Engaging and Eclectic in the East Bay

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To ensure the best experience for everyone:

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

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

Phones that ring during the performance are a total bummer. For everyone. Ensure that phones and other electronic devices will not make noise. Video and/or photographs of the performance are prohibited.

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!

Enjoy the show!
Who couldn’t use a little more drama?

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The National Museum in Bogotá, Colombia has recently undergone a major makeover. The main room on the first floor is now filled with an assortment of paintings, videos, sculptures, and artifacts from every part of Colombian history. Instead of the usual chronological progression of artworks whose sequence is designed to create a linear narrative, the new approach presents the viewer with wildly different pieces of work from the past through the present, reflecting vastly different techniques and perspectives. The result is intentionally confusing, almost overwhelming. The museum is making a statement: We need to challenge every assumption we have about history, about our inherited perspective. Where did our “view” come from? What are the values and experiences that shaped that view? How is our view different from that of the people around us?

My experience in the museum was made more impactful because I had just seen Fairview in New York. This is a play that presents a narrative, subjects it to a host of critical voices, exposes those voices, and then suspends the entire event so that the audience has an opportunity to deconstruct their own inner dialogue about what they’ve just seen. This is theatre at its most subversive: refusing to play by traditional rules and posing some serious questions about the hidden value system we bring to our perspective. Our “objectivity” is being radically questioned, and to engage with the play requires openness and curiosity. Without those two features, you may not respond to Fairview. If you bring them to your experience, however, you will be richly rewarded.

To make this kind of work requires no small amount of courage. Clearly, Jackie Sibblies Drury possesses more than her fair share. Teaming up with the wonderful director, Sarah Benson (who also serves as the artistic director of Soho Rep., our esteemed partner in this venture), she has created a play that I believe is going to stand as a landmark in our field for some time to come. The fact that the play was conceived and developed in our very own Ground Floor program makes the achievement that much more meaningful for all of us working at Berkeley Rep.

So sit back, or forward, and enjoy the view. And observe yourself along the way. You may be surprised by what you see.

Sincerely,

Tony Taccone
“I’m a Rep because theatre is a place to fit in. It’s a place where no one is excluded, and a place where everyone is respected.”

—Miya Drain, Teen Core Council Member, Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre
“I’m a Rep because theatre is a place where people can tell a story and be part of that story. Being in a room together sharing a story can make people feel less outside of themselves.”

—Nandi Maunder, Teen Core Council Member, Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre
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Directed by Ron Russell

"[Nilaja Sun] portrays three generations of a Puerto Rican family, as well as various friends and neighbors, bringing each to life with a radiant grace that makes her virtuosity seem as natural as breathing."

—New York Times

Berkeley Rep
Be a Rep
REPORT

Celebrating our 50th: Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre helps build the artists and audiences of tomorrow

BY KAREN MCKEVITT

Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre sits in the Nevo Education Center between Berkeley Rep’s Peet’s Theatre and the Aurora Theatre up Addison Street. Having first opened the doors of this new space in 2001, the School of Theatre offers programming as eclectic as the productions onstage at Berkeley Rep, reaching some 20,000 people in the Bay Area each year. Driven by an expanding community of inspired, curious, and creative theatre lovers, the School’s programming provides a variety of opportunities for engagement.

In fact, Berkeley Rep has had a commitment to education since its inception in 1968. Within its first two years, the company launched a series of workshops for aspiring theatre professionals, student matinees, and even a summer class for youth in Kenney Park. “Ever since then,” says School of Theatre Director Rachel Hull, “the School has embraced its role of being responsive to the community based on the needs of the community.”

The evolution of its in-classroom and youth programming shows perhaps the greatest evidence of the growth and adaptability of the School of Theatre. Access to the arts started declining in the California public school system in the mid-1980s, so the School of Theatre ramped up its touring programs and student matinees. Each year Berkeley Rep commissioned up to two 45-minute plays, hired emerging directors to put the shows on their feet, and toured them to local schools, often for as many as 10 weeks with 12 performances a week.

Berkeley Rep’s school tours would continue for some 20 years, but even by the mid-1990s California schools began to feel the full impact of Prop 13. School budgets for the arts were slashed, and schools reduced the number of assemblies and field trips in favor of increased in-classroom instructional hours. The School of Theatre changed its in-school programs to literacy-based programs like Story Builders, a workshop that enables elementary-school students to transform their lessons into theatre — and increases literacy and reinforces state education standards.

“Our school tours were about the idea that youth should have access to the arts,” says Rachel Hull. “The field trips were about the idea that youth should be able to go to theatre. Then the participatory and educational workshops we provide now are about the idea that kids should be able to make theatre in ways that ties to their education.”

Today student matinees continue, and the School of Theatre’s professional theatre artists lead free or low-priced interactive workshops throughout the nine counties of the Bay Area that enhance 2–12th grade curriculum, connect to California content standards, and align with the Common Core. The workshops integrate theatre, movement, and voice training while also teaching communication, problem solving, collaboration, and creative expression.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
Back on Addison Street, the Nevo Education Center provided a home base for the School of Theatre to increase workshops and classes for youth, teens, and adults. “The original intent was to provide more youth programs,” says then School of Theatre Director Rachel Fink (2000–16). “As we started offering classes, we started getting interest from more and more adults, which was a huge surprise. It really shifted how broadly we could think about the programming.”

Adds Rachel Hull, “The classes are a big part of our goal to connect people to their creative power and to provide immersive training for future theatre-makers.” Today the School of Theatre offers over 120 classes and camps for adults, teens, and youth in acting, musical theatre, playwriting, and more in sessions every fall, winter, spring, and summer. These offerings aren’t only for aspiring theatre artists—the School also offers classes like The Art of Business Improv, which is specifically designed for professionals from any field, at any level, who want to reap the benefits improv training to develop their leadership skills.

In addition to training the artists of tomorrow, the School is building the audiences of tomorrow. “We’ve been seeing the effects of the decrease in arts education in the public schools, which has now spanned two generations,” says Berkeley Rep’s Managing Director Susan Medak. “Theatre attendance among younger people has been declining, and we wanted to change that. We wanted to cultivate the next generation of theatre audiences and professionals who approach the world as engaged, thoughtful citizens.”

When the Nevo Education Center opened, the School hosted pizza parties for teens and asked them what arts access they needed that they weren’t getting in their schools. Out of that came the Teen Council and One-Acts Festival. Teen Council is designed by teens for teens all over the Bay Area, and oversees and leads Teen Nights, Teen One-Acts Festival, Young Writers of Color Collective, and a new writer’s workshop, Rough Draft.

“One of my teachers encouraged me to apply to the Young Writers of Color Collective,” says Nandi Maunder, who recently joined the Teen Core Council. “I had really good mentors, and my play received a staged reading as part of The Ground Floor’s Summer Residency Lab. After that, I knew I wanted to continue to be a part of Berkeley Rep.”

The School’s Teen Council program is a trailblazer—the program is being replicated at companies across the nation. It’s been recognized by the White House’s Young Americans and Americans for the Arts, and teen members have participated on panels at Theatre Communications’ Group’s annual conference, the White House’s Young Americans Roundtable, and Americans for the Arts’ Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C.

“It was amazing to go to Theatre Communications Group’s conference last year,” notes Teen Core Council
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Education for youth doesn’t stop at high school graduation. The School of Theatre also manages Berkeley Rep’s 12-month Fellowship Program for motivated college graduates ready to embark on a professional career in the theatre, a program that evolved from the Theatre’s summer internships that started in 1973. Fellows within 15 departments in the organization are directly exposed to the Theatre’s daily operations and given the opportunity to learn alongside an accomplished company of artists, administrators, guest directors, and designers. The Fellowship Program helps build the theatre artists, technicians, and administrators of tomorrow—more than 20 percent of former fellows now work at Berkeley Rep full time, and others work at professional theatres across the country, including New York.

From classrooms around the Bay Area to theatres around the country, Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre has touched the lives of students, artists, theatre-makers…and it also touches the lives of audience members like you by making meaningful connections between our mainstage work and you. The post-show discussions that follow every performance of Fairview, the docent talks before Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening performances and before Sunday matinees, the panel discussions featuring experts from the community, and community partnerships like the partnerships we had with 12 local organizations during the run of Angels in America—these are all made possible by the School of Theatre in close collaboration with Berkeley Rep’s artistic department.

“What we at the School of Theatre continue to find so striking is the inherent creativity and power of the people in our community,” says Rachel Hull. “Our continuing mission is to provide the space and time for people to maximize that potential and use their voice.”

Discover more about Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre at berkeleyrep.org/school.
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Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre connects audiences to their creative power:

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• Immersive training for future theatre makers •

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Berkeley Rep School of Theatre
Be a Rep
While in this political age one may rightfully be wary of superlatives, the 2018 Summer Residency Lab was inarguably our biggest yet. A few verifying statistics:

- We welcomed 22 projects, selected from nearly 700 applications—the most we’ve ever received.

- Scores of performers, many from the Bay Area, played 139 unique roles.

- We served over 1,000 communal meals to artists, staff, and guests, with an average of 47 attendees per dinner.

Several artists found unexpected ways into urgent, ongoing conversations around American politics and identities. 45 Plays for America’s First Ladies swept us from Martha to Melania in a genre-bending revue of the women who found themselves in the East Wing. Baruch Porras-Hernandez approached immigrant guilt, familial expectations, and building a life as a performer in the Bay Area with irreverence, heart, and piñatas. Andy Bragen collaborated with Ana Graham and Antonio Vega to make Summit, a play about two couples, one North American and one Mexican, and their attempt at a collaboration that will better the world. Tina Satter made a play out of the actual transcription of the F.B.I. interrogation leading to the arrest of Reality Leigh Winner, a 25-year-old woman who, this August, received a sentence of more than five years for leaking a top-secret government report on Russian hacking. Tina found an austere, fluorescent-lit corner of our warehouse to share the tense, chilling, and surprisingly funny piece. Marisa Carr wrote about coming of age in the punk scene as a young woman of color during the post-9/11 Bush administration. Christina Anderson examined a Black family’s work to integrate the public pools in their city.

Two pieces featured high school sports teams — Candrice Jones wrote about a girls’ basketball team in rural Arkansas, and Joe Waechter wrote about Minnesotan hockey players. Despite their distinct settings and voices, both Candrice and Joe’s plays tackled gender, group dynamics, coming of age, and the ways players both support and compete with each other, transmuting questions and struggles from their outside lives onto the rink or court.

We had some splendid art about artmaking. Eliza Bent took us to the low-ceilinged basement office of an undergrad poetry magazine, and Avi Amon and Julia Gytri wrote of Sephardic Jewish children in 1941 Greece inventing a magical realm to sublimate the terrors of their reality. Ryan Haddad starred as himself in a campy story of his family and in particular his Uncle Charlie, who has opinions about his portrayal in Ryan’s work. Naomi Iizuka and Paul Hodges worked on a musical about Okuni, a legendary erotic performer who played both men and women and originated kabuki theatre.

Still others wrote of women with fantastical powers. Min Kahng, inspired by a 16th-century story, created an island with a civilization of Black, Amazonian, warrior women who ride griffins. Leonard Madrid explored the haunting myth of Las Arañas, wronged women who exact revenge on violent men in a small New Mexican town. Sarah Ruhl delved into the legacy of the Salem witch trials.

We also had the most applications yet to our ambassador program, yielding a delightful and dedicated volunteer cohort of aspiring theatre-makers, without whom the Lab would never have run so smoothly. The ambassadors apparently have been enjoying their five exhilarating weeks with us, as many from the past two Labs have applied to Berkeley Rep’s yearlong fellowship program. The love is mutual — we had our first ambassador-turned-fellow last season, and welcomed two more this season, Leah Mesh-Ferguson in Company Management and Madeleine Rostami in Literary/Dramaturgy.

There are several other thrilling projects I didn’t have space to describe here. As you may have surmised, it was an awe-inspiring summer. We can’t wait to see what happens next in the lives of all of the projects and the artists making them.

Stay in touch with The Ground Floor at berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor.
In 2013, playwright Jackie Sibblies Drury participated in Berkeley Rep’s Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab. Artistic Director Tony Taccone spent a few hours one afternoon talking with Jackie in the kitchen (where all the good things happen), and came away from the conversation deeply impressed by Jackie’s intelligence, wit, and unique perspective on the world. In her typically humble fashion, Jackie attributes Tony’s interest in her and her work differently. She was assigned Tony’s office as her writing space during the Summer Lab, and says, “I think I was on Tony’s mind because I had literally taken over his office. Whenever he forgot something I would just be sitting on his couch.”

Director Sarah Benson was also here for 2013’s Summer Residency Lab, though she was working on a different project. As the artistic director of Soho Rep. in New York, Sarah is always on the lookout for interesting collaborations and new ways of working. She found herself in conversation with Tony, and the two started to think about ways their theatres might work together. They remarked on how different their companies were: Soho Rep. is a tiny, black box space known for its debuts of experimental works, while Berkeley Rep produces an eclectic variety of plays in two sizable spaces. They landed on commissioning a new play that would fit in both spaces, and they quickly settled on Jackie as someone who would be up for the challenge. This unexpected pairing of theatres officially co-commissioned Jackie to create a piece flexible enough to move from a small, downtown New York space to our larger regional house in Berkeley.

Jackie and Sarah returned to The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab in 2015, this time to work together. They began thinking seriously about surveillance, and, inspired by an abandoned office building across the street that we were given access to, used the space to inform their process. They asked six actors to do some deep internet research and gather information on other Summer Lab participants. One evening, they invited us into the office space, took each participant into a cubicle, and interrogated that person individually. The desired effect of unsettling the unsuspecting audience had been achieved, and this experiment helped to construct a foundation on which the play could grow.

Over the next two years, two more workshops took place with scenic designer Mimi Lien, who began to think about how the play’s ideas would take physical shape in the room. Sarah said, “Those [conversations] were huge in terms of starting to figure out how the theatrical form was serving these ideas, and how naturalism and that convention were such a big part of what we were trying to explore.” It gradually became clear that the play wanted to start in a familiar, realistic space, then expand out to explore uncharted territory.

Jackie eventually titled the piece Fairview, and it premiered at Soho Rep. in 2018, in association with Berkeley Rep. It was extended three times, becoming one of Soho Rep.’s most notable hits. In preparation for its move to Berkeley, Sarah and Tony found themselves talking about their respective spaces again. How to move the set from a small black box to a large thrust? Mimi rejiggered her set, moving a wall in the process; Sarah reblocked actors’ movements; Jackie tweaked language; and all three artists worked together to reshape the entire ending of the play for the Peet’s Theatre. No longer an experiment in a black box, the play now engages in a wider dialogue with a larger audience at Berkeley Rep.
Jackie Sibblies Drury and Sarah Benson are mutually excited by plays that break with tradition. Originally from the U.K., Sarah is now the artistic director of Soho Rep., a theatre known for its preeminent productions of plays that push theatrical form forward. Jackie is the author of plays that are all strikingly different from each other and linked largely through their inability to fit neatly in a genre. The pair has been collaborating on *Fairview*, a co-commission with Berkeley Rep and Soho Rep., for several years, but they still find it extraordinarily difficult to talk about the play without giving away a spoiler. Literary Manager Sarah Rose Leonard met with Sarah and Jackie when they were in town to tour the Peet’s Theatre; their goal of the day was to nail down how to reshape the ending of the play for a new space. Sitting in the theatre seats, the artists discussed their process, and did their very best to not give anything away.

Jackie, *Fairview* was sparked by your thinking about surveillance. How did those thoughts start becoming a play?

Jackie Sibblies Drury: It started as a piece thinking about surveillance, not in terms of technology, but in terms of thinking about why surveillance feels more dangerous to people of color because of the implicit bias around the people that are actually doing the surveilling. We talked about that more and more, and the piece shifted to really thinking about the way that people understand the worlds that they observe and live in. We were trying to get an audience to have that shift in some way, too.

How did surveillance, and the racialization of surveillance, pop into your head in the first place?

JSD: I spent some time living abroad in a place that does have government surveillance. It’s low-tech; you would just become aware of people following you on the street. Once it was embodied in that way of literally seeing the person, it made you think about their flaws as a human. Because they’re part of this governmental apparatus, their actual humanity is supposed to go away. But it doesn’t.

Sarah, how did you enter that conversation?

Sarah Benson: We came to The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab together and were still thinking very much about surveillance and how being surveilled changes how you live in the world, which pivoted into racialized surveillance. We spent this amazing week here with a group of actors, digging into some of those questions. At that point we were interested in surveilling the audience; we went through a whole exploratory process where we interviewed the audience and that material fed the end of the show. Then soon after we were reading a lot and talking. We read the Simone Brown book *Dark Matters*, which looks at race and surveillance and the intersection of those things and how, for people of color, being watched is an extremely harmful experience, historically and in an ongoing, palpable way.

What happened next in the development process?

JSD: Sarah and I and our scenic designer, Mimi Lien, all read books and met every couple of months to have conversations about people of color in space. Like in spaces, not in outer space.

(laughter)

So you had a book club?

JSD: We had a book club!

SB: Yeah! As we talked, Mimi really came into the conversation in a big way. We had this whole phase where we were talking a ton about Panopticon. It’s basically a space in which you are always being watched, but you don’t know if you’re being watched. We became fascinated by how that was going...
to feed the architecture of the set and the dramaturgy of the play. I also felt that Jackie was using theatre as a metaphor for how we watch and how we change the person we’re watching by how we watch them. That metaphor started to graft onto theatre in the conversation with Mimi, and that’s where I feel like it started to take the form of *Fairview*.

**Jackie, how would you describe your writing process for this play?**

**JSD:** Once we got to a place to have workshops, it was testing out all of these different texts that were in conversation with these ideas. It was tricky because it felt like any time anyone actually talked about any of the ideas it felt too loud and things fell apart. At first, a big part of it was figuring out how to show the ideas and have people talk about other stuff. Then, once we agreed on an overall structure that felt like it worked, it was about trying to solidify the three pieces that make up the play. It was so hard to write it! It felt like this math problem in a weird way, where we had a beginning and an end, and figuring out that middle part took forever.

**SB:** Right, we had an Act One and Act Three. We felt so clear on how they functioned and what they were doing. Figuring out Act Two was the thing. That was where workshops were so helpful; we were able to figure out where there was traction, where there was slack, and where we felt the most heat. I think it was also very particular actors who were such a huge part of that workshop process, helping us figure out what was working. You could feel it take off in moments. With them, we started to play with what you could see and what you could hear and when you were dividing the sort of aural/visual experience, which I think is such a big part of what the play is ultimately doing.

**How did you choose to make the protagonists an upper-middle-class Black family?**

**JSD:** We wanted the audience to walk in and think that this was a normal play. Normal plays are about wealthy people. They’re either about incredibly salt-of-the-earth working-class people, or about people who can sit around and talk about politics around the dining room table. That determined the class of the people. As for their race, well that’s what the play’s about.

**SB:** The play is colliding with the American family drama, which is historically White. It’s repopulating that with an upper-middle-class Black family exactly for the reasons Jackie’s saying. It’s looking at how Black people are watched and how their behavior is interpreted, all the time. It takes the hypervisibility that people of color are subjected to on a daily basis and puts it in a theatrical form. The entire conceit of the space is that you’re set up to watch people.

**JSD:** It’s also about TV and pop culture. A lot of the aesthetic of our entrance to the play in Act One comes from television, those ‘90s sitcoms, those families that a lot of people of our generation grew up with. Many of these stories that we see about Black people in popular culture are created by and for White people, so including the “disaster” narratives that happen in Act Three against the nice happy family comedies that are referenced in the beginning feels important.

**Along those lines, how does the use of comedy work for you in this play?**

**SB:** Comedy is an amazing tool for putting people in a place of comfort, as Jackie is saying. The humor is referencing narratives they know, stories they know, forms they know. I stole so many pieces from the show *Family Matters*, trying to figure out what do people do, like where do people flower arrange?

**JSD:** For someone to laugh at something they have to understand it or recognize it. It seems really useful to have that recognition.

**Jackie, what are you thinking about after you watch the play and go home?**

**JSD:** Honestly, I keep thinking about how I hope the play feels really irrelevant, really soon. That it’s not a play for the ages, hopefully it’s something that’s going to expire because it feels so quaint that bias was such an integral part of our society. I hope that it doesn’t age well, in a weird way.

**Sarah, the ending allows for a million emotions, and you say that any reaction is the right reaction. How did you arrive at that?**

**SB:** I actually feel that’s what makes the theatre space so amazing. It is a space where all of those feelings can co-exist and you should have as many reactions as there are people in the room. It is a space where discomfort and difficult, ugly feelings can happen, and also exhilarating, uplifting feelings and moments. I think the amazing thing about what Jackie’s written is whatever happens at the end, that is the event. What shows up in the end is created live, every night, by everyone who’s actually in the room. The audience truly co-creates the end of the show; the event is the audience and the play happening together. I feel like this play is living that in an amazing way.

**I keep thinking about how I hope the play feels really irrelevant, really soon. That it’s not a play for the ages, hopefully it’s something that’s going to expire because it feels so quaint that bias was such an integral part of our society.**

**PLAYWRIGHT JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY**
It’s easy to assume that a play always has a recognizable structure. The traditional canon includes many plays that have a clear beginning, middle, and end; adopt a chronological timeline; and follow a familiar build-climax-denouement architecture. Educational institutions sometimes teach plays as “literature,” inadvertently creating a bias toward theatre that reads easily on the page. Though some of the most recognizable names of modern drama generally adhere to time-honored construction techniques—Arthur Miller, August Wilson, Lillian Hellman—the theatre also has a long legacy of breaking the rules it sets up for itself. When this happens, it opens a path for the work to be considered experimental.

Plays rarely fall into the category of “experimental” with regard to their content. Whatever the subject matter, no matter how controversial or unusual, if it lives inside a familiar structure, an audience will generally feel like they know how to watch what they’re watching. But when form is unfamiliar, it can create a sense of disorientation. Viewers have to learn the rules of a play as they experience it. While this can be uncomfortable, it can also introduce exciting new ways of thinking or imagining.

Writers will sometimes look to re-invent structure when dialogue isn’t enough. In more traditional plays, language holds a primary position because these plays are content-driven, whereas in more form-driven pieces, language stands alongside other tools of theatre, such as sound, lights, choreography, stillness, and other elements that create a visual or visceral vocabulary. With Fairview, Jackie Sibblies Drury is in good company when she adopts an unconventional structure in order to express the ideas she’s investigating. Some of the most memorable moments in modern theatrical history arose when writers felt compelled to articulate a story via formal innovation.

Often considered the gateway to the modern experimental theatre, Alfred Jarry’s 1896 play Ubu Roi provoked such intense reaction at its premiere that it opened and closed on the same night. People responded immediately to Jarry’s embracing of obscenity, but his use of repetition, non-sequitur props and costumes, and outlandish stylization rendered his lacerating parody utterly unique, unlike anything anyone had seen before. Some people loved it, some loathed it, and some didn’t understand it, but few were ambivalent. This huge spectrum of response marked it as a seminal
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event that would be remembered well into the future. The play went on to influence generations of adventurous artists.

One of the most recognizable names when it comes to experimenting with form is Bertolt Brecht. He created a technique known as the "alienation effect"—an approach intended to keep the audience emotionally uninvolved in the predicaments of the characters’ lives. Rather than submerge you in the onstage world, his plays such as The Threepenny Opera (1928) and The Good Person of Szechwan (1943) strove to make the audience a conscious critical observer of the action onstage. Brecht’s play Mother Courage and Her Children (1941) is a particularly strong example of how characters step out of the action to speak directly to us, inviting the audience to be aware of their own judgement. He thought of theatre as a debate hall, ideally suited for thinking objectively about society’s problems, rather than an entertainment venue.

As playwrights continued to explore nontraditional structures, the genre of Theatre of the Absurd began to emerge. Techniques employed by Alfred Jarry in Ubu Roi started to gain momentum—for example, using repetitive, even nonsensical, dialogue to make a statement through form. In absurdism, what happens onstage transcends what is being said about it. French playwright Eugene Ionesco’s The Bald Soprano, which premiered in 1950, fits perfectly within this framework. In this play, a wealthy family hosts a dinner party. Over the course of the meal, their conversations become more and more incomprehensible until the action of the play begins again as the curtain falls. This devolution into chaos is Ionesco’s exact intent, as he wrote in an essay about his own work: the detached dialogue and collapse of reality in The Bald Soprano satirizes the petty bourgeois, who continue to lead their post-war lives with normalcy, never meaningfully engaging with the world around them.

Though different in message, the work of Irish playwright Samuel Beckett similarly fits the absurdist mold. None of his plays embraced traditional expectations of theatre at the time. He abandoned the typical Aristotelian structure of clearly developed characters and dramatic conflict to build abstracted worlds that more effectively serve his purpose as a writer. The most iconic example of this is Waiting for Godot, which premiered in 1953. The two protagonists, Vladimir and Estragon, strike up pseudo-conversations of dialogue that rarely respond directly to what has just been said, despite desperately trying to communicate with each other in order to keep themselves occupied. As they quite literally wait for Godot, who never arrives, inaction seems the only course of action. Through this constant stasis, Beckett suggests that humans are doomed to passivity. This structure empowers Beckett to ask big existential questions of audience members, who must grapple with the fact that nothing happens instead of being offered a clear conflict and resolution. Initial response revealed much consternation: early audiences objected vociferously to the lack of plot development. But as time went on, theatre-goers and scholars alike began to understand that “nothing happens” might in fact be the point. They grew to appreciate Beckett’s talent and originality, and Waiting for Godot is now regarded as a classic.

In the 1960s, absurdism morphed into what became known as “avant-garde” theatre. One of the most exciting innovators of avant-garde work was the New York-based writer Adrienne Kennedy, who broke ground with her surrealist, emotionally expansive plays. Kennedy often focused on expressing the psyches of her characters with nonlinear storytelling. Her breakthrough piece was 1964’s Funnyhouse of a Negro, a dark drama that takes place within the mind of her protagonist, Negro-Sarah, a woman who hates her own ethnicity. The visuals of the play drive the story more than the dialogue does. You can track the entire emotional arc of the play just from watching where Negro-Sarah is physically positioned in relationship to a European queen or her White landlady. Here, colors, sounds, costume, lights, and spatial relationships are just as much a part of articulating racial conflict as words are.

Meanwhile, across the pond, the prolific English playwright Caryl Churchill was redefining the term “experimental” altogether. For each play that she writes, she uses a completely new theatrical structure tailored to the topic she chooses to explore. Her work can be polarizing, and some plays are certainly more accessible than others. But all of them invite audiences to ponder the very definition of a play. One of Churchill’s more well-known works, 1979’s Cloud 9, explores the patriarchal roots of sexual and gender stereotypes, and also draws, in her words, a “parallel between colonial and sexual oppression.” In order to express these big ideas, she specifies casting choices that defy conventional expectation: a woman is played by a man, a Black man by a White man, and a boy by a woman. Then in the second act, she shifts some roles back to traditional casting where the actors resemble the people they are portraying, encouraging viewers to hold both the literal and the nonliteral at once. The play also jumps 100 years across time and moves from Africa to London, yet for the characters in the play, it’s only 25 years later. Churchill manipulates time in a nonrealistic way, and thus shakes us loose from our logical brains—the audience is asked to accept the impossible, and by giving over to the play’s request, new ways of seeing and understanding can arise.

Storytelling that challenges our accepted notions of what a play will look like has the potential to help us evaluate the world around us differently, providing us with a lens we might not have access to on our own. When we grapple with the world around us, trying to make sense of dynamics and concepts that might seem beyond our grasp, a gifted artist can bring us that much closer to making meaning out of something vast and overwhelming. Particularly useful when pondering the political or the philosophical, arenas that grow unwieldy very quickly, theatre that adopts an unusual structure often illuminates ideas we might not otherwise be able to see. Brecht showed us how quickly we judge others in situations where we might behave the same way. Beckett viscerally displayed how life can feel like waiting. Kennedy gave us a visual representation of internalized self-hatred. With Fairview and its completely original framework, Jackie Sibblies Drury prompts us to think about race in America, specifically around the surveillance of Black bodies. With national conversation at a fever pitch, there couldn’t be a better time for this radical invitation to reimagine and reassess the part we all play in that conversation.
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Paradise Square
An American Musical

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BOOK BY MARCUS GARDLEY, CRAIG LUCAS, AND LARRY KIRWAN
BASED ON THE SONGS OF STEPHEN FOSTER
CONCEIVED BY LARRY KIRWAN
SUPPLEMENTAL LYRICS BY LARRY KIRWAN AND GEORGE COOPER
ARRANGEMENTS BY JASON HOWLAND AND LARRY KIRWAN
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CHOREOGRAPHY BY BILL T. JONES
DIRECTED BY MOISÉS KAUFMAN
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DIRECTED BY
Sarah Benson

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

Fairview was originally commissioned and produced by Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, CA
Tony Taccone, Artistic Director and Susan Medak, Managing Director
and
Soho Rep., New York, NY
Sarah Benson, Artistic Director and Cynthia Flowers, Executive Director

Developed with support from The Ground Floor at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, CA

CAST
Beverly  Natalie Venetia Belcon
Suze  Brooke Bloom
Dayton  Charles Browning
Jasmine  Chantal Jean-Pierre
Bets  Natalia Payne
Mack  Jed Resnick
Jimbo  Luke Robertson
Keisha  Monique Robinson

PRODUCTION STAFF
Scenic Design  Mimi Lien
Costume Design  Montana Levi Blanco
Lighting Design  Amith Chandrashaker
Sound Design  Mikaal Sulaiman
Hair & Wig Design  Cookie Jordan
Fight Direction  J. David Brimmer
Dramaturg  Madeleine Oldham
Stage Casting  Stephanie Yankwitt & Margaret Dunn, TBD Casting
Stage Manager  Leslie M. Radin

The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union. The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in Lort Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.
Natalie Venetia Belcon

Natalie is thrilled to be making her debut here at Berkeley Rep. Her Broadway credits include Matilda, Avenue Q (original cast), and Rent. Her other credits include The Last Smoker in America (off Broadway), The Glorious Ones (Broadway), and the original cast of The Bubbly Black Girl. Natalie's TV credits include Play On for PBS Great Performances and other guest starring and recurring roles.

Brooke Bloom

Brooke is making her Berkeley Rep debut. Other credits regionally include Marie Antoinette (Irene best actress award) at American Repertory Theater, Lungs at the Studio Theater, and Becky Shaw (Barrymore best actress award) at the Wilma Theatre. Broadway and other New York credits include Time and The Conways at Roundabout Theatre Company, Everybody at Signature Theatre, Cloud Nine (Drama Desk nomination) at the Atlantic Theater, David Greenspan's Helen Twelvetrees at Abrons Arts Center, You Got Older (Drama Desk nomination and Obie Award) for Page 73, and Somewhere Fun at Vineyard Theatre. She can be seen with regular roles on Netflix's Gypsy, Amazon's Alpha House, and recurring on Amazon's upcoming Homecoming with various guest star appearances. She's had roles in many films, including She's Lost Control (Berlinale premiere, Independent Spirit Awards Best Film nomination) and an upcoming untitled Noah Baumbach film, among others.

Charles Browning

Charles was last seen in The Cost at LaMaMa. Previously, he appeared in the world premiere of I Sing the Rising Sea at Virginia Stage Company, the world premiere of The Capables at The Gym at Judson, and The Piano Lesson and Dreamgirls at Gallery Players. His New York credits include Classical Theatre of Harlem, Target Margin Theater, Classic Stage Company, The Lark, Joe's Pub: The Public Theater, and Ensemble Studio Theater. Regional credits include timeLine Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. He has worked in commercials, industrials, film, and television. Charles earned his BFA from DePaul University, an MFA from Columbia University, and studied at Oxford University (British American Drama Academy).

Chantal Jean-Pierre

Chantal is thrilled to make her Berkeley Rep debut. Her credits include Our Town at Miami New Drama, Disgraced at Maltz Jupiter Theatre, Intimate Apparel at Dorset Theatre Company, Doubt at Flat Rock Playhouse, A Raisin in the Sun at both Crossroads Theatre Company and Weston Playhouse, Fabrication at the People's Light and Theatre Company, Sheila's Day at Hartford Stage, and The G-Word at LaMaMa Experimental Theatre Club. A lover of classical theatre, she has played the title role in both Cincinnati Shakespeare and Orlando Shakespeare Festival's production of Antony and Cleopatra; Olivia in Twelfth Night at New York Classical Theatre; Goneril in King Lear at the Folgers in Washington, DC; Gertrude in Hamlet at the American Globe Theatre, and The Blue Bird and Henry VI at Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. She has guest starred on a number of television shows. Find out more at chantaljean-pierre.com.

Natalia Payne

Natalia appeared at Berkeley Rep in Three Sisters New York theatre credits include The Last Match (Roundabout Theatre Company), Me, Myself & I (Playwrights Horizons), New Jerusalem (Classic Stage Company), Jailbait (Cherry Lane Theatre), Aliens with Extraordinary Skills (Women's Project), and deathvariations (59E59 Theaters). Regional credits include Watch on the Rhine (Arena Stage), The Last Match (The Old Globe), Three Sisters and Trouble in Mind (Yale Repertory Theatre), Dirt (Studio Theatre–Helen Hayes nomination), and Memory House (Vineyard Playhouse). TV/film: Law & Order: SVU, Workin’ Moms, Ransom, Murdoch Mysteries, Dark Matter, Reign, Sensitive Skin, Cardinal, The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond, The Word, and Crazy Love. Originally from Toronto, Natalia studied acting at Yale University.

Jed Resnick

Jed is thrilled to be making his Berkeley Rep debut. He recently completed a long run in Avenue Q at New World Stages. Broadway/National tours include Avenue Q (Princeton/ Rod u.s.) and Rent (Mark). Other New York credits include New York Musical Festival, Ars Nova, b-side productions, and the New York International Fringe Festival. Regional credits include The Last Five Years (Actors Theatre of Louisville), The Seagull (Peterborough Players), Pregnancy Pact (Weston Playhouse), and Williamstown Theatre Festival, Westchester Broadway Theatre, and Brown/Trinity Playwrights Rep. He appeared in the film She's Marrying Steve. Proud AEA member and Brown alum. @jedres

Luke Robertson

Luke is making his Berkeley Rep debut. Luke's New York City theatre credits include Fairview at Soho Rep., feeling. at New Ohio Theatre, Good Television at Atlantic Theatre Company, and Neva at The Public Theater. Regionally, he has appeared at Yale Repertory Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Triad Stage, and Baltimore Center Stage. Film and television credits include Goddess, Mr. Robot, The Americans, Daredevil, Instinct, Elementary, Deception, Forever, and most Law & Orders. MFA Yale School of Drama.

Monique Robinson

Monique is ecstatic to make her Berkeley Rep debut. Her credits include Comedy of Errors at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; A Midsummer Night's Dream at Folger Theatre; Two Gentlemen of Verona, EveryMan, and Revolutionay Moments at Shakespeare & Company; The Final Days at A Contemporary Theatre; WaDe Na da waTer at Stage 773; G.O.A.T. at the Queen's Theatre in the Park; Iyom at the Workshop Theatre Company; and Somebody is Sure to Come at LaMaMa Experimental Theatre Club. Onscreen credits include See You Yesterday (Netflix), Tell Me a Story (CBS), Product of My Environment (nyciFiNominee), A Ring, FAWK, and Moni: The Series. Monique re-
received an MFA from University of Washington Professional Actors Training Program. Follow along on the journey at monitionerseries.com.

Jackie Sibblies Drury PLAYWRIGHT
Jacquie’s plays include We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formely Known As South West Africa, From the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884–1915; Really; and Social Creatures. Her plays have been presented by New York City Players and Abrons Arts Center, Soho Rep., Victory Gardens, Trinity Rep, Woolly Mammoth, Undermain Theatre, InterAct Theatre, Company One, and the Bush Theatre in London, among others. Her work has been developed at the Bellagio Center, Sundance, The Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club, Ars Nova, Soho Rep. Writer/Director Lab, New York Theatre Workshop, Prelude, the Bushwick Starr, the Lark, and the MacDowell Colony. She has received many awards, including a Windham-Campbell Literary Prize in Drama, a Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, and a United States Artists Gracie Fellowship.

Sarah Benson DIRECTOR
Sarah has been artistic director of Soho Rep. since 2007. Recent credits include Suzan-Lori Parks’ In The Blood (Signature Theatre). For Soho Rep.: Richard Maxwell’s Samara, César Alvarez and The Lisps’ Futurity (Callaway Award), Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ An Octoroon (Soho Rep. and Theatre for a New Audience), Lucas Hnath’s A Public Reading of an Unproduced Screenplay about the Death of Walt Disney, David Adjmi’s Elective Affinities, and Sarah Kane’s Blasted (Obie Award, Drama Desk nomination). She has also directed at American Repertory Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, and Manhattan Theatre Club. She holds an MFA from Brooklyn College, where she studied with Tom Bullard. In 2016, Sarah won a Vilcek Foundation Prize for Creative Promise.

Raja Feather Kelly CHOREOGRAPHER
Raja Feather Kelly, Princess Grace Award winner for 2017 and 2018, is a choreographer for theatre, dance, and performance works. Theatre credits include Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’Everybody (dir. by Lila Neugebauer at Signature Theatre), Jackie Sibblies-Drury’s Fairview (dir. by Sarah Benson at Soho Rep.), Suzan-Lori Parks’ The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World (dir. by Lileana Blain-Cruz at Signature Theatre, 2017 Lortel Award), Adrienne Kennedy’s Funnyhouse of a Negro (dir. by Lila Neugebauer at Signature Theatre), Marcus Gardley’s The House That Will Not Stand (dir. by Lileana Blain-Cruz at New York Theatre Workshop), Michael R. Jackson’s A Strange Loop (Playwrights Horizons), Daamah Mubashshir’s Everyday Afroplay (Jack), Jim Findlay’s Electric Lucifer (The Kitchen), and Lempicka (dir. by Rachel Chavkin at Williamstown Theatre Festival). Dance theatre: Raja Feather Kelly’s Ugly (Bushwick Starr); I, Am a Dancer (Ars Nova); Another Fucking Warhol Production (The Kitchen, 2015, nominated “Most Innovative Dance Performance of 2015” by Dance Magazine); Andy Warhol’s Blue Movie (BAM, Baryshnikov Arts Center); Andy Warhol’s Tropico (Danspace); Andy Warhol’s Drella (I Love You Faye Driscoll) (Invisible Dog); and Andy Warhol’s 15: Color Me, Warhol (Dixon Place).

Garrett Allen ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Garrett is a theatre, video, and performance artist focusing on visceral work that combats spectator passivity by collaboratively creating sensorial experience. They most recently devised We Were All Rooting for You (Playhouse Creatures Theatre Company) and directed a workshop of oscar at the Crown, an immersive club-pop musical, at Lot 45. They also assisted Sarah Benson on In the Blood at Signature Theatre and Samara at Soho Rep. Their video and performance art works have been exhibited at Harvard, Index Festival, Signal Gallery, The Deep End, You Are Here, and in several print/online publications. garrettallen.com.

Mimi Lien SCENIC DESIGNER
Mimi is a designer of sets/environments for theatre, dance, and opera. She previously designed Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West at Berkeley Rep. Previously at Soho Rep.: An Octoroon, A Public Reading…the Death of Walt Disney, We Are Proud..., and born bad. Other recent work includes Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812 (Broadway), War (LCT3), and 24-Hour History of American Music (St. Ann’s Warehouse). She is a recipient of a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award, American Theatre Wing Hewes Design Award, LA Drama Critics Circle Award, and an Obie Award for sustained excellence. Mimi was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2015, and is the first set designer ever to achieve this distinction.

Montana Levi Blanco COSTUME DESIGNER
Montana’s Berkeley Rep credits include Angels in America and An Octoroon. Off-Broadway credits include The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World (Lucille Lortel nomination) and In The Blood (Signature Theatre); He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box (Obie Award, Theatre for a New Audience); Fairview and The God I (Soho Rep.); The House That Will Not Stand, Red Speedo (dir. Blain-Cruz at Signature Theatre, 2017 Lortel Award) and Turner in Jerusalem (New York Theatre Workshop); Pipeline (Lincoln Center); Ghost Light and War (LCT3); The Last Match (Roundabout Theatre Company); and O, Earth (the Foundry Theatre). Regional credits include La Rondine (Minneapolis Opera), The Bluest Eye (the Guthrie Theatre), Lempicka (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and Measure for Measure (California Shakespeare Theatre). Montana trained at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin College, Brown University, and the Yale School of Drama. Visit montanalieviblanco.com.

Amith Chandrashaker LIGHTING DESIGNER
Amit’s theatre credits include Cardinal (Second Stage Theater), Twelfth Night (The Public Theater), The Lucky Ones (Ars Nova), Her Requiem (LCT3), Stuffed (the Westside Theatre), FADE (Primary Stages), [porto] (The Bushwick Starr/Woman’s Project), Alligator (New Georges/Sol Project), Seven Spots on the Sun (Rattlestick), Ike at Night (Under the Radar/The Public), Quiet, Comfort (Hoi Polloi), and The Hatmaker’s Wife (Playwrights Realm). Opera credits include The Flying Dutchman (Atlanta Opera), Falstaff (Opera Omaha), The Scarlet Letter (Opera Colorado), Abduction from the Seraglio (Atlanta Opera), and Lelisir d’amore (the Curtis Institute). Dance credits include premieres by Alexander Ekman, Azaure Barton, Liz Gerring, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Rennie Harris Pure Movement, Aalto Ballett Theatre Essen, Staatstheater Nürnberg, the National Dance Company of Wales, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

Mikaal Sulaiman SOUND DESIGNER
Mikaal is a Los Angeles-based sound designer and composer. New York credits include Light Shining in Buckinghamshire (New York Theatre Workshop), Time’s Journey Through a Room (Play Company), Rape of the Sabine Women (Playwrights Realm), Master (Foundry Theatre Company), Underground Railroad Game (Ars Nova, 2017 Obie Award winner), and The Oldsmobiles (the Flea). Upcoming New York projects include Rags Parkland (Ars Nova) and Thanksgiving Play (Playwrights Horizons). Mikaal’s regional credits include Trinity Repertory Company, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Arden Theatre Company, Early Morning Opera, California Shakespeare Theater, and New Paradise Laboratories. He attended the University of the Arts receiving a BFA in Acting and later studied the Jacques Lecoq approach to physical theatre at the London International School of Performing Arts. Visit mikaal.com.

Cookie Jordan HAIR & WIG DESIGNER
Cookie designed hair and wigs for Berkeley Rep’s production of The Last Tiger in Haiti. Broadway credits include The Cher Show (make-up design). Once on This Island, Sunday in the Park with George, In Transit, Eclipse, Side Show, After Midnight, Fela, A View from the Bridge, and South Pacific. Off-Broadway credits include Is God Is, In the Blood, Everybody, and The Death
of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World (Signature Theatre), and Marie and Rosetta and Midsummer Night’s Dream (Shakespeare in the Park). Cookie also designed for the tours of Fela (national and European), Dirty Dancing, Flash Dance (national), and received an Emmy nomination for make-up design for The Wiz Live.

J. David Brimmer
FIGHT DIRECTOR
David is a Fight Master (Society of American Fight Directors), and has choreographed, on Broadway, Spring Awakening, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Grace, Wit, and Speed-the-Plow. New York premieres include Is God Is, Hangmen, In the Blood, Yen, Gloria, Revolt. She said. Revolt again., An Octoroon, Punk Rock, We Are Proud to Present..., Bethany, Mr. Burns..., Blasted, The Whipping Man, Bug, and Killer Joe. David has worked with David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Suzan-Lori Parks, Ethan Coen, Conor McPherson, Martin McDonough, Tracy Letts, Kenneth Lonergan, Neil Labute, Wilson Milam, Evan Cabnet, Doug Hughes, Sarah Benson, Joel Schumacher, Ken Russell, and Franco Zeffirelli.

Madeleine Oldham
RESIDENT DRAMATURG/ DIRECTOR, THE GROUND FLOOR
Madeleine is the director of The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work and the Theatre’s resident dramaturg. She oversees commissioning and new play development, and dramaturged the world premiere productions of 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 Rights, and Portland Center Stage.

TBD Casting, Stephanie Yankwitt, CSA; Margaret Dunn
CASTING
Theatre credits include Fairview (Berkeley Rep and Soho Rep.), Thunderbodies (Soho Rep.), Music City (Cape Fear Regional Theatre), Borrowed Cash and Burn All Night (American Repertory Theatre/Oberon), Kinky Boots, West Side Story, and King Kong (Fugard Theatre, South Africa), Hal & O’Be (Stable Cable/59E59), Life x 3 (New Light Theater Project, upcoming), Disgraced, Inspector Calls, and Born Yesterday (Maltz Jupiter Theatre), Anne of Green Gables (Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival), Uncommon Sense (Tectonic Theater Project), and ongoing work with the Mainspring Arts Cooperative and the Playwrights’ Center. Select feature film: Brightlie’s Bind (upcoming, Daniel Hart Donohue/Satyre Entertainment), Give Me Liberty (K. Mikhanovsky/A24), and ongoing work with the Independent Film Project. Stephanie is a member of CSA.

Leslie M. Radin
STAGE MANAGER
Leslie is very pleased to be back at Berkeley Rep after most recently assistant stage managing Angels in America and stage managing An Octoroon, Aubergine, Head of Passes, and Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright. She started at Berkeley Rep as the stage management intern in 2003 and has also worked at American Conservatory Theater, Aurora Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theater, Center Repertory Company, and Santa Cruz Shakespeare. She has traveled with Berkeley Rep productions to the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the New Victory Theater in New York. Her favorite past productions include Aubergine, Wittenberg, Sisters Matsumoto, In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), Passing Strange, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, and The Secret in the Wings.
SoHo Rep.
Founded in Manhattan in 1975, SoHo Rep. is recognized for producing visionary, uncompromising, and exuberant new plays including the recent premieres of Jackie Sibblies Drury’s Fairview, Aleatha Harris’s Is God Is, Alice Birch’s Revolt. She said. Revolt again, debbie tucker green’s Generations, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’s An Octoroon, and César Álvarez’s Futurity, which won the 2016 Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical. The company and its productions have been recognized with 21 Obie Awards and a Drama Desk Award for Sustained Achievement. In 2015, The Village Voice named SoHo Rep. the “Best Off-Broadway Theater Company” and in 2016, the company was listed in Travel Magazine’s “10 Essential Off-Broadway Theaters.” Artistic Director Sarah Benson was also a recipient of the prestigious Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Theatre. Next: the world premiere of Kate Tarker’s Thunderbodies directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz and the New York premiere of Christopher Chen’s Passage directed by Saheem Ali. sohoarep.org.

Tony Taccone 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 Tony Kushner, and three that landed on Broadway: Bridge 2 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, and this season he will direct the world premiere musical, Kiss My Aztec!, written with John Leguizamo.

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 New Education Center, the renovation of the Pect’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.

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 Encore! 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 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 new play about faith called The Good Book and for a commission for McCarter Theatre Center titled The Song of Rome. Lisa is also writing a new

Amy Potozkin, CSA
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, B Street Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Marin Theatre Company, the Marsh, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Social Impact Productions Inc., and Traveling Jewish Theatre. Amy cast roles for various independent films, including Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton; Haiku Tunnel and Love & Taxes, both by Josh Kornbluth; and Beyond Redemption by Britta Sjogren. Amy received her MFA from Brandeis University, where she was also an artist in residence. She has been an audition coach to hundreds of actors and a presentation/communication coach to many businesspeople. Amy taught acting at Mills College and audition technique at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, and has led workshops at numerous other venues in the Bay Area. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, she was an intern at Playwrights Horizons in New York. Amy is a member of CSA, the Casting Society of America, and was nominated for Artios Awards for Excellence in Casting for The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures; One Man, Two Guvnors; and An Octoroon.

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.

Jack & Betty Schafer
SEASON SPONSORS
Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack just rotated off 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
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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 in Berkeley. Roda incubated the search engine Ask.com, now located in Oakland, and Cool Systems (gameready.com), a medical technology company recently acquired by Avanos Medical. He is currently on the board of three cleantech companies in which Roda is a major investor. Roger is chair of 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. Roger is the founder and chair of The Paros Foundation (parosfoundation.com), a philanthropic organization serving thousands in the country of Armenia. His wife, Julie Kulhanjian, is an attending physician at Benioff UCSF Children’s Hospital, Oakland. They have three adult children.

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

Leonard X & Arlene B. Rosenberg
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Len is a partner in the Palo Alto and San Francisco offices of Mayer Brown LLP, an international law firm, where he is the co-head of the West Coast real estate practice and a leader of the cross-border real estate investment practice. He is a member of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees and is currently secretary of the board. Len also heads the local alumni chapter of his alma mater, Brandeis University, and serves on the alumni association board of directors. Arlene, a recovering lawyer, is secretary of the board of trustees of Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame and chairs the synagogue’s social justice/social action committee. Len and Arlene have two sons, one a college sophomore studying journalism and one a high school junior who hopes to pursue a career in social justice. Now removed from the cold winters and thriving theatre scene of their former home, Chicago, Len and Arlene have enjoyed deepening their attachment to Berkeley Rep over the years, and are delighted to be sponsoring Fairview.

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Assistant lighting designer
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Props designer, Soho Rep.
Ryan Courtney
Deck crew
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Barber Shop Chronicles
A Fuel, National Theatre, and West Yorkshire Playhouse co-production
by Inua Ellams; Directed by Bijan Sheibani; Designed by Rae Smith

One day. Six cities. A thousand stories. For generations, African men have gathered in barbershops to discuss the world. This dynamic new play leaps between barbershops in London, Johannesburg, Harare, Kampala, Lagos, and Accra. The banter can be barbed, and the truth is always telling.

★★★★★
“Such an ambitious piece and so life-affirmingly realised. Go.”
—The Independent, London

Oct 26–28 ZELLERBACH HALL

The Routes of Slavery:
Memories of Slavery (1444–1888)
Jordi Savall
Directed by Jordi Savall

More than two dozen musicians from 15 countries on three continents unite in this reverent and uplifting celebration of the influence of enslaved Africans on the culture of the Americas and Europe. Sponsored by UNESCO, this massive cross-cultural musical reconciliation serves as an extraordinary tribute to the resilience of the human spirit.

Nov 3 ZELLERBACH HALL

Big Dance Theater
17c
Conceived and directed by Annie-B Parson
Co-directed by Paul Lazar
Choreographed by Annie-B Parson and the company

Obie Award-winning Big Dance Theater's latest effort is a portrait of Samuel Pepys, the outlandish 17th-century politician whose obsessive, tell-all diaries are a startling precursor to our own social media culture. The ensemble weaves music, dance, video, and text in an exploration of the moral murkiness of Pepys' legacy as statesman and notorious philanderer, juxtaposing his own writings with the radical feminism of his contemporary, the playwright Margaret Cavendish.

“Deeply brilliant...an amazing company... See the work of Annie-B Larson and Paul Lazar whenever possible.”
—The New York Times

Dec 13–16 ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE

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*2017 Greenwich Excellence Award for Likelihood to Recommend in the West. Based on interviews conducted by Greenwich Associates in 2017 with more than 30,000 executives at businesses across the country with sales of $1-500 million. City National Bank results are compared to leading competitors on the following question: How likely are you to recommend (bank) to a friend or colleague?

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