TDPS Presents the World Premiere of Christopher Chen’s
Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act

Berkeley, CA – January 22, 2015 – UC Berkeley Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies (TDPS) continues its 2014/2015 season with the World Premiere of Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act by award-winning playwright and UC Berkeley alumnus Christopher Chen. A bold, absurdist take on Euripides’ Iphigenia In Aulis, this new play explores the effect of looming violence on a society whose very rules and logic are on the verge of unraveling. Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act, directed by Mina Morita, opens Friday, March 6, 2015 and continues through Sunday, March 15, 2015 in the Zellerbach Playhouse on the UC Berkeley campus. Tickets are $13-$20 and can be purchased online through the TDPS Box Office at http://tdps.berkeley.edu/events/aulis/ or at the door.

A pointed, poetic and darkly humorous exploration of violence and morality, Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act finds Agamemnon’s army stranded on a beach, entertaining itself with video games and sitcoms while waiting for the wind that would carry their ships to war. In order for winds to blow them onward to Troy, Agamemnon must sacrifice his only daughter Iphigenia, or condemn his entire army—and nation—to defeat. In an existential space of paralyzing doubt, indecision, and anticlimax, a march toward unstoppable violence grows inevitable.

Chen’s inspiration for the piece came during the Bush era, when the Iraq War was in full force. “I wanted to write a play that captured the absurdity of the war, or, more specifically, the hazy decision-making process that can lead us to slide into war without significant resistance,” Chen says. He describes Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act as a “dream play” that explores the subconscious levels of a society where “nagging doubts start to unravel all decisions, rules and even the structure of language itself,” as well as addresses “the very human and sometimes destructive impulses we have to keep our nagging doubts and uncertainties at bay.”

The cast features the talents of UC Berkeley students Tanvi Agrawal, Samuel Avishay, Edoardo Benzoni, Sophia Brady, Alexander De Vasconcelos Matos, Emon Elboudwarej, Annie Fei, Ran Flanders, Matthew Hannon, Veronica Maynez, Tori Schniedewind, Morgan Steele, Eleanor White and Anthony Williams.

Christopher Chen is an international award-winning playwright whose full-length works have been produced and developed across the United States and abroad, including at the American Conservatory Theater, Asian American Theater Company, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Beijing Fringe, Central Works Theater Company, Crowded Fire Theater, The Cutting Ball Theater, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Fluid Motion, hotINK Festival, Just Theater, Lark Play Development Center, Magic Theatre, Playwrights Foundation, Silk Road Rising (formerly Silk Road Theatre Project), Sundance Theatre Lab and Theater Mu. He is a graduate of UC Berkeley and holds an MFA in Playwriting from SF State.

Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act opens Friday, March 6 and continues through Sunday, March 15, 2015 in the Zellerbach Playhouse on the UC Berkeley campus. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 2pm. General admission tickets are $18 online / $20 at the door; Tickets for students, seniors, UC Berkeley Faculty & staff are $13 online / $15 at the door. Tickets are now on sale through the TDPS Box Office at http://tdps.berkeley.edu/events/aulis/.

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