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BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES SEVENTH SHOW FOR 2016–17 SEASON

Obie Award-winning An Octoroon by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins will close out the season

May 12, 2016 – Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre revealed that Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ Obie Award-winning play, An Octoroon, will be the seventh and final production in its upcoming 2016-17 subscription season. The West Coast premiere of the reworking of the mid-19th-century play will be performed in the Peet’s Theatre in June 2017.

Playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins won the Obie Award for his radical, incendiary, and subversively funny riff on Dion Boucicault’s once-popular 1859 mustache-twirling melodrama. Judge Peyton is dead, and his plantation Terrebonne is on the brink of foreclosure. George, the high-minded heir apparent, falls for the lovely Zoe, who’s one-eighth black. But the bigoted plantation queen has eyes for George, and the dastardly overseer M’Closky plots to keep Zoe and Terrebonne for himself. A spectacular collision of the antebellum South and 21st-century cultural politics, An Octoroon is “This decade’s most eloquent theatrical statement on race in America today,” says the New York Times.

“This is the perfect play to close our season,” says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “If you look at the schedule as a whole, you will discover diverse voices and a breadth of talent that Berkeley Rep audiences have come to expect from us. What Branden Jacobs-Jenkins has created with An Octoroon meets our shared standard for works that challenge as well as entertain us. It’s no surprise that this play was one of the hottest tickets in New York last year.”

An Octoroon (director to be announced) 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; Roe, a new play by Lisa Loomer and a coproduction with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage, will be performed next spring; and Monsoon Wedding, a brand new musical directed by Mira Nair based on her 2001 hit film will play on the Roda Stage just in time for wedding season.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (Playwright)
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins is a Brooklyn-based playwright whose credits include War (Lincoln Center/LCT3), Gloria (Vineyard Theatre; Pulitzer Prize finalist), Appropriate (Signature Theatre; Obie Award), An Octoroon (Soho Rep; Obie Award), and Neighbors (the Public Theater). He is a Residency Five playwright at Signature Theatre and is under commissions from LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, MTC/Sloan, and the Steppenwolf Theatre Company. His recent honors include the Windham-Campbell Prize for Drama, the PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation Theatre Award, the Benjamin H. Danks Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Steinberg Playwriting Award, and the
inaugural Tennessee Williams Award. In addition to holding an MA in Performance Studies from NYU, Branden is also a graduate of the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at the Juilliard School. He currently teaches in the Hunter College Playwriting MFA Program, where is a Master-Artist-in-Residence.

For the 2016-17 season Berkeley Rep recognizes the generosity of season sponsors of BART, Peet’s Coffee, and Wells Fargo. An Octoroon 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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