WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME REPLACES PIKE ST. IN BERKELEY REP’S 2017-18 SEASON

January 31, 2018 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre announced that due to scheduling conflicts, Nilaja Sun’s Pike St. will be replaced by What the Constitution Means to Me as the final production in its 2017-18 season. Written by and starring award-winning playwright and actress Heidi Schreck and directed by Oliver Butler, What the Constitution Means to Me will have its West Coast premiere in the Peet’s Theatre.

“We are so lucky to be able to produce Heidi Schreck’s newest play,” says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “Part memoir, part drama, part improv, What the Constitution Means to Me breaks the bounds of traditional theatre to give us an intimate, funny, serious look at the Constitution and what it means to all of us. I can’t think of anything more important right now.”

When Heidi Schreck was in high school she delivered speeches about the Constitution in American Legion Halls all over the country in order to earn money to pay for college. Today the witty Obie Award-winning performer radically reinvents the speech she gave at 15 and discovers the profound effect this document has had on four generations of women in her family. The piece culminates in a fierce impromptu debate between Heidi and a local high-school debater over the future of our inalienable rights. Directed by the Debate Society’s Obie Award-winning Oliver Butler, What the Constitution Means to Me is a moving and entertaining show that New York Magazine called one of the 10 best shows of 2017, saying: “It finds the political, and the powerful, in the personal.”

The production will begin previews on Thursday, May 3 and run through Sunday, June 17. Individual tickets begin at $30 and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org or by phone at 510 647-2949. Press night will be on Thursday, May 10.

What the Constitution Means to Me originated with Clubbed Thumb in partnership with True Love Productions as part of Summerworks 2017. This play was commissioned by True Love Productions and developed in partnership with Clubbed Thumb.

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. What the Constitution Means to Me is made possible by lead sponsors Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer.

Heidi Schreck (playwright)
Heidi Schreck is a playwright, actor, and screenwriter living in Brooklyn. Her latest plays include What the Constitution Means to Me and Grand Concourse, which premiered at Playwrights Horizons and Steppenwolf Theatre in 2014-15, and has been produced by theatres all over the country including Shotgun Players in Berkeley. Grand Concourse received a Lilly Award, the Clare Tow Award, and was a
finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn prize. Heidi’s other plays *Creature, There Are No More Big Secrets*, and *The Consultant* have been produced by Long Wharf Theatre, Page73, Seattle Public Theatre, ART, SpeakEasy, New George, Rattlestick Theatre Company, and more. She holds commissions from the Atlantic Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, and South Coast Repertory Theatre and has been a playwriting fellow with Soho Rep and the Sundance Theatre Lab. Her television writing includes *Nurse Jackie, Billions, and I Love Dick*, and she is currently developing a TV series with Annapurna Pictures and Imagine. As an actor, Heidi has performed at Berkeley Rep (In the Wake), Roundabout Theatre, MTC, Playwrights Horizons, Shakespeare in the Park, and more. TV: *Nurse Jackie, The Good Wife, Billions, Law & Order: SVU*. Heidi is the recipient of two Obie Awards, a Drama Desk Award, and the Theatre World Award.

**Oliver Butler (director)**

Oliver Butler is the co-artistic director of The Debate Society and has directed *The Light Years* (Playwrights Horizons and Steppenwolf Theatre), *Jacuzzi* (Ars Nova), *Blood Play* (Bushwick Starr), *Buddy Cop 2* (Ontological), *Cape Disappointment* (PS 122), *You’re Welcome, The Eaten Heart, The Snow Hen*, and *A Thought About Raya*. His off-Broadway credits include *The Open House* (Signature Theatre, Lortel Award Best Play, Obie Award Direction) and *What the Constitution Means to Me* (Clubbed Thumb). His regional credits include *Bad Jews* (Long Wharf Theatre), *Thom Pain (based on nothing)* (Geffen Playhouse), *Legacy* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *An Opening in Time* (Hartford Stage), and his international credits include *Timeshare* (The Malthouse, Australia). Oliver is a Sundance Institute Fellow and a Bill Foeller Fellow (Williamstown).

**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