

15|16

A.C.T. AMERICAN  
CONSERVATORY  
THEATER

# THE LION



Photo by Matthew Murphy

## THE LION

Written and Performed by **Benjamin Scheuer**  
Directed by **Sean Daniels**

**APR 19–MAY 1, 2016**, AT A.C.T.'S STRAND THEATER

*Medicine cures the sick. Therapy treats the wounded.  
Imagination heals the soul.*



# CHESTER BAILEY

**Starring Dan Clegg  
and David Strathairn**

**by Joseph Dougherty  
Directed by Ron Lagomarsino**

Academy Award nominee David Strathairn (*Underneath the Lintel*) and A.C.T. M.F.A. Program alumnus Dan Clegg (*Major Barbara*) return to A.C.T. for a three-week engagement at The Strand. A young man arrives at a military hospital with no memory of his tragic shipyard accident. Meanwhile, his psychiatrist faces his own demons in this world-premiere psychological drama. Written by Emmy Award-winning playwright Joseph Dougherty and directed by stage and television director Ron Lagomarsino, *Chester Bailey* is a thrilling new work that explores the power of the imagination and the lies we tell ourselves to find wholeness and truth.

**MAY 25–JUNE 12, 2016**

*Limited Three-Week Engagement  
at The Strand Theater*

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# From the ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Dear Friends,

One of the joys of the new Strand Theater is that it gives A.C.T. the opportunity to introduce the Bay Area to magical shows we've seen elsewhere. *The Lion* is such a show. Produced to great acclaim in New York, it played a special performance last summer at the Williamstown Theater Festival, where I had the chance to see it. I was captivated. In a deceptively simple way, Benjamin Scheuer takes the threads of his life and weaves them into a complex tapestry. *The Lion* is about fathers and sons, illness and recovery, the surprises of love and the mysteries of life. Its tale is told with generosity, wit, and virtuosity. I immediately imagined it in this theater, where audience and actor are so intimately connected. We're honored to have *The Lion* on the Rembe stage.

This has been a year of exploration at The Strand, from our world-premiere Filipino project *Monstress* to Bill Irwin's *On Beckett* to the passionate blues of *The Unfortunates*. Upstairs in The Rueff, we have hosted local theaters for free as part of our Community Space-Sharing Initiative, and we have featured our M.F.A. Program and Young Conservatory actors in several remarkable new plays, including *Punk Rock*, directed by Craig Slight, and *The Big Meal*, directed by Ryan Guzzo Purcell. In January, the building was taken over by the New Strands Festival, in which musicians, dancers, theater-makers, and audiences reveled in developing work. And there's more to come, including the world premiere this spring of Joseph Dougherty's *Chester Bailey*, starring David Strathairn and Dan Clegg. Whether this is your first visit or whether you're a regular, we're delighted that you have found your way to this special offering, and we hope that it will inspire you to come back often to this amazing space.

Finally, if listening to gorgeous music about love and loss galvanizes you to hear more, don't miss Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years*, opening shortly at The Geary. After last spring's sold-out concert version of this show, we asked actor-director-writer Michael Berresse to stage a full production of this bittersweet musical about young marriage. Love isn't easy and marriage is even harder, but hearing people sing about it this beautifully is always worth it.

Welcome to *The Lion* and thank you for coming!



Carey Perloff  
Artistic Director

# Theater training for everyone

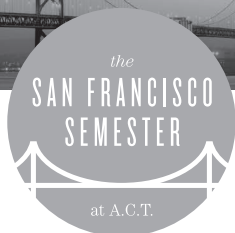


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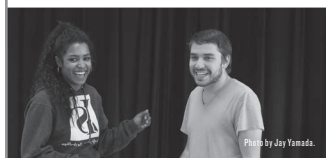
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*presents*

# THE LION

Written & Performed by  
**Benjamin Scheuer**

Scenic Designer	<b>Neil Patel</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Ben Stanton</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Leon Rothenberg</b>
Costume Consultant	<b>Jennifer Caprio</b>
Production Supervisor	<b>Dom Ruggiero</b>
Technical Supervision	<b>Mind the Gap Productions</b>
General Management	<b>Maximum Entertainment</b>

Directed by  
**Sean Daniels**

Originally produced in the United States by Manhattan Theatre Club  
Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director, Barry Grove, Executive Producer, on June 10, 2014

# 2016–17

50  
YEARS

A.C.T.  
AMERICAN  
CONSERVATORY  
THEATER

## ***The Hard Problem***

**by Tom Stoppard**

**Directed by Carey Perloff**

**Begins Oct 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. A compelling conflict of mind versus matter from one of theater’s greatest voices.

## ***King Charles III***

**by Mike Bartlett**

**Directed by David Muse**

**Begins Sep 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 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.

## ***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**

**Begins Feb 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. Forging an extraordinary friendship with her husband’s first wife, 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.

# SEASON

## ***John***

**by Annie Baker**

**Directed by Ken Rus Schmoll**

**Begins Feb 2017 at The Strand Theater**

"Haunting and haunted!"—*The New York Times*

A ghost 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. A delicious nerve-jangler hailed as "a true masterpiece" (*Slate*), this is a visceral ghost story with a millennial twist that will haunt the intimate Strand Theater.

## ***Needles and Opium***

**Written and directed by Robert Lepage**

**Begins Mar 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 addiction, renowned director Robert Lepage mounts his set around a vast suspended cube to create a spellbinding mix of stagecraft and storytelling.

***Please note that theaters, artists,  
and plays are subject to change.***

## ***Battlefield***

**Based on *The Mahabharata* and the play**

**by Jean-Claude Carrière**

**Adapted and directed by Peter Brook**

**and Marie-Hélène Estienne**

**Begins Apr 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 post-war battlefield—his army has won him the crown, but at what price? Written 2,500 years ago, the *Mahabharata*'s magical story of finding tranquility 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 Gandel and J Pardo**

**Directed by Alex Timbers**

**Begins Jun 2017 at The Geary Theater**

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

From 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.



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# A KIND OF ALCHEMY

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*An Interview with Benjamin Scheuer*

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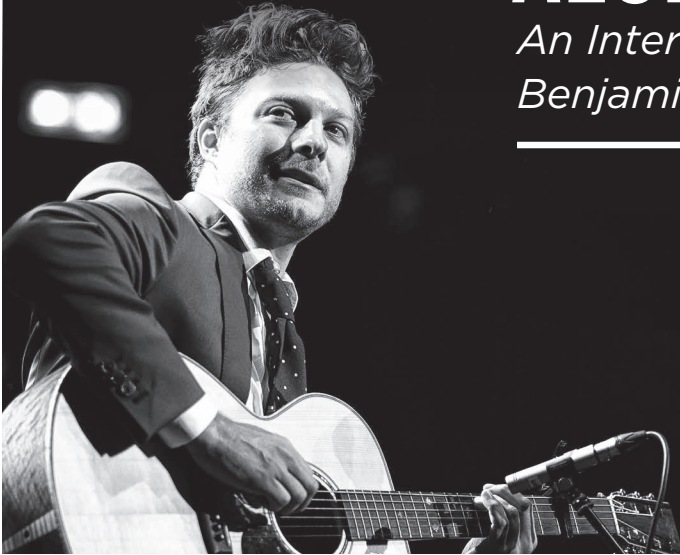


Photo by Christie Goodwin.

Benjamin Scheuer was 31 years old when *The Lion* (then called *The Bridge*) premiered at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2013. After the one-man musical ran off Broadway at Manhattan Theatre Club in 2014, the production transferred to The Lynn Redgrave Theater at Culture Project in 2015, where Scheuer won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance. The young *New Yorker* seemed like an overnight success, a charming musician with a winning smile, a gift for storytelling, and a wardrobe of sharply tailored three-piece suits.

The reality was quite different. *The Lion* might have appeared effortless, but it was his sixth musical project, and the first that became a hit. Scheuer had endured a series of setbacks—from losing his father at age 13 to being diagnosed with stage IV Hodgkin’s lymphoma at the age of 28—challenges that he transformed into the skeleton of *The Lion*’s story. “Being able to take the worst parts of our lives, then using those things as a means of communication, is a kind of alchemy,” he says. “We’re taking the worst things in our lives and using art to turn them into the best things.” We caught up with Scheuer as he was preparing to bring his award-winning show to The Strand Theater.





Photo by Nilaya Sabnis.

**How have your personal feelings about the themes in *The Lion* shifted since the show originally premiered in 2013?**

Before I started performing the show, I worried that many of the things I sang about were so personal that no one was going to understand. I've learned that the opposite is true. The very things we think make us unlovable are so often the things that other people relate to.

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**

I wanted to be Eddie Van Halen. I wanted to have long hair and wear leather pants and play guitar as fast as I could. Then I came to the realization that Eddie Van Halen is already Eddie Van Halen, and he's pretty good at it. I wanted to do something with a guitar, and I realized I'd better tell my own story.

**How is musical theater evolving?**

Nine Inch Nails is musical theater just as much as *Guys and Dolls* is. Both use music and words to capture attention, generate emotion, and tell stories. When writers acknowledge that musical theater is a methodology, rather than a genre, it frees them to create whatever they want.

**Songwriting seems like a solitary process. What was it like collaborating with director Sean Daniels?**

Sean Daniels is a brilliant man. If it weren't for him, I'd still be playing in a coffee shop to four people a night. Sean challenged me to dig deeper, to tell harder truths, to say things in fewer words. He also makes a tremendous breakfast sandwich. And he can wear mismatched plaid like no one else.

**Any advice for young actors, performers, and writers?**

Songwriters: get a rhyming dictionary. All artists: get a copy of *Roget's Thesaurus*. Then try this: Write down the one thing you don't want anyone to know about you. The single most terrifying thing. Start writing your next piece there.

Emulation is important as we learn our craft. But ultimately, we need to do our own thing. The one thing that every person can do better than anyone else is be themselves.

# ARTIST BIOS

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**BENJAMIN SCHEUER** (Writer/Performer) is the recipient of the 2015 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance and a 2015 Theatre World Award. The animated music videos for Scheuer's songs "The Lion" and "Cookie-Tin Banjo" have won prizes at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival, British Animation Awards, Encounters Festival, Crystal Palace Overground Festival, and Buenos Aires's ExpoToons Film Festival. The album *Songs from THE LION* will be released on June 3, 2016 (Warner Music Group/Alternative Distribution Alliance). With photographer Riya Lerner, Scheuer is co-creator of the art book *Between Two Spaces*, from which 50 percent of proceeds go to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Scheuer has toured with Mary Chapin Carpenter and performed at venues including the Royal Albert Hall in London and Lincoln Center Theater in New York. He has been a writer-in-residence at Goodspeed Musicals, the Weston Playhouse, and the Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriters Project, and he has been commissioned by the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Scheuer lives in New York City. *The Lion* is on tour through February 2017.

**SEAN DANIELS** (Director) has directed at Manhattan Theatre Club, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, St. James Theatre (West End, London), Actors Theatre of Louisville, Portland Center Stage, Geva Theatre Center, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Cleveland Play House, the Alliance Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Southern Rep Theatre, Swine Palace, Neo-Futurists, Aurora Theatre Company, Crowded Fire Theater, and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. His direction and shows have won an Offie Award for Best New Musical in London and a Drama Desk Award in New York, as well as awards for best play and best director in the Bay Area, Rochester, and Atlanta. His shows have also been nominated for the Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle awards. He is the artistic director of Merrimack Repertory Theatre and an artist-at-large for Geva Theatre Center. Previously, he spent several years at Actors Theatre of Louisville as associate artistic director, and at California Shakespeare Theater as associate artistic director/resident director. Before that, he was the artistic director and co-founder of Dad's Garage Theatre Company in Atlanta, Georgia.

**NEIL PATEL** (Scenic Designer) has designed for theaters on and off Broadway, regional theaters, and opera houses in the United States and abroad. His recent New York credits include *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*; *Stage Kiss*; *Indian Ink*; and *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. Other work includes production design for the HBO series *In Treatment* and the feature films *Some Velvet Morning* (Tribeca Film Festival) and *Loitering with Intent* (Parts & Labor Films).

**BEN STANTON** (Lighting Designer) has designed for Broadway's *Fun Home* (Tony Award nomination, Circle in the Square Theatre), *An Enemy of the People* (Samuel J. Friedman Theatre), and *Seminar* (John Golden Theatre). His recent off-Broadway credits include *Fun Home* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination, The Public Theater); *The Nether* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination, MCC Theater); *Our Lady of Kibeho* (Drama Desk Award nomination); *Kung Fu* and *Angels in America* (Signature Theatre Company); *Murder Ballad* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination, Manhattan Theatre Club/Union Square Theater), *Belleville* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination, New York Theatre Workshop), *Into the Woods* (The Delacorte Theater), and *The Whipping Man* (Lucille Lortel Award, Drama Desk Award nomination, Manhattan Theatre Club). His selected regional credits include the Mark Taper Forum, the Kirk Douglas Theatre, The Old Globe, South Coast Repertory, Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. He has designed concerts and tours for Regina Spektor, Sufjan Stevens, Beirut, and St. Vincent. Stanton is the recipient of the 2015 OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence of Lighting Design.

**LEON ROTHENBERG** (Sound Designer) has recently designed for Broadway's *Violet*, *The Realistic Joneses*, and *The Nance* (Tony Award). His select off-Broadway credits include work at Culture Project, Primary Stages, Second Stage Theatre, Tectonic Theater Project, Women's Project Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public Theater, LCT3, and New York City Center. Regionally, he has designed productions at Arena Stage, Seattle Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, New York Stage and Film, Two River Theater, North Shore Music Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center for the Performing Arts, Intiman Theatre, and Theatre by the Sea. International credits include Cirque du Soleil's *Kooza* and *Wintuk*, National Theatre of Cyprus, and Dijon International Adventure Film Festival.

**JENNIFER CAPRIO** (Costume Consultant) has worked on Broadway's *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and the West End's *The Lion* (St. James Theatre). She worked on the current national tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Selected New York credits include *Tail! Spin!* (Culture Project), *The Lion* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Little Miss Sunshine* (Second Stage Theatre), *In Transit* (Primary Stages, Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *Fugitive Songs* (Dreamlight Theatre Company), and *Striking 12* (Daryl Roth Theatre). Opera credits include Florida Grand Opera, Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado, and Mill City Summer Opera. Nationally, she has designed costumes for more than 60 regional theaters.

**DOM RUGGIERO** (Production Supervisor) has worked on Broadway's *The Gathering*, starring Hal Linden; *Borscht Belt on Broadway*, starring Bruce Adler and Mal Z. Lawrence; and *Ain't That a Kick in the Head—The Music of Sammy Cahn*, directed by Chet Walker. National tour credits include *A Swell Party: The Cole Porter Songbook*, starring Melba Moore; *Puttin' on the Ritz: The Irving Berlin Songbook*, starring Carol Lawrence; and *Greetings! Shalom Aleichem Lives*, starring Judy Kaye, Bruce Adler, and Theodore Bikel. Ruggiero has worked on various productions in many capacities from stage management to general management to producing. His projects have taken him across the United States, Europe, South America, and Australia with *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Anything Goes*, and *Song and Dance*, among many others.

**MIND THE GAP PRODUCTIONS** (Technical Supervisor) is a Brooklyn-based production company specializing in custom fabrication, production management, and production logistics. Notable projects include *On the Town* (Broadway), *Hand to God* (MCC Theater), *And I and Silence* and *A Particle of Dread* (Signature Theatre Company), *Sex with Strangers* and *The Substance of Fire* (Second Stage Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Classic Stage Company), and *The Tribute Artist*, *Poor Behavior*, and *While I Yet Live* (Primary Stages).

**MAXIMUM ENTERTAINMENT** (General Management) is a producing, developing, and management company. Maximum Entertainment was founded in 2006 by Avram Freedberg, Mary Beth Dale, and Eva Price. Managing Director/General Manager Carl Flanigan joined Maximum in 2016. General management credits on Broadway, off Broadway, and on tour include *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, *50 Shades! The Musical*; *Ivy + Bean, the Musical*; *Blank! The Musical*; *Colin Quinn: Long Story Short*; *Forever Dusty*; *Voca People*; *The Judy Show*; *Circumcise Me*; *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*; *The Magic School Bus Live!*; *Ella*; *'S Wonderful*; *Strega Nona*; and *I Love a Piano*.

**EVA PRICE** (Producer) was recently named one of *Crain's New York Business* 40 Under 40. She is executive producer/EVP for Maximum Entertainment, a producing and general management company focusing on Broadway, off-Broadway, and touring properties. Upcoming productions include *Found* (Philadelphia Theatre Company), *Small Mouth Sounds* (Signature Center), *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* (Town Hall, tour), and *Dear Evan Hansen* (Second Stage Theatre). Recent Broadway and off-Broadway productions include *On Your Feet!*; *Peter and the Starcatcher* (five Tony Awards); *Annie*; (Tony Award-nominated 2012 revival); *The Merchant of Venice*, starring Al Pacino (Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle award nominations); and *The Addams Family*. Selected solo shows and concerts include the Broadway engagements of Lewis Black, Carrie Fisher, Kathy Griffin, Colin Quinn (directed by Jerry Seinfeld), Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, and The Temptations and The Four Tops.

**Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director***  
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#### *The Lion* wishes to thank the following individuals:

Mandy Greenfield, Leah Hamos, Bob Alwine,  
Rick Miramontez, Molly Barnett, and Michael Jorgensen

*The Lion* was developed in part at a retreat at the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company, Weston, Vermont;  
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[www.TheLionMusical.com](http://www.TheLionMusical.com)





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WRITTEN AND COMPOSED BY JASON ROBERT BROWN  
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL BERRESSE

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