BLOOD KNOT

by Athol Fugard

Directed by Charles Randolph-Wright

Music composed and recorded by Tracy Chapman
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ABOUT A.C.T.

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 ZSpace 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 degree of fine arts. Donny 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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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We are so proud to welcome you to this production of Blood Knot.
I wish I could claim that over a year ago when we programmed this extraordinary play about race and family, we guessed that a sea change would be happening in American politics and that this presidential campaign would feature a major biracial candidate. The actual origin of this particular production was somewhat closer to home; when we invited Jack Willis to join A.C.T.’s core acting company last year, I asked him to give me a list of the plays he would most like to explore. At the top of his list was Blood Knot, with Steven Anthony Jones. I was startled, only because this is such a hugely challenging play; it requires two actors who trust each other completely, because, as is true with all of Fugard’s work, they will be asked to go into territory that is dangerous and hard to talk about. Race is the skeleton in America’s closet; even now, it is difficult to find the language to talk about what race makes us do, about how the legacy of racism in this country literally colors our behavior. This play unflinchingly examines the way in which each of us “performs” race, acting out all the expectations and biases that blackness and whiteness imply. Morrie and Zach are inextricably bound by their eternal “blood knot,” but they are also always “other” to each other.

Blood Knot was written in 1961—not long after the Sharpeville massacre in which South African police killed and injured hundreds of unarmed black protesters—and the context of apartheid cannot be overestimated. The atmosphere in which these brothers exist is toxic. When they behave in ways that we find shocking or upsetting, we have to remember that they are the products of a system in which humanity is constantly held hostage to politically determined divisions and preconceptions. Zach and Mortie’s very identity is at stake as they struggle to understand how they can be so similar and so divided at the same time. Even in this post-apartheid era, those divisions continue to haunt us. One of the most startling things about the play is the way in which Fugard exposes how our sense of self is held hostage to the categories in which the world places us: categories of gender, of race, of class, of language, of appearance. In Fugard’s South Africa, it is this deeply damaged internal sense of self that is the most tragic and the most difficult to crack; years after the dismantling of apartheid, we struggle with it still.

Having had the privilege to travel to South Africa together this summer to explore the play’s world at close range (thanks to the incredibly generous support of Nancy Livingston and Fred Levin, and Tom Lockard and Alix Mandel), Jack and Steven have brought a fierce passion and total honesty to the rehearsal process, in collaboration with the wonderful Charles Randolph-Wright, whose work in boundary-breaking productions like Insurrection: Holding History, Tartuffe, and Bête Brève helps us look at our preconceived notions of history and identity in new and surprising ways. The icing on the cake has been the involvement of one of my heroines, Tracy Chapman, who is not only an internationally acclaimed songwriter but one of the Bay Area’s own treasures. When Tracy began coming to see work at A.C.T., I immediately began imagining ways to bring her remarkable music to our stage. I hope this is the beginning of a long collaboration! And I hope that the work of these artists will move you and give you food for thought as we enter this exciting new year. Thank you so much for being here.

Best,

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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[Signature]

Carey Perloff
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A.C.T. launched its 2007–08 season with a generous million-dollar challenge grant from Jeff and Laurie Ubben, who have pledged to match all new and increased gifts to The Next Generation Campaign dollar for dollar up to $1 million. As we turn the corner on the second half of the season, we are thrilled to announce that we are halfway to meeting this generous challenge, which the Ubbens made in hopes of encouraging everyone’s support for this historic effort to create a $30 million endowment for A.C.T.

Once established, earnings from the endowment will provide crucial support to stage remarkable productions featuring visiting artists like those in Stevenson Todd (pictured above, left), to provide conservatory students greater opportunities to perform in productions such as The Importance of Being Earnest (above, center), and to commission and develop innovative new works like The Tissues Project (above, right).

Representatives of A.C.T. will be contacting you to ask for your participation in The Next Generation Campaign. Please help us meet the Ubbens’ generous challenge by making your own commitment to the future of great theater in San Francisco.

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Blood Knot
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MY BROTHER’S KEEPER
An Interview with Athol Fugard
BY JESSICA WERNER ZACK

In October 1961, Athol Fugard, a white South African playwright with two short dramas (No-Good Friday and Nongogo) to his name, and his friend Zakes Mokae, a black jazz saxophone-turned-actor, made theatrical history when they took the stage together for a single Sunday-night performance of Fugard’s third play, Blood Knot. By necessity a clandestine engagement given the apartheid government’s ban against multiracial events, the performance took place in an abandoned button factory in Johannesburg’s Dockyard House. The actors converted the space into a theater for the bare-bones two-character production, hanging costumes over the windows to muffle the street noise. Crowded into the hot, unventilated room, a double-capacity audience sat through a premiere that has since taken on the status of legend and launched the career of South Africa’s preeminent dramatist.

“They had never seen anything like it,” Mokae recalled years later of the predominantly white audience’s reaction to Blood Knot. They were “streaming in week after week to sit as if fascinated by a snail,” said novelist Nadine Gordimer. The act of watching a black man and a white man onstage as brothers—struggling alongside their respective countrysides to honor their family bond, their “blood knot,” and to right their responsibilities without succumbing to violence—was itself a charged event, and as such the play became not only artistically but also politically significant. In fact, four years after the play’s premiere, the apartheid regime declaredmixed races illegal, and in 1967, in response to a BBC television broadcast of Blood Knot, the police confiscated Fugard’s passport.

The original production went on to transfuse audiences in a six-month tour across South Africa, while subsequent stagings brought Fugard—and his country’s life-and-death struggle—to the international stage, with performances in London and New York. A 1985 Broadway revival, with Fugard and Mokae reprising their original roles, earned a Tony Award nomination for Best Play.

Blood Knot also became the model for many of Fugard’s subsequent plays: close, condensed, finely wrought studies of two or three people linked in a love-hate bond of blood, marriage, or friendship. His best-known works (all of which were written under apartheid—Boesman and Lena, A Lesson from Aloes, The Island, Sizwe Banzi Is Dead, and Master Harold…and the boys) are all potent metaphors in which characters voice their personal desires with an urgency that continues to speak to their country’s need to shed its divisive, troubled past and to find a common ground on which to build a humane future.

Fugard, who for many years has divided his time every year between Nies Bethesda, a semidesert village in South Africa’s Eastern Cape, and the beach community of Del Mar, California, spoke with A.C.T. Contributing Editor Jessica Werner Zack from his American home as Blood Knot rehearsals got underway. In conversation, while acknowledging theater’s essential ability to heighten and even provoke political consciousness, Fugard stressed the universal, existential nature of Zacharias and Morris’s plight in Blood Knot. These brothers are defined in Fugard’s mind, as all his characters have been, more significantly by their shared humanity than by any government’s restrictions.

WHEN BLOOD KNOT PREMIERED IN THOSE FAMOUS PERFORMANCES IN JOHANNESBURG IN 1961, DID YOU FEEL AT THE TIME THAT YOU WERE TAKING A RISK IN WRITING AND PERFORMING IN THIS PLAY?

You know, people have called this a serious failing of mine, yet it has fortunately always worked to my advantage—I have never worried about consequences. The act of writing something you believe in, that you feel must be written, is a compulsion that cannot be ignored. When you are sitting with blank paper and a pencil in your hand, obsessed with a set of images, you just can’t argue with that or qualify it in any way. You just have to hold your breath and jump right into the deep end.

THINKING BACK TO BLOOD KNOT’S PREMIERE, WHY DO YOU THINK THAT OPPRESSIVE AND DIVIDED ATMOSPHERE THAT THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT ALLOWED YOU TO KEEP PERFORMING THE PLAY, A BLACK MAN AND A WHITE MAN ONSTAGE TOGETHER?

Well, eventually I lost my passport because of it. The government changed its attitude as time went along, but initially they dismissed theater as of any significance or threat whatsoever. They thought, We’re not going to worry about that. If it gives us a little adverse publicity, let’s just let the idiots do it. Who cares? Well, they were wrong. It’s a pretty amazing contrast for me between that first performance in an abandoned little loft space and 25 years later when the same two actors in the same play ended up on a Broadway stage.

WHEN WE LAST SPOKE, WHEN ACT PRODUCED "MASTER HARROLD...AND THE BOYS IN 2001, YOU SAID THAT A VERY SPECIFIC CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE PROMPTED YOU TO WRITE THAT PLAY. IS THERE A CENTRAL IMAGE THAT INSPIRED BLOOD KNOT?

There is a very specific image that sparked Blood Knot, and it is an image that has stayed with me through all these years. It was during my few years (as a student) at University of Cape Town. I had hitchhiked back to my hometown to spend the Christmas holidays with my family. I knew my brother, who had been away from home for some time, would also be there. I arrived late at night, and my mother let me into the darkened, everybody-still-sleeping house, and in whispers we moved to the bedroom I had always shared with my brother. I could see my mother was a little disturbed, and when she held out the candle so I could see my brother, I saw that he had suffered a lot during those few years. The pain, even in that sleeping face in repose, was written very powerfully on his face. Instead of the powerful, broad-shouldered man I remembered, who I had always been a little jealous of because of his physical prowess and good looks, I saw somebody who had really taken some hard knocks.

It was unquestionably that image of a sleeping man, which is actually embodied in the monologue that Morris has at the end of the first scene when Zach has fallen asleep, and nothing related to the politics of South Africa, although I went on to realize that the politics of South Africa gave me a perfect way of exploring that relationship. The seminal image is an existential one. There is me, and there is you. I had been reading a lot of existentialists at that stage, and this was such a perfect embodiment of one of the fundamental elements of existence: the other.

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MY BROTHER’S KEEPER
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BY JESSICA WERNER ZACK

In October 1961, Athol Fugard, a white South African playwright with two short dramas (No-Good Friday and Nongogo) to his name, and his friend Zakes Mokae, a black jazz saxophone turned actor, made theatrical history when they took the stage together for a single Sunday-night performance of Fugard’s third play, Blood Knot. By necessity a clandestine engagement given the apartheid government’s ban against multiracial events, the performance took place in an abandoned button factory in Johannesburg’s Destiny House. The actors converted the space into a theater for the bare-bones two-character production, hanging costumes over the windows to muffle the street noise. Crowded into the hot, unventilated room, a double-capacity audience sat through a premiere that has since taken on the status of legend and launched the career of South Africa’s pre-eminent dramatist.

“My brother and I were seated on the back row,” recalls Mokae, who had been a protégé of Fugard’s for years. “We were watching the play unfold. It was such a beautiful moment. I felt a great sense of pride and joy. I knew that I was part of something special.”

The play is a powerful, intimate, and often brutal exploration of the racism that had divided South Africa for centuries. The story follows a black father and son, Mulewa and Marcus, who are forced to live in the same house, but in separate rooms. The play’s themes of love, hate, and redemption are deeply emotional and resonate with audiences even today. The performances were so powerful that they garnered Fugard a Tony Award nomination for Best Play.

The play has since been adapted into a film and a Broadway production, and Fugard and Mokae reprised their original roles. The play continues to be performed around the world, and its impact on South African theater cannot be overstated. It is a testament to the power of art to bring people together and to challenge the status quo.

The play’s success was not without its challenges. Fugard and Mokae were attacked by members of the white community, who were afraid of the play’s message. But Fugard was determined to continue telling the truth through his art, and he refused to back down.

The success of Blood Knot paved the way for Fugard’s later plays, which continued to explore the complex issues of race and identity in South Africa. His work has been translated into numerous languages and has been performed all over the world. Fugard’s plays continue to be a powerful force for change, and his legacy is one of hope and resilience.
I wondered reading the play if you were already interested in Beckett when you wrote it. Well, more importantly than Beckett, he is preceded by Sarre and Camus, and those are the two that I had read at that stage. So, my reading of Sarre and Camus—Beckett came years later—made me aware of the existential quality of that moment. I and the other. I loved my brother, but what the hell could I do about his life? I couldn’t live his life for him. I couldn’t wrap him up and put him in a bottom drawer to keep him safe from more danger. So, it starts with that. Then, I suppose the South African situation, which defined my life to a great extent at that point and really has to this day, in which people are divided by the color of their skin, gave me a way of dramatizing the difference between me and the other. So, that’s how it all comes together. It ended up in the writing of a play which I rightly describe as the moment that I found my voice as a playwright. There had been a few apprenticeships before that, but the moment I found a voice that I realized nobody but myself could write, and that’s what finding your voice means.

It might be hard for you to say since you wrote it, but to what do you attribute this play’s ability to continue to speak to so many people in different countries over so many years, divided as we are in so many ways? That is a good question. Whether they realize it consciously or not, it is about that existential dilemma, overlaid by race in certain situations. There is me, and there is the other. That is the issue that really makes it still relevant to people today, and, well, whenever.

So to you, the idea of a ‘Blood Knot’ is more universal than the bond shared by brothers, or by two men of different colors? It’s this notion of interdependence, that we are inextricably linked with one another regardless of not just race but everything that outwardly separates us. Yes. It all started with this sense of existential guilt one feels if one is looking at the faces of Death, parts of the lives of people, Pakistan at the moment, or in Iraq. You know, we are responsible [for one another]. We are our brother’s keeper.

In South Africa under apartheid, the politics of passing, of a light-skinned black man being able to live unnoticed among whites, must have been a tremendously fraught issue.

Oh, goosh. There were so many tragic stories about that, about a member of a family having to disguise his relatives because of the whims of genetics he or she was born with a skin that could pass for white, whereas the rest of the family without any question or testing was obviously non-white, or, more specific to South Africa, was “colored.” That was what Zach and Morris would have been, of mixed heritage. Oh, so many tragic stories.

Zach works daily to the point of exhaustion, and Morris carries an obviously heavy burden of guilt for his ability to have passed as white. Did you intend audiences to see both brothers as equally oppressed?

Very definitely. I wasn’t conscious of this while I was writing it, but there is a kind of prophetic note in the play. In the first half, Morris is dominant. And then in the second half you see Zach at that moment when he emerges and is proud of his blackness and knows what it is, but then Zach sets up that terrible game in the end and takes control of their life in that little shack in which they live. I knew in my bones that South Africa was heading for violence, and that the violence was going to come from the oppressed, as it has always done. We just have to look at world history. Zachanish, in his assumption of power, inevitably discovers his potential for violence. It can’t be avoided.

Yet you have described South Africa’s emergence into a democracy without untold bloodshed as a miracle of the 20th century. You know, there was enough bloodshed on the way. If I’m guilty of saying there was no bloodshed, it is a bit of a misnomer. I don’t know what the difference is between a cupful of blood and a bucketful.

You make a very good point. Maybe there’s the difference between bloodshed and outright apocalypse.

Absolutely. We’re speaking in relative terms, because we must remember the breakdown of South Africa’s population: Four- and-a-half million whites imposed their brutal rule on 19 million black people [1978 statistics]. Good heavens, when those black people rose up, it would be a tsunami, there would be nothing left of that little white island. That was in the cards.

So when you wrote Blood Knot, did you envision that racial apocalypse was possible?

My answer is yes. The dangerous game Morris and Zach play [at the end of Blood Knot] is no doubt going to be played again. What happens if one night that alarm clock doesn’t ring [and make them stop]? They’ve been conditioned like a pair of Pavlov’s dogs to respond to that ringing-ring. But alarm clocks sometimes do not ring. And if that happens in South Africa, what then?

Have you always felt a responsibility as an artist to confront in your work the injustices you see in the world, as opposed to writing from a more strictly personal place or to entertain?

I’ll tell you what I realized, and I can describe the moment that I realized it. What I realized was that with the gift of creativity comes responsibility and obligation. If it’s given to you, then it’s given to you not to be selfish with. I was 21 or 22, and I had just come back home from being a sailor and found a job freelancing for a newspaper. One of the thoughts I had for a story was to visit a night school in one of the black townships, a black ghetto, really. I thought it would be a good story, these black people trying to learn to read and write. And there they were, seated behind their desks. There were a couple of middle-aged men and women, and then I noticed there was one very old man. Really old. With a beard the color of the one I’ve got on my chin right now and with the head of hair to match. He was so beautiful. And he had a pencil in his hand, and in front of him was open an exercise book, and laboriously he was writing out the alphabet. I stopped and asked him why in his old age did he want now to learn to read and write? And he said to me, “If I can’t read the white man’s notices, I will be in trouble.”

Walking away from that little school, I became very conscious of the power of literacy. I thought about the fact that I could read and I could write, and that there were the likes of him who could not. And in that moment I was born of responsibility in me, responsibility to him. Because I had a gift of putting words on paper, I was obliged to do something that was of some use, possibly, some use to my fellow men and women and children.

A thread of hope runs through your work, despite the difficult context in which much of it was imagined. Do you see Blood Knot as a hopeful play?

Yes, it is. It’s just what the title says. There is a blood knot that ties every human being to another human being. It’s a knot we each share that cannot be untied.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I realized as I started working on this play that it scares me. I am astonished that it’s still so relevant, and still so painful, almost 50 years after it was written. Blood Knot makes me feel things I don’t want to feel, and forces me to deal with issues I think we all wish we could have overcome. I wonder how many people know how profoundly Athol Fugard’s writing affected his country and the world, that this white South African man had a huge hand in the dismantling of apartheid. Along with Mandela and Biko and so many others, the name Fugard must be included. In today’s commercial world, we don’t think of art having that kind of danger and importance, but Fugard demonstrated so clearly in his writing that it absolutely can.

I love when worlds collide, and we are forced to look at something outside of our own experience or comfort zone. To open our eyes and see the differences. Athol’s idea of mixed race is right in front of us whether we wish to deal with it or not. Barack Obama looks black, but his mother was white. In Blood Knot, Morris looks white, but is black. What did that mean 50 years ago in South Africa? What does that mean now in San Francisco? I was stunned to hear recently that San Francisco’s population is only 4% black. What happened? Do we talk about that? This play makes us think about who we are, and with the availability of DNA testing today, people of all backgrounds must rethink their origins and assumed ethnic identity. Our ancestors may not be who we expect them to be—after all, Obama and Dick Cheney are supposedly distant cousins. You have to love that.

Part of Blood Knot’s power is that it brings together such a mixture of elements. That’s why I wanted music to play an important part in this production, to help weave those elements together. Tracy Chapman is one of our greatest artists, and I am honored and thrilled to be collaborating with her. Like Fugard’s, Tracy’s work transcends boundaries. Her music challenges and heals.

The hope of this play is that it invites audiences to discuss things we don’t often discuss. It’s important that all kinds of people come to A.C.T., so there are people sitting next to each of us who don’t look like us. It is important that we see stories different from our own, that we explore other worlds. And if those worlds scare us, then that’s fantastic. That’s why we’re here. Thank you, Athol Fugard, for scaring all of us.

—Charles Randolph-Wright
I WOULDN'T READ THE PLAY IF YOU WERE ALREADY INTERESTED IN BECKETT WHEN YOU WROTE IT.
Well, more importantly than Beckett, he is preceded by Sarre and Camus, and those are the two that I read at that stage. So, my reading of Sarre and Camus—Beckett came years later—I made aware of the existential quality of that moment. And I and the other. I loved my brother, but what the hell could I do about his life? I couldn't live his life for him. I couldn't wrap him up and put him in a bottom drawer to keep him safe from more danger. So, it starts with that. Then, I suppose the South African situation, which defined my life to a great extent at that point and really has to this day, in which people are divided by the color of their skin, gave me a way of dramatizing the difference between me and the other. So that's how it all comes together. It ended up in the writing of a play which I righteously describe as the moment that I found my voice as a playwright. There had been a few apprenticeships before that, and then the moment I found a voice that I realized nobody but myself could write, and that's what finding your voice means.

MIGHT BE HARD FOR YOU TO SAY SINCE YOU WROTE IT, BUT TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THIS PLAY'S ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO SPEAK TO SO MANY PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OVER SO MANY YEARS, DIVIDED AS WE ARE IN SO MANY WAYS?
That is a good question. Whether they realize it consciously or not, it is about that existential dilemma, overlaid by race in certain situations. There is me, and there is the other. That is the issue that really makes it still relevant to people today, and well, wherever.

SO TO YOU THE IDEA OF A "BLOODY KNOT" IS MORE UNIVERSAL THAN THE BOND SHARED BY BROTHERS, OR BY TWO MEN OF DIFFERENT COLORS? IT'S THIS NOTION OF INTERDEPENDENCE, THAT WE ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH ONE ANOTHER REGARDLESS OF NOT JUST RACE BUT EVERYTHING THAT OUTSIDEALLY SEPARATES US.
Yes. It all started with this sense of existential guilt one feels if one is looking at the faces of Durban, if the faces of people Pakistan at the moment, or in Iran. You know, we are responsible for one another. We are our brother's keeper.

IN SOUTH AFRICA UNDER APARTHEID, THE POLITICS OF PASSING, OF A LIGHT-SKINNED BLACK MAN BEING able TO LIVE UNNOTICED AMONG WHITES, MUST HAVE BEEN A TREMENDOUSLY FRUSTRATING ISSUE.
Oh, goosh. There were so many tragic stories about that, about a member of a family having to dismiss his relatives because of the whims of genetics he or she was born with a skin that could pass for white, whereas the rest of the family without any question or testing was obviously non-white, or, more specific to South Africa, was "colored." That was what Zach and Morrie would have been, of mixed heritage. Oh, so many tragic stories.

ZACH WORKS DAILY TO THE POINT OF EXHAUSTION, AND MORRIS CARRIES AN OBVIOUSLY HEAVY BURDEN OF GUILT FOR HIS ABILITY TO HAVE PASSED AS WHITE. DID YOU INTEND AUDIENCES TO SEE BOTH BROTHERS AS EQUALLY OPPRESSED?
Very definitely. I wasn't conscious of this while I was writing it, but there is a kind of prophetic note in the play. In the first half, Morrie is dominant. And then in the second half you see Zach at that moment when he emerges and is proud of his blackness and knows what it is, but then Zach sets up that terrible game in the end and takes control of their life in that little shack in which they live. I knew in my bones that South Africa was heading for violence, and that the violence was going to come from the oppressed, as it has always done. We just have to look at world history. Zacharías, in his assumption of power, inevitably discovers his potential for violence. It can't be avoided.

YET YOU HAVE DESCRIBED SOUTH AFRICA'S EMERGENCE INTO A DEMOCRACY WITHOUT UNTOLD BLOODSHED AS A MIRACLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY. YOU KNOW, THERE WAS ENOUGH BLOODSHED ON THE WAY. IF I'M GUILTY OF SAYING THERE WAS NO BLOODSHED, IT IS A BIT OF A MISrepresentation. I don't know what the difference is between a cupful of blood and a bucketful.

YOU MAKE A VERY GOOD POINT. MAYBE IT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BLOODSHED AND OUTRIGHT APOCALYPSE.
Absolutely. We're speaking in relative terms, because we must remember the breakdown of South Africa's population: Four-and-a-half million whites imposed their brutal rule on 19 million black people [1987 statistics]. Good heavens, when those black people rose up, it would be a tsunami, there would be nothing left of that little white island. That was in the cards.

SO WHEN YOU WROTE BLOOD KNOT, DID YOU ENVISAGE THAT RACIAL APOCALYPSE WAS POSSIBLE?
My answer is yes. The dangerous game Morris and Zach play at the end of Blood Knot is no doubt going to be played again. What happens if one night that alarm clock doesn't ring [and make them stop]? They've been conditioned like a pair of Pavlov's rats to respond to that ting-ting-ting. But alarm clocks sometimes do not ring. And if it happens in South Africa, what then?

HAVE YOU ALWAYS FELT A RESPONSIBILITY AS AN ARTIST TO CONFRONT IN YOUR WORK THE INJUSTICES YOU SEE IN THE WORLD, AS OPPOSED TO WRITING FROM A MORE STRICTLY PERSONAL PLACE OR TO ENTERTAIN?
I'll tell you what I realized, and I can describe the moment that I realized it. What I realized was that the gift of creativity comes responsibility and obligation. If it's given to you, then it's given to you not to be selfish with. I was 21 or 22, and I had just come back home from being a sailor and found a job freelancing for a newspaper. One of the thoughts I had for a story was to visit a night school in one of the black townships, a black ghetto, really. I thought it would be a good story, these black people trying to learn to read and write. And there they were, seated behind their desks. There were a couple of middle-aged men and women, and then I noticed there was one very old man, Really old. With a beard the color of the one I've got on my chin right now and with the head of hair to match. He was so beautiful. And he had a pencil in his hand, and in front of him was open an exercise book, and laboriously he was writing out the alphabet. I stopped and asked him why in his old age did he want to learn to write and read? And he said to me, "If I can't read the white man's notices, I will be in trouble."

Walking away from that little school, I became very conscious of the power of literacy. I thought about the fact that I could read and I could write, and that there were the likes of him who couldn't. And in that moment I was born a sense of responsibility in me, responsibility to him. Because I had a gift of putting words on paper, I was obligated to do something that was of some use, possibly, some use to my fellow men and women and children.

A THREAD OF HOPE RUNS THROUGH YOUR WORK, DESPITE THE DIFFICULT CONTEXT IN WHICH MUCH OF IT WAS IMAGINED. DO YOU SEE BLOOD KNOT AS A HOPEFUL PLAY?
Yes, it is. It's just what the title says. There is a blood knot that ties every human being to another human being. It's a knot we each share that cannot be untied.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I realized as I started working on this play that it scares me. I am astonished that it's still so relevant, and still so painful, almost 50 years after it was written. Blood Knot makes me feel things I don't want to feel, and forces me to deal with issues I think we all wish we could have overcome. I wonder how many people know how profoundly Athol Fugard's writing affected his country and the world, that this white South African man had a huge hand in the dismantling of apartheid. Along with Mandela and Biko and so many others, the name Fugard must be included. In today's commercial world, we don't think of art having that kind of danger and importance, but Fugard demonstrated so clearly in his writing that it absolutely can.

I love when worlds collide, and we are forced to look at something outside of our own experience or comfort zone. It's part of the magic of theatre. The idea of mixed races is right in front of us whether we wish to deal with it or not. Barack Obama looks black, but his mother was white. In Blood Knot, Morris looks white, but is black. What did that mean 50 years ago in South Africa? What does that mean now in South Africa? I was stunned to hear recently that South Africa's population is only 4% black. What happened? Do we talk about that? This play makes us think about who we are, and with the availability of DNA testing today, people of all backgrounds must rethink their origins and assumed ethnic identity. Our ancestors may not be who we expect them to be—after all, Obama and Dick Cheney are supposedly distant cousins. You have to love that.

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—Charles Randolph-Wright
What and where is "home"? That's the question that most of Athol Fugard's plays ask and where many of them take place—in someone's home, or in a place a character has made into home. Since the early 1960s, when Fugard first attracted international attention, audiences, theater makers, and critics have experienced this "home" as a metaphor for South Africa, and we have looked at his plays through that prism, refracted by the fact of apartheid. Since Fugard fiercely opposed that ruthless system from the first, and because it's no exaggeration to say that his plays helped change the conscience of a nation, it's reasonable for us to regard his plays as outliers against inhumanity as specifically practiced by the government of South Africa between 1948 and 1991. However, viewing them solely in this one way is also restrictive: it leaves us label Fugard as a "political writer" and put his work in a box where we no longer need consider what else it is or may be. In the apartheid years, Fugard admitted to being bothered by the automatic linking up of his work to his native country's politics. "It saddens and depresses me," he told an interviewer in 1988, "when my work is bracketed between those words 'race' and 'apartheid.'" Works of art are created in response to internal as well as external pressures, and the sources of those internal pressures are deep, personal, and, in the end, not knowable in any but a most provisional way. Now that apartheid, the exterior pressure that worked on Fugard the artist, is gone, perhaps we can find meanings in his plays that lead beyond the political history of South Africa, and hear other, internal resonances, especially in one of the most crucial words in Fugard's vocabulary, "home." The ironic thing about viewing Fugard's work entirely through the lens of apartheid is that the word is Afrikaans for "apartheid." The hallmark of his plays, however, is a tight bond between two people that can either nurture or smother or, most frequently, both. "My plays are a series of burning focuses on tight relationships," he said in the same interview.

The basic Fugardian situation is an intense relationship between two people where one almost inevitably turns against the other: consider "Master Harold... and the Boys," in which the loving relationship between the young, white Hally and the black employee Sam is altered forever in one horrible moment. The tragedy—or the triumph—of the bond that connects them is that even in betrayal it won't break. After the dreadful words are spoken or the act committed, two people are still joined, by blood or history, looking across the broken ground in some place they call "home." That home may be the tea house where Hally takes refuge with the family's black employees Willie and Sam, or a comfortable house such as the one Piet and Gladys usually inhabit in "A Lesson from Alice," the rural lynching shock shared by Zachariah and Morris in "Blood Knot," or the desolate mudflat where a weepy couple slight but don't rest in "Boesman and Lena." A home takes many forms in Fugard's plays, and it can never be summed up in a single adjective. It is, as Fugard has said, "both a blessing and a curse." Whatever else it may be, home is a place that his characters carry with them. In "Boesman and Lena," the first thing we see are the entrances of a colored couple ("colored," in the South African lexicon of apartheid, meant, among other things, someone of colored race) who have been forced from their homes not for the first time, by the government's policy of residential segregation. Boesman and Lena carry their belongings on their heads, and from there it's a short leap to the understanding that they carry their home in their heads, too. Boesman and Lena's home is wherever the other is, a condition that, in their emotionally straightened circumstances, doesn't lead to happiness. Wherever they walk in their years of forced wanderings, the sight before Lena's eyes is unchanged; Boesman's back, and his shadow threatening to engulf her. He is her husband and her oppressor; she knows who he is by the fact that he beats her. "When I feel it I'll know. I'm Lena," she says. She also says, "Sometimes, helplessness is two... you and the other person who doesn't want to know you're there." One doesn't need apartheid to feel apart from other people, especially the person who shares your home. "Just our clothes, and each other," she says. "Never lose that. Run your legs off the other way, but at the end of it, Boesman is waiting." With his beatings and his silence, Boesman is more Lena's home than any temporary shelter he assembles from fugitive bits of firewood and tin, and she is his. Home is a deep loneliness.

In "Master Harold..." Hally can't stand his home, a place ruled by his ailing, tyrannical father. ("Home—sweet-fucking-home," Hally says. "Jesus, I hate that word.") He is terrified on this particular day that the doctor will allow his father to come home from the hospital, meaning that Hally will have to put up with his abuse and empty his stinking chamber pot "full of phlegm and piss." Hally has made a happier home for himself in the tea room in his mother's house in Port Elizabeth. There he's cared for and learns life lessons from Willie and Sam, but his father's reach isn't easily escaped. Into this relative paradise Hally brings the flawed apartheid morality he learned at the sick man's bedside, and in a vicious gesture destroys the one real home he had. For Hally, home will always be the painful memory of being driven down the one place where love and understanding were at least possibilities. Home is a fragile place, easily susceptible to the sickness of the outside world.

In "A Lesson from Alice," Piet and Gladys, a white couple, share an anxious truth of a marriage in their house in Port Elizabeth. He was once an antiapartheid activist before a wave of government arrests ended most protest in the country. His colleague, Steve, also a former activist and a colored man, has come to visit before leaving South Africa for exile in England. Some years earlier, Steve was the victim of a government informer, imprisoned, tortured, and almost driven to suicide. The same informer led the security police to Piet's and Gladys's home, which they tore apart before seizing Gladys's diary—a violation that brought on a severe breakdown, causing her to spend the intervening years in and out of mental institutions. She learned that neither her home nor husband could provide her with sanctuary. As for Piet, a heavy Afrikaner with a weakness for English poetry, he's suspected of being the informer who betrayed his wife and best friend. On the eve of his leaving, does Steve come to say goodbye, or to accuse Piet of being a traitor? Home is where you're under suspicion.

Home is more complicated than that. It is where Sam tries to reach Hally that life can be a place where "nobody trips or stumbles or bumps into anybody else," and where there is often music and laughter. In "Blood Knot," it is where Zach and Morris plan for a better future and where they relive the favorite game of their youth (which happens to be pretending to drive a car 100 kilometers an hour away from home). It is the place, ramshackle and primitive though it is, to which Morris returns, although he could pass for white and live in that comfortable world. It is where Zach dreams of offering his mother a butterfly, a symbol of her own beauty. It is also a haunted place, where Morris wonders which of her children their house, mother loved best: the dark one or the light one.

In "Fugard's newest play, a person's home is once again a nexus of love, comfort, betrayal, and violence: an elderly man's house is broken into and he discovers that the daughter of his late housekeeper helped the burglars gain entrance. The act was the man's own fault for not seeing to it that the girl didn't fall into poverty when her mother died! The play takes place in the present, years after the dismantling of apartheid, yet its effects are still felt: they still are part of what home is in South Africa now.

"Home" is many things for Athol Fugard: it's South Africa, but it's also a very personal inner landscape. It's the thinnest of membranes through which passes the clean or filthy outside. It's every inescapable human emotion. It's the people you are bound to in a blood knot. "You can't explain it," Fugard has said, "you can only say it. It's where you finally belong and where you have to go back to. It's where you are stigmatised. Home is a very deep transaction."
NO PLACE LIKE HOME

BY MICHAEL PALLER

W hat and where is "home"? That's the question that most of Athol Fugard's plays ask and where many of them take place—in someone's home, or in a place a character has made into home. Since the early 1960s, when Fugard first attracted international attention, audiences, theater makers, and critics have experienced this "home" as a metaphor for South Africa, and we have looked at his plays through that prism, refracted by the fact of apartheid. Since Fugard fiercely opposed that ruthless system from the first, and because it's no exaggeration to say that his plays helped change the conscience of a nation, it's reasonable for us to regard his plays as outliers against inhumanity as specifically practiced by the government of South Africa between 1948 and 1991. However, viewing them solely in this one way is also restrictive: it leaves us label Fugard as a "political writer" and put his work in a box where we no longer need consider what else it or he may be. In the apartheid years, Fugard admitted to being bothered by the automatic linking up of his work to his native country's politics. "It saddens and depresses me," he told an interviewer in 1988, "when my work is bracketed between those words 'race' and 'apartheid.'"

Works of art are created in response to internal as well as external pressures, and the sources of those internal pressures are deep, personal, and, in the end, not knowable in any but a most provisional way. Now that apartheid, the exterior pressure that worked on Fugard the artist, is gone, perhaps we can find meanings in his plays that lead beyond the political history of South Africa, and hear other, internal resonances, especially in one of the most crucial words in Fugard's vocabulary, "home."

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The basic Fugardian situation is an intense relationship between two people where one almost inevitably turns against the other: consider "Master Harold and the Boys," in which the loving relationship between the young, white Hally and the black employee Sam is altered forever in one horrible moment. The tragedy—or the triumph—of the bond that connects them is that even in betrayal it won't break. After the dreadful words are spoken or the act committed, two people are still joined, by blood or history, looking across the broken ground in some place they call "home." That home may be the tea house where Hally takes refuge with the family's black employee Willie and Sam, or a comfortable house such as the one Piet and Gladys uneasily inhabit in "A Lesson from Lena," or the nudist colony shock shared by Zachariah and Morris in "Blood Knot," or the desolate mud hut where a weary couple slight but don't rest in "Boesman and Lena." A home takes many forms in Fugard's plays, and it can never be summed up in a single adjective. It is, as Fugard has said, "both a blessing and a curse."

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In "Vortex," Fugard's newest play, a person's home is once again a nexus of love, comfort, betrayal, and violence: an elderly man's house is broken into and he discovers that the daughter of his late housekeeper helped the burglars gain entrance. The act was the man's own fault for not seeing to it that the girl didn't fall into poverty when her mother died? The play takes place in the present, years after the dismantling of apartheid, yet its effects are still felt: they still are part of what home is in South Africa now.

"Home" is many things for Athol Fugard: it's South Africa, but it's also a very personal inner landscape. It's the thinnest of membranes through which passes the cleats or filthy outside air. It's every inescapable human emotion. It's the people you are bound to in a blood knot. "You can't explain it," Fugard has said, "you can only say it. It's where you finally belong and where you have to go back to. It's where you are rooted. Home is a very deep transaction."
A GUIDING HOPEFULNESS

An Interview with Tracy Chapman on Blood Knot

BY JESSICA WERNER ZACK

Tracy Chapman has been well known around the world as a singer-songwriter with a social conscience ever since her politically charged eponymous debut album raced up the charts in 1988 with such hit tracks as “Fast Car” and “Talkin’ Bout a Revolution.” That same year she achieved worldwide fame after performing in London at Nelson Mandela’s 70th birthday concert, which was broadcast in more than 50 countries. (Mandela, South Africa’s future leader, at the time was serving his 24th year of a life sentence.) A year later she left Boston (where she had started her career booking with her guitar in Harvard Square) for San Francisco, which has been her home ever since. Seven more albums, multiplatinum sales, and four Grammy Awards have followed, and her reputation has endured as an artist whose songs evoke her passionate belief that individual humanitarian acts are redemptive and that, one by one, we can each help to make the world a more just place. She told the San Francisco Chronicle last year, “I think we’re all responsible for doing what we can to create the world we want to see, and on a personal level I try to do that.”

Chapman has attended several A.C.T. productions in recent years. Although she has been courted by various directors and producers to write commissioned music for theater and film projects, it wasn’t until A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff gave her a copy of Blood Knot that she decided to make her theatrical debut. Director Charles Randolph-Wright, an ardent fan of Chapman’s music, heard in her lyrics, persuasive and soulful, a guiding hopefulness that is also a hallmark of Fugard’s finest plays. He worked closely with Chapman to develop original songs and transitional music for his A.C.T. production that amplify the emotional life of the play’s two characters, Zachariah and Morris, as well as the “blood knot” itself that binds them as brothers and community in a South Africa wholly divided by apartheid. In conversation with Jessica Werner Zack last month, Chapman discussed her process in creating a musical credited for Athol Fugard’s powerful drama.

When you spoke briefly on the first day of rehearsal, you said that this play challenges you, could you articulate what you felt those challenges were?

This play deals with some difficult subjects. For one, obviously, the play deals with race and people’s perceptions of race, and the characters struggle with their own sense of self and racial identity. And there are some things that are revealed about the characters as they struggle with those issues that are disturbing. But I found myself engaged by the play on many levels because I felt that it was an honest portrayal. I’m not sure how anyone could read this play and not feel moved by what these characters go through.

Has it been important to you to confront issues of race directly in your work?

I found it enormously helpful to discover, in reading your interview with Fugard, that his creative process as it related to this play started all from a personal reflection. It’s the same for me. I don’t sit down with a list of topics and issues that I want to explore. I generally am starting from a more personal place, whether it’s just what is in my mind and imagination at the time, or some combination of that and influences around me, but it felt familiar to hear him say that.

In working on Blood Knot, are there any specific images or words that have helped spark your creative, musical imagination?

Mostly, I’m trying to take care and show respect for the text. I don’t want the music that has lyrics to get in the way of Fugard’s work. I really approached it by just immersing myself in the play—some of the words, and in trying to understand the lives and the minds of the characters. I read and reread the play, and I did a lot of research into the history of South Africa. I also have been listening to South African music and looking at biographical material about Fugard. I did some reading of the Bible, because there are passages that show up in several scenes. The story of Cain and Abel, and possibly seeing the mother as Eve, those things were on my mind. And then I had an assignment from...
A GUIDING HOPEFULNESS
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WHAT YOU FELT THOSE CHALLENGES WERE?
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HAS IT BEEN IMPORTANT TO YOU TO CONFRONT ISSUES OF RACE DIRECTLY IN YOUR WORK?
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IN WORKING ON BLOOD KNOT, ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC IMAGES OR WORDS THAT HAVE HELPED SPARK YOUR CREATIVE, MUSICAL IMAGINATION?
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WHO’S WHO IN BLOOD KNOT

STEVEN ANTHONY JONES (Zachariah), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in The Imaginary Invalid, the world premiere of Phillip Kan Gotanda’s After the War, Happy End, Gem of the Ocean, Parade, Transport, Lena James, Waiting for Godot, Yohem, The Three Sisters, The Dazzle, Night and Day, Burial Child, A Christmas Carol (Ebenezer Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Present), Celebration and The Room, “Master Harold”... and the Boys, The Moonshyne, The Invention of Love, The Threepenny Opera, Tartuffe, Indian Ink, Hecuba, Insurrection: Holding History, Seven Guitars, Orbitty (title role), Antigone, Miss Ever’s Boys, Clara, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Saint Joan, King Lear, Golden Boy, and Feathers. Other local theater credits include Fuente Ovejuna and McIntyre (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); As You Like It (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival); The Cherry Orchard, Every Moment, and The Island (Eureka Theatre); Sideman (San Jose Repertory Theatre); and Division Street (Oakland Ensemble Theatre). He originated the role of Private James Willie in the original production of J. Soldier’s Play at the Negro Ensemble Company in New York. His many film and television credits include two seasons of Mindset Callers.

ROBERT ERNST (Undersdy) has performed at A.C.T. in The Time of Your Life as the Armenian (also at Seattle Repertory Theatre), A Christmas Carol, and Jules and the Depression. He is co-founder of the Iowa Theatre Lab and the Blake St. Hawkeyes. Recent credits include Phil Tracy in The People’s Temple at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Caesar in Marius at Aurora Theatre Company. Other credits include The John, A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Late Henry Moss (replacement for Nick Nolte), Eyes for Consuela, Speed of Darkness, Kingfish, and The Joy of Going Somewhere Definite. His film and television credits include Southpaw, Jumpin’ Jack Flash, Burglar, Monk, Escape from Alcatraz, Nash Bridges, and Hill Street Blues. In 1987 Ernst broke the Guinness Book-world record for the longest continuous performance—by performing both set material and improvisation for twenty-four hours and one minute.

JACK WILLIS (Morriss) has appeared in more than 200 productions throughout the United States, including recent performances at A.C.T. in The Rainmaker, Hedda Gabler, A Christmas Carol, The Little Foxes, Happy End, Cast on a Hot Tin Roof, and The Black Rider. An A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, he is also 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 Theatre Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in Julius Caesar, The Crucible, and The Old Neighborhood. His Off-Broadway credits include The Restorative Rise of Astrum Uli, World of Mirrors, The Iphigenia Cycles, and Falstaff. He recently appeared in Gymp with Patti LuPone at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. Film and television credits include The Talented Mr. Ripley, The Omen Will Rock, The Out-of-Towners, Love and How I Came to Pass, Problem Child, Laver & Order, Ed, and Dallas. Willis is a co-founder of Aruba Repertory.

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BLOOD KNOT

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Who's Who in Blood Knot

STEVEN ANTHONY JONES (Zachariah), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in The Imaginary Invalid, the world premiere of Phillip Kan Gotanda's The Way We Live, Happy End, Gem of the Ocean, Fools, Transport, Lover James, Writing for Giants, Yohen, The Three Sisters, The Dazzle, Night and Day, Burial Child, A Christmas Carol (Ebenezer Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Present), Celebration and The Room, Master Harold... and the Boys, The Misscathucy, The Invention of Love, The Threepenny Opera, Tarraffo, Indian Ink, Hecuba, Insurrection: Holding History, Seven Guitars, Orbis (title role), Antigone, Miss Every Boy, Clara, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Saint Joan, King Lear, Golden Boy, and Feathers. Other local theater credits include Ponci Oregano and MacTugre (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); As You Like It (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival), The Cherry Orchard, Every Man, and The Island (Eureka Theatre); Sideman (San Jose Repertory Theatre); and Division Street (Oakland Ensemble Theatre). He originated the role of Private James Willie in the original production of A Soldier's Play at the Negro Ensemble Company in New York. His many film and television credits include two seasons of Midnights Caller.

ROBERT ERNST (Understudy) has performed at A.C.T. in The Times of Your Life as the Armenian (also at Seattle Repertory Theatre), A Christmas Carol, and Jesus and the Temptress. He is a cofounder of the Iowa Theatre Lab and the Blake St. Hawkleyes. Recent credits include Phil Tracy in The People's Temple at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Cesar in Marivaux at Aurora Theatre Company. Other credits include The John, A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Late Henry Moss (replacement for Nick Nolte), Eyes for Ennada, Speed of Darkness, Kingfish, and The Joy of Going Somewhere Definite. His film and television credits include Serf's Life, Jumpin' Jack Flash, Burly, Mall, Escape from Atlantis, Nash Bridges, and Hill Street Blues. In 1987 Ernst broke the Guinness Book world record for the longest continuous performance—by performing both set material and improvisation for twenty-four hours and one minute.

JACK WILLIS (Morris) has appeared in more than two hundred productions throughout the United States, including recent performances at A.C.T. in The Rainmaker, Hot Shots, A Christmas Carol, The Little Foxes, Happy End, Cast on a Hot Tin Roof, and The Black Rider. An A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, he is also 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 Theatre Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in Julius Caesar, The Crucible, Art, and The Old Neighborhood. His off-Broadway credits include The Rehearsal Room at Eastman Uli, World of Miracles, The Idioglyphic Cycle, and Falstaff. He recently appeared in Gypsy with Patti LuPone at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. Film and television credits include The Talented Mr. Ripley, The Crush Will Kill You, The Out-of-Towners, Love Horns, I Came in Peace, Problem Child, Lava & Order, Ed, and Dallas. Willis is a cofounder of Araba Repertory.

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Who's Who

HANSFORD PRINCE (Undertaker) has worked at many Bay Area theaters, including Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Thick Description, Word for Word, SF Playhouse, and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. He received a Garland Award and a San Francisco Bay Guardian Goldie Award for his performance as the title character in Thick Description's Joe Louis Blues. Television credits include guest-starring roles in House, Days of Our Lives, Nach Brichis, and The Division. Movies of the week include First Reformed and The Man Next Door for ABC and Visions of Murder for NBC. Prince has also worked on the independent films Dumbarton Bridge and Project and costarred in the feature film Cordially Bred, which has been well received at the American Black Film Festival and the Pan African Film Festival. He was also seen in the feature film Citysayer.

ATHOL FUGARD (Playwright) has been working in the theater as a playwright, director, and actor since the mid 1950s in South Africa, England, and the United States. His plays include No Good Friday, Nongogo, Blind Knot, Hello and Goodbye, People Are Living There, Bosom and Lena, Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act, StrawBitteis I Bant, Dimitro, The Island, A Lesson from Aloes, Master Harold... and the boys, The Road to Mecca, and Electra. With the Pigs, My Children! My Affair!, Playland, Valley Song, The Captain's Tiger, Sorrow and Rejoicing, Exits and Entrances, and his most recent play, Victory. He has been seen onstage in South Africa, in London, on and off Broadway in New York, and in regional theater in the United States. Film credits include The Road to Mecca, Gandhi, The Killing Fields, Meetings with Remarkable Men, Marrigolds in August, Boomers and Lena, and The Guest. He has written the novel Youph, a film version of which was made in South Africa and won the 2006 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, as well as the Michael Powell Award and the Standard Life Audience Award at the 2005 Edinburgh Film Festival, the People's Choice Award at the Toronto Film Festival, and the Audience Award at the Los Angeles AFI Film Festival. He has also published his Notesbooks: 1960-1977 and the autobiographical memoir Gouris.

CHARLES RANDOLPH-WRIGHT (Director) returns to A.C.T. where he has directed Insurrection: Holding History, Bilete Spirit, and Tariff. He most recently wrote and directed the film Mama, I Want to Sing! (premiering soon in theaters) and directed the award-winning film Praying with the Christ. He wrote the plays Blue and Castin' Up and directed the 50th-anniversary national tour of Guys and Dolls, as well as other productions at Roundabout Theatre Company, the New York Shakespeare Festival, Lincoln Center, New York Theatre Workshop, Manhattan Theatre Club, Carnegie Hall, the Mark Taper Forum, the Alliance Theatre, Arena Stage, and Pasadena Playhouse. He has also written features for Disney, Fox, HBO, and Showtime. Randolph-Wright directed episodes of the hit series South of Nowhere, produced and wrote the acclaimed series Law & Order, and has directed many videos and commercials, including the European "Freestyle" campaign for Nike. A Duke University honors graduate, he serves on Duke's artistic board and the board of directors of Roundabout Theatre Company and is a founding member of the Wright Family Foundation of South Carolina. Randolph-Wright established the workshop series "Different Voices" at the Roundabout and "Create Carolina," a new arts festival, at Winthrop University in South Carolina.

TRACY CHAPMAN (Composer), a singer-songwriter and Atlantic Records recording artist, has made seven studio albums since her debut in 1988, including Tracy Chapman, Cruel World, Masters of the Heart, New Beginning, Telling Stories, and Let It Rain. Her most recent record is Where You Live, released in 2005. She has toured extensively, both nationally and internationally, and collaborated with such musicians as B.B. King, Bob Dylan, Youssou N'Dour, Emmylou Harris, and Wynton Marsalis. She has found her voice in support of a wide range of social and humanitarian causes, including the Amnesty International Human Rights Now! tour, the Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute, Tibetans Freedom Concert, Farm Aid, Special Olympics, and amFAR.

ALEXANDER V. NICHOLS (Scenic Designer) design work spans from fighting and projections to scenery and costumes for dance, theatre, opera, and art installations. His designs have been set on the stages of such companies as Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, the Alley Theatre, the Ogegos Shakespeare Festival, The Huntington Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theatre, the National Theatre of Taiwan, San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, ODC/ SF, Hubbard Street Dance, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and have supported the work of the Kronos Quartet, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, and Rinde Eckert. Nichols has served as resident designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Pennsylvania Ballet, and Hartford Ballet and as lighting designer for American Ballet Theatre. Other dance credits include designs for choreographers Christopher D’Amboise, Ann Carlson, Val Canipari, Sonya Delwalde, Bill T.

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Who’s Who

HANSFORD PRINCE (Understudy) has worked at many Bay area theaters, including Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Thick Description, Word for Word, SF Playhouse, and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. He received a Garland Award and a San Francisco Bay Guardian Goldie Award for his performance as the title character in Thick Description’s Joe Louis Blues. Television credits include guest-starring roles in Roseanne, Days of Our Lives, Nach Brunch, and The Division. Movies of the work include Firestorm and The Man Next Door for ABC and Violins of Murder for NBC. Prince has also worked on the independent films Dumbarton Bridge and Propsect and co-starred in the feature film Cordially Bred, which was well received at the American Black Film Festival and the Pan African Film Festival. He was also seen in the feature film Cityyard.

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Jones, Jean Grand, Mark Morris, Mikko Niinimaki, Kevin O'Day, Kirk Peterson, Stephen Petronio, Dwight Rhoden, Michael Smuin, and Brenda Way. Other projects include the exterior lighting of the Sentinel Building, Francis Ford Coppola's historic headquarters in San Francisco, and structural and lighting design for the traveling art installation Circle of Memory.

SANDRA WOODALL (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for A.C.T. (Hedda Gabler, Oat on a Hot Tin Roof, A Doll’s House, The Dance, The Duchess of Malfi, Light Up the Sky, and Saint Joan, among others), San Francisco Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Stuttgart Ballet, Singapore Ballet Theatre, and the Magic Theatre. Recent productions include Cinderella for the Bolshoi Ballet, Sleeping Beauty for the Norwegian National Ballet, and Fifth Season for San Francisco Ballet. She was visual director for the eight-hour world premiere of Stan Lai’s Dream Like a Dream at Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, for Doro Ghamari at the Taiwan National Symphony; and for Rimsy-Korsakov’s opera ballet Mlada for the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Other design credits include the Enushi Theatre Company’s original production of Angel in America. Her work has been shown in numerous gallery exhibitions, and she is the recipient of numerous Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Awards for costume design.

MICHAEL PALLER (Drummer) 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 dramaturgy for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premieres of Tennessee Williams’ Small Craft Warnings at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of Gentlemen's Gloves, Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and 1940s-1950s Century Drama (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and Tennessee Williams in Context (Smith & Kraus, 2008) and has written theater and book reviews for the Washington Post, Village Voice, Newday, and Minervaselle 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 (Costume Designer) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as costume designer 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, Dirty Blonde, The Ride Down Mt. Morgan, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Tempest, and Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk. Off-Broadway credits include Staff Happens, Homebody/Kabuli, Fifth Column, and many others. She recently composed the scores for the Broadway production of August Wilson’s Radio Golf and Daniel Sullivan’s production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream and designed the sound for John Doyle’s production of Muhogay, starring Audra McDonald and Patti LuPone, for Los Angeles Opera. She has received three Drama Desk Awards and the LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award, as well as the Entertainment Design Award and an O.B.I.E. Award, both for sustained excellence.

KATHY A. PERKINS (Lighting Designer) has designed lighting throughout the United States, as well as in Europe and South Africa. She was a resident designer for two years with the Los Angeles Theatre Center (LATCH) and the Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company. Her designs have been seen in various New York venues, including Carnegie Hall and Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Regionally, she has designed for Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Mark Taper Forum, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, The Black Bay (St. Louis), ACT (A Contemporary Theatre), Indiana Repertory Theatre, Missouri Repertory Theatre, Congo Square Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, New Federal Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, and Court Theatre. She is editor/coeditor of five anthologies focusing on African/African Diaspora women, including Black South African Women: An Anthology of Plays. Perkins chairs the lighting design program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

DAN MOSES SCHREIER (Sound Designer) is currently working on the Broadway productions of Harvey Fierstein’s new musical, A Catered Affair, and Arthur Laurents’s Gypsy, starring Patti LuPone. Other Broadway productions include 110 in the Shade, Steenwyck Todd (Drama Desk Award nom.), Julius Caesar, 25th Annual Platinum Night Spelling Bee, Gem of the Ocean, Pacific Overtures, Assassins, After the Fall, Anna in the Tropics, Into the Woods, Topdog/Underdog, Major Barbara, Dance of the Deaf, Dirty Blonde, The Ride Down Mt. Morgan, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Tempest, and Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk. Off-Broadway credits include Staff Happens, Homebody/Kabuli, Fifth Column, and many others. He recently composed the scores for the Broadway production of August Wilson’s Radio Golf and Daniel Sullivan’s production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream and designed the sound for John Doyle’s production of Muhogay, starring Audra McDonald and Patti LuPone, for Los Angeles Opera. She has received three Drama Desk Awards and the LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award, as well as the Entertainment Design Award and an O.B.I.E. Award, both for sustained excellence.

THE JAPANESE ARTS CENTER, a non-profit corporation established in 1930 by Robert O. and Alice W. Borden under the guidance of Musical Director Isamu Noguchi, purchased an ancient Chinese masterpiece, a small jade figure of the Buddha. The acquisition was supported by the Robert O. and Alice W. Borden Foundation, Inc., and the various donors. Materials appear by courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Japanese Paintings from the Floating World 1690-1850

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Who’s Who

Jones, Jean Grand Maire, Mark Morris, Mikko Niinimaki, Kevin O’Day, Kirk Peterson, Stephen Petronio, Dwight Rhoden, Michael Smuin, and Brenda Way. Other projects include the exterior lighting of the Sentinel Building, Francis Ford Coppola’s historic headquarters in San Francisco, and structural and lighting design for the travelling art installation Circle of Memory.

SANDRA WOODALL (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for A.C.T. (Hedda Gabler, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, A Doll’s House, The Dazzle, The Duchess of Malfi Light Up the Sky, and Saint Joan, among others), San Francisco Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Stuttgart Ballet, Singapore Ballet Theatre, and the Magic Theatre. Recent productions include Cinderella for the Bolshoi Ballet, Sleeping Beauty for the Norwegian National Ballet, and Fifth Season for San Francisco Ballet. She was visual director for the eight-hour world premiere of Stan Lai’s Dream Like a Dream at Hong Kong Repertory Theatre for Dee Gossamer at the Taiwan National Symphony, and for Rimska-Korakov’s opera ballet Milda at the San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Other design credits include the Eureka Theatre Company’s original production of Angels in America. Her work has been shown in numerous gallery exhibitions, and she is the recipient of numerous Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Awards for costume design.

MICHAEL PALLER (Drumming) began his professional career as literary manager of Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturgy 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 Sovetennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and Tennessee Williams in Context (Smith & Kraus, 2008) and has written theater and book reviews for the Washington Post, Village Voice, Newday, and Minnelli magazine. Before his arrival at A.C.T. in 2006, he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

DAN MOSES SCHREIER (Sound Designer) is currently working on the Broadway productions of Harvey Fierstein’s new musical, A Catered Affair, and Arthur Laurents’s Gypsy, starring Patti LuPone. Other Broadway productions include 110 in the Shade, Stewey Todd (Drama Desk Award nom.), Julius Caesar, 25th Annual Platinum Jubilee Spelling Bee, Gem of the Ocean, Pacific Overtures, Assassins, After the Fall, Anna in the Tropics, Into the Woods, Topdog/Underdog, Major Barbara, Dance of Death, Derry Blonde, The Pride Down Mt. Morgan, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Tempest, and Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk. Off-Broadway credits include Staff Happens, Homebody/Kabul, Floyd Collins, and many others. He recently composed the scores for the Broadway productions of August Wilson’s Radio Golf and Daniel Sullivan’s production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream and designed the sound for John Doyle’s production of Moby-Dick, starring Audra McDonald and Patti LuPone, for Los Angeles Opera. He has received three Drama Desk Awards and the LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award, as well as the Entertainment Design Award and an OBIE Award, both for sustained excellence.

KATHY A. PERKINS (Lighting Designer) has designed lighting throughout the United States, as well as in Europe and South Africa. She was a resident designer for two years with the Los Angeles Theatre Center (L.A.T.C.) and the Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company. Her designs have been seen in various New York venues, including Carnegie Hall and Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Regionally, she has designed for Goodman Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Black Rep (St. Louis), ACT (A Contemporary Theatre), Indiana Repertory Theatre, Missouri Repertory Theatre, Congo Square Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, New Federal Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, and Court Theatre. She is editor/coeditor of five anthologies focusing on African/African Diaspora women, including Black South African Women: An Anthology of Plays. Perkins chairs the lighting design program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

MERYL LIND SHAW (Costuming 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, Cirque, and Phantasm at the Lapis Aisle, as well as the first workshop of The Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-ROM game Obiwan. 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 Godot and Ben Appétit! She was a residence 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.
GO BEHIND THE CURTAIN OF BLOOD KNOT FOR EVERYONE

Sparke follows Steven Anthony Jones and Jack Willis as they prepare for their current role of lovers with roar and color. Also featured is an interview with composer Tracy Chapman.

Wednesday, February 26 at 7:30pm on KQED 9 and KQED HD

24 American Conservatory Theatre
Go behind the curtain of Blood Knot
for everyone

SPARK! Follows Steve Anthony Jones and Jack Willis as they prepare for their comedy show that uses music and color. Also featured is an interview with composer Tracy Chapman.

Wednesday, February 6 at 7:30pm on KQED 9 and KQED HD

The at-risk and stage managers employed in the production are students of John Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

"A GUIDING HOPEFULNESS," CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

the director, who had thoughts about how he wanted the music to relate to the play. One thing Charles wanted to explore is trying to add a female voice to the play in some way. He was hoping that some of the music might be able to do that, and specifically he was looking for the mother's voice.

IN POST-INTERVIEWS YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT THE RACIAL TENSION YOU FELT GROWING UP IN THE 1930S IN CLEVELAND, A CITY STRUGGLING WITH SEGREGATION. DOES ANY OF THAT FEEL RELEVANT TO YOUR WORK ON BLOOD KNOT?

I've been considering the question of whether there are parallels between the system of apartheid and slavery and racial discrimination in America. There are certainly parallels, but I think overall the two experiences are very unique. And I think it's important to be honest on the part of the people who are suffering under the injustice is different.

This play definitely has themes that are universal, but, for me, anyway, it's very context-specific. There are some people who have talked about what it means to be mixed-race in America, as opposed to a mixed-race person in South Africa. But I don't think you can actually compare those experiences.

I think the challenge here is to see that the experience represented by these characters in this particular play may not look like anything any of us has ever seen. But there is still a place where we can find connection, because we see our humanity and our sense of belonging to terms with their identity. In general, I don't think we need to see ourselves in a work of art to believe that it is relevant. If in the end the audience leaves thinking that the two men onstage are brothers, if they have a mental moment, then the play has worked and the actors have achieved at least one of the things I think Fugard was trying to do.

CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 14th season as director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed the world premiere productions of Philip Kan Gotanda's After the War (an A.C.T. commission that premiered in March), Tom Stoppard's Travesties, Bernard Berken's Feel Myself (an intriguingly executed simple recording), and A Christmas Carol (a new adaptation by Perloff with dramaturg Paul Walsh). 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 Stopford's Three Sisters, Thirteenth Avenue, and A Christmas Carol. She is a graduate of Cornell University and the Juilliard School's movement program.

ROBERT O'HANON, on the occasion of the 2005 O'Neill Playwrights Conference, and Irish playwright Lucy Caldwell, on Guardians, for the 2007 O'Neill Conference. Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Edward Poon's Elixir, the American premiere of Pinter's Marseille and A Christmas Carol, and many other works. Under Perloff's leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, directing, and design, and was named the 1985 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1991, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's open the gate at the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

A recipient of France's Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the National Corporate Theatre Fund's 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, 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 Thosch 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 Leica and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director), now in her 12th 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 accept an M.B.A. degree from the Richard E. Schaeffer School of Business at The University of Pennsylvania followed a 15-year career in stage, film, and television management, ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credits include the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottesville Festival, Theatre New Brunswick, New Play Centre, Vancouver, and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. A former 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 anchored the benchmark study Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton. An active community member, Kitchen serves on the board and executive committee 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 Playwrights' League, the board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula, and many other works. Under Perloff's leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, directing, and design, and was named the 1985 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1991, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's open the gate at the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

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JAMES HARRIS (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theatre as an actor and stage manager. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of And This is Drinkin' Water and Drinkin' the Water. Off Broadway he produced Stuck Bootes in New York (directed by Michael W. Mason) and Steve's Arm and the Man. Harris joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded the Theatre Communications Group's International award for excellence in the theater in 1989, and in 1992 Harris was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle.
As an investor, Ron Conway looks for the most talented people with the greatest potential, and then secures the resources they need to flourish. That’s why as a philanthropist, Ron is partnering with UCSF Medical Center. Together we’re building a medical complex, where scientific innovations are becoming lifesaving treatments faster. We’re already the only nationally ranked top-ten hospital in the Bay Area, but our vision is to provide the best patient care available anywhere. To learn more, visit ucsfhealth.org/future. Together we are UCSF. Advancing Health Worldwide.
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"INVEST IN THE RIGHT COMPANY, AND YOU SEE GOOD RETURNS. INVEST IN THE RIGHT MEDICINE, AND IT CHANGES THE WORLD."

— Ron Conway, Silicon Valley angel investor, early Google, Inc., investor

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Frannie Fieldshackler, Co-chair  *  Dede McDermott, Co-chair

Producers Circle members make annual gifts of $10,000 or more to A.C.T.'s extraordinary generosity supports season productions, actor training in our conservatory, and arts education in our community. Members are invited to participate in the artistic development of A.C.T.'s season by attending production meetings and taking part in numerous behind-the-scenes opportunities. We are privileged to recognize these members' generosity during the December 1, 2006–December 31, 2007, period. For information about membership, please contact Paul Knudson at 415.439.2553 or pkudson@artspact.org.

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Directors Circle members make annual contributions of $1,500 to $2,999 to A.C.T. Their exceptional generosity supports production, programming, and instruction costs not covered by ticket sales and grants. Members enjoy a variety of benefits, including invitations to opening night receptions, complimentary parking, access to the V.I.P. ticket line for purchase or exchange premium tickets, and use of the V.I.P. Lounge during performance intermissions. We are privileged to recognize these members' generosity during the December 1, 2006–December 31, 2007, period. For information about membership, please contact Lea Nilsen at 415.439.2600 or lnilsen@artspact.org.

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From free parties to in-depth discussions with the artists, A.C.T. offers events for all—at no additional cost.

KORET PROLOGUE
Free postperformance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members
Tuesday, 2/12
Saturday, 2/24
Wednesday, 3/5
Tuesday, 4/1
Thursday, 4/2
Wednesday, 4/6

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES
Free postperformance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members
Tuesday, 2/19
Saturday, 2/24
Wednesday, 3/5
Tuesday, 4/1
Thursday, 4/2
Wednesday, 4/6

OUT WITH A.C.T.
A gathering of gay and lesbian theatergoers...literally following the 8 p.m. performance
Wednesday, 2/20

THEATER ON THE COUCH
An exciting collaboration between A.C.T. and The San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis. After the show, the panel will discuss the psychological aspects of the play and take questions from the audience in Fred's Columbus Room.
Friday, 2/15

And Don't Forget...
FIRST LOOK PRESENTS
Living experience of: José Rivera
ZUMA THEATER
1/30-2/16

MASTERS OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM PRESENTS CLASS OF 2008 IN WORLD BY SARAH RUNN
ZUMA THEATER
2/28-3/15

Masters of Fine Arts Program and Young Conservatory Present
The Wendy/If by Amy Herzog
ZUMA THEATER
3/21-4/5

KORET VISITING ARTISTS SERIES A.C.T.
3/2

FIRST LOOK NEW WORK READING SERIES
ZUMA THEATER
4/26-5/11

KORET VISITING ARTISTS SERIES A.C.T.
4/13

A.C.T. Donor Events

Design Presentation
Hear the director's vision at the first meeting of the company of The Government Inspector.
Tuesday, 3/15, 5:30 p.m.

Opening Night Dinner
A dinner with the director before the opening night performance of The Government Inspector.
Wednesday, 3/26, 7:30 p.m.

Design Presentation
Hear the director's vision at the first meeting of the company of Curse of the Starving Class.
Monday, 3/24, 11 a.m.

Design Presentation
Hear the director's vision at the first meeting of the company of The彷徨 Chair.
Tuesday, 3/25, 5:30 p.m.

To support A.C.T. and receive invitations to Annual Fund, Directors Circle, and Proscenium Society events, please contact Paul Krueger at paulkrueger@aact.org or 415.439.2553.

Due to the spontaneous nature of live theater, all times are subject to change.

For more information, call 415.749.2ACT or visit www.aact-sf.org.
Chandra Gordon, Jamiel Perkins, and Patti Ruoff Co-chairs

In addition to their usual gifts, the following individuals and businesses have made generous commitments to A.C.T. 2008 Gala "Illuminate the Night of Spectacle on Our Dining Table," on Saturday, April 5, 2008. A benefit event in support of A.C.T.'s creative arts training and youth education programs, "Illuminate the Night" features Coat of Arms winner Christine Eliseve. The spectacular evening will unite the Bay Area community leaders, philanthropists, and special artists in celebration of the next generation of growing minds in American theater. For information about sponsorship and tickets, please contact Carol Spiegel at 415.439.2470 or cspiegel@act.org.

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THE GALLERY AT A.C.T.

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 up the elevator) to view original artwork by a diverse array of artists, presented in series of rotating exhibitions throughout the 2007–08 season.

PAINTINGS BY DEBORAH BARLOW

Formerly of the Bay Area, Barlow is now a Boston-based artist who has been featured in several previous gallery shows at A.C.T. She describes her work as closely aligned with nature. “What compels me most is the natural world at the edges. The extremes are most provocative to me—the emptiness of a desert landscape or the intricate layers of a microscopic world. It’s what’s obvious that keeps me looking, and I look without any desire to mimic or reproduce those marginal views. My paintings are not objects as much as they are a record of how to search.”

Barlow exhibits her work in galleries in the United States, Canada, and Europe. She represented the United States in the International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Italy, in 1999, and was artist-in-residence at Anami Canu in County Cork, Ireland. In summer 2007 she was featured at the Chautauqua Institution in New York. She will be exhibiting at the Lyman-Eyes Gallery in Portownship, Massachusetts, in July 2008. A reception celebrating Deborah Barlow’s work will be held at the theater on Saturday, February 9, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. The current show runs from February 8 through April 20, 2008. For more information about Deborah Barlow, please contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 / kcsimmons@aol.com.
The gallery at A.C.T.

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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 refresher 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.

Beepers
If you carry a pager, beeper, cellular phone, or watch with alarm, please make sure that it is set to the “silent” 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 sprayed-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 415.439.2996 in an emergency.

Lanterns
A.C.T. performances begin on time. Lanterns 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 level, the Bakery 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 member of the United Allied Artists, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and Stock 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 SCENE, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, AND SOUND DESIGNERS IN LORT THEATERS ARE REPRESENTED BY UNITED SCENIC ARTISTS, LOCAL USA 829 OF THE IATSE.

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For Your Information

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
A.C.T.’s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 36 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108. Phone 415.898.3200. 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 12:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12–6 p.m. Sunday and Monday. During non-performance 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 415.749.2201. 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 scheduling privileges and last-minute 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. Mataro senior rush tickets are available at noon on the day of the performance for $12. 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 Bushworth at 415.439.2473.

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San Francisco

34
From Gold Dust To Stardust

During the Gold Rush, Wells Fargo stagecoaches carried more than gold dust and mail. We also brought actors, musicians and other performing artists to the West. Today, we’re proud to continue that tradition by helping to deliver arts and entertainment to our community.