



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**ALL NEW STAGING OF *DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*
TO PLAY AT BERKELEY PLAYHOUSE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

Partnership with East Bay Children's Book Project announced
to promote literacy and book drive during 7-week production

BERKELEY, CA (October 18, 2016) – **Berkeley Playhouse** invites Bay Area audiences to 'be their guest' this holiday season for the company's first ever staging of **Disney's *Beauty and the Beast***. Based on the Oscar-winning animated film, celebrating its 25th anniversary this holiday season, *Beauty and the Beast* begins performances **November 10, 2016, with performances running through December 23, 2016** at the historic **Julia Morgan Theater in Berkeley**. The international smash-hit musical gets the Berkeley Playhouse makeover as Producing Artistic Director Kimberly Dooley helms this all new production featuring a diverse and multigenerational cast of more than thirty actors from across the Bay Area. Featuring some of Disney's most popular songs and characters, audiences young and old won't want to miss this magical musical adventure. Press night will be held on Saturday, November 12, 2016 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.*

"Beauty and the Beast is that rare, enchanted fairy tale that has reinvented itself for every generation, going back hundreds of years," says director Kimberly Dooley. "Disney's adaptation stays true to the story's origins—that love defies our differences, whether physical or cultural, and that family can take any shape—even as a teacup. As a company, we've been exploring how this telling gives voice—literally—to those who feel like an outsider. It's filled with characters who feel their uniqueness keeps them from feeling connected to those around them, and in the end, it's those qualities that bring them together."

Berkeley Playhouse also announced it will be partnering Oakland's **East Bay Children's Book Project**, whose mission is to build literacy by putting books into the hands of children who have little or no access to them. Book receptacles from the EBCBP will be placed in the lobby of the Julia Morgan theater, and patrons will be able to donate new or gently used

books throughout the run. “I am thrilled to use our production of *Beauty and the Beast* to promote the incredible work being done by the East Bay Children’s Book Project,” says Berkeley Playhouse Managing Director, Gretchen Feyer. “Since opening in 2005, they have given out over 1.5 million books to children in need. The iconic image we all have of Belle is of her reading and seeking out books wherever she can. Through this program our audiences can help the young readers of the East Bay keep the magic of reading alive by providing easy access to new books.” More information on the East Bay Children’s Book Project can be found at eastbaychildrensbookproject.org.

In addition to directing, Dooley will take the reins on choreographing the cast of townspeople, dishware, utensils, and home furnishings that make up the magical world of *Beauty*. The creative team also includes music director Eric Walton, scenic designer Kirsten Royston, costume designer Lisa Danz, and lighting designer Leonardo Hidalgo.

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: Thursday, November 10 at 7pm, and Saturday, November 12 at 1pm.

Opens: Saturday, November 12 at 7pm.

Press: Saturday, November 12 at 7pm and Sunday, November 13 at 2pm.

Closes: December 23, at 7pm.

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.

PAY WHAT YOU CAN: There will be two “Pay What You Can” performances, **Friday December 2 and 16 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: Production Sponsor, Madonna Estates; City of Berkeley Civic Arts Commission, American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., Peet’s Coffee, Extreme Pizza, The Imagination Foundation, and individual donors.