BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2021 SEASON
Seven shows include three world premieres

Subscription package sales begin May 28

**Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer addresses audiences in new video**

May 28, 2020 — Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s **Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer** today revealed all seven productions for the 2021 subscription season. The shows announced display the depth and range the Tony Award-winning theatre is known for. They include the West Coast premiere and season opener *Sanctuary City* by Martyna Majok; the world premiere musical *Goddess* by Saheem Ali, Michael Thurber, and Jocelyn Bioh; the world premiere musical *Swept Away* with book by John Logan, music and lyrics by The Avett Brothers, and directed by Michael Mayer; Lauren Yee’s *Cambodian Rock Band*; the world premiere of *the ripple, the wave that carried me home* by Christina Anderson, commissioned by Berkeley Rep; and Charles L. Mee’s *Wintertime*, directed by Les Waters. Berkeley Rep is also in discussions to include the West Coast premiere of *Octet* by three-time Tony Award nominee Dave Malloy in its 2021 subscription season.

“I feel incredibly grateful at this moment to be able to look toward the future, and to plan for a time when Berkeley Rep will once again be a place where we will gather,” says Pfaelzer. “The plays and musicals in this upcoming season include stories of lovers, of activists, of dreamers, of sacrifice, and of hope. I long to be back in the theatre, as soon as it is safe for our audience, artists, and staff to re-inhabit this vital place of joy, inspiration, empathy, and community.”

“The artists who will create these seven productions are approaching theatrical storytelling in such varied ways,” Pfaelzer continues. “I’m particularly proud to see so many projects and artists who have been supported in The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work now represented on our stages. Lauren Yee developed *Cambodian Rock Band* in our Ground Floor Summer Lab several years ago, and I am delighted to now be able to share this wild ride with our audience. We also look forward to the chance to welcome back Dave Malloy, another Ground Floor veteran, with his beautifully innovative *Octet*, whose themes of community and isolation speak so perfectly to this moment. Christina Anderson’s exquisite play, *the ripple, the wave that carried me home*, was commissioned by Berkeley Rep and workshopped here. It is a thrill to welcome Jocelyn Bioh back this season with the world premiere of *Goddess*, her musical collaboration with Saheem Ali and Michael Thurber. I am honored to share Martyna Majok’s lyrical, devastating *Sanctuary City* with our community. Playwright Charles L. Mee and director Les Waters have brought such joy to our audiences with their previous collaborations, and *Wintertime* is a delicious, passionate, and totally theatrical romp. And, when it became clear that we could not open the world premiere of *Swept Away* in June 2020 as we previously planned, we worked with the creative team and cast to find dates they could all join us next spring. We simply did not want to lose this beautiful, meaningful musical — and now we are presenting its world premiere in June 2021.”

Pfaelzer shares more of her thoughts in this season launch video.

“The launch of our 2021 season is a promise to our patrons that we will be back and we will reopen when it is deemed safe to reopen,” says Managing Director Susie Medak. “It also
signals our investment in the future — a return to normalcy, and the future of Berkeley Rep. At the same time, the safety and well-being of our audiences, our artists, and staff is top of mind. If it is not safe, we’ll move our dates.”

THE 2021 SEASON

In Sanctuary City two young DREAMers fight like hell to establish a place for themselves in America, the only country they know as home. Pulitzer Prize winner Martyna Majok brings us an urgent story about the power of perseverance, the promise of safety, and the question of who is entitled to pursue life, liberty, and happiness.
Performances begin late winter 2021

Berkeley Rep welcomes back playwright Charles L. Mee and director Les Waters for Wintertime. Jonathan brings Ariel to his family’s summer house in the winter woods and plans to propose. Then his mother Maria arrives with her lover Francois, and his father Frank shows up with his lover Edmund — and soon nothing goes as planned. This exhilarating rollercoaster of a play whisks us up the peaks of romance, then down to the depths of jealous despair, never letting us forget that love, like life, is always in motion.
Performances begin late winter 2021

Three-time Tony Award nominee Dave Malloy (Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812) makes his Berkeley Rep debut with his latest off-Broadway hit, Octet. Eight internet addicts gather IRL to share their stories via a transcendent score for an a cappella chamber choir and an original libretto inspired by online comment boards, scientific debates, religious texts, and Sufi poetry. More than a takedown of our smartphone addictions, Octet is a sublime and revelatory experience that asks how we can find ways to be truly present with each other.
Performances begin spring 2021

Cambodian Rock Band thrilled audiences across the country and off Broadway and now comes to Berkeley Rep! In this darkly funny, electric new play with music, a young woman attempts to piece together her family history and bring a Khmer Rouge war criminal to justice 30 years after her father fled Cambodia. With a live band playing contemporary Dengue Fever hits and classic Cambodian oldies, this thrilling story toggles back and forth in time as father and daughter face the music of the past. San Francisco-born, Steinberg Award-winning playwright Lauren Yee receives her Berkeley Rep debut with Cambodian Rock Band, which was developed in our Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab.
Performances begin spring 2021

Tony Award-winning director Michael Mayer (Spring Awakening, Hedwig and the Angry Inch) blew the roof off Berkeley Rep in 2009 with Green Day’s American Idiot. Now he returns with a captivating world premiere musical Swept Away, this time featuring a book by Tony Award-winning stage and screen writer John Logan (Red, Broadway’s Moulin Rouge!, Skyfall, Gladiator), and music and lyrics by “America’s biggest roots band” (Rolling Stone) and multiple Grammy Award nominee The Avett Brothers. Originally scheduled for our 2019-20 season, Swept Away was necessarily postponed. Berkeley Rep is thrilled that the creative team along with Tony Award-winning actor John Gallagher, Jr. and Tony Award nominee actor Stark Sands, will all be able to join the world premiere production next spring.
Performances begin late spring 2021

In the world premiere of the ripple, the wave that carried me home, commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in our Ground Floor, Christina Anderson exquisitely evokes a story about justice, legacy, memory, and the ultimate challenge of forgiveness. Janice’s parents are prominent activists fighting for the integration of public swimming pools in 1960s Kansas. As injustice penetrates the warm bubble of her childhood, Janice grows apart from her family and
starts a new life far away. When she receives a call asking her to speak at a ceremony honoring her father, she must decide whether she’s ready to reckon with her political inheritance and a past she has tried to forget.

Performances begin early fall 2021

Berkeley Rep presents the world premiere musical Goddess, with a book by award-winning playwright Jocelyn Bioh (School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play), a score by composer Michael Thurber, and conceived by director Saheem Ali. A young man returns home to the coastal city of Mombasa, Kenya to marry his fiancée and step into his family’s political dynasty. But when he visits Moto Moto — a steamy afro-jazz club and the stomping ground of his youth — he finds himself drawn to a mysterious new singer. Inspired by the myth of Marimba, who created beautiful songs from her heartbreak, Goddess is infused with contemporary romance, ancient magic, and the irresistible vibes of African, jazz, and R&B music.

Performances begin fall 2021

Subscribers to Berkeley Rep get the best seats for these shows at the consistently lowest prices. In addition to our classic full season subscription package, Rep 7-Play, Berkeley Rep is introducing two new packages, Rep-Flex and Rep-Passport, to allow more people to enjoy some of the perks of a subscription but in more flexible and affordable combinations. Rep 7-Play guarantees tickets to all seven 2021 season shows and offers the biggest discounts and the best seats. Rep-Flex guarantees four tickets to be used on any of the seven 2021 season shows, offering the most flexibility and priority booking ahead of the general public. Rep-Passport is an affordable pay-as-you-go package, offering access to one discounted ticket per 2021 season show, and priority booking ahead of the general public. In addition to significant savings over single ticket prices, all Berkeley Rep subscribers receive valuable advantages such as the ability to reschedule performances for free, discounts to Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, and more.

Rep 7-Play season ticket packages start as low as $196. Additional subscription discounts for senior citizens, pre-K–12 educators, and patrons under age 35 make the cost of Rep 7-Play packages as low as $122.50. Rep-Flex is $300 for All Access Flex (any performance) or $240 for Weekday Flex (Tue-Fri), and Rep-Passport is $68. Ticket packages are available starting May 28.

For the 2021 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes the generous support of BART and Peet’s Coffee, Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to have Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, Jack and Betty Schafer, and The Strauch Kulhanjian Family on board as season sponsors.

“It has been incredible supporting Berkeley Repertory Theatre and we are excited for the upcoming season,” said Erica Brown, Retail President, Peet’s Coffee. “Our founder, Alfred Peet, believed in creating lasting impact in the community where his coffee was served. Our contribution to Berkeley Rep honors that commitment and fosters a new generation of artists.”

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 six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. The Berkeley Rep 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.

ABOUT THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP’S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK
As the umbrella for all new play activity at Berkeley Rep, The Ground Floor is a bold initiative designed to raise the bar on the Tony Award–winning nonprofit’s already successful record of artistic innovation. Think of it as an incubator for theatrical startups or a top-notch R&D facility for artists. For more information on the program and the artists supported, and for future announcements or opportunities to interact, visit berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor.

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2021 SEASON AT A GLANCE

Sanctuary City
By Martyna Majok
West Coast premiere
Starts late winter 2021

Wintertime
By Charles L. Mee
Directed by Les Waters
Starts late winter 2021

Octet
A Chamber Choir Musical
By Dave Malloy
Directed by Annie Tippe
West Coast premiere
Starts spring 2021

Cambodian Rock Band
Written by Lauren Yee
Featuring songs by Dengue Fever
Directed by Chay Yew
A Signature Theatre Production
Starts spring 2021

Swept Away
Book by John Logan
Music and lyrics by The Avett Brothers
Music arrangements and orchestrations by Chris Miller and Brian Usifer
Choreography by David Neumann
Directed by Michael Mayer
World premiere
Starts late spring 2021
Produced by special arrangement with Matthew Masten, Sean Hudock, and MWM Live

cambodian rock band
By Lauren Yee
Featuring songs by Dengue Fever
Directed by Chay Yew
A Signature Theatre Production
Starts spring 2021

the ripple, the wave that carried me home
By Christina Anderson
World premiere
Starts early fall 2021

Goddess
Conceived by Saheem Ali
Music and lyrics by Michael Thurber
Book by Jocelyn Bioh
Additional material by Mkhululi Z. Mabija
Directed by Saheem Ali
World premiere
Starts fall 2021

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