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BAY AREA'S FINEST RAISE \$656,000 AT BERKELEY REP'S OVATION GALA

Local favorite Danny Scheie roasts and toasts at theatrical *fête* at the Four Seasons SF

APRIL 25, 2013 – On Saturday night, 400 of the Bay Area's finest arts supporters gathered at the Four Seasons San Francisco to celebrate Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the neighborhood playhouse with the international reputation. The effervescent **Danny Scheie**, a Berkeley Rep stage veteran and one of the Bay Area's most beloved actors, hosted a spectacular evening for theatre fans, foodies, and philanthropists in honor of the Tony Award-winning theatre. OVATION raised \$656,000 to support the nonprofit's myriad artistic and creative efforts, including education and outreach programs for the local community.

In his opening remarks, Danny Scheie warned any unconverted guests of theatre's power as "...a gateway drug. Tomorrow you'll wake up and suddenly have this burning desire to become a subscriber, or join the board, or, worse yet, you'll want to become an actor!"

This year's 400 attendees found themselves surrounded by luminous artistic company, including legendary actress – and now author – **Rita Moreno**, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and playwright **Lawrence Wright**, musician **Paul Dresner**, Cal Shakes Artistic Director **Jonathan Moscone**, and Bay Area art connoisseur **Rena Bransten**.

The festivities began with a reception and silent auction. Guests snacked and sipped while bidding on collectable wines and unique cultural adventures. The evening continued with a three-course feast prepared by Four Seasons San Francisco's executive chef **Mark Richardson**. Guests enjoyed roasted lamb and sumptuous wines. Before dessert, auctioneer **DawnMarie Kostonis**, the self-proclaimed "gavel girl," presided over an energetic live auction. It quickly became a spirited competition for fabulous prizes including once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

The most popular lot of the night afforded two couples the chance to hobnob with Hollywood's elite at **Sir Elton John's** annual Oscar® viewing party. Winning bidders also can look forward to dining with celebrated gourmands **Narsai and Venus David**, who will host a sumptuous banquet in their Kensington home. A trip for two to Machu Picchu awaits a pair of lucky bidders who will explore the Incan site, stay in luxury at the historic Hotel Monasterio, and feast on delectable Peruvian cuisine. The evening ended with a captivating video highlighting the local and national influence of the nonprofit's School of Theatre, a national model for the field.

"For citizens of the Bay Area, no person is too different, no idea is too weird, no choice is too unconventional," said artistic director **Tony Taccone**. "Our Theatre celebrates that. The success of Berkeley Rep is a testament to just how popular some very weird ideas can be. Thank you for supporting our desire to say something original that hopefully has the capacity to touch you in a deep and surprising way."

"Theatre illuminates our common humanity and it also helps us understand the ways in which we differ," remarked **Susan Medak**, the Theatre's managing director. "During this difficult week for our country, we witnessed inspirational acts of personal, professional, and political bravery. It is important that we are able to recognize what values we share and to imagine different ways of seeing the world. That ability to open up perspectives is one of the best qualities of the theatre."

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In the spotlight were wines from Domaine Carneros by Taittinger, Donkey and Goat Winery, Match Vineyards, Quady Winery, Raymond Vineyards, and Wente Vineyards – as well as spirits from Distillery No. 209 and St. George Spirits. Guests also took home delicious delicacies from Guittard Chocolate Company, IZZE Sparkling Juice Company, Peet's Coffee & Tea, Semifreddi's, and Somersault Snacks, as well as gifts from Algenist, EO Products, and Fossil.

OVATION was supported by seven **Spotlight Sponsors**: Chevron, Jill & Steve Fugaro, Meyer Sound, Osterweis Capital Management, Marjorie Randolph, the Roda Group, and Jean & Michael Strunsky.

Led by Jill Fugaro and Jean Strunsky, the **planning committee** included Blair Buster, Martha Ehmann Conte, Daniel David, Thalia Dorwick, Rich & Robin Edwards, Scott Haber, Diane Manley, Pamela Nichter, and Felicia Woytak.

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to a national leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. With two stages, a school, and a Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, Berkeley Rep is proud to premiere exhilarating new plays. In the last six years, the company has helped send six shows to Broadway. Seven more landed off Broadway, one moved to London, two turned into films, and others have toured the nation. Come see tomorrow's plays today at Berkeley Rep

In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep was honored with the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its vital and versatile facilities – which include the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping to revitalize a renowned city. A not-for-profit organization, the theatre welcomes an annual audience of 200,000, serves 23,000 students, and hosts dozens of community groups, thanks to 1,000 volunteers and more than 330 artists, artisans, and administrators. For more information, just click berkeleyrep.org.

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