BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES FOUR PHENOMENAL SHOWS FOR THE 2019-20 SEASON

Productions part of incoming Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer’s inaugural season

Subscription package sales begin April 3

April 3, 2019 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre today announced a compelling slate of productions for its 2019-20 subscription season. Berkeley Rep’s new Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer revealed four of the seven subscription shows that will comprise her first season at the Theatre.

The four announced shows include the American premiere of Francis Turnly’s The Great Wave following its world premiere at the National Theatre in London last year; Jocelyn Bioh’s award-winning School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play that received critically acclaimed runs in New York and Los Angeles; the return of the Bay Area’s original subversive badass satirists in Culture Clash (Still) in America; and the world premiere musical Swept Away with music by The Avett Brothers, book by John Logan, and directed by Michael Mayer.

“I am thrilled to bring this eclectic group of artists to the Bay Area for my first season at Berkeley Rep,” says incoming Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer. “In putting together this season, it is important to me that the works have the sweeping theatricality and wide range of voices that Berkeley Rep is known for. I want to include artists who think of our Theatre as their creative home, as well as to introduce new storytellers to our audience. These four shows (with more to come very soon!) bring together artists whose voices will be fantastic discoveries for Bay Area theatregoers, like the brilliant and hilarious Jocelyn Bioh, and Francis Turnly, whose work will be seen in the U.S. for the first time with The Great Wave, alongside renowned artists including John Logan, Michael Mayer, The Avett Brothers, and the mad genius of Culture Clash. I can’t wait to begin the conversations with our audience that these artists and their work will launch.”

THE 2019-20 SEASON

In a Japanese coastal town in 1979, teenage sisters Hanako and Reiko run onto the beach during a tremendous storm on a dare. Hanako is tragically swept out to sea, while Reiko survives – but recalls seeing three mysterious men on the shoreline. The authorities determine that Hanako has drowned, but her mother insists that her missing daughter is still alive. Spanning over 20 years and the two vastly different nations of Japan and North Korea, The Great Wave by Francis Turnly is at once a riveting geopolitical thriller and a powerful story of the unshakable bonds between a mother, a daughter, and a sister who refuse to give up hope. American premiere starts fall 2019.

Paulina, the reigning queen bee at Ghana’s most exclusive boarding school, has her sights set on the Miss Universe pageant and the glamorous life that’s sure to follow. But her plans and even her very reputation are shaken up when Ericka, a new student who’s strikingly beautiful and talented, captures the attention of the pageant recruiter — and Paulina’s hive-minded friends. Winner of the 2018 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play and the Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award, School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play by Jocelyn Bioh is a biting comedy that tackles the universal issues of beauty and self-worth that face teenage girls across the globe. Starts spring 2020.

The missionaries of mayhem are back with their unique, badass brand of Chicano satire in Culture Clash (Still) in AmeriCCA! Born here in the Bay and Los Angeles-based, Culture Clash first brought their dangerous and subversive version of documentary theatre to Berkeley audiences with Culture Clash in AmeriCCA, gleefully skewering American culture through the lens of the Latino experience. In this
powerful, pointed, and downright hilarious update directed by Lisa Peterson, they turn their razor-sharp wit to everything from pussy hats to MAGA caps, laying down outrageous, biting, and thought-provoking monologues and sketch comedy about the immigrant experience in America right now. Starts spring 2020.

Multiple Grammy Award nominee The Avett Brothers, hailed as “America’s biggest roots band” by Rolling Stone, bring their signature blend of folk and rock ‘n roll attitude to the theatrical stage with Swept Away, a world premiere musical inspired by their 2004 album Mignonette and their vast body of music. The band joins forces with Tony Award-winning stage and screen writer John Logan (Red, Broadway’s Moulin Rouge!, Skyfall, Gladiator) and Tony Award-winning director Michael Mayer (American Idiot, Spring Awakening, Hedwig and the Angry Inch). It’s 1888, off the coast of New Bedford, MA. When a violent storm sinks their whaling ship, the four surviving souls — a young man in search of adventure, his older brother who has sworn to protect him, a captain at the end of a long career at sea, and a worldly first mate who has fallen from grace — each face a reckoning: How far will I go to stay alive? And can I live with the consequences? Starts summer 2020.

Subscribers to Berkeley Rep get the best seats for these shows at the consistently lowest prices. The 5-play Main Season package guarantees tickets to The Great Wave, School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play, Culture Clash (Still) in America, and two yet-to-be announced shows. Step up to the 7-play Full Season to include Swept Away and the third yet-to-be announced show as part of your package. In addition to significant savings, subscribers receive valuable advantages such as the ability to reschedule performances for free, discounts when purchasing tickets for friends, and the opportunity to secure seats before the general public for special events.

Full (7-play) and Main (5-play) season ticket packages start as low as $170 (7-play Full Season packages range from $189 to $623; 5-play Main Season packages range from $170 to $445). Additional subscription discounts for senior citizens, pre-K–12 educators, and patrons under age 35 make the cost of discounted packages begin at $85. Ticket packages are available starting April 3. “Choose your own” packages of three or more shows will be available once all seven season shows are announced.

For the 2019-20 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes BART, Peet’s Coffee, and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to have Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, Michael and Sue Steinberg, Jack and Betty Schafer, and The Strauch Kulhanjian Family on board as season sponsors.

“Wells Fargo is thrilled to support Berkeley Repertory Theatre, whose dedication to artistic excellence and community engagement makes such a meaningful impact on the lives of so many Bay Area residents,” says Denise Miles, Senior Vice President, Corporate Responsibility and Community Relations. “This will be our fourteenth year supporting the award-winning theatre as a season sponsor. We value Berkeley Rep’s commitment to expanding a community of theatre lovers, mentorship to the youth, and core values. The Theatre has tremendous reach through their workshops and has fostered the creative potential of hundreds of youth and teens. We look forward to this season’s continued success.”

“We’re proud of our longtime support of Berkeley Repertory Theatre and are excited for the upcoming season,” said Casey Keller, Chief Executive Officer, Peet’s Coffee. “Our founder, Alfred Peet, firmly believed in the importance of investing in his local community. We uphold that commitment today through art endowments to our neighbors at Berkeley Rep.”

ABOUT BERKELEY REP
Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its School of Theatre
engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep’s bustling facilities – which also include the 400-seat Peet’s Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. Be a Rep. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org.

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2019-20 SEASON AT A GLANCE

The Great Wave
By Francis Turnly
American premiere
Main Season ● Roda Theatre
Fall 2019

Culture Clash (Still) in America
Written and performed by Culture Clash
Richard Montoya, Ricardo Salinas, and Herbert Siguenza
Directed by Lisa Peterson
Main Season ● Peet’s Theatre
Spring 2020

School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play
By Jocelyn Bioh
Main Season ● Roda Theatre
Spring 2020

Swept Away
Book by John Logan
Music and lyrics by The Avett Brothers
Music arrangements and orchestrations by Chris Miller and Brian Usifer
Directed by Michael Mayer
World premiere
Limited Season ● Peet’s Theatre
Summer 2020

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