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AT THE WALDORF

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New York Post

"RIVETING"

New Yorker

"STUNNING"

Hollywood Reporter

"REMARKABLE"

Los Angeles Times

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Boston Globe

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DIRECTED BY **GORDON EDELSTEIN**
STARRING **JOHN DOUGLAS THOMPSON**



Photo by T. Charles Erickson

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New York Times

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American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco's Tony Award-winning nonprofit theater, nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training, and an ongoing engagement with our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, we embrace our responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of our creative work. Founded by pioneer of the regional theater movement William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. Since then, we've performed more than 350 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. We reach more than 250,000 people through our productions and programs every year.

Rising from the rubble of the catastrophic earthquake and fires of 1906 and immediately hailed as the "perfect playhouse," the beautiful, historic Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped a gaping hole in the ceiling, destroying the proscenium arch and dumping tons of debris on the first six rows of orchestra seats, the San Francisco community rallied to raise a record-breaking \$30 million to rebuild it. The theater reopened in 1996 with a production of *The Tempest* directed by Perloff, who took over after A.C.T.'s second artistic director, gentleman artist Ed Hastings, retired in 1992.

Perloff's 23-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 "locavore" theater—theater made by, for, and about the San Francisco 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 46-year-old Conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, is at the center of our work. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, and our intensive Summer Training Congress attracts enthusiasts from around the world. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19, led by 25-year veteran Craig Slight, and Studio A.C.T., our expansive course of study for adults. Our alumni often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area, as well as stages and screens across the country.

A.C.T. also brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 10,000 Bay Area school students 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 tens 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 in-depth study materials to Bay Area schools and community-based organizations.

With our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood marked by the opening of The Costume Shop theater, the renovation of The Strand Theater across from UN Plaza, and the launch of our mobile Stage Coach initiative, A.C.T. is poised to continue its leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.

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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 *Satchmo at the Waldorf* and InterACT with us!

Satchmo at the Waldorf

BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT *Jan 13, 7 PM*

In partnership with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, ride your bike to A.C.T. and take advantage of secure bike parking, low-priced tickets, and happy-hour prices at our preshow mixer.

PROLOGUE

Jan 19, 5:30 PM

Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion and Q&A with *Satchmo at the Waldorf* director Gordon Edelstein. Can't make this event? Listen to our podcasts! Visit act-sf.org/interact for details.

THEATER ON THE COUCH*

Jan 22, 8 PM

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

AUDIENCE EXCHANGE*

Jan 26, 7 PM; Jan 31 & Feb 3, 2 PM

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

OUT WITH A.C.T.*

Jan 27, 8 PM

Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGBT party.

WENTE VINEYARD WINE SERIES

Feb 2, 7 PM

Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine-tasting event.

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Feb 6, 12:45 PM

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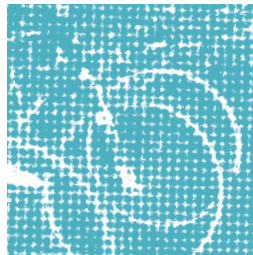
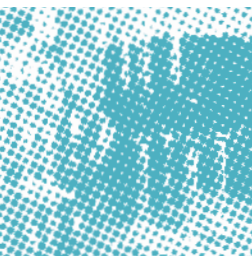
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A.C.T. volunteers provide an invaluable service with their time, enthusiasm, and love of theater. Opportunities include helping out in our performing-arts library and ushering in our theaters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/VOLUNTEER



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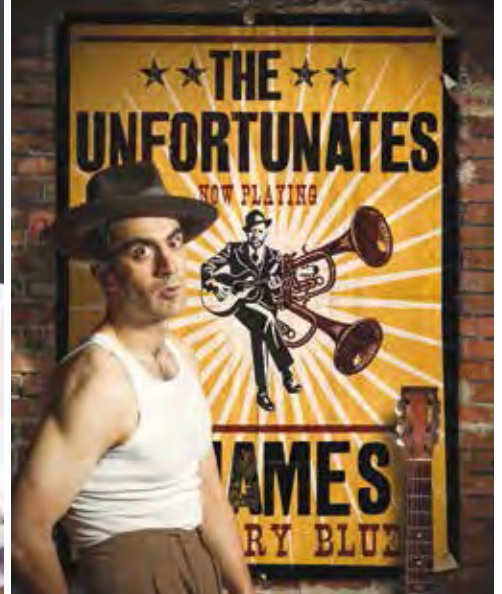
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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

The idea of Eugene O'Neill writing a comedy is practically oxymoronic to many people (you may remember A.C.T.'s productions of his tragedies *Long Day's Journey into Night* and *Moon for the Misbegotten*). But that is what he did with *Ah, Wilderness!* O'Neill looked through the complicated lens of his family history and found a heartbeat of joy and romance in a universe that would later yield much darker and more despairing work. *Ah, Wilderness!* is a play about youth, about first love, about parents and children, and, ultimately, about forgiveness and empathy. We all inherit the families we inherit. Often we wish we could change their composition, that we could alter their behavior or expectations in radical ways, but much of the journey of life is finessing these very delicate relationships in a way that both sustains us and allows us to grow up and be our own people. This is the story of *Ah, Wilderness!*

The idea for producing this play right now came to me last fall when I saw our beloved colleague Mark Rucker's exquisite production of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* with our second-year Master of Fine Arts Program actors. As was always the case with Mark's work, he managed to elicit performances of remarkable depth, clarity, humanity, and poignancy from these young actors, and I was so inspired when I left the show that night that I went home and wrote down all the other plays I would love to see that particular group of young actors do. *Ah, Wilderness!* was at the top of the list—it is a play that is only possible with the participation of ten remarkable 20-somethings. And how wonderful it is that A.C.T. has a training program that provides just that. The week after I made my list, we held an informal reading of *Ah, Wilderness!*, which included a number of the professional actors who are also in this production, such as Dan Hiatt and Anthony Fusco. We were captivated. The yearning and hilarious awkwardness that Richard's love for Muriel causes himself and his community at the turn of the twentieth century leapt off the page, and, surprisingly, felt very immediate and accessible. Love is still the most impossible

thing to articulate. We don't know what language to use, what behavior to adopt, what hope to hold out. O'Neill reminds us that, no matter how fraught and painful it can be, romance is always the richest possible destination and the most delicious thing to experience.

This production of *Ah, Wilderness!* was to be directed by Mark Rucker, whom we tragically lost on August 25. We are moved and grateful that Casey Stangl, who did such magnificent work on both *Venus in Fur* and *Love and Information*, agreed to step in. No one can ever take Mark's place. But Casey and this beautiful company of artists have created a production in Mark's honor that stands for everything he loved: community, imagination, passion, hilarity, and humanity. We hope you will experience the play in this spirit as we send so much light and love Mark's way.

Our M.F.A. Program is showcased not only in this production—it is visible and shining all over the place at A.C.T. this season, from its new home at The Strand Theater to our upcoming production of *A Christmas Carol*, which will star many of the same young artists that you see performing in *Ah, Wilderness!* It is unusual for a producing organization to have as its creative engine a group of young artists so fiercely committed to the future of the profession, and it is they who help keep us nimble and creative. We hope that this season you will all have the opportunity to get to know this aspect of A.C.T.'s mission, and to be introduced to the wealth of training and educational opportunities afforded by A.C.T. Whether it's watching a cabaret by our Young Conservatory teens, seeing the work of our community partners at The Costume Shop Theater, meeting our Downtown High School students, or coming to a reading of new work at The Strand, there are so many ways to access the creative life of this organization, and we invite you to do so whenever possible.

In the meantime, welcome to the magical world of *Ah, Wilderness!* Thank you for being here.

Best,
Carey Perloff
Artistic Director



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ah, Wilderness!

BY EUGENE O'NEILL

DIRECTED BY CASEY STANGL

SCENIC DESIGN BY **RALPH FUNICELLO**
COSTUME DESIGN BY **JESSIE AMOROSO**
LIGHTING DESIGN BY **ROBERT WIERZEL**
COMPOSITION AND
SOUND DESIGN BY **PAUL JAMES PRENDERGAST**
MUSIC CONSULTANT **DANIEL FEYER**
DRAMATURGY BY **MICHAEL PALLER**
CASTING **JANET FOSTER, CSA**

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

TOMMY MILLER	BRANDIN FRANCIS OSBORNE
ARTHUR MILLER	MICHAEL MCINTIRE**
MILDRED MILLER	CHRISTINA LIANG†
ESSIE MILLER	RACHEL TICOTIN*
LILY MILLER	MARGO HALL*
SID DAVIS	DAN HIATT*
NAT MILLER	ANTHONY FUSCO*
RICHARD MILLER	THOMAS STAGNITTA†
DAVID MCCOMBER	ADRIAN ROBERTS*
NORAH	JENNIFER REDDISH†
WINT SELBY	MATTHEW CAPBARAT†
BELLE	CAITLAN TAYLOR**
BARTENDER	ARTHUR WISE**
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A.C.T. dedicates our 2015–16 season to the loving memory of our beloved colleague and associate artistic director, Mark Rucker, who contributed immeasurably to the life of A.C.T.

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

**Member of Actors' Equity Association and the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016

†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016 and an Equity Professional Intern

Left to right: Eugene O'Neill. Photo by Carl Van
Vechten, 1933. Courtesy Library of Congress;
Eugene O'Neill at Sea Island Bend. Photo by Carl
Van Vechten, 1936. Courtesy Library of Congress.



THE NECESSARY PLAY

BY | MICHAEL PALLER

THE TRAGEDIAN GOES HOME

By 1931, Eugene O'Neill, great American tragic playwright, had won Pulitzer Prizes for *Beyond the Horizon*, *Anna Christie*, and *Strange Interlude*. He'd written 23 full-length plays, including *The Hairy Ape*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Emperor Jones*, and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, which the police in New York attempted to close because it depicted a black man kissing a white woman. That same year saw the debut and critical acclaim of *Mourning Becomes Electra*, his seven-hour Americanization of Aeschylus's *Oresteia* set in New England during the Civil War. He was lauded—not without justification—as the creator of the modern American theater.

Before O'Neill, American theater had been melodrama, vaudeville, and star-driven vehicles. With the aid of his collaborators at the Provincetown Playhouse, he forged an American theater that could aspire to stand beside the European accomplishments of August Strindberg, Henrik Ibsen, and Anton Chekhov. Like theirs, his was an experimental theater. In his early plays, O'Neill employed a host of theatrical conventions, from masks to spoken inner monologues, and styles, from naturalism to expressionism, to peel away the surface of everyday life and reveal the struggle and torment that he sensed seething underneath. O'Neill devoted himself to tragedy, striving to make it a viable genre for the twentieth century.

During the two-year gestation period of *Electra*, he felt himself encountering the limits of his talents. He wrote to his friend, the drama critic Joseph Wood Krutch, "Oh, for a language to write drama in! For a speech that is dramatic and isn't just conversation! . . . But where to find that language?" Once he was finished with *Electra*, he feared such a language had eluded him once again. He didn't know that the solution would soon present itself in a homey idiom and a genre for which he'd had little or no professional interest: comedy.

Waiting for fall rehearsals of *Electra* to get underway in New York, O'Neill and his wife, Carlotta, took a vacation home in Northport, Long Island. When the weather was clear, he could look across Long Island Sound toward the south shore of Connecticut and the town of New London, where he'd spent some of his unhappy boyhood and adolescence. Seized by a sudden desire to see the family house again, he told Carlotta he wanted to visit the once-thriving seaport town. She was dubious. "Don't do it, darling," she said. "Don't ever try to go back. Keep your ideas, but don't go back." O'Neill was determined, however, and off they went.

Once there, they couldn't locate the house, so completely changed was the neighborhood. When they finally managed to find it down by the water, they discovered that—of course—someone else was living in it, and they had to settle for a view from across the street. According to Carlotta, O'Neill said, "I shouldn't have come. Let's go away. I don't want to look at it." It was back to Northport, where he made a few notes for a play tentatively called *Nostalgia*, which he stuck in a drawer.

A year later, in September 1932, at his home on Sea Island, Georgia, O'Neill awoke one morning from a dream in which the whole plot of *Ah, Wilderness!* unfolded itself. From 7 a.m. till late afternoon he wrote out an entire scenario, and over the course of six weeks, the play, he said, "simply gushed" out of him.

LIT, SONG, AND SLANG

The play reflects three of O'Neill's abiding loves: literature, turn-of-the-twentieth-century popular music, and slang. As an adolescent, O'Neill read all the literature referred to in the play—and there's a lot of it, from Omar Khayyám (whose *Rubáiyát* inspired the title), Algernon Charles Swinburne, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, and Rudyard Kipling, to the anarchist writings of Emma Goldman, to the dime-novel exploits of detective Nick Carter and George Peck's Bad Boy. Every summer O'Neill read the novels of Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, and Charles Dickens, the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the poetry of Lord Byron. For all his reading, though, the teenaged O'Neill was much less worldly than he knew; like Arthur in *Ah, Wilderness!*, he believed that Oscar Wilde went to prison for the unspeakable crime of bigamy.

Many people sang or played an instrument at home and on social occasions in early twentieth-century America, and this domestic pleasure was dear to O'Neill's heart. He filled his plays with snatches of songs; according to O'Neill scholar Travis Bogard, only 8 of his 31 full-length plays are without music. Ten songs are heard or referenced in *Ah, Wilderness!*; one of them, "Bedelia," is plunked out on a player piano at the Pleasant Beach House in Act III. After the play opened to great success, Carlotta surprised O'Neill with a like instrument; allegedly, it had once graced the parlor of a New Orleans bordello. He named it Rosie and would sit at it for hours at a time, happily singing along. In one of the few photographs that show O'Neill with a smile, he sits contentedly at Rosie, hands splayed across the keys. According to Bogard, once O'Neill had settled into his last home, Tao House, in the hills above Danville, California, on warm summer nights residents for miles around could hear Rosie crank out "The Sunshine of Paradise Alley."

O'Neill may have strained for a tragic language, but the slang of his youth flowed from him freely. It's even more ubiquitous in his plays than music. The slang he used came almost exclusively from the first decade of the twentieth century, and



Eugene and Carlotta Monterey O'Neill. Photo by Carl Van Vechten, 1933. Courtesy Library of Congress.

he used it in plays, letters, and everyday speech, long after it had gone out of fashion. In later years, some critics wondered if he knew any contemporary idioms; on the other hand, those who knew him would comment on the unique flavor the words lent his speech.

Many of O'Neill's themes and character types appear in *Ah, Wilderness!*: the young man at odds with the world of his father, yearning for a mother figure and dreaming of illicit passion with prostitutes (or, in O'Neillian parlance, "tarts"); the grasping material life of America versus the higher callings of love and self-sacrifice; the divided nature of man's soul. Here, though, these themes appear in a congenial atmosphere. The big thematic guns of tragedy in his other plays are rendered in *Ah, Wilderness!* as Fourth of July firecrackers. Dark issues lurk, such as Uncle Sid's drinking problem and Aunt Lily's lonely future and perpetual disappointments, but their implications are the shadows, not the substance, of the work.

Those shadows belonged to the true story of O'Neill's youth, which *Ah, Wilderness!* decidedly is not. The play depicts, in his words, "the other side of the coin," the family that he wished he'd had: parents who love each other and care for their children, and children who feel secure and loved, even while in full-blown adolescent rebellion. O'Neill's own family—a self-involved father, tight with money and love; a mother who disappeared into the spare bedroom to emerge later in a

morphine haze; an elder brother who spent his days and nights in brothels and bars on a lifelong bender of guilt and self-loathing—is erased in this telling.

Perhaps O'Neill had to imagine his youth in the fictional glow of comedy before he could face his family's tragic truths. He would depict those with courage and honesty in the masterpieces that came later—*Long Day's Journey into Night*, set in the same (yet very different) house as *Ah, Wilderness!*, and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, which takes place just a few miles away on a piece of property that his father owned. Playwrights write the plays they need to write. *Ah, Wilderness!* is O'Neill's most popular and most produced play. Even if it weren't, the fact that it laid the groundwork for the last great ones makes it one of America's most significant plays, too.

WORDS ON PLAYS

Want to know more about *Ah, Wilderness!*? *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s renowned performance guide series, offers insight into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the subscription season with revealing interviews and in-depth articles.

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O'NEILL *by the* BAY

TAO HOUSE

in Danville, California

BY | SHANNON STOCKWELL



Recreation of Eugene O'Neill's study in Tao House.
Photo by Jerry and Roy Klotz, MD, 2004.

ALTHOUGH MANY ASSOCIATE EUGENE O'NEILL WITH the Northeast that served as the setting for so many of his plays, it was actually in the Bay Area that he composed some of his most revered work. O'Neill was living in Seattle when he won the 1936 Nobel Prize in Literature, and because he was constantly hounded by reporters, he and his wife, Carlotta, fled to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she had grown up. There they searched for a place to settle down where O'Neill could write in peace. They found the perfect spot in Danville, California. "We have a beautiful site in the hills of the San Ramon Valley with one of the most beautiful views I've ever seen," he wrote in a letter in 1937. "This is the final home and harbor for me. I love California." He spent his Nobel Prize winnings to build a house on the 158-acre plot of land, which he and Carlotta came to call Tao House due to their mutual interest in Eastern philosophy and aesthetics.

While living in Tao House, Carlotta regulated her husband's correspondence and visitors, giving him time to write. In this environment of peace and solitude, he wrote some of his most famous plays, including *The Iceman Cometh*, *Moon for the Misbegotten*, and *Long Day's Journey into Night*. He and Carlotta employed a handful of servants, including a driver, who brought O'Neill to his many medical appointments (neither O'Neill nor his wife drove). During World War II, however, it became increasingly difficult to sustain regular help. Meanwhile, O'Neill's health worsened, making it

necessary for him to visit his doctors more frequently. He and Carlotta began to feel marooned in the hills of Danville. They sold the house to Arthur and Charlotte Miller in 1944, who also bought the surrounding one thousand acres of land.

By 1965, however, the house and the surrounding land had been put on the market, and a realty company attempted to sell the land to develop a thousand condominiums. The plan fell through, but a woman named Thalia Brewer, a friend of Charlotte Miller, formed a group to prevent the loss of the land to development. Through the efforts of that group—which eventually became the Eugene O'Neill Foundation—and many others, Tao House was recognized as a National Historic Site in 1975.

Today, visitors can make reservations to visit the grounds, which also houses extensive archives full of information about O'Neill's life and work. Tao House has several programs that support theater artists and nurture the future of the craft in the environment in which O'Neill's genius once thrived.



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Fall into a Dream

AN INTERVIEW WITH
SCENIC DESIGNER

RALPH FUNICELLO

BY | CECILIA PADILLA

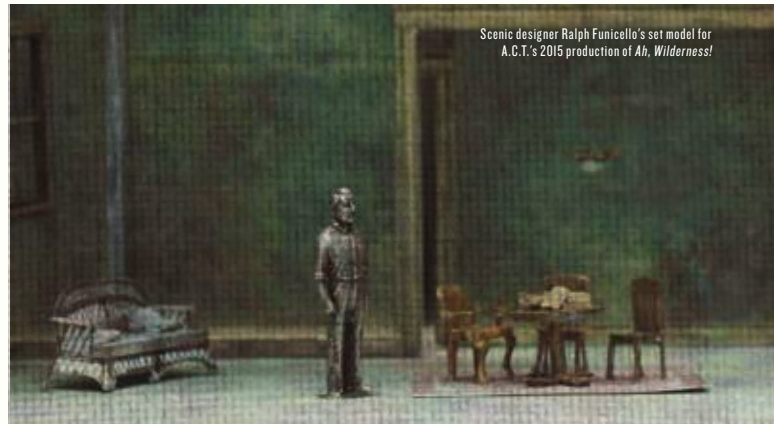
Despite its title, Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* does not take place in the wild outdoors. Instead, it depicts the home of the Millers, a tight-knit American family. Helping to bring the Millers' Connecticut home to San Francisco audiences is scenic designer Ralph Funicello. This is Funicello's second time working on *Ah, Wilderness!* with A.C.T.—he designed the sets when the play was produced here in 1978. In that production, Funicello's designs adhered to O'Neill's textual specifications, exhibiting period-appropriate styles and architecture. This time, he approached the play through a new lens. He says, "O'Neill literally dreamt up *Ah, Wilderness!*, so I want the audience to fall into the dream with him."

What is your design approach for this production of *Ah, Wilderness!*?

When I was asked to work on this production, my main concern was that the design approach would be a realistic representation of a Connecticut home. I had already done the show from that perspective, and I wasn't interested in repeating the same design. When I found out that I could go in a completely different direction with the set, I got very excited and immediately began to brainstorm a new model. My intention for this new production of *Ah, Wilderness!* revolved around the idea that the scenes would unfold in a fuzzy, dreamlike, memory-infused environment. I then calculated how much detailed architecture I would include in the set and how much of it would be abstract.

The play's events take place in three locations: the Miller home, a bar, and a beach. What challenges does this create for your design?

The play jumps back and forth quite a bit from location to location. Within the house, we switch between the sitting room and the dining room. Then we get to Richard's fiasco at the bar, which has a bare, back-room feel. And then we have the scenes on the beach, where Richard has these huge revelations about life and love under the moonlight. The beach is the most difficult environment to portray, since it involves the shore and waves crashing. The challenge of the scene on the beach was something that drove the whole design. I wanted to create a set that would accommodate the beach scenes within the context of the rest of the play. In order to do that, I concentrated on blurring the sharp lines of realism. A dreamy haze permeates the play.



Ah, Wilderness! is Eugene O'Neill's only comedy. Did this deviation from the classic O'Neill genre influence your design?

I've designed a lot of O'Neill plays, and it always fascinates me that, during the time he was writing, his life was unremarkable. He had failures in his childhood, and then he traveled around for about ten years, and then he spent the rest of his life—particularly the rest of his playwriting life—rehashing all of it. He sort of tortured himself over all the things he had seen and done. It's no wonder that he had to dream up a comedy, because he based so much of the material in his plays on the events of his difficult life. His childhood was so far removed from that of Richard's that he had to invent characters to capture the essence of close family ties. In a way, the comedic aspect of *Ah, Wilderness!* comes from the fact that O'Neill is poking fun at his own childhood, but there is a subtle trace of tragedy in that. I let that idea come through in my designs by creating a sparse set with minimal architecture and only the essential furniture. Through those designs, this production takes on a darker undertone that ties the comedy back to O'Neill's difficult life.

What are you most looking forward to regarding this production?

When I went to college at Boston University back in the 1960s, one of my teachers was the great theater critic Elliot Norton. He was a personal friend of O'Neill. Elliot Norton's lectures on O'Neill are something I will never forget. He would go into a trance and talk about O'Neill's work and everything that influenced his writing. It was wonderful. Elliot spoke about the development of the American theater, and it struck me that American theater history is a chain of people who can be traced back to O'Neill—and sitting in that classroom, hearing about Eugene O'Neill from this great man, I became a part of that chain. Working on *Ah, Wilderness!* allows me to be a part of Eugene O'Neill's influence on the American theater tradition.





A BOOK OF VERSES, UNDERNEATH THE BOUGH

The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

BY | CECILIA PADILLA & SHANNON STOCKWELL

Illustration from a facsimile of the manuscript *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, 1898. Courtesy Flickr: The Commons.

An avid reader, O'Neill included numerous literary references in his plays. This is especially true of *Ah, Wilderness!*, in which Richard Miller is himself an enthusiastic reader of poetry and prose. One of the most-quoted pieces in the play is the *Rubáiyát*, a poem first written in 1120 by Omar Khayyám, a Persian poet, mathematician, and astronomer. It was translated into English by Edward FitzGerald in 1859, and by 1860, his adaptation had gained popularity in England. It is from FitzGerald's translation that Richard quotes in *Ah, Wilderness!* Emphasizing the poem's importance to the play is the fact that the title comes from Richard's favorite stanza of the *Rubáiyát*:

***A Book of Verses, underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were paradise enow!***

In the play, Richard assumes that the older members of his family have not read the *Rubáiyát*, perhaps thinking that they found it improper. Indeed, when it was first published, the poem incited a degree of controversy, because the poet articulates a disbelief in the afterlife and emphasizes the importance of enjoying each day. Some more conservative

critics interpreted this as an endorsement of debauchery, since the poet's version of making the most of each day tended to include drinking. Of course, controversy can breed interest, and the poem's popularity continued to grow throughout the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. By 1906, when *Ah, Wilderness!* takes place, it was regarded as an important piece of literature, and it was one that many had read—including the older members of Richard's family.

FitzGerald professed that his poem told the story of the life and death of a poet, but on a grander scale, the *Rubáiyát* has been interpreted as a meditation on the unanswerable questions of existence. According to scholars William Henry Martin and Sandra Mason, "The story line . . . flows from the light of dawn and youth, through the ups and downs and philosophical concerns of mid-day and middle age, to thoughts of evening and death." When interpreted through this lens, it is easy to see why O'Neill was so attracted to this poem in relation to *Ah, Wilderness!*; the play explores the struggles and foibles of many ages, from young Tommy and his obsession with fireworks, to the awkwardness of teenaged Richard's first love, to Lily Miller's poignant and sorrowful desire for companionship as she grows older.

WHO'S WHO

in AH, WILDERNESS!



MATTHEW BALDIGA**
(Salesman, understudy for Arthur Miller, Sid Davis, and Wint Selby) is in his third year of the A.C.T.

Master of Fine Arts Program. His regional credits include roles in *Our Town*, *Intimate Apparel*, and *Henry V* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *Hamlet* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *A Christmas Carol* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *3:59 am: a drag race for two actors* and *Brink!* (33rd Humana Festival of New American Plays); and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (PlayMakers Repertory Company). His New York credits include *Einstein and Mileva* (Crosshatch Theatre Company), *Pratfalls* (Ground UP Productions), and *The Lady's Not for Burning* (Parenthesis). His international credits include *The Fugitives* (Prague Fringe Festival 2010). As an M.F.A. Program actor at A.C.T., his credits include *Teach for America*, *Kalos Kai Agathos* (directed by Jon Tracy), *The Long Goodbye*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Crazy for the Country*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hamlet*. Baldiga is an alumnus of the Acting Apprentice Program at Actors Theatre of Louisville and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



MATTHEW CAPBARAT†
(Wint Selby, understudy for Richard Miller) is a Bay Area native and makes his Geary debut with *Ah, Wilderness!*

He is currently in his final year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Some favorite M.F.A. Program credits include *Crazy for the Country* (Guglielmo), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Demetrius/Snout), *The Cherry Orchard* (Yasha), *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Pinky), *Hamlet* (Bernardo), and *The Long Goodbye* (Silva). As a part of A.C.T.'s Sky Festival, he co-created a three-person commedia dell'arte show entitled *Lady and Two Tramps*. Capbarat recently finished a season with Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival in *Romeo and Juliet* (Paris, understudy for Mercutio) and *The Fantasticks* (understudy for Matt and El Gallo). He holds a B.A. in anthropology and theater from UC Berkeley. He is the 2016 recipient of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program Sadler Award.



ANTHONY FUSCO*
(Nat Miller), a member of Actors' Equity Association since 1983, is an A.C.T. resident artist. A few

favorites from the dozens of A.C.T. productions in which he has appeared are *Indian Ink*, *Clybourne Park*, *The Homecoming*, *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*, *Dead Metaphor*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Three Sisters*, *Race, November*, and *The Rainmaker*. Fusco most recently appeared in *Love and Information* at The Strand Theater, also directed by Casey Stangl. Other Bay Area credits include *Sister Play* at Magic Theatre, *Pygmalion*, *Candida*, *Arms and the Man*, *The Tempest*, *King Lear*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* at California Shakespeare Theater, as well

as *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures* and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Fusco has appeared in *The Real Thing* on Broadway, in many off- and off-off-Broadway shows, and at regional theaters across America. He trained at The Juilliard School and The Barrow Group, and is an alumnus of the College of Marin and Tamalpais High School's drama department.



MARGO HALL'S*
(Lily Miller)
A.C.T. credits include *Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Hecuba*, and *A Streetcar Named*

Desire. Recent credits include *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Winter's Tale*, *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José*, and *Spunk* at California Shakespeare Theater; *The Motherf*cker with the Hat* at San Francisco Playhouse; *Fences* and *Seven Guitars* at Marin Theatre Company; *Fabulation* at Lorraine Hansberry Theatre; *Trouble in Mind* at Aurora Theatre Company; and *The People's Temple* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She premiered her semi-autobiographical piece, *Be Bop Baby: A Musical Memoir*, which she wrote in collaboration with Nakissa Etemad, commissioned by Z Space. Hall is a founding member of Campo Santo Theatre Company, where she has directed and acted in more than 15 productions, including plays by Chinaka Hodge, Jessica Hagedorn, Naomi Iizuka, Philip Kan Gotanda, and Octavio Solis.



DAN HIATT*
(Sid Davis, understudy for Nat Miller) was most recently seen at A.C.T. in the ensemble of Caryl Churchill's *Love and*

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

**Member of Actors' Equity Association and the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016

†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016 and an Equity Professional Intern

Information, which was the inaugural production at the new Strand Theater on Market Street. Other A.C.T. appearances include Stephen Hopkins in *1776*, Tom in *Round and Round the Garden*, the Magistrate in *The Government Inspector*, Bob Acres in *The Rivals*, Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and Cornelius Hackl in *The Matchmaker*. His Bay Area credits include *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and *Dinner with Friends* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* and many others at California Shakespeare Theater; *The 39 Steps* at TheatreWorks; *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at Theatre on the Square; *Wittenberg* and *Breakfast with Mugabe* at Aurora Theatre Company; and *Othello* at Marin Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include work with Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, the Huntington Theatre Company, The Pasadena Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and Theatre Calgary.



CHRISTINA LIANG⁺ (Mildred Miller, understudy for Muriel McComber) is a third-year Master of Fine Arts Program student at A.C.T.

She makes her Geary debut with *Ah, Wilderness!* She was last seen in *Love and Information* at The Strand Theater. Some of her Conservatory credits include *The Cherry Orchard* (Anya), *Kalos Kai Agathos* (Antigone), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hermia), *Iphigenia and Other Daughters* (Electra), and *Hello from Bertha* (Goldie). She also helped create a devised theater piece called *Girlhood* for A.C.T.'s Sky Festival, which was selected for a run at FaultLine. Some of her regional credits include *Twelfth Night* and *Uncommon Women* and *Others* (Mad and Merry Theatre Company) and *Measure for Measure* (New York University). Liang

received a B.A. in individualized studies from New York University and has trained at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre in New York City.



MICHAEL MCINTIRE^{}** (Arthur Miller)

returns to the Geary stage after making his debut last spring as Frid in A.C.T.'s production of *A Little Night Music*. He is in his third and final year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Some of his Conservatory credits include *The Cherry Orchard* (Lopakhin), *Hamlet* (Player King), and *Kalos Kai Agathos* (Oedipus). Other regional credits include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Pseudolus), *The Boys Next Door* (Arnold), and *Big River* (The King) at Maples Repertory Theatre; *Sunday in the Park with George* (Franz) at Musical Theater Heritage; and *The Kentucky Cycle* (J. T. Wells) at Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre. McIntire originally hails from Kirksville, Missouri, and has a B.A. in theater with an emphasis in acting from Columbia College Chicago and a B.A. in public communications from Truman State University.



BRANDIN FRANCIS OSBORNE (Tommy)

is an up-and-coming young actor in the Bay Area. He makes his A.C.T. debut with *Ah, Wilderness!* from his Young Conservatory involvement. Osborne found his love for acting only a year ago at Throckmorton Theatre in Marin, where he appeared in various youth musicals, including *42nd Street* and *West Side Story*. Now at the age of 10, his acting career is quickly moving into theater, motion pictures, and television.



ROSA PALMERI⁺ (Muriel McComber)

is a third-year student in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She makes her professional debut on the Geary stage with *Ah, Wilderness!* Her Conservatory credits include *The Skin of Our Teeth* (Sabina), *Hamlet* (Gravedigger), *The Cherry Orchard* (Charlotta), *Kalos Kai Agathos* (Jocasta), and *Teach for America* (Shipnia). Other memorable roles include Masha in *The Seagull* at the University of Evansville, a two-woman *Twelfth Night* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and Harpo Marx at New England Youth Theatre. Palmeri is from Vermont and spends her summers teaching Shakespeare and physical comedy to youth throughout the state in the Get Thee to the Funnery camps. She received her B.F.A. in theater performance from the University of Evansville and has trained at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts.



JENNIFER REDDISH⁺ (Norah, understudy for Belle)

makes her Geary stage debut as Norah in her third year as a master of fine arts candidate at A.C.T. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and participated in the Circle in the Square Theatre School Summer Workshop in New York. She is the artistic associate of Wax Wings Productions in Boston, where she directed the world premiere of Kevin Kordis's *Grandma's House* and produced *A Streetcar Named Desire*. At A.C.T., her recent credits include Varya in *The Cherry Orchard*, Marcellus in *Hamlet*, Brigida in *Crazy for the Country*, and Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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

^{**}Member of Actors' Equity Association and the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016

⁺Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016 and an Equity Professional Intern



ADRIAN ROBERTS*

(David McComber, understudy for **Bartender and Salesman**) was last seen at California Shakespeare

Theater this summer as King Basilio in *Life Is a Dream*. Other Bay Area credits include Charles Boyd in *pen/man/ship* at Magic Theatre, Gabriel in *Breakfast with Mugabe* at Aurora Theatre Company, Gabriel in *Fences* at Marin Theatre Company, Martin Luther King, Jr., in *The Mountaintop* at TheatreWorks, and Claudius/Ghost in *Hamlet* at Cal Shakes. Other regional credits include three seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Huntington Theatre Company, and Ken in *Playboy of the West Indies* at Lincoln Center Theater, among many others. Television credits include *Scrubs*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Brothers & Sisters*. Roberts is a graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program.



THOMAS STAGNITTA†

(Richard Miller) is a third-year student in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. He received his B.A. in English and

theater from Queens College, City University of New York, where he trained under acting teacher Claudia Feldstein. He was last seen as Filippo in the comedy *Crazy for the Country*, directed by A.C.T.'s head of movement and physical theater, Stephen Buescher. Other M.F.A. Program credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Waiting for Godot* (abridged), *Chasing Mehserle*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Hamlet*, *Our Lady of 121st Street*, *Kalos Kai Agathos*, *Bad Jews*, *The Rape of Lucrece* (adapted and directed), and *The Strangest Kind of Romance*. He is a recipient of the Bert and LeAnne Steinberg Leadership Award.

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CAITLAN TAYLOR** (Belle)

was last seen at The Geary as one of the *Liebeslieder* singers in Mark Lamos's production of *A Little Night Music*. A

third-year student in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, she has been seen in Conservatory productions of *The Cherry Orchard* (Ranevskaya), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena), *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Marcia), *Bad Jews* (Melody), *Kalos Kai Agathos* (Polyneices), and *Hello from Bertha* (Bertha). Other performance credits include *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*; *On the Town*; *On the Twentieth Century*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Man of La Mancha*; and others (College Light Opera Company); *Into the Woods* and *Les Misérables* (Main Street Theatre); and *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *Me and My Girl* (Scotch'n'Soda Theatre). Taylor is also an alumna of The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, Texas, and of Carnegie Mellon University, where she received a B.F.A. with honors in vocal performance. Favorite opera roles include *Le nozze di Figaro* (The Countess), *Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi), and Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny-Songspiel* (Jessie).



RACHEL TICOTIN* (Essie Miller)

has been last seen in A.C.T.'s *The Tosca Project* and *Boleros for the Disenchanted*. Her

Broadway credits include *Macbeth*, with Patrick Stewart. Her television credits include *Law and Order: Los Angeles*. Her film credits include *Man on Fire*, *Something's Gotta Give*, *Con Air*, and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* parts one and two.



ARTHUR WISE**

(Bartender, understudy for **David McComber**) is a third-year student in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts

Program. Past M.F.A. Program productions include *Crazy for the Country* (Sabina), *The Cherry Orchard* (Pishchik), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom), *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Father Lux), and *Kalos Kai Agathos* (Sphinx). He also performed in the North American tour of *My Fair Lady* and regionally in *White Christmas* at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre; *Amadeus* at Northern Stage; *Guys and Dolls* at Great Lakes Theatre; *The Odd Couple* at Porthouse Theatre; *Hair* and *Kiss Me, Kate* at Cain Park; and numerous new musical theater workshops and concerts in New York City. Wise received his bachelor of music from the Music Theatre Program at Baldwin Wallace University's Conservatory of Music.



LAUREN HART+ (Understudy for **Mildred Miller and Norah**)

is in her final year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She was most recently seen

as Molly Aster in *Peter and the Starcatcher* and Elmire in *Tartuffe* at Summer Repertory Theatre in Santa Rosa. Other recent roles include Vittoria in *Crazy for the Country*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard*, all for the M.F.A. Program at A.C.T., and Gwendolyn Pigeon in *The Odd Couple* and Monica in *Present Laughter* at Summer Repertory Theatre. Hart is a graduate of UC Berkeley, and was given the honor of the singing the U.S. national anthem at general commencement at California Memorial Stadium.



NEEL NORONHA

(Understudy for **Tommy**) returns to the Geary stage with *Ah! Wilderness*. He debuted at The Geary as part of the

Indian Ink cast. He was introduced to theater at a summer camp at A.C.T., where he discovered the world of playwriting and acting. He has since penned several stories that have turned into books and narrations, and has continued studying acting with the A.C.T. Young Conservatory. He is also an avid sports fan, loves reading (especially about American and Roman history), and has a budding interest in chess and speaking Mandarin. He is a fourth-grade student at McKinley Elementary School and lives in San Francisco with his parents and little brother, Dhruv.



EMILIE TALBOT*

(Understudy for **Essie Miller and Lily Miller**) was last seen at A.C.T. in *Love and Information* and *Mary Stuart*. Over

the past 20 years in the Bay Area, she has worked at Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, PlayGround, Playwrights Foundation, and Z Space, and she is an associate artist with Alternative Theater Ensemble. Regionally, she has appeared at or spent seasons with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, the Huntington Theatre Company, and Pittsburgh Public Theater, among others. Her film credits include *Tenderloin Blues*, *Solid Ground*, *The Fifth Stage of Labor*, *Ceremony*, and numerous commercials, voiceovers, and video games. She holds a B.A. in history and theater from the University of Oxford and Duke University and an M.F.A. from California Institute of the

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+Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016 and an Equity Professional Intern

Arts. In early 2016 she will appear in *Love and Information* at Capital Stage Company in Sacramento.

EUGENE O'NEILL (Playwright) was born on October 16, 1888, in New York City. He received his education at St. Aloysius Academy for Boys, the De La Salle Institute, and Betts Academy, and briefly attended Princeton University. His first play, *Bound East for Cardiff*, was produced in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1916. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), *Anna Christie* (1922), *Strange Interlude* (1928), and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (awarded posthumously in 1957), making him the playwright with the most Pulitzer Prizes. His other plays include *The Emperor Jones* (1920); *The Hairy Ape* (1922); *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (1924); *Desire Under the Elms* (1924); *Lazarus Laughed* (1926); *The Great God Brown* (1926); *Dynamo* (1929); *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931); *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933); *The Iceman Cometh* (1939); *Hughie* (1941); *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1943); and *A Touch of the Poet* (1942). In 1936, he became the first American playwright to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. He died on November 27, 1953, at age 65.

CASEY STANGL (Director) returns to A.C.T. after directing *Love and Information* last summer and *Venus in Fur* in 2014. Recent projects include *The Curse of Oedipus* for The Antaeus Company; *Venus in Fur* and *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* for South Coast Repertory; *First Person: Seeing America*, a multimedia piece with Ensemble Galilei; and *Lombardi*, a coproduction with Cleveland Play House and Arizona Theatre Company. Stangl's production of *Peace in Our Time* at The Antaeus Company won the 2012 Ovation Award and the L.A. Weekly Theater Award for Best Production. Nationally, Stangl's work has been seen at the Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Guthrie Theater, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Portland Stage, the Alabama

Shakespeare Festival, Minnesota Opera, Portland Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and many others. Stangl was the artistic director of Eye of the Storm Theatre in Minneapolis, for which she was named Minnesota Artist of the Year in 2003.

RALPH FUNICELLO (Scenic Designer) has designed the scenery for more than 55 productions at A.C.T., where he started his career in 1972 and received an honorary master of fine arts degree in 2005. He has also designed more than 290 productions of plays and operas throughout the world, including Broadway productions of *Julius Caesar*, *Brooklyn Boy*, *Henry IV* (Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, and Tony award nominations), *King Lear*, *QED*, and *Division Street*; off-Broadway productions of *Saturn Returns*, *Ten Unknowns* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *Pride's Crossing*, and *Labor Day*; and New York City Opera's *La Rondine*, San Diego Opera's *Don Quichotte*, and Los Angeles Opera's *The Dwarf* and *The Broken Jug*. He is an associate artist at The Old Globe in San Diego and has designed for major regional theaters across the country, as well as for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada and the Royal Shakespeare Company. He has received the Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration and awards from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, *Drama-Logue* magazine, *Back Stage West*, and the United States Institute for Theatre Technology. He currently holds the position of Don Powell Chair in Scene Design at San Diego State University.

JESSIE AMOROSO (Costume Designer) is in his seventh 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, the Julia Morgan Theatre, Solano College Theatre, the Berkeley City Club Theater, Marines' Memorial Theatre, the Herbst Theatre, Herbst Pavilion, and the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre. A.C.T. credits are

Love and Information; *Testament*, with Seana McKenna; and *Underneath the Lintel*, starring David Strathairn. 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: The Play*, starring Sharon Gless. He is a graduate of California State University, Hayward (now California State University, East Bay).

ROBERT WIERZEL's (Lighting Designer) A.C.T. credits include *A Little Night Music*, *Indian Ink*, *Napoli!*, *Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City*, *The Tosca Project*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, *Travesties*, and *Happy End*. He has designed productions with opera companies around the world, as well as numerous productions with The Glimmerglass Festival and New York City Opera. New York Broadway productions include *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, starring Audra McDonald, and the

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musical *Fela!* (Tony Award nomination). Other New York City credits include work with the New York Shakespeare Festival/The Public Theater, Signature Theatre Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, and Brooklyn Academy of Music. Dance work includes 29 years with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. He has designed at several regional theaters across the country, including Hartford Stage, Center Stage in Baltimore, Yale Repertory Theatre, The Old Globe, and the Mark Taper Forum. He holds an M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama and serves on the faculty at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

PAUL JAMES PRENDERGAST

(Composer, Sound Designer) makes his debut at A.C.T. On Broadway he received a Drama Desk Award nomination for *All the Way*. His select theater credits include productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, the American Repertory Theater, Atlantic Theater Company, South Coast Repertory, Long Wharf Theatre, Great Lakes Theater, Florida Stage, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Geffen Playhouse, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Hartford Stage, California Shakespeare Theater, the Alley Theatre, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Moscow Art Theater, and the Edinburgh International Festival. His theme park credits include Disney, Universal Studios, and Knott's Berry Farm. His museum credits include the J. Paul Getty Museum; the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Autry National Center. His dance credits include Diavolo, MOMIX, the Florida Ballet, Parsons Dance, and work with Judith Jamison. Prendergast's honors include a Grammy Award nomination and BroadwayWorld.com, Ovation, Drama-Logue, Back Stage Garland, Gregory, Seattle Times Footlight, and Gypsy awards. His work as a singer/songwriter has appeared on television, in films, on recordings, and in music venues nationwide.

MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg)

joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005, and since then 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) and *Williams in an Hour* (Smith & Kraus); 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)

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 Maiden's Prayer*, and *The Trojan Women: A Love Story* at Playwrights Horizons, as well as *Floyd Collins*, *The Monogamist*, *A Cheever Evening*, *Later Life*, and many more. 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).

MEGAN Q. SADA's* (Stage

Manager) most recent credits include A.C.T.'s *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (a coproduction with the Guthrie Theater), *Testament*, *The Orphan of Zhao*, *Napoli!*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *Arcadia*, *Dead Metaphor*, *Elektra*, *Endgame* and *Play*, *Scorched*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Clybourne Park*, *Round and Round the Garden*, and *A Christmas Carol*; Magic Theatre's *The Other Place*, *Bruja*, *Annapurna*, *Or*, *The Brothers Size*, *Oedipus el Rey*, and *Goldfish*; and California Shakespeare Theater's *Life Is a Dream*, *Blithe Spirit* (assistant director), *The Verona Project*, *King Lear*, and *Man and Superman*. Other professional credits include *The Velveteen Rabbit* (ODC), *Norman Rockwell's America* (TheatreWorks' New Works Festival) and *Lydia* (Marin Theatre Company). Sada graduated with a B.F.A. in theater from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

DEIRDRE ROSE HOLLAND's*

(Assistant Stage Manager) regional theater credits include *Let There Be Love* (A.C.T.); *The Liar* (Santa Cruz Shakespeare); *Twelfth Night* and *Lady Windermere's Fan* (California Shakespeare Theater); *2 Pianos 4 Hands* (TheatreWorks); *Game On*, *Next Fall*, *Next to Normal*, *Spring Awakening*, and *A Christmas Carol* in 2011 and 2012 (San Jose Repertory Theatre); the world premiere of *Bonnie & Clyde* and *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* (La Jolla Playhouse); and the Shakespeare Festival in 2011, *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* in 2010, and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (The Old Globe). Holland holds a master of fine arts degree in stage management from UC San Diego.

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

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A REMEMBRANCE OF MARK RUCKER

BY | CAREY PERLOFF

WHAT DREW ME TO MARK RUCKER FROM THE DAY

I first encountered him was his unique combination of expansiveness and diffidence. As determined as he was never to take the spotlight, never to be the center of attention, never to dominate the rehearsal room but to always leave plenty of space for everyone else to shine, Mark was also the king of the *amazing*. When I look back on his productions at A.C.T., I think about the outrageous tap-dancing curtain call that ended *Once in a Lifetime*; the stunning postapocalyptic Greek-tragedy-meets-*The Simpsons* operetta he staged for Anne Washburn's *Mr. Burns, a post electric play*; and the wild Italian mock funeral for *Napoli!* that involved Marco Barricelli playing dead on a mattress stuffed with coffee beans. Mark took incredible pleasure in the wondrous possibilities of live theater, in the pleasures of theatricality and the sheer power of play. But I also remember the deep, tender acting work that bubbled up again and again in Mark's productions: the exquisite moment in *The Rainmaker* when René Augesen's Lizzie realized that she was capable of being loved, the ache and longing of Richard Prioleau's young gay man in Tarrell Alvin McCraney's *Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet*, the surprising discovery of desire between

warring archaeologists that Mark unearthed in my play *Luminescence Dating*. As quiet and unassuming as Mark could be in person, he was exploding with passion, invention, wit, and longing inside. And he had an uncanny ability to find the humanity in every character, without judgment, without pressure. Both in life and in art, Mark left space around him for other people's unique human experiences to spontaneously emerge. Such an artist is extremely rare.

I had had the joy of seeing Mark's inventive work all across the country before he came to A.C.T.: from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to South Coast Repertory to Yale Repertory Theatre, Mark's wit and imagination kept popping up and flooding our national stages. He had such breadth and appetite, and was at home in a wide variety of dramatic literature. In 2001 Mark came to A.C.T. to stage a seriously sexy rendition of Amy Freed's *The Beard of Avon*, and we all fell in love with him. We were overjoyed when he relocated to San Francisco to be near his sister and beloved nephew some years later, and, realizing what a perfect fit he would be for A.C.T., we invited him to become associate artistic director.

Photo by Kevin Berne.

I remember the day I made him the offer: his big owl eyes twinkled merrily, and he proposed that we take a walk and talk about it. Thus it was that my deep collaboration with Mark began with a memorable walk up a mountain and ended with a beautiful walk in a garden just a few days before he died. There's a trail in the Marin Headlands that I love; it ascends quite quickly to a vista where one can see the vast, blue Pacific spread out below. So off we went one Sunday in 2009 to climb the hill and discuss Mark's future. As it turned out, Mark Rucker was a man of vast talents, but hiking wasn't one of them. He always joked later that I persuaded him to take the job at A.C.T. because he was too out of breath to demur. But we made it to the top of the hill, and together we sat and imagined where we wanted A.C.T. to go and how we might play together. As friends and colleagues, Mark and I were the most unlikely combination: I am restless and talkative and external, Mark was calm and quiet and internal. Perhaps that's why we fit together so well.

“

BOTH IN LIFE AND IN ART, MARK LEFT SPACE AROUND HIM FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S UNIQUE HUMAN EXPERIENCE TO SPONTANEOUSLY EMERGE.

I quickly learned that he was passionate about lots of things: screwball comedies, American classics, anything Shakespearean, and many things entirely new. But what he seemed to love most about A.C.T. was the fact that we were also an acting school and that our training programs were embedded in every aspect of our work. Clearly Mark recognized this model from his student days at Yale School of Drama; he regaled me with stories of outrageous impromptu productions at Yale Cabaret, and on and off for several years he helped run “the Bar” in the basement of The Geary, where on late-night occasions one could find M.F.A. Program actors and the casts of any number of shows singing at an open mike while Mark performed bartender duties and befriended *everyone*. He had a unique ability to bridge those two sides of A.C.T.: to direct, teach, and mentor young artists, and to give them the confidence and skills they needed to succeed on our mainstage. And that is exactly what he did. Over five seasons, Mark's work at every level of A.C.T. was exquisite, but I think what I remember the most is his work with our M.F.A. Program actors. To get real nuance and depth out of Anton Chekhov, William Shakespeare, Caryl Churchill, or Georges Feydeau when you are directing young actors is a feat, but Mark did it. And he did it by leaving *room*. He never talked too much, he never overdirected, he never got impatient with inexperience. He directed students exactly the way he

directed seasoned professionals: by giving them space to explore and by making them aware that he trusted them to chart their own path in their own unique way. He was the most active listener I have ever encountered. Nothing in the rehearsal room escaped his attention, and he had an uncanny ability to know exactly when to give a note or a nudge, and when to wait and let self-discovery happen. No one was better at giving confidence to a faltering ego, and no one more determined to let other people shine. In the end, it was the work he trusted; he never *ever* read reviews or took any stock in them, because that approbation wasn't why he'd fallen in love with this crazy profession to begin with.

Once in San Francisco, Mark quickly became the glue of the Bay Area. He adored connecting one strand of the theater community to another: he ran A.C.T.'s Community Space-Sharing Initiative and invited everyone from Awesöme Orchestra to Singers of the Street to perform at our Costume Shop Theater; he fought for Santa Cruz Shakespeare to stay alive and directed a joyful *As You Like It* for Mike Ryan's “resurrection” season there; he partnered with Jonathan Moscone and gave many of our M.F.A. Program actors their first jobs in his California Shakespeare Theater productions; he rejoiced in the resurgence of Z Space and looked for ways to collaborate there . . . again and again, Mark linked people up in his kind and expansive embrace, and took so much pleasure when the larger theater family treated each other as such. Mark and I never climbed that Marin mountain again, but we often walked as we talked. My last memory of Mark is a stroll we took through Yerba Buena Gardens shortly before he died. He had just returned from England and, knowing how much I love Greek tragedy, wanted to tell me about a brilliant production of the *Oresteia* he had seen. It was a cold San Francisco day and every time we sat down, the sun was swallowed by fog and we had to start walking again in search of a warmer spot. That is how I will always think of Mark. Eyes bright behind his glasses, attention truly and deeply focused on the person in front of him, with the most beautiful capacity to listen and the most generous impulse to share. He made you feel that you were enough, no matter what. He took such joy in the process of making something beautiful. We must all keep trying to do that, every day, in honor of his memory.



Janet Foster and Mark Rucker at The Strand Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Photo by Katelyn Tucker (Orange Photography)



STEPPING UP TO THE GEARY

*The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program
Actors in Ah, Wilderness!*

BY | SHANNON STOCKWELL

THE A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM

is a cornerstone of our company. One of the most transformative aspects of this intensive three-year course of study is the opportunity to be cast and perform in one of the shows in A.C.T.'s subscription season.

In charge of finding the perfect roles for these talented students is A.C.T. Casting Director Janet Foster, who has been with A.C.T. since the 2011-12 season. In addition to casting almost every show at A.C.T., Foster spends much of her time getting to know the M.F.A. Program actors in order to find mainstage roles in which each of them will shine. Her relationship with them begins the moment they first set foot in our studios at 30 Grant Avenue as prospective students, and it continues to grow as she sees them perform as much as possible—in the Created Movement Project, in Conservatory productions, and in the annual Sky Festival.

After becoming acquainted with each actor's unique skills, Foster invites them to audition for mainstage roles in which she feels they will truly excel. In the case of *Ah, Wilderness!*, she was extremely pleased with how well each student performed. "Everybody in the class came

in and did a stellar audition," she says. Then it was just a matter of figuring out who would play which role.

Once cast in a mainstage production, M.F.A. Program actors often express to Foster how amazing the experience is. "They learn so much through working with professionals, and it's great to hear what they bring out of the process," she says. "It's hugely satisfying to see how the students step up—and they all seem to step up when they get to the Geary stage."

The experience isn't just beneficial to the students, however, as director Casey Stangl found out after working with four M.F.A. Program actors on A.C.T.'s recent production of *Love and Information*. "They each brought into the room a breath of fresh air, their own sensibility, and their own way of thinking."

Stangl is particularly excited to have the M.F.A. Program actors in *Ah, Wilderness!*, which relies so heavily on a feeling of family. "They have been working together for almost three years," she says. "They all know each other and have each other's backs. They know the best and worst of each other. That's just like being in a family, and that adds a lot to the depth of this production's ensemble."

MEET THE M.F.A. FAMILY IN *AH, WILDERNESS!*



ARTHUR WISE

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Bartender

HOMETOWN: Cleveland, Ohio

UNDERGRAD: Baldwin Wallace University's Conservatory of Music

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT ACTING THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE A.C.T.?

How far you truly have to go: truth, honesty, vulnerability, and, ultimately, transparency. I never really knew how much of "you" you had to bring to the work until studying here. I thought it was all about technique—which it is, but the technique is about whittling yourself down to the most unfiltered, unbridled self that you can be.



CAITLAN TAYLOR

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Belle

HOMETOWN: Houston, Texas

UNDERGRAD: Carnegie Mellon University

WHY ACTING?

Particularly now, when society is ruthlessly focused on technology and mainly operates through digital interface, we desperately need inner reflection and connection. Exploring our emotional centers and experiencing catharsis in the theater opens us up to compassion and empathy, bringing us closer to connection and belonging: closer to the purpose and meaning of our lives.



CHRISTINA LIANG

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Mildred Miller

HOMETOWN: Short Hills, New Jersey

UNDERGRAD: New York University

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ACTING EXPERIENCE?

I played Peter Pan when I was 10 years old. I was at a summer music camp and my mother signed me up for a musical theater intensive. I was too big for my costume and green is definitely not my color, but I had a blast!



JENNIFER REDDISH

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Norah

HOMETOWN: Brewster, Massachusetts

UNDERGRAD: University of Massachusetts Amherst

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST RECENT ACTING EXPERIENCE AT A.C.T.?

I was last in *Crazy for the Country*, directed by Stephen Buescher. I played another (much sassier) maid named Brigida. It was a crazy, physical, funny romp about love, money, and family. I got to mess around with a cartoon Cockney accent, I learned how to juggle plates (mostly successfully), and Brigida got the guy in the end.



LAUREN HART

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Understudy for Mildred Miller and Norah

HOMETOWN: Palo Alto, California

UNDERGRAD: University of California, Berkeley

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ACTING EXPERIENCE?

I was in third grade, and my synagogue, Beth Am, was holding auditions for *Fiddler on the Roof*. I was so excited to audition, and I was cast as Bielke. I haven't stopped since!



MATTHEW BALDIGA

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Salesman

HOMETOWN: Apex, North Carolina

UNDERGRAD: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST RECENT ACTING EXPERIENCE AT A.C.T.?

This past spring I was in a crazy (no pun intended) commedia dell'arte play called Crazy for the Country, directed by Stephen Buescher. I played a 90-year-old masked character trying to keep social norms alive in the Italian countryside.



MATTHEW CAPBARAT

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Wint Selby

HOMETOWN: Walnut Creek, California

UNDERGRAD: University of California, Berkeley

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE ABOUT BEING AN M.F.A. PROGRAM ACTOR?

Our rigorous and time-intensive schedule. We begin each morning at 9 a.m. and remain in classes until 5 p.m. Following a break for dinner, we start our evening rehearsals at 6 p.m. and work until 10 p.m. That's a 13-hour day, five days a week. Sundays include a six- to eight-hour rehearsal, making our work week six days long. Our schedule is demanding and challenging, but it lets us be immersed in the craft and art form we love.



MICHAEL MCINTIRE

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Arthur Miller

HOMETOWN: Kirksville, Missouri

UNDERGRAD: Columbia College Chicago

IF WE ASKED YOUR PARENTS, WHEN WOULD THEY TELL US THEY KNEW YOU WOULD BE ONSTAGE?

When I was in first grade, I played the lead in our church's production of No Phibbin' Mephibosheth. I was a young boy who walked around on a wooden crutch. After the production, the pastor called me back onstage and I walked on still in character—still on the crutch. That was when my mother claims she knew I was destined to be an actor.



ROSA PALMERI

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Muriel McComber

HOMETOWN: Brattleboro, Vermont

UNDERGRAD: University of Evansville

WHAT ABOUT AH, WILDERNESS! DO YOU FIND RELEVANT TO YOUR GROWTH AS AN ACTOR?

Playing Muriel gives me a chance to exercise clown technique, which we're learning from Stephen Buescher. So many of Muriel's scenes reside in a state of not-knowing. She is an innocent making quick decisions in a world of new obstacles, and, as a result, her actions are often childlike.



THOMAS STAGNITTA

AH, WILDERNESS! ROLE: Richard Miller

HOMETOWN: Floral Park, New York

UNDERGRAD: Queens College, City University of New York

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN ACTING?

Get curious about the world. Have the willpower to change yourself. Be open, receptive, and patient, and the answers to your questions will reveal themselves when the time is right. Trust that you exist.

PHOTOS: Caitlan Taylor in *A Little Night Music* (photo by Kevin Berne); Arthur Wise in *Kalos Kai Agathos*; Caitlan Taylor in *A Little Night Music* (photo by Kevin Berne); Christina Liang in *Love and Information* (photo by Kevin Berne); Jennifer Reddish in *The Cherry Orchard*; Lauren Hart in *The Cherry Orchard*; Matthew Baldiga in *Side by Side by Sondheim*; Matthew Capbarat in *The Cherry Orchard*; Michael McIntire in *Hamlet*; Rosa Palmeri in *Teach for America*; Thomas Stagnitta in *Hamlet*. (All photos by Alessandra Mello unless otherwise noted.)

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Aaron Morelana and Blair Busbee, class of '14, in *Suñón*
at A.C.T.'s Costume Shop. Photo by Ryan Montgomery.

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Top photo by Jay Yamada; lower
two photos by Ryan Montgomery

THE SUM OF OUR ART

Collaboration at A.C.T.

BY | NIRMALA NATARAJ & SHANNON STOCKWELL

Group photo from *Stories from the 'Loin* rehearsal. Photo by Ben Quinn.

EACH DEPARTMENT AT A.C.T. HAS ITS UNIQUE FOCUS AND creates dynamic work on its own—but we recognize that there's a special kind of magic that comes from the exchange of ideas among various departments. The new conversations, diverse voices, and powerful performances that such collaborations produce are crucial to the creative life of A.C.T.

Time and time again, A.C.T.'s many artistic, educational, and community programs work together to create art that's fresh and vibrant. It's simple arithmetic, really, but the result is incredible: the creativity of one department plus the creativity of another equals something truly transformative.

Let's do some math!

THE M.F.A. PROGRAM + EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS =

Many M.F.A. Program actors express interest in teaching and working with the community, and Conservatory Director Melissa Smith and Director of Education & Community Programs Elizabeth Brodersen saw in this desire an opportunity to collaborate. Together, they created the M.F.A. Citizen

Artist curriculum, which supports the students' yearning to enrich their craft by providing them with training, tools, and opportunities to get involved with A.C.T.'s arts education and community programs. In particular, they teach in our residencies with Downtown and Ida B. Wells high schools.

"The M.F.A. Program actors have told us that working with our programs feeds them artistically, helps them realize the value of their work as artists, and helps them understand their actor training on a deeper level," says Brodersen.

THE M.F.A. PROGRAM + STAGE COACH =

Since the establishment of the Education & Community Programs Department in 2011, the more the M.F.A. Program actors worked with our continuation high school students, the more they wanted to get involved in other aspects of A.C.T.'s work in the community. Stage Coach, A.C.T.'s participatory theater program that helps to develop and showcase the stories of traditionally marginalized communities in San Francisco, was the perfect opportunity for further collaboration. M.F.A. Program actors now participate in many Stage Coach residencies

and performances in San Francisco neighborhoods. This partnership between departments resulted in *Stories from the 'Loin and Home Is Where . . .*, joint projects between M.F.A. Program actors and Stage Coach involving members of the Tenderloin community, exploring issues of homelessness and bringing powerful yet rarely heard stories to the stage.

One upcoming joint project between the M.F.A. Program and Stage Coach is also a collaboration with the One-Minute Play Festival, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and theaters across the nation. In October, A.C.T. Community Producer Rebecca Struch and playwright Aleshea Harris traveled to St. Louis to take part in *Every 28 Hours*, a week-long residency with artists from around the country to create a series of one-minute plays. Says Struch, “The work we created is part of a national artistic response to the events in Ferguson last year and the statistic that a black person is killed by police every 28 hours.” A.C.T. will host an event inspired by this work featuring M.F.A. Program actors at The Strand on October 28.

THE M.F.A. PROGRAM + NEW STRANDS + STAGE COACH =

Stage Coach is also benefiting from the expertise of A.C.T. Director of New Works Beatrice Basso to create its first commission: an adaptation by Harris of Sophocles’ *Oedipus*—inspired by the stories and experiences of Bayview/Hunters Point community members, gathered in a series of neighborhood-based story circles over the course of several months. Following a reading by M.F.A. Program actors in December of Harris’s first draft, the finished script will be performed next summer by a cast of Bayview residents and professional actors in a variety of San Francisco venues—including our mobile Stage Coach unit.

THE M.F.A. PROGRAM + THE YOUNG CONSERVATORY =

The M.F.A. Program actors also have a rich history of working with our Young Conservatory. In addition to teaching YC classes each summer, M.F.A. Program actors are cast with YC students in our annual production of *A Christmas Carol*. Recognizing a valuable opportunity for collaboration, YC Director Craig Slight launched a mentorship program that pairs M.F.A. Program actors with YC students during the rehearsal and performance process of our acclaimed holiday show. “Through the mentorship, the YC students have someone to look up to,” Slight explains. “Meanwhile, M.F.A. Program actors embrace the joy of passing on what they’ve learned.”

Melissa Smith notes that this mentorship also helps M.F.A. Program actors cultivate professionalism and accountability. She says, “When M.F.A. students connect with YC students, it helps them realize they are made of the same cloth. They are all aspiring theater artists, just at different points in their lives.”



THE YOUNG CONSERVATORY + EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS =

For more than 20 years, the YC has been commissioning seasoned playwrights to write new works specifically for young actors and has published numerous volumes of sophisticated dramatic works exploring the world through the eyes of young people. Last summer, using this same model, YC Director Craig Slight established the Collaborative Youth Arts Project: Slight and Community Artistic Director Tyrone Davis commissioned playwright Chris Webb to create *Snakes*, a powerful and poetic play exploring issues of race, identity, and tolerance, for a cast of young actors made up of students from A.C.T.’s continuation high school residencies and the YC, as well as students from Oakland’s Destiny Arts Center. Performed at The Strand as well as Destiny’s new venue in Oakland. “The project was ambitious but ultimately rewarding,” says Slight.

“THE CITIZEN ARTIST COMPONENT WITHIN THE M.F.A. PROGRAM IS AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE OUR TRAINING WITH SAN FRANCISCO’S COMMUNITIES AND WITNESS HOW THEATER CAN UNITE AND INSPIRE. IT HAS PROFOUNDLY IMPACTED MY GROWTH AS AN ACTOR AND HUMAN BEING.

DIANA GONZALEZ-MORETT, CLASS OF '17

These equations are only a few of the countless collaborations at A.C.T.—they happen every day, both big and small, through serendipity as well as focused intention, in ongoing projects as well as one-time events. “Ideas start as seeds in the hallway, on a bus, or at lunch,” says Struch. “Collaborating across departments makes our work stronger and more connected not only to A.C.T. but also to the city, the country, and the community as a whole.”

A.C.T. CELEBRATES PROSPERO MONTH

Remembering Our Lifetime Donors

BY | ROSE OSER

THE PROSPERO SOCIETY

THE PROSPERO SOCIETY RECOGNIZES LOYAL AND generous A.C.T. patrons who have provided for A.C.T. in their estate plans. Lifetime membership is extended to individuals who support A.C.T. through a bequest by will or living trust, or through other planned gifts that provide income for life and tax benefits to the donor.

Each November, A.C.T. celebrates Prospero Month to honor our forward-thinking members and to shine a spotlight on the benefits of legacy giving and membership in the Prospero Society. This year, we are beginning a new tradition of featuring exemplary members of the Prospero Society whose gifts have truly made a difference at the theater. Our first Prospero Society honoree, Tom Maryanski, passed away on December 24, 2013, at the age of 68.

Tom's partner, Marla Ferrara, tells us, "Tom was an extremely kind, gentle, and generous human being in the truest sense of the word, yet he was also very successful as cofounder of Tiburon Systems, which provided defense software to the U.S. military. As director of software engineering

at Tiburon, he supervised a staff of more than 200 and traveled all over the world for his job and for pleasure. He loved the theater and was a season ticket holder for many, many years. I came along just for the last three years and was lucky enough to join in that activity."

A.C.T. was lucky, too, to have Tom as a patron and Prospero Society member. He first came to A.C.T. as a guest of his good friends Alan and Susan Fritz (also Prospero Society members). Knowing Tom was always up for any new event, they invited him to attend a production, and when he did, he was hooked. Tom loved the production so much that he quickly became a season ticket holder, and then Tom and the Fritzes (and later Marla) began the tradition of attending A.C.T. productions together, which they continued for more than 40 years.

We are grateful to Tom for providing funds that will help ensure A.C.T.'s ability to provide professional theater productions, actor training, and arts education for the San Francisco community well into the future. Thank you.



Frannie Fleishacker and other Producers Circle members enjoy dinner on the stage of The Geary.



Tom Maryanski, a loyal member of A.C.T.'s Prospero Society.



LEFT TO RIGHT: A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, Mortimer Fleishacker III, and Frannie Fleishacker. Photo by Drew Altizer.

THE VIP LOUNGE

THIS SEASON, A.C.T. NAMED THE GEARY VIP LOUNGE

“The Mort,” in honor of Mortimer Fleishacker III. A significant member of the A.C.T. family, Mort served on the A.C.T. Board of Trustees and played an important role in coordinating the restoration of The Geary Theater after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. His father worked with Cyril Magnin and Benjamin Swig to bring A.C.T. to San Francisco in 1967.

Mort’s wife, Frannie, carries on the legacy of the A.C.T. founders. She is a member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, a Co-Chair of the Producers Circle, and a valued member of the Prospero Society. In 2005, Frannie made a significant impact on A.C.T. in her own right by suggesting a special Producers Circle dinner on the Geary stage. This event has now become a favorite A.C.T. tradition. Frannie has also been instrumental in supporting the M.F.A. Program by serving as a member of the M.F.A. Board and awarding an annual scholarship in her husband’s name. We applaud Mort and Frannie Fleishacker for their longtime support of A.C.T. and for ensuring that professional theater thrives in the San Francisco community.



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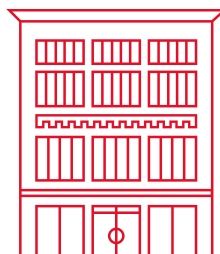
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Janet Foster, *Director of Casting & Artistic Associate*

Beatrice Basso, *Director of New Work*

Alexandra Moss, *Senior Artistic Fellow*

Ken Savage, *Directing & Outreach Fellow*

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Giles Havergal, Bill Irwin, Steven

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Adly Guirgis; Eugene O'Neill; Carey

Perloff and Paul Walsh; Sean San José;

Terry Teachout

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Lozano, Carey Perloff, Casey Stangl

Choreographers

Val Caniparoli, Erika Chong Shuch

Composers/Orchestrators

Jason Robert Brown, Casey Hurt,

Karl Lundeberg

Music Directors

Daniel Feyer, Casey Hurt

Designers

John Arnone, Nina Ball, Christopher

Barreca, Drew Boyce, Ralph Funicello,

Timothy Mackabee; Lee Savage, Sibyl

Wickersheimer, *Scenic*

Jessie Amoroso, Brandin Baron,

Beaver Bauer, Candice Donnelly, Callie

Floor, Katherine O'Neill, Ilona Somogyi,

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James Prendergast, Jake Rodriguez, Leon

Rothenburg, David Van Tieghem, *Sound*

Coaches

Nancy Benjamin, Lisa Anne Porter, *Voice,*

Text, and Dialect

Jeffrey Crockett, *Voice and Text*

Stephen Buescher, *Movement*

Johnathan Rider, Danielle O'Dea, *Fights*

Daniel Feyer, *Music*

PRODUCTION

Andrew Nielsen, *Production Manager*

Lay Hoon Tan, *Associate Production Manager*

Heather Cooper, *Assistant*

Production Manager

Brian Garber, *Technical Director*

Robert Hand, *Design Associate*

Stage Management

Elisa Guthertz, *Head Stage Manager*

Dick Daley, Elisa Guthertz, Megan Q. Sada,

Karen Szpaller, *Stage Managers*

Elisa Guthertz, Christina Hogan, Deirdre

Holland, Christina Larson, Megan

McClintock, Leslie Radin, Megan Q. Sada,

Assistant Stage Managers

Josie Felt, *Production Assistant*

Hal Day, AJ Gardner, Cynthia Moore,

Lauren Pekel, *Stage Management Fellows*

Prop Shop

Ryan L. Parham, *Supervisor*

Lizabeth Stanley, *Strand Props*

Costume Shop

Jessie Amoroso, *Costume Director*

Callie Floor, *Rentals Manager*

MELISSA SMITH

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Keely Weiman, *Build Manager/Draper*

Jef Valentine, *Inventory Manager*

Maria Montoya, *Head Stitcher*

Kelly Koehn, *Accessories & Crafts Artisan*

Stephen Smith, *First Hand*

Megan LaFleur, *Costume Administrator*

Chanterelle Grover, Koledon Lambright,

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Melissa Kallstrom, *Strand Wig &*

Makeup Coordinator

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Suzanna Bailey, *Head Sound*

Tim Tunks, *Master Electrician*

Mark Pugh, *Head Properties*

Colin Wade, *Flyman*

Mary Montijo, *Wardrobe Supervisor*

Diane Cornelius, *Assistant*

Wardrobe Supervisor

Tom Blair, Joe Nelson, *Stage Door Monitors*

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Master Technician

Sarah Jacquez, *Strand Sound Engineer*

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Jonathan Templeton, *Conservatory*

Associate Production Manager

Cameron Pence, *Technical Director*

Harrison Chan, Ben Rampley, *Assistant*

Technical Directors

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Jennifer Zilberstein, *Human*

Resources Manager

Gretchen Feyer, *Associate General*

Manager, Producing

Amy Hand, *Associate General*

Manager, Operations

Jessica Ju, *Assistant Company Manager*

Finance

Jason Seifer, *Director of Finance*

and Operations

Sharon Boyce, Matt Jones, Linda Lauter,

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Rafael Monge, *Receptionist*

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Flamm, Robert French, Lee Jewel, Kristen

Jones, Sharon Lee, Leontyne Mbele-

Pabong, Sam Mesinger, Genevieve Pabon,

Brandie Pilapil, Tuesday Ray, Victoria

Smith, Michael Sousa, Melissa Stern,

Lorraine Williams, *Ushers*

Forrest Choy, Jake Freeman,

Colleen Harriss, Anthony Hernandez,

Brooke Jensen, Matt Luque, Finona

McGovern, Athena Miller, Susan Monson,

Kareema Richmond, Tracey Sylvester,

Cevie Toure, *Bartenders*

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& Community Programs

Tyrone Davis, *Community Artistic Director*

Rebecca Struch, *Community Producer*

Jasmin Hoo, *Curriculum & Programs Manager*

Indira Wilmott, *Education Fellow*

Ariella Wolfe, *Stage Coach Fellow*

Elizabeth Halperin, *Student Matinees*

Joseph Givens, Raven Sisco, *Apprentices*

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& AMTC

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Training Congress

Jack Sharrar, PhD, *Director of*

Academic Affairs

Jerry Lopez, *Director of Financial Aid*

Dan Kolodny, *Manager, Conservatory*

Operations & Corporate Training Programs

Lizz Guzman, *Conservatory Associate,*

Academic Programs

Gabriella Mingoia, *Conservatory Associate,*

Young Conservatory & Studio A.C.T.

Matt Jones, *Bursar/Payroll Administrator*

Sabra Jaffe, Colin McArthur,

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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*

Melissa Carey, *Singing*

Nick Gabriel, *Acting, Director*

Cindy Goldfield, *Director*

Giles Havergal, *Director*

Gregory Hoffman, *Combat*

W. D. Keith, *On-Camera Acting*

Patrick Leveque, *Singing*

Jonathan Moscone, *Acting*

Corinne Nagata, *Dance*

Kari Prindl, *Alexander Technique*

Stacy Printz, *Dance*

Elyse Shafarman, *Alexander Technique*

Lisa Townsend, *Director, Choreographer*

Jon Tracy, *Director*

Studio A.C.T.

Cristina Anselmo, *Acting for the Camera*

Nancy Carlin, *Audition Technique*

Stephanie DeMott, *Acting and*

Devised Theater

Lauren English, *Acting and*

Audition Technique

Francie Epsen-Devlin, *Musical Theater*

Paul Finocchiaro, *Acting*

Nick Gabriel, *Program Director*

Marvin Greene, *Acting*

Lizz Guzman, *Stage Combat*

Bill Irwin, *Clown*

Rafael Jordan, *Acting*

W. D. Keith, *Acting for the Camera*

Drew Khalouf, *Speech and Diction*

Francine Landes, *Acting*

A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (A.C.T. Artistic Director)

is celebrating her 24th season as artistic director of A.C.T. This fall, she directs *Monstress*, adapted by Philip Kan Gotanda and Sean San José from the short stories by Lysley Tenorio. Last season, she staged the New York premiere of Tom Stoppard's *Indian Ink* at Roundabout

Theatre Company (nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award for Best Revival) before bringing the show to A.C.T. Recent A.C.T. productions also include *Testament*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *Arcadia*, *Elektra* (coproduced by the Getty Villa in Malibu), *Endgame* and *Play*, *Scorched*, *The Homecoming*, *Tosca Café* (cocreated with choreographer Val Caniparoli; toured Canada), and Racine's *Phèdre* in a coproduction with the Stratford Festival. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. José Rivera's *Boleros for the Disenchanted*; the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda's *After the War* (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of *A Christmas Carol*; the American premieres of Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love* and *Indian Ink*, and Harold Pinter's *Celebration*; A.C.T.-commissioned translations/adaptations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, *Uncle Vanya*, *A Mother*, and *The Voyage Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian's *Singer's Boy*; and major revivals of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Government Inspector*, *Happy End* (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), *A Doll's House*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Old Times*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Antigone*, *Creditors*, *The Room*, *Home*, *The Tempest*, and Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*, *Travesties*, *The Real Thing*, and *Night and Day*. Perloff's work for A.C.T. also includes Marie Ndiaye's *Hilda*, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein's *No for an Answer* and David Lang/Mac Wellman's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, and the West Coast premiere of her own play *The Colossus of Rhodes* (Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist).

Perloff is also an award-winning playwright. Her play *Kinship* premiered at the Théâtre de Paris last October in a production starring Isabelle Adjani and Niels Schneider and was produced at the Williamstown Theater Festival last summer, starring Cynthia Nixon and directed by Jo Bonney. *Waiting for the Flood* has received workshops at A.C.T., New York Stage and Film, and Roundabout Theatre. *Higher* was developed at New York Stage and Film, won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award, and received its world premiere in February 2012 in San Francisco. *Luminescence Dating* premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre, was coproduced by A.C.T. and Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. *The Colossus of Rhodes* was workshopped at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, premiered at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theatre, and was produced at A.C.T. in 2003.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound's *Elektra*, the American premiere of Pinter's *Mountain Language*, and many classic works. Under Perloff's leadership, CSC won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's opera *The Cave* at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

A recipient of France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the National Corporate Theatre Fund's 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years, and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Perloff is on the board of the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Sarasota, Florida, and is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas. Perloff is the author of *Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater* (City Lights, March 2015).



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. She has also taught and directed in the M.F.A. Program, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught

introductory, intermediate, and advanced acting. She has taught acting classes to students of all ages at 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., California Shakespeare Theater, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre; in New York at Primary Stages and Soho Rep; and in England at the Barbican Theatre (London) and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Smith holds a B.A. from Yale College and an M.F.A. 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 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, one block west of Union Square; or at 1127 Market Street at 6th Street, across from the UN Plaza. Walk-up hours are Tuesday-Sunday (noon-6 p.m.) on performance days, and Monday-Friday (noon-6 p.m.) and Saturday-Sunday (noon-4 p.m.) on nonperformance days. (For Strand Box Office walk-up hours, please visit act-sf.org.) Phone hours are Tuesday-Sunday (10 a.m.-6 p.m.) on performance days, and Monday-Friday (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.

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNTS

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

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 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 Joseph Rich at 415.439.2309.

AT THE THEATER

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary 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 theater bars, at the box office, and online.

REFRESHMENTS

Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available one hour before the performance in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level and the Sky Bar on the third level. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. 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 415.439.2317 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 in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.



Wheelchair Seating is located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** is now available on site.

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.

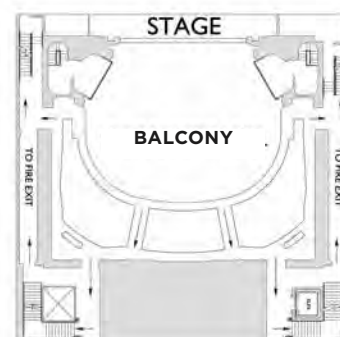
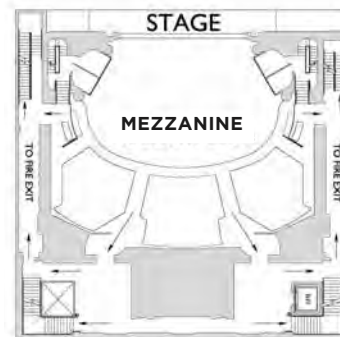
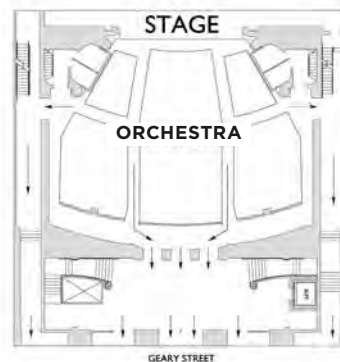


A.C.T. is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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

GEARY THEATER EXITS





Frances McDormand
as Lady Macbeth
PHOTO BY ALISON ROSA



Ayad Akhtar, playwright
of *Disgraced*
PHOTO BY NINA SUBIN



Kathleen Chalfant in Sarah Ruhl's
Peter Pan on her 70th birthday



Steven Epp as Long John Silver in
Mary Zimmerman's *Treasure Island*

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2869 Broderick Street

Beautiful house-like two-level view condominium in prime Cow Hollow. This is the upper unit in two-unit corner building, with its own separate entrance and garage. Formal living room, dining room and remodeled kitchen/family room that opens to a deck. Upstairs are three bedrooms on one level with a nice office area. The master suite has lovely Golden Gate Bridge and Presidio views. In-unit laundry, abundant storage and two-car parking. www.2869Broderick.com | Offered at \$3,500,000



1265 Masonic Avenue #C

Unexpected! At the top of this elegant historic building is a gorgeous, contemporary condominium flooded with light. The great room has a large open kitchen with granite counters and stainless appliances, and separate living and dining spaces. Ideal floorplan separation with a large master suite on one side and a family room/office leading to a second suite across the living area. Both bathrooms are gorgeously remodeled. In-unit laundry, independent garage parking, large storage room, shared garden. Walk outside to cafes, shops, groceries, farmers market, tech shuttles, and Golden Gate Park. www.1265MasonicAve.com | Offered at \$1,400,000

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