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making the real a reality

What makes a work of art original? What gives us the feeling that we are in the presence of a fresh voice, a new talent, a singular mind? Ironically, it is not just the ability of a particular artist to “invent” a new form or express ideas and emotions that have been hitherto unspoken. A new voice first gathers its inspiration from a variety of inherited techniques and ideas, from the legacies and mythologies of the past, from the accumulation of history. What seems original is, upon closer examination, a creative summation of everything leading up to a particular moment in time, integrated into a vision of what is occurring in the here and now and dynamically catapulted into the future.

Stew is an artist who dares to be original. A lifelong musician with a thriving international following, he brings to this, his first theatrical endeavor, the full measure of his musical experience, his love of all knowledge and his desire to respond spontaneously to whatever he is currently thinking and feeling. He is possessed of an overriding need to get down to “the really real,” be it utterly sublime or terrifically painful. Passing Strange is his chronicle of one man’s artistic journey, a search for authenticity, for both historical truth and self-knowledge seen through the hazy prism of a single life.

And, in the immortal words of the Grateful Dead, what a long, strange trip it is: from the suburban isolation of Southern California to the fertile drug dens of Amsterdam to the intellectual pyrotechnics of Berlin...it’s a wild ride cloaked in humor, intelligence and a kick-ass score. It’s a story of passion, stamina and idealism, mixed with a full dose of delusion, narcissism and weakness. A coming-of-age story in the throes of middle-age, a coming-home story when one has no home, a treatise on race while defying its limitations, Passing Strange ends up taking everyone — its characters, its players and its audience — to the psychic cleaners.

Collaborating with Stew in this rollicking adventure is his co-conspirator and co-composer, Heidi Rodewald, bassist extraordinaire. Director Annie Dorsen has nurtured this project from its inception and has played a seminal role in all aspects of its realization. Her team of designers, musicians and actors have all demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the project. Last but not least, we share our excitement and our resources with our good friends and co-producers at The Public Theater in New York (where this show is headed after it closes here). The Public was the first theatre to recognize the full potential of these original voices, and we are grateful that they invited us to participate as equal partners in this play’s development.

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Printed by Times Litho
co-pro: a way to grow a show
creating new work by building relationships nationwide

When *Passing Strange* closes here in Berkeley, all the sets, costumes and equipment—along with reams of notes about the show—will be carefully packed for shipping. And when that shipping container is opened a few days later at The Public Theater in New York City, the production will begin the next leg of its journey.

As you’ll notice when you turn to the title page for tonight’s show, Berkeley Rep and The Public are partnering to co-produce this production. In fact, this is one of three co-productions Berkeley Rep is participating in this fall. Before coming to Berkeley, *Mother Courage* had an initial run this summer at La Jolla Playhouse, and Tony is in La Jolla right now directing rehearsals of *Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell*, which premiered here in April and which opens this month in La Jolla.

Tony and I are often asked what constitutes a co-production. The *what* is easy; the *how* is more complicated. A co-production is a production shared, in whole or in part, with another theatre. Often that means that both theatres participate in selecting the artistic team and the cast. While staff members of both theatres share the responsibility for bringing a production to fruition, one theatre usually takes on the lion’s share of the work. Although the heavy lifting falls to the originating theatre, the production invariably arrives at its next stop in need of alterations and repairs, and often with an artistic team eager to improve upon their original choices. By sharing the financial burden for at least one production each season, as well as the construction and rehearsal time for that show, we bring you the best possible art—while wisely managing our expenses and maximizing the time of our hard-working staff.

These collaborations are not exclusive to Berkeley Rep. It has become common throughout the country to share costs on some shows, with the savings allowing theatres to produce other, large-scale work. New plays are probably the best beneficiaries of this practice. A co-production guarantees a new show a second run, ensuring that the writer and director have an opportunity to make improvements in a piece that may give it “legs” in the future. The opportunity to perfect a production may be the greatest value of co-producing, for both artists and for audiences.

There is one more benefit, and it serves theatre-lovers on both sides of the curtain. When we share productions, we work with our colleagues at different theatres and observe other approaches to our art form. Our staff is inspired and challenged by the teams at other theatres; they share ideas and information; they become familiar with the culture of different companies. These co-productions contribute to the vitality of a national theatre community that is remarkably, and I think uniquely, collaborative.

So when you discover that Berkeley Rep is co-producing a play, it may mean you are seeing a piece that originated here and that will travel elsewhere—as with *Passing Strange* and *Zorro in Hell*. Conversely, you may be seeing a new run of a play that we’ve helped to originate in another community—as with *Mother Courage*. Regardless of where each show began, Berkeley Rep takes full responsibility for—and great pride in—all the work that appears on our stage. Our goal is always to bring you work of the highest quality.

All the best,

Susie Medak
Managing Director
calendar

october
18 Passing Strange sneak peek & corporate partner reception, 6pm
19 Passing Strange previews begin, 8pm
20 Passing Strange Target® Teen Night, 6:30pm*
22 Mother Courage final performance, 7pm
24 Passing Strange docent presentations begin, each Tue 7pm
25 Passing Strange opens, 8pm
26 Passing Strange night/OUT LGBT post-show party

november
4 Ghostlight Luncheon Series: Theatre R&D*
5 Target® Family Series, 11am*
7 Teen Council meeting, 5pm*
9 Passing Strange post-show discussion
24 Passing Strange post-show discussion
25 All Wear Bowlers previews begin, 8pm
28 All Wear Bowlers docent presentations begin, each Tue 7pm
29 All Wear Bowlers opens, 8pm

december
1 All Wear Bowlers Target® Teen Night, 6:30pm*
3 Target® Family Series, 11am*
3 Passing Strange final performance, 7pm
5 Teen Council meeting, 5pm*
17 Teen Theatre Conference*

* Berkeley Rep School of Theatre
† Berkeley Rep donor event

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writing the future

Can you imagine graduating from high school and landing a Berkeley Rep commission to write a new play? That’s exactly what happened to Gabe Crane, who found the experience was “a wonderful opportunity to develop as a writer” and gave him “a strong injection of confidence to make a profession of both playwriting and larger creative pursuits.”

Berkeley Rep is stepping up its new play development program and invites patrons like you to get involved. At the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, teens write, direct, design, perform and produce original plays through the annual Target® Teen One Act Festival. And last season, Berkeley Rep launched a monthly playwriting group for high school students, along with a special playwriting track in the Summer Theatre Intensive program and teen playwriting workshops year-long at the School.

Playwriting classes for adults have also been expanded. They include “Vision and Revision,” a recent series taught by Berkeley Rep Dramaturg Madeleine Oldham, and a special summer section of the adult playwriting class which offers staged readings of students’ completed plays.

Of course, the Theatre continues to commission and develop new work for its mainstage seasons by some of the most talented artists of our day, such as rising star (and Berkeley native) Itamar Moses. Following a recent workshop of his play about race dynamics at Berkeley High, Itamar remarked that “the opportunity to develop a play in a safe artistic environment creates more room for risk and play—the things that help scripts get better—and eliminates a lot of the terror and self-doubt.”

Berkeley Rep is deepening its relationship with artists and providing them with the tools to realize new plays—making a commitment to develop at least five plays a year, and offer full-scale production of as many works as possible. Now is the time to say yes! to producing ambitious, intelligent, provocative and courageous new work. And artists tremendously appreciate it. Current playwright-under-commission and recent MacArthur Genius Grant-winner Sarah Ruhl exclaims, “I can’t think of anyone I would rather be in the room with working on a new play.”

Berkeley Rep is grateful that our many patrons and donors share a passion for challenging theatre and believe in the importance of supporting new, emerging and established artists. Now, more than ever, Berkeley Rep needs your help to raise the bar and embrace its role as a national leader in new play development. Supporting Berkeley Rep’s new plays is just one way that you can help sustain the legacy of American theatre. For more information, please contact Sara Fousekis, director of development, campaign at 510.647.2902.

don’t hang up—it’s just us!

You may get a call soon from one of our in-house callers, asking you to participate in our Annual Fund. Only 55% of our income is from ticket sales—we rely on our generous community to make up the rest. Talk to one of our friendly callers to find out how you can get a Glass Menagerie script, signed by Rita Moreno—and enjoy other unique benefits, too!

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Even when the curtain falls on the final bow of a production, an actor’s work is not complete. Make-up and costumes removed, the actor returns to the classroom to further their training and growth as an artist.

It’s a lesson the children from last season’s productions of *Brundibar* and *Our Town* have already learned. This past summer, nearly a third returned to Berkeley Rep to participate in our Summer Theatre Intensive, where students spent four weeks in technique classes which culminated in a performance of original work on the Thrust Stage.

By continuing to train, young actors get to reflect and build upon the lessons learned in a professional production—something Berkeley Rep’s casting director, Amy Potozkin, believes is vital. “Acting is an ongoing process,” she says, adding “it’s important to stretch yourself, to develop your instrument and keep growing and learning no matter how far you’ve already come.”

“At Berkeley Rep, I’m not only a performer, I’m a student,” says Matia Emsellem, a member of *Brundibar*’s student ensemble. At the School of Theatre Summer Intensive, she says, “we’re supposed to make mistakes... and get help.” And, the rigorous curriculum offers additional incentive—classes like stage combat, hip-hop dance and acting taught new skills to the 13-year-old, combining the experience of performing on stage with the essential process of continued training.

Denise Pinkston, mother of School of Theatre student and *Brundibar* cast member Sophia Sinsheimer, expresses her gratitude to Berkeley Rep “for providing my daughter with these transformative theatrical learning experiences. I can think of no greater gift to aspiring young artists than to let them explore the theatre world and learn about themselves in the process.”

As Jacob Cohen, one of six children who appeared in *Our Town*, says it, his experience at Berkeley Rep reminds him “to be open to everything: as soon as you say no to one thing you’re placing restrictions on yourself—and on everything you could be.”

The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre offers classes for all ages and interests. For more information on classes for you or your family, visit berkeleyrep.org/school. Winter classes begin January 8, 2007.
Was the eldest in my family.
Grew up very happy.
Swam, skied, played tennis.
Not a lot of girls did that back then.
Love caviar. Love it, love it, love it.
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a so big to run around
Why did you want to write a play?

I didn’t. Or, at least, I had no interest in writing a play where people would come and go and speak of Michelangelo, with entrances and exits and plot twists and such. I couldn’t have written that play even if I’d wanted to, because I don’t know how to write plays. What I wanted was to make something that took the electricity of a rock show and merged it with the rock and roll potential that exists within theatre. And by “rock show,” I don’t mean it in the “rockin’ Broadway musical” sense wherein unseen, uninspired pit musicians plow through “upbeat numbers” that someone with no genuine relationship to rock music wrote.

Annie [Dorsen] said it best: “When you hit a note on a guitar, it’s really the note...it’s not a metaphor.” I’m probably paraphrasing her badly, but that’s the best definition of rock and roll I’ve ever heard. We want to take the honesty of a club show, where the drummer is hung over and the bass player is pissed off and the singer has letters from the collection agency in his pocket, but there they are...serving you in a naked, honest and slightly dangerous way. Because, no matter how many tech rehearsals we do, this band is gonna be live and dangerous every night.

Having never been interested in theatre and having only seen a small handful of plays in my 45 years, before I got started I read some stuff about the old Greek play competitions. I also read a little bit about the vibe at [Shakespeare’s] Old Globe and — although I’m well out of my league here in commenting — it seems like those worlds were far more rock-and-roll than the stuffed-shirt vibe that scares most people away from theatre. Think about it: people
standing around consuming alcohol, watching (and sometimes yelling at) men onstage dressed up as women. And the joint was in a sketchy neighborhood? Wait a minute, I recognize that dive! I've been playing there my entire life!

**How'd you settle on the title Passing Strange?**

Here's my version of events: I opened a comic book version of *Othello* that Maria Goyanes at The Public Theater handed me, and I opened it to the passage where Othello talks about how he wooed Desdemona. It moved me as close to tears as anything I'd ever read in my life. In that scene, Othello reminded me of a guy in a rock band who got the girl by spinning his rock-and-roll war stories. I thought “that’s what the Youth in *Passing Strange* would do when he meets all these European girls.” He’d tell them a stack of tales from a land they’d never been to, and—like all storytellers—he’d, uh, embellish just a bit.

Obviously, the term “passing” has deep historical meaning for any African American my age or older. My grandmother was light enough to pass. But the kid in this play discovers there’s more to passing than just black folks passing for white. The term “passing” also has to do with time passing, of course.

**How is writing a play like making an album or writing a song? What’s the biggest difference?**

The best rock bands, in my view, tend to be very democratic. While each member may have a “role,” those roles tend to happily overlap and end up merging into an organic whole. Bands are essentially families that create. And so the creative family behind this play has operated more like a rock band than a team with rigidly defined duties.

For instance, Annie’s role in the creation of this piece was far beyond “directororial” or “dramaturgical.” She often reminded me of a good old-fashioned record producer who combines fundamental aesthetic input with a deep knowledge of the artist’s strengths. Also, she was wise enough to know that creating a fresh working model around the piece, our personalities and our respective sleeping habits would be better than trying to turn Heidi and me into “show folk” overnight.

Throughout this play’s development, the feeling has never left me that Heidi and I were still just writing one big song. For us, this play is a song big enough for people to run around in.

Every page of the script was subjected to the creative team’s input and nothing was considered precious or sacred—unless we all loved it! Some of the most important scenes, in fact, grew out of discussions Annie and I’d had about what needed to happen. And when there’s a major disagreement that Annie, Heidi and myself can’t get our heads around, [Jon] Spurney is called to weigh in.

Writing for actors’ voices is a bigger joy than writing for inanimate instruments because actors are instruments with minds. Writing for actors is turning into a terrible addiction.

**Would you talk a little bit about your relationship with language—have you always had such a way with it?**

Most of my approach to language probably comes from me, as a kid, mocking the crazy friends of my father. These were house painters, fry cooks and carpenters who seemed as low-brow as chitlins. And then suddenly, after the third beer, they’d recite Poe or Eliot word for word. That’s cuz they grew up in the age where you had to memorize poetry in elementary school. The first time I heard Eliot’s words was out of the mouth of a man in paint-splattered overalls. I was hooked. Eliot became my man. He was making music. I could bathe in the Four Quartets as a youth without having the foggiest notion what he was on about cuz it was just like Bach or Coltrane—it was music. The “meaning” behind Coltrane and Bach will hit you later, after much listening, but the sound hits you immediately. Besides, sound is meaning.

**What are you reading now?**

I’m really a nonfiction person. Newspapers. *New Yorker* profiles of the living and dead (the dead seem more interesting somehow). Re-reading a Baldwin biography (the patron saint of this play). But embarrassingly enough, I’ve started reading plays for the first time in my life. Albee is really rather punk rock in my view—acidic, smart-ass. The treble is turned way up in his work.

**Whom do you admire and why?**

Dylan, cuz he’s older than rope and still serving musical subpoenas. I think, on principle, I like anyone over forty still doing their artistic thing. Of course, I’m biased, but I think Art begins at 40. Americans are so terrified of being old that they don’t wanna claim that reality. The young, exciting upstart with no scars reminds us of a time when we never had to think about our donut intake or death. She reminds us of a time when we didn’t have to
think about consequences. As a country, we crave Art which infantilizes us because we've never been equipped psychologically to deal with the darkness. Dylan has never once asked us to look away from the darkness of consequences.

I also like Gore Vidal cuz he's like "Fuck you—I haven't mellowed. I'm still pissed and I'm more articulate than you and I'm 200 years old and did I say 'fuck you' yet?"

You've worked with Heidi Rodewald for a long time. Can you say a little bit about the nature of that collaboration?

Heidi wrote half of the music in Passing Strange. We are so close that we're working even when we don't look like we are. Our lives are a collaborative art project. We share the same approach to many things. Some years ago, when she had already been playing in the band and arranging and producing our records with me, I said "Hey, I need you to write some music for the next record," and she quietly went and wrote two utterly standout tracks. I like that. I've been in tons of bands where members beg to have a song on the album just for the sake of having one. Like they feel they deserve it. She waits till she's asked and then calmly serves you the subpoena and you're like, "Whoa!" I also have to say (and I think it's cuz I grew up around strong women) that I like collaborating with women. I knew when we started this play that I would want Heidi to write half of the music. I think the play needed another strong musical voice and, sexist-new-age-goofy as this may sound, I think we do a yin-yang thing musically.

How do you write songs? Do you have a usual process, like writing music first, then the lyrics, or vice versa? Do you like to write in a particular space or at a particular time?

I write in my head, music and lyrics together—mostly when I'm on the bus. The first time I hear the new song is when I'm teaching it to the band. Heidi only writes when I'm out of the house—i.e., out of her hair. So, while I'm writing on the bus, she's writing at home.

If you could only listen to five albums for the rest of your life, what would they be?

One recording of Bach's fugues, a late-period Coltrane session, a complete recording of Wagner's Ring Cycle, all Charlie Patton's stuff and either Hex Induction Hour or Grotesque by The Fall.

Was your family supportive of your desire to be a musician?

Yes, because they thought I'd eventually get over it and become a lawyer.

Would you call yourself a grown-up, still a kid, or somewhere in between?

I'm trying to grow up. It's hard. Being an artist or an athlete is the easiest way to remain infantilized. The same things adults were yelling at you for doing at 15, they end up applauding you for at 45. Art is really a playground. It's so easy to forget that art isn't life when you're dedicating your life to it.

You seem to write a lot about place in your work. How does the experience of your surroundings play into your creative mind?

For me, some chords actually mean Los Angeles. Just as some mean Berlin. Music and place are indistinguishable. I'd like to say I turn places into songs in order to understand them better. But sometimes I think I turn places into songs in order to misunderstand them better.

Have you experienced any communication gaps between music people and theatre people in this process?

I think theatre people may have experienced communication gaps with me far more than I've experienced gaps with them. They can't use terms like "rising drama" and "second act climax" or whatever because I don't know what those terms mean. Annie is cool enough to be conversant in the language of both theatre and rock and roll, so with us it's never been a problem.

What's next for you, after the run at The Public?

I wanna take everything we've learned here back to the nightclubs and cabarets we work in. I have this insane idea of forming a company of musicians and actors who'd put on crazy shows that could work in rock clubs and small theatres. Also, I'll be shooting a small film from a script Heidi and I wrote.

Performing in the same space for a month, do you think you're going to miss the variety of being on tour?

You mean the chaos of being on tour? Where every night is a different sound, lighting and load-in nightmare? Heidi and I won't be missing that any time soon. This consistency/stability that the theatre environment provides will allow us to concentrate on more important things: like keeping the show fresh and wild.
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there will be a 15-minute intermission

Passing Strange was developed with the help of the Sundance Theatre Lab, the Stanford Institute for Creativity, the Multi-Arts Production Fund—a program of Creative Capital supported by The Rockefeller Foundation—and the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation.

Funded in part through Meet the Composer’s Creative Connections program.

*Member, Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States
de’adre aziza
(Edwina/Mariana/Ensemble) studied drama at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. Since her graduation, she has worked with the Classical Theatre of Harlem (2004/05 season) and appeared on Law and Order: SVU and Sex and the City. Additionally, she has won several jazz vocal competitions and recorded jazz and hip-hop music for top New York radio stations. De’Adre has performed with jazz legend Roy Ayers, Malcolm-Jamal Warner and Nick Rolfe, and will unveil her own CD in 2007. She thanks Donna, Chipego, Sly and Leo for their continued love and support, and the Creator for Her eternal blessings. To learn more about de’Adre, please visit www.myspace.com/deadreaziza.

daniel breaker
(Youth) is proud to make his Berkeley Rep debut. His New York credits include Lynn Nottage’s Fabulation at Playwrights Horizons, Lisa Kron’s Well on Broadway and the title role in Pericles with Red Bull Theatre at The Culture Project. Daniel was nominated for the Helen Hayes Award for his portrayals of Domino in The Comedy of Errors and Ariel in The Tempest, both with The Shakespeare Theatre. His other productions include Lee Blessing’s Black Sheep, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, H.M.S. Pinafore, The Comedy of Errors, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, and The People’s Temple. He recently understudied the Broadway production of Well. His off-Broadway credits include American Maul, Bright Ideas, Henry V, Up Jumped Springtime and Wet. Regionally, Colman has appeared at A.C.T., Cal Shakes, The Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, Geva Theatre, Indian Repertory Theatre, New York Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Rep and TheatreWorks. Colman’s film and television credits include appearances in Around the Fire, Freedomland, King of the Bingo Game, Kung Phooey, True Crime and multiple appearances on Nash Bridges and the Law and Order series. Recently, he was an artist-in-residence at the New York Theater Workshop while developing his solo play A Boy and His Soul, which premiered last season at Thick Description. With all his love, Colman dedicates his work to the memory of his mom and pop.

eisa davis
(Mother) is a proud native of Berkeley now living in Brooklyn. Locally, she has performed her play Angela’s Mixtape and her original music at La Peña. Next year, her award-winning play Bulrush will be produced at Shotgun Players. Eisa’s stage credits include performances in Belize, Blues for an Alabama Sky, Fabulation, Intimate Apparel, June and Jean in Concert, The Valley Song and Violet Hour. Her screen credits include The Architect, Brass Tacks, Confess, Cosby, Law and Order, Robot Stories and The Wire. Eisa has performed her music on Showtime’s Soul Food and at Joe’s Pub, BAMCafé, the Whitney Museum and Santa Monica’s Temple Bar. Eisa is also a member playwright of New Dramatists and a graduate of Harvard University and the Actors Studio/New School. Shout-outs to Stew, Tony, Oskar, Bill, YMP, BHS and Mom.

colman domingo
(Franklin/Venus/Ensemble) is proud to have appeared at Berkeley Rep in Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Journey to the West and The People’s Temple. He recently understudied the Broadway production of Well. His off-Broadway credits include American Maul, Bright Ideas, Henry V, Up Jumped Springtime and Wet. Regionally, Colman has appeared at A.C.T., Cal Shakes, The Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, Geva Theatre, Indian Repertory Theatre, New York Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Rep and TheatreWorks. Colman’s film and television credits include appearances in Around the Fire, Freedomland, King of the Bingo Game, Kung Phooey, True Crime and multiple appearances on Nash Bridges and the Law and Order series. Recently, he was an artist-in-residence at the New York Theater Workshop while developing his solo play A Boy and His Soul, which premiered last season at Thick Description. With all his love, Colman dedicates his work to the memory of his mom and pop.

chad goodridge
(Hugo/Terry/Ensemble) has been with Passing Strange since the Stanford University workshop, and is proud to make his Berkeley Rep debut. His regional credits include Hamlet at Geva Theatre; Love’s Labour’s Lost, Macbeth, Once in a Lifetime and Proof at the Chautauqua Theatre Company; and The Skin of Our Teeth at Williamstown Theatre Festival. His off-Broadway credits include The Debate Over Courtney O’Connell and Home Free! Chad has also appeared on Law & Order: SVU and One Life to Live. Chad holds a B.A. from Dartmouth College. He thanks his family and his tribe.

rebecca naomi jones
(Sherry/Desi/Ensemble) recently completed a short run of the new rock musical Fallen Angel in the New York International Fringe Festival at the Village Theatre. Her previous credits include Caroline, or Change with Tonya Pinkins and Anika Noni Rose at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles and the Curran Theatre in San Francisco, the first national tour of Little Shop of Horrors, the tenth-anniversary world tour and national tour of Rent and How Love is Spelt as part of the Summer Play Festival at the Lion Theatre in New York. Rebecca holds a B.F.A. in drama from the North Carolina School of the Arts. “Many thanks to Jordan Thaler and Heidi Griffiths for ‘getting me’ and also to Nina Shreiber and Angela Wall for getting me out there. For my family.”
 marc doten
(Keyboard) plays bass and writes music for Double Naught Spy Car, which was voted Best Instrumental Band by L.A. Weekly and has opened for Rickie Lee Jones, Pere Ubu, Jonathan Richman, Nancy Sinatra and Brian Wilson. Independently, Marc has played with Josie Cotton, Jessica Harper, King Kukulele, The Negro Problem and The Wondermints, among others. As a record producer, Marc’s credits include two CDs from street blues legend Carlos Guitarlos, and Jazz Baby, a triple-CD collection of children’s classics with performances by Freddie Cole, Dr. John, Taj Mahal, Megan Mullally, Billy Preston, Poncho Sanchez, Cybill Shepherd and Janis Siegel. He’s currently co-producing vocalist/writer Joe Moe’s hyper-eclectic CD with performances from composer Van Dyke Parks and Skinny Puppy front man, Ogre.

russ kleiner
(Percussion) splits his time as a music educator, performer and recording artist with a variety of New York City groups. He has toured nationally with the critically acclaimed funk/jazz quartet Ulu and ten-piece soul band The Square Egg, opening for such acts as Cake, moe. and the Wailers. Russ has played with Greg Gisbert, Kevin Mahogany, Felix Pastorius and Phil Strange, and has appeared at BB King’s, The Blue Note and Iridium Club. He is grateful for the opportunity to take part in Passing Strange.

jon spurney
(Guitar/Keyboard/Co-Musical Director) appeared off Broadway in Hedwig and the Angry Inch and People are Wrong! He has performed and recorded with David Byrne, John Cale, Natalie Merchant, Jewel, Amy Rigby and They Might Be Giants. He also provides live piano accompaniment for silent film screenings at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. He composed and performed the incidental music scores for The Daily Show with Jon Stewart and The Colbert Report on Comedy Central. Jon was awarded a Bronze Lion at the Cannes Film Festival for his commercial scoring work. He lives in Manhattan with his dog, Boner.

heidi rodewald
(Bass/Vocals/Composer/Co-Musical Director) is the lighter half of the multi-disciplinary cabaret ensemble known as Stew. For almost a decade she has been a performer, arranger, producer and composer in both Stew and The Negro Problem, their critically acclaimed pop rock group with the catchy name. With Stew, she co-wrote the screenplay We Can See Today, which was invited to the 2005 Sundance Screenwriters Lab. She recently composed music for downtown legend Karen Kandel’s Portraits: Night and Day. A long time ago, Heidi was a member of Wednesday Week, a seminal ’80s girl group in which her music received regular rotation on MTV. Lately she’s been threatening to release a solo record, but worries about overshadowing Stew.

stew
(Playwright/Lyricist/Composer/Narrator) is the critically acclaimed singer, songwriter, founder and leader of The Negro Problem, a cheerful pop rock combo of note from Los Angeles. The Negro Problem’s albums Joys and Concerns and Post Minstrel Syndrome garnered nationwide acclaim and numerous accolades. Stew and collaborator Heidi Rodewald co-founded the afro-baroque cabaret ensemble known as Stew in 2000. Their album Guest Host was chosen as Album of the Year by Entertainment Weekly. In 2002, Stew released The Naked Dutch Painter.
which again won *Entertainment Weekly*’s album of the year and was described by the *New York Times* as “perhaps the finest collection of songs an American songwriter has come up with this year.” *Passing Strange* appeared at the Sundance Theater Lab in 2004 and returned for an unprecedented second consecutive year. Also, in 2005, Stew participated in the Sundance Director’s Lab to workshop a screenplay written with Rodewald, entitled *We Can See Today*. Stew has been an artist-in-residence at the California Institute of the Arts, and has recently composed — to his daughter’s delight — a song for *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

**annie dorsen**
(Director) directed workshops of *Passing Strange* at The Public Theater, Stanford Institute for the Arts and Sundance Theater Lab. She is the director and author of *Democracy in America*, and her other recent projects include *Antigone Arkhe, The Crazy Girl, Portraits: Night and Day and Somewhere Someplace Else*. Annie also directed the American premieres of *Belgrade Trilogy and Family Stories: Belgrade*. Additionally, she served as director and adaptor for *The Blue Bird* at the Williams and Todd Festival and *The Crazy Locomotive* at the Yale School of Drama. She is the recipient of the Sir John Gielgud Fellowship for Classical Directors from the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SSDC) and both the Boris Sagal and Bill Foeller Fellowships from the Williams and Todd Festival.

**karole armitage**
(Choreographer) is director of the New York-based Armitage Gone! Dance Company. After dancing in Georges Balanchine’s Geneva Ballet (1973–1975) and with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (1976–1981), she developed a unique style which combines contemporary movement trends with classical ballet and modern dance to create a virtuoso, high-velocity, image-driven look that is both exciting and expressive. In Italy, Karole served as director of the 40-member Ballet of Florence (1996–2000) and the Venice Biennale of Contemporary Dance (2001) and worked as resident choreographer for Ballet de Lorraine, France (2000–2005). She has contributed to the repertoires of major dance companies throughout Europe and North America, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Mikhail Baryshnikov’s American Ballet Theatre, Rudolf Nureyev’s Paris Opera, Oregon Ballet Theatre and the ballets of Berlin, Lyon, Monte Carlo, Munich and St. Petersburg. Karole also directs opera, has worked for pop stars Madonna and Michael Jackson and frequently collaborates with artists from other fields such as Jean Paul Gaultier, Jeff Koons, Christian Lacroix, György Ligeti, Brice Marden and David Salle.

**david korins**
(Scenic Designer) is excited to work at Berkeley Rep following last season’s *Finn in the Underworld*. David’s work...
was represented on Broadway this season with Tony Taccone's production of Sarah Jones' *Bridge and Tunnel*. He has been nominated for two Drama Desk Awards and a Lucille Lortel Award, and received the Hewes Design Award for *Blackbird*. His New York credits include *Dog Sees God, Essential Self-Defense, Floyd and Clea, Miss Witherspoon, Oedipus at Palm Springs, Orange Flower Water, Swimming in the Shallows, Thom Pain (based on nothing)* and *Tryst*. Regionally David has worked at the Alley Theatre, A.C.T., Baltimore CenterStage, Huntington Theatre, McCarter Theatre, The Old Globe, Paper Mill Playhouse, Pittsburgh City Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Williamstown Theatre Festival. David was the production designer for Focus Features’ *Blackbird, Winter Passing* with Will Ferrell and Ed Harris, as well as several HBO and E! Entertainment series. David is currently designing a large-scale public garden in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

**annie smart**  
(Costume Designer) is originally from the U.K. Her work has primarily been with new plays, especially those of Caryl Churchill for Joint Stock Theatre, designing sets and costumes for *Fen, Ice Cream and Hot Fudge* and *A Mouthful of Birds*. She designed for the Royal Court Theatre, numerous regional and London companies and the National Theatre (*The Father, Say It with Flowers, Black Snow, The Mountain Giants* and *The Skriker*). In the U.S., she has designed for Arena Stage, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), The Guthrie, Long Wharf, The Public, Steppenwolf and others. Her West Coast productions include *Going to St. Ives, The Importance of Being Earnest, Norah, Sheridan* and *Wintertime* for La Jolla Playhouse; *A Doll's House, Night and Day* and *The Threepenny Opera* for A.C.T.; *Othello and The Tempest* for Cal Shakes; and *Big Love, Fêtes de la Nuit, Finn in the Underworld, Honour, The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer* and *Yellowman* for Berkeley Rep. For TV, she designed the setting for KQED’s *Josh Kornbluth Show*. Annie has served as chair of the master’s program in theatre design at London’s Wimbledon Art School, professor of stage design at U.C. San Diego and costume lecturer at U.C. Berkeley.
kevin adams
(Lighting Designer) has created lighting designs for numerous Broadway shows including Eve Ensler’s The Good Body, John Leguizamo’s Sexaholix, An Almost Holy Picture with Kevin Bacon, A Class Act, Take Me Out and Hedda Gabler. His work off Broadway—which includes the rock musical hits Hedwig and the Angry Inch and Spring Awakening, as well as new work by Eric Bogosian, Richard Greenberg, Charles Mee, Neil Simon and Anna Deavere Smith—has earned him an Obie for Sustained Excellence. Kevin’s designs for opera have been seen at Bard SummerScape, Canadian Opera Company, Glimmerglass Opera, Houston Grand Opera, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, New York City Opera, Tanglewood Opera and Washington National Opera. He has also designed numerous concerts for Sandra Bernhard, the Indigo Girls, Patti Lupone, Audra McDonald and Magnetic Fields’ 69 Love Songs at Lincoln Center.

jake rodriguez
(Sound Designer) has carved out sound and music for A.C.T., Art Street Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Rep, Cal Shakes, Marin Theater Company (MTC) and Shotgun Players. His recent credits include The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, Othello, Salome and The Tempest at Cal Shakes and the world premieres of The People’s Temple and Fêtes de la Nuit at Berkeley Rep. Jake’s other credits include Comedy of Errors and Henry IV at Cal Shakes, sound design for LifeX3 at MTC, the music and sound design for Henrik Ibsen’s Ghosts at Berkeley Rep and sound design for Shotgun Players and Studio Theatre’s production of The Death of Meyerhold. Jake received a 2003 Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award in sound design for The Death of Meyerhold and a 2004 Princess Grace Award.

michael suenkel
(Production Stage Manager) is in his 21st season with Berkeley Rep and his 14th as production stage manager. His favorite productions include 36 Views, Endgame, Hydriotaphia and Mad Forest. He has also worked with La Jolla Playhouse, the Huntington Theatre in Boston, the Pittsburgh Public Theater, New York’s Public Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre. For the Magic Theatre, he stage-managed Albert Kazanaukas’ Breaking the Code and Sam Shepard’s The Late Henry Moss.

cynthia cahill
(Stage Manager) is pleased to continue her 12-year relationship with Berkeley Rep for the 2006/07 Season. Some of her favorite productions include Culture Clash in AmeriCCa, The Glass Menagerie, Journey to the West, The Laramie Project, The People’s Temple and Secret in the Wings.

the public theater
(Co-Producer) (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Mara Manus, Executive Director) was founded by Joseph Papp in 1954 as the Shakespeare Workshop, and is now one of the nation’s preeminent cultural institutions, producing new plays, musicals, productions of Shakespeare and other classics at its headquarters on Lafayette Street and at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park. The Public’s mandate to create a theatre for all New Yorkers continues to this day on stage and through its extensive outreach and education programs. Each year, over 250,000 people attend Public Theater–related productions and events at six downtown stages, including Joe’s Pub and Shakespeare in the Park. The Public has won 40 Tony Awards, 138 Obies, 39 Drama Desk Awards and 4 Pulitzer Prizes. www.publictheater.org

tony taccone
(Artistic Director) is in his tenth year as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged more than 35 shows, including the world premieres of Continental Divide, The Convict’s Return, Culture Clash in AmeriCCa, The First 100 Years, Geni(us), Ravenshead and Virgin Molly. He commissioned Tony Kushner’s renowned Angels in America, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum and has collaborated with Kushner on six projects. Their latest piece, Brundibar, debuted at Berkeley Rep and then traveled to New Haven and New York City. Tony recently made
his Broadway debut with *Bridge & Tunnel*, which was universally lauded by the critics and earned a Tony Award for its star, Sarah Jones. He also staged the show's record-breaking off-Broadway run, workshopped it for Broadway at Berkeley Rep and directed Jones' previous hit, *Surface Transit*. In 2004, his production of *Continental Divide* transferred to the Barbican in London after playing the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep and England’s Birmingham Rep. His other regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arizona Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, San Jose Rep, Seattle Rep and San Francisco’s Eureka Theatre, where he served six years as artistic director.

**susie medak**
(Manging Director) has served as Berkeley Rep's managing director since 1990, leading the administration and operations of the Theatre. She is president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and recently completed two terms on the board of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), where she served three years as treasurer. Susie has served extensively with the National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) Theatre Program panel, as well as on NEA panels in three other areas: Overview, Prescreening and Creation & Presentation. She has chaired panels for both the Preservation & Heritage and the Education & Access programs, also serving as an onsite reporter for many years. In addition, she led two theatre panels for the Massachusetts Arts Council. Closer to home, Susie is a commissioner of the Downtown Business Improvement District, former vice president of the Downtown Berkeley Association and founding chair of the Berkeley Arts in Education Steering Committee for Berkeley Unified School District and the Berkeley Cultural Trust. A proud member of the Mont Blanc Ladies’ Literary Guild and Trekking Society, Susie lives in Berkeley with her husband and son.

**les waters**
(Associate Artistic Director) is in his fourth year as associate artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged *Eurydice, Fêtes de la Nuit, Finn in the Underworld, The Glass Menagerie, The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer and Yellowman*. He won an Obie Award for *Big Love*, directing its premiere at the Humana Festival and subsequent runs at Berkeley Rep, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Goodman Theatre and Long Wharf Theater. Elsewhere in America, he has staged work at A.C.T., Connelly Theatre, the Guthrie, La Jolla Playhouse, Marin Theater Company, The Public, Signature Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre and Yale Rep. In his native England, Les has directed for the Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre Club, Joint Stock Theatre Group, National Theatre, Royal Court Theatre and Traverse Theatre Club. He often works with prominent playwrights like Caryl Churchill and Charles Mee, and champions important new voices, such as Jordan Harrison and Sarah Ruhl. The former head of the M.F.A. directing program at U.C. San Diego, Les' many honors include a Drama-Logue Award, an Edinburgh Fringe First Award, a KPBS Patte and several awards from...
Profiles

critics’ circles in the Bay Area, Connecticut and Tokyo.

amy potozkin
(Casting Director) is in her seventeenth season with Berkeley Rep where she serves as artistic associate and casting director. She has had the pleasure of casting for A Traveling Jewish Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, ACT/Seattle, Arizona Theatre Company, Bay Area Playwright’s Festival, B Street Theatre, Dallas Theatre Company, San Jose Rep, Marin Theatre Company, Charlie Varon’s play Ralph Nader is Missing, The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola, producer) and Social Impact Productions, Inc. Her film credits include Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton, and the Josh Kornbluth film Haiku Tunnel. She received her M.F.A. from Brandeis University, where she was also an artist-in-residence.

madeleine oldham
(Dramaturg) is Berkeley Rep’s literary manager and resident dramaturg. Prior to joining the staff at the Theatre, she served as resident dramaturg for the 2005 season at Cal Shakes. As literary manager and associate dramaturg at Baltimore’s CenterStage, she produced the First Look reading series, and headed up their young audience initiative. Before moving to Baltimore, she was the literary manager at Seattle Children’s Theatre and served as assistant and interim literary manager at Seattle’s Intiman Theatre. She has acted as treasurer of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas for the last two years, and is now their U.S.-based vice-president international. She has also worked on projects with A Contemporary Theatre, Austin Scriptworks, Geva Theatre and the Neo-Futurists.

wayne jordan & quinn delaney
(Season Producers) have enjoyed Berkeley Rep’s performances for a number of years. Wayne is a real estate investor and developer in the Bay Area and serves on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees. Quinn runs a Bay Area foundation and is involved with a number of progressive institutions, including serving as chair of the ACLU of Northern California.

the strauch kulhanjian family
(Executive Producers) Roger Strauch is president emeritus of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees. He is chairman of The Roda Group (www.rodagroup.com), a venture development company based in Berkeley, best known for launching Ask Jeeves. Roger is on the board of directors of GameReady, Sightspeed and Cardstore, all located in the East Bay. Roger is a member of Engineering Dean’s College Advisory Boards of Cornell University and U.C. Berkeley. He is an executive member of the board of trustees for the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley and co-founded the William Saroyan Chair in Armenian Studies at U.C. Berkeley. His wife, Julie A. Kulhanjian, is an attending physician at Oakland Children’s Hospital. They have three children.

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For more information on becoming a member, visit our website at berkeleyrep.org or contact Lynn Eve Komaromi, Director of Development, Annual Fund, at 510.647.2903 or email.
felicia woytak & steve rasmussen
(Executive Producers) believe that high quality programs in the arts and education are essential to a vibrant community. They are strong supporters of Berkeley Repertory Theatre because of its outstanding contribution to the production of thought-provoking and risk-taking theatre, as well as its enormous contributions to arts education in Bay Area schools and to our youth in the juvenile justice system. Felicia is a member of the board of trustees and a real estate investor and developer. Her husband, Steve, is president of Key Curriculum Press, an educational publishing company with a focus on mathematics.

mary ann & lou peoples
(Producers) have supported the arts for many years, and attended their first production at Berkeley Rep in the 1980s. Mary Ann has served on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees since 2003 and helped to initiate the Theatre’s new docent program. Both Lou and Mary Ann serve as trustees of the Boyd Family Foundation, whose goal is to help create a more educated population.

patricia sakai & richard shapiro
(Producers) have both served on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees over the past 16 years, and enthusiastically support the artistic vision and cutting-edge work that have earned Berkeley Rep its strong national reputation as a destination for theatre artists as well as their audiences. Patricia has also served on the board of directors of The Management Center of Northern California and worked at various corporations as an executive in the field of leadership development and organizational effectiveness. Richard is on the board of trustees of the University Art Museum/Pacific Film Archives, and has also served on the boards of the Urban School, Legal Assistance to the Elderly, Camp Swig and the East Bay Conservation Corps. He is a partner at Thelen Reid & Priest.

bart
(Season Sponsor) Voted America’s number one transit system in 2005, the Bay Area Rapid Transit District is a 104-mile, automated rapid transit system serving over three million people. Forty-three BART stations are located in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. Trains traveling up to 80 mph now connect San Francisco to SFO, as well as other San Mateo County destinations. The East Bay communities that BART serves stretch north to Richmond, east to Pittsburg/Bay Point, west to Dublin/Pleasanton and south to Fremont. BART’s mission is to provide safe, reliable, economical and energy-efficient means of transportation. Since opening in September 1972, BART has safely carried more than 1.5 billion passengers more than 18 billion passenger-miles. BART stations are fully accessible to disabled persons. BART’s current weekday ridership is approximately 320,000.

wells fargo
(Season Sponsor) has been the top corporate giver to Bay Area nonprofits for five consecutive years. On behalf of our 16,000 Bay Area team members, Wells Fargo recognizes Berkeley Repertory Theatre for its leadership in supporting the performing arts and its programs. More than 140 years ago, Wells Fargo stagecoaches brought actors, musicians and other performing artists to the West. As the oldest and largest financial services company headquartered in California, Wells Fargo has top financial professionals providing business banking, investments, brokerage, trust, mortgage, insurance, commercial and consumer finance and much more. For more than 154 years, Wells Fargo has helped generations of families build, manage, preserve and transfer wealth with personalized advice and services.

additional thanks
Taryn Roraback, Followspot
Sara Szewczyk, Followspot
Amanda Jagla, Draper
Sarah Wakida, Wardrobe
Rachel Crothers, First Hand
Nelly Flores, Stitcher
Linda Ricciardi, Milliner
Liza Wakeman, Stage Carpenter
John and Karen Oldham
about berkeley rep

Berkeley Repertory Theatre, now in its 39th season, is the recipient of the 1997 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Founded in 1968 as the East Bay’s first resident professional theatre, Berkeley Rep has established a national reputation for the quality of its productions and the innovation of its programming. Berkeley Rep’s bold choice of material and vivid style of production reflect a commitment to diversity, excitement and quality. The company is especially well known for its fresh adaptations of seldom-seen classics, as well as its presentation of important new dramatic voices. Berkeley Rep has attracted internationally acclaimed theatre artists such as Moisés Kaufman, Tony Kushner, Rita Moreno, Maurice Sendak, Anna Deavere Smith, Tadashi Suzuki, George C. Wolfe and Mary Zimmerman, and has produced numerous world premieres of plays by renowned playwrights.

what does it mean to be a not-for-profit theatre?
At the most fundamental level, it means that 100% of the dollars Berkeley Rep receives are directed back into supporting the work. It also means that the Theatre is “owned” by the community, governed by a board of trustees and exists to serve that community through its plays, educational programs and outreach initiatives. Total operating costs are not covered from ticket sales. Roughly 55% of Berkeley Rep’s costs are covered by ticket sales, while the remaining 45% must be raised through contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and grants from government agencies. Berkeley Rep belongs to you, and needs your involvement. Volunteer. Donate what time you can. Contribute what you can afford. Continue to attend performances. Berkeley Rep is your theatre. Your participation and support are needed to create an outstanding theatre experience for all audiences.

board of directors

- president: Rick Hoskins
- vice president: Richard A. Rubin
- treasurer: Peter Pervere
- secretary: Flicia Woytak
- vp, 40th anniversary campaign: Pat Sakai
- vp, annual fund: Dale Rogers Marshall
- chair, trustees committee: Roger A. Strauch
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affiliations

The director and choreographer are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union. The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE

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latecomers
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.

visit our website!
Check out Berkeley Rep’s website at berkeleyrep.org. We’ve just redesigned the site to make it even easier to buy tickets and track down the information that you need, including performance calendars, box office information, School of Theatre class schedules, program articles and more.

mailing/e-mail list
To request season information or to change your address, send your complete mailing address to Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704, call 510.647.2949, e-mail patron@berkeleyrep.org or click berkeleyrep.org/joinourlist. E-mail participants who use Hotmail, Yahoo and other restrictive online mail accounts, please authorize the berkeleyrep.org domain. Berkeley Rep does not sell or rent its mailing list.

tickets / box office
Box Office hours: noon–7pm, Tue–Sun
Call 510.647.2949 or click berkeleyrep.org
Call toll free: 888.4BRTtix / Fax: 510.647.2975
Groups (15+) call 510.647.2918

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special discount tickets
under 30 discount
Half-price advance tickets for anyone under the age of 30 for all shows except Fri–Sat 8pm and Sun 2pm. Proof of age required. Some restrictions apply. Limited availability.

student group weekday matinee
Tickets are just $10 each. Call the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre at 510.647.2972.

senior/student rush tickets
Half off the ticket price for full-time students and seniors 65+ with proper ID. One ticket per ID, 30 minutes before show time. Subject to availability. Cash only.

half-price “HotTix”
Limited half-price tickets for weekday evening performances go on sale at noon at the Berkeley Rep box office. Cash only. Tue–Fri. Call 510.647.2949 for details.

theatre info
emergency exits
Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, walk — do not run — to the nearest exit.

accessibility
Both theatres offer wheelchair seating and special services for those with vision- or hearing-impairment. Infrared listening devices are available at no charge in both theatre lobbies. Audio descriptions are available in the box office and require an advance reservation of two business days.

ticket exchange
Only subscribers may exchange their tickets for the same production. Exchanges must be made by 7pm the day preceding the scheduled performance. Exchanges are made on a seat-available basis.

educators
Call 510.647.2972 for information about $10 student matinee tickets, classroom visits and teaching artist residencies, teacher training workshops, post-show discussions, teacher study guides, backstage tours and more.

theatre store
Our store, located in The Roda lobby, is open 30 minutes before curtain, during intermission and after the show.

considerations
please keep perfume use to a minimum
Many patrons are sensitive to perfumes and other scents.

beepers / phones / cameras / recorders
Please make sure your pager, cell phone or alarm watch will not beep. Doctors may check pagers with the house manager and give seat location for messages. Use of recording equipment or taking of photographs in the theatre is strictly prohibited.

please do not touch the set or props on stage
You are welcome to take a closer look at the set, but please don’t step onto the stage. Some of the props can be fragile, and are placed in exact positions for the actors.

no children under seven are permitted in the theatre
Many Berkeley Rep productions are unsuitable for children. Please inquire before bringing children to the Theatre.
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