FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP PRESENTS THE HYPOCRITES' PIRATES OF PENZANCE

A delightfully revolutionary reimagining of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan’s comic opera

--Lively immersive experience to be staged in Theatre’s Osher Studio on Center Street--

September 3, 2015 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre proudly welcomes Chicago theatre rebels The Hypocrites for the West Coast premiere of Pirates of Penzance. Join the party in the Theatre’s Osher Studio on Center Street for a delightfully and fantastically eccentric take on Gilbert and Sullivan’s preposterous topsy-turvy world. Presented promenade-style, this unique production allows the audience to move around the space with the actors for a more immersive experience. Directed and adapted by Sean Graney, artistic director of The Hypocrites, Pirates of Penzance follows the adventures of Frederick, who was mistakenly apprenticed as a young boy to a band of sentimental pirates. Now 21, he falls head-over-heels for the Major-General’s daughter and forswears the buccaneer’s life forever, or so he thinks. This buoyant, award-winning production is a “spirited, affectionate, and nearly irresistible,” says the Boston Globe.

Co-adapted by Kevin O’Donnell and co-directed by Thrisa Hodits, The Hypocrites’ Pirates of Penzance starts previews Friday, October 16, 2015 and runs through Sunday, December 20, 2015. Press night will be held on Friday, October 23, 2015. Individual tickets start at $29 and can be purchased by phone at (510) 647-2949 or online at berkeleyrep.org.

The cast includes Mario Aivazain (Pirate/Pirate King US), Delia Baseman (Daughter, Mabel/Ruth US), Matt Kahler (Major General/Samuel), Royen Kent (Pirate/Freddy US), Kristen Magee (Daughter), Shawn Pfaustch (Pirate King), Becky Poole (Daughter), Christine Stulik (Ruth/Mabel), Zeke Sulkes (Frederick).

“We’re excited to have the Hypocrites present their Pirates of Penzance, a high energy production that will be staged in a very dynamic way,” says Tony Taccone, Berkeley Rep’s Michael Leibert Artistic Director. “With our Thrust Stage under renovation, we have the opportunity to present Pirates in the Osher Studio. A black box theatre, the Osher is able to provide ‘promenade seating,’ in which a portion of the audience is seated while others move around with the performers in the space. This environmental approach is fantastically intimate and gives renewed meaning to the phrase ‘up close and personal.’ It’s all part of the Hypocrites desire to restore the subversive fun to Gilbert and Sullivan and should make for a great evening.”

“Our Pirates of Penzance attempts to capture the revolutionary spirit of the original, beloved comic opera by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan,” remarks Sean Graney artistic director of The Hypocrites. “Everything that G&S fans expect will be there—and a lot more. We also offer an exciting, casual and live relationship between actor and attendee that is specific to the audience that arrives each evening. We can’t wait for Berkeley Rep’s adventurous patrons to embrace this fun, playful, and wacky production.”

Critics have fallen in love with the the Hypocrites’ uniquely stylized, fast-paced rendition of Pirates of Penzance. The Chicago Times calls the show, “a zany delight from start to finish.” The Chicago Tribune writes, “that cheeky Sean Graney, the very model of the modern conceptual director, has pulled out quite a delicious little off-Loop version of ‘The Pirates of Penzance.’ This is not your father’s Gilbert and Sullivan...."
Adds the *Boston Globe*, “spirited, affectionate, and nearly irresistible…. Apart from some amusing interpolations of brief snatches of contemporary songs, *Pirates of Penzance* displays a surprising fidelity to the original 19th-century score and storyline.”

Sean Graney (Adaptor and director) is the artistic director of The Hypocrites, which he started in 1997. The Hypocrites are recognized as a groundbreaking company and mainstay of theatre in the city of Chicago. Up next is *Yeomen of the Guard* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which is his fourth Gilbert and Sullivan project, having done *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, and *HMS Pinafore* all with The Hypocrites and are now going to be touring around to various and exciting cities. Graney is the recipient of the Helen Coburn Meier and Tim Meier Charitable Foundation for the Arts Achievement Award, and has won four Joseph Jefferson Awards.

Kevin O’Donnell (Co-adapter/Sound Design) is honored to be part of The Hypocrites and this production. Currently splitting time between Chicago and New Orleans, he has been teaching at Tulane University and designing for the New Orleans Shakespeare Festival. In Chicago his theatre work has been nominated every year he has worked, resulting in 20 Jeff nominations and 10 awards.

Thrisa Hodits (Co-Director) most recently co-directed the G&S Rep this past winter and looks forward to taking *Pirates* to Berkeley Rep and *HMS Pinafore* to Actors Theatre of Louisville this fall. Following *Tragic*, Hodits is directing *West Side Story* with the Center Theatre Company and *With Love and a Major Organ* with Strawdog Theatre Company.

The design team includes: Tom Burch (scenic designer), Maria DeFabo (properties designer), Heather Gilbert (lighting designer), Kevin O’Donnell (sound designer), and Alison Siple (costume designer). The music director is Andra Velis Simon, and the choreographer is Katie Spelman.

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. *Pirates of Penzance* is made possible thanks to the generous support of season sponsors the Strauch Kulhanjian Family and Jack and Betty Schafer.

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

THE HYPOCRITES’ PIRATES OF PENZANCE

WHO: 
Book by W.S. Gilbert
Music by Arthur Sullivan
Adapted and directed by Sean Graney
Co-adapted by Kevin O’Donnell
Co-directed by Thrisa Hodits
Music direction by Andra Velis Simon
Choreography by Katie Spelman

Featuring:
 Mario Aivazain (Pirate/Pirate King US), Delia Baseman (Daughter, Mabel/Ruth US), Matt Kahler (Major General/Samuel), Royen Kent (Pirate/Frederic US), Kristen Magee (Daughter), Shawn Pfaustch (Pirate King), Becky Poole (Daughter), Christine Stulik (Ruth/Mabel), Zeke Sulkes (Frederick)

Creative team: Tom Burch (scenic designer), Maria DeFabo (properties designer), Heather Gilbert (lighting designer), Kevin O’Donnell (sound designer), and Alison Siple (costume designer).

WHAT: 
Join the party in our new Osher Studio on Center Street with a delightfully immersive, loopy, and fantastically eccentric 80-minute take – think banjos, beach balls, and guitars – on Gilbert and Sullivan’s preposterous, topsy-turvy world. This buoyant, award-winning Pirates of Penzance by Chicago theatre rebels The Hypocrites is “spirited, affectionate, and nearly irresistible,” says the Boston Globe

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Osher Studio, 2055 Center Street @ Arts Passage, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: 77 PERFORMANCES: Friday, October 16 – Sunday, Dec 20, 2015

- Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Fridays @ 8:00 PM and 2:00 & 8:00 PM on 11/27
- Saturdays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM
- No performance on Thursday 11/26

Special Events:

Low-cost previews: Friday 10/16 and Wednesday 10/20 @ 8:00 PM; Saturday 10/17 @ 2:00 & 8:00 PM; Sunday 10/18 @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM; Tuesday 10/20 @ 7:00 PM

Opening Night: Thursday 10/22 and Friday 10/23 @ 8:00 PM

Teen Night: Friday 10/16 @ 6:15 PM

FREE docent events: docent talks before Tuesday and Thursday evening performances and discussions after all matinees. There will be no docent talk on Thursday 10/22

Post-play discussions: Friday 10/30, Tuesday 11/3, Thursday 11/12, Friday 11/20, and Thursday 12/10 following the performance

HOW MUCH: 
Premium: $48–89 · Section A: $41–73 · Section B: $29–60

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, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

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