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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***RITA MORENO: LIFE WITHOUT MAKEUP* PREMIERES AT BERKELEY REP**

Legendary performer kicks off new season at Tony Award-winning theatre

JULY 18, 2011 – In September, the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre kicks off its new season with the world premiere of *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*, a captivating new show created specifically for this outstanding actress. Written by Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**, developed by **Rita Moreno** and Tony Taccone, and staged and directed by **David Galligan**, this spectacular production starts previews in the Roda Theatre on **September 2**, opens **September 7**, and runs through **October 30**.

“I am truly excited as I anticipate telling my story on the stage at Berkeley Rep,” **Moreno remarks**. “Did I mention I’m terrified, happy, overwhelmed, ecstatic... so what’s new, that’s just me! It is great to be surrounded by such a supportive group of talented and dedicated people. I am amazed how Tony Taccone, the play’s author, could fit 79 years of living into two hours yet capture the excitement, sadness, humor, surprise, and verve with which it was lived. Sharing my life in this place is fitting. After all, Berkeley is my port of call.”

“It’s fantastic to have Rita back on our stage,” **Taccone comments**. “Her life story is both improbable and inspirational, so I’ve been trying to talk her into telling it for years. Once she embraced the idea, she threw herself into the task with the full measure of her talent and intelligence. The result is both entertaining and revealing – and it’s particularly moving for anyone who was born into difficult circumstances and strives for more. As a writer, it’s been great to work with such a skilled storyteller, and I’m sure our audience will be delighted by the result.”

During her remarkable career, Rita Moreno has portrayed some tough women, from Anita in *West Side Story* to Maria Callas in *Master Class*. Now this legendary performer takes on the toughest woman of all – herself. The star of stage and screen returns to Berkeley Rep for the first time since a sold-out run in *The Glass Menagerie*. She recounts her unlikely life in an irreverent and entertaining new show called ***Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup***. Expect another breathtaking performance from the lady who won the Oscar, the Tony, the Grammy, and two Emmys.

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Music director **Cesar Cancino** (piano) leads a lively band that includes **Sascha Jacobsen** (bass), **Alex Murzyn** (reeds), and **David Rokeach** (percussion). Two expert dancers – **Ray Garcia** and **Salvatore Vassallo** – join Moreno to perform choreography by **Lee Martino**. The show also features designs by **Anna Louizos** (scenic design), **Annie Smart** (costume design), **Alexander V. Nichols** (lighting and video design), and **Phil Allen** (sound design).

The executive producers of *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup* are John and Helen Meyer and Jean and Michael Strunsky; the production sponsors are the East Bay Community Fund, the Bernard Osher Foundation New Play Development Fund, and the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Philanthropic Fund. For the seventh straight year, BART and Wells Fargo serve as the official sponsors of Berkeley Rep's season.

Rita Moreno is one of a select group of performers to have won all four of the most prestigious awards in show business: she earned an Oscar for *West Side Story*, a Tony for *The Ritz*, Emmys for *The Muppet Show* and *The Rockford Files*, and a Grammy for *The Electric Company Album*. Her countless credits span more than six decades, from her Broadway debut at age 13 in *Skydrift* to the new sitcom *Happily Divorced*. Having appeared in more than 40 feature films – most notably *Carnal Knowledge*, *The Four Seasons*, *The King and I*, and *Singin' in the Rain* – Moreno was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1995. She has also performed on Broadway, in London's West End, and at numerous regional theatres. Her television credits range from *9 to 5* and *The Electric Company* to recent programs such as *Cane* and *Oz*. In 2004, during her celebrated run in Berkeley Rep's *Master Class*, Moreno was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to a civilian in commemoration of a lifetime of meritorious service. In 2010, President Obama awarded her the National Medal of Arts as well. Moreno continues to perform regularly at concerts, cabarets, and as a guest artist with orchestras across the country.

David Galligan most recently directed *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*, written by and starring Leslie Jordan, at the Apollo Theatre in London's West End, as well as Tyne Daly's *Songs at Feinstein's* in New York City and *The Second Time Around*, which kicked off Feinstein's 10th anniversary. Galligan also directed the off-Broadway production of *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*. Other past efforts include *Falsettos* for The Actors Fund and Jordan's solo piece, *Like a Dog on Linoleum*. Galligan has produced and directed 27 years of the S.T.A.G.E. benefit, the longest running AIDS benefit in the world. He is the recipient of the Los Angeles Stage Alliance's Ovation Lifetime Achievement Award.

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Tony Taccone is artistic director of Berkeley Rep, where he has staged more than 35 shows – including world premieres by Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Quincy Long, Itamar Moses, and Lemony Snicket. Known as a director, he recently turned his hand to playwriting, and two of his scripts are premiering this year: *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup* and *Ghost Light*, a coproduction between Berkeley Rep and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Taccone commissioned Tony Kushner’s legendary *Angels in America*, co-directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum, and has collaborated with Kushner on seven projects including *Brundibar* and *Tiny Kushner*. He took two shows from Berkeley Rep to Broadway: Sarah Jones’ *Bridge & Tunnel*, which won a Tony Award for its star, and Carrie Fisher’s *Wishful Drinking*, which set box-office records in Berkeley before enjoying a six-city national tour. Two of Taccone’s recent shows transferred to London: *Continental Divide* played the Barbican in 2004, and *Tiny Kushner* played the Tricycle Theatre last fall. His many regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Huntington Theatre Company, OSF, The Public Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre.

During the run of this show, theatre lovers can enjoy several **special events**:

- *Low-cost previews* take place on Friday, September 2; Saturday, September 3; Sunday, September 4; and Tuesday, September 6.
- *Opening-night festivities* are held on Wednesday, September 7 with a pre-show dinner for donors at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza and a post-show party for the audience catered by Bistro Liaison and Raymond Vineyards.
- *Teen Night* begins at 6:30 PM on Friday, September 9 and includes a presentation by a member of the artistic team, dinner provided by Phil’s Sliders, and a performance of the show. Tickets are only \$10 for high-school students. For details, call (510) 647-2973 or e-mail teencouncil@berkeleyrep.org.
- *night/OUT* on Friday, September 9 welcomes the LGBT community. This post-show dance party features food from La Bonne Cuisine and beverages courtesy of Ale Industries and Raymond Vineyards.
- Free 30-minute *docent presentations* about the show take place at 7:00 PM on the following Tuesday and Thursday evenings: September 6, September 8, September 13, September 15, September 20, September 22, September 27, September 29, October 4, October 6, October 11, October 18, October 20, and October 25.

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- *Post-play discussions* moderated by theatre professionals follow the 8:00 PM shows on Thursday, September 22; Tuesday, September 27; and Friday, October 7.
- And, on most weekend evenings, patrons can whet their palates for the play with *free tastings* from local culinary artisans one hour before curtain. For a full list of upcoming events, click berkeleyrep.org.

In the last six years, six shows developed at Berkeley Rep have ended up on Broadway. Seven more landed off Broadway, two turned into films, and others have toured the nation. So don't miss the **new season of exhilarating plays** at the Theatre. After Rita Moreno, it's the premiere of *How to Write a New Book for the Bible* by Bill Cain, a poignant play about caregiving from the award-winning author of *Equivocation* and *9 Circles*. For the holidays, Kneehigh Theatre Company comes back to the Bay Area for *The Wild Bride*, a vivid fairy tale from the creators of *Brief Encounter*. Next Jonathan Moscone directs *Ghost Light*, a fable for San Francisco also written by Taccone. Then, in February, Steven Epp – the star of *Figaro* and *The Miser* – returns to unleash another Molière masterpiece with *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*. Finally Associate Artistic Director Les Waters takes on John Logan's Tony Award-winning *Red*, and Dael Orlandersmith delivers a fierce and unforgettable performance in the world premiere of *Black n Blue Boys*. As an added attraction, Berkeley Rep is offering a special presentation of *In Paris* next spring, a beautiful romance starring Mikhail Baryshnikov.

Get the best seats for all these shows at the lowest prices by subscribing to Berkeley Rep. Choose three or more plays and guarantee your seats for events that are sure to sell out. **Subscribe to five or more plays and get first dibs on seats for Baryshnikov.** Ticket packages begin as low as \$81, meaning subscribers can save as much as 26% on every ticket. Berkeley Rep also offers generous discounts for senior citizens, theatregoers under 30, and employees of nursery, elementary, and secondary schools. Subscriptions are selling fast because of last season's string of hits – so order now for the best seats.

Individual tickets to see Rita Moreno and other shows in the upcoming season go on sale August 21. **Seats start at only \$29.** Additional savings are available for groups, seniors, students, and anyone under 30 years of age – meaning **discounted tickets** can be obtained for as little as \$14.50.

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RITA MORENO PREMIERES NEW SHOW AT BERKELEY REP / 5 OF 5

The Roda Theatre is located at 2015 Addison Street, near bus lines, bike routes, and parking lots – and only half a block from BART. For **tickets or information**, call (510) 647-2949 or toll-free at (888) 4-BRT-Tix – or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to a national leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. With two stages, a school, and a Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, Berkeley Rep is proud to premiere exhilarating new plays. In the last six years, the company has helped send six shows to Broadway: *American Idiot*, *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Ghetto Klown*, *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*, *Passing Strange*, and *Wishful Drinking*. Come see tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep.

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RITA MORENO: LIFE WITHOUT MAKEUP

FACT SHEET

WHO: Written by Tony Taccone
 Developed by Rita Moreno and Tony Taccone
 Staged and directed by David Galligan
 Choreography by Lee Martino
 Starring Rita Moreno with Ray Garcia and Salvatore Vassallo
 Featuring a four-piece band with Cesar Cancino (music director), Sascha Jacobsen (bass), Alex Murzyn (reeds), and David Rokeach (percussion)
 Designed by Anna Louizos (sets), Annie Smart (costumes), Alexander V. Nichols (video and lights), and Phil Allen (sound)

WHAT: *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*, the world premiere of a captivating show created specifically for this legendary actress

WHERE: Berkeley Repertory Theatre
 Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street @ Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: **September 2 – October 30, 2011**

SUN	MON	TUE ■	WED	THU ■	FRI	SAT
					2 SEP 8P	3 8P
4 7P	5	6 8P	7 8P	8 8	9 8P	10 8P
11 2	12	13 8	14 7	15 8	16 8P	17 2
18 7P	19	20 8	21 7	22 8P	23 8P	24 8P
25 2	26	27 8P	28 7	29 8	30 8P	1 OCT 2
2 7P	3	4 8	5 7	6 8	7 8P	8 8P
9 2	10	11 8	12 7	13 2	14 8	15 2
16 7P	17	18 8	19 7	20 8	21 8	22 2
23 2	24	25 8	26 7	27 2	28	29 8P
30 2						

P PREVIEW
 TN TEEN NIGHT
 X OPENING NIGHT
 N LGBT NIGHT/OUT

D POST-SHOW DISCUSSION
 T TASTING
 ■ DOCENT PRESENTATIONS
 EVERY TUE & THU 7PM

- Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
- Thursdays and Saturdays @ 2:00 PM or 8:00 PM
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM or 7:00 PM
- No performance on 10/28
- Matinees replace evening performances on 9/11, 9/17, 9/25, 10/1, 10/9, 10/13, 10/15, 10/22, 10/23, 10/27, and 10/30

Special Events:

Opening night: Wednesday 9/7 @ 8:00 PM

Teen night: Friday 9/9 @ 6:30 PM

night/OUT (LGBT party): Friday 9/9 @ 8:00 PM

Pre-show docent talks: Tuesdays 9/6, 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18 & 10/25 and Thursdays 9/8, 9/15, 9/22, 9/29, 10/6 & 10/20 @ 7:00 PM

Post-play discussions: Thursday 9/22, Tuesday 9/27, and Friday 10/7 @ 8:00 PM

HOW MUCH: **\$14.50 - \$73** (subject to change)

- Discounts:
- Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
 - \$10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
 - Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org

PHOTOS: <http://www.berkeleyrep.org/press/photos-11rm.asp>

TIX & INFO: (510) 647-2949 – berkeleyrep.org – (888) 4-BRT-Tix (toll-free)