GEM OF THE OCEAN

BY AUGUST WILSON

DIRECTED BY RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON
At one with both worlds. Don't be deceived by its finely sculpted lines and elegant demeanor. The Acura MDX, with electronic 4WD and traction control, has the ability to go where luxury rarely tread. The MDX. Acura.
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March/April 2006
Volume 12, No 5
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ABOUT A.C.T.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
nurturesthe 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
reinvest 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
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
producing alternative work at Zeum
Theater, which now serves as a venue for
student productions and exciting new
play. 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 credited 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
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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 American actor
training programs, while serving as the
creative engine of the company at large.

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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 Hildy at the time, and A.C.T. Executive Director Heather Kitchen and I drove three hundred miles north throughpouring 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 you on a journey 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 we marvel at reducing space 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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Welcome to Gem of the Ocean, and to our celebration of August Wilson.

Yours,

Casey Perloff
A.C.T. Artistic Director
“The very pineapple of perfection!”
Mrs. Malaprop, The Rivals

A.C.T.
American Conservatory Theater
San Francisco

2005–06
Season

The Overcoat
Created by Morris Panich
and Wendy Berling
Adapted from "The Overcoat,"
by Nikolai Gogol
Music by Dmitri Shostakovich
AUG 25–SEP 25

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 Riepert
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 Caryn Churchill
Directed by Anna D. Shapiro
APR 28–MAY 28

Happy End
by Bertolt Brecht
Music by Kurt Weill
Book and Lyrics adapted by
Michael Aronowitz
Directed by Carey Perloff
JUN 8–JUL 19

Tickets from $12

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 Hewphill
Music Composed by Bill Sims, Jr., and Broderick Santiago
Casting by Laura Stansby, C.S.A., Meryl Lind Shaw
Additional Personnel by Stephen O’Neal
Assistant Director by Jade King Carroll

THE CAST
(in order of appearance)

Eli
Chuck Patterson
Citizen Barlow
Oswin Odera
Aunt Ester
Michele Shaw
Black Mary
Ryohn Ruff
Rutherford Selig
Raynor Scheine
Solly Two Kings
Steven Anthony Jones
Cassius
Gregory Wallace

UNDERSTUDIES
Eli, Solly Two Kings—W. Gene Mahony
Citizen Barlow, Cassius—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
The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Stanley E. Williams, Artistic Director
Museum of the African Diaspora, Denise Bradley, Executive Director
Michael DeFlorimoso

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The Overcoat
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Adapted from "The Overcoat," by Nikolai Gogol
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Theverypineappleofperfection!
Mrs. Malaprop, The Rivals

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(2003)
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Citizen Barbour
Owino Odora
Aunt Ester
Michelle Shuy
Black Mary
Roshyn Ruff
Rutherford Selig
Raynie Schein
Solly Two Kings
Steven Anthony Jones
Casimir
Gregory Wallace

UNDERSTUDIES
Eli, Solly Two Kings—W. Gene Mahoney
Citizen Barbour, Casimir—Aldo Billingslea
Aunt Ester, Black Mary—Karen Aldridge, Rutherford Selig—Robert Ernst

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

When 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 been imagined possible,' Santiago-Hudson won a Tony Award for his portrayal of Cassius Clay's Seven Guitars also at A.C.T. in 1995' and played Cassius Clay's Broadway production (2000) of Gem of the Ocean, before he made the daunting transition last year to directing Wilson's work.

Gem of the Ocean is one of the most magnificent pieces of music ever written, each set in a different decade of the 20th century, and each a link in an ongoing chain of experience and emotion connecting the successive generations of the country's African Americans. August Wilson's 'Gem of the Ocean' is the most powerful piece of music ever written, by someone who has the power to transport us to places we never could have been imagined possible.'

Wilson's Gem of the Ocean, the eight of his other plays, in his beloved Hill District of Pittsburgh, an impoverished but vibrant neighborhood, in 1969--a Wilson said upon his death that he would have 'done it differently.'

"The story of a 285-year-old former slave Aunt Ester at 1839 Wylie Avenue--known as Aunt Ester--is in all 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 in January about celebrating Wilson's 'Gem of the Ocean' and the live music performances that are inspired by the potential of incorporating traditional African music, visualized drumming and chanting, into the production, to unlock the music in the play. The music and percussive energy, says Santiago-Hudson, allows the actors and the audience alike to 'feel the pulse of the room change, feel the magnitude 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, in some way, is part of 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 Citizens [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 Citizens' 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 Citizens' 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 problem in rehearsals and had my own thoughts about how we might solve it. And finally one day during a technical rehearsal, I was sitting in the back of the theater with August, and changing the City of Bones' scene and faculty. As August got up, he said, "Sure, go smoke a cigarette, we'll talk about the scene and he said to me, "OK, fix it. Tell me the story of this one." And I told him my idea: the City of Bones is an African ritual. It starts with drums and ends with music and drums. Real drums. Nothing modern.

So, later in his life, when I took all the synthesized music and started instead with real acoustic sounds, even some drumming played on stage 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 by characters that aren't normally spoken. We speak Yoruba. We speak Twi. We speak Wolof. We speak African. Sounds change. Smells change. Touches change. Movements change. And we bring you, the audience, through a change, too.

It's important that the actors do their own singing, in their own voices, so the characters feel that they are experiencing something new and magical. When they do, they will feel new things 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 falling above the stage, unless we can get to that feeling inside ourselves. If we can feel something is etherial, larger than life—that something that you can't imagine happening, but that must happen—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 you want to be educated, illuminated, and nurtured. I want your heart full with an experience that you haven't had before.

—Robbo 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 Moretii (1944-2005), a passionate champion of August Wilson's career and of new writing for the American theater.
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When 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 Cassius 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 pedestal play in Wilson’s extraordinary dramatic cycle of ten plays, each set in a different decade of the 20th 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 those 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 1909—a year Wilson said epitomized 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 1537 Wylie Avenue—mentioned, like Aunt Ester herself, in several of Wilson’s plays—serves as a safe haven in Gem for all three hot 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 director—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 unleash the magic in the play. The music and percussive energy, says Santiago-Hudson, allows 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 he 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.

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So later, as director, I took 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 Twi. We speak Wolof. We speak Afrikan. 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 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, drum, 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 tends 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 you want educated, illuminated, and nurtured. You want your heart full with an experience that you haven’t had before.

—Ruben Santiago-Hudson

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AUNT ESTER’S CHILDREN: A CENTURY ONSTAGE

BY AUGUST WILSON

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, occasionally, the impel to song. Before one can become an artist one must first be it. It is being in all facets, its many definitions, that endows the artist with an immeasurable sense of himself that is necessary for the accomplishment of his task. Simply put, art is beheld 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 emboldening 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 offers clear instructions as to the value of community, and make clear that the preservation and promotion, the propagation and reenactment of the values 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 1913) 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.

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AUGUST WILSON (1945–2005) is the author of Fences, 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 Fences; seven New York Drama Critics’ 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, Kukana Assanti and Ana Carson Wilson.

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, Juicymen Theatres unveiled the marquee on the newly renamed August Wilson Theatre (formerly the Virginia) on Broadway, a fitting tribute to one of the most important voices in the American theater.

"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
AUNT ESTER'S CHILDREN: A CENTURY ONSTAGE

BY AUGUST WILSON

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 1973 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.

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Gem of the Ocean

12 American Conservatory Theater
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 hogs and corn. They were the fee of a massive slave trade. 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 about an affirmation of the value and worth of their being in the face of a many-million-voice chorus that seems to deifiant 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 marry, 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 heroic.

From Herald Loomis’s vision of the homes rising out of the Atlantic Ocean (the largest unmarked graveyard in the world) in Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, to the pantheon of yeagery 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.

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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A.C.T. PROLOGUE

A conversation with director Ruben Santiago-Hudson
Tuesday, February 14, 5:30-6 p.m.
Geary Theater

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

Free postperformance discussions with actors and members of the production team, directly following the 8 p.m. performance
Wednesday, February 22

THEATER ON THE COUCH

Theater on the Couch is an exciting new collaboration between A.C.T. and The San Francisco Foundation for Psychanalytic Education to generate lively dialogue among the audience and a panel of selected local psychoanalysts. After the show, the panel will discuss the psychological aspects of the play and take questions from the audience.
Friday, February 17 (after the 8 p.m. performance)

For more information, call 415.749.2ACT or visit www.act-sf.org.

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 he dwelled 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 ideas and 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


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

Inside Info: This was Wilson’s first play since Ma Rainey with a female dominant 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: 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 Basket. The titular character is offstage—he’s the white man who pressed the leading character into promenade in the South.

MA RAINEY’S BLACK BOTTOM


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 one in his 20th-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


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


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.
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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–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 cafe that might be condemned—or might be bought by the nearby mortuary owner. Romance blossoms between an ex-con 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."

WHO'S WHO IN GEM OF THE OCEAN

STEVEN ANTHONY JONES (Sally Two Knees), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in Female Transport, Love's Labours, Waiting for Guda, Yefim, The Three Sisters, The Damned, 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, Androcles and the Lion, Insurrection: Holding History, Seven Guitars, Othello (title role), Antigone, Miss Evers' Boys, Clare, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Saint Joan, King Lear, Golden Boy, and Footloose. Other local theater credits include: Father Joseph (McEnery Theatre, 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 Delicatessen 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."

OYVISO ODERA (Girim Elemon) 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 Apollo in America: Millennium Approach, The Seagull, Topdog/Underdog, and As You Like It. Film and television credits include: "Looking, "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter at Alliance Theatre Company/The Acting Co., King Lear at Yale Repertory Theatre, The Outing Plays for the Shakespeare Theatre D.C. at the 2003 Athens Festival in Greece, A Panic: 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 Artistic Review Award for supporting actress for The Amen Corner. She holds an M.F.A. from the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University.


ROSALYNN 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 Dole, by Oyvise, 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 Outing Plays for the Shakespeare Theatre D.C. at the 2003 Athens Festival in Greece, A Panic: 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 Artistic Review 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—120 performances) and reprised now in Gem of the Ocean (four cities and Broadway—200 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, Staying Martin Lane, with Dylan Baker, and Man of the Year, with Robin Williams. Favorite film credits include: Fried Green Tomatoes, My Cousin Vinny, and Gem of the Ocean.
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Who’s Who
Ace Vinturka, The Rookie, The Quick and the Dead, and Nothing Lasts Forever, with Sam Jaffe.

Michele Shay (Ace Vinturka) 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 Loomis’s The Whistling Room (The Vineyard), Ship’s Second, Corridoranum, 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 Murders, 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 Hineau and Singer’s Boy, both with Olympia Dukakis. Other regional credits include Flying West (Pasadena Playhouse), House Arrest, with Anna Deavere Smith (Mark Taper Forum), and Waiting to Be Invited (ACT Theatre, Seattle), and Blues for an Alabama Sky (Decker 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 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 Libes, or The Revival of a Romantic Drama, The Gamester, A Doll’s House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Daedalus, Night and Day, Biblical Spirits, Celebration and The Room, “Master Harold”… and the boys, The Meander, Edward II, A Christmas Carol, Tangle, 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 Storms (Great White Theater), The Learned Ladies (Williamstown Theatre Festival), King Lear (Whole Theater), The Queen and the Rebel (Center Stage), and The Blues Music (San Francisco Repertory Theatre). Screen credits include Peter Sellers’s The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The Beverly Hillbillies, Dark Goddess, “Crime Story,” and Internal Affairs. Wallace is a Fox Fellow and a graduate of Yale School of Drama.

Who’s Who
in La Contesa, directed by Peter Brook. For the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Aldridge played the role of Athalia 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); Tamara in the world premiere of Tracy Letts’s Pulitzer Prize-nominated Miss Fire from Nebraska at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; Fox 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 (Undertaker) 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, Tajma Actors Guild, Sacramento Theatre Company, Piano 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
Who's Who

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MICHELE SHAY (Sue Krate) 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 Loosen's The Wailing Room (The Vineyard), Spia Second, Corridores, with Morgan Freeman and Gloria Foster, Mustapha Matura's Playboy of the West Indies (Lincoln Center), and her OBIE Award-winning performance in Mazer's Meeting, 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 Hnadako and Singer's Boy, both with Olympia Dukakis. Other regional credits include Flying West (Pasadena Playhouse), House Arrest, with Anna Deavere Smith (Mark Taper Forum), and Wearing It Be戴上(ACT Theatre, Seattle), and Blues for an Alabama Sky (Deaver Centre Theatre Company), both directed by Elvis 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 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 Dance, Night and Day, Bible Spirits, Celebration and The Room, Master Harold... and the boys, The Marching Stream, Edward II, A Christmas Carol, Tartuffe, Insurrection: Holding History, and Angels in America (Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award). Other theatre credits include One Country's Goal (Broadway), A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire (New York Theatre Workshop), As You Like It (Public Theater), Much Ado about Nothing (Alliance Theatre), The Storms (Guthrie Theater), The Learned Ladies (Williamsdorff Theatre Festival), King Lear (Whole Theater), The Queen and the Rebel (Center Stage), and The Banq's Strategier (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Screen credits include Peter Seller's The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, 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 (Undertaker) 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 Mattie

Who's Who

in Le Costume, directed by Peter Brook. For the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Aldridge played the role of Attila in the world premiere of The Dreams of Sarah Broadwood, written and directed by Regina Taylor. Chicago credits include: Nina in The Soayed at Writers' Theatre; Catherine in Proof at The Goodman Theatre (Black Theatre Alliance Award for best actress); Tamara in the world premiere of Tracy Letts's Palitera--nominated Miss Munroe from Nebraska at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; Fox Away and In the Blood (Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for best actress, After Dark Award) at Next Theatre; and Lovers Last 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 (Undertutty) 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 30 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, Piano 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
Who's Who

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 co-founder 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 Memo for the Michigan, 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 Sabrina, Jumpei Jack Flash, Bang, Metro, Escape from Atlantis, "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 MABRY (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 Reедер. He recently understudied the role of Jobs in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's production of JanSport Stories and understudied Red in the A.C.T. production of Wilson's Seven Guitars. Mabry is a graduate of San Francisco State University, where he received degrees in psychology and theater arts. He has trained in Paul 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 Theatre'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 for cable TV, and a Golden Globe nomination for best motion picture made for television. Santiago-Hudon made his directorial debut at the McCarthe 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 McCarthe Theatre Center production of Gem of the Ocean. Carnahan's regional and off-Broadway credits include Henrik
WHO'S WHO

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
(Undertaker) 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 'Manus' at the Aurora Theatre Company. Other credits include 'The John, a Memoir for the Michigan,' 'The Late Henry Moss' (rehearsal replacement for Nick Nolte), 'Eyes for Consuela,' 'Speed of Darkness,' 'Kingfish,' and 'The Joy of Going Somewhere Definitive.' His film and television credits include 'Sanford,' 'Jessica Fisk,' 'Bulldog, Merlot,' 'Escape from Atlantis,' '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.

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Mr. West in 'Two Trains Running' with TheatreWorks. With Marin Theatre Company, he performed in 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' and 'Roche.' He recently understudied the role of Pops in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's production of 'Jameson 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 Action and continues to work with Susan Nance on voice, singing, and the Alexander technique.

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MICHAEL CARNAHAN
('Scene' Designer) designed sets for the McCarter Theatre Center production of 'Gen of the Ocean.' Carnahan's regional and off-Broadway credits include 'Homicide,' and 'A Christmas Carol.'

the Rookery at Irish Arts, Porgy and Bess and Intrigue and Intrigue at Cocteau Rep, Brando at Audax, The Widower's Blind Date at Blind Date, The Miser, Candide, True West, and Muckabe. He designed for four seasons at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, where his credits included 'Tough Ritty, Create Faye, Eric Bogosian's Real Angel, A Disturbant Country Called Youth,' 'The Chisholar, Garden & Main,' and 'Rubes Santiago-Hudson's Luchavanna Blues.'

KAREN PERRY
('Costume' Designer) designed costumes for the McCarter Theatre Center production of 'Gen of the Ocean.' Perry is one of entertainment's foremost costume designers. Perry highlights include Spike Lee's 'Do The Right Thing,' John Sayles' 'The Brother from Another Planet, Just Licking' (dir. Jason Alexander), 'Bring 'Em Back Alive,' 'Bring 'Em Back' on Broadway, 'Saturday Night Live,' the UPN sitcom 'Abbey,' 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 prominent artists, including Gregory Hines, with whom she has collaborated on numerous commercials, marketing campaigns, and theatrical projects, including 'The True Color,' CBS's 'The Gregory Hines Show,' and the Showtime original film 'Bejeweled.' She is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in costume design for American and Black American theatre, film, and television, presented at the National Black Theatre Festival.

JANE COX
('Lighting' Designer) designed lighting for the McCarter Theatre Center production of 'Gen of the Ocean.' Recent credits include 'Dame Edna: Back with a Vengeance' in San Francisco and on Broadway, and designs for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Playwrights Horizons, the Vineyard Theatre, Signature Theatre, the New...
CELEBRATE WITH US - 25 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING THEATRE!

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by NTOAKE SHANGE
Our Salute to the Spoken Word, celebrating the pioneering work of the author of "for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf" directed by STANLEY E. WILLIAMS & DANNY DUNCAN through Feb. 19

I Just Stopped By To See the Man
Set against a backdrop of Mississippi Delta blues, this is the story of the greatest living bluesman, his latest daughter, and the British rocker who has made a fortune off the older man's music.
by STEPHEN JEFFRIES • directed by STANLEY E. WILLIAMS
March 16 - April 9

My Girl
World Premiere of a Soulful New Musical by DAVID CHARLES • directed by BUDDY BUTLER
April 20 - May 14

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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
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 for
over 150 productions, including 15 world
and American premieres and many more
West Coast premieres for some of
theatre's greatest playwrights, including
Tom Stoppard, Richard Nelson, Richard
Greenberg, and Christopher Durang.

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WHO'S WHO
the San Francisco productions of White Christmas, Jersey, and Picasso at the Lapin Agile, as well as the first workshops of The Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-ROM game Ghislain. 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 Born Appalled! 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
country's premier theatre companies and
performing arts centers. Significant
productions include the premieres of
Christopher Durang's Miss Witherspoon,
Steven Dietz's Last of the Boys and Picture
Nilo Cruz's Anna in the Tropics (2001
Pulitzer Prize winner), Regina Taylor's
Coward, Dael Orlandersmith's Vodouman (2002 Pulitizer Prize finalist),
Emily Mann's Having Our Say (three Tony
nominations, including best play and best
director), Alfred Uhry's River Song and
Serenity and Rejoicings, and Stephen
Wadsworth's Marivaux trilogy. McCarter,
home to the Matthews and Berlind
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
declared Levean's production of Electra (three Tony nominations). For more
information, visit www.mccarter.org.

DICK DALEY (Stage Manager) previous works include A Christmas Carol, A Man for the Misanthrope, and Waiting for Godot (A.C.T.), the world premieres of The Opposite Sex: The Musical and Dr. Faustus, written and directed by David Mamet (Magic Theatre); River's End, Bus Stop, Communicating Doors, The Last Sofas, and Virginia Woolf (Marin Theatre Company); Macbeth and Henry V (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); Goldilocks and the Three Bears; and Twelfth Night (L.A. Women's Shakespeare Company; The Sanlandal Diaries, The Dr. Zhivago, the Brenda Ueland's: Braving Women, and Pure Pyle Esther (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, for One, and Julius Caesar (Shakespeare & Company); and The Rejoicing of Artus, Jr. Ain't Misbehavin', The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me, A Clue Walk with Patsy Cline, and Norma Rae. 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, Love, James, The Constant Wife, American Buffalo, Frank Loesser's Han Christian Andersen, Sheekbodeh Petal, The House of Mirrors, The Invention of Love and Womg Mountain for A.C.T. She has also worked on productions of Our Town, Cloud Nine, Culture Clash in America, and The Greatsea for Berkeley Repertory Theatre and on The Imperative of Being Earnest and Mudhuts about Nothing for California Shakespeare Theatre.
GALLERY AT THE GEARY
HANS MAULI: URBAN SCENES IN BLACK AND WHITE

Find yourself with some extra time before a performance or during intermission? Want to expose yourself to more fine art, but don’t make it to art galleries as often as you’d like? Now you need look no further than the Geary Theater itself. A.C.T. invites you to visit the second floor of the theater (just outside the auditorium doors, along the north bank of windows, and by the elevator) to view original artwork by a diverse range of artists in a series of rotating exhibits throughout the 2005–06 season.

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 Zurich and worked as a graphic designer in Artia, 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 Art in 1997.

The artist will attend an opening reception at the Geary Theater on Saturday, March 4, 5–7 p.m. Free with admission to the Geary theater. For more information about Hans Mauli, please visit our Web site, www.galeryatthegeary.com or contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 / ka5creativeoptn@aol.com. 
A.C.T. Profiles

CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 14th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently oversaw the 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 Voysey Inheritance, Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing, Constanzo Cingolani’s Medea (an A.C.T.-commissioned adaptation of Gorky’s Faust Zlozvestna), Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, Becker’s Writing for God, Goetz’s Night and Day, and Chekhov’s Three Sisters. Her production of Maria Nijadja’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 Theatre and then to New York’s 59E59 Theatre last fall. She was recently awarded Franco’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 Real Thing, Constanzo Cingolani’s Medea, and Indian Ink and Pinero’s Celebration and The Room, A.C.T.-commissioned translations of Henrik Ibsen’s The Master Builder, Love’s Merit, and Uncle Vanya, the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s The Ring, and acclaimed productions of The Threepenny Opera, Old Times, A Doll’s House, Of Mice and Men, and The Chairs.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director) stepped into A.C.T.’s role in 1996, has strengthened the organization’s infrastructure and oversees 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 the M.F.A. degree from the Richard Ivy School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career as 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. A graduate of C. P. Snow’s Atelier, he also served as the Managing Director of the Citadel Theatre, managed a five-theater performing arts complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, an International Children’s Festival, and a Fem Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the book of the study Economic Impact of the Northrop Grimsby Arts in Edmonton. As 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 member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brother Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula, and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in Edmonton and has served on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on the A.C.T. committee for the San Francisco Business Times recently named Kitchen one of the 15 most influential women in the Bay Area nonprofit arena.

MELISSA SMITH (Con vehorary 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 pageants in theater and dance at Prator 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 everything from Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actor, she has performed in everything from Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy.

JAMES HAJER (Producing Director) has been co-artistic director with Eva Re Gallieni’s National Repertory Theatre. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of Ake Mito Hawaii Drinks A Little and Georgia (a musical by Claude Beyer 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. Haine joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theatre Craftsman Awards for excellence in 1989, and in 1992 Haine was awarded a fellowship achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle.

A.C.T. is the recipient of the 2005 Nellie O’Neill Playwrights Conference.

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The artist will attend an opening reception at the Geary Theater on Saturday, March 4, 5–7 p.m., and will give an artist talk at the Geary on Tuesday, March 7, 5 p.m.

For more information about Hans Mullai, please visit www.galleriesatgeary.com or contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 / kcsgallery@comcast.net.

GALLERY AT THE GEARY

HANS MULLAI: URBAN SCENES IN BLACK AND WHITE

A.C.T. is on display at the Geary Theater, February 10–April 30. Hours: 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Monday through Saturday; 2–6 p.m., Sunday, or by appointment.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE OCEAN?

Guards on the Beach, A.C.T. in-depth performance guide series, offers insights into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the A.C.T., 2005–2006 subscription season. Each entertaining and informative book contains a synopsis, advance program notes, study questions, additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play, and individual lessons of Works on Place for each production available in the library and online at www.aact.org.

Subscriptions to Works on Place are also available for the complete 2005–06 season. For more information call 415.749.2350.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GEM OF THE OCEAN?

Wanted are Plays, A.C.T. in-depth performance guide series, offers insights into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the A.C.T., 2005–2006 subscription season. Each entertaining and informative book contains a synopsis, advance program notes, study questions, additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play, and individual lessons of Works on Place for each production available in the library and online at www.aact.org.

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A.C.T. 2005–06 SEASON DONOR BENEFITS

A.C.T.’s donors play a critical role in the company’s success. Their support enables A.C.T. to continue its commitment to commissioning new work while producing fresh interpretations of the classics. To thank our donors for their generous contributions, A.C.T. is pleased to offer the following benefits—which include rare opportunities for “behind-the-scenes” glimpses of the process of making great theater at A.C.T.

SPONSOR $75–$149
- Subscription to Inside A.C.T., A.C.T.’s behind-the-scenes magazine, mailed to your home
- Advance-purchase priority for tickets to A Christmas Carol and productions of A.C.T.’s acclaimed conservatory
- Priority invitation to A.C.T.’s annual New York and London theater tours

SUPPORTER $150–$299
All of the above, plus:
- Invitation to attend a dress or technical rehearsal of an A.C.T. production
- Discounts on A.C.T. merchandise, costume shop rentals, and tickets to conservatory productions

CONTRIBUTOR $300–$599
All of the above, plus:
- Two-for-one ticket coupon valid when purchasing a full-price ticket to an A.C.T. Geary Theater production
- Recognition in the performance program twice during the season
- Invitation to attend a costume or prop and scene shop tour

SUSTAINER $600–$999
All of the above, plus:
- Invitation to attend a backstage tour of the Geary Theater
- Recognition in the performance program throughout the season
- Priority processing for purchasing discounted parking during A.C.T. performances

PATRON $1,000–$1,499
All of the above, plus:
- Complimentary guest passes for the A.C.T. Geary Theater VIP Lounge during intermissions
- Invitation to attend an opening night dinner with A.C.T. trustees, artistic staff, and visiting guests

THE A.C.T. DIRECTORS CIRCLE: $1,500 & ABOVE
Members of the Directors Circle play a leading role in the artistic success of each season at A.C.T., helping to bring thought-provoking, captivating theatrical productions to the Bay Area. This special group of donors makes annual contributions of $1,500 to $9,999, supporting world-class productions at the Geary Theater and the development and staging of new plays. Directors Circle benefits include:

- Complimentary parking for A.C.T. subscription performances
- Complimentary refreshments in the Geary Theater’s VIP Lounge during intermissions
- Invitations to attend all opening night dinners with A.C.T. trustees, artistic staff, and visiting guests
- Personalized VIP ticket service to order prime seats and exchange tickets
- Complimentary tickets to A.C.T. Conservatory performances and invitations to new play readings and workshops

PLAYWRIGHT $3,000–$4,999
All of the above, plus:
- Priority seating and personal assistance with your season subscription
- Complimentary subscription to Words on Plays, A.C.T.’s in-depth performance guide

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER $5,000–$9,999
All of the above, plus:
- Opportunity to be recognized as an Associate Producer of a play of your choosing and to attend the first production meeting of your play
- Assistance from A.C.T. in purchasing box seats for Broadway productions in New York City
- Recognition on the donor wall in the Geary Theater throughout the year

THE A.C.T. PRODUCERS CIRCLE: $10,000 & ABOVE
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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American Conservatory Theater is deeply grateful for the generous support of the individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies whose contributions make great theater possible.
The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program presents

ON THE BUM, OR,
THE NEXT TRAIN THROUGH

by Neal Bell
Directed by Sheryl Kiley

March 2-18, 2006

Packed with historical insight, modern wit, and, of course, a sizing 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 Burbank to land a role and finds herself in the midst of political scandal, artistic controversy, 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 & 12 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 Constantine Constandos
Directed by Domenique Lorano

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 Grimesley’s War Daddy and Sharon MacDonald’s Broken Hatfield—in her new play the United States and England during the harrowing times of World War II. About a group of young American cadets captured in England. Nightingales combines the common struggle and bond shared by a group of British and American young people.

Performance: 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.aact-sf.org | 415.749.2ACT
The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program presents

ON THE BUM OR THE NEXT TRAIN THROUGH
by Neil Bell
Directed by Sheryl Kaller
March 2-28, 2006

Packed with historical insight, modern wit, and, of course, a stirring love story, On The Bum brings to life the experiences of artists during the Great Depression. In Neil Bell’s drama, an out-of-work actress named Eleanor hops a train to the tiny town of Bumforsk to land a role and finds herself in the midst of political scandal, artistic cross-dressing, romance, and a new generation’s hope for a “new deal.”

Preview: March 2 & 3 at 8 p.m.
Opens: March 4 at 8 p.m.
Performance: March 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 & 18 at 8 p.m.
March 5, 11 & 12 at 8 p.m.

The A.C.T. Young Conservatory presents

WORLD PREMIERE! a collaboration with Theatre Royal Bath

NIGHTINGALES
by Constance Condorce
Directed by Domenique Lorano
March 24-April 2, 2006

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

Tickets: www.aact-sf.org | 415.749.2ACT

ARTISTIC
Johnathan Meza, Assistant Director
Brian Nieder, Lighting Designer
Jennifer Bolanos, Casting Director
Gray Hollande, Casting Associate
Vicky Zak, Props Manager

Associate Artists
Babe Agnew, Foreman
Samuel Jones, Stage Manager
Dariusz Libal, Lighting Designer
Nancy Graham, Costume Design

Directors
Wayne Crabill
Linda Good
Jill Hildreth
Sara Raines
Yasmin Holman
Carla Savello
Shawn Shouse
Devon S. Hill

Co-Authors
Karl Halsig
Sarah Scovell
Bill Sim, Jr.

Stage Managers
Vanessa Gillette
Juanita Palacios

Musical Directors
Lauren Horton
Catherine Rice

PRODUCTION
Jeff Brocco, Production Manager
Joan Hersh, Assistant Production Manager
Melissa Brodie, Stage Manager
Martin Bebb, Production Administrator

Designers
John Agnew, Scenic
Michael Comrie, Costumes
Kerry Cameron, Costume
Donald Eustace, Lighting
Rosa Fratturelli, Sound
Karen Karp, Properties
William Makley, Props
Jessica Brown, Wigs
Catherine Dugan, Makeup
Kathy Clary, Costumes
Derek Tuttle, Lighting
Antoinette Brooks, Sound
Alexandra V. Nichols, Lighting
Trina Nettles, Costume
Robert Wilson, Lighting
Tina Tanenbaum, Costumes
Michael Barkow, Sound
Cathie Beirne, Props
Shawn Shouse, Properties
Sara Raines, Costumes
Laura Barr, Costumes

Wardrobe
John Kate, Wardrobe
Tia Quigley, Costume

Set and Lighting
Darren Davis, Designer & Construction

Texts
Mark Twain, A Christmas Carol
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin

Readers
Kathleen Mellett
Peter Whittaker
Jennifer Parra

Operations
Kevin Scott, Manager
Burt Smith, Assistant Production Manager
Carolyn Gardner, Executive Assistant

CONSERVATORY
George Thompson, Curator

department
Dan Bocanegra, Associate Director

PRODUCTIONS
No Show

Information Technology
Thomas McKernan, Director
Jennifer Hailer, Assistant Director

STAGE AND PROPERTIES
Kim Givens, Prop Master

SOUND AND LIGHTING
Timothy Halsig, Lighting Designer

COSTUMES
Jacqueline Landers, Costume Designer

DANCE
Andrew Ross, Dance Director

DIRECTORS
Kim Givens, Director

APPOINTMENTS
Tina Tanenbaum, Executive Assistant

ADMISSIONS
Ashley Bagley, Director

FINANCE
Sara Raines, Bookkeeper

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE
Kathryn N. N. Hooks, Bookkeeper

SUPPORT
Deborah DeSario, Bookkeeper

HUMAN RESOURCES
Kim Givens, Director

CFO
Tina Tanenbaum, Executive Assistant

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
Jennifer Parra, Marketing Director

THEATER SF
Eloise, Assistant Director
Elaine Schonheit, Marketing Coordinator

NIGHTGLOWS
by Constance Condorce

Theatrical Director
Catherine Rice

Scenic Shop
Allen Bunyan, Scene Painter
Donny Diller, Prop Maker
Robert Van Winkle, Scene Painter
John Prentice, Prop Maker

Costume Shop
Nancy Graham, Costume Designer
Yasmin Holman, Costume Maker
Joan Hersh, Assistant Costume Designer
Sara Raines, Costumes and Props

Lighting Shop
Jeff Brocco, Lighting Designer

STAGE MANAGEMENT
Marianne Hinshaw,stage Manager
Deborah DeSario, Production Manager

STAFF
Carey Perkoff, Artistic Director
Heather Kitchen, Executive Director
Melissa Smith, Conservatory Director
James Haire, Managing Director
Jeffrey P. Maloney, General Manager
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.

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 415.749.2427 and use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card. On fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours a day on our site at www.aact.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance prebooking privileges and host-ticket insurance. Subscriptions available by calling 415.749.2290. 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 Bodworth at 415.459.2473.

AT THE THEATER
The Geary Theater is located at 405 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 Winds on Flaps, 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 Columbus 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 drinks are not permitted in the auditorium.

Beepers
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 415.459.2396 in an emergency.

Latcimers
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 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 Columbus Room on the lower level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the upper level.

Wheelchair seating is available on all levels of the Geary Theater. Please call 415.749.2427 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 theatre. 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.

The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

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

A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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GEARY THEATER EXITS

A BROADWAY PHENOMENON!
- The New York Times

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