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(A Football Love Story)
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I’m a baseball fan. My father took me to the ballpark when I could barely walk and I became forever enamored of the game. But during the course of my now long life, I watched, sometimes in horror, as football took over as America’s favorite sport. The reasons for this have been endlessly discussed by sociologists, sports writers, and fans: football is better suited for television, is more of a team game, is more entertainingly violent, is better marketed, has more parity, is more suited to the mythology of American culture. Whichever reason(s) you prefer, the undeniable fact is that football is king.

But after decades of ascending popularity, the sport is suffering the worst attack on its legitimacy since the early 20th century. Everywhere you look there’s negative press ranging from the devastating effects of head concussions to domestic violence. Commissioner Roger Goodell has come under intense fire for every manner of obfuscation, threatening his tenure and his yearly salary of $44,000,000. Owners are worried about their golden goose; players are divided about their relationship with the League; parents are increasingly fearful about letting their children play the game; and fans are, well...arguing. Fans have always been arguing, but the content of many conversations has shifted to the discomfort they feel or should feel while watching really, really big guys who run really, really fast take really, really big hits. Life has suddenly gotten very complicated for the NFL.

Enter KJ Sanchez and Jenny Mercein, two passionate football aficionados and dynamic theatre makers. Since discovering their mutual love for the game a few years ago, they set out to get the full story. They started interviewing former players (Jenny’s dad used to play for the Packers), and gradually widened the parameters of their investigation to include coaches, family members of football vets, physicians, academics, and parents. By the time they came to The Ground Floor (our new play development program) last summer, KJ and Jenny had sculpted a compelling docudrama of powerful, intersecting stories. Since then we’ve worked on expanding the scope and theatricality of the play.

It’s been a blast, working on a subject that’s such an entertaining and powerful part of our culture. The design team (even those who couldn’t give a damn about sports) has gone all out to realize the vision of the play, and we’ve assembled a first-rate ensemble that has an impressive level of skill as actors, fans, and former players. As they say in the big leagues, welcome to the show.

Sincerely,

Tony Taccone
A VIBRANT MUSIC VENUE
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Learn more at www.theuctheatre.org

The UC Theatre is a project of The Berkeley Music Group, a nonprofit organization. Federal Tax ID# 46-1517597.

2036 University Avenue, Berkeley
Okay, I'll be entirely honest with you.

I couldn't tell a touchdown from a touchback. My husband Greg can get mighty riled up over a dropped pass or a fumble, and can transform before my very eyes from a perfectly civilized human being into a grunting and wailing embodiment of abject pain and disappointment when the 49ers are in the throes. But it is, I hate to say it, all Greek to me. What I do get, though, is the extraordinary power that our athletes exert over our lives. They inform our sense of what is fair; they contribute to our affection for our alma mater; they brighten or darken our day. I guess what fans experience is a truly epic battle in every game, always between the forces of good and evil. A game is not just a game. It is a life-and-death battle. In my household, every game results in exultation or profound despair—there is no middle ground.

That said, things are inexorably changing in the NFL. The price that our athletes have paid for this much-loved game has begun to be understood in a new way. The price has proven to be too high. With X's & O's (A Football Love Story) we ask ourselves, while we ask you: When is enough really enough? Where do we as caring fans and friends draw a line in the sand? How do we love a sport but not love what it does to people?

Earlier this year Meow Meow asked us, “When I’m gone, will you remember me?” Universes and their Party People asked their own fundamental questions: Do you remember? Do you remember our complexity? In Red Hot Patriot, Molly Ivins advises us that we'd better remember...or forget at our own risk.

In X's & O's, KJ Sanchez demands that we remember, and not just that we remember, but that we specifically remember that football players are not mannequins who are there for our entertainment. These are human beings. They carry an awful lot of our aspirations on their backs, and we have some obligation to them.

Sports...theatre...for some people, both are just different forms of entertainment, quickly enjoyed and quickly forgotten. But for some fans these are where our epic battles play out. The Greeks understood that, thousands of years ago, when Olympic events celebrated both athleticism and art. Those old Greeks understood that there is a connection between mind and body, between physical prowess and creative endeavor. And they understood that a special bond exists between the doer and the watcher, a bond that we enjoy in this Theatre more than 350 times a season.

Tonight, as you delve with us into the world of professional football, on a stage in Berkeley where you are sitting with hundreds of other people, you are participating in an epic experience that is thousands of years old. We challenge you to enter the fray, listen, take sides, and then take action.

Warmly,

Susan Medak
When Berkeley Rep commissioned *X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story)* from KJ Sanchez and Jenny Mercein, we already knew the play would be something special. So we were thrilled to hear that it’s the recipient of the 2014 Rella Lossy Playwright Award, juried by acclaimed playwright Amy Freed and administered by the San Francisco Foundation.

“The award is designed to facilitate and reward the development of talented emerging playwrights,” says Dr. Frank Lossy. He endowed the award in memory of his wife Rella Lossy, who was a published playwright, theatre editor, actress, and poet. He adds, “Early in their careers such writers often have a hard time getting their plays performed before they have developed a following and a reputation.”

That’s why the Rella Lossy Playwright Award is so important—half of the monetary award is given to the playwright while the other half supports the production costs of the play, thereby encouraging new work in the Bay Area.

“Mr. Lossy’s generosity ensures that the Bay Area will continue to be an epicenter for innovative plays by nurturing the next generation of great playwrights,” says Tere Romo, arts and culture program officer at the San Francisco Foundation.

Amy, who juried the award, was fascinated by *X’s and O’s* exploration of American culture and love of the game despite the price the players pay. “The urgency of the issue, and deep and personal tone of this script struck me at once,” she says. “This play was so immediate, full of detail and familiarity with the sport that it took me into its world from the start.”

For KJ, the award couldn’t have come at a better time. “Jenny and I have been working on this play for two years, and the award renewed our faith in what we do,” she says. “Both of us are also actors, so receiving a playwright award in the honor of Rella Lossy is particularly meaningful. I’m so grateful to the San Francisco Foundation for this award and am humbled and honored to be a recipient.”
When playwright KJ Sanchez approached us two years ago with an idea for a piece about traumatic brain injuries in football, we knew that she and her collaborator Jenny Mercein were the perfect pair to tackle the project. Berkeley Rep enthusiastically commissioned the script, thus inviting KJ and Jenny to be a part of The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

KJ's company American Records creates documentary-style theatre, and is most well known for her piece ReEntry. Built entirely from extensive interviews with Marines and their families, ReEntry examines the experiences of returning veterans and toured the country to great success, playing at theatrical venues, military bases, and veterans' facilities. This lengthy information-gathering process and public discussion is a critical part of American Records' method and one that The Ground Floor, with its commitment to flexibility and artist-centric structure, is uniquely suited to support.

To kick off the play that was to become X's and O's (A Football Love Story), KJ and Jenny conducted dozens of interviews with current and former players, their families, coaches, fans, doctors, and other experts. A workshop at Center Stage in Baltimore, who co-commissioned the piece with Berkeley Rep, helped the two find the basic structure of the play, and in 2013, KJ and Jenny took a whirlwind trip out to Berkeley, where they conducted still more interviews and participated in a Ground Floor-hosted Q&A session with a panel of experts and Berkeley Rep community members.

The following year, X's and O's returned to Berkeley as a part of The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab. Though Ground Floor activities go on year round, the Lab provides the invaluable opportunity to work in the presence of other thoughtful, innovative artists who are developing their own projects. This structure creates a truly unique, safe, and fertile environment for discovery and exploration.

Unlike other development opportunities, The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab supports work at any stage of completion and does not require a final presentation of a project, instead working with artists to create custom residencies based on the particular needs of the project. This nimble program structure gives artists the space to ask the big questions and make bold changes that there's not always time for in the mad dash to get a project ready for an audience. During the summer residency for X's and O's, for example, KJ and Director Tony Taccone came to the realization that the fans and their experiences are truly at the heart of the play, and had the space to refine that scaffolding. Working with actors at this point in the process also gave the team time to explore what the extensive movement sections of the piece might look like. Plenty of solo writing days gave KJ time and space to digest and implement discoveries made in rehearsal.

With its commitment to rigor, flexibility, and innovation, The Ground Floor gives Berkeley Rep more room than ever to support artists and bring their cutting-edge new work to our stages.
Berkeley Rep has always been committed to exploring new ideas, creating new work, and fostering the country’s greatest voices.

Now, we aspire to make Berkeley Rep one of the most vibrant and respected centers for the development of new work in the country.

The bold and ambitious Create Campaign will allow us to realize this goal with a $14 million expansion of our Harrison Street campus into a center for artistic innovation and a home for The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

Developing the Harrison Street campus
By 2017, Berkeley Rep aims to complete the expansion of its Harrison Street campus by converting its undeveloped warehouse space into rehearsal halls and studios, artist live/work spaces, and a public forum—providing a home for The Ground Floor, where artists and the community can engage in the art of making theatre.

Artists will have the opportunity to live and work on-site, creating a singular environment for artistic collaboration and exploration. The new rehearsal halls and studios, connected by a large open gathering space, will allow artists to work on multiple projects simultaneously and have access to the full complement of our artistic staff and resources.

A home for The Ground Floor
The development of the Harrison Street campus will allow us to fully realize The Ground Floor and provide the necessary capital resources to allow the program to flourish. The Ground Floor breaks the mold, dramatically transforming how we make plays for audiences in the Bay Area and across the country, through a year-round series of commissions, workshops, and a concentrated artist Summer Residency Lab, where emerging and established theatre artists can collaborate and advance their craft.

To really make a theatre work, it has to be a civic enterprise. [It’s thrilling] when you find places like Berkeley where the city is clearly in love with this organization and this theatre and is willing to help make this kind of expansion of the facilities possible. [...] We can’t have a civilization without art and you can’t have art without the support of the people.

—TONY KUSHNER, PLAYWRIGHT

I’ve never been part of something so thoughtful, so collective. This is a super-innovative program, but that’s not surprising at Berkeley Rep. They are always taking things to the next level.

—LAUREN GUNDERSON, PLAYWRIGHT

Be part of the next chapter in Berkeley Rep’s history. Help us transform our Harrison Street campus into a center for artistic innovation with your gift today.

CALL 510 647-2906
Two chairs. Some coasters. Free weights. And, of course, a helmet tester.

No, these are not just knickknacks potentially hiding at garage sales or consignment shops, though Properties Supervisor Jill Green may search there to find what she needs. Instead these were all items included in Jill’s preliminary props list after reading X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story) for the first time.

For any props team, each show is the start of a new treasure hunt. It all begins with the list Jill creates, and even that may be cryptic. “We read the show and write down what we think is in it,” Jill says. “X’s and O’s is different because the prop could be seen on a projection and be intangible, so we have to always go to the designer or director and ask, ‘Here’s my list, what’s yours?’” From there, hundreds of emails and dozens of production meetings ensue to keep ideas stirring and communication open.

If she’s not communicating, she’s creating. “For this show we’re sewing, we’re welding for the helmet tester — we’ll be figuring out the mechanics for that,” Jill says. “We may be upholstering the couch; we’ll be painting.”

Director Tony Taccone and Scenic Designer Todd Rosenthal want the show to have a sterile, metallic feel to help convey some of the hospital environments. Jill, then, has to make sure all of her props artistically align with this vision. “This show has a lot of stainless steel, so whatever the set painter uses we will use so that it matches,” Jill assures.

With only two months to find and construct all the props, Jill’s team of four can’t dally wondering if they should create each prop, use one from stock, or search for it. “It’s just what we have in stock and what we don’t,” Jill states.

Even if the prop is in stock, it may need to be tweaked. “If we pull something for rehearsal and it works, then good,” Jill says. Often, however, props need to be polished, painted, or mended. “If it doesn’t work, we’re going to figure out what does and go from there. There’s only so much pre-planning you can do with a new show, because the director, actors, and writers make new decisions every day.”

Other times, props just need to be purchased — and purchased wisely. Jill hunts for bargains, frequents Craigslist, and always asks for a receipt. “Sometimes it’s a question of ‘What’s
“Your return policy?” Jill says with a laugh. Often her purchases cannot be returned after 30 days, so she has to strategically time out her buys to align them with the rehearsals’ needs. Jill wanted authentic sports equipment, so she’s spent enough time on Rogers Athletic Company’s site to make soccer moms look apathetic.

In keeping with docudrama’s style, Tony wants the show to move fluidly through its episodic scenes. The props, then, must be conservative and mobile. “Tony wants this show to go in and out, in and out,” Jill says. “But the lights that travel cost more than stationary ones, and the sports equipment can add up.” Stores’ sales are vital as the props team makes a lot of decisions based on the show’s budget.

A production’s design budget is divided into five main parts: sets, costumes, lighting, sound, and properties, with projections making its way in as a sixth element as technology advances. Props usually gets less than 10 percent of the budget, but the needs for X’s and O’s are unique. “Properties will be working with a more sizable chunk, almost double the norm,” Production Manager Peter Dean says. Budgets become complex, however, when a prop potentially overlaps with another production element.

“If there’s a surgery light on stage, it’s electrics, but once an actor starts maneuvering it, it becomes a prop,” Peter explains. “More than money, what it really comes down to is the artistic intent of the object and how it is being used on stage.”

To make matters trickier, props are often more fickle than any other design element. They may change—or even get deleted—as late as during a show’s tech period, especially in a new show like X’s and O’s. Jill shares, “The director and actors could get to a scene and say, ‘This is not working. We’re cutting.’ But is that the process of a new show? Yes.” She must thoroughly study each rehearsal report to note what adjustments, additions, or deletions are being made to the show’s props. The list continues to morph, and Jill continues to adapt.

But the helmet tester? “We know that’s going to be in the show,” Jill says, smiling. Having never built one before, she turned to the internet for research. “You can Google anything now,” she quips.

Dimensions for helmet-testing machines are not readily available online, but Todd provided a rough drawing, and Jill was able to base approximations off of images and YouTube clips. Each member of the props team assembled a part of the prototype before putting all the pieces together to, well, test the helmet tester. Once Tony and Todd approved the mock-up, Jill and her team created the real helmet tester. The show’s most noteworthy prop is then painted before being presented to Todd for any additional notes. “It might not be the exact size, but it needs to work for the show and that’s what matters,” Jill comments.

Stage props may not always match their real-life counterparts, but Berkeley Rep’s team ensures that they are true to their purpose and the design. “I challenge the audience to look for what we built verses what we bought,” Peter says. “I doubt they could tell the difference.”

“I challenge the audience to look for what we built versus what we bought. I doubt they could tell the difference.”

—PETER DEAN, PRODUCTION MANAGER
Supporting excellence: Berkeley Rep’s corporate partners

BY HALEY BIERMAN

What do Semifreddi’s Bakery, Schoenberg Family Law Group, Wells Fargo, American Express, and Deloitte all have in common? They’re all businesses that serve our community, but there’s something more. They all also work with Berkeley Rep through our Corporate Partnership program.

The relationships that we’ve developed with our corporate partners are among some of the most important and meaningful. In addition to the many beverage, catering, and other sponsors who help Berkeley Rep through in-kind donations of their products or services, we currently work with 26 others who generously provide funding for our productions and programs, and work with us to develop relationships with other Bay Area businesses.

“We believe that Berkeley Rep is an important community resource,” explains Hamid Hussain, senior vice president and East Bay region manager of Wells Fargo, one of Berkeley Rep’s season sponsors. “We’re pleased to be able to introduce our clients to Berkeley Rep and potentially spark their interest in becoming more involved with the Theatre.”

Business leaders also engage with Berkeley Rep through our Corporate Council. Hamid is a member, and he joins other Bay Area business leaders who meet regularly to discuss our programs, advise us on corporate matters, and help us network with Bay Area businesses. Many of our corporate partners have senior members of their staff serving on the Corporate Council, where they have the opportunity to meet our patrons and network with other professionals who support Berkeley Rep’s work.

“It’s been lovely to meet other professionals who are interested in the arts,” comments Jill Silliphant, lead of corporate citizenship at Deloitte and member of the council.

“The work of the Corporate Council is a fundamental part of how Berkeley Rep achieves its institutional goals,” remarks Thalia Dorwick, president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees. “We are enormously grateful for the support of our corporate partners. They are an integral part of our engagement with our local community.”

Our relationships with our partners are incredibly important to our continued success. We greatly benefit from working with these companies who support and believe in the work that we do. In that same vein, our corporate partners find value in expressing their own passions and beliefs through their support of the Theatre.

“Berkley Rep and Semifreddi’s have the same basic goals and values,” notes Tom Frainier, the president, CEO, and co-owner of Semifreddi’s Bakery who also serves on the Corporate Council. “Our goal is to produce world-class bread and pastries,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
and Berkeley Rep’s goal is to produce world-class theatre. We’re all artists working to create high-quality art.”

Debra Schoenberg, the founder of Schoenberg Family Law Group and a Corporate Council member, also expresses her passion for supporting creative endeavors in our community. “We are so blessed to live in such a culturally rich environment. As the owner of a successful law firm and a patron of the arts, I have an obligation to give back and support the performing arts,” she notes. “Ticket sales pay for a fraction of an organization’s operating budget. Supporting the arts is a moral imperative. It’s not a question of if, but rather, how much.”

In addition to providing general support for the Theatre, corporate partners often provide significant support for other programs. Philanthropic companies like Bayer and Morrison & Foerster help to fund our School of Theatre arts education and outreach programs, and American Express has been a lead sponsor of our fellowship program since 2009.

“When American Express heard about Berkeley Rep’s fellowship program, we became very excited,” explains Connie Parker, manager of account development at American Express and longtime Corporate Council member. “We typically don’t fund multi-year projects, but we are so impressed with the program that we have continued to support it throughout the years.”

Likewise, Berkeley Rep is incredibly impressed with and grateful for the amazing commitment of our corporate partners to all of our productions and community programs. We look forward to continuing to learn from and getting to know this diverse group of professionals for many years to come.

Is your company interested in the Corporate Partnership program?

For more information, please contact Daria Hepps at 510 647-2904 or dhepps@berkeleyrep.org.
One of the joys of working in theatre is that each production presents new opportunities for learning. Whether it’s creating a second story of a house that flies in from the wings, building an elaborate costume piece, programming multiple television screens to alternate between video and livefeeds, or launching a subscription campaign, Berkeley Rep’s staff members must solve unique puzzles at every step of the process. They must be open, adaptive, and experts in a collective cycle of strategize, prototype, assess, and repeat. This agility with problem-solving and openness to learning make our staff members great mentors to our fellows each year.

Every August, Berkeley Rep welcomes 15 young theatre professionals from across the country to spend 11.5 months learning the inner workings of a professional theatre in our fellowship program, which is administered by educators at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre and supported by American Express. Selected from a pool of over 300 applications, some of the fellows arrive straight from college life, while others come with more extensive theatre experience. All have a hunger to train deeply in their specific theatre discipline and a desire for their Berkeley Rep experience to position them well for full-time arts employment. In addition to attending workshops on industry trends and career-building, fellows are mentored daily by departmental staff. Additionally, each fellow is given the opportunity to mentor a high school student in the School of Theatre’s Teen One-Acts Festival, providing the fellow with the unique opportunity to develop their supervisory skills as well as apply what they’ve observed and learned from their mentors.

As Jean-Paul Gressieux, Berkeley Rep’s company manager and mentor, shares, “The fellowship program provides professional immersion and the opportunity to learn from people at the top of their game. Fellows here are treated with the same expectations as anyone else. They are not sheltered; it is a real, hands-on experience with consequences.”

This hands-on professional training, with a bit of an institutional safety net, has proven to be an extremely successful way of preparing and steering fellows toward their next career step. As former stage management fellow Emily Hartman adds, “My Berkeley Rep fellowship fleshed out my college experience and gave everything I learned real-world context. Not only was I in the rehearsal hall with the best stage managers and world-renowned artists that I had read about in college, but I was also seeing how I could apply being a stage manager to other professional fields. Though I still work in theatre regularly, I also do event management and stage management at nonprofit, educational, and corporate events. The thought to expand my horizon would have been lost on me for a much longer period of time if Berkeley Rep hadn’t made it safe to think outside the box—or in this case the theatre.”

In this time of MOOCs (massive online open courses), webinars, and a general interest in codifying creativity in learning, Berkeley Rep embraces a more artisanal, apprenticeship style of training, valuing the hands-on experiential nature and necessary craftsmanship of creating theatre. While some basic theory and techniques are available in books, most of the learning within a department is through a combination of staff experience and experimentation. Everyone is involved, with the fellow at the center. This process of collective discovery seeds an institutional culture of learning, as well as an individual sense of curiosity and acuity with problem-solving.

Jean-Paul adds, “A successful fellowship is one where both fellows and the mentor come away improved by experience. The best possible success resembles mutual learning.”
A THEATREGOER’S GUIDE TO THE GRIDIRON

Whether you’ve been a die-hard football fan since you played in Pop Warner or you only attend Super Bowl parties for the seven-layer dip, you may want a quick refresher on the basics of the game. Here are some football fundamentals that will get you up to speed in no time.

**DOWNS**

The action of the game is measured in “downs,” or attempts to gain yardage.

The offensive team is given four downs to advance the ball or score. If they successfully gain 10 yards, they get a new set of four downs. After the fourth down, the opposing team gets possession of the football.

**SCORING**

**Touchdown:** A player carries the ball across the opponent’s goal line into the end zone, or catches or recovers the ball in the end zone.

**Field Goal:** 3 points. A kicker sends the ball between the uprights of the goal post and over the crossbar.

**Extra Point and Two-Point Conversion:** 1 or 2 points. Following a touchdown, the ball is placed at the opponent’s two-yard line and the scoring team gets a chance to add one extra point by kicking the ball through the uprights of the goal post and over the crossbar or to add two points by running the ball across the opponent’s goal line or catching the ball in the end zone.

**Safety:** 2 points. An offensive player with the ball is tackled behind his own goal line.

**THE GAME CLOCK**

The game clock does not run continuously, but is stopped for an incomplete pass, the ball moving out of bounds, penalties, injuries, turnovers, the end of a quarter, and more.
**Snap, Tackle, Block**

**Snap:** The center starts the play by passing the ball backward.

**Tackle:** The defense brings the ball carrier to the ground. One or both of the carrier’s knees must touch the ground to constitute a tackle.

**Blitz:** Additional players are sent to tackle the QB or disrupt his pass attempt.

**Kneeling the Ball:** The QB immediately kneels to the ground after catching a snap. This ends the play but keeps the clock running to preserve a lead.

**Fumble:** A player loses the ball before being tackled or scoring.

**Sack:** The QB is tackled, forced to fumble, or goes out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage during an attempted pass.

**Spike:** The QB throws the ball to the ground after receiving the snap to stop the clock.

---

**The Field aka The Gridiron**

*Gridiron*
A football field. Before 1920, football fields were marked with grids rather than parallel lines, which made the field look like the metal grates for grilling known as “gridirons.” The term now serves as a nickname for the game.

**Down Line**
Television broadcasts often use yellow or red lines to show the first-down line that the offense must advance the ball to in order to get additional downs.

**Line of Scrimmage**
The imaginary line in the field that stands between the two teams at the start of a play.

---

**The Players**

**Each Team Is Allowed 11 Players on the Field at a Time.**

**There Are Three Platoons of Players on Each Team: Offense, Defense, and Special Teams.**

---

**Offense**

*Quarterback (QB):* The leader of the offense. Receives the ball at the start of each play and then runs with it, throws it to a receiver, or hands it to a running back.

*Center:* snaps the ball to the quarterback; blocks the defense.

*Offensive Guards and Tackles (aka “Linemen”):* block the opposing defense from taking down the carrier of the ball.

*Wide Receiver:* catches long passes from the QB and gains yardage.

*Tight End:* catches passes and also blocks the defense.

*Running Backs (Fullback + Halfback):* receive handoffs and passes, then run the ball to gain yardage.

---

**Defense**

*Defensive Ends and Tackles:* stop the running backs and battle the offensive linemen.

*Linebackers:* Keeps the offense from moving the ball down the field. Linebackers tend to make the most tackles.

*Cornerbacks:* cover the wide receivers.

*Safeties:* provide the deepest defense on passes to wide receivers.

---

**Special Teams**

Members of special teams are on the field during kicking plays. Special teams often include a **kicker,** who will handle kickoffs, extra points, and field goals, and a **holder,** who positions and holds the ball for the kicker.
THE NFL IN THE NEWS:

HEAD TRAUMA, LITIGATION, AND A CHANGING GAME

BY MADELEINE OLDHAM
While baseball still holds the reputation of being America’s national pastime, football eclipsed it 50 years ago as the most popular sport in America and never looked back. Today, football is viewed in over 70 percent of American households, and more than 111 million people watched the 2014 Super Bowl. The league generates around $10 billion in annual revenue, and still manages to maintain its status as a nonprofit organization (though individual teams do pay taxes). NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell wants to grow that number to $25 billion by 2027. Football has become a new American religion complete with Sunday rituals, fierce devotion, and the faith of a true fan. However, football now finds itself facing something of a dark night of the soul, as new information emerges almost daily regarding the effects of the game on the people who play it.

Rule Changes Designed to Reduce the Potential for Punishing Hits to the Head Continue to Be Put in Place. Neurologists Are More Commonly Seen as Part of a Team’s Medical Staff at Games.

Questions began to arise during the 1990s about why some former NFL players seemed to be exhibiting things like memory loss at relatively young ages, mood swings, or personality changes. In 1994, the NFL launched an initiative to fund research on the effects of repeated blows to the head in the game of football. Some held this up as an example of the league’s commitment to its players and its willingness to put some real money toward addressing the issue—taking action instead of merely paying lip service. Others criticized the step for being insincere, pointing to the choice of a rheumatologist with no training in the study of the brain to lead the investigation. The NFL research team conducted studies that found no extraordinary risk connected with playing football, and announced that no line could be drawn between concussions and any long-term effects. This contradicted a growing body of information gathered by outside doctors and scientists, which pointed toward high rates of cognitive impairment among former football players, particularly those who had suffered multiple concussions.

Evidence of a link between football and brain injury reached a tipping point after Dr. Bennet Omalu published his findings in 2005 from the autopsy he performed on legendary Pitts-burgh Steeler “Iron Mike” Webster. Webster was only 50 years old when he died, and yet the inside of his brain mirrored that of a much older man. Omalu subsequently autopsied the brains of other former NFL players, and identified them all as having signs of a degenerative disease known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE. The NFL tried to discredit Omalu, and attempted to have his article retracted. It did not succeed.

2006 saw the beginnings of former players seeking legal counsel to build a case against the NFL. Many of these men couldn’t hold down jobs, or in some cases even follow a conversation. They were often dealing with headaches, depression, the inability to remember simple things, lack of focus, substance abuse, or thoughts of suicide. The first major lawsuit was filed in 2011 on behalf of 75 players, asserting that the league deliberately withheld information regarding the potential brain damage the game can cause. This ballooned quickly, and today upward of 4,500 players are awaiting decisions, many in a massive class-action suit that will likely be settled by the time of this printing.

As of October 2014, 76 of 79 brains of deceased former NFL players displayed signs of CTE. The research is now incontrovertible.

Though the league was slow to respond to the evidence, once it finally conceded that significant risk of cognitive damage is inherent to the game, the NFL has taken a number of significant steps to address the issue. Rule changes designed to reduce the potential for punishing hits to the head continue to be put in place. Neurologists are more commonly seen as part of a team’s medical staff at games. Trainers now regularly occupy press boxes to look for signs of head trauma that the field-level trainers might miss because they are easier to see from above. Players who suffer a concussion during a game must obey strict guidelines about when they can return to play.

The response to what has been learned about CTE extends to the college, high school, and even youth levels. At the collegiate level, the NCAA faces similar issues to those in the NFL. The state of California recently passed a law that limits tackling practice for high school teams, and barred it altogether from taking place during the off-season. Similar legislation is expected to follow in other states. Enrollment in youth programs has dropped, and the future of football seems an open question. It’s a national struggle to celebrate our fierce love of the game alongside the knowledge that it causes irreversible harm to its participants. How, and whether, America can reconcile those two things remains to be seen.
A CONVERSATION WITH KJ SANCHEZ AND JENNY MERCEIN

BY JULIE MCCORMICK

KJ Sanchez and Jenny Mercein are women of many talents: KJ as a playwright, director, actor, and CEO of American Records; and Jenny as an actress, writer, teacher, and NFL aficionado. They bring their considerable experience and insight to the complex, far-reaching questions surrounding our national passion for football. Their keen dramaturgical eyes are guided by big hearts that carry incredible love for the game and the people it touches. Before going into rehearsal for X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story) with director Tony Taccone at Berkeley Rep, KJ and Jenny gave us a glimpse into their process of creating the play.
Julie: Tell us a little bit about why you decided to collaborate on this piece.

KJ: Jenny and I had worked together a long time ago—in 2002 at the University of Washington. That was actually the very first play that I made on my own; before that point I was with the SITI Company. So I went to the University of Washington, where Jenny was in the MFA program, to make a play called Too Much Water, which was a dance-theatre meditation on madness and suicide.

We really enjoyed working with each other, and once in a while we would run into each other at parties. We were at a friend’s Cinco de Mayo party in 2012; this was right after Junior Seau’s suicide. We were talking about football and how it seems like the game’s not going to be the same after this. And then Jenny said, “You know that my dad was a professional football player?” Which I don’t think I had known up to that point. We started to talk about it, and then a lightbulb went off: since American Records’ mission is to chronicle our time and serve as a bridge between people, it seemed like a moment in time that we got excited about capturing theatrically. So I called Tony and pitched it to him, and he said yes, and then I called Jenny. Our first conversations were really about how I thought she could bring so much because of her personal investment, but also how we should work together, how this whole thing would go.

Jenny: In the same way that KJ didn’t know that my dad played football, I had no idea that KJ was a big football fan. And so it was this moment of—not to play gender stereotypes or artist stereotypes, but there just aren’t that many women in the theatre who really sincerely love football in my experience. And I’d always wanted to work with KJ again—Too Much Water was a huge game-changer for me—and I have also aspired to do documentary theatre. So it made total sense, but it was the kind of thing where you leave the party and you don’t really know if anything is going to come of it. But a month later, in what I have come to see as typical KJ fashion, she calls and says, “Hey, I got us a commission!” It was kind of amazing. She just makes it happen.

Can you talk about what your process has been like since that point? Some of the big milestones you’ve hit?

KJ: Jenny did a good bulk of the interviewing herself. Because it was easier for her to call up folks and say, “Hey this is Jenny Mercein,” and everybody knows “Mercein.” So they immediately trusted her. Then she connected with the wives, and then we decided to exploit that as an asset, to know that there will be people coming to hear a reading in a week. Tony was a big part of this process because before Tony’s first responses to the play, it was a smaller play. It was a play mostly about the players and their families. He kept encouraging us to widen our lens and to look at this as a chance to reflect on other cultural issues.

Jenny: We also made one other early trip to Berkeley the summer of 2013. We got some great interviews, held a public panel discussion, and it was just wonderful for KJ and I to have that time together and to start processing.

How much of the dialogue ended up being verbatim, and how much of it has been fictionalized?

KJ: Right now, I would say...90 percent is from the transcriptions and 10 percent is adjustments for clarification.

The previous draft had a lot more of my free writing. There was a time when the fans were really just fictionalized representations of a lot of conversations that we’d had, but they were sounding like writing to me. So we went back and did more interviews, and now we’re pulling from direct transcriptions.

Jenny: There are one or two characters that are compilations of several players. The language—yeah, 90 percent is verbatim from real people’s mouths.

Did you get any pushback when you were speaking with people?

Jenny: Yeah, I certainly got pushback, and some of that you can hear in the play. Some of the people when I first approached them didn’t want to talk. But for the most part, people were pretty open, and I think because I really reassured them that our goal was to hear as many voices as possible. And as KJ said, being the child of an NFL player and totally loving the game, I could speak from an honest place. I didn’t have an agenda. I was a person who was sincerely interested in discussing football from all angles.

KJ: It’s not really pushback, but there were a whole battery of people who just didn’t return phone calls. We got a lot of help from a venerable journalist, who gave us a lot of direct phone numbers from his personal contact list. Some of those guys called me back; others just didn’t want to have anything to do with it because people are pretty nervous about the ramifications of who they talk to.

Jenny: We had contact information for NFL coaches: current coaches, former coaches, who didn’t call us back. Really anyone still entrenched in the NFL was very difficult for us to reach.

KJ: And then we decided to exploit that as an asset, because we knew pretty early on that this wasn’t going to be
a journalistic exposé. So we ended up embracing the people who would talk to us, who were the guys who were retired. By the way, a lot of these older players who played before the '80s didn’t make big money like the guys today. Back when they played, many of them had summer jobs, jobs during the off-season to make a living.

Lots of the guys we talked to were not big, famous players. They’re not household names, and yet they’re still vital stakeholders, and the game means as much to them as to the Brett Favres and the Hall of Famers and the millionaires. And that to me was the more compelling story and a part of the community that I didn’t really understand existed until working on this piece.

Why do you think that football is such beloved sport in America specifically?

KJ: It’s great storytelling. It’s a sport that was made for the medium of television: instant replays and the way the game gets repackaged and talked about have all of the things Joseph Campbell wrote about with the hero myths. There are some basic principles to all of the stories we’ve told throughout history, and all of those principles and narrative structural points appear in one single game of football.

Jenny: It’s really interesting because there’s something in our mythology about being an American: this stick-to-it-ness, that we don’t give up — that myth is embodied in football. And there’s also an instant gratification about it. Baseball is America’s favorite pastime, but there’s something about the four downs in football — it’s so compact. And there’s something that is, for me, deeply embedded in who I am as an American, going back to colonial times: that we were a scrappy people who got knocked down, built ourselves back up, and became

Whether it’s in front of a TV watching as a family or going to a Friday night high school game or tailgating before a big game — I think that sense of being part of a community I will always love and I will always want to participate in.

— JENNY MERCEIN

How has your relationship to the game changed over the course of working on this play?

Jenny: It’s definitely changed for me. I do still watch the game and I do enjoy the game very much, but once you’ve invested in the human side of these stories, it’s hard to shut that part of your brain off when you watch. It’s complicated.

KJ: Yeah and it has changed for me too. I can’t watch it with the same glee I used to, but also at the same time, I watch it with more appreciation. I really had no idea how hard it is to train to be a professional football player. I knew it was hard, but I like to live in a fantasy world where people are born with gifts and all they have to do is use the gifts they are given. But that’s so not true. The number of hours they take to study the game plans, the amount of training, the level of practice,
and the need to commit to that level—I mean, I look at my own life, and I'm pretty much a workaholic; I would consider myself a hard worker—but now that I really understand what it takes to prepare and play at that level, I don't know if I have the tenacity to work as hard as they do. So I have a newfound respect for the players, and I can't watch the game in the same way, and I can't see big hits without worrying who that person's going to be in 20 years.

Jenny: You know by the same token, I'm suffering heartbreak today because almost all of my family is together at the Yale-Princeton game and they're honoring my dad, and I would give anything right now to be at that football game. Whether it's in front of a TV watching as a family or going to a Friday-night high school game or tailgating before a big game—I think that sense of being part of a community I will always love and I will always want to participate in.

In light of all of the research that's being done right now about traumatic brain injuries, and given that love we have for the game, what do you think is going to happen to it in the next 10, 15 years?

KJ: That's a big question. I don't think anyone really knows, but there are some camps that say it is not going to be as exciting of a game; there are some camps that say that the demographics will change, and its cultural impact will change. There are some people who say it's not going to change at all, though it's definitely already changing just because the basic rules and equipment are changing. But that's the million-dollar question. And there are some fans that have just stopped watching. It's not a million-dollar question, it's a nine-billion-dollar question. If football as an industry is going to continue to be as large as it is.

Jenny: I would say a goal of this piece is for our audience to leave the play asking those questions and thinking deeply about those questions, but we don't have a crystal ball. We can't prognosticate, and we don't know. I can speak personally and say that I can't imagine a world without football. I can't imagine fall weather without football; I can't imagine a time when there wouldn't be that background hum on a Sunday of the TV playing the game. But it's changing. It's already changed, and it will continue to change and evolve. Historically football has evolved. And so I think that it's a big question.

KJ: I think it's something that we have to decide as a community. As a society we need to decide what happens to football. Because even if you don't watch it on TV anymore, everyone is tied to football, whether it's the fact that cities pay for stadiums and stadiums bring jobs to a city or whether it's workers' compensation issues when players have injuries. You can pick any person in America and you can play the seven degrees of separation game and see how a big portion of our society is in some way connected to this issue.

But we don't intend to say in any way that the stories the audience hears are everyone's experience. It was more important to us to focus on fewer people and go deeper with the characters than try to cover everything that this issue involves. There are certain issues that are really hot topics right now in the newspaper that we felt just couldn't fit in one play. A lot of these subjects deserve their own plays, so hopefully, X's and O's will encourage more playwrights to tell more stories about the issue—I feel like ours can be one of a constellation of plays about football. Our job is to take photographs of a moment in time and frame them in a way that hopefully ignites more conversation and thought after the play.
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BY KJ SANCHEZ WITH JENNY MERCEIN

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THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION
The San Francisco Foundation’s Rella Lossy Playwright Award, honoring the memory of the late Rella Lossy (1934–1996), a lifelong lover and champion of the American theatre and playwriting.

CAST
Frank, Rocky, Tough Guy & Chorus
Bill Geisslinger
George Coleman, Ramon & Chorus
Dwight Hicks
Addicott, Ben & Chorus
Anthony Holiday
Eric, BJ, Anthony & Chorus
Eddie Ray Jackson
Kelli, Martha, Roberta & Chorus
Jenny Mercein
Caroline, Team Physician, Laura & Chorus
Marilee Talkington

PRODUCTION STAFF
Scenic Design
Todd Rosenthal
Costume Design
Meg Neville
Lighting & Video Design
Alexander V. Nichols
Sound Design
Jake Rodriguez
Movement Director
John Sipes
Dramaturg
Madeleine Oldham
Casting
Amy Potozkin, CSA
Calleri Casting, CSA
Stage Manager
Kimberly Mark Webb

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

X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story) was originally commissioned by Berkeley Rep and Center Stage, and developed in The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

Partial support of open captioning is provided by Theatre Development Fund.

Affiliations
The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union. The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local I-95, IATSE.
Berkeley Rep Presents

Profiles

Bill Geisslinger
Frank, Rocky, Tough Guy & Chorus

Bill previously appeared at Berkeley Rep in Ghost Light, Continental Divide: Mothers Against/Daughters of the Revolution, Dinner with Friends, and The House of Blue Leaves. As an acting company member at Oregon Shakespeare Festival for 25 years he participated in more than 70 productions, including most recently August: Osage County, the world premiere of Ghost Light by Tony Taccone, and as assistant director of A Streetcar Named Desire. Other credits include the world premiere of Continental Divide by David Edgar (osr, Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, in the UK at Birmingham Rep, and the Barbican in London). He has also performed at the Old Globe Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Long Wharf Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, the Denver Center Theatre Company, Virginia Stage Company, the Mechanic Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, and Portland Center Stage. Bill’s film and TV credits include Grimm, Cheers, St. Elsewhere, News Radio, Nowhere Man, Dead by Sunset, A Thousand Heroes, Imaginary Crimes, and American Playhouse: The Skin of Our Teeth.

Dwight Hicks
George Coleman, Ramon & Chorus

Dwight began his career in athletics as a defensive back on the University of Michigan’s football team. He signed with the San Francisco 49ers and his outstanding play led him to four consecutive Pro Bowls and two Super Bowl Championships. Dwight is now creating a successful career in the entertainment business. His film credits include The Rock, Armageddon, Jack, Virginia, and Cartel War. Some of his television credits are Castle, Body of Proof, How I Met Your Mother, and Cold Case.

Anthony Holiday
Addicott, Ben & Chorus

Anthony is making his Berkeley Rep debut. On Broadway he understudied and debuted playing Magic/Willy/Henry in Magic/Bird at the Longacre Theater. His Los Angeles credits include Richard in Ques-ta at the Court Theatre, Red/Jason in Play at the Gardner Stages, and Peter in The Last Pitch at the Renegade Theatre. Anthony also played Richard in Machinal at the Chandler Theatre in Los Angeles, for which he was nominated for an AEA Award. He has been in films such as Roy Campanella Night, Elegy for a Revolutionary, Divorce Invitation, and Finding Amanda. He also has starred in numerous television shows, including Mistresses, The Exes, Dads, Hot in Cleveland, Perfect Couples, and The New Adventures of Old Christine, to name a few.

Eddie Ray Jackson
Eric, B.J., Anthony & Chorus

Eddie Ray makes his Berkeley Rep debut in X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story). A San Francisco native, he was last seen playing Muhammad Ali in Will Power’s Fetch Clay, Make Man at Marin Theatre Company. He was also a 2013 company member at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where he appeared in the U.S. premiere of The Heart of Robin Hood. His New York credits include Much Ado About Nothing at Classic Stage Company; A Midsummer Night’s Dream and La Ronde at the Riverside Theatre; and Miss Julie, The Proposal, and Endgame at Columbia University. Jackson received an MFA in acting from Columbia University and BA in theatre arts from California State University, Sacramento. He is a proud AEA member. Visit eddierayjackson.com.

Jenny Mercein
Kelli, Martha, Roberta & Chorus/Co-Creator

Jenny is thrilled to make her Berkeley Rep debut as both an actor and a co-creator of X’s and O’s. Writing credits include her solo shows pretty, Waiting, and her current piece in development Beautiful Mount Airy Lodge. Her theatre acting credits include Keen Company, HERE Arts Center, New Georges, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Pioneer Theatre Company, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Florida Studio Theatre, White Heron Theatre Company, Connecticut Free Shakespeare, and the Fulton Opera House. Jenny’s TV/film credits include 30 Rock, Blue Bloods, Unforgettable, Law & Order, The Diary of Ellen Rimbauer, and The Prospects. She graduated from Yale with a BA in Theatre Studies and History of Art and received her MFA in acting from the University of Washington. Jenny teaches at UC Santa Barbara Theater/Dance.

Marilee Talkington
Caroline, Team Physician, Laura & Chorus

Marilee is thrilled to be making her Berkeley Rep debut. Off Broadway she played Eleanor in A.R. Gurney’s The Middle Ages and Eileen in the revival of John Belluso’s A Nervous Smile with Theatre Breaking Through Barriers. Most recently, she played Catherine in the Bay Area premiere of Rapture, Blister, Burn at the Aurora Theatre Company. Regionally, Marilee has worked with American Conservatory Theater, Crowded Fire Theater, Center Rep, Magic Theatre (where she played Master Sunflower alongside Taylor Mac in The Lily’s Revenge), and TheatreWorks. Her solo show Truce has toured around the country and ran on BBC4 Radio in 2010. She is the recipient of a San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critic’s Circle Award, a California Center for Cultural Innovation Award, and is a proud MacDowell Fellow. Marilee is one of only two legally blind actors in the country to earn an MFA in acting (American Conservatory Theater).

KJ Sanchez
Playwright

KJ is the founder and CEO of American Records (amrec.us), devoted to making theatre that chronicles our time. As a playwright, KJ’s work has been produced at Asolo Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Two River Theater Company, Center Stage in Baltimore, Round House Theatre, Cornerstone Theater Company, Chicago’s Yo Solo Festival, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Hopkins Center for the Arts, and HERE Arts Center, and off Broadway at Urban Stages. Her directing credits include the Studio Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Round House Theatre, Two River Theater Company, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. KJ is the co-author, director, and producer of American Records’ flagship production ReEntry, based on interviews with Marines returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. ReEntry has toured extensively to theatres across the country as well as over 35 military bases and hospitals in the U.S. and abroad. KJ is also the voice of many characters on the Nickelodeon cartoons Go, Diego, Go! and Dora the Explorer. She is a Fox Fellow, a Douglass Wallop Fellow, and the recipient of the 2014 Rella Lossy Playwright Award.

Tony Taccone
Director/Michael Leibert 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 18 years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 23 shows to New York, two to London, and 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 shows that transferred to London, Continental Divide and Tiny Kushner, and two that landed on Broadway as well: Bridge & Tunnel and Wishful Drinking. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, Tony served as artistic director of Eureka Theatre, which produced the American premieres of plays by Dario Fo, Caryl Churchill, and David Edgar before focusing on a new generation of American writers. While at the Eureka, Tony commissioned Tony Kushner’s legendary Angels in America and co-directed its world premiere. He has collaborated with Kushner on eight plays at Berkeley Rep, including last season’s 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 Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, he debuted Ghost Light, Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup, and Game On, written with Dan Hoyle. 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.”

**Todd Rosenthal**

**SCENIC DESIGNER**

Todd previously designed Tribes and Ghost Light for Berkeley Rep. His Broadway credits include August: Osage County (Tony Award), The Motherfucker with the Hat (Tony nomination), Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Tony Award for Best Revival), and Of Mice and Men. Off Broadway, he designed for the premiere of Red Light Winter at the Barrow Street Theatre and Domesticated at Lincoln Center Theater. Todd was the set designer for six years for the Big Apple Circus. His international credits include August: Osage County (National Theatre in London and Sydney Theatre in Australia) and The Beauty Queen of Leenane at Theatre Royal in Ireland. Todd designed 33 productions for Steppenwolf Theatre and is an artistic partner at the Goodman Theatre. He also designed for the Guthrie Theater; the Alliance Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, the Alley Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and many others. Todd was lead designer for Mythbusters: The Explosive Exhibition and the International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes. He received many other accolades, including the Laurence Olivier Award, the Helen Hayes Award, Ovation Award, the Back Stage Garland Award, the Joseph Jefferson Award, and the Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration. Todd is an associate professor at Northwestern University and a graduate of Yale School of Drama.

**Meg Neville**

**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Meg’s recent and upcoming Berkeley Rep credits include One Man, Two Guvnors; Party People; Tribes; and The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures. She also worked on Pericles, Prince of Tyre; Ghost Light; In the Wake; Yellowjackets; Eurydice; TRAGEDY: a tragedy; Suddenly Last Summer; Dinner with Friends; Closer; and The Life of Galileo. Her recent and upcoming productions at Oregon Shakespeare Festival include Long Day’s Journey Into Night (2015), The Cocoanuts (2014), Taming of the Shrew (2013), and Ghost Light (2011). Meg is an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, where she has designed numerous productions including Lady Windermere’s Fan, An Ideal Husband, Mrs. Warren’s Profession, and lots of Shakespeare. Other Bay Area theatre credits include Marin Theatre Company, the Cutting Ball Theatre, American Conservatory Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Joe Goode Performance Group, and Magic Theatre. She has also worked at Second Stage Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Center Stage in Baltimore, South Coast Repertory, Atlantic Theater Company, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Chicago

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Lisa Peterson’s production of Antony and Cleopatra. For 16 seasons John was a director and resident movement director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Before joining OSF, he served as the artistic director of the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. John is a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique (AMSAT) and a certified actor/combatant with the Society of American Fight Directors. He also trained in corporeal mime with Étienne Decroux in Paris, and studied with Tadashi Suzuki in Japan. John is currently an associate professor at the University of Tennessee and a company member of the Clarence Brown Theatre.

Madeleine Oldham
RESIDENT DRAMATURG/DIRECTOR, THE GROUND FLOOR
Madeleine is the director of The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work and the Theatre’s resident dramaturg. She oversees commissioning and new play development, and dramaturgates the world premiere productions of The House that will not Stand, 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.

Amy Potozkin, CSA
CASTING DIRECTOR/ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE
This is Amy’s 25th season at Berkeley Rep. Through the years she has also had the pleasure of casting plays 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, including Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton; Haiku Tunnel and Love & Taxes, both by Josh Kornbluth; and Beyond Redemption 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, has taught acting at Mills College and audition technique at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, and has led workshops at numerous other venues in the Bay Area. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, she was an intern at Playwrights Horizons in New York. Amy is a member of CSA, the Casting Society of America.

Calleri Casting, CSA
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 & Vanddy, 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.

Kimberly Mark Webb
STAGE MANAGER
Kimberly’s credits at Berkeley Rep include more than 75 productions over the last 30-plus years. His other work includes productions for Center Theatre Group, New York’s Joyce Festival, the Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival, American Conservatory Theater, and Kansas City Repertory Theatre. Kimberly served as production stage manager at Theatre Three in Dallas for six years.

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 Association (08A). 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 Theater, Overtone Theatre Company, Park Day School, and the Julia Morgan Center. Karen is married to arts attorney MJ Bogatin.

Liesl Tommy  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
Liesl is Berkeley Rep’s associate director and helmed the acclaimed productions of Party People and Ruined. She directed the premieres of Appropriate by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Signature Theatre Company), Party People by universes (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), The White Man—A Complex Declaration of Love by Joan Rang (DanskDansk Theatre, Denmark), Peggy Picket Sees the Face of God by Roland Schimmelpfennig (Luminato Festival/Canadian Stage Toronto), Eclipsed by Danai Gurira (Yale Repertory Theatre, Woolly Mammoth), The Good Negro by Tracey Scott Wilson (the Public Theater, Dallas Theater Center), A History of Light by Eisa Davis (Contemporary American Theatre Festival), Angela’s Mixtape by Eisa Davis (Synchronicity Performance Group, New Georges), and Bus and Family Ties (Play Company for the Romania Kiss Me! Festival). Other credits include American Buffalo, Les Misérables, Hamlet, A Raisin in the Sun, and Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, as well as a four city tour of Ruined. Liesl serves as a program associate at Sundance Institute Theatre Program and as an artist trustee with the Sundance Institute’s board of trustees, and she facilitated the inaugural Sundance East Africa Theatre Director’s Lab in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Liesl has earned an Obie Award, a Lillian Hellman Award, the Alan Schneider Award for directing, the inaugural Susan Stroman Directing Award from the Vineyard Theatre, the NEA/TCG Directors Grant, and the New York Theatre Workshop Casting/Directing Fellowship. She has taught or guest directed at Yale Repertory Theatre, Juilliard, NYU, and Brown University. Liesl is an alum of Trinity Rep Conservatory and a native of Cape Town, South Africa.

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Photo: Elizabeth LeCompte, by Andrew Schneider
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 21st 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 Takazaucks’ Breaking the Code and Sam Shepard’s The Late Henry Moss.

Jack & Betty Schafer
Season Sponsors

Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack, one of the Theatre’s trustees, also sits on the boards of San Francisco Opera and the Straus Historical Society. He is vice-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 life 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 Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (seo).

The Strauch Kulhanjian Family
Season Sponsors

Roger Strauch is a former president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and is currently chair of the trustees committee. He is chairman of the Roda Group (rodagroup.com), a venture-development company based in Berkeley focused on cleantech investments, best known for launching Ask.com and for being the largest investor in Solazyme, a renewable oil and bio-products company (Nasdaq: szym, solazyme.com). Roger is chairman of the board of CoolSystems, a medical technology company, and a member of the UC Berkeley Engineering Dean’s college advisory board. He is chairman of the board of trustees for the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute; a member of the board of Northside Center, a mental-health services agency based in Harlem, New York City; and a co-founder of the William Saroyan Program in Armenian Studies at Cal. His wife, Julie A. Kulhanjian, is an attending physician at Oakland Children’s Hospital. They have three children.

Mary & Nicholas Graves
Lead Sponsors

Nick and Mary live in San Francisco and enjoy many days and evenings each year in Berkeley and at Berkeley Rep. Nick is a past president of the Theatre’s board of trustees and serves on the boards of several other nonprofits in the Bay Area. He is retired from the San Francisco–based asset management firm Osterweis Capital Management. Mary was awarded her doctor of education by Rutgers University in 2005. She is a past voting member of the Girl Scouts of the USA and a past board president of the Colorado Rocky Mountain School.

Stewart & Rachelle Owen
Lead Sponsors

Rachelle and Stewart are honored to sponsor X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story). Rachelle is a social worker by training, serves on the board of Bay Area Community Services (bacs) and the Berkeley Community Fund, and volunteers for the Red Cross. Stewart is a former vice chairman of Young & Rubicam and partner/owner of mcgarybrowen. He serves on the boards of Berkeley Rep and a number of start-ups including Ruby’s Rockets, JustGoGirl, and Revelator Coffee Company.

Steve Silberstein
Lead Sponsor

Steve was heavily involved in the 1970s in the automation of the libraries of the University of California, Berkeley and then co-founded Innovative Interfaces to automate libraries all over the world. He now enjoys playing racquetball and sculling (rowing) on the bay, as well as serving on the boards of several libraries, the University of California Berkeley Foundation, the Goldman School of Public Policy, and National Popular Vote. The main contact sport he is interested in is one that is not played on the gridiron, but instead is often in gridlock, namely politics.

David & Vicki Cox
Sponsors

Dave and Vicki have been active in the theatre world for nearly 30 years, first with the Guthrie, where Dave was chair of the board, and now with Berkeley Rep, where he is a board member. Vicki, a women’s rights activist, is a past national board member of Americans for the UN Population Fund and Planned Parenthood. The retired CEO of Cowles Media, Dave pursues interests in media and environmental causes. Previously, he was the board chair of Earthjustice and Link Media. The Coxes love Berkeley Rep’s dedication to risk-taking and its emphasis on contemporary plays, as well as its commitment to developing theatre works and artists.

Jack Klingelhofer
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Jack is the founder and co-owner of an information technology company located in the East Bay since 1981, and he is pleased that its success has allowed him to contribute to his other passion, the East Bay arts scene. As a long-term subscriber, Jack is excited to support the creative excellence at Berkeley Rep, whose performances have meant so much to him over the years.

Meet Us in the Bar

We offer a selection of premium spirits, including craft cocktails curated by East Bay Spice Company, and a satisfying array of sweets and savories.
The San Francisco Foundation: Rella Lossy Playwright Award

The San Francisco Foundation’s Rella Lossy Playwright Award honors the memory of the late Rella Lossy (1934–1996), a lifelong lover and champion of the American theatre and playwriting. Dr. Frank Lossy endowed this award in honor of his late wife Rella, who published several plays, served as the theatre editor of the Bay Area Review, and was a founding member of the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle. She was also an actress, published poet, and great supporter of the arts in Bay Area. The award is given annually to one emerging playwright and their world premiere play. One half of the $5,000 award is given to the playwright and the second covers production costs of the play. Find out more at sff.org.

Mosse Artistic Development Fund

For over 20 years, the Mosse Foundation has been promoting an open and tolerant society through grants to organizations that advance access to healthcare, academic opportunity, and the arts in their communities. Named after Hilde Mosse, a child psychiatrist whose family—owners of the Berliner Tageblatt-Imperial, Germany’s leading progressive newspaper—fled the country shortly after Hitler assumed power. Dr. Mosse played a key role in founding the La Farge Clinic in Harlem, which specialized in the treatment of African Americans with psychiatric illness. The Mosse Foundation honors Dr. Mosse’s legacy by supporting people and organizations that are brave and creative in their energetic and tenacious efforts to promote artistic innovation and nourishment, as well as those focused on lifting fellow human beings who are unfairly disadvantaged by forces of nature or culture. The Mosse Foundation is overseen by Hilde’s nephews, Berkeley Rep board member Roger Strauch and his brother Hans, principal architect of HDS. Through a grant made to Berkeley Rep, the Mosse Artistic Development Fund was established to support the development of new plays.

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Members of this Society, which is named in honor of Founding Director Michael W. Leibert, have designated Berkeley Rep in their estate plans. Unless the donor specifies otherwise, planned gifts become a part of Berkeley Rep’s endowment, where they will provide the financial stability that enables Berkeley Rep to maintain the highest standards of artistic excellence, support new work, and serve the community with innovative education and outreach programs, year after year, in perpetuity.

*For more information on becoming a member, visit our website at berkeleyrep.org or contact Daria Hepps at 510 647-2904 or dhepps@berkeleyrep.org.*

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Please arrive on time. Late seating is not guaranteed.

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Tickets/box office
Box office hours: noon–7pm, Tue–Sun
Call 510 647-2949
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Fax: 510 647-2975

Under 30? Half-price advance tickets!
For anyone under the age of 30, based on availability. Proof of age required. Some restrictions apply.

Senior/student rush
Full-time students and seniors 65+ save $10 on sections A and B. One ticket per ID, one hour before showtime. Proof of eligibility required. Subject to availability.

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Bring 10–14 people and save $5 per ticket; bring 15 or more and save 20%. And we waive the service charge.

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If you can bring at least 10 people, we'll give you a code for 20% off tickets to up to five performance dates. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org/entourage.

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Tickets are just $10 each. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org/studentmatinees. For group, Entourage, and student matinee tickets, please call us at 510 647-2918. Sorry, we can't give refunds or offer retroactive discounts.

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

Accessibility
Both theatres offer wheelchair seating and special services for those with vision or hearing loss. Assistive listening devices are available at no charge in both theatre lobbies. Scripts are available in the box office. Open captioning is available for at least one performance of every season production.

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

Ticket exchange
Only subscribers may exchange their tickets for another performance of the same show. Exchanges can be made online until midnight (or 7pm by phone) the day preceding the scheduled performance. Exchanges are made on a seat-available basis.

Request information
To request mailings or change your address, write to Berkeley Rep, 2025 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704; call 510 647-2949; email info@berkeleyrep.org; or click berkeleyrep.org/joinourlist. If you use Gmail, Yahoo, or other online email accounts, please authorize patronreply@berkeleyrep.org.

Considerations
No food or glassware in the house
Beverages in cans or cups with lids are allowed.

No smoking
The use of e-cigarettes is prohibited in Berkeley Rep’s buildings and courtyard.

Please keep perfume to a minimum
Many patrons are sensitive to the use of perfumes and other scents.

Phones / electronics / recordings
Please make sure your cell phone or watch alarm will not beep. Use of recording equipment or taking of photographs in the theatre is strictly prohibited.

Please do not touch the set or props
You are welcome to take a closer look, but please don’t step onto the stage.

No children under 7
Many Berkeley Rep productions are unsuitable for young children. Please inquire before bringing children to the Theatre. No babes in arms.

Accessibility
Both theatres offer wheelchair seating and special services for those with vision or hearing loss. Assistive listening devices are available at no charge in both theatre lobbies. Scripts are available in the box office. Open captioning is available for at least one performance of every season production.

Theatre maps

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THE BERKELEY REP MAGAZINE · 2014–15 · ISSUE 4
SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2015

5:30 pm Cocktail Reception & Silent Auction
7:00 pm Gourmet Dinner & Live Auction

The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco

Join us for a magical evening, as Berkeley Rep hosts
OVATION: Une Soirée Magnifique!

Find yourself transported to Carnaval in Paris,
a feast for the senses with surprises around every corner.

Tickets start at $750
Tables: Footlight $7,500 · Spotlight $12,500 · Limelight $18,000

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Joann “Jo” Hummel, joined in 2009

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