FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tony- and Oscar-Nominated Actress Kathleen Turner Makes Berkeley Rep Debut in Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins

Turner stars in one-woman show about beloved journalist and satirist Molly Ivins

October 14, 2014 – This November, Berkeley Repertory Theatre rolls out the red carpet for two-time Tony and Oscar nominee Kathleen Turner for her Berkeley Rep debut in Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins. The brassy, sharp-witted political journalist and best-selling author of Bushwacked, Ivins was celebrated for her folksy yet barbed humor. She was the rowdy raconteur stirring up trouble in the old boy’s club and ridiculing those she deemed too big for their britches — earning her a widely read syndicated column and a seat next to Mark Twain as one of America’s beloved satirists. Turner is all smarts and sass as the redheaded firebrand, recounting her political rants and personal reflections with a liberal dose of piss and vinegar. Written by twin sisters Margaret Engel and Allison Engel and directed by Obie Award winner David Esbjornson, this acclaimed production captures the red-headed reporter’s indomitable character by weaving personal anecdotes with her colorful take on national politics. Red Hot Patriot begins previews Friday, November 21, opens on Tuesday, November 25, and runs through Sunday, January 4. Press night for Red Hot Patriot will be held on Tuesday, November 25, 2014. Individual tickets start at $29 and can be purchased by phone at (510) 647-2949 or online at berkeleyrep.org.

“We’re thrilled to welcome world-renowned actress Kathleen Turner to Berkeley Rep,” says Tony Taccone, Berkeley Rep’s Michael Leibert Artistic Director. “Ms. Turner applies her phenomenal talent to create a portrait of the unconquerable Molly Ivins, whose fiery wit and political wisdom served as a tonic for our times. It’s going to be a very exciting and winning evening for our audience.”

“I truly love playing Molly Ivins. I’ve been a fan for as long as I can remember,” adds Turner. “She had a great sense of politics and what our responsibilities as citizens should be. Her commitment to her country and her knowledge and political savvy were just extraordinary. I know that Berkeley Rep’s audience will embrace her as much as I have.”

Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins had its world premiere at the Philadelphia Theatre Company, where Turner originated the role. Turner’s performances as Molly Ivins have earned laudatory reviews. Los Angeles Weekly raves, “Turner handles the demands of the work beautifully with tremendous stamina, and even a little well placed in-character ad lib banter to realize Ivins with empathic care and a perfected execution.” Adds the Huffington Post, “The show is absolutely wonderful, entertaining and illuminating... and fiercely topical to today’s helter-skelter events.”

(MORE)
Screen icon Kathleen Turner has garnered critical acclaim for her performances in various movies including Body Heat, for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe; Romancing the Stone and Prizzi’s Honor, which earned her a Golden Globe Award for each; Peggy Sue Got Married, which brought her both an Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe nomination; and War of the Roses with another Golden Globe nomination. Ms. Turner’s extensive film credits also include The Man with Two Brains with Steve Martin, Jewel of the Nile with Michael Douglas, The Accidental Tourist, V.I. Warshawski, John Waters’ Serial Mom, Naked in New York, Moonlight and Valentino, The Real Blonde, and Sofia Coppola’s The Virgin Suicides. Ms. Turner has also starred on Broadway in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, for which she received a Tony nomination; Indiscretions; The Graduate; and Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, for which she received a second Tony nomination. Ms. Turner had a major recurring role as Sue Collini on Showtime’s hit series, Californication. In the spring of 2010 Ms. Turner starred as Molly Ivins in the world premiere of Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins at Philadelphia Theatre Company and immediately following that shot the starring role in an independent film called The Perfect Family. Ms. Turner most recently starred on Broadway in High, and in addition to her film and stage credits, she wrote of her many accomplishments and life experiences in her 2008 autobiography titled Send Yourself Roses: Thoughts on My Life, Love, and Leading Roles, which secured a position on the New York Times Best-Seller List.

Michael Barrett Austin (Helper), a San Francisco Bay Area native, last worked with Berkeley Rep on The Lieutenant of Inishmore. Most recently, he was in the world premiere of Manic Pixie Dream Girl at the New York International Fringe Festival. Other theatrical productions include Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson (San Francisco Playhouse), Dracula (Center Rep), The Grapes of Wrath (TheatreFIRST), and The Internationalist (Just Theater). Austin has also played locally with 42nd Street Moon, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Aurora Theatre, TheatreWorks, California Shakespeare Theater, PlayGround, Pacific Repertory Theatre, the Carmel Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Stage, and Brava, among others.

Margaret Engel (Playwright) was a reporter for the Washington Post, Des Moines Register, and Lorain Journal, and was a Nieman fellow at Harvard University. She directs the Alicia Patterson Journalism Foundation and was the managing editor of the Newseum, the museum for news, in Washington, DC. She co-wrote Food Finds: America’s Best Local Foods and the People Who Produce Them with her twin, Allison, and helped turn the book into a show for Food Network, where it ran for seven years. It appears today on the Travel Channel. She serves on the boards of TheatreWashington/Helen Hayes Awards, the Fund for Investigative Journalism, and the Nieman Foundation. She chairs the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism awards board. She and her husband, Bruce Adams, wrote three editions of a travel guide to America’s baseball parks, with the help of their children, Emily and Hugh.

Allison Engel (Playwright) has been a newspaper reporter for the Des Moines Tribune, San Jose Mercury News, and Pacific News Service and was a Knight Journalism Fellow at Stanford University. She has also been a political speechwriter and aide for former Iowa governor Tom Vilsack and lieutenant governor Sally Pederson. In Iowa, she was active in the Des Moines Playhouse, serving as president and head of play selection. She has been a food columnist for Saveur, an architecture columnist for Renovation Style, and has written for many other national publications. She recently spent five years as director of communications at USC before becoming the associate director of the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities at the university. She received an MA in screenwriting from USC in 2009.
David Esbjornson’s (Director) premieres include Edward Albee’s The Goat, or Who is Sylvia? (Broadway) and the Play About the Baby (the Century Center), The Ride Down Mt. Morgan (Broadway) and Resurrection Blues by Arthur Miller (the Guthrie Theater), Angels in America: Millennium Approaches and the first staged presentation of Perestroika (Eureka Theatre), Homebody/Kabul (London), Neal Bell’s Thérèse Raquin (Classic Stage Company), In the Blood by Suzan-Lori Parks (the Public Theater), Albom/Hatcher’s Tuesdays with Morrie (Minetta Lane Theatre), Israel Horowitz’s My Old Lady (the Promenade Theatre), Kathleen Tolan’s Memory House (Actors Theatre of Louisville and Playwrights Horizons), Ariel Dorfman’s Purgatorio, and Kevin Kling’s How? How? Why? Why? (Seattle Repertory Theatre). His recent work includes Measure for Measure (New York Shakespeare Festival Delacorte), Moira Buffini’s Gabriel and Peter Parnell’s Trumpery (Atlantic Theatre Company), and Allison and Margaret Engels’ Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins (Philadelphia Theatre Company and Geffen Playhouse). He directed the revivals of Driving Miss Daisy (Broadway and West End); Death of a Salesman (Gate Theatre in Dublin); Hamlet (Theatre for a New Audience); A Few Good Men (West End); All My Sons (the Huntington Theatre Company); Much Ado About Nothing (NYSF); The Normal Heart (the Public); Mud and Drowning (Signature Theatre); The Entertainer, The Maids, Endgame, and Entertaining Mr. Sloane (CSC); Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and Summer and Smoke (the Guthrie); Twelfth Night and Lady From Dubuque (Seattle Rep); and Farmyard (New York Theatre Workshop). David has served as artistic director of Classic Stage Company and Seattle Repertory Theatre and is the current chair of theatre at Rutgers University.

The creative team for Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly includes John Arnone (scenic designer), Elizabeth Hope Clancy (costume designer), Daniel Ionazzi (lighting designer), Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen (sound design and original music), Maya Ciarcocchi (projection designer), and Paul Huntley (wig designer). The stage manager for Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins is Michael Suenkel, Berkeley Rep’s production stage manager.

The 2014-15 season is supported by BART and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also proud to have KPIX-TV (Channel 5) as a first-year season sponsor. Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins is made possible thanks to the generous support of Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, Mary and Nicholas Graves, the Strauch Kulanjian Family, and Jack and Betty Schafer. The executive sponsors for the show are Pam and Mitch Nichter, Jean and Michael Strunsky, Marjorie Randolph, Michael and Sue Steinberg, and the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Philanthropic Fund.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed nearly 400 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities – which include the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.
FACT SHEET

Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins

WHO: Written by Margaret Engel and Allison Engel
Directed by David Esbjornson
Starring Kathleen Turner with Michael Barrett-Austin (Helper)

Creative Team: John Arnone (scenic designer), Elizabeth Hope Clancy (costume designer), Daniel Ionazzi (lighting designer), Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen (sound design & original music), Maya Ciarcocchi (projection designer), and Paul Huntley (wig designer).

WHAT: In her Berkeley Rep debut, two-time Tony and Oscar nominee Kathleen Turner is all smarts and sass as the brassy, sharp-witted journalist and best-selling author, recounting her political rants and personal reflections with a liberal dose of piss and vinegar. “Absolutely wonderful, entertaining and illuminating,” lauds Huffington Post.

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: 51 PERFORMANCES: Friday, November 21 – Sunday, January 4, 2015
- Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM; 2:00 PM on 12/24 & 2:00 and 7:00 PM on 12/31
- Thursdays @ 8:00 PM; 2:00 & 8:00 PM on 12/4; No performance on Thursday 12/25
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM; no matinee 11/8 & 12/6
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM

Special Events:
- Low-cost previews: Friday 11/21 and Saturday 11/22 @ 8:00 PM, and Sunday 11/23 @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
- Opening Night: Tuesday 11/25 @ 8:00 PM; includes a pre-show dinner for donors catered by Hugh Groman Catering
- Teen Night: Friday 11/21 @ 6:30 PM
- FREE docent events: docent talks before Tuesday and Thursday evening performances and discussions after all matinees
- Post-play discussions: Thursday 12/11, Tuesday 12/16, and Friday 12/26 following the performance
- Last Call: Friday 12/5 following the performance
- Open Captioned Performance: Sunday 1/4 @ 2:00 PM

HOW MUCH: Premium: $48–89 · Section A: $39–73 · Section B: $29–55 (subject to change); Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age; $10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain; Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

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