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BERKELEY REP'S OVATION GALA RAISES \$775,000
Funds will benefit artistic and community programming

APRIL 3, 2017 – On Saturday night, April 1, over 350 of the Bay Area's finest arts supporters gathered at the **Fairmont San Francisco** to honor Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award-winning theatre company known for its innovative and challenging works. **OVATION: Berkeley Rep Celebrates *Monsoon Wedding*** raised \$775,000 to support the Theatre's artistic and creative efforts, including education programming and the Theatre's attempts to promote active citizenry.

The event launched the festivities for the highly anticipated world premiere of the musical adaptation of the 2001 film ***Monsoon Wedding*** and honored the accomplishments of **Mira Nair**, who directed the award-winning film and helms the new musical. Performances of *Monsoon Wedding* begin Friday, May 5 in Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre.

This year's attendees found themselves surrounded by sophisticated artistic company, all dressed to the nines, and rubbed shoulders with director **Mira Nair**; Alameda County Supervisor **Keith Carson**; corporate partners **Naren Gupta** (Nexus Venture Partners) and **Vinita Gupta** (Digital Link Corporation); and philanthropists **Barney and Barbro Osher** and **Moses and Susan Libitzky**.

The celebration began with a reception and silent auction. While bidding on collectable wines and unique cultural adventures, guests were treated to a sneak preview of *Monsoon Wedding*, as the cast performed two numbers from the upcoming new musical. The evening continued with a three-course Indian-inspired feast prepared by Fairmont San Francisco's executive chef, **Oscar Gonzales**, featuring oven-roasted lamb paired with sumptuous wines. Before dessert, auctioneer **DawnMarie Kotsonis** presided over an energetic live auction, in which guests vied for fantastic prizes including a trip to India and dinner for 10 prepared by food and wine celebrity chef **Narsai David**.

The top bid of the night captured a trip for four through Spain, France, and Italy aboard *The World*, the largest private yacht on earth.

"We're so grateful for the outpouring of support from the Bay Area community," says Managing Director Susan Medak. "Engaging this community has been a source of pride for Berkeley Rep over the years. We are so pleased to continue to create important work that challenges our audiences and inspires active citizenry."

"I have long admired Mira and her work," says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. "I'm thrilled to celebrate Mira's many accomplishments and to collaborate with her to bring the musical adaptation of *Monsoon Wedding* to the Berkeley Rep stage."

In the spotlight were wine, beers, and spirits from Hafner Vineyard, Ramsay Winery, Narsai David, Quady Winery, Domaine Carneros by Taittinger, Kingfisher Brewing Company, Raymond Vineyards, Drake's Brewing Company, and New York Distilling Company. Raj Tents, Avasar Mandap, Big 4 Party Rental, and Meyer Sound were essential to the production of the event.

RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

OVATION: Berkeley Rep Celebrates *Monsoon Wedding* was made possible by the generosity of lead sponsors Fossil Group, Bruce Golden & Michelle Mercer, Hotel Shattuck Plaza, and The Roda Group.

The planning committee for the event includes **Ashvini Bhave, Rich Edwards, Robin Edwards, Lisa Finer, David Fleishhacker, Jill Fugaro, Scott Haber, Sherry Haber, Jon Logan, Sandra McCandless, Stewart Owen, Sudha Pennathur, Renuka Pullat, Laura Severino, Audrey Sockolov, Jean Strunsky, Deborah Taylor, and Gail Wagner.**

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international 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. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed nearly 400 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 received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities – which include the 400-seat Peet’s Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org

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