

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

The Little Foxes

by LILLIAN HELLMAN

Directed by

LAIRD WILLIAMSON

Special Issue!
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Inside A.C.T., our
backstage magazine.

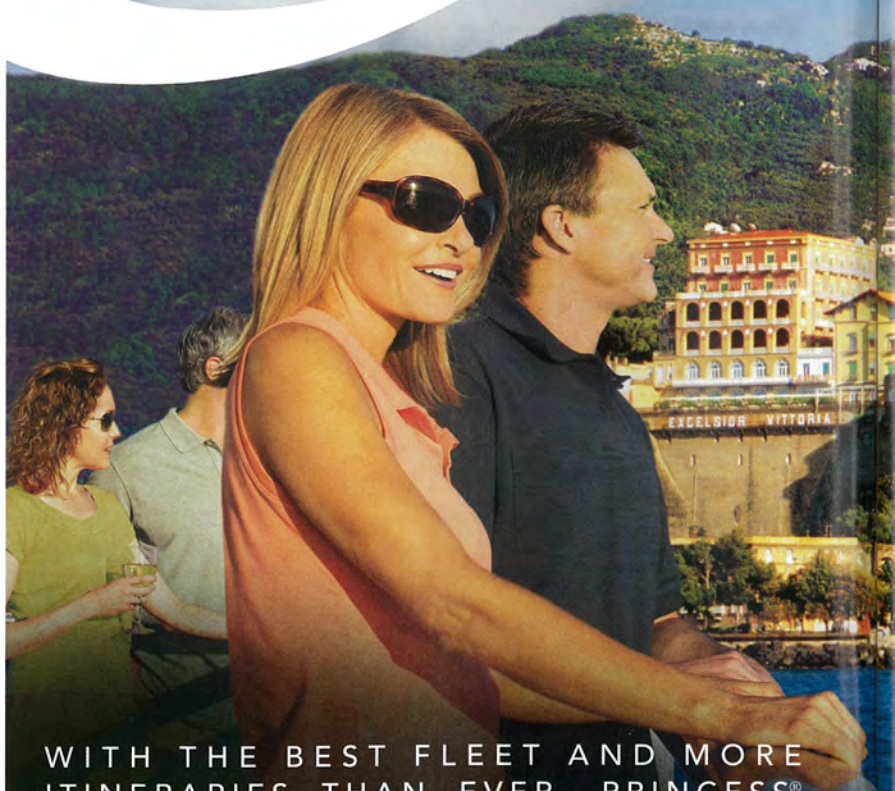


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WANT TO KNOW
MORE ABOUT
THE LITTLE FOXES?

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. Each entertaining and informative

issue contains a synopsis, advance program notes, study questions, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

Individual issues of Words on Plays for each production are available in the lobby and online at www.act-sf.org. Subscriptions to Words on Plays are also available for the entire 2006-07 season. For more information call 415.749.2250.

ABOUT A.C.T.

A.C.T. AUDIENCE PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNÉ



AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Heather Kitchen, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent its relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring

new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.'s creative work.

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



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american conservatory theater

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American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.

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Artistic Director 1986–1992

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"She's unmarried. She told me that in her opinion marriage was bound to be a failure if a woman could only have one husband at a time."

PHOTO COLLAGE BY ELIZABETH ZELON

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

JOCK McDONALD



Dear Friends,

I'm not sure Lillian Hellman could ever have imagined how prescient and frighteningly apropos her wicked and beautifully observed play *The Little Foxes* would seem, 70 years after its creation. We find ourselves yet again at a moment in

which American business is struggling to defend itself against an onslaught of charges of corporate malfeasance, so it is perhaps illustrative, and certainly fascinating, to reexamine the infamous, yet strangely familiar, Hubbards and their less-than-moral commercial practices.

In *The Little Foxes*, Hellman has written a melodrama in the best sense of the word (as director Laird Williamson said in his opening remarks to the cast, a melodrama is really "a play in which you can't wait to find out what happens next"), as we witness the members of a Southern family tearing each other apart in the desperate attempt to expand their financial empire. To my mind, *The Little Foxes* is not so much a play about the evils of money as it is an exploration of the deep vacuum within certain people that renders money-making their only seemingly viable option in life. This is a play that has meant a great deal to the American theater since its 1939 Broadway debut, and it resonated strongly with San Francisco audiences in its production at a young American Conservatory Theater in 1979.

As I'm sure you know by now, this season marks A.C.T.'s 40th anniversary in San Francisco. One of the wonderful things about an occasion like this is that it allows us to look back at the remarkable achievements of those who came before us, as well as to dream about the future. In selecting plays for this season, I went back through the entire list of A.C.T.'s past repertoire, and it reminded me how deeply committed this theater has always been to three things: great ideas, great language, and great acting. *The Little Foxes* is an opportunity to exercise all of those values, which is why it feels so uniquely appropriate for this celebratory season. It means a great deal to me that this production is being led by one of the most imaginative and visionary directors

in A.C.T.'s history, Laird Williamson, and that it is being designed by the great Robert Blackman, who had an enormous influence on A.C.T.'s legendary work in the company's early years.

It is equally exciting to me that this production features an ensemble filled with A.C.T. history: Julia Gibson, who mesmerized audiences as Harper in A.C.T.'s extraordinary *Angels in America* in 1994–95; Nicholas Hormann, who died so beautifully in *Dinner at Eight* during my very first season at A.C.T.; Jack Willis, whose Big Daddy (*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) and Sammy Wurlitzer (*Happy End*) exploded on this stage last season; Rhonnie Washington, who has portrayed both Ebenezer Scrooge and Jacob Marley's Ghost in A.C.T.'s beloved *A Christmas Carol*; Robert Parsons, who has graced the A.C.T. stage in projects as diverse as *The Black Rider*, *Buried Child*, *The Colossus of Rhodes*, and *Good*; and two highly talented A.C.T. M.F.A. Program students, John Bull and Grace Heid, who are making their A.C.T. mainstage debuts. With *The Little Foxes* we also welcome the gifted Jacqueline Antaramian to the American Conservatory Theater stage as the powerful Regina, along with ensemble members Margaret Robinson, last seen here in 1992's *Pecong*, and Stephen Klum, previously at A.C.T. in Frank Loesser's *Hans Christian Andersen*. Collectively, the artists in this play span the history of A.C.T.!

Welcome to the venal world of *The Little Foxes*.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Perloff".

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director

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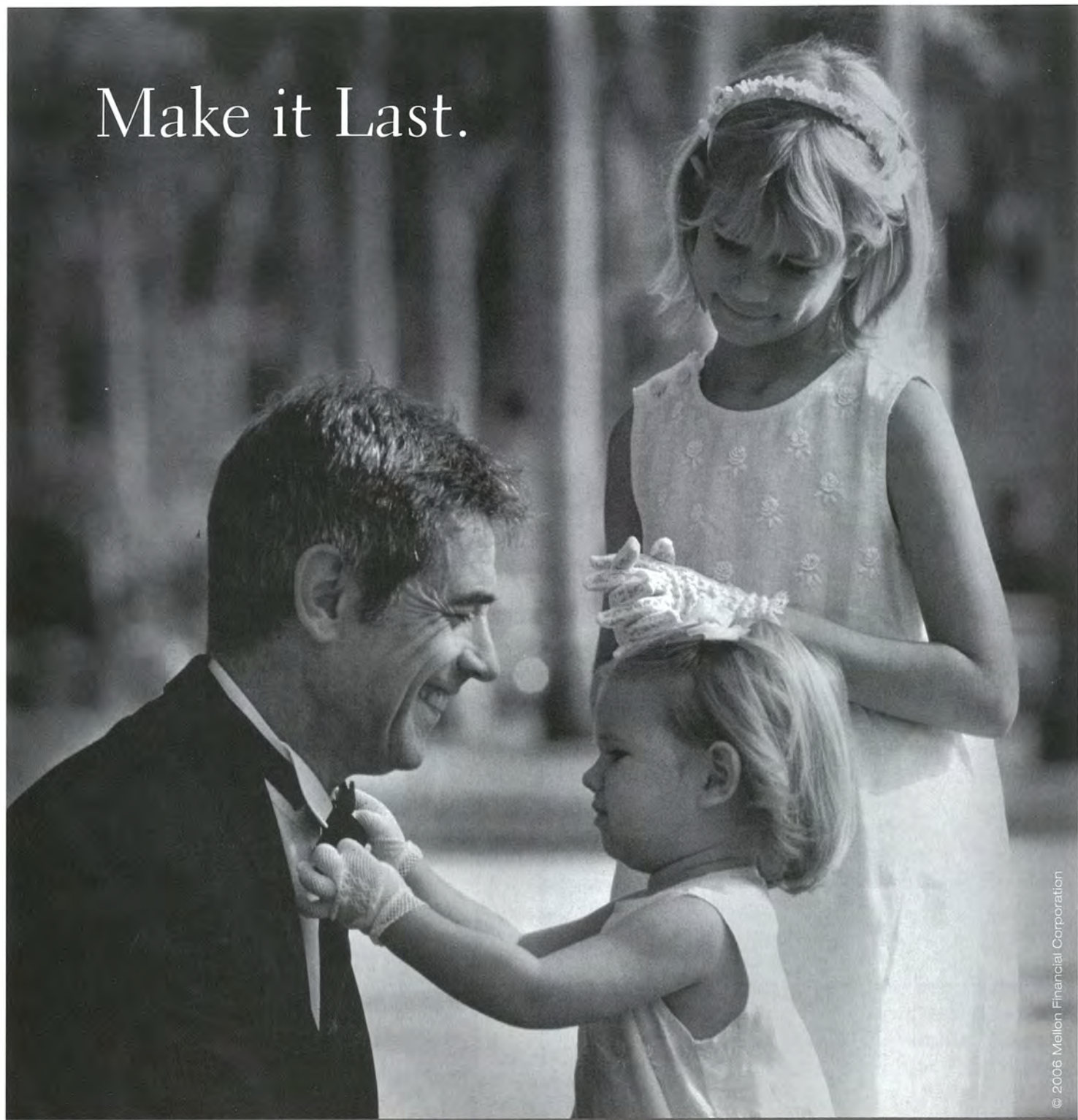
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**A.C.T.**

american conservatory theater

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director • Heather Kitchen, Executive Director

presents

The Little Foxes

(1939)

*by Lillian Hellman**Directed by Laird Williamson*

Scenery and Costumes by Robert Blackman
Lighting by Russell H. Champa
Sound by Steve Schoenbeck
Dramaturg Michael Paller
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw

THE CAST*(in order of appearance)*

<i>Addie</i>	Margarette Robinson
<i>Cal</i>	Rhonnie Washington
<i>Birdie Hubbard</i>	Julia Gibson
<i>Oscar Hubbard</i>	Robert Parsons
<i>Leo Hubbard</i>	John Bull*
<i>Regina Giddens</i>	Jacqueline Antaramian
<i>William Marshall</i>	Stephen Klum
<i>Benjamin Hubbard</i>	Jack Willis
<i>Alexandra Giddens</i>	Grace Heid*
<i>Horace Giddens</i>	Nicholas Hormann

UNDERSTUDIES

Benjamin—Stephen Klum; *Oscar, Horace, William*—Charles Shaw Robinson
Regina, Birdie—Carrie Paff; *Alexandra*—Allison Jean White
Leo—Joel Rainwater; *Addie*—Dawn-Elin Fraser; *Cal*—Michael Gene Sullivan

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Elisa Guthertz, *Stage Manager*
 Nicole Dickerson, *Assistant Stage Manager*
 Cassandra Phillipps, *Intern*

TIME AND PLACE

The living room of the Giddens House, in a small town in the South, in the spring of 1900.

Act I: Evening

Act II: Morning, one week later

Act III: Late afternoon, two weeks later

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A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF LILLIAN HELLMAN



LILLIAN HELLMAN IN 1934 (© BETTMANN/CORBIS)

Lillian Hellman was born in New Orleans to Julia (Newhouse) Hellman, who came from Alabama, and Max B. Hellman, from New Orleans. After briefly attending New York (1922–24) and Columbia (1924) universities, she began her literary career writing book reviews for the *New York Herald Tribune* and publishing short stories in *The Paris Comet*. In 1930 she moved with her husband, screenwriter and press agent Arthur Kober, to Hollywood and found work as a script reader for MGM. “When I first went out to Hollywood one heard talk from writers about whoring,” Hellman once said. “But you are not tempted to whore unless you want to be a whore.” In Hollywood Hellman met detective fiction writer Dashiell Hammett, who—despite numerous affairs on both sides—would remain her intimate companion and literary mentor until his death in 1961.

Hellman’s marriage to Kober ended in amicable divorce in 1932, and she returned to New York. At Hammett’s prompting, Hellman adapted a true story about two Scottish schoolteachers charged by a young student with lesbianism into her first play, *The Children’s Hour* (1934). The play ran for nearly 700 performances and brought Hellman instant recognition.

In 1935 Hellman went to work for Samuel Goldwyn as a screenwriter on such films as *Dark Angel* (1935), *These Three* (her adaptation of *The Children’s Hour*, 1936), *Dead End* (1937), and *The North Star* (1943). Hellman’s Hollywood success softened the failure of her next play, *Days to Come* (1936).

In 1936–37 Hellman traveled in Europe. She met Ernest Hemingway and other American writers living in Paris, visited Spain, where she witnessed the horrors of the civil war, and traveled in the Soviet Union.

The Little Foxes (1939) is among Hellman’s best-known works. The Goldwyn studio purchased the rights for the play after its success on Broadway. Arthur Kober, Dorothy Parker, and Alan Campbell were hired to do the final work on Hellman’s script for William Wyler’s film adaptation, which starred Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, and Teresa Wright.

From the mid 1930s, Hellman was frequently involved in liberal and leftist activities and organizations. While she worked on the plays *Watch on the Rhine* (1941), *The Searching Wind* (1944), and *Another Part of the Forest* (1946), the prequel to *The Little Foxes*, Hammett stopped writing, started drinking more heavily, and concentrated on working for the American Communist Party. Hellman followed his lead. Both Hellman and Hammett were members of the League of American Writers, the Screen Writers Guild, the American Labor Party, and the American League for Peace and Democracy, all well-known fronts for communist organizations. Although both Hammett and Hellman were later ridiculed by other party members for being mere figureheads, both were called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee and both pleaded the Fifth Amendment, refusing to name anyone as a member of a communist organization. Hammett went to jail and Hellman was blacklisted by Hollywood. In a letter to the committee she wrote: “To hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent and dishonorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year’s fashions.” For the rest of her life, however, Hellman would deny that she was ever a communist.

In the 1950s, unable to work in Hollywood, Hellman turned her attention to adapting plays—*Monstrat* (1950), *The Lark* (1956), based on Jean Anouilh’s play *L’Alouette* about Joan of Arc, and Voltaire’s *Candide* (1957), with music by Leonard Bernstein. She wrote three more original plays: *The Autumn Garden* (1951), her last collaboration with Hammett; *Toys in the Attic* (1960); and *My Mother, My Father and Me* (1961).

In the 1960s Hellman began teaching and writing her memoir trilogy: *An Unfinished Woman* (1969), which describes her childhood in New Orleans, years in Hollywood, and her relationship with Hammett; *Pentimento* (1973), dealing with her youth and early days in New York; and *Scoundrel Time* (1976), recalling her experiences with HUAC. Her final works included the novel *Maybe* (1980) and *Eating Together: Recipes and Recollections* (1984).

Hellman was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, received the Gold Medal for Drama from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and was awarded the MacDowell Medal. She died on June 30, 1984.

FAME AND FOXES

BY DEBORAH MARTINSON

TAKE US THE FOXES, THE LITTLE FOXES THAT SPOIL THE VINES

FOR OUR VINES HAVE TENDER GRAPES.

—*Song of Solomon* (2:15)

I HAD MEANT THE AUDIENCE TO RECOGNIZE SOME PART OF THEMSELVES IN THE
MONEY-DOMINATED HUBBARDS; I HAD NOT MEANT PEOPLE TO THINK OF THEM AS VILLAINS TO
WHOM THEY HAD NO CONNECTION.

—*Lillian Hellman*

In October 1937, then 32-year-old playwright Lillian Hellman, still reeling from the disappointing failure the year before of her second Broadway play, Days to Come—all the more disturbing since it followed her tremendously successful 1934 Broadway debut with The Children's Hour—traveled to Spain to support the Spanish Republicans in their civil war. There she was deeply moved by the deprivation and humiliation of the combatants struggling against fascist rule.

Hellman first thought of doing another play coming out of Spain. She didn't know what spurred her creatively; she "only thought about the play to keep from thinking about the plane ride and to keep from admitting to myself that in a few hours I would be having a fine dinner in Toulouse. I would be so hungry that I would forget about my friends in Spain who would not eat so much that night or the next one." She had been afraid to write another play and used politics to avoid it, but she had not lost touch with Broadway drama or Hollywood cinema. Embarrassed by *Days to Come*, she knew that she would have to write a drama that tapped into her own vision of the world from her own background.

From that premise, she began the six two-inch-thick notebooks of research that gave factual reality to those southern voices from her past. She said she tripped into "a giant tangled time-jungle" of her family history. Then she drew from herself "the half-remembered, half-observed, the half-understood which you need so much as you begin to write."

Hellman did not invent the carnivorous, sly, comic-evil Hubbards as much as expose them. Her script tells the story of the Hubbard family of Alabama, ready to sell out anyone, including their own kin and what is left of their souls, to gain wealth and standing. Through their antics she traced the excesses of capitalists who crush their own history and the "little people" around them, including family and friends. Hellman created a world

"populated by killers and victims, by eaters and the eaten, by foxes and geese." These characters, not their politics, carried the play and drew on her family connections to the United Fruit Company, notorious for its entrepreneurial interference in the politics and economics of banana republics.



STONE LIONS AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE VICKSBURG COTTON EXCHANGE, 1930s. PHOTO BY EUDORA WELTY (© EUDORA WELTY/CORBIS).

The Little Foxes and its 1946 prequel, *Another Part of the Forest*, focused on the Hubbard family drama and community exploitation. The checkered history of Hellman's wealthy southern family and knowledge of the South created an atmosphere as universal and steamily southern as Tennessee Williams's later plays. The Hubbards speak her particular southern language: witty, sly, charming, and malicious. Yet Hellman insisted her foxes live everywhere, telling a New Orleans audience years later, "I simply happened to write about the South because I knew the people and I knew the place . . . but I didn't mean it to be just for the South." In the world of business without ethics "these fictional turn-of-the-century robber barons bear an all too close resemblance" to greedy "fine gentlemen" of any time and place.

In early drafts she made Regina's abysmal treatment of her husband Horace more in keeping with her own extended family history, as she moves him first to an attic, then to slave quarters. Hellman originally wrote in a scene plucked from family legend: Regina rode a horse in circles outside the house as Horace died without his medicine. Retelling some of this family history for *Pentimento*, Hellman reflected, "All that seemed fine for the play. But it wasn't; life had been too big, too muddled for writing." So she whittled it down to the more believable act of Regina withholding Horace's medicine. What the audience sees is brutality under the patina of soft southern accents and gruff, appealing humor. The irony sizzles beneath.

Money and power, or the desire for it, dominated Hellman's Hubbards. Oscar ravages the land and his wife, Birdie. Ben, shrewd and cunning, controls the family business. Sister Regina manipulates and schemes and gets the upper hand over them all, as she disregards her own family in blatant self-interest and

exploitation. Tallulah Bankhead later wrote of the character she brought to life, "Regina Giddens was a rapacious bitch, cruel and callous. Etched in acid by Miss Hellman." So sinful, so flamboyant was Regina that Marc Blitzstein wrote *Regina*, an opera adapted from *The Little Foxes* and produced on Broadway in 1949. Hellman praised it as "the most original of American operas and the most daring." The complexity of the human spirit, the tragedy and comedy of all motivations and actions was Hellman's dramatic subject.

A popular story circulated that after *Foxes* opened, Hellman and her father, Max, stood at the back of the theater. "Miss Hellman leaned over and whispered into the ear of a mutual friend, 'ask papa if he recognizes any of us.'" Years later when an interviewer commented, "Your family is incredible," Hellman replied, "Everybody's family is incredible." Hellman objected to attempts to find exact correspondences that make the play personal rather than universal, though her Uncle Samuel Zemurray's first partner was named Ashbell Hubbard, and Regina Marx was part of Hellman's family tree.

After she unearthed her family and set them in motion, she went to her own experts for advice. Most important of all was Dashiell Hammett, his own writing career subsumed by alcoholism, who recovered sobriety long enough to help her do what he could no longer do himself—write a hit.

Hellman maintained that of all her plays, *The Little Foxes* owed most to Hammett. The two had stayed together because their bonds were strong, their ties complicated. They understood each other. Hammett's flagrantcy gave her freedom; his rigid codes required her own. But one of the strongest aspects of their relationship was their work together on a play. Hammett

loved Hellman and gave her plays more than his editorial talent. He gave himself, knowing she gave everything, too. Her plays became *their* center and she always credited him for his part, an odd symbiosis. He joked, "You're practically breaking my heart with letters about the play. I think we're going to have to make a rule that you're not to tackle any work when I'm not around to spur, quiet, goad, pacify, and tease you." Work gave Hammett a reason to sober up temporarily. He demanded and got from her a disciplined work ethic he could no longer stomach. Whether or not he knew he was finished as a writer, he dogmatically refused to let her fail. He saw her wicked, funny wit as a creative force. She had talent. Hammett thought Hellman worth it.



A WORKER STANDS BEHIND THREADS BEING FED INTO THE WARP SIDE OF A MACHINE LOOM AT A COTTON MILL, 1908. PHOTO BY LEWIS WICKES HINE (© CORBIS).

To stage the vibrant *Foxes*, Hellman turned again to Herman Shumlin, who had produced and directed *The Children's Hour*. His intensity was exactly right. At 41 he reentered the 34-year-old Hellman's daily life with great energy, pleased to produce and direct *The Little Foxes* at the National, his lucky theater. With its early-Renaissance-style carvings and gold embellishments in warm Italian walnut, the theater's interior provided a backdrop for southern Old World ambience; its yellow bulbs lighting the gilt ornaments warmed the room—perfect for the cold, steely nastiness masked by southern charm played out within.

Shumlin's chief coup was casting Tallulah Bankhead as Regina, one of America's "most cunning female villains." Bankhead epitomized Regina, though Hellman never could say it aloud. Bankhead, delighted by her wild reputation ("I'm pure as the driven slush"), drew on her own sins and flagrancies to fit the character. The actress called Regina "the best role I ever had in the theater."

The Little Foxes opened to packed crowds and rave reviews on February 15, 1939. *Time* magazine hailed it as "the season's most tense and biting drama," and the all-important *New York Times* hailed it as vivid theater, with Bankhead giving the finest performance of her career. However, some critics complained that it was too melodramatic or "a sinister play about sinister people." The play originally ran for 410 performances, and it has become an American classic.

The Little Foxes took Hellman "smack-dab before the portals of immortality." The Pulitzer didn't reward her nor the Drama Critics' Circle, though she gathered six votes of twelve and split the committee, forcing a tie. She began to be leery about such prizes. (When *Oklahoma!* opened in 1943, she wrote exhusband Arthur Kober, "It should get the Critics prize, being far better than the pretentious shit that will get it.") If prizes didn't matter, success did, and reinstatement in the rarefied world of Broadway. She asked her literary executors to guard *The Little Foxes* production after her death, to "be careful" with it. Its success came to mean hers. It proved her worth as the most "relentless" of female playwrights—a "species far more deadly than the male."

The Little Foxes tantalized Sam Goldwyn from the minute he heard of its success as a Broadway play in New York. Goldwyn snapped up the rights to it, despite his story editor Edwin Knopf's warning that the story was "too caustic." Rumor had it that Goldwyn blew up: "I don't care what it costs, I want it!" And he got it. Then he asked Hellman to adjust the script for a more conventional audience. Hellman's screenplay begins simply. Following the credits, the words on the screen appear: "Little foxes have lived in all times, in all places. This family happened to live in the Deep South in 1900."

The film was foolproof, as much as anything made in Hollywood could be. Critics acclaimed it as "a whole new course of motion-picture making." During its filming, Hellman remained



ELIZABETH HUDDLE IN THE 1979 A.C.T. PRODUCTION OF *THE LITTLE FOXES*, DIRECTED BY TOM MOORE. PHOTO BY WILLIAM GANSLER.

The play is nearly half a century old, now; but, alas, it has scarcely dated. Or, rather, it has dated only in one respect: Hellman underlines her message about the evil of human greed, preaching to us about an upcoming century of Hubbard-style ruthless grasping; and we do not need to have this message emphasized, for the truth of her predictions is all too obvious in today's world. Indeed, during the earlier scenes of the play, the craven plottings and counterplottings of the Hubbards get laughs from the audience—it is, I believe, the laughter of recognition.

—Robert Chesley, *San Francisco Review of Books*,
about the 1979 A.C.T. production

remarkably calm in the Hollywood hoopla and ultimately agreed with critics who felt that Wyler's adaptation of the film gave it its greatness. *The Little Foxes* was nominated for nine Oscars: best picture, director, screenplay, actress (Bette Davis, as Regina), and two for best supporting actress (Patricia Collinge, as Birdie, and Teresa Wright, as Alexandra)—the most Goldwyn had ever received for a single production. But there were no winners. Up against *Citizen Kane* and *The Maltese Falcon*, the runaway winner in 1941 was John Ford's quaintly sentimental drama *How Green Was My Valley*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



Was the eldest in my family.
Grew up very happy.
Swam, skied, played tennis.
Not a lot of girls did that back then.
Love caviar. Love it, love it, love it.
Lived in many countries as a diplomat's wife.
Danced with presidents and kings.
Proudest of my 2 children and 2 grandchildren.
Always wanted to be just as I am.
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WHO'S WHO IN *THE LITTLE FOXES*



JACQUELINE ANTARAMIAN*
(Regina Giddens)
was recently
nominated for a
Barrymore Award
for her performance
in the one-woman

play *Nine Parts of Desire*. She was also recently seen in Daniel Sullivan's production of *Julius Caesar* on Broadway with Denzel Washington. Her extensive theater credits include Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Serafina in *The Rose Tattoo*, Elmire in *Tartuffe*, Hannah in *Arcadia*, Sabina in *Skin of Our Teeth*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Portia in *Julius Caesar*, Elvira in *Blithe Spirit*, Abbie in *Desire under the Elms*, Rose in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Mahala in *Homebody/Kabul* at Intiman Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and the title roles of *Candida*, *Miss Julie*, and *Hedda Gabler*. Television and film credits include "Law & Order," "Third Watch," "Diagnosis Murder," "The Sopranos," and *The Siege*.



JOHN BULL (Leo Hubbard), who grew up in Mountain View and got his start at Los Altos Youth Theatre, is a member of the A.C.T. Master of

Fine Arts Program class of 2007. This past summer he was part of the tenth-anniversary Guthrie Experience, which performed *Confluence* in Minneapolis. At UC Berkeley, he majored in religious studies, minored in theater, dance, and performance studies, and was seen at Zellerbach Playhouse as Marat in *Marat/Sade*, Scar Tissue in *Marisol*, and Lucifer (among 11 roles) in *Divine Comedy: Dante Project*. He also attended Wake Forest University in North Carolina for two years, where he appeared in *The Matchmaker* and *Suddenly Last Summer* and won the decathlon in the Atlantic

Coast Conference Outdoor Track and Field Championships.



JULIA GIBSON*
(Birdie Hubbard) was last seen at A.C.T. as Harper in *Angels in America* and recently performed in the national tour of *The Exonerated*.

New York credits include *Miss Julie* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater); *Stealing Sweets and Punching People* (SPF '04); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Henry VIII*, and *Measure for Measure* (New York Shakespeare Festival); *The Learned Ladies* and *Candide* (Classic Stage Company); and performances with Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop, Circle in the Square, Roundabout Theatre Company, Soho Repertory Theatre, and The Irish Repertory Theatre. Regional credits include *Tally's Folly* (George Street Playhouse), *Helena* in *All's Well That Ends Well* (Goodman Theatre), and performances with Dallas Theater Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Philadelphia Festival Theater, and Long Wharf Theatre. Television and film credits include *Changing Lanes*, *Second Born*, "Law & Order," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," "Spin City," "One Life to Live," and the upcoming film *Michael Clayton*. Gibson is a graduate of NYU's Graduate Acting Program and works as a director and as a voice for Recorded Books.



GRACE HEID
(Alexandra Giddens) is a member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2007. Favorite roles in the M.F.A. Program

include Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Phaedre in *The Love of the Nightingale*,

Woman B in *Three Tall Women*, and Annie in *Anatol Fragments*. Heid worked at The New Harmony Project Playwrights Conference for several years, where she acted in readings of Donna Daley's *Deeply Shallow* and Jim Leonard's *Anatomy of Gray*. Heid also studied at the Prima Del Teatro in San Miniato, Italy, last summer. She received her B.F.A. in theater performance from the University of Evansville.



NICHOLAS HORMANN*
(Horace Giddens) last appeared at A.C.T. in *Dinner at Eight*. He began his career performing two Broadway repertory

seasons at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre under Harold Prince and the New Phoenix Repertory Company. Since then he has appeared on Broadway and off Broadway in new plays at Second Stage, The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, and Manhattan Theatre Club. Regional appearances include productions at La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, the Mark Taper Forum, the Ahmanson Theatre, South Coast Repertory, the McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, The Kennedy Center Theater, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Sundance Theatre Lab. Roles include *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Benedick*, *Angelo*, *Henry Higgins*, *Atticus Finch*, *Elyot Case*, and *Laurence Olivier*. Most recently, he performed in the West Coast premiere of *The Retreat from Moscow* at South Coast Repertory and the New York premiere of Charles Mee's *Wintertime*. He has made numerous television appearances. Hormann is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

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Who's Who



STEPHEN KLUM* (*William Marshall*) returns to A.C.T., where previously he sang in the chorus and understudied Tony Award-winning

actor John Glover in the world premiere of the musical *Frank Loesser's Hans Christian Andersen*. Recent credits include Frederick in *A Little Night Music* and Greg in a "back-by-popular-demand" production of *Sylvia*, both of which were directed by Bay Area notable Hector Correa. Klum's Shakespearean credits include Kent (*King Lear*), Antonio (*The Merchant of Venice*), and King Alonzo (*The Tempest*) at California Shakespeare Theater and Feste (*Twelfth Night*), Benedick (*Much Ado about Nothing*), and Boyet (*Love's Labor's Lost*) at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Klum has worked regional theater from Seattle to Miami. Favorite roles include Sherlock Holmes, Tartuffe, and Robert in *Proof*. In New York, he made numerous appearances on "Guiding Light" and "One Life to Live."



ROBERT PARSONS* (*Oscar Hubbard*) has been seen at A.C.T. in *The Black Rider*, *Buried Child*, *The Colossus of Rhodes*, and *Good*. Regional credits

include productions of *The Black Rider* at the Sydney Festival and the Ahmanson Theatre, *Misalliance* at the Alley Theatre, *The Heiress* at Arizona Theatre Company, *One Flea Spare* at New Repertory Theatre, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and *K* at HERE in New York. Bay Area credits include appearances at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Magic Theatre, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Stage Company, Marin

Theatre Company, Word for Word, the Willows Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, The Z Space Studio, Sacramento Theatre Company, and TheatreWorks. Film credits include *Black August* and *Almost Famous*.



MARGARETTE ROBINSON* (*Addie*) was last seen at A.C.T. as Faustina in *Pecong*. Other Bay Area credits include the recent production of

Permanent Collection at Aurora Theatre Company, *Crowns* at the Marines Memorial Theatre, *From the Mississippi Delta* (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle [BATCC] Award) and *Wilder, Wilder, Wilder* (BATCC Award) at Marin Theatre Company, *The Trial of One Shortighted Black Woman vs. Mammy Louise and Safreeta Mae* and *Home* at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* at TheatreWorks. She also performed in *Devotees in the Garden of Love*, directed by Oskar Eustis, at Actors Theatre of Louisville.



RHONNIE WASHINGTON* (*Cal*) is part of the Department of Theatre Arts at San Francisco State University. He earned his Ph.D.

from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, majoring in directing with a minor in theater history and criticism. His most recent SFSU directing project was *Betrayal*, by Nobel Prize winner Harold Pinter. His recent acting credits include Carl in *Bus Stop* at Marin Theatre Company and Troy Maxon in August Wilson's *Fences*. Other roles include Polonius in *Hamlet* and Aegeon

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

Who's Who

in *The Comedy of Errors* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and both Ebenezer Scrooge and Jacob Marley's Ghost in A.C.T.'s *A Christmas Carol*. Washington has been honored twice by the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* with a Goldie Award.



JACK WILLIS*
(*Benjamin Hubbard*)

most recently was seen in *Gypsy* with Patti LuPone at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. He has appeared in

more than 175 productions throughout the United States, including recent appearances at A.C.T. in *Happy End*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *The Black Rider*. He is an associate artist at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., and has been a company member of the American Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, and the Dallas Theater Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in *Julius Caesar*, *The Crucible*, *Art*, and *The Old Neighborhood*. His off-Broadway credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *World of Mirth*, *The Iphigenia Cycle*, and *Valhalla*. Film and television credits include *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *The Out-of-Towners*, *Love Hurts*, *I Come in Peace*, *Problem Child*, "Law & Order," "Ed," and "Dallas." Willis is a cofounder of Aruba Repertory.



DAWN-ELIN FRASER*

(*Understudy*) has performed with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, A.C.T., the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival,

Chautauqua Theater Conservatory, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Campo Santo, and many up-and-coming local companies, including Encore Theatre Company (with whom she performed

in the long-running production of Adam Bock's *Five Flights*). Specializing in voice, speech, and dialects, she is currently an associate core faculty member in the A.C.T. Conservatory. She has held residencies and/or taught master classes at Stanford University, the Young California Writers' Project, San Francisco State University, and the SF Arts Education Project. She has also served as dialect coach for productions at all of the major Bay Area theaters, including Marin Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and TheatreWorks. She is the editor of the zine *Fully Crushed Out* and received her master of fine arts degree from A.C.T.

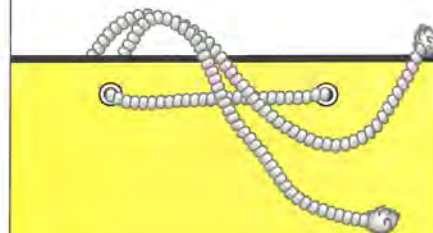


CARRIE PAFF*
(*Understudy*)

was recently seen at A.C.T. in the workshop of *The Imaginary Invalid* at Stanford as well as Carey Perloff's

Waiting for the Flood in the First Look series last season. In May, she played Jen/Jocasta in the West Coast premiere of Craig Lucas's *Small Tragedy* at Aurora Theatre Company. Other Bay Area credits include the world premiere of *The Haunting of Winchester* at San Jose Repertory Theatre, *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'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. Film credits include *Presque Isle* (Rob Nilsson) and *Opal's Diary* (Dina Ciraulo). She holds a master's degree in educational theater from New York University and is the cofounder of StageWrite, Building Literacy through Theatre.

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Who's Who



JOEL RAINWATER*
(Understudy)

appeared as
a Charitable
Gentleman and
Alan in A.C.T.'s

A Christmas Carol last year. Rainwater was recently seen in *Salome*, directed by Mark Jackson, at Aurora Theatre Company. Other credits include productions at California Shakespeare Theater, Kitchen Dog Theater in Dallas, The New Harmony Project in Indiana, the Tibbits Opera House in Michigan, and CalRep Theater in Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, where his roles included Oskar in *On the Bum*, or *the Next Train Through* and Georgi Abashvili and Yussup in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, both at Zeum Theater,

Danforth in *The Crucible*, Ligurio in *The Mandrake*, and the title role of *Richard III*. Rainwater is a cofounder of Irish Flu Productions. He received his B.F.A. in theater performance from the University of Evansville in Indiana.



CHARLES SHAW ROBINSON*

(Understudy) was last seen at A.C.T. in Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* and in Richard Nelson's

Goodnight Children Everywhere. He has appeared in New York in *The Common Pursuit*, written and directed by Simon Gray; John Houseman's production of *The Cradle Will Rock*; and *The Cruelties of Mrs. Schnayd*, directed by John Pepper. Regional theater credits include the title roles of *Hamlet* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), *Pericles* (Center Stage, Baltimore), and *Scaramouche* (The Empty Space Theatre, Seattle). Some favorite Bay Area roles include Milton in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's long-running production of Tony Kushner's *Homebody/Kabul*, Iago in *Othello* (California Shakespeare Theater), and Henri in *Magic Fire* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre/The Old Globe). He was also seen as Robert in *Betrayal* (Aurora Theatre Company) and Father in *Eurydice*, by Sara Ruhl (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Film work includes *No One Sleeps*, *Send Word*, *Bear Mother*, and the forthcoming *Mammoth Falls*.



MICHAEL GENE SULLIVAN*

(Understudy) has performed at A.C.T. in *The First Picture Show*, *Machinal*, *Pecong*, *Tartuffe*, "Master Harold"...

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and the boys, *Insurrection: Holding History*, *Blythe Spirit*, and five seasons of *A Christmas Carol*. Other regional theater credits include work with Denver Center Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, the Magic Theatre, the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, TheatreWorks, and theater festivals in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. He is also a member of the Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe, where he has performed, written, or directed more than 20 productions, including, most recently, the critically acclaimed *GodFellas*. Sullivan is the author of *1984*, the stage adaptation of George Orwell's dystopic novel. The play, directed by Tim Robbins, premiered at the Actors' Gang Theatre in Los Angeles and is currently touring nationally and internationally.



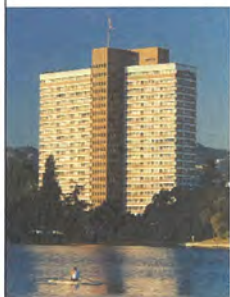
ALLISON JEAN WHITE*

(Understudy), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in Tom

Stoppard's *Travesties* and *The Real Thing* (both directed by Carey Perloff) and in the 2004 production of *A Christmas Carol*. She was also seen last spring in A.C.T. First Look presentations of *The Shaker Chair*, *Donna Wants*, *Warsaw*, and *Waiting for the Flood* at Zeum Theater. She appeared in *Chez Moi*, a clown cabaret, with Infinite Stage at The Players Theatre in New York and recently played Christina in *Red Light Winter* at the Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater. She performed with Killing My Lobster in *Goooal!!!* at the Magic Theatre and was seen at Venue 9 and The Marsh in her solo performance piece *Whitenoise*. White is a graduate of Brown University and the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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FALL 2006



Inside

A.C.T.

40
YEARS

WELCOME TO INSIDE A.C.T. FALL 2006



DEAR FRIENDS OF A.C.T.:

Early in my career, when I was working in Toronto at CanStage (with whom A.C.T. collaborated on last season's *The Overcoat*), the technical director of the theater was hired away by A.C.T. I remember the news circulating around the company in whispered and respectful tones because of the high esteem in which A.C.T. was held. I knew that I wanted to work at a theater whose standards were admired internationally and hoped someday A.C.T. would be a part of my life.

More than 20 years later, I, too, had the opportunity to join A.C.T. to form a CEO partnership with Carey Perloff. That was ten years ago and I have been growing with A.C.T. ever since.

Our challenges were very different ten years ago—we had just returned to the Geary Theater after years of nomadic post-earthquake existence, and we had a significant accumulated deficit with which to deal. The economy was booming in the late 1990s, our audience embraced the growth of the company, and because of that support we were able to grow artistically and financially. Today, Carey—who this year celebrates her 15th season

with A.C.T.—and I continue to develop our skills and continue to be enthused by you, our extraordinary audience. One of the things I most appreciate about you is your openness in letting us know what you think—whether we have disappointed or been transformational. Please keep letting us know how we are doing!

As we look forward to the season-long 40th-anniversary celebration of A.C.T., I want to thank the many people who have made my tenure here everything I could have wished for, as well as the many patrons, artists, trustees, craftspeople, staff, students, and community members who supported and grew this organization when I was still only dreaming of being here.

I hope that we have guided A.C.T. well, and that 40 years from now this organization is stronger, bolder, and more meaningful to this community than ever.

Enjoy the season and please keep in touch,

Heather Kitchen / Executive Director
American Conservatory Theater

ON THE COVER: SCENES FROM A TECHNICAL REHEARSAL OF A.C.T.'S 40TH-ANNIVERSARY-SEASON-OPENING PRODUCTION OF TOM STOPPARD'S *TRAVESTIES*. (FRONT, TOP INSET) A.C.T. HEAD CARPENTER MAURICE BEESLEY WORKS THE FLIES BACKSTAGE AT THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER; (FRONT, BOTTOM INSET) NEWEST A.C.T. CORE ACTING COMPANY MEMBER ALLISON JEAN WHITE TRAVERSES THE STAGE; (FRONT, MAIN PHOTO) A.C.T. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CAREY PERLOFF CONTEMPLATES HER NEXT DIRECTORIAL MOVE; (BACK) A.C.T. ASSOCIATE ARTIST GREGORY WALLACE PREPARES TO MAKE HIS ENTRANCE. PHOTOS BY JEREMY HARRIS.



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A COMMITMENT TO Discovery

CELEBRATING CAREY PERLOFF'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY AT A.C.T.

BY JESSICA WERNER ZACK

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TOM STOPPARD AND CAREY PERLOFF (2004, PHOTO BY DAVID M. ALLEN); OLYMPIA DUKAKIS IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER'S TRANSLATION OF EURIPIDES' *HECUBA* (1995, PHOTO BY RICHARD FELDMAN); A.C.T. ASSOCIATE ARTIST RENÉ AUGESSEN AND JAMES CARPENTER IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF PAUL WALSH'S TRANSLATION OF HENRIK IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE* (2004, PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN).



Carey Perloff is an excavator at heart—a self-described “cultural archaeologist” whose primary passion has always been exploring and unearthing concealed possibilities. As a high school student, she spent her summers working on archaeological digs in New Mexico and studying 3,000-year-old Anasazi relics. As an undergraduate at Stanford University, she learned Greek and studied classical drama and literature. She discovered a love of language that is not only meaningful, but visceral, mythic, altogether alive. During a year as a Fulbright fellow at Oxford, Perloff came to realize how thoroughly her love of the “find,” and of what the ancient Greeks, she has said, “knew about what it meant to be a citizen—engaged, questioning, connected to one’s community through theater”—could be satisfied in a career as a director.

As we celebrate Perloff’s 15th anniversary this season at the helm of A.C.T. (and the company’s 40th year in San Francisco), it is a fitting occasion to remember that it is this passionate commitment to discovery—of new voices, of forgotten classics, of the dynamic and muscular language that is the beating heart of the world’s great theatrical experiences—that has consistently energized her work as a director and has invigorated and transformed A.C.T. as a whole since she joined the company as its third artistic director in 1992.

Perloff remembers arriving in San Francisco and becoming immediately aware of the drama—and dramatic irony—in the fact that she was stepping into a theater quite literally in ruins. The once-majestic, federally designated landmark, and San Francisco treasure the Geary Theater had been gutted by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. “It was a ruin, and it felt so familiar,” Perloff said of her first glimpse of the damaged building. “I just wanted to get in there and excavate.”

The theater’s down-but-not-out condition was a fitting metaphor for the company Perloff signed on to lead. A.C.T., like many companies that had been formed

during the heady, idealistic days of the American regional theater movement in the 1960s and '70s, had fallen on hard times in the 1980s. A.C.T. was languishing, as a result of the departure of Founding Artistic Director William Ball, the shifting demographics of the theater's core audience, and a mounting deficit caused in part by a decrease in federal and foundation support.

In setting the strategy for the reinvigoration of the company, Perloff saw an important opportunity to ask the hard questions that would provide the answers necessary to ensure A.C.T.'s future survival and success. "Everything about the life and identity of this company needed to be rethought," she says. "Most significantly, we had to rethink the theater's purpose, and our own. We had to ask, 'What does this city want and need from A.C.T.?' And, 'What can we do differently from other theaters?' I was amazed to find, despite the perilous times, that A.C.T. had woven itself into the hearts of this city in deeper and more profound ways than I had realized."

A key to Perloff's decade-and-a-half of success has been her dedication to keeping San Francisco's engaged, progressive, and highly literate audience foremost in her mind as she has crafted A.C.T. seasons. "It became very clear that, even more important than infrastructure, people needed to love the art. They want to be challenged and delighted and surprised by what happens onstage."

From her inaugural A.C.T. project, a new translation (by Paul Walsh) of Strindberg's *Creditors*, to this season's opening production of *Travesties*, by longtime A.C.T. favorite Tom Stoppard, Perloff has established her commitment to creating repertoires that highlight bold writing, theatrical magic, evocative histories, and new ways of relating to our theatrical and literary traditions. Since 1992, she has directed 32 A.C.T. productions,

including 12 world and 4 American premieres. Her programming choices are guided by her belief that great ideas, great acting, and great language should take center stage. "We need to always be encouraging fabulous performances and vivid storytelling," she says.

While nurturing her own creativity as a director and a writer (the West Coast premiere of her third play, *Luminescence Dating*, will be coproduced by A.C.T. and the Magic Theatre in November), Perloff has overseen A.C.T.'s growth through initiatives she deems central to the life of a vibrant, nationally recognized theater: the establishment of a core company of resident actors; the centrality of training young actors in A.C.T.'s top-ranked conservatory; the development of new writing from a diverse range of authors; and the commitment of her fundraising energies to the creation of an endowment that will ensure the company's long-term fiscal security.

Perloff consistently cites as chief among the reasons she has thrived at A.C.T. the remarkable staff, her many positive collaborative working relationships, and the ever-essential relationship she fosters with A.C.T.'s audience. Over the course of 15 fruitful, high-energy, successful seasons as A.C.T. artistic director, Perloff has joined creative forces with more artists than could ever be included here. What follows are tributes from a few nearest to her heart and her craft.

Working on a production with Carey Perloff is like boarding a sleek silver train, one that goes very fast through the land of the play, somehow finding all the stations on the map, some of them known only to the playwright or not even to the playwright but only to Ms. Perloff, herself. Tremendous intellect, virtuosic directing

LEFT TO RIGHT: SUSAN GIBNEY AND ART MALIK IN THE U.S. PREMIERE OF TOM STOPPARD'S *INDIAN INK* (1999, PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN); WILLIAM PATERSON, RUTH KOBART, RAYE BIRK, AND JOY CARLIN IN DAVID STOREY'S *HOME* (1994, PHOTO BY TOM CHARGIN); GREGORY WALLACE IN *WAITING FOR GODOT* (2003, PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNÉ).



skills, sense of humor, drive, and deep understanding of any text make her a director with whom I love to work. She's also a great, great editor, one I trust totally with my work.

—*Playwright Constance Congdon*

To do what Carey does, to accomplish what she does, you have to be a wack job—you have to be crazy—and she is; Carey is out of her mind. How she blends the madness with the meticulous calendar-watch, and the nurturing of relationships, which are also part of her job, that I don't understand. I'm just glad for it.

—*Actor/clown Bill Irwin*

anniversary so well deserved. I look forward to us always dancing together...

—*Director Charles Randolph-Wright*

Carey has been the artistic director from whom I have learned the most, about art and life. She has certainly meant more to my career than any other A.D.—but more importantly, she has been my good friend. This may seem trivial, but those of you not in the “business” should know that the actor, despite what an audience assumes, is on the very bottom of the proverbial theater totem-pole: the last to be considered for anything and, for the most part, the last person anyone building a show wants to hear from.

I THINK THAT CAREY AND I MUST HAVE BEEN BORN ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH. NOT EVERY PLAYWRIGHT IS AS LUCKY AS TO HAVE A DIRECTOR WHO IS USUALLY SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF HIM INSTEAD OF SLIGHTLY BEHIND. A LOT OF WRITERS, INCLUDING MYSELF, LIKE TO THINK THAT THEIR PERSONAL THEATER IS TEXT-LED, BUT OF COURSE WHAT WE ALL RELY ON IS A DIRECTOR WHO ADDS THE MAGIC OF SHEER THEATRICALITY. PERHAPS BECAUSE SHE IS A WRITER HERSELF, BUT NOT A WRITER WHO SEEMS TO HAVE ANY DESIRE TO CORRECT ANOTHER WRITER'S PLAY, CAREY REPRESENTS A KIND OF IDEAL.

—*Playwright Tom Stoppard*

It's a matinee of *Tartuffe*, the house lights dim, Frank Sinatra croons “I've Got You Under My Skin,” and the curtain rises to a dance number. There is an inordinate number of people of color on that stage. This is *Tartuffe*? Suddenly dancing with the actors are an artistic director in a great black wig and a director in a fantastic jacket. Every member of the crew and house staff is watching from the wings, having heard of our appearance. The faces of the actors as we danced around them will remain with me always . . . Carey, do you believe we actually did that? What a perfect tribute to our relationship—Carey and Charles dancing together. Someone once said that you and I were twins; that you were me in pants. Well, I am extremely honored to be Carey Perloff in pants! At A.C.T., I have directed some of the most meaningful theatrical experiences of my career. I will never forget them and you, my wonderful sister, who is one of the few people on this planet who talks more than I do! Congratulations on an

The opposite is true with Carey. She made me feel proud and important and instilled in me the sense that an actor's contribution was indispensable.

Working at A.C.T. with Carey Perloff was, in my humble opinion, the greatest job an actor could have in the regional theater. Though I miss our collaboration, I miss her friendship most of all. How lucky you all are to have her in your midst.

—*Actor and former A.C.T. core company member (1997–2004) Marco Barricelli*

Fifteen years is enough time to see what people are made of. It is enough time to see where you want to go and start going there. Carey, A.C.T., and her audience have all done something amazing with the last 15 years. And the next 15? I can't wait.

—*Composer David Lang*

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The grand Beaux Arts-style building that stands at 415 Geary Street, near the corner of Mason, in the heart of San Francisco's legendary theater district, has been rechristened. As of this season, A.C.T.'s memorable 40th, the historic stage that has long been identified with the bold classical work that A.C.T. does so well will hereafter be known as the **American Conservatory Theater**, in official recognition that the company and the building are one and the same and permanent fixtures in San Francisco's cultural landscape.

Originally dubbed the Columbia (in honor of a venue destroyed by the earthquake and fire of 1906), the newly built theater opened on January 10, 1910. It was briefly known as the Wilkes and then the Lurie Theatre between 1924 and 1928 and was reopened as the Geary Theater on February 6, 1928. In January 1967, the Geary became A.C.T.'s San Francisco home, and in 1974 A.C.T. bought the building and established long-term residence.

"At a time when we are celebrating our first 40 years in San Francisco, we wanted to rename our great theater in a way that would permanently acknowledge that A.C.T. is at home in San Francisco," says A.C.T. Executive Director Heather Kitchen. A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff agrees, saying, "Renaming the Geary is a great vote of confidence in the health of our organization and a commitment to our audiences that A.C.T. will continue to contribute to people's lives in a way that only great theater can."

A JEWEL OF A THEATER

In 1967, a group of San Francisco civic leaders, including Cyril Magnin, Melvin Swig, and Mortimer Fleishhacker, installed recently founded American Conservatory Theater as San Francisco's premier resident theater company. The troupe immediately made its home in the landmark Geary Theater at 415 Geary Street (now known as the American Conservatory Theater; see sidebar), presenting there over the ensuing four decades some 300 productions to a collective audience of more than seven million people. As much a part of the action as any of the performers, the theater's gilt-framed stage has itself been a versatile member of the company, changing its inner workings and its name to support the productions, while remaining constant and steadfast, even when shaken to the ground.

The now 97-year-old building—the only one of the eight theaters built in San Francisco between 1906 and 1911 to continue in full-time operation—has hosted virtually all of America's great theater actors over the last century, from Sarah Bernhardt and Paul Robeson to Bill Irwin and Annette Bening. A fundamental piece of San Francisco history, the building was purchased by A.C.T. in 1974 with the help of the Ford Foundation; it earned a place on the National Register of Historic Places and was named a landmark of the State of California a year later. Largely destroyed by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the theater was reborn with the help of thousands of contributors who raised the \$29 million necessary to restore the building to its original glory, while bringing its stage technology up to contemporary standards.

Faced with the loss of the treasured Geary, IATSE Local 16 Vice President Ed Raymond, who was A.C.T.'s scene shop foreman before the earthquake and served as technical advisor during the

Continued on page 11

BELOW: EXTERIOR OF THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER (1996, PHOTO BY MARCO LORENZETTI); INTERIOR, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE 1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE (PHOTO BY SHERMAN TAKATA/GENSLEER AND ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS).



THE NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN



INTRODUCING THE NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN



Since its first season in San Francisco in 1967, American Conservatory Theater has been bringing extraordinary theatrical experiences to Bay Area audiences and providing quality actor training for people of all ages and skill levels in its nationally renowned conservatory. As the company embarks on its 40th-anniversary season, A.C.T. is pleased to announce the launch of *The Next Generation Campaign* to secure its future for the next generation of theater artists and audiences.

The Next Generation Campaign will establish an endowment of \$25 million to provide A.C.T. with the financial wings it needs to soar to new artistic heights in

the years ahead. With more than \$15 million committed to date, the campaign will ensure support for continuing artistic excellence and quality actor training at A.C.T. through the following endowments: Mainstage Endowment, \$10 million; Actor Training Endowment, \$10 million; New Works Endowment, \$5 million. This issue of *Inside A.C.T.* introduces the campaign for excellence on the mainstage. For more information, contact Jamie Johnson at 415.439.2464 or jjohnson@act-sf.org.



LEFT: A.C.T. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CAREY PERLOFF AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEATHER KITCHEN.
ABOVE (L TO R): A.C.T. BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR MARY S. METZ, RON HOGE, TRUSTEE DIANNE HOGE, FRED LEVIN, TRUSTEE AND NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE CHAIR NANCY LIVINGSTON, AND ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOHANNA PFAELZER. PHOTOS ON PAGES 7-10 BY KEVIN BERNER, TAKEN AT THE CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF PARTY ON MARCH 21, 2008, AT THE A.C.T. PROP AND SCENE SHOP.

EXCELLENCE ON THE MAINSTAGE

Over the past four decades, A.C.T. has become known for producing a diverse blend of classical and new work, for the excellence of its performers, and for the visual beauty of its productions. A featured objective of *The Next Generation Campaign* is the Mainstage Endowment, with a goal of \$10 million to support artistic excellence on the mainstage. As patrons of one of the few classical

theater companies left in America that produces a wide range of work, from large-scale classics to musicals to ambitious new plays, our audience members have come to rely on us to bring them transformative theatrical experiences featuring our core acting company members and the finest guest actors, directors, writers, choreographers, composers, and designers. Yet too often budget limitations impede our ability to produce large-

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By the Numbers

THE NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN

- \$25 million** – overall campaign goal
- \$10 million** – Excellence on the Mainstage
- \$10 million** – Excellence in Actor Training
- \$5 million** – Excellence in New Works
- \$15.6 million** – total raised to date
- \$9.2 million** – total contributed by A.C.T. trustees
- \$2 million** – largest individual gifts (two)
- 58** – total number of gifts to date
- 2,000+** – total number of gifts projected to reach goal
- 3** – number of years projected to complete campaign

THE NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Mortimer Fleishacker,
Ellen Magnin Newman,
Steven L. Swig, *Honorary Co-chairs*
Nancy Livingston, *Chair*

Lesley Ann Clement
Marilee K. Gardner · Jonathan S. Kitchen
Fred M. Levin · Sally Rosenblatt
Rusty Rueff · Cheryl Sorokin
Jeff Ubben · Carlie Wilmans

THE NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN ARTISTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Annette Bening, *Chair*

Rene Auberjonois · René Augesen
Elizabeth Banks · Marco Barricelli
Carlos Bernard · Raye Birk
Benjamin Bratt · Betty Lynn Buckley
Olympia Dukakis · Eve Ensler
Philip Kan Gotanda · Giles Havergal
Bill Irwin · Judith Ivey
Steven Anthony Jones · Lisa Kron
Matt McGrath · Omar Metwally
Pamela Reed · Peter Riegert
Anika Noni Rose · Ken Ruta
Ruben Santiago-Hudson · Tom Stoppard
David Strathairn · Tom Waits
Gregory Wallace · Laird Williamson
Robert Wilson · Charles Randolph-Wright

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am deeply honored to serve as committee chair of A.C.T.'s *Next Generation Campaign*. In accepting this position, I will be continuing the work of Alan Stein who, as chair of the Campaign Cabinet, brilliantly directed the quiet phase of this campaign. Under his leadership, the cabinet raised \$15.6 million towards our goal of \$25 million to establish a permanent endowment. I am proud to champion a financially stable future for A.C.T. and have every confidence that we can be successful with the help of passionate theater lovers like you.

I am sure you can remember your earliest theater experience, the one that took your breath away and got you hooked forever. Although I can certainly remember mine, nothing stands out as monumentally as the sheer grit, guts, and determination A.C.T. demonstrated when the Loma Prieta earthquake damaged our beloved theater. We performed for more than six years as a diaspora without a permanent home and yet managed to deliver unforgettable and truly compelling theater under the most difficult circumstances. This achievement made an indelible impression on me, and I knew that someday I would do whatever I could to support and sustain that kind of commitment. That someday is now.

We are all grateful for the ways in which A.C.T. continues to transform our lives with provocative new works and eloquent readings of the classics. We have all seen how numerous gifted conservatory students have launched their careers on our stage. Most importantly, we are keenly aware that as donors, subscribers, and dear friends, you have shown your loyalty and support. You have kept the conversation going, and for that we are deeply appreciative. Right now, at this critical juncture in A.C.T.'s history, you can make an even more lasting impact.

It is no accident that we have launched *The Next Generation Campaign* to coincide with A.C.T.'s 40th-anniversary year. The last four decades have earned us well-deserved community affection and admiration as well as national respect. But as we look back, we must also look forward. I am asking you to join me and the members of the campaign committee as together we secure the future of outstanding theater in San Francisco.

We appreciate your continued support.

NANCY LIVINGSTON

NANCY LIVINGSTON
Chair, *The Next Generation Campaign Committee*



A.C.T. BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN EMERITUS AND NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN CABINET CHAIR ALAN L. STEIN WITH TRUSTEE AND NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE CHAIR NANCY LIVINGSTON (PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE)



Excellence on the Mainstage continued from page 7

scale or risk-taking work, or to engage major national and international artists.

The Mainstage Endowment will assure enduring artistic brilliance on the American Conservatory Theater stage through the following funds:

- Mainstage Production Fund—\$5 million
- Core Company Fund—\$3 million
- Visiting Artist Fund—\$2 million

MAINSTAGE PRODUCTION FUND

Mainstage productions at the American Conservatory Theater are the heart and soul of A.C.T. In recent seasons, we have produced and presented such large-scale landmark productions as *The Time of Your Life*, *Arcadia*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and *The Black Rider*. But these large-scale works are more the exception than the rule at A.C.T., due to the tremendous financial resources required to adapt and reinterpret classic scripts, employ and house large casts, and design and build elaborate sets and costumes. To bring these works to the mainstage, A.C.T. embarks upon additional fundraising initiatives that require the time and attention of the artistic team and stretch internal resources to near breaking point.

Artistically, A.C.T. is poised to bring multiple large-scale, adventurous works to the mainstage each season. Only financial capacity holds us back from giving our audience more opportunities to experience such extraordinary artistic projects. The Mainstage Production Fund will enable A.C.T. to bring works of this size and stature to the American Conservatory Theater stage each and every season.

CORE COMPANY FUND

In 2001, Artistic Director Carey Perloff initiated a new core company of four actors at A.C.T., returning the theater to its founding roots as a true actors' theater. Core company members are also associate artists who serve as master teachers and directors in the conservatory at A.C.T. They are both formal and informal mentors, advising their younger peers regarding career choices, as well as teaching, directing, and coaching in their professional capacity. They also share the stage with Master of Fine Arts Program students and recent graduates who appear in mainstage productions.

The Core Company Fund will ensure that the core acting company—a feature unique to A.C.T. among major California regional theaters and a rare asset at theaters nationwide—can expand to include both veteran and junior members who will provide our audiences and our actors-in-training with richer theatrical experiences in the seasons ahead.

VISITING ARTIST FUND

Thanks to its prominence in American theater, and a strong reputation for providing an unusually nurturing creative environment, A.C.T. is already a much-desired destination for such gifted artists as



ABOVE LEFT (L TO R): A.C.T. ASSOCIATE ARTIST STEVEN ANTHONY JONES, A.C.T. RUBY JUBILEE GALA CHAIR PATTI RUEFF, AND TRUSTEE AND NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE MEMBER RUSTY RUEFF. ABOVE (L TO R): A.C.T. TRUSTEE AND NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE MEMBER CARLIE WILMANS WITH GENE METZ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CAREY PERLOFF, AND TRUSTEE KENT M. HARVEY.

continued on page 10

CAN'T WRITE A LARGE CHECK? You can still be a part of *The Next Generation Campaign*.

A.C.T. supporters who find themselves unable to make large outright gifts to *The Next Generation Campaign* can still make significant contributions, according to A.C.T. Prospero Society Co-chair Mortimer Fleishhacker. "We hope all those who love A.C.T. and want to help secure our future will participate in *The Next Generation Campaign*," he said. "No one need be excluded. If you can't make a substantial current gift, consider making a commitment to a future gift."

Bequests, IRA designations, and charitable remainder trusts are just a few ways to participate in the campaign in a significant way. "A.C.T. supporters who join the campaign through a bequest can make surprisingly large gifts," he says. "A gift like real estate, which is transferred to A.C.T. at death, can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. A.C.T. is willing to wait."

Bequests need not be complicated or costly. For example, you can ask your life insurance agent for a beneficiary designation form and use it to name A.C.T. to receive all or part of an existing life insurance policy.

He also encourages those who want to be a part of the campaign to consider IRA designations, which will pass to A.C.T. undiminished by income tax or estate tax. "Retirement plan proceeds are usually fully taxed as ordinary income if they pass to individuals and may be hit by estate tax as well. A.C.T. receives them tax free."

In addition, *The Next Generation Campaign* will count charitable remainder trusts and charitable gift annuities in which A.C.T. is named the irrevocable final beneficiary. "Charitable remainder trusts allow a donor who has need for cash flow now to sell appreciated stock or real estate tax free, get income for life, and make a gift to A.C.T.," explains

Prospero Society Co-chair and A.C.T. Trustee Joan Danforth. "The donor also gets an immediate income-tax deduction." For example, longtime A.C.T. supporter Ron Casassa of San Rafael sold a San Francisco apartment house tax free after transferring it to a charitable remainder trust. "Ron receives income for life and A.C.T. gets a magnificent future gift."

"Not every donor can simply sit down and write a large check to the campaign," Danforth says. "But bequests and other planned gifts open the door for them to be *Next Generation Campaign* supporters."

For confidential information on ways to give to *The Next Generation Campaign*, contact Tim Whalen at 415.439.2472 or twhalen@act-sf.org.

"No one need be excluded. If you can't make a substantial current gift, consider making a commitment to a future gift."



A.C.T. TRUSTEE AND HONORARY NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR MORTIMER FLEISHHACKER AND FRANNIE FLEISHHACKER

Excellence on the Mainstage continued from page 9

playwrights Tom Stoppard and David Mamet, directors Robert Wilson and Ruben Santiago-Hudson, and actor Olympia Dukakis. Currently, however, A.C.T.'s ability to extend such invitations is limited. The Visiting Artist Fund will provide the resources to bring world-class theater artists to San Francisco for extended periods of time to develop and refine their work and produce it

on the American Conservatory Theater stage. This investment in the significant writers, directors, and actors of our day will pay dividends to our audiences, who will be afforded new theatrical experiences that will enrich their lives and advance the classic and modern canon of dramatic literature.

Next Issue: Excellence in Actor Training



*JEWEL continued
from page 6*

renovations, was convinced that A.C.T. had no choice but to rebuild. "First of all," he said, "it was A.C.T.'s home, and it

had been for quite a while. To have an opportunity to reinvent a building that we were familiar with and turn it into a space that was designed specifically for the kind of programming A.C.T. wanted to do—that was pretty exciting."

Lillies, jazz great Bill Sims, Jr., and the eclectic live orchestras of *Urinetown*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Black Rider*, and *Happy End*.

For actors, A.C.T.'s theater remains one of the most cherished places to work in the United States. A.C.T. Associate Artist and core acting company member Steven Anthony Jones, who has appeared in more than two dozen A.C.T. productions since his 1987 appearance at the Geary in *King Lear*, says: "The acting experience is remarkably easy and intimate, both emotionally and vocally. The space affords you a connection with the audience that you can't get in other thousand-seat theaters."

ON THE ONE HAND, IT'S TRUE THAT A.C.T. IS NOT THE GEARY THEATER; IT IS PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER, A COMPANY OF ARTISTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GEARY IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN OUR BEING ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THE THINGS THAT A.C.T. WAS FOUNDED TO DO. YOU CAN'T REALLY TALK ABOUT MOVING INTO ANOTHER THEATER LIKE THE GEARY BECAUSE THERE AREN'T ANY.

—Alan L. Stein, chairman emeritus and board of trustees president during the renovation and reconstruction of the theater after the Loma Prieta earthquake (1996)

The modernization did not, however, diminish the ancestral beauty of the interior and the surprising intimacy (for a 1,000-seat auditorium) that had made it such a remarkable space in which to work and attend performances. A.C.T. Head Carpenter Maurice Beesley, who has worked at the theater on and off since A.C.T.'s first season in San Francisco and remembers the challenges of working in the Bay Area's last operational "hemp house" (a theater that relies on a hand-operated system of ropes, pulleys, and sand bags to fly scenery), observes, "With the modernization, backstage became much more efficient. In front of the curtain, the theater has kept its original character—with added amenities, of course—but the technical improvements help us maintain A.C.T.'s past style of production; now it's just much easier to accomplish."

With the restoration also came glorious new acoustics, which have encouraged A.C.T. to introduce a significant amount of live music into its repertoire. A diverse range of musical ensembles have accompanied A.C.T. productions in recent years, including the Kronos Quartet, the Rova Saxophone Quartet, Kitka, Chanticleer, a klezmer band, The Red Clay Ramblers, Britain's outrageous Tiger

The American Conservatory Theater is a sacred place, for audience members as well as the people lucky enough to call the stage their office and second home. Miguel Ongpin, who began his A.C.T. career as a flyman when the theater reopened in 1996, was married center stage. Legendary A.C.T. company member Sydney Walker was known to commune before each performance with the spirits of great actors, whom he was convinced were present in the wings and balconies.

Mollie Stickney, a former A.C.T. Young Conservatory student and Master of Fine Arts Program graduate who has performed at the theater before and after it was rebuilt, sees the theater as a sanctuary. "Walking into that theater from the craziness of Geary Street is like walking into a hollowed-out jewel," she says. "It is so quiet, so beautiful. It is truly a magical space."

—Margot Melcon

TOP: GEARY THEATER EXTERIOR IN 1967.
BOTTOM: GEARY THEATER EXTERIOR IN 1930.



LIVING AND LEARNING THE ART FORM

THE A.C.T. CONSERVATORY THEN AND NOW

BY ELIZABETH BRODERSEN

"When I began A.C.T.," said Founding Artistic Director Bill Ball in an interview in 1982, "I wanted to create a company with a dual purpose: resident repertory performance and concurrent and inseparable training, for all members of the company." An inspiring force in the revolutionary regional theater movement of the 1960s, Ball had the radical idea of creating a permanent home for a passionate company of professional actors who would dedicate their careers to living, learning, and passing on the art of the theater—"to conserve" the art of live theatrical performance in the literal sense of the word.

Recognizing that a professional actor (just as any serious artist) must study continuously if s/he is to grow in the art, A.C.T.'s founders based the company's original form on the classic European model of the "conservatory-theater"—like Molière's Comédie-Française, but indigenously American—in which a resident troupe of actors simultaneously performed while continuing their personal training and sharing their wisdom with a younger generation. In the late 1960s it was difficult for an actor to find concentrated training in the United States; A.C.T. was the first American regional theater to be founded on the conservatory concept. A.C.T.'s founders hoped that the institution would eventually become a flagship or model for a uniquely American style of acting.

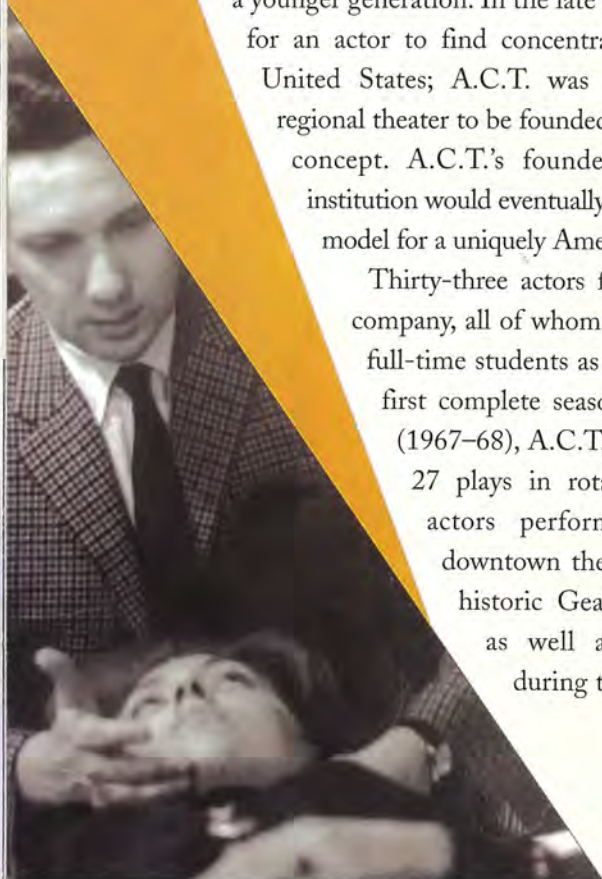
Thirty-three actors formed the fledgling company, all of whom were expected to be full-time students as well as actors. In its first complete season in San Francisco (1967–68), A.C.T. presented a total of 27 plays in rotating repertory, the actors performing at night in downtown theaters (including the historic Geary) while attending as well as teaching classes during the day.



"There was a level of excitement that you could cut with a knife," says Frank Ottiwell, who joined the company as an Alexander technique teacher in Pittsburgh in 1965 and is still an active faculty member. "It was a lovefest, but it was work. The entire community was one big family—students, company, secretaries, everybody; all of the actors could be called upon to teach, to engage, and we *all* were expected to go to class. The theater itself was our home; it was always open to us, and we could and did run in and out, any time of the day or night."

In addition to resident company actors and apprentices, almost immediately young, aspiring actors from across the country began to be invited to learn alongside the professionals. The first annual Summer Training Congress (STC) was established in the summer of 1967. The conservatory began to take shape as such in 1968, followed by the formal launch of the Advanced Training Program (now the Master of Fine Arts Program) in the 1969–70 season, a significant step toward institutionalizing the training program. Forty-five students were accepted for a first year of training; just half of those were invited to return for a second year of advanced instruction, and three or four of those invited to remain thereafter and work with the professional company. Children joined the Young Conservatory as early as 1970, while the Academy, an evening and weekend program for adults (now known as Studio A.C.T.), was established in 1972; all of these programs are still flourishing.

Early conservatory training, as a whole, was designed to instill qualities that A.C.T.'s founders and the conservatory's early leadership—who included UC Berkeley educator Robert Goldsby and distinguished director Allen Fletcher—considered essential for the



professional actor: a powerful stage presence, a vigorous and agile body, intelligence, endurance, kindness, and an ensemble spirit. Primarily Stanislavsky based, the curriculum emphasized the development of the actor's physical instrument and technical skills, with classes in voice, scansion (the analysis of rhythmic patterns in poetry and dialogue), and dance, as well as such "far-out" subjects as yoga, Alexander technique, fencing, laughter, curtsying, and heroics.

Academy Award-nominated actor Annette Bening, who entered the program in 1980 and went on to become one of A.C.T.'s most illustrious alumni, was inspired to audition for A.C.T. after hearing Ball speak at San Francisco State. "He had that touch of madness about him," she told A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program students at a Conservatory Hour at A.C.T. in 2002. "He was very compelling. I remember he spoke about the necessity of creating an atmosphere of creativity where everything is accepted and everything is utilized, no matter whose idea it is. It was always about saying 'yes.' I think the point he was making is that the creative process is mysterious, and that to get to the best choice in the end, you have to fumble around and try a lot of different things. All ideas must be entertained, and there is a tremendous amount of collaboration."



FAR LEFT: A.C.T. ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE INSTRUCTOR FRANK OTTIWELL WITH A STUDENT IN 1967. **LEFT (L TO R):** JACK WILLIS, A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENT JUSTIN LEATH, ROD GNAPP, AND CHARLES DEAN IN THE 2006 A.C.T. PRODUCTION OF *HAPPY END* (PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE). **ABOVE:** ANNETTE BENING IN THE 1984 A.C.T. PRODUCTION OF *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*. **RIGHT:** A.C.T. CONSERVATORY DIRECTOR MELISSA SMITH.

Bening remained with A.C.T. for three seasons after completing her training, performing with the mainstage company and even teaching in the STC (where her students included a young Teri Hatcher). "I really wanted to be a theater actress, and I didn't really watch movies," remembered Bening. "So I was dying to get on the Geary stage! When I was a student, that was my dream, and the actresses who performed there were my idols. I wanted to be up there, doing the stuff, wearing the dresses, speaking the words. I wanted to be just like them."

ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE

With accreditation in 1984 and the right to confer the M.F.A. degree in acting came increasing formalization of the program. At the same time, as financial pressures mounted with shifting economic conditions in the United States, the large-resident-company model became impossible to maintain. Ball stepped down as artistic director in 1986, followed by Ed Hastings's tenure (1986–92). While the A.C.T. actor training program remained one of the most successful and highly respected in the country, with the demise of the resident company it became increasingly distanced from the performing aspects of the institution.

Carey Perloff took A.C.T.'s artistic reins in 1992, and brought in Princeton University theater program head Melissa Smith to lead the conservatory in 1995. Together they worked to rebuild the bridge between performance and pedagogy. Perloff reinstituted a modified resident core acting company by engaging Marco Barricelli (replaced this season by recent M.F.A. Program graduate Allison Jean White), René Augesen, Steven Anthony Jones, and Gregory Wallace to work full time, year round, teaching and directing in the conservatory while performing in a substantial repertory of A.C.T. productions. A third year was added to the Master of Fine Arts Program curriculum in 1997, promising students opportunities to perform publicly in smaller San Francisco venues, as well as on the A.C.T. mainstage.



The task of educating actors in today's media-driven culture has become much more complex. "The training is almost remedial now, in terms of educating young people about the theater," says Smith. "Young actors don't grow up on theater anymore; they grow up on television and film, but they come to a theater to train. We have to teach them about what it is they're trying to do, because they haven't actually absorbed it. They've been doing it without ever seeing anybody do it."

"So training today is about 'conserving' in a different sense; it's about trying to conserve the classical tradition of the theater, while at the same time preparing young actors for the future of the art form."

By committing to incoming students that they will perform on the A.C.T. mainstage (in *A Christmas Carol*) before they graduate, A.C.T. has raised the educational bar, increasing the rigor of the curriculum's skills training, particularly voice, speech, movement, and singing. "These students are no longer in training for what they dream their career will be, but for something concrete," says Smith. "It's something they have to aspire to and prepare for. We commit that they will be on that stage, and they're committing to be."

No matter what their ultimate goals might be, Smith says that she tells hopeful applicants, "You are training in a program that is part of a producing theater. The training is therefore very much connected to the life and aesthetic of that theater, which emphasizes heightened language, potent dramatic literature, a vigorous creative process, and

commitment to the future of the art form in the development of new writing. Our training is designed to prepare you for all performance media, but you will have a lifetime investment in the theater."

While the A.C.T. training program has produced some of this country's finest and best-known actors, including Nicolas Cage, Danny Glover, Harry Hamlin, Anika Noni Rose, Winona Ryder, Carlos Bernard, Elizabeth Banks, Teri Hatcher, and Denzel Washington, over the years thousands of students have gone on to a wide range of careers, including writing, directing, producing, and arts administration. "Today, our task is to develop the artistic and human potential in each individual, preparing him or her to live a creative life," says Smith. "Something about what we do here should be about building a foundation for the rest of their lives, no matter what they end up doing professionally. Their life in the theater here should change how they function in their lives."

While A.C.T.'s current training program remains true to the mission established four decades ago, the model is continually being reinvented for its own time. "We continue to look at new models as the field changes," says Smith. "Being involved with professionals is still where the future lies. That's what we're looking at now: how we can have more of that, so young actors are in the professional soup, and there's more of the professional soup spilling onto them in the school."

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: AN EARLY A.C.T. YOGA CLASS IN ACTION; AN A.C.T. MOVEMENT CLASS IN 2006 (PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE); TOM STOPPARD READING NEW WORK TO THE COMPANY IN THE EARLY 1970S. OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: KEN RUTA AND RENÉ AUGESSEN IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF DAVID MAMET'S ADAPTATION OF HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER'S *THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE* (2005, PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE); DAVID STRATHAIRN, DAVID PATRICK KELLY, AND VERA FARMIGA IN *THE TEMPEST* (1996, PHOTO BY TOM CHARGIN); MARCO BARRICELLI AND SUSAN GIBNEY IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF MICHAEL FEINGOLD'S ADAPTATION OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER'S *MARY STUART* (1998, PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN).

PERLOFF'S 15TH *continued from page 5*
(To the tune of "The Mandalay Song" from *Happy End*)

Other theaters do the same old thing.
Perloff picks the new stuff with a sting.
Loves to stick her neck out, do a show that's daring,
Challenges the critics, and the status quo
Schiller, Gorky, Mamet, Wellman, Feingold
Everything except the thing you know.
Talk faster, Carey, quick!
You know you've got the trick.
Keep ideas flying fast and thick.
Theater's an art form and Perloff adores it,
Others exploit it but Carey explores it
She's no fake, even a quake couldn't take her away
Cheers for her years in the town by the Bay!

—*Theater critic/adaptor Michael Feingold*

I think that natural leaders are rare. I consider Carey to be a natural leader. Her love of people, art, and the human process of creating theater is infectious. She has such a beautiful way of expressing her passion about art and its making that inevitably draws people into her ever-expanding circle. One has no choice but to believe in her passion because she believes in it so fervently herself. That's what makes a natural leader. People want to follow her. She has her own unique vision of how theater needs to be made and it's about people and relationships and learning. Carey never stops learning because she's curious. She asks questions about things that she doesn't know and then asks questions about things that she knows just to see if there's anything else to add. I would work with her anytime because she creates an atmosphere that makes it safe to say, "I don't know, let's try it."

—*Music director/conductor Constantine Kitsopoulos*

Through the course of six satisfying productions here at A.C.T. [since Carey has been artistic director], I continue to be impressed with her supple intelligence, dynamic energy, indefatigable enthusiasm, and her unfailing powers of persuasion.

—*Laird Williamson*

Carey Perloff—director, teacher, writer, administrator, social activist, hiker, and classicist. Oh wonderful, wonderful, and again wonderful and after that, beyond all whooping—

—*Olympia Dukakis and Bill Shakespeare*

I think Carey and I must have been born on the same wavelength. Not every playwright is as lucky as to have a director who is usually slightly ahead of him instead of slightly behind. I think that Carey has always understood, probably in all of her work, the balance between the text and the event. A lot of writers, including myself, like to think that their personal theater is text-led, but of course what we all rely on is a director who adds the magic of sheer theatricality. Perhaps because she is a writer herself, but not a writer who seems to have any desire to correct another writer's play, Carey represents a kind of ideal.

These elevated sentiments seem to have left out one of the main things about working with Carey, which is that she is a lot of fun, highly intelligent fun, which is the best kind of fun and the best kind of intelligence. She is a theater animal—she behaves towards the writer as if the writer is in charge, the master, but really she is taking the master for a walk.

Give her a hug from me.

—*Playwright Tom Stoppard*



THE A.C.T. 2006-07 SEASON

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by Tom Stoppard | Directed by Carey Perloff
SEP 14-OCT 15

THE LITTLE FOXES

by Lillian Hellman | Directed by Laird Williamson
OCT 27-NOV 26

THE CIRCLE

by W. Somerset Maugham | Directed by Mark Lamos
JAN 4-FEB 4

HEDDA GABLER

by Henrik Ibsen | Directed by Richard E. T. White
FEB 9-MAR 11

world premiere

AFTER THE WAR

by Philip Kan Gotanda | Directed by Carey Perloff
MAR 22-APR 22

west coast premiere

BLACKBIRD

by David Harrower | Directed by Loretta Greco
APR 27-MAY 27

THE IMAGINARY INVALID

by Molière | Directed by Ron Lagomarsino
JUN 7-JUL 8

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
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LAIRD WILLIAMSON (*Director*) has staged for A.C.T. *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Dazzle*, *The Glass Menagerie*, "Master Harold"...and the boys, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Machinal*, *The Matchmaker*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *End of the World with Symposium to Follow*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *A Month in the Country*, *The Visit*, *Pantaglieze*, and the original production of *A Christmas Carol*. He has worked extensively with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where he most recently directed productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Julius Caesar*, *Pericles*, and his own adaptation of *Life Is a Dream*. He has also directed for Western Opera Theater, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Brooklyn Academy of Music. For Denver Center Theatre Company, he has directed *Gross Indecency*, *Arcadia*, *Galileo*, *Saint Joan*, *Coriolanus*, *Pericles*, and *Wings*, among many others. Recent credits include *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *John Brown's Body*, and *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur* at the Denver Center; *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Love's Labor's Lost* at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.; *Othello* at the Guthrie Theater; and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Legacy* at The Old Globe.

ROBERT BLACKMAN (*Scenic and Costume Designer*) received the Spotlight Career Achievement Award in television from the Costume Designers Guild earlier this year. He was the costume designer for four *Star Trek* series: "The Next Generation," "Deep Space Nine," "Voyager," and "Enterprise." He won an Emmy Award in 1991-92 for "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and has received nine Emmy nominations. His film work includes *'night Mother*, *The Running Man*, *Stones for Ibarra*, *Star Trek VII: Generations*, and *Star Trek X: Nemesis*. His recent theatrical work

includes costume design for *iWitness* at the Mark Taper Forum, *The Violet Hour* and *The Lady with All the Answers* at The Old Globe, *The Royal Family* at the Ahmanson Theatre (Ovation Award nomination), and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Uncle Vanya* at the Geffen Playhouse, where he most recently received an Ovation Award nomination for his *All My Sons* set design. He worked regularly at A.C.T. from 1972 to 1984 and designed the set for the original production of *A Christmas Carol*. Blackman holds an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama.

RUSSELL H. CHAMPA (*Lighting Designer*) has designed *A Number*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Voyage Inheritance*, and *Waiting for Godot* at A.C.T. Recent designs also include *iWitness* at the Mark Taper Forum, *A Safe Harbor for Elizabeth Bishop* and *The Right Kind of People* at

Primary Stages, *Another Golden Rome* and *Morbidity and Morality* at the Magic Theatre, *The Other Side* at Manhattan Theatre Club, *I Am My Own Wife* at The Wilma Theater, and *The Tricky Part* at San Jose Repertory Theatre and Intiman Theatre. On Broadway, Champa designed Julia Sweeney's *God Said "Ha!"* at the Lyceum Theatre. Other New York credits include productions at the Promenade Theatre, the Union Square Theatre, Classic Stage Company, New York Stage & Film, and La MaMa ETC. Regionally, he has designed for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, California Shakespeare Theater, the McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Actors' Gang, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



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Who's Who

STEVE SCHOENBECK (*Sound Designer*) makes his A.C.T. debut with *The Little Foxes*. As the associate sound designer for San Jose Repertory Theatre, he has designed numerous productions, including *The Immigrant*, *Enchanted April*, *Bad Dates*, *Wintertime*, *Cookin' at the Cookery*, Eric Bogosian's *Humpty Dumpty*, and *A Flea in Her Ear*. Other favorite sound design credits include TheatreWorks's productions of *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *Be Aggressive*, *Harold & Maude: An Intimate Musical*, *Over the River and Through the Woods*, *Holiday Memories*, and the Assembly Theatre's production of *Finder's Fee* for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. He has also designed sound for short films and animation and has mixed numerous musicals for TheatreWorks and San Jose Rep. He is a graduate of the sound arts program at the Expression College for Digital Arts and the theater arts department at UC Santa Cruz.

MICHAEL PALLER (*Dramaturg*) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for 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.

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.

ELISA GUTHERTZ* (*Stage Manager*) most recently worked at A.C.T. on *Death in Venice* at Zeum Theater and on last season's *A Number*, by Caryl Churchill. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *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 Theatre on Broadway, *Big Love* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and *The Vagina Monologues* at the Alcazar Theatre.

NICOLE DICKERSON* (*Assistant Stage Manager*) most recently worked as stage manager for California Shakespeare Theater's production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Her previous work in the Bay Area has included stage management for *The Colossus of Rhodes* and *For the Pleasure of Seeing her Again* at A.C.T.; *The Guys*, *Master Class*, and *Nine Parts of Desire* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *3F, 4F* and *The Hopper Collection* at the Magic Theatre; *Intimate Apparel* for TheatreWorks; *Displaced* at Marin Theatre Company; and *Times Like These* and *Windows and Mirrors* at Traveling Jewish Theatre. She also did lighting supervision and stage management for the U.S. tour of *Stories by Tobias Wolff* with Word for Word and assistant stage management and production coordination for Word for Word's *Tour de France 2004–2006* in Paris, France.

SPECIAL THANKS

Erin Washington, Laura Marett, Mobile Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Joseph Perloff, Diane Mott, Trish Dady, Ex'pression College for Digital Arts

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A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 15th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed acclaimed productions of Tom Stoppard's

Travesties, Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill's *Happy End* (including a cast album recording), *A Christmas Carol* (a new adaptation by Perloff with Paul Walsh), David Mamet's new adaptation of Granville-Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance*, 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 Marie Ndiaye's *Hilda*, coproduced at A.C.T.'s second space (Zeum) with Laura Pels Productions, traveled to Washington, D.C.'s Studio Theatre and then to New York's 59E59 Theater in 2005. Last year she was 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 *Heccuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, and *Uncle Vanya*; the world premiere of Leslie Ayzavian'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 play *Luminescence Dating*, which will be seen at the Magic Theatre in December (in a coproduction with A.C.T.), was developed under a grant from The Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project, was workshopped in the summer of 2004 at New York Stage & Film, premiered in New York in April 2005 at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, and will be published by Dramatists Play Service this fall. Her new play, *Waiting for the Flood*, was directed by Judith Ivey as part of A.C.T.'s First Look festival in January. 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 *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. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director),

LISA KOHLER



now in her 11th season with A.C.T., 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* named Kitchen one of the most influential women in business in the Bay Area for the past three years.

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. in 1995, 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 as an actor and Stage Manager. 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.

THE GALLERY AT A.C.T.

SHARON SHEPHERD:

CONTEMPORARY ABSTRACT PAINTINGS



SKEWED, 2006, MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER
(© SHARON SHEPHERD)

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 bank 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.

A vibrant collection of recent multitextured abstract paintings by San Francisco artist Sharon Shepherd are on view at A.C.T. September 14–November 26. A San Francisco resident since 1985, Shepherd has shown her work at the Artists Gallery of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, located at Fort Mason, since 1979. She has been an active studio artist for more than three decades, developing her articulate painterly vocabulary and multilayered style of contrasting surfaces, shapes, and patterns. Her mixed-media paintings are held in more than 300 public and private collections in the United States and abroad, and reproductions of her paintings have reached an even wider audience as internationally published posters and greeting cards. Her work has also been featured on film and television, in architecture and design catalogs, and as theatrical settings for ballet and modern dance companies.

"I am intrigued by the phenomenon of vanishing cultures, ancient architecture, and marks of graffiti," says Shepherd, explaining her varied and dynamic use of surface writing and visual symbols on her canvases—"sometimes literal, yet mystical."

Each artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For more information about Sharon Shepherd, please contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 or krscreativeoptns@aol.com.

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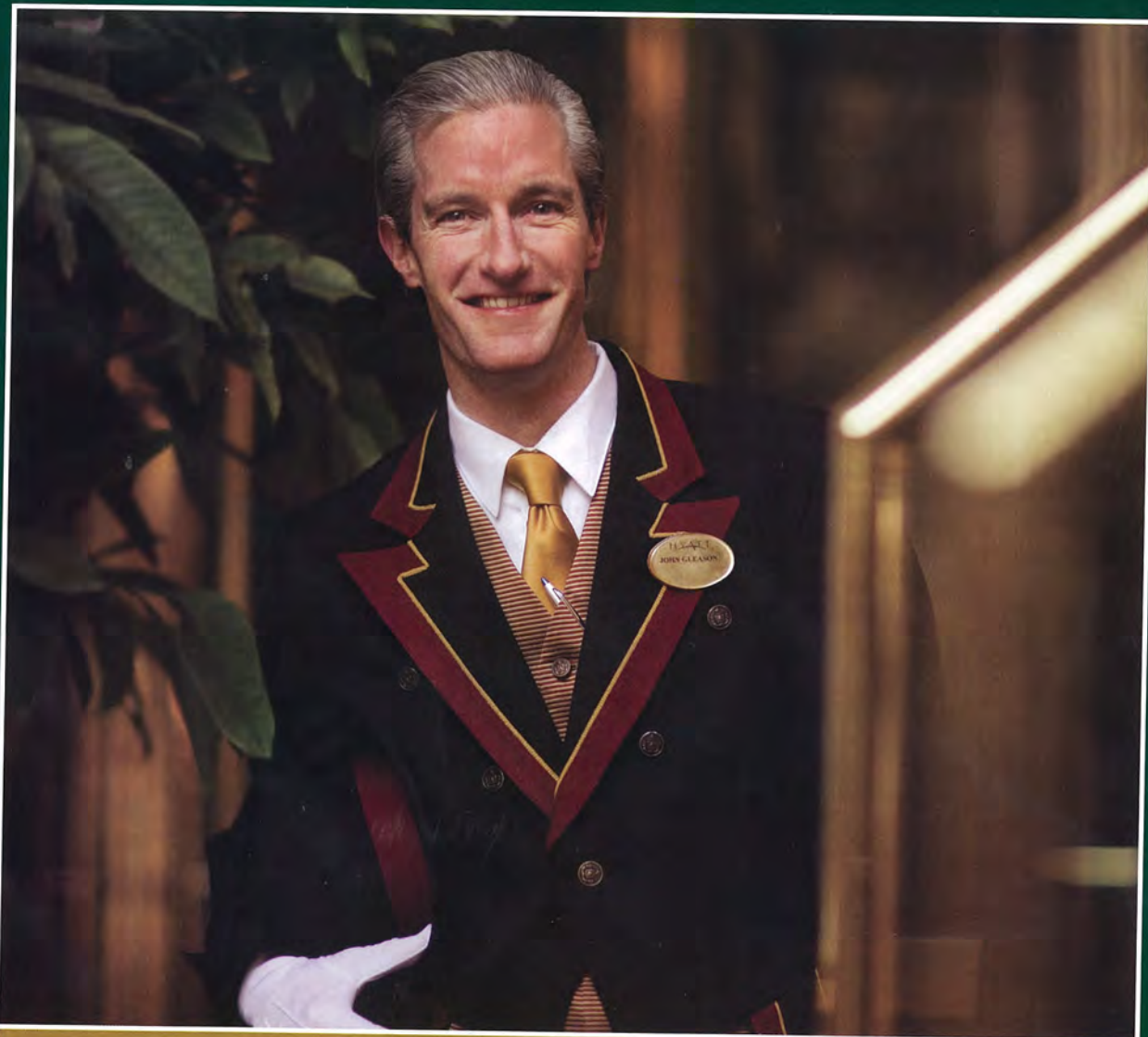
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JEAN WHITE



ALLISON JEAN WHITE AS CECILY IN THE A.C.T. 2006 SEASON-OPENING PRODUCTION OF *TRAVESTIES* (PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE)

The A.C.T. Conservatory would like to welcome M.F.A. Program alumna Allison Jean White back to the Bay Area, as she joins A.C.T.'s acclaimed core company of actors. The first new ensemble member since 2001, White is a graduate of Brown University, as well as a member of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program class of 2005, where she was the recipient of the ACT One scholarship. She has already appeared on the A.C.T. mainstage in *A Christmas Carol*, *The Real Thing*, and this season's opening production of Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*. "To be chosen to be a part of this incredible group of artists and to have the chance to come back to a company that means so much to me is a great honor," says White. "As an artist, you never stop learning and honing your craft, and this is a unique opportunity for my own artistic development."

2006-07

A.C.T.

CONSERVATORY
PERFORMANCES

MFA

MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM

OCT-NOV
18-2

Baby with the Bathwater

BY CHRISTOPHER DURANG

In repertory with

OCT-NOV
20-4

Red Scare on Sunset

BY CHARLES BUSCH

MAR
1-17

The Cider House Rules

Part One: Here in St. Cloud's

BY PETER PARNELL

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY JOHN IRVING

DIRECTED BY CRAIG SLAIGHT

APR
25-28

2ND-YEAR STUDENT WORKSHOP
David Copperfield

BY CHARLES DICKENS

ADAPTED IN VERSE BY GILES HAVERGAL

NOV
10-19

Charley's Aunt

BY BRANDON THOMAS

DIRECTED BY W. D. KEITH

JUN
1-17

Fields of Gold:
The Music of Sting

A COLLABORATION WITH BIRD

DIRECTED BY CRAIG SLAIGHT

MUSICAL DIRECTION BY KRISTA WIGLE

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Morgan Spector '08 in the M.F.A. Program production of *On the Run*

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FAME AND FOXES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

The Little Foxes made Hellman one of the most successful playwrights and screenwriters in the 1940s and the most famous woman playwright in the world. As Hammett's daughter Jo admitted, "My father was a great storyteller, but Lillian was even better." Hellman—with Hammett's help—came of age, became a woman, became a star. As the theatrical saying goes, failure is painful and success is intoxicating. With 410 performances, *The Little Foxes* blew up her world, for the better this time.

With *Foxes* selling out box offices on two coasts, Hellman held court at the luxurious Plaza Hotel, borrowing its grace and glamour for herself. Admiring reporters flocked to her rooms, gushing about her elegant legs, her blonde hair, her hospitality, and her "retinue of friends, the main train-bearers being Dashiell Hammett, Ralph Ingersoll, Shumlin, Louis Kronenberger, and Kober." One reporter gushed, "Miss Hellman likes people, she likes an occasional drink, a game of poker, a whirl at chem-de-fer. She is, in brief, merry rather than morbid." The media broadcast her fame nationally, pushing her to the forefront of national attention.

Drama wasn't always limited to a theater stage, and her characters weren't always fictional. Hellman berated the critics for missing the dark comedy of human betrayals and corruption. The characters might have represented the sinners in capitalism, but her relationship with them was intimate. She saw greed, waste, aristocratic posturing, and political shenanigans in her present comic view of the world.

Excerpted from Lillian Hellman: A Life with Foxes and Scoundrels, by Deborah Martinson (Counterpoint Press, © 2005 by Deborah Martinson).

"The best *Christmas Carol* ever! A terrific and imaginative production. Highest rating!"

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BY CHARLES DICKENS
ADAPTED BY CAREY PERLOFF
AND PAUL WALSH

MUSIC BY KARL LUNDEBERG
CHOREOGRAPHY BY VAL CANIPAROLI
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Charley's Aunt tells the story of Charley and Jack, two students at Oxford University who desperately want to impress two delightful young women. When the boys learn that Charley's wealthy old aunt from Brazil is coming to pay a visit, they use the opportunity to invite the ladies to lunch.

by Brandon Thomas
Directed by W. D. Keith
November 10–19, 2006
A.C.T. performing at Zeum Theater

But when plans change and the aunt can't come, the boys will do anything to make the meeting happen—even enlisting the help of an all-too-convincing friend to pretend to be Charley's aunt.
Tickets: \$12–\$20
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PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE FREE EVENTS at American Conservatory Theater ...

	<i>The Little Foxes</i>	<i>The Circle</i>
A.C.T. PROLOGUE <i>A conversation with the director before the 7 p.m. Tuesday preview (5:30–6 p.m.)</i>	Tuesday 10/31	Tuesday 1/9
AUDIENCE EXCHANGES <i>Free postperformance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members</i>	Tuesday 11/7 Sunday 11/12* Wednesday 11/15*	Tuesday 1/16 Sunday 1/21* Wednesday 1/31*
OUT WITH A.C.T. <i>A gathering of gay and lesbian theatergoers, immediately following the 8 p.m. performance</i>	Wednesday 11/8	Wednesday 1/17
ACT ONE <i>ACT One connects arts lovers in their 20s and 30s to great theater, hot events and parties, and each other.</i>	—	Friday 1/19
THEATER ON THE COUCH <i>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.</i>	Friday 11/3	—

*indicates matinee performance

AND DON'T FORGET ...

A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM PRESENTS <i>Red Scare on Sunset</i> and <i>Baby with the Bathwater</i>	10/18–11/4, Zeum Theater
A.C.T. Homecoming Weekend	11/3–11/4, A.C.T.
A.C.T. YOUNG CONSERVATORY PRESENTS <i>Charley's Aunt</i>	11/10–11/19, Zeum Theater
A.C.T. January First Look Series	1/18–2/3, Zeum Theater
A.C.T. IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE MAGIC THEATRE PRESENTS <i>Luminescence Dating</i>	11/30–12/23, Magic Theatre
<i>A.C.T. Ruby Jubilee</i>	4/22/07, Four Seasons Hotel

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

A.C.T. MEMORY: LAIRD WILLIAMSON



LAIRD WILLIAMSON IN 1974

When I think back on those early days at A.C.T., the best word I can use to describe them is euphoric. This ecstatic feeling came not only from the whiffs of vegetal vapors drifting down from the fifth floor, but also, and more importantly, from the great challenges generated by the work, the work, the work. Having come in as an actor to replace the wonderful Paul Shenar in the second season of *Cyrano*, I was then thrust into directing a series of mad, rough, and fascinating new plays in The Playroom as part of the Plays in Progress series. My first trial by ceremonial fire came in assembling "An Evening with Tennessee Williams," a tribute to the playwright in which the revered and often misunderstood master himself appeared to read from his works and in which

a raft of actors got to play scenes from roles they had always died to play. I had a great time. The next day in his column, Herb Caen called the ceremony for Mr. Williams "tantamount to canonization." I liked that. That evening remains to this day one of my most cherished theater experiences. Then followed a period of intense and exciting creative activity: The sweet *Matchmaker*, starring Elizabeth Huddle and Bill Paterson, which culminated in the life-changing tour to the Soviet Union; then the joyous, humbling, and inspiring experience of the first *A Christmas Carol*; the delicious romanticism of *A Month in the Country*; the brutal and brilliant dark comedy of *The Visit*; and that cubistic romp through *Pantagloize* with the wonderful Raye Birk being brilliant in the title role. This time I speak of was an undeniable high—a high for me, and a high for my fellow artists, and a high in the most sacred sense, as it was charged with such an intense outpouring of unadulterated art and love.

—Director Laird Williamson, who joined A.C.T. in 1974

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Dawn-Elin Fraser, *Voice and Speech, Dialects*
Nancy Gold, *Physical Character, Acting*
Jane Hammett, *Musical Theater*
W. D. Keith, *Director*
Domenique Lozano, *Director*
Christine Mattison, *Dance*
Lily Oglesby, *Acting*
Pamela Ricard, *Acting*
Craig Slight, *Director, Acting*
Krista Wigle, *Musical Theater*
Jud Williford, *Acting*

New Plays Program

Constance Congdon, Timothy Mason
Resident Playwrights

Accompanists

John Conway
Robert Rutt

Library Staff

Joseph Tally, *Head Librarian*
G. David Anderson, Elena Balashova, Joan Cahill, Barbara Cohrsen, Elaine Foreman, Martha Kessler, Barbara Kornstein, Ines Lewandowitz, Franco Mancini, Ann Morales, Roy Ortopan, Dana Rees, Beverly Saba, Roger Silver, Sam Thal, Sylvia Coe Tolk, Jean Wilcox, Nancy Zinn, *Library Volunteers*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

A.C.T.'s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, 415.834.3200. On the Web: www.act-sf.org.

TICKET SERVICES INFORMATION

A.C.T. Ticket Services

Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, 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 415.749.2ACT and use American Express, Visa, or MasterCard. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our website at www.act-sf.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance rescheduling privileges and lost-ticket insurance. Subscriptions available by calling 415.749.2250. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person.

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 A.C.T. Ticket Services 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

A.C.T. 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 merchandise—clothing, jewelry, DVDs, music, and other novelty items—as well as books, scripts and *Words on Plays*, are on sale in the main lobby, at the Ticket Services office, and online.

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 minibar 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.

Beeper!

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 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.

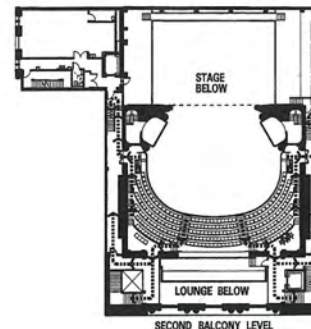
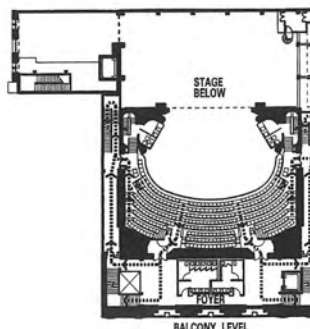
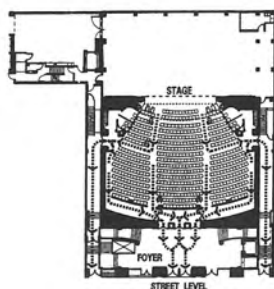


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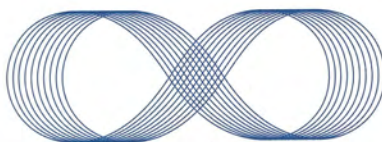
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