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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
LUCY KIRKWOOD'S *THE CHILDREN*
JANUARY 31 - MARCH 1 (OPENS: FEB. 6)**

BERKELEY, CA (January 2, 2020) Aurora Theatre Company continues its dynamic 28th season with the West Coast Premiere of Lucy Kirkwood's **THE CHILDREN**. **Barbara Damashek** (*Creditors, A Number, Splendour, The Lyons*) directs this unsettling eco-thriller that asks who is going to clean up the mess.

The cast features **James Carpenter** (*American Buffalo, John Gabriel Borkman, The Birthday Party*), **Anne Darragh** (*Our Practical Heaven, A Delicate Balance*), and **Julie Eccles** (*A Flea in Her Ear*).

THE CHILDREN runs January 31 - March 1 (**Opens: February 6**).

A long-married couple live in a ramshackle cottage near the edge of a nuclear disaster that recalls the 2011 Fukushima catastrophe. Intruding into their somewhat eccentric existence comes Rose, a former co-worker at the power station whose appearance after 30 years is a mystery that will inspire both laughter and an increasing sense of menace. But Rose is on an important mission.

A recent hit on Broadway after a successful run at London's Royal Court, Lucy Kirkwood's unique play is a beautifully written puzzle about personal responsibility, guilt, and what today's elders owe the young.

The Independent called **THE CHILDREN** "a richly suggestive and beautifully written piece of work...Kirkwood is the most rewarding dramatist of her generation."

The *New York Times* called it an "ecothriller bristling with chills and suspense."

"This play haunts me," said Artistic Director Josh Costello. "Lucy Kirkwood writes such nuanced characters and compelling relationships -- it's perfect for Aurora's intimate space, especially with this remarkable cast and director. But she's also asking big questions about generational responsibility, questions that will stick with you long after you leave the theater."

Lucy Kirkwood is a British playwright and screenwriter whose plays include *Mosquitoes*, *The Children*, *Chimerica*, and *NSFW* among others. Her 2009 play *It Felt Empty When the Heart Went at First But Is Alright Now* was nominated for the Evening Standard Award for Best Newcomer and made Kirkwood joint winner of the John Whiting Award. She won the inaugural Berlin Lee UK Playwrights Award in 2013. *Chimerica* won Best New Play at the 2014 Olivier and Evening Standard Awards, the Critics Circle Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Award.

Barbara Damashek returns to Aurora where she directed *Creditors* in 2019. Other Aurora credits include *A Number*, *Splendour*, *The Lyons*, *American Buffalo*, and *Fat Pig* among others. She has been the recipient of multiple awards for direction both locally and nationally, working extensively at many of the nation's leading regional theaters as a director, composer-lyricist, and playwright, including the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Rep, A.C.T., The Denver Center, South Coast Repertory, Actors Theater of Louisville, Mark Taper Forum, Trinity Rep. and internationally in the U.K. and Ukraine. Damashek was a 1988 Susan Smith Blackburn Playwright's Finalist for her musical *Whereabouts Unknown*. She is best known nationally as the 1985 Tony-nominated Director, Composer-Lyricist and Co-Author of the musical *Quilters*. Damashek has taught at several major national theater conservatories and is Professor Emerita from San Francisco State University.

Damashek has assembled an all-star cast for **THE CHILDREN**.

James Carpenter returns to Aurora (*American Buffalo*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *The Birthday Party*). He is an Associate Artist with California Shakespeare Theater and a former Associate Artist with Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other credits include Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Mark Taper Forum, The Old Globe, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory

Theatre, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, the Huntington Theatre Company, and Intiman Theatre. Screen credits include the feature films *The Rainmaker* and *Metro*, the independent films *Singing and For the Coyotes*, and the series *Nash Bridges*. Carpenter is the recipient of numerous San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, including the 2007 Award for Excellence in the Arts and the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2010, he was named a Ten Chimneys Foundation Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

Anne Darragh returns to Aurora (*Our Practical Heaven, A Delicate Balance, The Busy World is Hushed*). Darragh has performed in numerous world premieres including the Eureka Theatre production of *Angels in America*. Recent world premieres include Brian Thorstenson's *Wakefield* and Julie Jigour's *Bright Shining Sea*. Local stage credits include A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, Brava, Campo Santo, Encore Theatre, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Ragged Wing Ensemble, San Francisco Playhouse, San Jose Rep, TheatreWorks and Z Space. She is a company member of PlayGround and Stephen Pelton Dance Theatre Company. Film credits include Chris Brown's *Fannie, Annie and Danny*.

Julie Eccles was last seen at Aurora in *A Flea In Her Ear*. Most recently she was seen as Ruella in *Communicating Doors* at Center Rep and Tess in *Marjorie Prime* at Marin Theatre Company. Local credits include *Othello, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Candida, An Ideal Husband, King Lear, As You Like It, The Importance of Being Earnest, and Much Ado About Nothing* at California Shakespeare Theatre, as well as productions at A.C.T., Berkeley Rep., TheatreWorks, San Jose Rep., San Francisco Shakespeare Theatre and Word For Word. Regional credits include Huntington Theatre, Seattle Rep, Geva Theatre, and Syracuse Stage. Eccles attended the University of California, Davis and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

The creative team for **THE CHILDREN** includes **Bert Van Aalsburg**--Stage Manager; **Mikiko Uesugi**--Set; **Cass Carpenter**--Costumes; **Ray Oppenheimer**--Lights; and **Jeff Mockus**--Sound.

CALENDAR EDITORS

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THE CHILDREN runs January 31 - March 1 (**Opens: February 6**).

DATES

Previews: Friday 1/31 and Saturday 2/1 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, 2/1 at 2 p.m. only.

Tuesday, 2/4 and Wednesday, 2/5 at 7 p.m.

Open: **Thursday, February 6**

Close: **Sunday, March 1**

Shows: Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.

Sunday at 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

WHERE Aurora Theatre Company | 2081 Addison Street | Berkeley, CA

TICKETS For single tickets (\$35-\$70) or subscriptions (\$111-\$396), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit www.auroratheatre.org.

PRE PRODUCTION IMAGES <http://bit.ly/CHILDRENAuroraPress>

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ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY

The Aurora Theatre Company is known for work that invigorates audiences and artists through a shared experience of professional, intimate theatre. Aurora challenges itself and the broader community to do better, think deeper, laugh louder, and cast wider nets of empathy toward the world. Through its productions of both classic and new works, it supports the Bay Area community by hiring local artists and artisans. It has an operating budget of \$2.2 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Season Sponsors: Ed & Liliane Schneider. Sponsors: Craig & Kathy Moody. Associate Sponsors: Ellen & Barry Levine. Thomas W. Edwards & Rebecca Parlette-Edwards. Sallie Weissinger.

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