UPDATED JUNE 29, 2015

BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE PRESENTS ANNA DEAVERE SMITH’S
NOTES FROM THE FIELD: DOING TIME IN EDUCATION,
THE CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

A one-woman show featuring stories about the nation’s school-to-prison pipeline with special musical guest Marcus Shelby

June 15, 2015 — Berkeley Repertory Theatre is proud to present Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter, a special presentation created, written, and performed by playwright, actor, and educator Anna Deavere Smith. Directed by Obie Award-winner Leah C. Gardiner, this limited engagement opens Saturday, July 11 and runs through Sunday, August 2, 2015 in the Roda Theatre. Individual tickets start at $50 and are currently on sale to the general public. Tickets can be purchased by phone at (510) 647-2949 or online at berkeleyrep.org.

Smith garnered a National Humanities Medal from President Obama in 2012 and a MacArthur Award for her incisive and astounding theatrical investigations – from racial tension (Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992) to the deficiencies in our health care system in Let Me Down Easy. Now she turns her attention to the school-to-prison pipeline, which, by pushing children out of the classroom into the criminal justice system, has created a lost generation of youth from poor communities. In act one, Smith performs striking portraits culled from interviews she conducted with nearly 150 individuals in Northern California and elsewhere in the nation affected by the pipeline’s devastating policies – capturing the dynamics of a rapidly shifting social issue through her trademark performance technique. She will be joined by Bay Area favorite, jazz musician Marcus Shelby.

In act two, Smith invites the audience to engage in dynamic conversations and be active agents to help dissolve the school-to-prison pipeline and inequities in the education system. With the compelling and inspiring Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter, Smith believes that we all have the imagination, the wit, and the heart to make a difference.

“Last summer Anna presented a staged reading at Berkeley Rep featuring the stories of those most affected by the school-to-prison pipeline,” says Managing Director Susan Medak. “We are so pleased to have Anna back to present the finished work. We are at our best when we are able to produce the compelling work of important artists of our time. Anna is indisputably one of the most impactful artists working in the theatre today. Her capacity to capture the issues of the moment is unparrelled.”

“I'm pleased to present Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter at Berkeley Rep,” says Smith. “This is my coming home project. By that I mean that I come from teachers who in my generation gave their lives to changing the lives of young Baltimoreans through belief in the potential of public education. I feel that the Bay Area is the perfect place for conversations about the school-to-prison pipeline to start and possibly for solutions to emerge. I’ve had a long history with Berkeley Rep and the Bay Area where I have presented my work since the early 1980s.”

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Smith continues, “There’s a lot of research being conducted and has been done about the relationship of early suspensions and how that perpetuates a cycle of incarceration. Though the focus of fixing racial inequity is currently focused on problems with urban policemen, as President Obama cautioned us, in the midst of riots in Baltimore, the problem is broader and deeper than that. I believe that we have a chance to reimagine and recreate a new war on poverty. Education is a crucial part of that. Through this special presentation I hope that we can build a model for art to be in direct connection to advocacy. We can bring people forward to ask not just what they think, but what they can do. I hope this process will help us understand more about our children, our teachers, our judges, and our criminal justice system.”

To cultivate participation in the dialogue by as many voices as possible, Berkeley Rep is offering a wide array of ticket discounts including:

- **1,000 free community tickets** are available by application to nonprofit, and government organizations serving populations impacted by the school-to-prison pipeline and individuals for whom cost would be a barrier; details available at http://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/1415/9293.asp#tabbed-nav=groups;
- Reduced priced tickets for those under 30, only $25 each
- Groups of 15 or more receive a 20 percent discount. For more information call, (510) 647-2918; to reach the Box Office call, (510) 647-2949 or visit berkeleyrep.org

Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter, is funded in part by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation (Cal Wellness). Created in 1922 as a private independent foundation, Cal Wellness’ mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education, and disease prevention. Additional support for the project comes from the Akonadi Foundation; the Panta Rhea Foundation; the Sierra Health Foundation; Whole Foods Market; and the MAP Fund, supported by The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The producers for the show are Anna Deavere Smith and Robert Council & Ann Parks-Council. Lead support for the Anna Deavere Smith School-to-Prison Pipeline Project is provided by The Ford Foundation. Major support is provided by The Atlantic Philanthropies, the NoVo Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the Panta Rhea Foundation, and the Health Happens Here Initiative of the California Endowment. In 2014, Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter, was part of the third annual Summer Residency Lab of The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

Anna Deavere Smith is an actress and playwright and has appeared at Berkeley Rep in Let Me Down Easy, Fires in the Mirror, and Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992. She is said to have created a new form of theatre. She has created more than 18 one-person shows based on hundreds of interviews, most of which deal with social issues. Twilight: Los Angeles, about the Los Angeles race riots of 1992, was performed around the country and on Broadway. PBS is currently streaming that play due to its relevance to current events. Her most recent one-person show, Let Me Down Easy, focused on health care in the U.S. Three of her plays have been broadcast on American Playhouse and Great Performances (PBS). In popular culture you have seen her in Nurse Jackie, Blackish, Madame Secretary, The West Wing, The American President, Rachel Getting Married, Philadelphia, and others. Books include Letters to a Young Artist and Talk to Me: Listening Between the Lines. She is founder and director of the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at New York University.
Recently she was named the 2015 Jefferson Lecturer by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The lecture, established in 1972, is the highest honor the federal government confers for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities. Prizes include the National Humanities Medal presented by President Obama, a MacArthur fellowship, the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award, two Tony nominations, and two Obies. She was runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize for her play *Fires in the Mirror*. She has received several honorary degrees, among them from Yale University, Juilliard, the University of Pennsylvania, Spelman, Williams, Northwestern, and Radcliffe. She serves on the boards of the Museum of Modern Art, the Aspen Institute, the American Museum of Natural History, and Grace Cathedral-San Francisco. She is a University Professor at New York University.

**Marcus Shelby** is a bandleader, composer, arranger, bassist, educator, and activist who currently lives in San Francisco, California. His work and music has focused on sharing the history, present, and future of African American lives, on social movements in the United States of America, and on early childhood music education. Currently, Shelby is an artist in residence with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and the artistic director of the Marcus Shelby Orchestra. In 2013, he received a commission from the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival to compose *Beyond the Blues: A Prison Oratorio* an original composition for big band orchestra about the prison industrial complex, which will premiere September 2015. Shelby has also worked extensively in Bay Area theatre, film, and dance on a range of productions, such as composing scores for Anna Deavere Smith’s new play *Notes From the Field: Doing Time in Education*, choreographer Joanna Haigood’s dance theatre work *Dying While Black and Brown*, Margo Hall’s plays *Bebop Baby and Sonny’s Blues*, the Oakland Ballet’s *Ella*, Robert Moses’ Kin Dance Company, the Pacific Boy Choir, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and the Oakland Youth Chorus. Since 2002, Shelby has worked with the Equal Justice Society and is currently commissioned to create a musical theatre work with choreographer Joanna Haigood and director Stephen Anthony Jones about the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In March 2013, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee appointed Shelby to the San Francisco Arts Commission where he serves on the Community Arts Grants and Education Committee and the Street Artists Committee.

**Leah C. Gardiner**’s New York theatre credits include *generations* (Soho Rep, U.S. premiere), *Fidelis* (the Public Theatre), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (Atlantic Theater Company, U.S. premiere), *Born Bad* (Soho Rep, U.S. premiere, Obie Award), *Pitbulls* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), *Bulrusher* (Urban Stages, world premiere and Pulitzer finalist), *The Ghost of Enoch Charlton* (Keen Company), and *Kent, CT* (Zipper Theater). Her national credits include *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Othello* (Houston Shakespeare Festival); *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Alliance Theatre); *Fences* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Sucker Punch* (Studio Theatre, U.S. premiere); *Clementine in the Lower Nine* (TheatreWorks, world premiere); *The Last Five Years* (Crossroads Theatre Company); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Pillsbury House Theatre); *Blue Door* (South Coast Repertory, world premiere and Pulitzer finalist); *Topdog/Underdog* (Philadelphia Theatre Company); *Birdie Blue* (City Theatre); *Orange Flower Water* (Contemporary American Theatre Festival, world premiere); *The Flag Maker of Market Street* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival, world premiere); *The Piano Lesson* (Madison Repertory Theatre); *Angels in America, Parts I and II* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre); Broadway’s *The Normal Heart* (Arena Stage, American Conservatory Theater, re-staging director); and the national tour of *Wit* (Kennedy Center, Ordway, among others). As a writer and director she worked on *Cultures Collide* (Sony Entertainment); as a short film director, *The Belle of New Orleans* (Alliance Theatre); and as a film producer: *Mother of George*, best cinematography, Sundance. Gardiner holds an MFA in directing from the Yale School of Drama.
The creative team includes John Arnone (scenic designer), Ann Hould-Ward (costume designer), Alexander V. Nichols (lighting and projection designer), and Dan Moses Schreier (sound designer). The stage manager for Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter is Cynthia Cahill.

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 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. Its bustling facilities – the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city. For more information, visit www.berkeleyrep.org.

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FACT SHEET

Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter

WHO:
Created, written, and performed by Anna Deavere Smith
Directed by Leah C. Gardiner
Featuring music composed and performed by Marcus Shelby

The creative team includes John ArNONE (scenic designer), Ann Hould-Ward (costume designer), Alexander V. Nichols (lighting and projection designer), and Dan Moses Schreier (sound designer).

WHAT:
Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education, The California Chapter
MacArthur Award winner Anna Deavere Smith turns her attention to the school-to-prison pipeline and performs striking portraits culled from interviews she conducted with nearly 150 individuals in Northern California and elsewhere in the nation, affected by the pipeline’s devastating policies – capturing the dynamics of a rapidly shifting social issue through her trademark performance technique.

WHERE:
Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street Berkeley, CA 94704

WHEN: THREE WEEKS ONLY! Saturday, July 11 – Sunday, August 2, 2015
- Tuesdays and Fridays @ 8:00 PM
- Wednesdays @ 8:00 PM on 7/15 and @ 7:00 PM on 7/29
- Thursday @ 8:00 PM
- Saturdays @ 2:00 & 8:00 PM and @ 8:00 PM on 7/11
- Sundays @ 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM and @ 7:00 PM on 7/12 & @ 2:00 PM 7/19
- No performance on 7/20, 7/21 & 7/22

HOW MUCH: Premium: $77-89 · Section A: $63-73 · Section B: $50-60 (subject to change).
Berkeley Rep is offering a wide array of ticket discounts including:
- 1,000 free community tickets are available by application to nonprofit, and government organizations serving populations impacted by the school-to-prison pipeline and individuals for whom cost would be a barrier; details available at http://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/1415/9293.asp#tabbed-nav=groups;
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