FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKELEY REP HONORS ANNA DEAVERE SMITH AND PEET’S COFFEE AT OVATION
Gala evening benefits Theatre’s artistic and educational programming

February 26, 2020 – On Saturday, April 18 Berkeley Repertory Theatre celebrates the transformative power of theatre at OVATION, the organization’s annual gala. The evening signals a new era of artistic excellence under the leadership of Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer and Managing Director Susie Medak. This year, OVATION also celebrates two extraordinary changemakers who are making an impact on stage and in the community – artist Anna Deavere Smith and Berkeley-based pioneer Peet’s Coffee. Berkeley Rep’s only fundraising event of the year, OVATION aims to raise $900,000 to support the Theatre’s productions, new play program, and School of Theatre. The event will take place at 6:00PM at The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco.

Anna Deavere Smith is a celebrated actress, playwright, teacher, and author. She has appeared at Berkeley Rep in Let Me Down Easy, Fires in the Mirror, and Twilight: Los Angeles, and in 2015, she presented her most recent play, Notes from the Field, which looked at the vulnerability of youth, inequality, the criminal justice system, and contemporary activism. The play went on to great acclaim, with The New York Times heralding the play among The Best Theater of 2016 and TIME magazine naming it one of the Top 10 Plays of the year. HBO premiered the film version in February 2018.

“Anna Deavere Smith is one of the truly singular artists of our time,” says Johanna Pfaelzer. “Her extraordinary insight, rigor, compassion, and artistry have highlighted situations and given voice to people with whom we might not otherwise have the opportunity to spend time. Her plays both challenge and allow us to see the world in new ways. I am honored to have the chance to celebrate Anna’s work and her decades-long relationship with Berkeley Rep, whose audiences have been transformed by her vision time and time again.”

Berkeley Rep also honors Peet’s Coffee. In 1966, Alfred Peet opened his first coffeebar on Vine and Walnut in Berkeley, pioneering the craft coffee movement in America. Peet’s is dedicated to small-batch roasting, superior quality beans, freshness, and a darker roasting style that produces a rich, flavorful cup. Since its founding, Peet’s has been committed to the community and today is proud to be the exclusive coffee of Berkeley Rep, as well as the namesake of the state-of-the-art Peet’s Theatre. Supporting Berkeley Rep’s high artistic standards and diverse programming is an extension of this mission.

“Peet’s supported Berkeley Rep when we first opened our doors, and they have stuck by us in all the years since,” says Susie Medak. “I can’t think of another company that so shares our values or that has played more of a role in our growth. We are proud to honor them.”

There is still time to reserve a ticket – or an entire table – for Berkeley Rep’s OVATION. The gala evening includes a cocktail reception, and a coffee- and tea-inspired dinner menu. Exclusive prizes and one-of-a-kind adventures await guests in Berkeley Rep’s exhilarating live auction, featuring exceptional travel packages like a two-week voyage on the residential yacht The World, and extraordinary food and wine experiences.
OVATION is made possible by the generosity of Platinum sponsors Robin and Rich Edwards, Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, Richard Grand Foundation, Peet's Coffee, Sudha Pennathur and Ed Messerly, The Strauch Kulhanjian Family, and Gail and Arne Wagner.

The planning committee for the event is led by co-chairs Jill Fugaro and Laura Severino and includes Deborah Barrera, Ronnie Caplane, Narsai David, Rich Edwards, Sandra Eggers, Scott Haber, Sandra McCandless, Sudha Pennathur, Margaret Rothschild, Audrey Rose Sockolov, Jean Strunsky, Gail Wagner, and Susan Wolin.

Tickets for Berkeley Rep's OVATION begin at $750. Tables are available at several different sponsorship tiers — $7,500 (Bronze), $12,500 (Silver), $18,000 (Gold), $25,000 (Platinum). All proceeds from the event support the work on Berkeley Rep’s stages, as well as the Theatre’s arts education and new play development programs.

For more information, contact Nina Feliciano at (510) 647-2901 or concierge@berkeleyrep.org

ABOUT BERKELEY REP
Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities — which also include the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Be a Rep. Learn more at berkeleyrep.org

ATTENTION CALENDAR EDITORS:
Berkeley Rep’s OVATION: Celebrate the Transformative Power of Theatre
WHEN: Saturday, April 18 @ 6:00PM
WHERE: Ritz-Carlton San Francisco, 600 Stockton Street, San Francisco, CA 94108
HOW MUCH: Individual tickets begin at $750. Tables are priced between $7,500 and $25,000
INFO & TIX: (510) 647-2901 or www.berkeleyrep.org/ovation/

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