by
DAVID HARROWER

Directed by
LORETTA GRECO

BLACKBIRD
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American Conservatory Theater
matures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Heather Kitchen, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent its relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.’s creative work.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. During the past four decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people; today, A.C.T.’s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 250,000 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 Theater 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 re-opening of the Geary Theater (now the American Conservatory 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 Zeller 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 interactions.

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, Demet Washington, and Elizabeth Banks 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.

American Conservatory Theater
405 Geary Street, Suite 1100, San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 861-8666
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A.C.T. Box Office
415.792.2375
A.C.T. Website
www.aact.org

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Every once in a while that rare thing happens in encountering a brand- new play: you carefully begin reading the first few lines, and then suddenly find yourself on the last page, breathless and overwhelmed, having been completely swept away by the power of the writing. Such was the case when I first read Blackbird. I knew David Harrower’s work from an earlier play of his, Kite’s in Her, and from the enthused reports of fellow Glaswegian Giles Havergal but, nothing prepared me for the eloquence and startling reversals I discovered as I began reading this script. The writing has the mysterious silences of Pinter, the sexual menace of Mamet, and the lyrical echo of Beckett. Yet Harrower’s world is also completely sui generis. In the wake of our landmark world premiere production of Philip Kan Gotanda’s After the War, it is a great honor and pleasure to introduce you to another major new work. We have assembled a remarkable team of artists as our collaborators on this West Coast premiere of Blackbird, director Loretta Greco, whom we welcome back to A.C.T. after her stunning work on last season’s Blues for Anaconda, and with D. Continenza, now making her A.C.T. debut; and the visionary design team of Robert Brill, Russell Champa, Jake Rodriquez, and David Draper. We hope you will have an unforgettable experience as you encounter this major new writing talent.

And of course we hope very much that you have received the announcement of our spectacular 2007-08 season. I personally am thrilled about this upcoming season, because I finally have a chance to direct two of my absolutely favorite plays in the canon: Gogo’s The Government Inspector and Ford’s’Tis Pity She’s a Whore. With each passing year at A.C.T., I try to commit more and more deeply to those projects that are uniquely true to the A.C.T. experience: multidisciplinary work with vigorous language, superb acting and world-class production values, work from many cultures that challenges our assumptions, open our minds, and asserts the mad power of live theater in an age of passive viewing and media saturation. I recently returned from a week of intensive theater-going at the Golden Mask Festival in Moscow, and what impressed me most was how much theater matters to the Russian audience. All performances were sold out, and each performance was followed by a standing ovation, a common sight at theater in Moscow. I return to our mainstage with the exhilarating Anthony Fusco (whose many roles at A.C.T. include Telemachus in Medea, Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and the inimitable Jack Willis), whose Big Daddy, Judge Brack, Sammy Wurflitzer, and Ben Hubbard are just the beginning of the cast of characters he is ready to share with A.C.T. The experience of watching transformative actors travel through a season in highly diverse repertoire is something A.C.T. embraces very strongly and we hope it is one of the things that keeps you connected to us over the years.

We are delighted that many of you have found your way over to A.C.T.’s “other space,” Zeum Theater at Yerba Buena Gardens, to see some of the exciting work our Young Conservatory and Master of Fine Arts Program students have been producing there recently, as well as to explore our new works-in-progress. Next season at Zeum we invite you to join us for the world premiere of Josef Iveron’s electrifying Brainpool, as well as the next showing of our innovative new movement-theater piece, The Tousa Project, featuring a remarkable collaboration between SF Ballet dancers and major actors in a piece exploring Francisco’s legendary Tousa Café.

There is always something new happening at A.C.T., and we hope in the months to come you will deepen your involvement with us and find out how very much lies behind the gorgeous Art Deco façade of the American Conservatory Theater.

Welcome to Blackbird, and thank you for your support.

Yours,

Casey Perloff
Artistic Director

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CONTINUED

Young Company member, Jud Williford (who received his M.F.A. from A.C.T. in 2001 and has already graced our stage with memorable performances in A Christmas Carol, The Roths, The Time of Your Life, and Happy End), in addition to the invaluable Anthony Fusco (whose many roles at A.C.T. include Telemachus in Medea, Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and the inimitable Jack Willis), whose Big Daddy, Judge Brack, Sammy Wurflitzer, and Ben Hubbard are just the beginning of the cast of characters he is ready to share with A.C.T. The experience of watching transformative actors travel through a season in highly diverse repertoire is something A.C.T. embraces very strongly and we hope it is one of the things that keeps you connected to us over the years.

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KORET VISITING ARTIST SERIES

Koret Visiting Artist Series

In a generous new three-year partnership with A.C.T., Koret is now supporting our popular public and student discussions. As part of our commitment to promoting organizations that contribute to the Bay Area’s diverse cultural landscape, Koret is sponsoring the following exciting new series of talks with acclaimed theater artists, as well as A.C.T.’s regularly scheduled Audience Exchanges and Prologues.

NEW VOICES, NEW WORKS

Saturday, May 5, 7:30 p.m.
prior to the matinee performance of Blackbird

Groundbreaking playwrights discuss the process of developing new plays for the theater, from inspiration to workshop to previewing.

TALKING TO PHILIP KAN GOTAIDA (After the War, The White, Yonder Shaw You Die! LILAH, ICHIRO (Magic Few, A Year of the Camelot, Moonlight), ST THERESA’S REQUIEM, 800 HASS SMOOTH THE SKIRL, Our Lady of Razz-a Street, In Arsubine Work still the Ring) hosted by A.C.T. Associate Director JENNIFER PFEIFER

KORET PROLOGUE

Tuesday, May 8, 6:30 p.m.
Get inside the artistic process—come early for a literature performance discussion with the director and artist staff.

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

May 6, 7:30 p.m. and May 20, 2:30 p.m.
After the show, stick around for a site-specific chat with artists and members of the artistic team.

For more information, visit santanperson.sf.org

6 American Conservatory Theater

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Every once in a while that rare thing happens in encountering a brand-new play: you carefully begin reading the first few lines, and then suddenly find yourself on the last page, breathless and overwhelmed, having been completely swept away by the power of the writing. Such was the case when I first read Blackbird. I knew David Harrower’s work from an earlier play of his, Kinetic in Hero, and from the enthusiastic reports of fellow Glasgowean Giles Havergal, but nothing prepared me for the eloquence and startling reversals I discovered as I began reading this script. The writing has the mysterious silences of Pinter, the sexual menace of Mamet, and the lyrical aches of Beckett, yet Harrower’s words is also completely sui generis. In the wake of our landmark world premiere production of Philip Kan Gotanda’s After the War, it is a great honor and pleasure to introduce yes to another major new work. We have assembled a remarkable team of artists as our collaborators on this West Coast premiere of Blackbird: director Loretta Greco, with whom we welcome back to A.C.T. after her stunning work on Lastavamina Blue several seasons back; Steven Culp, who blessed us with his talent for nearly a year as Joe Pitt in our legendary production of Angels in America, Jenni Campbell, who is making her A.C.T. debut; and the visionary design team of Robert Brill, Russell Champa, Jake Rodrigues, and David Draper. We hope you will have an unforgettable experience as you encounter this major new writing talent.

A nd of course we hope very much that you have received the announcement of our spectacular 2007-08 season. I personally am thrilled about this upcoming season, because I finally have a chance to direct two of my absolutely favorite plays in the canon: Gogol’s The Government Inspector and Ford’s ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore. With each passing year at A.C.T., I try to commit more and more deeply to those projects that are uniquely true to the A.C.T. experience: multidisciplinary work with vigorous language, superb acting, and world-class production values, work from many cultures that challenges our assumptions, opens our minds, and asserts the mad power of live theater in an age of passive viewing and media saturation. I recently returned from a week of intensive theater-going at the Golden Mask Festival in Moscow, and what impressed me most was how much theater matters to the Russian audience of every age and type flocked to each performance I saw, as if hungry for the experience of being with fellow Muscovites in a public space, experiencing something magical on the stage.

So my hope is that A.C.T. will continue to produce theater that matters to you; that the experience of being in the community that is embraced by this magical space will keep a dialogue going in your lives that is rich and meaningful. We begin next fall as the first stop on the national tour of John Doyle’s hugely imaginative re-invention of Sondheim’s masterpiece Merrily We Roll Along, a production that will make you hear this great score in an entirely new way. We journey with A.C.T.’s extraordinary core acting company member René Augesen to a place where despair slowly transforms into hope in Richard Nash’s iconic American tale The Rainmaker. We get knocked sideways by the verbal pyrotechnics of David Mamet and his skewering of macho deal-making in his hip and hilarious Speed-the-Plow, and find our own perceptions about race and personal identity turned upside down by Athol Fugard’s scaring sibling-rivalry play Blood Knot, featuring core company members Jack Willis and Steven Anthony Jones. Then comes a spring of hugely ambitious and pungent plays: the THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR, Gogol’s wicked satire about small-town government bureaucracy and the womanizing mayor who tries to stay ahead of the fray; Sam Shepard’s prescient Western saga CURSE OF THE SEVENTH CLASS, in which one crazy family (complete with a live baby lamb) tries to stake a claim on the American dream; and finally, Ford’s magnificent story of a great love gone wrong in ‘TIS PITY SHE’S A WHORE, featuring some of the most glorious language of Jacobean drama in a tale of religious hypocrisy, sexual transgression, and political vendetta.

Our work at A.C.T. is enriched by the many extraordinary artists who work with us, including our core company of actors, which has been expanded next season to include our newest

“FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR” CONTINUED

Young Company member, Jud Williford (who received his M.F.A. from A.C.T. in 2001 and has already graced our stage with memorable performances in A Christmas Carol, The Rivals, The Time of Your Life, and Happy End), in addition to the invaluable Anthony Fusco (whose many vital roles at A.C.T. include Telemachus in Hektor Gahler, Tunenbach in The Three Sisters, Organte in The Misanthrope, the outrageously comic Marquis de Faugas in The Gambler, and delicious turns in Stopford and Pinter), and the inseparable Jack Willis, whose Big Daddy, Judge Brack, Sam Waterston, and Ben Hubbard are just the beginning of the cast of characters he is ready to share with A.C.T. The experience of watching transformative actors travel through a season in highly diverse repertoire is something A.C.T. embraces very strongly and we hope it is one of the things that keeps you connected to us over the years.

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NEW VOICES, NEW WORKS

Saturday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.

prior to the matinee performance of Blackbird

Groundbreaking playwrights discuss the process of developing new plays from the theater, from inspiration to workshop to Off-Off-Broadway.

Readings: PHILIP KAM GITANJAN After the War The Ghost, You're Shaved You ( då, LILLIAN GROG Magpie For, The Author of the Comedies, Monologue, STAFEREN: DE ACCIÓ) Nina, Speared for the Truth, Our Lady of 12th Street, In Achianda Well All the Kisses

Koret Prologue: Dir. JIANQUAN PENG

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

May 6 & 7, June 20 & 23, 7:30 p.m.

After the show, stick around for a discussion with the artists and members of the artistic team.

For more information, visit sanfrancisco.org
BLACKBIRD

by David Harrower (2005)

Directed by Loretta Greco

ANNUBLING THE
2007-08
SEASON!

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YOU SHOULD BE HAPPY.

JUST YOU,
YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE.
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"WITH MYSTERIES INTACT"
AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT DAVID HARROWER
BY JESSICA WERNER ZACK

I n conversation, Scottish playwright David Harrower discusses his writing with a refreshing modesty and perceptible bewilderment at the mysterious nature of his own creative process. He quickly debunked the myth of the omniscient writer, holding his characters’ fates securely in hand. Instead, Harrower admits to an astonishment that accompanies his success and an openness to letting his characters’ lives and loves roam freely, into situations that can surprise even their creator.

Speaking just a week after Blackbird earned the British theatre establishment’s highest honor, the Olivier Award for best new play, Harrower said with a laugh, “I’m still not sure how the play actually works.” That may be little comfort for the playwright looking for an easy summation of his plot and purposes, yet Harrower makes clear that the powerful emotional connections audiences feel with his work is inextricably connected to his own need to write dramas that “leave some mysteries intact, some questions left unanswered. If I ever find I know what my plays are about, that’s when I start worrying, because as soon as I start reducing it to knowing what’s going on, I’m in trouble.”

At age 40, Harrower is considered one of Scotland’s most gifted playwrights and has already created a substantial body of dramatic work celebrated for its compelling ambiguities and densely poetic, even enigmatic, language. His first play, Krise in Hems, first produced at Edinburgh’s Traverse Theatre in 1995, has become one of Scotland’s biggest theatrical successes. Written in exceptionally sparse language, the play exerts a disquieting power as it charts a medieval peasant woman’s journey from subservience to an adulterous husband to a mature, vengeful awareness. Translated for production in more than 20 countries, Krise in Hems solidified Harrower’s reputation worldwide as a writer whose plays haunt as well as entertain.

In the decade following his spectacular debut, Harrower wrote Kill the Old, Torture Their Young (1998) and Dark Earth (2003), as well as several adaptations and translations of European classics.

Each successive drama has been well received by audiences and critics alike, but he had yet to recapture the mature beauty of his debut work—until Blackbird premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2005 and won the theatrical world’s most prestigious award. The one-act, two-character play received the Scotland Critics’ Award for best play before transferring to the West End in 2006. Productions have since been planned in 17 other countries, including a month-long offering at Manhattan Theatre Club and Blackbird’s West Coast premiere at A.C.T. Harrower spoke to A.C.T. contributor Jessica Werner Zack in February, just before rehearsals for the A.C.T. production began in San Francisco. You’ve said that your initial inspiration for writing Blackbird was a real-life story you read in 2002 about a U.S. marine who had taken off for Europe with a young girl. What about that story intrigued you enough to explore it in theatrical terms?

I wasn’t exactly inspired by that story, but it inspired a series of thoughts that resulted in this play. I was wary of trying to dramatize real-life events. But I remember that story came from the heart. I started wondering about it. This image came to me of a man and a girl standing looking at the sea, and I just couldn’t shake it. It was really that image that became [my primary inspiration].

You’ve made sure nothing in the play is portrayed in black or white terms. Instead, you explore some of the decision-making spaces that can exist in human behavior, in relationships.

Absolutely. The [relationship between Una and Ray] did happen, but to me there was no point in going over the argument [if whether it was morally wrong] and becoming a referee standing in judgment of these characters. People know this kind of relationship shouldn’t happen, and there’s no point in me confirming what people believe. It was very important to me to let these two characters in this room together say anything they want to each other without censoring it. And they can say anything they want to each other because they are the only two persons who know exactly how they felt or what they wanted.

I think it’s important that you choose to have Ray and Una meet 15 years after their initial encounter so that they only flashback verbally to the events in the past. When I had the realization that I could make them both adults now, struggling over the memory of what had happened between them, that’s when it all sort of locked into place. For me, it’s the way we move within us, how we believe we are made up, and what memories we hold on to that shape us. It’s what makes the two people we are. We walk around at any given moment, the sum of what we carry with us. I wanted that tension between the memory of the picture they paint for themselves and what is possible between them now.

You describe the dangerous territory portrayed in Blackbird as one where “you had to be sure about what you were doing. We can choose to query that if we want, but I’m not going to take that [certainty] away from them. I’ve talked to a few women who have been in relationships at this [young] age with much older men and firmly believe that what they had was a love affair. That really surprised me. What’s very possible that the experience Una had with Ray may have come to represent one of the most important events in her life, for bad or for good. Probably mostly bad, I don’t know. I’m not entirely sure what has happened to her, nor where she’s left at the end. It’s a mystery. It was a seismic experience for her and now, it’s conceivable that she’s reconnecting with all the resentment, desire, and fear she has harbored all these years.

It’s interesting to hear you, the playwright, use the word ‘mystery’. So it’s possible to write a play and have certain things remain mysterious even to you?

I think the best way for me to come out of a play is with some mysteries intact, some questions left unanswered. My writing is such that there is a real ambiguity to it. There is mystery. It may be two things at the same time, and that is a quality I’m not entirely unpleased with.

AN AUDIENCE WATCHING BLACKBIRD WILL SURELY QUESTION WHY UNA HAS GONE TO SEE RAY, WHETHER SHE’S SEEKING REVENGE, UNDERSTANDING, OR SOME KIND OF CLOSURE. DID YOU HAVE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION FOR YOURSELF?

I didn’t have an answer in the beginning, but I probably created an answer for myself during the writing. I’m going to keep it to myself [laugh]. Sorry.

ONE BRITISH REVIEW OF BLACKBIRD CALLED THE PLAY “SPARINGLY COMPASSIONATE” GIVEN THE SUBJECT MATTER. WHAT CHALLENGING IS IT FOR YOU TO ACHIEVE A DEGREE OF EMPATHY FOR RAY, WHOM IT’S EASY TO SEE AS HAVING PREYED UPON UNA?

BYE BYE BLACKBIRD
BY Mort Dixon and Ray Henderson

Pack up all my care and woe
Here I go, singing low
Bye bye blackbird

Where somebody waits for me
Sugar’s sweet, so is she
Bye bye blackbird

No one here can love or understand me
Oh what hard luck stories they all hand me
Make my bed and light the light
I’ll arrive late tonight
Blackbird, bye bye

No one here can love or understand me
Oh, oh what hard luck stories they all hand me
Make my bed and light the light
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Harrower spoke to A.C.T. contributor Jessica Werner Zack in February, just before rehearsals for the A.C.T. production began in San Francisco.

YOU’VE SAID THAT YOUR INITIAL INSPIRATION FOR WRITING BLACKBIRD WAS A REAL-LIFE STORY YOU READ IN 2002 ABOUT A U.S. MARINE WHO HAD TAKEN OFF FOR EUROPE WITH A YOUNG GIRL, WHAT ABOUT THAT STORY INTERESTED YOU ENOUGH TO EXPLORE IT IN THEATRICAL TERMS?

I wasn’t exactly inspired by that story, but it inspired a series of thoughts that resulted in this play. I am weary of trying to dramatize real-life events. But I remember that story caught my eye and I started wondering about it. This image came to me of a man and a girl standing looking at the sea, and I just couldn’t shake it. It was really that image that became [my primary inspiration].

YOU’VE MADE SURE NOTHING IN THE PLAY IS PORTRAYED IN BLACK OR WHITE TERMS. INSTEAD, YOU EXPLORE SOME OF THE DECEIVED, DREADFUL AREAS THAT CAN EXIST IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR, IN RELATIONSHIPS.

Absolutely. The relationship between Una and Ray did happen, but to me there was no point in going over the argument [of whether it was morally wrong] and becoming a referee standing in judgment of these characters. People know [this kind of relationship] shouldn’t happen, and there’s no point in me confirming what people believe. It was very important to me to let these two characters in this room together say anything they want to each other without censoring it. And they can say anything they want to each other because they are the only two persons who know exactly how they felt or what they wanted.

I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT THAT YOU CHOSE TO HAVE RAY AND UNA MEET 35 YEARS AFTER THEIR INITIAL ENCOUNTER SO THAT THEY ONLY FLASHBACK VERBALLY TO THE EVENTS IN THE PAST.

When I had the realization that I could make them both two adults now, struggling over the memory of what had happened between them, that’s when it all sort of locked into place. For me, it’s what we carry within us, how we believe we are made up, and what memories we hold so to shape us. It’s what makes us the people we are. We walk around at any given moment, the sum of what we carry with us. I wanted that tension between the memory or the picture they paint for themselves and what is possible between them now.

YOU TALKED TO SOME DANGEROUS TERRITORY PORTRAYING WHAT THEY HAD AS A LOVE AFFAIR OR A CONSENTING RELATIONSHIP.

I knew it was dangerous ground and I thought I might get some flak for it, but, surprisingly, I got letters from women thanking me, congratulating me, standing firm that they had relationships when technically children, but that they knew exactly what they were doing. We can choose to query that if we want, but I’m not going to take that [certainty] away from them. I’ve talked to a few women who have been in relationships at this [young] age with much older men and firmly believe that what they had was a love affair. That really surprised me.

It’s very possible that the experience Una had with Ray may have come to represent one of the most important events in her life, for bad or for good. Probably mostly bad, I don’t know. I’m not entirely sure what has happened to her, nor where she’s left at the end. It’s a mystery. It was a seismic experience for her and now, it’s conceivable that she’s reconnecting with all the resentment, desire, and fear she has harbored all these years.

IT’S INTERESTING TO HEAR YOU, THE PLAYWRIGHT, USE THE WORD “MYSTERIES,” SO IT’S POSSIBLE TO WRITE A PLAY AND HAVE CERTAIN THINGS REMAIN MYSTERIOUS EVEN TO YOU?

I think the best way for me to come out of a play is with some mysteries intact, some questions left unanswered. My writing is such that there is a real ambiguity to it. There is mystery. It may be two things at the same time, and that is a quality I’m not entirely unplesased with.

BYE BYE BLACKBIRD
By Mort Dixon and Ray Henderson

Pack up all my care and woe
Here I go, singing low
Bye bye blackbird

Where somebody waits for me
Sugar’s sweet, so is she
Bye bye blackbird

No one here can love or understand me
Oh what hard luck stories they all hand me
Make my bed and light the light
I’ll arrive late tonight
Blackbird, bye bye

No one here can love or understand me
Oh, oh what hard luck stories they all hand me
Make my bed and light the light
I’ll arrive late tonight
Blackbird, bye bye

AN AUDIENCE WATCHING BLACKBIRD WILL SURELY QUESTION WHY UNA HAS GONE TO SEE RAY, WHETHER SHE’S SEEKING REVENGE, UNDERSTANDING, OR SOME KIND OF Closure. DO YOU HAVE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION FOR YOURSELF?

I didn’t have an answer in the beginning, but I probably created an answer for myself during the writing. But I’m going to keep it to myself [laugh]. Sorry.

ONE REVIEW OF BLACKBIRD CALLED THE PLAY “STRIKINGLY COMPASSIONATE.” GIVEN THE SUBJECT MATTER, WHAT ARE YOU CHALLENGING FOR YOU TO ACHIEVE A DEGREE OF EMPATHY FOR RAY, WHOM IT’S EASY TO SEE AS HAVING PREYED UPON UNA?
I guess I had to. I couldn't viliﬁy him or demonize him because he's a character I have created, and he would stand no chance of being of interest if I were to take a moral view of him. When I wrote [Blackbird], I had no real idea about what sympathy would be created for this man, and I was kind of surprised there was actually more sympathy than I thought there would be. That said, we can't turn away from the fact that there are real people much worse than him that actively seek children, and we as a society have to decide what we do with these people.

Your writing style has great concision and never closely comes close to being a written play in terms of terms of its many interwoven original and broken sentences. Do you initially write these concisely, or is it the result of a lot of rewriting?

This play actually came out like that. I wrote this in about a month. Once I started, I just wrote and couldn't stop writing. It came out almost in one go. It was extraordinary. I was very conscious of wanting to write in a language that indicated these two characters' mental state, so the language in effect reﬂects the fact that they are circling around something. They can't finish sentences, they can't be too deﬁnite, because if they're deﬁnite about something they don't know what effect it's going to have on the other person. That's something I've really taken from Shakespeare, the idea of language conveying its meaning in the actual words chosen by the characters themselves.

Knives in Hens, your ﬁrst produced play, was an immediate and tremendous success. What was the experience like for you as a young writer to achieve such acclaim with your ﬁrst go?

It was an extraordinary thing to have happened. I wrote it when I was 27 and it was produced when I was 28. It ran in Germany for about three years, and it sent out these reverberations and then other countries picked it up on it. I don't want to sound like an idiot savant here [laughs], but I had no idea why. It was quite an unusual, strong little story. It's something to do with, I guess, the fact of creating a language to convey your thoughts, to convey your feelings about the world. I think if it hadn't had that strand to it, it wouldn't have gotten anywhere. But it really burrowed into why we use language, what we need it for, and it did get an extraordinary response from people. I had taken quite a risk with the language and it was quite dense, with a real cryptic quality to it as well. So, yes, it was fantastic for a young writer.

Pinter is often mentioned as a possible role model for you. Stylistically, what can you share about your theatrical inﬂuences?

I've got to say, I came to theatre quite late. I wrote short stories for a while, as I was washing dishes in a restaurant and doing these cruddy jobs, and as I was writing the stories I found I couldn't be bothered writing the descriptive stuff, so they just came out with the dialogue. And this was even before I discovered Pinter, but I was thinking about what language could be used to do, what it could convey, how it could be used to hide things as well as reveal things.

I didn't go to theatre much. I had never shown much interest in it before, but I went to the library and I started reading what was there in the library. Some of the early stuff that really got hold of me was Brian Friel's plays.

Have you become the kind of writer now who imagines the stage as you're writing, hears your words in actors' mouths? Or do you still write in the more literary tradition, creating your own world in your head?

The latter. I see this sort of ﬁlms in my head, like these two people [in Blackbird]. One of the things I've found while writing plays is that I see the characters from a distance, and if I'm writing for ﬁlm or TV I see them in close-up. It's quite bizarre to think about, but maybe you've been inﬂuenced by your own viewing of ﬁlmed media, since the close-up only exists with a camera.

Right, and absolutely out in theatre. You've got just whole bodies on the stage, in the physical space, and how they approach or walk away or circle around each other. I've become just obsessed with theater and how it allows and encourages me to write language that can't exist anywhere else. That's really important to me.

What is the signiﬁcance of Blackbird's title? Did it come to you early, or after you completed the play?

It's quite simple really. My memory is that I needed a title quite quickly and I had been listening to some music and it was John Coltrane, or was it Keith Jarrett, the pianist, playing the standard "Bye, Bye, Blackbird." It was an improvised take on the standard. And this felt like an improvisation. You know, how long do I keep these two people in the room? I felt like a musician in many ways, sustaining what these two people could say and do to each other, improvising in a sense. And I also thought that maybe ["Blackbird"] was something he had called her, or maybe he was playing the Beatles! White Album on the way to the coast. It wasn't an obvious, more suggestive, to help me. But it turns out there is a tale about Saint Benedict, which I found out afterwards. I love the story, this disguise as a blackbird. I wish I had known about it beforehand because I would have claimed it as my own [laughs].

You've said in an earlier interview that you don't think theatre should be didactic or even too engaged with the external world. But you also express interest in writing something that responds to current events. Could you explain that bit?

That was sort of a rhetorical question to myself, asking how I should be responding to the world. I'm constantly caught between using my plays to explore current things within the world, and creating small dramas. I don't know exactly how people see Blackbird in this sense; it just stands alone as a good, intriguing piece of theatre. I know that when things get too didactic for me, I just switch off. Certain writers, certain voices, they just become too heavy for me. I've always preferred a quiet, more skewed look at something. There are lots of other writers writing about the state of Britain, race relations, sexual relations, identity issues. I'm not a writer who necessarily takes a subject and comments on it. I've got to ﬁnd a different way of representing something, and in that way I'm kind of a contradiction. I would love to be a great sane political voice, but I can't be because I am not that. I've got to be what I am, a quiet unsettling voice.

What looking watchfulness in the eyes of a 12-year-old... at once guarded, yet guileless. She is the very picture of contradiction: on the one hand diffident and ambivalent, on the other forthright and impetuous; half pertness and half pout. She disarms me with her sure sense of her own attractiveness and, with it, her direct, even provocative approach to the camera. Impossibly, she is both artless and sophisticated; a child and yet a woman.

—Sally Mann, At Twelve
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YOUR WRITING STYLE HAS GREAT CONCISSION AND HEWS CLOSELY TO HOW PEOPLE SPEAK IN LIFE, BOTH IN TERMS OF ITS MANY INTERROGATIONS AND BROKEN SENTENCES. DO YOU INITIALLY WRITE THIS CONCEALED, OR IS IT THE RESULT OF A LOT OF REWRITING?

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KNIVES IN HEN'S, YOUR FIRST PRODUCED PLAY, WAS AN IMMEDIATE AND TRUMPETING SUCCESS. WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE LIKE FOR YOU AS A YOUNG WRITER TO ACHIEVE SUCH ACCLAIM WITH YOUR FIRST GO?

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PINTER IS OFTEN MENTIONED AS A POSSIBLE ROLE MODEL FOR YOU, STYLISTICALLY: WHAT CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR THEATRICAL INFLUENCES?

I've got to say, I came to theater quite late. I wrote short stories for a while, as I was washing dishes in a restaurant and doing these crudey jobs, and as I was writing the stories I found I couldn't be bothered writing descriptive stuff, so they just came out with the dialogue. And this was even before I discovered Pinter, but I was thinking about what language could be used to do what it could convey, how it could be used to hide things as well as reveal things.

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HAVE YOU BECOME THE KIND OF WRITER NOW WHO IMAGINES THE STAGE AS YOU'RE WRITING, HEARS YOUR WORDS IN ACTORS' MOUTHS? OR DO YOU STILL WRITE IN THE MORE LITERARY TRADITION, CREATING YOUR OWN WORLD IN YOUR HEAD?

The latter. I see this sort of film in my head, like these two people [in Blackbird]. One of the things I've found while writing plays is that I lose the characters from a distance, and if I'm writing for film or TV I see them in close-up. It's quite bizarre to think about.

Maybe you've been influenced by your own viewing of filmed media, since the close-up only exists with a camera. Right, and absolutely not in theater. You've just got whole bodies on the stage, in the physical space, and how they approach or walk away or circle around each other. I've become just obsessed with theater and how it allows and encourages me to write language that can't exist anywhere else. That's really important to me.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACKBIRD'S TITLE? DID IT COME TO YOU EARLY, OR AFTER YOU'VE COMPLETED THE PLAY?

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YOU'VE SAID IN AN EARLIER INTERVIEW THAT YOU DON'T THINK THEATER SHOULD BE DIDACTIC OR EVEN TOO ENGAGED WITH THE EXTERNAL WORLD. BUT YOU ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN WRITING SOMETHING THAT RESPONDS TO CURRENT EVENTS. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THAT?

That was sort of a rhetorical question to myself, asking how I should be responding to the world. I'm constantly caught between using my plays to explore current things within the world, and creating small dramas. I don't know exactly how people see Blackbird in this sense; it just stands alone as a good, intriguing piece of theater. I know that when things get too didactic for me, I just switch off. Certain writers, certain voices, they just become too shallow for me. I've always preferred a quiet, more skinned look at something. There are lots of other writers writing about the state of Britain, race relations, sexual relations, identity issues. I'm not a writer who necessarily takes a subject and comments on it. I've got to find a different way of representing something, and in that way I'm kind of a contradiction. I would love to be a great sane political voice, but I can't be because I am not that. I've got to be what I am, a quiet unsettling voice.

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—Sally Mann, Al Twueve

THE GALLERY AT A.C.T.

ANNIE ARASSMITH: THE GARDEN

Find yourself with some extra time before a performance or during intermission? Want to expose yourself to more fine art, but don't make it to art galleries as often as you'd like? Now you need look no further than A.C.T. We invite you to visit the second floor of the theater (just outside the auditorium doors, along the north wall of windows, and by the elevator) to view original artwork by a diverse range of artists, presented in a series of rotating exhibits throughout the 2006-07 season.

Integrated mixed media pieces by Bay Area artist Annie Arrasmith are on view at A.C.T. April 27-July 8. Arrasmith creates original works of art by synthesizing nontraditional hand-pulled printmaking techniques, such as kolins monotypes, with mixed-media painting techniques. "I'm interested in the auditory nature of color," she explains. "I am looking for a certain sound in the piece. When I find it, I know the piece is alive. When there is life in a work of art, it has the potential to affect the surrounding space and the viewer. My goal is to create art that has a specific positive vibration, like those found in nature.

Kolins monotype is a technique that allows the artist to create one-of-a-kind images impossible with other methods. A printing plate of unvarnished stone is clay. Then kolins-based paint (made using white clay, water, and permanent artist’s pigments) is applied to the plate using a variety of tools and techniques. The resulting image is lifted onto an archival spin-fiber matrix using small hand rollers and pressure tools. After the monotype is hand-pulled, the image is further worked to create more intense and layered textures and colors. "In this body of work, I have used color (vibration), batik textile stamps (storytelling), and clay and pigments (earth) to give the viewer an experience of The Garden."

Arrasmith graduated from the California Institute of Integral Studies after attending the Pacific Northwest College of Art.

The artist will attend an opening reception at the theater on Thursday, May 3, 5:00-7:30 p.m. Each artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For more information about Annie Arrasmith, please contact Kevin Simmons at 415.474.1066 / kennat@artexceptions.com.
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A community’s commitment to arts and culture says a lot about the kind of place it is to work and live.

At Wells Fargo, we’re proud of the role we play in bringing artistic and cultural events to center stage.

WHO’S WHO IN BLACKBIRD

STEVEN CULP
(Peter Ray) received Drama-League awards for his performances in Angels in America (A.C.T) and the West Coast premiere of Raised in Captivity (South Coast Repertory Theatre). Over the last two decades he has appeared in numerous theatrical premieres, among them Tony Kushner’s Slavs! and Phyllis Nagy’s Trip’s Cinch (Humana Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville), Terrence McNally’s The Lisbon Traviata (Theatre Off-Park), Neil Simon’s Actors and Actresses (Hartman Theatre), A. R. Gurney, Jr.’s Sweet Sue (Williamstown Theatre Festival), Keith Reddin’s Highest Standard of Living (Playwrights Horizons), Jonathan Toliffons’s 5 Memory Serves (Pasadena Playhouse), and Lillian Gish’s The White Rose (The Old Globe). Other theater credits include Art (South Coast Rep), Coastal Disturbances (Circle in the Square, Broadway), Light Up the Sky (Ahmanson Theatre), Richard III (New York Shakespeare Festival), and many other plays at regional theaters across the country. Culp received Screen Actors’ Guild Awards in 2004 and 2005 (outstanding performance by an ensemble in a comedy series) as part of the cast of ABC’s “Desperate Housewives,” playing the role of the desperate husband Rex Van De Kamp. Notable recurring television roles include CIA agent Clayton Webb in “JAG,” Speaker of the House Jeff Hayley in “The West Wing,” Major Hayes in “Star Trek: Enterprise,” and Dr. Corday’s boyfriend Dav Spencer in “ER.” Since making his primetime TV debut as John Hay in the Emmy Award-winning NBC miniseries “Gore Vidal’s Lincoln,” opposite Sam Waterson and Mary Tyler Moore, Culp has appeared in many series and TV movies, including “CSI,” “24,” “Num3rs,” “Crossing Jordan,” “The Practice,” “Ally McBeal,” “Chicago Hope,” “Providence,” and Norma Jean and Marilyn. In addition to his critically acclaimed performance as Robert F. Kennedy in Thirteen Days, he has appeared in the feature films The Emperor’s Club (with Kevin Kline), Spartus (written and directed by David Mamet), The Sirens, Nurse Betty, James and the Giant Peach, and the recent release Firehouse Dog, among others. He is one of the stars of the upcoming ABC series “Traveler.”

JESSI CAMPBELL
(Uma) makes her A.C.T. debut in Blackbird. New York credits include the title roles of Inky and Victoria Martin: Mash Trae Queen at The Women’s Project (both directed by Loretta Greco), the Girl Scout in Commedia dell’Arte at New Georges, Boy in Luscious at Cherry Lane Theater, and Shawna in The Clybourne Stage (written and directed by Cobey Mandarino) at the 2006 New York International Fringe Festival. Film and television credits include the remake of The Anarchivist: Horrors, Spinning into Butter with Sarah Jessica Parker, “Rescue Me,” “Law & Order: SVU,” and “The Knights of Prosperity.” Campbell is a graduate of DePaul University.

ROD GNAPP
(Understudy) most recently appeared at A.C.T. in Happy End and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. 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 The Time of Your Life (also at Seattle Repertory Theatre), Gershon Giel Riss, June and the Paycheck, The Royal Family, and Dark Rapture and at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in numerous productions. He appeared as Neil Cassidy in Visions of Kermice at Marin Theatre Company, where he also played John Proctor in The Crucible. Gnapp appeared in the world premiere production of Sam Shepard’s The Late Henry Moss and recently performed in San Jose Stage Company as Austin in Shepard’s True West.

DAVID HARROWER
(Playwright) was born in Edinburgh and now lives in Glasgow, Scotland. His play Kvins in Hurs was first produced at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1995 and has been seen in more than 20 countries worldwide. Other plays include Kill the Old, Torture Their Young (Traverse Theatre) and The Clybourne Kids (NT Connections, National Theatre, London). Prezis, his third original
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**JESSI CAMPBELL**

(Uma) makes her A.C.T. debut in *Blackbird*. New York credits include the title role of *Judy* and Victoria Martin in: *Mas Tain Queen at the Women’s Project* (both directed by Loretta Greco), the Girl Scout in *Commedia dell'Romanus* at New Georges, *Boy in Luscious* at Cherry Lane Theater, and Shewan in *The Chronicles Stage* (written and directed by Cobry Mandarino) at the 2006 New York International Fringe Festival. Film and television credits include the remake of *The Anxious* with Sarah Jessica Parker, "Rescue Me," "Law & Order: SVU," and "The Knights of Prosperity." Campbell is a graduate of DePaul University.

**ANNA BULLARD**

(Undeclared) includes among her recent Bay Area credits *Ambition Facing West at TheatreWorks, Killer Joe* at Marin Theatre Company (and the extension at Magic Theatre), and the premieres of Mat Smart’s *The Hopper Collection* at Magic Theatre. Regional credits include Humana Festival premieres of Kia Corthron’s *Miss, The Messenger* and *Uncle Sam’s Spectacular at Actors Theatre of Louisville*. *Dracula* and *Cat* (for not 2B) for Actors Theatre of Louisville; and The Mousetrap and *Nuns on the Don* at the Desert Theatre Festival. She received her B.A. in English and theater from Whitman College and trained as an acting apprentice at Actors Theatre of Louisville.

**ROD GNAPP**

(Understudy) most recently appeared at A.C.T. in *Happy End and Cut on a Hot Tin Roof*. 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 *The Time of Your Life* (also at Seattle Repertory Theatre), *G Kangaroo* with *Rusa and the Paycheck, The Royal Family* and *Dark Rapture* and *The Rose* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in numerous productions. He appeared as Neil Cassidy in *Visions of Karenos* at Marin Theatre Company, where he also played John Proctor in *The Crucible*. Gnapp appeared in the world premiere production of Sam Shepard’s *The Late Henry Moss* and recently performed with San Jose Stage Company in *As You Will* as Austin in Shepard’s *True West.*

**DAVID HARROWER** (Playwright) was born in Edinburgh and now lives in Glasgow, Scotland. His play *Kneivis in Hone* was first produced at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1995 and has been seen in more than 20 countries worldwide. Other plays include *Kill the Old, Torture Their Young* (Traverse Theatre) and *The Chronicles* (NT Connections, National Theatre, London). Present, his third original
Who's Who

play, was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in 2001. Harrower has also adapted versions of Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author, first staged at the Young Vic in 2000; Children's Services from the Flames Who's performed at the National Theatre in 2002, and Blackbird's Wycliffe, performed at the Edinburgh Lyceum in 2002. His play Dark Earth premiered at the Traverse in August 2003, and his new version of von Horvath's Tales from the Firesh Woods, performed at the National Theatre later that year. Blackbird was commissioned by the Edinburgh International Festival and premiered there in August 2005. It subsequently transferred to London's West End in February 2006 and was recently performed at Manhattan Theatre Club in New York. Blackbird was short-listed for the Saltire Society's Scottish Book of the Year and won the Scottish Critics' Award for Best Play of 2006 and the Laurence Olivier Award in 2007.

LORETTA GRECO (Director) directed Ladrawanna Blue for A.C.T. after developing and directing its premiere at The Public Theater. Other New York premieres include Victoria Martin's Math Team Queen (Women's Project); The Story (Public Theater); Tree (Women's Project); Two Sisters and a Piano (Public Theater); Medea (Naked Angels Theater Company); Mercy (Vineyard Theater); Gwa (Women's Project); A Park in Our House (New York Theatre Workshop); and Undersail: A Western Sky (INTAR/Women's Project). Regional theater credits include Ransom and Juliet and Stop Kiss (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Much Ado/Merrily (Magic Theatre), and productions at Long Wharf Theatre, South Coast Repertory Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center, Intiman Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, the Coconut Grove Playhouse, Playmakers Repertory Company, and The Cleveland Play House. Greco also directed the national tour of Having Our Say, as well as the play's international opening at the Mark Taper Forum in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has collaborated with a variety of distinguished contemporary writers, including Pulitzer Prize winner Nile Cody, Tracey Scott Wilson, Emily Mann, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Del Marimar, Luis Alfaro, Joyce Carol Oates, and Jessica Hagedorn. Greco's own play, Passage: Stories of the Cuban Balseros, premiered at Miami's AREA Stage, which ran for six months before transferring to the Coconut Grove Playhouse. From 2004 to 2006 Greco served as artistic director of New York City's Women's Project, where she produced the premieres of Devotion Project, written by Karen Hartman, Lynn Nottage, Tanya Barfield, Chiori Miyagawa, and Caridad Svich; the rhythm and blues musical Best of Both Worlds; works by Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner and composed by Diedre Murray; Rinnie Geoff's Indy, Nenna Beebee's Jump/Out, directed by Leigh Silverman; and Lisa D'Amour's The Cataract, directed by Katie Pearl. Greco received her M.F.A. from Catholic University and is the recipient of two Drama League Fellowships and a Princess Grace Award.

ROBERT BRILL (Scenic Design) has designed for A.C.T. The Good Body and The Picture Shows. His designs for Broadway include A Streetcar Named Desire, Laugh Whore, The Good Body, Anna in the Tropics, Design for Living, One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest, Burial Child, The Rehearsal, and the upcoming revival of The Whiz. His other credits include A Number, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Vagina Monologues, and Waiting for Godot for A.C.T. Current and recent projects include Distraction at the Mark Taper Forum, Everyday at Second Stage in New York and at Yale Repertory Theatre, The Fear of Us at The Old Globe, and The Pillowman at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. On Broadway, Champa designed Julia Streuven's God Said "Hall" at the Lyceum Theatre. Other New York credits include designs for Manhattan Theatre Club, the Promenade Theatre, the Union Square Theater, Classic Stage Company, New York Stage and Film, Primary Stages, and La MaMa E.T.C.

The Pillowman at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. On Broadway, Champa designed Torn Jersey's God Said "Hall" at the Lyceum Theatre. Other New York credits include designs for Manhattan Theatre Club, the Promenade Theatre, the Union Square Theater, Classic Stage Company, New York Stage and Film, Primary Stages, and La MaMa E.T.C.

JAKE RODRIGUEZ (Sound Designer) has carved out sound and music for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, A.C.T., California Shakespeare Theater, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, and Art Street Theatre. Recent sound design credits include the world premiere of After the War and the new production of A Christmas Carol at A.C.T.; world premieres of Passing Strange, The People's Temple, and Fiffs de la Nuit at Berkeley Rep, and The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby at Cal Shakes. Other credits and sound for Cal Shakes' 2004 production of A Comedy of Errors; sound for Marin Theatre Company's Lysistrata; sound for Ibsen's Ghosts at Berkeley Rep; and sound for Shotgun Players' and Studio's productions of The Death of Meagobold. Rodriguez won the 2003 Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award in sound design for The Death of Meagobold and a 2004 Princess Grace Award.
Who’s Who

play, was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in 2001. Harrower has also adapted versions of Pirandello’s Six Characters in Search of an Author, first staged at the Young Vic in 2000; Children’s Jouars, performed at the National Theatre in 2002; and Blackbird’s Yellow Crook, performed at the Edinburgh Lyceum in 2002. His play Dark Earth premiered at the Traverse in August 2003, and his new version of von Horváth’s Tales from the Flames was performed at the National Theatre later that year. Blackbird was commissioned by the Edinburgh International Festival and premiered there in August 2005. It subsequently transferred to London’s West End in February 2006 and was recently performed at Manhattan Theatre Club in New York. Blackbird was short-listed for the Saltire Society’s Scottish Book of the Year and won the Scottish Critics’ Award for best play of 2006 and the Laurence Olivier Award in 2007.

LORETTA GRECO (Director) directed L’Attesa dell’Amaro Blue for A.C.T.; after developing and directing its premiere at The Public Theater. Other New York premieres include America’s Most Wanted (Women’s Project); The Story (Public Theater); Thrice (Women’s Project); Two Sisters and a Piano (Public Theater); Meagham (Naked Angels Theater Company); Mercy (Vineyard Theater); Gwo (Women’s Project); A Park in Our House (New York Theatre Workshop); and Underskin (Western Sky (INTAR Women’s Project), Regional theater credits include Rameau and Juliet and Stop Kiss (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Moshulu/Mortality (Magic Theatre), and productions at Long Wharf Theatre, South Coast Repertory Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center, Intiman Theatre, the Willamett Theatre Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, the Coconut Grove Playhouse, Playmakers Repertory Company, and The Cleveland Play House. Greco also directed the national tour of Havin’ My Say, as well as the play’s international premiere at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has collaborated with a variety of distinguished contemporary writers, including Pulitzer Prize winner Nile Cole, Tracey Scott Wilson, Emily Mann, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Del Marmergul, Luis Alfaro, Joyce Carol Oates, and Jessica Hagedorn. Greco’s own play, Passage: Stories of the Cuban Balsero, premiered at Miami’s AREA Stage, where it ran for six months before transferring to the Coconut Grove Playhouse. From 2004 to 2006 Greco served as artistic director of New York City’s Women’s Project, where she produced the premieres of Dae’s Ignite Project, written by Karen Hartman, Lynn Nottage, Taryn Barfield, Chiori Miyagawa, and Caridad Svich; the rhythm and blues musical Best of Both Worlds, created by Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner and composed by Diedre Murray; Rimme Graf’s Indigo; Nenna Beebe’s Jump/Cap, directed by Leigh Silverman; and Lisa D’Amour’s The Cautious, directed by Katie Pearl. Greco received her M.F.A. from Catholic University and is the recipient of two Drama League Fellowships and a Princess Grace Award.

ROBERT BRILL (Scenic Design) has designed for A.C.T.; the Good Body and The Picture Show. His designing for Broadway include Assassins (Tony Award nomination) and the set and club design for the critically acclaimed revival of Cabaret. Other Broadway credits include A Streetcar Named Desire, Laugh Whore, The Good Body, Anna in the Tropics, Design for Living, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Buried Child, Theswear, and the upcoming revival of The Wiz. His other credits include

Smear’s (Radio City Music Hall), On the Record (Disney Theatrical), The Wiz (La Jolla Playhouse), Finzoc (San Diego Opera), L’Irrumation (Chicago Opera Theatre), Amnerique (Paris Opera Ballet), La Boheme (Minneapolis Opera), The House of Martin Guerre (Goodman Theatre and Canadian Stage Company), A Clockwork Orange (Steppenwolf Theatre), Anna Deavere Smith’s Twilight Los Angeles, 1992 (Music Theatre Works and McCarter Theatre), The Laramie Project (New York, Denver, Berkeley, La Jolla), John Steinbeck’s East of Eden (Western Stage), and the 136th edition of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. He is a founding member of Sledgehammer Theatre and recipient of the 2004 Merritt Award for excellence in design and collaboration.

DAVID F. DRAPER (Costume Design) has designed A.C.T.; productions of Hilde (U.S. premiere, which traveled to Washington, D.C., and New York), Hecuba, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, The Cocktail Hour, Glengarry, Renovations, and Guiltiemans Are Dead (Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award), and the world premiere of David Lang and Mac Wellman’s The Difficulty of Crossing a Field. Local credits include May I Have and Breathe Normally ( Ethnic Award nomination) for Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Dancing for Gator at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and independent productions of Song of Singapore, Hitting for the Cocks, and Babus in Arto. He has designed for the Children’s Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Annapolis Opera, Baltimore Ballet, Pabody Opera Theatre, and Baltimore Actors’ Theatre. He has resident designer at Baltimore School for the Arts before joining A.C.T. in 1988.

RUSSELL H. CHAMPA (Lighting Design) has designed The Little Foxes, A Number, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Vaggy Inheritance, and Waiting for Godot for A.C.T. Current and recent projects include Distressed at the Mark Taper Forum, Everyday at Second Stage in New York and at Yale Repertory Theatre, The Fear of Us at The Old Globe, and The Pillowman at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. On Broadway, Champa designed Julia Sunnervig’s God Said “Hail” at the Lyceum Theatre. Other New York credits include designs for Manhattan Theatre Club, the Promenade Theatre, the Union Square Theatre, Classic Stage Company, New York Stage and Film, Primary Stages, and La MaMa E.T.C. Regionally, he has designed for William Tlist, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Campo Santo, the Willamett Theatre Festival, The Actors’ Gang, and the Kennedy Center.

JAKE RODRIGUEZ (Sound Designer) has carved out sound and music for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, A.C.T., California Shakespeare Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Shogun Players, and Art Street Theatre. Recent sound design credits include the world premiere of After the War and the new production of A Christmas Carol at A.C.T.; world premieres of Passing Strange, The People’s Temple, and Fets de La Nuit at Berkeley Rep; and The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby at Cal Shakes. Other credits and sound for Cal Shakes’s 2004 production of A Comedy of Errors for Marin Theatre Company’s Lifes’ Sound for Ibsen’s Ghosts at Berkeley Rep; and sound for Shogun Player’s and Studio theatre’s productions of The Death of Mebyerhoff. Rodrigue won the 2003 Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award in sound design for The Death of Me byberhoff and a 2004 Princess Grace Award.
**Who's Who**

**JorgeBoehringer**

**MerylLindShaw** (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 producing of White Christmas, Jesus Christ, and Fosse at the Latin Agit, as well as the first workshop of the Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-ROM game Dr. Oblivion. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she staged more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.'s Creditor and Run Away! 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 contracts (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival.

**ElsaGuthertz** (Stage Manager) most recently worked on The Little Foxes at A.C.T. and on the A.C.T. production of Death in Venice at Zeama Theatre. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include A Number, Sexual Perversity in Chicago, Cast on a Hot Tin Roof, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Good Grief, Waiting for Godot, and The Three Sisters, The Misanthrope, Long Day's Journey into Night, Tartuffe, Mary Stuart, and The Real Thing. Her work at A.C.T. also includes the production of Antigone, a Greek tragedy about an orphaned, David Lang/Maggie Wellman’s The Difficulty of Growing a Fjord, and the West Coast premiere of fellow Oxford University alumnus Christopher Bigsby’s (a student for the Snustam Blackman Award). Her play Luminous Dances at the Center of the Universe is a planetarium production that will be performed at the San Francisco Festival in May. Her next production is with the Stanford University Theatre Company in February 2005. She has collaborated with many notable contemporary writers, most recently Philip Kan Gotanda, on his new play After the War at the Sundance Institute in 2004 (an A.C.T. commission that will premiere in 2007), and Robert O'Hara, on a production 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 American, the American premiere of Fuster’s Mountaintop Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic plays. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, direction, and design. In addition, the company has won the award 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 Broadway Academy of Music. Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in English 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 Leo and Nicholas.

**HeatherKitchen** (Costume Director), now in her 11th season with A.C.T., has strengthened the organization’s infrastructure and oversees the company’s expansion to include the development of new and performances of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.’s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her undergraduate degree in history is from the University of Western Ontario and her graduate degree in 15th century stage, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. She is the recipient of the Stanford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charleston Festival, Festival 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 Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the benchmark study Economic Impact of the Performing Arts in Edmonton. An active community member, Kitchen serves on the boards of the Edmonton Arts Council and the Edmonton Performing Arts Alliance, and is the board chair of the Edmonton Arts Council. Kitchen also serves on the boards of the Edmonton Arts Council and the Edmonton Performing Arts Alliance, and is the board chair of the Edmonton Arts Council. A.C.T. Profiles

**CAREY PERLOFF** (Artistic Director) celebrated her 15th season as artistic director of A.C.T. in 1996. Under her direction, A.C.T. has produced more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.'s Creditor and Run Away! 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 contracts (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival.

**MelaMatsunaga** (Costume Director) at the Alcatraz Theatre.

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Individual issues of Words on Plays are available for purchase in the theater lobby, in A.C.T. Ticket Services (inside door at 405 Geary Street), and online at www.a-c-t.org. Subscription to Words on Plays is included in the cost of the subscription to A.C.T. for the entire season. For information about Words on Plays, call 415.749.2250.

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**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 producing of White Christmas, Jesus Christ, and Fosse at the Latin Agit, as well as the first workshop of the Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-ROM game Dr. Oblivion. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she staged more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.’s Creditor and Run Away! 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 contracts (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival.**
REVIEWED BY making the SEASON Program and documentary content in the medium of video, as part of the American Conservatory Theater and American Conservatory Theater in the 2015-2016 season. The program features a variety of new works and established directors, with a focus on contemporary and experimental performance. The program also includes a series of talks and workshops with prominent figures from the theater world. The season offers a diverse range of productions, including classical works, new plays, and multimedia pieces. The program is aimed at attracting a broad audience and fostering innovation within the theater community.
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*Top Ten List—Best of 2006*

Ron Briscoe, the New York Times

“Kiki & Herb: Alive on Broadway are Alive with a capital A. Irresistibly full-bodied art and perverse showbiz genius, this is a magnified cabaret concert that has the heat and dazzle of great balls of fire.”

Ron Briscoe, the New York Times

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For more information, call 415.439.2350 or visit www.ACTactortraining.org.

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A conversation with the director before the 7 p.m. Tuesday preview (8:30-6 p.m.)

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Free postperformance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members

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Wednesday 5/23

Sunday 6/17

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Wednesday 5/9

Friday 6/20

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An exciting 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.

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WHO’S WHO

KAREN SZPELLER (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked with A.C.T. on A Christmas Carol and with the M.F.A. Program last season. Favorite past shows include Salute at Aurora Theatre Company, Erosfiche, Fitz de la Nei, The Glass Menagerie, Broadway, and Comedie on the Bridge at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Unrestroom, The Musical at San Jose Stage Company, Striking 12 at TheatreWorks; and Ragtime and She Loves Me at Foothill Musical Theatre. She most recently stage-managed The Secret Garden at Willows Theatre Company. She is production coordinator at TheatreWorks in Menlo Park.

PORTIA JULIETTE was most recently seen in Adam Sandel’s San Francisco production of Gideon’s Dream, which will be remounted for two weeks in July 2007 at the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. She has appeared in North Bay Repertory productions of A Christmas Carol, Little Women, Footloose, and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. She has worked with Marin Shakespeare Company in scenes from The Merchant of Venice (Portia) and Romeo and Juliet (Juliet). She has been acting for many years and has studied at the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, Marin Shakespeare Company, Marin Theatre Company, and The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in Los Angeles.

HANNAH ROSE KORNFIELD makes her A.C.T. debut in Blackbird. She has enjoyed acting, singing, and dancing in professional and community productions throughout the Bay Area for the past three years. Recent roles include Mary Leenson in The Secret Garden (Willows Theatre Company), Alice in Alice in Wonderland (Marin Shakespeare Company), Young Joan in Far Away (Exit Theatre), Tina Denmark in Russell’s The Musical (Masquers Playhouse), Gloria in Wait Until Dark (Ross Valley Players), Biffie Waverly (understudied and performed) in Irving Berlin’s White Christmas (Curran Theatre), and featured performer in the cabaret show Simply Sondheim’s 75th Birthday Salute (Kilburn Hall).

Blackbird 29
SUMMER IN THE A.C.T. CONSERVATORY

A.C.T. SUMMER TRAINING CONGRESS
Now Accepting Applications for 2007!

8-WEEK SESSION
Courses cover a broad range of subjects, including acting, voice and speech, and movement. Training days typically begin with physical classes like stage combat, movement, and audition technique. The day continues with more technical classes, such as voice and speech. Afternoons are spent in acting classes, scene work, and improvisation workshops. The A.C.T. Summer Training Congress prepares actors to succeed in all aspects of performance, but our primary focus is on acting for the theater.

Mandatory registration and orientation week:
June 11–15, 2007
CLASS: June 18–August 10, 2007
GRADUATION: August 10, 2007

2-WEEK INTENSIVE
THE ACTOR AND THE AUDITION
This special two-week session focuses on the skills and materials actors need to audition and work in the theater. The training covers subjects ranging from audition techniques for classical and contemporary monologues to cold readings, headshots and resumes, marketing tools, business and rehearsal protocol, and a variety of other subjects. Some areas of on-camera audition will be covered, but the emphasis of this intensive session is primarily on auditioning for the theater.

Mandatory registration and orientation:
August 10 and 11, 2007
CLASS: August 13–24, 2007
GRADUATION: August 24, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 415.439.2350 OR VISIT www.ACTactorstraining.org

FIELDS OF GOLD: THE MUSIC OF STING
A collaboration with Bird
Directed by Craig Slaght
Musical Direction by Krita Wigel
Choreography by Christine Mattison
Musical arrangements by Robert Rott
June 1–24, 2007 • Zenn Theater

From the overwhelming success of his rock band The Police to his breakthrough solo career, Gordon Mathew Sumner—known to the world as Sting—is one of the all-time greatest singer/songwriters in modern music history. An exploration of what it means to be young and grow up in the modern era, Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting is another installment in the Young Conservatory’s ongoing series of musical tributes to contemporary pop composers (which include the recent hit production Across the Universe: The Music of Lennon and McCartney).

For more information: 415.749.2ACT | www.aact-sf.org

A.C.T. YOUNG CONSERVATORY
Summer sessions enrolling now!
4-week session: June 18–July 13
Two 2-week sessions: July 16–27 and July 30–August 10
Two 1-week sessions: August 13–17 and August 20–24

The Young Conservatory at A.C.T. is an internationally recognized professional theater-training program for young people between the ages of 8 and 19. Young actors from throughout the Bay Area come to the VC to develop their creative talent and to grow as young artists. The wide variety of classes and performance opportunities available includes acting, clowning, musical theater, play production, and improvisation.

For more information: 415.439.2444 | www.ACTactorstraining.org

STUDIO A.C.T.
Summer session enrolling now!
June 4–August 15, 2007

Whether you’re a beginner or a seasoned professional, Studio A.C.T. allows you to explore your imagination, your voice, and your intellect in a safe and rewarding environment. Classes are scheduled on nights and weekends to accommodate work and home commitments; teachers are working Bay Area professionals. Choose from classes in acting, improvisation, voice and speech, Meister technique, Shakespeare, and this session only—a special musical theater movement class.

For more information: 415.439.2332 | www.ACTactorstraining.org

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE FREE EVENTS at American Conservatory Theatre...

KORET PROLOGUE
A conversation with the director before the 7 p.m. Tuesday preview (5:30-6 p.m.)
Tuesday 5/1
Tuesday 6/12

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES
Free post-performance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members
Tuesday 5/8
Tuesday 5/15
Wednesday 5/22*
Tuesday 6/19
Wednesday 6/26
Sunday 7/1*

OUT WITH A.C.T.
A gathering of gay and lesbian theatre-goers, immediately following the 8 p.m. performance
Wednesday 5/9
Wednesday 6/20

ACT ONE
ACT One consists of acts from their 20th and 30th to great theater, hot events and parties, and all other.
—

THEATER ON THE COUCH
An exciting 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 psychoanalytical aspects of the play and take questions from the audience.
Friday 5/4
—

*Indicates matinee performance

AND DON’T FORGET...

KORET VISITING ARTIST SERIES
“New Voices, New Works”
A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM CLASS OF 2002 GRADUATION
A.C.T. COMEDY NIGHT
A.C.T. YOUNG CONSERVATORY PRESENTS
Fields of Gold: The Music of Sting

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A.C.T. STAFF

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
Heather Kitchen
Executive Director
Melissa Smith
Producing Director
James Haise
Lobby Director
Jeffrey P. Malley
General Manager

ARTISTIC
Johnnie Johnson, Associate Artistic Director
Mary Lee Gold, Director of Development
Siegfried Haffner, Governing Director
Bill LeBlanc, Governors' Relations
Daphne D’Souza, Director of Marketing and Audience Education

A.C.T. STAFF

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
A.C.T.'s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 35 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108, 415.884.3200. On the Web: www.aact.org

TICKET SERVICES INFORMATION
A.C.T. Ticket Services
Visit us at 406 Gray Street at Mezz, next to the theatre, one block west of Union Square. 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 415.749.2272 and use American Express, Visa, or MasterCard. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2221. Tickets are also available 24 hours a day at our website at www.aact.org. All sales are final and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance preferential seating and last-minute ticket coverage. Subscriptions are available by calling 415.749.2272. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or in person.

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Discounts
Half-price tickets are sometimes available one hour prior to curtain time. Square-half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the A.C.T. Ticket Services office two hours before curtain. Matinee senior rush tickets are also available one hour prior to curtain time. Student and senior rush tickets are available only on the day of the performance for $10. All rush tickets are subject to availability; one ticket per valid ID. Student and senior rush tickets are also available one hour prior to curtain time. 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 Burner at 415.749.2223.

A.C.T. MERCHANTIZE
A.C.T.-branded merchandise—clothing, jewelry, DVDs, books, and other novelty items—also available on the Web: www.aact.org

ADVERTISING

For Your Information

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that its Automatic Electrical Distillery (AED) is now available on site.

AFFILIATIONS
A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. A.C.T. is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is also a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group, and funded by the New York State Council on the Arts.

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