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CALENDAR
Docent presentations take place after matinees and at 7pm before each Tuesday and Thursday performance.

NOVEMBER
12 Page to Stage talk with Mary Zimmerman, 7pm
16 Opening-night dinner, The White Snake, Hotel Shattuck Plaza, 6pm ●
16 Opening night, The White Snake, 8pm

DECEMBER
8 Selected Shorts, 2pm & 8pm
9 Sneak Peek: Clowning, 1pm ■
9 Selected Shorts, 2pm & 7pm
28 Final performance, The White Snake, 7pm

JANUARY
6 First performance, Troublemaker, 8pm
6 School of Theatre Sunday Sampler, 1pm ■
6 Sneak Peek: Troublemaker, 1pm ■
7 Winter classes start ■
9 Opening-night dinner, Troublemaker, 6pm ●
9 Opening night, Troublemaker, 8pm
11 Teen Night, Troublemaker, 6pm ■
26 Teen Night, The Wild Bride, 6pm ■
27 Opening-night dinner, The Wild Bride, 5pm ●
28 Opening night, The Wild Bride, 7pm

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Front cover photo shot on location at the UC Berkeley Botanical Gardens. Thank you!
Take the Theatre home with you

The Hoag Theatre Store is better than ever, featuring our new tablet holder and exclusive items from our staff artisans. Wonderful gifts for you and the theatre-lovers in your life!

Berkeley Rep
Do you remember how old you were when you first contemplated the stars? When you first looked up and tried to grasp the concept of the “the infinite”? When your breath was taken away by the majesty of the universe and how you felt both enthralled by your own existence and diminished by how small you were? It was a feeling of wonder and fear, of being in love with the world and overwhelmed by its power. I think I was around 10 years old when I had my first such experience, but the memory of that specific moment has been obscured by time. And yet I’ve always been able to recreate the sensation, because I feel it when I watch a certain kind of play.

During the next several months, we will be presenting The White Snake and The Wild Bride, two plays adapted from fairy tales. Both productions are examples of what I call the Theatre of Infinite Wonder and Desire. Both ask that we watch a series of strange events with the simplicity of a child, that we remain open to the unknown, that we let ourselves be transported to a land where nothing is ever fully explained. This kind of theatre insists that all of life is a terrifying miracle, that human knowledge is always severely compromised, and that suffering is the only gateway to redemption and grace.

The stories themselves are not very complicated. But while the plots are not hard to follow, they are fantastical, full of astonishing transformations and surreal landscapes. And so it falls on the artist to reimagine those events, using imagery and action to invent a unique brand of elemental theatrical magic. Both The White Snake and The Wild Bride do precisely that: they invent their own theatrical language. We become rapt, cheered, and inspired by the sheer creativity on display. And when it works, it feels like that first moment we encountered the wonder of life itself.

The White Snake marks the seventh time we have presented a play by Mary Zimmerman. She is easily our most frequent guest director, and I am happy and proud to say that she considers Berkeley Rep a second home. Our time with Emma Rice has only just begun, but I have great hopes that she and her company Kneehigh Theatre will form a long-lasting relationship with us that will reap many artistic rewards. Both directors are fearless in their pursuit of beauty and their belief in the primacy of the actors. Both know when to let the power of the story reveal itself and how to amplify its mysteries. And both invite us to have a seat around the ancient campfire, to let our adult predispositions melt away, and to simply listen like a child to what the storyteller has to say.

Sincerely,

Tony Taccone

In October, Tony Taccone received the Margo Jones Award, named after the influential director and producer credited with creating the regional theatre movement. “All the sparkling, descriptive words and phrases we use to define the legacy of Margo Jones — impact, understanding, affirmation, encouragement, commitment to the craft of playwriting, encouragement of new writers — are woven into Tony’s inspiring and creative work at Berkeley Rep,” said Deborah Robison, a member of the awards committee. Congratulations, Tony!
Greetings and good wishes for a joy-filled holiday season. What a pleasure it is to spend the holidays in the company of Mary Zimmerman and her remarkable team of designers and actors. This is not the first time a piece created by Mary has captured our imaginations during the crazy, hectic months of November and December. Remember The Arabian Nights? Argonautika? Metamorphoses? Journey to the West? Maybe it is the way she sees beauty in every human emotion, or the fanciful quality she brings to her stories, or the exquisite moments of emotional clarity. Perhaps it is the way she so comfortably allows us to embrace stories from other parts of the world. Whatever it is, Mary’s plays so often seem like the perfect gift that Berkeley Rep can give our audience for the holidays.

Yes, it is that time of year when gift-giving is on our minds. If you’re like me, you look at that vast pile of solicitations on your desk (and an equally dense set logged in your iPad) waiting for you to sit down and prioritize the nonprofit organizations you value. Every year the pile gets higher and the need gets more urgent.

We here at Berkeley Rep are honored by the thousands of families that make us part of their year-end gift-giving tradition. Whether we receive gifts of $5 or $5,000, we are so grateful to all of you who recognize that the work we do is not self-sustaining, that ticket revenue covers less than half of our operating budget. Oh, if only we could perform each night for an audience of two or three thousand people. We’d be able to cover the full cost of the production. But we’d lose the intimate, immediate experience that is at the heart of what people so value at Berkeley Rep. Or our ticket prices for every production would be more like those on Broadway, where a bargain-price ticket is $100 (and then most of our audience could not afford to attend). Our commissions and development of new work, our thousands of hours of inexpensive and free work in area schools, the thousands of tickets that we contribute to other nonprofit organizations are all contingent upon the donations that supplement our ticket revenue. Without those donations, all of those programs would evaporate.

So as you contemplate your holiday gift list, I hope you will think about the pleasure you’ve enjoyed here at Berkeley Rep. I hope you’ll help us to continue doing our good work by making a tax-deductible contribution by December 31.

Warm regards,

Susie Medak

In October, Susan Medak was awarded the 2013 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Medal by the Berkeley Community Fund. Established in 1929, the Wheeler Medal honors a person who has made significant, long-term contributions to the greater Berkeley community. “Ms. Medak’s contributions extend well beyond the theatre,” says BCF President Jessica Pers. “She was instrumental in revitalizing downtown Berkeley into a vibrant arts district with live theatre, music, and arts education.” Congratulations, Susie!
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Commissioned to make Trouble

BY NORA SØRENA CASEY AND JULIE MCCORMICK

Dan Lefranc’s Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright began as a Berkeley Rep commission and will arrive on our stage in January. The commissioning program is a vital means for us to support the artists we love, stay in intimate contact with the new-play scene, and bring fresh work to Berkeley audiences. Choosing artists to commission and supporting them throughout the creative process requires considerable flexibility and intuition, as well as financial, artistic, and emotional backup.

When Madeleine Oldham, resident dramaturg and director of The Ground Floor, first began discussions with Dan four years ago about commissioning him to write a play, it was with an eye toward supporting Dan in his writing process and helping him create an exciting and dynamic new script.

“There was a lot of back and forth with Madeleine,” Dan recalls. “The process has been very long, and I imagine other theatres might get frustrated with that, but Madeleine was like, ‘It’s fine.’ She was there for every step of the play.”

It can be exhausting to even contemplate the work that goes into writing a play, not to mention actually doing it. “Commissions are really hard. Being in touch with someone is helpful,” Dan says. “I feel like Madeleine was gently shepherding the play towards something that might speak to audiences here. She was really in tune with what was powerful and interesting about the project.”

Once the play is further along in its development, a workshop may bring in designers, and the time might be used to answer specific questions, or experiment with how the play lives in space. In the past, Berkeley Rep’s workshops have often happened offsite, usually...
in New York, because limited resources dictated that it was more effective to send Berkeley Rep's literary staff to the playwright, rather than bring a writer and his or her group of actors to us. This meant that only a handful of people ever got to see a Berkeley Rep commission in progress. This year, however, that changed. With the inaugural summer residency lab at The Ground Floor, artists who in the past were accessed through emails, phone calls, and occasional trips to meet in person became the people sitting down next to us at dinner and starting each day sharing new thoughts, ideas, and innumerable pots of coffee.

“Getting to know the staff was amazing—I feel I was able to really become part of the landscape,” Dan says, reflecting on the three weeks he spent at The Ground Floor. “I could just run into Tony Taccone in my dumpy clothes getting coffee and we could chat.”

“The Ground Floor feels really unique; development sojourns usually feel contained and intensive, but the onsite communication with other artists was rejuvenating,” says Lila Neugebauer, the director of Troublemaker. “There was a real sense of hospitality in the deepest sense of the word. To be taken care of in that way was rare and truly amazing.”

As with the commission process, the summer residency lab is geared towards serving artists, not presenting public readings, though readings did result. This allowed the participants to take their time in exploring the questions of each piece. For example, Dan spent the first of his three weeks here writing alone, and used the rest of the time to work on the material with Lila and the actors. Because no final reading was required, the summer lab allowed the Troublemaker team to explore the text as a work-in-progress and build the artistic foundations for the upcoming production.

“Dan and I have never worked together, and we got to be in a rehearsal room together,” says Lila. “We got a glimpse into what a shared rehearsal process would look like.”

The play’s long journey continues. As this article is being written, the Troublemaker artistic team and Berkeley Rep casting staff are holding auditions. Dan is working on further defining characters and finalizing the shape of the plot. The rest of the staff will begin busily preparing advertisements, building the set and costumes, designing the artwork, and creating program copy, all of which will be informed by years of dialogue and collaboration. And when Troublemaker does come to our stage in January, we get to add the final, key ingredient to any play—an audience.
The art of (re-)telling stories

Summer Intensives empower kids to rebuild classic stories

By Cassie Newman

The different ways stories are told and interpreted not only keep them alive but also engage new audiences. That’s where the artists come in: to reimagine, reconstruct, reawaken stories in unique ways. Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre is fostering the next generation of those artists, giving students opportunities to explore stories both old and new.

For the past two years, the School’s Summer Intensive has been devoted to reimagining myths and fairy tales. Working alongside Bay Area playwrights and local teaching artists who serve as directors, students break into groups to create and perform original plays based on classic stories. It’s a four-week crash course in devised work: collaborating to rebuild a story through exploration and experimentation.

The Summer Intensive’s playwrights and teachers select a classical piece of literature, read it with the students, and lead them through discussions about the story’s themes and issues. Students become exposed to cultures they may be unfamiliar with, to beliefs different from their own, and to styles of language they don’t use in their daily lives.

Making the tale of Persephone resonate with a 15 year old who grew up in Berkeley might seem like an impossible task. But it turns out that these classic stories — with such daunting emotional and dramatic arcs — are all rooted in simple universal lessons. By breaking things down in their own words, the students begin to connect to stories that suddenly seem relevant to their own lives.

Within the first week of the Intensive, the new play’s structure starts to take shape based on the dynamics of each group and the relationship that develops between the students, the playwright, and the teacher. In the second week, they explore the direction the play will take.

In the case of one group working with the story of Medusa, it became clear almost immediately that the students were all musically inclined. A composer was added to the mix to write original songs, and the play became a rock musical. Another playwright was specifically interested in exploring the personal internal struggles and emotions the students were facing, and so the group’s retelling of Cinderella took on a less narrative style, instead drawing out the themes within the story and structuring the play around them.

One of the greatest benefits of developing work in this way is the opportunity to utilize the individual talents and interests of the performers. Instead of trying to fit an actor (or student) into a role, roles are created around the individuals. This not only highlights different strengths and unique skills, but also serves to challenge students in a more specific way based on their personalities and levels of experience.

Once the playwright has created a clear draft of the play, the students spend the third week getting it up on its feet, continuing to make adjustments as new discoveries are made. Along the way, the students design their own props and costumes from scratch, bolstering the overall creative process and giving them full ownership of how their original play will look in performance. The group has one final week to fine-tune their work before performing it for their families and peers on the final day of the Intensive.

As one student attests, “When we share our work with other students, it’s really cool. The ability to create a family with our group is really a beautiful thing.”

The final performance is a display and celebration not only of the students’ newly honed skills as performers but also of their individual imaginations and collaborative efforts. The students have told their own stories through the guise of a tale much larger and older than they are. And they’ve learned something new about themselves through the lens of that tale.
Learning on—and off—the job

How Berkeley Rep's Professional Development Fund puts better art onstage

BY JACOB MARX RICE

AT BERKELEY REP, THE SCENE SHOP AND RUN CREW have made coffins rise out of the floor, flown windows across the stage, and knocked down walls to reveal poppy fields. But when the Theatre decided to present David Henry Hwang's Chinglish, they came across a new challenge.

The set, which came from the Broadway production and was designed by David Korins, featured two massive turntables, sliding walls, and three chairs that glide. All of it was automated. While the shop and crew had used the software before, they never had to run so many systems at one time.

"To say that there were a lot of moving parts would be an understatement," says E.T. Hazzard, one of the carpenters on the project. The trick was getting everything coordinated seamlessly.

"It was a lot to figure out in a short period of time with a lot of people watching us," notes Colin Babcock, the assistant technical director. "What we really needed was a face-to-face tutorial with the person who created the technology." The solution? Berkeley Rep's Professional Development Fund.

Marge Randolph, president of Berkeley Rep's board, created the fund last year based on a simple philosophy: "Everybody wants to be better. Everybody wants to learn something.” The fund makes that possible, providing the means to “support the learning endeavors of current staff members.”

Berkeley Rep’s staff has eagerly taken advantage of this opportunity. The costume shop staff took a workshop in fabric origami. Some of the box office staff took a bafflingly technical course in Quantitative Analysis: Data Mining Using SQL. Others have used the fund to expand their horizons, taking classes in subjects they can’t explore in their job. Emiel Koehler and Lauren Shorofsky, the dynamic duo who run
the Theatre’s facilities, took a stone-carving class together. Lauren says of the class, “It really helped me become less stressed at work.”

Marge, who became president after serving on Berkeley Rep’s board for more than 20 years, recognized that “if staff members feel better about their jobs, they’re going to work even harder to put better art on the stage. They’re going to continue to uphold the sense of wonderment and the standard of excellence that this theatre practices.”

Colin, who has taken several classes through the fund, agreed. “A program like this is a huge draw for people to do the best they can for the company that’s giving back to them.”

Recognizing the importance of professional development, however, is easier than funding it. “We all know that nonprofits aren’t the richest kids on the block,” Marge explains, “and professional development often falls victim to tight budgets.”

Thanks to Marge’s donation, the scene shop was able to fly out the inventor of Chinglish’s automation technology from Rhode Island for a seminar. This ensured that the staff was ready for even the most complex challenges the set presented. “He was able to make things so much clearer,” says Colin.

Their work was so seamless, in fact, that they even disproved the old adage that “no one ever leaves the theatre humming the scenery.” The San Jose Mercury News called the set “mind-bending” and the San Francisco Chronicle hailed the “swift-sliding, slyly distinct sets and cinematic transitions.”

Even more importantly, the lessons the staff learned will continue to benefit Berkeley Rep and its audiences. As E.T. put it, “We just threw a Broadway show into the Roda Theatre. Any set you want, we can handle it.”
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A salute to our ushers

BY ASHLEY DAWN

BERKELEY REP RELIES ON MORE than 1,000 volunteers to welcome you to the Theatre. We spoke with a few of the 121 ushers who have donned their black-and-white outfits for more than 20 years. It doesn’t take long to see the connection between them: they’re all well-educated, well-traveled, and active community members. After reading about their experiences, we wouldn’t be surprised if you wanted to take a turn at ushering. (Find out how at the end of the article. By the way, ushers get to see the shows for free.)

Andree Thompson is an amazing 75-year-old woman. A sculptor, teacher, and activist, she is passionate about teaching inner-city youth and community-college students how to have “creative attention and skills to address urgent environmental issues.”

Andree found out about ushering at Berkeley Rep through a friend. It was the 1970s and she was a single mother on a tight budget. She’s ushered nearly every show since then, sometimes alongside friends and even significant others. So, what drew this sculptor to theatre?

“It’s art!” she exclaims. “It allows you the opportunity to explore and give voice to unconscious material in yourself. To learn different cultures and different levels of your psyche. We are always looking for different levels of our own history. Theatre has many layers of meaning, mythology, and beauty.”

Andree ushers with her friend, Catherine Hiersoux, a local gallery owner. They often run into people they both know, so they enjoy working the door—a coveted spot. “Everyone wants to work the door, so you have to get there early,” she notes. She also enjoys the company of other ushers she has met, who are “fascinating, interesting, alive — staying alive doing what we do.”

Lori Miller loves “amazing, incredible, topical theatre” and has been ushering since 1985 when she attended UC Berkeley. Like most ushers, she got into the game because her friends were doing it—and at the time, quality theatre was out of her price range. Skip forward a couple of decades, and today Lori still signs up to usher for every show of our season, and sometimes more than once. “I saw The Arabian Nights three times,” she says. The Wild Bride was another of her favorites because “it’s amazing to see what Kneehigh can do with a small company.”

As for this season, Lori’s most looking forward to Fallaci, a play about the famed Italian journalist who grilled Kissinger, Castro, Khomeini, Qadaffi, and other public figures. She’s also happy to be back greeting and helping our patrons. And with all the quality theatre in the Bay Area, why does she usher at Berkeley Rep? Simple: “It’s an amazing local theatre that has great plays every year, every season — an incredible body of work.”

When Sheila Baltimore was a young girl, her best friend’s father played alongside Ethel Merman in Annie Get Your Gun. The girls helped him learn his lines.

Want to usher?
Terrific! To find out more, visit berkeleyrep.org/ushers.
and became friends of “Auntie Ethel,” who saved them fourth-row-center seats to the show. This started her “big love of theatre,” and she has been hooked ever since.

Sheila came to Berkeley in the 1970s to visit friends, ended up moving here, and started ushering at the Theatre. She’ll swear that she’s seen each play four times — and she always enjoys discussing the show with people afterwards. She says, “Talking about shows is my main interest in life, and I love showing people to their seats.”

Bonnie McPherson Killip has been ushering since Berkeley Rep first moved to Addison Street in 1980 — much of that time with her husband, who passed away in 1989. Today she still ushers with a couple of friends. Clearly she hasn’t slowed down: “I have also been a peace activist since my grad-school days when I was a summer-school resident at International House in 1949.” She also enjoys supporting local theatre and loves the Downtown Arts District.

Bonnie’s favorite shows at Berkeley Rep include The Arabian Nights, Let Me Down Easy, The Agony & the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs (“Mike Daisey got a bad rep, but did a great job”), and though she wasn’t expecting to, she also enjoyed In the Next Room (or the vibrator play). In fact, she is so fond of the Theatre that she became a donor and a member of Berkeley Rep’s Michael Leibert Society.

Why Berkeley Rep? “I like Tony Taccone,” Bonnie says. “He’s able to create a diverse audience and choose shows that please the university students as well as the older donors” (which she admits to being). “Berkeley Rep does all types of plays, tries everything, and is very innovative.” So on your way out of the Theatre, give a little wave to our ushers near the doors. We couldn’t do what we do without them!”

We’d like extend a huge thank you to the following volunteer ushers who have committed countless hours to Berkeley Rep for 10 years or more.

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SLITHERING INTO STORIES

Mythology and snakes
NO CREATURE ELICITS EXTREMES OF FEELING quite like the snake. Throughout human history, snakes have been reviled and revered, but generally do not inspire much in the way of middling response — many people fear them; those who do not tend to love them. It’s a rare person that has no opinion about them at all. These perplexing reptiles touch us at such a deep level that we have featured them repeatedly in our stories, and imbued their presence in our world with extensive and often contradictory symbolism.

In myths from all over the world, snakes represent dual meanings and they often stand for both good and evil. The ancient symbol of the ouroboros — a serpent eating its own tail — dates back to the 14th century BC and signifies both an end and a beginning. (Dictionaries tell us that the words “snake” and “serpent” are interchangeable. In common parlance, however, “serpent” is rarely used to describe a snake in the physical world — it’s usually reserved for mythology and folklore.) In this way, snakes also came to suggest fertility and a cycle of death and rebirth. They also simultaneously embody both male and female qualities: their phallus-like shape and their venom are commonly thought to be masculine, while their skills of coiling and embracing are often associated with the feminine.

J.K. Rowling has clearly done her homework about the rich legacy of snake mythology. She called the house at Hogwarts that serves as ground zero for the dark arts “Slytherin.” When Harry Potter discovers he is a Parselmouth (a person who can speak the snake language, Parseltongue), he is forced to confront the fact that there might be evil as well as good living inside him. This coexistence of dark and light in the form of a snake traces back thousands of years. In the Garden of Eden, the snake symbolizes wisdom and knowledge as well as temptation and downfall.

Greek mythology is full of serpents that offer both negative and positive connotations. They can be found in 3 of Hercules’ 12 labors. Medusa and the Gorgons, who would turn anyone who looked directly at them to stone, had hair made of snakes. A serpent that required no sleep guarded the Golden Fleece. A lesser-known god, Asclepius, lent his name to a universally recognized symbol today: the rod of Asclepius — the symbol of a snake wrapped around a staff used to denote medical care. Asclepius recognized in snakes a healing power that made them immortal; the Greeks sometimes even invited non-venomous snakes to slither under the beds of the sick.

A Norse myth tells of a giant serpent that encircles all of human civilization. (Sea monsters are snakes of the sea that have a mass of stories unto themselves. The same goes for dragons, the snakes of the air.) In India, Vritra the snake was thought to control and bring on droughts. Some Native Americans believe that rattlesnakes must be paid respect, because they can change the weather from fair to foul.

We still find ourselves using stories today to try and explain these strange creatures; myths of a different kind have sprung up in recent years around snakes. They feature in many urban legend, ranging from a love of milk, to a penchant for living in toilets, to an ability to jump two feet. Contrary to popular belief, most snakes cannot spit (only the spitting cobra can), and they do not chase people when angry — they are far more apt to crawl away. Reports of unsuspecting gardeners discovering snakes in their recently purchased potted plants can, however, be true: a prospect which is enough for some people never to visit the nursery again.

From ancient civilizations to the present day, these mysterious creatures have captivated the human imagination. We fear them because we don’t understand them — it’s inconceivable that something moves as quickly as a snake does with no arms or legs. It’s incomprehensible that it swallows food whole, literally sheds its skin, and can kill with the tiniest of punctures or by coiling itself like a spring. Some believe that snakes can charm people, likely due to the fact that they can’t blink and their stares seem to penetrate. Perhaps this fixed gaze has in fact hypnotized us into yielding them such a prominent position in our stories.
AN EVER-CHANGING STORY

BY NORA SØRENA CASEY
A five-story-high pagoda stands on the West Lake of Hangzhou and, according to an ancient Chinese legend, trapped beneath it is a white snake who once took the form of a beautiful woman. The pagoda stood until 1924, but the story never stopped changing. When the tower was first constructed in 975 AD, the white snake was known as a fearful demon. By the time the pagoda was rebuilt in 2002, the legend of the white snake celebrated her valor and love. Over the centuries details were lost, replaced, or embellished, but two iconic elements of the tale endure: the white snake that appears as a woman, and the relationship between this mythic female and a mortal man.

The legend was published for the first time in a folktale anthology from 981 CE, in which a man visiting the city has an amorous encounter with a woman in white. Upon returning home, he becomes ill, and that night his body melts into his sheets. When the man’s family seeks out the woman, they learn that her home has always been uninhabited, except for a white snake that lives in the locust tree. The bizarre and tragic fate of the man, and the alluring but deadly shape-shifting woman, were transcribed from a popular oral story of the T’ang Dynasty (618–907 CE). Part of the bianwen genre, translated as “stories of metamorphosis,” this was one of many tales told in the vernacular that introduced Taoist and Buddhist ideas of unity, opposition, and multiple deities to the larger population.

The influences of religious philosophies helped to focus the details of this hazy legend. In the next major re-telling, the 16th-century “Story of the Three Pagodas on West Lake,” a young man named Xi Xuanzan visits Hangzhou’s West Lake during the Qingming Festival. He accompanies a young girl and an old woman to their house, where a beautiful woman in white invites him to their feast. It quickly becomes apparent that the women fall into the class of she-demons, alongside mythic figures like succubae or sirens, when they slaughter a man and devour his heart and liver. After witnessing this, Xi Xuanzan is intimidated into becoming the woman in white’s new husband, and it is only with the young girl’s magical aid that he escapes the same death. A Taoist priest intervenes to help Xuanzan and to restore the natural order, compelling the women and young girl to reveal their true shapes. The old woman becomes an otter, the young girl transforms into a black hen, and the beautiful woman turns into a white snake.

In spite of their protests (and the young girl’s reminder that she actually helped Xuanzan), the Taoist priest imprisons them all under stone pagodas on the West Lake. The lake remains central to this story as more than just a location — once considered the home of nymphs, lakes became associated with female demons in Buddhist mythology during the medieval period, in opposition to mountains, which were the home of ascetics.

Punloined coins, magical charms, and lost umbrellas are just some of the new elements that develop the legend in Feng Menglong’s work. In portraying her as a sympathetic figure guided by human needs, this novella plants a seed that grows wildly throughout the next century. Madame White becomes female not only in form, but also in a cultural sense: wooing Xu Xuan with a home-cooked meal and using Green as an agent to arrange their marriage in accordance with tradition. But is it a love story? Madame White no longer devours her husband’s internal organs, but when he becomes suspicious and abandons her, she appeals not only to Xu Xuan’s love but to his duty as a husband to stay with her. A triangle emerges between Madame White, Xu Xuan, and Fa Hai that sets up an opposition between duty to marriage and to religion. And ultimately, when Madame White and Little Green are trapped under the pagoda, Xu Xuan is allied with Fa Hai and lives happily ever after on his own.

Feng Menglong’s work provided a written basis for many later authors, who developed these themes with new events, characters, and narrative forms of their own. When the story transitioned onto the Chinese stage during the 18th century, the tensions between characters led to new, dramatic plot points. Ill-will between the monk Fa Hai and the shape-shifting Madame White escalated to a full-out water battle in a 1738 play, while another had Madame White give birth to a son, making her not only a dutiful wife, but also a loving mother. Little Green transitioned from a servant to a major character, which sparked an actual transformation — she became a green snake in Fang Chengpei’s play from 1771 and never changed back.

The color of the snakes in the legend took on new significance when the story moved to the stage, as classical Chinese drama takes a representational approach to storytelling rather than a strictly realistic one, using elaborate costumes, makeup, and a codified set of gestures to convey meaning. Ornate costumes were not only beautiful, but also sent a message: green is associated with healing and benevolence, while white symbolizes the unknown and is used for spirits, ghosts, and death. Strong make-up colors define the character types for the audience from the moment actors appear onstage; a red face indicates bravery while yellow make-up indicates duplicity. With minimal scenic design,
characters may indicate a long journey by walking in a circle and announcing to the audience where they have arrived. This presentational speech combines with music, singing, and physicality to create a rich and unique storytelling form.

The formal elements of these folktales and early plays embody a philosophy very different from America’s ideal of rugged individualism: they emphasize society, rather than the individual, and this can result in unromantic endings that audiences raised on Cinderella may resist. By the 19th century Madame White was a compassionate and sympathetic protagonist, but more often than not these stories end with her locked underneath the pagoda. The monk Fa Hai, who became increasingly arrogant and insensitive to White’s virtues, changed from a rescuer to an antagonist. Yet when he prevails the result is not a classic case of tragedy. In spite of the shift in personalities, the legend upholds Madame White’s confinement as the proper outcome.

Huang Tubi’s 1738 play incorporates a prologue and epilogue that contextualize what might strike audiences as an unsatisfying conclusion. These bookends resemble the Buddhist practice of storytelling with huatou, an opening statement that guides the student’s understanding towards awakening, and huawei, a closing statement that focuses the student’s contemplation of the finished tale. Tubi’s prologue explains how the story is guided by a Buddhist idea of balance. The protagonist Xu Xuan begins the play as an attendant to the Shakyamuni Buddha, but he is reincarnated as a human to fulfill his unfinished karma with Madame White. Fa Hai is instructed to contain White and Green and to bring Xu Xuan back onto the Buddhist path to Nirvana, but only after their karma is completed. Just as White and Xu Xuan’s meeting is destined to occur, so too is their separation.

As an oral story, the variations of Madame White’s tale told throughout China are innumerable and untraceable. Today, the list of novels, plays, storybooks, films, and television series based on the story provide a more concrete testament to the ability of the legend to transform. A 2003 staging of The Legend of the White Snake opera dazzled audiences by employing lasers, dry ice, and approximately 100 tons of water that were sprayed over the crowd for a battle scene, while an anime version inexplicably includes the adventures of two pandas. Different endings to the story have evolved to reflect the sensibilities of modern audiences. As individual characters have grown more defined, Madame White has been hailed for her increasingly empowered role. Looking back, it is hard to believe that the romantic story of an immortal and a young man fighting a prejudiced monk began as the legend of a heart-devouring shape-shifter. Yet there is strength in the figure of Madame White, marked by the mystery her color symbolizes, that holds these disparate tales together. As her character entwines the demonic with the domestic, immortality with vulnerability, and deception with love, the story that builds around her is able to adapt across centuries.
DESIGNING A LEGEND

BY JULIE MCCORMICK

The work of designers begin months (or even longer) before rehearsals start. In close collaboration with the director, it is their job to create the world of the play through the physical set, the lighting, the music, and the costumes. In some ways, their mission is the hardest, because it requires both aesthetic and technical mastery as well as a certain amount of clairvoyance. A production’s design must not only have sensory unity, but also anticipate the needs of the performers, something that often only becomes clear during rehearsals. You might know in advance from the script, for example, that the female lead needs to sweep gracefully down a flight of stairs in a feathered gown, but you might not know until the third week of rehearsal that an ensemble member needs to pop out of a cleverly concealed trap in the stage floor.

This pre-rehearsal process is tricky enough when you have a script to consult, but what if there isn’t one? Mary Zimmerman is well-known for her intuitive approach to directing: she begins without a script, and then writes new material at night to be used in rehearsal the next day. We decided to ask the designers for The White Snake (most of whom have worked with Mary on many projects over the years) about their perspectives on this unique process. Here is what some of them had to say.

Can you tell us a little bit about how you approach a script that you are going to work on?

Daniel Ostling, scenic designer: After reading the script, I generally move on to research — there are whole new worlds you work with in every play that you need to discover for yourself.

Mara Blumenfeld, costume designer: In general, it’s all about reading the script over and over again, talking to the director about his or her ideas, and doing tons of research. The research can take many different forms depending upon the particular project and the world of the play. It can be looking at other forms of art (painting/sculpture/architecture), historical photographs, and vintage fashion plates/magazines/catalogs, or just observing people on the street if it’s a contemporary setting. Each piece requires a different way into it, but in general I just try to allow myself to be open to the story and characters and to listen to what the director and the other designers are bringing to the table.

Andre Pluess, sound designer and composer: With any given script, I first try to identify and to understand in what moments music and sound are enabled to really breathe, be it in transition or underscore. Once I’ve identified these starting points, I begin to create a toolkit of themes and motifs that can be expanded and integrated into the play. I take into account the historical and cultural context of the play and reference those elements (instruments, scales, etc.) in the...
“What I admire about Mary is that she doesn’t fill everything in. In the theatre I find that really exciting, because it makes the audience an active part of the equation. They fill it in.”

DANIEL OSTLING, SCENIC DESIGNER
creation of the score. Attenuating these fragments in terms of their emotive, lyrical, or rhythmic qualities is an ongoing process with the director, musicians, and actors that continues through the rehearsal period and previews.

How is the process of designing a show with Mary Zimmerman different than working on projects that start with a script?

Daniel: With Mary you often begin with a book, or in this case, a folk tale that has many different versions. In the early meetings, the design team talks about the book, and the different versions that we find ourselves attracted to. It’s really about mixing it up and talking about what you like, or what seems really vibrant to you, or which moments are your favorite (not scenic design-wise necessarily, but story-wise).

Sometimes the design conversation starts with a big scenic idea (as with Metamorphoses — she knew she wanted it put in water); with The White Snake, she knew she was really interested in the medicine cabinet. After these initial conversations, I start to work up pretty rough models. With Mary she definitely likes to play with models and take them apart. It’s a little bit like pin the tail on the donkey, or hot-hot-cold.

We ended up with a set that is pretty minimal and open. Some of the ideas I came up with initially were very architectural and very heavy, but we quickly realized that we needed an aesthetic that would give us a lot of freedom. The solution for storytelling issues relies on the actors and props, rather than on set pieces that would weigh us down.

The general geometry of the set came from scroll paintings: a long, horizontal blank space with very carefully chosen details. Those paintings are deceptively simple, I think. They use a finite number of strokes; what’s most impressive is what those painters leave out. They’re very beautiful, very humble, those paintings.

Mara: With a Mary show, a lot of the design process has to remain really flexible. It’s a really exciting and creative process, but can also be a really challenging one for a costume shop that has to adhere to the realities of time and money. I often describe the design as falling into three categories: the knowns, the partial knowns, and the unknowns. The knowns are characters that we know for certain will be in the story, and we know who will be playing them — these are the central characters that Mary casts with a specific actor in mind. I can design looks for them and we can begin building for them in advance. Then the partial knowns are usually secondary characters or groups of characters that we know will likely be in the story — and I can design a look for them in advance, but we won’t know who will be playing those roles until we get into rehearsal. The unknowns are pretty self-explanatory — things that just evolve out of the rehearsal process that you always need to leave a little of your budget and resources aside for.

Andre: Essentially on a show of Mary’s, much of the music and sound is created during the rehearsal process. I like to be on hand for as much of the rehearsal process as possible, experimenting with the actors and musicians and responding in a more instinctual as opposed to a premeditated manner. I also try my best to surround myself with the most talented musicians I can find who have a flare for improvisation and a collaborative spirit.

What is your favorite part of your design for The White Snake?

Daniel: The overall geometry feels very elegant and spare, and is very satisfying to see in the space. Even though it’s easy to get caught up in the details, I think there’s something powerful about the set receding and allowing luscious colors and textures to be in the costumes, props, and lighting. It’s like looking at a diamond on black velvet — it makes it all the more glittering. The set can be a frame that things explode out of.

What I admire about Mary is that she doesn’t fill everything in. In the theatre I find that really exciting, because it makes the audience an active part of the equation. They fill it in. They end up seeing things that aren’t even there, and walk away having had a very full experience of filling in the negative space.

Mara: I think one of the things I’m most proud of with the design for The White Snake is the use of color and pattern; in looking at a lot of the research for traditional Chinese costumes, I was struck by the amazing combination of textiles, which is so different from our Western aesthetic. The Chinese use pattern upon pattern in different scales and colors that I wouldn’t necessarily think of combining together. It really forced me to look at fabric in a different way, and I think some of the combinations are really surprising and beautiful. And Dan’s set provides this really gorgeous but neutral platform for showcasing all of that color and pattern.

Andre: I’m very proud of the integration of the live music in the show, and of the work created by myself and our three musicians, Ronnie, Tessa, and Michal. Working with live musicians (as opposed to prerecorded music) is not something I do very often, and there is no substitute for the immediacy of having music performed live in dialogue with stage action.

What was the biggest design challenge you’ve had to overcome?

Daniel: I guess it’s always the one you’re working on. It’d be easy to say the water in Metamorphoses, and we just did one in a tent where the audience was on benches and we wanted the tent to just fly outward. But, really it’s always the current project. Design is about creating something for a particular use. It’s in service of the play and the actor. You’re trying to anticipate all of the millions of variables that exist in terms of what the materials do and how the actors walk, what the costumes look like, lights, how the director will use the set, the sightlines of the theatre...

You’re trying to pay attention to every variable and anticipate the whole experience and all the problems. Mary’s work is simple, but it’s a huge amount of effort to make it look that way.

Andre: There is a lot of music in the play and the band is active for over 80 percent of the show playing a very programmatic score. Ensuring the legibility and clarity of the text in relation to live music was and is a constant negotiation between the actors, band, and sound technicians.

Additionally, The White Snake is an ancient Chinese legend. I am not an expert in Chinese music by any stretch of the imagination. Finding a hybrid vocabulary (curated via research and from the immense dexterity of my collaborators in the band) that paid homage to the vast history of Chinese music yet also melded with my Western sensibilities and background was very challenging but incredibly fun.
Berkeley Repertory Theatre, in a co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, presents the world-premiere production of

THE WHITE SNAKE

Written and directed by Mary Zimmerman
Based on the classic Chinese fable

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CAST
Brother-in-Law/Ensemble Cristofer Jean*
Xu Xian/Ensemble Christopher Livingston*
Green Snake Tanya Thai McBride
Sister-in-Law/Ensemble Lisa Tejero*
White Snake Amy Kim Waschke*
Fa Hai/Ensemble Jack Willis*

Ensemble Keiko Shimosato Carreiro*
Gina Daniels*
Richard Howard*
Emily Sophia Knapp*
Vin Kridakorn*

Flutes Tessa Brinckman
Strings/Percussion Ronnie Malley
Cello Michal Palzewicz

PRODUCTION STAFF
Scenic Design Daniel Ostling
Costume Design Mara Blumenfeld
Lighting Design T.J. Gerckens
Original Music/Sound Design Andre Pluess
Projection Design Shawn Sagady
Voice and Text Direction Rebecca Clark Carey
Casting Joy Dickson (Ashland)
Amy Potozkin (Bay Area)
Logan Vaughn and
Adam Belcuore (Chicago)
Stephanie Klapper (New York)

Stage Manager Michael Suenkel*

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

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448 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036
Keiko Shimosato Carreiro
ENSEMBLE

Keiko last appeared at Berkeley Rep in Fuente Ovejuna. Since arriving in the Bay Area in 1987, she has been a collective member with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, where she has appeared in all but a handful of shows over the past two decades. Keiko was born in Boston, Massachusetts, where she spent most of her formative years. She arrived in the middle of the country when her father moved the family to Iowa City. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa with degrees in theatre, art, and music. She’s glad to be back at Berkeley Rep, and excited to be working on such a beautiful piece with Mary Zimmerman.

Gina Daniels
ENSEMBLE

Gina was seen locally in Hamlet and Private Lives at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, as well as Measure for Measure and Much Ado About Nothing at Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival. Her New York credits include 24 Hour Plays, Abingdon Theatre Company, Incumbo Theatre Company, the National Black Theatre, Nicu's Spoon, and Summer Play Festival. Gina has spent eight seasons with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and her most recent roles include Coretta Scott King and Fannie Lou Hamer in All the Way and Alice Ford in The Very Very Merry Wives of Windsor, Iowa. Her regional credits include All's Well That Ends Well and Pippin at the Utah Shakespeare Festival; As You Like It, Dracula, Macbeth, and The Taming of the Shrew at Delaware Theatre Company; Broke-ology at TheatreWorks; A Christmas Carol at Geva Theatre Center; Cyrano at Willamette Repertory Theatre; Doubt at Kansas City Repertory Theatre; The Exonerated at Charlotte Repertory Theatre; An Ideal Husband at Centerstage; Medea at Pittsburgh Public Theater; and The Story at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Gina trained at the University of Southern California.

Richard Howard
ENSEMBLE

Richard appeared on Broadway in Execution of Justice and off Broadway in Ten by Tennessee. He has been at OSF for 24 seasons and played title roles in Hamlet, Henry IV, Parts One and Two; Pericles, Prince of Tyre; Richard II; and Romeo and Juliet. He also appeared in its production of The White Snake. Richard’s other OSF credits include Angelo in Measure for Measure, Athos in The Three Musketeers, Bernard Nightingale in Arcadia, Charles Webb in Our Town, Cleante in Tartuffe, Dottore in The Servant of Two Masters, Frederick Fellowes in Noises Off, Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet, Gayev in The Cherry Orchard, Herbert Dean in The Royal Family, Jaques in As You Like It, Joseph Gribble in Room Service, Master Ford in The Merry Wives of Windsor, Noriyasu Odagura in Throne of Blood, Oliver Davenport in Pentecost, Shannon in The Night of the Iguana, Sharvilaka in The Clay Cart, and Walter Griffin in UP. Regionally, Richard appeared at Arena Stage in Hedda Gabler and at the Guthrie Theater in Candida, Julius Caesar, Our Town, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and Room Service. He studied at the Juilliard School. Visit richardhowardactor.com.

Cristofer Jean
BROther-in-law/ENSEMBLE

In eight seasons at OSF, Cristofer has performed in As You Like It (Silvius); The Clay Cart; The Comedy of Errors; Henry IV, Part One (Richard II, Chamberlain, and Sir Richard Vernon); Henry VI, Part One (Henry VI and Bedford); Henry VI, Parts Two and Three (King Henry); Henry VIII; Lorca in a Green Dress (title role); The Merchant of Venice; The Music Man; Oedipus Complex; The Pirates of Penzance; The Tempest (Ariel); Titus Andronicus; Troylus and Cressida (Patroclus); and The Winter’s Tale. He’s also been seen at the Acting Company, national tour; the Alice B Theatre; Chautauqua Theatre Company; Northwest Asian American Theatre; The Public Theater; and Sirius Idaho Theatre Company. Cristofer received his education at Harbin Gonghe Daxue, the Juilliard School, and University of Washington.

Emily Sophia Knapp
ENSEMBLE

In New York, Emily appeared in The Golem at the Riverside Theatre, In This Is the End of Sleeping at the Chekhov Now Festival, Milicent Scowworthy at the Summer Play Festival 2006, People Burning in Hotels at Performance Space 122, Schwarzwound at HERE Arts Center, and This Place Is a Desert at Prelude Festival. She spent five seasons with OSF playing Celia in The Pirates of Penzance, Diana in All’s Well That Ends Well, Hermina in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Jane Pilkins in Death and the King’s Horseman, Jessica in The Merchant of Venice, Koken and Old Woman in Throne of Blood, Luciana in The Comedy of Errors, Moth in Love’s Labour’s Lost, and Philippine and Lisette in On the Razzle. Emily has also performed at many regional theatres, including American Repertory Theatre, Boston Musical Theater, Harlequin Productions, the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, the Súgán Theatre Company, and Underground Railway Theater. She also appeared in the film After the Flood and on the TV show Infidelities. Emily trained at L’Ecole Philippe Gaulier and received her BA from Harvard College.

Vin Kridakorn
ENSEMBLE

Vin joins The White Snake at Berkeley Rep direct from OSF. His New York credits include Guildenstern in Hamlet with the Gallery Players, Orestes in Butoh Electra at the New York International Fringe Festival, Pedant in The Taming of the Shrew with the Queens Players, as well as Spoon River Anthology at Roy Aria Theater, Tape at Dance New Amsterdam, and the North American premiere of Walkabout Yeolha at Riverside Theatre. He was a resident actor at the Flea Theatre and appeared in its world premiere of Future Anxiety. Vin appeared in the films English-Vinglish, Mia, and Play Name, which was shown at NewFest, Outfest, the Seattle International Film Festival and received the Iris Prize. He received his MFA from the Actors Studio Drama School at Pace University. Visit vin-kridakorn.net.
Christopher Livingston
XU XIAN/ENSEMBLE

Christopher is pleased to make his Berkeley Rep debut in *The White Snake*. In three seasons at osf, Christopher played Cleante in *The Imaginary Invalid*; Malik in *Party People*; Osric in *Hamlet*; Peto in *Henry IV, Part One*; a Pirate in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Xu Xian in *The White Snake*. He played Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet* at Virginia Stage Company, and also appeared in *Black Nativity* at Intiman Theatre; *Blue/Orange*, *Cymbeline*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Revision*, *Signs*, *Slowly Departing*, and *The Wall of Water* at Rutgers Theater Company; *Cymbeline* at Rutgers Conservatory at Shakespeare’s Globe in London; *Sankofa* at the Moore Theatre; and *Youth Ink! Theater Festival* at McCarter Theatre Center. Christopher received his bfa from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

Tanya Thai McBride
GREEN SNAKE

Tanya was in osf’s production of *The White Snake*. She was seen in *The Ash Girl* and *Walk Two Moons* at Adventure Stage Chicago; *The Fantasticks* at Porchlight Music Theatre; *Like the Moon Behind the Clouds* at Caffeine Theatre; *Mirror of the Invisible World* at the Goodman Theatre (understudy); *Mr. Fluxus, You Asked For It!* with the Neo-Futurists; punkplay with Pavement Group at the Steppenwolf Garage; *The Rivals* at Polarity Ensemble Theatre; *Sketchbook 8: Parkersburg* at Collaboraction; *Twilight Orchard* at Redmoon; and *Yellow Face* at Silk Road Rising. She received her MFA from Ohio State University and her BA from California State University, Northridge.

Lisa Tejero
SISTER-IN-LAW/ENSEMBLE

Lisa appeared at Berkeley Rep in *Journey to the West* and *Metamorphoses*. She was also in the Broadway production of *Metamorphoses* at Circle in the Square Theatre where she played the Therapist. This makes her 20th production with Mary Zimmerman. She has just finished a season at osf where she was in *Henry V* as Queen Isabel and *The White Snake*. She is an artistic associate of Lookingglass where she has appeared in *1984*, *Argonautika*, *Curiosity Shop*, *Ethan Frome*, *Fedra*, and *S/M*. Also in Chicago, Lisa has appeared in *As You Like It*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Ghostwritten*, *Journey to the West*, *Mirror of the Invisible World*, *The Odyssey*, and *Silk* at the Goodman; *Kafka on the
Shore at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; as well as Cordelia in King Lear at Missouri Repertory Theatre and Lady Macbeth in Macbeth at Oak Park Festival Theatre. She has also worked at Cincinnati Playhouse, Court Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, the Mark Taper Forum, McCarter, Milwaukee Rep, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, and Victory Gardens Theater. Her film credits include Above the Law, Chain Reaction, A Man's Woman, and The Medicine Show. Lisa is a recipient of two After Dark Awards and a Drama League Distinguished Performance nomination.

Amy Kim Waschke
WHITE SNAKE
Amy is a proud company member of InViolet Repertory Theater and an associate artist of Theatre C. Her New York credits include Alice in Slasherland, The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G, and Living Dead in Denmark with Vampire Cowboys; disOriented at Theatre C; Grief at Manhattan Theatre Source; and The Water Station at Pacific Performance Project East. Regionally, she's been seen in Edward II and Tamburlaine at the Shakespeare Theatre Company, the title role in Electra at the Hangar Theatre, Fabuloso at Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Measure for Measure at Seattle Shakespeare Company, Metamorphoses at Weston Playhouse Theatre Company, Somebody/Nobody at Arizona Theatre Company, and The White Snake at osf. She's also been seen on TV in Law & Order: svu. She received her MFA from the University of Washington's Professional Actor Training Program. Amy lives in Queens with her best friend and fiancé Moses.

Jack Willis
FA HAI/ENSEMBLE
Jack is a company member at osf and a cofounder of Aruba Repertory. He appeared on Broadway in Art, The Crucible, Julius Caesar, and The Old Neighborhood, and off Broadway in The Iphigenia Cycle, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Valhalla, and World of Mirth. At osf he played Don Adrian de Armado in Love's Labour's Lost, Fa Hai in The White Snake, the Lord Chief Justice in Henry IV, Part Two, and Lyndon Baines Johnson in All the Way. Jack appeared in more than 200 productions throughout the world and was a member of the following theatre companies: American Conservatory Theater, ART, Arena, Dallas Theater Center, and Trinity Repertory Company. He lent his voice talent to Toy Story 3 and appeared in the films The Cradle Will Rock, I Come in Peace, Love Hurts, The Out-of-Towners, Problem Child, and
BERKELEY REP PRESENTS

The Talented Mr. Ripley, as well as the TV shows Dallas, Ed, and Law & Order. Jack was a Lunt-Fontanne Fellow in the inaugural year of the fellowship at Ten Chimneys Foundation.

Tessa Brinckman
FLUTES
A New Zealand flutist, Tessa enjoys a versatile career in the U.S. and abroad. Her ensemble work includes playing with the Astoria, Bach, Bloch, and New Haven Festivals, Ensemble East West, and the Oregon Symphony. In addition to performing at osf for three seasons, Tessa has recorded and composed for theatre, film, public radio, and commercials in New Zealand and the U.S. Her CD Glass Sky received critical acclaim. Tessa has premiered works of numerous West Coast composers, including Todd Barton, Bill Kraft, and Tomas Svoboda. In demand as an innovative performer, she also co-directs the flute/percussion duo Caballito Negro and is a member of the baroque group Risonanti. She teaches at Southern Oregon University and Rogue Community College, and as a teacher/artist at universities throughout the West and abroad.

Ronnie Malley
STRINGS/PERCUSION
Ronnie performs with the music groups Dusan Ensemble, Lamajamal, Mucca Pazza, and the University of Chicago Middle East Music Ensemble. He was an actor and musician in The Arabian Nights at Arena, Berkeley Rep, and Lookingglass, and also appeared in The White Snake at csfr. He performed in The Band’s Visit at Playwrights Horizons, Hecphaestus and Mirror of the Invisible World at the Goodman, and Mish Hek Ya Balad with Arab-American Theatre Group. Ronnie is a faculty member at the Old Town School of Folk Music and Chicago Academy for the Arts.

Michal Palzewicz
CELLO
Michal is a member of Trine, a virtuosic world-fusion band, and he’s also the principal cellist of the Rogue Valley Symphony. He was a founding member of Elsner String Quartet, which performed in the United States at the 92nd St. Y, Merkin Concert Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in England at Snape Proms Festival and Wigmore Hall. At csfr he performed in Cinderella, Macbeth, Medea, The Pirates of Penzance, She Loves Me, and The White Snake. Michal earned the Sauderson Award at the 92nd Coleman Chamber Ensemble Competition and was the winner of the Young Concert Artists Auditions in Leipzig. He studied with the Amadeus Quartet, Julia Lichten, Hugh Maguire, Barbara Musiej, Peter Oundjian, David Soyer, Tomasz Strahl, and Michael Tree, and attended the Academy of Music in Warsaw and Manhattan School of Music.

Mary Zimmerman
ADAPTER/DIRECTOR
Mary received the 2002 Tony Award for Best Director and a 1998 MacArthur Fellowship. This is her seventh show for Berkeley Rep, following acclaimed productions of The Arabian Nights, Argonautika, Journey to the West, Metamorphoses, The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, and The Secret in the Wings. These plays — and others that she’s adapted and directed such as Eleven Rooms of Proust, The Odyssey, Silk, and S/M — have enjoyed celebrated runs at Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Goodman, the Huntington, Lookingglass, the Taper, McCarter, Seattle Rep, and Second Stage Theatre. She also directed All’s Well That Ends Well and Pericles for the Goodman, Henry VIII and Measure for Measure for the New York Shakespeare Festival, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream for the Huntington. In 2002, Mary created a new opera with Philip Glass called Galileo Galilei, which was presented at BAM, the Goodman, and the Barbican in London. In recent years, she has staged Armida, Lucia di Lammermoor, and La Sonnambula for the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Based in Chicago, Mary has won 10 Joseph Jefferson Awards — the city’s top theatrical honors — including prizes for best production and best direction. She is a member of Lookingglass, an artistic associate of the Goodman, and she holds the Jahnars Family Foundation Chair in Performance Studies at Northwestern University.

Daniel Ostling
SCENIC DESIGNER
Daniel is a scenic designer based in San Francisco and New York whose credits at Berkeley Rep include The Arabian Nights, Argonautika, Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men, Closer, Metamorphoses, and The Secret in the Wings. His recent designs include Candide at the Goodman, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, and the Huntington; Clybourne Park on Broadway and at the Taper; The Convert at McCarter, the Goodman, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre; Elizabeth Rex and A Midsummer Night’s Dream with Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Endgame and Play at ACT; The Verona Project at California Shakespeare Theater; and The White Snake at csfr. Daniel’s upcoming projects include Eastland at Lookingglass, where he is an ensemble member. He has worked throughout the country including at BAM, Lincoln Center, the Met, Playwrights Horizons, and Shakespeare in the Park. Internationally, his work has been seen in London and Melbourne. Daniel is an associate professor at Northwestern University in Chicago.

Mara Blumenfeld
COSTUME DESIGNER
Mara returns to Berkeley Rep where she previously designed Frank Galati’s adaptation of after the quake and Mary Zimmerman’s The Arabian Nights, Metamorphoses, and The Secret in the Wings. Based in Chicago, she has designed numerous productions for Chicago Shakes, Court Theatre, the Goodman, Steppenwolf, and Lookingglass, where she is an ensemble member. Her regional credits include productions for La Jolla Playhouse, osf, Seattle Rep, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, and the Taper. In New York she designed Metamorphoses at Circle in the Square/Second Stage, The Glorious Ones at Lincoln Center, The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci at Second Stage, and Mary Zimmerman’s productions of Lucia di Lammermoor and La Sonnambula for the Met.

T.J. Gerckens
LIGHTING DESIGNER
T.J. is pleased to return to Berkeley Rep where he previously designed The Arabian Nights, Journey to the West, Metamorphoses, The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, and The Secret in the Wings. His most noteworthy designs include Candide, Silk, and the Mary Zimmerman and Philip Glass opera Galileo Galilei at the Goodman; Pericles at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, DC; and two seasons as resident lighting designer at Actors Theatre of Louisville. T.J.’s New York work includes Lucia di Lammermoor and La Sonnambula for the Met, Measure for Measure in Central Park, Metamorphoses on Broadway, and The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci at Second Stage. He has received numerous honors for his lighting, including a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award, Chicago’s Jefferson Award, Drama Critics Circle Award, Los Angeles Ovation Award, and New York’s Drama Desk Award.

Andre Pluess
ORIGINAL MUSIC/SOUND DESIGNER
Andres has worked with Berkeley Rep on numerous shows: after the quake, The Arabian Nights, Argonautika, Blue Door, Ghost Light, Honour, Metamorphoses, and The Secret in the Wings. His Broadway credits include 33 Variations, The Clean House, I Am My Own Wife, and Metamorphoses. His other credits include many productions for About Face Company (artistic associate), Court Theatre, the Goodman, Lookingglass (artistic associate), Northlight Theatre, Steppenwolf, Victory Gardens (resident designer), and other Chicago and regional theatres. His more recent projects include Cymbeline at the Shakespeare Theatre, Equivocation at Arena, Ghost Light and The Merchant of Venice at osf, Macbeth and Titus Andronicus at Cal Shakes (where he is an
artistic associate), *Palomino* at Center Theatre Group, *Sex with Strangers* at Steppenwolf, and *Stage Kiss* at the Goodman, as well as the score for the film *The Business of Being Born*. Andre received a Barrymore Award, a Drama Critics Circle Award, Drama Desk and Lortel nominations, multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards and Citations, and an LA Ovation Award for composition and sound design.

**Shawn Sagady**  
**PROJECTION DESIGNER**

Shawn’s work was last seen at Berkeley Rep in *Emotional Creature*. His Broadway credits include *Leap of Faith* and *Memphis* (2010 Best Musical), and his work has been seen off Broadway in *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* at Second Stage and *Father Comes Home From the War* at The Public. He also worked on the national tours of *Julius Caesar* and *Memphis* with the Acting Company. His regional credits include *All the Way, American Night, Measure for Measure*, and *The White Snake* at OSF; *Carmen* at LJP; and *Cowboy vs. Samurai* with Mo’ololo. Shawn has also designed for the Kaufman Performing Arts Center Opening Gala, the Honors Gala at LJP, and the Women in the World conference (the Daily Beast).

**Michael Suenkel**  
**PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER**

Michael began his association with Berkeley Rep as the stage management intern for the 1984–85 season and is now in his 19th year as production stage manager. Some of his favorite shows include *36 Views*, *Endgame*, *Eurydice*, *Hydriotaphia*, and *Mad Forest*. He has also worked with the Barbican in London, the Huntington, the Juste Pour Rire Festival in Montreal, LJP, Pittsburgh Public Theater, The Public and Second Stage Theatres in New York, and Yale Rep. For the Magic, he stage managed Albert Takazauckas’ *Breaking the Code* and Sam Shepard’s *The Late Henry Moss*.

**Tony Taccone**  
**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Tony is artistic director of Berkeley Rep. During his tenure, the Tony Award–winning nonprofit has earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In those 15 years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 60 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 18 shows to New York, two to London, and now one to Hong Kong. Tony has staged more than 35 plays in Berkeley, including new work from Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Quincy Long, 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*. Tony commissioned Tony Kushner’s legendary *Angels in America*, co-directed its world premiere, and has collaborated with Kushner on seven projects. His regional credits include ATL, Arena, CTG, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie, the Huntington, osf, The Public, and Seattle Rep. In 2012, Tony was selected to...
receive the Margo Jones Award for demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre. As a playwright, Tony recently debuted Ghost Light and Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup.

Susan Medak  MANAGING DIRECTOR
Susan has served as Berkeley Rep’s managing director since 1990, leading the administration and operations of the Theatre. She has served as president of the League of Resident Theatres (lorrt) and treasurer of Theatre Communications Group, organizations that represent the interests of nonprofit theatres across the nation. Susan chaired two panels for the Massachusetts Arts Council and has also served on program panels for Arts Midwest, the Joyce Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Closer to home, Susan chairs the Downtown Berkeley Business Improvement District and serves as president of the Downtown Berkeley Association. She is the founding chair of the Berkeley Arts in Education Steering Committee for Berkeley Unified School District and the Berkeley Cultural Trust. She was awarded the 2012 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Medal by the Berkeley Community Fund. Susan serves on the faculty of Yale School of Drama and is a proud member of the Mont Blanc Ladies’ Literary Guild and Trekking Society. She lives in Berkeley with her husband.

Karen Racanelli  GENERAL MANAGER
Karen joined Berkeley Rep in November 1993 as education director. Under her supervision, Berkeley Rep’s Programs for Education provided live theatre for more than 20,000 students annually. In November 1995, she became general manager, and since then has overseen the day-to-day operations of the Theatre, supervising the box office, company management, and IT. She has represented the League of Resident Theatres during negotiations with both Actors’ Equity Association and the Union of Stage Directors and Choreographers. Prior to her tenure at Berkeley Rep, Karen worked for Theatre Bay Area as director of theatre services and as an independent producer at several Bay Area theatre companies. She has served on the boards of Climate Theater, Overtone Theatre Company, and Park Day School, and is currently on the board of the Julia Morgan Center. Karen is married to arts attorney MJ Bogatin and they have two children.

Madeleine Oldham  DIRECTOR, THE GROUND FLOOR/RESIDENT DRAMATURG
Madeleine is the director of Berkeley Rep’s Ground Floor and the Theatre’s resident dramaturg. As literary manager and associate dramaturg at Baltimore Centerstage, she produced the First Look reading series and headed up its young audience initiative. Before moving to Baltimore, she was the literary manager at Seattle Children’s Theatre, where she oversaw an extensive commissioning program. She also acted as assistant and interim literary manager at Intiman. Madeleine served for four years on the executive committee of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and has also worked with ACT (Seattle), Austin Scriptworks, Crowded Fire Theatre Company, the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, the Kennedy Center, New Dramatists, Playwrights Center, and Portland Center Stage.

Amy Potozkin  CASTING DIRECTOR
Amy is in her 23rd season with Berkeley Rep. She has also had the pleasure of casting projects for ACT (Seattle), Arizona Theatre Company, the Aurora Theatre, B Street Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Marin Theatre Company, the Marsh, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Social Impact Productions Inc., and Traveling Jewish Theatre. Amy cast roles for the film Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton; Haiku Tunnel and the upcoming feature film Beyond Redemption by Britta Sjogren. Amy received her MFA from Brandeis University, where she was also an artist-in-residence. She has been a coach to hundreds of actors, teaches acting at Mills College, and leads workshops at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre and numerous other venues in the Bay Area.

Marjorie Randolph  SEASON PRODUCER
Marjorie is president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and a longtime supporter of the Theatre. She recently moved back to Berkeley after retiring as head of worldwide human resources for Walt Disney Studios. During her tenure at Berkeley Rep, she has produced 29 plays. A member of the California Bar and a former president of California Women Lawyers, she serves on the National Advisory Panel of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford University.

Jack & Betty Schafer  SEASON PRODUCERS
Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack, one of the Theatre’s board members, also sits on the boards of the Jewish Community Endowment, San Francisco Opera, and the Straus Historical Society. He is co-chair of the Oxbow School in Napa and an emeritus trustee of the San Francisco Art Institute, where he served as board chair. Betty, a retired transitions coach, has resumed her earlier career as a nonfiction writer and poet. She serves on the boards of Brandeis Hillel Day School, Coro Foundation, Earthjustice, and JVS and represents the Jewish Community Foundation on a national allocation committee.

The Strauch Kulhanjian Family  SEASON PRODUCERS
Roger Strauch is a former president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and a current member. He is chairman of The Roda Group (rodagroup.com), a venture-development company based in Berkeley and best known for launching Ask.com, PolYServe, and Sight-speed. Roger serves on the board of Game Ready, and his firm is the largest investor in Solazyme, a renewable oil and bio-products company based in South San Francisco (nasdaq:szym, solazyme.com). Roger is a member of the engineering dean’s college advisory boards of Cornell University and UC Berkeley. He is vice-chairman of the board of trustees for the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (msri) and a co-founder of the William Saroyan Program in Armenian Studies at Cal. He is also an executive member of the Piedmont Council of the Boy Scouts of America. His wife, Julie A. Kulhanjian, is an attending physician at Oakland Children’s Hospital. They have three teenaged children.

Pam & Mitch Nichter  EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
Pam is the chief operating officer, chief financial officer, and a founding principal at Osterweiss Capital Management, a San Francisco investment manager. Pam serves on the board of trustees at Berkeley Rep. Osterweiss Capital and its principals support and are on the governing boards of numerous Bay Area organizations, including the Contemporary Jewish Museum, Marin Summer Theater, San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Free Clinic, San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, and Summer Search. Mitch practices corporate and securities law at Paul Hastings, a global law firm, where he is a partner and heads up the firm’s hedge fund practice. Paul Hastings provides pro bono and other support to a number of Bay Area not-for-profit organizations including Audubon Canyon Ranch, East Bay Community Law Center, United Way, and WildCare. Pam and Mitch live in the North Bay and have been enthusiastic supporters of Berkeley Rep for years.

Shirley D. & Philip D. Schild  EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
Phil and Shirley moved to the Bay Area from Sacramento and Los Angeles after retiring in
1985, as a professor of medicine in gastroenterology at UCSF and UC Davis, Phil volunteered his services at hospitals and clinics in San Francisco and the East Bay for 20 years. Shirley volunteered for 22 years as an art librarian at the Oakland Museum of California. One of their first theatre experiences in the Bay Area was a performance at Berkeley Rep, and they have been ardent supporters ever since. They are also enthusiastic supporters of Cal Performances, Oakland East Bay Symphony, and the Oakland Museum of California. They are especially pleased to be involved with Berkeley Rep productions as they have attended almost every performance since 1985 and have introduced family and friends to the Theatre. They are pleased to be executive producers of Mary Zimmerman’s *The White Snake*.

**Jill & Steve Fugaro PRODUCERS**

Jill Fugaro is co-chair of Berkeley Rep’s Onstage Gala and member of the board of trustees. She is the founder and former CEO of Murlin Apparel Group, Inc., the Jill Martin sportswear design and manufacturing company. She works with Marin Humane Society’s SHARE dog program doing therapy visits with elders, is on the advisory council for the Institute for Health and Healing, and is an UCCE master gardener. Steve Fugaro is a primary care internist practicing in San Francisco, affiliated with both CP/Mc and UCSF. He is past president of the San Francisco Medical Society and is on the board of the San Francisco Health Plan. Steve and Jill both serve as trustees of Sausalito Presbyterian Church.

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Many Berkeley Rep productions are unsuitable for young children. Please inquire before bringing children to the Theatre. No babes in arms.
Consider the Pregnant Pause

That delicious moment of anticipation. We savor it, waiting, waiting, waiting for the slap of a shiny, fresh thought.

Berkeley Rep
leave a little different

It's ambitious, but we're trying to change the world, one play at a time. To help, visit berkeleyrep.org/consider
Meet Dorothy Mayers, resident, educator, and photographer. Her passion is taking the perfect picture. Her life is wonderfully framed by friends, family, and a vibrant, independent way of living. If every picture tells a story, Dorothy’s writing her next, best chapter at St. Paul’s Towers. To learn more, or for your personal visit, please call 510.891.8542.

Irwin and Dorothy Mayers, joined in 2005

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