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FEB-MAR 2019
SEASON 52, ISSUE 6



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SAN FRANCISCO'S THEATER COMPANY

American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco's Tony Award-winning nonprofit theater, nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training, and ongoing community engagement. We embrace our responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our rich theatrical traditions, while exploring new artistic forms and communities. Founded by William Ball, a pioneer of the regional theater movement, A.C.T. opened in San Francisco in 1967. We have since performed more than 400 productions to more than seven million people.

Hailed as the "perfect playhouse," the beautiful Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped the roof apart, San Franciscans raised a record-breaking \$30 million to rebuild the theater. The Geary reopened in 1996 with *The Tempest*, directed by Carey Perloff, who took over as A.C.T.'s third artistic director in 1992 after the retirement of Edward Hastings.

Perloff's tenure was marked by translations of classical works; cross-disciplinary performances and international collaborations; and theater made by, for, and about the Bay Area. Exploring powerful stories by celebrated artists and introducing audiences to extraordinary emerging voices in American theater continues under A.C.T.'s current artistic director, Pam MacKinnon.

A.C.T.'s 50-year-old Conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, is at the center of our work. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program is at the forefront of America's actor training programs. Our Summer Training Congress

attracts students from around the world, while the San Francisco Semester offers a unique study-abroad opportunity for undergraduates. Other programs include Studio A.C.T.—our expansive course of theater study for adults—and the Professional Development Training Program, which offers actor training for companies seeking to elevate employees' business performance skills. Our alumni often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area, as well as on stages and screens nationwide.

A.C.T. brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 17,000 Bay Area students and educators each year. Among our Education & Community Programs are the Young Conservatory (students ages 8–19), our Fellowship Program for emerging theater professionals, and our ACTsmart school and community programs, including the Student Matinee (SMAT) program that has brought hundreds of thousands of young people to A.C.T. performances since 1968. We also provide touring Will on Wheels Shakespeare productions, teaching-artist residencies, in-school workshops, and study materials to Bay Area schools and community-based organizations.

With the appointment of Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, our continuing commitment to the development of new work and new artists, and our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood with The Strand and The Costume Shop theaters, A.C.T. plays a leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.

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UP NEXT AT THE GEARY

THE GREAT LEAP



BY
LAUREN YEE

DIRECTED BY
LISA PETERSON

FEATURING
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“[This] imaginative vault over the decades . . . asserts a quiet, beautifully unexpected power”

Denver Post

Director Lisa Peterson loved *The Great Leap* as soon as she read it, but it wasn't until she heard actors performing it at the 2017 New Strands Festival that it came alive. "It's dynamic to read on the page," she says, "but the humor and the depth of feeling, you can't really tell until you see it and hear it in the mouths of actors."

Now, Peterson brings us the story of a 1989 basketball exhibition game in China pitting a smack-talking Jewish American coach against his former protégé. Will the actions of a scrappy Chinese American player who has fought his way onto the team escalate the fractured history between these coaches?

The Great Leap isn't just a story about basketball. Award-winning playwright Lauren Yee has laced elements of the game into the language, the visuals, even the staging of the production. "There's the same excitement and tempo and rhythm that you get when you're watching a game," she says.

Soaring through time and leaping across continents from the hardball courts of San Francisco's Chinatown to a Beijing on the brink of revolution, *The Great Leap* builds tension right up to the buzzer.

MAR 6–31, 2019

A.C.T.'S GEARY THEATER

act-sf.org/leap
415.749.2228

DON'T JUST SIT THERE . . .



At A.C.T.'s free InterACT events, you can mingle with cast members, join interactive workshops with theater artists, and meet fellow theatergoers at hosted celebrations in our lounges. Join us for *The Great Leap* and InterACT with us!

BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT

MAR 6, 7 PM

Take advantage of secure bike parking, low-priced tickets, and our preshow mixer, presented in partnership with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

PROLOGUE

MAR 12, 5:30 PM

Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion with a member of the *Great Leap* artistic team.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGE

MAR 19, 7 PM; MAR 24, 2 PM;

MAR 27, 2 PM

Join us for an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

OUT WITH A.C.T.*

MAR 20, 8 PM

Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGBTQ+ party.

WENTE VINEYARDS WINE SERIES

MAR 26, 7 PM

Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine-tasting event.

PLAYTIME

MAR 30, 12:45 PM

Get hands-on with theater at this interactive preshow workshop.

*Events take place immediately following the performance.

To learn more about our InterACT events, visit **act-sf.org/interact**.



BACK TO THE SOURCE

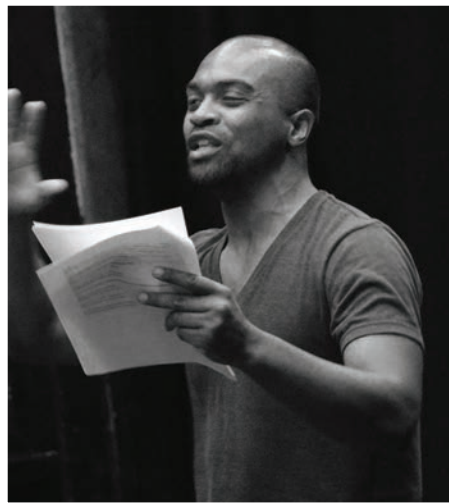
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JUL 28-AUG 3, 2019
[act-sf.org / backtothesource](http://act-sf.org/backtothesource)

Scholarship Application Deadline: May 27 | Final Application Deadline: May 30



PHOTOS BY JAY YAMADA

A.C.T. AMERICAN
CONSERVATORY
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FROM LEFT Actor Kimberly Scott, director Victor Malana Maog, actor Aneisa Hicks, playwright Mfoniso Udofia, and actor Eunice Woods at the first rehearsal for A.C.T.'s 2019 production of *Her Portmanteau*.

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A.C.T.'S YOUNG CONSERVATORY
PRESENTS



the WOLVES

THE WOLVES

by SARAH DELAPPE *Directed by* JESSICA HOLT

Try to keep up with teenage soccer team the Wolves as they stretch, run drills, and size up the opposition. But in between their passes are performance anxieties, family tensions, and complex conversations . . . *Left lunge.* Global genocide. Tampons. Do they have Skype in Cambodia? *Right lunge.* She got Plan B? There's the college recruiter! You're coming to the party this weekend?

For these nine young women, becoming an adult doesn't always come with a game plan.

APR 17–20, 2019

THE RUEFF AT
A.C.T.'S STRAND THEATER



To purchase tickets, visit
act-sf.org/ycshows.

FROM THE ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Welcome to *Her Portmanteau*!

When I was preparing for my job interview at A.C.T., I met with Emily Morse, the artistic director of New Dramatists, an organization in New York that supports playwrights with residencies that can include workshops, free printing, housing, space to write or rehearse, and terrible coffee. As a director, I would read plays by their members in their library (and occasionally drink the coffee), but last year I went there to pick Emily's brain about playwrights with Bay Area roots.

Our conversation led to Mfoniso Udofia, an A.C.T. M.F.A. Program alum (class of 2009) who'd recently been at New Dramatists to work with actors on her Ufot Family cycle. Emily could not stop talking about how powerful Mfoniso's plays were—both individually and combined together—and the experience of seeing actors transfiguring to play multiple generations through the years.

When I talked about Mfoniso in my job interview, Conservatory Director Melissa Smith took great pride in her former student, and I learned that A.C.T. had commissioned play eight of the nine-play cycle. Several weeks and interviews later, I was offered and accepted the job and immediately set out to program *Her Portmanteau*, play four.

While this is a homecoming for Mfoniso Udofia, it represents A.C.T.'s active commitment to a great playwright at the start of her powers, an artist who cut her teeth in our theater, performed in A.C.T.'s *Christmas Carol*, and learned in our studio spaces how a strong action feels as an actor. She is an artist I want to support, to work for, and to collaborate with. Excitingly, we are partnering with Magic Theatre, which is simultaneously producing *In Old Age* (the fifth play), so that Bay Area audiences can binge-watch this Nigerian American, immigrant, mother-daughter, sister-sister, multigenerational reconciliation story.

I invite you to listen to how Mfoniso uses language. She disorients an audience, expecting them to catch up and perhaps *feel* before they know exactly what to *think*. As well as English, you will hear Ibibio, one of Nigeria's more than 500 languages, spoken by native speakers and as a second language. Mfoniso brings language back to its emotional core: word as sound, word as memory, word as tradition, culture, home, and family.

Enjoy!



Pam MacKinnon
Artistic Director

Dear Friends,

In working with Mfoniso Udofia, it is exciting to experience a writer who is in the midst of creating an ambitious cycle of plays. Not only do these plays build on each other, intertwining their powerful stories, but at the same time each play delivers an impactful, unique experience for audiences.

Family is a strong throughline this season. In *Her Portmanteau*, you'll watch one mother grapple with her past decisions about how to care for her two powerful and very different daughters. As with so many things in life, there is no single right answer.

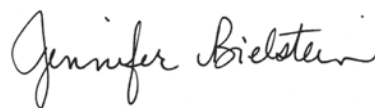
Exploration of family relationships abounds in our M.F.A. Program's spring productions, playing at The Costume Shop Theater and The Rueff at The Strand Theater in repertory from May 8–12. *Medea* and *Sense and Sensibility* explore the question of how we relate to our family members. *Medea*, jilted by her husband, Jason, after she sacrifices everything for him, realizes that the system is rigged against her. She vows to take revenge, and while we might suspect how that ends, this production, directed by Associate Conservatory Director Peter J. Kuo, will examine how she gets there.

Sense and Sensibility's Marianne and Elinor Dashwood are completely different, much like Iniabasi and Adiaha, the two sisters in *Her Portmanteau*. While Elinor represents down-to-earth thinking, Marianne is starry-eyed in her approach to finding love and happiness. When their father's death leaves them vulnerable, they must learn to rely on each other and hopefully find their own happy endings.

This vibrant and modern adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* was written by Kate Hamill, the acclaimed New York playwright who adapted another 19th-century classic, *Vanity Fair*, which we're producing on the Geary stage in April, directed by Jessica Stone.

I encourage you to dive deep into all of these productions and enjoy the range of strong female characters and how they face and embrace life's adventures!

See you at the theater,



Jennifer Bielstein
Executive Director

SPRING FLING

A.C.T.'S

*A special celebration in support of our artist training
and education and community programs*

SATURDAY

06.01.19

GEARY THEATER

6pm cocktails · 7pm performance of *Rhinoceros*

AUGUST HALL

8:30pm dinner + student performances + dancing + games + bowling!

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PRESENTS

**HER
PORTMANTEAU**

by **MFONISO UDOFIA**

Directed by
VICTOR MALANA MAOG

**THIS PRODUCTION MADE
POSSIBLE BY**

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DONALD J. AND TONI
RATNER MILLER
ROBINA RICCITIELLO
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*Developed and created as part of I Am
Soul—Playwright Residency Program at Dr.
Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre in
Harlem, NYC.*

*Her Portmanteau was developed, in part, at
SPACE on Ryder Farm.*

*Her Portmanteau had its world premiere at
New York Theatre Workshop (Jim Nicola,
Artistic Director; Jeremy Blocker, Managing
Director) in 2017 in association with The
Playwrights Realm.*

*Her Portmanteau is presented by special
arrangement with Dramatists Play Service,
Inc., New York.*

HER PORTMANTEAU

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Iniabasi Ekpeyong
EUNICE WOODS*

Adiaha Ufot
ANEISA HICKS

Abasiama Ufot
KIMBERLY SCOTT*

UNDERSTUDIES

Iniabasi Ekpeyong, Adiaha Ufot
BRITNEY FRAZIER*

Abasiama Ufot
CATHLEEN RIDDLEY*

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SARITA FELLOWS

Lighting Designer
Yael LUBETZKY

Sound Designer
JAKE RODRIGUEZ

Props Design Associate
JACQUELYN SCOTT

Voice and Dialect Coach
LISA ANNE PORTER

Dramaturg
JOY MEADS

Casting Director
JANET FOSTER, CSA

Movement Support
DANYON DAVIS

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ANDY DONALD

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LOUISA BALCH

Director of Production
MARTIN BARRON

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ONSTAGE NOW

I AM **NIGERIAN**. I AM **AMERICAN**. I WILL NOT CHOOSE.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT MFONISO UDOFIA
BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN

A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program alum **Mfoniso Udofia** is taking the American theater by storm.

Her ambitious nine-part Ufot Family cycle has been workshopped at leading new-play incubators, including SPACE on Ryder Farm and Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre. Three of the plays—*Sojourners*, *runboyrun*, and *Her Portmanteau*—have been produced at The Playwrights Realm, Magic Theatre, and New York Theatre Workshop. Now, she is back at A.C.T. with *Her Portmanteau*. We chatted with Udofia about her influences and the importance of having Black bodies onstage.

Who are your writing inspirations?

When I first started playwriting, I couldn't name many playwright inspirations. I read primarily non-dramatic narratives by contemporary African writers: Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Ben Okri. Around 2013, I had a very bad case of writer's block. I asked myself, "What African dramatic literature do I absolutely adore?" I could name only two African playwrights: Wole Soyinka and Athol Fugard. So I went searching and found Ama Ata Aidoo, Ola Rotimi, Tawfiq al-Hakim, and more, more, more. Reading them helped me see where my plays fit in the African dramatic literary canon.

What African storytelling tropes do you draw from?

In Nigeria, there is a multiplicity of languages [over 520]. You can't write a truly authentic Nigerian play without using different languages. Also, in a lot of Nigerian storytelling, the spirit world and the corporeal world inhabit the same space. Time can work differently. The narrative doesn't have to be linear.

You can have multiple time modalities happening at once. Take *runboyrun*. There is no beginning, middle, and end; it's on a constant loop, the past and present occurring within the same space.

What does the Nigerian language of *Ibibio* provide you as a playwright?

I'm interested in the power politics of language. In *Her Portmanteau*, you have characters who have varying degrees of ease within *Ibibio*. Iniabasi believes Adiaha does not understand anything of her culture, so she has a loaded conversation with her mother in *Ibibio* so her sister won't hear. She's surprised when Adiaha actually has a half understanding. She can hear, but not speak.

A big theme in *Her Portmanteau* is identity. It's a tricky place to live, caught between multiple cultures, languages, and countries.

It is. Especially as the country you are *from* becomes more and more unlike the country you're now *in*. The United States is a very individualistic society. Nigeria is more collectivist. Being a Nigerian in America, it's always a fight between the "I"—"I want to succeed"—and the "we": "This is what we need to do." There's always a struggle within the second-generation offspring; I can look at my foreign-born parents' culture and understand it, but also look at American culture and understand that. As a playwright, I want to illuminate that intersection, because I actually live it. I am Nigerian and I am American and I will not choose. The more we see stories that live in this intersection, the easier it will be for those of us who live there.

How does your work tackle the misconception that all Africans are from impoverished war-torn areas?

Africans from those areas exist, and the plays that chronicle their lives can be illuminating and impactful. But if those representations become the only truths you see related to an African body, that's problematic. The Africa that I know, and the Nigeria that I know, do not look like that. Did we have a cataclysmic, terrifying war? Yes. The first modern, African civil war—the Biafran War—happened in my ancestral homeland. But do we also barbecue at our house in Massachusetts? Yeah.

It's important for audiences to see different kinds of Blackness in relation to each other. In TV shows or plays, you see only Nigerians in Nigerian stories, African Americans in African American stories, Jamaicans in Jamaican stories; you never see us all interacting. My Ufot cycle looks at what happens when we do interact, and from a place of love.

How does it feel to be coming back to A.C.T.?

It's an incredible thing. It will be good to be back in the Bay and see this thing called The Strand Theater that I've heard amazing things about and now get to be on.

A.C.T. has commissioned another play in the Ufot cycle. Can you tell us anything about it?

It's Kufre's play (Iniabasi's son). A children's play. [Laughs] I need to start writing. ■

ONSTAGE NOW

REDUCING THE DISTANCE

AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR VICTOR MALANA MAOG

BY SIMON HODGSON

Across three decades in American theater, director Victor Malana Maog has earned a reputation as an insightful storyteller unafraid to dive deep into the tangled culture of contemporary America. This thoughtful, unassuming, and collaborative Filipino American director has developed work with most of the major US theater incubators, including Ma-Yi Theater Company, New Dramatists, The Lark, and The Playwrights Realm, the last of which paired him with playwright Mfoniso Udofia for a reading of *Sojourners* in 2013. That reading sparked a partnership across multiple plays in Udofia's nine-part Ufot Family cycle. We spoke with Maog about hope, hunger, and the challenge of the American story.

We heard that during your collaboration on *Her Portmanteau*, you asked Mfoniso to read the entire script aloud.

When we were working together on new pages at SPACE on Ryder Farm [a new play incubator in upstate New York], I would ask her to read the play—just like Arthur Miller used to do at first rehearsals—so I could funnel all the language and all the intention of the characters through her voice.

What did you hear in her spoken words that you didn't read on the page?

Mfoniso is a magnificent actor. Through her voice, I heard the musicality more. I also started to feel the internal incinerator of the characters—the hunger driving them forward. When audiences think of mother-daughter stories, they sometimes yearn to have a complete resolution. The unconscious impulse might be to flatten foreign characters and easily box in narratives. In this play, all of the women are incredible heroes. All of them can be monsters too—simultaneously wronged in some way and longing for a deep connection.

Your own background spans different cultures and communities. How does that prepare you for telling this story?

As a person born in the Philippines and raised in America, I'm interested in stories that wrestle with otherness. When I was one year old, my mom got an opportunity to work in America. My mom and dad left me with family. And when I reunited with them in America, I was six. My newborn sister was six months old. On a deep, personal level, I know what it means to be in another country, to be ripped from your parents, and the childish hope—even the adult hope—of reconnecting. I'm interested in the alienation and separation that can happen between two countries, and when those beliefs and expectations create friction. How do human beings survive being dropped into worlds they don't know?

How can you use *The Strand* to investigate those worlds?

This theater can take this naturalistic play and give it epic proportions. Part of our design is to bring the work forward as far as possible. It's easy, I can imagine, to think, "That's not my story; that's a Nigerian story." We want as much of a connection as we can between the actors and the audience. We want to reduce the distance.

To bring the audience closer to the action?

We're going to put the world of these characters and Adiaha's apartment in the audience's lap. To be able to smell the breaths and the interactions and to watch these human beings closely. What happens when you're with your family? There's a sense of suffocation—uncomfortable things happen, you want to scream but can't. In those small spaces, you can have decades of conflict, misunderstandings, or wants that you can't express. We have three great actors who are not afraid of this, and are willing to share that night with an audience.



Director Victor Malana Maog, scenic designer David Israel Reynoso, and playwright Mfoniso Udofia at the first rehearsal for A.C.T.'s production of *Her Portmanteau* (2019).

You're directing *Her Portmanteau* at A.C.T. and *In Old Age* at Magic Theatre. What draws you to Mfoniso's storytelling?

What I love about her is the grandness with which she arrived. She said, "I will cover generations." She wanted to put Black bodies onstage, to represent stories that she had not seen before. These characters—Abasiama, Iniabasi, and Adiaha—are roles of a lifetime. It tells you of her strength and the vastness of her vision. She is one of our great writers, our artist warriors. In 500 years, someone's going to open up this time capsule and, because of these plays, better understand the complexity of the American story. ■

WORDS ON PLAYS

Want to know more about *Her Portmanteau*? *Words on Plays* is full of interviews and original articles that give you a behind-the-scenes look. Proceeds from sales of *Words on Plays* benefit A.C.T.'s education programs.



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WHO'S WHO IN HER PORTMANTEAU



ANEISA HICKS **(Adiaha Ufot)**

is an actor whose theater credits include *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (Eclipse Theatre Company),

Graveyard Shift (Goodman Theatre), *The End of TV* (Manual Cinema), *Neverwhere* (Lifeline Theatre), and *The House That Will Not Stand* (Victory Gardens Theater). Her television credits include NBC's *Chicago Med*, Showtime's *The Chi*, Fox's *The Exorcist*, NBC's *Chicago Justice*, and Fox's *Empire*. Hicks can also be seen in the web series *The Haven*. Hicks received her MFA in acting from the University of Iowa in 2015 and completed Folio I and Folio II training at Chicago Shakespeare Theater in 2016–17. castingnetworks.com/aneisahicks



KIMBERLY SCOTT* **(Abasiana Ufot)**

makes her A.C.T. debut in *Her Portmanteau*. Her theater credits include Lynn

Nottage's *Sweat* (Arena Stage), Tarell Alvin McCraney's *Head of Passes* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), and the world premieres of Danaï Gurira's *Familiar* (Yale Repertory Theatre) and Jeff Whitty's *Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* (South Coast Repertory). At the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, she has performed in *Henry V* (directed by Rosa Joshi), *Henry IV, Parts One and Two* (directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz and Carl Cofield, respectively), and *Ruined* (directed by Liesl Tommy), as well as created the roles of Dembi in *The Liquid Plain*, by Naomi

Wallace; Amira in *Party People*, by UNIVERSES; Viola Pettus in *American Night*, by Culture Clash; and Cynthia in *Sweat*. Scott also created the role of Molly in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* on Broadway (Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations). Scott's screen credits include the films *Love & Other Drugs*, *World Trade Center*, *The Abyss*, and many television appearances. She received her MFA from Yale School of Drama.



EUNICE WOODS* **(Iniabasi Ekpeyong)**

is delighted to make her A.C.T. debut. Woods is based in Chicago, so she's

also delighted to spend the winter in San Francisco. Select credits from Chicago include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *Familiar* (understudy) at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* (understudy) at Goodman Theatre, *Hint* at Steep Theatre, *No Blue Memories: The Life of Gwendolyn Brooks* at Manual Cinema, *Parade* at Writers Theatre, *10 out of 12* at Theater Wit, *Little Shop of Horrors* at American Blues Theater, and *The Project(s)* at American Theater Company, among others. Her television credits include *Shameless* and *Chicago P.D.* Woods is represented by Gray Talent Group. Instagram: @eunicewoods



BRITNEY FRAZIER*

(Understudy) is a Bay Area actor, director, playwright, and teaching artist. She has had the

blessing of creatively collaborating as an actor with Campo Santo, Cutting Ball Theater, Shotgun Players, Brava! for Women in the Arts, Ubuntu Theater Project, San Francisco International Arts Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, PlayGround, and A.C.T. As a teaching artist, Frazier has taught and directed for Disney Theatrical Productions in New York and for Bay Area Children's Theatre as a part of its Disney Musicals in Schools program. She's also taught with California Shakespeare Theater, East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, StageWrite, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, The Marsh, and A.C.T. As a playwright, she has birthed three original plays: *Obeah*, *Dysphoria*, and *Pressure High*. In 2018, TheatreFIRST commissioned Frazier to write *Laveau*, a solo, ritual performance tribute to Marie Laveau. Most recently, Frazier was seen in *Candlestick* with Campo Santo.



CATHLEEN RIDDLEY*

(Understudy) is proud to be working with A.C.T. again. She is a multiple award-winning actor who

has performed at numerous Bay Area theaters. Riddley's favorite roles include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* at Queen Mab Productions, Lena in *brownsville song (b-side for tray)* at Shotgun Players, Lucy in *The American Play* at Thick Description Theatre Company, Nurse in *Medea* at African-

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

American Shakespeare Company, Mrs. Price in *Tree* at San Francisco Playhouse, and Azucar in *Bondage* at Alter Theater. She is particularly proud of having performed every role numerous times in the year-long run of *Hamlet* at Shotgun. Riddley is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association and Theatre Bay Area, and she is a company member at Shotgun and the PlayGround Center for New Plays. She is an alumna of the Juilliard School Drama Division, a certified ASL interpreter, and has an MA from the University of Pennsylvania.

MFONISO UDOFIA (Playwright),

a first-generation Nigerian American storyteller and educator, attended Wellesley College, obtained her M.F.A. from American Conservatory Theater and, while at A.C.T., co-pioneered *The Nia Project*, which provided artistic outlets for youth residing in Bayview-Hunters Point. Productions of her plays *Sojourners*, *runboyrun*, and *Her Portmanteau* have been seen at New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW), The Playwrights Realm, Magic Theatre, National Black Theatre, and Boston Court. She's the recipient of the 2017 Helen Merrill Playwright Award, the 2017-18 McKnight National Residency and Commission at The Playwrights' Center, and is a member of New Dramatists. She will be returning to NYTW in Fall 2019 with productions of *runboyrun* and *In Old Age*. She's currently commissioned by PlayOn!, Hartford Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, A.C.T., McCarter Theatre Center, Round House Theater, and South Coast Repertory. Her plays have been developed by Manhattan Theatre Club, McCarter, New Dramatists, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, Hedgebrook, Sundance Institute's Theatre Lab, SPACE on Ryder Farm, and many more.

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VICTOR MALANA MAOG

(Director), named one of *American Theatre* magazine's "People to Watch," makes his A.C.T. debut with *Her Portmanteau*. He has directed and developed work at The Public Theater, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Hartford Stage, Signature Theatre Company, Mabou Mines, Drury Lane Theatre, Second Generation Productions (2g), The Lark, New Dramatists, ABC/Disney, and large-scale stage shows, live events, and spectaculars at Disney Parks Live Entertainment. Upcoming productions include the world premiere of Mfoniso Udofia's *In Old Age* at Magic Theatre and *Macbeth* at California Shakespeare Theater. In 2004, Maog was one of six directors in the nation to receive a place at the National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group (TCG) Career Development Program for Theatre Directors. He is the board president of The Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists. He has also been awarded the Van Lier Directing Fellowship, Altvater Fellowship at Cornerstone Theater Company, and the Presidential Award with the Theatre Arts Project, and was recently chosen as an inaugural TCG SPARK Leadership Program leader. He has a BA in global leadership and performance studies from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. victormao.com

DAVID ISRAEL REYNOSO

(Scenic Designer) is a scenic and costume designer who is pleased to return to A.C.T., having previously designed *Hamlet* for the Geary stage. He is the Obie Award-winning costume designer for Punchdrunk's international sensation, *Sleep No More* (New York and Shanghai), and the creator/director of Optika-Moderna's innovative *Waking La Llorona*. Reynoso is recognized for his widespread work with regional theaters and dance companies

including The Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse, American Repertory Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Contra-Tiempo, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Gloucester Stage Company, and Lyric Stage Company of Boston. His scope of work extends beyond theater to experiential and exhibit designs, such as *PostSecret* and *Living with Animals* for the San Diego Museum of Man. Reynoso is the recipient of the Creative Catalyst grant, an Elliot Norton Award, a Craig Noel Award nomination, and multiple IRNE and BroadwayWorld Award nominations. davidreynoso.com

SARITA FELLOWS (Costume Designer)

makes her A.C.T. debut with *Her Portmanteau*. Her previous work in New York includes *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Measure for Measure* (New York Classical Theatre); *A Chronicle of the Death of Two Worlds* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Loving and Loving* (Stella Adler Studio of Acting); *Mud, Prospect*, and *Fabuloso!* (Boundless Theatre Company); *The Forbidden City* and *A Bright Room Called Day* (The Juilliard School); *Familiar* (associate costume designer; Playwrights Horizons); and *Turn Me Loose* (associate costume designer; Westside Theatre). Regionally, she's designed for *Two Trains Running* (Weston Playhouse Theatre Company); *Berta, Berta* and *A Late Morning [in America] with Ronald Reagan* (Contemporary American Theater Festival); *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* (Philadelphia Theatre Company); and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *The Dancing Princesses* (Summer Theatre of New Canaan). Fellows also designs for film, dance, and opera, and is an associate professor at Princeton University and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where she earned her MFA.

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Yael Lubetzky (Lighting Designer) is a New York-based lighting designer. She has designed productions in New York City and regionally including the Broadway production of *Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam*. She reunites with director Victor Malana Maog after recently collaborating on *South Pacific* (Drury Lane Theatre, Illinois). Additional recent designs include *Cabaret* (Paramount Theatre, Illinois; Joseph Jefferson Award nomination); *Downtown Race Riot* (The New Group); *Evita* and *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (Riverside Theatre, Florida); *Newsies* (NewArts, Connecticut); *Mamma Mia!* (Arkansas Repertory Theatre); and *The Three Musketeers* (Syracuse Stage; Syracuse Area Live Theater Award nomination). Her off-Broadway designs include productions at The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Women's Project Theater, Theatre at St. Clement's, The Duke on 42nd Street, Cherry Lane Theatre, INTAR Theatre, New Ohio Theatre, York Theatre Company, and National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene. Regional theater designs include productions at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Trinity Repertory Company, Children's Theatre Company, and Clarence Brown Theatre.

Jake Rodriguez (Sound Designer) is a sound designer and composer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. His recent credits include *Women Laughing Alone with Salad* and *The Events* (Shotgun Players); *Sweat* and *Vietgone* (A.C.T.); *Everybody* (California Shakespeare Theater); *Angels in America* and *An Octoroon* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *we, the invisibles* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (A.C.T., Theatre Calgary, Grand Theater, The Old Globe); *The Christians* (Playwrights Horizons, the Mark Taper Forum); *Girlfriend* (Kirk Douglas Theatre); and *Mr. Burns, a*

post-electric play (A.C.T., the Guthrie Theater). Rodriguez is the recipient of a 2004 Princess Grace Award.

Jacquelyn Scott (Props Design Associate) works as props master, set designer, and art director for theaters and film companies throughout the Bay Area. Her previous credits include *Men on Boats*, *Vietgone*, and *John* (A.C.T.); *She Loves Me*, *Seared*, *Stage Kiss*, *Company*, *Tree*, *Into the Woods*, *Jerusalem*, *Abigail's Party*, and *A Behanding in Spokane* (San Francisco Playhouse); *Fool for Love*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *Buried Child*, *The Happy Ones*, *Annapurna*, *The Lily's Revenge*, *The Brothers Size*, *Goldfish*, and *Octopus* (Magic Theatre); *Stories by Emma Donoghue* and *Colm Tóibín* and *Stories by Alice Munro* (Word for Word Performing Arts Company); *Assassins* and *God's Plot* (Shotgun Players); *Hundred Days* and *The Companion Piece* (Z Space); and *American Hwagap* (The Play Company, New York). wrenarthouse.com

Lisa Anne Porter (Voice and Dialect Coach) is the head of text and dialects at A.C.T. She has served on the faculties of UC Berkeley, UC Davis, Shakespeare & Company, the Tepper Semester at Syracuse University, Naropa University, California Shakespeare Theater, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She was an associate professor of voice, acting, and text in the BFA program at Syracuse University, where in her first year of teaching she was awarded the Most Inspirational Faculty award. She has coached voice and dialect in more than 70 productions nationwide. As a professional actor, she has performed with numerous repertory companies and Shakespeare festivals throughout the country. Porter has an M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T., a BA in theater and American studies from Wesleyan University, and is certified in Linklater voice training.

JOY MEADS (Dramaturg), a native of Oakland, comes to A.C.T. from Center Theatre Group, where she served as literary manager/ artistic engagement strategist. Her CTG dramaturgy credits include Rajiv Joseph's *Archduke*, Ngozi Anyanwu's *Good Grief*, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's *Appropriate*, Dael Orlandersmith's *Forever*, Jordan Harrison's *Marjorie Prime* (2015 Pulitzer Prize finalist), Bruce Norris's *A Parallelogram*, Marco Ramirez's *The Royale*, Daniel Alexander Jones's *Radiate*, and Naomi Iizuka's *SLEEP* (a co-commission with Ripe Time, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Yale Repertory Theatre). Previously, Meads was literary manager at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and associate artistic director at California Shakespeare Theater. She has also developed plays with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, New York Theatre Workshop, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Ojai Playwrights Conference, Portland Center Stage, South Coast Repertory, and Campo Santo, among others. Meads is a proud co-founder of The Kilroys.

JANET FOSTER, CSA (Casting) has cast for A.C.T. for seven seasons, including Edward Albee's *Seascape*, *Men on Boats*, *Sweat*, *Hamlet*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *The Hard Problem*, *King Charles III*, *Arcadia*, *Stuck Elevator*, *The Orphan of Zhao*, *Napoli!*, and *Endgame* and *Play*. On Broadway, she cast *The Light in the Piazza* (Artios Award nomination), *Lennon*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Taking Sides* (co-cast). Off-Broadway credits include *True Love*, *Floyd Collins*, *The Monogamist*, *A Cheever Evening*, and *Later Life*. Regionally, she has worked at Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Goodman

Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, The Old Globe, and American Repertory Theater. Film, television, and radio credits include *Cosby*, *Tracey Takes On New York*, *The Deal*, *Advice from a Caterpillar*, *The Day That Lehman Died* (Peabody, SONY, and Wincott awards), and *"T" Is for Tom* (Tom Stoppard radio plays, WNYC and WQXR). She also cast *LifeAfter*, a GE Theater podcast.

DANI BAE* (Stage Manager) returns to A.C.T. for *Her Portmanteau*. Recent A.C.T. credits include *Heisenberg*, *The Birthday Party*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Local stage management credits include *Detroit '67* and *Dry Powder* (Aurora Theatre Company). Other stage management credits are *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), the Bard Music Festival (Bard SummerScape), and *Urinetown: The Musical* (American Theatre of Actors). She recently completed a stage management fellowship at A.C.T. Bae has a BFA in stage management from Syracuse University.

CHERYLE HONERLAH* (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to work with A.C.T. this season. She has worked with many theaters in the Bay Area, including California Shakespeare Theater (*black odyssey*, *Quixote Nuevo*, and *The Glass Menagerie*), TheatreWorks (*Tuck Everlasting* and *Daddy Long Legs*), Douglas Morrisson Theatre (*Charley's Aunt '66*, *Book of Days*, and *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*), Shotgun Players (*The Mousetrap*), and African-American Shakespeare Company (*Cinderella*, *The Tempest*, *Medea*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*). Honerlah holds a BA in technical theater from California State University, East Bay, and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Mr. Essien E. Idiong,
Dialect Consultant
May Liang, *Assistant Director*
Dante Clarke, *Head Carpenter*
Ana Gabriela Hernandez-McKig,
Head Electrician
Ksenia Antonoff, *Wigs Supervisor*
Mika Rubenfeld, *Wardrobe Crew*

PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDINGS

Audience members may take photos in the theater before and after the performance and during intermission. If you post photos on social media or elsewhere, you must credit the production's designers by including the following names:

David Israel Reynoso (Scenic Designer),
Instagram: @designreynoso

Sarita Fellows (Costume Designer),
www.saritafellows.com

Yael Lubetzky (Lighting Designer)

Jake Rodriguez (Sound Designer),
twitter: @sounjaerk

Please note: Photos are strictly prohibited during the performance. Photos of the stage are not permitted if an actor is present. Video recording is not permitted in the theater at any time.

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A.C.T. TODAY

TESTING AND LEARNING

A CONVERSATION WITH A.C.T. BOARD MEMBER JASCHA KAYKAS-WOLFF

BY SIMON HODGSON

Jascha Kaykas-Wolff, the chief marketing officer at Mozilla, had enjoyed several shows at The Geary. But it wasn't until M.F.A. Program board member Chris Hollenbeck and his wife, Holly, invited him and his wife, Rebecca, to the Spooked at The Strand Halloween-themed fundraiser in 2015 that Kaykas-Wolff discovered A.C.T.'s sheer range of work. That introduction sparked a partnership between Mozilla and A.C.T. that now includes a series of new play readings, sponsorship of the M.F.A. Program play *Clickshare* in 2017, support for the New Strands Festival, and sponsorship of new content for the LED screen at The Strand. It also resulted in Kaykas-Wolff joining A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees.

What drew Mozilla to work with A.C.T.?

We were first interested in A.C.T. because we saw a unique parallel in the way we both developed products. You do something magical at a very high frequency; you create products (or productions) that you've got to test, learn from, and continually improve upon—and you get to experience that testing and learning in front of a live audience. It's complementary to the way many technology companies think about developing products. Mixing your processes with ours is inspiring.

Over the last couple of seasons, dozens of Mozilla folks have experienced A.C.T.'s work. What results have you seen in your own colleagues?

Every time we bring your team into our offices, our teams are inspired to think differently about how they



PHOTO COURTESY JASCHA KAYKAS-WOLFF

interact with their customers. That's not a finite tool that you deliver, it's a mindset. The more we introduce the way that A.C.T. thinks about product development, the better off we are overall.

Any ideas about future collaboration between Mozilla and A.C.T.?

When we brought your M.F.A. actors and Artistic team into our office, it generated something really cool. I've had conversations with [Associate Artistic Director] Andy Donald about setting up a hotdesk arrangement with a playwright in Mozilla's headquarters.

We've got amazing writers and creative people; when you put smart creators together, good things happen.

We also think that the Strand's LED screen is an amazing vehicle to get our word out to San Franciscans. We want everyone to understand that when they choose Firefox as their browser or any Mozilla product, it gives them more control of their online life. Working with your creative team to design a message that makes sense in the context of The Strand, its location, and the plays happening at A.C.T.—that's intriguing. ■

For more information about how to start a similar collaboration with A.C.T. or how to join A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees, visit act-sf.org/support or contact A.C.T. Director of Development Caitlin A. Quinn at 415.439.2436 or cquinn@act-sf.org.

A.C.T. TODAY



THEORY INTO PRACTICE

M.F.A. PROGRAM ACTORS ON THE MAINSTAGE

BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN



PHOTOS BY KEVIN BERNIE.

As actors walk from their dressing rooms up to the stage of The Geary or The Strand, they pass the names and photographs of thousands of performers who have trodden the same path. For our current and recently graduated Master of Fine Arts Program actors, these names empower, inspire, and energize them in the brief moments before the curtain rises. “It became a preshow ritual to look at all those names,” says recent M.F.A. graduate Kadeem Ali Harris (class of 2018), who played Chris in this season’s opener, *Sweat*. “There’s power in knowing the long history of people who came before you. It’s a blessing to be able to get up there and do the same.”

“THERE’S POWER IN KNOWING THE LONG HISTORY OF ACTORS WHO CAME BEFORE YOU. IT’S A BLESSING TO BE ABLE TO GET UP THERE AND DO THE SAME.”

—M.F.A. PROGRAM ALUM KADEEM ALI HARRIS

This season, more of our actors-in-training have experienced this power than ever before; every mainstage production has featured a third-year M.F.A. Program actor or alum. Alongside Harris in *Sweat* was current M.F.A. actor Will Hoeschler (class of 2019), who understudied the role of Jason. In *Men on Boats*, Katherine Romans (class of 2019) played Bradley, while her classmate Jerrie R. Johnson understudied multiple roles. In December, the entire third-year M.F.A. class performed in *A Christmas Carol*; two of those actors—Ash Malloy and Göran Norquist (class

of 2019)—put their newly acquired Geary experience to use straightaway as the understudies for the lizards in Edward Albee’s *Seascape*. And *Her Portmanteau* is written by class of 2009 alum Mfoniso Udofia.

For each up-and-coming actor, performing in front of an A.C.T. audience is a rush. “The first time I performed on the Geary stage, I climbed up a ladder into smoke, fog, and darkness and said the first lines of *Hamlet* [2017],” says Vincent Randazzo, a class of 2018 grad who also performed in *A Walk on the Moon* and will soon be back at A.C.T. in *Vanity Fair*. “My heart was beating so fast, I thought I was going to pass out and fall backward into the trap.”

But in that moment, Randazzo knew that the theater training he had received in the M.F.A. Program had more than prepared him to command the stage. “At A.C.T., you don’t just become ‘Geary ready,’ but ‘theater ready.’ The training gets you to a place where you realize, ‘I can do this everywhere,’” says Randazzo. Current third-year actor Ash Malloy, who played Annabelle in *A Christmas Carol* (2018), agrees. “A.C.T.’s M.F.A. Program is rigorous, one that prepares the entirety of the actor’s instrument to express the full range of the human experience. I’ve learned so much from my mentors. Conservatory Director Melissa Smith taught me the power of truth in acting. Voice teacher Lisa Anne Porter showed me that vulnerability is the greatest gift, and that theater is a place where the most beautiful and broken parts of us can be put on full display. The M.F.A. Program has irrevocably changed me and I am forever grateful.”

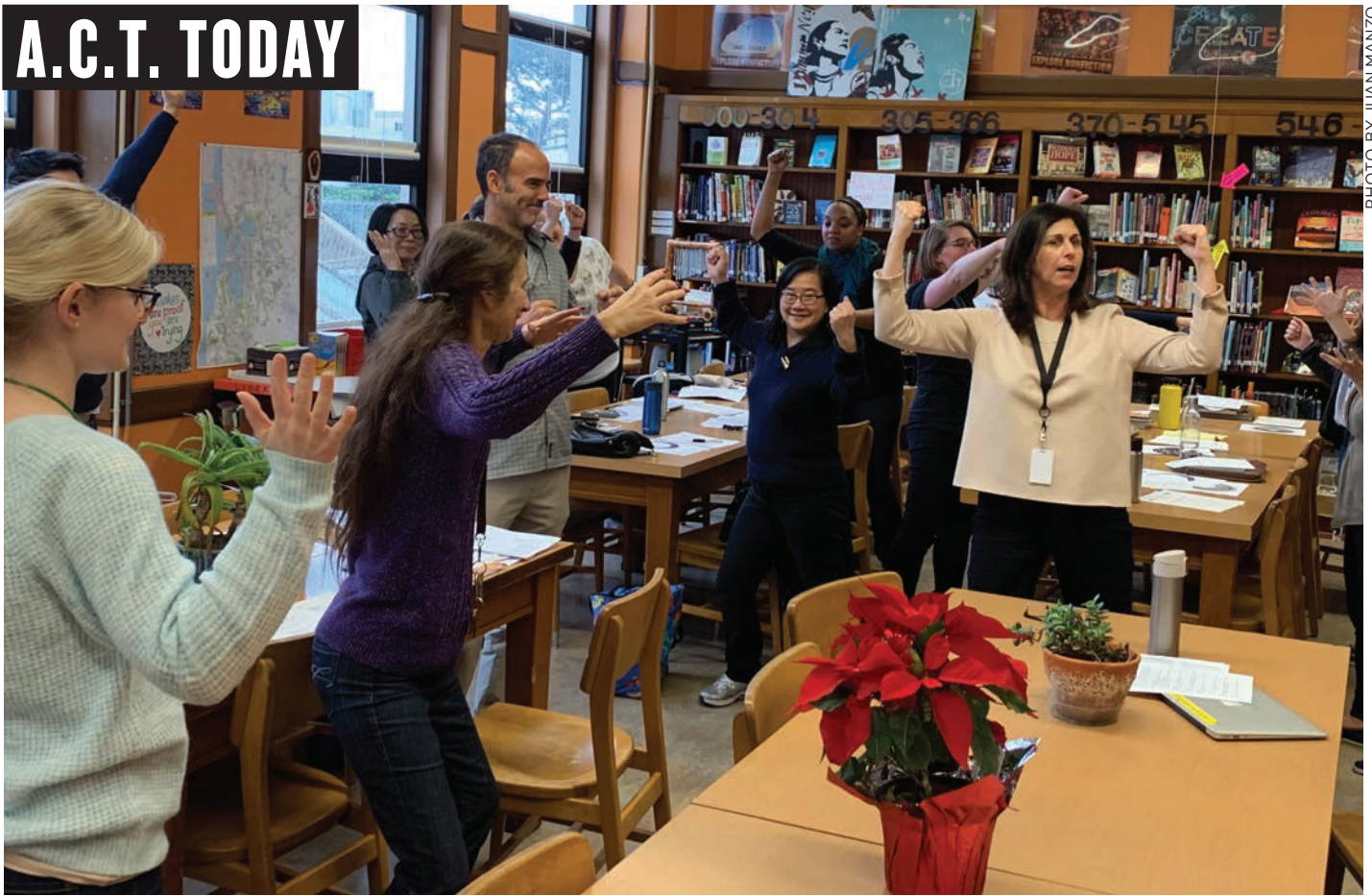
“I have a vivid memory,” says Katherine Romans (class of 2019), “of sitting in the balcony of The Strand watching *The Unfortunates* [2016] during my final callback for the M.F.A. Program and thinking, ‘I hope I get into this program so that I can perform on a stage like this one day.’ Opening night of *Men on Boats* was surreal. To be on the same stage with Amy Lizardo, whom I saw in *The Unfortunates*—I felt like I’d won the lottery.” ■

OPPOSITE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT)

M.F.A. Program graduates Rod Gnapp (class of 1987) and Kadeem Ali Harris (class of 2018) in *Sweat*; Annemaria Rajala and M.F.A. Program actor Katherine Romans (class of 2019) in *Men on Boats*; M.F.A. Program graduates Peter Fanone and Vincent Randazzo (class of 2018) in *Hamlet*.

For more information about A.C.T.’s Master of Fine Arts Program, visit act-sf.org/mfa.

A.C.T. TODAY



Teachers from Aptos Middle School participate in an Introduction to Arts Integration professional development seminar led by Lisa Edsall Giglio.

SHAPING LIVES

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BY ANNIE SEARS

In 1944 at the Terezin concentration camp in what was then Czechoslovakia, 17-year-old Jerry Rosenstein—when he had precious free time—would perch in the barracks’ dusty rafters to watch fellow inmates rehearse *The Threepenny Opera*. Terezin was a holding space for select Jews, particularly artists. The Nazis were staging a propaganda film at Terezin, depicting a thriving arts culture as cover for the atrocities occurring at this and other camps. Prisoners of Terezin, including Rosenstein, were later separated and sent to hard labor or extermination camps. But while they were together, Terezin inmates used music to encourage one another. “It was my nightly pleasure,” said Rosenstein. “I learned that opera word for word, totally and completely.”

Rosenstein (1927–2016) endured five years in concentration camps, including surviving Dr. Joseph Mengele’s selection process at Auschwitz. “Music provided him an anchor in the death camps,” says Martin Tannenbaum, Rosenstein’s close friend and trustee of his estate, as well as co-chair of the Education & Community Programs Committee of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees. “Even after being liberated from Auschwitz, opera and theater provided him sustenance. And in his later years, here in San Francisco, he attended as many as ten music and theater performances weekly.”

Because the arts “saved” Rosenstein during his adolescence, he wanted to ensure that other San Francisco youth—particularly with limited economic resources—would have access to performing arts. In turn, Rosenstein left a seven-figure gift to the SFUSD Visual and Performing Arts Department. That gift is now funding the Jerry Rosenstein Arts Project, “JRAP” for short. “The playfulness of the name would not have been lost on Jerry!” says Tannenbaum.

JRAP is a collaboration between several San Francisco arts organizations, including A.C.T., African-American Shakespeare Company, Performing Arts Workshop, SF Jazz, SF Film, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, with San Francisco Opera serving as the project’s lead. While the collaboration features numerous organizations, there’s only one mission: provide middle-school students in the SFUSD access to arts learning opportunities that build creativity, resilience, and self-confidence.

JERRY ROSENSTEIN (1927–2016)

In 1946, just months after escaping the Nazi concentration camps in Eastern Europe, the Rosenstein family emigrated from Paris to New York. Shortly thereafter, Jerry Rosenstein left for the West Coast, where he came out as gay and built an import/export business, which included importing hard woods for all Eichler Homes. Rosenstein used his business success to give back to others.

“Jerry was a gay Jewish man—with great good looks, even in his late eighties—and enormous charm, wit, and curiosity,” says Martin Tannenbaum. “He was a generous supporter of the arts, gay rights, and social justice.” The majority of his estate was distributed to over 40 such organizations. Rosenstein also gave of his time and intellect to Congregation Sha’ar Zahav, the American Civil Liberties Union, Merola Opera Program, A.C.T. (where he was a longtime subscriber and donor), and Jewish Family and Children’s Services (JFCS). A jack of all trades, Rosenstein used his business skills to help JFCS develop long-term funding strategies and his performative skills to illuminate the often-untold stories of gay Jews and others in the camps. He was particularly fond of sharing with young people.

“HAVING JRAP ANCHOR THE EARLY DAYS OF OUR ARTS INTEGRATION PLAN HAS ALLOWED US TO DREAM EVEN BIGGER”

—DONN HARRIS, SFUSD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS

The plan is threefold. Firstly, JRAP is providing professional development for all SFUSD middle-school educators and extensive workshops with teachers at select pilot schools. The goal is bolstering teachers’ ability to incorporate the arts into all curricula—from statistics to geography, chemistry to sociology. “Having JRAP anchor the early days of our arts integration plan has allowed us to dream even bigger and do even more for our students,” says Donn Harris, SFUSD executive director for creativity and the arts. “As we make decisions around educational priorities, it is important that we cover a lot of ground with our programs, combining literacy, identity, collaboration, and personal growth into a unified educational experience. A.C.T. and JRAP are exceptional partners to us.”

Secondly, JRAP matches these educators with local artists, who bring their expertise into the classroom for four to twelve visits. This semester, students at Francisco Middle School, Aptos Middle School, Everett Middle School, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School will explore acting, spoken word, photography, filmmaking, podcasting, and choreography under the leadership of teaching artists practicing in those fields.

JRAP’s third element is rigorous evaluation. By tracking the effects of these professional development seminars with educators and residencies with students, JRAP leaders can lay the groundwork for other arts integration initiatives moving forward. “We’re hoping that the impact of this program on teachers and students will be profound, and that the model can be replicated in more San Francisco schools and perhaps across the state and the country,” says Tannenbaum. “Jerry believed that art has the power to change lives. It certainly changed his.” ■

To learn more about JRAP, contact SFUSD Director for Creativity and the Arts Donn Harris at harrisd2@sfusd.edu. To learn more about A.C.T.’s Education & Community Programs, including JRAP, visit act-sf.org/education.

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Jerry is president of Parnassus Investments and serves on the boards of San Francisco Opera and A.C.T. Thao and Jerry have established scholarships for music education at the San Francisco Symphony, undergraduate education at UC Berkeley, and high school education for 125 girls in Vietnam.

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Priscilla is a vice chair of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees and Development Committee chair. She is vice president of the SF Symphony, Grace Cathedral, and past chair of NARAL Pro-Choice America's Foundation Board. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith is president of SF Opera's board of trustees and a board member of Episcopal Community Services.

JAMES C. HORMEL AND MICHAEL P. NGUYEN-HORMEL†

James, the first openly gay US ambassador, founded the James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL). Michael works alongside James on their charitable giving foundation, and has served on the SFPL Commission for two terms. A trustee of A.C.T., Michael is profoundly passionate about the arts and humanities.

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Nancy is the Chair Emerita of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees. She serves on the boards at the College of Fine Arts at Boston University and the National Council for the American Theatre. Fred serves on the boards of the San Francisco Symphony, the Asian Art Museum, and the SF Film Society.

TONI REMBE AND ARTHUR ROCK*

Past chair of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees, Toni is a retired partner at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. Arthur was one of America's first venture capitalists. Along with other community endeavors, they are cofounders of the Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Center for Corporate Governance at Stanford Law School.

ROBINA RICCITIELLO†*

Robina is communications director for the Million Person Project, a company that helps people identify their core values to tell their personal story. She is involved with the UCLA Depression Grand Challenge, an effort to cure depression by the end of this century, and with NARAL Pro-Choice America.

MARY AND STEVEN SWIG*

Steven has served on A.C.T.'s board since 1986 and is cofounder of Presidio Graduate School. Mary is on the Women's Leadership Board of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. They serve on the boards of the Solar Electric Light Fund and the Americans for Cures Foundation.

JEFF AND LAURIE UBBEN*

Jeff is a founder of ValueAct Capital and a director of 21st Century Fox Inc. and Willis Towers Watson PLC. He serves on the boards of Duke University, Northwestern University, and the E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation. Laurie founded San Francisco's Bird School of Music.

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President of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees, Kay is a partner at private equity fund Health Evolution Partners. She is a trustee of Parnassus Funds and a board member of San Francisco University High School. Andre, the founder of On Tap Consulting, has held executive roles in startups and Fortune 500 companies.

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PAM MACKINNON (Artistic Director)

is celebrating her inaugural season as A.C.T.'s fourth artistic director. She is a Tony, Drama Desk, and Obie Award-winning director, having directed upwards of 70 productions around the country, off Broadway, and on Broadway. Her Broadway credits

include Beau Willimon's *The Parisian Woman* (with Uma Thurman), *Amelie: A New Musical*, David Mamet's *China Doll* (with Al Pacino), Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles* (with Elisabeth Moss), Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* (with Glenn Close and John Lithgow), Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, and Outer Critics Circle nomination), and

Bruce Norris's *Clybourne Park* (Obie Award for Excellence in Direction, Tony and Lucille Lortel nominations). After five years as board chair of Clubbed Thumb, a downtown New York theater company dedicated to new American plays, she sits on its advisory board. She is an artistic associate of the Roundabout Theatre Company, a Usual Suspect of New York Theatre Workshop, and an alumna of the Drama League, Women's Project, and Lincoln Center Theater's Directors' Labs. She is also the executive board president of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC). She grew up in Toronto, Canada, and Buffalo, New York, acted through her teens, but majored in economics and political science at the University of Toronto and briefly pursued a PhD in political science at UC San Diego, before returning to her true passion: theater.



JENNIFER BIELSTEIN (Executive Director) joins A.C.T. with more than 25 years of theater management experience. She is currently president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT)—an organization that represents 74 theaters nationwide—having previously served as LORT's

vice president; chair of its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; secretary; and on multiple union negotiating teams. Before relocating to the Bay Area, Bielstein was the managing director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, managing director of Actors Theatre of Louisville, and executive director of Writers Theatre in Chicago. She has also worked for Steppenwolf Theatre Company, About Face Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and the Lincoln Park Zoo, as well as serving on the boards of the League of Chicago

Theatres, Theatre Forward, the Arts and Cultural Attractions Council, and other civic boards. She has received the Center for Nonprofit Excellence's Pyramid Award of Excellence in Leadership, and has been recognized as one of Louisville's *Business First*'s 40 Under 40. In 2017, Bielstein was named by *Twin Cities Business* as a Person to Know, and, in 2018, *Minnesota Business* magazine named her as a Real Power 50 member. Bielstein is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, attended Stanford's Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders in the Arts, and earned an MBA from Bellarmine University, where she received the MBA Faculty Merit Award and was inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma, the honor society for business programs.



MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director, Head of Acting) has served as Conservatory director and head of acting in the Master of Fine Arts Program at A.C.T. since 1995. During that time, she has overseen the expansion of the M.F.A. Program from a two- to a three-year course of study

and the further integration of the M.F.A. Program faculty and student body with A.C.T.'s artistic wing, while also teaching and directing in the M.F.A. Program, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. In 2013, she launched the San Francisco Semester, a semester-long intensive that deepens students' acting. In 2016, she was honored by Theatre Bay Area as one of 40 individuals who have changed the face of Bay Area theater. Prior to assuming

leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of the Program in Theater and Dance at Princeton University. She has taught acting classes to students of all ages in various colleges, high schools, and studios around the continental United States, at the Mid-Pacific Institute in Hawaii, New York University's La Pietra campus in Florence, and the Teatro di Pisa in San Miniato, Italy. She is featured in *Acting Teachers of America: A Vital Tradition*. Also a professional actor, she has performed regionally at the Hangar Theatre, A.C.T., the California Shakespeare Festival, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre; in New York at Primary Stages and Soho Rep.; and in England at the Barbican Centre in London and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Smith holds a BA from Yale College and an MFA in acting from Yale School of Drama.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

A.C.T.'s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, 415.834.3200. On the web: act-sf.org

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A.C.T. BOX OFFICE

Visit us at 1127 Market Street at 7th Street, across from the UN Plaza; or at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, one block west of Union Square. Walk-up hours are Tuesday–Sunday (10 a.m.–15 minutes after curtain) on performance days, and Monday–Friday (noon–6 p.m.) and Saturday–Sunday (noon–4 p.m.) on nonperformance days. (For Geary Box Office walk-up hours, please visit act-sf.org.) Phone hours are Tuesday–Sunday (10 a.m.–curtain) on performance days, and Monday–Friday (10 a.m.–6 p.m.) and Saturday–Sunday (10 a.m.–4 p.m.) on nonperformance days. Call 415.749.2228 and use American Express, Visa, or MasterCard; or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours a day on our website at act-sf.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current ticket subscribers and those who purchase ticket insurance enjoy ticket exchange privileges. Packages are available by calling 415.749.2250. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person.

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Groups of 15 or more save up to 50%! For more information call Anthony Miller at 415.439.2424.

AT THE THEATER

A.C.T.'s Strand Theater is located at 1127 Market Street. The lobby opens one hour before curtain. Bar service and refreshments are available one hour before curtain. The theater opens 30 minutes before curtain.

A.C.T. MERCHANDISE

Copies of *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s in-depth performance guide, are on sale in the main lobby, at the box office, and online.

REFRESHMENTS

Strand Cafe hours are Thursday–Tuesday (8 a.m.–4 p.m.) and Wednesday (7 a.m.–noon) for the general public. Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available to patrons one hour before performances. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages. Bar drinks are now permitted in the theater.

CELL PHONES

If you carry a pager, beeper, cell phone, or watch with alarm, please make sure that it is set to the “off” position while you are in the theater. Text messaging during the performance is very disruptive and not allowed.

PERFUMES

The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented aftershave lotions, even in small amounts, can cause severe physical reactions in some individuals. As a courtesy to fellow patrons, please avoid the use of these products when you attend the theater.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE

Leave your seat location with those who may need to reach you and have them call 415.439.2397 in an emergency.

LATECOMERS

A.C.T. performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated before the first intermission only if there is an appropriate interval.

LISTENING SYSTEMS

Headsets designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium are available free of charge in the lobby before performances. Please turn off your hearing aid when using an A.C.T. headset, as it will react to the sound system and make a disruptive noise.

RESTROOMS are located on the basement level; on the ground floor (two ADA toilets behind the box office); and toward the back of the upper orchestra, on mezzanine 2. Gender diversity is welcome at A.C.T. We invite audiences to use the restroom that best fits your gender identity. If preferred, single-user restrooms can be found at the rear of the lobby.



Wheelchair Seating is located at the main cross aisle on the orchestra level, at Box A on the orchestra level, and in the mezzanine.

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** is now available in the Strand box office.

LOST AND FOUND

If you've misplaced an item while you're still at the theater, please look for it at our merchandise stand in the lobby. Any items found by ushers or other patrons will be taken there. If you've already left the theater, please call 415.439.2471 and we'll be happy to check our lost and found for you. Please be prepared with the date you attended the performance and your seat location.

AFFILIATIONS

A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of Theatre Bay Area, the Union Square Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.



A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



The scenic shop, prop shop, and stage crew are represented by Local 16 of the IATSE.

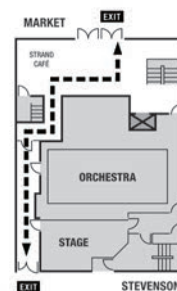


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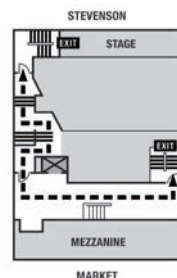
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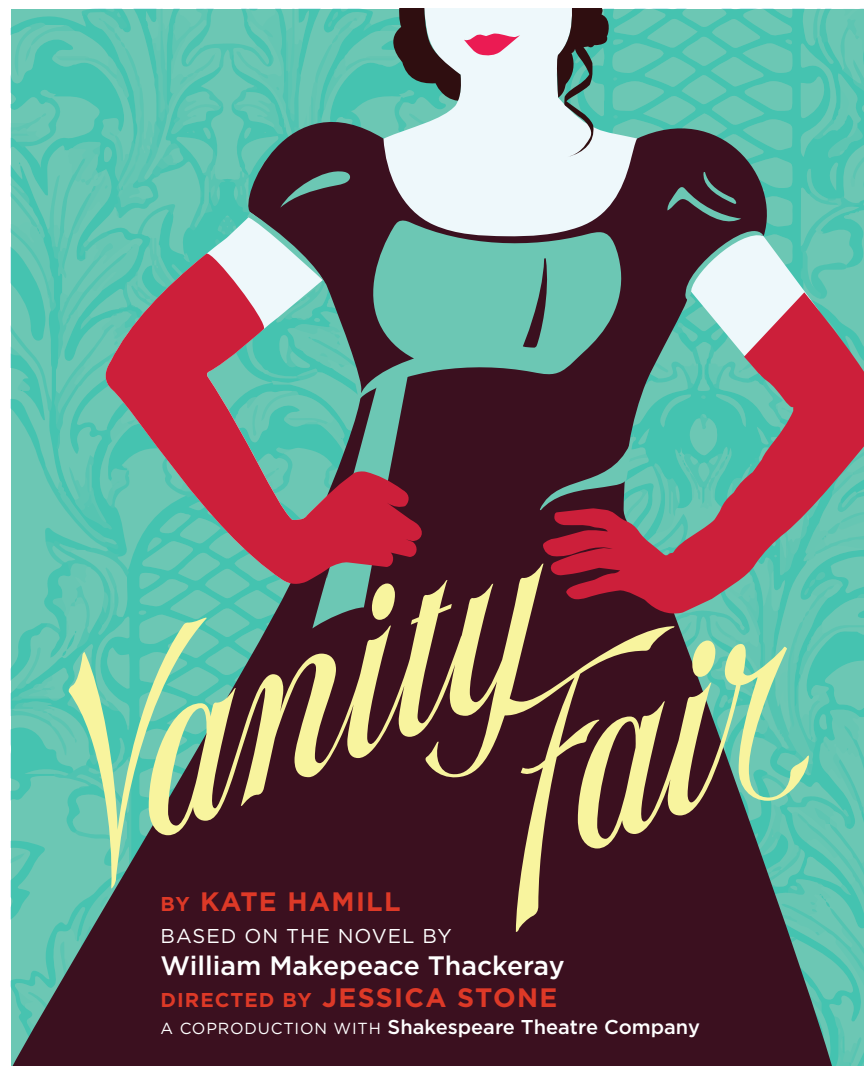
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