FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF AUBERGINE A NEW WORK BY ACCLAIMED PLAYWRIGHT JULIA CHO

Aubergine will be the first production in the newly remodeled Thrust Stage

November 23, 2015 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre continues its 2015-16 season with the new emotional family drama Aubergine, written by Julia Cho and directed by Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. This will be the first production presented on the newly renovated Thrust Stage and the second world premiere of the 2015-16 season, following Amélie, A New Musical. Aubergine is the story of an estranged son, his ill father, a visiting uncle carrying their memories in tow, a woman without an appetite, and a refugee from a forgotten country. These characters prove potent ingredients in this bittersweet and moving meditation on family, forgiveness, and the things that nourish us. When language fails, when the past fades, the perfect meal transcends time and culture and says more than words ever can.

Commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work, Aubergine begins previews Friday, February 5 and runs through Sunday, March 20, 2016. Press night will be held on Friday, February 12, 2016. Individual tickets start at $29 and can be purchased by phone at 510 647-2949 or online at berkeleyrep.org.

“Aubergine is a deeply moving play that expresses our capacity for desire and loss” says Taccone. “Using food as a powerful touchstone that connects us with our past, Julia Cho has found a unique way to tell a story that explores the complexities of family, memory, and healing.”

“I am so honored that Aubergine will make its world premiere at Berkeley Rep,” says Cho. “Family dramas are nothing new, but there aren’t too many with a specifically Asian American context and point of view. I am grateful to Berkeley Rep for bringing Aubergine to a wider audience.”

The Los Angeles Times says, “[Julia Cho is] on many theater hot lists thanks to a reputation for crafting intricate, often poetic pieces that blur the lines between fact and fiction.”

The cast for Aubergine includes Safiya Fredericks (Diane), Tyrone Mitchell Henderson (Lucien), Tim Kang (Ray), Jennifer Lim (Cornelia), and Joseph Yang (Ray’s uncle). And returning to the Berkeley Rep stage in the role of Ray’s father is longtime Bay Area favorite Sab Shimono. Shimono has appeared in several Berkeley Rep productions, including Yankee Dawg You Die (1989), The Ballad of Yachiyo (1997), and Last of Suns (1995). “Sab Shimono is a larger than life character,” says Managing Director Susan Medak. “All of us here at Berkeley Rep are ecstatic that he is returning.”

Headshots and bio information can be found in Berkeley Rep’s press room.

The creative team includes Wilson Chin (scenic designer), Linda Cho (costume designer), Jiyoun Chang (lighting designer), Rob Milburn & Michael Bodeen (sound designers), Aaron
Rhyne (projection designer), Madeleine Oldham (dramaturg), Leslie M. Radin (stage manager), and Amy Potozkin (casting).

Julia Cho’s plays include The Language Archive (Susan Smith Blackburn Award), The Piano Teacher, Durango, The Winchester House, BFE, The Architecture of Loss, and 99 Histories. They have been produced in New York at Roundabout Theatre Company, the Public Theater, Vineyard Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, and New York Theatre Workshop, and regionally at Long Wharf Theatre, South Coast Repertory, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and many others. Cho studied playwriting at Amherst College, New York University, and the Juilliard School, and was a member of New Dramatists. Her play Office Hour will premiere at South Coast Rep in April 2016.

For the 2015-16 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes the generosity of returning season sponsors BART, Wells Fargo, and KPIX-TV (Channel 5), and welcomes Peet’s Coffee as its fourth official season sponsor. Aubergine is made possible thanks to the generous support of lead sponsors Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau, executive sponsor Guy Tiphane, and sponsor Jack Klingelhofer. Season sponsors include Jack and Betty Schafer, Michael and Sue Steinberg, and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family.

ABOUT THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP’S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK
As the umbrella for all new play activity at Berkeley Rep, The Ground Floor is a bold initiative designed to raise the bar on the Tony Award–winning nonprofit’s already successful record of artistic innovation. Think of it as an incubator for theatrical start-ups or a top-notch R&D facility for artists. The Ground Floor is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts; Bank of America; the Kenneth Rainin Foundation; supporters of Berkeley Rep’s Create Campaign; and ArtPlace (artplaceamerica.org), a collaboration of top national foundations; the National Endowment for the Arts; and various federal agencies to accelerate creative place making across the U.S. For more information on each project, and for future announcements or opportunities to interact, visit berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor.

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

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FACT SHEET

BERKELEY REP PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF AUBERGINE

WHO:
Written by Julia Cho
Directed by Tony Taccone
Commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

Featuring: Safiya Fredericks (Diane), Tyrone Mitchell Henderson (Lucien), Tim Kang (Ray), Jennifer Lim (Cornelia), Sab Shimono (Ray’s father), and Joseph Yang (Ray’s uncle)

Creative team: Wilson Chin (scenic designer), Linda Cho (costume designer), Jiyoun Chang (lighting designer), Rob Milburn & Michael Bodeen (sound designers), Aaron Rhyne (projection designer),

WHAT:
An estranged son, a father who’s ill, a visiting uncle carrying their memories in tow, a woman without an appetite, and a refugee from a forgotten country — they all prove potent ingredients in this bittersweet and moving meditation on family, forgiveness, and the things that nourish us. When language fails, when the past fades, the perfect meal transcends time and culture and says more than words ever can.

WHERE:
Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Thrust Stage, 2025 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: 51 PERFORMANCES: Friday, February 5 – Sunday, March 20, 2016
• Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM, except March 15
• Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
• Thursdays @ 8:00 PM; 2:00 & 8:00 PM on 2/18 and 3/17
• Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM; 8:00 PM only on 2/6 and 2/20
• Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM; 7:00 PM only on 2/7
• No performance on Tuesday 03/15

Special Events:
Low-cost previews: Friday 2/5, Saturday 2/6, Tuesday 2/9, and Thursday 2/11 @ 8:00 PM; Sunday 2/7 & Wednesday 2/10 @ 7:00 PM

Opening night: Friday 2/12 @ 8:00 PM; includes a pre-show dinner for donors sponsored by Autumn Press and C.G. di Arie Vineyard & Winery

Teen Night: Friday 2/5 @ 6:15 PM

FREE docent events: Docent talks before Tuesday and Thursday evening performances and discussions after all matinees

Post-play discussions: Thursday 2/25, Tuesday 3/1, and Friday 3/11 following the performance

Open captioning: Sunday 3/20 @ 2:00pm

HOW MUCH: Premium: $48–89 · Section A: $41–73 · Section B: $29–60 (subject to change) TIX & INFO: 510 647-2949 – berkeleyrep.org Discounts: 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, email groups@berkeleyrep.org

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