

Mark Taper Forum 46th Season 2013

FIRST SEASON PRODUCTION

Tribes

by Nina Raine
Directed by David Cromer
February 27 – April 14, 2013

SECOND SEASON PRODUCTION

August Wilson's

Joe Turner's Come and Gone

Directed by Phylicia Rashad
April 24 – June 9, 2013

THIRD SEASON PRODUCTION

A Parallelogram

by Bruce Norris
Directed by Anna D. Shapiro
West Coast Premiere
July 10 – August 18, 2013

FOURTH SEASON PRODUCTION

Humor Abuse

Created by Lorenzo Pisoni and Erica Schmidt
Directed by Erica Schmidt
September 17 – November 3, 2013

FIFTH SEASON PRODUCTION

The Steward of Christendom

by Sebastian Barry
Directed by Steven Robman
November 26, 2013 – January 5, 2014



 Center
Theatre
Group
L.A.'s Theatre Company

Inspiring Our Future

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Michael Ritchie, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **Edward L. Rada**, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Gordon Davidson, FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Presents

HUMOR ABUSE

CREATED BY

Lorenzo Pisoni AND **Erica Schmidt**

PERFORMED BY

Lorenzo Pisoni

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Ben Stanton

SOUND DESIGNER
AND ORIGINAL MUSIC

Bart Fasbender

ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR

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PRODUCTION
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David S. Franklin

STAGE MANAGER

T.J. Kearney

DIRECTED BY

Erica Schmidt

Humor Abuse runs approximately 90 minutes without an intermission.

Originally produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club, Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director,
Barry Grove, Executive Producer, on February 19, 2009.

Humor Abuse was developed at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Conference.

September 17 – November 3, 2013
Mark Taper Forum

~ PRESERVING ~ THE PICKLES

by Emily Means

BY THE TIME *Humor Abuse's* Lorenzo Pisoni was six years old, he was a contracted member of his parents' Pickle Family Circus. Born and raised a Pickle, he was exposed to the inner workings of a world many of us can only dream about, a world in which, as Lorenzo says, "There are no limits. You can do whatever you think of."

Lorenzo's parents, Pickle co-founders Larry Pisoni and Peggy Snider, met while working at The San Francisco Mime Troupe in the early 1970s. They began juggling together, performing and passing the hat in Union Square. Together, they gathered a band of diverse performers — unicyclists, acrobats, jugglers, musicians and clowns — and the Pickle Family Circus opened in May 1975 in the gym of John O'Connell High School in San Francisco's Mission District.

From the beginning, the Pickles made deliberate decisions that set them apart from the traditional American circus. The Pickles staged performances in a single ring, without circus animals, and on an intimate scale that embraced and empowered audience members. Peggy remembers, "It was a way of leveling so that there was not really a vast difference between the audience and circus performer. It was a way of saying, 'If you want to do something, you can do it. We are not extraordinary individuals. We are just like you.'"

The Pickles also embraced the communities from which their audiences came. Their first performance benefited Latino daycare centers in San Francisco, and up and down the West Coast they collaborated with senior centers, food pantries, and many other organizations.

With all the spirit of a neighborhood circus thrown together in somebody's backyard, the Pickles relied on more than just the talent of its performers, who were responsible for every aspect of their business. Everyone pitched in to keep the show running, whether it meant assembling bleachers or hanging canvas, building props or personally mentoring sponsoring groups. Terry Lorant, Pickle performer and photographer, reflected on this all-for-one, one-for-all philosophy in an interview with San Francisco Chronicle columnist Jon Carroll: "We never

considered saying, 'Forget it.' There was some intense — maybe insane — group pride that enabled us to do things that none of us individually would have ever thought of attempting." The Pickle Family Circus was an all-inclusive celebration, founded by two visionaries who fell in love — not only with the circus, but also with each other.

Larry and Peggy married, and Lorenzo was literally born into the circus; he grew as the circus did. With a large extended family of civic-minded artists, he was one of several Pickle kids who spent their childhoods on the road in backstage "tent cities," learning tricks of the trade from a "kiddy corral" that was watched over by whoever was not onstage. "Everyone in the company was always having a good time," Lorenzo remembers. "I think that is maybe the rarest thing I experienced as a child. I don't know many kids who not only have a firsthand knowledge of what their parents do on a day-to-day basis, but also get to see their parents enjoying what they do — see any adults enjoying what they do."

The adults were having such a good time, in fact, that Lorenzo could not wait to participate. "He wanted to do it *all*," Larry remembers. "He wanted to do the acrobatics and the juggling. He wanted to clown; he wanted to play music." At age two, Lorenzo began going onstage during intermission. His earliest acts were, according to his mom, "adorable" imitations of what he saw the adults do: wholehearted attempts at tumbling, clowning and juggling.

When Larry left the Pickles in 1987, Lorenzo inherited a strong sense of responsibility for the circus his father helped start. Whenever he could, the 11-year-old inserted himself into the roles his father would have performed, both onstage and off. "If they would have let me drive the bleacher truck, I probably would have jumped at the chance," he remembers.

Lorenzo continued to perform with the Pickle Family Circus throughout his teenage years, even while attending high school full time. School introduced him to a world of possibilities outside the family business:

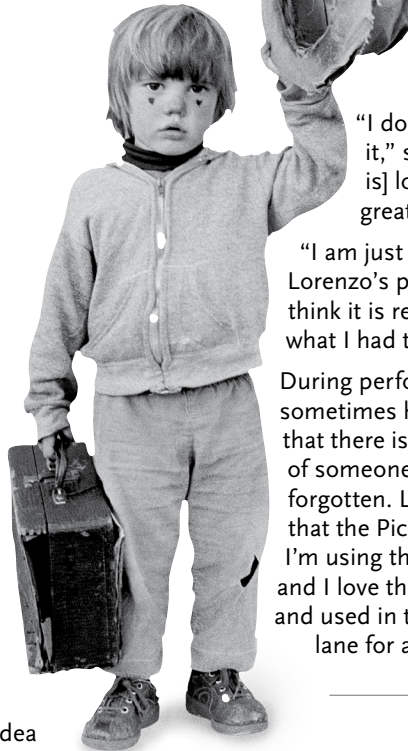


"I think that's when I realized, 'Oh, I'm not going to do circus for the rest of my life.' Although I never would have admitted it then, because it was my identity."

Matriculation at Vassar College across the country in upstate New York meant a fresh start for the Pickle kid. He chose to keep his unique upbringing a secret, but his anonymity was short-lived: a director called his apartment and left a message on the answering machine asking whether he wanted to be ringmaster of a circus in Tokyo. His roommates intercepted the call, and Lorenzo was forced to admit the truth. They were incredulous until he did a backflip.

After graduation, Lorenzo worked as a ringmaster in a Las Vegas Cirque du Soleil show before moving to New York to pursue an acting career. After many years of success, he decided to resurrect an old idea for a show, one that had begun as a couple of anecdotes he and fellow Pickle kid Jonah Hoyle (son of Pickle clown Geoff Hoyle) had contributed to a one-night benefit act they performed as teenagers alongside their dads. They were anecdotes about growing up in the circus and being "abused in the name of humor."

At Vassar, Lorenzo and Jonah had merged versions of these "humor abuse" monologues with old Pickle routines and a "performed history" of clowning. When Lorenzo approached Jonah about reviving the piece, Jonah declined: "Lorenzo's story was *the story* of the Pickles... I told him that he should make it a solo show. And that he should make it as personal and as honest as he could." With the help of director, writer and Vassar friend Erica Schmidt, Lorenzo set out to do just that. Erica focused on the autobiographical elements, helping Lorenzo to see what was already there: the story of a father and a son. The show was produced by Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City Center — with Larry in the audience.



"I don't know that he quite knew how to process it," says Lorenzo. "I really do think [the piece] is loving and celebratory... He did a really great job as a parent, and he's a great clown."

"I am just incredibly proud," Larry says of Lorenzo's performance in *Humor Abuse*. "I think it is really quite a wonderful gift. It is what I had to pass on to him, and I did."

During performances of *Humor Abuse*, Lorenzo sometimes hears an audience member laugh and knows that there is a Pickle in the house. It is the laughter of someone who has been reminded of something forgotten. Lorenzo is happy to remind us: "I love that the Pickles can live on in some way. I love that I'm using the circus' original backdrop in the show, and I love that I'm using props that my parents built and used in the ring. It's a little walk down memory lane for a lot of people." Lorenzo included. ■

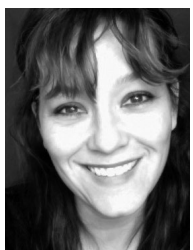
Excerpted from an article which first appeared in the performance program for *Humor Abuse's* 2012 run at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.), where Emily Means currently serves as the school and community programs coordinator.

IN PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE - 1. Willy the Clown (Bill Irwin, center) gets a gift as other Pickles look on (L-R) - Jonah Hoyle, Mary Winegarden, Melinda Marsh, Larry Pisoni, Lorenzo Pisoni, Peggy Snider, Cecil MacKinnon, Gypsy Snider, Sando Counts and Michael Margulis • 2. (L-R) Lorenzo and Larry Pisoni • 3. (L-R) Larry and Lorenzo Pisoni • 4. Lorenzo Pisoni. PHOTOS BY TERRY LORANT.

Who's Who



LORENZO PISONI (Co-creator/Performer). Broadway credits include *Equus* (Broadhurst Theatre) and *Henry IV* (Lincoln Center Theater). Off-Broadway credits include *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It* (The Public Theater/NYSF), *Humor Abuse*, *Last Dance*, *The Explorers Club* and *Golden Age* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Election Day* (Second Stage Theatre), *The Devil's Disciple* (The Irish Repertory Theatre) and *Troilus and Cressida* (Theatre for a New Audience). Selected regional credits include *Humor Abuse* and *The Gamester* (A.C.T.), *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *The Great Gatsby* and *Humor Abuse* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), *The Injured Party* (South Coast Repertory), *The Great Gatsby* (Guthrie Theater), *The Tempest* (McCarter Theatre Center), and *Arms and the Man* (Barrington Stage Company). Film and television credits include *A Lotus 'Til Reckoning*; *Company Retreat*; *The Adjustment Bureau*; *Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son*; *The Good Wife*; *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*; and *All My Children*. Other selected credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center), the Pickle Family Circus and Cirque du Soleil. Pisoni graduated from Vassar College; selected honors include Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Obie and Outer Critics Circle Awards.



ERICA SCHMIDT (Co-creator/Director). Credits include Jonas Hassen Khemiri's Obie Award-winning *Invasion!*, *Humor Abuse* (Manhattan Theatre Club; winner: Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics, Drama Desk and Obie Awards; also A.C.T., Philadelphia Theatre Company and Seattle Rep), *Rent* (Tokyo), Molière's *Imaginary Invalid*, Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Sorcerer* and Copland's *The Tender Land* (Bard SummerScape), *Carnival* (The Paper Mill Playhouse), *People Be Heard* (Playwrights Horizons), *Trust* (The Play Company; Callaway Award nominee), *As You Like It* (The Public Theater/NYSF, chashama and New York International; Fringe Festival 2000 winner for Best Direction), *Debbie Does Dallas* (wrote the adaptation and directed off-Broadway at the Jane Street). Upcoming: *Taking Care of Baby* by

Dennis Kelly at MTC, *I Call My Brothers* for The Play Company, and a workshop production of *Girls Turn Red* (also author) at The Vineyard.

BEN STANTON (Lighting Designer), based in Brooklyn, New York, has designed lighting for theatre, dance and concerts over the past 14 years throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Recent projects include *Angels in America* (director Michael Greif, Signature Theatre Company), *The Whipping Man* (director Doug Hughes, Manhattan Theatre Club; Lucille Lortel Award and Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Lighting Design), Sufjan Stevens' *Age of Adz* (European tour and Prospect Park Bandshell) and *Humor Abuse* at Seattle Repertory and A.C.T. In New York, Stanton has designed at The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, LCT3, Roundabout Underground, Signature Theatre, MCC Theater, Vineyard Theatre, Primary Stages, The Kitchen, Daryl Roth Theatre, Edge Theatre, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and The stageFARM. Regional theatre credits include work at the Mark Taper Forum, Long Wharf Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, Dallas Theater Center, South Coast Repertory, the Huntington Theatre Company, Philadelphia Theatre Company, McCarter Theatre Center, Intiman Theatre, Paper Mill Playhouse, Westport Country Playhouse, Hartford Stage, Actors Theater of Louisville, the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Chautauqua Theater Company, Bay Street Theatre, New York Stage and Film, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival.



BART FASBENDER (Sound Designer and Original Music) has worked with Erica Schmidt on *Honey Brown Eyes* (The Working Theater), *Invasion!* and *Trust* (The Play Company), *Slag Heap* (Cherry Lane Theatre), *Spanish Girl* (Second Stage Theatre Uptown), *Don't Blink* (The Directors Company), *Top Girls* (Fordham University), *Arms and the Man* (Barrington Stage Company) and *Humor Abuse* (Seattle Repertory, A.C.T.). New York credits include *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* on Broadway, *Storefront Church* and *Port Authority* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Lonely, I'm Not* and *Mr. and Mrs. Fitch* (Second Stage Theatre), *Burning* and *Russian Transport*

(The New Group), *Apple Cove* (Women's Project), *Three Changes* and *Drunken City* (Playwrights Horizons), *Graceland* (LCT3), *The Revisionist*, *Asuncion* and *The Aliens* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), *A Body of Water* (Primary Stages), and *Boozy...*, *Heddatron*, and *Hell House* (St. Ann's Warehouse/Les Freres Corbusier). Regionally, Fasbender has designed for The Old Globe, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, New York Stage and Film, Barrington Stage Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Center Theatre Group (Kirk Douglas Theatre), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Virginia Shakespeare Festival and Hartford TheaterWorks. Fasbender was nominated for a Hewes Design Award.

MANHATTAN THEATRE CLUB. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Lynne Meadow and Executive Producer Barry Grove, MTC has become one of the country's most prominent theatre companies. Productions at its Broadway and off-Broadway venues have earned 19 Tony Awards and six Pulitzer Prizes, an accomplishment unparalleled by a New York theatrical institution. Renowned productions include *Humor Abuse*; *The Assembled Parties*; *Venus in Fur*; *Good People*; *The Whipping Man*; *Time Stands Still*; *Ruined*; *Rabbit Hole*; *Doubt*; *Proof*; *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*; *Love! Valour! Compassion!*; *Sylvia*; *Putting It Together*; *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*; *Crimes of the Heart*; and *Ain't Misbehavin'*. www.ManhattanTheatreClub.com.



DAVID S. FRANKLIN (Production Stage Manager). Center Theatre Group highlights: *An Enemy of the People*, Baz Luhrmann's *La Bohème*, *Art, A Perfect Wedding*, *Romance*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Curtains*, *Nightingale*, *The History Boys*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Two Unrelated Plays* by David Mamet, Kirk Douglas in his solo show, *Before I Forget*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Parade*, *The Subject Was Roses*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, Randy Newman's *Harp and Angels*, *God of Carnage*, *Vigil*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Los Otros*, *Red*, *Seminar*, *Tribes* and *A Parallelogram*. Other Los Angeles: Los Angeles Theatre Center in its heyday from 1985–1990, Pasadena Playhouse and Geffen Playhouse. Regional: Seattle Rep, Intiman Theatre. New York: Public Theater. Tours: Europe — *Quotations from*

a *Ruined City, Law of Remains* (with Reza Abdoh's Dar a Luz company); North America — Ann Magnuson's *You Could Be Home Now*.

T.J. KEARNEY (*Stage Manager*). Mark Taper Forum: *Enter Laughing*. Ahmanson Theatre: *Leap of Faith*. National Tour: *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*. Pasadena Playhouse: *South Street*; *Twist! An American Musical*; *Dangerous Beauty*. The Laguna Beach Playhouse: *Marvelous Wonderettes: Caps and Gowns*; *This Wonderful Life*. Five seasons at Sacramento Music Circus. T.J. holds a BFA from CalArts. Special thanks to family for all their support. Proud member of Actors' Equity.

MICHAEL RITCHIE (*Artistic Director*) is in his eighth season as Center Theatre Group's Artistic Director, and has led over 130 productions to the Ahmanson, Taper and Douglas stages since his arrival in 2005. From 1996 to 2004 Michael was the Producer of the Williamstown Theatre Festival and prior to that he was a Production Stage Manager in NYC. At CTG, he premiered six musicals that moved to Broadway — *The Drowsy Chaperone* (which won 13 Tony Award nominations), *Curtains* (eight Tony nominations) 13, *9 to 5: The Musical*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* and *Leap of Faith*. He has produced 33 world premieres including the musicals *Minsky's*, *Venice* and *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, and the plays *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (a Pulitzer Prize finalist that also moved to Broadway), *Water & Power* and *Yellow Face*, and he presented a broad range of plays and musicals ranging from *Dead End* to *The Black Rider* to *Edward Scissorhands* to blockbusters such as *God of Carnage*, *Mary Poppins*, *Jersey Boys* and *August: Osage County*. In addition, Michael inaugurated CTG's New Play Production Program, designed to foster the development and production of new work.

EDWARD L. RADA (*Managing Director*) returned to Center Theatre Group in 2011 after previously serving as CTG's Chief Financial Officer for 12 years (1996 – 2008). Rada spent three years (2008 – 2011) as President of the Music Center Foundation, a non-profit corporation that holds and invests the endowment and reserve funds for the Music Center and its resident companies (including CTG). Prior to his years at CTG, he was the Director of Finance at The Old Globe in San Diego and principal of Rada & Associates, an accounting firm that specialized in entertainment-related

non-profit organizations and theatrical productions. He is a graduate of Occidental College in Los Angeles with numerous post-graduate coursework and credentials. He currently serves on the board of directors for Entertainment Industry Foundation, Theatre @ Boston Court, and United Support of Artists for Africa/USA for Africa, among other affiliations. He also serves on the board of trustees for the pension, health and welfare and 401(k) plans of I.A.T.S.E. Local 33 Stagehands Union.

DOUGLAS C. BAKER (*Producing Director*) is now in his 23rd season at CTG. Previously, he managed Broadway and touring productions including *Tru*, *Born Yesterday*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Annie*, *A Chorus Line*, *Working*, *The Wiz*, and *Legends!*, which premiered at the Ahmanson Theatre in 1986 and starred Mary Martin and Carol Channing. Doug is a member of the Achievement Hall of Fame of Chagrin Falls Schools in Ohio and a graduate of Albion College. He is an active member of the Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network and is a proud member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. In May 2013 Doug received The Broadway League's prestigious Outstanding Achievement in Presenter Management Award.

KELLEY KIRKPATRICK (*Associate Artistic Director*). Since arriving at CTG in 2005, Kelley has produced over 40 productions at the Ahmanson Theatre, Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theatre, many of which have gone on to future lives on Broadway, off-Broadway and beyond. In addition to producing shows across CTG's three stages, he has had the privilege of collaborating with numerous local and national artists to commission and develop new works.

GORDON DAVIDSON (*Founding Artistic Director*) led the Taper throughout its first 38 seasons, guiding over 300 productions to its stage and winning countless awards for himself and the theatre — including the Tony Award for theatrical excellence, Margo Jones Award, The Governor's Award for the Arts and a Guggenheim fellowship. *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Angels in America* (Part One) won the Pulitzer in consecutive years and, in 1994, three of the four plays nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play were from the Taper (*Angels in America* won). In 1989 Gordon took over the Ahmanson and, in 2004, he produced the inaugural season in the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

Additional staff for *Humor Abuse*

Technical Consultant Brian Fauska
Assistant Lighting Designer John A. Garofalo
Production Assistant Andrew Lia

CREDITS

"Larry's Memory" by Randall Craig, performed by Wayne Barker; Historical photos by Terry Lorant; Set construction by Seattle Repertory Theatre; Original costumes provided by Manhattan Theatre Club, Seattle Repertory and American Conservatory Theatre; Additional costumes for CTG production provided by CTG Costume Shop and additional staff: Tailor – Swantje Tuohino, First Hand – Iris Marshall, Stitchers – Ophelia Brown and Leonardo Lopez; Production photography by Craig Schwartz, Los Angeles, and Mark Garvin.

SPECIAL THANKS

A.C.T. – Brenden Mendoza and Emily Means, Seattle Repertory Theatre, John Lee Beatty, Mandy Greenfeld, Jerry Patch, Lisa McNulty, Preston Whiteway, Michael Cadman, Jill A. Mauritz, Sophia Chapadjiev, The NTI Class of fall 07, Tammy Dillon and Susana Meyer, Kate Lowald, Lauren Weigart, Kathy Hood, James Gregg, Voki Kalfayan, Bill Irwin, Jes Kelly, Terry Lorant, Peter Jacobson, Paul Pisoni, Annie Ratti, Mary Rower, Sandra Kelly, Harvey Robb, Gypsy Snider, Peggy Snider, Molly Ward, Russell Rothan, B.D. Wong, Jason Antoon, Wayne Barker, Peter Dinklage, Jonah Hoyle, Andrea Laver, Larry Pisoni.

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JESSICA NASH Donor Contributions Supervisor
MARIA PAREDES Donor Relations Associate for The Guild
BECKY PIERCE Events and Major Gifts Assistant
COURTNEY ROBERTSON Institutional Giving Associate
ERIC SEPPALA Executive Assistant to the Development Director
ERIN SCHLABACH Major Gifts Coordinator

AL BERMAN, ELIZABETH DELLORUSSO, GINA EAST, LILI HERRERA, TONY LEWELLEN, HOLLY RAMOS, NICOLE SCIPIONE, LENA THOMAS, BILL WALTON, REHA ZAMANI

..... Donor Advisors

ADAM BURCH, KARLA GALVEZ Donor Services Associates

ANNE BRUNER, MURRAY E. HELTZER, MARCI MILLER, JULIE NADAL Development Volunteers

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

JIM ROYCE Director of Marketing, Communications and Sales
NANCY HEREFORD Director of Media and Communications
PHYLLIS MOBERLY Media and Communications Associate
JASON MARTIN Media and Communications Associate
LYN COWAN Media and Communications Coordinator
CHELSEY ROSETTER Media and Communications Coordinator

NISHITA DOSHI Art Director
IRENE KANESHIRO Senior Design Manager
HARUKA HAYAKAWA Graphic Designer
TERESA ENGLISH Graphic Designer

ANDREW DARCEY Advertising Manager
KAREN VOCK Marketing Manager
JAMES SIMS Marketing Creative Manager
JEWEL MOORE Marketing Coordinator
ROSE POIRIER Webmaster
CRAIG SCHWARTZ Production Photographer
LARRY DEAN HARRIS Copywriter
CINEVATIVE/MARK CIGLAR Production Video
TOM BURMESTER, TREVOR ALGATT, KEVIN MAPP Event Video
ALLIED LIVE:
LAURA MATALON, SHANNON WILLETT, KELLY ESTRELLA Advertising Agency

TICKET SALES AND SERVICES

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SKYPP CABANAS Ticket Operations Coordinator
SANDY CZUBIAK Audience and Subscriber Services Manager
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ALICE CHEN Audience Services Asst. Supervisor
SAM AARON, DEBORAH REED Audience Services Sales Associates
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SARAH K. GONTA Box Office Treasurer
KISHISA ROSS, GISELE FRAZEUR Assistant Treasurers
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MICHAEL ZOLDESSY Account Sales Manager
EILEEN ROBERTS Account Sales Associate
KERRY KORF Priority Services Director
SUSAN F. TULLER Priority Services Operations Manager
JAY BURNS Priority Services Sales Manager
PAUL CUEN Priority Services Manager

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Center Theatre Group would like to thank its exceptional staff for their ongoing commitment, dedication and extraordinary efforts.