

## Arts & Culture

### Best Theatre Companies In East Bay

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East Bay theatregoers have endless choices, from Tony-winning regional theatre to revivals of Broadway musicals to the experimental and the avant garde. Get your dose of live [entertainment](#) with a show at any one of these great theaters. Each promise to deliver something different and exciting.

#### California Shakespeare Theater

Bruns Amphitheater  
100 California Shakespeare Theater Way  
Orinda, CA 94563  
[www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org)

Founded in 1974, Cal Shakes is an award-winning, nationally recognized regional theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone and Managing Director Susie Falk. Kick back in a stunning [outdoor](#) amphitheater and watch some of the best live theater in the Bay Area. While Shakespeare's plays are a staple, Cal Shakes takes on fascinating new works every season. The theater opens 2 hours before curtain, so bring a picnic, or purchase gourmet food, wine, and beer from the cafe.



<http://www.calshakes.org>

#### Berkeley Rep

2025 Addison St  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 647-2949  
[berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org)

The Berkeley Repertory Theatre was founded in a storefront in 1968 and is now considered to be one of the most prestigious regional theatre [companies](#) in America. The Berkeley Repertory Theatre has deservedly won a Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Many shows which have premiered or been developed at the Rep have gone on to experience successful Broadway runs. Recent performers range from the best of local talent to such world-renowned figures as Mikhail Baryshnikov.



The exterior of the Roda Theatre at the Tony Award-winning Berkeley Repertory Theatre. (credit: Timothy Hursley, courtesy of ELS)

#### Shotgun Players

1901 Ashby Ave  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
(510) 841-6500  
[shotgunplayers.org](http://shotgunplayers.org)

Shotgun Players, founded in 1992, is known for its focus on new work. Founding Artistic Director Patrick Dooley describes its beginnings as "10 eager actors and a bucket of black paint." Before this dedicated [company](#) of artists found a permanent home in 2004, it performed on 44 different stages. When *SF Weekly* identified Shotgun as Best Theatre Company 2011, it lauded the company's "elusive combination of artistic daring, cultural relevance, and showstopping



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(credit: Shotgun Players)

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### Aurora Theatre Company

2081 Addison St  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 843-4822  
[auroratheatre.org](http://auroratheatre.org)

Over the past two decades, the Aurora Theatre Company has received 60 awards from the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle and was named *SF Weekly*'s 2012 "Best Theatre." Because of its intimate stage, Aurora productions has often been referred to as "chamber theatre." While developing new work, it also provides an excellent selection of revivals, from classics to little-known masterpieces, that warrant revisiting. The company's mission statement proclaims to "strive to enrich the lives of our audience by producing high-quality, thought-provoking work that shines in an intimate setting."



(credit: Aurora Theatre)

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### Central Works Theatre

2315 Durant Ave  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 558-1381  
[centralworks.org](http://centralworks.org)

Central Works Theatre is the most experimental and avant-garde company included in this short list. Central Works does only original work developed in a unique workshop style whose methodology includes the participation of a full company of actors, playwright, director and designers from the origin of an idea to a full script, developed over many months of workshops. It refers to this highly-distinctive approach as "the Central Works method." Critics have called this work "consistently intelligent, provocative and relevant," "complex and vital" and "riveting and mesmerizing." In 2010, Central Works was awarded the Paine Knickerbocker Award for Outstanding Achievement by the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle.



(credit: centralworks.org)