



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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LEAPIN' LIZARDS!
BERKELEY PLAYHOUSE CONTINUES THEIR 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH
AN ALL NEW HOLIDAY PRODUCTION OF
ANNIE

Production to feature a cast of over 30 Bay Area actors with
three different young actresses in lead role

Company to partner with San Francisco CASA to bring awareness to the Bay Area's foster
children, and the need for more local foster parents and CASA volunteers

BERKELEY, CA (October 10, 2017) – **Berkeley Playhouse** continues their tenth anniversary season with everyone's favorite redheaded optimist, *Annie*. One of the most popular musicals in Berkeley Playhouse's history, this all new production for the holidays is going to "shine like the top of the Chrysler Building!" In 1930s depression era New York, young orphaned Annie is determined to find the parents that left her on the doorstep of the New York City Orphanage, run by the soused and sour Miss Hannigan. When Annie is chosen by billionaire Oliver Warbucks to spend the holidays at his mansion, she leaves behind the only community she's ever known, and her daily life of "hard knocks" and "maybe's" turns into one of cinemas and Roll's Royce's . . . and an opportunity to discover the truth about her parents. Based on the popular Harold Gray comics of the 1920s, *Annie* is filled with adventure, mayhem, and the discovery of what family truly means. Performances run Friday through Sunday November 10 through December 23, with an added Wednesday performance December 20, and Thursday evenings November 30, December 7 and 21. Press night will be held on Saturday, November 11 at 7pm. **Tickets (ranging from \$22—\$40)** are available by calling (510) 845-8542 x351 or by **visiting online at www.berkeleyplayhouse.org.** *Ticket prices are subject to change without notice.*

"When planning our 10th anniversary season, we wanted to look forward and choose shows that uniquely expressed who Berkeley Playhouse is," says **Berkeley Playhouse Producing Artistic Director Kimberly Dooley**. "But one show kept coming back to our planning process—as it not only holds a special place in Berkeley Playhouse history, but it's heart and soul is reflected through a strong young girl who betters her world, and those around her, through wisdom, bravery,

and compassion—the very ideals that we hold dear at Berkeley Playhouse. We’re excited to share this beautiful new production of *Annie* with the next generation of Berkeley Playhouse theatergoers.”

Continuing the **Berkeley Playhouse Community Partner Initiative, which partners a Bay Area nonprofit with each production**, Managing Director Gretchen Feyer announced today that throughout the run of *Annie*, Berkeley Playhouse would highlight the work of **San Francisco CASA** (Court Appointed Special Advocates), which ensures children in the foster care system have a voice in the court and community, and the services they need to thrive.

“The work that San Francisco CASA does engages the local community to provide consistency and caring to the often-invisible population of youth in foster care. Our partnering programs strives to bring the themes, challenges, and experiences of the characters in our onstage musicals to a place of real-world advocacy. Our hope is to not only make our community a better place for all, but to show our younger audience members the many ways they can engage in philanthropy. We look forward to *Annie* bringing a spirit of endless possibilities to the community, highlighting the amazing work of SFCASA volunteers, and reinforcing that being a CASA volunteer or a foster parent can be an incredible gift.”

“CASA was originally founded by a judge to bring the community into what is otherwise a confidential, opaque system,” says San Francisco CASA Director of Development Paul Knudsen. “There are nearly 7,000 children in the Bay Area who have been removed from the only homes they knew, all in need of supportive adults and we are excited to partner with the esteemed artists at Berkeley Playhouse to further shed light on issues around foster care and the needs of foster youth”

Annie originally opened the 2011 season at Berkeley Playhouse, and remains one of the most attended in their ten-year history. Berkeley Playhouse’s all new production will be **directed by Scottie Woodard (*The Little Mermaid at Berkeley Playhouse*), with choreography by Allison Paraiso and music direction by Eric Walton**. The cast will feature over thirty Bay Area actors, including youth performers from Berkeley Playhouse’s acclaimed Conservatory. **The lead role will be shared by three young actresses, Sophia Gilbert, Miranda Long, and Josie Dooley.**

ABOUT BERKELEY PLAYHOUSE: Founded in 2007 by professional theatre actor, director, and teacher for over 25 years, Elizabeth McKoy, Berkeley Playhouse’s mission is to create theatre and programs that engage, ignite, and celebrate diverse Bay Area audiences through a thriving conservatory, a professional main stage season, educational outreach, and a commitment to the development of new family musicals. In support of our mission, we maintain and enhance the historic Julia Morgan Theater. A commitment to community, diversity, inclusion, and empowerment is at the heart of our work.

Previews: Friday, November 10 at 7pm, and Saturday, November 11 at 1pm.

Opens: Saturday, November 11 at 7pm.

Press: Saturday, November 11 at 7pm, and Sunday November 23 at 2pm.

Closes: December 23 at 2pm

Performances: Due to the unique performance schedule, please check the website for specific dates and times. All performances at Berkeley Playhouse at The Julia Morgan Theater, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704.

TICKETS: For tickets (\$22 for previews, \$22–\$40 for regular performances) or more information, the public may call (510) 845-8542 x351 or visit berkeleyplayhouse.org. Group rates available for 10 or more people. Ticket prices are subject to change at any time.

PAY WHAT YOU CAN: There will be two “Pay What You Can” performances, **Thursday November 30 and December 7 at 7pm**. The promotion is CASH ONLY at the door one-hour prior to performance time. We request a donation of \$20 per ticket but are able to accept a minimum of \$5 per ticket.

FAMILY GUIDE: Education is central to the mission at Berkeley Playhouse. Guide created by Berkeley Playhouse staff for each production have been created to enrich the learning experience of all patrons both young and seasoned. Links to the free Family Guides can be found online at BerkeleyPlayhouse.org.

Berkeley Playhouse gratefully acknowledges support from Madonna Estates Winery; City of Berkeley Civic Arts Commission, Fleishhacker Foundation, American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., The Tides Foundation, Beneficial State Bank Foundation, Peet’s Coffee, Extreme Pizza, The Imagination Foundation, and individual donors.