For Immediate Release

BERKELEY REP PRESENTS HAND TO GOD
West Coast premiere of Broadway smash hit

December 19, 2016- Berkeley Repertory Theatre today announced the West Coast premiere of Hand to God written by Robert Askins and directed by David Ivers. The Broadway smash hit and Tony Award-nominated play begins previews on Friday, February 3, and the show runs through Sunday, March 19. Individual tickets begin at $29 and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org or by phone, 510 647-2949. Press night will be on Friday, February 10.

Hand to God tells the story of Jason, a Texas teenager, and his sock puppet named Tyrone. Tyrone may look innocent, but when he infiltrates the angst-ridden church youth group and takes possession of Jason’s arm, well, all hell breaks loose. Spectacularly foul-mouthed and wickedly scandalous, Tyrone shocks the congregation with his outrageous insinuations, exposing their deepest secrets—and teaching us all about love, grief, and what it means to be human. This fast-paced, irreverent comedy is “darkly delightful,” declares the New York Times.

"Dave Ivers has a feel for comedy like very few people I know," says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “Hand to God requires a director who can unleash its subversively brash and outrageous spirit. As Berkeley Rep audiences who saw his One Man, Two Guvnors last year know, Dave is just the man for the job."

Robert Askins (Playwright)
Robert Askins was born in Cypress, Texas in 1980. He moved to New York in 2005. His Obie Award-winning, Tony nominated play Hand to God was a smash hit on Broadway after a 2014 run at MCC and three sold-out runs at Ensemble Studio Theater in 2011-12. In 2009 his play Princes of Waco was produced by EST/Youngblood. His one-act play Matthew and the Pastor's Wife was a part of Marathon 2010 at EST, and The Love Song of the Albanian Sous Chef won a Dallas Outer Circle Critics Award in 2011. Askins is proud to be an alumnus of L-73, Youngblood, and a member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre. He has received two E.S.T./Sloan grants, an Arch and Bruce Davis Award, and is one of the 2012 recipients of the Helen Merril Award for emerging playwrights.

David Ivers (Director)
David Ivers directed One Man, Two Guvnors at Berkeley Rep in 2015, and is the artistic director of Utah Shakespeare Festival, where he has been creating productions as director/actor since 1992. In recent seasons, he has directed Twelfth Night, Twelve Angry Men, Romeo and Juliet, Cyrano De Bergerac, and others. Additionally, he spent 10 years as a resident artist with the Denver Center Theatre Company, collaborating on over 40 productions as director/actor. Also, David helmed The Taming of the Shrew and a premiere adaptation of The Cocoanuts for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Michael Doherty (Jason/Tyrone)
Michael Doherty is making his Berkeley Rep debut. His off-Broadway credits include Dublin by Lamplight (59E59/Inis Nua Theatre Company). His regional credits include Ragtime, Man of La Mancha, and A Christmas Carol (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), Peter and the Starcatcher (Connecticut Repertory Theatre), Charley’s Aunt and Taming of the Shrew (Utah Shakespeare Festival), Assistance (the Wilma Theater), Next to Normal and The History Boys (Arden Theatre Company), Mr. Hart and Mr. Brown
(People’s Light), Moon Over Buffalo (Gulfshore Playhouse), The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Theatre Horizon — Barrymore Award for Supporting Actor), and many more. His TV pilot, Los Jarochos, won Best Writing at the 2013 Independent TV Festival. Doherty received his BFA from University of the Arts.

David Kelly (Pastor Greg)
David Kelly most recently appeared at Berkeley Rep in the world premiere of It Can’t Happen Here. He also appeared in Fuente Ovejuna and Haroun and the Sea of Stories. In 25 seasons at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, he appeared in numerous productions, including Imaginary Invalid, Pirates of Penzance, My Fair Lady, Henry V, Hamlet, Three Musketeers, Richard II, and Noises Off, among others. Kelly is an instructor at Southern Oregon University.

Michael McIntire (Timothy)
Michael McIntire is making his Berkeley Rep debut. He most recently appeared at the American Conservatory Theater in A Little Night Music; Ah, Wilderness!; A Christmas Carol; and in its MFA Conservatory production of The Rocky Horror Show. Other regional credits include A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, The Boys Next Door, and Big River (Maples Repertory Theatre), Sunday in the Park with George (Musical Theater Heritage), and The Kentucky Cycle (Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre). His film credits include Saints Rest, Matched, and If Night Comes. McIntire recently received his MFA in acting from ACT.

Laura Odeh (Margery)
Laura Odeh is delighted to be making her debut at Berkeley Rep. She has appeared on Broadway in The Rivals (Lincoln Center Theatre). Her off-Broadway credits include The Aristocrats, Gaslight, and Mrs. Warren’s Profession (the Irish Repertory Theatre), A Body of Water (Primary Stages), and King Lear (the Public Theater). Regional productions include Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberly (Marin Theatre Company), King Lear (Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC), 33 Variations (La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage), and The Cherry Orchard (Yale Repertory Theatre). Her television and film credits include The Other Woman; Synecdoche, NY; The Unusuals; and Guiding Light. She has worked with such directors as Robert Falls, James Lapine, Mark Lamos, Bill Rauch, Moisés Kaufman, Charlie Kaufman, and Don Roos. Odeh received her MFA from NYU Graduate Acting and is a proud member of Actors’ Equity.

Carolina Sanchez (Jessica)
Carolina Sanchez made her Berkeley Rep debut earlier this season in the world premiere of It Can’t Happen Here. She also has appeared in Milk Like Sugar (Margie) at the Huntington Theatre Company, Iowa (Amanda) at Playwrights Horizons, the workshop of Murder at the Gates (Audrey), and the national tour of West Side Story (Rosalia).

The creative team includes Jo Winarski (scenic designer), Meg Neville (costume designer), Alexander V. Nichols (lighting designer), Joe Payne (sound designer), Amanda Villalobos (puppet designer), and Danielle O’Dea (fight choreographer).

For the 2016-17 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes the generosity of season sponsors BART, Peet’s Coffee, and Wells Fargo. Hand to God is made possible thanks to the generous 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