



AURORA THEATRE COMPANY OFFICIALLY BREAKS THROUGH *Wall-breaking event kicks off company's expansion*

January 14, 2009 - Berkeley's acclaimed **Aurora Theatre Company**, now in its 17th season, celebrated both the company's start of construction on its expansion and the commencement of the public phase of its \$2.1 million capital campaign with a wall-breaking ceremony held on **January 12, 2009**. Over 100 VIPS and local luminaries attended the event, including **Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates**, **Berkeley City Manager Phil Kamlarz**, and **City Councilmembers Jesse Arreguin, Laurie Capitelli and Kriss Worthington**. After enjoying cocktails and a sumptuous buffet of Ahi tuna tartar, Saumon Pochée, and Quenelle Soufflé, courtesy of Bistro Liaison, guests watched lead donor **Deborah Ruth**, hammer in hand, break through the ceremonial brick wall constructed especially for the event; the expanded space will be named The Nell and Jules Dashow Wing in honor of Deborah Ruth's parents. The new expansion is the final project of the late acclaimed theater architect **Gene Angell** (with his partner **Brian Rawlinson**). Construction by general contractor Oliver & Company, Inc., with construction management by Edward Van of E.J. Van Company, Inc., began January 13.

After opening remarks from Aurora Theatre Company Board President and co-capital campaign committee chair **Robert B. Hetler**, guests listened to heart-warming speeches about the history and future of the Aurora from **Artistic Director Tom Ross** and founding Artistic Director **Barbara Oliver**, as well as an enthusiastic proclamation from Mayor Bates officially declaring January 12th "Aurora Theatre Company Day." Aurora Theatre Company **Technical Director/Production Coordinator Chris Killion** led guests on a tour of the new space, where co-campaign committee chair **Carolyn Weinberger** gave a rousing champagne toast. On hand to lend their support were Rawlinson along with Gene Angell's widow, **Pat Angell**. Also attending were campaign committee members **John Caner, Alison Teeman, and Muffy Thorne**, as well as Board Vice President and President-elect **Ellen Levine** and Board members **Joel Altman, Fred Feller, Jim Fowler, Tony Hawthorne, Wendy Markel, Carol Neil, Hillary Reinis, Leigh Robinson, Cindy Snow, and Diane Verducci**.

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AURORA THEATRE COMPANY “WALL-BREAKING”

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During the reception, Artistic Director Tom Ross announced that the \$200,000 grant recently awarded by The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, of New York City, to establish The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Fund for Artistic Initiatives, will initially help underwrite two projects which the expanded space will soon make possible: the development of a new play to be penned by acclaimed local director **Mark Jackson**, and a work based on Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale* with former San Francisco Ballet principal dancer **Muriel Maffre**.

Once completed, the expansion space will add 2,600 square feet to the 7,200 square feet the company currently occupies, and will house a new rehearsal space for main stage productions, readings, and workshops of new productions, as well as artistic offices. The projected completion date of the expansion project is summer 2009.

Located in the heart of the Downtown Berkeley Arts District, Aurora Theatre Company continues to offer challenging, literate, intelligent stage works to the Bay Area, each year increasing its reputation for top-notch theatre. Located in the heart of the Downtown Berkeley Arts District, Aurora Theatre Company has been called “one of the most important regional theaters in the area” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, while *The Wall Street Journal* has “nothing but praise for the Aurora.” The *Contra Costa Times* stated, “perfection is probably an unattainable ideal in a medium as fluid as live performance, but the Aurora Theatre comes luminously close,” while the *San Jose Mercury News* affirmed “[Aurora Theatre Company] lives up to its reputation as a theater that feeds the mind,” and the *Oakland Tribune* declared “it’s all about choices, and if you value good theater, choose the Aurora.”

Aurora Theatre Company rounds out its 2008-09 season with the West Coast Premiere of George Packer’s provocative recent Off-Broadway hit **BETRAYED** in January. Mark Jackson, who directed Aurora Theatre Company’s acclaimed production of *Salome*, returns to the company to helm August Strindberg’s **MISS JULIE** in April. Bob Glaudini’s unconventional romantic comedy **JACK GOES BOATING**, directed by Joy Carlin, closes the season in June.

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