



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**BERKELEY PLAYHOUSE TO OPEN 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON  
WITH EAST BAY PREMIERE OF THE HEAVENLY MUSICAL COMEDY  
SISTER ACT**

Performances to play historic Julia Morgan Theater in  
limited one-month engagement, beginning Sept 22, 2017

Company announces plans to double its popular  
“Pay What You Can” performances

BERKELEY, CA (August 30, 2017) – **Berkeley Playhouse** opens their tenth season of professional theater for family audiences with the East Bay premiere of Alan Menken’s heavenly musical comedy, *Sister Act*. Based on the hit 1992 film, audiences will be praising the toe-tapping, gospel infused score from Tony and eight-time Oscar winner Alan Menken (*Beauty and the Beast*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Little Mermaid*). When downtown disco diva Dolores Van Cartier witnesses a crime, she’s placed into protective custody in the one place she’s sure not to be found – a convent! Forced to trade in her nighttime habit of nightclubbing and disco dancing for a nun’s habit, Dolores finds newfound self-worth, confidence, and a community she never expected to be a part of, as she leads her fellow Sisters to heavenly new heights, and transforms their church into a revitalized home of celebration, song, and community spirit. Filled with powerful music, outrageous choreography, and a moving story of unlikely friendships, *Sister Act* will raise the roof of the historic Julia Morgan theater, which itself was originally built in 1910 as a community church. Performances run Friday through Sunday, and select Thursday evenings, beginning September 22, 2017. Press night will be held on Saturday, September 23 at 7pm. **Tickets (ranging from \$22—\$40)** are available by calling (510) 845-8542 x351 or by visiting online at [www.berkeleyplayhouse.org](http://www.berkeleyplayhouse.org). *Ticket prices are subject to change without notice.*

“Our tenth anniversary season is opening with a party,” says Berkeley Playhouse Producing Artistic Director Kimberly Dooley. “Ten years ago, Berkeley Playhouse’s founder, Elizabeth McKoy, set out to build a theater company in residential Berkeley that was a celebratory home to music, story, family, diversity, and community. We wanted our season opener to not only embrace our core, but be a rousing, exuberant musical that brought our community together.

*Sister Act* hits all the right notes—it’s about a woman who comes to discover how evolving your spirit can evolve a community, and she does so through music—it’s everything we hope to do at Berkeley Playhouse.”

Wanting to further provide easy access to professional musical theater in the heart of Berkeley, Managing Director Gretchen Feyer announced that beginning with *Sister Act* the company would double its popular “Pay What You Can” performances, beginning with *Sister Act*. “We want to make sure that *anyone* in our community who wants to enjoy an evening of theater can do so. Our most recent ‘Pay What You Can’ performance sold out—over 350 theatergoers were able to see our production of *Tarzan* paying an average of \$8.00 a ticket, but more than 65 theatergoers were turned away—we simply couldn’t fit one more person in the theater! It was thrilling and heartbreaking at the same time. Starting this season, each production will have two performances offering a ‘Pay What You Can’ option.” *Sister Act* will offer its Pay What You Can dates on Thursday, October 5 and 12 at the 7 p.m. performance. Tickets for Pay What You Can performances go on sale at the Julia Morgan Theater box office one hour prior to performance time. Tickets are cash only and no reservation is required, and seating is assigned at time of purchase.

*Sister Act* originally opened at the Pasadena Playhouse in 2006 where it broke all box office records. It opened in London’s West End in 2009 in a production co-produced by its original film star, and past Berkeley resident, Whoopi Goldberg. It transferred to Broadway in 2011 where it was nominated for five Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Original Score. *Sister Act* features a score by Alan Menken, lyrics by Glenn Sater, and a book by Cheri Steinkellner and Bill Steinkellner with additional material by Douglas Carter Beane. Berkeley Playhouse’s production will be directed by Alexis Lazear, with choreography by Allison Paraiso and musical direction by Michael Patrick Wiles.

**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, September 22 at 7pm, and Saturday, September 23 at 1pm.

**Opens:** Saturday, September 23 at 7pm.

**Press:** Saturday, September 23 at 7pm, and Sunday September 24 2pm.

**Closes:** October 22 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](http://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 October 5 and 12 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](http://BerkeleyPlayhouse.org).

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