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By Julia Cho
Directed by Tony Taccone
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I was raised to be an American. My father was Italian from Brooklyn, my mom Puerto Rican and raised in Spanish Harlem. They were both relatively poor and had very large extended families. They identified strongly with their bloodlines: Spanish and English were both spoken at home while the cursing was done in Italian. Raucous family celebrations featured vigorous, competitive, and very loud demonstrations of ethnic pride from both sides of the clan.

But as grounded as they were in their particular cultures, more than anything else, my parents aspired to be Americans. Raised during the Depression and coming into adulthood just after World War II, they hurled themselves into pursuing the American dream. For most of their lives, they were the beneficiaries of a growing economy, affordable housing, and a strong public school system for their children.

The cost of that assimilation was that over the course of time, they slowly sublimated their ethnic identities. While they never denied their heritage, it became less of a prominent feature. Class identification transcended ethnicity, and the values of the dominant white culture seeped more and more into aspects of our lives.

Which leads me to tonight’s play. Disgraced follows the story of Amir, a Pakistani American lawyer who hides his Muslim background for personal and professional reasons. When the truth is exposed, all hell breaks loose. The foundations of his successful law practice begin to crumble and the contradictions of his political views explode his relationships. In the blink of an eye, the armor that Amir has built to protect his identity as an American is stripped away, and he is left to grapple with the remnants of his tattered and torn history. It’s a brutal and exciting story, given astonishing voice and shape by playwright Ayad Akhtar, director Kimberly Senior, and the entire creative team.

The events of Disgraced have been compressed for dramatic purposes. And the situation facing Muslims in America today is fraught with suspicion and judgment. Most of us will never have to deal with encounters as volatile as the one presented tonight. But we all carry our histories in ways that we don’t fully comprehend or even acknowledge. When challenged or threatened, those histories can emerge with startling speed, revealing parts of ourselves we’ve kept hidden. Disgraced compels us to constantly deepen our understanding of the past, of our personal and collective history, so that we may move with clarity and empathy into the future.

Sincerely,

Tony Taccone
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St. Louis Symphony
ZELLERBACH HALL

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Tim McAllister, saxophone

JOHN ADAM Saxophone Concerto
MAHLER Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp minor

Jan 31
David Robertson, conductor
Peter Henderson, piano
Deborah O’Grady, visuals, production, director/photographer

MESSIAEN Des Canyons aux Étoiles

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November 2015
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You very likely received an envelope
in the mail from Berkeley Rep recently. Yes, a real snail mail
envelope! And it may still be sitting on your desk, unopened,
with a pile of similar letters, waiting for your year-end ritual
of assessing which nonprofit organizations play a meaningful
role in your life or in the life of your community. Am I right?
You now know how I handle my year-end contributions.
Those solicitations pile up on my desk as December 31 looms
close. I finally set aside a time to weigh the merits of each
organization, considering which I will make a priority, which
I will forgo, which will see an increase in my support, and which may have seen my
last gift.

We labor over our letter to you. Every word is parsed and every appeal refined. And yet, for all our effort, I know that you get dozens of solicitations and our appeals may never see anything more than your waste basket! Actually, one of the things we know about our Berkeley Rep audience is that you are an unusually involved and community-minded crowd, which is one reason you have so many choices when it comes to philanthropy.

But I hope that you will take our request seriously. As you know, the Thrust Stage has been closed this fall for a much-needed renovation. Over the last 35 years, the Thrust Stage has seen over 15,000 performances and its fair share of wear and tear. Now, we’re breathing new life into our signature theatre with a new energy-efficient infrastructure, a state-of-the-art sound system, and upgraded amenities that will improve your theatregoing experience. What’s not changing is the intimacy between performer and audience member that makes seeing a show in the Thrust so special. The renovation is being fully funded by contributions to the Create Campaign from patrons like you.

In 1980, we opened the Thrust Stage with the generous investment of this community. This January, we will re-open the theatre to a new generation of theatregoers, and we need your support to help make it happen.

When you return home today, I hope you'll open that envelope marked Berkeley Rep and include us in your year-end philanthropy.

Wishing you a joy-filled New Year!

Warmly,

Susan Medak

from the Managing Director

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If you think New York reigns supreme when it comes to theatre, this might be a good time to expand your horizons. While we all know there’s a wealth of interesting plays being staged around the Bay Area, there’s something to be said about the dynamic theatrical hubs of Chicago and Seattle.

Three plays in Berkeley Rep’s 2015–16 season have ties to the Windy City—The Hypocrites’ *Pirates of Penzance*, Mary Zimmerman’s *Treasure Island*, and the Pulitzer Prize–winning *Disgraced*, which traveled from Goodman Theatre to Berkeley and will reach its final destination at Seattle Repertory Theatre.

So what is it about these two cities that make for some of the most engaging theatre around?

Chicago’s rich theatrical history dates back to the early 1800s, though the city has undergone several dramatic revitalizations before becoming a major destination for the performing arts. From the establishment of the Chicago Theater in 1837, to the building of the Chicago Opera House and other performance venues after the Great Fire tore through the city in 1871, to the rise of the Little Theater movement in 1912, Chicago has never been afraid to redefine its relationship with the stage.

Today, Chicago remains the only city to house five Tony Award–winning regional theatres still producing — Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. As longtime Chicago Tribune theatre critic Chris Jones noted in an interview with Backstage.com, “Chicagoans are proud of their theater — even if they don’t go; [theater’s] what we’re known for, they take pride in it.”

Meanwhile, Seattle is blessed with a community of enthusiastic theatre makers. Though many of the Emerald City’s arts organizations suffered during the economic downturn, local actors, directors, and playwrights find inspiration for creating work through collaboration. Theatre Puget Sound, a Seattle–based service organization, helps connect theatre professionals to projects being produced at not only larger companies like Seattle Repertory Theatre or ACT — A Contemporary Theatre, but also up-and-coming organizations, which are often influenced by what each individual artist involved in a production brings to the table. In a city seen as having a moderately reasonable cost of living compared to other metropolises, Seattle performers often find room to embrace projects without the added pressure of trying to make ends meet. While not all artistic endeavors produce a lucrative return, the involvement of artists at all experience levels bolsters the community to continue to create and grow together.

So the next time you’re contemplating booking a plane ticket to the East Coast to catch the latest Broadway premiere, take a moment to consider what’s making headlines in the art world nearby — these cities are closer than you think.
Theatre for social change

BY JAMIE YUEN-SHORE

While scrolling through the variety of classes offered at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, many prospective theatre students may stop and wonder, “What exactly is Theatre of the Oppressed, and is it a class I might be interested in?” Next to audition techniques and playwriting, Theatre of the Oppressed may be a less familiar offering to some. In fact, Theatre of the Oppressed is the most familiar kind of theatre.

“In Theatre of the Oppressed we say, ‘Everyone can do theatre, even professional actors,’” jokes Jiwon Chung, School of Theatre instructor and former president of the national organization for Theatre of the Oppressed. “What we mean by that is that theatre is innate to human beings; it’s as natural as speaking, moving, feeling, thinking, playing, dancing, singing. In fact, it’s probably what made us human. To be seen, witnessed, to share experience, to empathize, to problem solve, to create beauty and meaning, these are fundamental human qualities. Theatre is what makes us conscious, social beings.”

Conceived by Brazilian director Augusto Boal in the early 1970s, Theatre of the Oppressed, or TO, is a collection of games, techniques, and exercises that utilize theatre as a vehicle for personal and social transformation. Jiwon explains, “Theatre of the Oppressed is the tool that allows me to get to the heart of oppression, to see it, and to effectively do something about it. In TO we learn how to see imbalance, how to name it, how to analyze it, and how to transform it—collectively.”

In TO classes, students reenact, analyze, and reshape experiences from their lives. They learn effective techniques to demechanize, or deconstruct, rote habitual behaviors; dynamize, or animate, lived experiences with movement, sounds, and words; and codify, or depict, oppression so that it is visible and can be acted on.

Jiwon has worked with lots of different students and has observed the impact TO can have on their lives, whether working on becoming more thoughtful in one’s daily actions or confronting larger instances of trauma. Jiwon describes, “In one workshop, a person had been incarcerated under horrific, unjust circumstances. We did a series of exercises, followed by a form of sculpting the body in blindness, called cire perdue — lost wax. It’s a process where you form an image of yourself under oppression, then create a series of transformative molds that change the image successfully. They said the work allowed them to transform their experience, to begin to trust other humans again, and to have the tools to continue to transform. It’s not therapy, that’s not our Theatre for social change

Continued on page 12
“When open-heart surgery isn’t an option, we can implant the new heart valve through a small incision in the leg.”

-ALAN YEUNG, MD, INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGIST

People who need a heart valve replacement are not always strong enough for surgery. For them, our Stanford cardiac team performs an innovative alternative. With just a small incision in the thigh, the new valve is guided and placed into the heart. Patients can recover faster and go home sooner. Discover more at stanfordhealthcare.org.
Interested in learning more about what classes the School of Theatre has to offer? Visit berkeleyrep.org/classes. Registration for winter classes begins mid-November and classes start January 11.

objective, but we know that art can be healing. Cheaper than therapy, deeper than therapy, I sometimes say.”

First offered in 2013, the class has been taken by educators, lawyers, healthcare providers, social workers, and people simply interested in leading more mindful lives. MaryBeth Cavanaugh, associate director of the School of Theatre, is excited that the School can provide this kind of class to the Bay Area community.

“I watched Jiwon take an acting workshop at Berkeley Rep, quite a few years ago, and was struck by his openness and presence,” she says. “I then took one class with him and felt that his teaching and his class would not only complement our offerings, but expand them. I’ve watched him bring complete strangers, from diverse backgrounds, to unification. I feel that it is vital for the School to offer classes that can expand one’s personal expression as well as their political point of view.”

The School strives to meet the needs and interests of every student, whether they’re seeking to apply theatre skills to their profession or to their everyday lives. TO offers this opportunity and creates a space for engaging with theatre on a very personal level.

When asked how each Theatre of the Oppressed class comes to a close, Jiwon replies, “We connect physically and energetically. We ground our energy, connect to each other, breathe, sigh, release. We may share a word or two. Then we let go with the understanding that we continue to accompany each other and that we will come together again — deeper and more powerfully. The work for justice and healing continues. It never ends. We build the path by walking.”
Spotlight on KPIX

BY LOREN HISER

For almost 50 years Berkeley Rep has been dedicated to creating new work that invites audiences and artists to explore new ideas and challenge their assumptions. The work is unparalleled, and our audiences and partners are even more so.

Creating great theatre is a team effort; the term “it takes a village” really is no joke. From the playwright and the director, to our audiences of supporters and sponsors, our community comes together to witness exhilarating art. It will come as no surprise that corporate sponsorship, as well as the contributions of individuals, plays a vital role in the life of Berkeley Rep.

We had the opportunity to sit down with Susan Wolin, a member of Berkeley Rep’s Corporate Council and a business development specialist at KPIX 5 and KBCW (both owned and operated by CBS SF, which is one of Berkeley Rep’s season sponsors), for an interview to discuss her relationship with the Theatre, and the people who come to the Theatre, on a very personal level. Berkeley Rep’s image and everything that you do is something we’re proud to align ourselves with.

Why does KPIX 5 support Berkeley Rep?

KPIX 5 has a commitment to the community. We’re a local station, and even though we carry national network programs, we’re all about local involvement, local news, and having opportunities to engage with the community in different ways. Berkeley Rep is part of that.

Why did KPIX 5 choose to become a season sponsor?

Berkeley Rep is a fabulous partner. We have relationships with a number of arts groups, but Berkeley Rep really takes it seriously. The organization gives us an opportunity to really engage with the Theatre, and the people who come to the Theatre, on a very personal level. Berkeley Rep’s image and everything that you do is something we’re proud to align ourselves with.

One of the perks of your sponsorship is being able to host an event at Berkeley Rep for your executives, clients, or audience. Why is it valuable to you?

Engaging with our clients socially is fun and valuable. Most stations have Giants tickets, but being able to share a theatrical experience with a client—a memorable theatrical experience—is very different. It’s a nice treat for us to be able to offer our clients and friends.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
What is your favorite play that you've seen at Berkeley Rep?
If you had asked me a month ago I would have said Tartuffe. Now having seen Amélie, though, it's a dead heat. I have to see if I can beg an extra pair of tickets....

Anything you want people to know about KPIX 5?
I think that it's going to be on everyone's horizon that February 7, 2016 is Super Bowl Sunday on KPIX 5.

What isn't so much on everyone's horizon is that we have been working for a year and a half to make sure that the Super Bowl event is all inclusive...for the entire Bay Area.... So, very much like a play, people are showing up for the final product. They don't see how much work has gone into it. That's what the Super Bowl has been for KPIX 5, and I'm very much looking forward to watching that game.
Pack your wallet before you travel abroad.

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wellsfargo.com
Wrestling with *Disgraced*: An interview with Ayad Akhtar

BY SARAH ROSE LEONARD
Ayad Akhtar won the Pulitzer Prize for *Disgraced* in 2013, after it ran at LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater and before it transferred to Broadway. But *Disgraced*’s success is only one part of this prolific writer’s multifaceted career. His novel, *American Dervish*, has been published in over 20 languages and garnered a 2012 Best Book of the Year from Kirkus Reviews. He has written two other critically acclaimed plays, and his screenplay, *The War Within*, was nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay. Ayad is currently working on various commissions and adapting *Disgraced* for HBO. He dropped by Berkeley Rep on his way back from a writer’s retreat and gave Literary Manager Sarah Rose Leonard a glimpse of how fast his brain works and how quickly he can jump up on a chair when speaking emphatically.

**Sarah Rose Leonard: What inspired you to write *Disgraced***?

Ayad Akhtar: I was possessed. I mean, it just came out of me. At some point I could not stop hearing this guy Amir’s voice and could not understand what he was telling me or why he was speaking, why he kept saying these things. You know Faulkner once said, “All I do is follow my characters around and write down what they say.” That was really the first time I had that experience.

**Can you name some of your influences?**

I had this high school teacher who changed my life and made me want to become a writer. Everything I do is in homage to her. One of the things that she did was expose me to European Modernism. I read Robert Musil and Kafka and Rilke and Proust and Camus and Sartre and Heinrich Böll and Thomas Mann and just on and on and on. It instilled in me this idea that being a great writer was writing like a European modernist. It took me 15, 17, 19 years, until my mid-to-early 30s to understand that idea was blocking me from my entire experience as a person. The preoccupation with astonishing and impressing, the aesthetic, that literary poetic of modernism was in the way not only of me and my subject matter, but why I wanted to do this thing in the first place. I felt touched by stories. I didn’t care about being impressed by them. I felt touched by them. When I started to understand this, everything began to change for me. I finally began to find myself as a writer and what I found was my natural inclination toward thrillers and melodrama and potboilers. I don’t want the audience connected only in the mind—I want it in the body and everywhere. Narrative, intellectual, emotional, anticipatory connections. I want seduction. I want all of it.

**You have said that your work falls more on the side of entertainment. How did you decide that was the need you wanted to fill?**

I say that as a tactic because I don’t subscribe to the division between high and low that pervades literary culture. Especially, to some degree, in the theatre. I feel that by situating my work as entertainment — when it is so clearly preoccupied by philosophical issues and political issues — that I’m foregrounding the way in which I’m ultimately trying to connect to an audience. I’m not particularly interested in having a dialogue with theatrical tradition and history. I have no problem with it. I’m just not interested in it. To me what’s interesting about the theatre is the living, breathing connection to an audience here and now. By calling the work entertainment, I’m foregrounding the centrality of the audience’s experience of my work. It’s strategic.

**I understand *Disgraced* is part of a larger body of work. Can you talk about what you are exploring?**

I’m now four works into a seven-work series which is exploring contemporary life from the perspective of Muslim American identity. And each of the works has a very different take on it. There’s *The Who & The What*, which is about a very devout family in Atlanta struggling with their progressive daughter, who is also devout, but progressive. *Disgraced* deals with the rejection of faith and secularism. *American Dervish* deals with mysticism (that’s the novel that I wrote). And *The Invisible Hand*, with political extremist ideology. I’m exploring it from all the various angles.

“People walk away from this play moved, and confused, and angry. Sometimes they are very deeply satisfied, other times very deeply unsatisfied.” —AYAD AKHTAR

**What makes you know what form your work wants to take?**

I typically write in three forms: for the screen, the theatre, or the page. And each of them has a different kind of interiority. Movies tell you through the cutting, through the camera angle selection, through the image size, through the flow of images. The director makes most of those decisions for you. A novelist similarly does the same thing through language. In theatre, you are given greater freedom, but you’re also more on the outside. And that creates a different kind of interiority that’s particularly conducive to a collective experience. So each idea has its own sense of self. Some ideas want to be described. For others, you want to be absorbed in the experience. And with still others, you want to be confronted and challenged in some way.

**What interests you about the similarities between religion and the financial world? I’m thinking about the substitution of religion for money in *The Invisible Hand* and Amir’s pursuit of financial well-being as a secular Muslim in *Disgraced*.**

Those are the two central issues of our times. I think that the language of finance and the dilemmas of faith are the two central narrative axes of the collective psyche of the fading, late, capitalist empire that we are. For me, it is not a matter of a conscious choice to write about that; it’s the emanation of a natural interest on my part. I read the *Wall Street Journal* every day. I have been preoccupied with issues of faith most of my life. I think that, actually, writing about the financial world...
is writing about religious ideology. I think that free-market capitalism has all of the hallmarks of religious ideology: assumptions about reality, enacted rituals, the expectation that certain rituals will lead to certain outcomes when it’s patently the case that it never does, vociferous belief, and the marshaling of national and personal resources to justify unproven and unprovable assumptions about reality. Eight hundred years ago, we could’ve talked about the reigning ideological order guiding individuals and nations, and we would’ve called it the church. Today we call it the economy.

How does this play out for Amir in Disgraced?

Amir is a guy who wants to make it. Amir is somebody who doesn’t know who he is. He thinks that he can do what many Americans do, which is to cut themselves off from the Old World and renew themselves in the New World. We celebrate that renewal as the great American story. Seven or eight generations in, you have kids that are leaving families from one coast and going to another and finding surrogate families and surrogate communities. Rupture from the old self, renewal of the self in a new world: that’s the American story. Amir finds himself in the unfortunate predicament of being Muslim, Muslim for whatever it means to him, in the post-9/11 world, and that paradigm of the American story is not offered to him. All he can experience is the mourning of the rupture. He cannot be celebrated for his renewal. So that’s the dilemma. I think that the play, in a way, speaks to the trouble of failing to mourn the rupture. Which we do not do as Americans. We don’t like mourning, and we don’t like acknowledging what we’re leaving behind.

You’ve drawn a line between assimilation and self-denial with Amir’s character. What interests you about the flip side of assimilation?

I think that Amir sees some inherent tension between liberal, secularist, contemporary, capitalist democracy and Islamic ideology as he experienced it growing up. I think he’d say that Islam and the West are not compatible, which is a point of view that some people have. And I think that he falls on the side of, “I don’t want to have anything to do with Islam. Because I saw a lot of stuff growing up that I hated, and I don’t want to recapitulate it.” It’s a position a lot of people take with regard to Catholicism, and with regard to Judaism, with regard to whatever religion they come from. It’s just that we can’t talk about Islam these days because nobody can really see it outside the “Us and Them. Are they our friends or are they our foes? Is Islam against me or for me? Should I be scared or should I not be scared?” There’s a whole universe of stuff outside of what you’re feeling about whether you should be afraid or not. But the discourse we are now involved in is all about either defending or attacking Islam. So Amir has fallen right into it and he is playing along with this paradigm in order to create space for himself.

Can you talk about the relationship between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the play?

This is a complicated one because of my personal history. I, a Muslim kid, grew up and the first author who spoke to me was Chaim Potok, and then I learned how to write from Philip Roth and Woody Allen and Seinfeld. The Jewish American experience has taught me how to understand my own experience as a Muslim. So there’s a real paradox there, because
there is an inherent tension between Judaism and Islam for many complicated reasons. I believe that Islam basically comes from Judaism, so on some level, Islam has always had to differentiate itself, just like Christianity. I don’t know how you can construe that the Jews killed Christ from the story of Pontius Pilate, but somehow that’s the message. That seems to be more about Christianity trying to distance itself from the very central, problematic issue that Jesus is Jewish. Similarly, in Islam, it is very difficult to distance yourself from the texts. I mean the Quran is constantly referring to the Old Testament. It is constantly telling the stories of the Old Testament in this fragmentary form as if to imply that the first readers and the first hearers of the Quran already knew the stories. So in some ways, it’s really a secondary source glossing on the Old Testament. It’s like an Arab Talmudic version of the Old Testament. So there’s this inherent tension there. And I go into much greater detail in a more personal narrative way in American Dervish, but somehow that’s the message. That seems to be more about Christianity trying to distance itself from the very central, problematic issue that Jesus is Jewish. Similarly, in Islam, it is very difficult to distance yourself from the texts. I mean the Quran is constantly referring to the Old Testament. It is constantly telling the stories of the Old Testament in this fragmentary form as if to imply that the first readers and the first hearers of the Quran already knew the stories. So in some ways, it’s really a secondary source glossing on the Old Testament. It’s like an Arab Talmudic version of the Old Testament. So there’s this inherent tension there. And I go into much greater detail in a more personal narrative way in American Dervish, but I think that Disgraced is picking up the thread of this long-standing brotherhood between Judaism and Islam, and of course the contemporary issue of Israel and Palestine, which figures only more and more strongly in the geopolitics of the world today.

The play has now been in your life for about three and a half years. How has your relationship with it changed over time?

I understand it finally. When it went up in Chicago, I didn’t understand what I had written. And then when it got to Lincoln Center and I did it in New York, I started to understand it.
Obliterating the ego: Islamic art and the West

BY KATIE CRADDOCK

Major works of Islamic art and architecture include the Taj Mahal, the Alhambra, the Dome of the Rock, and the Great Mosque of Córdoba with its “pillars and arches” that make “you feel like praying,” as Emily describes in Disgraced. Emily, a white, non-Muslim, American artist, paints in a style inspired by Islamic art. While Emily’s embracing of the Islamic art tradition raises tricky questions about creative ownership, Islamic art itself comprises a rich, vast body of work, and can be appreciated around the world. Although many works of Islamic art may be familiar to Western audiences, Western perceptions of Islamic art can be reductive. For instance, a common misconception in the West holds that Islamic art is largely “nonrepresentational” because Islam prohibits figural imagery (art depicting human or animal forms). While there are Hadith, or sayings, attributed to the Prophet Muhammed that warn against the risks of figural imagery because it may encourage idolatry, the Quran itself does not prohibit artistic figural imagery. On the contrary, there is a significant body of figural Islamic art across time periods and media.

Art history, a discipline developed in the West, privileges figural representation above other artistic modes. While much Islamic art is indeed non-figural, to call it “nonrepresentational” is inaccurate; non-figural art may represent ideas, concepts, and relationships. Instead of asking why Islamic art is non-figural, local professor Carol Bier, a historian of Islamic art, posits that we should turn the question around to ask, “Why, in the Western world, is there such an incredible preoccupation with figural imagery?” This prejudice extends to academic programming —universities will typically add art history courses in Indian or Chinese art, which have more figural traditions, sooner than courses in non-figural traditions. Yet when discussing the development of Abstract Expressionism and Modernism in the 20th century, the academy rarely acknowledges that the principles of those forms — such as abstraction, rhythm, repetition, and non-figural representation — were established in Islamic art hundreds of years earlier.

Islamic artists also struggle to gain traction in the Western museum establishment. Ninety-one-year-old Iranian artist Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian has been creating gripping works of mosaic-style geometric abstraction for over four decades. A resident of Tehran who lived half her life in New York City, Farmanfarmaian’s pieces innovatively marry Islamic art traditions and Modernism. It was only this spring that she finally had her first solo exhibition in a major New York museum — a retrospective of her work at the Guggenheim that included 80 of her faceted mirror sculptures and geometric drawings created between 1974 and 2014. The New York Times’ Randy Kennedy noted, “To say that the show...has been a long time in coming would not only be an understatement but an object lesson in several kinds of history, [including] the West’s long-wary relationship with [Islamic] art.”

Instead of conceiving of Islamic art as “nonrepresentational,” we can think of it as both predominantly textual and deeply mathematical.

Rather than focusing on the ways in which Islamic art departs from European traditions, we can better understand the art by examining it on its own terms. Instead of conceiving of Islamic art as “nonrepresentational,” we can think of it as both predominantly textual and deeply mathematical. Calligraphy is arguably the central element of Islamic art; Islamic artists exploit the Arabic script to transform texts — historically, often passages from the Quran — into multitudes of exquisite designs. As Islamic mathematicians, astronomers, and scientists made thrilling discoveries and contributions to their fields in the 11th and 12th centuries, Islamic artists created complex geometric patterns across a variety of media that emphasized both adherence to form and pattern, and the eye-catching interruption of those patterns through judicious symmetry-breaking. As Emily asserts, unlike Renaissance forms, which “put the individual at the center of the universe and made a cult out of the personal ego,” the Islamic tradition is still “connected to a wider, less personal perspective.” Where Western forms are largely borne of a tendency to prize the individual above all else, Islamic art often expresses a more expansive, collectivist outlook.
Aubergine was commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in The Ground Floor, Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.
Berkeley Repertory Theatre, in association with Goodman Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre, presents the West Coast premiere of

DISGRACED

BY Ayad Akhtar
DIRECTED BY Kimberly Senior

NOVEMBER 6–DECEMBER 20, 2015
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Isaac J. Anthony Crane
Abe Behzad Dabu
Emily Nisi Sturgis
Amir Bernard White
Jory Zakiya Young

PRODUCTION STAFF
Scenic Design John Lee Beatty
Costume Design Jennifer Von Mayrhauser
Lighting Design Christine A. Binder
Sound Design Jill DuBoff
Casting Adam Belcuore
Dramaturg Jonathan L. Green
Stage Manager Julie Haber
Assistant Stage Manager Michael Suenkel

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

Disgraced was developed in part at the New Writers New Plays residency at Vineyard Arts Project (Ashley Melone, Founder and Artistic Director).


Disgraced is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

This production was mounted by Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Goodman Theatre.
**Profiles**

**J. Anthony Crane**

Anthony’s Broadway credits include The Country House and Sight Unseen (Manhattan Theatre Club), The Winslow Boy (Roundabout Theatre Company), and Butley with Nathan Lane. His off-Broadway credits include Modern Orthodox, Relativity, and The Brothers Karamazov. His regional credits include Scar in the first national tour of The Lion King, The Music Man (Theatre Under the Stars), Spamalot (Wynn Las Vegas), The Odd Couple (Dallas Theater Center), Absalom (Humana Festival of New Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville), Farragut North and 50 Words (Contemporary American Theater Festival), Sight Unseen (the Old Globe), and Lost In Yonkers (Papermill Playhouse). Anthony has also appeared in The Recruiting Officer and Our Country’s Good (Buffalo Theater Ensemble). Anthony has also appeared in The Recruiting Officer, Our Country’s Good, Mary Poppins, All My Sons, Twelfth Night, The Taming of the Shrew, The Glass Menagerie, Long Day’s Journey into Night, and Closer. Film and television credits include The War of the Roses, Life on Mars, Ugly Betty, The Practice, Third Watch, Jag, Six Degrees, Frasier, CSI, and The Big Easy. Anthony is a graduate of Northwestern University.

**Behzad Dabu**

Behzad’s Chicago credits include The Matchmaker, Disgraced, The Christmas Carol (Goodman Theatre); Inana, Blood and Gifts, and The History Boys (TimeLine Theatre Company); Samsara (Jeff nomination for Best Supporting Actor) and Disconnect (Victory Gardens Theater); Disgraced (American Theater Company); Twelfth Night (First Folio Theatre); Holes (Adventure Stage Chicago); and We Live Here (Theatre Seven of Chicago). His film and television credits include Chicago P.D., You’re So Talented, King Rat, and Imperfections. He is a member of the Chicago Inclusion Project and an associate artist with TimeLine Theatre Company. Behzad attended Columbia College Chicago and is represented by Pajesscia Talent. Please visit behzaddabu.com.

**Nisi Sturgis**

Nisi’s New York credits include The 39 Steps, Intimate Apparel, Dysphonia, and The Less We Talk. Her regional credits include In The Next Room (or the vibrato play) (Cleveland Play House); A Doll’s House, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Life of Riley, Pentecost, Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing, and Pericles (the Old Globe); Mrs. Warren’s Profession, Pride and Prejudice, Doubt, You Can’t Take It with You, and Richard III (Denver Center Theatre Company); A Streetcar Named Desire, To Kill a Mockingbird, Arms and the Man, Our Town, and Trelawny of the Wells (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey); Hamlet and Emma (Pioneer Theatre Company); Failure: A Love Story and Macbeth (Illinois Shakespeare Festival); Twelfth Night (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre); and Trying (Merrimack Repertory Theatre). Her television credits include the recurring role of June Thompson on HBO’s Boardwalk Empire. Nisi received her MFA from the Old Globe.

**Bernard White**

Bernard’s off-Broadway credits include The Tempest and The Death of Garcia Lorca (the Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival), The Who & The What and Blood and Gifts (Lincoln Center Theater); Landscape of the Body (Signature Theatre Company), and Sakharam Binder (Play Company). His regional credits include Troilus and Cressida and Henry V (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Art (East West Players); The Who & The What, The Seven, and Dogeaters (La Jolla Playhouse); Wings of Desire (American Repertory Theater/Toneelgroep Amsterdam); and Bilte Spirit and Lucy and the Conquest (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Bernard’s film credits include Miss India America, Captain America: The Winter Soldier, Vino Veritas, It’s Kind of a Funny Story, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Quarantine, The World Unseen, American Dreamz, Land of Plenty, Raising Helen, The Matrix Reloaded/Revolutions, Scorpion King, Pay It Forward, and City of Angels. His TV credits include recurring roles on The Brink and Silicon Valley (in third season) in addition to Madame Secretary, Grey’s Anatomy, Touch, Castle, The Good Wife, N.C.I.S., and over 100 more.

**Zakiya Young**

Zakiya’s Broadway credits include Stick Fly, The Little Mermaid, and The Radio City Christmas Spectacular. Her off-Broadway credits include Storyville (Audelco Award nomination for Outstanding Performance in a Musical — Female) and Tenderloin at the York Theatre Company, The Lightning Thief at the Lucille Lortel Theatre, Chasing the Bird at the Joyce Theater, and Greenwood at the New York Musical Theatre Festival. Her regional credits include Good People at George Street Playhouse and Seattle Repertory Theatre, Aida at Music Theatre Wichita and Starlight Theatre, It’s a Bird...It’s a Plane...It’s Superman at Dallas Theater Center, White Christmas at Syracuse Stage, and Little Miss Sunshine at La Jolla Playhouse. Zakiya’s television credits include Orange Is the New Black, Made in Jersey, This American Life — Live at 8am (video and radio), and the web series Submissions Only. Please visit zakiyayoung.com.

**Ayad Akhtar**

Ayad’s plays include Disgraced (Broadway, LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and 2013 Obie Award for Extraordinary Achievement), The Who & The What (LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater and La Jolla Playhouse), and The Invisible Hand (New York Theatre Workshop/the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis). Also a novelist, Ayad is the author of American Dervish, published in 2012 by Little, Brown and Company, also in 20 languages worldwide. He co-wrote and starred in The War Within (Magnolia Pictures), which was released internationally and nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay. As an actor, Ayad also starred as Neel Kashkari in HBO’s adaptation of Andrew Ross Sorkin’s book Too Big to Fail. He studied at Brown University and Columbia University’s School of the Arts.

**Kimberly Senior**

Kimberly directed the Broadway premiere of Disgraced, which she previously directed off Broadway at Lincoln Center Theater. Her other off-Broadway credits include The Who & The What (Lincoln Center Theater). Her regional credits include Little Gem (City Centre), Murder on the Nile and A Few Good Men (Peninsula Players), Mauritius (Theatre Squared, Fayetteville, AR), and The Who & The What (La Jolla Playhouse). Her many Chicago credits include Disgraced and Rapture, Blister, Burn (Goodman Theatre); Marjorie Prime, The Diary of Anne Frank, Hedda Gabler, and The...
Letters (Writers Theatre, where she is a resident director); 4000 Miles and The Whipping Man (Northlight Theatre); Want and The North Plan (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); Inana, My Name is Asher Lev, All My Sons, and Dolly West’s Kitchen (TimeLine Theatre, where she is an associate artist); Disgraced (American Theater Company); The Great God Pan, After the Revolution, Madagascar, The Overwhelming, and The Busy World Is Hushed (Next Theatre); and Waiting for Lefty (American Blues), among others. Kimberly is adjunct faculty at Columbia College, and is a proud member of SDC.

John Lee Beatty
SCENIC DESIGNER
John’s Broadway credits include Disgraced, The Heidi Chronicles, Chicago, The Nance, Outside Mullingar, Venus in Fur, Other Desert Cities, Good People, Rabbit Hole, After Midnight, The Color Purple, Doubt, Proof, The Sisters Rosensweig, Talley’s Folly, Fifth of July, A Delicate Balance, The Heiress, Last Night of Ballyhoo, Ain’t Misbehavin’, and Abe Lincoln in Illinois. His recent off-Broadway credits include Dada Woof Papa Hot, Shows for Days, The City of Conversation, and Much Ado About Nothing and King Lear in Central Park. Designer of more than 100 Broadway shows, he is the recipient of multiple Tony, Obie, Outer Critics Circle, and Drama Desk Awards and is a member of the Theater Hall of Fame.

Jennifer Von Mayrhauser
COSTUME DESIGNER
Jennifer’s Broadway credits include Disgraced, Wit, Rabbit Hole, Knock Knock, Hay Fever, The Heidi Chronicles, Night of the Iguana, Talley’s Folly, Da, Execution of Justice, Baby, Beyond Therapy, and Angels Fall. Her off-Broadway credits include work with Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage Theatre, and Circle Repertory Company. She received an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence. Her film credits include Hateship Loveship, The Private Lives of Pippa Lee, The Ballad of Jack and Rose, Captain Ron, The Hand That Rocks the Cradle, I’m Not Rappaport, Lean on Me, The Real Blonde, and Mystic Pizza. Jennifer’s television credits include The Slap, Unforgettable, Under the Dome, and Law & Order (Emmy nomination). Please visit jennifervonmayrhauser.com.

Christine A. Binder
LIGHTING DESIGNER
Christine’s Chicago credits include Lookingglass Alice and Death Tax (Lookingglass Theatre Company), An Issue of Blood (Victory Gardens Theater), A Kid Like Jake (About Face Theatre), and Swan Lake (Joffrey Ballet). Her opera designs include work at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, San Diego Opera, New York City Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Houston Grand Opera, as well as the recent Eugene Onegin for Grand Theatre de Geneve in Switzerland. Upcoming designs include Heir Apparent (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), Eugene Onegin (Houston Grand Opera), Thaddeus and Slocum: A Vaudeville Adventure (Lookingglass), and Cinderella (Joffrey Ballet).
Christine received Jeff Award nominations for her work with Court Theatre, Lookingglass, and Northlight Theatre.

**Jill DuBoff**  
**SOUND DESIGNER**

Jill designed the sound for Berkeley Rep's production of *Mother Courage*. Her Broadway credits include *Hand to God*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Picnic*, *Wit*, *Other Desert Cities*, *Good People*, *The Constant Wife*, *The Good Body*, and *Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home*. Her off-Broadway credits include work at Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Atlantic Theater Company, Vineyard Theatre, MCC Theater, Playwrights Horizons, the Public Theater, Second Stage Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Women's Project Theater, New Georges, the Flea, Cherry Lane Theatre, Signature Theatre Company, Clubbed Thumb (affiliate artist), and Penguin Rep Theatre. Her regional credits include work with Bay Street Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse, Westport County Playhouse, Portland Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, New York Stage and Film, Humana Festival of New Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Adirondack Theatre Festival. Radio credits include *Studio 360*, *Naked Radio*, and *Radiolab*. Jill has received the Ruth Morley Design Award, an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence, and a Lilly Award. She has also been nominated for Drama Desk and Henry Hewes Awards and is an adjunct professor at Sarah Lawrence College. Jill is the audio producer for the New Yorker magazine.

**Adam Belcuore**  
**CASTING**

Adam has been the casting director at Goodman Theatre since 2003. As a casting director, he has also worked with Chicago Children's Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Writers Theatre, and About Face Theatre. He is a founding member of Serendipity Theatre Collective and served as its artistic director until 2005. During his tenure he created 2nd Story, the hybrid storytelling, wine, and music event that is now the company's namesake and primary focus. He currently serves on 2nd Story's advisory board.

**Julie Haber**  
**STAGE MANAGER**

Julie is delighted to return to Berkeley Rep after stage managing *You, Nero and Ballad of Yachio*, both in co-production with South Coast Repertory. She has stage managed at many regional theatres around the country, including four summers at Santa Cruz Shakespeare (formerly Shakespeare Santa Cruz). She served as administrative stage manager at American Conservatory Theater and as company stage manager at South Coast Rep. She enjoys doing children's theatre at MainStreet Theatre Company. She received her MFA from Yale School of Drama and has taught stage management at UC Irvine, UC San Diego, CalArts, and Yale. Julie is a proud member of Actors’ Equity.

**Michael Suenkel**  
**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER/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 22nd 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 Theatre in New York, and Yale Repertory Theatre. For the Magic Theatre, he stage managed Albert Taizakauckas' *Breaking the Code* and Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss*.

**Tony Taccone**  
**MICHAEL LEIBERT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

During Tony's tenure as artistic director of Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award–winning nonprofit has earned a reputation as a national leader in innovative theatre. In those 19 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 40 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*. 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 *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.”

**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 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 serves on the board of the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA). 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.

**Theresa Von Klug**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

Theresa joined Berkeley Rep at the beginning of the 2015–16 season. She has over 20 years of experience in the New York not-for-profit performing arts sector where she has planned and executed events for dance, theatre, music, television, and film. Most recently she was the interim general manager for the Public Theater and general manager/line producer for Theatre for a New Audience, where she opened its new state-of-the-art theatre in Brooklyn, and filmed a major motion picture of the inaugural production of Julie Taymor’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, released June 2015. Theresa has worked as a production manager at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and New York City Center, including the famous Encore! Great American Musicals in Concert, and as a field representative/lead negotiator for the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. She holds a MS in Labor Relations and Human Resources Management from Baruch College.

**Peter Dean**  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Peter arrived at Berkeley Rep in 2014 after a 20-year career in New York, Boston, and Denver. Prior to trekking across the country to find home, Peter was serving as production manager at the Public Theater, where favorite works include *Here Lies Love*, *Father Comes Home from the War Parts 1–3*, *Mobile Shakespeare*, and *The Tempest* as well as musical collaborations with Sting, the Roots, and The
Eagles. Peter also spent time in New York helping Alex Timbers to develop Rocky the Musical, The Last Goodbye, and the cult classic Dance Dance Revolution the Musical. Other favorites include working with Edward Albee to remount The Sandbox and The American Dream at their original home at the Cherry Lane Theater, Little Flower of East Orange directed by the late Phillip Seymour Hoffman, and being a part of the development team for The Ride, an interactive four-mile traveling performance in the heart of Times Square. Regionally Peter has had the honor of working with the Huntington Theatre Company, American Repertory Theater, Commonwealth Shakespeare, Trinity Rep, Hasty Pudding Theatricals, Colorado Ballet, Central City Opera, and the Denver Center Theatre Company. Peter is a graduate of Otterbein University.

**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 dramaturges 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**

**DIRECTOR OF CASTING/ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE**

This is Amy’s 26th 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 independent films, including Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton; Haiku Tunnel and Love & Taxes, both by Josh Kornbluth; and Beyond Redemption by Britta Sjogren. Amy received her MFA from Brandeis University, where she was also an artist in residence. She has been an audition coach to hundreds of actors and a presentation/communication coach to many businesspeople. Amy 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, and was nominated for an Artios Award for Excellence in Casting for The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures.

**Jack & Betty Schafer**

**SEASON SPONSORS**

Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack just rotated off the Theatre’s board and is 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 is on the boards of Earthjustice, Coro Foundation, Brandeis Hill Day School, Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO), San Francisco Community College Foundation, and Brandeis Hillel Day School. They live in San Francisco.

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Michael & Sue Steinberg

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Michael and Sue have been interested in the arts since they met and enjoy music, ballet, and live theatre. Michael, who recently retired as chairman and chief executive officer of Macy’s West, served on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees from 1999 to 2006 and currently serves on the board of directors of the Jewish Museum. Sue serves on the board of the World of Children. The Steinbergs have always enjoyed regional theatre and are delighted to sponsor Berkeley Rep this season.

The Strauch Kulhanjian Family

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Roger Strauch is a former president of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and is currently vice president of the board. 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). 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.

Frances Hellman & Warren Breslau

LEAD SPONSORS

Warren and Frances are avid watchers of live theatre, which includes Berkeley Rep and an annual pilgrimage to London’s West End. Having loved Berkeley Rep for years, they are thrilled to sign on as sponsors of Disgraced. They are very proud of the cutting-edge, exceptional theatre that Berkeley Rep continuously produces. Frances’ day job is as Professor of Physics at UC Berkeley and Warren is a machinist and welder at 5th Street Machine Arts.

Stewart & Rachelle Owen

LEAD SPONSORS

Rachelle and Stewart are honored to sponsor Disgraced. Rachelle is a social worker by training, serves on the boards 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 mcgarrybowen. He serves as president on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and as a board member for a number of startups including Ruby’s Rockets, JustGoGirl, and Revelator Coffee Company.

Bill Falik & Diana Cohen

EXECUTIVE SPONSORS

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 and has been serving as trustee for Berkeley Rep for the past nine years. He currently is the managing partner of Westpark Associates, which creates master-planned communities in the greater Sacramento region. For the past 10 years, Bill has been an adjunct 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.

Thalia Dorwick

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Thalia became involved with the theatre when, at age 12, she wrote, produced, and starred in a Girl Scout play. Fortunately, she has been only a spectator since then. She is past president of Berkeley Rep’s Board of Trustees, and she also directed the Theatre’s Docent Program for many years. She believes that Berkeley Rep, where she has enjoyed performances for decades, is the best theatre in the Bay Area. She serves as a vice president of the Board of Trustees of Case Western Reserve University. She has a Ph.D. in Spanish, taught at the university level for many years, and is the co-author of a number of Spanish textbooks. She retired in 2004 as editor-in-chief of McGraw-Hill Higher Education’s Humanities, Social Sciences, and World Languages group. She is currently engaged in relocating to Florida and Pennsylvania and will miss Berkeley Rep’s productions enormously.

David Hoffman & Joan Sarnat

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David is a consulting research professor of mathematics at Stanford and a Berkeley Rep trustee. He was an associate director of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (msri) in Berkeley and has been involved in producing museum shows about mathematics in the United States, France, and China. Joan is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice in Berkeley.

Felicia Woyerak & Steve Rasmussen

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Felicia and Steve believe that high-quality programs in the arts and education are essential to a vibrant community. They are strong supporters of Berkeley Rep because of its outstanding contribution to the production of thought-provoking and risk-taking theatre, as well as its enormous contributions to arts education at the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre and in Bay Area schools. Felicia is a member of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees. She is a real-estate investor/developer and together with her husband, Steve Rasmussen, owns Palisades Vineyards in Napa Valley. In addition, Steve is a national and international consultant in mathematics education and curriculum development.

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KPIX 5 shares a commitment with CBS News to original reporting. “Our mission is to bring you compelling, local enterprise journalism,” emphasized kpix/kbcw President and General Manager Bruno Cohen. “And just like Berkeley Rep, we’re passionate about great storytelling. We strive to showcase unique stories that reflect the Bay Area’s innovative spirit, incredible diversity, and rich culture as well as its challenges.” Sister station KBCW 44 Cable 12 airs the region’s only half-hour newscast at 10pm. Produced by the kpix 5 newsroom, “Bay Area NightBeat” offers viewers a fresh perspective on current events along with a lively—and often provocative—look at what the Bay Area is saying and sharing online and in social media. Both stations are committed to supporting valuable community organizations such as Berkeley Rep, and are proud to serve as season media sponsors.

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better. I get so many troubled responses. People walk away from this play moved, and confused, and angry. Sometimes they are very deeply satisfied, other times very deeply unsatisfied. And they want me to explain it to them. And I say to them, “Look, I’m the writer, and it took me three years to understand what I wrote.” I think that you just gotta sit with it for a little while. Because I cannot explain to you the ways in which the play is interfacing with your own prejudices and causing a kind of reaction that you then see mirrored onstage. Which you then have to relate to in some embodied way that is no longer about your mind. And then you have to grapple with that experience afterwards. If you’re a Muslim-lover, then you have to go talk about how I am a self-hating writer. And if you’re a Muslim-hater, then you have to go off and say, “I know what I’m talking about, because I’m the one telling the truth about these Muslims.” So that complex dynamic of how meaning begins to take shape in this very personal way for every audience member is something that has taken me a very long time to understand. The play is enacting the process of representation, the process of polarization, the process of splitting. There’s no meaning to the play. It doesn’t mean anything. It’s an experience for the audience to have.

What do you hope people walk away with?

What I do hope is that this public event of conflict and tragedy can find an audience that has lost itself in that experience, and both recognizes itself and does not recognize itself in what they saw. And are so moved or troubled or confused by what they saw, but convinced by the truth of what they saw, that they cannot forget it once they leave the theatre. And the trouble that the play has released into them is something that causes them to keep asking the question, “What’s wrong? Is something wrong with the play? Is something wrong with the world that the play is talking about? Is there something wrong with me? Is something wrong with America? Is something wrong with the writer?”
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The cast of Amélie, A New Musical (photo courtesy of kevinberne.com)
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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.

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

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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.

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You are welcome to take a closer look, but please don’t step onto the stage.

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Many Berkeley Rep productions are unsuitable for young children. Please inquire before bringing children to the Theatre. All attendees must have a ticket: no lap-sitting and no babes in arms.

Ticket exchange

Subscribers may exchange their tickets for another performance of the same show — for free! Online or by phone.

Nonsubscribers may also exchange their tickets, but an exchange fee and reasonable restrictions will apply, by phone or in person only.

All exchanges can be made until 7pm the day preceding the scheduled performance. All 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.
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