For Immediate Release

BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES FULL CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR TONY KUSHNER’S ANGELS IN AMERICA

Tony Award-winning masterpiece returns to the Bay Area for the first time in over 20 years

January 4, 2018 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre today announced the full cast and creative team for Tony Kushner’s Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One: Millennium Approaches and Part Two: Perestroika.

Tony Kushner’s Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning masterpiece finally arrives at Berkeley Rep in its entirety — directed by artistic director Tony Taccone in his 20th anniversary season! First staged 26 years ago, and originally commissioned by the Eureka Theatre in San Francisco while Taccone was serving as artistic director, this fierce and astounding two-part drama is at once an epic exploration of American politics, gay identity, and mythology, and a personal story of love and loyalty. In today’s sociopolitical climate, Kushner’s universal message of compassion and inclusion makes Angels in America as timely as ever.

“When Tony Kushner, Stephen Spinella, and I first worked on the premiere of Angels in America in 1991, I never dreamed we’d have the chance to revisit it together 27 years later,” says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “That prospect is tremendously exciting, particularly at this moment in our history. Questions Tony Kushner asked in 1991 have never felt more urgent. We’re at a crossroads: What kind of society are we going to have? Is democracy still viable? Can we change — and is the change we’ll make progressive and inclusive, or will it be led by survival of the fittest and political fracturing? I’m thrilled to be tackling these questions with this warm and brilliant cast of eight, comprising friends old and new.”

After winning two Tony Awards for his portrayal of Prior Walter in the original Broadway production, Stephen Spinella returns to Angels in America in the role of Roy Cohn. Joining Spinella is an ensemble of noted actors making their Berkeley Rep debuts, including Randy Harrison as Prior (best known for his work on Showtime’s Queer as Folk), and Caldwell Tidicue (aka Bob the Drag Queen) as Belize.

Previews begin Tuesday, April 17, 2018 and the show runs through Sunday, July 22, 2018. Press day will be Saturday, April 28, 2018 with both Parts One and Two being presented. Tickets start at $40, and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org and by phone at 510 647-2949 (Tue-Sun, noon-7pm).

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CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Tony Kushner (Playwright)
Tony Kushner’s plays include A Bright Room Called Day; Angels in America, Parts One and Two; Slavs; Homebody/Kabul; the musical Caroline, or Change; and the opera A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck, both with composer Jeanine Tesori. He has adapted and translated Pierre Cornelle’s The Illusion, S.Y. Ansky’s The Dybbuk, Bertolt Brecht’s The Good Person of Szechwan and Mother Courage and Her
Children, and the English-language libretto for the opera Brundibár by Hans Krasa. He wrote the screenplays for Mike Nichols’ film of Angels in America, and for Steven Spielberg’s Munich and Lincoln. His books include Brundibar, with illustrations by Maurice Sendak; The Art of Maurice Sendak, 1980 to the Present; and Wrestling With Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict, co-edited with Alisa Solomon. Tony Kushner is the recipient of a Pulitzer Prize, two Tony Awards, three Obie Awards, two Evening Standard Awards, an Olivier Award, an Emmy Award, two Oscar nominations, and the Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award, among other honors. In 2012, he was awarded a National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama. He lives in Manhattan with his husband, Mark Harris.

Tony Taccone (Director/Michael Leibert Artistic Director)
Tony is celebrating his 20th anniversary season. During Tony’s tenure as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award-winning nonprofit has earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In those 20 years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 23 shows to New York, two to London, and one to Hong Kong. Tony has staged more than 40 plays in Berkeley, including new work from Julia Cho, John Leguizamo, Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Itamar Moses, and Lemony Snicket. He directed the shows that transferred to London, Continental Divide and Tiny Kushner, and two that landed on Broadway as well: Bridge & Tunnel and Wishful Drinking. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, Tony served as artistic director of Eureka Theatre, which produced the American premieres of plays by Dario Fo, Caryl Churchill, and David Edgar before focusing on a new generation of American writers. While at the Eureka, Tony commissioned Tony Kushner’s legendary Angels in America and co-directed its world premiere. He has collaborated with Kushner on eight plays at Berkeley Rep, including The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. Tony’s regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Center Stage Theatre Group, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Huntington Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Public Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, he debuted Ghost Light, Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup, Game On, written with Dan Hoyle, and It Can’t Happen Here, written with Bennett S. Cohen. In 2012, Tony received the Margo Jones Award for “demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre.”

Danny Binstock (Joe)
Danny made his Broadway debut in the 2013 revival of Breakfast at Tiffany’s. He recently starred in the world premiere of The Man in the Ceiling (Bay Street Theatre), based on Jules Feiffer’s book. He performed in director Ivo Van Hove’s production of A View from the Bridge (Ahmanson Theatre, Kennedy Center). In New York, he performed in Bones in the Basket for The Araca Group’s off-Broadway festival. Nationally his notable theatre credits include The Music Man (Guthrie Theater), The Imaginary Invalid (Fisher Center at Bard College), The Last Match (City Theatre), Pop! (Yale Repertory Theatre), The May Queen (Geva Theatre), Assassins (PlayMakers Repertory Company), and Titus Andronicus (Shakespeare Theatre Company). On television, Danny has appeared on The Blacklist (NBC) and Codes of Conduct (HBO). His films include A Good Marriage, Good Friday, No Pay, and Nudity. Danny is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama MFA program and earned his BFA at the University of Michigan.

Randy Danson (The Angel)
Randy is delighted to be back at Berkeley Rep, where she most recently appeared as Clio in Tony Kushner’s The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. Most recently she has appeared as Lady Bracknell in The Importance of Being Earnest at Two River Theater. Prior to that she played Mother Showman/Brother/Grade School Chum in Signature Theatre’s production of Suzan-Lori Parks’ Venus in New York City. Also she portrayed Alice in Sam Hunter’s play Lewiston at Long Wharf Theatre. She has appeared in various episodic television programs, a number of films by independent filmmaker Mark Rappaport, and The Last Temptation of Christ directed by Martin Scorsese. She was awarded the Helen Hayes Award for her portrayal of the title role in The Good Person of Szechuan, the Barrymore Award for Vivian in Wit, and an Obie Award for sustained excellence of performance in 1992.
Randy Harrison (Prior)
Randy is making his Berkeley Rep debut. His New York credits include Wicked (Broadway), Harbor (Primary Stages), Edward the Second (Red Bull Theater), Antony and Cleopatra (Theatre for a New Audience), and The Singing Forest (The Public Theater). He toured nationally as the Emcee in Roundabout Theatre Company’s Cabaret. His recent regional credits include Sunday in the Park with George and The Glass Menagerie at Guthrie Theater, Red at Cleveland Playhouse, The Habit of Art at Studio Theatre in DC, Twelfth Night at Shakespeare Theatre Company, Pop! at Yale Rep, and six seasons at Berkshire Theatre Festival (Equus, Amadeus, Mrs. Warren’s Profession, Ghosts, Waiting for Godot, and The Who’s Tommy). Randy’s TV credits include Mr. Robot, Bang Bang You’re Dead, and Queer as Folk. He made his directorial debut with the web series New York is Dead, which won best comedy at the New York Television Festival and is available on Funny or Die.

Benjamin T. Ismail (Louis)
Benjamin is thrilled to be making his official Berkeley Rep debut with Angels in America, though he did appear for a week as an understudy in 2015’s Tartuffe. Selected regional credits include The Invisible Hand (American Stage Theatre Company); Disgraced, Speech & Debate, Tribes, and The Santaland Diaries (Capital Stage); Peter Pan and The Secret Garden (Playhouse on the Square); Cloud 9, The Pillowman, The Submission, and Complet Female Stage Beauty (Big Idea Theatre); and The Mystery of Irma Vep and Cinderella (Sacramento Theatre Company). He comes to Berkeley Rep directly from his residency at American Stage in St. Petersburg, FL, where he directed, acted, and designed several shows in 2017. He is former artistic director of Big Idea Theatre in Sacramento and a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

Bethany Jillard (Harper)
Bethany is thrilled to be making her debut with Berkeley Rep. As a company member with the Stratford Festival of Canada for five seasons, her credits include A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Beaux’ Stratagem, Othello, The Three Musketeers, Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, Richard III, The Little Years, Dangerous Liaisons, and Peter Pan. Regional credits include Disgraced (Cincinnati Playhouse); Othello (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); The Seagull, Gone With The Wind (world premiere), and After Miss Julie (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre); How It Works, The Little Years, and Cake and Dirt (Tarragon Theatre); My Name Is Rachel Corrie (Theatre PANIK); A Man of No Importance (Acting Up Stage); That Face (Nightwood/Canadian Stage); and Tough! (Factory Theatre). Her film and television credits include If I Were You with Marcia Gay Harden (Paragraph), Murdoch Mysteries (Shaftesbury), Bloodletting... (TMN), Rookie Blue (ABC), and I Love You... But I Lied (Lifetime). She is a graduate of the University of Toronto and the Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre Training.

Carmen Roman (Hannah)
Carmen understudied the national tour of Angels in America 24 years ago. Her off-Broadway credits include The Iphigenia Cycle (Theater for a New Audience from Court Theatre in Chicago) and The Mysteries (Classic Stage Company). Regionally she performed in Native Son at Yale Repertory Theatre; The Audience at TimeLine Theatre; Wit, Black Snow, and Brutality of Fact (Goodman Theatre); Side Man (Steppenwolf Theatre); The Price (Syracuse Stage and Geva Theatre Center); The Importance of Being Earnest (Center Stage in Baltimore); and Sonia Flew (Huntington Theatre). Film & TV credits include Chicago P.D. (Susan Williams), Betrayal (Connie Mrozek), Boss (Dr. Gabriella Reyes, recurring), Law & Order (Judge Einhorn, recurring), Law & Order SVU and Criminal Intent, and Savages. She is a company member of American Blues Theater, Chicago. Carmen was a 2002 Fox Fellow, and received the Sarah Siddons Award, Florence Herschler Award, and Joseph Jefferson Awards for Master Class and Wit.

Stephen Spinella (Roy Cohn)
Stephen won two Tony Awards and two Drama Desk Awards for the original Broadway productions of Tony Kushner’s epic Angels in America plays, which marked his Broadway debut. He has since starred on Broadway in the Tony Award-winning musical Spring Awakening; revivals of A View from the Bridge, Electra, and Our Town (with Paul Newman); and James Joyce’s The Dead, for which he won a third Drama Desk Award, as well as an Outer Critics Circle Award, and was again a Tony nominee. His most recent Broadway credit is The Velocity of Autumn, co-starring Estelle Parsons. Off Broadway Stephen won an Obie for Love! Valour! Compassion! He also appeared in An Iliad (Lucille Lortel and Obie
Awards), alongside Meryl Streep in The Seagull directed by Mike Nichols, and in Tony Kushner’s The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. Among his feature film credits: Alfonso Cuarón’s Great Expectations, Tim Robbins’ The Cradle Will Rock, Gus Van Sant’s award-winning Milk, Quentin Dupieux’s cult hit Rubber, and Steven Spielberg’s Lincoln. He will appear this fall in Can you ever forgive me? starring Melissa McCarthy. Stephen has guest-starred on Will and Grace, Frasier, Heroes, Grey’s Anatomy, Nip/Tuck, and Alias. He’s had recurring roles on The Education of Max Bickford, 24, Desperate Housewives, Royal Pains, and Steven Soderbergh’s The Knick.

Caldwell Tidicue (Belize)
Caldwell, popularly known as Bob the Drag Queen, is the winner of the Emmy Award-winning reality show RuPaul’s Drag Race Season 8. His standup special, Suspiciously Large Woman, premiered on LOGO TV this past summer. Film credits include Rough Night, Cherry Pop, Words – a Documentary, and Straight Outta Oz. Television credits include HBO’s High Maintenance and Playing House. Caldwell is currently working on a documentary titled A Queen for the People. Visit BobTheDragQueen.com. #PurseFirst

Takeshi Kata (Scenic Designer)
Takeshi designed Last Tiger in Haiti at Berkeley Rep. Recent New York credits include Office Hour (The Public Theater), Man From Nebraska (Second Stage Theater), The Profane (Playwrights Horizons), Derren Brown: Secret (Atlantic Theater Company), Forever (New York Theatre Workshop), and Gloria (Vineyard Theatre). Regional work includes designs for the Alley Theatre, American Players Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Ford’s Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Nashville Opera, Old Globe, Resident Ensemble Players, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Takeshi has won an Obie Award and has been nominated for Drama Desk, Barrymore, Connecticut Critics Circle, and Ovation Awards. He is an assistant professor at the USC School of Dramatic Arts and has an MFA from Yale School of Drama.

Montana Blanco (Costume Designer)
Montana is returning to Berkeley Rep after having designed An Octoroon last season. His off-Broadway credits include The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World (Lucille Lortel nomination) and In The Blood (Signature Theatre); Pipeline (Lincoln Center Theater); Ghost Light and War (Lincoln Center Theater/LCT3); Red Speedo and Nat Turner in Jerusalem (New York Theatre Workshop); The Last Match (Roundabout Theatre Company); Hamlet, Teenage Dick, and Pretty Hunger (The Public Theater); O, Earth (the Foundry Theatre); and Orange Julius (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater). Regional credits include The Bluest Eye (Guthrie Theater), War (Yale Repertory Theatre), Measure for Measure (Santa Cruz Shakespeare/California Shakespeare Theater), and Side Show and Our Country’s Good (Brown/Trinity Repertory Company). Upcoming: Is God Is and Fairview (Soho Rep), He Brought Her Heart Back In a Box (Theatre for a New Audience), The House That Will Not Stand (New York Theatre Workshop), and Lempicka (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Training: Yale School of Drama, MFA; Brown University, MA; Oberlin College, BA; Oberlin Conservatory of Music, BM. Visit montanaleviblanco.com.

Jen Schriever (Lighting Designer)
Jennifer is a lighting designer based in New York City. Her Broadway credits include Eclipsed and John Leguizamo’s Ghetto Klown (also filmed for HBO). Her off-Broadway credits include School Girls, or the African Mean Girls Play (MCC Theatre); Strange Interlude (Transport Group); ...Discord (Primary Stages); Today is my Birthday (Page 73); On the Exhale (Roundabout Theatre Company); The Moors (Playwrights Realm); Bright Half Life (Women’s Project); Eclipsed, Toast, and A Second Chance (The Public Theater), Night is a Room (Signature Theatre Company); and Sunset Baby (Labyrinth Theater Company). Regionally, she has designed at Goodman Theatre, Center Stage, American Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodspeed Opera House, Studio Theatre in DC, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Studio Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, South Coast Repertory, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. Her opera credits include Die Fledermaus and Pearl Fishers (Metropolitan Opera); Faust, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and La Traviata (Mariinsky Theatre in Russia), and The Pearl Fishers (English National Opera in London). Jennifer is an adjunct professor at Purchase College. Visit jenschriever.com.
Alexander V. Nichols (Projection Designer)
Alex has designed more than 30 productions for Berkeley Rep. His Broadway credits include Wishful Drinking, Hugh Jackman—Back On Broadway, and Nice Work If You Can Get It. His off-Broadway productions include In Masks Outrageous and Austere, Los Big Names, Horizon, Bridge & Tunnel, Taking Over, Through the Night, and In the Wake. Alex has worked at regional theatres throughout the country, including American Conservatory Theater, Mark Taper Forum, National Theatre of Taiwan, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and La Jolla Playhouse, among others. His dance credits include resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet; lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre; and resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company since 1989. His designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance, Hong Kong Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, ODC/SF, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Alex's other projects include the museum installation Circle of Memory, a collaboration with Eleanor Coppola, presented in Stockholm, Sweden, and the video and visual design for Life: A Journey Through Time, a collaboration with Frans Lanting and Philip Glass, presented at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

Bray Poor (Sound Designer)
Bray's Berkeley Rep credits include For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday, Eurydice, In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West, Red, and Dear Elizabeth. His recent work includes War at Lincoln Center Theater, The Glass Menagerie at Toneelgroep Amsterdam, The Last Match at the Old Globe, and 10 out of 12 at Soho Rep (directed by Les Waters). His Broadway credits include The Real Thing, In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), and American Plan. His sound design and music have been heard in New York at Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage Theatre, The Public Theater, Signature Theatre Company, New York Theatre Workshop, PS 122, and Clubbed Thumb, and regionally at Trinity Repertory Company, Arena Stage, Yale Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, and South Coast Repertory, among others. He has also created multimedia art installations, as well as original music and sound for various media sites dedicated to social change.

For the 2017-18 season Berkeley Rep recognizes the continued generosity of season sponsors BART, Peet's Coffee, and Wells Fargo as well as the support of individual season sponsors Jack and Betty Schafer, Michael and Sue Steinberg, and The Strauch Kulhanjian Family. Angels in America is made possible by lead sponsors Target, Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau, Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, and Stewart and Rachelle Owen. Executive sponsors are Kelli and Steffan Tomlinson.

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, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.