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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER, San Francisco’s Tony Award–winning nonprofit theater, nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training, and an ongoing engagement with our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Ellen Richard, 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.

The beautiful, historic Geary Theater—rising from the rubble of the catastrophic earthquake and fires of 1906 and immediately hailed as the “perfect playhouse”—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.

Perloff also put A.C.T.’s conservatory and educational programs at the center of our work. A.C.T.’s 45-year-old conservatory, led by Conservatory Director Melissa Smith, serves 3,000 students every year. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs. Our M.F.A. Program students often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area as alumni. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19; Studio A.C.T. for adults; and the Summer Training Congress, an intensive program that attracts enthusiasts from around the world.

A.C.T. also brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 9,000 Bay Area school students each year. Central to our ACTsmart education programs, run by Director of Education 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 after-school programs.

With our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood marked by the opening of The Costume Shop theater and the current renovation of The Strand Theater across from UN Plaza, 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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American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.  
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What’s Inside

ABOUT THE PLAY

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THE LEGACY OF SACHER-MASOCH by Michael Paller

VENUS’S REVENGE by Dan Rubin

INSIDE A.C.T.

THE ARTISTS WE LOVE
A.C.T.’s New Play Commissions
by Shannon Stockwell

ENGAGING CURIOUS MINDS
The Next Phase of Studio A.C.T.
by Dan Rubin

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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 theater.

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

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Dan Rubin

CONTRIBUTORS
Michael Paller
Shannon Stockwell

DON’T JUST SIT THERE …

At A.C.T.’s FREE InterACT events you can mingle with cast members, join interactive workshops with theater artists, or meet fellow theatergoers at hosted events in our lounges. Join us for our upcoming production of The Suit and InterACT with us!

BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT
April 23, 8pm
In partnership with the SF 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
April 29, 5:30pm
Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion and Q&A with director Casey Stangl. Can’t make this event? Watch it live—online! Visit act-sf.org/interact for details.

THEATER ON THE COUCH*
May 2, 8pm
Take part in a lively postshow discussion in our lower-level lounge with Dr. Mason Turner, chief of psychiatry at SF’s Kaiser Permanente Medical Center.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES*
May 6, 7pm
May 11 & 14 at 2pm
Join in an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

OUT WITH A.C.T.*
May 7, 8pm
Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGTB party.

WINE SERIES
May 13, 7pm
Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine tasting event in our third-floor Sky Lounge.

PLAYTIME
May 17, 1pm
Get hands-on with theater at this interactive preshow workshop.

To learn more about attending InterACT events, visit act-sf.org/interact.

*Events take place immediately following the performance.
Dear Friends:

One of the reasons I so admire David Ives is that he epitomizes something I deeply believe in, namely the great value to contemporary playwrights of maintaining an active and ongoing investigation of the classics. We live in a culture that is obsessed with the new and the novel. In recent years, funding for the theater has mostly been directed towards new work, with the result that classical repertoire has begun to disappear from our stages. An ingenious playwright, Ives has a thrilling ability to buck the tide by finding unusual classics to adapt and riff upon in the creation of his own new work. He has made magic out of Molière's *School for Wives*, Corneille's *The Liar*, and numerous other French farces; he has resurrected the words of Mark Twain in *Is He Dead?*; and he reinvented *White Christmas* for our times.

The encounter with a vivid classical text can open a writer's imagination to new ideas and theatrical forms, while rescuing contemporary writing from banality. So it was with great joy that I returned to Classic Stage Company (where I once was artistic director) one cold February evening a few years ago and saw a new Ives play called *Venus in Fur*. I had vaguely known the Sacher-Masoch story upon which the play is based, but what thrilled me about *Venus* was the brilliant and witty collision of a totally contemporary circumstance with one of the strangest novels of erotic fiction ever penned. Ives's linguistic deftness allows those two worlds to inform each other in marvelous and surprising ways, and by the end of the evening I had the sensation of having seen not only a delicious classic but also a breathtaking new play. I was particularly delighted that *Venus* premiered at a classical theater before becoming one of the most heralded new plays on Broadway.

The story of how Ives created *Venus* is further proof of his well-developed theatrical muscle. Initially he set out to do a straightforward adaptation of the Sacher-Masoch novel for the stage. Having taken a pass at that task, he sent the results to his longtime collaborator, director Walter Bobbie, who responded that he wasn't sure the nineteenth-century story as told had any contemporary relevance. Rather than abandon the project, Ives wrestled with the material until he hit upon the play-within-a-play scheme, embedding the classical story within a present-day rehearsal studio, into which a desperate actress arrives determined to win the role of her career. Reality and fiction blur and blend as we watch the cat-and-mouse games erupt between director and actress, past and present, play and truth.

Ives's play operates on many levels, keeping us endlessly guessing and entertained, while revealing dark truths at the heart of a violent power struggle. Of course, the director/actor relationship is always a complex one: in trying to sculpt an actor's performance into something matching the vision for the play, the director often resorts to a certain degree of manipulation or muscle. But in the end, the actor is the instrument that matters. The actor will always know more about a role than either the director or even the writer can ever know, because that role is in her own body. *Venus in Fur* is about that vivid embodiment, about the ways in which an actor invites another entity into her skin and relishes the discovery and power of performing that character. It is a totally present-tense play, as all great theater must be, inviting actors to commit with ferocity to a high-stakes game of love and chance.

Those of you who have been coming to A.C.T. for some time know how much we treasure theatricality and the power of the imagination. Next season, we have many riches in store. The plays we have lined up are all about memory: how we attempt to recreate the past through dazzling fragments of what we remember; how storytelling is a constant retelling, reimagining, and misinterpreting of history; and how we as audience members participate in that recreation.

So it is perfect that we are opening our 2014–15 season with *Old Hats*, an explosive new work by two of the most brilliant clowns in the world, Bill Irwin and David Shiner. Ever since their landmark *Fool Moon*, Bill and David have wanted to create a piece about what happens to clowns when they get older. The hilarious and heartbreaking fruit of their quest is a show (originally developed at the Signature Theatre in New York) that takes them into cyberspace and beyond, but always returns them to the totally human anxieties over love and loss, aching bones, and the indelible memory of what they...
Once were. *Old Hats* is a metaphysical eruption of hilarity and humanity by master artists working at the peak of their craft.

Another kind of memory game is happening in Colm Tóibín’s fiercely lyrical Tony Award–nominated one-woman show, *Testament*, which recounts in riveting detail Mary’s personal narrative of the last days in the life of her son, Jesus. Held under house arrest until she cooperates with the authorities, Tóibín’s unforgettable Mary grieves for her child while questioning the motives of those who would deify him. How do legends form? Who has the right to rewrite history? Whose memory counts in the end? Tóibín, a celebrated Irish novelist, has created in Mary a character of astonishing poignancy, wit, ferocity, and vulnerability—and legendary Canadian actress Seana McKenna (whom many of you just saw in *Napoli!*?) will bring her to blazing life on the Geary stage. With potent contemporary echoes of mothers around the world who have lost sons to the fervor of coercive movements, *Testament* asks us unsettling questions about faith, fanaticism, and family.

Like Tóibín, playwright Anne Washburn asks big questions about the slippery nature of memory in *Mr. Burns*, her dystopian comedy about a group of post-apocalyptic survivors trying to recreate from memory the “Cape Fear” episode of *The Simpsons*. Washburn, a Bay Area native, has written an ingenious salute to the resilience of storytelling, asking us, “If you lost everything, what would it take to rebuild your culture?” A play that was hailed in New York for leaving audiences “dizzy with the scope and dazzle of its ideas,” *Mr. Burns* makes all of us responsible for the preservation of civilization as we watch a fragment of pop culture become the raft on which we float.

Memory also looms large in Tom Stoppard’s exquisite *Indian Ink*, which we are revisiting next season in collaboration with Roundabout Theatre Company in New York, after our American premiere of the play 15 years ago. Of all of Stoppard’s plays, *Indian Ink* is perhaps his most romantic—and also most personal. Stoppard grew up in India during World War II, and out of his memories he has created a stunning time-travel play about the relationship between an English poet and an Indian painter in 1930, and how that relationship is discovered (and misinterpreted) years later by those who love them.

It is fortuitous that we will be presenting this magical play about poetry, passion, and missed opportunities in the same season as a musical that perfectly encapsulates those themes: Stephen Sondheim’s sumptuous *A Little Night Music*, which will be directed by Mark Lamos. Filled with Sondheim’s signature wit and some of his most gorgeous melodies (including the beloved and haunting treasure “Send in the Clowns”), this is a bittersweet tale of lost love, scandalous infidelity, and young passions that intertwine over a midsummer’s eve at a country home in 1900s Sweden. It will be a luscious way to usher in the summer.

That’s only the beginning! There’s another Geary play to come and also the opening production of The Strand Theater yet to be announced. We are in for a tremendously exciting season, and we truly hope you will join us for all of it.

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
A.C.T.’S groundbreaking 2014–2015

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THE SUIT

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Four performers. Three musicians. A couple of chairs and clothing racks. In the mysterious alchemy of theater, sometimes the simplest and most unlikely elements combine to create the most imaginative, moving stories. In many ways, *The Suit* is a simple story, plainly told. But in the hands of visionary director Peter Brook, its simplicity conjures up theatrical magic.

An international hit that has captivated audiences across the globe, *The Suit* takes place in apartheid-era South Africa in Sophiatown, a suburb of Johannesburg, which burned brightly as a center of black culture in the 1940s and 1950s before being demolished a few years later. Against this lively backdrop, a classic tale of adultery unfolds, with a terrifying twist: when a husband catches his wife in the arms of her lover, the lover flees—but leaves his suit behind. As her penance, the husband orders his wife to “treat the suit as an honored guest.” Accompanying her wherever she goes, the suit takes on a life of its own, a whimsical yet cruel reminder of her infidelity—and an indelible mark on their future.

The New York Times anointed Brook “the most influential stage director alive” for his varied, inventive, and astounding work. For *The Suit*, he joins with longtime collaborator Marie-Hélène Estienne and composer Frank Krawczyk to depict the horrors and humiliation of a communal tragedy—apartheid—through a profoundly intimate, fable-like tale. As it weaves together evocative African melodies with soaring jazz standards, the play’s music underscores the immediacy and complexity of this haunting story, integrating the virtuosic musicians directly into the action.

“The Suit is magical in the most elemental and purely theatrical way,” says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff of her decision to bring the production to San Francisco. “It reminds us that all it takes is a good story on a bare stage to captivate an audience and help them imagine a whole world.”

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presents

VENUS IN FUR

BY David Ives

DIRECTED BY Casey Stangl

SET DESIGN BY John Lee Beatty

COSTUME DESIGN BY Alex Jaeger

LIGHTING DESIGN BY Alexander V. Nichols

SOUND DESIGN BY Will McCandless

DRAMATURGY BY Michael Paller

CASTING BY Janet Foster, CSA

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THOMAS

Chad Deverman*

VANDA

Anna Ishida*

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

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VENUS IN FUR IS PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.
THE LEGACY OF SACHER-MASOCH

By MICHAEL PALLER
If Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836–95) walked into the theater today, he’d be surprised to know that his reputation, such as it is, revolves around one slim novel written in 1870, *Venus in Furs* (he used the plural). He’d also be dismayed, on two counts: first, that the rest of his large output has been forgotten; and second, that the one work that hasn’t is remembered only for the outré sexual predilection of its hero, a Galician gentleman named Severin. Sacher-Masoch considered *Venus* to be an important document about the relations between men and women, not pornography. He was certainly unhappy when, in 1893, the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing borrowed his name to coin the term “masochism,” describing a person who desires being “completely and unconditionally subject to the will of a person of the opposite sex; of being treated by this person as by a master, humiliated and abused.”

Raised mostly in Prague, Sacher-Masoch was born in Lemberg, the capital of Galicia, on the far eastern edges of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Lemberg is now Lviv; that part of Galicia is now Ukraine). At his father’s wish, he obtained a law degree, though he was more interested in literature and the theater. His first post was as a history teacher at the university in Graz, Austria, and his first book, published in 1857, was a highly dramatic account of the sixteenth-century revolt against Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. At about the same time, he began writing fiction, and in 1860, after two successful novels, he gave up teaching and turned full time to a literary life.

By the time he died, he’d written 15 novels, dozens of stories, and several volumes of criticism. In some literary circles he was considered the heir and equal of Turgenev; critics praised his collection of Jewish tales for their sharp observation, brilliant characterization and dialogue, and warmth and sympathy for his subjects, the poor Jewish inhabitants of the villages and towns of Galicia. Indeed, while he became a cosmopolitan literary man who lived in Vienna and Berlin, Sacher-Masoch (who wasn’t Jewish but whose oft-stated sympathy for Jews led many to think he was) found much of his creative inspiration in the Eastern Europe he knew as a child.

**THE LEGACY OF CAIN**

His interests, though, were far-reaching. They included the pressing need for governmental reform and concerns about the rise of militarism (especially in Germany) and the eradication of poverty. He envisioned a United States of Europe with equal rights for women and Jews, the abolition of private property, a morality centered on altruism, and an acceptance of a wide range of sexual practices. The work he was most celebrated for in his lifetime, an ambitious multiwork compendium called *The Legacy of Cain*, took in all of this and more. His purpose in writing this gigantic cycle of novels, novellas, and stories, he said, was to “illustrate the universal struggle for existence” across all human activity.

The legacy of Cain’s murder of Abel, as Sacher-Masoch saw it, included Love, Property, the State, War, Work, and Death. Each of these was to be the subject of an individual volume, each volume consisting of six tales of various lengths, from stories to novels. The first five would illustrate the reality of each of these topics as experienced in daily life; the sixth would present the ideal condition, yet to be attained. *Venus in Furs* was the fifth entry in the volume on Love, preceded by a comparatively sympathetic portrayal of homosexuality called *Plato’s Love*. (Sacher-Masoch completed only the volumes on Love and Property, which together comprised 11 novels.) The multi-story approach had its uses beyond expressing his political and social beliefs. It gave him a structural reason to write repeatedly about love and sex, which he did, inside and outside *The Legacy*.

**ART IMITATING LIFE IMITATING ART**

Sacher-Masoch didn’t have to look beyond himself for *Venus*’s inspiration. Years after its publication, he recalled a childhood episode that he said accounted for his desire to be beaten by a woman wearing fur. He had surprised his aunt, wearing a “green velvet jacket trimmed with squirrel,” in an assignation with her lover. As a punishment, she threw him on the carpet and whipped him. The experience, he wrote, “became engraved on my soul as with a red-hot iron.” In *Venus*, Severin tells a similar story. The novel’s action also closely mirrors Sacher-Masoch’s experience with his mistress, a widow named Fanny von Pistor, whom he met a year or two before writing *Venus*. Like Severin, Sacher-Masoch traveled with her to Italy under the name “Gregor,” wearing a servant’s uniform and
traveling in a third-class train coach. As in the novel, he signed a contract pledging to be Fanny’s slave for six months, while she promised to wear fur “as often as practical and especially when being cruel.” A photograph of the pair of them bears a striking resemblance to the painting described early in the novel: Fanny, in furs, reclines on an ottoman holding a whip in her left hand, while Sacher-Masoch kneels at her feet.

When the novel was published, he received a fan letter from a woman named Aurora Rümelin. It was, she wrote in her memoirs, such a shameless letter that she scarcely believed she could write, let alone mail, it. She signed it “Wanda von Dunajev,” the name of Severin’s nemesis, love, and mistress. Sacher-Masoch responded immediately and they met. When they married soon after, Aurora assumed both Wanda’s name and sexual persona. She and Sacher-Masoch drew up a contract, very similar to the one in the novel and referred to in the play: Sacher-Masoch pledged to be Wanda’s “slave lying in the dust.” She, in turn, could exercise “the greatest cruelty,” in return for which he agreed to kiss the foot that kicked him. The final clause reads, “If ever you can no longer bear my domination, and the chains become too heavy for you, then you must kill yourself—I will never give you your freedom.” Alas for her, it was Wanda who eventually could not put up with their life. She found fulfilling her duties as a mother to their children and a dominatrix to her husband too exhausting. Sacher-Masoch moved on to another woman, as in the novel Wanda moves on to another man, and they divorced.

SEX AND LITERATURE

When Venus was published in the Love volume of The Legacy, the liberal Vienna journal the Neue Freie Presse denounced it and Sacher-Masoch, whom it called a nihilist and a communist. Beyond that, however, there was little public uproar about Severin’s sexual obsession with whips and furs. Perhaps, as an anonymous critic writing in the Times Literary Supplement put it a hundred years later, “the Gothic quality of his fictions about splendid viragos and their self-sacrificing worshippers fitted into the folk traditions of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.” That is, Western European readers weren’t bothered by masochistic sexual practices in literature when performed by the barbarian inhabitants of Eastern Europe, where Venus begins—at a resort in the Carpathian mountains.

Of course, for centuries Europeans had been reading accounts of sexual practices, several of which they’d never admit to wanting to try themselves. The first use of the word dominatrix in literature occurred in the tenth century, when it was used by the nun-poet-playwright Hroswitha. She didn’t employ it within a sexual context, but as the scholar Jeremy Hugh Baron points out, she used it in her poem about the Virgin Mary to describe a “fragile woman who is victorious and a strong man who is routed with confusion.” The first-century Satyricon is a smorgasbord of sex scenes; The Canterbury Tales and The Decameron are replete with them. Sexual whippings turn up in Restoration plays from the obscure The Virtuoso to the better-known Venice Preserved, in which a senator asks a courtesan to spit in his face and kick and whip him. Fanny Hill, published in 1748, has been called the first example of pornography in the form of a novel, and the first one in England to describe flagellation in detail. The nineteenth century brought Europe the explicit poetry of Swinburne and Baudelaire, to say nothing of the pornography of de Sade. So it’s not surprising that readers took the sexual content of Venus in stride.

So why has Sacher-Masoch been forgotten? Some critics suggest it’s due to our refusal, until well into the twentieth century, to take seriously the literary treatment of a whole range of sexual practices. Others have argued that his writing just wasn’t very good. In either case, what’s true is that Sacher-Masoch never hid his kind of desire from the public, and his insistence that it was a legitimate subject for serious literature—along with his interest in social justice generally—made him an activist for understanding and equality before his time. Perhaps that’s his real legacy.

WORDS on PLAYS

Celebrates 20 Years!

Words on Plays, A.C.T.’s renowned performance guide series, started 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 Venus in Fur!
May 7–17
A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM PERFORMS
THE GIRL FROM MAXIM’S
by Georges Feydeau Directed by Mark Rucker
A showgirl shimmies her way into high society in this sparkling farce of love and mistaken identity set in 1880s Paris.

May 7–17
A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM PERFORMS
OUR LADY OF 121ST STREET
by Stephen Adly Guirgis Directed by Edris Cooper
A hilarious and scorchingly dark comedy about a group of estranged friends who reunite at a nun’s funeral in Harlem.

May 14–17
A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM AND YOUNG CONSERVATORY PERFORM
TEACH FOR AMERICA
by Rob Ackerman Directed by W.D. Keith
An idealistic young teacher reveals unpleasant truths about American history to her students—stirring up controversy and dire consequences.

MORE SHOWS, MORE SAVINGS!
SEE TWO SHOWS FOR JUST $30 (A $10 SAVINGS) OR SEE ALL THREE FOR $40!
In the ancient Greek tradition, Venus was called Aphrodite, and she was a goddess born out of revenge. Uranus, primeval god of the sky and father of the Titans, cast his insurgent sons, the Cyclopes, deep into the Underworld. In retribution, the mother goddess, Gaia, persuaded Cronus, youngest of the Titans, to attack his father. While Uranus slept, Cronus castrated him and threw the dismembered parts down to earth. Where the flesh landed in the Mediterranean Sea, the water began to foam. Soon after, Aphrodite emerged.

When Aphrodite entered the assembly of the Olympian gods on Mount Olympus, it was immediately clear that she would be trouble. In a room of divine beauties, all eyes were on her. “Each one of [the gods] prayed that he might lead her home to be his wedded wife, so greatly were they amazed at [her] beauty,” sings an ancient Homeric hymn. Assessing the situation, Zeus quickly married off his adopted daughter to the steady-but-lame god of the forge, Hephaestus. This infamously mismatched pairing pushed Aphrodite into a series of adulterous affairs. The most notorious of these was with the war-hungry god Ares, but her promiscuity extended to other Olympians: Hermes, Poseidon, and Dionysus.

Aphrodite could incite and direct desire as she pleased. “There is nothing among the blessed gods or among mortal men that has escaped Aphrodite,” the Homeric hymn continues. “Even the heart of Zeus, who delights in thunder, is led astray by her; though he is greatest of all and has the lot of highest majesty, she beguiles even his wise heart whenever she pleases, and mates him with mortal women, unknown to Hera.” Annoyed to be the victim of Aphrodite’s whims, all-powerful Zeus shamed the goddess by making her fall in love with a series of mortals. These included the beautiful Adonis (whom Aphrodite reluctantly shared with the goddess Persephone) and the Trojan hero Anchises (father of Aeneas).

When duly honored, Aphrodite could be a powerful ally. Famously, during the Judgment of Paris, the Trojan prince gave her a golden apple inscribed with the phrase “To the fairest,” infuriating the goddess’s competitors, Hera and Athena. As his reward, Paris was given the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen. The Greek prince Hippomenes prayed to Aphrodite for assistance in his pursuit of the princess Atalanta: “Come, lovely Cytherea [Aphrodite], prosper the deed I dare and with thy grace nourish the flame of love that thou hast lit.” Soon Atalanta was his. Likewise, when Pygmalion, king of Cyprus, fell in love with an ivory statue he had sculpted, he prayed to Aphrodite, and the cold stone came to life.

On the other hand, Hades hath no fury like Aphrodite scorned. Aphrodite gave Helen to Paris, but Helen was already married to the Greek king Menelaus. Years earlier, Menelaus had promised to sacrifice a hundred head of cattle to Aphrodite should he win Helen’s hand. Following the wedding, however, the king failed to honor his pledge, and the wrathful goddess sent his trophy wife to Troy—igniting the epic Trojan War. Helen’s father, the Spartan king Tyndareus, likewise neglected to honor the goddess. Both of his daughters (Helen’s sister was Clytemnestra, the betrayed wife of Agamemnon, who watched her husband murder her daughter) were cursed with unlucky marriages. When King Theseus’s son, Hippolytus, devoted himself to the chaste goddess Artemis, an insulted Aphrodite bewitched his stepmother, Phaedra, causing her to be seized with a wild passion for her stepson that resulted in their gruesome deaths. Other examples of her fury abound.

When the Trojan Anchises discovered he had lain with the goddess of beauty, he was duly overcome with terror. He knew that when a mortal and immortal intertwined, it was often at the mortal’s peril. He prayed for pity. Aphrodite comforted her one-night-stand: she promised him no harm, and she promised him a great son. But should Anchises boast of their indiscretion, all bets were off. “Refrain from naming me,” she warned the man. “Avoid the rage of the gods.” After imparting this sound advice, she disappeared into the windy sky.
There is nothing among the blessed gods or among mortal men that has escaped Aphrodite’s whim, she beguiles even his wise heart whensoever she pleases, and mates him with mortal women, unknown to Hera. Annoyed to be the victim of Aphrodite’s whims, all eyes were on her. “Each one of [the gods] prayed that he might lead war. Helen’s father, the Spartan king Tyndareus, likewise wanted Aphrodite should he win Helen’s hand. Following the wedding, Aeneas (father of Aeneas) and the Trojan hero Anchises, to attack his father. While Uranus slept, Cronus cast his insurgent god of the sky and father of the Titans, cast his insurgent son, the mother goddess, Gaia, persuaded Cronus, youngest of the Titans, to attack his father. When duly honored, Aphrodite could be a powerful ally. Whether you have a week or a month, our popular summer sessions immerse students in the joy of acting as they develop their talents, learn new skills, and gain the confidence to succeed onstage and beyond. Each session concludes with a performance for family and friends. Classes include acting, improvisation, musical theater, audition technique, and more!

I really grew as a teacher and actor during my time [at A.C.T.], and I cherish the connections, ideas, and lessons I was exposed to. In my 16 years teaching drama, your Back to the Source program was the most enlightening and fruitful professional development I have participated in.”
**Henry Clarke***

(Thomas) recently toured with L.A. Theatre Works, twice taking *Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers* to China and playing Robert Kennedy in *RFK: The Journey to Justice*. Favorite theater credits include Foster in *No Man's Land* at the American Repertory Theater; Adam in *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* at SpeakEasy Stage Company; and four seasons at Shakespeare & Company, where he played Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Richmond in *Richard III*, and Malcolm in *Macbeth*, among others. His television credits include the national PBS special *Brush Up Your Shakespeare: An Evening at Pops, Chuck, Lie to Me, and House M.D.* He currently appears in *Action English* on China Central Television. He holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from Smith College and an M.F.A. in acting from the American Repertory Theater/Moscow Art Theatre Company; and four seasons at Shakespeare & Company, where he played *Shakespeare & Company*, *Stage Company*; and four seasons at *22 / AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER *

**Brenda Meaney***

(Vanda) most recently played the role of Marion Clegg in Caryl Churchill’s *Owners* at Yale Repertory Theatre and Melanie in Lewis Black’s *One Slight Hitch* at Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater. Meaney is a recent graduate of the M.F.A. program at the Yale School of Drama, where she appeared as Arkadina in *The Seagull*, Octavia in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and The Angel in *Angels in America: Perestroika*, as well as roles in *She Rode Horses Like the Stock Exchange*, *Hong Kong Dinosaur*, and *The Tall Girls*. Television credits include Yvonne in *Love/Hate* (Radio Telefis Eireann).
ALEX JAEGER (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for Major Barbara, Arcadia, 4000 Miles, Maple and Vine, Once in a Lifetime, The Homecoming, November, Speed-the-Plow, and Rock ‘n’ Roll for A.C.T.; Buried Child, Se Llama Christina, Bruja, What Were Up Against, Or, Oedipus el Rey, Goldfish, Mrs. Whitney, Mauritius, and Every Five Minutes for Magic Theatre; Two Sisters and a Piano for The Public Theater in New York; All My Sons, True West, Nostalgia, and others for South Coast Repertory; A Streetcar Named Desire, August: Osage County, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Romeo and Juliet, Handler, Stop Kiss, Fuddy Meers, and Dead Man’s Cell Phone for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Other Desert Cities and A Parallelogram for the Mark Taper Forum; The Nether, The Paris Letter, and Eclipsed for the Kirk Douglas Theatre; and Doubt, Tally’s Folly, and Looped for the Pasadena Playhouse. Other credits include many productions with the Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C., and the Geffen Playhouse. Jaeger is the recipient of several design awards, including two L.A. Ovation Awards, three Back Stage Garland Awards, and four Drama-Logue Awards.

ALEXANDER V. NICHOLS (Lighting Design) returns to A.C.T. for his 16th production. Theater credits include the Broadway productions of Wishful Drinking, Hugh Jackman Back on Broadway, and Nice Work If You Can Get It and off-Broadway productions of Los Big Names, Horizon, Bridge and Tunnel, Taking Over, Through the Night, In the Wake, and In Masks Outrageous and Austere. Regional theater credits include designs for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, the Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Dance credits include resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet. He was the lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre and has been the resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, among others. Other projects include the museum installation Circle of Memory, recently presented in Stockholm, and visual choreography for LIFE: A Journey Through Time, recently presented at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

WILL McCANDLESS (Sound Designer) is a theatrical sound designer, composer, and audio engineer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Recent design credits include Napoli!, 4000 Miles, and Higher for A.C.T.; A Winter’s Tale, Lady Windermere’s Fan, Spunk, Blithe Spirit, and Candida for California Shakespeare Theater; I and You and The Whipping Man for Marin Theatre Company; and The Great Gatsby and The Whipping Man for Virginia Stage Company. McCandless has been a visiting artist at San José State University, University of San Francisco, Sonoma State University, St. Mary’s College of California, and Solano College Theatre. McCandless has received two Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for sound design and he has been a recipient of the Eric Landisman Fellowship, a program of Theatre Bay Area.

MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams’s Small Craft Warnings at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and Williams in an Hour (Smith & Kraus 2010); he has also written theater and book reviews for the Washington Post, Village Voice, Newsday, and Mirabella magazine. Last year, he adapted the text for the San Francisco Symphony’s multimedia presentation of Peer Gynt.
Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.


**DANIELLE CALLAGHAN’S** (Stage Manager) previous A.C.T. credits include *Major Barbara, Stuck Elevator, 4000 Miles, Higher, Armistead Maupin’s Tales of the City, Scapin, The Tosca Project, Vigil, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Souvenir, Rock ‘n Roll, Speed-the-Plow, Sweeney Todd, Blackbird, Death in Venice*, and six productions of *A Christmas Carol*. Other favorite shows include *What We’re Up Against* and *Mauritius* with Magic Theatre; *Mefistofele, Falstaff, The Tales of Hoffmann, Lohengrin*, and Nixon in China with San Francisco Opera.

**STEPHANIE SCHLIEBAN** (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked on *Elektra, Race, Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet, The Tosca Project, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, and Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo*, among others, at A.C.T. Other local stage management credits include *One Night with Janis Joplin, A Minister’s Wife, The Death of the Novel, Bill W. and Dr. Bob, Double Indemnity, Spring Awakening*, and *The Dresser*, among others, at San Jose Repertory Theatre; *Flower Drum Song, Guys and Dolls, The King and I, Gypsy*, and *The Wizard of Oz* at American Musical Theatre of San Jose; *Anansi the Spider, Orson’s Shadow, and The Last Schwartz* at Marin Theatre Company; *Le nozze di Figaro* and *The Magic Flute* at Opera San Jose; and *Silent Sky* and the New Works Festivals of 2009, 2010, and 2013 at TheatreWorks. She has also worked with Teatro ZinZanni and the Circus Center of San Francisco.
JOHN LITTLE and HEATHER STALLINGS LITTLE (Executive Producers) recently produced *Arcadia* at A.C.T. Heather Stallings Little is a C.P.A. turned writer who worked in investment banking and as the chief financial officer of a company that manages the affairs of professional athletes. A frequent adventure traveler, she writes travel stories as well as fiction and “Travels with My Crazy Husband” on her *Posts from the Silicon Valley Outback* blog. She is the author of the novel *False Alarm* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*’s new fiction serial *Click City*, which follows a multitude of quirky characters with San Francisco as the canvas. Her short fiction has appeared in *ZYZZYVA*. Heather joined the A.C.T. board of trustees in 2011 and John is on the Asian Art Museum board of trustees. He is an entrepreneur and inventor and enjoys adventure travel, skiing, tennis, and photography.

DOUG TILDEN and TERESA KELLER (Executive Producers) were recently executive producers on last season’s *4000 Miles*, and Tilden has been executive producer and company sponsor for several A.C.T. offerings in the past. He has more than four decades of experience in international shipping and is actively engaged in international humanitarian issues, international education, and global awareness. He serves on the boards of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and World Savvy. He is an amateur archaeologist and sits on the board of the Archaeological Institute of America. Keller is cofounder of Round the World with Us, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing youth of different cultures together through service learning. Keller serves on the advisory council of Children International and plays a leadership role in developing their chapter initiative. Prior to Round the World, Keller was executive director of the 220,000-member Archaeological Institute of America.

ADDITIONAL CREDIT
Jonathan Rider, Fight Director

Trustee Extraordinaire: JO S. HURLEY

BY HELEN RIGBY

Jo S. Hurley, a member of the board of trustees, has been an A.C.T. subscriber since 1970 and a donor since 1975. She is the chair of the Prospero Society Committee and a trustee host to M.F.A. Program students. Hurley is passionate about supporting A.C.T. as an executive producer, and she supports the theater through legacy giving. Hurley often joins the staff in the V.I.P. Lounge, chatting with donors about her love of theater and the Prospero Society.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME A THEATER LOVER? I was nine years old, in the third grade. The high school was doing a play and I wanted to be in it. I auditioned with four other girls and I got the part! (Now that I look back on it, I probably got the part because I had the loudest voice.) After that experience, I was hooked. I did more acting in junior high and in high school, but in college at the University of Kansas I became very interested in lighting design. I wired klieg lights and worked the light boards. I loved being backstage.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER A.C.T.? When Bill Ball came to A.C.T. in 1967, two or three actors came to an organization that I was part of and gave a talk about A.C.T. My husband and I started attending and became subscribers in 1970.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE PRODUCTIONS AND EVENTS AT A.C.T. One of my favorite shows was *Merchant of Venice* [1970] done in turn-of-the-century costumes. I loved *Tartuffe* [1999] and *Arcadia*—both times [1995 and 2013]! I especially love the Producer’s Circle Dinner on the Geary stage, and I’ve enjoyed the student performances at the Prospero Society Luncheons.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE PROSPERO SOCIETY? While doing our estate planning, we put A.C.T. in our trust but didn’t tell anyone. A few years later we got a letter inviting us to join the Prospero Society. We wanted to make sure that our gift would keep giving. Naming A.C.T. in our estate plans would make that happen. I tell prospective members, “If you like theater and want it to continue, you have to help its longevity. One way to do it is to join the Prospero Society. It doesn’t have to be complicated; just put us in your will.” Legacy giving enables everyone, even if you can’t give a large gift during your lifetime, to play a part in A.C.T.’s future. The Prospero Society is one of the best-kept secrets at A.C.T.

WHY IS A.C.T. AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR LIFE? The plays, the people, the staff; watching the M.F.A. Program students perform for high school audiences; attending Young Conservatory performances. The Geary Theater is magical. As corny as it might sound, A.C.T. leaves a warm spot in my heart. There is no place like it.

Currently 108 Prospero Society members are providing for the future of A.C.T. Won’t you join them? For information about joining the Prospero Society, contact Helen Rigby, Associate Director of Development, at 415.439.2469 or hrigby@act-sf.org. Visit www.act-sf.org/support to learn more about our planned giving program.
With the opening of our intimate and versatile Costume Shop theater in 2011 and the unveiling of The Strand Theater on the not-so-distant horizon, A.C.T. suddenly has a variety of performance spaces in which to work and play. This excites Beatrice Basso, A.C.T.’s newly named director of new work: “I feel we have such an opportunity to go to the artists we love and invite them into our homes—to be able to let their pieces grow, and then give the pieces the best venue, with the right size and the right spirit,” she tells us. Looking forward to having a stage ideally suited for new work, our Artistic Department has commissioned several artists to write new theater pieces to coincide with The Strand’s opening in spring 2015.

One of the first artists we contacted was Christina Anderson, who was named by American Theatre magazine as one of the 15 up-and-coming artists “whose work will be transforming America’s stages for decades to come.” She was first introduced to A.C.T. three years ago by Stephen Buescher, head of movement on our Master of Fine Arts Program faculty. “The collaborations with the students and different directors we’ve paired her with have been so fruitful that it was a natural choice to offer her a commission,” says Basso. Anderson toured The Strand before renovations began last year, and she was inspired by the history of the century-old cinema. Her new play, which has yet to be titled, will be an exploration of The Strand and the Central Market neighborhood in which it exists.

Another project in the works is a series of adaptations of the short stories collected in Monstress, by the San Francisco-based Filipino author Lysley Tenorio. Artistic Director Carey Perloff was inspired by the theatricality of Tenorio’s stories and the timely issues they explored: immigration, eviction, the perils of gentrification, and clashes between generations and cultures. A.C.T. took a unique approach to this commission, pitching the project to multiple artists and letting them choose the story that most inspired them. Many of these artists are local: Philip Kan Gotanda, the Berkeley-based playwright who wrote After the War for A.C.T. in 2007, is adapting the story “Save the I-Hotel”; Sean San José, cofounder of the San Francisco-based theater company Campo Santo, is adapting “Monstress”; and Colman Domingo, who began his theater career in San Francisco before moving to New York, is adapting “The Brothers.”

Additionally, because A.C.T. is passionate about exploring various types of performance, poet Jessica Hagedorn and composer Fabian Obispo are collaborating on adapting the story “Felix Starro” into a music-theater piece. “We are fascinated by multidisciplinary works,” Basso says. “We’re excited to imagine a stage where more and more of that takes place—of inclusion, rather than exclusion—of different performance styles, dance, music, spoken word, poetry, coming together.”
Bay Area composer and playwright Dave Malloy came to the attention of A.C.T. through Casting Director Janet Foster and Associate Artistic Director Mark Rucker, who saw the playwright’s work during a trip to New York. They fell in love with his play *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* and his music. “This is an artist that we’ve known and loved, but now we have a venue that feels right for the tone and the delicacy of his pieces,” Basso explains. Malloy already had an idea in mind that he felt would be right for The Strand: *The Happiness of Fish*, a music-theater piece that explores atheism and theism through the lenses of movement, beauty, and Taoism.

Through its Grace Magill New Plays Program, A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory has been commissioning plays for young actors since 1989. It is through this program, started by YC Director Craig Slaight, that we came to know the Irish Indian playwright Ursula Rani Sarma, who wrote *Riot* for us in 2010. We recently commissioned her to adapt Khaled Hosseini’s best-selling novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* for the stage. We are also commissioning the celebrated Irish novelist Colm Tóibín, whose one-woman play, *Testament*, will appear in our 2014–15 season starring Seana McKenna as Mary, Jesus’s mother. Working with director Maria Aitken, Tóibín will adapt The Aspern Papers, a Henry James novella from 1888.

The artistic team also commissioned Melinda Lopez to write a new translation of *Yerma*, the classic play by Federico García Lorca. This project continues A.C.T.’s longstanding tradition of commissioning new translations. “In the world of new play development, translations are not often considered new work, but the way we do them here truly is, in terms of development,” says Basso, whose translation of the Italian play *Napoli* just appeared on the Geary stage.

“The best discussions that we have had about opening The Strand were about not differentiating the classical work—which maybe A.C.T. is more known for—from new plays and new projects,” Basso explains. “Our conversations are about opening up the possibilities. We don’t think in binary categories of classical theater versus new plays, but about how they can feed each other in an open and fertile way to create an exciting combustion.”

The list of projects continues. “We have other artists that we love cultivating,” says Basso. “We like to do so in a way that is open hearted, so that each artist feels empowered to do their best and freest work, but as a team we are also interested in accompanying with total commitment, interest, and constructive feedback each project in which we invest our enthusiasm, time, and resources. We want to become a team with our artists while they are in our midst—and beyond.”

When asked what she envisions the future of A.C.T.’s new works program to be, she summarized her thoughts in two words: “Abundant. Unexpected.”
ENGAGING CURIOUS MINDS
THE NEXT PHASE OF STUDIO A.C.T.
by Dan Rubin

In an introductory acting class currently offered by the Studio A.C.T. wing of our conservatory, a retiree in her early 80s is training alongside a teenager who is taking some time off between high school and college. What transcends their age gap is a love for theater and, above all, says Studio A.C.T.’s new director, Nick Gabriel, “curiosity.”

Studio A.C.T. is our extended learning program for adults (19 and older). Its mission is simple, Gabriel explains: “We are trying to enrich the lives of theater enthusiasts.” Tuition costs are kept purposefully low in order to make courses accessible to the widest cross section of our community, and the courses attract professionals, dabbling amateurs, and aspiring artists—young artists just starting out and older students looking for something new. “We give people an outlet for their creativity that is not satisfied elsewhere in their lives,” Gabriel sums up.

Gabriel, having taught in every educational program we offer, is uniquely suited to guide the future of Studio A.C.T. He began as a student in our Master of Fine Arts Program and then started teaching in the Young Conservatory (YC) and Summer Training Congress (STC). Since graduating with his masters in 2009, he has taught in the M.F.A. Program and as a teaching artist in the Education Department’s Acting for Critical Thought collaboration with Downtown High School. For Studio A.C.T., Gabriel has taught acting and movement for the actor, and in the spring session he will co-teach a workshop with an Anton Chekhov expert about playing the language of Chekhov while applying the techniques of the playwright’s nephew Michael Chekhov.

Meanwhile, Gabriel continues to perform around the Bay Area. He is an A.C.T. resident artist and recently played Amedeo in Napoli! He has also been seen at The Geary in Arcadia, Scorched, Endgame, and Once in a Lifetime. “I have experience interfacing with all of these populations of students and actors,” he tells us. “And it feels like a good fit that I should be the one to carry on the legacy of Studio A.C.T.”

Catering to a broad range of students is a defining characteristic of Studio A.C.T. “We are an extraordinary social experiment in that regard,” smiles Gabriel. “We bring new meaning to the expression ‘academic diversity.’ Anyone can find something within the curriculum to satisfy a desire for creativity—anyone.”

Making good on this ambitious claim has been Gabriel’s focus since he took over the program last summer. Historically, A.C.T. as an institution has focused primarily on actor training: the continued exploration and deepening of the craft of the professional actors seen onstage was, in fact, central to the theater’s founding principles. As an outgrowth of that tradition, our conservatory programs have traditionally focused on strengthening the skills of actors. Gabriel, however, has overseen the expansion of the courses offered by Studio A.C.T.: “We have the ability to give the Bay Area community an opportunity to study other aspects of theater practice: playwriting, directing, costume design, stage makeup—eventually we’ll even offer stage management. We are the only program in the area offering this range of courses in a cohesive curriculum.”

Extending the programming further, Studio A.C.T. has begun to offer courses that teach students how to use theater techniques in nontheatrical contexts: The Art of Public Speaking and Acting for the Executive Presence. With these courses, Gabriel hopes to attract students who are not necessarily interested in acting onstage, but who can use...
A.C.T. wing of our conservatory, a retiree in her early 80s
Amedeo in Napoli! (19 and older). Its mission is simple, Gabriel explains: “We are the NEXT PHASE OF
STUDIO A.C.T. by Dan Rubin
ENGAGING CURIOUS MINDS
INSIDE A.C.T.
Critical Thought collaboration with Downtown High School.
young artists just starting out and older students looking for
Bay Area. He is an A.C.T. resident artist and recently played
He began as a student in our Master of Fine Arts Program and
then started teaching in the Young Conservatory (YC) and
offer, is uniquely suited to guide the future of Studio A.C.T.
director, Nick Gabriel, “curiosity.” T uition costs
language of Chekhov while applying the techniques of the
between high school and college. What transcends their age
as a teaching artist in the Education Department’s Acting for
Arcadia, Scorched Endgame
A.C.T.: “We have the ability to give the Bay Area community
find something within the curriculum to satisfy a desire for
necessarily interested in acting onstage, but who can use
these courses, Gabriel hopes to attract students who are not
historically, our conservatory programs have traditionally
the theater's founding principles. As an outgrowth of
meaning to the expression 'academic diversity.' Anyone can
begun to offer courses that teach students how to use theater
historically, we will illuminate students’ artistry through this educational experience. They don’t have to think of themselves as artists. We’ll show them exactly how artistic they really are.”

“STUDIO A.C.T. IS AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH
HUMANITY AND ARTISTRY INTERSECT WITH THE
UTMOST RESPECT. THE INSTRUCTORS SEEK GROWTH,
AND, THEREFORE, THE CLASSES ARE DYNAMIC AND
PROGRESSIVE, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO
ARE DETERMINED TO SET THEIR OWN BARS.”

STUDIO A.C.T. Student Sam Kim

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Leonard and Sophie Davis Fund Davis/Dauray Family Fund The Gruber Family Foundation Edina M. Reichmuth Educational Fund of The San Francisco Foundation

NATIONAL CORPORATE THEATRE FUND

National Corporate Theatre Fund (NCTF) is a not-for-profit corporation created to increase and strengthen support from the business community for this country’s most distinguished professional theatres. The following donors support these theatres through their contributions to NCTF:

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GIFTS IN KIND

A.C.T. thanks the following donors for their generous contribution of goods and services.

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CORPORATIONS MATCHING ANNUAL FUND GIFTS

As A.C.T. is both a cultural and an educational institution, many employers will match individual employee contributions to the theater. The following corporate matching gift programs honor their employees’ support of A.C.T., multiplying the impact of those contributions.

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A.C.T. STAFF

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Ryan L. Parham, Supervisor
Jay Luxon, Properties Assistant
Katie St. John, Properties & Scene Shop Fellow

Costume Shop
Jesie Ammons, Costume Designer
Callie Floor, Rentals Manager
Kerby Weiman, Build Manager/Director
Jed Valentine, Inventory Manager
Maria Montoya, Head Stitcher
Kelli Koehn, Accessories & Craft Artist
Alexander Zuck, Jr., Tailor
Emily White, Costume Administrator
Katy Tiefenbrun, Emily West, Costume Fellows

Wig Shop
Jeanna Parham, Wig Master

Stage Staff
Miguel Ongpin, Head Carpenter
Tim Wilson, Head Electrician
Susanna Bailey, Head Sound
Mark Pugh, Head Properties
Brent Bjornstad, Flynn
Mary Montonio, Wardrobe Supervisor
Danna Ruby, Associate Wardrobe
Jessica McGinty, Wig & Makeup Supervisor
Tom Blate, Joe Nelson, Stage Door Monitors

Conservatory/Second Stage
Sarah Phythian, Conservatory Production Manager & Technical Director
Shay Henley, Krishna Smith, Conservatory Assistant Technical Directors

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Carex Cafas, Executive Assistant and Board Liaison
Amy Hand, Company Manager
Kate Stewart, Human Resources Manager
Gericchen Margolius, Producing Associate
Jessica Evans, General & Company Management Fellow

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Anthony Estes, Web and Social Media Manager

Library Staff
Joseph Tally, Head Librarian

A.C.T. thanks the physicians and staff of the Centers for Sports Medicine, Saint Francis Memorial Hospital, for their care of the A.C.T. company. Dr. James Garrick, Dr. Victor Prieto, Dr. Mina Hong, Don Kemp, P.A., and Chris Corpus.
(coproduced by the Getty Villa in Malibu), Endgame and Play, Scorch'd, The Homecoming, Tosca Cafe (cocreated with choreographer Val Caniparoli and recently 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, Creditor, 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).

Her play Luminescence Dating premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre, was coproduced by A.C.T. and Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. Kinship was developed at the Perry-Mansfield New Play Festival and at New York Stage and Film (2013); Waiting for the Flood has received workshops at A.C.T., New York Stage & Film, and Roundabout Theatre Company. Higher was developed at New York Stage and Film and presented at San Francisco’s Contemporary Jewish Museum in 2010; it won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award and received its world premiere in February 2012 in San Francisco. Her one-act The Morning After was a finalist for the Heideman Award at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Perloff has collaborated as a director on new plays by many notable writers, including Gotanda, Nilo Cruz, Timberlake Wertenbaker and Robert O’Hara.

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 Medal of Arts, 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.

ELLEN RICHARD (Executive Director) joined A.C.T. as executive director in August 2010. She served previously as executive director of off Broadway’s nonprofit Second Stage Theatre in New York City. During her tenure at Second Stage, she was responsible for the purchase contract of the Helen Hayes Theatre and substantial growth in subscription income and growth in individual giving. Under Richard’s leadership, Second Stage provided the initial home for the Broadway productions Everyday Rapture, Next to Normal, and The Little Dog Laughed.

From 1983 to 2005, Richard enjoyed a rich and varied career with Roundabout Theatre Company. By the time she departed as managing director, Roundabout had been transformed from a small nonprofit on the verge of bankruptcy into one of the country’s largest and most successful theater companies of its kind. Richard is the recipient of six Tony Awards as producer, for Roundabout productions of Cabaret (1998), A View from the Bridge (1998), Side Man (1999), Nine (2003), Assassins (2004), and Glengarry Glen Ross (2005). Producer of more than 125 shows at Roundabout, she had direct supervision of all general and production management, marketing, and financial aspects of the theater’s operations. She conceptualized and oversaw the redesign of the three permanent Roundabout stages—Studio 54, the American Airlines Theatre, and the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre. She directed the location search for Cabaret and supervised the creation of that production’s environmental Kit Kat Klub.

Prior to her tenure at Roundabout, Richard served as business manager of Westport Country Playhouse, theater manager for Stamford Center for the Arts, and business manager for Atlas Scenic Studio. She began her career working as a stagehand, sound designer, and scenic artist assistant.
**AT THE THEATER**

A.C.T.’s Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary Street. The lobby opens one hour before curtain. Bar service and refreshments are available one hour before curtain. The theater opens 30 minutes before curtain.

**A.C.T. Merchandise**

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

**Refreshments**

Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available one hour before the performance in Fred’s Columbia Room on the lower level and the Sky Bar on the third level. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. Bar drinks are now permitted in the theater.

**Cell Phones!**

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

**Perfumes**

The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented 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 415.439.2317 in an emergency.

**Latecomers**

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

**Listening Systems**

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

**Photographs and Recordings**

Photographs and Recordings of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

**Restrooms**

Restrooms are located in Fred’s Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

**Wheelchair Seating**

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

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

**Lost and Found**

If you’ve misplaced an item while you’re still at the theater, please look for it at our merchandise stand in the lobby. Any items found by ushers or other patrons will be taken there. If you’ve already left the theater, please call 415.439.2471 and we’ll be happy to check our lost and found for you. Please be prepared to provide us 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.

A.C.T. supports prop shop, stage crew and stage shop are represented by Local 16 of the IATSE.

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

A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.
“Scourging authority and upholding the dignity of the downtrodden.”
—THE SWEDISH ACADEMY, ON AWARDS THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE TO DARIO FO

ACCIDENTAL
DEATH
OF
AN
ANARCHIST

Written by Dario Fo
Directed by Christopher Bayes
STARTS NOW PLAYING

Written and performed by Brian Copeland
Directed by David Ford
Special Presentation · Starts Apr 23

Very funny!... Copeland is a winning, magnetic performer. More than that he’s got an important tale to tell!”
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NOT A GENUINE BLACK MAN

Written by Dario Fo
Directed by Christopher Bayes
STARTS NOW PLAYING

Written and performed by Brian Copeland
Directed by David Ford
Special Presentation · Starts Apr 23

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TRIBES

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Nina Raine
Directed by
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Starts Apr 11

“It’s the best-written, best-plotted, deepest, most daring—and funniest—new play in recent years.”
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TRIBES

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Directed by
Jonathan Moscone
Starts Apr 11
THE ORPHAN OF ZHAO

NEW ADAPTATION BY JAMES FENTON
DIRECTED BY CAREY PERLOFF
A COPRODUCTION WITH LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

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[a] drama hewn out of a myth that speaks across the centuries”
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