



**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF EXPANSION
ACCLAIMED THEATRE COMPANY OPENS
“THE NELL AND JULES DASHOW WING”**

BERKELEY, Calif. (August 12, 2009) – Berkeley’s acclaimed **Aurora Theatre Company** announced today the official completion of the company’s Addison Street expansion wing, **The Nell and Jules Dashow Wing**, named in honor of lead donor Deborah Ruth’s parents. The expansion space, which will have its official opening on **August 17** during a private ribbon-cutting ceremony, adds 2,600 square feet to the 7,200 square feet the company currently occupies, and houses a new rehearsal space for main stage productions, readings, and workshops of new productions, as well as artistic offices and conference room.

The Nell and Jules Dashow Wing also increases the capability for in-house set-building and allows the Aurora to increase the number of performances per show and extend current productions on the main stage while preparing for the next production. The expansion now also allows for a larger lobby and other patron amenities; it was built considering all green construction techniques and is handicapped accessible.

More than halfway through an ongoing \$2.1 million capital campaign, Aurora officially broke through the wall connecting its current space to an adjacent space and began the expansion project in January 2009. The new expansion wing is the final project of the late acclaimed theater architect Gene Angell (with his partner Brian Rawlinson); Oliver & Company, Inc. was the general contractor, with Edward Van of E.J. Van Company, Inc. overseeing the project as Construction Manager.

“To see this much-needed expansion project come to fruition after many months of planning and fund raising is indeed an exciting occasion,” said capital campaign co-chair and outgoing Board President Robert B. Hetler. “The entire Board of Directors of Aurora Theatre Company joins me in thanking the many generous donors who have made this milestone possible and for helping to ensure Aurora Theatre Company’s ultimate intimate theatre experience for future generations.”

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“It’s thrilling to celebrate a walk into this space,” said Carolyn Weinberger, campaign co-chair. “It’s also thrilling to celebrate the incredible devotion, dedication, determination and hard work of everyone who helped bring this phase of Aurora’s expansion to such a successful conclusion. Now, we can concentrate on reaching our other goals for the future: creating new works, attracting new audiences, and building our endowment.”

Veteran Bay Area actor and director Barbara Oliver, along with Dorothy Bryant, Marge Glicksman, Richard Rossi, and Ken Grantham formed Aurora Theatre Company in 1992. For its first decade, the company occupied an elegant, intimate 67-seat drawing room in the Julia Morgan-designed Berkeley City Club, quickly attracting a core of loyal patrons for its high-quality chamber productions. Seven years ago, the Aurora moved to its current space in the downtown Berkeley Arts District, a new theater that expanded seating capacity to 150. Today, with attendance at near capacity, the expansion seeks to support the needs, both artistically and operationally, of this growing professional theater company while retaining the actor-audience intimacy that has become Aurora’s defining characteristic.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank our community and funders, the hard-working Aurora Board of Directors, and our extraordinary staff for indeed making this an exciting time,” said Tom Ross, Aurora Theatre Company Artistic Director. “As we enter our 18th season and celebrate the completion of The Nell and Jules Dashow Wing, to see just how much the Aurora has grown, both artistically and physically, since its early days at the Berkeley City Club, is truly a testament to the importance of the arts in our community, even in these trying economic times. We look forward to sharing the Aurora experience for many years to come.”

Operating under a Tier 3.5 Actors’ Equity Association Bay Area Theatres contract on an annual budget of \$1.4 million, 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 theatres 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

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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 theatre that feeds the mind,” and the *Oakland Tribune* declared “it’s all about choices, and if you value good theatre, choose the Aurora.”

Aurora Theatre Company opens its 18th season in August with Clifford Odets’ legendary Depression-era drama **AWAKE AND SING!** directed by Joy Carlin, featuring **Charles Dean, Ellen Ratner, Ray Reinhardt, and Rod Gnapp**, along with **Victor Talmadge, Anthony Nemirovsky, Rebecca White, and Patrick Russell**. Tony-nominated director Barbara Damashek returns to Aurora Theatre Company in October to helm Neil LaBute’s exploration of body image in contemporary America, **FAT PIG**, and the jingle bells will rock again this December with a new edition of **THE COVERLETTES COVER CHRISTMAS**. Aurora Theatre Company Artistic Director Tom Ross helms the World Premiere of Joel Drake Johnson’s **THE FIRST GRADE** in January, and Aurora Theatre Company founding Artistic Director Barbara Oliver returns to direct Henrik Ibsen’s masterwork **JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN** in April. Closing the season in June is the Bay Area Premiere of Stephen Karem’s innovative comedy **SPEECH & DEBATE** directed by Robin Stanton. For tickets or more information about Aurora Theatre Company, the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit **auroratheatre.org**.

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