

PRESS CONTACT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**BAY AREA'S ART ENTHUSIASTS RAISE \$644,000 AT
BERKELEY REP'S OVATION GALA****Guests thrilled by special appearance from cabaret diva Meow Meow
and a surprise flash mob performance**

APRIL 21, 2014 – On Saturday, April 19, a host of distinguished guests descended on San Francisco's elegant Four Seasons hotel for **Ovation**, [Berkeley Repertory Theatre's](#) annual gala. Under the leadership of gala co-chairs **Jill Fugaro** and **Jean Strunsky**, the theatrical extravaganza raised \$644,000 in support of the award-winning non-profit's creation of exciting new plays and its commitment to education and outreach programs for the local community.

"The Gala is an opportunity for people to demonstrate their support for ambitious, provocative theatre, and to raise awareness of the value of the arts in creating a whole society," said **Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone**. "Through the generous support of devoted theatregoers, we are able to continue our mission of bringing great stories to life."

"With the funds generated, Berkeley Rep will be able to provide educational programs for children and adults throughout the Bay Area, world-class theatre at accessible prices, and programs to underserved groups in the surrounding community," remarked **Susan Medak, the Theatre's managing director**. "I thank all of the participants from the enthusiastic bidders to the multitude of dedicated volunteers and staff who made this event a success. It was a great night for the Theatre."

More than 300 Bay Area art enthusiasts – including leading artists and community innovators – donned their finest to celebrate the Theatre. Among the attendees were **Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney, Robert and Audrey Sockolov, Michael and Sue Steinberg, Moses and Susan Libitzky, Joe and Sherry Felson, screen and stage actress Deirdre Lovejoy, and award-winning Bay Area stage actress Lorri Holt**.

The festivities began with a reception and silent auction featuring collectable wines and unique cultural adventures. As guests settled into the lavish ballroom for dinner, they were surprised with a boisterous and high-energy flash mob performance led by Danceation creator Heath Hunter. The performers danced in perfect unison to the aptly chosen song "Applause" by Lady Gaga. The rousing performance indeed yielded thunderous applause from the audience.

Dinner was a delectable feast by Four Seasons San Francisco's executive chef **Mark Richardson**, paired with stellar wines. Before dessert, expert auctioneer **DawnMarie Kotsonis** led an energetic live auction. Guests bid enthusiastically and generously on exclusive packages for once-in-a-lifetime experiences and one-of-a-kind prizes, including an incredible adventure to Vancouver in gorgeous British Columbia to experience majestic mountain views at Whistler; two tickets to Elton John's legendary Oscar night dinner and party; a thrilling London West End theatre-filled adventure; a delicious private dinner at the home of Chef Narsai David; a visit to Chicago for opening night of Sting's new musical, *The Last Ship*, with two tickets to the performance and exclusive post-show party; and a New York getaway, complete with tickets to Broadway shows and a weeklong stay in a spectacular Midtown Manhattan condominium.

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BAY AREA'S FINEST RAISE \$644,000 AT BERKELEY REP'S OVATION GALA / 2 OF 2

The celebration continued with a captivating video highlighting the remarkable journey of mounting a play at Berkeley Rep – specifically this season's world premiere of *The House that will not Stand* – from supporting the vision of the playwright to the incredible impact on the local community after it hits the stage. The enchanted evening drew to a close with a special surprise performance by **Meow Meow**, international singing sensation and über-award-winning comedienne. The cabaret diva performed an excerpt from her upcoming Berkeley Rep show, *An Audience with Meow Meow*, set to open the Theatre's 2014-15 season in September. The sizzling and rousing performance proved to be one of the more memorable highlights of the evening.

In the spotlight on every table were wines from Domaine Carneros by Taittinger, Hafner Vineyard, Match Vineyards, Pat Paulsen Vineyards, Quady Winery – as well as spirits from Greenbar Craft Distillery, Macallan Scotch & Black Grouse Scotch, St. George Spirits, and Tres Agaves Products, LLC. Guests also took home delicious delicacies from Naked Juice Coconut Water, Peet's Coffee & Tea, and Semifreddi's, as well as gifts from Autumn Press, Dolphin Graphics, East Bay Spice Company, Epi Center MedSpa, EO Products, Fossil, and Miette Pâtisserie and Confiserie.

Support for OVATION was led by three **Limelight Sponsors**: Fossil, Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, and The Roda Group. In addition, there were seven **Spotlight Sponsors**: Dallas Summer Musicals and FireMused Productions, LLC; Forest Creatures Entertainment; Jill and Steve Fugaro; Meyer Sound; Osterweis Capital Management; Stewart and Rachelle Owen; and Jean and Michael Strunsky.

Led by Jill Fugaro and Jean Strunsky, the **planning committee** included Daniel David, Narsai David, Thalia Dorwick, Rich and Robin Edwards, Scott Haber, Diane Manley, Pamela Nichter, Felicia Woytak, and Deborah Taylor.

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.

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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