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Corporate Office

425 North 85th Street Seattle, WA 98103 p 206.443.0445 f 206.443.1246 adsales@encoremediagroup.com 800.308.2898 x105 **www.encoremediagroup.com**

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SAN FRANCISCO'S **Theater Company**

American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco's Tony Awardwinning 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 literature and traditions 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, our intensive Summer Training Congress attracts enthusiasts from around the world, and our San Francisco Semester welcomes undergraduate students who want a taste of the grad school experience. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19, led by 25-year veteran Craig Slaight, 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 hundreds of thousands of young people to A.C.T. performances since 1968. We also provide touring Will on Wheels Shakespeare productions, teaching-artist residencies, in-school workshops, and 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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David Strathairn (Underneath the Lintel at A.C.T.; film: Good Night, and Good Luck; Lincoln) and A.C.T. M.F.A. Program alumnus Dan Clegg (Major Barbara) make their Strand debut. In 1945, in a Long Island hospital, psychiatrist Dr. Philip Cotton takes charge of Chester Bailey, a young man recovering from devastating injuries that have left his imagination his only haven. Wounded by his own disappointments, Cotton struggles to heal this unusual patient. He is forced to make an ethical decision that jeopardizes everything he has ever believed, leading him to new realizations about love, hope, and the imagination. Written by Emmy Award-winning playwright and screenwriter Joseph Dougherty and directed by stage and television director Ron Lagomarsino, *Chester Bailey* is an intimate and haunting psychological drama.

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VOLUNTEER!

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

COVER AND BELOW: Actors Zak Resnick and Margo Seibert. Photos by Mario Elias.



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DON'T JUST SIT THERE . . .



At A.C.T.'s free InterACT events, you can mingle with cast members, join interactive workshops with theater artists, and meet fellow theatergoers at hosted celebrations. Join us for our upcoming production of *Chester Bailey* and InterACT with us!

Chester Bailey AT THE STRAND THEATER

AT THE STRAND THEATER

BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT *May 25, 6:30 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

May 31, 5:30 PM Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion and Q&A with a member of the *Chester Bailey* artistic team.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGE*

Jun 5 & Jun 8, 2 PM Join us for an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

To learn more and order tickets for InterACT events, visit **act-sf.org/interact**.

* Events take place immediately following the performance.

complete the story



1967



ACT

1972



1996

2016

For nearly 50 years, the community has played a leading role in A.C.T.'s history.

How will you contribute to A.C.T.'s next chapter?

Any gift made before June 30 will go toward our \$100,000 Complete the Story Challenge and will be matched dollar for dollar.

Visit act-sf.org/support or contact Individual Giving Manager Abigail Pañares at 415.439.2353 or apanares@act-sf.org to make a gift today!



FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Almost exactly a year ago, we presented a concert version of Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* here at The Geary, and the music filled this room so beautifully we wondered why we had never staged a full production of this unique musical. A year later, here we are!

Jason Robert Brown is one of the most literate musical theater writers around. He takes the two threads of this love story and runs them in opposite directions, so that while the man is falling in love, the woman is mourning the end of the affair. It's an ingenious device, one that deeply intrigued Michael Berresse when he first encountered the musical many years ago. I asked Michael to direct this production after meeting him in the cast of *The Normal Heart* in 2012; a triple threat, Michael acts, directs, and writes for the theater with equal aplomb, and it has been a pleasure collaborating on this production with him.

I am constantly inspired by the range of writing in the American musical theater today. This spring at A.C.T. alone, we have seen the raucous blues of The Unfortunates give way to the melodic heartbreak of The Lion, and now Jason Robert Brown's sophisticated score fills The Geary. If you enjoy what you've been hearing this spring, stay tuned for a number of exciting upcoming projects. Next season we will be collaborating with saw player David Coulter on an original score for A Thousand Splendid Suns. We'll be moving from the Armstrong jazz world of Satchmo to that of his rival Miles Davis in Robert Lepage's Needles and Opium, an exploration of the relationship between art and addiction. And Here Lies Love, a new musical about the infamous Imelda Marcos, wife of a Filipino dictator, will transform The Geary with intoxicating music by David Byrne of Talking Heads. Beyond our subscription season, we're also collaborating with composer Byron Au Yong on developing Port/City, a new musical with writer Christopher Chen. And this August, Craig Slaight will stage a musical with Young Conservatory actors at The Strand: Fields of Gold, inspired by the music of Sting.

We are already in high gear preparing for next season, A.C.T.'s 50th (read all about it on the next two pages). And we're thrilled that this landmark season will include *The Hard Problem*, the first play in almost a decade by the inimitable Tom Stoppard, who has found his U.S. home at A.C.T. This next season marks other important anniversaries: *The Hard Problem* will be the twentieth time one of Stoppard's works has been produced by A.C.T., and the tenth time I have directed one of his shows here.

Meanwhile, to celebrate our 50th season, our dramaturg Michael Paller is writing a detailed book about A.C.T.'s colorful history (replete with superb photographs), and his research has prompted an institution-wide examination of A.C.T.'s roots. It is an important moment to recommit as we celebrate the 500 current subscribers who have been with us for five decades and contemplate the next 50 years of A.C.T.'s life. We have many activities planned for you throughout next season to commemorate this milestone, and to celebrate you, who have made the whole journey possible.

Thank you as always for your engagement, your passion, your responses, and your connection to live theater. Enjoy *The Last Five Years*, and see you in September for the outrageous West Coast premiere of *King Charles III*.

Carey Perloff Artistic Director







A.C.T. AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

2016-17 SEASON

King Charles III

by Mike Bartlett **Directed by David Muse** Sep 14-Oct 9, 2016, at The Geary Theater

"#1 Play of the Year!"-The New York Times

With its witty echoes of Shakespearean drama, Mike Bartlett's brilliant contemporary work of speculative history blurs the boundaries of truth and tragedy. Queen Elizabeth II is dead. Prince Charles ascends to the throne, but what kind of ruler will he make for this once-united kingdom? Hailed as "fresh, thrilling and fearlessly comic" (Entertainment Weekly), this imaginative glimpse of future history is a theatrical event of crowning achievement.

The Hard Problem

by Tom Stoppard **Directed by Carey Perloff** Oct 19-Nov 13, 2016, at The Geary Theater

"Characteristically sleek, humorous, acute and urbane" The Guardian. London

Tom Stoppard returns to A.C.T. with his first new play in nearly a decade, The Hard Problem, a provocative drama of sex, science, and supercomputing. Razor-sharp psychology grad Hilary wins a prestigious brain research position that forces her to confront her ex-lover (and former mentor) in a fight to defend the soul, altruism, and even God from modern science. This is a compelling conflict of mind versus matter from one of theater's greatest voices.

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Based on the novel by Khaled Hosseini Adapted by Ursula Rani Sarma Original music written and performed by David Coulter Directed by Carey Perloff Feb 1–26, 2017, at The Geary Theater

"Brave, honorable, big-hearted . . . powerfully moving!"—*The Washington Post*

In war-torn Kabul, unmarried and pregnant Laila is forced to marry her older neighbor after her family and home are torn apart. She forges an extraordinary friendship with her husband's first wife, and the two women find the hope and strength to raise a new generation. The world-premiere theatrical adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's best-selling novel is a stunning new production featuring live music from renowned composer and saw player David Coulter.

John

by Annie Baker Directed by Ken Rus Schmoll Feb 22-Apr 23, 2017, at The Strand Theater

"A true masterpiece. Revolutionary!"—*Slate*

A haunting story that took off-Broadway by storm, *John* is the latest hit from American theater's hottest new voice—2014 Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Baker (*The Flick*). Jenny and Elias show up at an old bed-and-breakfast in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. But in the creaking house they find something unsettling. This delicious nerve-jangler with a millennial twist will haunt the intimate Strand Theater.

Needles and Opium

Written and Directed by Robert Lepage Mar 30-Apr 23, 2017, at The Geary Theater

"Super-visionary!"—The New York Times

Jazz legend Miles Davis travels to Europe in 1949 to discover the pleasures of Paris, unlock his creativity, and find his heroine in Juliette Gréco. At the same time, French filmmaker Jean Cocteau embarks on his own opium-fueled journey to New York. In this breathtaking dive into art and exile, renowned director Robert Lepage mounts his set around a vast suspended cube to create a spellbinding mix of stagecraft and storytelling.

Battlefield

Based on *The Mahabharata* and the play by Jean-Claude Carrière Adapted and directed by Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne Apr 26-May 21, 2017, at The Geary Theater

"One of the most influential directors of the last century"—*San Francisco Chronicle*

Following his stunning success with *The Suit*, which played to standing ovations at A.C.T. in 2014, legendary director Peter Brook is back. A newly crowned king surveys a postwar battlefield—his army has won him the crown, but at what price? Written 2,500 years ago, *The Mahabharata*'s magical story of finding tranquillity in the midst of destruction has striking connections to modern times and has inspired some of Brook's most transformative theatrical moments.

Here Lies Love

Concept and lyrics by David Byrne Music by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim Additional music by Tom Gandey and J Pardo Choreographed by Annie-B Parson Directed by Alex Timbers Begins June 2017 at The Geary Theater

"Terrific! It's impossible not to be swept away."-New York Post

From a pretty country girl to the consort of a dictator, Imelda Marcos was the star who came with her own soundtrack. *Here Lies Love* is the visionary musical smash about the infamous Filipina leader who married controversy with karaoke. Created by pop icon David Byrne of Talking Heads and award-winning music producer Fatboy Slim, this is a theatrical event that's going to rock the house, transforming The Geary in a musical theater revolution.



PLEASE NOTE Theaters, artists, and plays are subject to change

To join A.C.T.'s 50th-anniversary season, visit act-sf.org/join or call the A.C.T. box office at 415.749.2228.



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MUSICAL NUMBERS

"STILL HURTING" CATHY "SHIKSA GODDESS" JAMIE "SEE, I'M SMILING" CATHY "MOVING TOO FAST" JAMIE "I'M A PART OF THAT" CATHY "THE SCHMUEL SONG" JAMIE "A SUMMER IN OHIO" CATHY "THE NEXT TEN MINUTES" JAMIE & CATHY "A MIRACLE WOULD HAPPEN" JAMIE "CLIMBING UPHILL" CATHY "IF I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN YOU" JAMIE "I CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT" CATHY "NOBODY NEEDS TO KNOW" JAMIE "GOODBYE UNTIL TOMORROW/I COULD NEVER RESCUE YOU" JAMIE & CATHY







CAREY PERLOFF, Artistic Director

PRESENTS



WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY JASON ROBERT BROWN DIRECTED BY MICHAEL BERRESSE

MUSIC DIRECTION BY MATT CASTLE DESIGNER

ASSOCIATE LIGHTING PAUL HACKENMUELLER

CAST

JAMIE WELLERSTEIN ZAK RESNICK* CATHY HIATT MARGO SEIBERT*

UNDERSTUDIES

JAMIE JEFFREY BRIAN ADAMS* CATHY KELSEY VENTER*

MUSICIANS

PIANO	MATT CASTLE
VIOLIN	DEBORAH PRICE
CELLO 1	JESSICA IVRY
CELLO 2	KELLEY MAULBETSCH
GUITAR	SCHUYLER MCFADDEN
BASS	DEWAYNE PATE
TRACTOR	KEVIN PORTER

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STAGE MANAGER MEGAN Q. SADA* ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER CHRISTINA LARSON* STAGE MANAGEMENT AJ GARDNER AND

CON

FELLOWS LAUREN PEKEL

ORIGINALLY PRODUCED FOR THE NEW YORK STAGE BY ARIELLE TEPPER AND MARTY BELL

ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY NORTHLIGHT THEATRE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Last Five Years is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.

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PLAYING WITH TIME

An Interview with Jason Robert Brown

BY | SIMON HODGSON

Sneddo

Photo by Kurt

The Last Five Years nearly didn't happen. In 1999, Jason Robert Brown was on the verge of guitting show business after his show Parade closed on Broadway with underwhelming box office returns. Then his phone rang with a commission from Lincoln Center Theater. Brown started to explain what he'd been thinking about-a two-person musical, one guy, one girl. As he talked, the structure started to crystallize in his mind. Two lovers would tell parallel stories, but whereas his story would be told from first kiss to breakup, her story would run the opposite way. The resulting score wowed audiences when it premiered in Skokie, Illinois, at Northlight Theatre in 2001, and over the last 15 years it has become a sleeper hit, continuing to win fans in dozens of regional productions and earning a feature-film adaptation (starring Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan) in 2014. We caught up with Brown to talk musicals, marriage, and why he's tough on the Midwest.

Why do you think The Last Five Years has endured?

The Last Five Years was, in a lot of ways, an experiment in rigor. There are rules of composition and dramaturgy that I set out as a challenge to myself at the beginning of the piece, and I insisted on applying them throughout the creation of the show. That rigor extends beyond the formal issues and into the characters' emotional lives. I forced myself to be honest about who Jamie and Cathy were and how they would react. The end result is two very full characters, two people who are filled with recognizable complexity, even though we only see them in short snippets of time. Ultimately, I think it's that complexity that has kept the characters compelling and interesting.

What's your process in framing the storytelling through song?

I think of theater music like costumes-the minute a character puts on the music, it should help define that character. Jamie and Cathy are twentysomethings living in 1990s New York City, and that information guides my musical choices. Cathy is an actress, so her music is a little more showbizzy and extroverted, while Jamie is a writer, so his music is more nerdy and complicated. Much of the show is about how their different ethnic and financial backgrounds affect their relationship, and that's built into the music as well-Cathy's Celtic roots peek through the texture of many of her songs, and Jamie's Jewish DNA is coded into several of his pieces. Of course, there's also enough overlap in their respective sounds to make them believe that they belong together.

What was your thinking behind the reversed storytelling structure?

My main instinct was to write something for two singers alternating solo songs. I decided early on to have it be a love story, and once I decided that, I was stuck for how to tell the story, until I realized that if I had one character tell the story in reverse while the other told it chronologically, that would keep it more interesting than if I had them both moving in the same direction. When I made that decision I had no idea how much it would bring to the narrative; I'm very grateful for that particular flash of inspiration. I'm surely indebted to *Merrily We Roll Along* (always one of my favorite musicals) and to Tom Stoppard, whose work often plays with time in emotionally resonant ways.

Have your personal feelings about the themes in *The Last Five Years* changed since it premiered in 2001?

Oh, sure. I used to think of Jamie and Cathy as my contemporaries, my friends, and I really ached for them and feared for their futures. Now I have an avuncular response: "Oh, you poor kids, I know it sucks being in your twenties, but you'll see it all works out fine." I spent my twenties in an unhappy marriage, climbing frantically up a very slippery ladder to success. In my forties, I've got a wonderful family with beautiful children, a thriving if complicated career, and the general sense that the key to making your life work has something to do with perseverance and endurance.

How is American musical theater evolving?

It feels like it's branching off in (at least) two different directions. There is the very corporate "entertainment"—musicals painted in broad strokes and designed to appeal to the widest possible audience, such as *Aladdin* and *Finding Neverland*. Then there's the very personal and cheerfully idiosyncratic approach, which brings us work like *Fun Home* and *Hamilton*. I don't care a whole lot about the first branch, but that second branch is very exciting, and that's the kind of work I've been trying to do all along.

From the song lyrics, it seems like you have a soft spot for New York in *The Last Five Years*, but what do you have against Ohio?

You know, I pick on the Midwest in *The Last Five Years* and *13*, but I hope I make up for it with *The Bridges of Madison County*!

THE LAST 45 YEARS

Jason Robert Brown through the Years

BY | BRAD AMOROSINO AND SIMON HODGSON

In its 1995 review of *Songs for a New World, Variety* described composer Jason Robert Brown as "a promise waiting to happen." Nearly two decades later, he is a pillar of American musical theater who has won three Tony Awards and has seen five of his shows open on Broadway. As Brown approaches his 46th birthday, we take a look at the musical storyteller's journey.



1970

Jason Robert Brown was born in Tarrytown, a couple hours north of New York City. He grew up in the small town of Ossining, New York; his mom was an English teacher and his dad worked in the bathroom fixture business.

1977

At the age of seven, Brown asked for a piano, so his parents schlepped an old one out of his grandfather's basement. "It instantly occurred to me that I could write songs on it," Brown said. "At some point, I became a composer, but I'm not sure when or how."

1995

The young composer's first song cycle, *Songs for a New World*, premiered off Broadway. While developing the show, he was introduced to legendary Broadway director and producer Hal Prince (*Damn Yankees, Cabaret, Evita*). The connection led to a job as the rehearsal pianist on Prince's *Kiss of the Spider Woman*.

1998

Brown stepped in to replace Stephen Sondheim as the composer for *Parade*, a musical directed by Hal Prince and based on the tragic story of a Jewish businessman lynched in Georgia in 1913. The show's intense subject matter wowed audiences, and Brown earned his first Tony Award, for Best Score.

2001

Inspired by his own highs and lows in love, Brown's twoperson musical, *The Last Five Years*, opened at Northlight Theatre outside Chicago before transferring to off Broadway. The show's tender, bittersweet tone would attract audiences in regional productions nationwide as well as inspire a featurefilm adaptation in 2014.

2014

Brown won a new generation of fans with the Broadway premiere of *The Bridges of Madison County.* Based on the best-selling tearjerker about an Italian-American housewife falling for a rugged *National Geographic* photographer, this Midwestern romance won Tony Awards for Best Original Score and Best Orchestrations.

SONGS FOR THE FUTURE

In shows such as *The Bridges of Madison County, Parade*, and *The Last Five Years*, Jason Robert Brown has written some of musical theater's most original work. And it isn't just audiences who love his range and his ear for contemporary rhythm. Thousands of young actors who have studied musical theater since 2000 have grown up with Brown's songs—no wonder the *Huffington Post* calls them "the Jason Robert Brown generation."



E

Michael Berresse came to A.C.T. while performing in the national tour of *The Normal Heart* in 2012, and he is delighted to return to the Bay Area—this time as an accomplished director. "Looking back on my directorial career," says Berresse, "I see that a number of the shows I've worked on have had complicated or nonlinear structures. I suppose there's something about the puzzle of them and the way my own mind works that draws me to that kind of material." Some of the works Berresse has puzzled over include *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the original Broadway production of *[title of show]*, and *Now. Here. This.*, the last of which follows a group of friends on a tour of a natural history museum where the exhibits inspire a time-travel adventure.

With its unique structure in which one character's story is told from end to beginning, and the other's from beginning to end, *The Last Five Years* has been another puzzle for the director to solve. We sat down with Berresse to talk about the challenges and the joys of directing *The Last Five Years*.

What's it like being both an actor and a director?

My experience with and empathy for the whole process of acting informs many things about the way I direct. For example, when I start a new project, my experience with acting helps me imagine how it might feel to speak the words or live the circumstances before I start exploring how to tell the story from the outside. That gives me a strong emotional base, and it also helps me develop an external point of view in practical ways, like figuring out how the rhythm of the language or music translates into design or how the emotional content translates into staging.

What personal stamp will you put on this production?

I believe that, regardless of how a love affair plays out, the risk is as important and as powerful as the outcome. Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, as the adage goes. I hope to show a little nod toward the future in the arc of Cathy and Jamie's relationship, a moment of perspective at the end of the play that's not necessarily written in the text. We often get stuck in the hurt of things and miss the opportunity for gratitude and growth. It helps that these characters are very complex, flexible portraits and that we have such gifted actors.

Why is Jason Robert Brown's work so loved and enduring?

I had the extraordinary experience of working with Jason while appearing in a production of *Parade* at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. I will never forget the day he sat down at the piano in the rehearsal room and started playing his own music for us. He stopped being the composer, the lyricist, the pianist, and he started being the music. When I hear his music now, I see him and feel him playing it. He puts his whole soul into his work. I think the listener can feel that instinctively.

What are the challenges of directing this show?

In addition to the unconventional timeline, this show is unique in that there's very little interaction between the two characters. Although Jamie and Cathy share the stage at various times, there are only a few moments when they actually sing together. The bulk of the show is performed without a scene partner, which is very atypical for a musical. That presentational quality is a challenge in the staging and the design, but, on the flip side, it creates an intimate, almost confidential, relationship between the audience and the actors. The lack of busy-ness helps focus the attention on the lyrics and the emotional journey of the characters.

1 SEE THIS SHOW AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECONSIDER THE WAYS **WE PERCEIVE OUR OWN ADVENTURES** IN LOVE, WHAT WE LABEL AS **GOOD**, **BAD**, **GENEROUS**, **SELFISH**, **A SUCCESS**, **A FAILURE**.

-DIRECTOR MICHAEL BERRESSE

What do you want audiences to take away from this show?

I see this show as an opportunity to reconsider the ways we perceive our own adventures in love, what we label as good, bad, generous, selfish, a success, a failure. I hope people leave *The Last Five Years* feeling that the risk is as rewarding as the outcome. There is both great joy and great heartbreak in Cathy and Jamie's story, but, for me, *The Last Five Years* is an opportunity to say, at the end of the day, how lucky we are to find each other at all, to invest in and care about and love one another. If you're feeling, you're alive.

WORDS ON PLAYS



Want to know more about The Last Five Years? 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. Each purchase of Words on Plays directly supports A.C.T.'s educational programs.

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WHO'S Who

in THE LAST FIVE YEARS



ZAK RESNICK*

(Jamie) makes his A.C.T. debut with *The Last Five Years*. Broadway credits include *Mamma Mia!* (Sky). Off-Broadway credits include

Piece of My Heart: The Bert Berns Story (Bert), directed by Denis Jones; Once Upon a Mattress (Sir Harry), directed by Jack Cummings III for Transport Group; and Disaster! (Chad), directed by Denis Jones. Television credits include Lovestruck for ABC Family. Select workshops include Benny & Joon (Sam) for Transport Group; Irma la Douce with Katie Holmes, directed by Rob Ashford; Lempicka (Tadeusz) for Yale Repertory Theatre; Brave New World (John), directed by Sheryl Kaller; The Blue Flower for Second Stage Theatre; Bare: A Pop Opera (Jason), directed by Stafford Arima; and *Dogfight* (Fector) for Lincoln Center Theater. Original album credits include Jonathan Reid Gealt's Thirteen Stories Down; Scott Alan's What I Wanna Be When I Grow Up: Joev Contreras's Love Me. Love Me Not and Young Kind of Love; and Alexander Sage Oyen's Moment by Moment. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, where he received his B.F.A. in drama, and was an acting student at the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney, Australia.



MARGO SEIBERT*

(Cathy) makes her A.C.T. debut with *The Last Five Years*. Her Broadway credits include *Rocky*. Off-Broadway credits

include roles in The Undeniable Sound of Right Now at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and Women's Project Theater, Tamar of the River at Prospect Theater Company (Drama Desk Award nomination), and Saturday Night at The York Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include roles in Ever After at Paper Mill Playhouse; Candide at Goodman Theatre and Shakespeare Theatre Company; In This House and Anne Washburn's Orestes: A Tragic Romp at Two River Theater; Arcadia at Folger Theatre; The Boy Detective Fails at Signature Theatre in Virginia; and Next to Normal and Pregnancy Pact at the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company. Television credits include Boardwalk Empire and Elementary.



JEFFREY BRIAN ADAMS*

(Understudy) has many credits on the West Coast, including San Francisco Playhouse productions of

Dogfight (Birdlace), the Theatre Bay Area Award-nominated *Promises*, *Promises* (Chuck) and Into the Woods (Prince); Death of a Salesman (Happy) and The Addams Family (Lucas) at San Jose Stage Company; and Hair (Claude) at Bay Area Musicals. New York City credits include Happily After Ever (Darren) at 59E59 Theaters. Women and Wallace (Wallace) at Theatre Row, the New York International Fringe Festival world premiere of Animals (Drew), and a reading with Nathan Lane in association with Naked Angels. Adams holds his M.F.A. from The New School for Drama in New York City, where he was named the James Love Scholar. He can be seen next in City of Angels at San Francisco Playhouse.



KELSEY VENTER* (Understudy)

was most recently seen by Bay Area audiences in *Monstress* at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater.

Other A.C.T. credits include Love and Information; Mr. Burns, a post-electric play (coproduction with the Guthrie Theater): 'Tis Pitv She's a Whore: and A Christmas Carol. Select regional credits include four seasons of Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! at The Old Globe: The Miracle Worker, Les Misérables (San Diego Critic's Circle Award for Best Supporting Actress), The 39 Steps, Trying, and Guys and Dolls at Lamb's Players Theatre; I Love You Because at North Coast Repertory Theatre; *Timepiece* at The Active Theater; Oliver! at Woodminster Amphitheater; She Loves Me and Boeing-Boeing at Center REPertory Company; and The Threepenny Opera and A Seagull in the Hamptons with Shotgun Players. Venter earned her B.A. in theater from San Diego State University and her M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.

JASON ROBERT BROWN

(Playwright and Composer) is a Tony Award-winning composer, lyricist, conductor, arranger, orchestrator, director, and performer. His major musicals as composer and lyricist include Honeymoon in Vegas (Drama Desk Award nominations for Outstanding Lyrics and Outstanding Music), The Bridges of Madison County (Tony Award for Best Score), 13 (Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Lyrics). The Last Five Years (Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Music and Outstanding Lyrics), Parade (Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Musical; Tony Awards for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score), and Songs for a New World. His orchestral adaptation of E. B. White's novel The Trumpet of the Swan premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with the National

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

Symphony Orchestra. As a soloist or with his band, The Caucasian Rhythm Kings, Brown has performed concerts around the world. His first solo album, *Wearing Someone Else's Clothes*, was named one of Amazon.com's Best of 2005. Brown was on the faculty of the University of Southern California School of Dramatic Arts for nine years, and was the Blodgett Artist-in-Residence at Harvard University in 2014. Brown is a member of the Dramatists Guild and the American Federation of Musicians Local 802 and 47.

MICHAEL BERRESSE (Director)

is a Tony Award-nominated actor and OBIE Award-winning director. His directorial credits include Peter and the Starcatcher, Next to Normal, Round and Round the Garden, and the world premieres Now. Here. This., Analog and Vinyl, and [title of show] (on and off Broadway; OBIE Award, Lucille Lortel Award nomination). On Broadway, his performance credits include A Chorus Line; Kiss Me, Kate (Tony, Outer Critics Circle, and Fred and Adele Astaire award nominations); The Light in the Piazza (Outer Critics Circle Award nomination); Carousel; Chicago; The Gershwins' Fascinating Rhythm; Damn Yankees; Guys and Dolls; and Fiddler on the Roof. London credits include Kiss Me, Kate (Olivier Award nomination). Select regional appearances include The Normal Heart (A.C.T., Arena Stage), Parade (Mark Taper Forum), Can-Can (Paper Mill Playhouse), The Dybbuk (Great Lakes Theater Festival), A Majority of One, and West Side Story. Film and television credits include State of Play, The Bourne Legacy, A.I. Artificial Intelligence, Meet Dave, The Knick, The Good Wife, Law & Order, Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. Law & Order: Criminal Intent. Crossbones, and Person of Interest.

MATT CASTLE (Music Director)

has played, acted in, directed, or developed more than 80 new musicals at Sundance Institute, New York University, Playwrights Horizons, the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Signature Theatre Company in New York City, Signature Theatre in Virginia, Goodspeed Musicals, The York Theatre Company, Barrington Stage Company, the New York Musical Festival, and Collaborative Arts Project 21. With Frank Galgano, he arranged and orchestrated the songs for *Litter*, performed at A.C.T. in 2011. Some other highlights include *Into the Woods* (Fiasco Theater, McCarter Theatre, The Old Globe, Roundabout Theatre Company, and an upcoming NETworks Presentations tour), *Once Upon a Mattress* (Transport Group), *Found* (Atlantic Theater Company), *A Dog Story* (Waterfront Playhouse), *A* Little Princess (Sacramento Theatre Company), and the upcoming Chick Flick the Musical. With Frank Galgano, he orchestrated numbers performed at Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall, Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, 54 Below, Broadway Cares, and Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. As an actor/ musician, Castle played Peter in the 2007 Broadway revival of Company and appeared in the original off-Broadway casts of Musical of Musicals, Enter Laughing, and Lingoland.



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The Main Theate

For more information about any of our spaces or to schedule a tour, please contact A.C.T. Associate General Manager, Operations, Amy Hand at **ahand@act-sf.org**.

TIM MACKABEE (Scenic Designer)

makes his A.C.T. debut with The Last Five Years. His Broadway credits include The Elephant Man (also on the West End, starring Bradley Cooper), and Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth (directed by Spike Lee). Off-Broadway credits include Heathers at New World Stages; Gigantic at Vineyard Theatre; Luce at Lincoln Center Theater; Much Ado about Nothing at The Public Theater; Guards at the Tai and Our New Girl at Atlantic Theater Company; and Important Hats of the Twentieth Century and Vietgone at Manhattan Theatre Club. Regional credits include The Old Globe, South Coast Repertory, Denver Center Theatre Company, Center Stage in Baltimore, Ford's Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Syracuse Stage, Cleveland Play House, Yale Repertory Theatre, Philadelphia Theater Company, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Studio Theatre, Paper Mill Playhouse, Geva Theatre Center, The Muny, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Barrington Stage Company, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Film and television credits include Amy Schumer: Live at the Apollo (directed by Chris Rock), Gotham, Smash, The Today Show, and Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and Yale School of Drama.

CALLIE FLOOR (Costume Designer)

earned her B.F.A. from the University of Utah and her higher diploma in theater design from the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. Since coming to the Bay Area in 1987, she has designed for many theaters, including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, San Francisco Mime Troupe, California Shakespeare Theater, Zaccho Dance Theatre, Word for Word, and Theatre of Yugen. Recent projects include *The Heir Apparent* for Aurora Theatre Company and *The Invisible Hand* for Marin Theatre Company.

ROBERT WIERZEL (Lighting

Designer) has designed several productions at A.C.T., including *The Realistic Joneses; Ah, Wilderness!; 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*. Wierzel has designed productions with opera companies in New York, Paris, Tokyo, Norway, Toronto, Boston, Seattle, San Diego, Houston, Dallas, Virginia, Florida, Atlanta, Chicago, and Washington, DC, as well as numerous productions with The Glimmerglass Festival. Broadway productions include Lady Dav at Emerson's Bar & Grill, starring Audra McDonald; the musical Fela! (Tony Award nomination); and David Copperfield's Broadway debut, Dreams and Nightmares. Other New York City credits include productions at New York Shakespeare Festival (NYSF)/The Public Theater, Signature Theatre Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, Lincoln Center Theater, and Brooklyn Academy of Music. Wierzel's extensive dance work includes 31 years with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. In addition, Wierzel has designed at many major regional theater companies across the country. Upcoming projects include the NYSF/ Public Theater Free Shakespeare in the Park productions of *Taming of the Shrew*, directed by Phyllida Lloyd, and Troilus and Cressida, directed by Daniel Sullivan.

KAI HARADA (Sound Designer)

has many Broadway design credits, including Allegiance, Gigi, Fun Home, On the Town, First Date, Follies (Tony and Drama Desk award nominations), and *Million Dollar Quartet*. Other work includes Amélie (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *Beaches* (Drury Lane Theatre); Brooklynite (Vineyard Theatre); Little Dancer and First You Dream (John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts); Zorro (Moscow's MDM Palace Theatre and Atlanta's Alliance Theatre); Hinterm Horizont (Stage Theater am Potsdamer Platz); The Pirates of Penzance (Portland Opera); Head Over Heels and She Loves Me (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Rent (The 5th Avenue Theatre); and Barbie Live! He worked with Tony Meola as an associate designer for A Christmas Carol; Disney's Der Glöckner

von Notre Dame; Kiss Me, Kate; and Wicked. He was an audio consultant for Hedwig and the Angry Inch on Broadway. He attended Yale University.

JANET FOSTER, CSA (Casting

Director) joined A.C.T. as the casting director in the 2011-12 season. On Broadway she cast The Light in the Piazza (Artios Award nomination), Lennon, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, and Taking Sides (co-cast), Off-Broadway credits include Lucy, Brundibar, True Love, Endpapers, The Dying Gaul, The Maiden's Prayer, The Trojan Women: A Love Story, Floyd Collins, The Monogamist, A Cheever Evening, Later *Life*, and many more at Playwrights Horizons. Regionally, she has worked at Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Yale Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, The Old Globe, Center Stage in Baltimore, Westport Country Playhouse, and the American Repertory Theater. Film, television, and radio credits include Cosby (CBS), Tracey Takes On New York (HBO). Lewis Black's The Deal, Advice from a Caterpillar, The Day That Lehman Died (BBC World Service and Blackhawk Productions; Peabody, SONY, and Wincott awards), and "T" Is for Tom (Tom Stoppard radio plays, WNYC and WQXR).

MEGAN Q. SADA* (Stage Manager)

has worked on A.C.T.'s The Realistic Joneses; Ah, Wilderness!; Mr. Burns, a post-electric play (a coproduction with the Guthrie Theater); Testament; Napoli!; Underneath the Lintel; Arcadia; Dead Metaphor; Elektra; Endgame and Play; Once in a Lifetime: Clvbourne Park: Round and Round the Garden; and A Christmas Carol. Other theater credits include Magic Theatre's The Other Place; 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, and ODC's

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The Velveteen Rabbit. Sada graduated with a B.F.A. in theater from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

CHRISTINA LARSON* (Assistant

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

SARAH AND TONY EARLEY

(Executive Producers) were executive producers for A.C.T.'s *Major Barbara* and *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play.* Sarah is the founder and chair of the Belle Isle Conservancy. Belle Isle is the nation's largest island park and sits on 982 acres in the Detroit River. She also serves on the boards of the City Parks Alliance and the San Francisco Botanical Garden. Sarah has a keen interest in education and has served on the board of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, as well as

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the board of the University of Detroit Jesuit High School. She is a partner in Cornerstone Schools, an inner-city school network in Detroit that excels in providing quality education for grades K-8. Sarah has a B.A. from Saint Mary's College, an M.B.A. from San Diego State University, and an associate's degree in landscape design from Oakland Community College. Tony has been CEO of PG&E since 2011. Prior to that, he was CEO of DTE Energy in Michigan. He is on the boards of the Exploratorium and United Way of the Bay Area. He has also been an active advocate of educational issues as a board member of Cornerstone Schools and the College of Engineering Advisory Council at the University of Notre Dame. Tony holds a B.S. in physics, an M.S. in engineering, and a J.D., all from Notre Dame.

CELESTE AND KEVIN FORD

(Executive Producers) moved to the Bay Area in 1978 and purchased A.C.T. season tickets to support and watch two classmates from the University of Notre Dame who were enrolled in the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program. The Fords have not missed a production at A.C.T. since. Celeste is the CEO and founder of Stellar Solutions, an aerospace engineering services business, and Kevin is the CFO. Stellar Solutions just celebrated its twenty-first anniversary and has received numerous accolades, including the prestigious Fortune magazine Great Place to Work award. The company's engineers work on a variety of satellite projects, including the science mission to Mars, commercial communication satellites, and defense and intelligence satellites. Celeste and Kevin have three grown children who join them at A.C.T. productions whenever they are available. Celeste, who was an engineer by day and actress by night in college, currently serves on the A.C.T. Board of Trustees.

JOHN LITTLE AND HEATHER STALLINGS LITTLE (Executive

Producers) recently produced *Indian Ink, Venus in Fur,* and *Endgame* and *Play* at A.C.T. Heather is a CPA-turned-writer who worked in investment banking and as the chief financial officer of a company that manages the affairs of professional athletes. A frequent adventure traveler, she writes travel stories as well as fiction and "Travels with My Crazy Husband" on her *Posts from the Silicon Valley Outback* blog. She is the author of *Click City* (the fiction serial seen in the *San Francisco Chronicle*) and the novel *False Alarm*. Her short fiction has appeared in *ZYZZYVA*. Heather joined the A.C.T. Board of Trustees in 2011. John previously served on the Asian Art Museum Board of Trustees. He is an entrepreneur and inventor and enjoys adventure travel, skiing, tennis, and photography.

MARY AND STEVEN SWIG

(Executive Producers) have supported A.C.T. and attended productions since the company's arrival in San Francisco. Steven has served as an A.C.T. trustee since 1986 and is the cofounder and president emeritus of Presidio Graduate School. Mary and Steven serve together on the boards of the Solar Electric Light Fund and the Americans for Cures Foundation (stem cells), and they are fellows in the Advanced Leadership Initiative at Harvard University. They have co-founded and are co-chairs of the National Student Debt Jubilee Project. Mary is also on the Women's Leadership Board of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. At A.C.T., Steven and Mary have recently produced No Exit, Phèdre, Curse of the Starving Class, and Hedda Gabler.

OPPOSITE

Top row (left to right): Jeff McCarthy, Ed Hastings, and Barbara Dirickson in *Buried Child*, 1994 (photo by William Ganslen); Nicholas Pelczar and Nick Gabriel in *Arcadia*, 2013 (photo by Kevin Berne); Ann Weldon and Ray Reinhardt in *The Rose Tattoo*, 1970 (photo by Hank Kranzler); Bill Irwin in *Fool Moon*, 1998 (photo by Ken Friedman).

Middle row (left to right): Firdous Bamji in Indian Ink, 2014 (photo by Kevin Berne); Lise Bruneau and Garret Dillahunt in Angels in America, 1994 (photo by Ken Friedman); Anthony Fusco, Mattea Fountain, and Nicholas Pelczar in A Christmas Carol, 2014 (photo by Kevin Berne); Olympia Dukakis as the tragic queen Hecuba, 1995 (photo by Ken Friedman).

Bottom row (left to right): Fredi Olster and Anthony S. Teague in *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1975 (photographer unknown); Gregory Wallace, Steven Anthony Jones, and Jonathan Sanders in *"Master Harold"*... and the boys, 2001 (photo by Kevin Berne); Patrick Tovatt and Michael Learned in *Tartuffe*, 1968 (photo by Ganslen Studios); BD Wong in *The Orphan of Zhao*, 2014 (photo by Kevin Berne).







A.C.T.'S 50th Anniversary Season

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SUMMERFUN AT STUDIO A.C.T.

Working Hard, Playing Harder

BY | NICK GABRIEL

INSIDE A.C.T.







FOR SOME OF US, NOTHING SURPASSES THE JOYS OF

belting out show tunes in the shower, producing funny Vines featuring unwitting family members, or recreating scenes from *Modern Family* with our best friends. Studio A.C.T. gets it.

Many ambitious performers commit years of their lives to refining their skills, even after they've acquired professional experience. Studio A.C.T. is where they go to continue training. But it's also a place where hopeful performers with no prior experience go to study theater for the very first time. Complete novices study alongside career artists in a fun, supportive atmosphere that inspires lifelong friendships. In short, Studio A.C.T. offers world-class theater training to anyone and everyone.

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All Studio A.C.T. courses teach skills that have value extending beyond the stage. For example, students learn to collaborate, to speak clearly and audibly, and to be more comfortable in their bodies. All of these skills work in harmony to build a student's confidence.

However, Studio A.C.T. isn't just about developing skills that can be applied to everyday situations. It's largely about having fun. Students spend many joyful hours playing games and getting in touch with their inner kid. The more we can stimulate our students' imaginations, the more successful they'll be as artists. Sometimes hard work calls for serious playtime, and we don't shy away from that. And what could be more fulfilling than building friendships with folks from all walks of life who happen to be passionate about theater? Studio A.C.T. is an inclusive community in which having fun and making personal connections is just as important as learning theater skills. Studio A.C.T. provides an exciting creative outlet like no other. Wonderful adventures happen in our classrooms every day.

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UP NEXT IN THE CONSERVATORY



Photo by Kevin Berne

THROUGH THE YEARS WITH JASON ROBERT BROWN

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INSIDE A.C.T.

POWER PLAY

A Sneak Peek at Mike Bartlett's King Charles III, coming to The Geary September 14, 2016

BY | SHANNON STOCKWELL

IMAGINING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF BRITAIN'S PRINCE

Charles became king, Mike Bartlett's ingenious *King Charles III* looks both backward and forward. It envisions a potential royal power struggle with contemporary figures while also echoing the past with the soaring rhythmic meter of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. This futuristic yet historic exploration makes this Olivier Award-winning production the perfect opener in September to A.C.T.'s 50th season, in which we honor our own past while looking forward to our next act.

King Charles III opens with the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. As the country mourns, Charles assumes his destined role as king. But his very first action causes uproar when, instead of adding the monarch's traditional signature to a bill passed by Parliament, he refuses to sign. With politicians from all sides lining up against him, Charles questions what power the King truly has. As the constitutional crisis deepens between Charles and Parliament, the country descends into protest and chaos. Meanwhile, in Buckingham Palace, Prince Harry falls in love with anti-monarchist Jess, and Princess Kate unveils her own ambitions for the throne.

This epic political thriller started as a single idea in the brain of Bartlett, a rising British playwright. Originally, he envisaged Charles refusing to sign a bill immediately after becoming king, but the notion needed a structure to support it. Bartlett explains, "It only became a play when I thought, well, wait—[Charles] should be a Shakespearean tragic hero and the form of the play should be a Shakespeare play."

The Shakespearean roots show throughout the play. Nearly the entire show is written in blank-verse iambic pentameter, complete with subtle rhyming couplets and lofty metaphors. The structure is Shakespearean as well, with five acts and interweaving storylines. But most of all, the characters take their cue from the Bard. King Charles has echoes of old Lear, betrayed by his family. Harry follows in the footsteps of the wastrel Prince Hal, disregarding his royal



DIRECTOR DAVID MUSE

duties. Kate is a modern-day Lady Macbeth, power hungry, ambitiously encouraging her husband, William, to be a man. William, meanwhile, mirrors Hamlet in his indecision to take a stand against his father's destructive actions.

"King Charles III is a splendid play: witty, wise, intellectually and emotionally gripping, and ambitious," says director David Muse, who spent the early part of his career immersed in Shakespeare and describes himself as one of the most ardent fans of Bartlett in this country. "Like a great play by Shakespeare, it imagines a particular (and fascinating) moment of crisis for the British monarchy, but its treatment of politics, celebrity, and tradition is astute and far-reaching."

"What I found most exciting about the play was . . . the way it refreshes our idea of what is Shakespearean," says *Vulture* reviewer Jesse Green. "It reminds us that all those Lears and Macbeths and Hals and Hamlets were addressing the same issues that face us today: the meaning of leadership, the trade-offs of service, the glamour of ambition, the tragedy of doubt." At a time when America is going through its own succession story, it is a rare pleasure to be reminded of what we suspected all along: politics is theater.



INSIDE A.C.T.

A STONE IN THE POND

Nurturing Citizen Artists BY | SHANNON STOCKWELL

THE SEEDS OF THE CITIZEN ARTIST CURRICULUM WERE

planted when the Education & Community Programs Department was formed five years ago and launched a partnership with Downtown High School (DHS), a continuation high school for students who have not experienced success in traditional public schools. "The DHS students were in the halls of A.C.T., literally running into our M.F.A. Program actors," says Conservatory Director Melissa Smith. "As soon as they met each other, they were asking to be in a room together. I knew it would be empowering for the actors to have the opportunity to mentor these students."

Education & Community Programs Director Elizabeth Brodersen agreed. She also knew it was invaluable to give M.F.A. Program actors teaching and community-building skills—many A.C.T. graduates go on to teach because they are so passionate about sharing the power of theater with others. Soon, M.F.A. Program actors were helping with many of A.C.T.'s school and community programs.

The partnership between the M.F.A. Program actors and participants in the school and community programs was powerful. Community members and students learned theater skills from a diverse cohort of passionate, talented young artists, who in turn found inspiration and new artistic depths in the stories, knowledge, and bravery of the students and community members with whom they worked.

Meanwhile, the newly formed Education & Community Programs Department looked for models on which to base their mission. They found El Sistema, a Venezuelan method of arts education that believes an educator plays four roles: they are *citizen artist teacher scholars*. Inspired by a program at Boston University, A.C.T. gravitated toward the first two words: *citizen artist*. "For A.C.T., a citizen artist is an actor who is also prepared to be a socially engaged citizen of the world, who has the tools to help make positive change in the communities in which he or she ends up," says Brodersen.

Because the collaboration between the Education & Community Programs Department and the M.F.A. Program was so fruitful, the citizen artist curriculum was established, making social engagement a fundamental part of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program. This year, citizen artistry was officially incorporated into the accredited M.F.A. curriculum: each student is required to take 16 hours of training, encompassing class work in cultural competency, lesson planning, and participatory theater



based community organization that serves low-income, young immigrant women and women of color "on the edge of risk." Photo by Haley Seppa.

techniques. In addition, each student is required to complete 22 hours of work with the community; if they complete 30 additional hours, they will graduate with a concentration in citizen artistry.

Second-year M.F.A. actor Narea Kang, who recently completed the weeklong training, explains, "A citizen artist is a *responsible* artist. As actors, we play such a big role in representing communities and individuals when we tell their stories onstage. We need to take the time and effort and care to treat their stories with dignity and respect."

The new curriculum is a lot of work, but for the M.F.A. Program actors, it's worth every minute. "Expanding my listening skills and my compassion only helps my connection with my fellow students when we're performing onstage together," says secondyear actor Alexa Erbach. Her classmate Diana Gonzalez-Morett agrees, and adds, "Witnessing the resilience and love in my community has inspired me to be vulnerable and take more risks in the roles I play."

"Being an actor, being onstage, having an audience, are privileges that not everybody gets," says second-year actor Julie



<image>

Adamo. "The citizen artist curriculum has made me aware of my responsibility in that position of privilege to tell stories of all kinds and to include people of all types, because those stories matter."

The new curriculum is great for the M.F.A. Program actors as students, but the effect goes deeper than that. Citizen artistry has a profound impact on the art of theater in general. By reaching out and working with communities that aren't traditionally represented onstage, the program transforms the definition of theater itself. "We are challenging the notion of who theater is for," says School & Community Programs Coordinator Alec MacPherson. "We believe it is for everyone, for all ages, for all socioeconomic demographics, for every race and creed."

By engaging actors with the world in which they live, A.C.T.'s citizen artist curriculum is making a difference. "The M.F.A. Program actors get to help create theater with and about the people in the community, and the people in the community come and see this theater, and because of that, they come and see more theater," says Erbach. "It's a ripple effect. You throw a stone in the pond, the ripple expands, and those ripples grow into powerful waves."



LOOKING BACK

The Strand's First Year BY | CECILIA PADILLA Can you believe that it's only been a year since we opened The Strand Theater? So many things have happened there in these past 12 months that it feels like 1127 Market Street has been A.C.T.'s home for much longer. In the past year, we have produced three subscription shows-Love and Information, Monstress, and The Unfortunates. We've hosted local arts organizations such as Kearny Street Workshop and the Posse Foundation for free as part of our Community Space-Sharing Initiative. Google has used the space as a gathering spot. The Strand Cafe has served countless passersby delicious Artís coffee. The performance spaces have seen Young Conservatory shows I'm Still Standing, Punk Rock, and Snakes (a collaboration with A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs and Oakland's Destiny Arts Center) and M.F.A. Program shows such as The Big Meal and The Rocky Horror Show. The New Strands Festival activated every corner of The Strand with myriad forms of new and developing art. And that's only the beginning. A.C.T. is thankful to you, our patrons, who have made our first year at The Strand such a success. We can't wait to see you back there next spring for Annie Baker's John!

BELOW

Mayor of San Francisco Ed Lee and A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff celebrate the opening of The Strand Theater in May 2015.



BELOW

Joel Bernard (left) and Dominique Salerno perform in The Strand's inaugural mainstage production, *Love and Information*, by Caryl Churchill.



BELOW

Students from Bessie Carmichael Elementary School perform on the stage of The Strand.







ABOVE Patrons mingle in The Strand's lobby and cafe.



ABOVE

Students from the Young Conservatory perform *I'm Still Standing*, a musical featuring the songs of Elton John.

ABOVE

Koko (Eddie Lopez) offers Big Joe a chance to change his fate in *The Unfortunates*.

Photo Credits

Top: Katelyn Tucker (Orange Photography), Kevin Berne, Billy Cole (Orange Photography) Middle: Kevin Berne Bottom: Katelyn Tucker (Orange Photography), Jay Yamada Opposite: Bruce Damonte



THE OPENING OF THE STRAND WAS THE CULMINATION OF A LONG-HELD DREAM AND A LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT OF A.C.T.'S 50 YEARS. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT. TO DATE, WE HAVE RAISED \$33.4 MILLION OF OUR \$34 MILLION FUNDRAISING GOAL.



THERE ARE STILL MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT THE STRAND AND BRING US CLOSER TO OUR GOAL. WE HOPE YOU WILL CONSIDER A GIFT TO THE STRAND IN CELEBRATION OF ITS ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY. For information on how you can support The Strand, please contact:

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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 directed *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 (co-created 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 Voysey 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).



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

Perloff is also an award-winning playwright. Her play Kinship premiered at the Théâtre de Paris in October 2014 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).

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

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

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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 at act-sf.org/wordsonplays.

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 thirdlevel 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

Performances begin promptly, and late seating is at the house manager's discretion. Latecomers may have to watch the performance on a video monitor in the lobby until intermission. Latecomers and those who leave the theater during the performance may be seated in alternate seats (especially if they were in the first few rows) and can take their assigned seats at intermission

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.



GEARY THEATER EXITS

STAGE



A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from Hotel Tax Fund.







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adapted and directed by Mary Zimmerman from the novel by robert louis stevenson

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