

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY SUPPORTERS RAISE FUNDS AT ENCHANTING EVENING OF DIONYSIAN DELIGHTS

Blue Sky Bacchanalia

SAN CARLOS, CA (8 May 2024) – Donned in togas and flowing Grecian gowns with heads topped with golden laurel crowns and clusters of grapes, some 212 guests gathered at **Hiller Aviation Museum** to honor **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** at its spring fundraiser *Blue Sky Bacchanalia*, an unforgettable evening of merriment and revelry. This Greco-Roman-inspired gathering, held **Sunday, May 5**, successfully raised more than \$400,000 to toast the exciting future of the Tony Award recipient and benefit its continued mission to bring the arts to Bay Area audiences.

Among the guests at the festivities were *Blue Sky Bacchanalia* chair **Barbara Shapiro** of Menlo Park and committee members **Wynne Dubovoy** of Menlo Park, **Dr. Sarah Donaldson** of Stanford, **Peggy Woodford Forbes** of Los Altos, **Nancy Ginsburg Stern** and **Holly Ward** of Palo Alto, **Julie Kaufman** of Atherton, **Jim Knipple** of Santa Clara, **Cindi Sears** of Portola Valley, and **Meb Steiner** and **Lynn Szekely-Goode** of Los Altos Hills. Also in attendance was TheatreWorks Board Chair **Mark Greenstein** of Menlo Park, and TheatreWorks trustees **Katie Blodgett** of San Carlos, **Rose Hau** of Atherton, **Alex Perez** of Palo Alto, **Daniel Shiplacoff** of Los Altos, **Jane Weston** of Emerald Hills, and **Edlyn Yuen** of Foster City. Montalvo Arts Executive Director **Angela McConnell**, EnActe Arts Founder/Artistic Director **Vinita Sud Belani**, **Kalpna and Rahan Guha**, and Harrell Design + Build's **Brooke Nicholson** and **Bee Rasmussen** enjoyed the festivities.

The event began with guests entering **Hiller Aviation Museum**, a stunning Smithsonian affiliate based in San Carlos, CA that features more than 50 aircraft from more than a century of aviation history. The attendees wandered through the aero displays, trying out their skills on helicopter

and airplane simulators as well as admiring spacesuits and cockpits. First on the event's agenda was Dionysian delights, where signature cocktails and sumptuous wines from **J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines** flowed freely. Guests then gathered for feasting, enjoying hors d'oeuvres, salad, and a choice of braised short ribs or risotto cake.

TheatreWorks' Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli** and TheatreWorks Executive Director **Debbie Chinn** welcomed the crowd and kicked off the festivities. Star auctioneer **Devon Bell** took the stage to offer up rare treasures, unforgettable trips, and behind-the-scenes theatre experiences. The live auction featured a lavish seven-night stay in an ocean-view penthouse apartment in Mexico, a Paso Robles wine country getaway featuring a peek into production at J. Lohr Paso Robles Wine Center, dinner with award-winning television and stage star **Francis Jue** and tickets to see him in a play on Broadway, a New York trip with industry passes to National Alliance for Musical Theatre's 2024 Festival of New Musicals, a luxurious golfing experience at prestigious courses in Palo Alto and Pebble Beach, a dinner and private concert with Bay Area theatre veteran **Molly Bell** (recently seen in TheatreWorks' *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*) accompanied by TheatreWorks Resident Music Director **William Liberatore**, and premium tickets to a San Francisco Giants game. Bell closed the auction by inviting guests to raise their paddles and commit to helping make a difference by supporting live theatre.

TheatreWorks introduced **Blue Sky Bacchanalia** honoree, longtime partners **The Lohr Family**, whose wines are often extolled as "the nectar of TheatreWorks." Following a video tribute, **Lynn Lohr** spoke fondly of TheatreWorks and The Lohr Family's collaboration throughout the years, presenting Sardelli and Chinn with magnums of wine in thanks. J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines founder **Jerry Lohr**, CEO/President **Steve Lohr**, and Chief Brand Officer **Cynthia Lohr** were also in attendance at the event.

Then, the attendees engaged in a heated competition as TheatreWorks kicked off the Dessert Dash, sponsored by **Cindi Sears** and TheatreWorks' Volunteer Artist Hospitality Committee. In this favorite TheatreWorks fundraiser tradition, guests gathered table bids for the chance to choose their dessert selection first from a table groaning with beautifully decorated and decadent desserts from businesses across the Bay Area including **Namesake Cheesecake**, **Du Ciel**

Artisan Bakery, Lavender n' Cream, Alexander's Patisserie, Berry Creek Bakeshop, Fleur du Cocoa, Oy! Gluten Free, Icing on the Cake, Maison Alyzée, Satura Patisserie, Douce France, Mademoiselle Colette, Draeger's Market, Cocola, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Susie Cakes, and Paris Baguette. The Dessert Dash earned a record profit at *Blue Sky Bacchanalia*, raising more than \$34,000 for the Tony Award recipient theatre company.

Bay Area actor **Phil Wong** (TheatreWorks' *Little Shop of Horrors*) then introduced *Blue Sky Bacchanalia* honoree **Francis Jue** (*Soft Power, M. Butterfly, TV's Madam Secretary*). The Obie Award-winning actor has performed regularly on TheatreWorks stages for decades, including in the recent claws-out comedy *Tiger Style!*. An Olympian Ensemble of Bay Area talent including Wong, **Nick Nakashima, Melissa WolfKlain, and Solona Husband** honored Jue's legacy at TheatreWorks with highlights from his illustrious career, performing songs from *Cabaret, Kiss of the Spider Woman, and Into the Woods*. Nakashima, WolfKlain, and Husband will appear onstage together again in TheatreWorks' upcoming World Premiere musical *Being Alive: A Sondheim Celebration*, performing June 5-30, 2024 at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. At the night's end, VIP guests joined *Blue Sky Bacchanalia* honorees for a special toast to conclude the festivities.

Sponsors of *Blue Sky Bacchanalia* include partner sponsor **Edward Jones**; art sponsors **J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines, Harrell Design + Build, and Galileo Planning Group**; vodka sponsor **Tito's Handmade Vodka**; gold sponsors **Anne & Larry Hambly, Lynn Szekely, and Renee & Mark Greenstein**; and silver sponsors **Sarah Donaldson, Wynne Segal Dubovoy, Julie Kaufman & Doug Klein, Mark Lewis & Barbara Shapiro, Cindi Sears, Rick Stern & Nancy Ginsburg Stern. Gayla Lorthridge Wood & Walt Wood** sponsor **J. Lohr Vineyards & Wine** and **Holly Ward** sponsors **Francis Jue**. Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2023/2024 season is **San Francisco Chronicle**.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, led by Artistic Director **Giovanna Sardelli**, presents a wide variety of contemporary plays and musicals and revitalizes great works of the past. Founded in 1970 by **Robert Kelley**, TheatreWorks has grown from a truly original Silicon Valley start-up to become one of the nation's leading professional non-profit theatre companies. TheatreWorks was

recently honored as the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award. TheatreWorks also champions new work, offering artists support and a creative home as they develop new stories for the American theatre. Offstage, TheatreWorks' arts education programs in local schools and arts engagement programs in Silicon Valley neighborhoods uplift its audiences and strengthen community bonds. Onstage and off, TheatreWorks welcomes the mosaic of people that embody the Bay Area and beyond, celebrating the transformative power of theatre to ignite imagination, inspire conversation, and enliven souls.

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://cbpr.co/press/blueskybacchanalia>