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Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak | Prismatic Communications | kevin@prismaticcommunications.com

"Sets the benchmark of modern circus" —The London Evening Standard

"A whole new kind of awe-inspiring theatre" —NBC

SAN FRANCISCO'S HISTORIC CLUB FUGAZI TO REOPEN FALL 2021

THE 7 FINGERS, THE WORLD-RENOWNED CIRCUS AND ARTS COLLECTIVE, TO CREATE AN ONLY-IN-SAN-FRANCISCO INTIMATE AND IMMERSIVE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE

SAN FRANCISCO (May 19, 2021)—Today, internationally recognized arts leader **David Dower** announced the launch of **Club Fugazi Experiences**, a new arts and culture venture conceived and created by a team of celebrated and award-winning producers. Under this new venture, Club Fugazi—the former home of *Steve Silver's Beach Blanket Babylon*—will become the site of a brand-new theatrical experience from the world-renowned circus and arts collective, **The 7 Fingers**. The intimate and immersive resident production, created by Bay Area natives and The 7 Fingers co-founders **Gypsy Snider** and **Shana Carroll**, will serve as a love letter to the City by the Bay. Performances of the new production will begin in Fall 2021. Tickets will go on-sale in late June 2021. Additional details, including upcoming arts initiatives and events from Club Fugazi Experiences, will be announced at a later date. For more information and to sign-up for email updates, visit www.clubfugazisf.com.

"This project is a labor of love for all involved," said **Dower**. "I launched my career in theater here in San Francisco. Gypsy and Shana are native San Franciscans. To have the opportunity to reanimate a venue with such a rich history, at the very moment we are coming out from under this long, dense cloud, is a powerful and energizing privilege for us. Without optimism, there will be no recovery. We are proud to be injecting a burst of hope into the story of San Francisco's resurgence."

"The arts are part of what make our city special and are going to be a central part of San Francisco's recovery from this pandemic," said **San Francisco Mayor London N. Breed**. "Club Fugazi has a long history of drawing residents and visitors from all over for a unique and fun experience in North Beach. I am so excited that this amazing venue is going to live on with these creative, new performances. I can't wait to go see the production when it opens."

"Club Fugazi is a storied venue with deep roots in North Beach and San Francisco," adds **San Francisco District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin**. "While it was bittersweet to see *Beach Blanket Babylon* shelve their hats after a glittering 45-year run, the stage at Club Fugazi will shine again! I am thrilled to welcome the acrobatic performance artists of The 7 Fingers and their creative vision to Club Fugazi. The 7 Fingers have roots in San Francisco, as well, with two of the co-founders originating from the Pickle Family Circus. I'm looking forward to welcoming them home and breathing new life into this historic and special building."

Told through death-defying acrobatics, awe-inspiring choreography and movement, and original music, the still-to-be-named production at Club Fugazi invites locals and visitors alike on an exhilarating romp through both the essence and the myth that has earned San Francisco the place it holds in our collective imagination. From the Gold Rush and 1906 earthquake to the Summer of Love and the mysterious fog, San Francisco will vividly come to life through a series of tableaux (*acts*) that pay homage to the City's stunning beauty, storied characters, and astounding resilience. The production will play seven performances a week at Club Fugazi.

"San Francisco represents the core of my creative inspiration," said **Snider**. "I have never ceased wanting to create for and with the city that raised me on the importance of the individuals' voice within a community. We are honored to have Club Fugazi be part of the re-entry of culture and gathering in San Francisco."

"I can't describe what it means to me to finally bring the work and form I love back to the home I love," adds **Carroll**. "The San Francisco Bay Area is in my DNA. It is not only where I was raised, but also where I got my start as a performer and creator. Its influence and character have been inseparable from my work through my years and travels. To have the chance to finally create something uniquely for and about this city is such an incredible gift. It's what I've been dreaming about all these years working abroad!"

The production will feature nine of the world's best acrobats who have graced the stages of some of the most prestigious venues around the globe. They include (*in alphabetical order*): **Isabella Diaz** (United States), **Melvin Diggs** (United States), **Devin Henderson** (United States), **Ruben Ingwersen** (Australia), **Kalani June** (United States), **Jérémi Levesque** (Canada), **Natasha Patterson** (United States), **Enmeng Song** (China), and **Junru Wang** (China).

Since its inception in 2002, the Montreal-based [The 7 Fingers](#) has become one of the world's leading contemporary circus troupes and has been seen by over seven million people in 672 cities in 54 different countries. Known for redefining circus by stripping down the spectacle to its thrilling essence, the collective has expanded from its own signature touring shows to creating theatrical experiences as varied as the very artistic directors themselves—original productions varying from intimate one-person shows to large-scale arena performances, Broadway musicals, and artistic collaborations with renowned international artists and companies. The 7 Fingers have developed performances for a wide range of high-profile projects, including The Royal Variety Performance for the Queen of England, ceremonies for the Sochi, Vancouver, and Turin Olympics, the National Circus School end-of-year show, and much more.

Club Fugazi is currently undergoing a major transformation to make room for the immersive production. Further enhancing the patron's experience, a curated menu of bites and beverages featuring some of the City's most well-known purveyors will be available for purchase during each performance.

"San Francisco serves as a wellspring for creativity and storytelling which inspires the world," said **San Francisco Travel President and CEO Joe D'Alessandro**. "Our visitors return again and again to discover the incredible arts scene they couldn't fit into their most recent trip. The 7 Fingers production will be a welcome event to delight audiences and continue San Francisco's standing as a top arts and culture destination. We look forward to their production becoming part of the rich tapestry that is our performing arts fabric."

Adds **Dan Macchiarini, Vice President of the North Beach Business Association**: "The North Beach Business Association is thrilled to have The 7 Fingers launch in our commercial district, bringing world class circus to North Beach. Their contribution to the theater arts here will continue the long heritage of performance events at Club Fugazi and make a major new contribution to the already amazing arts scene existing in North Beach. As their core leadership is made up of native San Franciscans, we know that The 7 Fingers will also be making San Francisco a major center of circus arts experimentation and development showcasing the finest of performing arts productions. We say, 'Welcome Home' to them!"

The Club Fugazi Experiences team includes: **David Dower** (Co-Producer and Executive Director), **Eric Eislund** (Co-Producer and General Manager), and **Deborah Barrera** (Co-Producer). **Nassib El-Husseini**, CEO of The 7 Fingers, will serve as Executive Producer.

The creative team includes: **Gypsy Snider** (Artistic Director), **Shana Carroll** (Artistic Director), **Colin Gagne** (Composer), **Alexander V. Nichols** (Production Designer), **Jake Rodriguez** (Sound Designer), and **Keiko Carreiro** (Costume Designer).

Located in the heart of San Francisco's North Beach district, Club Fugazi—built in 1913—has a long and storied arts history. Under the ownership and management of the Italian Community Services, the venue served as the location for jazz pianist Thelonious Monk to record his acclaimed solo album, "Thelonious Alone in San Francisco" (1959). Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the venue held readings for Beat poets, including the legendary Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, and Alan Ginsberg. In 1967, the Grateful Dead held a release party at Club Fugazi for their first album. The venue became home to *Steve Silver's Beach Blanket Babylon*, the world's longest-running musical revue, in 1975 where it remained for 45 years. The production played for more than 17,200 performances and to over 6.5 million guests, taking its final bow in 2019. Club Fugazi Experiences will further build on the venue's artistic legacy.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Gypsy Snider (Co-Artistic Director)

Co-founding and artistic director of The 7 Fingers Gypsy Snider wrote, directed *SisterS*, *Réversible*, *Intersection*, *Amuse*, *Un Dia*, *Traces*, and *Loft*. She has choreographed televised feature performances for America's Got Talent, Her Majesty's Royal Variety Performance, the illusionist Darcy Oake's *Edge of Reality*, and several large scale fashion shows for Bench in the Philippines.

In 2013, working with director Diane Paulus on a new vision of *Pippin*, she choreographed and wove circus into the revival of the Broadway musical. Gypsy's work on *Pippin* earned her a Drama Desk Award and an Outer Critics Circle Award.

Gypsy began her circus career at the age of 4 when her parents founded The Pickle Family Circus. She grew up touring the West Coast with the company. In 2002, while in her home town of San Francisco she wrote and directed for The New Pickle Circus a show entitled *Circumstance*.

Gypsy wrote and directed *Ships in the Night*, a gender blending contemporary musical dance revue for Richard Branson's new Virgin Voyages cruise line. The 2020 televised UEFA Draft featured an 8-minute piece created and choreographed by Gypsy dedicated to the 12 participating cities of the season of European Football.

Gypsy is also a guest teacher and guest director at the National Circus School of Montreal. In 2015, she received the Evolving Circus Award in New York City presented by Diane Paulus. She was invited to speak at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington DC in 2017 on the evolution of Circus Arts in the United States.

Shana Carroll (Co-Artistic Director)

As co-founding artistic director of The 7 Fingers, Shana Carroll directed and/or co-directed *Passagers*, *Cuisine & Confessions*, *Séquence 8*, *Traces*, *Psy*, *Loft*, *La Vie*, *Le Murmure du Coquelicot*, and *FeriAmuse*. Through 7 Fingers collaborations and special projects, she created the show within the *Queen of the Night* experience at the Diamond Horseshoe in New York City and co-designed the first segment of the Sochi Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony.

Shana has also frequently collaborated with Cirque du Soleil, most recently as co-director of their first show on ice *Crystal*, and previously as acrobatic designer and choreographer of *Paramour* (Broadway) and *Iris* (Los Angeles), and as director-choreographer of their performance at the 2012 Academy Awards.

Shana is well known for her acrobatic and circus choreography. She choreographed four gold medal winning numbers at the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in Paris. She has received Best Choreography nominations at the Drama Desk Awards (*Traces*) and the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards (*Circumstance*), and directed and choreographed *Duel Reality*, an immersive circus show based on Romeo and Juliet for Richard Branson's new Virgin Voyages cruise line.

Originally from Berkeley, California, and daughter of beloved San Francisco columnist Jon Carroll, Shana began her career as a trapeze artist with San Francisco's Pickle Family Circus and went on to a 20-year career in the air with Cirque du Soleil and many others before co-founding The 7 Fingers.

Colin Gagné (Composer)

Colin Gagné has been composing music and designing sound for circus, theater and musicals for quite a while. After a diploma in electroacoustic composition at Université de Montréal, he worked with Akousma, Mutek, Cirque Éloize, Théâtre du Nouveau Monde and The 7 Fingers, amongst others, while teaching musical technologies at CEGEP de St-Laurent. Recently, he signed the music for *Reversible* (The 7 Fingers, Dir. : Gypsy Snider), *Une chambre de verre* (Nord Nord Est, Dir. : Benoit Landry), *Vice et Vertu* (The 7 Fingers, Dir. : Samuel Tétrault), *Edmond* (Juste pour Rire, Dir. : Serge Denoncourt), *La liste de mes envies* (Théâtre du Rideau Vert, Dir. : Marie-Thérèse Fortin), and designed sound and sounds for *Fame The Musical* (Juste Pour Rire, Dir. : Serge Postigo), *Hotel* (Cirque Éloize, Dir. : Emmanuel Guillaume), *Saloon* (Cirque Éloize, Dir : Emmanuel Guillaume), *Le Journal d'Anne Frank* (TNM, Dir : Lorraine Pintal), while doing musical arrangements and sound design for Sochi's Olympic Games Opening with The 7 Fingers in 2014. When he has some free time, he creates electronic music, under the name Inocl.

Alexander V. Nichols (Production Designer/Scenic Designer)

Alexander V. Nichols' design work extends from lighting, video, projections, scenery, costumes and spans from dance, theater, opera to architectural lighting and art installations. The Berkeley, California native got his start at a young age designing scenery and lighting for Berkeley Ballet Theatre where his mother, Sally Streets, was Artistic Director and his sister Kyra Nichols, a Principal Dancer at New York City Ballet, and brother Robert Nichols, a former member of Chicago City Ballet, would make guest appearances. From these familial roots Mr. Nichols has emerged as a designer for dance and theater on an international level. He has served as Resident Visual Designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Co. since 1988, as resident lighting designer for the Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, American Repertory Ballet and as Lighting Director for American Ballet Theatre. His designs have been set on companies including San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Joffrey Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Alberta Ballet, ODC/SF and Pittsburgh Ballet Theater. He has collaborated with choreographers including Christopher d'Amboise, Val Caniparoli, Ann Carlson, Sonya Delwaide, Marguerite Donlon, Dominique Dumais, Alex Eckman, Joe Goode, Jean Grand-Maitre, Bill T. Jones, Annabelle Lopez-Ochoa, Graham Lustig, Mark Morris, Matjash Mrozewski, Mikko Nissenen, Kevin O'Day, Kirk Peterson, Stephen Petronio, Yuri Possokhov, Michael Smuin, Myles Thatcher, Helgi Tomasson and Brenda Way.

In theater, Mr. Nichols' designed the video for *Broadway To Oz*, Hugh Jackman's 2015 Australian Arena tour. His Broadway credits include the scenic, lighting and projection design for Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*, lighting design for *Latin History For Morons*, projection designs for *Hugh Jackman – Back on Broadway* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*. Off Broadway credits include: *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me* (set/lighting/video), *In Masks Outrageous and Austere* (lighting), *In The Wake* (lighting/video), *Through The Night* (set/lighting/video), *Taking Over* (lighting/video), *Bridge and Tunnel* (lighting), *Los Big Names* (scenic/lighting/projection) and *Horizon* (scenic and lighting). Additional theater credits include production designs for Mark Taper Forum, Guthrie Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage Co., Huntington Theater, Seattle Repertory Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, the National Theater of Taiwan and the Alley Theater.

Mr. Nichols experience also reaches to live music where he got his start by assisting Lighting Designer Harri Kouvenen in the garage band days of the heavy metal bands Metallica, Exodus and Laaz Rokit. He has since developed collaborations with: Opera Philadelphia ("Elizabeth Cree" lighting/projection), LA Philharmonic ("Nixon In China" scenic/projection), Cleveland Symphony Orchestra (Bluebeard & Magnificent Mandarin scenic/lighting/video), San Francisco Opera (Svadba (scenic/lighting), Composer Philip Glass and photographer Frans Lanting ("Life - A Journey Through Time" video direction/visual choreography), Kronos Quartet ("Visual Music" scenery/video), Paul Dresher Ensemble ("Sound Stage" scenic/lighting, and "Awed Behavior" scenic/lighting), Gamelan Sekar Jaya ("Kawit Legong" lighting) and Bill Frisell ("Disfarmer Project" scenery/video) He also designed the lighting for "Aid and Comfort II", an AIDS benefit in collaboration with Eiko Ishioka featuring Laurie Anderson, Herbie Hancock, Phillip Glass, John Adams and the Kronos Quartet.

Mr. Nichols is a recipient of a San Francisco Certificate of Honor for his work at American Conservatory Theater. He has also received four Isadora Duncan Awards, four Bay Area Critics Circle Awards and three Dean Goodman Awards as well as two nominations each for Henry Hewes Design Awards and Los Angeles Ovation Awards.

Jake Rodriguez (Sound Designer)

Jake Rodriguez is a sound designer and composer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. **Credits Include:** *Between Two Knees* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Woman Laughing Alone with Salad, The Events* (Shotgun Players); *Sweat, Vietgone* (American Conservatory Theater); *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (American Conservatory Theater, Theatre Calgary, Grand Theater, The Old Globe); *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (American Conservatory Theater, Guthrie Theater); *Everybody* (California Shakespeare Theatre); *Angels in America, An Octoroon* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *we, the invisibles* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *The Christians* (Playwrights Horizons, Mark Taper Forum); *Girlfriend* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), others. Awards: Recipient of the 2004 Princess Grace Award for Sound Design. Other: Creator of Cricket, a mobile theatre sound design and playback software program; acoustic adviser. Education: Sound design internship, American Conservatory Theater; San Francisco State University School of Theatre and Dance.

Keiko Carreiro (Costume Designer)

Keiko Shimosato Carreiro is a Collective and Board Member with the Tony Award winning San Francisco Mime Troupe. Since 1987, she has been an actor, designer, co-writer, and director with the company and has been in almost every summer show. Carreiro has performed at theaters throughout the Bay Area, including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, A.C.T., The Magic Theater, The Aurora Theater, Word for Word, and Center Rep. She was nominated for The Shellie Award for Outstanding Actress in the role of Grace in *The Sisters Matsumoto* at Center Rep.

She is an award-winning costume designer, nominated for TBA Best Costumes, Bay Area Critics Circle Award, and recipient of the 2018 Meritorious Achievement Award (American College Theater Festival).

Carreiro teaches with The San Francisco Opera Guilds' "Book to Bravo" and "Voices for Social Justice" programs and enjoys raising up the next generation of artists/activists.

David Dower (Co-Producer and Executive Director)

Like the Fingers founders, David Dower's journey as a theater producer began in San Francisco, where he founded The Z Space and produced over fifty productions over a twenty-year span.

From his place behind the bar at The Zuni Cafe, David launched the original Z Collective, comprised of waiters, bartenders, and maitre d's, producing a dozen shows over five years before morphing into The Z Space, which is still in operation in the Mission District. In that time, David began a long collaboration with monologist Josh Kornbluth, with whom he developed and directed new works for the stage (*Ben Franklin: Unplugged, Love & Taxes, Citizen Josh, Andy Warhol: Good for the Jews?* and *Sea of Reeds*) and staged the films *Red Diaper Baby* and *Mathematics of Change*. David also developed and directed new works by many Bay Area artists and ensembles, including Anne Galjour, Gary Leon Hill, Charlie Varon, and Word for Word.

David led The Z Space ("MVP of Bay Area Theater", SF Chronicle, 2005) for 12 years before leaving to assume the role of Associate Artistic Director at Arena Stage in Washington, DC in 2006.

In six seasons there he oversaw the production of three Tony-winning shows (*33 Variations, Next to Normal*, and *Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolff*) and the development of three shows that ultimately earned the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (*Next to Normal, Fun Home*, and *Sweat*.) He also oversaw the production of the long-running hit *Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies*, which re-established DC's long-dormant Lincoln Theater, Ellington's home theater, and the record-breaking hit *Oklahoma*, which opened the new Arena Stage building and ultimately sold over \$5 million in tickets in its two extended runs there.

David then became Artistic Director at ArtsEmerson, in Boston, where he presented the 7 Fingers' shows *Sequence 8, Traces, Cuisine & Confessions, Reversible*, and *Passengers*. He returned to San Francisco at the end of 2020 to assume the role of Executive Producer for The 7 Fingers US operations.

Eric Eislund (Co-Producer and General Manager)

Eric is the owner and managing partner of Act 5 Entertainment and the co-owner of Imaginatours Entertainment. He has produced, operated and promoted a diverse mix of live entertainment projects across North America and around the world in a range of venues that include arenas, theaters and exhibition centers. The company's foundation rests on the global experience, talent, and contacts that Eric has established over the past 30 years successfully bringing live entertainment productions to over 50 countries, generating over \$1 billion in revenues.

Eric has worked with a variety of major productions and brand owners including Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Disney On Ice, Cirque du Soleil, Walking with Dinosaurs, Warner Bros, Universal Studios, Nickelodeon, Mattel and more.

As co-founder of the international production company ThemeSTAR, Eric produced over 40 tours in 17 languages selling over 3.5 million tickets. Along with his partners, Eric negotiated an acquisition of the company by AEG to form AEG Themestar in 2008.

Act 5 Entertainment is active as a co-producer and general manager of theatrical and experiential projects in North America and international territories including *Nelson Mandela – The Official Exhibition*.

Eric is based in San Francisco where he resides with his wife and two teenage sons.

Nassib El-Husseini (Executive Producer)

Committed to exploring the horizons of human creativity in all its complexity, Nassib El-Husseini has charted a singular and wide-ranging course. After leaving his native Lebanon in the late 1980s, Nassib worked as an advisor and volunteer with numerous Quebecois, Canadian, and international governmental and non-governmental agencies. Following studies in administration and international relations at the American University of Beirut, he

obtained a Ph.D. in political science from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) in 1996. In 1998, he published *L'Occident Imaginaire* (Éditions PUQ).

Nassib El-Husseini's trajectory took a major turn in 2003, when his path crossed that of seven artists determined to make their mark on the world of contemporary circus. With their first show just created, a clear-eyed ally was all the troupe needed to conquer the world. Nassib placed his experience and his passion for art and innovation at the service of the nascent troupe that would become one of the jewels of artistic expression.

As chief executive officer of the company, Nassib has brought his resolutely avant-garde, innovative vision and has turned towards a vast exploration of possibilities. Propelled by these ideas, The 7 Fingers have become a major player in the international art scene.

Nassib El-Husseini is currently the president of the board of directors of CINARS (International Exchange for the Performing Arts) and was a member of the board of the Conseil des arts de Montréal from 2012 to 2018, as well as a member of the organizing committee of the Canadian Arts Summit in 2019. He sits on the boards of the Société des arts technologiques (SAT), and the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles). Nassib is also a member of the National Advisory Committee for the National Creation Fund and of the Founding Board of Directors, Movement Arts Creation Studio, Inc. (MACS).

In 2013, Nassib was awarded the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)'s Prix Reconnaissance in recognition of his exceptional career. In 2014, he received the Artists for Peace Award on behalf of The 7 Fingers. In 2019, he was presented the Carmelle and Rémi Marcoux Chair in Arts Management's Cultural Manager Award from HEC Montréal. Shortly after, he was named Chevalier (Knight) by the Ordre de Montréal.

Deborah Barrera (Co-Producer)

Deborah is a Tony award winning Producer, representing FireMUsed Productions, LLC.

Broadway Productions include *Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations*, *An American in Paris*, *American Idiot*, *La Cage aux Folles* with Kelsey Grammer, *Hands on a Hard Body*, Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Sweat*, *One Man, Two Guvnors* starring James Cordon, *The Glass Menagerie* directed by John Tiffany, *China Doll* starring Al Pacino, *Hughie* starring Forest Whitaker and directed by Michael Grandage, David Byrne's, *Here Lies Love*, *The Mountaintop* with Samuel Jackson, the 2014 revival of *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Elling* starring Brendon Fraser and Denis O'Hare, *Sylvia* revival with Matthew Broderick, the West End production of *1984*, and investments in the Broadway/touring productions of *Hamilton*, *Freestyle Love Supreme*, *Shuffle Along*, and *Hello, Dolly!*. Off Broadway, FireMUsed Productions proudly produced PigPen Theatre Company's, *The Old Man and the Old Moon*.

Deborah is a longtime supporter of new work, having developed several new work programs with regional theatres, and serving as a panelist with the National Endowment for the Arts. She currently works with the Edgerton Foundation in their new works funding program, and is a mentor for Theatre Accelerator. She is a TONY Awards voter and a long-standing member of the Broadway League, serving on the Legislative Council and Diversity and Inclusion committees. In 2020, she founded the Women's Independent Producer Group, which has joined with, in support of, the Broadway Advocacy Coalition and the Costume Industry Coalition. Her Board service includes Moises Kaufman's award-winning Tectonic Theatre project in New York. In San Francisco, she is a standing member of the San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary Board, and works with the capital campaign team, and annual fundraising events for Berkeley Repertory Theatre.