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ACT-SF.ORG

# 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 engagement with our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, we embrace our responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our rich theatrical traditions and literatures, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. Founded by William Ball, a pioneer of the regional theater movement, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. We have since performed more than 350 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. Every year we reach more than 250,000 people through our productions and programs.

Rising from the wreckage of the earthquake and fire of 1906 and hailed as the "perfect playhouse," the beautiful, historic Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped the roof apart, San Franciscans rallied together to raise a record-breaking \$30 million to rebuild the theater. The Geary reopened in 1996 with a production of *The Tempest* directed by Perloff, who took over in 1992 after the retirement of A.C.T.'s second artistic director, gentleman artist Ed Hastings.

Perloff's 24-season tenure has been marked by groundbreaking productions of classical works and new translations creatively colliding with exceptional contemporary theater; cross-disciplinary performances and international collaborations; and theater made by, for, and about the Bay Area. Her fierce commitment to audience engagement ushered in a new era of InterACT events and dramaturgical publications, inviting everyone to explore what goes on behind the scenes.

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. Meanwhile, our intensive Summer Training Congress attracts students from around the world, and the San Francisco Semester offers a unique study-abroad opportunity for undergraduates. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19, led by 28-year veteran Craig Slight; 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 their employees' business performance skills. Our alumni often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area, as well as on stages and screens across the country.

A.C.T. also brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 12,000 Bay Area students and educators each year. Central to our ACTsmart education programs, run by Director of Education & Community Programs Elizabeth Brodersen, is the longstanding Student Matinee (SMAT) program, which 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 our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood marked by the renovation of The Strand Theater and the opening of The Costume Shop Theater, A.C.T. plays a leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.

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WELLESLEY ROBERTSON III IN *NEEDLES AND OPIMUM*.  
PHOTO COURTESY EX MACHINA.



IN THIS INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION FROM FRENCH Canadian director Robert Lepage, three worlds collide inside a vast cube suspended over the Geary stage. Jazz legend Miles Davis travels to Europe in 1949 to discover the pleasures of Paris, unlock his creativity, and find his heroine in Juliette Gréco. At the same time, French filmmaker Jean Cocteau returns from his own opium-fueled journey to New York. Forty years later, a Québécois actor wanders the streets of Paris, seeking solace from a lost love in the words of Cocteau and the cool jazz of Davis.

Individually, the stories are thrilling and heartbreaking, but what elevates this production is Lepage's extraordinary storytelling. One of Canada's most revered film and stage directors, Lepage has directed everything from ballet and opera to puppetry and circus shows. He has helmed productions of Wagner at the Metropolitan Opera, *Kà* and *Totem* for Cirque du Soleil, and a Kabuki-inspired Stravinsky at the Canadian Opera Company.

# NEEDLES AND OPIUM

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**ROBERT LEPAGE**

PRODUCED BY  
**EX MACHINA**

He has also directed five feature films and is the artistic director of his own multidisciplinary production company, Ex Machina, the producer of this piece. Developing an aesthetic all his own, Lepage combines words, movement, music, installation art, and contemporary circus techniques to create a unique theatrical experience.

In *Needles and Opium*, Lepage uses video projection, acrobatics, and jazz to take us on a breathtaking dive through Paris's nightclubs and bistros to examine the enigmas of creativity, exile, and addiction. Can art as intoxicating as Davis's trumpet-playing and Cocteau's films be created without the intensity of addiction, in the unfamiliar heart of a foreign city? The result is an experience not to be missed.

**MAR 30–APR 23** | A.C.T.'S GEARY THEATER  
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Actors Stacey Yen (Jenny)  
and Joe Paulik (Elias)

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## 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 our upcoming production of *Needles and Opium* and InterACT with us!

## NEEDLES AND OPIUM

AT THE GEARY THEATER

### BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT

MAR 30, 7 PM

Ride your bike to A.C.T. and take advantage of secure bike parking and low-priced tickets at our preshow mixer, presented in partnership with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

### PROLOGUE

APR 4, 5:30 PM

Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion with a member of the *Needles and Opium* artistic team.

### AUDIENCE EXCHANGE\*

APR 9 & 19, 2 PM; APR 11, 7 PM

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

### OUT WITH A.C.T.\*

APR 12, 8 PM

Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGBT party.

### THEATER ON THE COUCH\*

APR 14, 8 PM

Take part in a lively conversation in our lower-level lounge with Dr. Mason Turner, chief of psychiatry at Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Medical Center.

### SYMPOSIUM

APR 15, 2 PM

An expert on the themes of the play joins a member of the *Needles and Opium* artistic team for a fascinating postshow conversation.

### WENTE VINEYARDS WINE SERIES

APR 18, 7 PM

Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine-tasting event.

To learn more and order tickets for InterACT events, visit [act-sf.org/interact](http://act-sf.org/interact).

\*Events take place immediately following the performance

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A.C.T. volunteers provide an invaluable service with their time, enthusiasm, and love of theater. Opportunities include helping out in our performing-arts library and ushering in our theaters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## LISTEN!

Check out A.C.T.'s new podcast, *Theaterology*, and listen to InterACT events online!

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# A.C.T.'S 50TH SEASON GALA

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 5PM

Join A.C.T.'s celebrated alumni and artists from the past 50 years with a black-tie block party along Market Street.

#### THE EVENING WILL FEATURE

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FOR TICKETS, VISIT  
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\*as of February 7



# FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the magical, mysterious world of Annie Baker. Many of you may already be Baker aficionados (there have been excellent productions of her work at San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, and Aurora Theatre Company), while for others, *John* will be an introduction to the highly original voice of a remarkable young playwright. *John* invites us into the Gettysburg bed-and-breakfast of a loquacious woman named Mertis. Nothing is what it seems in this hilarious and unsettling meditation on loneliness, time, and the search for connection in an increasingly enigmatic universe.

I find it particularly interesting that we are doing this play in the home city of Airbnb, a company that has made ubiquitous the truly strange practice of sleeping in someone else's home, surrounded by someone else's personal possessions and life stories. *John* is a ghost story about trying to make sense of one's place in the world, while surrounded by wind chimes, lifelike dolls, and an endless array of tchotchkes. The play is filled with Baker's uniquely crafted language and wit and feels particularly suited for the intimacy of The Strand. We're delighted to welcome such a distinguished group of artists to A.C.T. to collaborate on this West Coast premiere of Baker's latest play.

We are continuing to celebrate A.C.T.'s 50th anniversary with a plethora of special events and master-artist residencies. It was a joy to have Tom Stoppard with us for *The Hard Problem*, and we are looking forward to hosting the legendary Peter Brook, who will join us in San Francisco for his landmark production of *Battlefield* this spring. At 92, Brook is one of the most revered directors in the world today, and we're honored that he has chosen to be with us to share his ideas, teach master classes, and participate in our festivities. On March 18, we will have a

Geary-wide open-house celebration of A.C.T.'s birthday, with live events happening all over the building. The day will culminate in a free reading on the Geary stage of Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, starring many beloved alumni and former company members. We hope you will *all* join us for that!

As we put the finishing touches on Michael Paller's 50th-anniversary book, *A Five-Act Play: 50 Years of A.C.T.*, I am constantly reminded of the founding vision for A.C.T. and the tenacity of so many artists, administrators, and audience members that has kept it alive in spite of all obstacles. While honoring the original vision of a muscular repertory company that is also a distinguished educational institution, A.C.T. has evolved and grown in significant ways, particularly with regard to the depth of our community engagement and the breadth of our commitment to new work. In this program, you'll find a wonderful piece on our New Strands Festival and our work on new plays over the past 50 years. These commitments give me great hope about the next 50!

Finally, as we celebrate our past and look to the future, we hope you will continue to share your own stories with us—we love what we've received so far! Visit [act-sf.org/shareyourstory](http://act-sf.org/shareyourstory) to tell us about your favorite memories of A.C.T. In the meantime, welcome to *John*, and thank you as always for being with us.

Yours,



Carey Perloff  
Artistic Director



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BOTTOM ROW: BATTLEFIELD: PHOTO BY SIMON ANNAND. A NIGHT WITH JANIS JOPLIN: ARTWORK BY ADAM LARSON.



# A.C.T.

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PRESENTS

# JOHN

BY ANNIE BAKER  
DIRECTED BY KEN RUS SCHMOLL

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*John is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.*

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\*\*Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2017, appearing in this production courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

ABOUT THE PLAY

# MADNESS AND INTIMACY

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
PLAYWRIGHT ANNIE BAKER

BY MICHAEL PALLER

Playwright Annie Baker

PHOTO BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE



## **When Annie Baker was 17 years old, she started surreptitiously recording everyday**

conversations and transcribing them exactly as she heard them. When she went back and read the transcriptions, she was moved by the innate rhythm of mundane speech, the pauses and false starts, what was said and unsaid. Since that high school experiment, Baker has gone on to become an internationally renowned, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright. She is perhaps most well known for her distinctive dialogue, which realistically portrays the way human beings actually speak, complete with ums, ahs, repetitions, false starts, and silences. Before rehearsals began at A.C.T., we caught up with Baker over e-mail to talk about her newest play, *John*.

---

**Can you say something about how *John* came about?**

**I read that you got interested in reading “uncanny texts like Hoffmann and Bruno Schulz and German Expressionist films.”**

**Does what you’re reading often find its way into what you’re writing? And where else did this play come from?**

*John* came out of years of reading and thinking, and yes, what I’m reading always finds its way into my work. Reading is part of writing for me. One book that was a huge influence on *John* was Victoria Nelson’s *The Secret Life of Puppets* which then led me to all these other texts by Bruno Schulz and E. T. A. Hoffmann and Daniel Schreber. What else influenced the play? William James’s *Varieties of Religious Experience*, a lot of Kierkegaard and Rudolf Otto, an essay by Rilke on dolls, Jung’s autobiography, Freud’s essay on the uncanny, various trips to Gettysburg and the people I met there, and Georgia Engel herself. I worked with Georgia for the first time in 2012 on a production of *Uncle Vanya*, and I felt like the two of us understood each other completely. I started writing *John* for her, and I kind of built the whole play around her. Our work together and our mutual love and understanding was a big part of the process. And then of course, there’s the young couple in the play, and the madness of being in a relationship that needs to end. Certain relationships I had in my twenties made me feel like I was going totally bonkers. And while I’d always been resistant to writing a “relationship play,” I was intrigued by making the somewhat young and immature central relationship part of a larger, more expansive musing on madness, and intimacy, and the numinous.

**One of the things the play seems to be about is the possibility, or the sense, that we are being watched all the time—or watched over, which can be either a sinister feeling or a comforting one, and by either some large, invisible force or by the small, inanimate objects that surround us. Do you have any sense about what, if anything, is out there**

**concerning itself with us? Do you feel that sort of presence yourself? Is it comforting, or sinister?**

Wow. Well, I love these questions. They’re big ones. I’m not sure I feel comfortable answering them in a public forum. They’re definitely questions I’ve thought about a lot and I was thinking about all of them while writing the play. I think the best way to know my thoughts on this subject is to read or see the play. Basically everything every character says, even when they’re disagreeing with each other, encapsulates how I feel about the matter. They’re all different sides of myself and my feelings surrounding the issue. Around the time I hit 30, someone very wise said to me something like: “Thinking you know what someone else is thinking is the definition of madness.” Or maybe they said: “Trying to figure out what other people are thinking will drive you mad.” And as simple as it sounds, it kind of blew my mind. I’d expended so much energy in my first 30 years trying to know and anticipate what other people were thinking and then convincing myself that I’d figured it out. There is also the danger, of course, of trying to figure out what God is thinking. And that’s a different brand of the same madness.

***John*, like others of your plays, takes place in a single location, a bed-and-breakfast in Gettysburg. You’ve said that you’re interested in “trapping people in one space.” Is that an aesthetic impulse, a psychological one, or something else?**

It’s both an aesthetic and a psychological impulse (or I can’t really un-entwine them). It’s just something that theater can do really, really well that film and television can’t: trap you in a box. The restriction of and the literal borders around the stage space have always been thrilling to me. And when I write it’s really helpful to me to say to myself: we only see what happens in this space. What happens outside of it is unknown.

# A HIDDEN WELL

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
DIRECTOR KEN RUS SCHMOLL

BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN



PHOTO BY ZACK DEZON

"I find *John* terrifying," says director Ken Rus Schmoll. "That's what attracts me to it. It's like driving down a road in the fog. You can only see a few yards ahead of you, and you never seem to arrive at your destination." Schmoll is no stranger to plays that create this experience. Hailed as "an expert at sustained abnormality" by *Time Out New York*, Schmoll has directed works that explore strangeness and illusion at many of New York's most illustrious off-Broadway theaters, including New York Theater Workshop, Clubbed Thumb, and Playwrights Horizons. As he prepared to direct *John*—his first Annie Baker play—at A.C.T., we caught up with him to chat about bed-and-breakfasts, Baker, and presenting reality onstage.

## What research did you do for *John*?

Scenic designer Marsha Ginsberg and I went to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and knocked on the doors of bed-and-breakfasts. We were invited into many of them and spent hours with the various proprietors looking through rooms, photographing architectural details, taking notes on how they were decorated and organized. Secretly, we were compiling mental portraits of the proprietors themselves, to understand the type of person who would choose to run a B and B.

## What is your favorite thing about *John*?

I love the characters. Each of them is deeply knowable and deeply mysterious. One of the play's preoccupations is how

different generations relate to one another. In addition to the young couple, there are two roles for actresses in their seventies that are complex, far from the stereotypical "old ladies" that permeate popular culture.

## How does the title inform the play?

It makes me think of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*: the person that never arrives, an offstage force that pulls the play along. It also makes me think of Sophocles's *Antigone*, which dramatically speaking is more about Creon, the person who has to grapple with Antigone's unwavering actions.

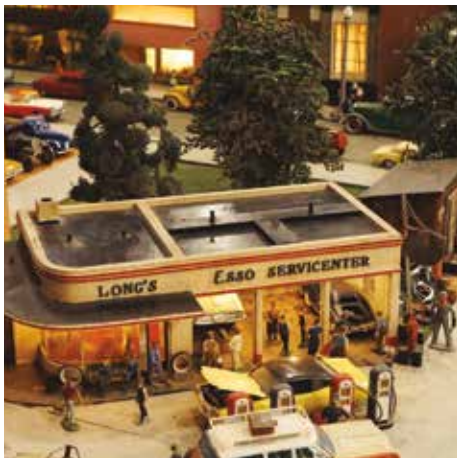
## Annie Baker is a playwright who is very specific about stage directions and set design. What is it like to work on a show like this?

Within structure lies freedom. By meticulously confronting the details of the play, one senses the vast hidden mental and emotional wells beneath the play. I don't think of myself as an interpreter of plays, rather as a craftsperson or an engineer. To make emptiness, one makes a cup, as the Japanese saying goes.

## What are the challenges of directing Baker's work?

There is a lot that is unspoken. There are the long pauses that everyone associates with her plays. This requires a thorough exploration of what the characters are thinking. Thinking is





**OPPOSITE**  
Director Ken Rus Schmoll.

**ABOVE**  
Scenic designer Marsha Ginsberg's bed-and-breakfast research photos from a trip to Gettysburg with Schmoll.

potentially as dramatic a force onstage as speaking. Personally, I am obsessed with “thinking” onstage: what actors think, what characters think, how thinking actually occurs, how thinking is represented to be happening.

#### What makes Baker's plays so powerful?

They are generous with audiences. There is something immediately recognizable in each of her plays, often the setting (a movie theater, a bed-and-breakfast), sometimes a situation—friends hanging out. At the same time, she does not fill in every detail of the story. She allows space for the audience to project themselves into her worlds and to wander among the thoughts of the characters, and their own thoughts, too. Annie's plays are like a communal garden divided into individual plots, where each audience member may plant whatever he or she prefers.

#### Why this play now?

In a moment when many people are feeling an urgency—to do something, to figure out what to do—*John* asks us to consider going in through the side door. The side door takes more time, we have to figure out where it is, and it involves a bit of a journey.



**WORDS ON PLAYS**

Want to know more about *John*? *Words on Plays* is full of original essays and interviews that give you a behind-the-scenes look at *John*—perfect for reading before the play, during intermission, or when you get home! Proceeds from sales of *Words on Plays* benefit A.C.T.'s education programs.

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# WHO'S WHO IN JOHN



## **GEORGIA ENGEL\*** (Mertis)

is thrilled to be rediscovering the role of Mertis in the West Coast premiere of *John* at A.C.T. She created

the role in 2015 at New York's Signature Theatre and received an Obie Award for Distinguished Performance by an Actress. Other recent New York downtown credits include Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* at Soho Rep. (adapted by Annie Baker, directed by Sam Gold) and Will Eno's *Middletown* at Vineyard Theatre (directed by Ken Rus Schmoll). On Broadway, Engel's credits include *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *My One and Only*, and *Hello, Dolly!* Her television credits include *Hot in Cleveland*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* (three Emmy Award nominations), *Coach*, and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (two Emmy Award nominations).



## **ANN MCDONOUGH\***

(Genevieve) was most recently at Arena Stage in Washington, DC, in *The City of Conversation*. At

Lincoln Center Theater in New York, she was in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* and *Dinner at Eight*. She was in the original production of A. R. Gurney's *The Dining Room* (Playwrights Horizons), and she was in it again, 25 years later, when the cast of the Keen Company production won a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Ensemble Performance. Also in New York, she appeared in the original productions of *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, *What I Did Last Summer*, *Mastergate*, *Uncommon Women and Others*, and *Fables for Friends*. At Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, she has performed in 12 productions, most

recently *Our Town* (Mrs. Soames). On television, she was in *Law & Order*, *The Good Wife*, and *All My Children* (Esther).



## **JOE PAULIK\*** (Elias)

has many off-Broadway credits, including *Stupid Fucking Bird* (The Pearl Theatre Company), *Love & Money* (Signature Theatre), *P. S. Jones and the Frozen City* (New Ohio Theatre), *Timon of Athens* (The Public Theater), *A Feminine Ending* (Playwrights Horizons), *The Sporting Life* (Vineyard Theatre), and *Measure for Measure* (The Acting Shakespeare Company). His regional credits include *The Power of Duff* (Geffen Playhouse and Huntington Theatre Company), *Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Twelfth Night* (Hartford Stage), *Moonchildren* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *Major Barbara* (Guthrie Theater), *Old Wicked Songs* (Westport Country Playhouse), and *Eurydice*, *Cabaret & Main*, and *Kilroy Was Here* (Williamstown Theatre Festival). His

television credits include *Guiding Light*, *The Good Wife*, and *Person of Interest*. Paulik holds an MFA from New York University's graduate acting program, and he completed the Shakespeare course of study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.



## **STACEY YEN\***

(Jenny) makes her A.C.T. debut with *John*. Yen's theater credits include *A Confederacy of Dunces* with Nick Offerman at the

Huntington Theatre Company; Mary Zimmerman's *Arabian Nights* at Arena Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, and Kansas City Repertory Theatre; *Mirror of the Invisible World* at Goodman Theatre; *Twelfth*

*Night* at Hartford Stage; *The Winter's Tale* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival; *Macbeth* and *As You Like It* at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival; and the world premiere of *Love in the Wars* at Bard SummerScape, directed by Ken Rus Schmoll. In New York, Yen has premiered new work with such theater companies as Ars Nova, The Mad Ones, Clubbed Thumb, The Play Company, and The Public Theater. Internationally, Yen has toured *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* at the King's Theatre Edinburgh, Singapore's Esplanade Theatre, and New York's acclaimed Under the Radar Festival. Television credits include *Elementary*, *Madam Secretary*, *Treme*, *The Blacklist*, *High Maintenance*, *Gossip Girl*, *Unforgettable*, *The Good Wife*, *Blue Bloods*, *Ugly Betty*, *Nurse Jackie*, and *CSI: NY*. Yen received her BA from Brown University and her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.



## **PATRICK ANDREW JONES\*\***

(Understudy) is in his third year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and recently made his

Geary debut with *A Christmas Carol*. Jones is the recipient of the 2015 M.F.A. Program "Hit Your Stride" scholarship. Some of his favorite credits with the M.F.A. Program are KJ in *The Aliens* for the A.C.T. Sky Festival, *Macbeth* in *Macbeth*, and Tranio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Along with working extensively in the New York City theater scene, he has worked in the Bay Area performing such roles as Ferdinand in *The Tempest* and Charles Musgrove in *Jane Austen's Persuasion* at the Livermore Shakespeare Festival.

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

\*\*Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2017, appearing in this production courtesy of Actors Equity Association



**NAREA KANG\*\***

**(Understudy)** is in her third year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She was last seen on the Geary stage in *A Christmas Carol* and

as Bo in Tom Stoppard's *The Hard Problem*. Recent M.F.A. Program credits include *Doubt*, *A Parable* (Sister Aloysius), Horton Foote's *Blind Date* (Dolores) and *The Actor* (Elizabeth), *Cardenio* (Camila), and *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth). Kang has worked as an actor, teaching artist, and producer in Seattle and San Francisco.

**TRISH MULHOLLAND\***

**(Understudy)** is a graduate of Australia's National Theatre Drama School. She was a top-rating, award-

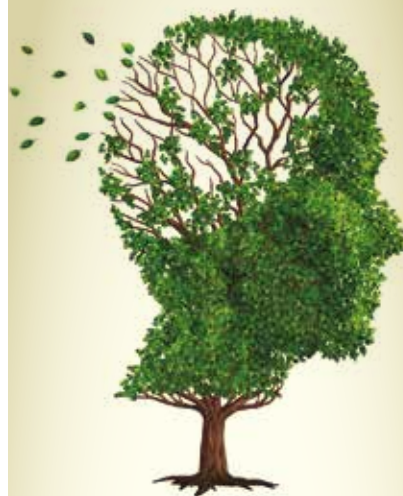
winning radio host in Melbourne, Australia, and hosted radio shows in Italy and France, before finally settling in the Bay Area and returning to theater. A core company member of Berkeley's Shotgun Players, Mulholland has appeared on stages around the Bay Area including A.C.T., Aurora Theatre Company, and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Favorite roles include Mother Courage, Agave in *The Bacchae*, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, the updated diva in *The Seagull in The Hamptons*, and Woman in the West Coast premiere of Edward Albee's *The Play about the Baby* (Shotgun Players).

**ANNIE BAKER (Playwright)** has written many plays, including *John* (Signature Theatre; Obie Award, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel award nominations for Outstanding Play), *The Flick* (Playwrights Horizons/Barrow Street Theatre; Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Hull-Warriner Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Obie Award for Playwriting), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Playwrights Horizons; Obie Award for Best New American Play, Drama Desk Award nomination

for Outstanding Play), *The Aliens* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater; Obie Award for Best New American Play), *Body Awareness* (Atlantic Theater Company; Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations for Outstanding Play/the John Gassner Award), and an adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (Soho Rep., Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Revival), for which she also designed the costumes. Her plays have been produced at more than 200 theaters throughout the US and in more than a dozen countries, including productions at the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Court Theatre in London and the Moscow Art Theatre in Moscow. Other recent honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, The Steinberg Playwright Award, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and the Cullman Center Fellowship at The New York Public Library. She is a resident playwright at Signature Theatre and a Master Artist in Residence at the Playwriting MFA Program at Hunter College.

**KEN RUS SCHMOLL (director)**

has recently directed MJ Kaufman's *Sagittarius Ponderosa* for the National Asian American Theatre Company, Lucas Hnath's *Hillary and Clinton* at the Philadelphia Theatre Company, Anne Washburn's *Antlia Pneumatica* at Playwrights Horizons, Max Posner's *Judy* for Page 73 Productions, Kate E. Ryan's *Card and Gift* for Clubbed Thumb, Jenny Schwartz and Todd Almond's *Iowa* at Playwrights Horizons, Ayad Akhtar's *The Invisible Hand* at New York Theatre Workshop, John Banville's *Love in the Wars* at Bard SummerScape, and Will Eno's *Middletown* at the Vineyard Theatre. He is a usual suspect at New York Theatre Workshop, an affiliated artist with Clubbed Thumb, co-mentor of the Clubbed Thumb Directing Fellowship, a three-time Sundance Institute Theatre Program alum, a former co-chair of the Soho Rep. Writer/Director Lab, and the recipient of two Obie Awards and a Lucille Lortel Award



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nomination. Schmoll's upcoming projects include Tony Meneses's *The Women of Padilla* at Two River Theatre.

**MARSHA GINSBERG (Scenic Designer)** is an Obie Award-winning scenic and costume designer working in theater and opera in the US and Europe. Her previous work with Ken Rus Schmoll includes *Love in the Wars* (Bard SummerScape); *Proserpina* (Spoleto Festival USA); *It Happens Like This* (Tanglewood Music Center/

Guggenheim Works & Process); *Red Dog Howls* (New York Theatre Workshop); *A Map of Virtue* (13P); and *Telephone* (The Foundry Theatre). Ginsberg has designed opera projects with directors Christopher Alden, Roy Rallo, Lydia Steier, Jay Scheib, and Ted Huffman. These include *Transformations* and *Così fan tutte* (San Francisco Opera/Merola Opera Program), *L'Orfeo* (Konzert Theater Bern), *The Rake's Progress* (Staatstheater Braunschweig), *Powder Her Face* (New York City Opera/

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Opéra de Québec), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Opéra National de Bordeaux), *Methusalem Projekt* and *Don Pasquale* (Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar), and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Theater Basel), among others. Her recent theater credits include *The Undertaking* (Barrow Street Theatre), *Nikolai and the Others* (Lincoln Center Theater/Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, directed by David Cromer), and *Angel Reapers*, created by Martha Clarke (Signature Theatre). Ginsberg is the recipient of many grants and awards, including the 2016 New York State Council on the Arts grant for *Faust 2.0* (Mabou Mines), the New York Foundation for the Arts Architecture Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Groups Design Fellowship, an Elliot Norton Award, The Watermill Center Residency, and The MacDowell Colony Residency.

**JESSIE AMOROSO (Costume Designer)** is in his eighth season at A.C.T. and is currently the costume director for the company. Bay Area theater design and styling credits include work at the California Theatre Center, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Berkeley Playhouse, Solano College Theatre, Central Works Theater Company, Marines' Memorial Theatre, the Herbst Theatre, the Herbst Pavilion at Fort Mason Center, and the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre. A.C.T. credits are *Ah, Wilderness!*; *Love and Information*; *Testament* with Seana McKenna; *Underneath the Lintel*; and *Chester Bailey*. Other highlights include designing two world premieres for Brad Erickson at New Conservatory Theatre Center, most recently *American Dream*. At Project Artaud he designed *Caligula*, featuring Nancy Carlin, and at Z Space he designed *A Round-Heeled Woman*, starring Sharon Gless. Volunteer designs for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS include *Broadway Bares 23: United Strips of America* and *Broadway Bares SF: Tech Tails*. He is a graduate of California State University, Hayward (now California State University, East Bay).



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**ROBERT HAND (Lighting**

**Designer)** most recently designed *Monstress* and *Chester Bailey*, for which he received the Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Lighting Design (A.C.T.); *Seared* and *Stage Kiss* (San Francisco Playhouse); *Home in 7* by choreographer Amy Seiwert and *Boiling Point* by choreographer Darrell Grand Moultrie (Atlanta Ballet); and *Peter Pan* by choreographer Jorden Morris (Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre). Additional credits include lighting designs for the English National Ballet, North Carolina Theatre, Milwaukee Ballet, Scottish Ballet, *Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues*, and *Scary Movie 5*. He is also the former resident lighting designer for Atlanta Ballet, where he designed more than 25 new works, many of which remain in their permanent repertoire.

**BRENDAN AANES (Sound**

**Designer)** has designed sound for recent productions, including *The Hard Problem*, *The Unfortunates*, and *Chester Bailey* at A.C.T.; *Othello* at California Shakespeare Theater; *Cowboy Bob* at Ars Nova; *Triangle* (Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Sound Design), *The Life of the Party*, *Confederates*, and *The Lake Effect* for TheatreWorks; *Fire in Dreamland* at Kansas City Repertory Theatre; *The Way West* at Marin Theatre Company; *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn* at Aurora Theatre Company; *The Hundred Flowers Project* (Will Glickman Award for Best New Play) and *Truck Stop* at Crowded Fire Theater; *Mutt* at Impact Theatre; and *Abigail's Party*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, and *The Aliens* at San Francisco Playhouse.

**JACQUELYN SCOTT (Props**

**Master)** works as props master, set designer and art director for theaters and film companies throughout the Bay Area. Her previous credits include *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); *American Hwagap* (The Play Company, New York); and as art director for Park Pictures, Paper Dog Video, and Heist.

**MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg)**

joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005, and since then he has dramaturged more than 50 productions and workshops. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's *Small Craft Warnings* at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth Century Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan), *Williams in an Hour* (Smith & Kraus), and *A Five-Act Play: 50 Years of A.C.T.* (Chronicle Books). He has also written theater and book reviews for the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *Newsday*, and *Mirabella* magazine. He recently adapted the text for the San Francisco Symphony's multimedia presentation of *Peer Gynt*. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

**JANET FOSTER, CSA (Casting**

**Director)** joined A.C.T. as the casting director in the 2011-12 season. 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 *Lucy*, *Brundibar*, *True Love*, *Endpapers*, *The Dying Gaul*, *The*



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*Maiden's Prayer, The Trojan Women: A Love Story, Floyd Collins, The Monogamist, A Cheever Evening, Later Life, and many more at Playwrights Horizons. Regionally, she has worked at Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Yale Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, The Old Globe, Center Stage in Baltimore, Westport Country Playhouse, and the American Repertory Theater. Film, television, and radio credits include *Cosby* (CBS), *Tracey Takes On New York* (HBO), Lewis Black's *The Deal, Advice from a Caterpillar, The Day That Lehman Died* (BBC World Service and Blackhawk Productions; Peabody, SONY, and Wincott awards), and *"T" Is for Tom* (Tom Stoppard radio plays, WNYC and WQXR).*

## DEIRDRE ROSE HOLLAND\*

**(Stage Manager)** has worked on many regional theater projects and productions, including the 2016 New Strands Festival, *On Beckett, Chester Bailey, Let There Be Love, and Ah, Wilderness!* at A.C.T.; *The Liar* at Santa Cruz Shakespeare; *Othello, Twelfth Night, and Lady Windermere's Fan* at California Shakespeare Theater; *Daddy Long Legs, Cyrano, and 2 Pianos 4 Hands* at TheatreWorks; *The Big Meal, Game On, Next Fall, Next to Normal, A Christmas Carol* (2011 and 2012), and *Spring Awakening* at San Jose Repertory Theatre; *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* and the world premiere of *Bonnie & Clyde* at La Jolla Playhouse; and the Shakespeare Festival 2011, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (2010), and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* at The Old Globe. Holland holds an MFA in stage management from UC San Diego.

## CHRISTINA LARSON\* (Assistant

**Stage Manager)** most recently assistant stage-managed *The Hard Problem, The Last Five Years, and The Unfortunates* at A.C.T. Her favorite shows as production assistant have been *King Lear* (California Shakespeare Theater), *Sister Play* (Magic Theatre), *Tribes* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), and *Macbeth* (California Shakespeare Theater).

## PRISCILLA AND KEITH GEESLIN (Executive Producers)

have produced the A.C.T. shows *Satchmo at the Waldorf, Old Hats, Underneath the Lintel, Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City, Scapin, The Tosca Project, Curse of the Starving Class, and The Rivals*, among others. Priscilla currently serves as vice chair of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, of which she has been a member since 2003, as well as chair of the Development Committee. She also serves on the boards of the San Francisco Symphony, Grace Cathedral, and chairs the NARAL ProChoice America Foundation Board. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith is the president of San Francisco Opera's board of trustees.

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# A NIGHT WITH Janis Joplin



## LOVE AND HAIGHT

### LOOKING AHEAD TO *A NIGHT WITH JANIS JOPLIN*

BY SIMON HODGSON

She breathed in air. She breathed out soul. Janis Joplin was, for many San Franciscans, the voice of the Summer of Love. Born in 1943 in Port Arthur, Texas, Joplin was a quiet, blues-loving bohemian girl. But in 1964, she headed west and fell headlong into '60s San Francisco, living in Haight-Ashbury, recording tracks with emerging musicians, and diving deep into the city's counterculture. Within two years, she had joined the psychedelic rock band Big Brother and the Holding Company, and she was earning a reputation across West Coast venues for her extraordinary voice, laced with heart, soul, and Southern Comfort. By the time she performed at the Monterey Pop Festival in the summer of 1967, Joplin was at the top of her game.

"At A.C.T. we have long been invested in San Francisco stories," says Artistic Director Carey Perloff. "So when the opportunity came to bring *A Night with Janis Joplin* to San Francisco in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love, it was irresistible."

For the show's creator, Randy Johnson—producer of theatrical shows about artists from Elvis Presley to Conway Twitty, Louis Prima to Patsy Cline—the idea for the show began at a meeting

with the Joplin family. "They had wanted to do a new show about Janis," says Johnson. "[The meeting] was going to be 20 minutes and turned into a two-and-a-half hour meeting. One of the things [her family] talked about was cleaning day in the Joplin house. Dorothy Joplin [Janis's mother] had wanted to be a Broadway singer. Circumstances happened and she stayed in Port Arthur, Texas, and had a family. On cleaning day they would play Broadway show tunes, and each Saturday was a different cast album. They listened to *West Side Story*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Porgy and Bess*. Janis played 'Summertime' over and over, and it went on to become one of her greatest hits."

"Summertime" is just one of the singer's favorites featured in *A Night with Janis Joplin*, joining such songs as "Piece of My Heart," "Me and Bobby McGee," and "Ball and Chain." Framed by these classic '60s tracks, the musical focuses on Janis's story as she tells us about her roots, her growth, and the singers whose sound influenced her own. *Janis* isn't just a celebration of Joplin's raw harmony, but also a salute to the soulful vocals of five other iconic twentieth-century artists: Nina Simone, Odetta, Etta James, Bessie Smith, and Aretha Franklin. As San Francisco gears up to commemorate the 50th anniversary of its Haight-Ashbury heyday, what better way to celebrate our own 50th anniversary . . . and to rock The Geary like it's 1967.

***A Night with Janis Joplin* runs June 7 to July 2  
at The Geary Theater. Learn more at [act-sf.org/janis](http://act-sf.org/janis).**



# FIFTY YEARS OF DISCOVERY

## A HISTORY OF NEW WORK AT A.C.T.

BY SHANNON STOCKWELL

Throughout our 50 years of existence, A.C.T. has been a home for new work, commissions, and world premieres. We have always supported new plays—like Annie Baker's *John*, which premiered in New York in 2015—and we've done so since the beginning.

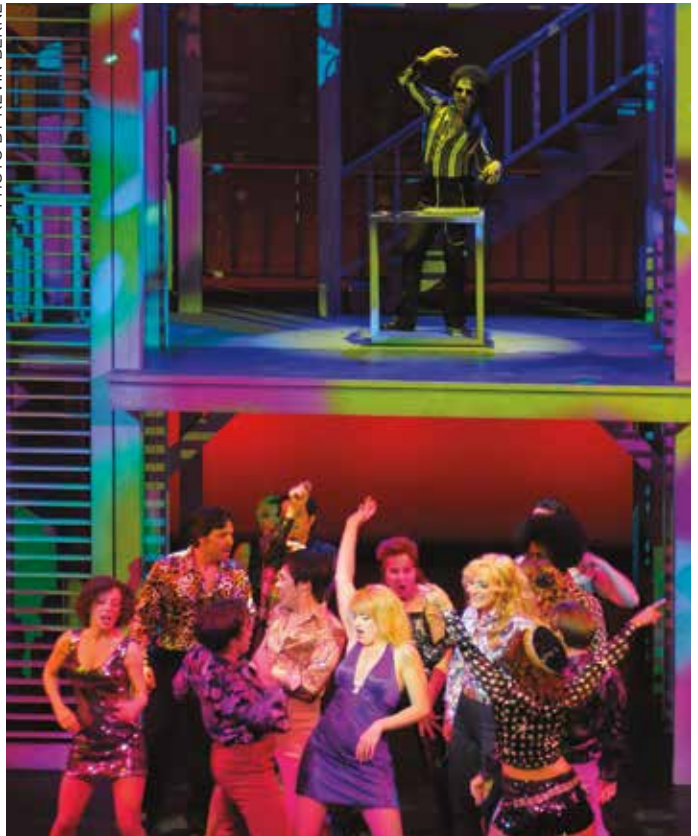
In fact, A.C.T.'s second season contained a total of four new plays: Brian McKinney's *Deedle, Deedle, Dumpling, My Son God*; Nagle Jackson's *Caught in the Act*; Jerome Kilty's *Don't Shoot, Mabel! It's Your Husband*; and *Long Live Life*, also by Kilty, which was based on the letters of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov (played by Ken Ruta, whom Bay Area audiences may remember

from many other A.C.T. productions; he was most recently seen on the Geary stage as the Ghost of Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol*).

Beginning in 1973, Executive Director Edward Hastings mounted simple productions of new plays in the 49-seat Play Room, located on the first floor of 450 Geary Street. This project, funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, developed into a program called Plays in Progress (PIP). Tickets were free to subscribers, and in the program's first season, a total of five thousand people came to the performances. Over 20 years at A.C.T., 84 new plays were produced through PIP, mostly by West Coast playwrights (who Hastings felt had fewer chances at productions than East Coast playwrights). Some writers that went through PIP include short-story writer Raymond Carver; filmmaker Ethan Coen (*No Country for Old Men*; *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*); Mark Medoff, who went on to win a Tony Award for *Children of a Lesser God*; and William M. Hoffman, whose play *As Is* was produced on Broadway in 1985.

PIP offered playwrights the opportunity to hone their work, but it also provided actors in the Advanced Training Program (the



**OPPOSITE**

Rachel Ticotin and Nol Simonse in *The Tosca Project*.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Hiro Kanagawa and Carrie Paff in *After the War*; Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City*; A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff at a reading of *Monstress*.

precursor to A.C.T.'s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program) the opportunity to act in and direct new plays. Hastings said of PIP: "We're part of the theatrical maternity ward instead of being just keepers of the archives."

Also showing A.C.T.'s commitment to new work is the Young Conservatory's Grace Magill New Plays Program, which Young Conservatory Director Craig Slight started in 1989 to develop plays, by professional playwrights, about the world as seen through the eyes of young people. Since the program began, it has fostered the creation of more than 40 new plays by English-speaking playwrights—including Ursula Rani Sarma, adapter of A.C.T.'s *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, whose play *Riot* premiered with a YC cast in 2010.

In the past decade, Artistic Director Carey Perloff—always a champion of new plays—has steered A.C.T. in the direction of tackling new work and commissions with increased fervor. These new plays have included such favorites as *After the War* (2007), *The Tosca Project* (2010), *Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City* (2011), *Monstress* (2015), and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2017).

Perloff is also a fierce advocate of commissioning new translations, by contemporary American playwrights, of great foreign works. At A.C.T., new translations are treated as new plays and receive intensive workshops before they are staged. Among the playwrights with whom we have worked on new translations are Paul Walsh (Ibsen and Strindberg), Timberlake Wertenbaker (the Greeks), and Melinda Lopez (Federico García Lorca).

Meanwhile, New Strands, A.C.T.'s play development and commissioning program, began in earnest in 2014. The inaugural New Strands Festival—when we first presented these works to the public—was held in February 2016 and ignited The Strand Theater with work from every artistic discipline, from film to dance to animation to music to theater.

A.C.T.'s mission is partly to conserve, renew, and reinvent theatrical traditions, but it is also committed to exploring new artistic forms and has been for 50 years. While classics constantly remind us of where we have been and how our past connects to the present, new works are vital in making sure theater stays fresh and relevant to modern audiences. The conversations generated by the mixture of the old and the new is what makes A.C.T. truly special.

# EPIC SIMPLICITY

A SNEAK PEEK AT  
PETER BROOK'S *BATTLEFIELD*

BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN

In 1985, revolutionary director Peter Brook shook the theater world with *The Mahabharata*—a marathon nine-hour production of a Sanskrit epic poem written 2,500 years ago. Using every tool in his extensive theatrical toolbox, he brought to life this story of familial dysfunction, power struggles, destiny, and responsibility. “That play was the event of the New York theater season,” says *New York Times* theater critic Ben Brantley. “Theater cognoscenti lined up for the privilege of sitting from morning into night.”

Now, more than 30 years later, the legendary director has returned to this rich material to create *Battlefield*. While Brook’s first production of *The Mahabharata* was epic in every way—cast size, sets, costumes, and scope—*Battlefield* is a study in economy: it zooms in on one specific moment of the ancient epic, focusing on the aftermath of a single conflict. Featuring only four actors and one musician on a bare stage, *Battlefield*’s elegant simplicity gives it a raw power. “In something very, very concentrated you can find an incredible richness,” said Brook in a recent interview with *Slant* magazine.

For Brook and his writing partner, Marie-Hélène Estienne, *The Mahabharata*’s story of coming face-to-face with the consequences of conflict has striking connections to modern times. King Yudhishtira, the protagonist of *Battlefield*, reminds Brook of men like J. Robert Oppenheimer, the developer of the atom bomb. He “lived a tortured life because his discovery won the war, but fell with such horror on Hiroshima. And this same Hiroshima question is there today in so many parts of the world,” says Brook.

The director’s relationship with A.C.T. predates Brook’s groundbreaking *Mahabharata*. In 1972, Brook and the Royal Shakespeare Company brought his circus-inspired *Midsummer Night’s Dream* to the Geary stage. More recently, Brook and Estienne adapted *The Suit*—a story of betrayal and revenge set in a South Africa weighed down by apartheid—which played to sold-out audiences and rave reviews in 2014. Now, not only will Brook’s *Battlefield* be on the Geary stage, but the director himself will be in residence at A.C.T., offering masterclasses, discussions, and further exploration of this must-see theatrical creation.

**“PETER BROOK’S INCLUSIVE  
AND IMAGINATIVE THEATRICAL  
VISION CHANGED THE WAY  
WE’VE ALL MADE THEATER  
FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS.”**

**A.C.T. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CAREY PERLOFF**



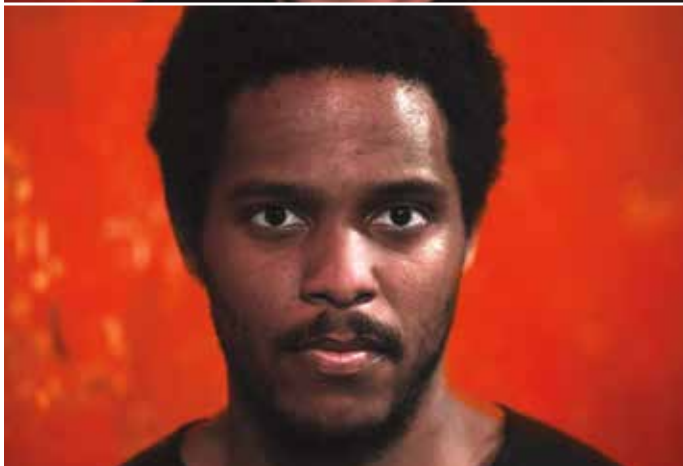
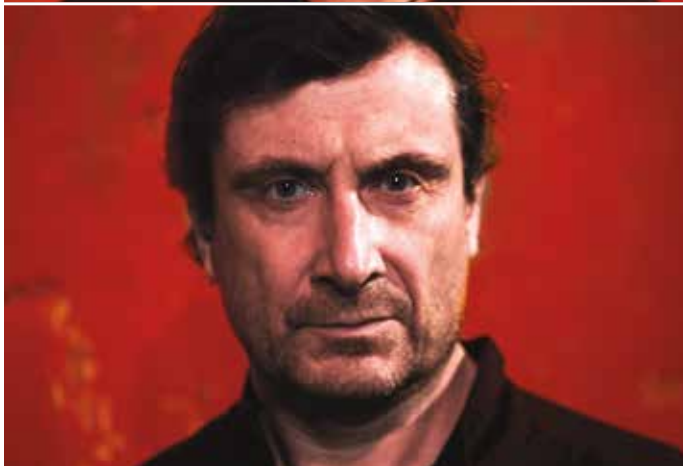
**ABOVE**  
Carole Karemera (left) and Ery Nzaramba  
in a scene from *Battlefield*.

**RIGHT FROM TOP**  
*Battlefield* actors Carole Karemera, Ery Nzaramba,  
Sean O’Callaghan, and Jared McNeil.

“At age 92, Peter Brook remains one of the greatest master directors in the world,” says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff. “His inclusive and imaginative theatrical vision changed the way we’ve all made theater for more than 50 years, so it’s particularly moving to have his stunning work represented as part of A.C.T.’s 50th-anniversary season. *Battlefield*’s poetic, magical form takes us to the essence of theatrical storytelling. All it takes is a good story on a bare stage to captivate an audience and help them imagine a whole world.”

***Battlefield* runs April 26 to May 21 at The Geary Theater.  
To learn more, visit [act-sf.org/battlefield](http://act-sf.org/battlefield).**

PHOTOS BY SIMON ANNAND







# CITIZEN DRAMATURGS

## HOW A.C.T.'S NEW STRANDS FESTIVAL IS CHANGING SAN FRANCISCO

BY SIMON HODGSON

Last year's inaugural New Strands Festival brought hundreds of theatergoers to The Strand Theater and invigorated the Central Market neighborhood with electrifying new work. Featuring DJ sets, staged readings, and performances spanning dance, music, animation, and theater, the festival opened A.C.T.'s doors to the Bay Area community and to new generations of theatergoers. The four-day event established The Strand as a home for dynamic new work, A.C.T.'s very own incubator for artists of all kinds. Now, as we approach this year's New Strands Festival, we sat down with A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director Andy Donald, who is leading the team organizing the festival, to talk about 2017's festival lineup, the opportunity posed by Central Market, and the benefits of sharing secrets with audiences.

### What did A.C.T.'s artistic team learn from the 2016 New Strands Festival?

Our major discovery was a growing appetite in this city for witnessing the theatrical process—not just productions—and an eagerness among San Franciscans to participate in the birth of new work. We realized that if we let our audiences in at an earlier stage, they take on a shared ownership of the work with our artists and assume a role as “citizen dramaturgs.”

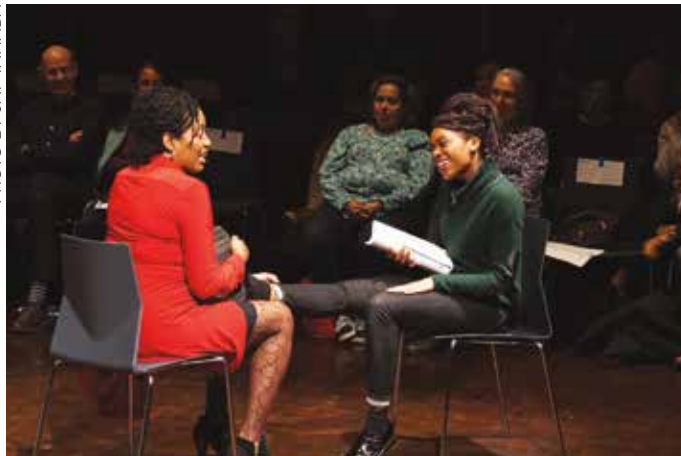
### What's different about the festival this year? What can we look forward to?

The programming this year is inclusive of the new work happening across all of A.C.T.'s departments. Over the last season, we've linked new-work development more deeply with our M.F.A. Program actors, community partners, and our Education & Community Programs. Rarely does an artist have the option of utilizing all the departments of an institution to generate a piece, so providing access to A.C.T.'s performance and actor-training programs has made for some fascinating commissions that will have their first showings at this year's festival.

The festival's offerings this year are the perfect snapshot of A.C.T. today: a devised piece about fathers and sons by extraordinary artists from multiple disciplines; an intergenerational Bay Area story written for the M.F.A. Program class of 2018; our latest Collaborative Youth Arts Project with students from the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, Oakland's Destiny Arts Center, and our public high school residencies; and two brand-new musicals, one about southern churchgoing and the other about tech startups. We've also moved the festival to late spring to give it a feeling of culmination, of reflection on the past season while peeking into our future.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**  
Julie Adamo, Maria-Christina Oliveras, and Joaquín Torres in Melinda Lopez's adaptation of *Yerma*; Shona Tucker and Akilah A. Walker in Christina Anderson's *How to Catch Creation*; Turbulence Lab with Keith Hennessy and Turbulence Company.



**OPPOSITE**  
Miwa Matreyek in *This World Made Itself*.

### Who are the new voices who will be part of New Strands as it progresses?

We've established a brand-new residency program—the New Strands Residency—which links us with a nationally recognized incubator theater to bring three playwrights to the Bay Area and workshop their newest pieces in the festival. Our inaugural partner is New York's Ma-Yi Theater Company, one of the nation's most prominent Asian American ensembles. We could not be more excited to introduce these new voices to a city with such a robust, diverse Asian American population. My hope is that San Francisco gets to know these writers through various panel discussions and happy hours scheduled around their festival presentations.

### How does the New Strands Festival fit within A.C.T.'s larger story?

For half a century, the focus at A.C.T. has been on the craft and performance of the theater artist. With the opening of The Strand, we saw an opportunity to create this festival and invite our audience into the artist's method. On a practical level, it also provides us with an unmovable deadline for wrestling work into shape! We're not looking to present final products during this weekend, but rather show our audience that we're making strides on the commissioned work that they support, and that

we're dreaming up new ways and new projects that will attract the best artists to San Francisco to create that work.

### What role does the New Strands Festival play for San Francisco?

When The Strand opened in 2015, A.C.T. became uniquely situated at a nexus of San Francisco, where new tenants in the tech industry collide with long-standing cultural, government, and social-service institutions. This seemed like the perfect neighborhood to create an annual festival about new work development, artistic expression, audience interaction, and innovative ideas.

The New Strands Festival will be an open house, with audiences moving freely from one event to another, showcasing what The Strand can do for this vital part of town. With so much progress happening outside our doors, we wanted to harness that energy by envisioning a future for San Francisco inside as well.

**The 2017 New Strands Festival is free and open to the public and runs May 19 to 21. To find out more, visit [act-sf.org/newstrands](http://act-sf.org/newstrands).**

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## James Haire

*Producing Director Emeritus*

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Michael Paller, *Dramaturg*  
Janet Foster, *Director of Casting and Artistic Associate*  
Allie Moss, *Artistic Administrator*  
Ken Savage, *Assistant Producer*  
Jessica Katz, *Artistic Fellow*

## Resident Artists

Anthony Fusco, Nick Gabriel, Dominique Lozano, Craig Slaughter

## Associate Artists

Marco Barricelli, Olympia Dukakis, Giles Havergal, Bill Irwin, Steven Anthony Jones, Andrew Polk, Tom Stoppard, Gregory Wallace, Timberlake Wertenbaker

## Playwrights

Annie Baker; Mike Bartlett; Jean-Claude Carrière, Peter Brook, and Marie-Hélène Estienne; Randy Johnson; Robert Lepage; Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh; Ursula Rani Sarma; Tom Stoppard

## Directors

Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne; Randy Johnson; Robert Lepage; Dominique Lozano; David Muse; Carey Perloff; Ken Rus Schmoll

## Choreographers

Val Caniparoli

## Composers/Orchestrators

Mark Bennett; David Coulter; Karl Lundeberg, Nick Perloff-Giles and Brendan Aanes

## Music Directors

Daniel Feyer

## Designers

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## CONSERVATORY

Nick Gabriel, *Director of Studio A.C.T.*  
Christopher Herold, *Director of Summer Training Congress*  
Jack Sharrar, PhD, *Director of Academic Affairs*  
Jerry Lopez, *Director of Financial Aid*  
Dan Kolodny, *Manager, Conservatory Operations & Professional Development Training*  
Emily Hanna, *Conservatory Associate, Young Conservatory & Studio A.C.T.*  
Matt Jones, *Bursar/Payroll Administrator*  
Vanessa Flores, *Conservatory Associate, Academic Programs*  
Lena Mier, Marcella Toronto, *Conservatory Fellows*

## M.F.A. Program Core Faculty

Nancy Benjamin, *Co-Head of Voice and Dialects, Director*  
Stephen Buescher, *Head of Movement, Director*  
Jeffrey Crockett, *Head of Voice*  
Dominique Lozano, *Acting, Director*  
Michael Paller, *Director of Humanities*  
Lisa Anne Porter, *Co-Head of Voice and Dialects*  
Jack Sharrar, PhD, *Theater History*  
Melissa Smith, *Head of Acting, Director*

## M.F.A. Program Adjunct Faculty

Mary Carbonara, *Dance*  
Milissa Carey, *Singing, Director*  
Tyrone Davis, *Citizen Artist*  
Andy Donald, *Arts Leadership*  
Julie Douglas, *Improv*  
Daniel Feyer, *Music Director, Accompanist*  
Janet Foster, *Audition, Showcase*  
Anthony Fusco, *Acting*  
Nick Gabriel, *Acting, Director*  
Giles Havergal, *Director*  
Gregory Hoffman, *Combat*  
Jasmin Hoo, *Citizen Artist*

## DON-SCOTT COOPER

*General Manager*

Mark Jackson, *Devised Theater*  
W. D. Keith, *On-Camera Acting*  
Philip Charles MacKenzie, *On-Camera Acting*  
Heidi Marshall, *On-Camera Acting*  
Seana McKenna, *Acting*  
Corrine Nagata, *Dance*  
Caymichael Patten, *Audition*  
Jeanna Parham, *Stage Makeup*  
Carey Perloff, *Arts Leadership*  
Kari Prindl, *Alexander Technique*  
Stacey Printz, *Dance*  
Helen Rigby, *Fundraising*  
Megan Q. Sada, *Theater Professionalism*  
Ken Savage, *Director*  
Elyse Shafarman, *Alexander Technique*  
Lisa Townsend, *Director, Choreographer*  
Becca Wolff, *Director*

## Studio A.C.T.

Liz Anderson, *Filmmaking*  
Heidi Carlsen, *Voice*  
Matt Chapman, *Movement*  
Julie Douglas, *Mask, Clown, and Movement*  
Lauren English, *Acting and Audition Technique*  
Francie Epsen-Devlin, *Musical Theater*  
Paul Finocchiario, *Acting*  
Nick Gabriel, *Acting*  
W. D. Keith, *On-Camera Acting*  
Drew Khalouf, *Speech and Diction*  
Jessica Kitchens, *Acting*  
Kari Prindl, *Alexander Technique*  
Mark Rafael, *Acting*  
Patrick Russell, *Acting, Movement, and Clown*  
Rebecca Struch, *Acting*  
Laura Wayth, *Acting*

## YOUNG CONSERVATORY

Craig Slaughter, *Young Conservatory Director*  
Andy Alabran, *Acting*  
Cristina Anselmo, *Acting*  
Pierce Brandt, *Musical Theater*  
Nancy Gold, *Physical Character, Acting*  
Dan Griffith, *Movement*  
W. D. Keith, *Director*  
Deborah Leamy, *Musical Theater*  
Dominique Lozano, *Director, Acting*  
Christine Mattison, *Dance, Choreographer*  
Vivian Sam, *Musical Theater, Dance*  
Dan Seda, *Musical Theater*  
Trish Tillman, *Acting*  
Valerie Weak, *Acting*  
Krista Wigle, *Musical Theater*

## Conservatory Accompanists

Thaddeus Pinkston, Naomi Sanchez, Lynden James Bair

## Library Staff

Joseph Tally, *Head Librarian*  
G. David Anderson, Laurie Bernstein, Helen Jean Bowie, Bruce Carlton, Barbara Cohrsen, James Daniel, William Goldstein, Pat Hunter, Connie Ikert, Martha Kessler, Nelda Kilguss, Barbara Kornstein, Analise Leiva, Ines Lewandowitz, Richard Maggi, Patricia O'Connell, Roy Ortopan, Maida Paxton, Connie Pelkey, Christine Peterson, Dana Rees, Peter Schmid, Roger Silver, Jane Taber, Susan Torres, Jean Wilcox, Marie Wood, *Library Volunteers*

A.C.T. thanks the physicians and staff of the Centers for Sports Medicine, Saint Francis Memorial Hospital, for their care of the A.C.T. company: Dr. Victor Prieto, Dr. Hoylond Hong, Dr. Susan Lewis, Don Kemp, P.A., and Chris Corpus, Clinic Supervisor.

## Accreditation

A.C.T. is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.



# A.C.T. PROFILES



## **CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director)**

is celebrating her 25th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she has overseen a huge growth in the quality and scope of A.C.T.'s work, helped to rebuild the earthquake-damaged Geary Theater and the new Strand Theater in Central Market, and has forged

collaborations between A.C.T. and theaters across the United States and Canada. Known for innovative productions of classics and championing new writing and new forms of theater, Perloff has directed classical plays from around the world, 10 plays by Tom Stoppard (including the American premieres of *The Invention of Love* and *Indian Ink*, also at Roundabout Theatre Company, and two productions of *Arcadia*), and many productions by favorite contemporary writers such as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, José Rivera, and Philip Kan Gotanda. Favorite productions include *Hecuba*,

*Mary Stuart*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Tosca Café*, *The Voyage Inheritance*, *Scorched*, and *Underneath the Lintel*.

Perloff is also an award-winning playwright. Her recent play *Kinship* premiered at the Théâtre de Paris in 2014; *Higher* won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award; and *Luminescence Dating* premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre. Perloff's book, *Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater* (City Lights Press), was selected as San Francisco Public Library's One City One Book read for 2016.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the premiere of Ezra Pound's *Elektra*, the American premiere of Pinter's *Mountain Language*, and many classic works. Named a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government, Perloff received a BA Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford.



## **PETER PASTREICH (Executive Director)**

joins A.C.T. after a 50-year career in arts management. He spent 21 years as executive director of the San Francisco Symphony, a period that included the tenures of music directors Edo De Waart, Herbert Blomstedt, and Michael Tilson Thomas, and during which

the orchestra increased its endowment from \$12 million to \$120 million. Pastreich was the chief administrator responsible for the construction of Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, and for its acoustical renovation.

Before coming to San Francisco, he spent 12 years as executive director of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and

six years as managing director of the Mississippi River Festival. In addition, Pastreich has done management consulting for the Berlin Philharmonic, Southbank Centre in London, Detroit Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia. He has also served as mediator in orchestra and opera union negotiations in Detroit, Louisville, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Sacramento, Seattle, and San Antonio.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1938, Pastreich received a BA in English literature from Yale University in 1959. In 1999, he was made a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government and was named an honorary member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees by Local 16 of the Stagehands Union.



## **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. She also successfully launched the San Francisco Semester, a semester-long intensive designed to deepen students' well of acting experience, broaden their knowledge of dramatic literature, and sharpen their technical skills—all while immersing them in the multifaceted cultural landscape of

the Bay Area. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of the Program in Theater and Dance at Princeton University, where she also taught introductory, intermediate, and advanced acting. 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, 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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

### SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNTS

Seniors (65+) save \$40 on 8 plays, \$35 on 7 plays, \$30 on 6 plays, \$25 on 5 plays, and \$20 on 4 plays. Full-time students, educators, and administrators save up to 50% off season subscriptions with valid ID. Visit [act-sf.org/educate](http://act-sf.org/educate) for details.

### SINGLE TICKET DISCOUNTS

Joining our eClub is the best—and sometimes only—way to find out about special ticket offers. Visit [act-sf.org/eclub](http://act-sf.org/eclub) for details. Find us on Facebook and Twitter for other great deals. Beginning two hours before curtain, a limited number of discounted tickets are available to seniors (65+), educators, administrators, and full-time students. For matinee performances, all seats are just \$20 for seniors (65+). Valid ID required—limit one ticket per ID. Not valid for Premiere Orchestra seating. All rush tickets are subject to availability.

### GROUP DISCOUNTS

Groups of 15 or more save up to 50%! For more information call Gillian Eichenberger at 415.439.2309.

### 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.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDINGS** of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

**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.



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.



A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

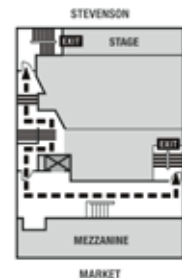
## STRAND THEATER EXITS



G



M1



M2

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production or distributing recordings on any medium, including the Internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the author's rights and actionable under United States copyright law. For more information, please visit: [www.samuel french.com/whitepaper](http://www.samuel french.com/whitepaper)

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