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Press Contact: Marilyn Langbehn
510.548.3422 x118
510.910.3129 cell
mlangbehn@calshakes.org

California Shakespeare Theater Announces “Building for the Future: The Cal Shakes Campaign”

Theater announces two-phase plan to renovate the Bruns Amphitheater and surrounding campus; \$7.5 million already raised towards \$8.2 million Phase One goal; Construction of Phase One to begin this October and conclude prior to the opening of the 2010 season

Berkeley, CA – California Shakespeare Theater, the Bay Area’s premier professional theater dedicated to reimagining classic works of world theater, today announced “**Building for the Future: The Cal Shakes Campaign**,” a visionary plan to renovate the Bruns Amphitheater and its surrounding campus in the first major upgrade since the company moved to Orinda’s Siesta Valley from Berkeley nearly twenty years ago.

"Three years ago, our board made a commitment to a capital campaign," says Cal Shakes Artistic Director **Jonathan Moscone**, "and through the leadership of **Sharon Simpson** and **Jim Roethe**, and the work of our entire board and staff, and the most talented campaign committee members ever, we are actually turning what started as a dream into vision, and now into a reality. Our artists deserve it. Our audiences deserve it. And in the end, we will have a theater company that will be sustainable for many, many years to come, so that the next generations of theater goers and artists can continue to experience the relevance of Shakespeare and the classics in their lives."

The San Francisco-based design firm **Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects** has created a two-phase plan for permanent, environmentally sustainable structures which will not only complement the natural beauty of the Bruns, but will richly enhance the theater-going experience for patrons and artists alike. **Phase One** of the project will address the replacement of 20-year-old deteriorating temporary structures that currently house restrooms, office space, and artists’ work spaces. **Phase Two** will focus on the specific needs of the amphitheater itself, including significant upgrades to patron comfort and the replacement of outmoded production facilities and systems with state-of-the-art technology.

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The Theater has raised nearly **\$7.5 million** of the **\$8.2 million** price tag for Phase One; campaign co-chairs **Jim Roethe** and **Sharon Simpson** expressed confidence in successfully reaching the campaign goal.

“We began this campaign nearly two years ago and our Board of Directors and many donors have thrown their whole-hearted support behind this project. In the past four months we’ve raised more than \$250,000 to match a challenge grant from one of our long-time donors. We know that our supporters are committed to taking this bold step to ensure that the company has a viable sustainable home for the future,” said Campaign co-chair and former Board president **Jim Roethe**.

“Cal Shakes is a Bay Area treasure”, added Campaign co-chair **Sharon Simpson**. “It provides crucial public spaces where people can collectively find inspiration, entertainment, and community. But after years of exposure to the elements, the Bruns facilities have become untenable for audiences and artists alike. Unless we act now, we risk losing that treasure for future generations.”

Cal Shakes Associate Artist **L. Peter Callender** is equally as enthusiastic about the project. “I have been returning to Cal Shakes year after year out of my love of the theater, love of the audience, and love of the setting,” he said. “And now I’m very excited because this project will finally give us backstage conditions that match the standards we have been able to set in performance.”

Phase One of the construction, to be completed by spring of 2010 in time to open Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone’s tenth anniversary season, will focus on the construction of a new **7000-plus-square-foot Patron and Artist Center** to replace the dilapidated temporary structures that have been in use since the site opened in 1991. The new Center will include 31 new restrooms with low-flow plumbing features to reduce water consumption; energy-efficient dressing rooms, wardrobe area and green-room for the artists; a modern café; a theater store; offices for house management and volunteers; and much-needed storage space. The entire structure will be topped with a “living roof” designed to provide insulation, habitat for plants and animals, and a visual tie to the hillside beyond.

Other elements of Phase One include regrading the Bruns site to create a spacious, central plaza that will open up the grounds with more room for people to gather; an enlarged access road at the back of the theater, creating crucial space for loading scenery and new possibilities for production design; and installation of sustainable infrastructure that significantly improves mechanical, electrical, water, and sewage systems. In addition, the first

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phase of the plan sets aside \$700,000 for a working capital reserve to help ensure long-term financial stability. The project has been designed to LEED certification standards.

Phase Two will focus on the Bruns Amphitheater by upgrading antiquated lighting and sound systems, building a new control booth, and rebuilding the stage. Permanent seating will replace plastic chairs. A new windscreen and extended sunscreen around the amphitheater will improve comfort for the patrons without disrupting views of the surrounding landscape.

Additional information about the project, including artist's renderings, campaign updates, photos, etc. are available on the web at www.calshakes.org/future.

Founded in 1974, the Theater began as an artistic collective and has evolved into a fully professional theater known for its innovative productions of classic theater. During its 15 years at Berkeley's John Hinkel Park, such actors as Annette Bening, John Vickery, Douglas Sills, Julian Lopez-Morillas, and Lura Dolas appeared in over 53 productions, primarily of the plays of William Shakespeare. In 1991, the Theater built its current performance venue, the 545-seat Bruns Memorial Amphitheater designed by Bay Area architect Gene Angell, in the hills between Berkeley and Orinda, following a capital campaign led by East Bay philanthropist Clarence Woodard and supported by foundations and Bay Area community leaders. In 2000, following a yearlong national search, Jonathan Moscone was appointed its current artistic director. Since Moscone's tenure, California Shakespeare Theater has broadened its programming to reflect its mission to create fresh rediscoveries of important works of world theater. The official change of the company's name from California Shakespeare Festival to California Shakespeare Theater in 2003 more clearly defines its role as a theater serving the diverse communities of our region beyond its summer programming offerings, especially through the year-round educational programming of its Artistic Learning department, and the ongoing development of new theatrical works as part of New Works/New Communities. Cal Shakes envisions becoming a true cultural leader of the Bay Area, providing a home for its community of artists, audiences and learners 365 days a year.

California Shakespeare Theater will open its 2010 season with the world premiere of *John Steinbeck's The Pastures of Heaven*, adapted by renowned San Francisco playwright **Octavio Solis**, and directed by **Jonathan Moscone**. Developed as part of Cal Shakes' **New Works/New Communities** program in collaboration with San Francisco's **Word for Word Performing Arts Company**, *Pastures of Heaven* marks the first time in 25 years Cal Shakes has debuted a play on its Main Stage. **Timothy Near**, former artistic director of San Jose Rep, returns to the Bruns with the season's second production, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, a forthright (and banned in its day)

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examination of the role of women in society, **July 10-August 1**. Noted director, designer, and adapter **Joel Sass**, whose rollicking *Pericles* delighted audiences and critics alike in 2008, will transform the hills of Orinda into the Scottish heath with a powerful 8-person adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, **August 21-September 12**. Rounding out the 2010 season is Artistic Director Moscone's take on Shakespeare's double-edged romantic comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which the barbs of a joyfully bickering couple fool no one but themselves. *Much Ado* runs from **September 22-October 17**. For tickets or more information, call the Cal Shakes box office at 510.548.9666 or visit www.calshakes.org.

PHOTO EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE: Photos and artist's renderings of the project are available at <http://www.calshakes.org/v4/press/pressphotos.html>

ABOUT CAL SHAKES

Founded in 1974, California Shakespeare Theater is a fully professional, critically acclaimed theater known for its innovative productions of the plays of William Shakespeare and other reimagined classics. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone and Managing Director Susie Falk, Cal Shakes is committed to being a leading community citizen by nourishing the imaginations of audiences, artists, and learners of all ages. Cal Shakes makes boldly imagined and deeply entertaining interpretations of Shakespeare and the classics; provides in-depth, far-reaching artistic learning programs for learners of all ages and circumstances; and brings disparate communities together around the creation of new American plays that reflect the cultural diversity of the Bay Area.

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