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June 2015 Volume 13, No. 8



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San Francisco's THEATER COMPANY

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

Rising from the rubble of the catastrophic earthquake and fires of 1906 and immediately hailed as the "perfect playhouse," the beautiful, historic Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped a gaping hole in the ceiling, destroying the proscenium arch and dumping tons of debris on the first six rows of orchestra seats, the San Francisco community rallied together 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 20-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 45-year-old Conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, is at the center of our work. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, and our intensive Summer Training Congress attracts enthusiasts from around the world. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19, led by 25-year veteran Craig 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 tens of thousands of young people to A.C.T. performances since 1968. We also provide touring Will on Wheels Shakespeare productions, teaching-artist residencies, in-school workshops, and in-depth study materials to Bay Area schools and community-based organizations.

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

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"Extraordinary.... Tour de force would be an understatement." —Boston Globe

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JAN 2016



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"A glorious, bluesy, mythical, uplifting paean to the power of music to stir the soul" *—Mail Tribune*, Ashland, Oregon

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AT A.C.T.'S STRAND THEATER

"Tenorio's characters are zany, witty, and beautifully drawn." —*Slate.com*

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SEP 2015

Ah, Wilderness!

by Eugene O'Neill *Directed by* Mark Rucker

AT A.C.T.'S GEARY THEATER

"A sensitive tribute to young and middle-aged love and to a beautiful, bygone era" *—The Examiner*, Washington, DC

O'Neill's exquisite coming-of-age classic is a tender comedic portrait of a sensitive young poet and his growing pains, and one family's well-meaning attempts to stay united in the face of misunderstanding.



WEST COAST PREMIERE

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by Will Eno

Directed by Loretta Greco

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THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Written and composed by Jason Robert Brown

AT A.C.T.'S GEARY THEATER

"Graceful, gripping, and break-your-heart beautiful. *The Last Five Years* burrows into your skin by virtue of its very theatricality. It's impossible not to swoon!" —*New York Daily News*

Following the wildly successful concert version at The Geary Theater in spring 2015, this unforgettable musical—packed to the brim with humor, romance, and an exuberant score—takes an imaginative look at two newlyweds' hope that love will endure the test of time.

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MAY 2016



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A.C.T. volunteers provide an invaluable service with their time, enthusiasm, and love of theater. Opportunities include helping out in our performing-arts library and ushering in our theaters. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/VOLUNTEER

DON'T JUST SIT THERE...



ONSTAGE NOW: LOVE AND INFORMATION

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

BIKE TO THE THEATER JUN 3, 6:30PM

In partnership with the S.F. 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

JUN 9, 5:30PM Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion and Q&A with *Love and Information* director Casey Stangl. Can't make this event? Listen to our podcasts! Visit act-sf.org/interact for details.

THEATER ON THE COUCH*

JUN 26, 7:30PM Take part in a lively discussion in our lower-level lounge with Dr. Mason Turner, chief of psychiatry at SF's Kaiser Permanente Medical Center.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES*

JUN 30, 7PM; JUL 15 & 26, 2PM Join us for an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

OUT WITH A.C.T.*

JUL 8, 7:30PM Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGBT party.

WINE SERIES

JUL 14, 6:30PM Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine-tasting event.

PLAYTIME

 ${\rm AUG}$ 1, 12:45PM Get hands-on with theater at this interactive preshow workshop.

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

*Events take place immediately following the performance.



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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the inaugural production at our beautiful new Strand Theater. As you take your seats in this magically reimagined space, I hope you will take a minute to gaze up and look all around you; you will see the theater's original 1917 moldings and lovingly restored ventilation grilles on the ceiling, adjacent to contemporary architectural features and state-of-theart theater technology. This blend of old and new, decorative and functional, along with the lively vermilion of the walls balanced by the subtle grays and blacks of the seats and stairs, ushers in a new era for American Conservatory Theater. We will have the opportunity to present work in a more intimate setting, to welcome new artists and audiences into the A.C.T. family, to showcase the talent of our young artists in training, and to expand our repertoire in thrilling ways.

Given that The Strand is the first major cultural center to open in what has come to be known as the "tech corridor" of Central Market, it seems fitting to launch our work in this new home with a play that delves deeply and incisively into the strange collision of data and desire for meaning that epitomizes our tech-saturated times. Caryl Churchill is a playwright of immense imagination who marries form and content in a unique way. As she set about to explore what is happening to our personal lives and to our sense of self in the context of information overload, she created a play whose form perfectly mirrors its content. Love and Information is composed of 57 short scenes, each one a miniature playlet in which individuals search for meaning and love in a mysterious and complex digital age. Churchill does not specify who the characters in each scene are; it is up to the director and the creative team to decide what each scene means, how to interpret it, and whom to cast. Neither gender nor age is spelled out, so an enormous amount of creative leeway is offered to the artists and audience members tackling the play. I love this aspect of Churchill's work; as a playwright, she raises the bar on collaboration and invites the richest possible exploration of the major issues facing us today by leaving room for our own imagination. Each scene prompts us to question our assumptions. What is God? What is love? How are we to interpret the glut of information flooding our email inboxes at every moment? In a landscape of facts, is there room

for faith? For family? How are we to ascribe meaning to our lives when everything seems to be reducible to statistics? The scenes of *Love and Information* mount up inexorably—often hilariously, sometimes heartbreakingly—and combine to offer a rich theatrical stew that wakes us up

to the contradictions of our world in remarkable, visceral ways.

This has been a beautiful spring for A.C.T., with Kwame Kwei-Armah's moving *Let There Be Love* leading into Mark Lamos's sumptuous and romantic vision of *A Little Night Music*. We are already hard at work preparing the 2015–16 season,

66 CARYL CHURCHILL IS A PLAYWRIGHT OF IMMENSE IMAGINATION WHO MARRIES FORM AND CONTENT IN A UNIQUE WAY.

including our explosive Pulitzer Prize–winning opener, *Between Riverside and Crazy*, and our lyrical and laugh-filled world premiere, *Monstress*, which will play at The Strand this fall. We are so grateful to all those who nurtured and supported us as we

opened our second venue. As we learn how to operate in two spaces and two neighborhoods simultaneously, please let us know how we can help make Strand-going the best possible experience for all of you. Feel free to call my hotline at 415.439.2459 with any observations, questions, or concerns.

Enjoy Love and Information, and thank you for coming!

Best,

Carey Perloff Artistic Director



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presents

BY Caryl Churchill

DIRECTED BY Casey Stangl

SCENIC DESIGN BY **Robert Brill** COSTUME DESIGN BY **Jessie Amoroso** LIGHTING DESIGN BY **Lap Chi Chu** SOUND DESIGN BY **C. Andrew Mayer** PROJECTION DESIGN BY **Micah J. Stieglitz** CASTING BY **Janet Foster, CSA** DRAMATURG **Beatrice Basso** ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **Allie Moss**

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Ryan Williams French*† Gabriel Marin* Emilie Talbot* Kelsey Venter*

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THE PLAY RUNS AN HOUR AND 40 MINUTES WITH NO INTERMISSION.

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

†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2015

\$Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2015 and an Equity Professional Intern \$Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2016 and an Equity Professional Intern

Needing to Know and Needing to Love

The Enduring Mystique of Caryl Churchill

By Nirmala Nataraj

CARYL CHURCHILL IS PERHAPS THE MOST

acclaimed female playwright in the English-speaking world, and simultaneously the most elusive. Critic Charles Spencer has called her the "least predictable of contemporary playwrights." Her work has been described as elliptical, provocative, shocking, confounding—and, over the years, it has become significantly more pared down, devoid of stage directions or notes, which only seems to contribute to her enduring mystique.

Although Churchill has been writing plays for over five decades, she stopped giving interviews many years ago. She rarely comments on critics' analyses of her work, but her past interviews and the words of her close collaborators, of whom there are many, continue to spark the imaginations of those who recognize the multiple ways in which she has pushed dramatic boundaries over the course of her career. Feminist and socialist politics are important facets of Churchill's plays, as her work challenges the oppressions and repressions of gender, class, sex, and race—but her bold stylization is an equally prominent feature of her writing. The fact that her work ranges from epic Brechtian dramas to surreal "anti-plays" to disconnected slice-of-life episodes is part of what makes it difficult to define Churchill's style. Flashbacks, twisted chronologies, overlapping dialogue, contradiction, repetition of word and gesture, and different actors playing the same character in different scenes are just some of the devices Churchill has employed in her plays.

Given the scope of Churchill's experimentation (with form as well as process), many critics have noted that answering the question "What is a Caryl Churchill play?" leaves most people scratching their heads in puzzlement. Playwright April de Angelis says, "She has turned the idea of what a play should be over and over, revisioning it beyond the accepted imaginative boundaries, to produce plays that are always revolutionary."

As eager as they are to be heard, according to Churchill's publisher of over 40 years, Nick Hern, her characters themselves are often less "talky" (preferring to justify their existence not with long speeches but with activity) and less obviously categorizable as villains or protagonists than those of other playwrights. Actor Maxine Peake, who played the title role in Churchill's *The Skriker* (about a malevolent fairy who manipulates two teenage mothers) in 2014 at London's Royal Exchange Theatre, describes Churchill's characters as "coming more from a physical impulse rather than a cerebral one."

Churchill and her collaborators are often surprised by the plays that emerge from her imagination. Hern says, "The plays just turn up, without warning. I think she's one of those shamanistic writers, in the way Harold Pinter was. A play isn't planned or premeditated; it's scratching an itch. They come to me and I sit down to read them, having absolutely no idea what the length or subject matter or form will be." Much like Pinter, Churchill is also mordantly witty, whether she is training her eye on large-scale social ills or the quirky dynamics of an intimate relationship. A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff says, "Churchill's plays are supremely alive because the scenes are endlessly active. They're about transactions, power, competition, desire."

Love and Information premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in 2012, under the direction of Churchill's frequent collaborator James Macdonald. De Angelis notes that this enigmatic play is an exploration of two of the most powerful human themes: needing to know and needing to love. Love and Information is a collection of 57 short, episodic vignettes that use a series of interactions between mostly unnamed characters to explore knowledge, meaning, and how we make sense of information in our lives. Each vignette is selfcontained and characters are not repeated from one scene to the next, meaning that the dozen actors in our production are responsible for playing multiple roles. Some of the scenes last only five seconds, and none are longer than five minutes. Because Churchill does not include stage directions or character descriptions in Love and Information, the artistic team is tasked with filling in the blanks and creating the world of the play according to the production's specific needs and intentions.

Overall, *Love and Information* presents an assortment of stories and perspectives that leave much to the viewer's imagination. Indeed, a viewer's process of making sense of the play may be the ultimate point that Churchill is attempting to make. As she has said, "I don't set out to find a bizarre way of writing. I certainly don't think that you have to force it. But, on the whole . . . I enjoy finding the form that seems to best fit what I'm thinking about."

"DECISION"

(a scene from Caryl Churchill's script for Love and Information, exactly as it appears on the page)

I've written down all the reasons to leave the country and all the reasons to stay.

So how does that work out?

There's things on both sides.

How do you feel about it?

No, I'm trying to make a rational decision based on the facts.

Do you want me to decide for you?

Based on what? The facts dont add up.

I'd rather you stayed here. Does that help?

WORDS ON PLAYS Celebrating more than 20 years!

Words on Plays, A.C.T.'s renowned performance guide series, started more than 20 years ago as a way for audiences to learn more about our plays before they came to the theater. Today the series continues to offer insight into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the subscription season with revealing interviews and in-depth articles and it serves as a cornerstone of our ACTsmart education programs.



By subscribing to *Words on Plays* or purchasing individual copies at the theater and online, you directly support A.C.T.'s educational efforts, serving teachers and students throughout the Bay Area. Extend the love of theater to future generations—and learn more about *Love and Information*!

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REVEALING A Spectrum of Humanity

An Interview with Director Casey Stangl By Beatrice Basso

Scenic designer Robert Brill's rendering for A.C.T.'s 2015 production of *Love and Information*

DIRECTOR CASEY STANGL RETURNS TO A.C.T. AFTER STAGING

David Ives's *Venus in Fur* last spring. That production was packed with intense, edgily comic exchanges about sexual politics, generating plenty of heat with its unexpected plot twists. Now, Stangl brings her talent for seamless transitions and precise pacing to *Love and Information*, a play that offered her a blank creative canvas that she describes as simultaneously "exhilarating and terrifying."

Stangl's early years as a director were spent in San Francisco, primarily at the Eureka Theatre. Among the plays she experienced while in the city was a production of Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*, which had its Bay Area premiere at the Eureka and then moved to the Curran Theatre. Coincidentally, the first job Stangl was offered after she became a full-time freelance director was the opportunity to stage *Top Girls* at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. She says she was awed to discover an elasticity in Churchill's language that made the play relevant and provocative nearly two decades after its premiere.

Stangl found her stride in directing new work and reimagining classics through a bold contemporary lens. Her movement background and interest in visual composition have helped her weave the complex fabric of *Love and Information.* At a new-play festival in Southern California a week before rehearsals began, Stangl was happy to talk about the themes and ideas that have piqued her imagination, what it's been like to include the specific communities of San Francisco in Churchill's scenes, and whether the gap between love and information is truly as wide as it may seem.

How did you react when A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff asked you to direct *Love and Information?*

I was thrilled. Carey described the play, which is made up of disparate scenes with no common characters. Then she talked about it being the first production at The Strand Theater, which is located in San Francisco at a kind of crossroads between various communities—from homeless people to tourists to tech workers to government workers to immigrant mom-and-pop store owners. She felt that *Love and Information* was the perfect play with which to open this new space.

What were your first impressions of the play?

Carey told me, "The play is wide open." When you read the first scene, there are just lines and no character names. I remember thinking, "Wow, she wasn't kidding, this is *wide open.*" When you have that amount of choice, you can do anything, but it also means you have to find a container and a way into the play. With most plays, the container is usually already built for you, so this is an interesting challenge.

You were already familiar with Caryl Churchill's work, as you directed *Top Girls* for the Guthrie Theater over a decade ago.

Yes. They are very different plays, but they share some commonalities; for instance, Churchill's ability to manipulate language, to write characters and scenes in which so much is happening below the words, is important in both works. *Love and Information* is so striking because these scenes range from a quarter of a page to three pages, but despite such a small amount of dialogue, you can pull back the curtain and imagine what's happening between these characters. This illumination of a moment in someone's life is thrilling to be able to evoke. Churchill has a very unflinching, unsentimental view of life, but there's so much hope and humanity and joy in her perspective, as well.

Generally, directors are asked to guide an audience through a linear, narrative, realistic journey.

Absolutely. I would say there is almost always a story being told, even in plays that have a nonlinear structure, or that



[Love and Information] has a radical form in which several individual narratives add up to something larger that reveals how we live and what it means to be a human on this planet right now.

—Director Casey Stangl

bounce around in time. But that's not what we're doing here. There's not one specific story we're telling; the play has a radical form in which several individual narratives add up to something larger that reveals how we live and what it means to be a human on this planet right now. Because there are so many different themes and ideas, they will resonate differently for different people.

What do you think makes this play relevant at this particular moment in time?

When somebody told me about the play originally, they said that it was about living in the Digital Age. So before I read it, I really thought that it was about dealing with the age of Facebook, and that sort of thing. There are certainly hints of that in the play, but it's so much bigger and broader than that. Throughout history, there have been large technological leaps-such as the invention of the wheel or the Industrial Revolution-that have radically changed the way people live. With such changes, there have always been predictions that we're going to lose our humanity. I remember when computers first became ubiquitous, people said, "Soon, no one will ever see each other, and we'll never leave our homes, and robots will take over everything." In fact, what happened was a proliferation of coffee shops so that people could actually come out and connect with each other. Churchill has tapped into the sense that, despite the constancy of dire predictions, humanity prevails. We just find different ways to continue to have this sense of connection.

THE INNOVATION of CARYL CHURCHILL by SHANNON STOCKWELL

Danielle Frimer and Elyse Price in the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program's 2013 production of Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*. Photo by Kevin Berne.

CLOUD NINE (1979) was the play that first brought Churchill international recognition. In the first act, a British family living in a colonized African country struggles with the oppressive gender roles of the Victorian era. The second act takes place in modern-day London (although only 25 years have passed for the characters from the first act), as they begin to rebel against and liberate themselves from the sexual roles that were assigned to them in a bygone era. Cross-gender and crossracial casting underlines the biting satire in this farce about sexual politics and colonialism.

TOP GIRLS (1982) is Churchill's most-produced play. Eschewing chronological storytelling, Churchill begins the play with Marlene, a manager at Top Girls Employment Agency, who has recently been promoted and is celebrating with a surreal and fragmented dinner party of semi-famous women from history and fiction. The final scene takes place a year earlier and features a confrontation between Marlene and her working-class sister, who has raised Marlene's daughter as her Glenn Stott and Dillon Heape in the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program's 2013 production of Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine*. Photo by Kevin Berne.

Critics have lauded Love and Information

for its innovative structure. Theater scholar R. Darren Gobert writes, "[In this play], sharply drawn dots . . . collectively constitute an epic canvas that exceeds the sum of its pointillist parts." Early in Churchill's career, she wrote, "The role of the playwright is not to give answers but to ask questions. We need to find new questions, which may help us answer the old ones or make them unimportant, and this means new subjects and new forms." As a result of her commitment to constant reinvention, Churchill's plays are widely recognized as some of the most innovative of the past half-century.

own, thus underscoring what Marlene has had to give up in order to succeed as a professional woman. Inspired by the politics of Margaret Thatcher, this play explores the intersection between capitalist ambition and feminism.

DRUNK ENOUGH TO SAY I LOVE YOU? (2006) tells the story of a complex, borderline-abusive, and decidedly one-sided romantic relationship between Sam (who is the embodiment of America) and Guy (who is an American). The narrative of the love story is chronological—Guy is initially enamored with Sam and helps him carry out various political tasks, leaves when he becomes uncomfortable with the things Sam does, and eventually returns—but the play is set in an ambiguous time period, discussing events all the way back to World War II as if they had just happened. The play is a critique of blind nationalism, patriotic fervor, and the lies we tell ourselves in order to continue loving our country.

WHO'S WHO IN LOVE AND INFORMATION



JOEL BERNARD*⁺ is a graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Recent credits include an appearance on *Law*

& Order: Special Victims Unit and the voice of the villain, Sewell, in Silent Hill: Downpour. Bernard is a founding member and artistic director of Benefit of the Doubt Theatre Company. He was last seen at A.C.T. as Young Scrooge in A Christmas Carol. His M.F.A. Program credits include Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet, Firs in The Cherry Orchard, Laertes in Hamlet, Hobson in The Girl from Maxim's, and Galileo Galilei in Galileo. He was recently awarded the Joan Sadler Award, given to a third-year A.C.T. M.F.A. Program student in recognition of leadership and sustained passion.



ANTHONY

FUSCO*, a member of Actors' Equity Association since 1984, is an A.C.T. resident artist. A few favorites from the dozens of A.C.T.

productions in which he has appeared are Indian Ink, Clybourne Park, The Homecoming, Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo, Dead Metaphor, Hedda Gabler, The Three Sisters, Race, November, and The Rainmaker. Fusco most recently appeared at Magic Theatre in John Kolvenbach's Sister Play; other Bay Area credits include Pygmalion, Candida, Arms and the Man, The Tempest, King Lear, and The Importance of Being Earnest at California Shakespeare Theater, as well as The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures and Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Fusco appeared in The Real Thing on Broadway, in many off- and off-off-Broadway shows, and at regional theaters

across America. He trained at The Juilliard School and The Barrow Group, and is a proud alumnus of Tamalpais High School's drama department.



CINDY GOLDFIELD*

is a two-time recipient of both the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle and the Dean Goodman Choice

awards. She recently finished her 11th season of A Christmas Carol at A.C.T. Other regional credits include The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Center REPertory Company); Spring Awakening and Bill W. and Dr. Bob (San Jose Repertory Theatre); Another Midsummer Night (TheatreWorks); Brimstone, Moon Over Buffalo, and Merrily We Roll Along (Willows Theatre Company); Oliver! (Broadway by the Bay); Moving Bodies (Marin Theatre Company); Crimes of the Heart (Playhouse West); the world premiere of OMFG! The Internet Dating Musial (ODC); Texas Chainsaw Manicurist and Cowardly Things (New Conservatory Theatre Center); Mack & Mabel (42nd Street Moon); and Scalpel! (Brava! For Women in the Arts). New York credits include D'Arcy Drollinger's Project: Lohan, and Mr. Irresistible, at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. Goldfield also enjoys the cabaret collaboration of Goldfield & Koldewyn with the inimitable Scrumbly Koldewyn.



DAN HIATT* has been seen at A.C.T. as the Englishman in *Indian Ink*, Stephen Hopkins in *1776*, Tom in *Round and Round the Garden*, the Magistrate in

The Government Inspector, Bob Acres in The Rivals, Guildenstern in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, and Cornelius Hackl in The Matchmaker. Other Bay Area credits include Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Dinner with Friends, and Menocchio at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby and many others at California Shakespeare Theater; *Twentieth Century* at TheatreWorks; Picasso at the Lapin Agile at Theatre on the Square; Noises Off at Marines' Memorial Theatre; Wittenberg and Breakfast with Mugabe at Aurora Theatre Company; and Othello at Marin Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include work with Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Huntington Theatre Company, The Pasadena Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, Studio Arena Theatre, the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and Theatre Calgary.



JOE HOLT* is a member of The Antaeus Company in Los Angeles. Roles include Hotspur in *Henry IV*, *Part 1*; Banquo in *Macbeth*; Celso in

The Malcontent; Macaulay in The Thin Man; and Waiter in Celebration. Classics-Fest performances include Stanley in A Streetcar Named Desire, Levee in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, and Nelson in Wedding Band. Other theater credits include We Are Proud to Present ... (The Matrix Theatre Company), Nine Circles (Bootleg Theater), and The Pain and the Itch (Zephyr Theatre). As a member of The Flea Theater in New York City, he had roles in No Mother to Guide Her, A Heartbeat to Baghdad, and The Breakout. Regional theater credits include *Blue/Orange* (TheaterWorks in Hartford) and Twelve Angry Men (Merrimack Repertory Theatre). Television credits include roles on Scandal, Grey's Anatomy, The Good Wife, Franklin & Bash, I Didn't Do It, and Supernatural.

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

[†]Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2015

WHO'S WHO IN LOVE AND INFORMATION



RAFAEL JORDAN*[†] was recently seen at A.C.T. as Topper in *A Christmas Carol* and Tom in *The Glass*

Menagerie, directed by Ryan Purcell. Other memorable roles include Bobby in American Buffalo at Aurora Theatre Company (San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for Best Production; Theatre Bay Area Award nomination for Best Ensemble); Dorante in The Liar at the Livermore Shakespeare Festival; and Describe the Night, by Rajiv Joseph, at the TheatreWorks New Works Festival. New York credits include Apollodorus in Caesar and Cleopatra (off Broadway), George in Uncle Tom's Cabin during Metropolitan Playhouse's OBIE Award-winning season, I Feel Your Pain with multiple OBIE Award winner Kathryn Grody, and the world premiere of Thunder Above, Deeps Below. Other theater credits include 365 Days/365 Plays and The Open Road Anthology at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Film credits include Me, You, & the Road; The Best Laid Plans; and Othello in Othello (the web series).



CHRISTINA

LIANG[#] recently completed her second year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Some of her Conservatory credits include

The Cherry Orchard (Anya), Kalos Kai Agathos (Antigone), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Hermia), Iphigenia and Other Daughters (Electra), and Hello from Bertha (Goldie). She also helped create a devised theater piece called Girlhood for A.C.T. Sky Festival and Faultline Theater. Some of her regional credits include Twelfth Night and Uncommon Women and Others at Mad and Merry Theatre Company and Measure for Measure at New York University. Liang received a B.A. in Individualized Studies from New York University and has trained at the Upright Citizens Brigade in New York City.



SHARON LOCKWOOD's*

work at A.C.T. includes Napoli!; Dead Metaphor; 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; Hedda Gabler; Juno and the Paycock;

The Cherry Orchard; The Rose Tattoo; The Pope and the Witch; Saturday, Sunday and Monday; and A Christmas Carol for ten seasons. She also has a long-time association with Berkeley Repertory Theatre; there, she most recently played Sonia in Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, for which she received a San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award. Other Bay Area credits include productions at California Shakespeare Theater, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Marin Theatre Company, TheatreWorks, and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Regional credits include Houston's Alley Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse (San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award for Culture Clash's Zorro in Hell), San Diego Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Missouri Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, and The Old Globe. She originated the role of Barbara in Nickel and Dimed, which she performed at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles under the direction of Bartlett Sher. Film and television credits include Mrs. Doubtfire, Long Road Home, and Vonnegut Stories.



appeared most recently as the title character in the world premiere of *The Missing Pages of Lewis Carroll* at the Theater @

LEO MARKS*

Boston Court. Other regional credits include *Smokefall*, *The Language Archive*,

and Major Barbara at South Coast Repertory; How to Write a New Book for the Bible at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre; Lincolnesque and Time and the Conways at The Old Globe; A Perfect Wedding at the Kirk Douglas Theatre; All the King's Men at Intiman Theatre; and Cymbeline at Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC, among many others. He co-founded New York's Elevator Repair Service and played Hamlet in Jessica Kubzansky's acclaimed production. Other awards include Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Performer of the Year Award in 2012, and Top 10 Leading Men in 2010 and 2011; several L.A. Weekly Awards and nominations; and an OBIE Award. Marks has had many television appearances, most recently on Masters of Sex.



DOMINIQUE SALERNO^{*}

was last seen on A.C.T.'s Geary stage as the Ghost of Christmas Past in *A Christmas Carol.* Her A.C.T. Master of

Fine Arts Program credits include Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Sueño, Galileo, Niagara Falls, and Limited Unlimited (a onewoman show in which she performed 14 characters while inside a cupboard). Regional credits include Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Shrek the Musical, and The Pirates of Penzance at Santa Rosa Junior College Summer Repertory Theatre. Salerno is also an internationally credited director and domestically produced playwright. She directed HALF, by Rebecca Foresman, in the 2014 Roma Fringe Festival. Her own play, So Small a Thing, will be featured in the San Diego International Fringe Festival this July. Salerno also has 13 years of improv training and performs at Endgames Improv in her spare time. Salerno has a B.A. from Princeton University and is a graduate of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program.



MIA TAGANO* has performed locally

with Magic Theatre (Every Five Minutes), TheatreWorks (M. Butterfly, Snow Falling on Cedars, and The Loudest Man

on Earth), California Shakespeare Theater (The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby and Hamlet), and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival (Twelfth Night). Her regional stage credits include Tamburlaine at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC; Snow Falling on Cedars at Portland Center Stage and Hartford Stage; and Tantalus with the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and the Royal Shakespeare Company, including a UK tour. Her New York credits include 99 Histories at Cherry Lane Theatre, Song of Singapore at Capital Repertory Theatre, and Far East at Lincoln Center Theater. Her television and film credits include All My Children, Law & Order, Tantalus: Behind the Mask, and John Barton's The Shakespeare Sessions. She received her B.A. in drama from Ohio State University and her M.F.A. from the University of Washington's Professional Actor Training Program.



SHONA TUCKER's*

previous A.C.T. credits include *Blithe Spirit, Tartuffe*, and *Insurrection: Holding History.* Tucker is a company member of

both YARA Arts Group and Half Moon Theatre, for which she has performed *Love/Sick; Good People; Almost, Maine*; and a staged reading of her own play, *Growing Wild.* Her off-Broadway theater credits include roles at New York Theatre Workshop, The Public Theater, Circle in the Square Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theatre Club, and La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. Regional theater credits include the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory

Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Stageworks/ Hudson, Arena Stage, The Acting Company, Hartford Stage, and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Her television and film credits include Lights Out, Walk the Fish, Preaching to the Choir, Third Watch, New York Undercover, and Law & Order. She is a Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab director, AUDELCO Award winner, Schomburg Fellow, and Fulbright Scholar. Tucker earned a B.S. from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. in acting from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She is currently an associate professor of drama and director of theater at Vassar College.



RYAN WILLIAMS FRENCH*†

(*Understudy*) recently graduated from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and is a proud recipient of the Bratt Family diversity

scholarship. French was last seen on the Geary stage as Sam in Mr. Burns, a postelectric play and as Fred in A Christmas Carol. Recent A.C.T. M.F.A. Program acting credits include Hamlet (title role), Sueño; Romeo and Juliet, Seven Guitars, Niagara Falls, The Strangest Kind of Romance, and Battle for Babylon. French also worked regionally as a company member at Chautauqua Theater Company in New York, where he starred in The *Comedy of Errors.* Most recently, he taught classes in the Young Conservatory. French has also written and directed several plays and debuted his solo performance This Modern Life during A.C.T.'s Sky Festival in January 2014. French has a B.A. from Dartmouth College.

[†]Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2015 [†]Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2015 and an Equity Professional Intern

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



GABRIEL MARIN*

(Understudy) was last seen at A.C.T. in Napoli!. Locally, Marin has appeared in over 50 productions with Cal

Performances, San Francisco Playhouse, Aurora Theatre Company, Playwrights Foundation, Black Box Theatre, Center REPertory Company, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, PlayGround, the San Francisco Fringe Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, The Jewish Theatre, Thick Description, Word for Word, Z Space, and many others. Marin has performed on NBC, CBS, PBS, and the BBC.



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

WHO'S WHO IN LOVE AND INFORMATION

EMILIE

TALBOT*

(Understudy) has

worked in the Bay

at such theaters as

Area for over 20 years



Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and PlayGround, and she is an Associate Artist with AlterTheater. Around the country, she has appeared at or spent seasons with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Huntington Theatre Company, and Pittsburgh Public Theater, among others. Film credits include Tenderloin Blues, The Fifth Stage of Labor, Ceremony, and many commercials, voiceovers, and video games. She is a graduate of Duke University, CalArts, and Oxford University.



KELSEY VENTER*

(*Understudy*) was most recently seen in *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* at A.C.T. and the Guthrie Theater,

and by San Diego audiences in Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! at The Old Globe. Other regional credits include Les Misérables, 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 Amphitheatre; She Loves Me and Boeing Boeing at Center REPertory Company; The Threepenny Opera and A Seagull in the Hamptons with Shotgun Players; and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and A Christmas Carol with A.C.T. Venter is one of the Guinness World Record holders for Longest Marathon Theatrical Performance with Lamb's Players Theatre. She earned her B.A. in theater from San Diego State University and her M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.

CARYL CHURCHILL's (*Playwright*)

stage plays include Objections to Sex and Violence, Cloud Nine, Three More Sleepless Nights, Top Girls, A Mouthful of Birds (with David Lan), Serious Money, Icecream, Mad Forest, Thyestes (translated from Seneca), This Is a Chair, Blue Heart, A Number, Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?, Seven Jewish Children, and Ding Dong the Wicked, which all received their first productions at Royal Court Theatre in London. Her honors include three OBIE Awards for Playwriting (Cloud Nine, Top Girls, Serious Money), an OBIE Award for Sustained Achievement, the Laurence Olivier/BBC Award (Best New Play, Serious Money), and an induction into the American Theater Hall of Fame. Churchill has also written extensively for radio and television.

CASEY STANGL (*Director*) returns to A.C.T. after directing Venus in Fur last spring. Recent projects include The Curse of Oedipus for The Antaeus Company; Venus in Fur and The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane for South Coast Repertory; First Person: Seeing America, a multimedia piece with Ensemble Galilei; and Lombardi, a coproduction with Cleveland Play House and Arizona Theatre Company. Stangl's production of Peace in Our Time at The Antaeus Company won the 2012 Ovation Award and the L.A. Weekly Theater Award for Best Production. Nationally, Stangl's work has been seen at the Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Guthrie Theater, the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Portland Stage, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Minnesota Opera, Portland Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and many others. Stangl was the artistic director of Eye of the Storm Theatre in Minneapolis, for which she was named Minnesota Artist of the Year in 2003.

ROBERT BRILL's (Scenic Designer) designs for A.C.T. include Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo, Blackbird, and The First Picture Show. His designs for Broadway include Cabaret, Jesus Christ Superstar, Assassins (Tony Award nomination), Guys

and Dolls (Tony Award nomination), Design for Living, Buried Child, and others. His credits also include Christopher Plummer's A Word or Two (Ahmanson Theatre/Stratford Shakespeare Festival); Moby-Dick (The Dallas Opera, San Diego, San Francisco, Washington, DC, Australia, and Canada); Faust (Metropolitan Opera/English National Opera); Everest (The Dallas Opera); The Manchurian Candidate (Minnesota Opera); Wozzeck (San Diego Opera); Robin and the 7 Hoods (The Old Globe); Sinatra: His Voice. His Word. His Way. (Radio City Music Hall); On the Record (Disney); An American in Paris (Boston Ballet); A Clockwork Orange (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); The Laramie Project (Brooklyn Academy of Music and others), and numerous productions for La Jolla Playhouse, where his designs include the Flaming Lips musical Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots, The Darrell Hammond Project, Sideways, His Girl Friday, The Wiz, and many others. He is a founding member of Sledgehammer Theatre and a recipient of the Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration.

JESSIE AMOROSO (Costume Designer) is in his sixth season at A.C.T. and is currently the costume director for the company. Bay Area theater design and styling credits include work at the California Theatre Center, New Conservatory Theatre Center, the Julia Morgan Theatre, Solano College Theatre, the Berkeley City Club Theater, Marines' Memorial Theatre, the Herbst Theatre, Herbst Pavilion, and the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre. A.C.T. credits on the Geary stage are *Testament*, with Seana McKenna, and Underneath the Lintel, starring David Strathairn, both directed by Carey Perloff. Other highlights include designing two world premieres for Brad Erickson at New Conservatory Theatre Center, most recently American Dream. At Project Artaud he designed Caligula, featuring Nancy Carlin, and at Z Space he designed A Round-Heeled Woman: The Play, starring Sharon Gless. He is a graduate of California State University, Hayward (now California State University, East Bay).

LAP CHI CHU's (Lighting Designer) regional credits include designs for the Mark Taper Forum, the Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, The Shakespeare Theater, Arena Stage, Hartford Stage, and Dallas Theater Center. New York credits include designs for The Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Signature Theatre, Second Stage Theatre, Performance Space 122, and Kitchen Theatre Company. He is the lighting/video designer for chameckilerner Dance Company (Costumes by God, Visible Content, Hidden Forms, I mutantes seras, Por favor, and Não me deixe), which has performed in the United States and Brazil. Honors include recognition from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, the Angstrom Award for Career Achievement in Lighting Design, multiple San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, a "Drammy" for Best Lighting, and a Lucille Lortel Award nomination for The Good Negro at The Public Theater. Chu is on the lighting-design faculty at California Institute of the Arts.

C. ANDREW MAYER (Sound Designer)

is a Minneapolis-based sound designer. He has worked with numerous regional theaters in the Twin Cities and elsewhere, including the Guthrie Theater, the Jungle Theater, Mixed Blood Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, and History Theatre, as well as on SeaGlass Theatre's Los Angeles production of How Cissy Grew. He has also worked on several productions with Minnesota Opera, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning Silent Night. He was a McKnight Theater Artist Fellow and won an AUDELCO Award for his design for Carlyle Brown's Pure Confidence at 59E59 Theaters in New York City. Every summer he serves as the producing director of the Acadia Repertory Theatre on Mount Desert Island in Maine. This is his first production with A.C.T.

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



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THINKAS & LOS



Carey Perloff says the gala was "a magical night in the very center of the city; we watched the sun set as the amazing Alan Cumming regaled us with songs and stories against the backdrop of The Strand."

The live auction was a great success; popular items included a pair of restored seats from the original Strand and a dinner for 12 at designer Ken Fulk's Magic Factory with celebrity chef Nancy Oakes. The after-party ended the event with a bang, as DJ Flaxo spun music while guests danced the night away. The gala raised more than \$850,000, thanks to supporters of our programs. We are confident this success will propel us forward as we celebrate the opening of The Strand.

A huge thanks to our gala sponsors: Wells Fargo, BNY Mellon Wealth Management, PG&E, U.S. Bank, Ascent Private Capital Management, Makena Capital, Plant Construction, Dark Horse Winery, Hafner Winery, Ravenswood Winery, Blue Print Studios, and the Fairmont Hotel San Francisco.

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WHO'S WHO IN LOVE AND INFORMATION

MICAH J. STIEGLITZ's (Projection

Designer) previous credits include projection design for Head of Passes at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Bauer off Broadway and at San Francisco Playhouse; Camelot, Promises, Promises, and Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo at San Francisco Playhouse; Breakfast with Mugabe, A Bright New Boise, and Our Practical Heaven at Aurora Theatre Company; and Heart Shaped Nebula, Bonnie & Clyde, and Harry Thaw Hates Everyone at Shotgun Players.

BEATRICE BASSO (Dramaturg) serves as the director of new work at A.C.T., focusing on season planning, the commissioning process, and new-work development through A.C.T.'s New Strands program. She previously served as dramaturg and literary manager at Long Wharf Theatre, where she collaborated on new plays by Julia Cho, Craig Lucas, and Dael Orlandersmith, among others. Basso's translations from Italian have been produced at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and A.C.T. Her experience as a translator has been featured in Tradurre and Theatre Topics and on NPR's All Things Considered. Basso has taught seminars on translation and dramaturgy at UC Santa Cruz, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Yale University. She has worked as a freelance dramaturg at numerous festivals and theaters, including the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, The Ground Floor at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Theatre Calgary. She is an ensemble member with Affinity Project, currently in residence at CounterPulse. Basso has studied drama at Royal Holloway, University of London, and she graduated in classics and theater studies from the University of Padua, Italy.

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

ELISA GUTHERTZ* (Stage Manager) most recently worked on Mr. Burns, a post-electric play; Testament; Major Barbara; Underneath the Lintel; and Arcadia at A.C.T. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include 4000 Miles, The Normal Heart, The Scottsboro Boys, Endgame and Play, Scorched, Once in a Lifetime, Clybourne Park, Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, November, Boleros for the Disenchanted, Rich and Famous, The Rainmaker, A Number, and Eve Ensler's The Good Body, among others. She has also stage-managed The Mystery of Irma Vep; Suddenly, Last Summer; Rhinoceros; Big Love; Civil Sex; Collected Stories; and Cloud Tectonics at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include The Good Body at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Big Love at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and The Vagina Monologues at the Alcazar Theatre.

CHRISTINA HOGAN's* (Assistant Stage Manager) theater credits include Hookman (Encore Theatre Company); And I and Silence, Hir, Arlington, Every Five Minutes, The Happy Ones, Terminus, Se Llama Cristina, and Any Given Day (Magic Theatre); A Raisin in the Sun, Blithe Spirit, Much Ado About Nothing, The Verona Project, and Pastures of Heaven (California Shakespeare Theater); Fuddy Meers and Good People (Marin Theatre Company); and very still and hard to see (A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program). Hogan has a B.A. in theater arts from Saint Mary's College of California.

LESLEY ANN CLEMENT (*Executive Producer*) has supported A.C.T. since 1989. Currently secretary of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, Clement joined the board in 2004, co-chaired the 2010 *Crystal Ball* season gala, and serves on the Development Committee as co-chair of the Producers Circle. She was an executive producer on A.C.T.'s productions of *The Scottsboro Boys, Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City*, and *The Tosca Project*. Her last role on the A.C.T. stage was a walk-on in the finale of *A Christmas Carol*. By day, Clement prosecutes elder-abuse cases.

NOLA YEE (*Executive Producer*) is a member of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees and was recently an executive producer for The Orphan of Zhao. Raised in Honolulu, Yee remembers her first A.C.T. experience from the mid 1970s, when the company toured Hawaii every summer. She holds a B.A. in psychology and an M.S. in information management and systems from UC Berkeley. She is currently a partner at NVC Holdings and is cofounder of the Pikake Foundation. She is a former board member of many nonprofit organizations, including Hospice by the Bay, Hospice of Marin, the Center for Women and Religion of The Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and the San Francisco Aloha Festival, as well as a current board member of NextCourse.

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

VERSATILITY AND TRANSFORMATION

THE M.F.A. PROGRAM ACTORS IN LOVE AND INFORMATION

By Shannon Stockwell

Left to right: Rafael Jordan, Dominique Salerno, Christina Liang, and Joel Bernard. Photo by Anna Woodruff.

ACTORS FROM OUR ACCLAIMED MASTER OF FINE

Arts Program have been seen in almost every show this season, from Ryan Williams French as the title character in *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* and Danielle Frimer and Glenn Stott in *Indian Ink* to countless understudy roles, while the entire third-year class takes the stage each year in *A Christmas Carol. Love and Information* features three members of the M.F.A. Program class of 2015—Joel Bernard, Rafael Jordan, and Dominique Salerno—who celebrated the completion of three years of intensive training at a graduation ceremony on May 18. Second-year student Christina Liang rounds out the cast.

Conservatory Director Melissa Smith is thrilled that these four students have had the opportunity to perform in Caryl Churchill's newest play. "The M.F.A. Program teaches instrumental flexibility, professionalism, collaboration, and transformation," she says. "*Love and Information* demands fluency in those areas. You could not pick a better test of our training."

The very nature of the play is enticing to these four actors. "I love how innovative Churchill's writing is," says Salerno. "Each scene of *Love and Information* is completely different from the last, but there is the same longing and desire to connect."

Love and Information presents actors with the challenge of performing multiple roles. "It's exciting to be able to attack a show from multiple perspectives," says Jordan. "You have to follow your instincts and jump in. You have to know who you are, where you are, right away." Being in a play that invites so many interpretations made the rehearsal process an invigorating experience for the M.F.A. Program actors, all of whom have an affinity for trying on new characters and ideas. "Casey [Stangl, the director] was interested in a real sense of collaboration," says Bernard. "There was a great sense of freedom."

Some of the M.F.A. Program actors' collaborators in the cast include such seasoned performers as Cindy Goldfield and A.C.T. Resident Artist Anthony Fusco. "Working with this group of incredible veteran actors is like being welcomed to eat lunch at the cool kids' table," says Liang. "Everyone is so smart, talented, warm, and inclusive."

"Performing in *Love and Information* is kind of like jumping off the high dive for these actors," says Smith. "How perfect for people who are in or have just graduated from the M.F.A. Program."

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM GRADUATING CLASS OF 2015!

JOSIE ALVAREZ JOEL BERNARD KEMIYONDO COUTINHO RYAN WILLIAMS FRENCH DANIELLE FRIMER RAFAEL JORDAN STEFANÉE MARTIN BEN QUINN DOMINIQUE SALERNO GLENN STOTT

MONSTRESS COMES TO THE STRAND THEATER by Shannon Stockwell

A.C.T. IS THRILLED TO INCLUDE IN OUR 2015–16

subscription season the world premiere of *Monstress*, an evening of two one-act plays that explore the resilience of a community struggling to find home in the ever-shifting sands of the American dream. The project will be the first production at The Strand Theater this fall.

In these two contemporary tales about the rich history of Filipino-American life in California, adapted from the acclaimed collection of short stories by Bay Area author Lysley Tenorio, a vibrant array of characters strive for personal transformations that are seemingly impossible, wonderfully moving, and distinctly theatrical. The infamous eviction of Filipino residents from San Francisco's International Hotel in the 1970s sets the background for Philip Kan Gotanda's stirring *Save the I-Hotel*, which illuminates the dangers of love that crosses forbidden territories. Sean San José's *Presenting*... *the Monstress!*, based on Tenorio's title story, moves us from the streets of Manila to the Bay Area, where a Filipino B-movie director has been seduced by the opportunity to work with a shady American filmmaker.

Tenorio's book of short stories was published in 2012 to great critical acclaim; NPR said, "[Tenorio] has taken a uniquely Filipino-American perspective, polyglot and glittering with cinema dreams, and used it to make a bold collection of stories of the rejected, the helpless and the lost. *Monstress* is the debut of a singular talent." A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff was immediately entranced by the potential theatricality of the stories. Through New Strands, our recently created Lysley Tenorio (center) with playwrights Philip Kan Gotanda (left) and Sean San José (right). Photo by Ryan Montgomery.

new-play development program, we commissioned four artists to select the tales that most inspired them and adapt them for the stage. During the workshopping process, Perloff discovered that Gotanda's *Save the I-Hotel* and San José's *Presenting*...*the Monstress!* could share a cast and would be perfect to present alongside each other. As another part of the *Monstress* project, Colman Domingo's *The Brother(s)*, adapted from Tenorio's story "The Brother," will be presented as a late-night event after the show on October 18 at 10 p.m. and as a part of our Scripts reading series on October 19.

So far, the development process, which has featured several readings along the way, has proved to be "smooth, fun, and generous," says Gotanda. "I've known and worked with A.C.T. for years, and they are as close to a theater family as one can have."

Perloff, Gotanda, and San José have invited Tenorio to be a part of the development of these plays, and he has attended every reading. "I love seeing how these artists have taken my stories and transformed them," says Tenorio. "While they've preserved the integrity of the stories and have remained true to the characters, they've reimagined the material as well, so that it feels like my stories have new life infused into them."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NEW STRANDS,

VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/COMMISSIONS

A SUMMER OF STORY AND SONG THE YOUNG CONSERVATORY'S TWO-PLAY FESTIVAL

By Nirmala Nataraj

A POETIC EXPLORATION OF DIVERSITY AND A

statement-making musical about embracing one's true self will stand side by side in our Young Conservatory's first-ever Two-Play Festival this summer. Envisioned by YC Director Craig Slaight as the perfect way to celebrate the opening of The Strand and the YC's permanent home in our new theater, the festival is a landmark opportunity to showcase work created for and performed by young people. The festival launches this August at The Strand, making its productions the YC's first full shows in our new performance venue and education center.

"The festival puts the YC at the center of our community in an exciting way, and it is also a great opportunity to collaborate with A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs department," says Slaight, who commissioned a new script for this project, which will be directed by A.C.T. Community Artistic Director Tyrone Davis, in collaboration with Oakland's Destiny Arts Center.

Written by Los Angeles–based playwright and poet Christopher Webb, the project brings together a diverse group of young performers from the YC, our Education & Community Programs, and Oakland's Destiny Arts Center, a predominantly movement-based organization that engages young people with themes of resilience and social justice. Performances take place at both Destiny Arts Center and The Strand's second-floor performance space, The Rueff.

Davis is pleased that our Central Market venue will draw new audiences of both young people and adults during the festival. "The Strand will involve the community in everything we do and hopefully make people feel welcomed and like they have a space to see and create theater, not to mention engage in important dialogue about issues facing our city and country," he says.

The Young Conservatory performs *Staying Wild*, a play by Janet Allard, in 2014. Photo by Jay Yamada.

The festival also includes *I'm Still Standing*, a musical based on the songs of Sir Elton John. Almost a decade ago, Slaight approached John to request permission to write the book for a play that would weave together the songwriter's most beloved works as a tribute to John's iconic place in the music industry. John gave Slaight his blessing, and seven years ago, the musical was born. *I'm Still Standing* is an epic tale about a girl named Bennie, a teenage pop icon who embarks on a journey toward acceptance and self-discovery. The play will be performed on The Strand's mainstage, The Toni Rembe Theater, and will mark the first time cabaret seating is used in the space.

The Two-Play Festival offers 35 roles for young people and is a cornerstone of the YC's summer curriculum. Slaight is excited to bring the talent of so many of our students together, especially given his passion for presenting new work that reflects the voices of our youth. "I began commissioning plays for young actors because I knew it would be a way to tap into their true creative talent," says Slaight.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE YOUNG CONSERVATORY AND ENROLLING IN ITS SUMMER PROGRAM? VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/YC

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN BUSINESS AND THE ARTS

STUDIO A.C.T. AND OUR CORPORATE TRAINING PROGRAM by Anna Woodruff

A.C.T. PROVIDES INTENSIVE TRAINING FOR

those who aspire to be theater professionals, but skills learned in an acting class can positively affect a person's life beyond the stage. Many of the classes offered by Studio A.C.T., the Conservatory's extended-learning program, stimulate creativity while cultivating leadership, business, and social skills.

Classes specially created for business-minded students include Acting for the Executive Presence, which helps participants create onstage presence and use acting skills to enhance pitches, keynotes, and public speeches necessary in the corporate world. The Art of Public Speaking covers basic voice, speech, diction, and body-language techniques necessary for everything from sales pitches to TED talks to wedding toasts.

Although some of the available classes will be especially compelling to people in the corporate world, Director of Studio A.C.T. Nick Gabriel says that our offerings are for artists and non-artists alike: "These classes are all about engendering empathy and trust, and using your imagination with an ensemble of people to accomplish a collective goal in a short period of time, just as you would if you were assigned to a team in a corporate environment."

Filipp Nisenzoun took Acting for the Executive Presence in the summer of 2014. Nisenzoun, a product manager for Appirio (a company that helps build cloud-powered businesses), says that Studio A.C.T. taught him a range of lessons, including "appropriate body language and vocal skills, and more advanced lessons, like structuring presentations and handling questions. These skills help ease self-consciousness and let your authentic self emerge."

Photo by Kevin Ber

Conservatory Operations Manager Dan Kolodny says, "Acting is fun to learn, and it provides a skill set that people don't typically receive in regular corporate training."

Given the success of these techniques inside the classroom, A.C.T. has decided to take some of our classes "off campus" with its **Corporate Training Program**. Gabriel and Kolodny have created class models that can be customized to serve a variety of businesses in San Francisco. Classes include Team Building and Collaboration, Storytelling and Presentational Skills, and Acting for the Executive Presence, which are available as half-day, full-day, and two-day sessions.

Gabriel hopes to bridge the gap between the tech sector and the arts by offering these classes off campus. He says, "Both tech professionals and theater professionals are interested in connectivity; it's one aspect of our work that unites us. A.C.T. hopes to expand the very definition of community by bringing some of our best work right into the offices of Bay Area businesses."

STUDIO A.C.T. CLASSES BEGIN JULY 20.

TO SIGN UP, VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/STUDIO

TAKING THEIR SEAT STRAND DONORS JASMINE AND MICHAEL MALAGA

by Mindy Lechman



Jasmine Malaga and daughter Charlotte

A.C.T. IS HONORED TO COMMEMORATE THE

inaugural supporters of The Strand Theater by installing their names on seat plaques, as we know that these inscriptions will inspire theater-loving audiences for years to come.

Jasmine and Michael Malaga have been coming to performances at A.C.T. for the past two decades and became subscribers four years ago. Jasmine used to travel frequently to New York for business and always made time to see a play or two when there. "I'm impressed that the caliber of A.C.T.'s work rivals that of any I saw in Manhattan, even though San Francisco is a much smaller city," she says.

The Malagas have especially enjoyed attending A.C.T. with their friends and sharing the magic of theater. "We set aside several magical evenings a year to invest in our friendships and share our passion for theater," says Jasmine.

This year the Malagas welcomed the arrival of their daughter, Charlotte, who they hope will share their love for the arts. "We want to be part of supporting exceptional theater in San Francisco and to help ensure that institutions like A.C.T. continue to be a part of our daughter's life," Jasmine explains. "Since she was born the year The Strand opened, we thought it would be fitting to sponsor a seat in her name. We hope to introduce her to theater at A.C.T. as she grows up."

The Malagas believe San Francisco needs to continue nurturing the arts and are excited that The Strand will revitalize a building that has been such a mainstay in the city's cultural history. The Strand will also showcase the work of A.C.T.'s Master of Fine Arts Program and Young Conservatory students, house our expanding Education & Community Programs, and provide a venue for a wider range of A.C.T. productions.

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For more information about The Strand and other naming opportunities, please pick up a brochure in the lobby or contact A.C.T. Director of Development Amber Jo Manuel at 415.439.2436 or amanuel@act-sf.org.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (*Director, A.C.T. Artistic Director*) is celebrating her 23rd season as artistic director of A.C.T. This past fall, she staged the New York

premiere of Tom Stoppard's Indian Ink at Roundabout Theatre Company (nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award for Best Revival) before bringing the show to A.C.T. Recent A.C.T. productions also include Testament, Underneath the Lintel, Arcadia, Elektra (coproduced by the Getty Villa in Malibu), Endgame and Play, Scorched, The Homecoming, Tosca Café (cocreated with choreographer Val Caniparoli; toured Canada), and Racine's Phèdre in a coproduction with the Stratford Festival. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. José Rivera's Boleros for the Disenchanted; the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda's After the War (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of A Christmas Carol; the American premieres of Tom Stoppard's The Invention of Love and Indian Ink, and Harold Pinter's Celebration; A.C.T.commissioned translations/adaptations of Hecuba, The Misanthrope, Enrico IV, Mary Stuart, Uncle Vanya, A Mother, and The 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).

Perloff is also an award-winning playwright. Her play Kinship premiered at the Théâtre de Paris last October in a production starring Isabelle Adjani and Niels Schneider, and will be produced at the Williamstown Theater Festival this 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 the Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. The Colossus of Rhodes was workshopped at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, premiered at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theatre, and was produced at A.C.T. in 2003.

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

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

MELISSA SMITH

(*Conservatory Director*, *Head of Acting*) has served as Conservatory director and head of acting in the Master of Fine Arts Program at

A.C.T. since 1995. During that time, she has overseen the expansion of the M.F.A. Program from a two- to a three-year course of study and the further integration of the M.F.A. Program faculty and student body with A.C.T.'s artistic wing. She has also taught and directed in the M.F.A. Program, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught introductory, intermediate, and advanced acting. She has taught acting classes to students of all ages at various colleges, high schools, and studios around the continental United States, at the Mid-Pacific Institute in Hawaii, New York University's La Pietra campus in Florence, and the Teatro di Pisa in San Miniato, Italy. She is featured in Acting Teachers of America: A Vital Tradition. Also a professional actor, she has performed regionally at the Hangar Theatre, A.C.T., California Shakespeare Theater, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre; in New York at Primary Stages and Soho Rep; and in England at the Barbican Theater (London) and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Smith holds a B.A. from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from Yale School of Drama.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A.C.T. Box Office

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

Special Subscription Discounts

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

Single Ticket Discounts

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

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Group Discounts

Groups of 15 or more save up to 50%! For more information call Joseph Rich at 415.439.2473.

At The Theater

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

A.C.T. Merchandise

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

Refreshments

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

Cell Phones!

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

Perfumes

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

Emergency Telephone

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

Latecomers

EXIT

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

Listening Systems

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

STRAND THEATER EXITS



MARKET ST

Photographs and Recordings of A.C.T.

performances are strictly forbidden.

Restrooms are located on the basement level; on the ground floor (two ADA toilets behind the box office); and toward the back of the upper orchestra, on mezzanine 2.



Wheelchair Seating is located at the main cross aisle on the orchestra level, at Box A on the orchestra level, and in the mezzanine. A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is now available 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.



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

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

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ΠΠ

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M2

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