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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOURMANDS GATHER FOR BERKELEY REP'S ELEGANT NARSAI TOAST

Annual gourmet gala features five celebrity chefs and an appearance by Rita Moreno

MARCH 14, 2007 – Today, Berkeley Repertory Theatre declared that its 15th annual Narsai Toast will thrill the palates of culinary connoisseurs – with a delectable dinner cooked up by celebrity chefs from San Francisco's top restaurants, delicious desserts concocted by renowned *chocolatier* **Jacques Torres**, and an appearance by the Bay Area's very own diva, **Rita Moreno**. The annual gourmet gala and wine auction, a benefit for this Tony Award-winning theatre, takes place on Friday, April 20 at the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco. The exclusive event starts with a reception and silent auction at 5:30 PM, and celebrations continue with a gourmet dinner and live auction at 7:30 PM.

"I'm proud to announce the chefs for this year's all-star kitchen," said **Narsai David**, an expert on wine and cuisine for KCBS who has hosted the event since its inception. "A stellar team will prepare hors d'oeuvres and a four-course dinner for guests: **Ron Boyd**, *chef de cuisine* at Aqua; **Jean-Pierre Dubray** executive chef at the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco; **Suzette Gresham**, executive chef at Acquerello; and **Chris L'Hommedieu**, *chef de cuisine* at Michael Mina. The evening will culminate with an incomparable dessert from Jacques Torres – and it's not just the food that's exquisite! Each course will be paired with fine wines from prestigious California vineyards, including Chappellet Winery, Gloria Ferrer Champagne Caves, Neal Family Vineyards, Quady Winery, Raymond Vineyard, and Russian Hill Estate Winery."

"We truly appreciate the ongoing support of the culinary community," remarks **Susan Medak**, managing director of Berkeley Rep. "Over the last 15 years, this event has raised more than \$3 million to support our artistic work, educational programs, and community outreach. These funds are essential, because Berkeley Rep is a nonprofit and relies on tax-deductible donations to the Narsai Toast to continue bringing world-class theatre to the Bay Area."

Over the past 15 years, the **Narsai Toast** has become the epitome of gastronomic excellence showcasing the culinary talents of the country's leading chefs. Past events have featured the cuisine of celebrated chefs such as **Traci Des Jardins**, **Thomas Keller**, **Paul Prudhomme**, **Wolfgang Puck**, **Jeremiah Tower**, and **Charlie Trotter**. Every year, the gala is one of the Bay Area's most magical evenings, dazzling 500 guests from the arts, business, and culinary

(MORE)

1997 tony award for outstanding regional theatre / a nonprofit corporation since 1968

CELEBRITY CHEFS SELECTED FOR BERKELEY REP'S NARSAI TOAST / 2 of 2

communities. The 2007 Narsai Toast is supported by lead sponsor Fossil and two event sponsors: KCBS All News Radio 740 and the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco.

For this year's **auction**, Narsai David will reprise his role as auctioneer. Guests have the opportunity to bid on an array of wines from Northern California vineyards and from private collections, as well as several exceptional culinary adventures: a seven-night trip to Provence for ten guests, including accommodations at L'Ancienne Poste; a four-night stay at Exclusive Resorts, including a *bon voyage* dinner at the chef's table at One Market; dinner for ten prepared by **Jan Birnbaum** at Stony Hill Vineyard, hosted by **Willinda and Peter McCrea**; dinner for eight at Bay Wolf with **Richard Reich**; and dinner for ten at the home of **Narsai and Venus David**, including wine selected from their private cellar.

The 2007 Narsai Toast is chaired by **Becky Bleich, Rich Edwards, and Wayne Wilson**. The event is made possible, in part, by the generosity of Citigroup Private Bank; DFS Group, Ltd; the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts; Rick Hoskins and Lynne Frame; Jefferies and Company, Inc.; Macy's; Merrill Lynch Private Banking and Investment Group; Meyer Sound; the Roda Group; and Wells Fargo. Sponsors also include Foley & Lardner LLP, Goldman Sachs, Mary and Nicholas Graves, Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Sarah McArthur and Michael LeValley, the Mechanics Bank, Mary Ann and Lou Peoples, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, the Pratt/Bleich family, Marjorie Randolph, Michael and Sue Steinberg, and Felicia Woytak and Steve Rasmussen.

Tickets for the Narsai Toast begin at \$500, and tables are priced between \$5,000 and \$12,500. All proceeds from the event support Berkeley Rep's mission to set a national standard for ambitious programming, engagement of its audiences, and leadership within the community. Formal attire is not required. For more information, contact Kirsten Berzon, Berkeley Rep's special events manager, at 510.647.2906 or kberzon@berkeleyrep.org.

ATTENTION, CALENDAR EDITORS:

- WHO: 5 celebrity chefs – Ron Boyd of Aqua; Jean-Pierre Dubray of the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco; Suzette Gresham of Acquerello; Chris L'Hommedieu of Michael Mina; and Jacques Torres of Jacques Torres Chocolate – with an appearance by Rita Moreno
- WHAT: 15th annual Narsai Toast, a gourmet gala and wine auction benefiting Berkeley Rep
- WHERE: The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, 600 Stockton St, San Francisco
- WHEN: Friday, April 20, 5:30 PM (reception / silent auction) & 7:30 PM (four-course dinner)
- HOW MUCH: \$500 tickets; tables from \$5,000 to \$12,500
- INFO & TIX: 510.647.2906, www.berkeleyrep.org or kberzon@berkeleyrep.org

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