

For photos, interviews, etc. contact:
Terence Keane, Director of Public Relations
510.647.2917, tkeane@berkeleyrep.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES 40TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN AT NARSAI TOAST

Record-breaking event sets the tone for an ambitious campaign to raise \$25 million

APRIL 4, 2008 – As if sending a show to Broadway and breaking box office records at home weren't enough, Berkeley Repertory Theatre just announced big news on the financial front. Tonight its annual gourmet fundraiser – the Narsai Toast – generated a record-breaking \$800,000 and the Tony Award-winning theatre also revealed its ambitious 40th Anniversary Campaign. **This initiative has already raised an impressive \$14 million on its way to a \$25-million goal** that will fortify and enhance Berkeley Rep's core values of artistic excellence, community outreach, and arts education. Amid the festivities, the Theatre celebrated its 40th birthday and the evening's honoree, Michael Steinberg, marked his own 80th year.

"To prepare for the next phase in our history, Berkeley Rep has embarked on a \$25-million campaign to ensure that the values upon which we were founded will remain at the core of our ambitions and infrastructure for decades to come," remarked **Richard A. Rubin**, president of Berkeley Rep's board and co-chair of the Campaign. "We salute the generosity of those who have already helped us more than halfway to our goal, and we encourage other local arts lovers to respond to the anonymous challenge we've received: if we can raise an additional \$2 million, this donor will match that amount! Your investments have already started to show powerful returns for Berkeley Rep and Bay Area theatre. Please help us reach our full potential."

"Looking to the future is the perfect way to commemorate our 40th birthday," added Artistic Director **Tony Taccone**. "By investing in artistic growth, education programs, and financial strength, Berkeley Rep can seize promising opportunities and cultivate the next generation of thinkers, artists, and engaged community members. New play development has become part of our DNA, and the Campaign allows us to support an extensive creative process for artists under commission. As you can see from the line-up for next season, we're already enjoying the fruits of our labors – *Yellowjackets* by Itamar Moses and *The Vibrator Play* by Sarah Ruhl are two world premieres that were made possible by our 40th Anniversary Campaign."

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The 40th Anniversary Campaign was born out of a 10-year strategic plan to provide a solid foundation for Berkeley Rep's future. The Campaign includes three major initiatives to help Berkeley Rep fulfill its deepened ambition and ensure its long-term financial health:

- **Artistic Advancement: \$14 million.** The Campaign will elevate Berkeley Rep's commitment to take artistic risks, bring new and signature work to the stage, and engage our community in challenging theatre. The company will commission 50 new plays by 2013 and bring two large-scale productions to the stage each season for 10 years. The Theatre's facilities will also be expanded to accommodate this growth. The 25-year-old Thrust Stage will get a facelift with state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems, refurbished seats, and new air conditioning. Even better, two new performance spaces will allow Berkeley Rep to showcase works in development and to host more workshops, readings, and interactive events. These intimate performance venues will expand opportunities for artistic and civic engagement, giving voice to the next generation.

(MORE)

- **Education & Outreach: \$4 million.** Berkeley Rep will continue to enrich the lives of young people, building the audiences and citizens of tomorrow by investing in more education and outreach programs. The Campaign will allow Berkeley Rep to purchase a permanent home for its School of Theatre, a vibrant center that serves more than 20,000 youth every year. It will offer 100 scholarships for young people each year, and hire two full-time outreach coordinators who can visit classrooms and train local teachers to integrate theatre into their curricula. Berkeley Rep will also continue to expand its young audience by investing in discounts and programs that invite a broad youth population to participate in its School, on its stage, and as active theatregoers.
- **Financial Strength: \$7 million.** Finally, the Campaign will ensure that the Theatre's artistic and education initiatives can be sustained until its 50th birthday and beyond. To secure Berkeley Rep's long-term stability, the Campaign will build an endowment, retire the mortgage on the Roda Theatre, attract new audiences and donors, and secure the company's financial future.

The 40th Anniversary Campaign has already raised \$14 million, with nearly half of that given by Berkeley Rep's board of directors. The total includes **four lead gifts** of \$1 million each from the Bernard Osher Foundation and three individual donors. Other major gifts have come from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, and the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation.

Co-chaired by Rita Moreno and Paul Newman, the honorary campaign committee includes **luminaries** such as Anthony Batarse, Jr.; Peter Coyote; Narsai M. David; Lois M. De Domenico; Danny Hoch; Tony Kushner; Patrick O'Dea; Shirley Nelson; Bonnie Raitt; Barclay Simpson; H. Marcia Smolens; and Saul Zaentz. The Campaign is led by three members of Berkeley Rep's board: Richard A. Rubin, Felicia Woytak, and Wayne Jordan.

ABOUT THE NARSAI TOAST

The 40th Anniversary Campaign was announced during Berkeley Rep's annual gala. Over the past 16 years, the Narsai Toast has become the epitome of gastronomic excellence, showcasing the culinary talents of the country's leading chefs. Every year, the event is one of the Bay Area's most magical evenings, dazzling 400 guests from the arts, business, and culinary communities. To date, the gala has raised an incredible \$4.3 million to benefit Berkeley Rep.

Held at the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, this year's Toast began with a reception and silent auction at 5:30 PM, and continued with a gourmet dinner at 7:30 PM. Guests enjoyed a performance by jazz chanteuse **Paula West**, as well as a video tribute to Mr. Steinberg that highlighted his years on Berkeley Rep's board and his visionary leadership during good times and bad. The event featured a delectable menu prepared by a team of celebrity chefs:

- **Hors d'oeuvres by Jean-Pierre Dubray of the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco**
such as Seared Dayboat Scallops on Spring Pea Puree with Lemon Oil and Grilled American Kobe Beef Brochette with Ponzu Gastrique – served with the Brut Rosé from Domaine Carneros by Taittinger, the 2004 Ellen's Block Syrah from Russian Hill Estate Wines, and the 2006 Simi Sauvignon Blanc from Simi Winery
- **First course by Staffan Terje of Perbacco**
Shellfish Brodetto with Grilled Filone and Spring Garlic Aioli paired with the 2006 Conundrum
- **Second course by Adrian Hoffman of the Lark Creek Restaurant Group**
Tortelli of Sweet Pea Puree with Crisp Mint and Parmesan paired with the 2006 Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast from Merry Edwards Wines

(MORE)

- **Entrée by Joseph Manzare of Globe**
Lamb Two Ways with Mashed Ceci and Fava Leaves served with the 2004 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon from Louis M. Martini Winery and the 2004 Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon from Raymond Vineyards
- **Dessert by Piero Selvaggio and Davide Giova of Valentino**
Chocolate Delight and Ricotta Cannoli with Bronte Pistacchio and Blood Orange Sorbet paired with the 2007 Elysium Black Muscat from Quady Winery

A live auction followed dinner, with Narsai David reprising his role as auctioneer. In the middle of the bidding, one of Berkeley Rep's biggest supporters leapt up and offered a surprise gift of \$100,000 – spurring other guests to match that amount and doubling the usual proceeds from this annual auction. In addition to an array of wines from Northern California's finest vineyards and private collections, auction items included a five-night luxury stay for four at Calistoga Ranch, a Fender Electric guitar signed by Bonnie Raitt, and a private movie screening for 60 people with Rita Moreno at Meyer Sound.

Every year, the event is hosted by Narsai David, an expert on food and wine for KCBS, who was a founding member of Berkeley Rep's board of trustees and a former board chair. The gourmet sponsor for the 2008 Narsai Toast is Fossil, and the connoisseur **sponsors** are DFS Galleria, Nicholas and Mary Graves, the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trust, Macy's West, Meyer Sound, and Richard A. Rubin and H. Marcia Smolens. The 2008 Narsai Toast was chaired by Becky Bleich, Rick Hoskins, and Laura Onopchenko. Barbara and Gerson Bakar, Ed Brennan, Mary and Nicholas Graves, Carole Shorestein Hays and Jeffrey Hays, Robert Mettler, Louis Meunier, Helen and John Meyer, Rita Moreno and Leonard Gordon, and Jean and Michael Strunsky serve on the honorary committee.

ABOUT MICHAEL STEINBERG

Michael Steinberg joined Berkeley Rep's board of trustees in 1999, overseeing the Theatre's campaign to build a second stage – the Roda Theatre – and bringing his passion for food and wine into play as the longtime chair of the Narsai Toast. Under his leadership, the event's annual revenue has nearly doubled. Steinberg is also an avid supporter of the New York City Ballet and the visual arts, as well as a dedicated contributor to important causes abroad. In 2007, he and his wife, Sue, were the lead donors for the creation of the University of California, San Francisco's care center in Kenya. After a long career in the retail industry, Mr. Steinberg retired as CEO & Chairman of Macy's West in 2000. He remains active on a number of corporate retail boards, including Fossil.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Born in a storefront on College Avenue, Berkeley Rep has moved to the forefront of American theatre. Founded in 1968 by Michael Leibert, the Theatre quickly earned respect for presenting the finest plays with top-flight actors. In 1980, with the support of the local community, Berkeley Rep built the 400-seat Thrust Stage where its reputation steadily grew over the next two decades. It gained renown for an adventurous combination of work, presenting important new dramatic voices alongside refreshing adaptations of seldom-seen classics. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. The company celebrated by unveiling a new 600-seat proscenium stage in 2001, the state-of-the-art Roda Theatre. It also opened the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre to house a long tradition of outreach and education programs. The addition of these two buildings transformed a single stage into a vital and versatile performing arts complex, the linchpin of a bustling Downtown Arts District which has helped revitalize Berkeley. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed 300 shows at Berkeley Rep, including 50 world premieres. The Theatre now welcomes an annual audience of 180,000, serves 20,000 students, and hosts dozens of community groups, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 400 artists, artisans, and administrators. In the last two years, four shows seen at Berkeley Rep have gone on to New York: *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Brundibar*, *Eurydice*, and *Passing Strange*.

###