IN THIS ISSUE

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You’re free to bring beverages in cans, cartons, or plastic cups with lids into the house.

Food is prohibited in the house. Because, eww!

Please keep Berkeley Rep’s outdoor and indoor spaces free of cigarette smoke, e-cigarettes, and vaping.

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Late seating is not guaranteed. If you are seated late, please follow the house manager’s instructions about where to sit. If you leave during the performance, you will be reseated at an appropriate break.

This is live theatre, and we’re all in this together. Join with your fellow theatregoers, and remember that people respond to the show in different ways. One of the joys of live theatre is the collective experience!

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Editor
Karen McKevitt

Graphic Designer
Cheshire Isaacs

Contact Berkeley Rep
Box Office: 510 647-2949
Groups (10+): 510 647-2918
Admin: 510 647-2900
School of Theatre: 510 647-2972

Writer
Katie Craddock
Si Mon’ Emmett
Sarah Rose Leonard
Karen McKevitt
Madeleine Oldham
Madeleine Rostami
Brooke Vlasich

REPORTS

Celebrating our 50th: Collaborating with Tony Taccone · 10
Repisodes: The first year of the Berkeley Rep Podcast · 13
Introducing the 2019 Summer Residency Lab artists · 14
A youth leadership movement · 17
Roy Cockrum: A vision for the future of theatre · 18

FEATURES

Kiss My Aztec: The Origin Story · 20
Talking conquests and comedy with John Leguizamo and Tony Taccone · 20
Diasporic movement: A conversation with choreographer Maija García · 23
Breaking the rules with David Kamp and Benjamin Velez · 24
Riffing on Aztec ritual · 26

BERKELEY REP PRESENTS KISS MY AZTEC! · 28
MEET THE CAST & CREW · 31

CONTRIBUTORS

Foundation, corporate, and in-kind sponsors · 42
Individual donors to the Annual Fund · 43
Michael Leibert Society · 45

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Staff, board of trustees, and sustaining advisors · 46

2018–19 · ISSUE 7 · THE BERKELEY REP MAGAZINE · 3
"An intensely personal yet universal story of hope in the face of inescapable loss." — PLAYBILL

By JOAN DIDION
Directed by NANCY CARLIN
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I met John Leguizamo 10 years ago. He came through Berkeley Rep with Ghetto Klown, one of his legendary solo shows that was making its way around the country before landing in New York. I immediately fell in love with John’s rapacious intellect and take-no-prisoners sense of humor. We hit it off, talking deep into the night about the terrors and joys of the theatre, our kids, and the New York Knicks. Shortly thereafter he asked me to work with him on a new play, and we’ve been in rehearsal, for one thing or another, ever since. It’s been a fantastic ride that continues tonight with Kiss My Aztec! The show is further evidence of our shared lunacy and ambition, our love of very low comedy and highfalutin ideas, and our mad desire to celebrate modern Latinx culture.

Our small army of collaborators includes composer and co-lyricist Benjamin Velez, co-lyricist David Kamp, and our choreographer, Maija García. They are each brilliant artists and spectacular human beings. Along with the gifted David Gardos, our music supervisor, they have toiled in the musical trenches until we have all wept... with laughter, despair, hope, and exhaustion. Along the way, we assembled a team of righteously talented designers and actors, whose infectious spirit made every rehearsal feel like a trip to Animal House. A new musical tests the stamina, patience, and strength of everyone involved, and Kiss My Aztec! is appropriately named. We hope it kisses you in all the right places.

Finally, I have to acknowledge that this is my final show as artistic director of Berkeley Rep. I say “have to” because this is the place where words truly fail me. It is impossible for me to describe to you what is in my heart...the confluence of feelings, thoughts, and memories that reside there being too great for me to encapsulate with a few poor words...

I have been privileged to work at this Theatre for half my life.
I have had the immense good fortune of watching it grow with the support, guidance, and love of thousands and thousands of people...most of whom I have never met.

To the board members who volunteered their expertise and gave so generously, to the administrative and production staff who worked so damn hard to support the work, to the artistic staff who put up with my ridiculous self and who taught me every day about the art of being human, and to you, the audience, who decided to support our efforts to build a large, artistic institution creating work that is risky on every level...

I salute you. Berkeley Rep is an ongoing experiment, one filled with challenges only solved by the imagination. I leave it in extraordinary hands of Susie Medak and Johanna Pfaelzer, who will lead it, as always, into the glorious unknown.

Yours truly,

Tony Taccone
It is only right that Tony Taccone's final production before he steps down as artistic director should be a total bacchanal, a musical send-up of myth, majesty, and mayhem that contains all the elements of theatricality that reflect Tony's evolution as an artist and as a human being over the 33 years he has called Berkeley Rep home. Kiss My Aztec! is funny and topical and in your face and smart and, in a sly way, it is extremely sophisticated. It is written by John Leguizamo and Tony with Benjamin Velez and David Kamp, with choreography by Maija García, and I really don't want to diminish that this is a piece made with love and humor by all of them. But from where I sit, it is the embodiment of all I think of as classic Tony Taccone.

What I, as his professional partner for all these years, have loved so much about Tony has been his capacity to live happily with contradictions. He is relentless in his commitment to artists. He has a deep sense of responsibility for this Theatre. And when you are “his,” he is a man of unwavering loyalty. I adore his wicked sense of humor and, thankfully, to this Theatre's great benefit, his ability to evolve and grow. Yes, when he was first hired he enjoyed pushing the limits of taste, but he developed boundaries that even he wouldn't cross. He arrived with a love of a good, dynamic dialectic, no matter how hard to stage, but he also came to love stretching the very definition of what a play could be, extending even to plays without words. Yes, he arrived with a keen eye for the ironic with a constant tilt toward the cynical, but toward the end of his time here, he gave us a totally heartfelt and urgent Angels in America. He arrived as an enfant terrible, but he has evolved into a wizened sage. He arrived with an antipathy to plays driven by the heart, but he has become quite the romantic, letting us all fall in love with artists like Mary Zimmerman and Emma Rice. And yes, he swore an almost allergic distaste for musical theatre, but he welcomed American musicals in development for each of the past 10 years, choosing Kiss My Aztec! as his final project.

In all these years there have been times I've wanted to hug him and times I've wanted to throttle him. But, now, as we send him off to some new and grand adventures, it is with real glee that I can finally tell him to Kiss My Aztec!

Warmly,

Susan Medak
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My legacy. My partner.
Incoming Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer’s inaugural season features fantastic discoveries for Bay Area theatregoers, like Jocelyn Bioh and Francis Turnly, alongside renowned artists including Sarah Ruhl, Suzan-Lori Parks, Mark Wing-Davey, John Logan, Michael Mayer, The Avett Brothers, Lisa Peterson, Culture Clash, and Academy Award® winner Dianne Wiest!

**THE GREAT WAVE**

AN EPIC NEW THRILLER • AMERICAN PREMIERE

BY FRANCIS TURNLY
DIRECTED BY MARK WING-DAVEY
MAIN SEASON • RODA THEATRE
STARTS SEP 2019

Spanning over 20 years and the two vastly different countries of Japan and North Korea, *The Great Wave* is at once a riveting geopolitical thriller and a powerful story of the unshakable bonds between a mother, a daughter, and a sister who refuse to give up hope.

**WHITE NOISE**

AN UNCOMPROMISING NEW DRAMA • WEST COAST PREMIERE

BY SUZAN-LORI PARKS
MAIN SEASON • PEET’S THEATRE
STARTS SEP 2019

Brave, intelligent, and eviscerating, *White Noise* by Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks is one of the most talked about new plays tackling our rapidly unraveling social contract. We’re proud to be the only regional theatre outside New York to present *White Noise* this year. Winner of the 2019 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play.

**BECKY NURSE OF SALEM**

A WORLD PREMIERE BY ONE OF BERKELEY REP’S BELOVED PLAYWRIGHTS

BY SARAH RUHL
MAIN SEASON • PEET’S THEATRE
STARTS DEC 2019

The latest play from Tony-nominated Sarah Ruhl, *Becky Nurse of Salem* speaks to the trials and triumphs of women today — and is also a comedic, warmhearted story about trying to do the right thing in a chaotic world.
CULTURE CLASH (STILL) IN AMERICA

IRREVERENT, THOUGHT-PROVOKING SOCIAL SATIRE

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY CULTURE CLASH
RICHARD MONTOYA, RICARDO SALINAS, AND HERBERT SIGUENZA
DIRECTED BY LISA PETERSON
MAIN SEASON · PEET’S THEATRE
STARTS FEB 2020

The missionaries of mayhem are back with their unique, badass brand of Chicano satire! Born here in the Bay and Los Angeles–based, Culture Clash first brought their dangerous and subversive version of documentary theatre to Berkeley audiences with Culture Clash in AmeriCCa, gleefully skewering American culture through the lens of the Latino experience.

SCHOOL GIRLS
OR, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY

AN INFECTIOUS COMEDY WITH TEETH

BY JOCELYN BIOH
DIRECTED BY AWOYE TIMPO
MAIN SEASON · RODA THEATRE
STARTS MAR 2020

Winner of the 2018 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play and the Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award, School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play is a biting comedy that tackles the universal issues of beauty and self-worth that face teenage girls across the globe.

HAPPY DAYS

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER DIANNE WIEST IN ONE OF THEATRE’S MOST EXTRAORDINARY ROLES

BY SAMUEL BECKETT
DIRECTED BY JAMES BUNDY
WITH DIANNE WIEST
LIMITED SEASON · RODA THEATRE
STARTS MAY 2020

Academy Award® winner Dianne Wiest plays Winnie in Samuel Beckett’s masterpiece Happy Days. With her husband Willie (Michael Rudko) increasingly out of reach and the earth itself threatening to swallow her whole, Winnie’s buoyant optimism shields her from the harsh glare of the inevitable in this absurdly funny and boundlessly compassionate portrait of the human spirit. The New York Times declares Wiest is “extraordinary,” capturing both the humor and the heartbreak of one of Beckett’s most popular plays in this stunning Yale Repertory Theatre production.

SWEPT AWAY

A HAUNTING MUSICAL TALE OF THE SEA, SACRIFICE, AND SALVATION · WORLD PREMIERE

BOOK BY JOHN LOGAN
MUSIC & LYRICS BY THE AVETT BROTHERS
MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS & ORCHESTRATIONS
BY CHRIS MILLER & BRIAN USIFER
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL MAYER
LIMITED SEASON · PEET’S THEATRE
STARTS JUN 2020

Tony Award-winning director Michael Mayer (Spring Awakening, Hedwig and the Angry Inch) blew the roof off Berkeley Rep in 2009 with Green Day’s American Idiot. Now he returns with a captivating world premiere musical, this time featuring a book by Tony Award–winning stage and screen writer John Logan (Red, Broadway’s Moulin Rouge!, Skyfall, Gladiator), and music and lyrics by “America’s biggest roots band” (Rolling Stone) and multiple Grammy Award nominee The Avett Brothers.

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Celebrating our 50th: Collaborating with Tony Taccone

BY KAREN MCKEVITT

It’s absolutely fitting that our 50th anniversary season should come to a close with a world premiere musical co-written and directed by Tony Taccone — his last show as artistic director of Berkeley Rep. *Kiss My Aztec!* marks Tony’s second collaboration with John Leguizamo — the two made a bit of, well, history in 2016 with *Latin History for Morons*, John’s solo show that premiered in Berkeley and went on to Broadway where it helped him win a Special Tony Award.

Let’s take a look at a few other significant shows representing Tony’s 20+ years at Berkeley Rep and featuring some of his other collaborators.

Clockwise from above: Randy Harrison, Caldwell Tidicue, Benjamin T. Ismail, and Carmen Roman in *Angels in America*; Robyn Rodriguez and Derrick Lee Weeden in *The Oresteia*; Geoff Hoyle in *Lemony Snicket’s The Composer is Dead*; Ephraim Sykes, Jeremy Pope, James Harkness, Jared Joseph, and Derrick Baskin in Berkeley Rep’s production of *Ain’t Too Proud*; Robynn Rodriguez and Derrick Lee Weeden in *The Oresteia*; Geoff Hoyle in *Lemony Snicket’s The Composer is Dead*; Rita Moreno with Salvatore Vassallo and Ray Garcia in *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*.

World premieres produced under Tony’s tenure

2019: *Kiss My Aztec!*
Book by John Leguizamo and Tony Taccone · Music by Benjamin Velez · Lyrics by David Kamp, Benjamin Velez, and John Leguizamo

2018: *Paradise Square*
Book by Marcus Gardley, Craig Lucas, and Larry Kirwan · Music by Jason Howland and Larry Kirwan · Lyrics by Nathan Tysen

2018: *Fairview*
By Jackie Sibblies Drury · In association with Soho Rep

2017: *Imaginary Comforts, or The Story of the Ghost of the Dead Rabbit*
By Daniel Handler

2017: *Ain’t Too Proud—The Life and Times of The Temptations*
Book by Dominique Morisseau · Music and Lyrics from The Legendary Motown Catalog

2017: *Monsoon Wedding*
Book by Sabrina Dhawan · Music by Vishal Bhardwaj · Lyrics by Susan Birkenhead

2017: *Roe*
By Lisa Loomer (commission) · Co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arena Stage

2016: *Last Tiger in Haiti*
By Jeff Augustin (commission)

2016: *It Can’t Happen Here*
By Tony Taccone and Bennett S. Cohen, adapted from Sinclair Lewis

2016: *Latin History for Morons*
By John Leguizamo

2016: *Aubergine*
By Julia Cho (commission)

2015: *Amélie, A New Musical*
Book by Craig Lucas · Music by Daniel Messé · Lyrics by Nathan Tysen and Daniel Messé

2015: *X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story)*
By KJ Sanchez with Jenny Mercein (commission)

2014: *An Audience with Meow Meow*
By Meow Meow

2014: *The House that will not Stand*
By Marcus Gardley (commission)

2013: *Fallaci*
By Lawrence Wright

2013: *Troublemaker, or The Freakin’ Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright*
By Dan LeFranc (commission)

2012: *The White Snake*
By Mary Zimmerman · Co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival

2012: *Emotional Creature*
By Eve Ensler

2012: *Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men*
Written and performed by Dael Orlandersmith (commission)

2012: *Ghost Light*
By Tony Taccone · Conceived and developed by Jonathan Moscone and Tony Taccone · Co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival

2011: *How to Write a New Book for the Bible*
By Bill Cain

2011: *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*
By Tony Taccone · Developed by Rita Moreno and Tony Taccone

2010: *Lemony Snicket’s The Composer is Dead*
Music by Nathaniel Stookey · Conceived for the stage by Lemony Snicket, Phantom Limb, Tony Taccone, and Geoff Hoyle

2009: *Angels in America*
While he was artistic director at the Eureka Theatre, Tony Taccone commissioned *Angels in America* in 1989 from an up-and-coming playwright named Tony Kushner. Taccone and Oskar Eustis, then dramaturg at the Eureka and now the artistic director of The Public Theater, ushered the play onto the national stage. *Angels in America* received a revival, complete with “marathon days” at Berkeley Rep in 2018, helmed by Taccone.
The Oresteia

Of the nearly 50 plays Tony has directed at Berkeley Rep, several of them loom large. One is, of course, Angels in America. Another marked the opening of the Roda Theatre in 2001: Robert Fagles' translation of The Oresteia, three plays performed as two events in rotating repertory.

David Edgar’s Continental Divide was comprised of two three-hour plays that investigate a West Coast governor’s race. Tony directed the premiere at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, then brought it to Berkeley Rep in 2003, just one month after the special election to recall California Governor Gray Davis.

Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup

Tony forayed into writing earlier this decade, starting with Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup. The following year, Tony and Jonathan Moscone conceived and developed Ghost Light — Tony wrote the play while Jonathan directed. Most recently, Tony and Bennett S. Cohen adapted Sinclair Lewis’ It Can’t Happen Here, which premiered in fall 2016, directed by Berkeley Rep’s Associate Director Lisa Peterson.

Lemony Snicket’s The Composer is Dead

Tony also conceived — along with Lemony Snicket, Phantom Limb, and Geoff Hoyle — and directed Lemony Snicket’s The Composer is Dead in 2010, starring Geoff Hoyle and an orchestra of puppets. Tony had directed a number of Geoff’s shows in the 1990s, starting with world premiere of The Convict’s Return, written by and starring Geoff, with longtime Berkeley Rep actor Sharon Lockwood as co-star.

Ain’t Too Proud

Under Tony’s leadership, Berkeley Rep has been producing more and more musicals. American Idiot, which premiered in 2009, marked the first time we partnered with New York producers Tom Hulce and Ira Pittelman, and we hooked up with them again for 2017’s Ain’t Too Proud — The Life and Times of The Temptations.

Taking Over / Bridge & Tunnel / Culture Clash in AmeriCCa

Latin History for Morons is just the latest of many solo shows that Tony has helmed. Danny Hoch’s Taking Over premiered here in 2008. It received a national tour and an extended off-Broadway run in Manhattan at The Public Theater, and won the Los Angeles Critics Circle Award for Best Solo Performance in 2010. After directing Sarah Jones in the West Coast premiere of her solo show Surface Transit in 2003, Tony helmed a workshop production of Bridge & Tunnel in 2005. The pair took it to Broadway and Sarah won a Tony Award. Culture Clash premiered two shows at Berkeley Rep with Tony at the helm: Culture Clash in AmeriCCa in 2002 and Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell in 2006. Culture Clash returns to Berkeley Rep next season with Culture Clash (Still) in America.

2010: Compulsion
By Rinne Groff (commission)

2010: In the Wake
By Lisa Kron

2010: Girlfriend
Book by Todd Almond · Music and Lyrics by Matthew Sweet

2010: Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West
By Naomi Iizuka (commission)

2009: American Idiot
Music by Green Day · Lyrics by Billie Joe Armstrong · Book by Billie Joe Armstrong and Michael Mayer

2009: You, Nero
By Amy Freed · Co-production with South Coast Repertory

2009: In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)
By Sarah Ruhl (commission)

2008: Yellowjackets
By Itamar Moses (commission)

2008: Taking Over
Written and performed by Danny Hoch

2007: To The Lighthouse
By Adele Edling Shank, based on the novel by Virginia Woolf

2006: Passing Strange
Book and Lyrics by Stew · Music by Stew and Heidi Rodewald (commission)

2006: Culture Clash’s Zorro In Hell
By Culture Clash (commission)

2005: Finn in the Underworld
By Jordan Harrison

2005: The People’s Temple
By Leigh Fondakowski with Greg Pierotti, Stephen Wangh, and Margo Hall

2005: For Better or Worse
Based on plays by Georges Feydeau, translated and adapted by Geoff Hoyle · In association with Arizona Theatre Company

2005: Fêtes de la Nuit
By Charles L. Mee

2003: Continental Divide: Mothers Against and Daughters of the Revolution
By David Edgar (commission) · Co-production with Oregon Shakespeare Festival

2003: Fräulein Else
Adapted by Francesca Faridany from the novella by Arthur Schnitzler

2002: Menocchio
By Lillian Groag

2002: Culture Clash in AmeriCCa
By Culture Clash

2002: Persimmony Jones
By Laurie Lathem and Hector Correa (school touring show)

2001: 36 Views
By Naomi Iizuka

2000: The Alchemist
Adapted from Ben Jonson by Joan Holden (commission)

1999: The Queen of the Sea
By Anne Galjour (commission/school touring show)

1999: The First 100 Years
By Geoff Hoyle (commission)

1999: Ravenshead
By Steve Mackey and Rinde Eckert (commission)

1998: Hydriotaphia
By Tony Kushner

These world premieres also made possible by Berkeley Rep’s artistic staff: Les Waters (associate artistic director 2003–2012), Lisa Peterson (associate director), Amy Potozkin (director of casting/artistic associate), and Madeleine Oldham (resident dramaturg/director, The Ground Floor).
CONGRATULATIONS
ON A REMARKABLE RUN, TONY!

You’re a Bay Area legend. We can’t wait to see what you do next.

Best wishes,
Pam MacKinnon, Jennifer Bielstein,
and everyone at American Conservatory Theater

RHINOCEROS
THE ABSURD IS REAL.

by Eugène Ionesco
Translated by Derek Prouse
Directed by Frank Galati

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TOP GIRLS
by Caryl Churchill
directed by Tamilla Woodard

TESTMATCH
by Kate Attwell
directed by Pam Mackinnon

WAKEY, WAKEY
by Will Eno
directed by Anne Kauffman
starring two-time Emmy Award winner Tony Hale

GLORIA
by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
directed by Eric Ting

TONI STONE
by Lydia R. Diamond
directed by Pam Mackinnon
choreographed by Camille A. Brown
a coproduction with Arena Stage

RICHARD O’BRIEN’S
THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW
books, music, and lyrics by Richard O’Brien
directed and choreographed by Sam Pinkleton

POOR YELLA REDNECKS
VITGONE PART 2
by Qui Nguyen
directed by Jaime Castañeda

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Repisodes: The first year of the Berkeley Rep Podcast

BY SARAH ROSE LEONARD

When Berkeley Rep produced Angels in America in 2018, we formed partnerships with people and groups in the Bay Area who had an affinity with the manifold themes of the play. We connected with theologians, AIDS medical professionals and activists, earthquake specialists, political scientists, local health service providers, and more. This diverse and vibrant group of people shared their stories and personal touchpoints for Angels with us. We were so inspired by their stories that we wanted to share our conversations about the play, and how it connected to our community, with our audience. We created a seven-part podcast miniseries to do just that, and called it Repisodes: The Berkeley Rep Podcast.

When we wrapped the miniseries, we found we liked producing it so much that we'd like to make it a regular part of our programming. But what did we want our podcast to be?

We first created an audio version of the features in program, making them accessible to audiences in another format. This first segment of our podcast is ideal for our patrons who are blind or have low vision, or for those who simply prefer listening to reading. These Repisodes are posted by our first preview, so they also give audiences a chance to learn about the show before seeing it.

We decided to also feature an extended cut of the interviews that appear in the program. The “In Conversation” segment captures longer versions of our interviews and features behind-the-scenes details. We know many audience members read the program before the show begins, so we resist giving anything away there that might unfold onstage (#nospoilers). In the podcast interview, however, we imagine the audience might have already seen the show, so we allow a more free-flowing conversation about the work to transpire.

The third segment of Repisodes is entitled “The Core,” and aims to capture the flavor of our Angels in America miniseries. In “The Core,” we connect what is onstage to the real world. For HOME, the dramaturg on that show interviewed two San Francisco-based artists she’s worked with about their art using reclaimed housing materials. The conversation touched on gentrification in the Bay Area, and the threatened existence of artists living amidst that change. For Paradise Square, choreographers Bill T. Jones, Jason Oremus, and Garrett Coleman spoke about their process marrying contemporary movement to imagined historical dance. They spoke about how modern-day conversations concerning racial appropriation played a role in their collaboration. Each episode of “The Core” is widely different from the last: the play and the current moment determine the topic.

Berkeley Rep’s sound department and literary department work together to produce each Repisode. The Literary/Dramaturgy Fellow (Madeleine Rostami) edits each conversation, and the Sound Fellow (Courtney Jean) uses her highly skilled ear to make a perfect mix. It’s a rare chance for these two departments to collaborate; it’s been exciting for us to embark on a brand-new creative endeavor together. This year marks our first full year of crafting Repisodes, and we look forward to more in the coming season! We eventually want to be in partnership with a local radio station... so we’ll take any leads you have.

You can find Repisodes at soundcloud.com/berkeleyrep or wherever you listen to podcasts. Thanks for listening!
Introducing the 2019 Summer Residency Lab artists

BY MADELEINE OLDHAM

**The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab** brings together artists from near and far to make new theatrical work. This talented group embraces a broad spectrum of style, content, and form. Some projects have only an idea and will use the time to find their way towards first drafts; others will try to hone, refine, or tear apart and rebuild what they’ve written so far.

The selected 2019 Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab artists and projects are:

**The Bengsons’ Ohio** is a concert musical about faith, doubt, and fatherhood, chronicling several generations in Shaun Bengson’s family, a line of music-loving pastors affected by congenital hearing loss.

Alex Borinsky and Ezra Furman’s *Untitled Project for the New Jerusalem Tavern* is a concert for the last seven nights at the New Jerusalem Tavern in which transangelic humans — who grow wings — gather in a bar that will soon be gone.

In Mathilde Dratwa’s *A Play about David Mamet Writing a Play about Harvey Weinstein*, Francesca, a playwright, has several Reasons to be Pretty Angry. Among them: David Mamet has actually, in real life, written a play about Harvey Weinstein.

Jessica Fechtor’s *Book of Hours* is a play about empathy, its power and limitations, and our varying responses to our own mortality.

Emily Feldman will begin writing a currently untitled contemporary American comedy in conversation with an ancient Greek tragedy.

Vanessa García with Victoria Collado and Anna Driftmier are co-creating *1000 Miles*, a play about what it means to migrate to a new place, trying to find refuge amidst walls that block our path.

**Dave Harris’ Watch Me** takes place in the subconscious void of an interracial couple from their first date, to their first time, to a reckoning with heritage, ancestry, and Black Jesus.

**Jessica Huang and Ashley Hanson** are writing *The Kim Loo Sisters Musical*, about sisters who shared top billing with Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, and Ann Miller, but today their names — Alice, Maggie, Jenée, and Bubbles — are all but forgotten.

**Julia Izumi’s Akira Kurosawa Explains His Movies and Yogurt (With Live & Active Cultures!)* is a fantastical lecture/performance hybrid about identity, cultural imperialism, and “healthy” consuming.

Berkeley-born playwright **Itamar Moses’ The Ally** is about the tribalisms that lurk in all of us and what happens when two of them are in conflict.

Mexico City-based playwright **Sylvia Peláez** will join us to work on a project to be determined.

**Sam Pinkleton and Pig Iron Theatre Company** will collaborate on *House of Victory*, a large-scale American Entertainment loosely inspired by Aaron Copland and Martha Graham’s wartime collaboration *Appalachian Spring*.

**Mason Rosenthal** will lead fellow Lightning Rod Special co-directors **Scott R. Sheppard and Alice Yorke** in workshop shopping a new piece of ensemble-devised theatre in collaboration with theatre artist/puppeteer Morgan FitzPatrick Andrews and playwright/vediographer Paul William Kruse.

**Asha Sundaraman’s India/Indiana** is a new musical that weaves together the stories of two women on opposite sides of the globe to explore identity, migration, and coming of age.

**Caldwell Tidicue’s Harriet Tubman: Live in Concert** is the life, times, and impact of Harriet Tubman told through hip hop and storytelling.

In **Sanaz Toossi’s Your Broken Racket**, two friendships — one set in the present, one set in the past — unfold on a tennis court in Iran.

**Tom Toro’s Yes, The Planet Got Destroyed** is a theatrical adaptation of Tom’s forthcoming graphic memoir about breaking into the *New Yorker* while battling depression.

**Ikechukwu Ufonmadu** will create Ike’s *Wonderful World of Leisure*, an evening-length solo comedic performance structured as a Master Class on Leisure.
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The youth of the Bay Area, specifically here in Berkeley, have a keen sense of awareness when it comes to social activism. The teens in particular know what it takes to create space for their voices to be heard, allocate resources, and find an audience who will not only hear them, but also support their effort. This is especially true of the six teenagers from Berkeley Rep’s Teen Council who fundraised their way to the 2019 Theatre Communications Group (TCG) conference in Miami, advocating for their place among professional theatre artists from across the country. Making space for young voices should be imperative to the American theatre community for one simple reason: these teen arts advocates are not only the future, but also the present. With their vision of what theatre can be and determination to make change in our industry, they are challenging the belief that young theatre-makers can only have an impact when they are adults. They are making their presence known now and bringing their own chairs to the table.

The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre takes several teens on an annual leadership trip to the TCG conference — an event that just recently started including young voices. This process starts with a series of interviews and applications from Teen Council members who show their intention to create an impact on the theatre community. It was evident from the start that Dina, Eleanor, Fidela, Marina, Milo, and Roan all showed an astounding amount of ambition and ability to participate in a national conversation. Roan, for example, pushes to have more conversation on identity politics in theatre. “Being mixed race and then being a woman and wanting to be a director, I want to see people who look like me,” she says. “The whole idea is change. We’re telling stories, but more and more the stories that we tell nowadays have to say something. We’re in a different climate where people need more of a message.”

Our Teen Council members then started fundraising for the trip — which in itself is another learning experience. With the guidance from Berkeley Rep’s development and education fellows, as well as the School of Theatre’s staff, the six teens created an original campaign video, accompanying social media posts, and individual outreach efforts. They shared personal stories about their involvement in the arts and the impact that has made on them as activists in their communities. These teens quickly earned their goal and found themselves that much closer to a unique experience that awaited them in Miami.

This year the TCG conference focuses on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Bringing teens to this conference who not only identify as people of color and/or as young women, but also advocate for their representation in these spaces is part of the School of Theatre’s own intentionality behind carving out room for the next generation of artist here and now. Just like these teen leaders, we too are no longer waiting for the possibility for space to be made in the future. We are often thinking about how we are continuing a conversation and making action plans that dig deeper into community engagement and a wide array of representation (challenging the generalizations that come along with the word “diversity”) in the American theatre.

Rachel Hull, director of the School of Theatre, notes that “The TCG conference is the opportunity for young artists who are leaders in their own right to step into rooms with artistic leaders and innovators from across the country. Their understanding of the many voices and variety of theatrical explorations expands and amplifies their own opportunities and these creative forces.”

With an emphasis on young voices, the leadership trip to the TCG conference is more than just a trip. It is a movement. As Milo articulates, these national conversations are in need of “a voice for our area, a voice from our youth, a voice from all the different backgrounds that we come from.” This practice of including young minds in the conversation that shapes American theatre communities should not and will not be a one-time occasion. There is immense transformative power in theatre and our young artists are quickly learning how to become a part of it.
Co-writers John Leguizamo and Tony Taccone have compared Kiss My Aztec!'s music to that of a mixtape or mash-up album: a singular blend of dance, music, and dialects that come together to celebrate Latinx culture. The eclecticism of the show is mirrored by the many pursuits and interests of Roy Cockrum, founder of The Roy Cockrum Foundation and a main sponsor for Kiss My Aztec! In a recent conversation, Roy reflected on his career, which spans professions including actor, stage manager, monk, and for the last five years, major benefactor to the American theatre. No matter where life took him, Roy's passion for theatre remained a constant focus. When asked what inspired him about theatre, he shared: “It’s the connections you make with the people you’re working with and a way of figuring out who you are through the work. It’s physical, spiritual, and social. It’s a whole person kind of approach to living.”

The idea for The Roy Cockrum Foundation began when Roy attended the National Theatre's adaptation of Philip Pullman's trilogy His Dark Materials while on a religious retreat in Oxford, England. As he watched the production's multiple scene changes, numerous characters, and elaborate special effects, Roy realized that without greater public support for the arts, nonprofit American theatres would be afraid of the financial risk in producing a new show of this scale.

This realization planted the seeds for what would become The Roy Cockrum Foundation's mission to support world-class performing arts projects in nonprofit professional theatres throughout America, enabling them to reach beyond their normal scope of activities and undertake ambitious and creative productions. Throughout his work as a philanthropist, his dedication to this purpose can be seen at a multitude of theatres working on a wide range of transformative projects, which have included 2666, an elaborate production with multimedia elements at the Goodman Theatre; the new play X written by Marcus Gardley about the assassination of Malcolm X; and now Kiss My Aztec! at Berkeley Rep.

Kiss My Aztec!'s irreverent script and infectious songs immediately piqued Roy's interest, but what resonated with him the most was John and Tony's commitment to sharing the history of Latinx culture, a community whose contributions historically have been overlooked in American theatre and society. A show with this ambition would require a dynamic creative team, talented cast members, and many rehearsals and workshops to polish the script, music, and choreography — all of which would be a huge financial and artistic risk for Berkeley Rep. After seeing Angels in America: Millennium Approaches at Berkeley Rep last season, Roy saw how Kiss My Aztec! and the organization could benefit from the Foundation's support. “[Berkeley Rep] is a flagship theatre; it has been for decades,” he says. “And if I didn’t know it before, I certainly knew it after watching Angels in America last summer. It was as good a production of that play as I’ve ever seen…. It was so moving and perfect to the time.” By providing essential funding to Kiss My Aztec!, the Foundation is helping American artists realize their ambitious visions and expanding the stories told on American stages.
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Many years ago, John Leguizamo had an idea for a play about the Aztec Empire. He felt hungry to celebrate the rich culture of Latin America and to create the roles he wanted to see in American theatre. At that time, John didn’t think that audiences would be ready for his type of humor — so established in the world of stand-up comedy and not yet tested out in the theatre — so the unnamed Aztec project was put on the back burner as he pursued other projects. But the idea always stayed in the back of his mind, and two things became clear as time passed: this story wanted to be a musical, not a play; and John would not be performing, instead focusing his efforts as a member of the writing team. From here, a project called *Pain in the Aztec* was born, and John began the hunt for collaborators.

Early on, lyricist David Kamp and composer/co-lyricist Benjamin Velez joined the music team, excited to bring their musical theatre expertise to the process. Originally strangers, the duo became fast friends and infused the score with humor to match John’s book. Separately, John and Tony Taccone, Berkeley Rep’s artistic director, began collaborating on other projects (like *Latin History for Morons*, which graced our stage in 2016). As their own creative partnership strengthened, John approached Tony about directing *Pain in the Aztec*. Intrigued by the concept and thrilled by the chance to work with John again, Tony hopped on board as co-writer and director. In April 2018, the fully formed writing team held a workshop at The Public Theater in New York. The process brought new dimension to *Pain in the Aztec*, and Tony decided to program a full world premiere production as his final show at Berkeley Rep.

Over the past year, *Pain in the Aztec* became *Kiss My Aztec!* as we see it today. The team held two smaller workshops in 2018 before a longer two-week workshop this March. The most recent workshop also included choreographer Maija García and the full cast for the show’s time in Berkeley. The energy in the room resulted in major revisions that fueled the storytelling, bringing new life into the world premiere production. After playing on the Roda stage, our Berkeley Rep production will head to La Jolla Playhouse for a run that opens in September, sharing this hilarious story of Latinx culture to audiences across the state.

**CORTÉS—WHAT A BASTARD!**

**TALKING CONQUESTS AND COMEDY WITH JOHN LEGUIZAMO AND TONY TACCONE**

**BY KATIE CRADDOCK**

During a workshop of *Kiss My Aztec!* in New York City this March, Artistic Associate and Assistant Dramaturg Katie Craddock huddled up with John Leguizamo and Tony Taccone in a wee writing studio to learn about the inspiration for this show, the political function of comedy, and their creative partnership.
John, where did the idea for this piece come from?

**John:** I wanted to create a space for our Latin stories, in the same humorous way I’d seen on Broadway with shows like *Spamalot* and in movies like *Blackadder.* The general public doesn’t know a lot about Aztec history — for instance, the Aztecs had libraries full of extensive codices, but many were burned by colonizers. Erasing history was (and is) a means of controlling a people.

**Tony:** When we were auditioning actors for this show, it was really depressing to me how many people had the same two or three shows on their résumés. It was a clear reminder of the paucity of Latin work, and it's horrifying — there’s no established assumption yet that this work should be done. So you find yourself carving a new pathway, and John’s obviously done a brilliant job of insisting on that — in an inviting way. His genius is that he has found a voice and built a comic relationship with people across many backgrounds that wanna hear from him.

**John:** And Tony’s been my accomplice. I love working with Tony because he’s a beast for storytelling and narrative; there aren’t too many people on the planet as passionate and obsessed about proper storytelling as Tony. Also, he’s half Puerto Rican. That is so exciting for me — I wanna reach in there and grab that Puerto Rican in him, and tell him that he’s okay.

**Tony:** That’s a real thing for me. I started unconsciously pursuing Latin work about 15 years ago. Susie Medak, Berkeley Rep’s managing director, pointed it out — she said, “Do you realize how much Latin work you’re doing? Your dormant Puerto Rican genes are blooming here.” But it was working on *Latin History for Morons* that drove me to make a conscious effort to examine my past, and actually research it. I went back to my mother and relatives and took their oral histories. It’s part of my heritage that could be lost — I need to recapture it and understand where I’m coming from. The pressure on my mother to assimilate was immense. She’s 92 years old and teaches Spanish to this day, but her upbringing was about trying to get in there with white people to succeed.

**John:** That’s what happens. I grew up in the hood, and all my friends were Latin and Black, but then when I got to college I was like, “Oh my God, I sound different than everybody, I talk different, I have different vernacular, and slang. I need to un-ghetto myself if I’m gonna succeed.” Cause obviously I rub people the wrong way, and I just stand out too much.” But then I went to auditions and I’m like, “Wait a minute. They want me to be a gang leader, a drug lord, a janitor, or the killer in the episode.” And I’m like, “Wait a minute! I just went through this whole process of assimilating as hard as I could.” So quickly I learned that it didn’t matter how hard I worked, I would not be cast as lawyers or doctors.

**Tony:** Is that how your solo shows were born?

**John:** Absolutely. I thought, “Where are the Latin stories? Why aren’t we anywhere?” I needed to make material for myself. ‘Cause I knew we were funny, I knew we were intellectual. I knew we had great stories to tell: present, past. So that became my life’s work. You ask yourself, “Why does this matter? What am I doing to change culture?”
This is a piece you are writing but not performing in. Is that something that you knew early on?

John: No, I was writing it for myself originally, about 10 years ago. It was a play then, not a musical. It wasn’t gaining traction. They said it was “funny, but, Aztecs?” They just didn’t get it. I had a lot of stories like that. Stories about Latin culture had no traction in Hollywood or TV. They just couldn’t get it.

How did you decide to not act in it?

John: Well, when it became a musical I was like, “I’m out.” I mean I’ve got an amazing voice, except for pitch or melody; otherwise you’d love to hear me.

Why did you make it a musical?

John: I think the impetus was Spamalot. The way they turned Holy Grail into a musical made me think, “Wow, maybe I can do that with my Aztec piece.” But then I realized I can’t write music, and started working with Benjamin [Velez] and David [Kamp], who can.

Tony: But the sensibility of a lot of the music comes from John — the comic spirit we’re tapping.

John: And you. Tony wants songs to move the plot forward. When I first started writing the musical I thought songs were like in an opera; they could just reveal the unconscious, or just be about emotion that you didn’t see. But it can’t —

Tony: In a musical you have to keep the momentum. It’s a difficult art form. The many elements have to feed each other... and we are trying to write a nontraditional musical. It’s a crazy new hybrid. There’s more book than usual, and we’re doing this Elizabethan/urban slang combination — this colliding of worlds. ‘Cause it’s set in the 16th century.

What do you find exciting or useful about that combination of period and modern language?

John: I wanted to create an Elizabethan patois. A Shakespearean language with ghetto slang. I love it in my ear — that juxtaposition. I’ve always loved slang, American vernaculars, and urbanisms. I grew up with that, and love hearing it combined with the Elizabethan language.

Are you hoping bridging that linguistic gap will make people draw parallels between the 16th century and now?

Tony: We never lose the sensibility that we are in the present day watching a theatrical event. The frame of the show breaks the fourth wall; it’s a company of actors saying, “We’re both sharing this same world with all its contradictions, challenges, fucked-up-ness, and beauty. And we are all gonna now look at what happened back in 1540.” We’re always trying to make the audience connect it to their own experience today. A lot of the contradictions and injustices are the same, which is depressing.

John: I mean, yes, things haven’t moved as far as we’d like, but we have to remember that progress is never linear — it goes backwards and forward, it’s not steady.

Tony: Yeah. I’ve only been alive in this period of time, but it seems to me from studying history that —

John: Oh you’re much older than you let on, come on. Didn’t you actually polish Cortés’ helmet?

Tony: What a bastard.

John: Yeah, Tony’s drawing from personal experience when we’re talking about the conquest.

Tony: Exactly. Oh, the horses were brutal. What was I saying?

You were talking about history.

Tony: Right. We tend to fall victim to mini cycles of our experience. Trump is elected, so we think, “Oh my God, there’s been no progress. We’re back to square one.” But that’s not really true historically, as John was saying. There is a war going on now. But our sensibility tends to be dominated by the present moment and we forget that if we look back at history, there’s always a struggle.

John: We progress and we regress.

Tony: It’s an ebb and flow. But hopefully the ebb doesn’t take us so far back that we can’t return from it.

On that rather dark note — this piece is full of outrageous humor, but it’s about a murderous oppression and attempted erasure of a people. It’s relentlessly silly, but makes...
Diasporic movement

A CONVERSATION WITH CHOREOGRAPHER MAIJA GARCÍA

BY KATIE CRADDOCK

Choreographer Maija García is crafting movement for Kiss My Aztec! that, like its score, is exhilaratingly eclectic. Artistic Associate Katie Craddock chatted with Maija about her work and experience creating choreography for the show.

Would you tell me about your artistic background?

I cut my teeth in the concert dance world, first in San Francisco and then New York. Actually, I landed my first professional dance job at the Alice Arts (now Malonga) Center in the East Bay. I studied sustainable development at San Francisco State (back in the day, when nobody knew what sustainability meant).

I trained with Cecilia Marta, and taught Contemporary and Latin Jazz at Alonzo King Lines Ballet/San Francisco Dance Center and Rhythm & Motion to pay for college. Choreography came out of teaching, actually. I had to make up phrases, so...

I moved to New York at 24, toured internationally with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, and spent 10 years making and re-making Fela! on Broadway. Inspired to devise original work, I started a theatre arts organization — Organic Magnetics — to produce live installations about the history of New York City (the untold stories). I’ve been working as a freelance director and choreographer all over the U.S., and Cuba, where my family is from. My movement background is a collage of classical and contemporary dance of the African and Latinx diasporas.

Why are you excited to be making this piece right now?

Growing up in Ann Arbor, I was usually the only Latina in my class. I remember connecting with a paragraph about the ancient Mayan and Aztec cultures in a textbook. It came to my consciousness through my name, at first. It was like a portal: I wanted to know everything about the indigenous people of the Americas — their language, spirituality, cosmology; their temples and pyramids! I was empowered to learn that advanced civilizations thrived in the Americas before “discovery” by Europeans. This was a point of pride in my young mind that would shape my Latinx and artistic identity as a Cuban American. In 2000, I trekked through Mexico and Central America to explore Mayan and Aztec ruins and live in the jungle. Have you ever heard a tree monkey scream? It was one of the most cathartic and formative experiences of my life. I’ve always felt connected to indigenous wisdom — in its inextricable relation to the natural world — and I am truly invested in bringing it to life theatrically through this piece. I don’t mean to mislead you; we are not doing traditional Aztec dance. We are conjuring resilience in a way that infuses the comedy with a hint of magical realism. Theatre is a place where we can try to imagine what was, carrying a torch for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27
Breaking the rules with David Kamp and Benjamin Velez

BY KATIE CRADDOCK

David Kamp and Benjamin Velez in the rehearsal room for Kiss My Aztec!

PHOTO BY CHESHIRE ISAACS
Composer and co-lyricist Benjamin Velez and co-lyricist David Kamp are collaborating to build the musical world of Kiss My Aztec! In the midst of a developmental workshop in March, Artistic Associate Katie Craddock grabbed a moment with them to talk about the process of blending musical genres to create a truly Latinx mixtape.

Could you each tell me about your creative background and how you came to work on this piece?

Benjamin: I've been doing theatre since I was 6 years old and my mom forced me to audition for Oliver. I've always loved writing music, but when I went to college, I thought I wanted to be a film director. Then, at Columbia, I wrote a musical called the Varsity Show and had an incredible experience — I loved the collaboration and the rush of having thousands of people see my work. It was so rewarding that I thought, "This is what I have to spend my life doing." I got a day job working at Sony Music while I did the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop for several years. An agent who came to a BMI presentation knew John [Leguizamo] was looking for a lyricist with whom I've been friends for about 20 years — which was at a great satirical publication, Spy Magazine. I've always been doing humor and writing that's close to musical comedy song lyrics. I even wrote a column once for GQ in which I lamented that lyricists were not as in-demand in our modern age as they were in the '30s and '40s. I made a casual comment about wanting to write musical lyrics to John Leguizamo — with whom I've been friends for about 20 years — which he apparently filed away, because when he decided that the script he'd written should be a musical, he asked me, "Remember how you said you've always wanted to write lyrics? I'm doing a musical comedy, would you like to have a go at being a lyricist?" I said, "Absolutely," and then I was slammed together with this guy...

David: I come from a journalistic background — mostly nonfiction books and magazine work. However, I've always had a parallel writing career as a writer for print. My very first job was at a great satirical publication, Spy Magazine. I've always been doing humor and writing that's close to musical comedy song lyrics. I even wrote a column once for GQ in which I lamented that lyricists were not as in-demand in our modern age as they were in the '30s and '40s. I made a casual comment about wanting to write musical lyrics to John Leguizamo — with whom I've been friends for about 20 years — which he apparently filed away, because when he decided that he'd written the script should be a musical, he asked me, "Remember how you said you've always wanted to write lyrics? I'm doing a musical comedy, would you like to have a go at being a lyricist?" I said, "Absolutely," and then I was slammed together with this guy...

Benjamin: The funniest part of it is that, I had my whole initial conversation with John not knowing anything about David. Then at my first meeting with John, David was there, and it turned out to be the best thing because he's brilliant and we work so well together.

David: Yeah, it's one of those classic forced collaborations, but a very happy and fruitful one.

This musical spans an incredible range of genres. What has it been like to write in all these different musical styles?

Benjamin: For me, the most exciting part is that you have flexibility in terms of what “musical theatre” music is.

John's instinct to have so many different styles is right because we're telling a Latinx story. Latinx music and culture is so wide-ranging. Using all these different musical styles helped create this mosaic picture of what the culture is today and where it started. So many of the rhythms that are associated with Latin genres came from either African slaves who were brought over, or Native peoples who were colonized.

David: There is a logic to how we select genres for songs. Generally, the Spanish colonizer characters will sing in more Old World musical idioms, whereas the Aztec characters will sing in New World idioms. For example, the salsa song we've done, “Punk-Ass Geek-a” — even though that style is generally sung in the Spanish language, it's a New World invention. The more “white-bread” genres are sung by the European characters. When John originally approached us, he wanted it to be a Latin/urban mixtape. We've deviated from that a bit, but this genre-hopping fits how he wanted to reflect the genres he grew up with, whether it's hip-hop or merengue or boogaloo, which is a really New York thing. As a New York City Latino kid growing up in Queens, John had a swirll of genres in his head.

What is your process of writing lyrics like when, as you mentioned, this show operates across different styles?

Benjamin: Sometimes we battle over the importance of whether things need to be exact.

David: A perfect rhyme, or I guess a symmetrical rhyme, versus an asymmetrical rhyme. Benjamin has strict rules: if it's sung, it must be a perfect rhyme; if it's rapped it doesn't have to be.

Benjamin: Because that's how those two vernaculars work!

David: I have to tip my hat to Benjamin. I gave him two different attempts of Colombina's song “Don't Tell Me What I Can't Do” and he skillfully Frankensteined them together. Benjamin came up with the chorus framework you'll hear of “why can't a girl enjoy...” The first completions of that phrase that he gave me were “shaving her head instead of shaving her legs” and “slitting a throat instead of knitting a coat.” He got the ball rolling, and I thought of “whooping some asses instead of batting my lashes” and “bringing the hurt instead of trying to flirt.” That's a real example of how we collaborate. I have two failed attempts at that song and he took the best from both of them and came up with that hook. Now it's probably my favorite song in the show.

What is most exciting to each of you about this piece?

David: The liveliness of it, the energy. Benjamin and I know the rules of musical theatre — you do have to know the rules to break them. We are breaking some rules by being so all over the place and being transgressive, I suppose, both lyrically and musically. That brings such an energy to it — moving away from musical comedies that are locked in one mood.

Benjamin: What's exciting is just the sheer irreverence of the approach — it's really creatively freeing. We don't have to directly channel one type of Latin music.

David: Or directly channel the traditions of musical theatre.

Benjamin: It's a cornucopia. Everyone might respond more to different parts of it. We're trying to tell a story that's framed within certain archetypes, but of people that I have not seen portrayed often onstage. That's exciting.
Riffing on Aztec ritual

BY MADELEINE ROSTAMI

*Kiss My Aztec!* is a satirical musical riffing on a multitude of historical happenings. It mashes up Aztec culture with Spanish colonialism, rap rhythms with cum-bia music, and traditional musical theatre structure with John Leguizamo-branded stand-up comedy. And then skewers all of it.

So who were the Aztecs anyway? Fun fact! The Aztec Empire is largely regarded as the last major indigenous empire in Mesoamerica. Soon after their arrival in the area in the early 1200s, the Aztecs built a great civilization, complete with intricate social laws, political hierarchies, religious customs, and military dominance, and each component of their society centered around ritualistic practices that brought the Aztecs closer to their gods. Their sovereignty in the region lasted until 1521, when Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés overthrew their capital city. *Kiss My Aztec!* places us after this conquest in 1540, as the Aztecs attempt—with all their might—to hold on to the traditions that defined their way of life.

The roots of Aztec culture serve as the base for much of the humor the characters lay down in song. The Aztec creation myth is a good starting place: before the birth of the Aztec people, legend holds that evil powers had destroyed the world and its inhabitants many times over, demolishing what they deemed “imperfect” with each attempt. But the opposing powers of good fought against this cycle of devastation, bringing new life to Earth, and eventually they got it right: the god Quetzalcoatl mixed the bones of previous humans with a paste concocted from cornmeal and his own blood, thereby creating the Aztec people.

This origin story resulted in an immense amount of pride for the Aztecs—they were the “perfect” race of the present, and in their veins flowed the blood of their gods. With this innate sense of honor, the Aztec people sought to preserve their way of life according to the will of the gods that had created them. But this sense of honor paralleled a deep degree of pessimism—the Aztecs believed they must continue to earn the respect of the gods in order to postpone the destruction of their world, and that came at no small cost. To keep their gods satisfied, they relied on elaborate ceremonial rituals, including sacrifice.

*Kiss My Aztec!* tackles the idea of paying respect to the higher powers through the hilarious song “Make the Impossible Possible.” In it, in order to appease the gods and get them on the Aztecs’ side, our protagonists search for citizens who might be used for offerings in a temple sacrifice. Temple sacrifice was a crucial aspect of Aztec life. Some historians’ estimates suggest that nearly 84,000 people (mostly prisoners) were ritualistically killed over a period of a few days at the dedication of the temple in the capital city of Tenochtitlan. Other estimates are more conservative—closer to 20,000—but all span the tens of thousands. And the practice extended far beyond massive events like this—rituals were built into daily and monthly events that honored the gods, like those dictated in the Codex Borbonicus.

The Aztec warriors in our musical aim to guard a sacred element of their society: a codex that holds a prophecy. A codex in Mesoamerican culture was an ancient book that usually detailed societal and religious customs. One such codex, the Codex Borbonicus, contained nearly 47 feet of paper panels that documented fantastical costumes, detailed sacrificial processes, and outlined the divine calendars that were the heart of Aztec culture. There were two key calendars. The first was a succession of days that rotated in sequences of 13—each day marked the special daily rituals to appease the god who ruled over that day. The second was a solar calendar with 18 months that were each 20 days long. According to this calendar there were five remaining “unlucky days” where no festivals were held. We see glimmers of these calendars in our show as the warriors wait for just the right circumstances to take action.

In *Kiss My Aztec!* we see a world where the newly arrived Spanish forces suppress the once dominant Aztec people, forcing them into slave labor camps and quelling any sense of rebellion or faith. The Spanish conquistadores acted in fierce opposition to nearly every belief of Aztec culture. The Aztec Emperor at the time believed that Cortés and his entourage represented the prophesized return of Quetzalcoatl, the god that created the Aztec people. And so they hesitated to resist—a choice that proved disastrous against an enemy driven by the European practice of total warfare, unafraid to decimate their enemy at any cost. While the Aztecs valued their warriors, they understood warfare as a sacred duty which complied with the will of the gods. Battles were carefully timed and negotiated, and they sought not to kill, only to capture prisoners that could be sacrificed to the gods for whom the Aztecs fought. Combined with the European diseases and brutal coloniast practices, the conquistadores set a path to total domination of Mesoamerica. The musical we watch here tonight imagines a whole new ending to this story: one where the Aztecs fight back.
powerful assertions about identity and resilience. Why is it important for you to be telling this dark story with humor?

John: That’s how I grew up, so that’s my sensibility. I had a very difficult upbringing, and humor was the thing that saved me and my family. And I think part of why I grew up that way is a consequence of the conquest. Like when I even look at some of the violent games that we played in Queens — Hot Peas and Butter, Manhunt, and Knuckles — they’re all games brought on from the conquest. There was such abuse of people, and abuse of families and children. So, I wanted to create this dark world, but also assert that there’s always hope. No matter how dark it is, no matter who the president is, and how much he’s trying to destroy decency and respect of others, it’s still a great time where women are rising in power and Latin people are getting their due. We elected many women, including Latina women, into office in the midterms. A lot of great things are happening even in this darkness.

Tony: That’s a perfect answer, John. The more personal answer for me is that I was the class clown because I had a massive speech impediment. I could not talk in complete sentences until I was in seventh grade. Being funny was the way out — the way to be liked. So I married that personal experience to a worldview. I realized comedy could invite people to look past their own prejudices, and that became part of my aesthetic. Look at Dario Fo — an amazing, political Italian comic who won the Nobel Prize [in 1997 because he “emulates the jesters of the Middle Ages in scourging authority and upholding the dignity of the downtrodden”]. Read his acceptance speech — it was very controversial that a clown won the fucking Nobel Prize, but he was a major political thinker using comedy to make people pay attention.

Tell me about the show’s range of musical genres.

John: We wanted a broad bandwidth of Latin music — the salsa, Latin freestyle, merengue, reggaeton, cumbia, as many of the beautiful aspects of Latin music as we could squeeze in, and the dances that come with them. We even throw a tango in there. Our music is everywhere these days. Cardi B is Dominican, and she’s the highest selling female rapper in the world. You got Bruno Mars, he’s Puerto Rican, and he’s doing the pop thing. And then you got Camila Cabello, she’s Cuban and she’s doing a more Latin R&B sound. Latin music goes everywhere, and so that’s what we try to cover, though it’s impossible to completely achieve — the A to Z of Latin music.

What are each of your favorite genres of Latinx music?

John: There are many styles that I love, but in particular la Sonora Matancera. They’re a Cuban/Afro-Cuban group that started in the 1920s — they made Cuban music that permeated Latin America. They were incredible crooners and wrote beautiful love songs.

Tony: Salsa, ‘cause of my mom. Tito Puente was my mother’s cousin.

John: No! Oh my God, you’re illustrous.

What would your mothers think of this show?

Tony: Well, our mothers get along famously. My mother loves everything I do because I’m doing it.

John: I’ve been a huge pain in my mom’s ass trying to get her to understand the culture she came from, to help her understand her indigenous roots. Every time she sees my pieces, she learns something about herself and the culture she came from, and it’s great ‘cause then she influences her friends.

Which character in the show do you most identify with?

John: It’s gotta be Pepe; he’s the artist saying, “Look, we matter, we count.”

Tony: Yeah, it’s the guy who’s trying to be funny and popular, but he’s doing all the wrong things.

John: We don’t win at basketball, we don’t win at football, we don’t win all the fights, but hey, we’re funny and interesting.
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MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I
WHITE PEOPLE ON BOATS
DON’T TELL ME WHAT I CAN’T DO
NO ONE COMPARETH TO THE SPANISH
PUNK-ASS GEEK-A
MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE
CAVE RAP
EVERYBODY NEEDETH A FIXER
TANGO IN THE CLOSET
THE ABSTINENCE SONG
SHIT’S ABOUT TO GO DOWN

ACT II
DARK MEAT
SPOONETH ME
IMPOSSIBLE BLUES
NEW GIRL, NEW WORLD
PUPPETRY SLAM
CHAINED MELODY
THE BATTLE
FINALE
Angelica Beliard
ENSEMBLE

Angelica is a New Jersey native raised in New York City and is thrilled to be making her Berkeley Rep debut in Kiss My Aztec! Most recently she starred as Carmen in an immersive adaptation Carmen: To Havana and Back (Public Arts). Angelica made her Broadway debut in the hit musical On Your Feet! in the Broadway company of Summer: The Donna Summer Musical. @bite.size4

Chad Carstarphen
EL JAGUAR NEGRO/REY MUNDO

Chad is thrilled to be making his Berkeley Rep debut with Kiss My Aztec! His regional and national credits include Broke-ality (Kitchen Theatre Company) and the first national tour of In the Heights. In nyc, he was seen in the world premieres of Evensong (Astoria Performing Arts Center) and The Conscientious Objector (the Clurman Theatre at Theatre Row). As an ensemble member of Pregones/Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, productions with the company include El Bolero Was My Downfall, The Desire of the Astronaut, The Harlem Helfighters..., Hey Yo! Yo Soy!, and Neon Baby. Chad’s film/TV credits include Landing Up, The Pudding Club, and Dumped. He attended New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. @chadcarstarphen

Lauren Cox
SWING/ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER

Lauren is originally from the Bay Area and is now based in New York City. She is ecstatic to return home to join the team of Kiss My Aztec! Lauren is on faculty at Joffrey Ballet School and The Ailey School. Performance credits include, off Broadway: Immersive play Seeing You (as 1940s Jazz Singer) and the Afro-Cuban Yiddish Opera Hatuey: Memory of Fire (Xiomara, dance captain). TV & live shows: Gwen Stefani, Alicia Keys, Pharrell, LLCoolJ, and Saturday Night Live. Choreography: TEDx Asbury Park; Legally Blonde, Hamilton, and Once on This Island (The Broadway Experience); The Late Wedding (Columbia University); Time of Our Life (Hunter College); The Jazz Nutcracker (LaGuardia Performing Arts Center); Joffrey Ballet School; The Ailey School; and Harlem Arts Festival. She is interested in the intersection of poetry, dance, and sociology in order to articulate diverse walks of life and provide opportunities for artists around the world. Visit laurencox.org.

KC de la Cruz
ENSEMBLE

KC is delighted to be making her Berkeley Rep debut. Recent credits include The Prince of Egypt (Keturah) with TheatreWorks; In the Heights (Nina) with Woodminster Summer Musicals; Smokey Joe’s Café (DeLee), The Little Mermaid (Ariel), and Les Misérables (Eponine) with Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre; West Side Story (Maria) with City Lights Theatre; and Miss Saigon (Kim) with Palo Alto Players. KC has been performing since she was 5 years old and hopes to take her talents and dreams to the Big Apple where she wants to further her theatre career. @kcdelacruz

Yani Marin
COLOMBINA

Yani is excited to be making her Berkeley Rep debut, with this extraordinary cast and creative team. Her Broadway credits include Wicked, Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, and West Side Story (2009 revival, Grammy-winning original cast recording) where she understudied and performed the role of Anita. Her other shows and tours include Hair (Hollywood Bowl), Wicked (first national), West Side Story (International), The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, and The Beyoncé Experience as a backup dancer. Most recently Yani had a recurring role in the new series Jack Ryan (Amazon Prime) as well as a recurring role on Empire (Fox). Other TV credits include Blue Bloods, ncis LA, Criminal Minds, One Bad Choice, and Smash. She is a graduate of nyu, Tisch School of the Arts. Currently, Yani is also in pre-production for an independent feature film that she is producing and starring in called Nice to Meet Me.

Zachary Infante
FERNANDO/SEBASTIAN/ENSEMBLE

Zach is a New Jersey-based artist grateful to be making their Berkeley Rep debut! Zach was most recently seen as the Dormouse in Duncan Sheik, Steven Sater, and Jessie Nelson’s new musical Alice By Heart off Broadway at mcc Theater. Other off-Broadway credits include

Jesus E. Martínez
CAPTAIN SOLDIER/ENSEMBLE

Jesus has been part of the Kiss My Aztec! family since 2014 and he’s delighted to debut at Berkeley Rep. Hailing from NYC, he received his BA at suny Purchase College and is an ensemble member of Pregones Theatre, Teatro SEA, and Spanish Repertory Theatre. He recently appeared in Dancing in My Cockroach Killers (Pregones Theatre), Sueño: A Latino Take of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Society of the Educational Arts), In the Name of Salome (Spanish Repertory Theatre),...
Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliette (La TÉA Theatre), which earned him an award from the Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors for his portrayal of Mercutio. His favorite voice acting credits for TV/film include Blue Bloods (CBS), Dora and Friends (Nickelodeon), The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt (Netflix), The First Purge (Universal), The Sun Is Also a Star (Warner Bros), and many others. Twitter/Insta: @mrtn2193

Maria-Christina Olíveras
TOLIMA/ENSEMBLE

Maria-Christina is thrilled to be back at Berkeley Rep, having made her debut in the world premiere of Amelie, which she subsequently did on Broadway. She was recently seen in the Bay Area at The Curran in David Henry Hwang and Jeanine Tesori’s new musical Soft Power and Taylor Mac’s 24-Decade History of Popular Music. Broadway credits include Amelie (original cast recording), Machinal, and Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson. Other New York credits include Here Lies Love (original cast recording), Pretty Filthy (original cast recording), Romeo and Juliet (The Public Theater), and Zorba! (Encores City Center), among numerous others. Regionally, she has performed at Yale Repertory Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Long Wharf Theatre, Sundance, Baltimore Center Stage, the Huntington Theatre Company, and the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center. Recent film and television appearances include St. Vincent, Madame Secretary, and The Blacklist. She holds her BA from Yale University and her MFA from the National Theatre Conservatory and is a member of The Actor’s Group. Follow her @mcoliveras and mariachristinaoliveras.com.

Joél Pérez
PEPE

Joél is an actor and writer who is excited to make his Berkeley Rep debut! As an actor, his theatre work includes Fun Home (Broadway and The Public Theater); Sweet Charity (The New Group, Lortel Award winner for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical); Oedipus El Rey, Wild Goose Dreams, and As You Like It (The Public Theater); and Stuck Elevator (American Conservatory Theater). His TV work includes Jesus Christ Superstar (NBC), Person of Interest (CBS), Odd Mom Out (Bravo), The Big C (Showtime), and The Outs (Vimeo). As a writer, his play, The Church of the Holy Glory, premiered at Ars Nova ANTFest 2018. His full-length play, From the Fountain, is in development with the Sol Project. He is also a writer and performer in shiz, a monthly musical sketch comedy show at Upright Citizen’s Brigade. He studied at Tufts University, the British American Drama Academy, and ucb. Follow him @misterjoelperez and joelperez.com.

Al Rodrigo
RODRIGO/ENSEMBLE

Al is very excited to be making his debut here at Berkeley Rep. New York credits include Open Admissions (Broadway U/S); Blood Wedding, Death of Garcia Lorca, and Bang Bang Blues at Joseph Papp Public Theater; Don Juan of Seville at Classic Stage Company; The Señorita from Tacna and Savings at INTAR; and New York 1937 at Jewish Repertory Theater. Regional credits include The Happiest Song Plays Last at the Los Angeles Theatre, One Crazy Day or The Marriage of Figaro at Arizona Theatre Company, Pericles at Hartford Stage, Romeo and Juliet at Syracuse Stage, Bandido! at the Mark Taper Forum, and La Posada Magica at South Coast Rep, and others. Film credits include Last Rites, The Glass Shield, Brown’s Requiem, The Great White Hype, The Birdcage, Citizen Jane, House of Sand and Fog, and others. Al’s television credits include Truth Be Told, Mayans M.C., Supernatural, CSI Miami, NYPP Blue, Wanted, The West Wing, Burn Notice, High Incident, Jag, Star Trek DS9, ARL15, Martin, Something Wilder, The Nanny, Riders in the Sky, Prey, and others. He also works extensively in the voiceover industry. Visit alrodri.go.com.

Desiree Rodríguez
PILAR/ENSEMBLE

Desiree is making her Berkeley Rep debut! Off Broadway credits include Elizabeth in Tricks the Devil Taught Me (Minetta Lane Theatre). National tours and regional credits include Ana in Barrio Grrrl! (Kennedy Center), Frida/Rufina/Alfonsina in Tres Vidas (Core Ensemble), and Roberta in Why You Beasting? (Fringe). TV/film credits include The Sun Is Also a Star (Warner Bros.), The Village (NBC), Orange is the New Black (Netflix), The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt (Netflix), Madam Secretary (CBS), Unforgettable (CBS), and Black Nativity (FOX). She has sung backup for Gloria Estefan and Harry Connick Jr. and has recorded with the Yeah Yeah Yeah’s on their album Mosquito. She is a member of the Broadway Inspirational Voices choir directed by Michael McElroy. You can follow her shenanigans @msdesrod.
Richard Henry Ruiz
PIERRE PIERROT/ENSEMBLE

Richard is happy to be making his Berkeley Rep debut. Off Broadway he has appeared in Fiorello (Encores) and Two Gentlemen of Verona: The Musical (The Public Theater). Some regional credits include Assassins (Yale Repertory Theatre), Disney’s Hunchback of Notre Dame (La Jolla Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Folger Theatre), The Music Man (the Guthrie Theater), Two Gentlemen of Verona (Old Globe), Twelfth Night (Pig Iron Theatre Company), Man of La Mancha (Jeff Award nomination, Marriott Lincolnshire Theater), Guys and Dolls (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), 1776 (Connecticut Repertory Theatre), Oliver (Goodspeed Opera House), and most recently The D’Ysquith Family in A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder (Florida Studio Theatre). National tours include Man of La Mancha, Jesus Christ Superstar, Urinetown, and Sweet Charity. Richard’s television credits include Search Party, season two. Visit richardhenrynyc.com.

Kenji Higashihama
MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR/KEYBOARDS

Kenji made his Berkeley Rep debut as associate music director and keyboard 2 for Paradise Square earlier this season and is happy to be back for Kiss My Aztec! He is a freelance musician and private teacher recently transplanted to the Bay Area. Some previous credits include working with ‘Ulalena (Maui Theatre Lahaina), Mah’ai Kekumu (local Hawaiian artist), Afro Criollo Sound (Afro-Caribbean band), Jill Santoriello (A Tale of Two Cities and It Happened in Key West), associate music directing a national tour of The Music Man (Windwood Productions), and more. Locally, he has been seen playing for organizations such as Esses Productions, Broadway by the Bay, Transcendence Theatre Company, Center Rep, The College Preparatory School, TRIS, and Piedmont Children’s Choirs.

Dana Bauer
REEDS

Dana grew up in Vallejo and attended San Francisco State University. She has toured Europe, Asia, and the U.S. in the orchestras of A Chorus Line and Les Misérables. Locally, she has played for numerous musicals, such as Wicked, Mambo Kings, Aladdin, Miss Saigon, and Berkeley Rep’s own Amélie, and backed up artists like Johnny Mathis and Michael Feinstein. In addition to being a woodwind player, Dana is a busy working voice actress and jazz singer. Her album Dana Bauer—In My Own Voice is available on iTunes and Spotify. She lives in the Bay Area with three cats, a poodle, and a drummer.

Juan Carreon
DRUMS/PERCUSION

Juan is a San Francisco Bay Area-based freelance drummer and is a graduate of the acclaimed University of Miami Jazz Department, where he studied drum set, classical, and world percussion. He has most recently been seen touring across the country occupying the drum
chair for Mexican roots band Los Cenzontles and Latin music icon Jorge Santana. Equally comfortable in several styles, Juan has shared the stage with an eclectic group of musicians that includes Jackson Browne, David Hidalgo (Los Lobos), Flaco Jiménez, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and Pete Escovedo. Juan has recorded several albums with the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, including original works by Andrew Lippa I Am Harvey Milk and the recently released Unbreakable.

Steve Danska
GUITAR
Steve played guitar in Berkeley Rep’s premiere of Paradise Square earlier this season. He is a Bay Area native making a living as a professional guitarist. His music education began at a young age studying classical piano, but he later fell in love with the guitar. He graduated from California State University East Bay in 2014 with a BA in jazz guitar performance. Versatility across music genres is one of his strongest assets and has ultimately led to touring nationally and internationally as a side musician for different artists. Apart from playing musicals around the Bay Area, he plays guitar for Megan Rose from The Voice, as well as guitar in two original bands, Analog Us and Warsycythe. It’s not uncommon for Steve to play everything from country to heavy metal and a musical all in the same week. Steve tries to find things he likes about music in every genre he listens to, and he’s thrilled to help bring the music of this production to life.

Marvin McFadden
TRUMPET

Marvin has been a professional trumpet player working in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1980. His musical capabilities have enabled him to be a successful freelance musician in the greatly varied genres of today’s music industry. His versatility along with his expertise in lead trumpet playing has kept him in constant demand. Marvin’s many credits include playing backup to, or recording with such artists as Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Tormé, George Shearing, Rosemary Clooney, Huey Lewis and the News, The Doobie Brothers, Santana, Hammer, Natalie Cole, Maureen McGovern, Barry Manilow, Diana Krall, Bob Hope, Vic Damone, Ray Charles, ConFunkShun, Tony Toni Tone, Donna Summer, and The Temptations. Marvin has done numerous musical productions in San Francisco, including Jersey Boys, Book of Mormon, In the Heights, Bronx Tale, Spamalot, The Color Purple, Dream Girls, and Motown the Musical.

Eric Price
BASS

Eric is a professional bassist and music educator located in the East Bay. Eric works as a private bass teacher and string clinician in schools around the Bay Area. He serves as principal bassist with several local orchestras, including the UC Berkeley Symphony, Solano Symphony, and the Symphony of the Redwoods. He has performed with the Berkeley Symphony, Stockton Symphony, Orpheus Project in Juneau, Alaska, and internationally with the Classical Music Festival (Austria) and Tuscia Opera Festival (Italy). Eric has become increasingly involved in Bay Area musical theatre, and he is delighted to be a part of Berkeley Rep.

John Leguizamo
BOOK/LYRICIST

Multifaceted performer, Tony 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, Vanguarda Awards). His second one-man show, Spic O’Rama (1993), enjoyed extended sold-out runs in Chicago and New York (Dramatists’ Guild Hull-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 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. In 2016, John’s Latin History for Morons (directed by Tony Taccone) had its world premiere at Berkeley Rep. The show was nominated for two Tony Awards in 2018 with John being the recipient of a special award for his career.

Tony Taccone
BOOK/DIRECTOR/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

After more than 30 years at Berkeley Rep, Tony is celebrating his final season with the company. 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 these years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 24 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 Julia Cho, John Leguizamo, Daniel Handler, Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, and Itamar Moses. He directed the shows that transferred to London, Continental Divide and Tiny Kushner, and thee that landed on Broadway: Bridge & Tunnel, Wishful Drinking, and Latin History for Morons. 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, Game On, written with Dan Hoyle, and It Can’t Happen Here, written with Bennett S. Cohen. 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.” Most recently, Tony directed the revival of Angels in America at Berkeley Rep.

Benjamin Velez
MUSIC/LYRICIST/ARRANGER

Born and raised in Miami, Benjamin is a composer/lyricist and Columbia graduate where he wrote the 114th Annual Varsity Show. He’s been a proud member of the BMI workshop since 2010 (Harrington Award in 2012). His work has been developed at the Yale Institute for Music Theatre, Musical Theatre Factory, Ars Nova, New York Musical Theatre Festival, The Public, Joe’s Pub, The York Theatre (Afterland), Dixon Place (Starblisters), and The Public Theater. He was a 2017 Sundance Artist at the Ucross Foundation, and a 2018 artist in residence. His musical Borderline was the 2018 Weston Playhouse New Musical.
Award winner and will be workshopped at the 2019 O'Neill National Music Theater Conference this summer. He is a 2018-19 Dramatist Guild Foundation Fellow.

David Kamp
LYRICIST
David is an author, journalist, and humorist. Among his books are the national bestseller *The United States of Arugula*, a chronicle of America’s foodways; *I Must Say*, Martin Short’s best-selling memoir (as co-author); and four volumes of humor. A longtime contributor to *Vanity Fair*, he has profiled such figures as Johnny Cash, Sly Stone, Lucian Freud, Bruce Springsteen, Randy Newman, and the Brill Building songwriters. His work also appears regularly in the *New York Times*. He began his career at *Spy*, the legendary satirical monthly. *Kiss My Aztec!* is his first musical.

Maija García
CHOREOGRAPHER
Maija’s choreography credits include *West Side Story* (the Guthrie Theater), *Snow in Mid-Summer* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Another Word for Beauty* (Goodman Theatre), *Cuba Libre* (Artists Repertory Theatre), *Hatuey* (Peak Performances), Fats Waller (Kennedy Center), *Neighbors* (The Public Theater), and *FELA!* (Broadway, National Theatre of London, world tour, the concert). Film and TV credits include Spike Lee’s *BlackKkKlansman*, *Chi-Raq* (Amazon), and *She’s Gotta Have It* (Netflix). Maija has directed *Salsa, Mambo, ChaChaCha* (Teatro Mella, La Habana Cuba); CRANE (Lied Center); *Stories of Service* (Irish Auditorium); *I Am New York — Juan Rodriguez* (El Museo del Barrio); *Legend of Yuna* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); and *Ghosts of Manhattan* (Fort Tryon Park, NYC). Maija is Director of Professional Training at The Guthrie Theater, a member of sdc, and represented by caa.

David Gardos
MUSIC SUPERVISOR
David’s Broadway credits include *Falsettos*, *Finding Neverland*, *Chaplin* (associate music director), *Side Show*, *Big Fish* (assistant conductor), and *Hamilton* (sub conductor). Regional/New York credits as music director include *The Family Resemblance* (O’Neill Theater Center), *Darling Grenadine* (Goodspeed-at-Chester), *The Boy Who Danced On Air* (Abingdon Theatre), *My Paris* (Long Wharf Theatre, Goodspeed-at-Chester), *Ever After* (Paper Mill Playhouse), and *Nickel Mines* (New York Musical Festival). Concerts include Deb Monk’s Birthday Bash (BC/FEA) and Kristin Chenoweth at Carnegie Hall. David received a Master of Music (Orchestral Conducting) from University of Cincinnati (ccm) and a Bachelor of Music (Music Education) from University of Sydney.

Simon Hale
ORCHESTRATOR
Simon’s credits include *Tootsie* (Tony nomination), *Girl from the North Country* (Drama Desk/Olivier nominations), *Spring Awakening*, *Alice by Heart*, *Romantics Anonymous*, *Woman on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (Drama Desk nomination), *Finding Neverland*, *Whisper House* (Old Globe), and *Strictly Ballroom* (West End). Other credits include *Side Show* (Southwark Playhouse) and *Company* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield). As arranger/orchestrator, Simon has worked for George Benson, Björk, Sarah Chang, Ray Davies, Robin Gibb, Josh Groban, Incognito, Jamiroquai, Lang Lang, George Michael, Oasis, Sade, Alicia Keys, Duncan Sheik, and Simply Red. After working on Sam Smith’s *In the Lonely Hour* (Grammy nomination) Simon orchestrated and conducted the Golden Globe and Oscar-winning *Writing’s on the Wall* from the James Bond film *Spectre* as well as conducting the orchestra for the live performance at the Academy Awards in February 2016. Simon orchestrated and co-composed the soundtrack for the video game *L.A. Noire* which (along with Andrew Hale) won him a BAFTA for original music.

Wilson Torres
PERCUSSION ARRANGER
Wilson is a graduate of The Juilliard School M.A.P. The Juilliard School Pre College program, and F.H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art (Fame). He received his BM, MM in Orchestral Performance from The Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Duncan Patton and Christopher S. Lamb. Broadway credits include Tony and Grammy Award-winning musical *In the Heights*, *Les Miserables* (25th anniversary revival), *Lysistrata Jones*, *The Wiz* (Encores), *On Your Toes* (Encores), *Cabin
BERKELEY REP PRESENTS

in the Sky (Encores), Invisible Thread (Second Stage), and Smokey Joe’s Cafe. Tours include The Lion King (first national), The Lion King (Cheetah), and Wicked (first national). Orchestral credits include San Francisco Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, Staten Island Sympho-
ny, and Albany Symphony. Film/TV: Smash, Throwdown with Bobby Flay, Ocean’s 8, and Crazy Ex-Girlfriend. Wilson is a proud endorser of Latin Percussion and Sabian Cymbals.

Clint Ramos
SCENIC/COSTUME DESIGNER
Clint’s Berkeley Rep credits include Ruined and Pike Street. Notable set/costume designs include, on Broadway: Eclipsed (Tony Award, Henry Hewes nomination), Once On This Island (Tony, Outer Critics, Drama Desk nominations). Torch Song (Tony nomination), Burn This, Sunday in the Park with George. Six Degrees of Separation, In Transit, The Elephant Man (Broadway, West End), and Violet. Off-Broadway credits include White Noise, Wild Goose Dreams, Slave Play, Familiar, The True, Here Lies Love (New York, London), Sweet Charity, and Booty Candy. He recently premiered Downstate by Bruce Norris at the National Theatre. He has over 200 regional and international credits. He is also an Encores! Off-Center principal designer. Upcoming: Grand Horizons, Soft Power, and The Outsiders. Clint’s awards and honors include the Tony Award (first person of color to win in his category), Obie Award for Sustained Excellence, three Lucille Lortel Awards, a TDF Sharaff Award, two American Theatre Wing Henry Hewes Design Awards, and Helen Hayes Awards. He is the recipient of the Ani ng Dangal Philippine Presidential Medal; he was awarded this honor twice. He is the Head of Design at Fordham University Theatre Program. @clintramos

Alexander V. Nichols
LIGHTING DESIGNER
Alexander returns to Berkeley Rep for his 44th production. Broadway credits include Wishful Drinking, Hugh Jackman Back on Broadway, Nice Work If You Can Get It, and Latin History for Morons, and off-Broadway productions of Los Big Names, Horizon, Bridge & Tunnel, Taking Over, Through the Night, In the Wake, In Masks Outrageous and Auster and Ernest Shackleton Loves Me. Regional theatre credits include designs for American Conservatory Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Dance credits include resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet. He was the lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre and has been the resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His designs are in the repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Alley American Dance Theater, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, among others. Recent projects include Elizabeth Cree at Opera Philadelphia, Nixon in China at the LA Philharmonic, and Bluebeard’s Castle for the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra.

Jessica Paz
SOUND DESIGNER
Jessica designed the Broadway production of Hadestown (Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominee). Off-Broadway and regional credits include Welcome to Fear City (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); Twelfth Night, Midsummer Night’s Dream, Miss You Like Hell, Othello, and Julius Caesar (The Public Theater); Burn All Night (American Repertory Theater); A Sucker Emcee and The Muscles in Our Toes (LAByrinth Theater Company); Ugly Lies the Bone (Roundabout Theatre Company); Becoming Dr. Ruth (Westside Theatre); Looking for the Pony (Vital Theatre Company); Women Beware Women (Red Bull Theatre); and Stretch — A Fantasia (New Georges). Jessica was associate designer of Bandstand (Broadway), Dear Evan Hansen (Broadway and international), and Falsettos (Broadway and international).

Stephen Chbosky
The musical Kiss My Aztec! is based on a screenplay by John Leguizamo and Stephen Chbosky. Stephen is an author, director, and screenwriter. He is best known for his award-winning adaptation of his debut novel, The Perks of Being a Wallflower (glaad, Independent Spirit, People’s Choice, wga nominee). The novel spent over two years on the New York Times Bestseller list and enjoyed the distinction of being Number 10 on the most banned books in America list for 2000–09. He co-wrote the screenplay for Disney’s live action Beauty and the Beast as well as the film adaptation of RJ Palacio’s Wonder, starring Julia Roberts and Owen Wilson, which he also directed. His first feature, The Four Corners of Nowhere, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. He wrote the screenplay for the film adaptation of Rent and co-created the post-apocalyptic TV drama, Jericho. His second novel, Imaginary Friend, will be published October 1, 2019. Twitter: @StephenChbosky

Amy Potozkin
DIRECTOR OF CASTING/ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE
This is Amy’s 29th 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, The 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; One Man, Two Guvnors; and An Octoroon.

Tara Rubin Casting
CASTING

Madeleine Oldham
DRAMATURG/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 Fairview, AUBergine, 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.

Profiles
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 25th season as production stage manager. He has also worked with the Huntington Theatre (Boston), The Public Theater and New Victory Theatre (New York), La Jolla Playhouse, Yale Repertory Theatre, and many others. Internationally he has stage managed shows in Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Among his favorite Berkeley Rep productions are last season’s Angels in America, The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures, Eurydice, Fêtes de la Nuit, The Beaux’ Stratagem, and Mad Forest.

Megan McClintock
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
Megan is always happy to come home to Berkeley Rep after starting her stage management career as a Berkeley Rep fellow. In the years since she has stage managed at American Conservatory Theater, Aurora Theatre Company, Center Repertory Company, California Shakespeare Theater, Marin Theatre Company, and the San Francisco Opera. Favorite Berkeley Rep credits include Treasure Island, Girlfriend, The Arabian Nights, The White Snake, No Man’s Land, Dear Elizabeth, Tristan & Yseult, The Wild Bride, and How to Write a New Book for the Bible. Megan is also a part of the venue and production management team at the Curran in San Francisco. Megan has a BA in theatre and history from Willamette University.

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 (tcg), 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, she is the founding chair of the Berkeley Arts in Education Steering Committee for Berkeley Unified School District and the Berkeley Cultural Trust, and served on the board of the Downtown Berkeley Association. Susan serves on the faculty of Yale School of Drama and is a member of the International Women’s Forum and the Mont Blanc Ladies’ Literary Guild and Trekking Society. She was awarded the 2012 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Medal by the Berkeley Community Fund and the 2017 Visionary Leadership Award by tcg. During her time in Berkeley, Susan has been instrumental in the construction of the Roda Theatre, the Nevo Education Center, the renovation of the Peet’s Theatre, and in the acquisition of the Harrison Street campus. She also worked with three consecutive mayors to help create Berkeley’s Downtown Arts District.

ERIC TING, Artistic Director

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Theresa Von Klug
GENERAL MANAGER

Before joining Berkeley Rep, Theresa had 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. Her previous positions include the interim general manager for The Public Theater; 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; production manager at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and New York City Center, including the famous Encores! Great American Musicals in Concert; and 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.

Audrey Hoo
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Audrey is pleased to make her Berkeley Rep debut this season. Prior to this, Audrey served as the production manager at American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. Highlights of her time there include A Thousand Splendid Suns (dir: Carey Perloff, by Ursula Rani Sarma), A Walk on the Moon (dir: Sheryl Kaller, by Paul Scott Goodman and Pamela Gray), and John (dir: Ken Rus Schmoll, by Annie Baker). Audrey has also served as the production manager at the La Jolla Playhouse. Highlights of her time there include working on Junk (dir: Doug Hughes, by Ayad Akhtar), Come from Away (dir: Christopher Ashley, by Irene Sankoff and David Hein), Hunchback of Notre Dame (dir: Scott Schwartz, by Alan Menken, Peter Parnell, Stephen Schwartz), and Up Here (dir: Alex Timbers, by Bobby and Kristen Lopez). Audrey was previously at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (2006–14). During her time at BAM, she had the pleasure of working with a wide range of international artists across all performing arts genres such as Robert Lepage, William Kentridge, Moisés Kaufman, Geoffrey Rush, Catherine Martin, Sam Mendes, Paul Simon, John Turturro, and Elaine Stritch. Audrey is also an alumni of the Weston Playhouse, Santa Fe Opera, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. Audrey holds an MFA in Technical Direction from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Lisa Peterson
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Lisa is a two-time Obie Award-winning writer and director whose previous projects at Berkeley Rep include The Good Book (2019), co-written with Denis O’Hare; Office Hour (2018); Watch on the Rhine (2017); It Can’t Happen Here (2016); Madwoman in the Volvo (2016); An Iliad (2012), which Lisa co-wrote with Denis O’Hare and which won Obie and Lortel Awards for Best Solo Performance; Mother Courage (2006); The Fall (2001); and Antony @ Cleopatra (1999). Other recent West
Coast productions include *You Never Can Tell* (California Shakespeare Theater), *Hamlet* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), and *Chavez Ravine* (Ovation Award for Best Production — Center Theatre Group). She has directed world premieres by many major American writers, including Tony Kushner, Beth Henley, Donald Margulies, José Rivera, David Henry Hwang, Luis Alfaro, Marlene Meyer, Naomi Wallace, Basil Kreimendahl, and many others. She regularly works at the Guthrie Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, and New York Theatre Workshop. Lisa and Denis are working on a commission for McCarter Theatre Center titled *The Song of Rome*. Lisa is also writing a new music-theatre piece with Todd Almond called *The Idea of Order*, co-commissioned by La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Rep, and Seattle Rep.

**The Roy Cockrum Foundation**

Founded in 2014 by Roy Cockrum and Benita Hofstetter Koman with winnings from Mr. Cockrum’s Powerball lottery jackpot, the foundation’s mission is to award grants to support world-class performing arts projects in not-for-profit professional theatres throughout America. Since 2014, fifteen flagship American theatres have received major grants from the foundation. Inspiration for its mission derives from a Camus quote: “Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future.” — Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*

**Bruce Golden & Michelle Mercer**

**SEASON SPONSORS**

Michelle and Bruce have been ardent supporters of Berkeley Rep since 1993, when they moved with two young children in tow to Berkeley. Their favorite evenings at Berkeley Rep were usually the discussion nights, where often friends would join them as well. Michelle and Bruce always felt that Berkeley Rep was an exceptional Bay Area cultural treasure as it was willing to support courageous new works and nurture innovative young playwrights. In 2002, Bruce and Michelle moved to London, where they nourished themselves on a steady diet of English theatre (note the proper spelling) until they could return to their beloved Berkeley Rep. They are delighted once again to be back in the very center of leading-edge theatre and are honored to be lead producers for two of this season’s great productions. Their two now-grown children are also tremendous theatre junkies and will hopefully be joining Bruce and Michelle for some of this season’s performances.

**Jack & Betty Schafer**

**SEASON SPONSORS**

Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack previously served on the Theatre’s board and is now on the boards of San Francisco Opera and the Straus Historical Society. He is an emeritus trustee of the San Francisco Art Institute and the Oxbow School. Betty is on the board of EarthJustice, the
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, and Sponsors for Educational Opportunity. In San Francisco, Betty is involved with Wise Aging, a program for adults addressing the challenges of growing older. They have three daughters and eight grandchildren.

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 Season Sponsors

Roger Strauch has served on the Berkeley Rep board of trustees for the last 22 years as a member and as an executive officer, including president. He is chair of The Roda Group (rodagroup.com), a high technology venture development company based in Berkeley. Roda incubated the search engine Ask.com, located in Oakland, and Cool Systems, located in Concord (gameready.com), a medical technology company recently acquired by Avanos Medical. He is currently on the board of four cleantech companies in which Roda is a major investor. Roger is on the board of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute and leads the Mosse Art Restitution Project which searches for family art illegally confiscated during Germany’s Third Reich. He is a board member of the Northside Center, a mental health services agency based in Harlem, NY and a member of UC Berkeley Engineering Dean’s College Advisory Board. His wife, Dr. Julie Kulhanjian, is an infectious disease attending physician at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital, Oakland. Roger and Julie have three adult children with whom they enjoy cooking and traveling.

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, and as great admirers of Tony Taccone, they are thrilled to sign on as sponsors of Kiss My Aztec! They are very proud of the cutting-edge exceptional theatre that Berkeley Rep continuously produces. Frances’ day job is as professor of physics and dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences 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 Kiss My Aztec! Rachelle is a retired social worker and artist. Rachelle also serves as a disaster volunteer for the American Red Cross. Stewart is a former vice chairman of Young & Rubicam and partner/owner of mcgarrybow- en. He serves as president on the Berkeley Rep board and on the boards of a number of startups through his investment company, Roble Partners.

Linda & Steven Wolan Executive Sponsors

Linda and Steven Wolan have been attending Berkeley Rep productions since 1969 when they encountered the theatre on College Avenue emblazoned with a peace sign. They have been long-time supporters of the Theatre having contributed to all its campaigns and co-producing many productions, including Macbeth, Rita Moreno’s Life Without Makeup, Figaro, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, and X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story). Linda has served on the Artistic Director’s Circle for a decade and Steven has been a docent and presently is honored to be a member of the board of trustees. They regularly attend the San Francisco Symphony and Aurora Theatre where Steven was a member its board of directors. Linda is a realtor with District Homes in Berkeley, and Steven is a mediator and a retired attorney. They’ve lived in Berkeley since dinosaurs roamed Addison Street. Both of their children, Jen Wolan, also a realtor at District Homes, and Ben Wolan, live in Berkeley with their families.

David & Vicki Cox Sponsors

Dave and Vicki have been active in the theatre world for nearly 40 years, first with the Guthrie Theater, where Dave was at one-time chair of the board, and now with Berkeley Rep, where he is a board member. Vicki, a women’s rights activist, is a past national board member of Americans for the UN Population Fund and Planned Parenthood. The retired CEO of Cowles Media, Dave pursues interests in media and environmental causes. Previously, he was the board chair of Earthjustice and Link Media. The Coxes love Berkeley Rep’s dedication to risk-taking and its emphasis on contemporary plays, as well as its commitment to developing theatre works and artists.

Robin & Rich Edwards Sponsors

Robin and Rich have been strong supporters of Berkeley Rep for more than 20 years when they started serving on the gala committee (on which they continue to serve). Rich was co-chair of the Naraisal Toast for five years. Robin retired from active law practice as a partner of Dentons US LLP at the end of 2011 and joined Berkeley Rep’s board in early 2012.

Rich retired in 1998 as a senior partner of San Francisco’s Robertson Stephens & Co., a high-tech-focused investment bank, and became a professional photographer. Both Rich and Robin have been very active as board members and fundraisers for numerous Bay Area nonprofit organizations. They now spend about half the year traveling the world by sea.

Michael H. Kossman Sponsor

Michael is a member of the company’s board of trustees, and is honored to be sponsoring a wholly new production after sponsoring the spectacular revival of Angels in America last year. Michael’s theatre involvement goes all the way back to an elementary school production of Peter Rabbit in 1971. He has appeared in various productions around the Bay Area, including Jesus Christ Superstar (College of Marin) and Brigadoon (the Mountain Play), as well as having spent two years as a supernumerary with the San Francisco Opera. Michael has spent significant time with numerous Bay Area nonprofits, most recently as a board member at Frameline, and March 31, 2000 was declared Michael Kossman Day in San Francisco in recognition of his contributions to the city and its people. His day job keeps him busy as the chief operating officer of Aspiriant, an independent wealth management firm serving affluent families across the country.

Patricia Sakai & Richard Shapiro Sponsors

Patricia and Richard have alternated serving on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees for over 25 years. They are proud to support the Theatre’s leading-edge artistic vision, innovative productions and programs, and a stellar staff that have earned Berkeley Rep its national reputation as a destination for both theatre artists and audiences. Patricia is on the board of Ashby Village, and has also served on the board of the Management Center of Northern California. She was a secondary school educator, director of continuing education at St. Mary’s College, and worked at several Bay Area corporations as a learning and organizational effectiveness executive. Patricia is currently a painter and performs with the San Francisco Choral Society. Richard serves on the boards of Berkeley Rep and Resources for Community Development. He has also served on the boards of the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archives, Camp Swig, the East Bay Conservation Corps, Legal Assistance for Seniors, and the Urban School. Richard is a partner at Farella, Braun + Martel.

Laura and Nicholas Severino Sponsors

Laura and Nick are thrilled to sponsor Kiss My Aztec! and are honored to play a role in Tony’s last production as artistic director at Berkeley Rep. The Severinos have been longtime, passionate supporters of the humanities.
Laura serves on the board of trustees at Berkeley Rep and is the co-chair of this year’s gala. Nick has been an executive at Apple Inc. for 15 years. Laura and Nick believe strongly in the importance of the arts, and are particularly proud to support the creative work of Berkeley Rep.

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Additional staff

**Associate choreographer**
Lauren Cox

**Associate scenic designer**
Diggle

**Associate costume designer**
Michelle Ridley

**Associate sound designer**
Beth Lake

**Assistant dramaturg**
Katie Craddock

**Costume shop**
Julie Barner
Kathleen Crowley
Sophie Hood — Crafts
Nelly Flores
Milena Geary
Alea Gonzales

**Dialect coach**
Jessica Berman

**Deck crew**
Bradley Hopper
Isaac Jacobs
James McGregor
Kourtney Snow

**Electricians**
Desiree Alcocer
Ann Christine Hartzell
Evan Lopes Lola
Francesca Muscolo-Arlt
Kevin B Quintero
Melissa Ramirez
Minerva Ramirez
Sarina Renteria
Nathanael C. Schiffbauer
Kyle Slaugh
Ericka Sokolower-Shain
Matt Sykes
Joshua van Eyken

**Followspot operators**
Spencer Dixon
Zach Wziontka

**Production assistants**
Sofie Miller
Tanner Bryce Oertel

**Props**
Kate Fitt
Erin Gallagher
Will Gering
Chris Jee
Noah Kramer
Zoe Gopnik McManus
Garner Takahashi Morris
Baz Wenger

**Scene shop**
Jennifer Costley
Isaac Jacobs
Carl Martin
Sean Miller
Jeff Palmer
Henry Perkins
Zach Wziontka

**Scenic artists**
Kristen Augustyn
Chriissy Curl
Lassen Hines
Katie Holmes

**Sound A2**
Courtney Jean

**Sound**
Adam Danska
Sarah Jacquez
Michael Kelly
Max Krongaus
Jordan Smetzer

**Interim associate sound/video supervisor**
Chase Nichter

**Wardrobe**
Claire Griffith

**Additional lighting equipment provided by 4Wall Entertainment LA.**

**Additional sound equipment provided by Masque Sound.**

**Rehearsed at The New 42nd Street Studios.**

**Rehearsed at TW Studios: Chelsea.**

**Rehearsed at Ballet Hispánico.**

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**Medical consultation for Berkeley Rep provided by Cindy J. Chang, MD, UCSF Clinical Professor, and Steven Fugaro, MD.**
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