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**BERKELEY PLAYHOUSE TO KICK OFF 11TH SEASON WITH
*DREAMGIRLS***

Limited engagement to play historic Julia Morgan Theater beginning September 21, 2018

BERKELEY, CA (September 5, 2018) – **Berkeley Playhouse** opens their eleventh season of professional theater for family audiences with the legendary Broadway musical, *Dreamgirls*. One of the most celebrated American musicals of the 20th century, *Dreamgirls* was inspired by the stories and rise of R&B’s most popular superstars, including The Supremes, James Brown, and the roster of artists that helped change the landscape of popular music in the 60s and 70s. Effie, Lorrell, and Deena have grown up together—they are young, determined, and talented—and they’ve got a dream to be the next big girl group on the radio, no matter what the cost. When they are discovered at a local talent show by a ruthless manager with his own agenda for fame, they are propelled into a world where dreams do come true—and where success can tear apart even the strongest of relationships. Detailing the epic rise of a Motown-like super-group from obscurity to stardom, the story of two lifelong friends takes center stage in this legendary and soulful musical journey that explores the rewards of shooting for the stars, and the costs of valuing success over family. With music by Henry Krieger and lyrics and book by Tom Eyrn, the original 1982 Broadway production, directed by Michael Bennet, was nominated for 13 Tony Awards, and gave birth to the iconic songs, “And I Am Telling You” and “One Night Only.” Performances run Friday through Sunday, and select Thursday evenings, beginning September 21, 2018. Press night will be held on Saturday, September 22 at 7pm. **Tickets (ranging from \$20—\$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.*

“*Dreamgirls* is the perfect opener for our eleventh season” says founding Artistic Director Elizabeth McKoy. “As we closed our most successful season ever, breaking numerous house records and welcoming new audiences from throughout the Bay Area, and embark on our second decade, we are challenging ourselves to fight for our dreams—to find stories that empower, energize, question, and find strength in community. *Dreamgirls* encapsulates all that we love about musicals while pushing us to literally *dream* big. We cannot wait to bring this thrilling production to Berkeley.”

Adds Berkeley Playhouse Producing Artistic Director Kimberly Dooley, “Even though *Dreamgirls* focuses its core story on two powerful women—both of whom find their voice under the scrutiny of the spotlight—there is nothing intimate about it. It is musical theater on the grandest scale. It reflects how success can change even the strongest of families and how music can bring two people—or a generation—together. We’ve assembled a remarkable cast of Bay Area artists to bring this thrilling story to the Julia Morgan.”

Continuing to make theater available for all audiences, the run of Berkeley Playhouse’s *Dreamgirls* includes two **low-cost preview performances** (September 21 at 7pm; September 22 at 1pm), and offers two **Pay What You Can** performances, **Thursday, October 4 and 18 at 7pm.**

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 21 at 7pm, and Saturday, September 22 at 1pm.

Opens: Saturday, September 22 at 7pm.

Press: Saturday, September 22 at 7pm, and Sunday, September 23 at 2pm.

Closes: October 21 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, \$20–\$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 October 4 and 18 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, American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., Peet’s Coffee, Beneficial State Bank, The Disney Company Foundation, Netflix, Extreme Pizza, The Imagination Foundation, and individual donors.