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March 2014
Volume 12, No. 6

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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 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.
Edward Hastings, *Artistic Director* 1986–92



MODERN NATURE

Georgia O'Keeffe

AND LAKE GEORGE

Fascinated with the astonishing natural beauty of Lake George in upstate New York, Georgia O'Keeffe reveled in the discovery of new subject matter that energized her signature modernist style. From magnified botanical compositions to panoramic landscapes, this exhibition offers a deeper understanding of the spirit of place that was essential to O'Keeffe's artistic evolution.



This exhibition is organized by The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York, in association with the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The exhibition is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. The foundation sponsor is the Henry Luce Foundation.

The presentation at the de Young is made possible by the Ednah Root Foundation, the San Francisco Auxiliary of the Fine Arts Museums, and the Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund.

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Georgia O'Keeffe, *Petunias*, 1925. Oil on board. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, museum purchase, gift of the M. H. de Young Family. © Georgia O'Keeffe Museum/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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EDITOR

Dan Rubin

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Paller

Shannon Stockwell

VOLUNTEER!

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

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
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DON'T JUST SIT THERE ...



At A.C.T.'s **FREE** InterACT events you can mingle with cast members, join interactive workshops with theater artists, 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.



From the ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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 Feare” 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

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ATTEMPT TO RECREATE
THE PAST THROUGH
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*All titles, artists, and dates are subject to change.

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By
TOM STOPPARD

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The New York Times

Two men, separated by 50 years, explore the mystery of a freethinking erotic poet and the Indian painter she loves.

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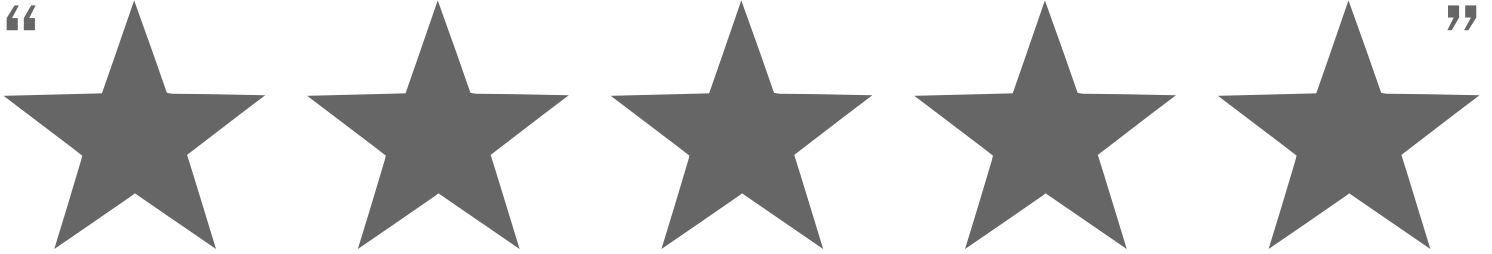
“REVOLUTIONARY!”

The New York Times

“TRANSCENDING”

New York Post

“



”

The Sunday Times, London

New York Daily News

The Daily Telegraph, London

**“[PETER BROOK IS] THE
MOST INFLUENTIAL STAGE
DIRECTOR ALIVE”**

The New York Times

**“EXQUISITELY
PERFORMED AND ALMOST
UNBEARABLY MOVING”**

The Mail on Sunday, London

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.

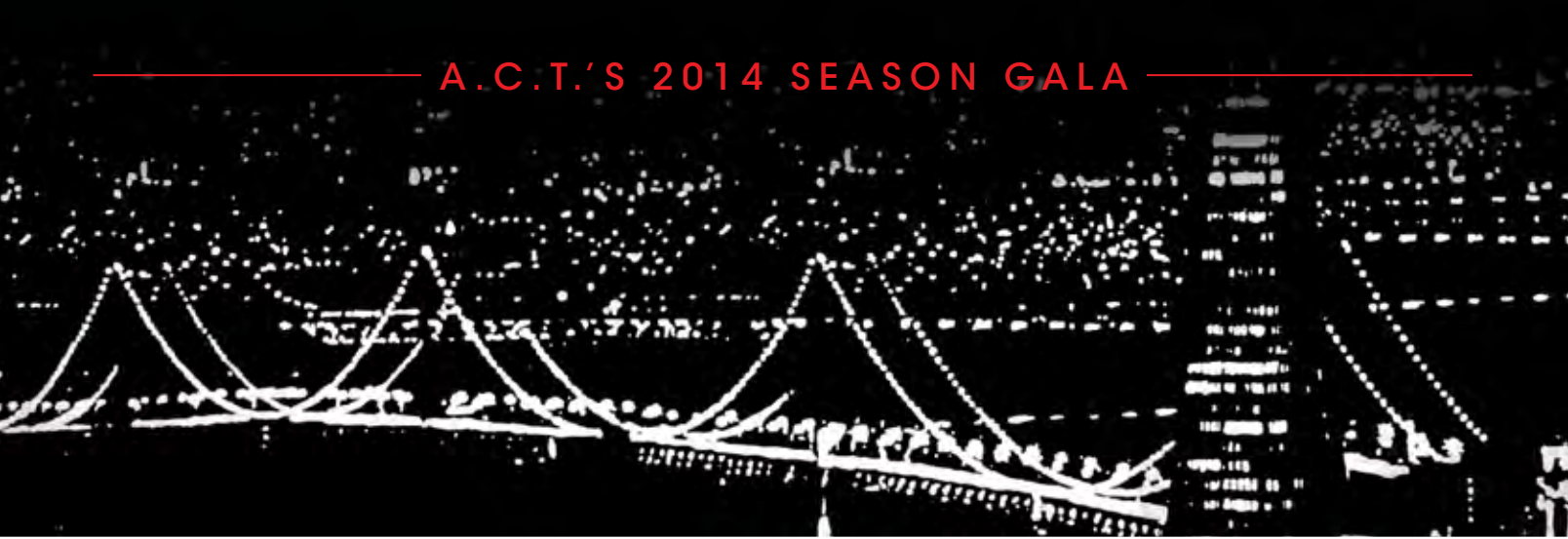
An international hit that has captivated audiences across the globe, *The Suit* takes place in apartheid-era South Africa in Sophiatown, a suburb of Johannesburg, which burned brightly as a center of black culture in the 1940s and 1950s before being demolished a few years later. Against this lively backdrop, 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.”

TO LEARN MORE OR PURCHASE TICKETS, VISIT ACT-SF.ORG/THE Suit.

A.C.T.'S 2014 SEASON GALA



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Co-chairs

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SOUND DESIGN BY **Will McCandless**
DRAMATURGY BY **Michael Paller**
CASTING BY **Janet Foster, CSA**

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THOMAS **Chad Deverman***
VANDA **Anna Ishida***

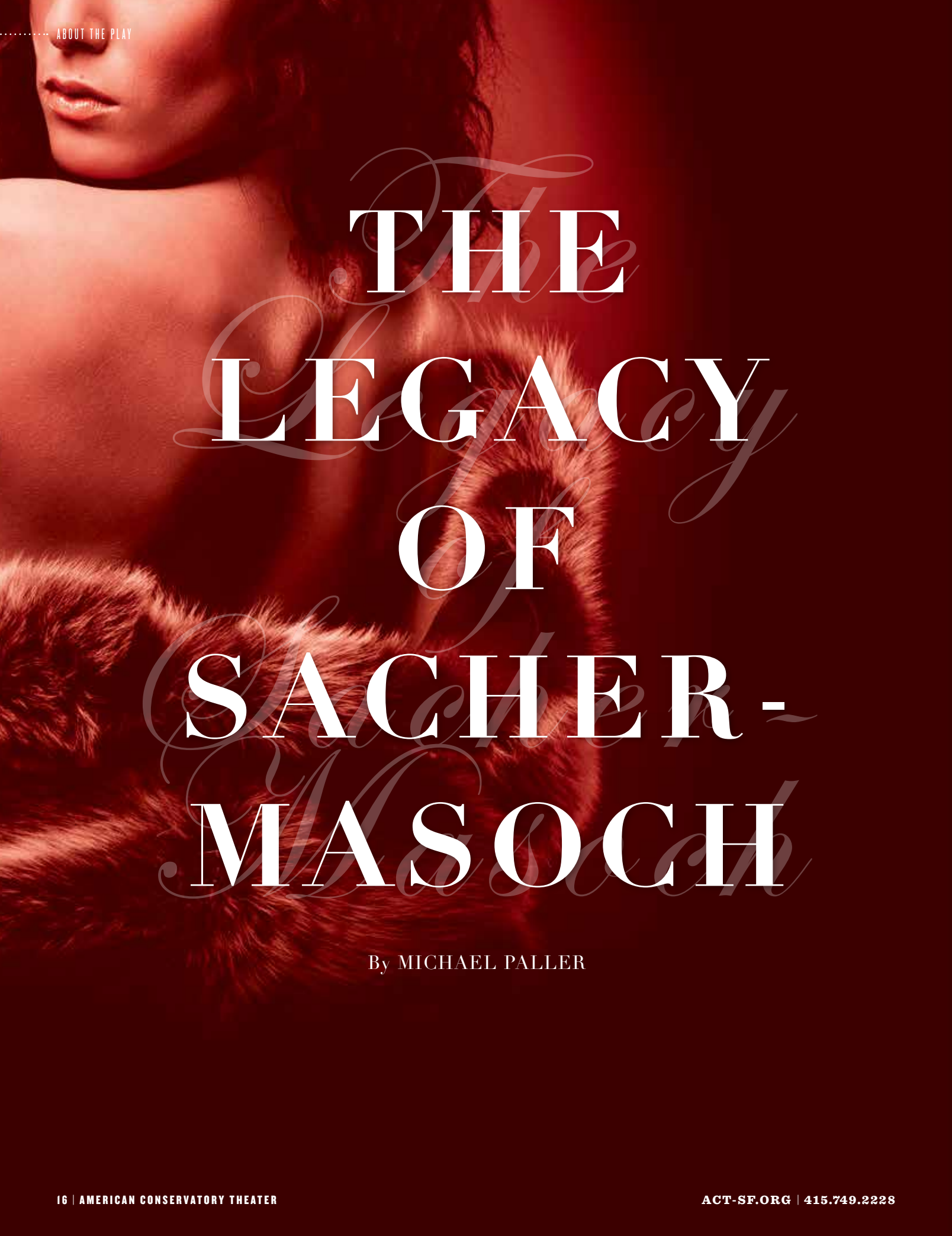
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THE LEGACY OF SACHER- MASOCH

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



Leopold von Sacher-Masoch

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.

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Clockwise from top (L to R): The cast of *The Odyssey* (photo by Jay Yamada); Titus Tompkins and Rebekah Brockman in *Crazy Dreams* (photo by Jay Yamada); Aaron Moreland in *Seven Guitars* (photo by Kevin Berne); the cast of *Battle for Babylon* (photo by Alessandra Mello).

VENUS'S REVENGE

By DAN RUBIN

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 whensoever 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, Phaedre, 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.

Venus with a Mirror (detail), 1555, Titian

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WHO'S WHO IN VENUS IN FUR



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 Theater School Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University.



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 Telefís Éireann).



CHAD DEVERMAN*

(Understudy) was last seen in the French tour of *You Know When the Men Are Gone*, produced by San Francisco's Word

for Word Performing Arts Company. Other Bay Area credits include *33 Variations*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Sisters Rosensweig* at TheatreWorks; *First Person Shooter*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Coronado*, *Den of Thieves*, and *Honey Brown Eyes* at San Francisco Playhouse; *Titus Andronicus*, *As You Like It*, and *Restoration Comedy* at California Shakespeare Theater; *The Busy World Is Hushed* at Aurora Theatre Company; *Splitting Infinity* at San Jose Repertory Theatre; *The Farm* at Shotgun Players; and *reasons to be pretty* and *Dying City* at Capital Stage in Sacramento. Film and television credits include *The Delivery Man*, *Curves*, *Men of the Tree*, and a recurring role on NBC's *Trauma*. He is a graduate of the NYU Tisch School of the Arts B.F.A. Program.



ANNA ISHIDA*

(Understudy) has performed locally with Central Works, Crowded Fire Theatre, Impact Theatre, Boxcar Theatre, Shotgun

Players, and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. She recently originated the role of Raina in the new musical *The Fourth Messenger*, loosely inspired by the life of the historical Buddha reimagined as a woman. Ishida tours regionally/internationally with *Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage*, which was featured in the *New Yorker's* "2009 Top 12 Best Off-Broadway Shows" and was the recipient of the 2012 Edinburgh Fringe Herald Angel Award. She stars in San Francisco director H. P. Mendoza's critically acclaimed feature film *I Am a Ghost* (distribution in March 2014). Ishida received the 2012 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Outstanding Local Discovery Award for Theatre and a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award (Best Actress in a Musical 2012). She is a graduate of the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts and Mills College.

DAVID IVES (Playwright) is the author of the one-act comedies *All in the Timing* (Outer Critics Circle Award) and *Time Flies*. His full-length plays include *The School for Lies* (adapted from Molière's *The Misanthrope*), *The Heir Apparent* (adapted

from Jean-François Regnard's comedy), *New Jerusalem: The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza* at Talmud Torah Congregation: Amsterdam, July 27, 1656 (Hull-Warriner Award), *Is He Dead?* (adapted from Mark Twain), *White Christmas*, *Polish Joke*, and *Ancient History*. He has translated Feydeau's classic farce *A Flea in Her Ear*, Yazmina Reza's drama *A Spanish Play*, and Pierre Corneille's 1643 comedy *The Liar*. He is the author of three young-adult novels—*Monsieur Eek*, *Scrib*, and *Voss*—and he has adapted 33 American musicals for New York City's beloved *Encores!* series. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and a former Guggenheim Fellow in playwriting.

CASEY STANGL (Director) most recently directed *The Liar* for The Antaeus Company; *First Person: Seeing America*, a multimedia piece for Ensemble Galilei, touring nationally; *Citizen Twain*, starring Val Kilmer at the Kirk Douglas Theater in Los Angeles; *Lombardi*, a coproduction with Cleveland Play House and Arizona Theatre Company; *Mrs. Packard* for the University of Southern California School of Dramatic Arts; Moving Arts's *The Car Plays* at La Jolla Playhouse and Segerstrom Center for the Arts's Off Center Festival; and many projects for South Coast Repertory, including the award-winning production of *In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)*. 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 Theatre Company, 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.

JOHN LEE BEATTY (Scenic Design) designed the set for the productions of *Venus in Fur* at Classic Stage Company and on Broadway, where he is currently represented by the productions of *After Midnight*, *Mothers and Sons*, *Outside Mullingar*, and *Chicago*.

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 We're 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,

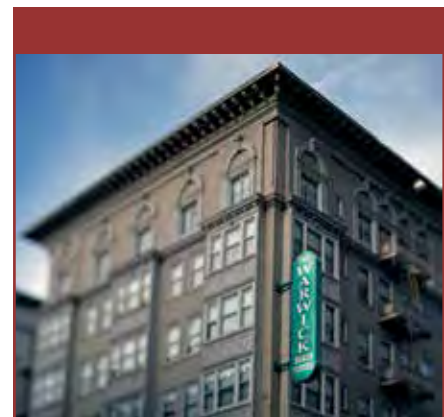
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, among others. Other projects include the museum installation *Circle of Memory*, recently presented in Stockholm, and visual choreography for *LIFE: A Journey Through Time*, recently presented at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

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*.

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

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WHO'S WHO IN VENUS IN FUR

Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

JANET FOSTER, CSA (*Casting*) joined A.C.T. as the casting director in the 2011–12 season. On Broadway she cast *The Light in the Piazza* (Artios Award nomination), *Lennon*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Taking Sides* (co-cast). Off-Broadway credits include *Lucy*, *Brundibar*, *True Love*, *Endpapers*, *The Dying Gaul*, *The Maiden's Prayer*, and *The Trojan Women: A Love Story* at Playwrights Horizons, *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, CENTERSTAGE, Westport Country Playhouse, and the American Repertory Theater. Film,

television, and radio credits include *Cosby* (CBS), *Tracey Takes on New York* (HBO), *The Deal* by Lewis Black, *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).

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 SCHLIEMANN* (*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.



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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*

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

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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.

THE ARTISTS WE LOVE

A.C.T.'S NEW PLAY COMMISSIONS

by **Shannon Stockwell**



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."



OPPOSITE PAGE: Christina Anderson and Philip Kan Gotanda. ABOVE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sean San José, Colman Domingo, Jessica Hagedorn, Fabian Obispo, Melinda Lopez, Colm Tóibín, Ursula Rani Sarma, and Dave Malloy

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 Slight, 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



performance skills in other aspects of their lives and careers. “We are making a more concerted effort to do off-campus training focused on team building: workshops and immersive retreats, depending on the needs of the organization that invites us,” Gabriel reports. “We are in a very good position to satisfy very specific demands. We’ve already done one workshop—for the online magazine *Bold Italic*—which was tremendously successful.”

“What I think is wonderful is that Studio A.C.T. students do not even need to be particularly artistic,” Gabriel continues. “All of our instructors are professional theater practitioners: 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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Stephen Buescher, *Head of Movement, Director*
Jeffrey Crockett, *Head of Voice*
Anthony Fusco, *Acting, Director*
Domenique Lozano, *Acting, Director*
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Nick Gabriel, *Director*
Margo Hall, *Acting, Director*
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Drew Khalouf, *Speech and Diction,
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Marty Pistone, *Acting On-Camera*
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Pierce Brandt, *Musical Theater*
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Jane Hammett, *Musical Theater*
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Christine Mattison, *Dance, Choreographer*
Patrick Russell, *Acting, Audition Technique*
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Vivian Sam, *Musical Theater, Dance*
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A.C.T. thanks the physicians and staff of the
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company: Dr. James Garrick, Dr. Victor Prieto,
Dr. Minx Hong, Don Kemp, P.A., and
Chris Corpus.

A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (*A.C.T. Artistic Director*) recently celebrated her 20th year as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed *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 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 Voyage Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayzavian'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).

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 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.



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.



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 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, one block west of Union Square. **Walk-up hours** are Tuesday–Sunday (noon–curtain) on performance days, and Monday–Friday (noon–6 p.m.) and Saturday–Sunday (noon–4 p.m.) on nonperformance days. **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.

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

AT THE THEATER

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

A.C.T. Merchandise

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

Refreshments

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

Cell Phones!

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

Perfumes

The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented 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 of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

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



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

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

Lost and Found

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



The scenic shop, prop shop, and stage crew are represented by Local 16 of the IATSE.

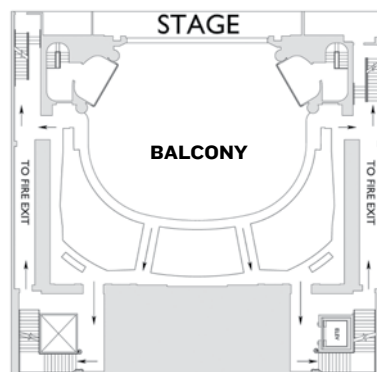
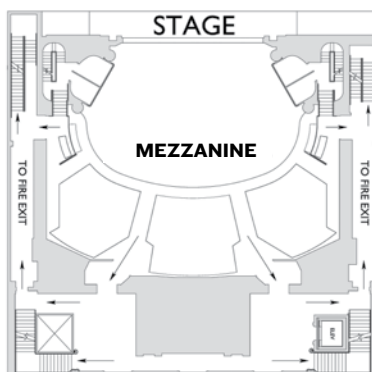
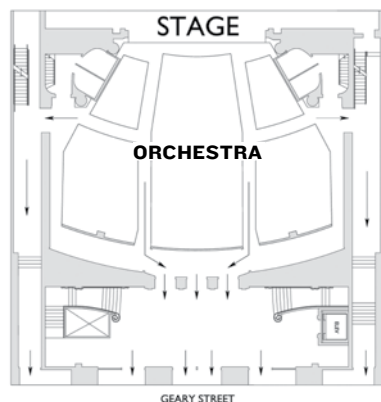


A.C.T. is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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