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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **San Jose Repertory Theatre Celebrates Its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season with a World Premiere by Philip Kan Gotanda and a New Education Outreach Initiative! *The 2010-2011 Season Begins September 2010***

SAN JOSE, Ca. (February 04, 2010) — San Jose Repertory Theatre's Artistic Director **Rick Lombardo** today announced the Rep's highly anticipated 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, with five of the six plays beginning September 2010 through June 2011. This Anniversary Season, with a World Premiere, two West Coast Premieres and one Regional Premiere, celebrates the Rep's passionate commitment to presenting provocative stories told by renowned playwrights, breathtaking designs created by accomplished artists and riveting performances from award-winning actors. The World Premiere of **Philip Kan Gotanda's** romantic comedy, ***Love in American Times*** is a cause for celebration as is **Lombardo's** launch of **San Jose Rep on Tour**, the Rep's new education outreach initiative, which will bring fully produced plays to high schools in the Bay Area.

"It has been a wonderful year getting to know the Rep community better with each passing play we've shared together, so I'm especially excited to be announcing this new slate of work which I believe will touch our community in so many powerful ways," states **Rick Lombardo**. "It's a year that includes the smart, cutting-edge drama of ***Secret Order***, the simple, beautiful and moving power of ***Black Pearl Sings***, the sheer delight of ***Backwards In High Heels***, the bravura actor turns in ***The Dresser***, and the World Premiere of **Philip Kan Gotanda's** smart, new, sophisticated, romantic comedy ***Love in American Times***. I know we'll be taking an adventurous ride together next season at The Rep!"

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season begins with the West Coast Premiere of ***Black Pearl Sings***. **Rick Lombardo** will direct this powerful story about the capacity of music to help heal the struggle between the past and present. The Herald Tribune claims "[***Black Pearl Sings***] reaches into the soul of a nation and pulls at the heart and mind." ***Black Pearl Sings*** confirms music can transform pain into beauty and that the strength of the unaccompanied human voice is unparalleled in its capacity to sooth the soul.

Next is the West Coast Premiere of the fast-paced, biomedical thriller, ***Secret Order*** by playwright **Robert Clyman** (***Tranced*** 2007-08). Corporate greed and the politics of science collide in this biomedical thriller. The New York Times calls this brilliant exploration of the business of science "... taut, twist-filled and an appealingly cynical drama ... full of dazzling moments." The responsibility of science hangs in the balance as the race for notoriety rages in this outstanding drama about the high-stakes of science.

For the holidays, the Rep presents the Regional Premiere of the enchanting, new musical, ***Backwards In High Heels***. This funny, moving, toe-tapping account of Ginger Rogers' public and private life will be directed by acclaimed director, **Scott Schwartz**, and is the perfect package of holiday joy. This intimate musical dances its way through Ginger's life with unforgettable music, show-stopping dance numbers and a captivating story that chronicles the legendary actress's journey from hometown to Hollywood. Funny, moving and a visual feast, ***Backwards In High Heels*** is a toe-tapping, swirling, gliding account of her ambitious public and private life.

In January, **Lombardo** takes the reins and directs ***The Dresser***, a touching and poignant tribute to theatre, unrequited love and the human spirit. This production stars two leading Bay Area actors, Ken Ruta as "Sir" (*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 2007-08 and *Later Life*, 1994-95) and James Carpenter as "Norman" (*As You Like It*, *A Picasso*, *Wintertime*, *By The Bog of The Cats...*, *Ctrl+Alt+Delete*, *Sideman* and *The Matchmaker*). This love letter to theatre captures the triumph of the human spirit and the bonds of friendship in the face of extraordinary situations as "the art" emerges victorious over turbulent circumstances.

In May, the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season reaches a fitting finale with the World Premiere of **Philip Kan Gotanda's** newest play, a contemporary, romantic comedy, ***Love in American Times***. In ***Love in American Times***, Gotanda explores the evolving themes of love and gender in 21<sup>st</sup> century global America in a story that explores the relationship between a powerful older Caucasian man and an accomplished younger Asian woman. The age-old tradition of matchmaking takes a contemporary twist when these powerful, self-made, accomplished and attractive individuals redefine courtship and create new rules that bend the nature of nuptial. Is there room for love with two intractable egos, single-minded practicality and no shortage of money or power? This sizzling, smart, sophisticated, romantic comedy marks Gotanda's third World Premiere with San Jose Rep. Gotanda's critically acclaimed ***The Wind Cries Mary*** (2002-03) and ***Sisters Matsumoto*** (1998-99) were extremely popular with Rep patrons.

"A few years back I was at a wine tasting party in the Oakland Hills where an acquaintance told me of a woman who discreetly matched up very wealthy, single Caucasian men with accomplished, very attractive, single Asian women for the purposes of marriage," states **Philip Kan Gotanda**. "Taken aback but intrigued, I began to think of Silicon Valley, of issues of race, sex, age, America, Asia, evolving-wax-and-wane-colonialism, new capitalism, big corporations and, of course, *love* - and the story was there. Though ***Love in American Times*** is a comedy, it tackles themes that can at times be challenging for audiences. It is a testament to San Jose Repertory and Rick Lombardo's forward-looking vision of American Theater that they are willing to give original, provocative stories a home."

The Rep's tradition and commitment to outreach and arts education continues in this 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season with the birth of **San Jose Rep on Tour**. Recognizing that school funding for field trips and transportation has greatly diminished, the Rep's newest education outreach initiative will take 'theatre on the road' and bring professional productions of classic plays directly to high schools throughout the region. **San Jose Rep on Tour** is modeled after the successful program implemented by **Rick Lombardo** during his tenure as Producing Artistic Director at New Repertory Theatre in the Boston area. **San Jose Rep on Tour** will feature the talents of some of the finest professional artists and leading performing actors in the Bay Area. The program launches with Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* in fall 2010.

"Next year will also see the introduction of our newest Educational Outreach program – **San Jose Rep On Tour**. This Education Outreach initiative is based upon a program I began almost ten years ago in the Boston area, and which now serves nearly 40,000 high school age students annually," **Lombardo** continues. **Rep on Tour** will bring professional productions of classic plays, which are studied in the curriculum, directly to schools throughout our region. We will begin this program next year with Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. We are very grateful to our multiple funders, who have rallied around this idea of deepening the work we already do with local schools, especially **Bank of America** and the **Packard Foundation**."

In addition to **San Jose Rep on Tour**, the Rep offers engaging Post Show Discussions and Ghostlight Forums, which invite patrons to participate in lively discussions about the productions with the artists and community leaders. The Creative Playshop series offers a place for children to learn and explore the themes of the main stage productions through improvisational workshops, while their parents watch the performances. The Rep provides an ASL interpreted series for our hearing-impaired subscribers on the final Saturday matinee during the run of each show.

Subscriptions are now available. Subscription prices range from \$125 to \$325 - for a five or six play package. Discounted subscriptions for students, seniors and teachers are available. For subscription tickets, call **408.367.7255**.

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### **About the Rep**

Celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, San Jose Rep is an award-winning, non-profit, professional theatre company in the South Bay, presenting six main stage productions each year. As a major contributor to South Bay's cultural community for 30 years, the Rep's mission is to engage, entertain and inspire people. The Rep produces innovative theatrical performances that offer fresh perspectives into the human condition, educational programs that promote life-long learning, and outreach initiatives that benefit our diverse community. For more information, visit [www.SJRep.com](http://www.SJRep.com).



## Fact Sheet

2010-11 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season

WEST COAST PREMIERE

***A Moving and Melodic Drama***

***Black Pearl Sings***

by Frank Higgins

directed by Rick Lombardo

Sept. 2 – Sept. 26, 2010

Pay What You Will: Thursday, September 2 @ 8:00pm

Press Opening Night: Wednesday, September 8 @ 8:00pm.

Can music transform pain into beauty and unite two strangers? Susannah, a white, driven ethnomusicologist for the Library of Congress, is about to find out in her quest to find authentic, pre-slavery, African-American music. When she encounters Texas prisoner Pearl Johnson, an unlikely partnership develops between the street-smart Pearl and the ambitious Susannah. It isn't long before Pearl is belting out radiant, soul-baring songs with the strength and beauty of the unaccompanied human voice. These vocal artifacts remind us of the power of music to help heal in the struggle between our collective past and the desire for individual histories. Does our past define us, and at what cost?

“Reaches into the soul of a nation and pulls at the heart and mind ... involving and emotionally charged ...” - *Herald Tribune*

“A wonderful jewel box of a show ... unfolds and blooms ...” - *MetroWeekly*

WEST COAST PREMIERE

***Biomedical Thriller***

***Secret Order***

by Robert Clyman

Oct. 14 – Nov. 7, 2010

Pay What You Will: Thursday, October 14 @ 8:00pm

Press Opening Night: Wednesday, October 20 @ 8:00pm.

Corporate greed and the politics of science collide in this biomedical thriller. When Dr. Shumway, a relatively obscure and naïve cancer researcher, is thrust into the high stakes world of science, the notion of noble “truth-seeking” is dissected with a scalpel’s precision.

Shumway is in over his head when he and a young student researcher get swept up in the dangerous world of political maneuvering, corporate loyalty and scientific ethics. But it's Dr. Brock, the chief administrator at a famous research institute, who will stop at nothing in his pursuit to find a cure for cancer. Responsible science hangs in the balance in the race to be first to trial, first to publish and first to find a cure in this brilliant exploration of the business of science.

“ ... very entertaining ... sparkling dialogue ... dazzling ...” *NY Times*

“ ... fast-paced, entertaining psychological drama ...” *Curtain Up*

REGIONAL PREMIERE

***An Enchanting, New Musical  
Backwards In High Heels***

*“Remember, Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but backwards and in high heels.”* Bob Thaves, "Frank and Ernest," 1982

conceived & developed by Lynnette Barkley & Christopher McGovern  
book/original songs/arrangements by Christopher McGovern  
directed by Scott Schwartz

Nov. 24 – Dec. 19, 2010

Pay What You Will: Thursday, November 24 @ 8:00pm

**Press Opening Night: Wednesday, December 1 @ 8:00pm.**

The remarkable life and times of the multi-talented, legendary actress Ginger Rogers comes to life onstage! This intimate musical dances its way through Ginger's life with unforgettable music, show-stopping dance numbers and a captivating story that chronicles her journey from hometown to Hollywood and from one love affair to another. Best known as Fred Astaire's dance partner, Ginger defied her overly-protective mother to become one of Hollywood's biggest stars and one of the industry's first women to demand equal pay. Funny, moving and a visual feast, *Backwards In High Heels* is a toe-tapping, swirling, gliding account of her ambitious public and private life.

“ ... *High Heels* dances to the top! ... undeniably captivating ...”  
*Palm Beach Daily News*

“An enchanted evening ... the melody is flowing and the tap shoes are chattering away, all is nirvana.”  
*Florida Sun-Sentinel*

## ***The Dresser***

### ***A Love Letter to Theatre***

by Ronald Harwood

directed by Rick Lombardo

starring James Carpenter as Norman and Ken Ruta as Sir

Jan. 27 – Feb. 20, 2011

Pay What You Will: Thursday, January 27 @ 8:00pm

Press Opening Night: **Wednesday, February 2 @ 8:00pm.**

It's 1942 in Britain and the smell of death is in the air. The sirens howl, signaling another air raid, but inside the crumbling walls of a regional theatre in the provinces the aging actor, Sir, prepares to give his 227<sup>th</sup> performance as King Lear. Norman, Sir's devoted, fuss-budget dresser, is barely able to take care of himself but faithfully assists Sir in near feudal servitude, massaging his ego, pampering his intellect and even creating sound effects for the Shakespearean production by Sir's struggling troupe. This touching and poignant tribute to theatre, friendship and the human spirit in the face of great strife - be it war or one's own debilitating mortality - proves that "the show must go on."

"... devilishly entertaining ... a moving, platonic love story ..." *NY Times*

"... sparking with theatrical wit ..." *Talkin' Broadway*

## ***TBA***

March 24 – April 17, 2011

Pay What You Will: Thursday, March 24 @ 8:00pm

Press Opening Night: **Wednesday, March 30 @ 8:00pm**

Our talented artistic team is working hard to find just the right show to round out this fabulous Anniversary Season. We can't reveal anything yet, but we can promise that it will be worth waiting for.

WORLD PREMIERE

### ***A Contemporary, Romantic Comedy***

### ***Love in American Times***

by Philip Kan Gotanda

directed by Rick Lombardo

May 12 – June 5, 2011

Pay What You Will: Thursday, May 12 @ 8:00pm

Press Opening Night: Wednesday, May 18 @ 8:00pm.

Sparks aren't the only things flying in this smart, sophisticated, romantic comedy. The age-old tradition of matchmaking takes a contemporary twist when the powerful, self-made, wealthy businessman, Jack Heller, meets the accomplished, sharp and extremely attractive, Scarlett Mori-Chang in a pre-arranged meeting. Jack and Scarlett deliciously spar, test, probe and one-up each other in what could scarcely resemble a "date," as they evaluate one another's qualifications. With a pre-nuptial that looks more like articles of incorporation than a financial arrangement, the deal is sealed. But it isn't long before dysfunctional chaos breaks out when Jack's family and soon to be ex-wife enter the picture. Is there room for love with two intractable egos, single-minded practicality and no shortage of money or power?

"... undoubtedly Philip Kan Gotanda is *the* chronicler of the Japanese American experience." *Asian Weekly*