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2015–16 SPECIAL PRESENTATION

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Photo on this page and cover: John Leguizamo (photo by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders)
“Seeing my kids watch the show today, their faces lit up… it reminds me of the real job of art: it's to make us feel alive, not just that we exist.”

—Jordan Winer, Drama Teacher at Berkeley High School, after the student matinee of Berkeley Rep's Macbeth

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— Jordan Winer, Drama Teacher at Berkeley High School, after the student matinee of Berkeley Rep’s Macbeth
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Whether you’re visiting us for the first time or you have been here before, we’re delighted to welcome you to Berkeley Rep. We’re also thrilled to welcome back John Leguizamo—his hit Broadway and HBO show Ghetto Klown was seen on our stage as Klass Klown in 2010.

When you come to Berkeley Rep, you’ll see both new and established artists like John working at the top of their game—and you get to be a part of the life of their work. You get to say you saw Latin History for Morons first, right here in the Bay Area. Isn’t that cool? (In fact, go ahead and brag now before the show begins: #LatinHistory4Morons.)

And there’s more to come. In September we launch our new season with a play that couldn’t be more politically right-now. It Can’t Happen Here, a new adaptation of Sinclair Lewis’ 1935 novel, features a character remarkably like Donald Trump who becomes president of the United States, but what it’s really about is how easily fascism can take hold in this country, especially if we’re complacent. Our next season also features the world-premiere musical Monsoon Wedding, which promises to be a spectacular treat. (And another chance for you to say you saw it first!) Curious about more? Check out page 8.

Insider tip: To see fantastic shows and pick up valuable perks while saving on ticket prices, subscribe to Berkeley Rep. Create your own package of three or more plays, or choose our 5-play or 7-play package. All packages offer priority seating, savings over the single-ticket price, and flexibility—if your plans change, you can change your tickets to attend the same production on a different day, and we waive the fees.

We like to say that each play in our season is a stop along an exhilarating journey. Today is your first stop, and we’d be honored if you continued traveling with us. If we’ve done our job, you’ll find that your heart has been touched and your mind has been challenged.

Warmly,

Susan Medak
Discover the 2016–17 Season

Celebrate the world premieres of Monsoon Wedding and It Can’t Happen Here, the return of Kneehigh, a hit Broadway comedy, and more — your adventure awaits!

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IT CAN’T HAPPEN HERE

Adapted by Tony Taccone and Bennett S. Cohen from the novel by Sinclair Lewis
Directed by Lisa Peterson
Main Season · Peet’s Theatre
World premiere · Sep 23–Nov 6, 2016

Sinclair Lewis’ satirical novel follows the ascent of a demagogue who becomes president of the United States by promising to return the country to greatness. Called “a message to thinking Americans” upon its publication, this eerily prescient book receives a new adaptation just in time for election season.

THE LAST TIGER IN HAITI

By Jeff Augustin
Directed by Joshua Kahan Brody
A co-production with La Jolla Playhouse
Main Season · Peet’s Theatre
World premiere production · Oct 14–Nov 27, 2016

Five kids in modern-day Haiti, all entangled in a dark history of servitude, spin spellbinding folktales, vying for the title of best storyteller—and dreaming of their freedom. When two of them reunite 15 years later, the boundary between reality and fiction vanishes.

946: THE AMAZING STORY OF ADOLPHUS TIPS

Adapted by Michael Morpurgo and Emma Rice
Directed by Emma Rice
In association with Kneehigh and Birmingham Repertory Theatre
Main Season · Roda Theatre
American premiere · Dec 2, 2016–Jan 15, 2017

Kneehigh is back! The theatrical alchemists return with a tender new coming-of-age tale that uncovers the secrets behind World War II’s D-Day landings—with swingin’ live music, enchanting puppetry, and signature stage sorcery.

HAND TO GOD

By Robert Askins
Directed by David Ivers
Main Season · Peet’s Theatre
West Coast premiere · Feb 3–Mar 19, 2017

A spectacularly foul-mouthed and wickedly scandalous sock puppet shocks a town’s congregation with his outrageous insinuations, exposing their deepest secrets—and teaching us all about love, grief, and what it means to be human. “Darkly delightful,” declares the New York Times.

ROE

By Lisa Loomer
Directed by Bill Rauch
A co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage
Limited Season · Roda Theatre
World premiere production · Mar 3–Apr 2, 2017

In turns shocking, humorous, and poignant, Roe cuts through the headlines and rhetoric to reveal the divergent personal journeys of Roe v. Wade lawyer Sarah Weddington and plaintiff Norma McCorvey (“Jane Roe”) in the years following the fateful decision.

MONSOON WEDDING

Book by Sabrina Dhawan
Music by Vishal Bhardwaj
Lyrics by Susan Birkenhead
Directed by Mira Nair
Main Season · Roda Theatre
World premiere · May 5–Jun 25, 2017

Award-winning film director Mira Nair brings her exuberant and sumptuous Monsoon Wedding to Berkeley Rep’s stage in this highly anticipated world premiere musical about an arranged marriage between a modern upper-middle-class Indian family’s only daughter and an American guy she’s never met.

AN OCTOROON

By Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
Director to be announced
Limited Season · Peet’s Theatre · Jun 23–Jul 23, 2017

Playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins won the Obie Award for his radical, incendiary, and subversively funny riff on Dion Boucicault’s once-popular 1859 mustache-twirling melodrama. A spectacular collision of the antebellum South and 21st-century cultural politics, An Octoroon is “This decade’s most eloquent theatrical statement on race in America today,” says the New York Times.
Born in a storefront, Berkeley Rep has moved to the forefront of American theatre—and is still telling unforgettable stories. Many plays have their world premieres at Berkeley Rep before going on to greater success; other shows are honed in Berkeley, where actors, directors, and designers benefit from the skilled staff, experienced artisans, and an adventurous audience.

Nine shows seen at Berkeley Rep have ended up on Broadway. More than 12 arrived off Broadway, two moved to London, two turned into films, and others have toured the nation. In fact, this ambitious nonprofit has helped deliver 30 shows to New York in the last 29 years! These plays have earned five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, five Outer Critics Circle Awards, four Lucille Lortel Awards, a Grammy Award, and many other honors. Here’s a select closer look at this remarkable track record:

**2013: No Man’s Land**
Legendary actors Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart came to Berkeley Rep for a pre-Broadway engagement of Harold Pinter’s masterwork. Directed by Sean Mathias, the show played only 34 performances in the Roda Theatre before moving to New York the fall to play in repertory with their revival of *Waiting for Godot*. *No Man’s Land* begins a UK tour in August 2016.

**2013: The Wild Bride**
In 2011, Berkeley Rep teamed up with Kneehigh for the American premiere of *The Wild Bride*. The show married terrific reviews with audience ovations—and extended for three weeks into 2012! That splendid reception led to a honeymoon engagement in 2013 before this *Bride* ran away to play off Broadway at St. Ann’s Warehouse.

**2012: Emotional Creature**
Tony Award-winning author and activist Eve Ensler selected Berkeley Rep to stage the world premiere of a show based on her bestselling book. In June, *Emotional Creature* debuted in the Roda Theatre. Then, in October, the original cast began a three-month run off Broadway at the Romulus Linney Courtyard Theatre.

**2012: In Paris**
When legendary performer Mikhail Baryshnikov teamed up with other Russian artists for this romantic show, Berkeley Rep signed on to produce one of the first stops in the United States. A sold-out three week run in the Roda Theatre helped lead the show to a limited run at Lincoln Center in August.

**2011: The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs**
Mike Daisey performed a provocative play about our nation’s love affair with technology in Berkeley. Then, after runs in Seattle and Washington, DC, it received an extended run at the Public Theater. After an appearance on *This American Life*, Daisey found himself at the center of a controversy because he admitted to fabricating parts of his story.

**2011: Ghetto Klown**
Emmy and Obie Award-winning performer John Leguizamo came to Berkeley Rep in June 2010 to workshop his new solo show as part of the Fireworks Festival. This hilarious and heartfelt tale—known in Berkeley as *Klass Klown*—enjoyed an extended run at Broadway’s Lyceum Theatre under the moniker *Ghetto Klown*, earning Leguizamo the Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Solo Performance.

**2010: The Great Game: Afghanistan**
The *The Great Game: Afghanistan*, a sweeping cycle of short
scripts by 12 top playwrights, caused a sensation in 2009 when it debuted at the Tricycle Theatre in London. In 2010, while Berkeley Rep sent its production of *Tiny Kushner* to the Tricycle, it helped produce a four-city American tour of *The Great Game*. After making its West Coast premiere in Berkeley, this epic show went on to play at the Skirball Cultural Center in Manhattan — and then the nation's leaders requested a special performance in Washington, DC to educate personnel at the Pentagon!

**2010: American Idiot**

In September 2009, Berkeley Rep drew international attention when it presented the world premiere of Green Day's *American Idiot*, directed by Tony Award-winner Michael Mayer. The record-breaking run brought in the biggest advance sale in the Theatre's history, the biggest day at the box office, and 18 of the top 20 days ever. Due to ticket demand, it was extended before it even played its first performance — and it eventually ran for five extra weeks. It was no surprise, then, that it announced a Broadway transfer less than two months later. *American Idiot* began its Broadway run in March 2010 and quickly earned two Tony Awards, a Drama Desk Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, the Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album, and numerous other honors.

**2009: In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)**

Berkeley Rep commissioned this stimulating script from MacArthur genius Sarah Ruhl. Les Waters staged its world premiere in the Roda Theatre in January; then both artists made their Broadway debuts when Lincoln Center Theater produced the show at the Lyceum that fall. *In the Next Room* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. *USA Today* named it Best Play of the Year, *The New Yorker* proclaimed it the Top Moment in Theatre for 2009, and the *New York Times* declared it one of “the four best new plays to be produced in New York this year.”

**2009: Wishful Drinking**

After an initial run in Los Angeles, Hollywood legend Carrie Fisher came to Berkeley Rep to work on her solo show with Artistic Director Tony Taccone. *Wishful Drinking* broke box-office records during its extended run in Berkeley. Then it became a *New York Times* bestseller and played for sold-out crowds on a seven-city national tour. When the pair brought this outrageous show to Broadway, it received rave reviews and played an extended run at Roundabout Theatre’s Studio 54. Fisher won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, and the show became a popular HBO film.

**2008: Taking Over**

Danny Hoch came to Berkeley Rep to workshop his first new solo show in 10 years with Tony Taccone. In 2008, the world premiere of the resulting work enjoyed an acclaimed, extended run in Berkeley before a national tour, which included free shows in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx as part of the Hip-Hop Theater Festival and an extended off-Broadway run at the Public. *Taking Over* won the Los Angeles Critics Circle Award for Best Solo Performance in 2010.

**2007: Passing Strange**

The provocative rock musical created by Stew and Heidi Rodewald made its world premiere at Berkeley Rep. A co-production with the Public, it enjoyed an extended off-Broadway run and then transferred uptown in 2008 to Broadway’s Belasco Theatre. Berkeley Rep was one of the proud producers of this Broadway run, which earned Stew a Tony Award for Best Book. *Passing Strange* also won three Drama Desk Awards including Best Musical, two Obie Awards including Best New American Theatre Piece, four Audelco Awards including Best Musical, and the New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for Best Musical. The show made the annual Top 10 list in many prominent papers — and so did the cult film directed by Spike Lee when it came out in 2009.

**See tomorrow’s plays today at Berkeley Rep!**

Photos right to left: the cast of *Emotional Creature* (photo by Kevin Berne); Colman Domingo, Rebecca Naomi Jones, Chad Goodridge, de’Adre Aziza, and Daniel Breaker in *Passing Strange* (photo by Kevin Berne); Maria Dizzia and Hannah Cabell in *In the Next Room* (photo by Kevin Berne); the cast of *American Idiot* (photo by mellpix.com); Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart in *No Man’s Land* (photo by Kevin Berne)
Madeleine Oldham: Will you tell us a little bit about how the project started?

John Leguizamo: Well, it was a couple of things. I read that 32 percent of Latin kids drop out of high school, and that we drop out of college at the highest rate of any minority. And then I started thinking that you never hear about a Latin hero in literature, so that got me studying Latin history to see why we weren’t included in anything. And then I found out that, oh my god—we were in the Revolutionary War. We were in the Civil War. We were in every war this country’s ever fought! And we get no credit for any of it. If we had learned about this stuff, maybe there wouldn’t be this huge dropout rate because kids would feel included and could see themselves in the history, and could project themselves into the future.

Tony Taccone: I think John is sort of under-representing the spectrum and the scope of the project. One is the journey of John the narrator to try to rediscover his own history and reclaim that for himself. And then there’s the history itself. And there are a lot of surprising facts inside of it. One of the goals is to both engage the audience in a hilarious way because it’s a comedy, but also to kind of shock them into the reality about the amount of erasure that seems to have happened. I mean as a Latin guy myself, this show has generated for me a constant sense of rediscovering the spectrum and the depth of Latin history, and how much of it I certainly was not carrying actively.

John: We both didn’t know that we fought in the American Revolutionary War and that we had generals—

Tony: For me, it’s more fundamental than that. For example I never connected myself to Native Americans.

John: Oh really?

Tony: Not really, I’m Puerto Rican. And Puerto Rico is its own little enclave.

John: Yeah and Puerto Ricans are very tied to Taino.

Tony: They are. But I don’t feel a big connection to the Chicano movement. I’ve just not felt personally invested—I’ve respected it and been interested nominally in it, but I’ve not felt a kind of visceral ethnic kinship.

John: I grew up in New York with every Latin group in the world as my friends, as my neighbors. And every other white group, black group, and Asian group—I grew up with everybody. And you had to figure out who you were and how you belong as a whole. So I felt very connected to all my Latin groups, and they empowered me in so many ways—the Chicano movement influenced me a lot. And the Native Americans, I always felt very connected to Native Americans, especially as I got older.

Tony: My parents spent their entire time trying to become Americans, and even though Spanish was spoken in the home very actively, they worked so hard to—

John: Assimilate.

Tony: Sublimate their ethnic background in order to join white America, that it became this kind of weird gap.

John: That’s a lot of mixed messages going on.

Tony: Yeah exactly.

The other thing I want to say — the last big story of...
the play is the story of John and his family, trying to grapple with issues of identity.

John: I’m hoping this play can make a difference regarding what is in textbooks, what’s in movies, and hopefully it’ll reach some kids and make them do their own research as well.

A lot of this for me is around the fact that there’s a lot of bullying going on in this country. We’re more aware of it than ever before because of the digital age. I think it is causing a lot more pain to kids than it was when nobody was filming it, nobody was reporting it. It used to disappear into the ether and eventually we’d get over it, but now it causes a lot more pain. My family has experienced it, and I read a lot about the bullying of Latin kids. So that’s part of what’s in there.

Can you talk a little bit about how the two of you got to know each other?

John: I feel like I’ve known him for a long time. Tony helped me get Ghetto Klown going and helped me workshop it at Berkeley Rep. It was an amazing workshop — so much fun.

Tony: We started hanging out during Ghetto Klown, and John was wanting to talk about the show and the work. And I didn’t actually want to do much of that, because he had a director and I didn’t want to muscle in on that. John ended up reassuring me that it was okay, and we ended up talking about the work. It felt really easy and really fun.

How did Ghetto Klown come to your attention, Tony?

Tony: Oh I had been following John’s work for a long time — since Sexaholix and the various movies he made. And when I started talking about him to my mom, she was like, “Oh, Leguizamo!” She loves anybody who’s Latin and has attained any kind of celebrity. So I had the thought for a while, and had a lot of admiration for him as an actor and as a writer. I don’t even remember how we got approached, but I think John or one of his people called and asked if we would be interested in this, and I was all over it. I loved the idea of bringing him to Berkeley Rep.

John: And I had heard about Berkeley Rep all my life so I was really honored to be there and to be able to work at one of the prestigious theatres in America, so that was really easy for me. Plus you guys had a really good system for developing. I’ve always been chasing really great places that let you be an artist and let you explore and fail. It’s so important to experiment when you’re in the creative process. To create great work you need to be able to fail and experiment or you’re never going to test your boundaries.

Speaking of which, John, can you talk a little bit about your time at The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab?

John: Oh yeah! The Ground Floor is fantastic because I had been tinkering with this thing in my head, you know — Latinx history. And I didn’t know how to do it. I had a lot of vague... I had a lot of stuff written, and had done research for years and years. So I had a lot of amassed material, and I just didn’t know if it was going to float. I found out about your lab and I spoke to Tony and then I spoke to you. And I was like oh my god, this is perfect! This is the environment that I need to just see if this idea is going to work. And I got into the lab, and it was incredible. I got the first 20 pages written, I read them, and people were very helpful and very instructive. And a lot of the things that were said became prophetic because this thing has taken the shape that they said. The notes were mostly saying people wanted to hear my story more, they wanted more of my personal connection to it. And I kept denying it. I kept saying, “Fuck no, this is going to be about history, it’s not going to be about my life.” And of course, as a playwright you can’t really control the material. You have to let it dictate what it wants to be.

And after that, you took it into comedy clubs and then to La Jolla Playhouse for a workshop production, right?

John: At Ground Floor I asked Tony to be the director. I think every director has a unique personality and brings a unique skill set. And I felt that this was one of my hardest pieces because of the history, and the mixing it with the personal life, and then taking it back to the history. It was a very complicated play. I knew Tony had the skill set and the experience and the background, along with a really solid background in dramaturgy and play structure. And I needed that kind of support and help. So I asked him and when he said yeah, I was over the moon.

And then I finished the piece. I acted it for my friends at home — that’s what I always do, I read it for friends and family. And they were digging it. But I took out all the personal stuff and then went out to the comedy clubs very confidently — too confidently. I got pimp slapped at my first outing in Buffalo. The crowd was like — nope. Some teachers loved it. And I love that demographic — all two of them. But everybody else was like, “I thought you were gonna be funny. And I thought this was gonna be about your family.” And I was like holy shit, all this history stuff that I really love, it’s too dense. It’s too pedantic. So I had to rework it that whole night, retool it, putting in family bits and pieces. And I tried it again the next night, and people were a little bit more appreciative. But there was still too much history. So the next night I retooled it again to put more personal stuff. And by the fourth night in Buffalo I felt like I learned what it has to be: history, and then an analogical personal situation that matches the history. And that’s how this birthed.

Did you know that it was going to be a theatre piece? Is it different in a comedy club?

Tony: It’s different.

“I feel like I’m inside a part of his brain, probably not in a place he actually wants me to be. And vice versa.”

—TONY TACCONE

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
John: Tony went to a lot of them.
Tony: I went to four of them.

**How is it different?**

Tony: Oh my god. I mean people go to comedy clubs to get drunk and to laugh every six or seven seconds.
John: There's a lot of pressure.
Tony: And if you don't do that, you aren't delivering.

And obviously theatre is about exploring time and exploring dramatic scenes and situations in a really different way. I mean the good thing was, I never once worried for one nanosecond whether John was going to be funny.

John: Oh, I worry about that.
Tony: I don't. He's a brilliant comic writer and an amazing performer. What I worried about was him getting so attached to that sort of comic pressure that you're in when you're in a comedy club —

John: He's right, he's so right.... There's an energy and electricity in a comedy club that you don't have in a theatre. The audience there comes at you with so much energy and so much expectation, and they're so drunk they want to laugh. They will laugh at anything as long as you get in that comic rhythm. So I liked that because I want this piece to be funny and palatable to people who may not like history or Latin history or Latin people. But I was still trying to add a little bit of theatre. And Tony was telling me, “You have to be careful not to fall into the trap of set up — joke, set up — joke. We have to start getting into more of the theatre rhythm.”

Tony: More situation — situation as opposed to set up — joke, set up — joke.
John: Yeah, more of a story structure, with a beginning, a middle, and a payoff. That's what we have to move it towards, especially when we go to La Jolla. At La Jolla, people wanted more content, more depth, more facts. Which was interesting because it was the opposite of what the people at comedy clubs wanted.

Tony: Going into a theatre and sitting — the expectations are not the same. I mean, we are trying to capture the energy of a comedy club, but with the sustained storytelling possibilities of a theatre. That's what we're trying to do, is marry those two things. It's like *American Idiot* — trying to capture the energy of a rock concert, but trying tell a story as well. It's great fun, really exciting, and it's not always easy. After one point, I told him he couldn't do any more clubs. I just said you can't do it — they're not the same thing. And once he actually left the comedy club and went to a theatre, he didn't want to go back.

John: It doesn't fit in a comedy club anymore.
Tony: I have to say the La Jolla portion of the experience ended up being a critical and really essential part of the process.

John: It was fantastic.
Tony: Being in front of an audience with everybody accepting that this is not finished, we were able to literally rewrite stuff every single night, because we didn't have to worry about memorizing —

John: That was the most important thing because I've always reached this point and then I can't change much because of the memorization. But because I had a prompter, and people were told that I was going to ask for line, that loosened me up completely more than it ever has before. So we were rewriting —

Tony: A lot —
John: I would perform, Tony would give me notes that night and I'd stay up and write until 1AM until I passed out. I'd wake up at 6AM, write again, meet with Tony. He'd give me more notes on what I wrote. We'd rehearse it, I'd perform it, he'd give me notes. And this went on for three weeks. It was amazing. It was the most creative I've been since 1993.

**So what do rehearsals look like? Tony, is it different directing John from other people, is there anything that's unique about this rehearsal process?**

Tony: Well, John's a unique guy and he has a very unique process. And there's also the difference between a solo show and a regular play. Solo shows are very different. People think with solo shows you have nothing to do. I find them to be twice as intense.

John: Oh my god, it's so much more work.
Tony: I feel like I'm inside a part of his brain, probably not in a place he actually wants me to be. And vice versa.

John: It's an MRI. Tony's my MRI.
Tony: It's a very intimate dramaturgical kind of relationship. You're inside of a play in a way that you're usually not. You don't have to worry about 18 other people — all you have to worry about is one person. So that's an interesting phenomenon that you're actually able to go pretty far with this one person.

Also John has a very particular way of owning the material. He rewrites more than any artist I've ever seen. He's all over it. And he's all over it with a kind of, I wouldn't call it improvisatory, but there's a kind of binding process with language with him, where he's trying to find the exact right way to say something that feels colloquial but also smart and fulfilling. He's also a great actor, so I have the luxury of letting him find the best way in on any acting beat, while I'm also able to stand back and say, "No, that's wrong."

John: That's what's amazing about working with Tony — he is that sharp and that in tune. He's incredible as a director because he is listening to the language, he's watching the minutia of your acting, the details, he's paying attention to every sort of vocal inflection and your physicality and your intention, but at the same time he's paying attention to the dramaturgical shape of the piece, where the obstacles are, where the scene beats are, and language at the same time.

He's kind of a kindred spirit — we love the same things. We like to wordsmith, joke-smith, and we like the physicality of things. We like the shape of a dramatic scene. It's so much fun working with someone who sees all that, because not everybody does. So we can have fun exploring everything and really fine-tuning stuff in a masterful way. Tony brings so many skill sets to the table that makes it really exciting.

**How do you navigate it when you disagree?**

Tony: Well, we don't actually disagree on a lot.
John: Not a lot.
Tony: We do disagree.
John: We do disagree.
Tony: I think we just try stuff out. We just try it. And then
it’s like, “Okay, fine, fine. You want to do it that way? Fine? Go hang yourself on the fucking vine.”

John: “It’s your funeral. Put the nail in that coffin, go ahead buddy.”

Tony: I think we also both take tiny bits of relish in being right about things. And admitting it to the other person. “Okay you were right. Fine.”

John: It’s funny that way. We do disagree, not that often, but now and then, and we’ll play it out in our heads. Sometimes we don’t have to actually do it. You see the both of us taking a moment to think it through and then realize, “...nope it’s not gonna work” before we even try it.

Tony: When he disagrees, I’m actually pretty interested in why. Because he knows the material in a way that I could never know. I mean, he understands and owns it in a way, especially as an actor—

John: Right, and he has the perfect sort of outside view looking in, but he’s also a very emotional guy, a very sensitive dude. So his comments I know are really nurturing, even when he is gruff. It’s a tough love, man. When he goes, “That’s bullshit,” I go, “I know, I know, it is bullshit. It’s the best I can do right now, so we’re going to have to live with it.”

Has anything surprised you along this process?

John: Yes, a lot surprised me. Even at this ripe old age, you still forget that the material sort runs the thing. It’s not our egos or our will — the material controls and shapes itself and if you step out of the way, it wants to be its own thing if you let it. Tony and I are kind of like the midwives of the situation. And that still fascinates me that no matter how much you want to control it, you don’t. You kind of garnish it and you add flourishes, but the material owns itself. It’s so fascinating to me. In film writing, you control it. And you better control it because otherwise it just runs amok, and becomes a piece of shit. In playwriting, it comes more from the inside out, and you just have to guide it.

Tony: I’ve been surprised by a number of things. I’ve been surprised at how interesting it’s continued to be. With projects like this, it’s a crap shoot whether they’re gonna work or not. I’ve always really liked and admired John, but when you get in a rehearsal room, you never know what’s going to happen. With this, it’s always been really interesting. I’m always really excited to come into work every day. The material is surprisingly deep. And the transitions — going from the history stuff, to the personal stuff — you’re sort of doing the giant slalom there. You gotta know where the flags are and really make the turn, otherwise you’ll go off the course. I also feel like it’s great being as old as I am now. I feel like I’m able to just let him go. I mean this guy is a master performer. I’m able to watch performances and offer thoughts about what’s working and what’s not, but he knows it better than anyone, and I’m at a point in my life where I know how to trust that.

John: That’s what’s great about it. This is my sixth one-man show. I love acting in one-man shows, but I don’t want to be the narrator, I don’t want to just be the talking head. I like to create with my body and my emotions. And Tony loves that stuff. And the more we get into the emotional stuff, the more he encourages me to really go there. And it’s weird we have this weird connected personal experience that links us to the piece.

Tony: Yeah our parenting was very, very similar. We constantly talk it about over lunch.

John: Yeah. So that connects us with the piece. Tony’s emotional life is the same emotional life that I had with my family that influenced this piece in huge ways. He’s not afraid of going there, he definitely has no fear. And that gives me a huge sense of safety to go and try stuff, and experiment. And so we’ve been able to bring that stuff that might previously have been a little too personal into the show.
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WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY
John Leguizamo

DIRECTED BY
Tony Taccone

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Performer John Leguizamo

PRODUCTION STAFF
Dance Choreography Emmanuel Hernandez
Scenic & Lighting Design Alexander V. Nichols
Costume Consultant Maggi Yule
Sound Consultant James Ballen
Stage Manager Kathy Rose

The stage manager is a member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

John Leguizamo: Latin History for Morons was developed in The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

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 USA/IA, IATSE.
Multifaceted performer and Emmy Award-winner John Leguizamo's notable career defies categorization. His work spans the genres of film, theatre, television, literature, and beyond. As writer and performer, John created the off-Broadway sensation *Mambo Mouth* (1991; Obie, Outer Critics Circle, Vanguardia Awards). His second one-man show, *Spic-O-Rama* (1993), enjoyed extended sold-out runs in Chicago and New York (Dramatists' Guild Hurr-Warriner Award for Best American Play, Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for Best Broadway Performance, Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance). His third solo show, *Freak*, completed a successful run on Broadway in 1998. A special presentation of *Freak*, directed by Spike Lee, aired on HBO (Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Music Program and nomination for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special). In 2001 John returned to Broadway with *Sexaholix...a Love Story*, directed by Peter Askin (Outer Critics Circle Award nomination for "Outstanding Solo Performance" and Tony Award nomination for Best Special Theatrical Performance). *Sexaholix* aired as an HBO Special in 2002 and toured widely. His most recent one-man show, *Ghetto Klown*, was developed at La Jolla Playhouse (and developed at Berkeley Rep as *Klass Klown*) and went on to Broadway run in 2011. His graphic novel *Ghetto Klown* has been nominated for a 2016 Eisner 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 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."

**Emmanuel Hernandez**

**DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER**

Emmanuel is a choreographer who is honored to be part of *John Leguizamo: Latin History for Morons* at Berkeley Rep. Emmanuel has proudly choreographed for Mr. Leguizamo’s award-winning production of *Ghetto Klown* both on Broadway and for his HBO special. He has had the privilege of touring and sharing the stage with great performers like Ariana Grande, Jojo, Danitza Kane, and Prince Royce, to name a few. He was also a part of the Wayne Brady improv-based show *Making It Up* at the Venetian Theatre in Las Vegas. He has appeared on *Saturday Night Live* on a skit written for Ellen Page and appeared in an episode of *Glee*. Emmanuel has been in the entertainment industry for many years and choreography is his passion. His experience in the industry is broad and extensive. He is excited to be part of John’s new show and looks forward to once again making history as part of his team.

**Alexander V. Nichols**

**SCENIC/LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Alex has designed more than 30 productions for Berkeley Rep. His Broadway credits include *Wishful Drinking*, *Hugh Jackman—Back On Broadway*, and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*. His off-Broadway productions include *In Masks Outrageous and Auster* and *Los Big Names*, *Horizon*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Taking Over*, *Through the Night*, and *In the Wake*. Alex has worked at regional theatres throughout the country, including American Conservatory Theater, Mark Taper Forum, National Theatre of Taiwan, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and La Jolla Playhouse, among others. His dance credits include resident designer for the Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet; lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre; and resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company since 1989. His designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Alley and American Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance, Hong Kong Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, odc/sf, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Alex’s other projects include the museum installation Circle of Memory, a collaboration with Eleanor Coppola, presented in Stockholm, Sweden, and the video and visual design for *Life: A Journey Through Time*, a collaboration with Frans Lanting and Philip Glass, presented at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

**Maggi Yule**

**COSTUME CONSULTANT**

Maggi has designed costumes locally for Bay Area Children’s Theatre, Aurora Theatre, Shotgun Players, Town Hall Theatre, Crowded Fire, PlayGround, and TheatreFirst. Originally from New York, she designed for theatre, film, television, and industrial shows with companies including HBO, Scholastic Productions, Laurel EFX Television, and Columbia Pictures. She has spent the last 12 seasons as the costume director at Berkeley Rep.

**James Ballen**

**SOUND CONSULTANT**

James has been making artists and productions sound excellent in the Bay Area and beyond for more than 15 years. He is very happy to be a part of bringing *Latin History for Morons* to Berkeley Rep audiences. Some of James’ credits include work at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Public Theater, St. Ann’s Warehouse, the Barbican Centre, La Jolla Playhouse, American Conservatory Theater, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and California Shakespeare Theater. Favorite Berkeley Rep credits include *Passing Strange*, *Girlfriend*, *The Wild Bride*, *American Idiot*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Brundibar*, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, and 36 Views. James was part of the Berkeley Rep fellowship program, and has served as sound supervisor for the past six seasons.

**Kathy Rose**

**STAGE MANAGER**

Kathy last worked with Berkeley Rep as stage manager for Bill Cain’s *How to Write a New Book for the Bible*. She has produced or stage managed for organizations such as the Santa Fe Opera, Teatro Zinzanni, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, odc, the SF Jazz Center, Opera Parallèle, Post: Ballet, and Cal Performances. Kathy has worked with a wide variety of artists, most notably Joan Baez, Anna Deavere Smith, Lars Ulrich, and Meredith Monk. Kathy is a proud member of both Actors’ Equity Association (AEA) and the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA). She is thrilled to be working Mr. Leguizamo to bring his art to the stage.
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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 Encores! 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 Theatre, 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 dramaturged 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 Artios Awards for Excellence in Casting for *The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures and One Man, Two Guvnors.*

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 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 Theater in New York, and Yale Repertory Theatre. For the Magic Theatre, he stage managed Albert Takeazaucks’ *Breaking the Code* and Sam Shepard’s *The Late Henry Moss.*

Jack & Betty Schafer
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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, Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (seco), San Francisco Community College Foundation, and Brandeis Hillel Day School. They live in San Francisco.

Michael & Sue Steinberg
SEASON SPONSORS
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, 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.

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Members of this Society, which is named in honor of Founding Director Michael W. Leiber, 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 contribute to the community's innovative outreach and educational programs. For more information on becoming a member, visit our website at berkeleyrep.org or contact Diana Hepps at 510-642-9043 or dhappes@berkeleyrep.org.

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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.

Bringing children to the Theatre
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.

Tickets/box office
Box office hours: noon–7pm, Tue–Sun
Call 510 647-2949
Click berkeleyrep.org anytime
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.

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

Entourage tickets
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.

Student matinee
Tickets are just $10 each. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org/studentmatinee. Sorry, we can’t give refunds or offer retroactive discounts.
“City National helps keep my financial life in tune.”

So much of my life is always shifting; a different city, a different piece of music, a different ensemble. I need people who I can count on to help keep my financial life on course so I can focus on creating and sharing the “adventures” of classical music. City National shares my passion and is instrumental in helping me bring classical music to audiences all over the world. They enjoy being a part of what I do and love. That is the essence of a successful relationship.

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*Michael Tilson Thomas*
Conductor, Educator and Composer

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