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The Berkeley Rep Magazine
2013–14 · ISSUE 1

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“Unforgettable!”
—LA TIMES

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—LONDON GUARDIAN

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—SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

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—WALL STREET JOURNAL

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Berkeley Rep
When I think of Christopher Durang’s plays I’m reminded of my Uncle Pasquale’s funeral. We loved Uncle Pasquale. He was robust as a young man with a huge, infectious laugh. But as he got older, he got weird. His paranoia became the stuff of family legend. During the last 20 years of his life he probably left his house twice. Both times undercover. For years no one saw him.

So when the rent-a-priest at his funeral launched into a eulogy describing Uncle Pasquale as a “man of the community,” my siblings and I started to squirm. As the priest went on to portray him as a man who “loved mingling amongst us,” we started kicking each other, and then giggling, finally bursting into wildly inappropriate laughter that mortified my parents and filled us with years of guilt.

Christopher Durang understands this kind of uncontrollable laughter. He’s built his career on creating characters that can’t help themselves. However crazy they might be, however extreme their behavior, they are simply acting on their own truth. Durang resists being overly mean towards them. He seeks to reveal their logic rather than simply mock their ridiculousness; and ultimately, he empathizes with the sufferers. For all the wicked satire in his plays, all the darkness that lies underneath the surface of his dramatic situations, he chooses to forgive his characters through laughter.

Both the laughter and the forgiveness are on full display in his latest gem: Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike. Loosely inspired by the work of Chekhov, this play takes on the modern world with comic relish mingled with a kind of brokenhearted sympathy. The two tones are married together like an odd couple that can’t be untangled from each other. The result is something entirely recognizable and original.

To direct this play, it’s a great pleasure to bring back my old friend, Mr. Richard E.T. White. For many years, Richard was a stalwart member of this community (for real, not like my Uncle Pasquale), before he took his talents to Chicago and then Seattle. He reunites with many of his oldest collaborators on this project, as well as some great folks who are new to our Theatre. Together they enter Durang’s unique laboratory, where they get to dissect the comedy and the pathos and make some theatrical magic of their own. It’s a great way to kick off the new season, and we welcome each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Tony Taccone
Bill T. Jones/Arnlie Zane Dance Company
30th Anniversary Celebration • Oct 7–13, 2013

Bill T. Jones/Arnlie Zane Dance Company 30th Anniversary Exhibition
Sep 20 - Nov 3 • Exhibition Reception Oct 10 • Upstairs Galleries


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For many, autumn signals the waning of the year, with the sun setting earlier, children returning to school, and that inevitable hunkering down in anticipation of winter. During this time, squirrels hoard food, and bears store fat. Autumn is when one buckles down to business after the respite of the summer.

And yet, for me, autumn has always meant something completely different. It has always signaled the beginning! We’ve spent at least a year talking with artists, assembling teams of creative partners, and constructing performance calendars (then deconstructing and reconstructing them again). Tickets have been sold and budgets approved. Now, we are finally able to close the books on everything that came before and turn our full attention to a new season of performances.

The first day of rehearsals for the first production of the season has its own traditions. We assemble the entire staff, many members of our board, and our most deeply committed supporters and volunteers for one grand beginning. When I look at this heady mix of people I am always reminded that what we do here at Berkeley Rep is the result of a somewhat unwieldy, ongoing exercise in collaboration in the service of a larger calling. Our goal, always, is to produce theatre that challenges, enriches, stretches, entertains, and sometimes even confounds our artists and our audience members.

Our route to that end varies constantly. Sometimes that means reclaiming a mighty classic; sometimes that means uncovering an emerging creative voice. Berkeley Rep’s task with each play is two-fold: to do whatever we can to give each play and each group of artists every opportunity to be wildly successful, and to give our audiences the tools and resources to fully experience each one of those productions.

The first rehearsal for Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike was particularly sweet. Welcoming Richard E.T. White, Kent Dorsey, Beaver Bauer, Sharon Lockwood, and Lorri Holt back to Berkeley Rep was deeply gratifying and a bit like a family reunion. Each of them has a history with this company that stretches back to the ’80s. This production is a special opportunity to bring together our veterans as well as some really wonderful actors who will be new to you. That first day in the rehearsal hall with old colleagues and new ones, with staff members who have been with us for 25 years and the new group of fresh-faced Berkeley Rep fellows, was a reminder that we are a company—a family—with a past, a present, and a future.

I’m so glad that you have joined us for Christopher Durang’s deliriously fun play and that its humor, its heart, and its intelligence make you glad that you’ve joined us for another beginning. Some of you have been with us since our founding in 1968. Whether you’ve been part of Berkeley Rep for decades or are joining us for the first time tonight, welcome. Welcome to our family.

Warmly,

Susan Medak

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“My mother always told me” that each piece of music tells a story,” says Grammy–nominee Mona Golabek. “So she told me the story of her life through the music she loved.”

Now Mona shares her mother’s extraordinary story with us. It’s 1938, and Lisa Jura is a young, promising musician in Vienna whose dreams are about to be interrupted by the Nazi regime. Her family has access to one safe passage to England via the Kindertransport, so Lisa is sent away from Vienna, away from her home, and away from her beloved music instructor who had first recognized her unique abilities on the piano. But Lisa’s pursuit of a better life doesn’t end when she reaches England. In this poignant show directed by Hershey Felder (George Gershwin Alone), Mona Golabek performs some of the world’s most beautiful music live—as she relates the real-life legacy of her mother’s quest to survive.

Before The Pianist was a play, it was a book that inspired thousands of young musicians around the country. In a 2012 interview with Boston’s NPR station, Mona explained, “I dreamed about taking the book and turning it into a theatrical production because I saw the effect of my telling the story to students when the book first came out.” The Pianist of Willesden Lane debuted at the Geffen Playhouse and has since traveled the country with terrific reviews in its wake.

“This elegant heartfelt show is an arresting, deeply affecting triumph,” asserts the Los Angeles Times. “A stirring case of art preserving life...” says the Chicago Tribune. “Enough to make your mouth fall open with a certain wonder at the way of the world.”

The Pianist of Willesden Lane begins October 25, and tickets are on sale now. For the best seats and other valuable perks, subscribe to our 2013–14 season. Visit berkeleyrep.org or call 510 647-2949, Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 7pm.
As an actor, stepping into a role in a Christopher Durang play is no easy feat. Durang’s work is “distinctively loopy,” as Ben Brantley at the New York Times has defined it, and making his material resonate requires an innate sense of comedy and the ability to uncover the funny in the layers of absurdism.

The ever-pervading question is, can funny be taught? At Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, we think the answer is yes! In fact, we think that most people have inherent skills that lend themselves to playing comedy. It’s just a matter of honing those skills and developing them into specific techniques—which you can do in the myriad comedy classes we offer throughout the year.

Joan Mankin, quite the clown herself, returned to the School of Theatre to teach a physical comedy class this summer. She attests that anyone who “likes to be laughed at and is not afraid of being ridiculous” has what it takes to play comedy. The most common error people make, she explains, is “overdoing things, trying to make what they are doing funny.”

Rebecca Stockley agrees. A staple both at the School of Theatre and at BATS Improv in San Francisco, she teaches an expanding roster of improv classes all year long to our students in Berkeley. “Trying to be funny seems to chase the funny away,” she observes. “The harder a person tries to be funny, the more desperation he or she projects. The audience can sense an actor’s desperation and feels pity rather than amusement,” making it less likely that they will laugh.

So what are the tricks of the trade?

“One: listen to the audience. Two: don’t be afraid of making mistakes. Three: accept what the audience finds funny,” Joan advises.

For Rebecca, it’s all about the rule of three: set up, pattern, break in routine. Oh, and she also encourages “fearlessly going to extremes.”

No problem, right?

That’s where the technique comes in. It protects the actors, allowing them to be fearless and spontaneous within the safety of a framework they’ve established for themselves.

“To improvise we learn to take risks, not to take things personally, to try things, to be willing to let them go,” Rebecca explains. “Improvisation can develop tolerance for ambiguity and fearless risk-taking.”
Rediscover your creativity! It’s not too late to get in on a class this fall. Learn more and register at berkeleyrep.org/classes or call 510 647-2972.

Physical comedy rests on a slightly different approach. “You have to really hone the physical comedy work you are doing — rehearse it over and over again so it is a part of your body,” Joan instructs. “Then, when you are performing, you don’t have to think so much about the physicality or the humor. You just have to listen to the audience and hear how they respond.”

Listening is important for improvisers as well, as it is for all actors. Rebecca advises, “To improvise, an actor needs to be present, in the moment, and to listen. This state of being is vital in auditions and rehearsals — and it brings a performance to life.” She continues, “An actor who isn’t present and in the moment, but who is going through the rehearsed motions like a practiced routine, is much less engaging. I’m not saying that the actor isn’t doing the same thing from show to show, but that he or she is doing the same thing as if it were for the very first time each time. Improvisation develops the ability to stay present, alive, and fresh.”

Rebecca has found that improv can be used to teach and develop the whole range of comedic skill sets. “In improvisation, as in storytelling, a basic platform of who, what, and where provides a foundation on which to build a scene,” she explains. “Specialized skills can be leveraged to make that scene satire, black comedy, or what you will.”

Joan points out that satire and dark comedy don’t need to get as much laughter as slapstick, mugging, and clowning. It is the difference between the subtle dialogue written by Jon Stewart or, say, Christopher Durang, and the work of the Three Stooges or Jim Carrey.

The key element across the spectrum of comedy, though, is timing. It is apparent in the work of every comedian, whether it seems highly intuitive and impulsive (Jon Stewart) or obsessively orchestrated (the Three Stooges). That level of orchestration points to the degree of technical training required in physical comedy, which Rebecca and Joan both agree is the most demanding on a performer.

“I have tremendous respect for physical comedy. It is not to be taken lightly,” Rebecca says. “Physical comedy is best when practitioners can be choreographed to repeat the same movements with precise timing again and again. It takes strength, specificity, attention to detail, and mindfulness to repeat actions. Sloppy physical acting doesn’t work and can be dangerous. A pratfall gone wrong hurts. A missed punch, slap, or throw can cause serious injury.”

Yet in the same way that physical comedians need to repeat actions with precision, actors performing satire, improv, or even stand-up comedy need to be able to repeat jokes the same way time after time.

For all of the marked differences in comedic styles, there are more similarities in playing these varied styles than meet the eye. It all comes back to a person’s inherent traits and which styles they take to most naturally.

So while we do believe that funny can be taught (and with teachers like Joan and Rebecca on our faculty, we’re ready to prove that!), we want to echo Rebecca in reminding you: “Don’t go for the funny and the funny will find you.”

Maybe it already has.

“One: listen to the audience. Two: don’t be afraid of making mistakes. Three: accept what the audience finds funny.”

—JOAN MANKIN, PHYSICAL COMEDY TEACHER

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GLITTER, GLAMOUR, GLEAM
Getting #social with the Theatre

BY SARAH NOWICKI

Let’s face it—we live in a world of likes, shares, and retweets. Not only does it seem that social media is here to stay, it has become an integrated part of our daily routine at Berkeley Rep. We update our Facebook and Twitter pages frequently with news about upcoming shows, pictures from artists, and important information for our audience. We chat with our fans, or “Reptorians” (a name they chose for themselves on Facebook), about almost anything—whether it’s answering questions about a new play, providing recommendations for nearby restaurants, or sharing a photo from rehearsal. For instance, during the run of No Man’s Land, the immediacy of social media helped us notify our fans and followers of last-minute ticket availability. Even Masha from Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike has something to say on Twitter with her own hashtag, #MashaSays. Whether you’re checking in with us on Foursquare or sharing photos from our interactive lobbies on Instagram, we love to see how our fans are making theatre part of their everyday conversations.

Join our online dialogue, get a glimpse behind the scenes, and share your thoughts about our work onstage. Like us on Facebook at /BerkeleyRep and follow us on Twitter @berkeleyrep—but please, not during the performance.

Last night was the start to a stellar run of NO MAN’S LAND with a fabulous opening. Here’s a photo of the whole cast along with Tony, Sean, and Susie. Cheers to a fabulous run (and Keith Stern for this great photo)!

Check out Anna Deavere Smith and Tony Kushner! They are all smiles at The White House just after receiving their medals. Congratulations!

Mark your calendars, Reptorians: Broadway Idiot is set for a wider theatrical release beginning on October 11!
In June, Berkeley Rep hosted its second annual Ground Floor summer residency lab. The follow-up to our debut included 16 projects that came to us from all over the country in various stages of development. Writers, composers, actors, musicians, directors, dramaturgs, and designers gathered at Harrison Street to lay foundations for the brand new plays they are crafting from the ground up.

The summer lab was designed with the potential for maximum responsiveness in mind. No process looks the same, and each begins with artists telling us what their ideal residencies would look like. We try to come as close as possible to what they ask for. As projects develop, needs shift as new characters are added or cut, music or movement becomes more or less important, or a play takes a very different direction from its original starting place. We try to remain nimble. A final reading or presentation at the culmination of an artist’s time with us is an option if it feels helpful to further the project, but is not required if it’s too early for an audience.
We saw magic in action. Victor Lesniewski wrestled the sprawling topic of the Syrian civil war into a cohesive shape and wrote an entire draft in three days. Jackie Sibbiles Drury pretended she was procrastinating by watching Vine videos made by teenage girls for hours (which is saying something, as each one is only six seconds long). Then on the last day she busted out about 45 astonishing pages of text that captured with penetrating honesty the emotional brutality teenage girls can inflict on one another. César Alvarez created a prototype of the kind of immersive experience he feels holds the key to the future of theatre.

The Debate Society spent a number of afternoons studying the awkwardness of climbing in and out of a Jacuzzi and whether that might affect how the set was configured and how the characters relate to one another. Lauren Gunderson taught herself to play the banjo, and performed songs in front of an audience for the first time. Each artist’s residency was tailored to what his or her particular project needed at that moment in time.

So what happens next? Janet Allard and Niko Tsakalakos are meeting to build the seven songs they had when they left us into a fleshed-out story. Lisa Peterson will find some time to carve out of her busy directing schedule to sit down with her composer, Todd Almond, and put their heads together about where their story wants to go. Larissa FastHorse has a draft that is pretty much rehearsal ready, and is looking for a company to produce the world premiere of her play.

Four plays from 2012’s inaugural summer lab received or will receive productions this year: Dan LeFranc’s Troublemaker, or the Freakin’ Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright and Marcus Gardley’s The House that will not Stand at Berkeley Rep; Heidi Stillman’s adaptation of Marguerite Duras’ The North China Lover at Lookingglass in Chicago; and Madeleine George’s The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence at Playwrights Horizons in New York.
Welcoming Liesl

Berkeley Rep announces a new member of our artistic team

BY BENJAMIN HANNA

New plays are on fire at Berkeley Rep. We’ve championed new work for years, but now we’re creating more and more of it on our stages. As we continue to investigate innovative ways of creating plays through The Ground Floor, our Center for the Creation and Development and New Work, we look to collaborate with those who share our passion. So it is with great pleasure that we introduce Berkeley Rep’s new associate director, Liesl Tommy.

Liesl directed the acclaimed production of Lynn Nottage’s Ruined in 2011 at Berkeley Rep — and the San Francisco Chronicle noted her “richly textured staging.” In her new role, Liesl will support ongoing artistic pursuits in the spirit of cultivating and producing innovative and adventurous work for the Theatre. A big job, but she’s uniquely qualified for this role.

“I had a profound experience working with Berkeley Rep to bring Ruined to Bay Area audiences,” remarks Liesl. “Berkeley Rep has a reputation for producing rigorous, exciting theatre with truly forward-thinking and challenging ideas. It’s why all these great theatre artists want to get their work done here. I’m honored to join the staff and to participate in bolstering the creative visions of the organization.”

A native of Cape Town, South Africa, Liesl is an award-winning director who has captured international and national attention for her productions. She has an affinity for new work and counts 11 world premieres among her credits. She has helmed plays at prestigious theatres across the country, and she also serves as the program associate at Sundance Institute Theatre Program, focusing on its activities in East Africa. She was recently made an artist trustee with the Sundance Institute board of trustees.

“I am thrilled to welcome Liesl to our staff this season,” says Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “She is the consummate artist and a skilled and enthusiastic collaborator. She’s a wonderful addition to the creative team as we continue to chart our course for the future to bring powerful stories to our stage.”

“Berkeley Rep has a reputation for producing rigorous, exciting theatre with truly forward-thinking and challenging ideas. It’s why all these great theatre artists want to get their work done here.”

—LIESL TOMMY
Berkeley Rep's 2013–14 season open-captioned performances:

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
Sunday, October 20, 2013 at 2pm

The Pianist of Willesden Lane
Sunday, December 8, 2013 at 2pm

Tristan & Yseult
Sunday, January 5, 2014 at 2pm

The House that will not Stand
Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 2pm

Accidental Death of an Anarchist
Sunday, April 20, 2014 at 2pm

Tribes
Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 8pm
Friday, May 9, 2014 at 8pm
Sunday, May 11, 2014 at 2pm

The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures
Sunday, June 29, 2014 at 2pm

If you've ever had to lean over to your theatregoing companion during a show and whisper, “What did she say?” then we have some fantastic news for you: Berkeley Rep now offers open captioning for every play in our 2013–14 season. Open captioning is state-of-the-art technology that displays text of an actor's speech at the same time the actor is speaking. Unlike with closed captioning, audience members don't need to have any special equipment to see the displayed text—no headsets, no fumbling with hearing aids. We're able to provide this exciting new service thanks to a partnership with Theatre Development Fund's (TDF) National Opening Captioning Initiative.

"Open captioning is one more way that we can open our doors to all audiences and provide more access for our patrons, allowing them to participate in the live theatre experience," says Susan Medak, Berkeley Rep’s managing director. “We are committed to eliminating any barriers that keep people from experiencing all that Berkeley Rep has to offer.”

“Open captioning is a great equalizer, a groundbreaking service for audience members with hearing loss,” adds Lisa Carling, director of TDF Accessibility Programs. “There is no guessing on words or pretending to understand a line that evokes a strong response from others sitting around them. We are delighted to help Berkeley Rep make its performances more enjoyable and accessible to this broader audience.”

The captioning will be provided by c2 (caption coalition) inc., which has captioned more than 800 theatrical productions in over 180 venues. At Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre and Thrust Stage, open captioning will be viewable from at least 25 seats. Interested in open captioning? Our box office team members are happy to help you find the perfect seat. Call 510 647-2949, Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 7pm.

SONIA: Now I feel better.
VANYA: I'm glad.
SONIA: Has the blue heron been at the pond yet this morning?
In this age of email, text messages, and 140 characters, it’s not every day that you receive a handwritten note in the mail. And yet, that’s exactly what hundreds of Berkeley Rep supporters received this summer.

While you were at the beach or in the mountains, Berkeley Rep staff, artisans, teachers, and Teen Council members took the time to write to some of our donors and let them know how much their gift to the Theatre means to each of them. Since we couldn’t send handwritten notes to all of our generous supporters, we thought we’d share a few of these with you here. From all of us at Berkeley Rep, thank you for allowing us to do our work and for helping create extraordinary theatre!
Richard E.T. White is a surprising man. In his celebrated and substantial career as a director and educator, he has done many things you would not expect the same person to do. His passion for theatre has led him from the Bay Area to Japan to Seattle, from Brecht to Shakespeare and rock 'n roll. Over all of his passion is a warmth, sparkle, and generosity of spirit that is evident in every interaction.
Julie McCormick: What did your process of preparing for this particular play entail?

Richard E.T. White: This play is kind of a mash-up. It’s a fond embrace of both high and low culture, which is a wonderful thing for anyone who is working on it. There’s a kind of wonderful roller coaster of references that you need to ride while putting yourself into the world of the play.

I think one of the things that appealed to me almost immediately when I read the play is that I’m basically the same age as Vanya and have a lot of the same reference points. One thing I look for is that familial connection. When you talk about process, I think one of the things an artist has to do is find ownership, and find one’s own way into the play. I remember Ozzie and Harriet, I’m confused about cell phones and text messaging, and although my parents were not college professors who dabbled in community theatre, I did note with affection that my father courted my mother by stage managing productions that she was in at our local community theatre in Trail, British Columbia. So one of the things that I’m doing is combing through my own autobiography and finding how the play can become personal to me. And I think that’s something that any artist needs to do. What I’ve discovered about myself as a director is that the more I can invest and be in the world of the play on a personal level, the better the experience is for me and the more I actually have to offer my collaborators on the play.

So I’ve been looking at the Disney movies, looking at Smiles of a Summer Night, and reading the Chekhov plays to try and get a sense of what it was that Mr. Durang pulled from, but I’m also enjoying the opportunity to watch the E channel and devour Entertainment Weekly. There’s the world that Vanya and Sonia and Nina live in, but then there’s also that wonderful, bizarre, Fellini-esque world that Masha and Spike bring onstage with them, which is the most foreign world to me. I can embrace Chekhov and I can embrace Ingmar Bergman and even Walt Disney with great ardor and complete identification. What I don’t do, like Vanya, again, like Vanya and Sonia, is that I don’t swim in that particular world of young Hollywood.

Chekhov is a major reference point and has been a way in for you, but do you think that an audience member needs to be familiar with Chekhov in order to appreciate what’s going on?

Oh no, not at all. I think there’s probably an extra layer that comes through if you’ve read all the plays, but I think that ultimately, for all of its literary allusions and allusions to specifics of pop culture, the root of the play is something that is deeply human and very universal, which is, “What does it mean to be a family?” What I respond to is the present tense of those relationships onstage. The sense that there’s this world in which people are contemplating what it means to be at the nether end of their lives. What are the dreams you have that are unfulfilled? Are there still possibilities left in you? Do you feel like the doors of your life are closing, and what can open them? How do we stay attuned to the possibility of miracles in our lives? Those kinds of things are universal — the relationships between brothers and sisters, the relationships between lovers, the idea of the generational difference between young and old… that’s the emotional ground of the play.

And so I think of someone like Stephen King, for instance, who populates his novels with endless citations of pop culture and specifics of culture, but at the same time, you don’t need to know every one of those things that he’s talking about to be pulled along on the thrill ride. And the same thing is true of Shakespeare and, frankly, of Chekhov. If you read the plays of Chekhov again, there’s a lot of information in there that we don’t necessarily know immediately, but that doesn’t stop us from responding to the emotional storytelling in the play. I think the same thing is true of Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike.

You’re the head of the theatre department at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. When did teaching become a part of your trajectory?

Very early on, actually. The first paid job I had in theatre when I was 20 years old was with an organization called Neighborhood Youth Corps, where I got a summer job through my acting teacher teaching theatre to high school kids.

And when was this? What was that like?

That was back in 1970. My teaching partner Jane Unger and I were very ambitious, and set up these workshops that were going to culminate in a performance of Brecht’s A Man’s a Man. We were going to do it as an anti-war protest, as this was the height of the Vietnam War. So I really started teaching and directing well before I was ready to do it, and the first job I got after I graduated college was a teaching job. I then spent three years as a teacher with the Drama Studio when it was in Berkeley; I taught through the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival (now known as Cal Shakes) when I was there; and a year after I was kindly shown the door by the PhD program at the University of California, they hired me back to teach. I never thought that at a given point I would become a teacher. So much of my life — and I think this is one of the reasons I like the play too — has been a series of miracles and happy accidents and opportunities that arrive out of the blue.

My wife and I embarked on this magnificent adventure in 1992 when we answered an ad in Artssearch magazine on kind of a whim to go teach in Japan, and to our surprise we were selected and hired. So we went off to teach in Japan for three years.

What did you teach there? Theatre?

We taught English at a technical college in Yokohama, and we also taught theatre classes and directed plays at a Japanese-language theatre company in Tokyo. It was an enormous spiritual, anthropological, and creative venture for us. I think that’s when I became an educator: it was the experience of being in Japan and realizing how by teaching language and by teaching how language impacts behavior that we were opening doors of perception up to these students. That was fascinating and really rewarding, and we could feel how we were helping to make a difference in the lives and worldviews of our students in Japan.
Your roots go very deep in the Bay Area, and this is a return to Berkeley Rep after a fair hiatus. Almost 20 years.

What has been your association with Berkeley Rep?

I established myself as a director in the Bay Area in 1979 and had the great fortune to have some success at smaller theatres like the Eureka, and then moved to what was then the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival. Michael Leibert had invited me several times to direct at Berkeley Rep but it had never worked out with my schedule. Then when Joy Carlin took over she offered me the chance to direct a couple of plays in 1984, and that was the time when Sharon Ott came in. Sharon not only confirmed that I would still be directing there, bless her heart, but offered me a staff position. So for two years I was the resident director at Berkeley Rep, and directed I think five plays in the first couple of years that I worked there. It was a great opportunity for me because at the time, Berkeley Rep was kind of a step up in terms of resources and imagination and pushback from artists who were really mature and strong and experienced. It also gave me the Thrust Stage, which is still my favorite theatre that I've ever worked in.

And then interestingly, when I moved to Chicago, one of my first friends that I made was Susie Medak, who at the time was the managing director at Northlight Theatre. It was then really serendipitous that Susie came to Berkeley Rep. I was delighted to be able to finally work with her as a freelancer in the '90s, when I was in Japan but came back once a year to direct. I was also in grad school with Tony Taccone for three years. Tony came with me to the Eureka, and after I left as the artistic director at the Eureka, Tony took over that position. Coming back to Berkeley Rep is like coming back to be with family in a lot of ways.

How has Berkeley Rep changed over the years?

What's wonderful about Berkeley Rep is that it's a mission-driven theatre. There's a sense of excitement and bravery in terms of choice of material that's still extant, but what's different is that the ambition and scope of the Theatre is so much broader now. Then there's the Roda, which is this big, beautiful proscenium house. And I have to admit, I'm still a little bit in mourning that I don't get to work on the Thrust Stage, because as I've said, I love that stage and some of the best work of my life has been there, but I'm excited about working in the Roda. In the last several years I've had the opportunity to direct a number of shows at ACT — you know, in the big golden box — and I've also been able to work at Seattle Rep at the Bagley Wright Theatre, which is another large proscenium house. So coming into the Roda, it's not as odd as it would've been for someone whose initial aesthetic was developed at the Eureka — where we had a big, beautiful flexible space that we could create strange, wonderful environmental pieces in — and in the intimacy of the Thrust. So you know, I might be a little intimidated by working in the Roda if I hadn't had the opportunity to work in the big golden box and at Seattle Rep, but I'm excited about the possibilities of working in the Roda and creating a welcoming space for an intimate, familial comedy in that beautiful proscenium house.

I'm very curious to see how that happens. And I imagine at least some of this will come through in how the audience interacts with the set.

Christopher Durang actually lives in Bucks County, PA where Vanya takes place, so he has infused the play with a sense of place that's really quite lovely. Part of our job is to extend that sense of place all the way out into the seats. To create something that's very specific and authentic onstage, but then that welcomes the audience in and makes them feel like they're a part of this family and environment. That's where I feel particularly blessed in my colleagues as well. Theatre is such a collaboration and you're as good as the people you work with. And in this case I'm blessed to have Kent Dorsey, Debra Beaver Bauer, Alex Nichols, Rob Milburn, and Michael Bodeen, all of whom are artists I've worked with for many years. I have a kind of deep trust in them as collaborators and
in their ability to weave a visual and aural tapestry that creates a type of environment that will draw us into the story and the characters of the play.

**In your career you’ve worked a lot with new plays but also a great deal with Shakespeare. I’m very curious about how that’s come together for you — because you started in the new play world and moved more into Shakespeare, yes? And that just strikes me as a very unusual direction. How did that happen?**

Well, the thread that ties them together is Brecht. Even the kind of new plays that I got my start doing are animated by epic storytelling. The theatre company that really made me want to be an artist in the theatre and really showed me the way to be an artist in the theatre was the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Seeing them when I was a young student in college was a revelation to me: that theatre could actually have a meaning greater than the simple public event of enjoying a show. That you could see a piece of theatre and you could walk away and it could resound and resonate in your mind for years. Which is why all due honor to Sharon Lockwood, you know, because some of my most vivid memories of those early Mime Troupe shows are Sharon Lockwood’s brilliance playing a variety of roles in shows like *The Independent Female* and *The Dragon Lady’s Revenge*.

So when I got started a lot of the plays were inspired on some level by Brecht and by the spirit of critique, like *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel* by David Rabe, Trevor Griffith’s *Comedians*, and *Mary Barnes* by David Edgar. I made my mark in Bay Area theatre as an artist primarily by introducing a lot of writers through the Eureka who were kind of the British heirs and descendents of Brecht. So then moving into Shakespeare was relatively seamless in a way, because Shakespeare was the founder of epic storytelling. What I wasn’t prepared for with Shakespeare was how hard I would fall in love with the experience of directing it, and actually seeing how an audience and that Shakespearean play could create an event together. That was really memorable. And of course part of that is language and part of that again is the epic sweep of storytelling, showing all levels of class, of weaving plots and subplots together. The wonderful challenge to you as a director is to orchestrate this large vision of a world onstage that Shakespeare presents you with.

And so I kind of went from British political plays in the ‘70s to Shakespeare in the ‘80s and then went off to Japan. And the other writer who was kind of instrumental in my growing aesthetic as a director was Sam Shepard. I directed a number of plays by Shepard, and his work appeals to the rock ‘n roll side of me. And of course, there’s a lot of crossover between Brecht and rock ‘n roll — Brecht was a rocker back in the ‘20s in Germany. Shakespeare is a very rock ‘n roll writer as well. His work is pungent, it has a beat, it’s got pace. So you learn a lot by directing classical work, and I think the most important thing that you have to learn as a director — that you get to learn as a director working on Shakespeare — is how much information is actually parked in the dramatic text. One of the arcs I’d like to think that I can look back on in my career as a director is moving from imposing things on a play when I was young to deeply investigating what’s there, and trying to be as attuned as possible to the nuances and possibilities of language.

**What I’ve discovered about myself as a director is that the more I can invest and be in the world of the play on a personal level, the better the experience is for me and the more I actually have to offer my collaborators on the play.**


Playing by Ken Friedman

**How does that come to bear on *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*?**

Durang is a great language writer — his text is not necessarily poetic in the same way as Shakespeare’s, but it is certainly very precise in terms of the sonic rhythms, the precise placement of words, carefully placed imagery, and how themes are developed and repeated throughout. The experience of directing Shakespeare in the ‘80s has given me this great appreciation of language and what language can do. So getting back to your first question about what process is, to me it’s become so much more about listening — listening, listening, listening — and opening myself up to the possibilities of language.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39
Five Questions for Sharon Lockwood

By Julie McCormick

Before the start of rehearsals for Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, we asked veteran actor Sharon Lockwood five questions about comedy. From her debut as a rabbit to her years at the San Francisco Mime Troupe and theatres around the Bay Area, Sharon has played to the extremes of the human experience and everything in between.

Julie McCormick: When did you discover that you had a talent for being funny?

Sharon Lockwood: I still have this memory — this was back in Connecticut where I was born. I did some Easter play or something, and I remember playing a rabbit and wiggling my nose and everybody laughing. I’ll never forget that moment. When I started acting in junior high and high school, I did a lot of heavy-duty stuff. My first big thing was that I played Helen Keller in The Miracle Worker in high school. I was just a freshman and I was in the senior play. Then I got involved in political theatre and did the San Francisco Mime Troupe for a long time, and it was a side of me that I never got to tap into. It’s one of the things that I’m really excited about with this play because I feel like I get to use both sides of me. A lot of times when you do comedy, people don’t think of you for doing drama. You have to play the reality of the situation, always. It’s never a matter of doing something to get a laugh. That’s the worst way to go. I still am shocked the first time I’ll rehearse a moment and the people watching and will laugh. Then I’ll realize, it’s supposed to be funny, but I wasn’t going for that. Sometimes it’s a mysterious thing.

Does acting in a comedy feel different to you than acting in something more serious?

You know, it depends on the play. Sometimes, particularly if it’s a drama, a play will just take you where you need to go. If it’s an original script, you don’t always know where the laughs are going to be. The audience teaches you so much about that. Sometimes I think comedy is hard and tragedy is easy. You know that old saying. Sometimes it can be physically exhausting. Farce takes so much physical precision and timing.
And then sometimes I’ve also been exhausted by doing a drama. I remember in *Juno and the Paycock* at ACT—I had one scene where I played a mother at a funeral that kind of changes the direction of the play from a comedy to a tragedy. Before the last time I did the scene I broke down, because it was a scene of containing all the tragedy, but instead of being histrionic about it, I was really containing it. That was so exhausting—to keep it all in, but have it all be there.

So I think it varies from piece to piece. Some things can be more exhausting than others. It’s a craft, and I think that each project is different.

**Who or what makes you laugh?**

Hmm, I’m a little bit of a tough customer. But once I get going… Anthony Fusco makes me laugh; he has such a dry way. There was a YouTube video that an actor at ACT was showing me in the dressing room, and it was a chipmunk looking surprised with this music going, “bum bum bum.” And I just lost it.

Sometimes something can strike you as funny and you really don’t know why. It can be a character, it can be the situation. It varies.

I used to love to watch *The Honeymooners*, as politically incorrect as that was. Jackie Gleason would make me howl. Things like *Fawlty Towers*, some of the British shows. I love *Doc Martin*. It’s this series that they rerun on PBS with a British actor Martin Clunes, and there’s something about this character—he’s this total curmudgeon that lives in this little village with a group of misfits that he has to deal with. And he’s a doctor that can’t stand the sight of blood. It’s full of wonderful character studies, wonderful situations, and it’s been on for five or six seasons and I’m totally addicted. It just makes me laugh out loud.

I’m less interested in laughing at pain. You know the famous thing about the Road Runner cartoons and the anvil falling on Wile E. Coyote. Maybe when I was little it may have made me chuckle, but I don’t know.
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Costume Design
Debra Beaver Bauer

Lighting Design
Alexander V. Nichols

Original Music &
Sound Design
Rob Milburn &
Michael Bodeen

Stage Manager
Michael Suenkel

Assistant Stage Manager
Leslie M. Radin

Dramaturg
Julie McCormick

Casting
Amy Potozkin

Callee Casting

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Vanya
Anthony Fusco

Sonia
Sharon Lockwood

Cassandra
Heather Alicia Simms

Masha
Lorri Holt

Spike
Mark Junek

Nina
Caroline Kaplan

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written by
Christopher Durang

directed by
Richard E.T. White

The actors and stage managers are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.


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2013-14 · ISSUE 1 · THE BERKELEY REP MAGAZINE · 25
Anthony Fusco

Anthony is (finally) making his Berkeley Rep debut. A Marin County kid, he came back to the Bay Area from New York City in 1999 and since has been a leading actor and company member at American Conservatory Theater and California Shakespeare Theater, playing memorable roles in dozens of productions. His personal favorites include Clybourne Park, Samuel Beckett’s Play, Dead Metaphor, David Mamet’s Race and November, The Homecoming, Hedda Gabler (directed by Richard E.T. White), Caucasian Chalk Circle, and The Three Sisters at ACT; and King Lear, Blithe Spirit, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Tempest, Arms and the Man, and Candida at Cal Shakes. On Broadway, Anthony has appeared in The Real Thing and The Real Inspector Hound. He has performed in plays off Broadway (and off-off-Broadway) and at many of America’s major regional theatres. His (few) film appearances include his role as a creepy priest in Francis Ford Coppola’s Twixt. Anthony lives in San Francisco with his wife and two children. He is a graduate of Juilliard.

Lorri Holt

Lorri’s favorite roles at Berkeley Rep include Gwen in Fin in The Underworld, Catherine in Fêtes de la Nuit, Beth in Dinner With Friends, Becky Lou in The Tooth of Crime, Agnes in Dancing at Lughnasa, Libby in Blue Window, and Rachel in Reckless (these last three directed by Richard E.T. White). She has been an award-winning actress in the Bay Area for three decades, working with SF Playhouse, American Conservatory Theater, Magic Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Center Rep, TheatreWorks, and in long-running San Francisco commercial productions, including The Vagina Monologues and another Christopher Durang play, Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You, with Cloris Leachman. For 10 years she was a member of the groundbreaking Eureka Theatre, where she originated the role of Harper Pitt in Tony Kushner’s Angels in America. Her regional and international credits include the Wilma Theater; Birmingham Repertory Theatre; the Barbican Theatre; La Jolla Playhouse; Taper, Too at the Mark Taper Forum; and Actors Theatre of Louisville’s Festival of New American Plays. She has voiced many characters in the Star Wars and Lord of the Rings video games, teaches acting, and is a published writer of short stories and articles on acting and theatre. Lorri is also an experienced realtor with Thornwall Properties in Berkeley.

Mark Junek

Mark is thrilled to be making his Berkeley Rep debut. His credits include The Performers (on Broadway), Galileo and A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Classic Stage Company, The Imaginary Invalid at Bard Summer-Scape, and The Seagull and Henry V at Juilliard. He has appeared in the TV shows Smash and Law & Order: SVU. Mark is a founder of Makehouse, which provides artists free space and time to create in rural New Jersey; visit makehouse.org. Mark received his MFA with Juilliard Drama Division, group 40, and his BA at Columbia University.

Caroline Kaplan

Caroline is thrilled to be making her Berkeley Rep debut with this beautiful, hilarious, incisive new play. Her New York credits include Hester in The Silver Cord at the Peccadillo Theater Company and Polly in The Three-penny Opera at Riverside Theater. She has also appeared at Center Stage in Baltimore in The Completely Fictional-Utterly True-Final Strange Tale of Edgar Allen Poe, Trinity Repertory Company in The Merchant of Venice, the Guthrie Theater in the world premiere of Going Live, and Williamstown Theatre Festival in The Three Sisters. Caroline’s other favorite roles include Cunegonde in Candide, Valencienne in The Merry Widow, Lucille Frank in Parade, Irina in The Three Sisters, and Eliante in The Misanthrope. She received her training at the Brown/Trinity Graduate Acting program. Caroline is the proud recipient of a Stephen Sondheim fellowship.

Sharon Lockwood

Sharon was last seen at Berkeley Rep as a 200-year-old woman in Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell. Her other favorite Berkeley Rep credits include Valpone, The Alchemist, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, The Triumph of Love, Pentecost, The Importance of Being Earnest, and The Magic Fire. Sharon has also performed extensively at American Conservatory Theater, most recently in the world premiere of Dead Metaphor. Her other ACT appearances include roles in ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Hedda Gabler, The Rose Tattoo, The Royal Family, The Government Inspector, and A Christmas Carol (2005-12). Sharon originated the role of Barbara in the world premiere of Nickel and Dimed under the direction of Bartlett Sher, which premiered at Intiman Theatre in Seattle and subsequently played at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. She reprised the role in a TheatreWorks/Brava for Women in the Arts co-production here in the Bay Area. Her other local credits include many appearances at California Shakespeare Theater (most recently in Richard Montoya’s American Night), San Jose Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Center Rep, and many years with the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Regionally, she has performed at La Jolla Playhouse, the Old Globe, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Missouri Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, the Alley Theatre, and Long Wharf Theatre.

Heather Alicia Simms

Heather is pleased to make her debut at Berkeley Rep. An actor, voiceover artist, and writer, she has appeared on television, in film, and on stage in New York, London, and regional theatres around the country. Heather’s Broadway credits include Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, A Raisin in the Sun, and Gem of the Ocean. Her other theatre credits include The Brother/Sister Plays, born bad, The Exonerated, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Breath, Boom, and Insurrection: Holding History, among others. Heather’s film credits include Red Hook Summer, The Nanny Diaries, Broken Flowers, Head of State, and NY’s Dirty Laundry, among others. Her television credits include Law & Order: SVU, Whoopie, Homicide, Third Watch, and As the World Turns. Heather attended Tufts University where she received...
Christopher Durang
PLAYWRIGHT
Christopher’s work has appeared on Broadway, off Broadway, across America, and around the world. His many plays include The Actor’s Nightmare, Baby with the Bathwater, Betty’s Summer Vacation (Obie Award), Beyond Therapy, For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls, Laughing Wild, The Marriage of Bette and Boo (Obie Award), Medea Amok, Miss Witherspoon (Pulitzer Prize finalist), Mrs. Bob Cratchit’s Wild Christmas Binge, Sex and Longing, Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You (Obie Award), and Why Torture is Wrong and the People Who Love Them. His play Beyond Therapy made its West Coast premiere at Berkeley Rep in 1983. Christopher earned the Tony Award for Best Play with Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, a Tony nomination for Best Book of a Musical with A Christmas Carol (Obie Award), and an Obie Award for Best Direction of a Play. His other honors include the Dramatists Guild Fellowship. Visit heatherasimms.com.

Richard E.T. White
DIRECTOR
Richard directed 11 shows at Berkeley Rep between 1984 and 1994, including Blue Window, Dancing at Lughnasa, Hard Times (West Coast premiere), The Importance of Being Earnest, In the Belly of the Beast, Painting It Red (West Coast premiere), Reckless, The Sea, Speed-the-Plow, and The Tooth of Crime (with Sharon Ott). In 1987, his production of Hard Times was selected for the American Theatre Exchange in Manhattan, becoming the first show in Berkeley Rep’s history to transfer to New York. Richard served as artistic director of San Francisco’s Eureka Theatre and Chicago’s Wisdom Bridge Theatre. He has also worked with Alliance Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Court Theatre, the Empty Space Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Northlight Theatre, the Old Globe, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and the Shakespeare Theatre Company. With Paul Dresher and Rinde Eckert, he co-created the electronic opera Slow Fire, which toured internationally and appeared at Lincoln Center. His recent work includes Red at Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Arizona Theatre Company, and A Midsumber Night’s Dream and The Lion in Winter at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Richard has been chair of the Cornish College of the Arts Theater Department since 1993 when he returned from a three-year residency in Japan, which included teaching at Toin and Gakuushoin Universities and serving as resident director for Theatre Company Subaru in Tokyo.

Kent Dorsey
SCENIC DESIGNER
Kent returns to Berkeley Rep where he was the scenic designer for The Alchemist, For Better or Worse, Serious Money, The Importance of Being Earnest, Dancing at Lughnasa, Mother Jones, and Blue Window. He also designed both sets and lights for The Tooth of Crime, Volpone, Life During Wartime, In Perpetuity Throughout the Universe, Missing Persons, Yankee Dawg You Die, Fish Head Soup, and Speed-the-Plow, and his lighting designs include Dream of a Common Language, Geni(us), The Convict’s Return, Major Barbara, and Diary of a Scoundrel. Kent’s New York theatre productions include Alligator Tales, About Time, The Cocktail Hour, Yankee Dawg You Die, Suds, Another Antigone, and Silence. He has worked as scenic and/or lighting designer for such notable directors as Jerry Zaks, Jack O’Brien, Ellis Rabb, Adrian Hall, John Hirsch, John Tillinger, Brian Bedford, Edward Payson Call, John Rando, Tony Taccone, Richard E.T. White, Oskar Eustis, and Sharon Ott. He has designed scenery or lighting on 97 productions for San Diego’s Old Globe Theatre and has designed for most of the ma-
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Debra Beaver Bauer  
**Costume Designer**

Beaver is a Bay Area costume designer, and she’s excited to return to Berkeley Rep, where she designed *What the Butler Saw*, *Tartuffe*, *Blue Window*, *In Perpetuity Throughout the Universe*, *Rhinoceros*, *The House of Blue Leaves*, and *Menocchio*. She has also designed numerous productions for American Conservatory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Magic Theatre, TheatreWorks, and other local companies. Her work has also taken her to Washington, DC and New York City. She has been the resident designer for Teatro Zinzanni, and her circus roots have taken her to Russia and productions in Japan. Beaver is also quite fond of designing for dance and, yes, ice skaters. She includes San Francisco Ballet, Margaret Jenkins, skating productions for NBC, and various arenas around the country among her credits. She also admits to a few large-scale floor shows in Las Vegas. She is also now in collaboration with Brenda Wong Aoki on a Noh–inspired underwater folk tale.

**Alexander V. Nichols**  
**Lighting Designer**

Alex is returning to Berkeley Rep for his 26th production. His theatre credits include the Broadway productions of *Hugh Jackman Back On Broadway* and *Wishful Drinking* (originally presented by Berkeley Rep), and the off-Broadway productions of *Bridge and Tunnel*, *Horizon*, *In the Wake*, *Los Big Names*, *Taking Over*, and *Through the Night*. Alex’s other design credits include American Conservatory Theater, Arena Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, the Mark Taper Forum, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. He was the resident designer for American Repertory Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and Pennsylvania Ballet; the lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre Company; and has been the resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His designs are in the permanent repertory of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Boston Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance, odc/sf, and San Francisco Ballet, among others. Alex’s recent projects include the museum installation *Circle of Memory*, presented in Stockholm, and video and visual design for *Life: A Journey Through Time*, presented at the Barbican Center.

Rob Milburn & Michael Bodeen  
**Composers & Sound Designers**

Rob and Michael are happy to return to Berkeley Rep where they recently composed music and designed sound for *No Man’s Land* (and its upcoming move to Broadway). Their other Broadway credits include music composition and sound for *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, *The Miracle Worker*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, and *The Speed of Darkness*; music for *My Thing of Love*; and sound for *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Superior Donuts*, *Reasons to Be Pretty*, *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *Hollywood Arms*, *King Hedley II*, *Buried Child*, *The Song of Jacob Zulu*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Their off-Broadway credits include music and sound for *Checkers*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *Inked Baby*, *After Ashley*, *Boy Gets Girl*, *Red*, *Space*, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, and *Marvin’s Room*; sound for *Family Week*, *Brundibar*, *The Pain and the Itch*; and music direction and sound profiles.

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Michael Suenkel  
STAGE MANAGER

Michael began his association with Berkeley Rep as the stage management intern for the 1984–85 season and is now in his 20th 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 Theatre Company, the Juste Pour Rire Festival in Montreal, La Jolla Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theater, The Public Theater and Second Stage Theater in New York, and Yale Repertory Theatre. For the Magic Theatre, he stage managed Albert Takazauckas’ Breaking the Code and Sam Shepard’s The Late Henry Moss.

Leslie M. Radin  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Leslie is very pleased to be back at Berkeley Rep after most recently stage managing Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright and assistant stage managing Chinglish (both here and at the Hong Kong Arts Festival). She started at Berkeley Rep as the stage management intern in 2003 and has also worked at Center Rep, American Conservatory Theater’s MFA program, San Francisco Opera Center’s Merola Program, SF Playhouse, and the New Victory Theater in New York, where she traveled with Berkeley Rep’s production of Brundibar/But the Giraffe. Her favorite past productions include In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), Passing Strange, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, The Pillowman, and The Secret in the Wings.

Julie McCormick  
DRAMATURG

Julie is the literary associate at Berkeley Rep. She has previously served as a dramaturg on John Logan’s Red and has worked with various projects at The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab. She also occasionally freelances at other theatres in the Bay Area. Julie was the 2011–12 Peter F. Sloss Literary/Dramaturgy Fellow at Berkeley Rep, and holds a BA from Carleton College.
Amy Potozkin
ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE/CASTING DIRECTOR
A native New Yorker, Amy moved west in 1990 when she was hired to work for Berkeley Rep. Through the years she has also had the pleasure of casting projects for ACT (Seattle), Arizona Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, 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 various indie films: Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton; Haiku Tunnel and the upcoming Love and Taxes both by Josh Kornbluth; 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. Amy is a member of CSA, the Casting Society of America.

Calleri Casting
CASTING
Calleri Casting is James Calleri, Paul Davis, and Erica Jensen. Their most recent theatre credits include Venus in Fur on Broadway and the long-running Fuerza Bruta, as well as All in the Timing, My Name is Asher Lev, the revival of Passion, and The Revisionist starring Vanessa Redgrave and Jesse Eisenberg. Some past Broadway credits include 33 Variations, Chicago, James Joyce’s The Dead, and A Raisin in the Sun. Calleri also cast for shows at The Civilians, Classic Stage Company, Epic Theatre Ensemble, the Flea Theater, Keen Company, Long Wharf Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center, New Georges, the Old Globe, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, stagefarm, Summer Play Festival, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. They cast 10 seasons with Playwrights Horizons, including such plays as Betty’s Summer Vacation, Goodnight Children Everywhere, Lobby Hero, Small Tragedy, and Violet, to name a few. Their TV credits include Army Wives, Ed, Hope & Faith, Lipstick Jungle, Monk, and Z Rock, and film credits include Another Earth, Armless, Merchant Ivory’s The City of Your Final Destination, Heights, Lisa Picard is Famous, Peter & Vandy, Ready? OK!, Trouble Every Day, The White Countess, and Yearbook. Calleri received 12 Artios Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Casting and is a member of CSA.

Tony Taccone
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
During Tony’s tenure as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award–winning nonprofit has earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In those 16 years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 22 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 this season marks his eighth collaboration with Kushner when he directs The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. Tony’s regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Center Theatre Group, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Huntington Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theatre, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, Tony recently debuted Ghost Light and Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup. His latest play, Game On, written with Dan Hoyle, will premiere in April 2014 at San Jose Repertory Theatre. In 2012, Tony received the Margo Jones Award for “demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre.”

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 (LORT) 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 1993 as education director. Under her supervision, Berkeley Rep’s Programs for Education provided live theatre for more than 20,000 students annually. In 1995, she became general manager, and since then has overseen the day-to-day operations of the Theatre. 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
Madeleine Oldham  
RESIDENT DRAMATURG/DIRECTOR, THE GROUND FLOOR
Madeleine is the director of Berkeley Rep’s recently launched Ground Floor and the Theatre’s resident dramaturg. She oversees commissioning and new play development, and dramaturged the world premiere productions of Passing Strange and In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), among others. As literary manager and associate dramaturg at Center Stage in Baltimore, 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 Theatre in Seattle. 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, the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center, the Kennedy Center, New Dramatists, Playwrights Center, and Portland Center Stage.

Bill Falik & Diana Cohen  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
Bill and Diana have been subscribers and supporters of Berkeley Rep since its earliest days on College Avenue. Diana joined the board of trustees in 1991 and served the Theatre for 10 years; she currently serves on the board of trustees of Cal Performances. As a family therapist, she worked in private practice for 25 years before retiring to focus on her painting. Bill has been a real-estate and land-use lawyer practicing in the San Francisco Bay Area for the past 40 years. He currently is the managing partner of Westpark Associates, which creates master-planned communities in the greater Sacramento region. Bill is also a principal partner in Mortgage Resolution Partners, a new organization formed to provide mortgage relief for homeowners. He is a visiting professor at UC Berkeley Law School and a member of the professional faculty at Haas Business School. Bill has served on Berkeley Rep’s board since 2006. Bill and Diana are actively involved in philanthropic activities throughout Northern California. They have three grown children, all of whom live in the Bay Area.

Richard & Robin Edwards  
PRODUCERS
Robin and Rich have been strong supporters of Berkeley Rep for more than 20 years when they started serving on the gala committee. Rich was co-chair of the Narsai Toast for five years. They were thrilled to have gone on to support Berkeley Rep when it brought Chinglish to the 2013 Hong Kong Arts Festival. Robin retired from active law practice as a partner of Dentons US LLP in January 2012. She joined Berkeley Rep’s board in early 2012 and is also actively involved with xenn SF (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now), the Women’s Leadership Council for United Way of the Bay Area, and Mount Holyoke College. Rich retired in 1998 as a senior partner at San Francisco’s Robertson Stephens & Co., a high-tech-focused investment bank. He is a professional photographer and has been very active as a board member and fundraiser for numerous Bay Area nonprofit organizations, including Jewish Family & Children’s Services of the East Bay, Oakland Museum of California, and the College Preparatory School. Rich served as the executive director of the Friends of Photography and the Ansel Adams Center for Photography in San Francisco from 2001 to 2004.

Sandra & Ross McCandless  
PRODUCERS
Sandra McCandless, a long-standing board member of Berkeley Rep, presently serves as co-chair of the Corporate Council and as a member of the executive and compliance committees. She represents management in labor and employment matters as a partner of the global law firm Dentons US LLP. She is also a neutral arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association. Sandra is a leader of the American Bar Association, the largest professional services organization in the world. Currently, she serves on the ABA’s board of governors and as chair of its finance committee. Ross teaches science and mathematics at Mount Diablo High School and is an avid dancer and birdwatcher. The McCandless’ love of theatre dates back to Sandra and Ross’ joint performance at Harvard College in William Shakespeare’s Hello Out There. Their daughter Phyra McCandless and son-in-law Angelos Kottas are also enthusiastic members of the Berkeley Rep family.

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The Bernard Osher Foundation, which supports higher education and the arts, was founded in 1977 by Bernard Osher, a respected businessman and community leader. The Foundation provides scholarship funding to selected colleges and universities across the nation. It also benefits programs in integrative medicine at Harvard University, UCSC, and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. In addition, the Foundation supports a national network of educational programs for seasoned adults, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, which now operate on the campuses of 117 institutions of higher education. Finally, an array of performing arts organizations, museums, and selected educational programs in the San Francisco Bay Area and the State of Maine receive Foundation grants. The Honorable Barbro Osher, consul general of Sweden in California, chairs the Foundation’s board of directors.

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Gladys Perez-Mendez · Valerie Sophie
Epic Storytelling
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

You’ve spent a lot of time at regional theatres around the country — where do you think the regional theatre is going to be in 20 years? Where do you hope for it to be is maybe another way to put that.

Well, what I hope is that the regional theatre continues to question itself in the way it’s doing now, because we’re seeing what’s happening now — and I speak for myself — is that a significant portion of the population that has sustained the regional theatre for the last 30 years is aging. I think the question is, how can the theatre continue to make its connection with a large population and not be a walled off, elitist art form? We have a lot of challenges in terms of taking our work to people. The challenge is to not sit in a house like Vanya and Sonia and wait for life to come to you, but how do you chase the blue heron outside of your house? I think the most exciting recent developments in theatre are events like Here Lies Love, and Young Jean Lee’s untitled feminist show, which are immersive and participatory, or something like the work that the National Theatre of Scotland is doing, like Black Watch and The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Heart. As an audience member you’re invited to become an active member of the event that’s happening. I think that’s crucial.

And then the other thing that I’m seeing as a really interesting and exciting development is a lot of auto-biographical work. A lot of the most moving work that I’ve seen uses the real lives of people as a kind of foundation. Something like the German company She She Pop with their show Testament, where the performers were joined onstage by their fathers in a piece investigating the relationships of children to their fathers.

I’ve seen a number of pieces in the last couple years by artists who are investigating what it means to be a child with an aging parent. And that can be narcissistic, but in the hands of an artist — just in the way that a good memoir can be a fascinating read — it has the capability to resonate far beyond. We’re so bombarded by stuff that to find something simple and authentic is quite powerful.

Your question is a profound and useful one. I think there’s an invitation and a necessity to move beyond the walls of theatre and to look at how the theatrical experience can expand out and use technology in interesting ways, that can use the relationship of performer to audience in multiple ways. But the main thing I think is, what will keep audiences coming to the theatre and engaged in the theatre is the sense that they have participated in something. There are a lot of ways to create that feeling, but as I said, I think the thing we have to do as artists is look at how we can create a platform for theatre that is broader and more inviting.

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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; please request these materials at least two days in advance of your performance date. Open captioning is available for at least one performance of every season production.

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Berkeley Rep merchandise and show-related books are available in the Hoag Theatre Store in the Roda Theatre.

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