

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

# Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

by Tennessee  
Williams

Directed by  
Israel  
Hicks



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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 three decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people; today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 270,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996, A.C.T.'s efforts to develop creative talent for the theater were recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award. In 2001, to celebrate A.C.T.'s 35th anniversary and Perloff's 10th season, A.C.T. created a new core company of actors, who have become instrumental in every aspect of its work.

Today A.C.T. is recognized nationally for its groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations

of contemporary 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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American Conservatory  
Theater was founded in  
1965 by William Ball.

Edward Hastings  
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# FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PHOTO BY JOCK McDONALD



**Dear Friends,**  
It is a strange and sad sensation to write to you about *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* as Tennessee Williams's beloved city of New Orleans lies submerged in water, desolate and ruined. There has been so much talk since hurricane Katrina about whether it will ever be possible to rebuild New Orleans.

The one thing we know is that the city survives in the collective imaginations of every artist who was inspired by it, wrote about it, painted it or imagined it, and of everyone who continues to experience that art. So in celebrating the 50th anniversary of this extraordinary play, let us also celebrate the complex and colorful legacy of the city that did so much to shape the life of Tennessee Williams.

When a play achieves the kind of iconic status of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, one forgets that at the time of its creation, it was venturing into territory at once unknown and uncharted. The larger-than-life characters that inhabit *Cat*, battling for the soul of the prodigal son who sits at the center of the play, are both wonderfully precise and fabulously mythic, and as such they continue to lure remarkable actors to tackle them. One of the beauties of having a core acting company, as we do at A.C.T., is that we can give our actors the chance to keep growing and stretching, by exploring roles they've never played and always dreamed of working on. Maggie the Cat is such a role for René Augesen. Being a southern girl herself, René has always longed

to play one of Williams's great heroines, and I was astounded to discover that she'd never had the chance to do that on a professional stage. So this production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is, among other things, a chance to celebrate an actress who has given so much to A.C.T. for the past four years, as she climbs this incredible mountain.

This production is also a chance to welcome to A.C.T. our new dramaturg, Michael Paller. I first met Michael many years ago when he interviewed me for *TheaterWeek* in New York, and I remember at the time being amazed at his erudition and his passion for the field. Michael is an expert on Tennessee Williams, having just published a fascinating book called *Gentlemen Callers*, so his arrival at A.C.T. just in time for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is particularly fortuitous. If the dramaturg is the person charged with sustaining the heartbeat of the writer in the rehearsal room, we know that the writers whose work we explore at A.C.T. will be enthusiastically and passionately sustained by Michael Paller.

Finally, we are thrilled to welcome back one of our favorite artists, director Israel Hicks, to the Geary stage. We last collaborated with Israel on Sherry Shepard-Massat's *Levee James*, and we fell in love with his gorgeous sense of language, his beautiful visuals, his ability to keep things smoldering beneath the surface at all times. He has assembled a remarkable group of artists for this production, and we are delighted to share them with you.

Welcome!

Carey Perloff  
Artistic Director

## PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE FREE EVENTS AT THE GEARY THEATER

### A.C.T. PROLOGUE

a conversation with A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff and director Israel Hicks

**Tuesday, October 18, 5:30–6 p.m.**

Geary Theater

### AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

free postperformance discussions with actors and members of the production team, directly following *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

**Tuesday, October 25 (after the 7 p.m. performance)**

**Sunday, October 30 (after the 2 p.m. performance)**

**Wednesday, November 9 (after the 2 p.m. performance)**

### OUT WITH A.C.T.

a gathering of gay and lesbian theatergoers, immediately following the 8 p.m. performance **Wednesday, October 26**

For more information, call 415.749.2ACT  
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### THEATER ON THE COUCH

*Theater on the Couch* is an exciting new collaboration between A.C.T. and The San Francisco Foundation for Psychoanalysis to generate lively dialogue among the audience and a panel of respected local psychoanalysts. After the show, the panel will discuss the psychological aspects of the play and take questions from the audience.

**Friday, October 28 (after the 8 p.m. performance)**

### A CONVERSATION WITH DRAMATURG MICHAEL PALLER

A.C.T. Resident Dramaturg Michael Paller will appear at Cody's Books in Berkeley to discuss his new book, *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality and Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Drama*.

**Monday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m.**

Cody's Books (510.845.7852) is located at 2454 Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley.



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Carey Perloff, Artistic Director • Heather Kitchen, Executive Director

presents

*Tennessee Williams's*

# *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF*

(1955)

*Directed by Israel Hicks*

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Scenery by</i>         | Ralph Funicello   |
| <i>Costumes by</i>        | Sandra Woodall    |
| <i>Lighting by</i>        | Russell H. Champa |
| <i>Sound by</i>           | Fitz Patton       |
| <i>Dramaturg</i>          | Michael Paller    |
| <i>Casting by</i>         | Meryl Lind Shaw   |
| <i>Assistant Director</i> | Dave Sikula       |
| <i>Dialect Coach</i>      | Deborah Sussel    |

## THE CAST

|                                             |                                            |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <i>Margaret</i>                             | René Augesen                               |
| <i>Brick</i>                                | Michael James Reed                         |
| <i>Big Mama</i>                             | Katherine McGrath                          |
| <i>Big Daddy</i>                            | Jack Willis                                |
| <i>Mae, sometimes called Sister Woman</i>   | Anne Darragh                               |
| <i>Gooper, sometimes called Brother Man</i> | Rod Gnapp                                  |
| <i>Reverend Tooker</i>                      | Julian López-Morillas                      |
| <i>Doctor Baugh</i>                         | James Carpenter                            |
| <i>Sookey, a servant</i>                    | Fannie Lee Lowe                            |
| <i>Buster / Sonny (alternating)</i>         | Austin Greene / William Halladey Lanier    |
|                                             | Kevin Matthew Maltz / Tobiah Richkind      |
| <i>Dixie, a little girl (alternating)</i>   | Devyn Hocevar-Smith / Anya Jessie Richkind |

## UNDERSTUDIES

*Brick*—Gabriel Marin; *Margaret/Mae*—Carrie Paff; *Big Daddy*—Julian López-Morillas  
*Big Mama*—Phoebe Moyer; *Gooper, Reverend Tooker, Doctor Baugh*—Tommy A. Gomez; *Sookey*—Elizabeth Carter

## STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Kimberly Mark Webb, *Stage Manager*  
Elisa Guthertz, *Assistant Stage Manager*  
Alex Marshall, *Intern*

## TIME AND PLACE

The plantation house of Big Daddy Pollitt, in the Mississippi Delta, circa 1955.

There will be two intermissions.

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# "THIS IS LIFE"

BY MICHAEL PALLER

Shakespeare, like his Elizabethan playwriting colleagues, was an eager plunderer of other people's work for use in his own plays—it was the only way to satisfy his audience's bottomless appetite for new work (it didn't hurt, either, that there was no such thing as copyright law). Tennessee Williams was an equally enthusiastic pilferer: he stole from himself. Time and again he would revisit old material: sometimes new plays would emerge from old ones (*Orpheus Descending* of 1957 is a much-improved rethinking of 1940's *Battle of Angels*; the 1947 *Summer and Smoke* begat the 1964 *Eccentricities of a Nightingale*). On occasion, one-act plays blossomed into full-length works, as was the case with *Ten Blocks on the Camino Real*, which lost the first four words of its title but gained the equivalent of an act, and *Confessional*, which became *Small Craft Warnings*. More often, short stories morphed into plays: "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" eventually became *The Glass Menagerie*; "Man Bring This Up Road" was the starting point for the undervalued *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*; "The Angel in the Alcove" became *Vieux Carré* via a couple of one-acts;

"The Night of the Iguana" became the play of the same name; and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* began life in Williams's imagination as one of his best short stories, "Three Players of a Summer Game."

That story, written 1951–52, is about a wealthy young southern planter, Brick Pollitt, who, for reasons never explained, takes to drink and throws "his life away as if it were something disgusting that he had suddenly found in his hands." The pieces are swiftly collected by his wife, Margaret, who seizes control of Brick's Mississippi Delta plantation, acquires Brick's power of attorney, and assumes management of all his business affairs. That's not all she seizes. In a diamond-hard passage of prose, Williams describes a remarkable transformation that occurs between wife and husband:

It was as though she had her lips fastened to some invisible wound in his body through which drained out of him and flowed into her the assurance and vitality that he had owned before marriage. . . . She became vivid as Brick disappeared

behind the veil of his liquor. . . . She abruptly stopped being quaint and dainty. She was now apt to have dirty fingernails which she covered with scarlet enamel.

Margaret cuts her hair short and replaces her husband in the world of male power by inhaling his masculinity, leaving him an empty shell—or rather an empty highball glass awaiting the next freshener. The last time we see them, Margaret is driving through town in Brick's Pierce Arrow touring car, while Brick sits, swaying in the back, "grinning with a senseless amiability." We never



TENNESSEE WILLIAMS IN FRONT OF HIS HOME, 1948 (PHOTO © BETTMAN/CORBIS)



learn what caused Brick's collapse, why he takes a mistress, or why, while dashing across a wide front lawn with football in hand, he stumbles, falls, and then sprawls beneath a sprinkler wearing only his underwear, before quietly being taken away by the police. Nor do we get any inkling of what will happen next between him and Margaret. What we do get is the portrait of a weak man dominated by an increasingly powerful woman. The roots are all buried in a powerful subtext.

The journey from "Three Players of a Summer Game" to *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was tortured. As Williams wrestled with the material in his Key West studio in 1953, he suffered from a terrific writer's block, and his drinking ratcheted up. He wrote his agent, Audrey Wood, that he had to drink in the morning before being able to work, but that the results were so poor that he ended the day more depressed than when he began. He thought about psychotherapy (but put it off until the twin crises of the failure of *Orpheus Descending* and his father's death drove him to it in 1957). What caused Williams so much trouble? We can't know for certain, but one explanation might be found in Williams's attempt to make clear the cause of Brick's paralysis. Williams invented a relationship with a man called Skipper, Brick's best friend during college and then teammate on a pro football team, The Dixie Stars. Or is "best friend" the right way to put it? Actors, directors, and critics have been at odds for years as to whether Brick is gay, latently gay, straight and deeply insensitive to Skipper's feelings for him, or some strange combination of all of the above. *Something* between Brick and Skipper (who is dead, having drunk himself to death) has caused Brick to become an alcoholic and cast Maggie (as Margaret becomes in the play) from his bed.

Williams himself seemed uncertain about the nature of Brick and Skipper's relationship, and when asked about it gave different answers at different times, each one carefully shaded and ambiguous. In a 1954 letter to the play's director, Elia Kazan, when the two were discussing the revisions that ultimately became famous and problematic, Williams provocatively wrote, "I now believe that, in the deeper sense, not the literal sense, Brick is homosexual with a heterosexual adjustment: a thing I've suspected of several others, such as Brando, for instance." But even this is less than clear on second reading. How is someone gay or straight "not in the literal sense"?

Williams's troubles with the play continued well into rehearsal, where he made—and then unmade—many dozens of changes in the text. The major revisions that Williams made at Kazan's urging

are well known; Williams described them when he first published the text in 1955, complete with two versions of Act Three. One, called simply "Act Three," was the version Williams submitted to Kazan in 1954; the other, called the "Broadway Version," was the one that Kazan actually directed the following year. The alterations that Kazan requested fell into three categories: he wanted Maggie to be more feminine and more "sympathetic" to the audience; he wanted Big Daddy to appear in Act Three (he didn't in any of Williams's earlier drafts), and he wanted the audience to see that Brick had gone through a significant change as a result of his searing confrontation with Big Daddy in Act Two. Williams made these changes because he wanted Kazan to direct the play, but he was not happy about it. Indeed, when the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, mounted a major revival in 1974 (which subsequently moved to Broadway), he undid most of them. He then published the new version (known as the "1974

revision," containing only the newest Act Three), which is the edition director Israel Hicks has chosen for A.C.T.

Although Williams wrote in 1955 that he "embraced wholeheartedly" Kazan's suggestion to soften Maggie's rough edges, his letters say otherwise. While mulling Kazan's ideas, he wrote Audrey Wood, "I am not sure this new ending [i.e., the Broadway Version] is what I want. Do you think it contains an echo of 'Tea and Sympathy'? The other, harder ending of it didn't. Here is another case of a woman giving a man back his manhood, while in the original conception it was about a vital, strong woman dominating a weak man and achieving her will." He wanted Maggie

to be as tough at the end as she is at the beginning (and she enters the play in a fighting mood), but he thought that the Broadway Version of Act Three was sentimental, and a falsification of Maggie's tenacious nature. In the version Kazan first read, Maggie, who knows what it is to be poor and is determined never to be poor again, sees what she wants and takes it—and will drag Brick with her if necessary. In the Broadway Version, however, her interest is, as Williams wrote Wood, in giving Brick back his manhood. This was one of the changes that Williams removed in 1974.

Although Williams was sufficiently dissatisfied with Kazan's desired revisions that he published both versions of Act Three in the play's early editions, he didn't spurn the resulting Pulitzer Prize or New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. Still, while the positive reviews were some of the best professional news Williams had had in years, niggling doubts remained in the mind of some as to just what Brick's problem was, and who he was.

**"I THINK THAT DELIBERATE,  
CONSCIENCELESS MENDACITY,  
THE ACCEPTANCE OF FALSEHOOD  
AND HYPOCRISY, IS THE MOST  
DANGEROUS OF SINS. . . . I MEANT  
FOR THE AUDIENCE TO DISCOVER  
HOW PEOPLE ERECT FALSE VALUES BY  
NOT FACING WHAT IS TRUE IN THEIR  
NATURES, BY HAVING TO LIVE A LIE."**

—*Tennessee Williams*



John McClain of the *Journal American* wrote that Brick “finds himself unable to rid himself of an infatuation for his college roommate . . . and hence is incapable of [a] normal relationship with his wife or any protracted period of sobriety.” Robert Coleman, writing in the *Daily Mirror*, described the relationship with Skipper as “unnatural.” Although the *Daily News*’s John Chapman felt “frustrated . . . some heart or purpose or point is missing,” it was clear to him that Brick was “a drunkard and a queer.” (Well into the 1960s, journalistic and academic critics alike were perfectly relaxed about using language like that.)

Perhaps the most interesting case was Walter Kerr, then the daily critic for the New York *Herald Tribune*. Throughout their respective careers, Kerr was one of Williams’s major champions. In *Cat*, Kerr sensed a major drama with a major hole. The play, he wrote, “is a beautifully written, perfectly directed, stunningly acted play of evasion: evasion on the part of its principal character, evasion, perhaps, on the part of its playwright.” When Kerr saw the 1974 revival, he viewed with different eyes what amounted to a different play, in a different time. The new production “displays

the work as something clearer than it seemed to be in its original and vastly successful Broadway run, clearer and more honest than some of us at first supposed,” he wrote in the *New York Times*. “An unresolved mystery has always seemed to envelope Brick. Was he not homosexual, did Williams mean him to be but—given the discreet silences of 20 years ago—cautiously refuse to say so? The answer comes exacerbatantly clear—to me, at least—in the new mounting.” The answer was “yes.” Nonetheless, the point is ambiguous enough that the answer today is likely to differ according to who is answering.

In all versions of the play, of course, Williams filled out Brick’s world, introducing Big Mama, Mae, Gooper, and the five No-Neck Monsters, but in every iteration, Maggie and Brick are the center of his concerns. What do they have in common that many of the other characters lack? A desire to tell the truth, almost an instinct for it. “Yes, yes, yes! Truth, truth!” Maggie says. She admires Big Daddy, she tells Brick, because he “*is* what he *is* and he makes no bones about it.” Big Daddy, too, is a truth-teller who smells “the powerful and obnoxious odor of mendacity” when he enters in (the 1954 and 1974) Act Three just as Gooper reveals his plan to take control of the estate on Big Daddy’s death. Brick is in the habit of telling the truth—he won’t disguise his drinking, or the fact that he forgot Big Daddy’s 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. So being unable to face the truth of his relationship to Skipper—whatever it was—is most painful. Indeed, the play dramatizes one of Williams’s favorite themes: to tell the truth amidst the lies, in this case, the lies families tell to each other, that we tell to ourselves. Discussing *Cat* in a 1957 interview, Williams was referring to Brick and Maggie when he said:

I think that deliberate, conscienceless mendacity, the acceptance of falsehood and hypocrisy, is the most dangerous of sins. . . . I meant for the audience to discover how people erect false values by not facing what is true in their natures, by having to live a lie, and I hoped the audience would admire the heroic persistence of life and vitality; and I hoped they would feel the thwarted desire of people to reach each other through this fog, this screen of incomprehension. What I want most of all is to catch the quality of existence and experience. I want people to think, “This is life.”

Indeed it is: chaotic yet ordered, clear yet mysterious, a play that acts on our minds like . . . well, one hesitates to say it, but like a cat on a hot tin roof.

*Michael Paller is the author of* Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) *and has written theater and book reviews for the* Washington Post, Village Voice, Newsday, *and* Mirabella magazine. *He joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005.*



“JORDAN MASSEE, SR., AN IMPOSING SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN WHOSE GRANDDAUGHTER HAD DUBBED HIM ‘BIG DADDY,’ WAS A TRUE RACONTEUR AND USED EXPRESSIONS SUCH AS ‘NERVOUS AS A CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF.’ HE WAS ALSO ENDOWED WITH AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF STORIES ABOUT PLANTATION LIFE ‘ON THE RICHEST LAND THIS SIDE OF THE NILE.’ TOM [TENNESSEE WILLIAMS] WAS CLEARLY IN AWE OF THE HUGE ELDER MASSEE IN HIS WHITE LINEN SUIT.” FROM *TOM: THE UNKNOWN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS*, BY LYLE LEVERICH (CROWN, 1995). PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF JORDAN MASSEE, MACON, GEORGIA.



# FACTS ABOUT ME

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

I was born in the Episcopal rectory of Columbus, Miss., an old town on the Tombigbee River which was so dignified and reserved that there was a saying, only slightly exaggerated, that you had to live there a whole year before a neighbor would smile at you on the street. As my grandfather, with whom we lived, was the Episcopal clergyman, we were accepted without probation. My father, a man with the formidable name of Cornelius Coffin Williams, was a man of ancestry that on one side, the Williams, came from pioneer Tennessee stock and on the other from early settlers of Nantucket Island in New England. My mother was descended from Quakers. Roughly there was a combination of Puritan and Cavalier strains in my blood, which may be accountable for the conflicting impulses I often represent in the people I write about.

I was christened Thomas Lanier Williams. It is a nice enough name, perhaps a little too nice. It sounds like it might belong to the son of a writer who turns out sonnet sequences to Spring. As a matter of fact, my first literary award was \$25.00 from a Woman's Club for doing exactly that, three sonnets dedicated to Spring. I hasten to add that I was still pretty young. Under that name I published a good deal of lyric poetry, which was a bad imitation of Edna Millay. When I grew up I realized this poetry wasn't much good and I felt the name had been compromised so I changed it to Tennessee Williams, the justification being mainly that the Williamses had fought the Indians for Tennessee and I had already discovered that the life of a young writer was going to be something similar to the defense of a stockade against a band of savages.

When I was about twelve, my father, a traveling salesman, was appointed to an office position in St. Louis and so we left the rectory and moved north. It was a tragic move. Neither my sister [Rose] nor I could adjust ourselves to life in a Midwestern city. The schoolchildren made fun of our Southern speech and manners. I remember gangs of kids following me home yelling "Sissy!" and home was not a very pleasant refuge. It was a perpetually dim little apartment in a wilderness of identical brick and concrete structures with no grass and no trees nearer than the park. In the South we had never been conscious of the fact that we were economically less fortunate than others. We lived as well as anyone else. But in St. Louis we suddenly discovered there were two kinds of people, the rich and the poor, and that we belonged more to the latter. If we walked far enough west we came into a region of fine residences set in beautiful lawns. But where we lived, to which we must always return, were ugly rows of apartment buildings the color of dried blood and mustard. If I had been born to this situation I might not have resented it deeply. But it was forced upon my consciousness at the most sensitive age of childhood. It produced a shock and

## A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THOMAS LANIER ("TENNESSEE") WILLIAMS was born on March 26, 1911, in Columbus, Mississippi. The most-performed—and most autobiographical—American playwright, Williams wrote some seventy plays, fifteen film scripts, two novels (*The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* [1950] and *Moise and the World of Reason* [1975]), and an autobiography (*Memoirs* [1975]), as well as scores of essays, poems, and short stories. His most famous works appeared on Broadway and in film throughout the 1940s and 1950s and number among the great classics of American theater. His first success came with *The Glass Menagerie* in 1944, followed by *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947, which won the Pulitzer Prize. In 1953 *Camino Real* was commercially unsuccessful, but *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) also won a Pulitzer Prize and was filmed, as were *The Rose Tattoo* (Tony Award, 1951), *Orpheus Descending* (1957), *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959). His later, less-known plays include *THIS IS (An Entertainment)* (which had its world premiere at A.C.T. in 1975), *Vieux Carré* (1977), *A Lovely Sunday at Creve Coeur* (1978–79), and *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* (1980).

Williams died in February 1983 in New York after apparently choking on the cap of a pill bottle.

**"I DISCOVERED WRITING AS AN ESCAPE  
FROM A WORLD OF REALITY IN WHICH  
I FELT ACUTELY UNCOMFORTABLE."**

—Tennessee Williams

a rebellion that has grown into an inherent part of my work. It was the beginning of the social consciousness which I think has marked most of my writing. I am glad that I received this bitter education for I don't think any writer has much purpose back of him unless he feels bitterly the inequities of the society he lives in. I have no acquaintance with political and social dialectics. If you ask what my politics are, I am a Humanitarian.

That is the social background of my life!

I entered college during the great American depression and after a couple of years I couldn't afford to continue but had to drop



out and take a clerical job in the shoe company that employed my father. The two years I spent in that corporation were indescribable torment to me as an individual but of immense value to me as a writer for they gave me firsthand knowledge of what it means to be a small wage earner in a hopelessly routine job. I had been writing since childhood and I continued writing while I was employed by the shoe company. When I came home from work I would tank up on black coffee so I could remain awake most of the night, writing short stories, which I could not sell. Gradually my health broke down. One day, coming home from work, I collapsed and was removed to the hospital. The doctor said I couldn't go back to the shoe company. Soon as that was settled I recovered and went back South to live with my grandparents in Memphis where they had moved since my grandfather's retirement from the ministry. Then I began to have a little success with my writing. I became self-sufficient. I put myself through two more years of college and got a B.A. degree at the University of Iowa in 1938. Before then and for a couple of years afterwards I did a good deal of travelling around and I held a great number of part-time jobs of great diversity. It is hard to put the story in correct chronology for the last ten years of my life are a dizzy kaleidoscope. I don't quite believe all that has happened to me, it seems it must have happened to five or ten other people.

My first real recognition came in 1940 when I received a Rockefeller fellowship and wrote *Battle of Angels* which was

produced by the Theatre Guild at the end of that year with Miriam Hopkins in the leading role. It closed in Boston during the tryout run but I have rewritten it a couple of times since then and still have faith in it. My health was so impaired that I landed in 4F after a medical examination of about five minutes' duration. My jobs in this period included running an all-night elevator in a big apartment-hotel, waiting on tables and reciting verse in the Village, working as a teletype operator for the U.S. Engineers in Jacksonville, Florida, waiter and cashier for a small restaurant in New Orleans, ushering at the Strand Theatre on Broadway. All the while I kept on writing, writing, not with any hope of making a living at it but because I found no other means of expressing things that seemed to demand expression. There was never a moment when I did not find life to be immeasurably exciting to experience and to witness, however difficult it was to sustain.

From a \$17.00 a week job as a movie usher I was suddenly shipped off to Hollywood where MGM paid me \$250.00 a week. I saved enough money out of my six months there to keep me while I wrote *The Glass Menagerie*. I don't think the story from that point on, requires any detailed consideration.

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*This essay originally appeared on the jacket of the record album Tennessee Williams Reading from His Works (Caedmon Records, 1952).*



THE NOTTOWAY PLANTATION HOUSE, COMPLETED IN 1859, STANDS OVERLOOKING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA, NEAR BATON ROUGE AND NEW ORLEANS. THE INSPIRATION FOR SCENIC DESIGNER RALPH FUNICELLO'S SET FOR THIS PRODUCTION OF *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF*, NOTTOWAY IS ONE OF THE LARGEST ANTEBELLUM PLANTATION HOUSES IN THE SOUTH, WITH 64 ROOMS, 7 STAIRCASES, AND 5 GALLERIES. THIS 53,000-SQUARE-FOOT PLANTATION HOME WAS CONSTRUCTED BY JOHN HAMPTON RANDOLPH, WHOSE FATHER HAD COME FROM VIRGINIA IN 1820. IN 1860, NOTTOWAY ENCOMPASSED 6,200 ACRES AND RANDOLPH, THE BUILDER AND OWNER OF THE PROPERTY DURING THAT TIME, OWNED 155 AFRICAN AMERICANS WHO WORKED HIS SUGARCANE PLANTATION AS SLAVES. THE RANDOLPHS HELD ON TO THE HOUSE THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION UNTIL 1889, WHEN MRS. RANDOLPH SOLD THE MANSION FOLLOWING HER HUSBAND'S DEATH. (THE HOUSE WAS NOT DAMAGED BY HURRICANE KATRINA.) ©OWAKI-KULLA/CORBIS.



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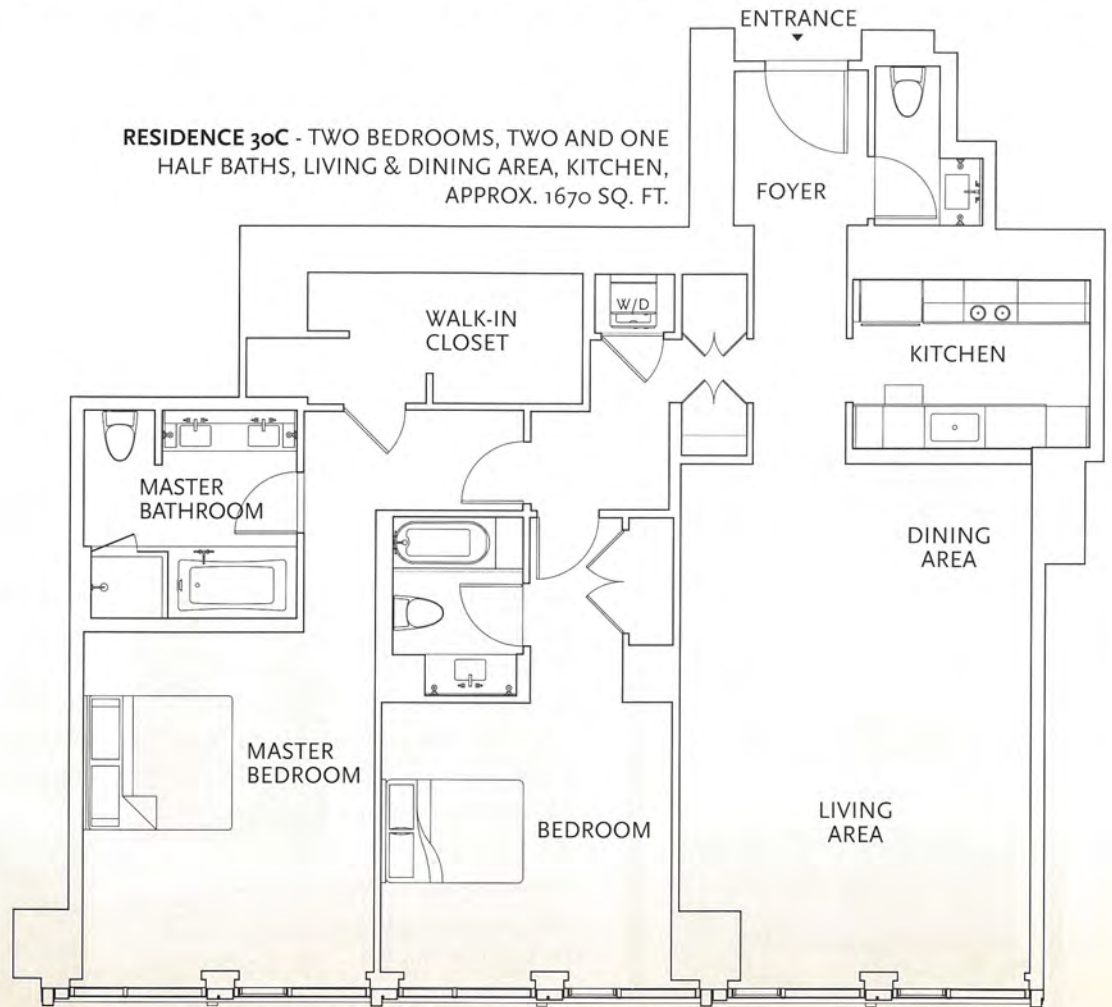
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## Who's Who



**RENÉ  
AUGESSEN\***  
(Margaret), an  
A.C.T. associate  
artist and core  
acting company  
member, made her  
A.C.T. debut in *The*

*Misanthrope*; she has appeared in recent seasons in *Celebration* and *The Room*, *The Beard of Avon*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Buried Child*, *Night and Day*, *The Dazzle*, *The Three Sisters*, *A Doll's House*, *A Mother*, *The Real Thing*, *The Gamester*, and, most recently, *The Voyage Inheritance* (also at Kansas City Repertory Theatre). New York credits include *Spinning into Butter* (Lincoln Center Theater), *Macbeth* (with Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, Public Theater), *It's My Party...* (with F. Murray Abraham and Joyce Van Patten, Arc Light Theater), and *Overruled* (Drama League). Regional theater credits include *Mary Stuart* (dir. Carey Perloff, Huntington Theatre Company); several productions, including the world premieres of *The Beard of Avon* and *The Hollow Lands*, at South Coast Repertory; and productions at the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Baltimore's Center Stage, the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Stage West. Film and television credits include *The Battle Studies*, "Law & Order," "Guiding Light," "Another World," and Hallmark Hall of Fame's *Saint Maybe*. Augesen is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.



**JAMES  
CARPENTER\***  
(Doctor Baugh) most  
recently appeared  
at A.C.T. as Dr.  
Rank in *A Doll's  
House*. Other A.C.T.  
credits include

*Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Tempest*,

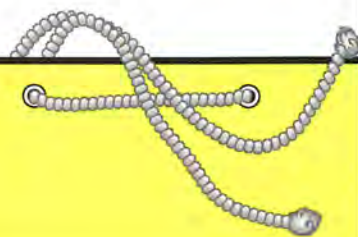
\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of  
Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

*Mary Stuart*, *Full Moon*, and *The Royal Family*. Bay Area credits include work at San Jose Repertory Company, Aurora Theatre, TheatreWorks, Marin Theatre Company, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and Thick Description. Carpenter has performed at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in more than 30 productions, most recently *The People's Temple*. He is an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, where he appeared recently as Ralph Nickleby in *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*. Out of town credits include productions at Arizona Theatre Company, Dallas Theater Center, and the Huntington Theatre Company. Film and television credits include *The Rainmaker*, *Metro*, *Singing*, *The Sunflower Boy*, and appearances on "Nash Bridges."



**ANNE  
DARRAGH\***  
(Mae) makes her  
A.C.T. debut in  
this production, her  
second Williams  
play (the first  
being *Suddenly*

*Last Summer* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Recent performances include Michael McKeever's *Charlie Cox Runs with Scissors* at Marin Theatre Company and Rebecca Gilman's *The Sweetest Swing in Baseball* at the Magic Theatre. She had the honor of playing Harper in the Eureka Theatre production of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. Other world premieres include *The American in Me*, *Sex Habits of American Women*, *Ted Kaczynski Killed People with Bombs*, *Wyoming*, *A Common Vision*, and *Speaking in Tongues*, all at the Magic. She has also performed in the world premiere of *Hellbound on My Trail* at Campo Santo, *Okra* at Brava! Theater Center, *Ladies of Fisher Cove* at the Ohio Theatre in New York, and the long-running hit *Political Wife*. Darragh is a native of Oakland and first learned acting from



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# Who's Who

John Probst at Bishop O'Dowd High School and from Lura Dolas in A.C.T.'s Summer Training Congress.



**ROD GNAPP\***  
(*Gooper*) appeared in *The Time of Your Life* at A.C.T. and Seattle Repertory Theatre. He has been acting in theaters around the

Bay Area for the last 16 years. He has also been seen at A.C.T. in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Royal Family*, and *Dark Rapture* and in numerous productions at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He was seen locally as Neil Cassidy in *Visions of Kerouac* at Marin Theatre Company, where he also played John Proctor in *The Crucible*. Gnapp also appeared in the world premiere production of Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss*. More recently, he appeared in San Jose Repertory's production of *Major Barbara* and San Jose Stage Company's productions of *The Woman in Black* and *The Lonesome West*.



**AUSTIN GREENE** (*Sonny*) is a fifth-grade student at Sycamore Valley Elementary School in Danville and is studying acting in the A.C.T.

Young Conservatory. Greene is returning to the Geary Theater for his third production. Previous A.C.T. credits are Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* and Ivar in *A Doll's House*. He has also played the roles of Toto in *For Better or Worse* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Danny Muir in *John Muir's Mountain Days* with the Willows Theatre Company.



**DEVYN HOCEVAR-SMITH** (*Dixie*) is currently a fourth grader at The San Francisco School. She has been in many plays since

she was six; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* with A.C.T. is her first professional production. She has studied acting at Kids on Camera in San Francisco since 2004.



**JULIAN LÓPEZ-MORILLAS\***  
(*Reverend Tooker*) has been acting and directing in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1973. He recently appeared

in the A.C.T. production of *The Voyage Inheritance* in the role of Reverend Colpus. He has directed productions of *Tartuffe* and *Troilus and Cressida* for the A.C.T. Conservatory and Anthony Clarvoe's *DNR* for the Plays in Progress series. Other acting and directing work includes productions at the Eureka and Magic theaters of San Francisco, the Denver Center Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, American Players Theatre, Court Theatre of Chicago, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.



**WILLIAM HALLADEY LANIER** (*Buster*) attends Alvarado Elementary School in San Francisco where he is an enthusiastic

participant in all the performing arts, including leading roles speaking Spanish. He spent two years in the San Francisco

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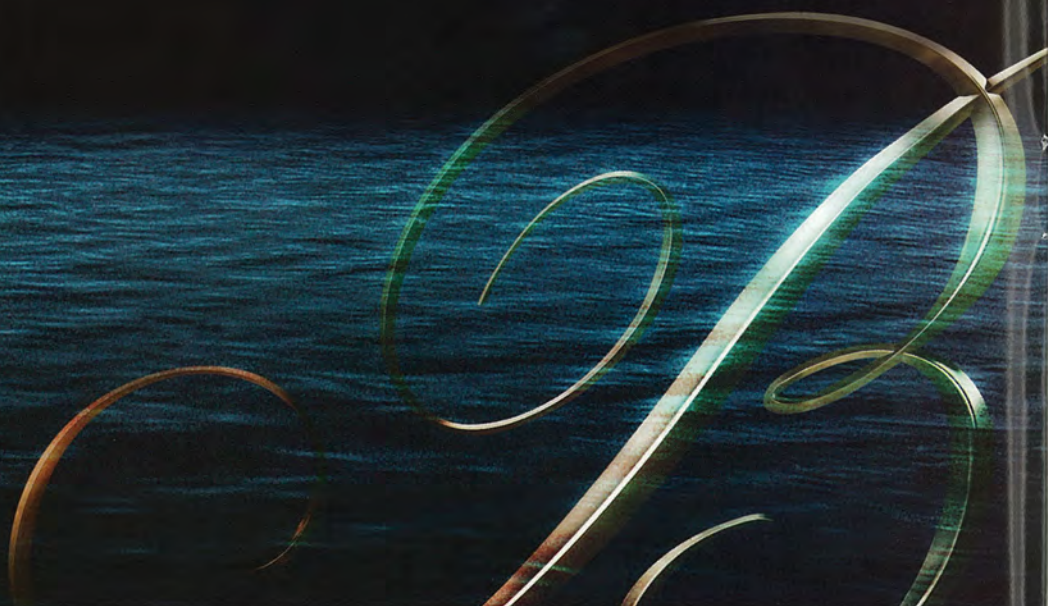
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# Who's Who

Boys Chorus and has enjoyed three years of Shakespeare Camp, as well as one summer session in the A.C.T. Young Conservatory. He is distantly related to Tennessee Williams.



**FANNIE LEE LOWE\*** (*Sookey*) appeared in A.C.T.'s *Tartuffe* in 1999, performs with her Jazz Trio when there's a booking, and, mostly recently,

completed a stint as a film extra in *Pursuit of Happyness*. She has been blessed to work with TheatreWorks, and consistently with Danny Duncan in productions of Duncan originals for more than 35 years.



**KEVIN MATTHEW MALTZ** (*Buster*) lives in Burlingame and attends Franklin Elementary School. Last year he participated in Kids

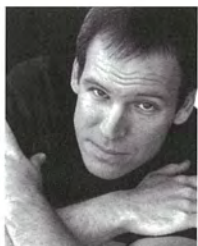
on Camera workshops and, during the summer, studied acting at GATE. This is his first performance at A.C.T.



**KATHERINE McGRATH\*** (*Big Mama*) is an associate artist at The Old Globe in San Diego, where she has performed in numerous

productions, including *The Rivals*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Moon for the Misbegotten*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *The Magic Fire*, *Electra*, and *Dear Liar*. Broadway credits include the revival of *The Music Man*, *A Man of No Importance*, and *The Night of the*

*Tribades*. She has performed for regional theaters across the country, including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Ford's Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartford Stage Company, the Huntington Theatre Company, the Hartman Theatre, McCarter Theatre, New Orleans Repertory Theater, the Guthrie Theater, South Coast Repertory Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, the Mark Taper Forum, the Ahmanson Theatre, and Lincoln Center Theater. Film and television credits include *Scandal in a Small Town*, "Frasier," "Cheers," "Hill Street Blues," "Wonderworks," and "General Hospital."



**MICHAEL JAMES REED\***'s (*Brick*) New York credits include *La Bête* (Broadway), *King Lear* (Roundabout Theatre),

*Amphitryon* (Classic Stage Co.), *A Forest in Arden* (New York Theatre Workshop), and *Twelfth Night*, *The Venetian Twins*, and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (Pearl Theatre). Regionally, Reed has appeared in *Pericles* (title role), *Julius Caesar* (Marc Antony), *Twelfth Night*, and *Trojan Women* (The Old Globe Theatre); *Terra Nova* and *Nostalgia* (South Coast Repertory Theatre); *Enchanted April* (Pasadena Playhouse); *Angels in America, Parts 1 & 2* (Alley Theatre); and work at the Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Syracuse Stage, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Papermill Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, and Asolo Stage Co. In London, he appeared in *Richard III* at the Royal Shakespeare Company (starring Antony Sher) and *L'Ilusion* (Actors Touring Co.). His television credits include guest-starring roles on "The King of Queens," "Six Feet Under," "Method & Red," "24," "JAG,"

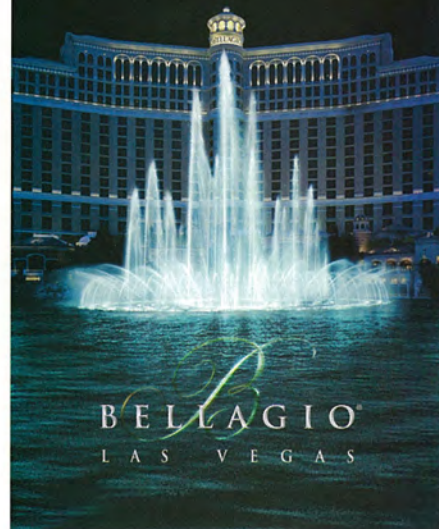
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# Who's Who

"Ladies Man," "That 70's Show," "Silk Stalkings," and "Another World" and recurring characters on "The City" and "One Life to Live." Reed attended UC Santa Cruz and is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London and of Los Gatos High School.



**ANYA JESSIE RICHKIND** (*Dixie*) is a seventh grader at Marin Country Day School. She has studied in the A.C.T. Young

Conservatory for three years. Her affection for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* began two years ago when she played Dixie in an A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program production. Last year she rejoined her M.F.A. Program friends on the Geary stage, playing Little Fan and understudying the Toy Ballerina in *A Christmas Carol*. Inspired by knitting backstage, Richkind created Help Aid Tragedy Survivors (HATS), a school organization that knits items for sale to raise money for tsunami, and, now, Hurricane Katrina victims. Other activities include studying Hebrew and playing cello and soccer.



**TOBIAH RICHKIND** (*Sonny*), a second grader at Marin Country Day School, joined the A.C.T. Young Conservatory this

year. He has studied dance for several years at ODC and appeared in their production of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Richkind practices karate and has earned a green belt. Other favorite activities are soccer, playing the guitar, swimming, and baseball.

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**JACK WILLIS\*** (*Big Daddy*) has appeared in more than 150 productions throughout the United States, last appearing at A.C.T.

in *The Black Rider*. He is an associate artist at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., and was a company member of the American Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory, and the Dallas Theatre Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in *Julius Caesar* (with Denzel Washington), *The Crucible*, *Art*, and *The Old Neighborhood*. His off-Broadway credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *The Iphigenia Cycle*, and, recently, New York Theatre Workshop's *Valhalla*. Willis has appeared regionally in productions of *The Threepenny Opera*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Buried Child*, *Man and Superman*, *Wild Duck*, *Heartbreak House*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *The Caretaker*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Trojan Women*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, *Other People's Money*, *All the King's Men*, *House of Blue Leaves*, *In the Belly of the Beast*, *A Flea in her Ear*, and *The Rocky Horror Show*. Willis's film and television includes *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *The Out-of-Towners*, *Love Hurts*, *I Come in Peace*, *Problem Child*, "Law & Order," "Third Watch," "Ed," and "Dallas." He is a cofounder of Aruba Repertory.



**ELIZABETH CARTER\*** (*Understudy*) is working with A.C.T. for the first time. She has performed with numerous Bay Area theaters,

including California Shakespeare Theater, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Sacramento Theatre Company, Word for

Word, and TheatreWorks. Last year she was seen in the Duke Ellington musical *Beggar's Holiday* at Marin Theatre Company. Most recently, she explored insanity with the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Her favorite roles include the Bawd in *Pericles*, Effie in *Dreamgirls*, Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and her many roles in the colored museum and *Nickel and Dime*. She is a founder of Oakland Public Theater.



**TOMMY A. GOMEZ\*** (*Understudy*) has performed for A.C.T. in *The Three Sisters* and *Enrico IV* (both directed by Carey Perloff)

and in eight productions of *A Christmas Carol*. Other theater credits include productions at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Georgia Shakespeare Festival, TheatreWorks, Aurora Theatre Company, BoarsHead Theater, the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival, two seasons with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, four seasons with the California Shakespeare Festival, and The Old Globe in San Diego, where he played Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Gomez has also done extensive work as a drama instructor at Lansing Community College in Lansing, Michigan, teaching incarcerated youth in Michigan, Alabama, and California's juvenile justice system, and in the A.C.T. Summer Training Congress.



**GABRIEL MARIN\*** (*Understudy*) was last seen in A.C.T.'s First Look presentation of *La Bella Familia* and at the Magic Theatre in the world

*continued on page 23*





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# Inside A.C.T.

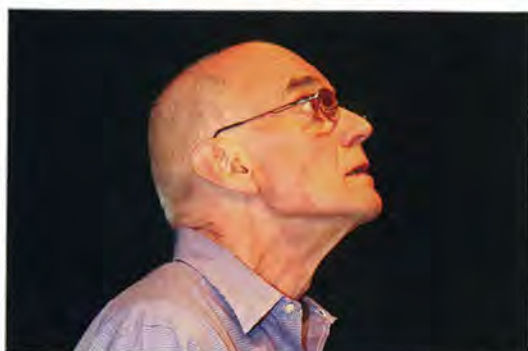
A NEW *CHRISTMAS CAROL* PG. 3

EDUCATION AT A.C.T. PG. 8

ALUMNI NOTEBOOK PG. 12



# WELCOME TO INSIDE A.C.T. FALL 2005



A.C.T. is pleased to announce the debut of *Inside A.C.T.*, our new audience magazine. Including feature articles and news items about the myriad facets of one of the United States's most exciting regional theaters and actor-training institutions, *Inside A.C.T.* offers our audience and patrons across the country a chance to take a glimpse at what goes on behind the proverbial curtain.

This inaugural issue takes a look at a pivotal moment in the history of A.C.T., as the company prepares to launch the world premiere production of a brand-new adaptation of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the Bay Area's perennial holiday favorite, first produced by A.C.T. in 1976 and presented in San Francisco almost every December since. *A Christmas Carol* is the ultimate expression of A.C.T.'s commitment to the philosophy of "one artistic community," bringing extraordinary designers, the finest professional theater artists, our Master of Fine Arts Program students, 19 young actors from our Young Conservatory, and audience members of every age together in celebration of the powerful magic of live theater.

Look for the second issue of *Inside A.C.T.* in the spring, when we'll be taking a look at the planning of A.C.T.'s 40th (and Carey Perloff's 15th) anniversary season. Enjoy!

FRONT COVER ART: COSTUME SKETCH FOR A.C.T.'S NEW *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* © COSTUME DESIGNER BEAVER BAUER. SKETCHES ON PAGES 3-6 ALSO © BEAVER BAUER. ABOVE: PHOTOS FROM A.C.T.'S AUGUST WORKSHOP OF *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* (TOP TO BOTTOM) DEVON HADSELL AND TOBI JANE MOORE; A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENTS CLAIRE SMITH BROWNELL AND JAMILA WEBB; AND GILES HAVERGAL, AS SCHOOGIE (PHOTOS © JEREMY HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY). BACK COVER: GEARY THEATER PHOTO BY MARCO LORENZETTI.



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Look up! Look up! Look up, know me better!  
For I am the Spirit of Christmas!  
Look up! Look up! Look up, know me better!  
I have come to open your heart,  
I am here to banish the darkness . . .

# Carol

BY ELIZABETH  
BRODERSEN

From June to August this year, the unlikely sounds of Christmas could be heard wafting through A.C.T.'s offices in San Francisco, as early visions of sugarplums and holiday revelers danced their way across the rehearsal room floor just down the hall. This is an auspicious moment for the company, which, after producing 27 incarnations of the company's beloved 1976 adaptation of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, has marshaled its creative talent and energy to create a brand-new version that will premiere at the Geary Theater in December.

When A.C.T. originally mounted Dickens's classic Christmas tale nearly 30 years ago, the Powers That Were felt optimistic that the show might be successful enough to return for one more season. At the time, A.C.T.'s *Carol*, adapted by Dennis Powers and Laird Williamson, was one of the few theatrical productions of Dickens's 1843 novella being performed in the United States. Over the next three decades, however, the annual production of *A Christmas Carol* became a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory, performed 832 times to a collective audience of more than 775,000, employing nearly 1,000 actors (including seven different Ebenezer Scrooges and hundreds of children) and 600 backstage staff along the way. After successfully remounting the same production for three decades—using the same set pieces, props, and costumes, with only occasional refurbishment—and in light of the plethora of new Bay Area holiday productions, including the San Francisco Ballet's new *Nutcracker*, Best of Broadway's new *White Christmas*, and Mark Morris's *The Hard Nut* in Berkeley—the summer of 2005 seemed the perfect moment to breathe new life and spirit into A.C.T.'s ever-popular holiday theatrical tradition.

DREAMING A NEW





"We went through incredible institutional soul-searching as we discussed *Carol's* continuing significance to A.C.T.'s artists and audiences," says Artistic Director Carey Perloff, who ultimately decided to develop a new adaptation of Dickens's text herself, in collaboration with dramaturg Paul Walsh. "Contrary to popular belief, *A Christmas Carol* is not a cash cow. It takes tremendous resources, in terms of staff time, creative energy, and financial support, to mount a production of such grand scale each year, and we knew it would take even more to create a new production from the ground up. Yet there are deeply compelling reasons to keep this extraordinary story in our repertoire."

Among those reasons is the multigenerational aspect of the production. Featuring in each season's cast the entire third-year class of A.C.T.'s top-ranked Master of Fine Arts Program, as well as 19 students from the Young Conservatory (A.C.T.'s acclaimed program for actors aged 8 to 19), *A Christmas Carol* has played a critical role in the A.C.T. Conservatory's actor training curriculum, a role also central to the development of the new production. The relationships among the professional actors and students in each year's *Carol* are fostered by a mentoring program, in which each professional mentors an M.F.A. Program cast member, who in turn mentors a YC student; thus each generation helps usher the succeeding one into the life of the working theater artist.

"This production announces to the world that young people are central to A.C.T.'s aesthetic experience," adds Perloff. "Our M.F.A. Program, led by Melissa Smith, and our Young Conservatory, led by Craig Slight, are incredible, and here is our chance to really celebrate them and say, Look what this institution can do."

Despite the stiff new competition looming literally around the corner last winter, audiences continued to flock to *Carol*, and it became evident that the A.C.T. production has become a vital part of the wider Bay Area community's holiday experience. "We discovered just how passionate people are about *A Christmas Carol*," says Perloff. "Dramatizations of this story seem to have become an important ecumenical American ritual at holiday time, regardless of



individual religious background or faith. Seeing *Carol* is an experience that people yearn to have, year after year. It is a remarkable story, a secular tale about transformation and the imagination.

"I also think we have to remember the number of people who are part of this company's life who came first to A.C.T. to see *A Christmas Carol*, and that every year we have audiences who are seeing theater for the very first time."

#### A NEW SCRIPT AND MUSIC

Because her vision for *Carol* at A.C.T. was so particular, and included so many more children and young people than any version she could find, Perloff, a playwright in her own right (*A Colossus of Rhodes*, *Luminescence Dating*), finally sat down with dramaturg Paul Walsh (whose previous translations and adaptations for A.C.T. have included *A Doll's House*, *Creditors*, and *Edward II*) to begin work on a brand-new adaptation for A.C.T. They immediately went back to Dickens's original novella.

Taking advantage of the opportunity to tailor the script to A.C.T.'s specific needs, Walsh and Perloff set ground rules for the new version. The first rule: No narrator. Dickens himself, a familiar presence in many dramatic interpretations of the tale (including A.C.T.'s previous version), no longer makes an appearance onstage. "We were excited to see whether everything that happened could be dramatized," says Perloff. "There are many 'story theater' versions [of *A Christmas Carol*]. I wanted to see if we could really make this a play." The second rule: Create two 40-minute acts with an intermission (fidgety children often had a hard time sitting through the previous version's 100-minute playing time).

The third rule was to stay true to the unique rhythms of Dickens's language. "We wanted to see if we could find a language for the script that echoed Dickens's," says Perloff. "His descriptive passages are filled with surprisingly sensual adjectives and active gerunds. That's why I started the first song, 'Piercing, piercing, piercing, piercing / Biting, biting, biting, biting cold,' for example—right from the book! I thought it would be wonderful to preserve the kinetic energy of his descriptive prose."

Adds Walsh, "Dickens wrote his stories and novels nearly two centuries ago to be read aloud, so they're already performative, in a sense. They have a cadence that's meant to be heard, and words that, while sometimes unfamiliar, are wonderfully theatrical. So we've held to as much of Dickens's language as is practical within our adaptation, at the same time trying to make sure that everything is crystal clear moment by moment and celebratory of the imaginative possibilities of Dickens's own text."

Music is integral to the development of the new adaptation. Composer Karl Fredrik Lundeberg (who scored Ibsen's *A Doll's House* for A.C.T., as well as acclaimed film and television work) is writing all new music for the production, including several songs and underscoring to provide *Carol*'s dramatic action with narrative continuity and an overall sense of magic and celebration. "When I reread *Carol* after not reading it for 25 years, I was struck by how comical and wry the writing is," says Lundeberg. "It almost reminded me of P. G. Wodehouse. So the lyrics for the songs were already there, in the text. Carey would take the first pass at ordering the words in a musical way, and then I would musicalize it. It's an interesting way to create a book for a musical, because Charles Dickens is the lyricist."

Lundeberg's score draws from a wide variety of traditions, from the folk tunes of his Norwegian family's musical roots to contemporary American gospel. "Subliminally, the music needs to have a lightness to it," he says. "I ended up writing a lot of the melodies in what's called the Lydian mode [in which the fourth note of a major scale is raised a half step], which gives them a sort of a lift. Because this is a piece that's going to be done, hopefully over many years, by people of different ages and levels of training, I didn't want the melodies to be complex, but I did want the harmonies to be interesting, and as they keep shifting beneath the melodies, things move along faster."







### FANTASTICAL DESIGN

Also crucial to the collaborative development process has been the involvement of the *Carol* design team, which includes, in addition to Lundeberg, Tony Award-winning scenic designer John Arnone (*Lennon*, *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*, and *The Full Monty*, among many others, on Broadway), costume designer Beaver Bauer (most recently, *The Gamester* and *The Goat* for A.C.T.), lighting designer Nancy Schertler (*The Real Thing*, *Hilda*, *Levee James*, and *Texts for Nothing* for A.C.T.), sound designer Jake Rodriguez (*The Colossus of Rhodes* for A.C.T.), and San Francisco Ballet choreographer Val Caniparoli (*A Doll's House* for A.C.T.). The team's participation began early in the script writing process, accelerating during workshops of the draft text held at A.C.T.'s studios this summer.

The visual aesthetic of the new production reflects Perloff and Walsh's desire to imagine *Carol* the way Dickens might have if he had created a production today. "I felt the production should be much more dreamlike, like the book, which is very filmic," says Perloff. "It cuts back and forth in time; it's written in this fantastic way. So instead of detailing Scrooge's adventure with the ghosts in a linear structure, we tell his story in a kind of swirling pageant with scenes dotted throughout.

"We also decided that, while we will keep the setting loosely Victorian, we're not going to be a slave to that period. The design is in no way realistic, because this is at its core a piece about magic and change. Dickens said that, if the ghosts could appeal to the imagination of this man such that he could ultimately believe in them, he would be transformed."

Known for her outrageously inventive designs for the theater, Bauer took to heart her assignment to make the ghosts "scary and surprising." With a combination of gorgeous costuming and ingenious stagecraft, they embody Dickens's descriptions in his original text: Christmas Past is a candle, lit from within, who descends on a swing; Present is a Bacchic spirit of fecundity and abundance who sings a full-voiced gospel-like tune; Future is a gigantic puppet that flies across the stage on tie-lines. "The ghosts are intentionally androgynous," says Perloff. "This year we're looking at women to play them, but another year they might be men. The point is that they are otherworldly, filled with light and unlike ordinary humans; their locomotion is different, they swing in from the rafters, they rise up from the depths below the stage on elevators. They hang above like specters. They transport."

### SCROOGE'S JOURNEY BACK TO COMMUNITY

Perloff and Walsh were particularly interested in the inherently theatrical possibilities of the ghost story that lies at the heart of Dickens's tale. "I think, for Laird [Williamson] and Dennis [Powers], *A Christmas Carol* was a piece about the Solstice, very much about darkness and light," says Perloff. "For me, it's also about the imagination. Dickens had a profound belief in fantastical storytelling. He told this particular ghost story in the belief that, if you could trigger a person's imagination, you could trigger their humanity. I believe that's really what he was trying to do with this story."

"In rereading a classic text like *A Christmas Carol*," adds Walsh, "we always read from where we are today. Reading *Carol* this time, what we found was that Dickens in fact chose to write a ghost story. It's not a story about the trials and travails of Victorian England, or about child labor and the abuse of children; he wrote many books about that. This is a much simpler story, about a man who has allowed himself to be separated from community and then is called back to community, first by these ghosts, by his residual memories, and then by the



community itself. He eventually finds his way back into the fold, because he's been changed by the telling of the story.

"We wanted to find a theatrical metaphor that was equivalent to Dickens's prose, that would help our audiences join in the imaginative journey of Scrooge and therefore join in his reclamation by society. *A Christmas Carol* celebrates the possibility of theater to evoke and maybe even effect a change on behalf of community, because we watch theater as a community. Theater celebrates that sense not of the individual, but of the individual in society, in community, and that's the story that *A Christmas Carol* tells."

Fundamentally, A.C.T.'s new *Carol* is a gift to the entire Bay Area community of theater artists and audiences. "One of the reasons this has been a very challenging process," says Perloff, "is that we're trying to do all this as imaginatively and efficiently as possible, so we don't have to charge high ticket prices. We want the ticket price to be low, because we want this show to be affordable to the widest possible audience. This story is for all of us."

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by Charles Dickens

Adapted by Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh

Music by Karl Lundeberg

Choreography by Val Caniparoli

Directed by Carey Perloff

**LIMITED ENGAGEMENT:  
NOVEMBER 26–DECEMBER 24, 2005**

A.C.T.'s new production of *A Christmas Carol* is made possible by generous support from:

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## PRODUCING HOLIDAY SPIRIT

A fundamental aspect of the development of A.C.T.'s new version of *A Christmas Carol* takes place far behind the scenes. Part of the development process from the very beginning, The *Carol* Circle is a group of individuals and families who have made generous financial contributions to help cover the expenses of the production. Supplementing major underwriting from SBC and PG&E, *Carol* Circle donors have turned their dedication to live theater and their community into an expression of giving, becoming part of a special group of producers created specifically for this project.

*Carol* Circle members enjoy rare firsthand opportunities to experience the making of the new production, attending workshops and readings, and watching up close as the play evolves over the course of the six-month development period. They are invited to experience every step of the process, including script rewriting and revision, design meetings and workshop readings, and conversations with cast members.

Each of the individuals who make up the *Carol* Circle has a different reason for participating. Jeff and Laurie Ubben, who pledged financial support for the project in its earliest days, form the backbone of the group, inspired in part because their two daughters, Josephine (age 12) and Charlotte (16), have both taken courses in the A.C.T. Young Conservatory. Playing an early role in A.C.T.'s new venture also infuses the project with their entrepreneurial spirit. "We've had a chance from the inside to experience the creative process in progress," says Jeff Ubben, who runs his own investment firm.

## THE CAROL CIRCLE

Cathy and Sandy Dean, Penelope and Charles Finnie, Robert and Elizabeth Fisher, John and Laura Fisher, William and Sakurako Fisher, Coltrane and Christopher Lord, Marjorie and Joseph Perloff, Lisa and John Pritzker, Lizanne and Barry Rosenstein, Chris Ryder and Melissa Bateman, Martin and Corsee Sanders, Abby and Gene Schnair, Ruth Ann and Lee Seward, Jo Schumann Silver, Laurie and Jeff Ubben, Timothy and Sharon Ubben, and Anne and Paul Wattis.





# ENTERTAINING EDUCATION AT A.C.T.



## ONE ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

*"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."* FROM THE A.C.T. MISSION STATEMENT

Since the company's arrival in San Francisco in 1967, A.C.T. has been dedicated to the idea of lifelong learning. At A.C.T., working artists are in constant collaboration with artists-in-training, and professionals and students learn from each other in a rich variety of ways, from actor training in the classroom to the development of new work and onstage collaboration in professional productions. Dedicated to the enrichment of "one artistic community," A.C.T. also extends its educational efforts into the broader Bay Area, bringing the audience into the theatrical experience with a wide range of programs.

**MASTER OF FINE ARTS (M.F.A.) PROGRAM** / Ranked as one of the top programs in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program was the first theater training program in the country not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award the master of fine arts degree. Functioning as the cornerstone of the A.C.T. Conservatory, the M.F.A. Program currently trains 51 students in its three-year curriculum.

**YOUNG CONSERVATORY (YC)** / The YC offers a broad range of theater training for young people aged 8 to 19. Working professional actors and directors lead students in a spectrum of classes, including acting, directing, voice and speech, musical theater, audition, and improvisation. The YC's internationally acclaimed New Plays Program

has to date commissioned 23 new plays by some of the English language's most outstanding playwrights, performed publicly by YC students, collected in publications by Smith and Kraus Publishers (*New Plays from the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, Volumes I, II, III, and IV*), and enjoyed as a valuable resource in classrooms throughout the United States.

**STUDIO A.C.T.** / This comprehensive evening and weekend training program offers the highest-quality instruction in acting and other performance skills to adults with beginning to advanced levels of experience. Four 10-week sessions are offered each year; instructors are working theater artists who love to teach.

**SUMMER TRAINING CONGRESS (STC)** / The STC offers professional actor training for high school graduates 19 and older with prior theater training or experience. Each summer, working professionals, including conservatory faculty and distinguished guests, lead approximately 100 students from across the United States in nine weeks of intensive study.

**FIRST LOOK** / A series of professional workshops, staged readings, and productions of new plays by cutting-edge playwrights, A.C.T.'s First Look program offers established and up-and-coming artists the opportunity to present their works in an environment that nurtures and supports them through the entire span of the creative process.

CLOCKWISE, FROM BOTTOM LEFT: STEPHANIE SAUNDERS '07; CAROLINE SHARMAN '06; GREGORY WALLACE DIRECTS CRYSTAL NOELLE '04 IN *ELEKTRA* (PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN); JEFFREY CROCKETT TEACHING VOCAL TECHNIQUE (PHOTO BY MELISSA KASEMAN); M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENTS' PREPERFORMANCE WARM-UP; PRISCILLA REGALADO TEACHING MOVEMENT; THE YOUNG CONSERVATORY CAST OF *LADIES OF THE CANYON: THE MUSIC OF JONI MITCHELL*; STEVEN M. STROBEL '05 IN *LILIES, OR THE REVIVAL OF A ROMANTIC DRAMA* (PHOTO BY DAVID WILSON); ALLISON JEAN WHITE IN *THE REAL THING* (PHOTO BY DAVID M. ALLEN). PHOTOS BY KEVIN BERNE, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE NOTED.





**STUDENT MATINEE SERIES** / The A.C.T. Student Matinee Series is one of the oldest and most respected programs of its kind in the nation. Each year 13,000 young people participate in A.C.T.'s arts initiatives, which bring students to professional and conservatory performances and provide workshops that enrich their appreciation of the theatrical experience.

**ACT ONE** / ACT One is a group of young professionals who share an interest in live theater. Events are designed to give members a unique, behind-the-scenes perspective on A.C.T. In addition, ACT One members lend support to the next generation of theatrical talent by raising funds for scholarships to the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program.

**PROLOGUES** / The Prologue series features free in-depth discussions with the director and/or other members of the creative team of each A.C.T. production, which take place in the theater on the Tuesday before the opening night performance.

**AUDIENCE EXCHANGES** / Audience Exchanges are free postperformance discussions among the audience, cast members, and A.C.T. artistic staff following select performances of each Geary Theater subscription production.

**OUT WITH A.C.T.** / A gathering of lesbian and gay theater lovers, Out with A.C.T. combines great theater with complimentary postperformance parties, offering refreshments by BV Wines and some of Union Square's most exciting restaurants.

**ARTREACH** / Developed to help fill the gap in the public school system's dwindling arts curriculum, A.C.T. ArtReach is an intensive theater-based educational program offered in collaboration with 20 public schools throughout the Bay Area. ArtReach provides on-site theater workshops (taught by A.C.T. M.F.A. Program graduates) and free Student Matinee Series tickets to students in the San Francisco Unified School District. Since the program was established in 1995, ArtReach has served more than 2,000 young people.

**AMEX STUDENT SUBSCRIPTION SERIES** / Full-time students can subscribe to a full season of A.C.T. productions at 50% off regular ticket prices—less than \$8 a ticket. Performances are followed by receptions in the Geary Theater's private lounge, where students can interact with actors and artists involved in the production. The American Express® Student Subscription Series is sponsored by a generous grant from American Express Company.

**WORDS ON PLAYS** / *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s in-depth performance guide series, offers insights into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the A.C.T. subscription season. Teachers participating in the Student Matinee Series each receive a free copy; subscriptions and single issues are also available for purchase by the general public.

**BRING WHAT YOU CAN/PAY WHAT YOU WISH** / Patrons can pay any amount for tickets to A.C.T. productions at the Geary Theater when they donate children's books, diapers, or coffee beans to benefit Raphael House, a shelter and support program for homeless families in San Francisco's Tenderloin District.





# THE PRODUCER

"From the moment Carey [Perloff] decides on a play she wants to stage at A.C.T., things start to get really interesting for me," says A.C.T. Producing Director James Haire. "Then the decision-making and negotiating journey begins," Haire explains, shedding light on the crucial, and yet surprisingly little understood, role he plays as the longtime head of A.C.T.'s producing department in ensuring that the company's creative ventures are not only artistically vital, but also economically, logistically, and legally feasible.

Unlike other theater professionals, such as designers and directors, whose contributions are more immediately recognizable to audiences, a producing director's responsibilities for a nonprofit repertory theater of A.C.T.'s size and scale are much less public, yet equally essential to the company's theatrical life. After the initial burst of artistic brainstorming, Haire steps in to research and negotiate every aspect of a play's progress toward the stage.

In the case of some large-scale productions—such as *The Black Rider* last fall (the largest and most expensive production in A.C.T.'s history)—contract negotiations, union dispensations, and applications for travel and work visas are begun by Haire more than two years prior to an expected opening. Annually, Haire negotiates contracts with all 17 of A.C.T.'s affiliated unions, including the two most influential—Actors Equity Association (AEA), which represents all of A.C.T.'s [nonstudent] actors, and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the largest labor union in the entertainment industry. In addition, Haire formalizes contracts and rights agreements with authors, actors, literary estates and executors, other regional theaters and production consortiums (for coproductions), and a wide range of artisans and technicians, all of whom contribute to A.C.T.'s chosen productions realizing believable life onstage.

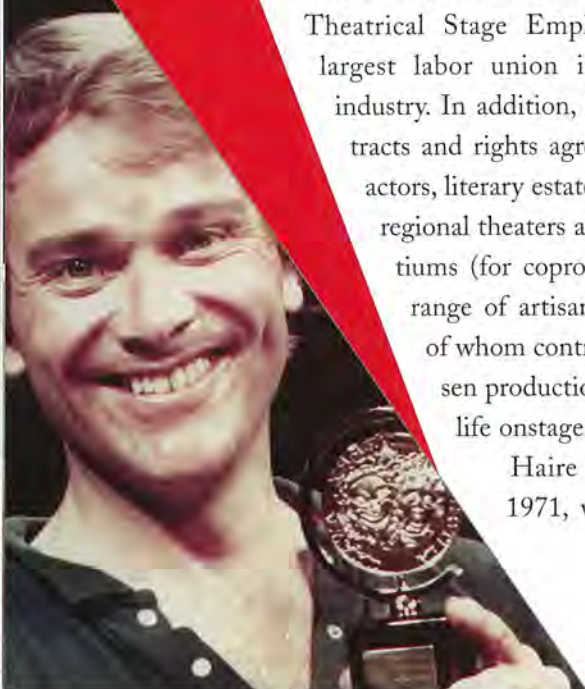
Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971, when he was hired as

production stage manager by A.C.T.'s cofounder Bill Ball. "I had every intention of staying just one season," says Haire, recalling his arrival in California following a successful string of stage-managing and producing projects in 1960s New York. "But [A.C.T.] was brand new and very exciting. It had the professionalism of Broadway, but also the idealism I always wanted to find in the theater when I left school, and so I just stayed. It was after the [Loma Prieta] earthquake [in 1989] that, all of a sudden, I was busy finding alternate theaters when the Geary was uninhabitable and negotiating leases, I really stepped into this role of producer. I got used to the challenge of solving problems one after another, and keeping the flame alive."

These so-called "problems" are in fact the day-to-day challenges of producing at one of the country's largest regional theaters. "If a play seems fiscally viable, then I look into acquiring the producing rights, which in the case of a mature play like *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is very simple. When it's a new play with a lot of buzz, it becomes much more complicated because we're then vying with many other producers and theaters who also want it."

Given the theater-world reality that there are never as many quality properties available as there are companies seeking new acquisitions, the competition can be daunting. "The regional theater world, like so much else in our society, has become much more competitive," says Perloff, "and Jim's role is made even more complicated by the fact that we coexist (and at times compete) with other nonprofit, as well as commercial, houses in the Bay Area. The producing equation isn't as simple as, Why don't we do such-and-such play?"

"Jim's indefatigable negotiating and steadfastness have made many of our most rewarding recent artistic enterprises possible," says Perloff, "and have also helped us ensure future goodwill and collaborations with some of our favorite writers." Haire cites as his to-date crowning career achievement the arduous negotiations for *The Black Rider*. The enormous scale of the production—with co-creators (Tom Waits and Robert Wilson) on two coasts and a far-flung cast of 14 actors and seven musicians from six countries—presented a challenge in itself, and the





issue of securing work visas for each non-American cast member became a nail-biting saga in the aftermath of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's tightened post-9/11 requirements. "I remember a moment just a week before rehearsals were to begin when I was simultaneously on the phone with an actor in Germany, and another in France, trying to coordinate them both to meet at their respective embassies at a specified time to get paperwork through to the INS. I truly thought that if Homeland Security maintained their position, we were going to lose the whole project."

The show indeed went on, in large measure due to Haire's determination, and the production itself has secured A.C.T.'s greater standing in the international theater world. Haire is hopeful, along with Perloff and the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, that successes like this will help A.C.T.'s reputation for theatrical adventurousness continue to grow. "*The Black Rider* was a tremendous artistic and financial risk," says Haire, "but due to the fact that our community really got behind this work, we came out on top. A.C.T.'s audience is really unique, and they have grown right along with us. They are probably our greatest strength. It sounds kind of idealistic, but I guess it is. And it's true."

## TAKING A "FIRST LOOK"

A.C.T. has long been committed to the notion that playwrights do their best work in community with other artists, and that the development of vibrant writing for the stage depends on investing in and nurturing writers' talents. As part of this effort to develop new plays, adaptations, and translations, A.C.T. launched in September 2003 the successful "First Look" program with a series of workshops, semistaged readings, and fully staged productions, including several produced to acclaim at A.C.T.'s alternate performance space at Zeum Theater.

"We have shaped the First Look program to foster new work by leading local, national, and international playwrights," says Associate Artistic Director Johanna Pfaelzer. "The program is dedicated to meeting these artists' needs, giving them the tools they require to fully realize their talents, and to providing a venue where their plays can be received by a thoughtful audience in an engaging dialogue."

Following A.C.T.'s inaugural First Look production of Philip Kan Gotanda's *Yohen*, highlights of the program since then have included: workshops and staged readings of new plays by Victor Lodato, Cindy Lou Johnson, Jamie Pachino, Michael Springate, Itamar Moses, Edwin Sanchez, and Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, and a new

translation and adaptation (by Marco Barricelli and Beatrice Basso) of a Pirandello novella.

Only time will tell what seeds of inspiration these and future workshops may sow. *Hilda*, a remarkable play by French-Senegalese writer Marie Ndiaye, had its English-language premiere at Zeum in January 2005 as part of the First Look series. Directed by Perloff and coproduced by Laura Pels, *Hilda* generated broader interest while at A.C.T. and as a result is being produced in Washington, D.C., and New York this fall. Another graduate of the First Look program, Perloff's own *Luminescence Dating*, was presented at Zeum in May 2004 and received its first full production at New York's Ensemble Studio Theatre in April.

"Creating brand-new work is always an unpredictable proposition," says Perloff, "but it is also a deeply exhilarating, gratifying, and eye-opening one for all involved. It is critical for the next generation of artists to see us making a commitment to new work and to the unique writers of our time."

For information about upcoming First Look events, please visit [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org).

LEFT: PRODUCING DIRECTOR JAMES HAIRE WITH A.C.T.'S TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AND TRAINING, 1979. RIGHT: DIAN KOBAYASHI AND STEVEN ANTHONY JONES IN A.C.T.'S INAUGURAL "FIRST LOOK" PRODUCTION OF PHILIP KAN GOTANDA'S *YOHEN* AT ZEUM THEATER, SEPTEMBER 2003 (PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNÉ).



# ALUMNI Notebook

Graduates of the A.C.T. Conservatory grace stages and screens across the country. Here's what some of our illustrious alumni have been up to recently:

## MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM 2000-05

**Kira Blaskovich, Michael Chmiel, Ryan Farley, and Jed Orleman** (all '02) performed together in *Vicarious* for the New York International Fringe Festival at 13th Street Repertory Theatre. **Ka-Ling Cheung** performed in the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company production of *The Tempest* and in the national touring production of *The King and I*. **Kevin Crook** will be seen in the upcoming Will Smith movie *Pursuit of Happyness*, and in the fall production of *Missives* (with **Dawn-Elin Fraser** '98) at Theatre Rhinoceros in San Francisco. **Davis Duffield** performs this summer in *Stirring* at the Edinburgh Festival. **Julie Fitzpatrick** performed in *Out of Body and Out of Mind* for the New York International Fringe Festival at The Connelly Theater. **Jeff Galfer** performs in the Invisible City Theatre Company production of *Midnight* at Manhattan Theatre Source at Washington Square Park in New York City. **Patrick McNulty** directed *Manatee* for the New York International Fringe Festival. **Sarayu Rao** appears in an upcoming episode of Fox's new series "Bones" and performs as Varya in *The Cherry Orchard* at Yale Repertory Theatre in October. **Jomar Tagatac** appears this fall in the Best of Broadway production of *Holes* at the Orpheum Theatre in San Francisco. **Marilee Talkington** wrote and directed the production *Sugarville: a little death*, produced this summer at The Player's Loft Theatre in New York City. **Jud Williford** can be seen this summer in *Nicholas Nickleby* (*Parts I and II*) at the California Shakespeare Theater.

**David Valdez** assists with the production of (and can occasionally be seen on) the Comedy Central show "Mind of Mencia with Carlos Mencia"; Valdez is also directing a yet-to-be-titled documentary about a group of high school kids competing in the Academic Decathlon, produced by Eric Ladd of Ignite Creative and Richard Karn.

## 1995-99

**Andy Alabran** performed in the Shotgun Players' *Cyrano de Bergerac* in Berkeley this summer. **Elizabeth Banks** can be seen in several recently released films: *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, with Steve Carell and Catherine Keener; *Heights*, with Glenn Close; and *The Baxter*, directed by Michael Showalter. She also finished filming *Daltry Calhoun*, produced by Quentin Tarantino. Banks also performed the role of Cherie in *Bus Stop* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in August. **Cynthia Bruckman** has published a book of poems, *Endangered Species* (Wind River Press). **Leith Burke** was seen as Duke Orsino in *Twelfth Night* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz's Sinsheimer-Stanley Festival 2005. Following a





successful run performing in *Sides* at Performance Space 122 in New York, **Cindy Cheung** is now producing another *Sides* production at the Culture Project in New York; she also performed as Magdalena in a workshop musical adaptation of *The House of Bernarda Alba* at Lincoln Center Theater, and opposite Paul Giamatti in M. Night Shyamalan's upcoming movie *Lady in the Water*. **Omar Metwally** performed in the New York premiere of Richard Kalinoski's *Beast of the Moon*, opposite Louis Zorich. He will also be seen in Steven Spielberg's forthcoming film, *Munich*. **Anika Noni Rose** performed in the New York City Center Encores! production of *Purlie*, with Blair Underwood. **Dana Slamp**'s play *The Importance of Marrying Well* was produced at New York's Lucille Lortel Theatre as part of the New York International Fringe Festival. **Dennis Trainor** is a new teacher and director at the Peddie School, a boarding school for grades 9–12 in Hightstown, New Jersey. **T. Edward Webster** was seen in Joe Penhall's *Blue/Orange* at the Aurora Theatre Company in Berkeley and in *Eurydice* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. **Eric Siegel** was seen in *Engaged* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz and appears in *The Untitled Onion Movie*.

## 1990-94

**J. Todd Adams** was seen in *Engaged* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. **Hal Brooks** directed *Thom Pain* (based on *nothing*), a new solo play by Will Eno, at the DR2 Theater in New York City. **Brad DePlanche** performed as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival. **Jamison Jones** produced and performs in the films *Getting Lucky* and *West of Brooklyn*. **Amy Lowenthal** is a graduate assistant in the National Agriculture Law Center at the University of Arkansas School of Law. **Julie Oda** performed as Moth in *Love's Labor's Lost* and Sharon in *Gibraltar* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. **Scott**

## AND THE WINNER IS...

Over the past year, several A.C.T. alumni have been prominently recognized for their outstanding contributions to the acting profession. For her performance in *Being Julia*, for example, **Annette Bening** M.F.A. '82 received a Golden Globe Award for best performance by an actress in a motion picture, as well as an Oscar nomination. The M.F.A. Program class of 1997 also produced two Tony Award nominees: **Omar Metwally** '97 (also an STC graduate), nominated for best featured actor in a play for his performance in *Sixteen Wounded*, and **Anika Noni Rose** '97, who won the Tony for best featured actress in a musical for her performance in *Caroline, or Change*. Summer Training Congress alum **Teri Hatcher** has also been in the news, celebrating the popularity of the hit ABC series "Desperate Housewives."

Hatcher earned an Emmy nomination for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series and took home a Golden Globe for best performance by an actress in a musical or comedy television.

Congratulations to all our alumni for their continuing dedication to professional excellence.



LEFT: OMAR METWALLY AND LENA GEORGAS IN *BEAST ON THE MOON* ON BROADWAY (PHOTO BY CAROLL ROSEGG). ABOVE: ANIKA NONI ROSE ACCEPTING HER TONY AWARD (PHOTO © ZACK SECKLER/CORBIS). BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: ANNETTE BENING AND TERI HATCHER ACCEPTING THEIR GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS (PHOTOS © MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS/CORBIS).





**Alan Smith** guest-starred on *Pop Life* and appeared in the film *Bewitched*. **Lisa Steindler** is in her sixth season as artistic director of Encore Theatre Company and continues to serve as A.C.T.'s Artreach Program coordinator.

## 1980-89

**Annette Bening** can be seen in upcoming films as the title character of *Mrs. Harris*, directed by Phyllis Nagy, and in *Running with Scissors*, directed by Ryan Murphy. **Dan Butler** can be seen in the short film *Duck, Duck, Goose!* **Nancy Carlin** can be seen in *Night of Henna*, a Pakistani-American film directed by Hassan Zee. **Nike Doukas** has been seen on "Blind Justice" and "Desperate Housewives" (both on ABC). **Robin Goodrin Nordli** performed as Queen Margaret in *Richard III* and Olivia in *Twelfth Night* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. **Robynn Rodriguez** performed as the Duchess of York in *Richard III* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. **Douglas Sills** guest starred on "The Closer" (TNT) and appears in the film *Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo*. **Art Manke** is an adjunct faculty artist in the drama department at the North Carolina School of the Arts. He directed the American premiere of Noël Coward's final play, *Star Quality*, at the Pasadena Playhouse, and restaged his acclaimed production of *The Winter's Tale* for the Old Globe Theatre's M.F.A. Program. **Ken Sonkin**

*Comedy* opens at Seattle Repertory Theatre in December. **Lauren Klein** performed in *The Peoples Temple* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and has a recurring role (Judge Carla Solomon) on "Law & Order" (NBC).

## YOUNG CONSERVATORY

**Winona Ryder** stars in the feature film *Mary Warner* and recently finished shooting *A Scanner Darkly*. **Nicolas Cage** appears in the films *National Treasure*, *The Weather Man*, and *Ghost Rider*. **Milo Ventimiglia** is featured in the films *Dirty Deeds* and *Stay Alive* and will appear in the new television series "The Bedford Diaries." **Jaime Rosenstein** performed in *The Audience* at the Connelly Theater in New York. **Tom Mison** appears in the Hallmark Entertainment film *Jules Verne's The Mysterious Island*. **Lauren Rosi** was an ensemble member in Woodminster Summer Musicals' *Hello, Dolly!* and *Oklahoma*.

## SUMMER TRAINING CONGRESS AND STUDIO A.C.T.

In 2006, Hyperion will publish Teri Hatcher's ("Desperate Housewives") memoir *Burnt Toast*. **Camryn Manheim** appears in the feature films *Dark Water*, *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*, and *An Unfinished Life*.



was seen in *American Buffalo* at Sonoma County Repertory Theater, where he also directed *Incorruptible* in March. **Benjamin Bratt** plays Lt. Colonel Mucci in *The Great Raid*, directed by John Dahl, and can be seen with Dennis Hopper in the new NBC series "E-Ring." **Amy Freed**'s new play *Safe in Hell* opens at Yale Repertory Theatre in November, directed by Mark Wing-Davey, and her *Restoration*

# Notebook

We'd love to know what our alumni are up to. Please send information to Sara Danielsen, [sdanielsen@act-sf.org](mailto:sdanielsen@act-sf.org).

LEFT: BENJAMIN BRATT AND DENNIS HOPPER IN NBC'S "E-RING." RIGHT: (TOP) CLAYTON B. HODGES '05 (CENTER) WITH A.C.T. ASSOCIATE ARTISTS MARCO BARRICELLI AND RENÉ AUGÉSEN IN *THE REAL THING*, AT THE GEARY THEATER OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2004 (PHOTO BY DAVID M. ALLEN); (BOTTOM) KEVIN CROOK '05 AND STEVEN M. STROBEL '05 IN *LILIES* (PHOTO BY DAVID WILSON).



## READY FOR THE GEARY

The stage of the Geary Theater is like no other. It evokes a feeling of vastness and intimacy at the same time, for actors as well as audience members. With its grand size and glittering, gilded proscenium the space is spectacularly theatrical, but it can also draw the audience in, making one feel as if one were deep within the scene, hearing every whisper. A stage like the Geary's elicits a certain kind of reverence and is a daunting challenge for actors who are forever changed after treading its boards for the first time.

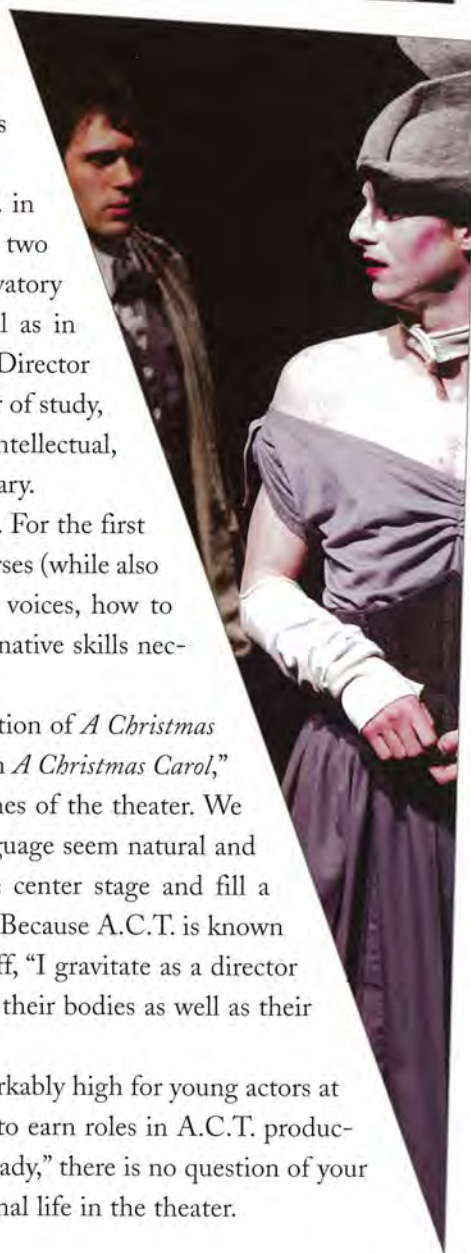
The spatial and acoustical demands of the theater space itself inform every decision that goes into producing at A.C.T., from the selection of the play to the size and shape of a prop or the color of a costume. The most important factor for successful production in the Geary, however, is the ability of the performer to succeed on that stage: i.e., whether they are what A.C.T. calls "Geary ready."

The idea of "Geary readiness" became a focal point of discussion at A.C.T. in 1998, when the conservatory expanded its Master of Fine Arts Program from two to three years. The new third year is spent performing publicly in conservatory productions at Zeum Theater (A.C.T.'s alternative performing space), as well as in professional A.C.T. productions mounted at the Geary Theater. Conservatory Director Melissa Smith and Artistic Director Carey Perloff agreed that by their third year of study, M.F.A. Program students should be expected to possess the physical, vocal, intellectual, imaginative, and professional skills to perform successfully at the 1,000-seat Geary.

Mastering these skills requires tireless practice and single-minded dedication. For the first two and half years of their training at A.C.T., M.F.A. Program students take courses (while also participating in studio productions) designed to teach them how to use their voices, how to move, stand, and breathe correctly, and how to develop the technical and imaginative skills necessary to own the Geary stage.

The culmination of this process is performance in the annual A.C.T. production of *A Christmas Carol* in December of their third year. "By the time our students take the stage in *A Christmas Carol*," says Perloff, "we expect them to be able to project beautifully into the far reaches of the theater. We expect them to have richly developed language skills that make heightened language seem natural and understandable in a large house, and to have the physical confidence to take center stage and fill a moment fully in such a way that an impulse can 'read' in the back of the house." Because A.C.T. is known for choosing plays with poetic language and heightened theatricality, says Perloff, "I gravitate as a director towards actors who are not afraid to make bold, theatrical choices and who use their bodies as well as their minds to express an idea or an emotion."

Using the Geary Theater as the benchmark for success sets the standard remarkably high for young actors at the beginning of their careers—as well as for seasoned professionals who hope to earn roles in A.C.T. productions. But, for A.C.T., there is no other way. As a performer, if you are "Geary ready," there is no question of your ability to fill any venue or rise to any challenge that may lie ahead in a professional life in the theater.





# THE A.C.T. 2005-06 SEASON

## THE OVERCOAT

Created by Morris Panych and Wendy Gorling  
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 Riegert  
JAN 5-FEB 5

## GEM OF THE OCEAN

by August Wilson | Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson  
Featuring Phylicia Rashad  
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

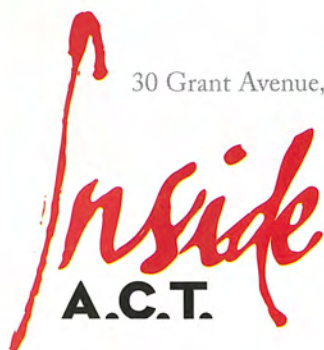
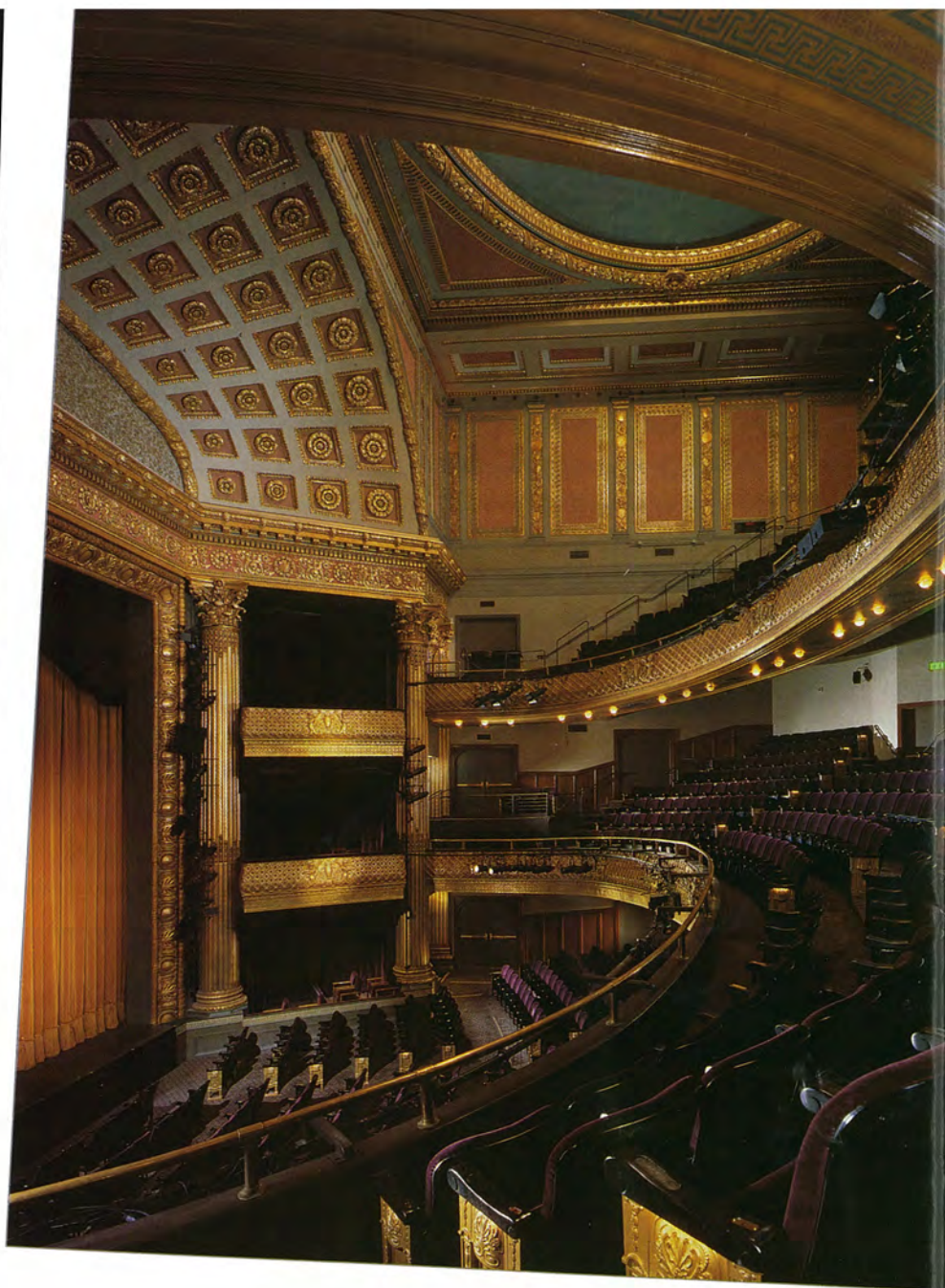
## HAPPY END

by Bertolt Brecht / Music by Kurt Weill  
Book and Lyrics adapted by Michael Feingold  
Directed by Carey Perloff  
JUN 8-JUL 9

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by Charles Dickens  
Adapted by Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh  
Music by Karl Lundeberg  
Choreography by Val Caniparoli  
Directed by Carey Perloff  
NOV 26-DEC 24

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# Sexual Perversity in Chicago

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David Mamet

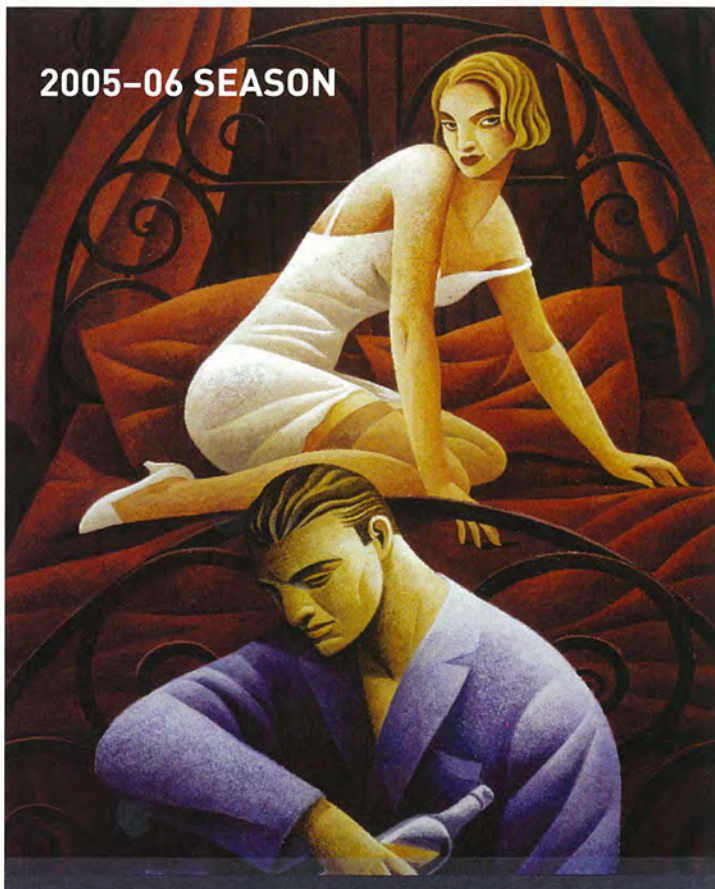
Directed by  
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by Nikolai Gogol  
Music by Dmitri Shostakovich  
AUG 25–SEP 25

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## **Gem of the Ocean**

by August Wilson  
Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson  
Featuring Phylicia Rashad  
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**

by Bertolt Brecht  
Music by Kurt Weill  
Book and Lyrics adapted  
by Michael Feingold  
Directed by Carey Perloff  
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## **A Christmas Carol**

by Charles Dickens  
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# Who's Who, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

premiere of John Belluso's *The Rules of Charity*. Marin has performed at Aurora Theatre Company, The Actors' Gang, Chicago Dramatists Workshop, the Magic Theatre, Word for Word, Thick Description, CentralWorks, Playground, and Open Fist. His next appearance will be with the SF Playhouse in their upcoming production of Craig Lucas's *Prelude to a Kiss*.



## PHOEBE MOYER\*

(Understudy) makes her first appearance with A.C.T. Winner of five San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics'

Circle Awards and five Dean Goodman Choice Awards, she has performed throughout the Bay Area for San Jose Repertory Theatre, Pacific Alliance Stage Company, TheatreWorks, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Shakespeare Company, AmeRican CitiZeNs' TheatRE, Theater Artists of Marin, Calaveras Repertory Theatre, TheatreFirst, Center REpertory Company, Sierra Repertory Theatre, Actors Theater of Sonoma County, PCPA Theaterfest, Playhouse West Repertory Theater, Willows Theatre Company, Woodminster Summer Musicals, and Woman's Will, among others. Favorite roles include Maria Callas in *Master Class* (Dean Goodman Choice Award and SFBATCC nomination), Daisy Werthen in *Driving Miss Daisy* (SFBATCC Award for principal performance), and Phoebe Rice in *The Entertainer* (SFBATCC Award for principal performance). Moyer has been a theater/dance instructor at the high school and college levels, including two summers with the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, and is listed in *Who's Who among America's Teachers*®. She is also a voice-over artist and acting coach.

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



## CARRIE PAFF\*

(Understudy) was last seen in the world premiere of *The Haunting of Winchester* at San Jose Repertory Theatre. Recent Bay

Area credits include *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and *Becoming Memories* at Center REpertory Company, the world premiere of Charles Grodin's *The Right Kind of People* at the Magic Theatre, and Aurora Theatre Company's critically acclaimed production of *Betrayal*. She has also performed with The Shee Theatre Company, Woman's Will, Word for Word, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. She holds a master's degree in educational theater from New York University and is the cofounder of StageWrite, Building Literacy through Theatre.

**ISRAEL HICKS** (Director) directed *Levee James* for A.C.T.'s 2003–04 season. Hicks has been an associate artist for the past 15 seasons at the Denver Center Theatre Company (DCTC), where he last directed *A Streetcar Named Desire* and August Wilson's *King Hedley II*. Directing credits at DCTC also include the world premieres of *Pork Pie: A Mythic Jazz Fable*, *Waiting to Be Invited*, *Kingdom*, *Coming of the Hurricane*, and *Evil Little Thoughts*, as well as *Jitney*, *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Seven Guitars*, *Two Trains Running*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Home*. In addition, he has directed at regional theaters throughout the country, including the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. He has directed films for the National Film Board of Canada, Universal Studios, NBC, and CBS. Hicks is currently the artistic director and chairman of

the Theater Arts Program at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts.

**RALPH FUNICELLO** (Scenic Designer) has been associated with A.C.T. as a set designer since 1972, including serving as the head of design 1989–90; he most recently designed the sets of *The Voyage Inheritance*, *A Mother*, *The Three Sisters*, *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, and *Machinal*. He has designed the scenery for more than 250 theater productions throughout the United States and Canada. An artistic associate at The Old Globe, he has also worked extensively with the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. His work has been seen on and off Broadway, at Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, American Festival Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Denver Center Theatre Company, the Guthrie Theater, Arizona Theatre Company, the Huntington Theatre Company, the Stratford Festival in Ontario, and New York City Opera. His designs have been nominated for a Tony Award, a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and the Lucille Lortel Award and have been recognized by Bay Area and Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle awards and *Drama-Logue* magazine. Funicello is the Powell Chair in Set Design at San Diego State University.

**SANDRA WOODALL** (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for A.C.T. (*A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *A Doll's House*, *The Dazzle*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Light Up the Sky*, and *Saint Joan*, among others), San Francisco Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Bolshoi Ballet, National Ballet of Norway, Stuttgart Ballet, the Kronos Quartet, Singapore Ballet Theatre, and the Magic Theatre. In



## Who's Who

2004, she designed sets and costumes for Val Caniparoli's *A Cinderella Story* at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and for Yuri Possokhov's *Reflections* at San Francisco Ballet. As a Fulbright Scholar in Taiwan in 1999–2000, she taught at the National Institute of Arts in Taipei. Other design credits include the Eureka Theatre Company's original production of *Angels in America* and *The Gates* for Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. Her work has been shown in many gallery exhibitions, and she is the recipient of several Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards for costume design.

**RUSSELL H. CHAMPA** (*Lighting Designer*) designed *The Voyage Inheritance* and *Waiting for Godot* at A.C.T. Recent designs also include *Raw Boys* at the Wilma Theater in Philadelphia, *Eurydice* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and *The Right Kind of People* at the Magic Theatre. On Broadway, he designed *Julia Sweeney's God Said "Ha!"* at the Lyceum Theatre. Other New York theaters for which Champa has designed include Manhattan Theatre Club, Classic Stage Company, New York Stage & Film, the Promenade Theatre, the Union Square Theatre, and La MaMa ETC. Regionally, he has designed for Trinity Repertory Company, McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, ACT Theatre/Seattle, California Shakespeare Theater, The Actors' Gang, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, The Shakespeare Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

**FITZ PATTON** (*Sound Designer*) has designed and scored plays and dance in New York for Lincoln Center Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, Atlantic Theater Company, The Juilliard School, Clubbed Thumb, The Flea Theater, and Naked Angels and regionally for New York Stage and Film, the Dallas

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# Who's Who

Theater Center, Philadelphia Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theater, Baltimore's Centerstage, Yale Repertory Theatre, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati (ETC), Long Wharf Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theater, American Players Theatre, and Coconut Grove Playhouse. Recent scores include: *Safe Harbor for Elizabeth Bishop*; Warren Leight's *James and Annie*; James Lapine's *Fran's Bed*; Naomi Wallace's *Things of Dry Hours*; *Candida*; *Matt and Ben*; and *I Am My Own Wife*. Upcoming scores include *Cinderella* for ETC and *A Soldier's Play* for Second Stage. In the spring he will score H. T. Chen's new dance piece with a live percussion orchestra.

**MICHAEL PALLER** (*Dramaturg*) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club and has since been a dramaturg or literary manager at Phoenix Theatre Ensemble (Cleveland), George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's *Small Craft Warnings* at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and has written theater and book reviews for the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *Newsday*, and *Mirabella* magazine. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase. He has degrees in American studies and journalism from Syracuse University and dramaturgy from Columbia University.

**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 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.

**KIMBERLY MARK WEBB\*** (*Stage Manager*) is in his 12th season at A.C.T., where he worked most recently on *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*, *The Voysey Inheritance*, *The Gamester*, *The Real Thing*, *A Mother*, and *A Doll's House*. During 19 years with Berkeley Repertory Theatre he stage-managed more than 70 productions. Other credits include *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* in San Francisco, *The Woman Warrior* for Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, *Mary Stuart* and *The Lady from the Sea* at Boston's Huntington Theatre Company, *Hecuba* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and *The Philanderer* at Aurora Theatre Company. Webb served as production stage manager at Theatre Three in Dallas for six years.

**ELISA GUTHERTZ\*** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) most recently worked at A.C.T. last season on *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include *Well*, *The Good Body*, *Levee James*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Misanthrope*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Tartuffe*, *Mary Stuart*, *The Rose Tattoo*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She has also stage-managed *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Rhinoceros*, *Big Love*, *Civil Sex*, *Collected Stories*, and *Cloud Tectonics* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include Eve Ensler's *The Good Body* at the Booth Theater on Broadway, *Big Love* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and *The Vagina Monologues* at the Alcazar Theatre.

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Valery Gergiev, conductor

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ORANGE COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



# A.C.T. PROFILES



**CAREY PERLOFF** (*Artistic Director*), who is celebrating her 13th season as artistic director of A.C.T., most recently directed A.C.T.'s acclaimed productions of 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, will travel to Washington D.C.'s Studio Theater this October and to New York's 59 E 59th Street Theater in November. Perloff is currently collaborating with dramaturg Paul Walsh on a new adaptation and production of *A Christmas Carol* to premiere at the Geary Theater in December 2005. 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 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 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.



# STARRY NIGHT 2005

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## RICHARD McCALL'S BEQUEST CELEBRATES FAITH IN THEATER

If, as Richard McCall says, "Theater is the church of our age," he and his partner, Bruce Carlton, are among the most devout members of the congregation.



RICHARD McCALL



BRUCE CARLTON

Attending an average of 75 plays a year, Richard and Bruce go wherever good theater can be found: San Francisco, New York City, Ashland, the East Bay, and smaller venues near their new country home in southeast Sebastopol.

"We hope to turn our three-car garage into a theater for play readings and recitals," Richard says cheerfully. It's likely to happen. They've already built a 1,200-square-foot art studio for Richard's vivid acrylic paintings on their three-acre property.

Richard rests his theater-as-church thesis on three core beliefs: "It's open to everyone, its messages are universal, and it's alive," he says. He has put his estate where his beliefs are in a bequest that will leave about one-fourth of it to A.C.T. and the rest to three other Bay Area arts groups.

Richard is a member of A.C.T.'s planned giving committee, a volunteer group that encourages membership in the Prospero Society, which honors those who have included A.C.T. in their estate plans.

With a warm, expansive personality, Richard says he found escape from a hard childhood in the arts, particularly in theater. Now that he's retired from a 31-year career as an American Airlines ticket agent—"I loved working with the public," he said—he has more time for theater and acrylic painting, which he began studying in earnest five years ago.

Bruce, a retired librarian from Contra Costa College, is planning to return to the stage. He met Richard more than 30 years ago, while they were both singing in a San Francisco Lamplighter production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. Bruce understands the funding challenges the theater faces and is working on a charitable remainder trust that will also benefit A.C.T.

Bruce also values the rewards of good theater. "I feel our minds are being stretched and our horizons broadened. It's also a thrill to be dazzled by the high production values of A.C.T."

Richard's commitment to the Prospero Society is a mix of love of theater and a sense of social obligation. "A bequest is one way to make A.C.T. strong for future generations," he said. "It's societal payback.

Those who created A.C.T. gave us a gift. Now it's our turn."

He considers A.C.T.'s Geary Theater one of the most beautiful he's been in and extols the power of experiencing live performance with others. "Your

emotions are intensified. There's nothing like it." And, he adds, "People have their toys; we have theater tickets."

A.C.T. is honored to have Richard McCall and Bruce Carlton as members of its Prospero Society. For more information about the Prospero Society, please call the Development Office at 415.439.2470.

**"A BEQUEST IS ONE WAY TO  
MAKE A.C.T. STRONG FOR  
FUTURE GENERATIONS, IT'S  
SOCIETAL PAYBACK. THOSE WHO  
CREATED A.C.T. GAVE US A GIFT.  
NOW IT'S OUR TURN."**

—Richard McCall



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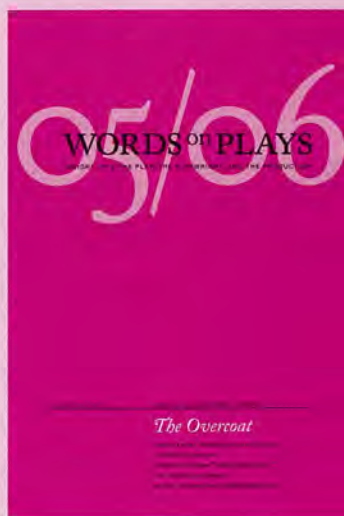
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In June 2004, Koret Foundation Funds awarded A.C.T. a multi-year grant for general operating support, demonstrating exceptional leadership and ensuring that A.C.T. continues to offer theater of outstanding artistic quality to the San Francisco Bay Area. For the 2005-06 season, the foundation is sponsoring A.C.T.'s 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary production of Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. A.C.T. is pleased to recognize Koret Foundation Funds for their remarkable generosity and vision in supporting our artistic community.

Since its inception in 1979, Koret Foundation Funds has awarded more than \$300 million in grants focused on a range of areas, including education reform and youth development, community and cultural development, and policy analysis that responds to socioeconomic challenges. In Israel, funding has primarily focused on economic expansion and higher education. In addition, Koret has launched a series of initiatives that are revitalizing and strengthening the Bay Area's educational, policymaking, and cultural institutions, as well as the economy in Israel. Over its first quarter-century, Koret's funding philosophy has evolved from traditional grant making to innovative, entrepreneurial approaches to fundamental contemporary issues.

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# A.C.T.

## CONSERVATORY PERFORMANCES

MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM PRESENTS

### *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

by Bertolt Brecht  
Directed by Mark Jackson

SEP 29–OCT 15

### *Hair*

Book and Lyrics by  
Gerome Ragni and James Rado  
Music by Galt MacDermot  
Directed by Craig Slight  
in Fred's Columbia Room, Geary Theater

JAN 27–29

### *Spring Performance (TBA)*

MAR 2–18

YOUNG CONSERVATORY PRESENTS

WORLD PREMIERE

### *Mullen's Alley*

by Timothy Mason  
Directed by Craig Slight

AUG 19–28

### *The Butter and Egg Man*

by George S. Kaufman  
Directed by W. D. Keith

NOV 11–20

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.



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## GALLERY AT THE GEARY



LAPIDARIA,  
BY DEBORAH BARLOW

### DEBORAH BARLOW: RECENT PAINTINGS

Want to expose yourself to more fine art, but don't make it to art galleries as often as you'd like? 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.

Currently on view (through November 13) are mixed-media paintings by Boston artist Deborah Barlow, whose work over the last 25 years has displayed her ongoing fascination with earthly terrains and vistas. Her work is inspired by and closely aligned with natural forms—from the expanse of an open landscape to the miniaturist intricacies of a single cell—but her approach is nonrepresentational. She creates a complex dimensionality through layers that are built up with a variety of materials such as acrylic, oil, wax, minerals, metal foil, rice paper, ink, pastels, and powdered pigments. Eventually images emerge that float in the zone between what can be seen and what cannot, between the explicit and the implicit.

Raised in Utah and the Bay Area, Barlow graduated from UC Santa Cruz and then headed east, yet she returns frequently to the deserts of her childhood. She has also developed a deep connection with other evocative landscapes such as the Celtic coastline of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, the Andes, and the Himalayas.

This is Barlow's third show at Gallery at the Geary and features her latest works on canvas and panel. Barlow shows her work regularly in California, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. In 2003 she represented the United States in the International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Florence, Italy. She was artist-in-residence at Anam Cara in County Cork, Ireland, and her work has been seen in exhibitions in Ireland and Belgium. Upcoming shows are planned in Massachusetts and New York in 2006.

Each Gallery at the Geary artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For more information about Deborah Barlow, please visit [www.deborahbarlow.com](http://www.deborahbarlow.com) or contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 / [krscreativeoptns@aol.com](mailto:krscreativeoptns@aol.com) / [www.galleryatthegeary.com](http://www.galleryatthegeary.com).

Caroline Sharman '06 and G. D. Kimble '06 in the M.F.A. Program production of *Richard III* (photo by Kevin Barne).



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A.C.T. YOUNG CONSERVATORY

PRESENTS

## THE BUTTER AND EGG MAN

*By George S. Kaufman*

*Directed by W. D. Keith*

November 11–20, 2005

Zeum Theater

A hayseed comes to New York, invests in show business, and beats the smart Broadway boys at their own game. The only solo playwriting effort by one of the truly great comic writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, this rollicking 1925 comedy hit bring zaniness to fever pitch.

## A.C.T. YOUNG CONSERVATORY GOES INTERNATIONAL



THE COMBINED A.C.T. AND BATH COMPANY ATTEND *THE OVERCOAT* AT A.C.T.

In July 2003, the A.C.T. Young Conservatory and England's Theatre Royal Bath entered into a collaboration to share new-play commissions and exchange students. The first co-commission was *War Daddy*, by Atlanta playwright Jim Grimsley. Theatre Royal Bath spent two weeks in residence in San Francisco (the young Bath actors stayed with families of Young Conservatory students) working on the play and studying in the Young Conservatory. They then returned to Bath and produced the new play, which A.C.T. then produced in November 2003. In 2004, the process was repeated in reverse, as Bath and A.C.T. co-commissioned *Broken Hallelujah*, a new play by British playwright Sharman Macdonald. In August 2004 A.C.T. students traveled to Bath for two weeks, working on the play

and studying in the TRB conservatory. *Broken Hallelujah* premiered in Bath in April 2005 and in San Francisco in June 2005.

The second cycle of the collaboration began this past summer, when ten young actors and their director, Lee Lyford, were in residence at A.C.T., taking classes in the Young Conservatory and working on the new play *Nightingales*, co-commissioned from American playwright and longtime A.C.T. favorite Constance Congdon (*A Mother*, *Moontel Six*, *The Automata Pietà*), which both companies will produce in 2006.



# CHILDREN CENTER STAGE

A.C.T. has always valued its commitment to young theater artists—both as students in the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, which is nationally and internationally recognized as one of the leading theater training programs for children, and as up-and-coming professional performers—and every season several children take their very first steps onto the Geary stage. The cast in this production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* features six young actors, four boys and two girls, ages 8 (Tobiah) to 12 (Anya), who round out Mae and Gooper's rambunctious family of "no-neck monsters" in rotating performances (each child performs four times a week). Nineteen young actors (ten girls and nine boys) have also been cast in next month's premiere production of A.C.T.'s brand-new *A Christmas Carol* (November 26–December 24).

The challenges of casting young actors in mainstage productions begin with the search for children, and parents, willing and able to sustain the rigors of a professional performance schedule (with eight shows per week and a preceding month of daily after-school and weekend rehearsals), as well as the physical and vocal skills, and the confidence and maturity, necessary to hold their own onstage among more seasoned professionals. The audition process presents further challenges, explains A.C.T. Casting Associate Greg Hubbard. "It's hard enough to judge an experienced adult actor's capabilities based

on a ten-minute audition. With children, most with little audition experience, it can be even more complicated to determine which ones have the acting skills and focus necessary when so many of them are overcome with audition nerves and anxiety." Tennessee Williams's stage descriptions of the children in *Cat* ("all through dinner... exchanging pokes an' pinches an' kicks an' signs an' signals") only complicates the matter by requiring the young actors in the production to, as Hubbard says, "act like brats and misbehave—but be professional all the while."

A.C.T. is extremely fortunate to benefit in this endeavor from its Young Conservatory (YC), which, under the leadership of Director Craig Slight, instructs hundreds of talented young performers each year in the various aspects of live performance, readying them for the opportunity to step into the spotlight. Slight explains that the mission of the YC is not to turn a child into a star, but rather to provide a fertile creative environment in which a young actor can explore his or her artistic life, in the classroom and onstage. Each year the YC presents a season of four fully staged productions at Zeum Theater, A.C.T.'s alternative performance space. In addition, young actors from the YC occasionally make their way to the stage of the Geary Theater, where they perform together with other fine young Bay Area actors and some of the top adult professional actors in the industry.

Every time a script calls for children, the A.C.T. casting department consults with Slight to help identify YC students to audition for them and the director. In recent seasons, YC students have been featured in A.C.T. productions of *Waiting for Godot*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *A Doll's House*. Two of the young performers in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* are already Geary Theater veterans: Anya Richkind played Little Fan in last year's *Carol* (as well as playing Dixie in the M.F.A. Program production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 2003), and Austin Greene was last year's Tiny Tim in *Carol*, as well as one of the children in *A Doll's House* the previous season. "Having children who are Geary veterans pays off in their YC classes," says Slight. "It's interesting for me to watch as they have that professional experience and then come back to the studio. There's always a new step forward, which is fun for them, and inspiring for other students."

"Actors of all ages dream of performing in a theater as magnificent as the Geary, and no matter your age it's a privilege to walk out on that stage," says Slight. "For young actors, the opportunity can be particularly empowering, and there are residual benefits that go far beyond their acting experience. It's rare for a child to be taken this seriously, to be shown the respect of their fellow actors and audience as part of a distinguished acting company. They can pass along what they learn to their peers in the YC, and, most importantly, whether or not they become professional actors, the intensity of moving a theater full of people with their presence onstage is life-changing."



A.C.T. ASSOCIATE ARTIST RENÉ AUGESSEN WITH AUSTIN GREENE AND TOBI JANE MOORE IN THE 2004 PRODUCTION OF HENRIK IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE*. PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN.



# A.C.T. STAFF

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Heather Kitchen  
*Executive Director*

Melissa Smith  
*Conservatory Director*

James Haire  
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Jeffrey P. Malloy  
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Michael Paller, *Dramaturg*  
Greg Hubbard, *Casting Associate*  
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Gregory Wallace

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

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Karl Lundeberg

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Jared Hirsch, *Interim Associate Production Manager*  
Miesha Brodsky, *Assistant Production Manager*  
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Christine Dougherty, *Costumes*  
Callie Floor, *Costumes*  
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Sandra Woodall, *Costumes*  
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Russell Champa, *Lighting*  
Jane Cox, *Lighting*  
Alexander V. Nichols, *Lighting*  
Nancy Schertler, *Lighting*  
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Garth Hemphill, *Sound*  
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Amanda Jagla, *First Hand*  
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Jane Henderson-Shea, *Properties Head*  
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Mark Pugh, *Stagehand*  
Karl Pribram, *Stage Door*

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Colleen Rosby, *Door Person*  
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Len Lucas, *Assistant Facilities Manager/30 Grant*  
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Sara Daniels, *Director of Student Affairs*  
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Deborah Sussell, *Speech, Verbal Action*  
Gregory Wallace, *Acting*

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*Resident Playwrights*

## Accompanists

John Conway  
Robert Rutt



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## 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. 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.

## Beeipers!

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.



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.

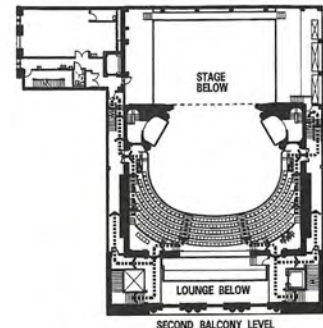
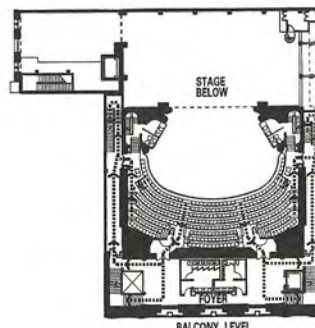
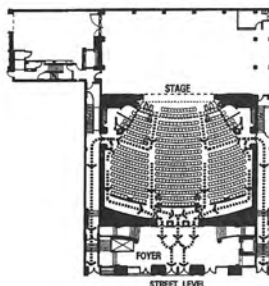


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A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

# GEARY THEATER EXITS





  
**All New!**

**Nov 26–Dec 24**

Tickets from \$18



# A Christmas Carol

by **Charles Dickens**  
new adaptation by  
**Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh**

music by **Karl Lundeberg**  
choreography by **Val Caniparoli**  
directed by **Carey Perloff**

Illustration by Jason DeAntonia

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