

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

# GEM OF THE OCEAN

BY AUGUST WILSON

DIRECTED BY  
RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON

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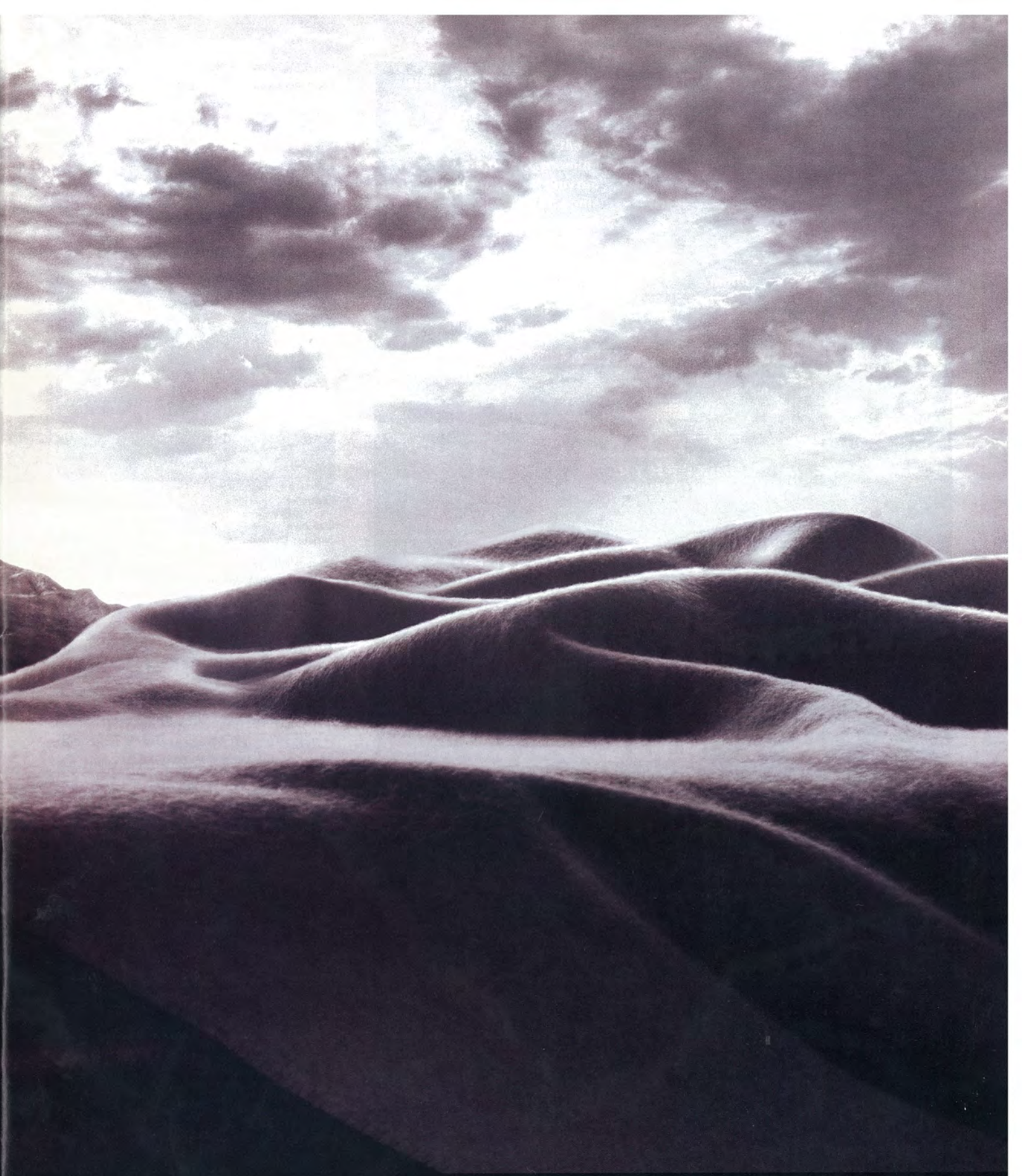





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# ABOUT A.C.T.

GEARY THEATER AUDIENCE PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNIE



**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 Executive 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 four 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 playwriting. 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 and George Thompson, 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 Teri Hatcher 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.



Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director* • Heather Kitchen, *Executive Director*

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# FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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JOCK McDONALD



**Dear Friends,**  
The last two words of August Wilson's luminous play *Gem of the Ocean* are, "So live." I first heard these words spoken onstage a week after August Wilson had died.

The fiercely life-affirming spirit of the play has become perhaps even more potent in the wake of August's death. Four months after the fact, it is still hard to believe that the incredibly fertile imagination that created all that language has been stopped; August was such a lover of theater, such a spinner of yarns, such a celebrator of the English language in all its surprises and complexity that the American theater will seem sadly silent without him. But he left behind a treasure trove of material that will continue to be part of the repertoire into our distant future, and we are thrilled to introduce you to one of the most recent additions to that repertoire, *Gem of the Ocean*, which we present in honor of his memory.

Like all of August's plays, *Gem* had a lengthy gestation period. One of the people most instrumental in bringing this play to life was our beloved Ruben Santiago-Hudson (last seen at A.C.T. in his own masterful *Lackawanna Blues*, and before that in his Tony Award-winning performance in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*). Ruben played Caesar in the Broadway production of *Gem of the Ocean*, and August became excited by the notion of Ruben carrying on the spirit of his work by directing a production of the play himself. We joined forces with the McCarter Theatre to collaborate with Ruben on this production, which opened in Princeton shortly after August's death in early October.

I was in Washington, D.C., directing *Hilda* at the time, and A.C.T. Executive Director Heather Kitchen and I drove three hundred miles north through pouring rain to catch the first phase of Ruben's work on the play. We arrived during a technical rehearsal, just as Aunt Ester was welcoming Citizen Barlow into the City of Bones. I will never forget standing at the back of that theater, soaking wet, listening to that incredibly magical language as a 285-year-old woman took a young man on the spiritual journey of his lifetime.

*Gem* is a play about belief in the face of complete darkness, and as with all of August's work it is a play about survival against the odds. It is also one of his most magical, lyrical, visionary plays, a play about the future that takes place a hundred years ago. It is fascinating to me that at the end of August's life he reached back to the beginning of the century, and the beginning of his epic cycle of African-American history, to find the launching pad for the long story he had already told. I know he would have been delighted that our two remarkable core acting company members Steven Anthony Jones and Gregory Wallace are taking part in this journey, along with long-time A.C.T. favorite Michele Shay and a remarkable company of artists new to the Geary stage who are prepared to take you on an adventure to the other side and back. As Aunt Ester reminds Citizen when she welcomes him into her home: "You on an adventure, Mr. Citizen. I bet you didn't know that. It's all adventure. You signed up for it and didn't even know it."

Welcome to *Gem of the Ocean*, and to our celebration of August Wilson.

Yours,

Carey Perloff  
A.C.T. Artistic Director



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## The Overcoat

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Music by Dmitri Shostakovich  
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## Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

by Tennessee Williams  
Directed by Israel Hicks  
OCT 13-NOV 13

## Sexual Perversity in Chicago

by David Mamet  
Directed by Peter Riegert  
JAN 5-FEB 5

## Gem of the Ocean

by August Wilson  
Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson  
FEB 10-MAR 12

## The Rivals

by Richard Brinsley Sheridan  
Directed by Lillian Groag  
MAR 23-APR 23

## A Number

by Caryl Churchill  
Directed by Anna D. Shapiro  
APR 28-MAY 28

## Happy End

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Emily Mann, *Artistic Director* • Jeffrey Woodward, *Managing Director*

# GEM OF THE OCEAN

*by August Wilson*  
(2003)

*Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson*

*Scenery by* Michael Carnahan  
*Costumes by* Karen Perry  
*Lighting by* Jane Cox  
*Sound by* Garth Hemphill  
*Music Composed by* Bill Sims, Jr., and Broderick Santiago  
*Casting by* Laura Stanczyk, C.S.A., Meryl Lind Shaw  
*Additional Percussion by* Stephen O'Neal  
*Assistant Director* Jade King Carroll

## THE CAST

*(in order of appearance)*

*Eli* Chuck Patterson  
*Citizen Barlow* Owiso Odera  
*Aunt Ester* Michele Shay  
*Black Mary* Roslyn Ruff  
*Rutherford Selig* Raynor Scheine  
*Solly Two Kings* Steven Anthony Jones  
*Caesar* Gregory Wallace

## UNDERSTUDIES

*Eli, Solly Two Kings*—W. Gene Mabrey; *Citizen Barlow, Caesar*—Aldo Billingslea  
*Aunt Ester, Black Mary*—Karen Aldridge; *Rutherford Selig*—Robert Ernst

## STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Dick Daley, *Stage Manager*  
Katherine Riemann, *Assistant Stage Manager*  
Phoebe Weiss, *Intern*

## SPECIAL THANKS

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Museum of the African Diaspora, Denise Bradley, *Executive Director*  
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# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ruben Santiago-Hudson has a reverence, as both an actor and a director, for “the larger-than-life spirit in August Wilson’s plays that has the power to transport us to places we never could have imagined possible.” Santiago-Hudson won a Tony Award for his portrayal of Canewell in Wilson’s *Seven Guitars* (also at A.C.T. in 1995) and played Caesar in the Broadway production (2004) of *Gem of the Ocean*, before he made the daunting transition last year to directing Wilson’s work.

*Gem of the Ocean* is the penultimate play in Wilson’s extraordinary dramatic cycle of ten plays, each set in a different decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and each a link in an ongoing chain of experience and emotion connecting the successive generations of this country’s African Americans.

“August did something no other writer has done in our generation, by chronicling an entire history and predicament of a people in this country,” says Santiago-Hudson. “No one else has done this. Not Edward Albee. Not Eugene O’Neill. Not Tennessee Williams. Not any of these wonderful writers.”

Wilson set *Gem of the Ocean*, like eight of his other plays, in his beloved Hill District of Pittsburgh, an impoverished but vital neighborhood, in 1904—a year Wilson said captivated his imagination because “you could walk around and find the people who [had been] slaves. I find that incredible.” The home of 285-year-old former slave Aunt Ester at 1839 Wylie Avenue—mentioned, like Aunt Ester herself, in several of Wilson’s plays—serves as a safe haven in *Gem* for all those lost souls, young and old, who seek out her grace and guidance.

Santiago-Hudson spoke to the cast and A.C.T. staff on the first day of *Gem of the Ocean* rehearsals in January about celebrating Wilson’s passionate visions and magnificent legacy. An unusually musical artist—who was last seen at A.C.T. in 2002 in his autobiographical play *Lackawanna Blues* (accompanied by blues guitarist and *Gem of the Ocean* composer Bill Sims, Jr.)—Santiago-Hudson remembered a conversation he had had with Wilson, just weeks before the playwright’s death in October 2005. Santiago-Hudson was inspired by the potential of incorporating traditional African music, ritualized drumming and chanting, into the production, to unlock the magic in the play. The music and percussive energy, says Santiago-Hudson, allow the actors and the audience alike to “feel the balance of the room change, feel the magnificence of the spirit.”

I don’t look at *Gem of the Ocean* as just a play. I look at it as an experience and an illuminating journey. We are going to start in one place, and we’re going to end up in a completely different place. And anyone who participates in this journey, onstage or in the audience, will go someplace with us that you’ve never been before—as long as you give your heart to it.

We, the audience, can’t take the journey until Citizen [Barlow, who is led in *Gem*’s central scene by Aunt Ester to the City of Bones, a mythical graveyard at sea] believes in what he feels, and not until Aunt Ester believes what she sees: that a paper boat made from her own bill of sale into slavery has become a ship called the *Gem of the Ocean* and will transport them to a place where Citizen’s soul can be cleansed. Only then can we, the audience, do the same thing and journey along with them.

During the run of *Gem of the Ocean* on Broadway, I felt like the City of Bones scenes remained problematic. They are crucially important to the play, and to our understanding of Citizen’s spiritual journey, and yet it felt like we hadn’t ever really solved, theatrically, the journey to the City of Bones. I had been watching the problems in rehearsals and had my own thoughts about how we might solve it. And finally one day during a technical



RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON IN *LACKAWANNA BLUES* AT A.C.T. IN 2002.

“YOU THINK YOU SUPPOSED TO KNOW EVERYTHING. LIFE IS A MYSTERY. DON’T YOU KNOW LIFE IS A MYSTERY? I SEE YOU STILL TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT. IT AIN’T ALL FOR YOU TO KNOW. IT’S ALL AN ADVENTURE. THAT’S ALL LIFE IS. BUT YOU GOT TO TRUST THAT ADVENTURE.”

—Aunt Ester, *Gem of the Ocean*



rehearsal, I was sitting in the back of the theater with August, and we were going 'round and 'round, changing the City of Bones scenes back and forth and in all directions. As August got up to go smoke a cigarette, we started talking about the scene and he said to me, "OK, fix it. Tell me one thing you'd do." And I told him my idea: the City of Bones is an African ritual. It starts with drums and it ends with drums. Real drums. Nothing modern.

So later, as director, I took out all the synthesized music and started instead with real acoustic sounds, even some drumming played onstage by the actors. I want the people onstage transported into a ritual, and this has to mean that things will happen that don't normally happen. Languages change and will be spoken that aren't normally spoken. We speak Yoruba. We speak Twee. We speak Wolof. We speak *as Africans*. Looks change. Smells change. Touches change. Movements change. And we bring you, the audience, through a change, too.

It's important that the actors do this themselves, live and in their own voices, so the characters feel that they are experiencing something new and magical. When they do, then anything at all can happen in the City of Bones. But *not* until then.

Bill Sims, Jr., has written the incidental and opening and closing music, so that throughout *Gem of the Ocean* there is a consistent voice of the African-American community. There is a voice of our history. All the music is acoustic: banjo, piano, guitar, djembe (drums), percussion, and voice. I remember telling August, "In every single one of your plays, there is an opportunity for something much bigger than life to happen. And I think that special something needs to emanate from inside your characters." I don't think characters should come flying in or levitate above the stage, unless we can first get to that feeling inside ourselves. If we can feel something is ethereal, larger than life—something that you can't imagine happening, but that *must* happen—only then can it reveal its power.



So go ahead and laugh. Clown. Have fun. Cry. Enjoy yourself. But this *is* August Wilson and it is history, and when you leave the theater I want you educated, illuminated, and nurtured. I want your heart full with an experience that you haven't had before. ■

—Ruben Santiago-Hudson

**The A.C.T. production of *Gem of the Ocean* is dedicated to the life and work of August Wilson. A.C.T. also honors the memory of producer Benjamin Mordecai III (1944–2005), a passionate champion of August Wilson's career and of new writing for the American theater.**

ABOVE: THE SEA NYMPH, BY ROMARE BEARDEN (1977). FROM THE ODYSSEUS COLLAGES. © ROMARE BEARDEN FOUNDATION.



# AUNT ESTER'S CHILDREN: A CENTURY ONSTAGE

BY AUGUST WILSON



ABOVE: ILLUSTRATION FROM *THE MIDDLE PASSAGE: WHITE SHIPS/BLACK CARGO*, BY TOM FEELINGS (DIAL BOOKS).  
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*This essay, which serves as the preface to King Hedley II (TCG Books), was written in the spring of 2000, before the playwright had begun Gem of the Ocean and Radio Golf, the final two plays in his 20th-century cycle. It first appeared in the New York Times (April 23, 2000).*

In 1975 I wrote a short story titled “The Greatest Blues Singer in the World.” As it turned out, the text of the story was very short. I began, “The streets that Balboa walked were his own private ocean, and Balboa was drowning.” That seemed to communicate the idea with more clarity than I could hope to gain by adding to it, so I stopped and typed “The End.”

I had conceived a much longer story that spoke to the social context of the artist and how one’s private ocean is inextricably linked to the tributary streams that gave rise to, and occasioned, the impulse to song.

Before one can become an artist one must first *be*. It is *being* in all facets, its many definitions, that endows the artist with an immutable sense of himself that is necessary for the accomplishment of his task. Simply put, art is beholden to the kiln in which the artist was fired.

Before I am anything, a man or a playwright, I am an African American. The tributary streams of culture, history, and experience have provided me with the materials out of which I make my art. As an African-American playwright, I have many forebears who have pioneered and hacked out of the underbrush an aesthetic that embraced and elevated the cultural values of black Americans to a level equal to those of their European counterparts.

Out of their experiences, the sacred and the profane, was made a record of their traverse and the many points of epiphany and redemption. They have hallowed the ground and provided a tradition gained by will and daring. I count it a privilege to stand at the edge of the art, with the gift of their triumphs and failures, as well as with the playwrights down through the ages who found within the turbulent history of human



thought and action an ennobling conduct worthy of art. The culture of black America, forged in the cotton fields of the South and tested by the hard pavements of the industrial North, has been the ladder by which we have climbed into the New World. The field of manners and rituals of social intercourse—the music, speech, rhythms, eating habits, religious beliefs, gestures, notions of common sense, attitudes toward sex, concepts of beauty and justice, and the responses to pleasure and pain—have enabled us to survive the loss of our political will and the disruption of our history. The culture’s moral codes and sanction of conduct offer clear instructions as to the value of community, and make clear that the preservation and promotion, the propagation and rehearsal of the value of one’s ancestors is the surest way to a full and productive life.

The cycle of plays I have been writing since 1979 is my attempt to represent that culture in dramatic art. From the beginning, I decided not to write about historical events or the pathologies of the black community. The details of our struggle to survive and prosper, in what has been a difficult and sometimes bitter relationship with a system of laws and practices that deny us access to the tools necessary for productive and industrious life, are available to any serious student of history or sociology.

Instead, I wanted to present the unique particulars of black American culture as the transformation of impulse and sensibility into codes of conduct and response, into cultural rituals that defined and celebrated ourselves as men and women of high purpose. I wanted to place this culture on stage in all its richness and fullness and to demonstrate its ability to sustain us in all areas of human life and endeavor and through profound moments of our history in which the larger society has thought less of us than we have thought of ourselves.

From *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* (which is set in 1911) to *King Hedley II* (set in 1985), the cycle covers almost 80 years of American history. The plays are peopled with characters whose ancestors have been in the United States since the early 17th century.

They were brought across an ocean, chained in the hulls of 350-ton vessels. In the southern part of the United States, they were made to

**AUGUST WILSON (1945–2005)** is the author of *Jitney*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *King Hedley II*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade by decade, over the course of the 20th century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. Honors include Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Britain’s Olivier Award for *Jitney*; seven New York Drama Critic’s Circle Awards; and an Emmy nomination for *The Piano Lesson* screenplay. Wilson received Rockefeller and Guggenheim fellowships, the Whiting Writers’ Award, a 2003 Heinz Award, a National Humanities Medal from the president of the United States, numerous honorary degrees, and the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a 1995 American Academy of Arts and Letters inductee. He was raised in Pittsburgh’s Hill District. Wilson died in October 2005; he is survived by his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero, and his two daughters, Sakina Anari and Azula Carmen Wilson.



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In August 2005, as Wilson put the final touches on *Radio Golf*, completing his cycle, he responded to the announcement that he had been diagnosed with terminal liver cancer: “I’ve lived a blessed life. I’m ready.” On October 17, Jujamcyn Theaters unveiled the marquee on the newly renamed August Wilson Theater (formerly the Virginia) on Broadway, a fitting tribute to one of the most important voices in the American theater.

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**“THERE IS A GRACE BEYOND MATTER.  
IT IS OUR WAY OF KNOWING, AND  
ACCEPTING, THE SPLENDOR OF DEATH  
WITH ITS VOLUMINOUS ATLAS.  
WE FIND IT WHEN WE MUST.”**

—August Wilson



labor in the vast agricultural plantations. They made do without surnames and lived in dirt-floor cabins. They labored without pay. They were bought and sold and traded for money and gold and diamonds and molasses and horses and cows. They were fed the barest of subsistence diets. When they tried to escape, they were tracked down by dogs and men on horseback. They existed as an appendage to the body of society. They had no moral personality and no moral status in civic or church law.

After 200-odd years, as a political expediency, they were granted freedom from being the property of other men. During the next hundred years they were disenfranchised, their houses were burned, they were hung from trees, forced into separate and inferior houses, schools, and public facilities. They were granted status in law and denied it in practice.

Yet the characters in the plays still place their faith in America's willingness to live up to the meaning of her creed so as not to make a mockery of her ideals. It is this belief in America's honor that allows them to pursue the American Dream even as it remains elusive. The conflicts with the larger society are cultural conflicts. Conflicts over ways of being and doing things. The characters are all continually negotiating for a position, the high ground of the battlefield, from where they might best shout an affirmation of the value and worth of their being in the face of a many-million-voice chorus that seeks to deafen and obliterate it.

They shout, they argue, they wrestle with love, honor, duty, betrayal; they have loud voices and big hearts; they demand justice, they love, they laugh, they cry, they murder, and they embrace life with zest and vigor. Despite the fact that the material conditions of their lives are meager. Despite the fact that they have no relationship with banking capital and their communities lack the twin pillars of commerce and industry. Despite the fact that their relationship to the larger society is one of servitude and marked neglect. In all the plays, the characters remain pointed toward the

future, their pockets lined with fresh hope and an abiding faith in their own abilities and their own heroics.

From Herald Loomis's vision of the bones rising out of the Atlantic Ocean (the largest unmarked graveyard in the world) in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, to the pantheon of vengeful gods ("The Ghosts of the Yellow Dog") in *The Piano Lesson*, to Aunt Ester, the then 349-year-old conjure woman who first surfaced in *Two Trains Running*—the metaphysical presence of a spirit world has become increasingly important to my work. It is the world that the characters turn to when they are most in need.

Aunt Ester has emerged for me as the most significant persona of the cycle. The characters, after all, are her children. The wisdom and tradition she embodies are valuable tools for the reconstruction of their personality and for dealing with a society in which the contradictions, over the decades, have grown more fierce, and for exposing all the places it is lacking in virtue.

Theater, as a powerful conveyer of human values, has often led us through the impossible landscape of American class, regional, and racial conflicts, providing fresh insights and fragile but enduring bridges of fruitful dialogue. It has provided us with a mirror that forces us to face personal truths and enables us to discover within ourselves an indomitable spirit that recognizes, sometimes across wide social barriers, those common concerns that make possible genuine cultural fusion.

With the completion of my latest play, *King Hedley II*, I have only the "bookends," the first and last decades of the 20th century, remaining. As I approach the cycle's end, I find myself a different person than when I started. The experience of writing plays has altered me in ways I cannot yet fully articulate.

As with any journey, the only real question is: "Is the port worthy of the cruise?" The answer is a resounding "Yes." I often remark that I am a struggling playwright. I'm struggling to get the next play on the page. Eight down and counting. The struggle continues. ■

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# AT THE CLOSE OF A CENTURY

BY DON SHIRLEY

When August Wilson wrote his breakthrough success, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, in 1984, he had no idea he had embarked on a cycle of plays that would take more than two decades to complete.

It wasn't until he was writing *The Piano Lesson*, three plays later, that it dawned on him that by setting his plays in different decades of the 20th century, he was gradually constructing a cycle. It would focus on "the largest issues and ideas that black people faced in those times," he said in 1986, shortly after he realized what was taking shape.

Many playwrights have had dreams on that scale; few have seen them realized. Yet Wilson's ambitious goal has been reached. All of the plays have been produced, with eight reaching Broadway.

As the cycle continued, the plays became more sprawling and more referential to one another—with characters showing up in more than one play. The atmosphere of the neighborhood where Wilson grew up, Pittsburgh's Hill District—hardly present in the first two produced plays—became stronger.

## GEM OF THE OCEAN

Set in: 1904 • Premiere: 2003 • A.C.T. Production: 2006

**Plot:** A young man seeks an old seer's counsel about a violent incident, while a former Underground Railroad guide frets over his sister and a black constable tries to enforce the white man's law.

**Inside Info:** This was Wilson's first play since *Ma Rainey* with a dominant female character, the 285-year-old Aunt Ester, who was mentioned but not seen in *Two Trains Running* and *King Hedley II*. Wilson said, in 1904, "you could walk around and find people who were slaves. I find that incredible."

## JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE

Set in: 1911 • Premiere: 1986 • A.C.T. Production: 1989

**Plot:** A mysterious man in search of his wife, accompanied by his young daughter, arrives at a boarding house where a neighbor tries to help him rediscover his identity.

**Inside Info:** Wilson has called this play his favorite. His inspiration came from a photograph of Romare Bearden's painting *Mill Hand's Lunch Bucket*. The titular character is offstage—he's the white man who pressed the leading character into peonage in the South.

## MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

Set in: 1927 • Premiere: 1984 • A.C.T. Production: 1987

**Plot:** In a Chicago recording studio, "Ma" Rainey and her band—exploited by the white-run music industry—fall into strife among themselves.

**Inside Info:** The fourth play Wilson wrote was his first to be produced—and the only play in his 20<sup>th</sup>-century cycle set outside Pittsburgh. Wilson said: "*Ma Rainey* isn't about 'This is what you took from us' but 'This is so valuable what you've taken from us.'"

## THE PIANO LESSON

Set in: 1936 • Premiere: 1987 • A.C.T. Production: 1991

**Plot:** Boy Willie, a sharecropper from the South, wants to sell his family's ancestral piano. His Pittsburgh sister Berniece insists on keeping it—the piano has the carved faces of their great-grandfather's wife and daughter, who were sold in exchange for the piano during the days of slavery.

**Inside Info:** Wilson picked up his second Pulitzer for this story. Skip James's blues song "Special Delivery" was part of Wilson's inspiration—he said he "wanted to write a play like that song—with the same grace, elegance, power."

## SEVEN GUITARS

Set in: 1948 • Premiere: 1995 • A.C.T. Production: 1995

**Plot:** A group of neighbors in the backyard of a tenement house returns from a funeral, and the play flashes back to the final week of the young singer-songwriter who died.

**Inside Info:** "All of the things in the play are very necessary, but they all appear to be quite unnecessary," Wilson said.



STEVEN ANTHONY JONES (LEFT) AND ROSCOE LEE BROWNE IN *JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE* AT A.C.T. IN 1989.





JOAN MARCUS

### FENCES

Set in: 1957 • Premiere: 1985

**Plot:** A former Negro League baseball player who was born too soon to make the transition to the major leagues now collects garbage and nurses grudges against his athletic 17-year-old son.

**Inside Info:** Probably because of its original star, James Earl Jones, this Pulitzer- and Tony-winning play is considered Wilson's foremost star vehicle.

### TWO TRAINS RUNNING

Set in: 1969 • Premiere: 1990

**Plot:** A group of regulars hangs out at a café that might be condemned—or might be bought by the nearby mortuary owner. Romance blossoms between an excon and a waitress.

**Inside Info:** This play is more conversation oriented than most of Wilson's previous plays. The oral tradition is "how the values of black culture are passed along," Wilson said. "The history is not written down; the mythology is not written down."

**ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP):** MICHELE SHAY, KEITH DAVID, AND RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON IN *SEVEN GUITARS* AT A.C.T. IN 1995.

**RIGHT (LEFT TO RIGHT):** CARL GORDON, CHARLES S. DUTTON, ROCKY CARROLL, AND LOU MEYERS IN *THE PIANO LESSON* AT A.C.T. IN 1991.

### JITNEY

Set in: 1977 • Premiere: 1982

**Plot:** The owner of an unlicensed cab business faces the threat that his building will be demolished, while his son—out of prison after 20 years—seeks a reconciliation.

**Inside Info:** The first play that Wilson wrote for his cycle is the only one of the ten that never reached Broadway—although it did play off Broadway. Although Wilson is known for king-size first drafts, he had to expand the original *Jitney*. He joked: "If it's a 90-minute play, no one will know it's mine."

### KING HEDLEY II

Set in: 1985 • Premiere: 1999

**Plot:** The title character, just out of jail, is saving money to open a video store but instead becomes a bank robber.

**Inside Info:** Marion McClinton took over the reins from Lloyd Richards as Wilson's director with this play, which is set in the same backyard and has two of the same characters as *Seven Guitars*. McClinton said, "I've worked on Shakespeare, Beckett, and Genet, and they were a walk in the park compared to this play."

### RADIO GOLF

Set in: 1997 • Premiere: 2005

**Plot:** While Aunt Ester's house is scheduled for demolition, Harmond Wilkes II wants to teach kids in the neighborhood how to play golf—and wants to become Pittsburgh's first black mayor. His partner helps a white radio investor take advantage of minority ownership tax breaks.

**Inside Info:** Wilson examines the contemporary black middle class. The play includes a character from *Two Trains Running*, two descendants of characters in *Gem of the Ocean*, part of the set from *Jitney*, and a speech that was cut from *King Hedley II*.

*This article originally appeared in the Los Angeles Times August 7, 2005 (© 2005 Los Angeles Times).*



GERRY GOODSTEIN



# WHO'S WHO IN *GEM OF THE OCEAN*



**STEVEN ANTHONY JONES** (*Solly Two Kings*), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in

*Female Transport, Levee James, Waiting for Godot, Yoben, The Three Sisters, The Dazzle, Night and Day, Buried Child, A Christmas Carol* (Ebenezer Scrooge), *Celebration* and *The Room*, "Master Harold"...and the boys, *The Misanthrope, The Invention of Love, The Threepenny Opera, Tartuffe, Indian Ink, Hecuba, Insurrection: Holding History, Seven Guitars, Othello* (title role), *Antigone, Miss Evers' Boys, Clara, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Saint Joan, King Lear, Golden Boy, and Feathers*. Other local theater credits include *Fuente Ovejuna* and *McTeague* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *As You Like It* (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival); *The Cherry Orchard, Every Moment, and The Island* (Eureka Theatre); *Sideman* (San Jose Repertory Theatre); and *Division Street* (Oakland Ensemble Theatre). He originated the role of Private James Wilkie in the original production of *A Soldier's Play* at the Negro Ensemble Company in New York. His many film and television credits include two seasons of "Midnight Caller."



**OWISO ODERA** (*Citizen Barlow*) recently appeared in *For the Love of Three Oranges* at La Jolla Playhouse and *Macbeth* at Boston's Commonwealth

Shakespeare Company. Odera is a recent graduate of the University of California at San Diego M.F.A. Actor Training Program, where he appeared in *Angels*

*The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

in *America: Millennium Approaches, The Seagull, Topdog/Underdog, and As You Like It*. Film and television credits include *Relative Obscurity, The Thirst*, "The Unit," and "Numb3rs." He is a recipient of the George C. Wolfe Theatre Award from the Princess Grace Foundation. This summer, Odera will join the acting company of the Summer Shakespeare Festival at The Old Globe in San Diego, where he will appear in *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



**CHUCK PATTERSON** (*Eli*) appeared in the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*. Broadway credits include *Two Trains*

*Running, Death of a Salesman* (with George C. Scott), *Gospel at Colonus, All God's Chillun' Got Wings, Home, and Proposals*. Off-Broadway and regional credits include *Gitney, The Odyssey, Everybody's Ruby, Blade to the Heat, Driving Miss Daisy, The African Company Presents Richard III, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Miss Ever's Boys, A Soldier's Play, Fences, Othello, A Lesson from Aloes, and Twelve Angry Men*. On film and television, Patterson has appeared in *The Amazing Jett Jackson, The Five Heartbeats, The Royale, Vengeance: The Story of Tony Cimo*, "Law & Order," "New York Undercover," and "Spenser for Hire."



**ROSLYN RUFF** (*Black Mary*) appeared in the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*. Ruff has appeared off Broadway in

*The Cherry Orchard* and *Macbeth* at The Classical Theatre of Harlem and *Killa Dilla*, by OyamO, for the Working Theatre. With The Acting Company,

she toured the country in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (AUDELCO nomination) and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Regional theater credits include *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* at Alliance Theatre Company/The Acting Co.; *King Lear* at Yale Repertory Theatre; *The Oedipus Plays* for the Shakespeare Theatre D.C. at the 2003 Athens Festival in Greece; *A Panto: Sleeping Beauty, Once in a Lifetime, and In the Blood* at People's Light & Theatre Company; and *Three Faces and a Funeral* at the American Repertory Theatre. Television appearances include "The Jury," "The Sopranos," and "All My Children." Ruff was awarded the 2003 Barrymore Award for outstanding lead actress in a play and the 1999 Buffalo Artvoice Award for supporting actress for *The Amen Corner*. She holds an M.F.A. from the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University.



**RAYNOR SCHEINE** (*Rutherford Selig*) appeared in the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*. An Actors' Equity

member since 1973, Scheine is a veteran of more than 100 theater productions, 50 feature films, and countless television appearances and is thrilled to be playing Rutherford Selig again, a role he originated in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* in 1986 (six cities and Broadway—320 performances) and reprises now in *Gem of the Ocean* (four cities and Broadway—220 performances). He has two feature films in theaters now: *Transamerica*, with Felicity Huffman, and *The New World*, with Colin Farrell. Films to be released later this year include *The Sentinel*, with Michael Douglas and Eva Longoria, *Stealing Martin Lane*, with Dylan Baker, and *Man of the Year*, with Robin Williams. Favorite film credits include *Fried Green Tomatoes, My Cousin Vinny,*





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## WHO'S WHO

*Ace Ventura, The Rookie, The Quick and the Dead, and Nothing Lasts Forever*, with Sam Jaffe.



**MICHELE SHAY** (*Aunt Ester*) is best known for her Tony-nominated performance in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, for which she received

Outer Critics Circle and NAACP awards. On Broadway, she was also seen in Samm Art Williams's *Home* (Negro Ensemble Company) and Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls...* (New York Shakespeare Festival). Off-Broadway credits include playing Titania opposite William Hurt in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (NYSF), Lisa Loomer's *The Waiting Room* (The Vineyard), *Split Second*, *Coriolanus*, with Morgan Freeman and Gloria Foster, Mustapha Matura's *Playboy of the West Indies* (Lincoln Center), and her OBIE Award-winning performance in Matura's *Meetings*, with Carl Lumbly. Recent regional credits include the world premieres of *Radio Golf*, by August Wilson (Yale Repertory Theatre), and *The God Committee* (Barrington Stage Company). At A.C.T. she has appeared in *Seven Guitars*, and in *Hecuba* and *Singer's Boy*, both with Olympia Dukakis. Other regional credits include *Flying West* (Pasadena Playhouse), *House Arrest*, with Anna Deveare Smith (Mark Taper Forum), and *Waiting to Be Invited* (ACT Theatre, Seattle) and *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Denver Center Theatre Company), both directed by Israel Hicks. Film and television credits include *He Got Game*, *One True Thing*, "Family Law," "Judging Amy," "The Cosby Show," "ER," and the role of Henrietta Morgan on NBC's "Another World." A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, Shay also directs

*The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

and is a professional coach. She received a Fox Foundation Grant to study the connection between acting and the healing arts, a pursuit which has become a passion.



**GREGORY WALLACE**

(*Caesar*), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in *Lilies*, or *The Revival*

*of a Romantic Drama, The Gamester, A Doll's House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Dazzle, Night and Day, Blithe Spirit, Celebration* and *The Room*, "Master Harold"...and the boys, *The Misanthrope, Edward II, A Christmas Carol, Tartuffe, Insurrection: Holding History*, and *Angels in America* (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award). Other theater credits include *Our Country's Good* (Broadway), *A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (New York Theatre Workshop), *As You Like It* (Public Theater), *Much Ado about Nothing* (Alliance Theatre), *The Screens* (Guthrie Theater), *The Learned Ladies* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *King Lear* (Whole Theater), *The Queen and the Rebels* (Center Stage), and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Screen credits include Peter Sellars's *The Cabinet of Dr. Ramirez, The Beverly Hillbillies, Dark Goddess*, "Crime Story," and *Internal Affairs*. Wallace is a Fox Fellow and a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.



**KAREN ALDRIDGE**

(*Understudy*) recently finished work on Marin Theatre Company's world premiere production of *Splittin' the*

*Raft*. Internationally, she performed in a yearlong, 17-country tour as Matilda



## WHO'S WHO

in *Le Costume*, directed by Peter Brook. For the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Aldridge played the role of Alelia in the world premiere of *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove*, written and directed by Regina Taylor. Chicago credits include: Nina in *The Seagull* at Writers' Theatre; Catherine in *Proof* at The Goodman Theatre (Black Theatre Alliance Award for best actress); Tamyra in the world premiere of Tracy Letts's Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Man from Nebraska* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; *Far Away* and *In the Blood* (Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for best actress, After Dark Award) at Next Theatre; and *Love's Labor's Lost* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Aldridge holds an M.F.A. in acting from The Theatre School, DePaul University and a B.A. in sociology from UCLA.



### ALDO BILLINGSLEA

(*Understudy*)

has appeared in productions of August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, Joe Turner's

*Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, and *Two Trains Running*; Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*; Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*; August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*; Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*; and more than 20 different plays by William Shakespeare. He has worked in the Bay Area at Marin Theatre Company, the Magic Theatre, TheatreWorks, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Center REPertory Company, and The Z Space Studio. Billingslea has also worked at Portland Center Stage, Portland Repertory Theatre, Tacoma Actors Guild, Sacramento Theatre Company, Plano Repertory Theatre, Theatre Three in Dallas, San Antonio's Majestic Theatre, Oasis Theatre Company in Buffalo, San Diego's Old Globe, the Utah Shakespearean Festival, the Illinois

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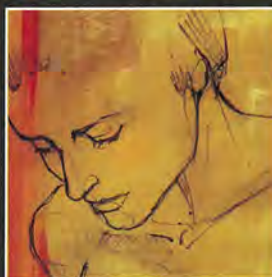
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Shakespeare Festival, the Shakespeare Festival of Dallas, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland (seven seasons). He is an associate professor of theater arts at Santa Clara University.



**ROBERT ERNST** (*Understudy*) has performed at A.C.T. in *The Time of Your Life* as the Armenian (also at Seattle Repertory Theatre), *A Christmas*

*Carol*, and *Juno and the Paycock*. He is a cofounder of the Iowa Theatre Lab and the Blake St. Hawkeyes. Recent credits include Phil Tracy in *The People's Temple* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Cesar in *Marius* at the Aurora Theatre Company. Other credits include *The John*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Late Henry Moss* (replacement for Nick Nolte), *Eyes for Consuela*, *Speed of Darkness*, *Kingfish*, and *The Joy of Going Somewhere Definite*. His film and television credits include *Surefire*, *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, *Burglar*, *Metro*, *Escape from Alcatraz*, "Nash Bridges," and "Hill Street Blues." In 1987 Ernst broke the *Guinness Book* world record for the longest continuous performance—by performing both set material and improvisation for twenty-four hours and one minute.



**W. GENE MABREY** (*Understudy*) has performed in various Bay Area venues over the past 25 years. He has appeared in several

productions at The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, including August Wilson's *Two Trains Running* (Mr. West) and *Jitney* (The Boss). He repeated the role of

Mr. West in *Two Trains Running* with TheatreWorks. With Marin Theatre Company, he performed in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Becket*. He recently understudied the role of Pops in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's production of *Jonestown Stories* and understudied Red in the A.C.T. production of Wilson's *Seven Guitars*. Mabrey is a graduate of San Francisco State University, where he received degrees in psychology and theater arts. He has trained in Phil Bennett's Stanislavsky Method of Psychophysical Actions and continues to work with Susan Nance on voice, singing, and the Alexander technique.

**RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON** (*Director*) has received Tony, OBIE, AUDELCO, Helen Hayes, Clarence Derwent, Drama League, and New Professional Theater's Shining Star awards for his work as an actor. His autobiographical stage play, *Lackawanna Blues*, which debuted at Joseph Papp's Public Theater, received OBIE, Helen Hayes, and HBO Arts Festival awards. He recently received the Humanities Award for outstanding television screenplay for *Lackawanna Blues*, which aired on HBO last year and garnered seven Emmy nominations, including one for outstanding made-for-television movie, the National Board of Review Award for best film or miniseries made for cable TV, and a Golden Globe nomination for best motion picture made for television. Santiago-Hudson made his directorial debut at the McCarter Theatre Center with *Gem of the Ocean* last year. He has appeared on the Geary Theater stage in A.C.T.'s 2002 production of *Lackawanna Blues* and in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* in 1995.

**MICHAEL CARNAHAN** (*Scenic Designer*) designed sets for the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*. Carnahan's regional and off-Broadway credits include *Howie*

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# WHO'S WHO

*the Rookie* at Irish Arts, *Pygmalion* and *Intrigue and Love* at Cocteau Rep, *Brando* at Audax, *The Widow's Blind Date* at Blind Fate, *The Miser*, *Candide*, *True West*, and *Macbeth*. He designed for four seasons at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, where his credits included *Tough Titty*, *Create Fate*, Eric Bogosian's *Red Angel*, *A Distant Country Called Youth*, *The Chekhov Cycle*, *Cabaret & Main*, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson's *Lackawanna Blues*.

**KAREN PERRY** (*Costume Designer*) designed costumes for the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*. Perry is one of entertainment's foremost costume designers. Career highlights include Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, John Sayles's *The Brother from Another Planet*, *Just Looking* (dir. Jason Alexander), *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* on Broadway, "Saturday Night Live," the UPN sitcom "Abby," and the acclaimed CBS original movie *One Day in Montgomery: The Rosa Parks Story*, for which she received a Costume Designers Guild Award nomination. Perry has also worked as a personal wardrobe stylist to several premier artists, including Gregory Hines, with whom she has collaborated on numerous commercials, marketing campaigns, and theatrical projects, including *The Tic Code*, CBS's "The Gregory Hines Show," and the Showtime original film *Bojangles*. She is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in costume design for American and Black American theater, film, and television, presented at the National Black Theatre Festival.

**JANE COX** (*Lighting Designer*) designed lighting for the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*. Recent credits include *Dame Edna: Back with a Vengeance* in San Francisco and on Broadway, and designs for Brooklyn Academy of Music, Playwrights Horizons, the Vineyard Theatre, Signature Theatre, the New

San Francisco Conservatory of Music

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# WHO'S WHO

York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater, Classic Stage Company, and Primary Stages in New York. Regional and international credits include work with the Guthrie Theater, CenterStage, Arena Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, CTC, the National Theatre in London, and the Project Theatre in Dublin. Cox was the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group grant 2001-03.

**GARTH HEMPHILL** (*Sound Designer*) was A.C.T.'s resident sound designer for eight years and is now freelancing full time. He has designed more than 150 productions, including 15 world and American premieres and many more West Coast premieres for some of today's greatest playwrights, including Tom Stoppard, Richard Nelson, Richard Greenberg, and Christopher Durang.

Hemphill has earned numerous awards for his work on musicals and dramatic works, from the classics to new plays. Favorite A.C.T. productions include *The Three Sisters*, *The Constant Wife*, *The Dazzle*, *American Buffalo*, *Lackawanna Blues*, *Indian Ink*, *Buried Child*, *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, *The Beard of Avon*, *Enrico IV*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Frank Loesser's Hans Christian Andersen*, *Edward II*, *The House of Mirth*, *The Invention of Love*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Insurrection: Holding History*, *Mary Stuart*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

**BILL SIMS, JR.** (*Composer*) is an internationally respected "Master of the Blues." Sims composed the original music for the McCarter Theatre Center production of *Gem of the Ocean*, as well as for Ruben Santiago-Hudson's acclaimed autobiographical stage play, *Lackawanna Blues*. Other stage credits include *Moms*

and *Her Ladies* at the Producer's Club Theatre, *Deep Down* at INTAR Theatre, *Trick the Devil* at Freedom Theatre in Philadelphia, and *The Crowns* at the Intiman Theatre in Seattle. Sims was the subject of the documentary "An American Love Story" (PBS), for which he composed many of the songs on the soundtrack. Other film credits include *Miss Ruby's House*, for which he composed the music on the soundtrack, *New York Stories for DKNY*, and the film version of *Lackawanna Blues* for HBO. Sims's voice can be heard in many television and radio commercials. His critically acclaimed 1999 CD release, *Bill Sims*, demonstrates his knowledge of the many facets of the blues.

## BRODERICK SANTIAGO

(*Composer*) is one of this generation's most talented and versatile entertainers. At the age of ten, Santiago fell in love with percussion at a local community center in his hometown of Lackawanna, New York. It was in this environment that the passion for sharing his talent manifested itself in the form of educating others. An accomplished and seasoned entertainer, Santiago has shared the stage with a host of renowned musicians, including Jonathan Butler and Jimmy Delgado. Recently Santiago composed a selection for the Emmy and Golden Globe-nominated HBO film *Lackawanna Blues*. Santiago is a founding member of Rio Negro, a Latin jazz band based in Atlanta, Georgia. When he's not teaching, he can be found playing with his band at various high-profile functions around the world.

**MERYL LIND SHAW** (*Casting Director*) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for the Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and

*The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

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# WHO'S WHO

the San Francisco productions of *White Christmas*, *Jitney*, and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, as well as the first workshop of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and the CD-ROM game *Obsidian*. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she stage-managed more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.'s *Creditors* and *Bon Appétit!* She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She has served on the Bay Area advisory committee of Actors' Equity Association, the negotiating committee for the LORT contract (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival.

**MCCARTER THEATRE CENTER** (*Coproducer*), under the leadership of Artistic Director Emily Mann and Managing Director Jeffrey Woodward and located on the campus of Princeton University, is recognized as one of the nation's premier theater companies and performing arts centers. Significant productions include the premieres of Christopher Durang's *Miss Witherspoon*, Steven Dietz's *Last of the Boys* and *Fiction*, Nilo Cruz's *Anna in the Tropics* (2003 Pulitzer Prize winner), Regina Taylor's *Crowns*, Dael Orlandersmith's *Yellowman* (2002 Pulitzer Prize finalist), Emily Mann's *Having Our Say* (three Tony nominations, including best play and best director), Athol Fugard's *Valley Song* and *Sorrows and Rejoicings*, and Stephen Wadsworth's Marivaux trilogy. McCarter, home to the Matthews and Berliand Theatre, has also produced major new productions of August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*, Edward Albee's *All Over* (OBIE Awards for direction by Emily Mann and performance by Rosemary Harris), and David Leveaux's production of *Electra* (three Tony nominations). For more information, visit [www.mccarter.org](http://www.mccarter.org).

**DICK DALEY's** (*Stage Manager*) previous works include *A Christmas Carol*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, and *Waiting for Godot* (A.C.T.), the world premiere of *The Opposite of Sex: The Musical* and *Dr. Faustus*, written and directed by David Mamet (Magic Theatre); *River's End*, *Bus Stop*, *Communicating Doors*, *The Last Schwartz*, and *Visions of Kerouac* (Marin Theatre Company); *Macbeth* and *Henry V* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *Golda's Balcony* and *Twelfth Night* (L.A. Women's Shakespeare Company); *The Santaland Diaries*, Dance Umbrella's *Boston Moves*, and *Pure PolyEsther* (The Theatre Offensive); *Tongues of Fire*, a multimedia production on the life and works of Jaime Gil de Biedma, *King Lear*, and *Henry V* (The Company of Women); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Duet for One*, and *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare & Company); and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*, *A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline*, and *Nunsense*. He also had a seven-year run as the production manager at Emerson College in Boston.

**KATHERINE RIEMANN** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) has worked on productions of *Hilda*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Levee James*, *The Constant Wife*, *American Buffalo*, *Frank Loesser's Hans Christian Andersen*, *Shockheaded Peter*, *The House of Mirth*, *The Invention of Love* and *Wrong Mountain* for A.C.T. She has also worked on productions of *Our Town*, *Cloud Nine*, *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*, and *The Oresteia* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre and on *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Much Ado about Nothing* for California Shakespeare Theater.

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# A.C.T. PROFILES



**CAREY PERLOFF** (*Artistic Director*) is celebrating her 14th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed A.C.T.'s acclaimed productions of *A*

*Christmas Carol* (a new adaptation by Perloff with dramaturg Paul Walsh), David Mamet's new adaptation of Granville-Barker's *The Voyage Inheritance*, Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*, Constance Congdon's *A Mother* (an A.C.T.-commissioned adaptation of Gorky's *Vassa Zheleznova*), Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Stoppard's *Night and Day*, and Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*. Her production of Maria Ndiaye's visionary new work *Hilda*, coproduced at A.C.T.'s second space (Zeum) with Laura Pels Productions, traveled to Washington D.C.'s Studio Theater and then to New York's 59E59 Theater last fall. She was recently awarded France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

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 Pinter's *Celebration* and *The Room*; A.C.T.-commissioned translations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, and *Uncle Vanya*; the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian's *Singer's Boy*; and acclaimed productions of *The Threepenny Opera*, *Old Times*, *Arcadia*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Antigone*, *Creditors*, *Home*, and *The Tempest*. Her work at A.C.T. also includes the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein's *No for an Answer*, David Lang/Mac Wellman's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, and the West Coast premiere of her own play *The Colossus of Rhodes* (a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award). Her new play, *Luminescence Dating*, was developed under a grant from The Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project, was workshopped last summer at New York Stage and Film, and premiered in New York in April 2005 as the mainstage offering of the First Light Festival at the Ensemble Studio Theatre. She has collaborated with many notable contemporary writers, most recently Philip Kan Gotanda on his new play *After the War* (an A.C.T. commission) at the Sundance Institute in July 2004 and Robert O'Hara on

*Antebellum* for the 2005 O'Neill Playwrights Conference.

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 *The Birthday Party*, and many classic works. Under Perloff's leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, direction, and design, as well as 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.

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.



LISA KOHLER

**HEATHER KITCHEN** (*Executive Director*), since joining A.C.T. in 1996, has strengthened the organization's infrastructure and overseen the company's expansion to include

the development and performance of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.'s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in stage, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credits include the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, Theatre New Brunswick, New Play Centre, Vancouver, and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of The Citadel Theatre, Kitchen managed a five-theater performing arts complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, an International Children's Festival, and a Teen Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the benchmark study *Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton*. An active community member, Kitchen serves on

the boards and executive committees of the Commonwealth Club of California, as well as the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund in New York. She is a past member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula, and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in Edmonton and has served three terms on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, Canada Council of the Arts, and *Forbes* magazine's Business and the Arts Awards. The *San Francisco Business Times* recently named Kitchen one of the 15 most influential women in the Bay Area nonprofit arena.

**MELISSA SMITH** (*Conservatory Director*) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory's Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, 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 for six years. She has worked with people of all ages in venues around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actor, she has performed in numerous off-off Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including A.C.T. In 2004 she toured London and Birmingham (U.K.) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's production of *Continental Divide*. 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.



# GALLERY AT THE GEARY

HANS MAULI: URBAN SCENES IN BLACK AND WHITE



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**Black-and-white photographs spanning three decades of work by renowned Swiss photographer Hans Mauli are on view at the Geary, February 10–April 23.** A Bay Area resident, Mauli studied art at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zürich and worked as a graphic designer in Aarau, Copenhagen, London, Paris, and New York. In the late 1960s he worked for the celebrated Herb Lubalin in New York and for the advertising agency Young & Rubicam in Paris. Though graphic design was his profession, he has had an enduring interest in photography ever since taking his earliest photos in the public spaces of Swiss cities and towns. He continued to take pictures, although, without access to a darkroom, didn't make prints of his pictures until many years later.

In 1971, Mauli made a professional switch and established himself in Paris as a successful advertising photographer. After 20 years working in that capacity, he moved to the United States, settling in the Bay Area in 1992, and focused his attention on fine art photography. He rediscovered his old negatives and contact sheets and made the first prints of his early work in the 1990s. Mauli's fine art prints were exhibited by the Mill Valley Art Commission in 1995 and 1996. He participated in the Hotel Triton Contemporary Art Fair in San Francisco in 1996 and had a one-man show at the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco in 2005. One of his prints, *Window Dressing* (Copenhagen, 1960) was acquired by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1997.

**The artist will attend an opening reception at the Geary Theater on Saturday, March 4, 5–7 p.m.** Each Gallery at the Geary artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For more information about Hans Mauli, please visit [www.galleryatthegeary.com](http://www.galleryatthegeary.com) or contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 / [krscreativeoptns@aol.com](mailto:krscreativeoptns@aol.com). ■

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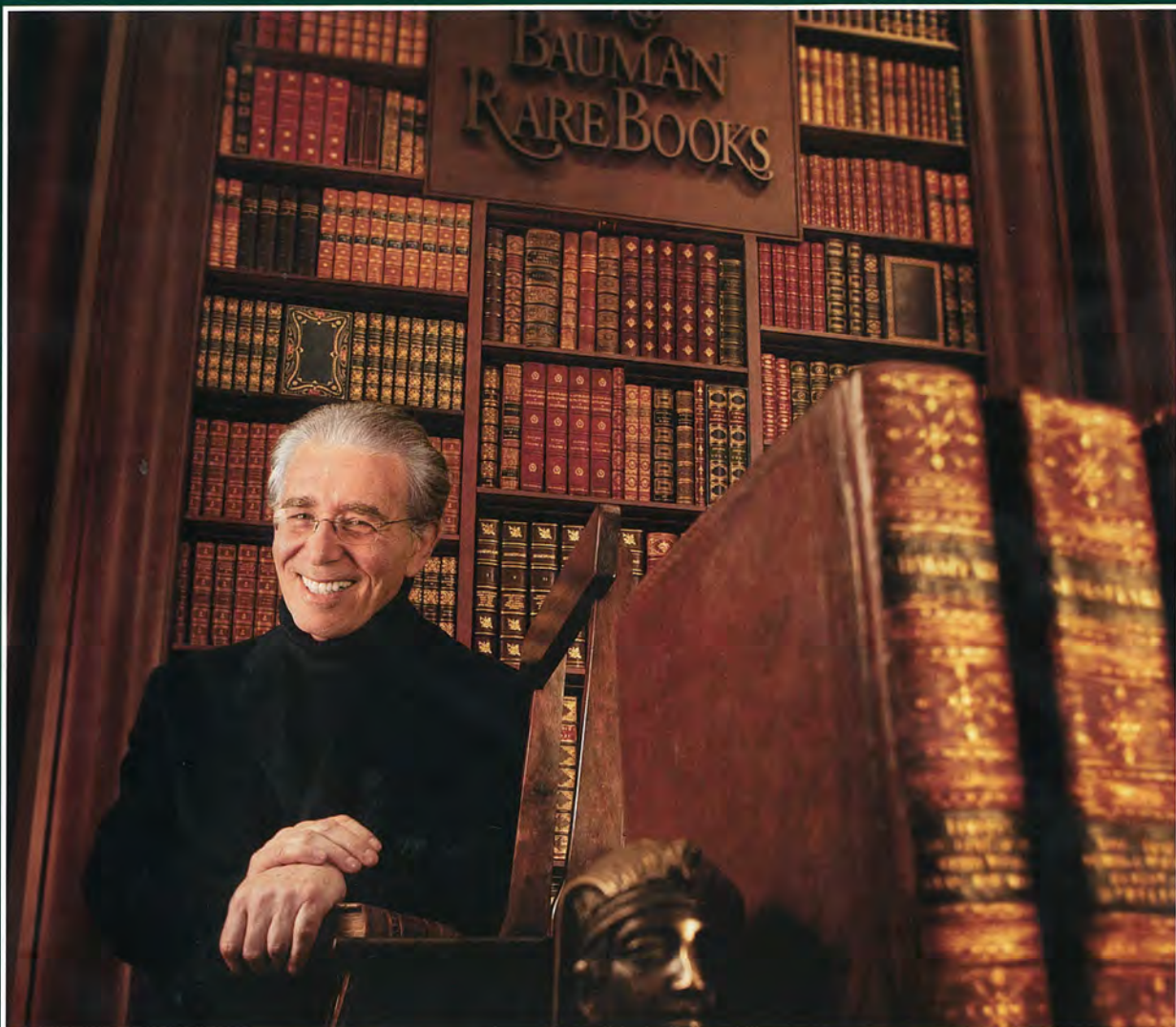
Individual issues of *Words on Plays* for each production are available in the lobby and online at [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org). Subscriptions to *Words on Plays* are also available for the entire 2005–06 season. For more information call 415.749.2250.





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The Producers Circle is comprised of individuals who make generous annual gifts to A.C.T. of \$10,000 or more. Each Producers Circle member enjoys extended benefits and privileges, including the opportunity to be recognized as Producer of a production of his or her choosing, as well as to participate in the artistic development of A.C.T.'s season by attending production meetings and technical and dress rehearsals and by watching a performance from the stage manager's booth in the Geary Theater.



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# A.C.T.

CONSERVATORY PERFORMANCES

MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM PRESENTS

## *On the Bum, or The Next Train Through*

by Neal Bell • Directed by Sheryl Kaller

MAR 2-18

2<sup>ND</sup>-YEAR STUDENT WORKSHOP

## *Much Ado about Nothing*

by William Shakespeare • Directed by Giles Havergal

APR 27-29

YOUNG CONSERVATORY PRESENTS

WORLD PREMIERE  
A COLLABORATION WITH THEATRE ROYAL BATH

## *Nightingales*

by Constance Congdon • Directed by Dominique Lozano

MAR 24-  
APR 2

WORLD PREMIERE  
A COLLABORATION WITH THE BIRD SCHOOL OF ROCK

## *Come Together: The Music of Lennon and McCartney*

Created and Directed by Craig Slight  
and Christine Mattison  
Musical Direction by Krista Wigle

JUN 2-25

All performances at Zeum Theater,  
unless otherwise noted.



Creative Services: '06 and '07, Kender '08 in the M.F.A. Program, production of *Nightingales* by Neal Bell

 **A.C.T.**  
american conservatory theater  
Carey Perloff, artistic director | Heather Kitchen, executive director

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## The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program presents

### ON THE BUM OR, THE NEXT TRAIN THROUGH

by Neal Bell

Directed by Sheryl Kaller

March 2-18, 2006

Packed with historical insight, modern wit, and, of course, a sizzling love story, *On the Bum* brings to life the experiences of artists during the Great Depression. In Neal Bell's drama, an out-of-work actress named Eleanor hops a train to the tiny town of Bumfork to land a role and finds herself in the midst of political scandal, artistic censorship, romance, and a new generation's hope for a "new deal."

Previews: March 2 & 3 at 8 p.m.

Opens: March 4 at 8 p.m.

Performances: March 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 & 18 at 8 p.m.

March 5, 11 & 18 at 2 p.m.

March 12 at 5 p.m.

## The A.C.T. Young Conservatory presents

WORLD PREMIERE

A collaboration with Theatre Royal Bath

### NIGHTINGALES

by Constance Congdon

Directed by Dominique Lozano

March 24-April 2, 2006

Continuing the A.C.T. Young Conservatory's international collaboration with Theatre Royal Bath—which has already given life to Jim Grimsley's *War Daddy* and Sharman MacDonald's *Broken Hallelujah*—A.C.T. favorite Constance Congdon blends in her new play the cultures of the United States and England during the harrowing time of World War II. About a group of young American cadet nurses stationed in England, *Nightingales* embraces the common struggle and bond shared by a group of British and American young people.

Performances: March 24, 25, 29, 30 & 31, April 1 at 7:30 p.m.

March 25 & 26, April 1 & 2 at 2 p.m.\*

\*Free musical cabaret, featuring songs of the 1940s, follows each matinee performance.

**Tickets: [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org) | 415.749.2ACT**



# A.C.T. STAFF

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Michael Paller, *Dramaturg*  
Greg Hubbard, *Casting Associate*  
Vinly Eng, *Producing Associate*

## Associate Artists

René Augesen  
Steven Anthony Jones  
Craig Slight  
Gregory Wallace

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Wendy Gorling  
Lillian Groag  
Israel Hicks  
Morris Panych  
Carey Perloff  
Peter Riegert  
Ruben Santiago-Hudson  
Anna D. Shapiro

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Broderick Santiago  
Bill Sims, Jr.

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Luis Perez

## Musical Directors

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Constantine Kitsopoulos

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Miesha Brodsky, *Assistant Production Manager*  
Marion Bechthold, *Production Administrator*

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Kent Dorsey, *Scenery*  
Donald Eastman, *Scenery*  
Ralph Funicello, *Scenery*  
David Korins, *Scenery*  
Ken MacDonald, *Scenery*  
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Nancy Bryant, *Costumes*  
Candice Donnelly, *Costumes*  
Christine Dougherty, *Costumes*  
Callie Floor, *Costumes*  
Karen Perry, *Costumes*  
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Robert Wierzel, *Lighting*  
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Garth Hemphill, *Sound*  
Lindsay Jones, *Sound*  
Rob Milburn, *Sound*  
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Jane Henderson-Shea, *Properties Head*  
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Colleen Rosby, *Door Person*  
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Len Lucas, *Assistant Facilities Manager/30 Grant*  
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Jean Wilcox, *Library Coordinator Volunteer*

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Jeffrey Crockett, *Voice*  
Steven Anthony Jones, *Acting*  
Francine Landes, *Movement*  
Frank Ottiwell, *Alexander Technique*  
Michael Paller, *Director of Humanities*  
Priscilla Regalado, *Modern Dance*  
Jack Sharrar, *Culture and Text*  
Melissa Smith, *Acting*  
Deborah Sussell, *Speech, Verbal Action*  
Gregory Wallace, *Acting*

## Adjunct Faculty

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Bonita Bradley, *Character Embodiment*  
Glen Canin, *Alexander Technique*  
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Dawn-Elin Fraser, *Speech, Verbal Action*  
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Cynthia Bassham, *Voice & Speech*  
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Mike Carroll, *Acting*  
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Domenique Lozano, *Director*  
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Krista Wigle, *Musical Theater*  
Jud Williford, *Acting*

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Constance Congdon, Timothy Mason,  
*Resident Playwrights*

## Accompanists

John Conway  
Robert Rutt



# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## 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: [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org).

## BOX OFFICE AND TICKET INFORMATION

### Geary Theater Box Office

Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square. Box office hours are 12–8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12–6 p.m. Sunday and Monday. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12–6 p.m. daily. Call 415.749.2ACT and use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our Web site at [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org). All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance rescheduling privileges and lost-ticket insurance. Subscriptions 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 at the box office.

## Discounts

**Half-price tickets** are sometimes available on the day of performance at TIX on Union Square. **Half-price student and senior rush tickets** are available at the box office two hours before curtain. **Matinee senior rush tickets** are available at noon on the day of the performance for \$10. All rush tickets are subject to availability, one ticket per valid ID. **Student and senior citizen subscriptions** are also available. A.C.T. offers one **Pay What You Wish** performance during the regular run of each production.

## Group Discounts

For groups of 15 or more, call Edward Budworth at 415.439.2473.

## AT THE THEATER

The Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary Street. The auditorium opens 30 minutes before curtain. The lobby opens one hour before curtain. Bar service and refreshments are available one hour prior to curtain.

## A.C.T. Merchandise

A.C.T.-branded souvenirs—clothing, jewelry, DVDs, music, and other novelty items—as well as books, scripts and *Words on Plays*, are on sale at the souvenir desk in the main lobby and at the Geary Theater Box Office.

## 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. There is also a mini-bar in the main lobby. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. Food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium.

## Beeepers!

If you carry a pager, beeper, cellular 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 415.439.2396 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 performance. 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.

**Rest rooms** 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 available on all levels of the Geary Theater. Please call 415.749.2ACT in advance to notify the house staff of any special needs.

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

## AFFILIATIONS

A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. 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 the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.



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The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

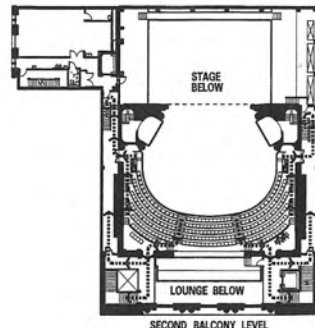
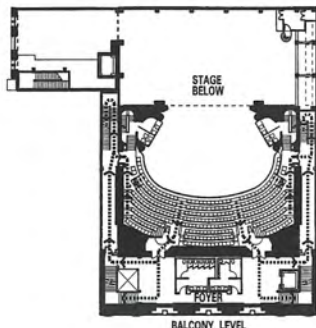
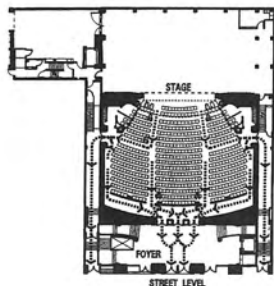


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# A BROADWAY PHENOMENON!

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