a Doll's House

by HENRIK IBSEN | translated from the Norwegian by PAUL WALSH
directed by CAREY PERLOFF

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ABOUT A.C.T.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Managing Director Heather Kitchen, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent its 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 A.C.T.'s creative work.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. During the past three decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people; today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 270,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996, A.C.T.'s efforts to develop creative talent for the theater were recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award. In 2001, to celebrate A.C.T.'s 35th anniversary and Perloff's 10th season, A.C.T. created a new core company of actors, who have become instrumental in every aspect of its work.

Today A.C.T. is recognized nationally for its groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations of contemporary playwrighting. Since the reopening of the Geary Theater in 1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable period of audience expansion and financial stability. In 2001, A.C.T. began producing alternative work at Zeum Theater, which now serves as a venue for student productions and exciting new plays. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

The conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, now serves 3,000 students every year. It was the first actor training program in the United States not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a master of fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, and Winona Ryder are among the conservatory's distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to A Doll's House, our first production of 2004. We hope you had a wonderful holiday season and have come back refreshed and ready for a new year of thrilling and invigorating theater!

Now, for the confession, I grew up obsessed with dolls. Lots of dolls. I had what my family devastatingly called "the doll corner," which spread like an amoeba from the corner beside my bed across the floor to the door. Rooms were added exclamingly as the doll family grew in that strange way only doll families can; there were no parent dolls, indeed there were no adult dolls at all, just dozens of same-aged children in peculiar foreign dress making up some mysterious version of a family. My dolls were always my age, which meant they could re-enact in the afternoon whatever I had lived through at school that day. It was a highly convenient and deeply satisfying activity. Eventually, needless to say, I grew up, put the dolls in boxes, and tried to live an adult life. When I look back on it now, I wonder if my obsession with dolls was just in some way a prequel to my obsession with theater.

Ibsen's landmark play is about a family in which everyone is still happily playing with dolls. Torvald has married a highly intelligent and energetic woman, whom he dresses up and toys with like his own private adult-sized playing. Nora buys "dollies" for her tiny daughter, but in reality she is toys for her to play with, just as she plays with her doll-like children and infantilizes her hyper-sensitive husband. Her life is a series of "staged" events—when people walk into her little nest she arranges them in pleasing displays just as if they were overgrown toys. She hides her secrets, her forbidden macaronis, well out of sight. Into this precious and beautiful world, reality is never supposed to enter. The harshness of the outside world is desperately kept at bay.

Although A Doll's House was written in 1879, it is remarkable how much this kind of role-playing and infantilization is still part of our cultural experience. For all that women have been encouraged to seek independence and men have been encouraged to see themselves as more than tough breadwinners, many of us still fear the kind of freedom that comes from growing up, and fall easily into conventional roles. It is so difficult to look squarely at the realities of the world that many of us avoid it at all costs if we possibly can. We insulate ourselves, we dress up, we buy gadgets and gizmos and adult games, we collect toy trains and Lincoln dolls, and we play. And then, every once in a while, reality comes crashing in the door. It can take any form: illness, poverty, desire, war, love. But it is a wake-up call. One of the most startling moments in Ibsen's play is in Act III when Nora sits across from her husband at the table and asks him to the fact that never, in eight years of marriage, have they had a real conversation.

I chose to do this play because I wanted to see our remarkable core acting company member René Augesen play Nora, and because I wanted our equally remarkable resident director and Scandinavian theater expert Paul Walsh to create a new translation for us of this astonishing play. But as I have dug into its core, I realize how many profound issues it touches upon that are still at the center of our lives, as men and women struggle to define and redefine themselves to each other and to themselves. In times of anxiety, people play games. The relationship of those games to what is really happening in our lives is fascinating.

We're thrilled to be exploring this material with you, and hope you find it as surprising and exciting as we have.
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ON THE FAR REACHES OF MODERNITY

BY PAUL WALSH

In a Bloomsbury drawing room in 1886, members of London's Socialist League offered an amateur performance of Ibsen's A Doll's House. In the title role was Eleanor Marx, the youngest daughter of Karl Marx, who had taught herself Norwegian in order to read Ibsen in his original language. Her common-law husband, Edward Aveling, played the role of Torvald Helmer. William Morris's daughter May took the role of Mrs. Linde, and Nils Krogstad was played by a young Bernard Shaw. By all accounts the production was more earnest than artistic, but the fact that it took place at all suggests the extent to which Ibsen's contemporaries saw his play as a harbinger of progressive political change. In fact, from the day it was first published in 1879, A Doll's House sparked impassioned debate, garnering a loyal following of progressives and radicals across Europe who celebrated the play with the same moral insistence as respectable citizens condemned it. A Doll's House seemed to challenge the sanctity of the home and the duty of women as wives and mothers, and it did so in a vocabulary that was simultaneously modern and startlingly real. People discussed Nora as if she were the woman down the street rather than a fictional construct. As the "Nora Question" became a cause célèbre that swept through the drawing rooms of Europe, so did the play's four Norwegian authors, Henrik Ibsen.

By all accounts, Ibsen was less secure in his appointed role as social reformer than the Bloomsbury players supposed. While he relished controversy, he craved respect and respectability above all else. He preferred the frock coat and top hat of the ruling class to the red scarf of the street-corner revolutionary and demanded that his voice not be confused with that of any of his characters: "They endeavor to make me responsible for the opinions which certain of the personages of my drama express," he wrote in 1882 after the publication of his play Ghosts. "And yet there is not in the whole book a single opinion which can be laid to the account of the author." It has been said that Ibsen's last words were "on the other hand . . . " and there is no doubt that, as a disciple of the German idealist dialectician G. W. F. Hegel, he embraced his contradictions as he embraced his contradictions. Perhaps this is why he was able to bring such complex subtlety to his dramatic explorations of middle-class life. Observing his own personal failings and shortcomings as the elaboration of an ideal conflict, he was able to recognize the dramatic secrets of the middle-class drawing room.

FOR IBSEN, THE HOME WAS A BATTLEFIELD OF PRIVATE DESIRES AND PUBLIC CONSTRAINTS.

Throughout the 19th century, the middle-class home, whether a townhouse apartment in a small provincial town or a row house in the capital, was "a social place in a curiously private way," as Witold Rybczynski writes in his fascinating book Home: A Short History of an Idea (1986). Nowhere was this truer than in Scandinavia, where the home was envisioned as a safe haven, a nest of comfort and domesticity, a private universe, separate from though fed by the "getting-and-spending" world outside. The front door of the middle-class home was meant to keep the world at bay and protect the privacy of the family. Only invited visitors and old friends were welcome in the well-run middle-class home, and they were generally greeted with due ceremony. In fact, in Scandinavia, as in Germany, the word for "secret" (heimlich in German, hemlig in Swedish, hemmelig in Norwegian) is a close cognate of the word for "home" (heim in German, hem in Swedish, hjem in Norwegian), and it was the secrets of the middle-class home that fed the domestic dramas of Ibsen.

For Ibsen, the home was a battlefield of private desires and public constraints. Social pressure invaded the private domain through an insistence on duty (pigt), bringing with it the insurmountable weight of conventions, traditions, and expectations. The past was the enemy of change; social expectations conspired against individual liberation. This was the "great new theme" that Ibsen brought to the stage: the emergence of a class of individuals who had gained social, economic, and political ascendancy throughout the 19th century were now clamoring for personal freedom in the private sphere.

A SON OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Ibsen was himself a son of the middle class. Born in 1828 to a prominent merchant family in the shipping town of Skien, south of modern-day Oslo, on the east coast of Norway, he was the eldest of five children. When he was eight, however, his father's business failed and he was left to his own devices. At sixteen he became an apothecary's apprentice and dreamed of going to university. While he never did attend university, he did start writing plays, and his first romantic history plays in the grand style popular at the time.

In 1850 Ibsen moved to Christiania (now Oslo), where he met the famous violinist and courtier Ole Bull, who brought him to the west coast city of Bergen to work in Bull's Norwegian national theater as playwright-in-residence and stage manager. Ibsen owes his education in the craft of the theater to the years he spent working for Bull and later as artistic director of the Norwegian Theater in Christiania, a position he held from 1857 to 1862 with limited success. During these years he met, courted, and married the spirited Sofie Mariken Thoresen, and enjoyed his first modest successes as a playwright.

In 1864, Ibsen left Norway for the European continent, where he stayed for 27 years, living in Germany and Italy. By all accounts, his life was quite uneventful. He was a private man who lived quietly with his family and kept to himself. He read little and almost never went to the theater. Instead he spent his time contemplating life and every two years or so he sent a startling new play to his publisher in Norway.

From abroad, Ibsen focused on Norwegian provincial life, recreating his abandoned home in his mind, turning it over and examining it in all its stilted detail. Out of this obsession with a place on the far reaches of modernity, he created the modern drama. All but two of his plays are set in Norway, and they are an impressive collection of the philosophical and religious dramas Brand (1866), the picturesque Peer Gynt (1867), and the world historical dramas Emperor and Galilean (1873), about Julius the Apostate, were followed by plays of contemporary life: The League of Youth (1889), Pillars of Society (1877), and the "problem plays" that incited such public outcry, including A Doll's House (1879), Ghosts (1881), and An Enemy of the People (1882). As he was vilified in the press for attacking the sanctity of marriage and the family, Ibsen grew in stature and importance, becoming the most famous Scandinavian of his day.

Contemporary accounts give the impression of a man of meticulous temperament—elegant, finicky, and meticulous in his habits, with a surprising ability to empathize with strangers. It is in this that suffuses his writing. Even as he saw the shortcomings and guessed at the hidden contradictions in the hearts of those he met on the street, he was able to feel their humanity and give expression to it. In doing so, Ibsen created a style that is direct, fresh, and surprisingly conversational even today. This was one of the most surprising discoveries waiting for me when I sat down to translate A Doll's House: Ibsen's characters sound like real people facing real problems. His language is dramatically supple and rich with emotional complexity and ambiguity. Behind a strikingly modern facade of bravado and game-playing lurk subtle intimations of doubt and self-loathing. In Norwegian, Ibsen's characters speak a language
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Photograph: "A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen was produced by the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, 1987. Designed by Disneyland's Bob Mack. Photograph by Richard Termine.

8 American Conservatory Theater
Who’s Who

RENE AUGESEN*

(Avina) is an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, made her Geary Theatre debut three seasons ago in The Misandrophobe, she has appeared in recent seasons in Collected Stories, The Board of Iven, Bilby Spirit, Buried Child, Night and Day, The Dazzles, and The Three Sisters. New York credits include Spinning into Butter (Lincoln Center Theater), Madeover (with Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, Public Theater), It's My Party... (with F. Murray Abraham and Joyce Van Patten, Arc-Light Theater), and Osmutated (Drama League). Regional theater credits include Mary Stuart (dir. Carey Perloff, Huntington Theatre Company), several productions, including the world premieres of The Board of Aaron and The Holling Lands, at South Coast Repertory; and productions at the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Baltimore Center Stage, the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Stage West. Film and television credits include The Battle Stuffers, "Law & Order," "Guiding Light," "Another World," and Hallmark Hall of Fame's Saint Maybe. She is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

JOY CARLIN

(Naive) is a former associate artistic director of A.C.T. and was a member of the A.C.T. acting company for many years. Her favorite A.C.T. role includes Miss Primm in The Importance of Being Earnest, Banana in The House of Blue Leaves, Kitty Dovell in The Time of Your Life, Birdie in The Little Foxes, Einid in The Floating Lightbulb, Big Mama in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Aria in Per Quer, Meg in A Lie of the Mind, and Kathleen in Home. Her directing credits at A.C.T. include The House of Bernarda Alba, The Lady, Not for Burning, The Doctor’s Dilemma, Golden Boy, Heddya, Merrie Wives, and the world premiere of Jane Anderson’s Food and Shelter. Carlin also been resident director and interim artistic director at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and has acted in and directed productions throughout the Bay Area and beyond. She is the recipient of the 1997 Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Blinder Porter Award for continued excellence in her career as actor and director.

GREGORY WALLACE


and at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for 12 years; he is the recipient of numerous Drama-Logue, Backstage West, and Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle awards. His theater credits include: three seasons each with The Old Globe Theatre and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as well as appearances with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, the California Shakespeare Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and Marin Theatre Company. Recent credits include the feature films The Rainmaker and Memoirs, the independent Singing and The Sunflower Boy, and the series “Nash Bridges.”

CAITLIN MURPHY

(Cariatides) is a former A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member. She has appeared with A.C.T. in the title role of The History of Mr. Polly, in the world premiere of Michael Longhurst’s They’re Playing Our Song, in Off Broadway’s Born in the Backyard, and in the West Coast premieres of David Mamet’s The Woodsman and Yoga Biric’s The Shape of Things. Recent credits include Biric’s The Shape of Things, David Mamet’s The Woodsman, and The History of Mr. Polly. She has also appeared in the world premieres of Michael Longhurst’s They’re Playing Our Song, and in Off Broadway’s Born in the Backyard. Murphy has performed her solo show, Muster, Where Were You When I Woke Up Screaming and My Red Osiris at Wood in the Middle of the Night all over New York City. Her television credits include: The Last Day in the Life of Brian Daring for HBO, Women Aloud, and "Law & Order."

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

that is more conversational than literary. My task in translating A Doll’s House for the contemporary stage was to find the same freshness and emotional directness in English in order to allow Ibsen’s characters to once again give voice to contemporary issues without losing sight of the contradictions inherent in modern life.

By locating the great moral questions of his day square in the center of the middle-class drawing room and daring to delve into the individual psyche of moral creatures drowning in a morass of social lies and self-deceptions, Ibsen brought a metaphysical profundity to the domestic drama. In this he farished not only the new drama but also a new morality of individual freedom and desire. But even as these characters speak to change, they find themselves caught in a web of duties and obligations. This is what makes these plays dramatic rather than didactic. Speaking out can destroy as well as liberate; often the rewards of self-discovery are less tangible than the suffering it causes. In plays like The Wild Duck (1884), Ruinsmoolscherl (1886), The Lady from the Sea (1888), and Helga Gahler (1890), Ibsen dug deep into the troubled psyche of the modern world, uncovering its propensity for easy truths and deadly deceptions, diagnosing the crisis of individual faith, and staring unflinchingly at the despair of contemporary guilt.

In 1891 Ibsen returned to Norway after nearly three decades abroad. Here he wrote his final four plays—the Master Builder (1892), Little Eyolf (1894), John Gabriel Borkman (1896), and When We Dead Awaken (1899)—pushing beyond the limits of stage realism and the problems of social life into a dark and tormented realm of psychological anguish and isolation precipitated by the terror of his own failing creative energy. As a new century dawned, he fell ill and never really recovered. He died in 1906.
that is more conversational than literary. My task in translating A Doll’s House for the contemporary stage was to find the same freshness and emotional directness in English in order to allow Ibsen’s characters to once again give voice to contemporary issues without losing sight of the contradictions inherent in modern life. By locating the great moral questions of his day square in the center of the middle-class drawing room and daring to delve into the inner psyche of moral creatures drowning in a morass of social lies and self-deceptions, Ibsen brought metaphysical proximity to the domestic drama. In this he far exceeded not only the new drama but also a new morality of individual freedom and desire. But even as these characters speak to change, they find themselves caught in a web of duties and obligations. This is what makes these plays dramatic rather than didactic. Speaking out can destroy as well as liberate; often the rewards of self-discovery are less tangible than the suffering it causes. In plays like The Wild Duck (1884), Raumschenkel (1886), The Lady from the Sea (1888), and Hedda Gabler (1890), Ibsen dug deep into the troubled psyche of the modern world, uncovering its propensity for easy truths and deadly deceptions, diagnosing the crisis of individual faith, and startling unflinchingly at the despair of contemporary guilt.

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RENE AUGUSEN
(Anna Wachtmeister) an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, made her Geary Theater debut three seasons ago in The Missandree. She has appeared in recent seasons in Collected Stories, The Board of Acquaintances, Bitter Bird, Night and Day, The Dazzles, and The Three Sisters. New York credits include Spinning into Butter (Lincoln Center Theater), Manxman, with Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, Public Theater; It’s My Party (with F. Murray Abraham and Joyce Van Patten, Art Light Theater), and Overawed (Drama League). Regional theater credits include Mary Stuart (dir. Carey Perloff, Huntington Theater Company), several productions, including the world premieres of The Board of Aces and The Hollinglands, at South Coast Repertory; and productions at the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Baltimore Center Stage, the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theater, and Stage West. Film and television credits include The Battle Stalins, "Law & Order," "Guiding Light," "Another World," and Hallmark Hall of Fame’s Saint Maybe. Augusten is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

JOY CARLIN
(Nurse) is a former associate artistic director of A.C.T. and was a member of the A.C.T. acting company for many years. Her favorite A.C.T. roles include Miss Primm in The Importance of Being Earnest, Bananas in The House of Blue Leaves, Kitty Duvall in The Time of Your Life, enticing Tia in The Fasting Lightsbath, Big Mama in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Aaa in Per Gynt, Meg in A Lie of the Mind, and Kathleen in Home. Her directing credits at A.C.T. include The House of Bernarda Alba, The Lady, Not for Burning, The Doctor’s Dilemma, Golden Boy, Heggard, Mame, and the world premiere of Jane Anderson’s Food and Shelter. Carlin has also been resident director and interim artistic director at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and has acted in and directed productions throughout the Bay Area and beyond. She is the recipient of the 1997 Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle/Backporch Award for continued excellence in her career as actor and director.

GREGORY WALLACE
(Ned Kroogland), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Dazzles, Night of the Hunter, Bitter Bird, Spinning into Butter, and The Room, “Master Harold”...and the Boys, The Missandree, Educating Harry, A Christmas Carol, Tartuffe,
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Who’s Who

Anthony Fusco* (Uncredited) was last seen at A.C.T. in Los Liasons Dangereuses and The Three Sisters. Previous A.C.T. productions are Night and Day, Celebration and The Room, Enrivo IV, The Minotaur, A Christmas Carol and The Speed of Light. Other Bay Area credits include leading roles in Arena and the Men, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Cymbeline, and The Skin of Our Teeth for the California Shakespeare Theatre and A Travelling Jewish Theatre’s production of The Caucasian. On Broadway, he was in Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing and The Real Inspector Hound. Among his off-Broadway credits are Simon Gray’s The Holy Terror, In Levita’s Centrist, and David Mamet’s Life in the Theatre. Fuses is a graduate of the Juilliard School. This spring he will appear in Israel Horovitz’s My Old Lady with Marin Theatre Company.

Nancy Carlin* (Uncredited) appeared in numerous productions at A.C.T. from 1984 to 1991, including A Life of the Mind, Dinner at Eight, The Scagell, The Bowen Play, Edible, Twelfth Night, A Tale of Two Cities, and Ibsen’s John Gabriel Borkman. Carlin is an associate artist of the California Shakespeare Theatre, where she has been seen in recent seasons in Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Twelfth Night, and Love’s Labour’s Lost. She has also performed with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Marin Theatre Company, the Aurora Theatre Company, and TheatreWorks. Carlin has directed productions for the Aurora Theatre Company, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, and Footlight Theatre Company (where she is an affiliate artist). She stars in the film John Paul’s Prewarsup and co-produced the film Haiku Tunnel. Carlin has a B.A. in comparative literature from Brown University and an M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.

Heather Matheson* (Uncredited) has appeared in the East Bay in After the Fall, in the title role of Nana, in Little in The Rainmaker, and as Patricina in Sight Unseen at Playhouse West. Other local theatre credits include Heidi in The Heidi Chronicles and Gwendolyn in The Importance of Being Earnest. A recipient of several Drama-Logue and Dean Goodman awards, she has also performed with SPOF! FURY in The Illusion and with Unconditional Theatre in The Revolting Rise of Abiara IV. In New York she was a member of Abandon Theatre Company. Film and television credits include Bandits, The Deep End, Wilderness, Black August, Partners, and Nash Bridges. Matheson is a graduate of the Juilliard School.

Paul Walsh (Theafer-Dramaturg) has worked on nearly two dozen productions since coming to A.C.T. in 1996 in dramaturgical and
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by VICTOR LODATO       Directed by PAM MAckINNON

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Who’s Who

ANTHONY PUSCO (Undated) was last seen at A.C.T. in The Lion’s Share. Dangerous and The Three Arrows. Previous A.C.T. productions are Night and Day, Celebration and The Room, Enron, The Merry Widow, a Christmas Carol, and The Three Arrows. Previous A.C.T. productions are Night and Day, Celebration and The Room, Enron, The Merry Widow, a Christmas Carol, and The Three Arrows.

NANCY CARLIN (Undated) appeared in many productions at A.C.T. from 1984 to 1991, including A Life of the Mind, Dinner at Eight, The Seagull, The Trojan Women, Twelfth Night, The Tale of Two Cities, and Oscar, John Gabriel Borkman. Carlin is an associate artist of the California Shakespeare Theater, where she has been seen in recent seasons in Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Twelfth Night, and Love’s Labor’s Lost. She has also performed with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Carlin has directed productions for the Aurora Theatre Company, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, and Footlight Theatre Company (where she is an affiliate artist). She stars in the film Jim Jarmusch’s Factory and co-produced the film Hasidic Soul. Carlin has a B.A. in comparative literature from Brown University and an M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.

HEATHER MATHIESON (Undated) has appeared in the East Bay in After the Fall, The Tale of Two Cities, and Love’s Labor’s Lost. She also appeared in The Rainmaker, and as Maria in Sight Unseen at Playhouse West. Other local theater credits include Head in The Head Chronicles and Gwendolyn in The Importance of Being Earnest. A recipient of several Drama-Logue and Stein Goodman awards, she also performed with FORDY in The Illusion and with Unconditional Theatre in The Revolting Rise of Aerosoles US. In New York she was a member of Abrons Theatre Company. Film and television credits include Bandits, The Deep End, Wildmothers, Black August, Partners,” and “Nash Bridges.” Mathieson is a graduate of The Juilliard School.

PAUL WALSH (Pianist/Dramaturg) has worked on nearly two dozen productions since coming to A.C.T. in 1996 as Dramaturg and...
director of humanities, including its translation of Thucydides' Perikles for the A.C.T./Master of Fine Arts Program's 2002 graduating class. Though Walsh has worked often as a dramaturg with director Casey Perloff, this is his second collaboration with her as translator Perloff commissioned and directed Walsh's translation of Strindberg's Ceylan first at the Classic Stage Company in 1992 and later that year at A.C.T. Walsh translated and read as part of the Classic Stage's New Visions program at Classic Stage Company in 1999. Before coming to A.C.T., Walsh worked with theater companies across the country as dramaturg and translator, including the award-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune. He is the only dramaturg to have received the prestigious TCG/Pew National Theatre Artist Residency Grant. Walsh earned a Ph.D. from the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama at the University of Toronto.

ANNIE SMART (Scenic Designer) has designed sets and costumes in the U.S., U.K., and Germany. In the U.S. she has worked on plays presented by University of California, Davis, and the Kennedy Center. In Germany she has designed sets for the Kulturverband/Mitte and Stadttheater, and performed at the Deutsches Theater and Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden. Annie has designed sets and costumes for the Theater an der Elbe, Hamburg, and performed at the Thalia Theater, Berlin. In France she has designed sets and costumes for the Théâtre de la Ville and the Théâtre de la FORUM. In Italy she has designed sets and costumes for the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, and the Teatro alla Scala, Verona. In the U.K. she has designed sets and costumes for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, and the Almeida Theatre. In Canada she has designed sets and costumes for the Stratford Festival, the Canadian Stage Company, and the National Arts Centre. In Mexico she has designed sets and costumes for the Teatro de la Ciudad and the Teatro de la Ciudad de Mexico. In Australia she has designed sets and costumes for the Sydney Opera House and the Melbourne Theatre Company. In Asia she has designed sets and costumes for the National Theatre of Japan and the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. In South America she has designed sets and costumes for the Teatro de la Moneda and the Teatro de la Moneda in Santiago, Chile. In South Africa she has designed sets and costumes for the University of Cape Town and the Cape Town Arts Festival. In Africa she has designed sets and costumes for the National Theatre of Ghana and the National Theatre of Kenya. In the Middle East she has designed sets and costumes for the Al-Shamiye Theatre in Damascus, Syria, and the Al-Assad Theatre in Amman, Jordan. In the Nordic countries she has designed sets and costumes for the National Theatre of Sweden and the National Theatre of Norway. In India she has designed sets and costumes for the National Centre for Performing Arts and the Prithvi Theatre. In South Korea she has designed sets and costumes for the National Theatre of South Korea. In Japan she has designed sets and costumes for the National Theatre of Japan and the Kabuki-za Theatre. In China she has designed sets and costumes for the National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Grand Theatre. In Australia she has designed sets and costumes for the National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Sydney Opera House. In Canada she has designed sets and costumes for the National Theatre of Canada and the Royal Alexandra Theatre. In the United States she has designed sets and costumes for the New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, the Cleveland Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the San Francisco Ballet.

SANDRA WOODALL (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for A.C.T. and the San Francisco Opera. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Theatre Wing’s Donaldson Award, the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, and the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award. She has also designed costumes for the San Francisco Ballet, the San Francisco Opera, and the San Francisco Symphony. She is the recipient of the 2018 Steinberg Playwright Award, the 2019 Edward Albee Foundation MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, and the 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship. She is a founding member of the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Theatre Wing’s Donaldson Award, the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, and the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award. She is the recipient of the 2018 Steinberg Playwright Award, the 2019 Edward Albee Foundation MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, and the 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship. She is a founding member of the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle.
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ANNE SMART (Set Designer) has designed sets and costumes in the U.S., UK, and Germany. In the UK much of her work has been for the Royal National Theatre. In Germany, she designed the sets for Das Wunder von St. Veit in St. Veit an der Krems. She has also designed for the Oper in Hamburg and the Nationaltheater in Mannheim. Smart’s set for the recent production of Sweeney Todd at A.C.T. has been seen in numerous gallery exhibitions, and she is the recipient of numerous Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Awards for costume design.

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A.C.T. Prologue
A conversation with director Carey Perloff
Tuesday, January 13, 5:30-6:00 p.m.
Geary Theater

Audience Exchanges
at the Geary Theater, directly following A Doll’s House.
Tuesday, January 20 (after the 7:30 p.m. performance)
Wednesday, February 4 (after the 2 p.m. matinee)

A.C.T. and the San Francisco Public Library present a season-long series of free events designed to offer our behind-the-scenes looks at A.C.T. productions and the artists who create them. We hope you’ll join us for the conversations that make up this exciting new series at the Main Library.

Translator Paul Walsh on Ibsen and A Doll’s House
Thursday, January 16, 6:30-7:00 p.m.
San Francisco Main Library
Lower Level, Koret Audionia
101 Larkin Street (at Grove)
For more information, call 415-831-2273 or visit sanfarm.org.libguides.com

Who’s Who

CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director), who recently celebrated her eleventh season as artistic director of A.C.T., most recently directed acclaimed revivals of Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, The Seagull, Night and Day, and Chekhov’s The Three Sisters with A.C.T.’s core acting company.

Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has directed for A.C.T. the American premieres of Stoppard’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Harold Pinter’s Celebration and The Room; A.C.T. commissioned translations of Hesiod, The Iliad, Ovid’s De Amore, Mary Stuart, and Uncle Vanya; the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Bay; and acclaimed productions of The Threepenny Opera, Old Times, Arcadia, The Rose Tattoo, Antigone, Creditors, Home, and The Caucasian Chalk Circle.

He worked at A.C.T. also includes the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein’s No for an Answer, David Lang’s In the Beginning, and William Bolcom’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

WEBB served as production stage manager at Theater Three in Dallas for six years.

JUNE PALLADINO (Assistant Stage Manager) has been involved in Bay Area theater, primarily as a stage manager, since 1999. Some of her favorite productions include A Streetcar Named Desire, Angels in America, and Rigoletto at A.C.T., and A Chorus Line, Crazy for You, and The Fantasticks at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

A.C.T. Profiles

HEATHER M. KITCHEN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. in 1996. Since that time, Kitchen has overseen the company’s expansion and been instrumental in fortifying the organization’s infrastructure and increasing support for A.C.T.’s artists and employees. After turning her B.A. in drama and theater arts at the University of Waterloo in 1975, Kitchen began her career in stage management at the prestigious Stratford Festival. Other career highlights include four seasons as production manager of Theatre New Brunswick, a regional touring company located in Eastern Canada, and as general manager of the Citadel Theatre, Canada’s largest regional theater. Following 15 years of stage management, Kitchen received her M.B.A. from the internationally renowned Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. She is an active member of the larger San Francisco community, currently serving on the board of the Commonwealth Club of California, and is a past member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross and of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula. Kitchen is serving her third term on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres and serves on the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, the Canada Council of the Arts, and Forbes magazine’s Business and the Arts Awards.

MELISSA SMITH (Concierge Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory of Fine Arts, the A.C.T. Conservatory Summer Training Concerts, and Studio A.C.T., in addition to serving as the master acting teacher of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T., Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting, scene study, and Shakespeare for six years. Also a professional actor, she has performed in regional theaters and in numerous off-off-Broadway plays, including work by Mac Wellman and David Greenspan. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

JAMES HAIRE (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theater. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little and Georgy (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen’s Don’t Drink the Water. Off-Broadway he produced Ibsen’s Little Eyolf (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw’s Arms and the Man. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theater Crafts International’s award for excellence in the theater in 1989, and in 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle.

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Thursday, January 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
San Francisco Main Library
Lower Level, Koret Auditorium
100 Larkin Street (at Grove)

For more information, call 415-432-2253 or visit sanlou.org/aact.

Who’s Who

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Perloff received a B.A. 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. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

HEATHER M. KITCHEN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. in 1996. Since that time, Kitchen has overseen the company’s expansion and been instrumental in fortifying the organization’s infrastructure and increasing support for A.C.T.’s artists and employees. After turning her B.A. in drama and theater arts at the University of Waterloo in 1975, Kitchen began her career in stage management at the prestigious Stratford Festival. Other career highlights include four seasons as production manager of The Theatre New Brunswick, a regional touring company located in Eastern Canada, and as general manager of The Citadel Theatre, Canada’s largest regional theater. Following 15 years of stage and production management, Kitchen received her M.B.A. from the internationally renowned Richard Ivy School of Business at The University of Western Ontario. She is an active member of the larger San Francisco community, currently serving on the board of the Commonwealth Club of California, and is a past member of the San Francisco Opera Leadership Board of the American Red Cross and of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula. Kitchen is serving her third term on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theaters and serves on the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, the Canada Council of the Arts, and Forbes magazine’s Business and the Arts Awards.

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