FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE

PRESENT A PUBLIC TOWN HALL FEATURING ANNA DEAVERE SMITH

THURSDAY, JULY 17, YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS THEATER

Jazz musician Marcus Shelby joins Smith for staged reading and dialogue about California’s school-to-prison pipeline

June 11, 2014 — Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) present a series of public Town Halls featuring MacArthur Award-winning actress, playwright, and educator Anna Deavere Smith, who will present a staged reading of her work-in-progress, Notes From the Field: Doing Time In Education – The California Chapter. The evening will be comprised of material collected through Smith’s interviews with more than 100 individuals in Northern California who are affected by what has been commonly named the school-to-prison pipeline. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, “There are policies and practices that push our nation’s schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.” Smith will hold three Town Halls in the Bay Area to spark discussion and increase public engagement with this pressing social issue. At each event, Smith — who will be joined by jazz musician Marcus Shelby, a favorite Bay Area artist — will present a reading of her work and then open the floor for public dialogue. Berkeley Rep will host two invitation-only Town Halls earlier in the month for some of the Bay Area’s most influential thought leaders, artists, and policy makers involved in public education and the prison system. Notes From the Field: Doing Time In Education – The California Chapter was developed with support from The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts will host the third Town Hall for the general public on Thursday, July 17 at 8:00 PM at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, 700 Howard Street. Tickets are $15 and can be purchased online at www.ybca.org or by phone at (415) 978-ARTS as of Friday, June 13. Seating is limited.

“We’re thrilled to partner with YBCA to shed light on this very disturbing national trend adversely impacting at-risk youth in our communities,” says Berkeley Rep Managing Director Susie Medak. “Anna has the incredible ability to get to the core of some of the most critical social-justice issues of our time, and we believe that theatre is the perfect forum for these conversations.”

“This is a perfect example of how art can be a catalyst for personal and social transformation by bringing together people from all walks of life,” says YBCA Executive Director Deborah Cullinan. “YBCA is proud to be able to host a public forum around such an important issue and bring it to the attention of our community.”

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Generous support of the Anna Deavere Smith Pipeline Project research and presentations in California is provided by The California Endowment and its Health Happens Here initiative, and the Panta Rhea Foundation.

Lead funding for the project is provided by The Atlantic Philanthropies and The Ford Foundation, with additional support from the NoVo Foundation and the Open Society Foundations. The Pipeline Project is a sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Anna Deavere Smith, actress/playwright, is said to have created a new form of theatre. Prizes include a MacArthur fellowship, the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Award, two Tony Award® nominations, two Obies, and others. Last summer President Obama presented her with the National Humanities Medal. Smith has created over 18 one-person shows based on hundreds of interviews, most of which deal with social issues. Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992 — an exploration of the Los Angeles race riots — was performed on Broadway and around the U.S. The touring version of the play was produced by Berkeley Repertory Theatre. 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 PBS’ Great Performances. In popular culture she has appeared in Nurse Jackie, 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 has received several honorary degrees, including one from Yale University, Juilliard, University of Pennsylvania, Spelman, Williams, Northwestern, and Radcliffe. She serves on the boards of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, among several others. She received the Dean's Medal from Stanford Medical School. She is a university professor at NYU and the founding director of Anna Deavere Smith Works at the Aspen Institute, fostering the meeting of artistic excellence and social change.

Marcus Anthony Shelby is an accomplished teacher, composer, arranger, and bassist who is currently the artistic director and leader of The Marcus Shelby Orchestra, The Marcus Shelby Hot 7, and The Marcus Shelby Trio. Shelby was awarded a 2009 Black Metropolis Research Consortium Fellowship in Chicago to conduct research for his commission to compose “Soul of the Movement.” As a 2006 Fellow in the Resident Dialogues Program of the Committee for Black Performing Arts at Stanford University, Shelby conducted research for his commission to compose “Harriet Tubman.” Shelby has had the honor of arranging for and conducting the Count Basie Orchestra featuring Ledisi, performing and recording with Tom Waits, and receiving the City Flight Magazine 2005 Award as one of the “Top Ten Most Influential African Americans in the Bay Area.” Shelby is also very active in music education and currently teaches at Rooftop Alternative School in San Francisco and the Stanford Jazz Workshop at Stanford University. In March 2013, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee appointed Shelby to the San Francisco Arts Commission.

GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR
The Ground Floor aims to create a truly safe space for artists that is not influenced by the pressure of imminent public exposure, so – unlike many other labs – it does not require recipients to present a reading or performance at the end of their residencies. Nonetheless, many projects will reach a stage where the creators request an invited audience or even engage community members as collaborators. For more information on each project, and for future announcements or opportunities to interact, visit: berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor.

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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.

ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), located in San Francisco’s Yerba Buena cultural district, is one of the nation’s leading multidisciplinary contemporary arts centers. With a belief that contemporary art is at the heart of community life, YBCA brings audiences and artists of all backgrounds together to express and experience creativity. The organization is known for nurturing emerging artists at the forefront of their fields and presenting works that blend art forms and explore the events and ideas of our time. As part of its commitment to the San Francisco Bay Area, YBCA supports the local arts community and reflects the region’s diversity of people and thought through its arts and public programming. YBCA presents performing arts, visual arts and film/video programming year-round in the Forum, Screening Room, Galleries and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787) or visit www.ybca.org.

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FACT SHEET
Anna Deavere Smith’s

Notes From the Field: Doing Time In Education – The California Chapter

WHO: Anna Deavere Smith
Music by Marcus Shelby

WHAT: Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presents a public Town Hall featuring Anna Deavere Smith, who will present a staged reading of Notes From the Field: Doing Time In Education – The California Chapter, which explores the school-to-prison pipeline, a national trend where children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Field Notes: Doing Time In Education: The California Chapter was developed with support from The Ground Floor; Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work.

WHERE: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater
700 Howard Street San Francisco, CA 94103

WHEN: July 17, 2014 @ 8:00 PM

TIX & INFO: Tickets are $15 and can be purchased online at www.ybca.org or by phone at (415) 978-ARTS