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BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES THE WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL VERSION OF MONSOON WEDDING

The new production is the sixth show to join the 2016-17 season

April 20, 2016- Berkeley Repertory Theatre today announced that award-winning film director Mira Nair will bring her exuberant and sumptuous Monsoon Wedding to the stage in this highly anticipated world premiere musical based on the 2001 hit film.

Monsoon Wedding is the perfect storm starts brewing when family members from around the world descend on Delhi for a nonstop four-day celebration of an arranged marriage between a modern upper-middle-class Indian family’s only daughter and an American guy she’s never met. But the bride is having an affair, her father’s financial troubles deepen, and dark family secrets surface. The forecast calls for drama, love, hope, laughs and a whole lot of rain.

“I have always envisioned Monsoon Wedding as a fully fleshed out musical,” says Nair. “The overlapping stories, fast-paced, rich dialogue combined with terrific musical numbers are perfect for a stage production. But at its core it has a fantastic story, and to be working with Berkeley Rep to help tell that story just adds to the excitement. I know the end result will be something terrific.”

“Mira Nair is a brilliant filmmaker I have long admired,” says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “She is a special, dynamic, and charismatic artist, as well as a great visionary. She brings a distinct passion and voice to the independent film world. I know her spirit and talent will easily translate to the stage. Monsoon Wedding is one of my favorite films and to have the opportunity to bring it to the stage in the form of a musical is really something to be excited about.”

Monsoon Wedding joins the previously announced 2016-17 season, which includes It Can’t Happen Here, based on Sinclair Lewis’ 1935 classic novel adapted by Taccone and screenwriter Bennett S. Cohen and helmed by award-winning director Lisa Peterson; Jeff Augustin’s The Last Tiger in Haiti, a co-production with La Jolla Playhouse and directed by Joshua Kahan Brody; and the return of Kneehigh with the U.S. premiere of 946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips, in association with Kneehigh and Birmingham Repertory Theatre and helmed by Emma Rice. After a successful Broadway run, the irreverent comedy Hand to God, directed by David Ivers, will have its West Coast premiere; and Roe, a new play by Lisa Loomer and a coproduction with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage, will be performed next spring.

Monsoon Wedding features a book by Sabrina Dhawan, music by Vishal Bhardwaj, and lyrics by Susan Birkenhead.

MIRA NAIR (Director)

Mira Nair was born and raised in Rourkela, India, and went on to study at Delhi and Harvard universities. She began as an actress before segueing to make documentaries. Her narrative feature debut, Salaam Bombay! (1988), won the Camera d’Or and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film. A resourceful and determined independent filmmaker who casts unknowns alongside Hollywood stars, Nair has directed Mississippi Masala (1991), The Perez Family (1995), Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love (1996), Hysterical Blindness (2002), Vanity Fair (2004), The Namesake (2006), Amelia
The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2012). Her upcoming film, Queen of Katwe, about a rural Ugandan girl with an aptitude for chess, stars Lupita Nyong’o and David Oyelowo.

SUSAN BIRKENHEAD (Lyricist)
Susan Birkenhead received a Tony Award nomination and a Drama Desk Award for her lyrics for Jelly’s Last Jam (1992). She was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for Triumph of Love (1998). She was nominated for a Tony Award for Working (1978), and won an Outer Critics Circle Award for What About Luv? (1991). She won an L.A. Drama Critics Award for Minsky’s (2009). She is currently working on The Secret Life of Bees with Lynn Nottage, Duncan Sheik, and Sam Gold, and Betty Boop with David Foster, Sally Robinson, and Jerry Mitchell.

VISHAL BHARDWAJ (Composer)
Vishal Bhardwaj is an Indian film music composer, director, writer, and playback singer. He also produces films under his banner VB Pictures. Vishal has composed music and songs for numerous films such as Maachis (1996), Satya (1998), Chachi 420 (1998), Godmother (1999), and the wildly popular theme songs for The Jungle Book in Hindi. As a director, he is known for his adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays – Maqbool (2003), based on Macbeth; Omkara (2006), based on Othello; and Haider (2014), based on Hamlet. Other directorial titles include Makdee (2002), The Blue Umbrella (2005), Kaminey (2009), 7 Khoon Maaf (2011), and Matru ki Bijlee Ka Mandola (2013). His music and films have won several national and international awards.

SABRINA DHAWAN (Author)
Sabrina Dhawan worked as the screenwriter on the award-winning film, Monsoon Wedding. She also co-wrote the film, Ishqiya, Kaminey and Rangoon with Vishal Bharadwaj. In the fifteen years Sabrina has worked as a screenwriter, she has worked with various studios and independent production companies including 20th Century Fox, UTV Films, Killer Films, Fox Searchlight, Fox-Star Studios, Disney, HBO Canal Plus, PBS and ABC Family. This is her first work for the stage.

For the 2016-17 season Berkeley Rep recognizes the generosity of season sponsors of BART, Peet’s Coffee, and Wells Fargo. Monsoon Wedding is also made possible by the support of individual season sponsors Jack and Betty Schafer, Michael and Sue Steinberg, and The Strauch Kulhanjian Family.

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 Peet’s Theatre, 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

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