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Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak | Prismatic Communications | kevin@prismaticcommunications.com

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER ANNOUNCES LINEUP AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE FOR 2022/23 SEASON

Season includes the jaw-droppingly brilliant **PASSENGERS** by the modern circus collective, The 7 Fingers; the West Coast premiere of Obie Award–winning Bay Area playwright Christopher Chen’s new play, **THE HEADLANDS**; Qui Nguyen’s raucously funny and deeply moving **POOR YELLA REDNECKS**; the classic musical, **THE WIZARD OF OZ**, directed and choreographed by Tony Award nominee Sam Pinkleton; and new dates for the world premiere of the pre-Broadway musical, **SOUL TRAIN**

Add-on productions include a limited engagement of **ON BECKETT**, conceived by and starring Tony Award winner Bill Irwin, and the return of the Bay Area’s favorite holiday tradition, **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

SAN FRANCISCO (April 15, 2022)—**American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)** Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein announced today the productions that will make up the company’s 2022/23 season—the jaw-droppingly brilliant **PASSENGERS** by the modern circus collective, **The 7 Fingers**; the West Coast premiere of Obie Award–winning Bay Area playwright Christopher Chen’s new play, **THE HEADLANDS**; Qui Nguyen’s raucously funny and deeply moving sequel to *Vietgone*, **POOR YELLA REDNECKS**; the classic musical, **THE WIZARD OF OZ**, directed and choreographed by Tony Award nominee Sam Pinkleton; and new dates for the world premiere of the pre-Broadway musical, **SOUL TRAIN**. Add-on productions include a limited engagement of **ON BECKETT**, starring Tony Award winner Bill Irwin, and the return of the Bay Area’s favorite holiday tradition, **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**.

Said MacKinnon: “From celebrating the literal homecoming of the adventurous troupe and artist collective The 7 Fingers, to relishing in the childhood chapter of playwright Qui Nguyen’s autobiographical trilogy in small town Arkansas, to my directing Chris Chen’s San Francisco-set noir and murder mystery that unlocks family secrets, to hearing Dorothy sing ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’ on the Geary stage, to getting on board the Soul Train and Don Cornelius’s vision for America, I am all in to investigate and celebrate A.C.T.’s 2022/23 season’s theme of ‘home.’”

“We continue to celebrate the return to live theater with a lineup of productions that are sure to excite and delight, including several that were forced to be postponed due to the pandemic,” adds **Bielstein**. “We invite the San Francisco Bay Area to join us for a season of stories that reflect the world around us and resonate with the spirit of the San Francisco Bay Area.”

The 2022/23 season kicks off with the acclaimed production, *Passengers* (September 15–October 9, 2022), from the world-renowned contemporary circus arts collective, **The 7 Fingers**. You have never experienced a train ride quite like this. *Passengers* combines contemporary dance, circus arts, singing, acrobatics, and theater into a story that explores a community of strangers with one thing in common: each person has somewhere to go. The Geary Theater will be your personal quarters as life happens along this track of sorts, twisting and turning through valleys and plains. Experience tearful goodbyes, anticipatory reunions, and fateful encounters inside the cabin. These jaw-droppingly talented performers use feats such as aerial routines, juggling, tightrope walking, and more to explore the intricate connections between all of our lives. Performances of *Passengers* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater. Press night will be held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

“When first creating *Passengers* four years ago, it was in great hope and anticipation of one day, finally, bringing it back home to my native Bay Area,” said creator, director, and choreographer and Bay Area native **Shana Carroll**. “The pandemic put that dream temporarily on hold, but I’m thrilled that—a few long-awaited years later—my little train has finally made its way back to its home station in my beloved San Francisco. The themes at the heart of this show—of travel, of nostalgia for foreign lands and past eras, of celebrating a ‘ride’ that is unexpected and so often cut too short—have brought new layers of meaning and importance in our post-pandemic era. In many ways it feels we are premiering a whole new show!”

Next, A.C.T. will present a special limited engagement of *On Beckett* (October 19–23, 2022), conceived and performed by Tony Award winner **Bill Irwin**. Irwin can’t escape Samuel Beckett. He has spent a lifetime captivated by the Irish writer’s language. In this intimate 90-minute evening, Irwin will explore a performer’s relationship to Beckett, mining the physical and verbal skills acquired in his years as a master clown and Tony Award-winning actor. Irwin’s approach to the comic, the tragic, to every side of Beckett’s work—including *Waiting for Godot*, *Texts for Nothing*, and more—will allow audiences to experience the language in compelling new ways. *On Beckett* is presented as a 2022/23 season add-on production. Performances of *On Beckett* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater. Press night will be held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

The Bay Area's favorite holiday tradition returns in person with A.C.T.'s celebrated production of the **Charles Dickens** classic, *A Christmas Carol* (November 30–December 24, 2022). Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and those deliciously spooky ghosts, this version of *A Christmas Carol*—adapted by **Paul Walsh** and **Carey Perloff** and directed by **Peter J. Kuo**, based on the original direction by Carey Perloff—stays true to the heart of Dickens's timeless story of redemption and brings a playful sensibility to his rich language. *A Christmas Carol* is a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become a holiday tradition for families all around the San Francisco Bay Area. *A Christmas Carol* is presented as a 2022/23 season add-on production. Performances of *A Christmas Carol* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. Press night will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 at 7 p.m.

In early 2023, A.C.T. presents the West Coast premiere of Obie Award-winning Bay Area playwright **Christopher Chen's** striking, thought-provoking 21st-century noir, *The Headlands* (February 9–March 5, 2023). For true crime fan Henry Wong, his father's unexplained death is the ultimate cold case. But as he digs into the SFPD evidence, he's haunted by the myths and misdirections of his own family history. How did his parents really meet? What's behind the detective's warnings about the case? And what is hidden in the Marin Headlands? After its acclaimed world premiere at New York's Lincoln Center Theater in 2020, *The Headlands* comes home to San Francisco in a new production directed by Tony Award winner and A.C.T. Artistic Director **Pam MacKinnon**. Performances of *The Headlands* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. Press night will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

"I am thrilled beyond measure to be bringing *The Headlands* to A.C.T., and to be working with Pam MacKinnon to bring it to life," said **Christopher Chen**. "*The Headlands* is my love letter to San Francisco, the city I spent my entire life in—from birth, up to right now. To share this play with my hometown—a place I feel so deeply in my bones—will be one of the most personally meaningful moments of my career. "

In Spring 2023, the *Vietgone* story continues at the Strand Theater with playwright **Qui Nguyen's *Poor Yella Rednecks*** (March 30–May 7, 2023), the second chapter in his kickass, hip-hop trilogy about a Vietnamese family who swap war-torn Saigon for rural '70s Arkansas. The lovers from part one—Tong and Quang—are now married . . . that's the good news. The bad news is that with low-wage jobs, a son struggling with English, and rumors of old flames, the challenges are only beginning. Nguyen reunites with *Vietgone* director **Jaime Castañeda** to draw from rap, leap into martial arts, and dig deep into his own family journey. Funny, sexy, and subversive, *Poor Yella Rednecks* confirms Nguyen as a groundbreaking playwright of the new American story. Performances of *Poor Yella Rednecks* will take place at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater. Press nights will be held on Wednesday, April 12 and Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

"I'm thrilled to be back in San Francisco at one of my favorite theaters in the country," said **Jaime Castañeda**.

"This sequel to *Vietgone* promises to be just as exciting. Qui's words will make you want to laugh and dance at the same time."

Next, A.C.T. will present the classic musical, ***The Wizard of Oz* (June 1–25, 2023)**, from Tony Award–nominated director/choreographer **Sam Pinkleton** (*Soft Power* and *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*) and Tony Award-winning designer **David Zinn** (Edward Albee's *Seascape* at A.C.T.). Do you remember the first time you saw **L. Frank Baum's** classic tale come to life? The sweeping music and lyrics by **Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg**, the beloved characters, and the enthralling journey of a young girl from a grayscale Kansas prairie to a world filled with color, danger, and magic. For decades this enchanting classic musical has been a part of some of the best moments of our lives. When you enter the Geary Theater to experience *The Wizard of Oz*, you'll connect with rekindled memories—as well as the spark of unexpected surprises and twists! **Performances of *The Wizard of Oz* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. Press night will be held on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.**

"I am dizzy with excitement and a good bit of terror to bring *The Wizard of Oz* to San Francisco and A.C.T.'s fabulous Geary Theater," said **Pinkleton**. "The myth of Dorothy and her friends, and their big adventure, means something different to every single person you ask—whether it's childhood nostalgia, queer survival, or an unhealthy obsession with flying monkeys. I'm giddy and honored to enlist (gulp) the brains, heart, and courage of the Bay Area—in collaboration with mega-genius David Zinn—to create an intimate, intergenerational, human-powered *Wizard of Oz* that is bursting with contradictions and big beating hearts—just like San Francisco itself."

A.C.T. will close its 2022/23 season with the world premiere of the pre-Broadway musical, ***Soul Train* (August 25–October 1, 2023)**. Get ready for "the hippest trip in America" with the world premiere of *Soul Train*, the Broadway-bound musical based on the iconic TV show that brought Black music, dance, and style into every living room in America. Journey back to 1971 Chicago, when Black entrepreneur and radio DJ Don Cornelius transformed the pop culture landscape by recognizing the lack of Black musical artists on television. Within a year, his local dance show went national and became one of the longest running shows in television history. Elegant, determined, and complicated, Cornelius set trends for nearly 40 years by giving a stage—and a camera—to the artists who created the soundtrack of *multiple* generations, and to the dancers, including Rosie Perez and Jody Watley, who became superstars.

Launching fall of 2023 at A.C.T.'s historic Geary Theater, the acclaimed, trailblazing creative team of *Soul Train*—the first Broadway-bound musical with a creative team of all Black women—includes Tony Award nominated playwright and MacArthur Genius **Dominique Morisseau** (Broadway's *Ain't Too Proud*; *The Detroit Project*;

“Shameless”), Tony Award nominated choreographer **Camille A. Brown** (A.C.T.’s *Toni Stone*; Broadway’s *for colored girls...*, *Once on This Island*, “Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert!” on NBC), and acclaimed director **Kamilah Forbes** (Apollo Theater’s Executive Director, Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me* on HBO; *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*) as director. The musical is produced by Tony Award nominee **Matthew Weaver** (*Rock of Ages*), **Jeffrey Tick** (former owner of Broadway’s Helen Hayes Theater), and **Richard Gay** (5Pack Entertainment founder, Superfly COO, and former executive at Viacom’s Music Networks & BET Networks). Serving as executive producers are four-time Grammy Award-winning & Academy Award-winning artist and author of *Soul Train: The Music, Dance and Style of a Generation* **Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson**; Don Cornelius’s son **Tony Cornelius**; Emmy Award nominated *CSI* creator **Anthony E. Zuiker**; Live Nation Urban president **Shawn Gee**, and Broadway veteran **Devin Keudell** (*Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*), along with co-producers **Nick Stern** and **J. Todd Harris**. Performances of *Soul Train* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater. Press night for *Soul Train* will take place on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

“I am so excited to help bring the narrative of one of our culture’s most influential and legend-making endeavors to the stage,” said **Morisseau**. “Having grown up on this series and being immersed in the culture around it, I never knew what it took to make it the iconic staple that it is. Through the socio-political challenges both internally and externally, Don Cornelius’ uncompromised vision, and the revolutionary dance culture that the show made visible to the mainstream, there are a million handprints on what we know as “Soul Train.” I cannot wait to partner with this legendary creative team of incredible women to celebrate the history and the unsung heroes of our nation’s longest running televised music and dance series.”

Season ticket packages range in price from **\$92–\$389** and are available now by visiting act-sf.org or calling the A.C.T. Ticketing Office at 415-749-2228. Single tickets will go on sale to the general public at a later date.

Full-season subscriptions offer incredible savings, unparalleled access, exclusive benefits, and personalized customer service. Subscribers save as much as 33% off single-ticket prices. Students and educators are eligible to save 50% on subscriptions, and senior discounts are available for certain series. To make subscriptions more affordable, A.C.T. also offers all subscribers an extended payment plan that allows payment in three easy installments. A.C.T.’s subscriber benefits include free ticket exchanges up to certain time on your scheduled performance, guaranteed best seating, ticket protection, early access to tickets for special events outside of the regular season, subscriber-only events, discounts on convenient prepaid parking one block away from the theater, and discounts for neighborhood restaurants.

A.C.T. will offer numerous **InterACT events** for each mainstage production during the 2022/23 season that give patrons opportunities to get closer to the action while having an entire night out at the theater. InterACT events include **Drinks & Drama Fridays**, a preshow evening featuring specialty cocktails, pop-up food, DJ, and specially-priced tickets; **Prologue**, featuring a preshow sneak peek at the artistic process with members of the artistic staff; **Audience Exchanges**, featuring lively Q&As with the actors and artists who create the work onstage; **Pride Night**, a revamped pre- and postshow party celebrating LGBTQ+ pride within the theater community; **Wine Series**, featuring preshow wine tasting from some of the Bay Area's hottest local wineries; and **PlayTime**, a preshow interactive theater workshop with the artists who make each production happen. Additional InterACT events will be added throughout the season.

A.C.T. would like to acknowledge its Season Presenters **Barbara Bass Bakar; Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson; Kathleen Donohue and David Sze; Priscilla and Keith Geeslin; Michael P. N. A. Hormel**, in loving memory of **James C. Hormel; Kenneth and Gisele Miller; Barbara Ravizza and John S. Osterweis; Toni Rembe and Arthur Rock; Robina Riccitiello; Kay Yun and Andre Neumann-Loreck**; and Company Sponsors **The Ray and Dagmar Dolby Family Fund; Linda Jo Fitz; Frannie Fleishhacker; Kevin and Celeste Ford; Jo S. Hurley; Fred M. Levin**, in honor of **Nancy Livingston Levin, The Shenson Foundation; The Marymor Family Fund; Deedee McMurtry; Gerine Ongkeko; David and Carla Riemer; Patti and Rusty Rueff; Abby and Gene Schnair; Mary and Steven Swig; and Jay Yamada**. Additional support provided by **San Francisco Grants for the Arts, The Shubert Foundation, and Theatre Forward**.

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