SAM SHEPARD'S
CURSE OF THE STARVING CLASS
Directed by PETER DUBOIS

Check out the Spring '08 issue of Inside A.C.T. within!
From Gold Dust To Stardust

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Today, we’re proud to continue that tradition by helping to deliver arts and entertainment to our community.
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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 reinvest its relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.’s creative work.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater 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 playwrighting. 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 555 Taylor Theater, which now serves as a venue for student productions and exciting new plays. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

The conservatory, led by Melissa Smith and George Thompson, now serves 3,000 students every year. It was the first actor training program in the United States not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a master of fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, and Elizabeth Banks are among the conservatory’s distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The first thing that leapt off the page when I read Curves of the Starving Class prior to rehearsals was Weston’s speech to his son, Wesley:

“I remember now. I was in hook. I was in hook up to my elbows. See, I always figured on the future. I banked on it. I was banking on it getting better. It couldn’t get worse, so I figured it’d just get better. I figured that’s why everyone wants you to buy things. . . . Why not borrow if you know it’s coming in. Why not make a touch here and there. They all want you to borrow anyhow. Bank, car lots, investors. The whole thing’s geared to invisible money. You never hear the sound of change anymore. It’s all plastic shuffling back and forth. . . . So I figured if that’s the case, why not take advantage of it? Why not go into debt for a few grand if all it is is numbers? . . . I just played ball.”

There is something heartbreaking about that speech in the context of the American economic landscape today, in which more horses are being fenced off than at any time since the Depression. With mythic precision, Sam Shepard has always tapped into the relentless American belief in the future. Even in the face of mounting debt and limited job prospects, America continues to be a place where people dream of staking out new ground, conquering new frontiers, inventing new devices, creating new opportunities for their families. When Shepard wrote Curves of the Starving Class in 1977, the country was in a very different place, but the restless struggle of this particular family to grab a piece of the future for themselves feels completely of our time. The promise of potential riches encourages us to borrow way beyond our means, and when we can’t repay the loans, we question where we went wrong.

As actor Pamela Reed has pointed out, the refrigerator is the tenth character in the play. It is the gaping mouth in the center of the kitchen, waiting to be filled up. The characters in Shepard’s play are constantly opening the fridge and staring into its light, hoping to uncover bounty inside, but for the most part discovering only an empty void. “No one’s starving!” Emma shouts at her mother early on in the play. “We don’t belong to the starving class!” to which her mother replies, “We’re hungry, and that’s starving enough for me!” Shepard’s characters are both literally and metaphorically hungry; they have huge appetites for adventure, for love, for advancement, but they live in a run-down shack without a front door on a stretch of land where nothing will grow. When the father finally returns with a bag of groceries, it contains nothing but arichokes. Their situation is both hilarious and tragic, and we feel for them precisely because the gap between the characters’ desires and their reality is so enormous.

Exactly 30 years ago this month, Curves opened at The Public Theater in New York with a young Pamela Reed playing Emma, the daughter, and Olympia Dukakis playing her mother, Ellis. Today at A.C.T., we are thrilled to present Pamela as Ellis, alongside our remarkable core company members Jack Willis and Jud Williford as her husband and son; we are also delighted to welcome Nicole Lowrance to A.C.T. and to welcome back the rest of this extremely talented ensemble, under the direction of Peter DuBois. Shepard has taken this opportunity to rework sections of the script and to transform the play from a three-act to a two-act structure, thereby tightening the suspense and highlighting certain character choices in fascinating new ways. It is a great honor to revisit this astonishing play, and to know that, as he has matured, this great American playwright has kept an eye on this beloved early play of his, and continued to wrestle with its meaning and its structure.

Get ready for a wild adventure!

Yours,

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director
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Wesley, Malcolm—T. Edward Webster; Ellis—Jeri Lynn Cohen; Emma—Maya Lawson.
Taylor, Weston, Ellis—Howard Swain; Emerson, Slater—Craig Marker.

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Elisa Guthertz, Stage Manager
Karen Stpalter, Assistant Stage Manager
Tanner Agron, Intern
Christine Ploswight, Lamb Wrangler

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Nita Carey and Jim Kirchner of Duarte, California
James Donlon
Don Gilardi, Red Hill Farms

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CURSE, THEN AND NOW

BY MARGOT MELCON

Sam Shepard is as iconic as America itself. He is our rebel poet, rugged hero, and sensitive cowboy. Crossing artistic disciplines before it was fashionable, he has been a rock musician, poet, novelist, film star, director, and actor, as well as arguably the most important American playwright of his generation. Existing at the core of all these occupations is a steadfast determination to chronicle the devolution of the American Dream with a ferocious honesty. Shepard cuts a recognizable silhouette: the hard-working loner, turning a critical eye on our culture as it inches inexorably away from the promise it once held. Although more than 40 years have passed since he began to stretch his imaginative reach across the cultural landscape, Shepard’s observations have an eternal quality and an unflinching integrity that keep his work fresh and frighteningly relevant.

When Curse of the Starving Class premiered in New York in 1978 at Joseph Papp’s Public Theater, it was described by the New York Times as a savage play about hunger. “For Mr. Shepard,” wrote critic Richard Erlich, “the common people—white-collar, blue-collar, or whatever—is one great starving class. Its hunger, its ambitions, its pains are artificially stimulated; and what it strives for is plonky food that doesn’t bring satisfaction, only a new voracity. Ultimately, the message goes, American life is controlled by crooks and swindlers who delude the people and end up stripping them.” Whether this voracious hunger is for food, emotional connection, or some kind of spiritual longing, America’s appetite has still not been satisfied, as those words continue to ring true.

ORIGIINAL CURSE

After a decade of working successfully in New York’s off- and off-Broadway experimental theaters in the 1960s and early ’70s, Shepard said in 1974: “I’d like to try a whole different way of writing now, which is very stark and not so flashy and not full of a lot of mythic figures and everything, and try to scrape it down to the bone as much as possible.” Curse of the Starving Class represents Shepard turning toward realism for the first time, though it remains rooted in an extraordinary style that the New York Times described as “oscillating between realism and savage fantasy.” Written in 1977, Curse is the first in what is considered Shepard’s “family trilogy”—with Buried Child (1978) and True West (1980)—and his first full-length play that could be described as domestic drama.

As Shepard was writing Curse, he also began to really mine the depths of his own family history. In a 2000 interview, he remarked, “The one thing that keeps drawing me back to writing about my family is this thing that there is no escape from the family. . . . It started with a little tiny one-act play I wrote way back when called Rock Garden (1964), where there was, for the first time in my work, a father, a mother, and a son. It was a very simple one-act little play, but it keyed off into Curse of the Starving Class (1977), and that keyed off into Buried Child (1979). . . . It initiated something that I didn’t even see, I didn’t even recognize that this was going to be the impulse toward other things, and I certainly didn’t see myself spending my whole life on it. . . . The amazing thing to me is that, now, in this time, for some reason or another, the disaster inherent in this thing called the American Family is very, very relevant now with audiences.”

The character of Weston in Curse of the Starving Class is largely based on Shepard’s own father, Samuel Rogers, Jr., a veteran of the Army Air Corps who, through a warm and charismatic man, had a severe drinking problem that drove him into heated battles with his son and periods when he would disappear from his family completely. Shepard acknowledges his father’s influence in his life and work: “I grew up in a condition where the male influences around me were primarily alcohols and extremely violent and, at the same time, like lost children, not knowing how to deal with it. . . . Slowly they began receding further and farther away—receding from the family, receding from society.”

A NEW CURSE FOR A NEW GENERATION

In much of his work, Shepard explores the timeliness of generations repeating mistakes and returning to or trying to escape from homes that are falling to pieces. Many of his best-known plays were written almost three decades ago, but he continues to revisit his work for succeeding generations of actors and audiences. Though early in his career Shepard eschewed the idea of rewriting his plays, he has since embraced the value of revision to reflect the ever-changing realities of making live theater. In an interview in 1974 he said, “I think I’m too flippant about what I write—it’s too easy to discard one thing and say, okay, now act in because when it comes down to the flesh-and-blood thing of making it, it’s a different world. I think that’s where rewriting comes in—if it seems that the angle that the actor has to come at is too impossible or difficult.”

In anticipation of a revival of Curse of the Starving Class, Shepard recently took a new look at the script, making minor but precise changes that bring the sweeping themes of the play into graphically sharp focus. He has taken Curse from a three-act to a two-act structure and has tailored a word or phrase here and there to streamline the text. “The rewrite pulls out the mythic quality of the play, and enhances its themes,” says Peter DuBois, director of the A.C.T. production. “It’s not big surgery. There aren’t major changes to characters. There are some changes that have great impact. Sam is one of the great American masters and having him revisit his first full-length play has been incredible to witness.”

Changing the play’s structure means that the audience learns things about the Tate family on a slightly different timeline. For the actors telling the story, it makes a big difference. “The changes aren’t massive amounts of writing,” says Pamela Reed, who plays the mother, Ella, in the current A.C.T. production and played the daughter, Emma, in the play’s 1978 New York premiere, “but because of where the act break is, now you know things that you didn’t know when we did the play the first time. You weren’t sure. It causes one to play things differently.”

Embracing his roots in the experimental theater, Shepard writes with one foot in the real world, and the other planted firmly in a realm that is slightly absurd, pushed just past the ordinary. Curse of the Starving Class walks the fine line in between. When asked about the play crossing the line of realism, DuBois counters, “Sam stretches the rubber band without snapping it. He takes the real situation and he stretches it so tight that it’s right about to break, but it doesn’t. I’m treating the play in a very real way, but there are a handful of moments that dip toward surrealism. We’re consciously building those moments into the play, which I feel Sam has built into the language.”

Shepard’s script also walls the line between comedy; an aspect of his style that is often overlooked, and the dark family drama for which he has become known. Curse of the Starving Class is mired in the drunken desperation of a family incapable of connecting to one another, but floating above the darkness in the Tate family.
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DuBois discussed the rewrite with Shepard in Ireland last spring while at the Abbey Theatre during the premiere of Shepard's new play, Kicking a Dead Horse. "I've always found this play so funny, and Sam's rewrite has made the situations more absurd and more extreme. The comedy doesn't leap out at you on the page. The combustibility and the bleakness of the story are what is first apparent when you read the script, but the comedy really comes alive when the actors bring Sam's language to life. It's when all the different elements get pulled together that the comedy really emerges," Reed agrees, adding, "I think he's made it tighter, made it a little bit cleaner. He's brought a little more humor to it. It's a very funny piece."

THE AMERICAN DREAM UNFULFILLED

Shepard's changes did not, however, after a story that is still profoundly current. Says DuBois, "When the audience watches this show written about a family in the mid-1960s, they will recognize the current state of America as if the play was written a month ago." About a family struggling under increasing debt, Cope is centered around a father fighting a battle with alcoholism, weighed down by his disappointment in America's failure to deliver on its postwar promise, and is based on Shepard's own father's experience retreating from World War II. DuBois remarks, "I think the play is clearly deeply personal, and the story is a deeply personal story that Sam is telling. At the same time, he's telling a larger American story."

Shepard once recalled, "This happened all across the country of course, but my dad came from an extremely rural farm community—wheat farmers—in Illinois, and next thing he knows he's flying B-24s over the South Pacific, over Rumania, dropping bombs and killing people he couldn't even see. And then from that into trying to raise a family and growing up in white America."

From this context for the dirtiest, roots, it's been about this big American Dream of the icon on the porch and home ownership and barbecues," says DuBois, "and that dream has been built on the back of war. The men fighting the war come back and they don't know what to do with that pain; they drink and that turns into violence. The culture pushes us to buy and consume and go into debt. Sam puns duality under the post-World War II vision of America that emerged in the '50s. The larger character of the play is about the postwar vision of the beauty and simplicity of this country and unlimited opportunities for the nuclear family."

For DuBois, it is this fantasy of the American Dream that represents the "curse" of the play's title. "The curse has a lot of implications. Part of it is very much referring to this invisible force that is bigger than government that blows through history and sucks people into it, and once they're sucked into it, they can't break free of it. It's in the soil. It's in the air. It's fate. It's what our behavior accumulates into, and in the play, it's this thing that becomes larger than the characters executing that behavior."

Reed adds, "What he's talking about, the sale of America and the breaking down of what makes us a family, is more profound today than it was when we first did Cope in 1978. Shepard was a visionary in many ways. Unfortunately what he's talking about has become so true."

As much as Shepard makes use of the Tate family to explore his own personal history, he also uses them as a way of revealing the extent to which the larger American Dream has remained unfulfilled. That the story of Cope remains potent to us is a testament to his unique ability to capture and render theatrical enduring truths. Reed, once the rebellious daughter of the Tate family, and now its escape-driven matriarch, finds with something like a mixture of admiration and despair, "I think this play has real legs. Long, long legs."

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

SAM SHEPARD was born Samuel Shepard Rogers III on November 5, 1943, in Fort Sheridan, Illinois. The son of a career Army father, Shepard spent his childhood on military bases in the United States and Greece before his family settled on a farm in Duarte, California.

Shepard worked as a stable hand on a ranch in Chino from 1958 to 1963 and studied agriculture for a year at Mount San Antonio Junior College. After leaving college, he joined the Bishop's Company Repertory Players, a touring theater group.

In 1963, Shepard moved to New York City, where he worked as a busboy at the Village Gate in Greenwich Village and began to write plays for the emerging experimental underground theater scene. He made his debut at Theatre Genesis on October 10, 1964, with the double-billed Cowpokes and Ruck Garden. In 1965 he premiered The Everest Affair at Yorkville, a West End theatre in London, and began to write plays for the emerging experimental underground theater scene.

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Shepard's play Stages of Shed was premiered at the American Place Theatre in 1993, and Simpsonio transferred to the Royal Court Theatre after its premiere in 1994 at the New York Shakespeare Festival. A revised Bare Child, under the direction of Gary Sinise, opened on Broadway in April 1996 and earned a Tony Award nomination. Emmy for Connolly, based on a short story by Augustus Pipp, premiered at Manhattan Theatre Club in 1998. San Francisco's Magic Theatre premiered The Late Henry Moss, starring Sean Penn and Nick Nolte, before it was moved to the Signature Theatre in New York in 2003.

Shepard's recent projects include the short story collection Great Dream of Heaven (2002), the plays The Gold of Hell (2004) and Kicking a Dead Horse, which premiered in Dublin, Ireland in March 2007 and will have its New York premiere in July 2008 at The Public Theater; and the films Black Hawk Down (2001), Don't Come Knocking (his second collaboration with Wenders, writer/director, 2005), and The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007). The upcoming From Hereon (2008), in which he is scheduled to play, is the last descendant of Heaven (actor, with Pamela Reed). Shepard is considered one of the foremost modern American playwrights. The Signature Theatre dedicated its entire 1996–97 season to his plays. In 1985 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which awarded him the Gold Medal for Drama in 1993. In 1993 he was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame.
kitchen is an inverted absurdity that transforms the play into something infinitely more layered and complex.

DuBois discussed the rehearsals with Shepard in Ireland last spring while at the Abbey Theatre during the premiere of Shepard's new play, Kicking a Dead Horse. 'I've always found this play so funny, and Sam's rewrite has made the situations more absurd and more extreme. The comedy doesn't leap out at you on the page. The combustibility and the bleakness of the story are what is first apparent when you read the script, but the comedy really comes alive when the actors bring Sam's language to life. It's when all the different elements get pulled together that the comedy really emerges,' Reed agrees, adding, 'I think he's made it tighter, made it a little bit cleaner. He's brought a little more humor to it. It's a very funny piece.'

THE AMERICAN DREAM UNFULFILLED

Shepard's changes did not, however, after a story that is still profoundly current. Says DuBois, 'When the audience watches this show written about a family in the mid-1960s, they will recognize the current state of America as if the play was written a month ago.' About a family struggling under increasing debt, Cave is centered around a father fighting a battle with alcoholism, weighed down by his disappointment in America's failure to deliver on its postwar promise, and is based on Shepard's own father's experience retreating from World War II. DuBois remarks, 'I think the play is clearly deeply personal, and the story is a deeply personal story that Sam is telling. At the same time, he's telling a larger American story.'

Shepard once recalled, 'This happened all across the country of course, but my dad came from an extremely rural farm community—what farmers—in Illinois, and next thing he knows he's flying B-24s over the South Pacific, over Rumania, dropping bombs and killing people he couldn't even see. And then from that into trying to raise a family and growing up in white America.'

From this country of 480 million roots, it's been about this big American Dream of the iceberg on the porch and home ownership and barbecues," says DuBois, "and that dream has been built on the back of war. The men fighting the war come back and they don't know what to do with that pain; they drink and that turns into violence. The culture pushes us to buy and consume and go into debt. Sanp pand dynamics under the post-World War II vision of America that emerged in the '50s. The larger transformation of the play is calling out the postwar vision of the beauty and simplicity of this country and unlimited opportunities for the nuclear family.'

For DuBois, it is this fantasy of the American Dream that represents the "curse" of the play's title. "The curse has a lot of implications. Part of it is very much referring to this invisible force that is bigger than government that blows through history and sucks people into it, and once they're sucked into it, they can't break free of it. It's in the air. It's in the air. It's in the air. What we're doing is exposing what's off-the-books in the American Dream," he adds.


In 1974 Shepard returned to the United States and became the playwright-in-residence at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco, a position he held until 1984. Plays from this period include: *Action* (OBIE Award, 1974), *Killer's Head* (1975), *Angels in America* (1976), and *Suicide in B-Flat* (1976).

Beginning in the late 1970s, Shepard applied his unconventional dramatic vision to a more conventional dramatic form, the family tragedy, producing *Crimes of the Starring Class,* which premiered at the Royal Court in London in 1977, and *Buried Child* in 1978 (both of which won OBIE Awards) and *True West* in 1980. Shepard achieved his warmest critical reception with *Buried Child,* which also won the Pulitzer Prize for drama. Washington Post theater critic David Richards wrote, "Shepard delivers a remarkable comic meditation on family and home of the civilized... The amber waves of grain mask a dark secret. The fruitless plain is rotting and the purple mountains' majesty is like bad bruise on the landscape."

Shepard began a new career as a film actor in 1975, appearing in *Reds and Giants* and Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven.* He also began collaborating with Joseph Chaikin on *Furber and of the Village Voice* (1977). He began working with music that was heavily dependent on the theories of Antonin Artaud. Shepard and Chaikin would also collaborate on *Savages/Love* (1979, *Wax on Heaven*) and *When the World Was Green (A City's Fable)* (1996).

ANNOUNCING A.C.T.'S 2008–09 SEASON

A.C.T. is thrilled to announce the lineup of the company’s 42nd subscription season.

From smart, edgy pieces to wildly innovative theatrical events, the upcoming 2008–09 season offers full-impact theater—plays that leap off the stage and leave you away from a culture of distractions into new realms of time, language, and thought. At A.C.T. we strive to engage the mind, excite the senses, and elevate the discourse as only theater can.

The season opens in September with the West Coast premiere of Tom Stoppard’s latest and most personal work, Rock ’n’ Roll, which recently finished hugely successful runs in London and on Broadway. “Tom’s latest play is very sexy and very personal,” says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, a longtime friend and collaborator of Stoppard, who will direct the production. “Rock ’n’ Roll draws us into the lives of individuals who are trying to carve out a little place for themselves amid the bureaucracy and horror of Soviet-dominated Czechoslovakia. This play testifies powerfully to the fact that art can change a culture and change history.”

The season continues with Emmy Award winner Jane Anderson’s quirky drama The Quality of Life. The show’s star-studded cast features Dennis Boutsikaris alongside Laurie Metcalf and Julliette Wakefield, who play cousins confronting loss and survival in the aftermath of the fires in the Oakland hills. The Quality of Life comes to A.C.T. following its world premiere production at Los Angeles’ Geffen Playhouse.

A.C.T. ushers in the new year with the first major revival of legendary playwright John Guare’s Rich and Famous, a “wacky funhouse ride” through the disturbed unconscious of an ambitious playwright as he struggles against hilarious odds to make his 644th play a success. From the inspired mind of John Guare—who brought Six Degrees of Separation and The House of Blue Leaves to the American stage—Rich and Famous springs to life with twisted humor, rapid-fire dialogue, and outrageous plot twists.

The momentum gathers with the season’s next offering, Sweet Charity, showcasing Broadway star Judy Kaye (A.C.T.’s Chicago Todd) in a role that earned her a 2006 Tony Award nomination. A heartfelt portrait of Florence Foster Jenkins as told by her accompanist, played by Donald Corren, Steven Temperley’s play depicts a wealthy socialite with all the ambition and means to succeed as a classical soprano—except a decent voice. “This piece—which is based on historical fact—about a woman’s indomitable will to be an artist, even when she’s not, both amuses and rings true,” says Perloff. Ben Brantley of the New York Times praised Souvenir as “a sweet…love letter of a play…an unexpectedly gentle and affecting comedy.”

As spring comes around, A.C.T. turns its gaze simultaneously to the past and the future, re-envisioning the company’s classical heritage while putting Homer’s timeless tale of the conquest of Troy in a new theatrical form. War Music, in a world premiere production commissioned by A.C.T., is the union of distinguished poet Christopher Logue’s modern take on the Iliad with director and adapter Lillian Groag’s impossible theatricality. Aligned with A.C.T.’s commitment to fusing movement, music, and language in new theatrical forms, Groag has turned Logue’s adaptation of Homer into a groundbreaking work of interdisciplinary art, with an original score by up-and-coming composer John Glover. “Lillian has created a wonderful work that is in keeping with the sense of the ‘shame of war,’” says Perloff. War Music is a pungent meeting of the ancient Greek and modern worlds.

A.C.T.’s embrace of powerful new writing choices with new works by two of America’s most important contemporary playwrights. On the heels of A.C.T.’s hugely successful world premieres of Jose Rivera’s Brainpeople, the theater is proud to host Rivera’s newest play, Boleros for the Disenchanted, a decades-spanning, ravishing tale of two generations of Puerto Ricans. Rivera’s play examines the life cycle of a marriage—its beginnings and its end—and embraces the comedy and tragedy in between.

A.C.T. closes the season with the West Coast premiere of master playwright Edward Albee’s Peter and Jerry. A work that dares to reimage and reframe The Zoo Story, Peter and Jerry rocked continued on page 20
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A.C.T. closes the season with the West Coast premiere of master playwright Edward Albee’s Peter and Jerry. A work that dares to reimagine and reframe The Zoo Story, Peter and Jerry rocked continued on page 20
Who's Who in C Urse of the Starving Class

ROD GNAPP (Eddie) is a graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program and a long-time member of Bay Area stages. He has appeared at A.C.T. in The Government Inspector, The Racketeer, Happy End, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Time of Your Life, and others. He was recently seen in the Theatre Production of Territories, Marin Theatre Company's production of Fifer, and in TheatreWorks' production of The Elephant Man. Film credits include the principal bad guy in the independent feature Valley of the Heart's Delight and the mechanic in Pixar's live-action short Calendar Compression.

DAN HATT (Taylor) has been seen at A.C.T. as the Magistrate in The Government Inspector, Bob Acres in The Rivuls, Rosecrantz in Rosecrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Cornelius Huld in The Maidsheater, Yeshickob in The Cherry Orchard, Rodgers in Othello, Mel in The Play's the Thing, and Smith in The Threepenny Opera. Other Bay Area credits include Dinner with Friends and Memoirs at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; The Life and Times of Nicholas Nickleby, and many others at California Shakespeare Theater, This Wonderful Life, The Immigrant, and A Flea in Her Ear at San Jose Repertory Theatre; Spinning into Butter at TheatreWorks; Postage at the Lapin Agile at Theatre on the Square; Noise Off at Marin Memorial's Theatre; and The Real Thing and Life and Love at Marin Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include work with Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Huntington Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., Studio Arena Theatre, the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and Stage West in Toronto.

NICOLE LOWRENCE (Emma) makes her A.C.T. debut with Curse of the Starving Class. New York credits include Horizons Frozen Dividing the Estate (dir. Michael Wilson) at Primary Stages (dir. Darko Tresnjak), Engaged (dir. Douglas Hughes), and Don Juan (dir. Bartlett Sher), all with Theatre for a New Audience, Columbus (dir. PJ Paparelli) with New York Theatre Workshop; and Tatjana in Color (dir. Will Pomerantz) with New York Project. Regional credits include the world premiere of The Learned Ladies of Park Avenue (dir. Michael Wilson) at Hartford Stage; David Copperfield (dir. Joanne Woodward) at Westport Country Playhouse; Romeo and Juliet (dir. PJ Paparelli) at Ford's Theatre; and The Little Foxes (dir. Douglas Hughes), both at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. Television credits include Whoopi, Guiding Light, and Theatre in the New York Times.
Who’s Who in Curser of the Staving Class

ROD GNAPP (Edith) is a graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program and a long-time veteran of Bay Area stages. He has appeared at A.C.T. in The Government Inspector, The Raintamer, Happy End, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Time of Your Life, and others. He was recently in the Theatre production of Terence, Marin Theatre Company’s production of Ffemton, and in TheaterWorks’ production of The Elephant Man.

NICOLE LOWRIANCE (Emma) makes her A.C.T. debut with Curse of the Staving Class. New York credits include Horizon Forum’s Dividing the Estate (dir. Michael Wilson) at Primary Stages (moving to Broadway this fall in association with Lincoln Center), The Merchant of Venice (dir. David Aaron Brann), and performances in the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, ’01, and Will That Ends Well (dir. Darko Tresnjak), Engaged (dir. Douglas Hughes), and Don Juan (dir. Bartlett Sher), all with Theatre for a New Audience, Columbus (dir. PJ Paparelli) with New York Theatre Workshop; and Tasjania in Color (dir. Will Pomerantz) with Project. Regional credits include the world premiere of The Learned Ladies of Park Avenue (dir. Michael Wilson) at Hartford Stage; David Copperfield (dir. Joanne Woodward) at Westport Country Playhouse; Romeo and Juliet (dir. PJ Paparelli) at Festival; and The Lemonade (dir. Gale Edwards) and The Little Fools (dir. Douglas Hughes), both at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C.; TV credits include Whoopi, Guiding Light, and Theatre in America. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School.

CRAIG MARKER (Malcolm) last appeared at A.C.T. as Teddy Lucan in The Circle. Other credits include the world premiere of First Person Shooter (SF Playhouse); Third, Theophilos North, Brooklyn Bay, Daily Dish Kitchen, and Shakespeare in Hollywood (TheaterWorks); The Muppet and The Marriage of Figure (Center REPertory Company); Epigenet, at Asilu (San Jose Repertory Company); Re Stag (Marin Theatre Company); Liver’s Labor’s Lost (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival); The Shape of Things and The Periander (Aurora Theatre Company, each earning him a Dean Goodman Choice Award); The Intelligent Design of Jenny Obra (Berkeley Repertory Stage and San Jose Repertory Company); and David Edgar’s Continental Divide (Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, and Barbican Theatre (UK), and La Jolla Playhouse).

PAMELA REED (Ella) originated the role of Emma at the New York Shakespeare Festival and is honored to have the opportunity to revisit the play in the role of Ella. She made her A.C.T. debut in Pinter’s Old Times (dir. Carey Perloff) in 1998 and has performed as Edward Albee’s The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? She has performed on Broadway in Fools and The November People and off Broadway in Eldora at Classic Stage Company (dir. Carey Perloff), Getting Out at the Lucille Lortel and appeared in a Drama Desk Award: Curse of the Staving Class, Aunt Don’t Lemon, Fox, All Will That Ends Well, and The Servant of the Prophet at The Public Theater; Mrs. Warren’s Profession at the...
Who’s Who

Roundabout Theatre; Standing on My Knees at Manhattan Theatre Club; and Horse Heavens at the Williamsburg Theatre Festival; among others. Her extensive film credits include the upcoming Descending from Heaven (with Sam Shepard), Proof of Life, Standing on Fishes, Why Do Fools Fall in Love?, Roan, Santa Fe, Junior, Passed Away, Kindergarten Cop, Cadillac Man, Chattahoochee, Rachel River, The Best of Times, Malcolm and Howard, The Goodbye People, and The Right Stuff. She has appeared in the made-for-television movies Carriers, Deadly Whispers, Critical Choices, Born Too Soon, A Woman with a Past, and The Man Next Door. Other television credits include the network series Jericho, The Kennedys, Grand, and The Home County; the Hallmark Hall of Fame special Caroline; the miniseries Hemingway and Robert Altman’s series Tanner ’88 (Ace Award for Best Actress) and Tanner on Tanner. She received an OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance.

Howard Swain (Slate) has appeared at A.C.T. in The Sou’wester, The Learned Ladies, Taking Steps, A Lie of the Mind, The Doctor’s Dilemma, Feathers, Saint Joan, and A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. He has also worked at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, Word for Word, Magic Theatre, SF Playhouse, Post Street Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Marin Memorial Theatre, Eureka Theatre Company, and San Jose Stage, as well as the Oregon, California, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, and Marin Shakespeare festivals and the New York Theatre Workshop, Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C., and the Pasadena Playhouse. Film and television work includes Thelma & Louise, Just One Night, Night of the Sinner, Cherry 2000, Frasier, Miracle Mile, Mirro, She’s the One, Bridge, Midnight Caller, Kiss Shot, Mrs. Lambert Remembers Love, Lying Eyes, Hill St. Blues, and Valley of the Heart’s Delight.

T. Edward Webster (Emerson) most recently appeared in Rebecca Gilman’s A Strong, Brave, Woman You’re in With at Magic Theatre. He has been seen at A.C.T. in The Revival, Tom Stoppard’s Night and Day, A Christmas Carol, Edward III, The Time of Your Life, and the world premiere of Marc Blitzstein’s No for an Answer at Zeum Theater (dir. Carey Perloff). Bay Area theater credits also include Our Town, Everyman, and Suddenly Last Summer at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Long Day’s Journey into Night and True Gentlemen of Verona at San Jose Repertory Theater; Richard III, Man and Superman, Cymbeline, The Skin of Our Teeth, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Measure for Measure, Much Ado about Nothing, and Othello at California Shakespeare Theater; The Mystery Plays at the SF Playhouse; and Blue Orange, Lobby Hero, and The Man of Destiny at Aurora Theatre Company. He is a graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program.

Inside A.C.T.

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

“Who’s Who” continues after INSIDE A.C.T. SPECIAL SECTION

16 American Conservatory Theater
**Who's Who**

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**OAK ROOM**

Located in The Westin St. Francis Hotel, the historic Oak Room Restaurant & Lounge serves a full seasonal menu of American favorites with international flavors for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Additional menu choices include Westin Kid's Club items for children 12 and under and "Smart Dining" selections that are higher in protein and lower in sodium and fat.

**BREAKFAST**
Monday-Friday: 6:30am – 10:30am
Saturday-Sunday: 6:00am – 11:30am

**LUNCH**
Monday-Friday: 12:00pm – 2:00pm

**DINNER**
5:00pm – 10:00pm nightly

The Oak Room is available for private events with capacities of up to 60 people for seated meals and up to 100 people for cocktails.

**INSIDE A.C.T. SPECIAL SECTION**

"who's who" continues after INSIDE A.C.T. SPECIAL SECTION
Dear Friends,

As chair of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, I have the unique opportunity to observe the behind-the-scenes work necessary to realize the extraordinary theatrical productions we are accustomed to seeing at A.C.T. These productions spring from the collaborative efforts of hundreds of people working to produce great art and the next generation of great theater artists. Looking to the future, A.C.T.'s senior staff and trustees have developed a comprehensive strategic plan containing several new initiatives designed to take A.C.T. to an even higher level of excellence. I would like to recognize the individuals who provide the leadership—under the direction of the inspired executive partnership of Heather Kitchen and Carey Perloff—that makes this plan real.

It is Director of Marketing and Public Relations Jannice Gallegos who leads the strategically essential work of obtaining ongoing feedback from our audience—a fundamental part of who A.C.T. is and why we exist. Ensuring that A.C.T.'s productions continue to unfold onstage at the highest possible level of artistry is A.C.T. Producing Director James Haire. Development of new theatrical writing and forms is the monumental task that Associate Artistic Director Pinky Pasdar has undertaken. Making sure that all of A.C.T.'s strategic efforts are executed in a fiscally responsible way is newly installed Administrative Director Tom Proch. Conservatory Director Melissa Smith and Conservatory General Manager George Thompson spearhead programs to bring our acclaimed actor training program and its students closer to our audience. Communication of A.C.T.'s goals to our donors and the "heavy lifting" of fundraising are managed by Director of Development Tim Whalen.

At the board level, specialized committees—headed by Conservatory Committee Chair Patrick Thompson, Development Chair Lesley Clement, Marketing Committee Chair Abby Sznitser, and New Works Committee Chair Pruce Green—are staffed by providing direction and feedback and communicating trends and results to the full board. A.C.T.'s 40 trustees provide their individual talents and insight in these and other areas to make A.C.T. the theater it is today and will be in the years to come.

Thank you for joining us on A.C.T.'s ambitious journey into the future. Read on to find out more about the people who will guide us on our way.

Sincerely,

Joel Gittes

Jack Curtis / Chair, A.C.T. Board of Trustees

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**A.C.T.’s SENIOR TEAM**

As the San Francisco Bay Area’s flagship theater, A.C.T. is guided on its dramatic course by a leadership ensemble of talented and creative professionals. These nine individuals—representing the heads of the primary departments of the organization—are responsible, in conjunction with the board of trustees, for charting a thrilling and productive course for the organization on its theatrical travels.

In addition to pursuing their daily mission of ensuring that the 800+ artists, artisans, faculty, staff, and crew members who work at A.C.T. each season do so in creative harmony and fiscal responsibility, A.C.T.’s senior management team is responsible for creating and executing the long-term plans and policies that will carry the theater forward. Over the past two years, working with the board, the senior team spent hundreds of hours examining all aspects of the organization to determine what is working, what needs improvement, and, above all, what the future would and could hold for A.C.T.

These are the people without whom A.C.T. productions would never make it to the stage. They are each an integral part of the organization’s artistic life, professional, trustworthy, creative, diligent, and fiercely dedicated to the continued success of A.C.T.

**CAREY PERLOFF**

**Artistic Director**

**BIRTHPLAC** Washington, D.C.

**HOMETOWN** I grew up in D.C. and Philadelphia and lived 15 years in New York City.


**FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** Opening After the War after four years of development; creating the new A Christmas Carol, recording Happy End at Skywalkers; A Doll’s House with René Augensen and Paul Walsh; blessing the Geary Theater the night it reopened.

**WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.?** I urge audiences willing to take risks on vigorous theatrical outings of classics and new plays, a full second stage season, and spectacularly talented students performing everywhere.

**LITTLE-KNOW FACT** I trained to be an archaeologist and majored in ancient Greek in college. I did 13 years of ballet and was a mean Toy Mouse in The Nutcracker.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** Read: Gao Xingjian, Soul Mountain; all of Michael Chabon’s novels; Orhan Pamuk, My Name Is Red and Snow. Listen to: Bonobo Madigan, Nico Muhly, David Lang.
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These are the people without whom A.C.T. productions would never make it to the stage. They are each an integral part of the organization’s artistic life, professional, trustworthy, creative, diligent, and fiercely dedicated to the continued success of A.C.T.

CAREY PERLOFF

Artistic Director

BIRTHPLACE Washington, D.C.

HOMETOWN I grew up in D.C. and Philadelphia and lived 15 years in New York City.


FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE Opening After the War after four years of development; creating the new A Christmas Carol, recording Happy End at Skywalkers; A Doll’s House with René Augensen and Paul Walsh; blessing the Geary Theater the night it reopened.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? I urge audiences willing to take risks on theatrical outings of classics and new plays, a full second stage season, and spectacularly talented students performing everywhere!

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I trained to be an archaeologist and majored in ancient Greek in college. I did 13 years of ballet and was in a real Tony Moose in The Nutcracker.

RECOMMENDATIONS Read: Gao Xingjian, Soul Mountain; all of Michael Chabon’s novels; Orhan Pamuk, My Name Is Red and Snow. Listen to: Bonfire Madigan, Nico Muhly, David Lang.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Opening the restored Geary Theater with The Tempest, featuring the Kronos Quartet in the pit; collaborating with Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard; opening Luminous Dating in New York; directing Steve Reich’s The Cave in Vienna.

Heather Kitchen  Executive Director

BIRTHPLACE Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
HOMETOWN I grew up in Toronto, lived in eight provinces of Canada, and now consider San Francisco my home.
AT A.C.T. SINCE 1996.
FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE The process of producing After the War. So many people collaborated on and supported its journey, and the whole company worked to support Philip and Carey’s vision.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? Producing transformative art that is central to the lives of our audience.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I studied classical guitar and I participated in the 545-mile AIDS/LifeCycle 6 ride last June. I am riding again this June in AIDS/LifeCycle 7, from San Francisco to L.A.
RECOMMENDATIONS Read: Alex Ross, The Rest Is Noise; Listening to the 20th Century. Listen to: Stan Rogers, Manuel Barrueco, John Williams, Andres Segovia, Louis Armstrong. Watch: your step.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Beginning my career at the Stratford Festival; doing turnaround management as production manager of Theatre New Brunswick managing Canada’s largest regional theater, The Citadel. And, of course, my work at A.C.T., where I found an artistic home.

James Haire  Producing Director

BIRTHPLACE Phoenix, Arizona.
HOMETOWN Phoenix.
FIRST A.C.T. EXPERIENCE Having my hand-writing analyzed prior to my first meeting with William Ball. I guess I passed.

FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE Bill Ball’s “up, up, and away” lecture at the start of each season; the annual “walk down” following the final performance of the season, where each play from that year took a final curtain call followed by a grand finale staged by Bill.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? Onward and upward.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I played triangle in the Emerson Grade School rhythm band alongside Barry Goldwater, Jr. I wonder if he has kept it up. My career as a professional bullfighter in Nogales was cut short; my parents found out.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS My years spent stage-managing on Broadway at the start of my career; Cyranos de Bergerac with Peter Donat, staged by Bill Ball at A.C.T.; after the Loma Prieta earthquake, rebuilding the theater and experiencing a new A.C.T.

Thomas C. Proehl  Administrative Director

BIRTHPLACE Hastings, Minnesota.
HOMETOWN Moorhead, Minnesota.
AT A.C.T. SINCE February 1, 2008.
FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE Getting hired!
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? To support and inspire the next generation of actors, authors, audience members, and administrators.

LITERARY CHARACTER OR HISTORICAL FIGURE YOU MUST RELATE TO William Shakespeare. We share the same birthday. He wrote plays, I write contracts.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I used to be an actor.
RECOMMENDATIONS Read: classic novels; Watch: Boston Legal and The Office and Percy Adlon’s film Bagdad Cafe. Listen to: classical music on public radio.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Founding member and first managing director of Signature Theatre Company in New York City with James Houghton. Oversaw the construction of the new $125 million Guthrie Theater, which was completed on time and on budget. Most recently served as the executive director of the Minnesota State Arts Board and secured a 19% increase in funding for the arts.

George Thompson  Community Relations Manager

BIRTHPLACE Port Chester, New York.
HOMETOWN Greenwich, Connecticut.
FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE The incoming M.F.A. class’s monologue presentation at the start of each school year.
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? We acquire the Curran Theatre in a hostile takeover.

LITERARY CHARACTER OR HISTORICAL FIGURE YOU MUST RELATE TO Jonny Quest, because I love adventure, challenges, and mystery.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I was a visual artist in high school and won best in show. Sold a few pieces, as well.

Melissa Smith  Community Director

BIRTHPLACE Louisville, Kentucky.
HOMETOWN Louisville, Kentucky.
FIRST A.C.T. EXPERIENCE Auditioning for A.C.T.’s Advanced Training Program (the precursor to the M.F.A. Program) in 1979. I was accepted into the program but didn’t attend—perhaps I was waiting to run it?

FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE Seeing actors we’ve trained succeed brilliantly in featured roles on the A.C.T. stage.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? An extraordinary confluency of professional artists—directors, writers, designers, and above all, actors—who are as invested in training the next generation of actors as they are in doing their own work.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I love baking pies. I miss competitive swimming.
RECOMMENDATIONS Read: Learning to Drive, by Kathy Pollitt; By the Lake, by John McGahern. Watch: 2004. Pont Laptevish. CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Launching the third year of A.C.T.’s M.F.A. Program in 2000; performing in London at the Barbican in David Edgar’s Continental Divide; teaching Sam Shepard scene study to Italian and Danish actors (without understanding a word they said) in San Miniato, Italy, at Teatro del Pisa.

Pink Pasdar  Associate Artistic Director

HOMETOWN I spent my childhood in Media, Pennsylvania. Rural bliss. Never had a key to my front door.
FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE There was a pretty big earthquake opening night of The Rainmaker. It started as the curtain was rising.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? Chaos, thunderstorms; I’ve drawn the knife of permutations . . . I see bringing more new works to A.C.T. and expanding our new works program into our M.F.A. Program. We have amazing students, and I can’t wait to get them together with great playwrights.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I gave birth to my daughter in the back of an ambulance.
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Opening the restored Geary Theater with *The Tempest*, featuring the Kronos Quartet in the pit; collaborating with Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard; opening *Luminous Dance* in New York; directing Steve Reich's *The Cave* in Vienna.

**Heather Kitchen** Executive Director

**BIRTHPLACE** Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
**HOMETOWN** I grew up in Toronto, lived in eight provinces of Canada, and now consider San Francisco my home.
**AT A.C.T. SINCE** 1996.
**FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** The process of producing *After the War*. So many people collaborated on and supported its journey, and the whole company worked to support Philip and Carey's vision.

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**LITTLE-KNOWN FACT** I studied classical guitar and I participated in the 545-mile AIDS/Lifecycle 6 ride last June. I am riding again this June in AIDS/Lifecycle 7, from San Francisco to L.A.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** Read: Alex Ross, *The Rest Is Noise*.
Listening to the 20th Century.
Listen to: Stan Rogers, Manuel Barrueco, John Williams, Andres Segovia, Louis Armstrong. Watch: your step.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Beginning my career at the Stratford Festival; doing turnaround management as production manager of Theatre New Brunswick; managing Canada’s largest regional theater, The Citadel. And, of course, my work at A.C.T., where I found an artistic home.

**James Haire** Producing Director

**BIRTHPLACE** Phoenix, Arizona.
**HOMETOWN** Phoenix.
**AT A.C.T. SINCE** 1971.
**FIRST A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** Having my handwriting analyzed prior to my first meeting with William Ball. I guess I passed.

**FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** Bill Ball’s “up, up, and away” lecture at the start of each season; the annual “walk down” following the final performance of the season, where each play from that year took a final curtain call followed by a grand finale staged by Bill.

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**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** My years spent stage-managing on Broadway at the start of my career; *Cyrano de Bergerac* with Peter Donat, staged by Bill Ball at A.C.T.; after the Loma Prieta earthquake, rebuilding the theater and experiencing a new A.C.T.

**Thomas C. Proehl** Administrative Director

**BIRTHPLACE** Hastings, Minnesota.
**HOMETOWN** Moorhead, Minnesota.
**AT A.C.T. SINCE** February 18, 2008.
**FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** Getting hired!

**WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.?** To support and inspire the next generation of actors, authors, audience members, and administrators.

**LITERARY CHARACTER OR HISTORICAL FIGURE YOU MUST RELATE TO** William Shakespeare. We share the same birthday. He wrote plays, I write contracts.

**LITTLE-KNOWN FACT** I used to be an actor.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** Read: classic novels. Watch: *Boston Legal* and *The Office* and *Percy Jackson’s* film *Bagdad Cafe.*
Listen to: classical music on public radio.

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**George Thompson** Managing Director

**BIRTHPLACE** Port Chester, New York.
**HOMETOWN** Greenwich, Connecticut.
**AT A.C.T. SINCE** August 2005.
**FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** The incoming M.F.A. class’s monologue presentation at the start of each school year.

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**Melissa Smith** Curatorial Director

**BIRTHPLACE** Louisville, Kentucky.
**HOMETOWN** Louisville, Kentucky.
**AT A.C.T. SINCE** June 1995.
**FIRST A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** Auditioning for A.C.T.’s Advanced Training Program (the precursor to the M.F.A. Program) in 1979. I was accepted into the program but didn’t attend—perhaps I was waiting to run it?

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**LITTLE-KNOWN FACT** I love baking pies. I miss competitive swimming.


**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Launching the third year of A.C.T.’s M.F.A. Program in 2000; performing in London at the Barbican in David Edgar’s *Continental Divide*; teaching at Stanford, Stanford, Stanford, Stanford, Stanford.

**Pink Pasdar** Associate Artistic Director

**BIRTHPLACE** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
**HOMETOWN** I spent my childhood in Media, Pennsylvania. Rural bliss. Never had a key to my front door.
**AT A.C.T. SINCE** June 2007.
**FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE** There was a pretty big earthquake opening night of *The Rainmaker*. It started as the curtain was rising.

**WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.?** Chaos, thunderstorms; I’ve drawn the knife of perils… . I see bringing more new works to A.C.T. and expanding our new works program into our M.F.A. Program. We have amazing students, and I can’t wait to get them together with great playwrights.

**LITTLE-KNOWN FACT** I gave birth to my daughter in the back of an ambulance.
on Euston Road in London.

RECOMMENDATIONS Read: Music for Throbbing, Depressed Characters, Emily's Ballroom, and Frankenstein. Make a Sandwich. Watch: Jack's Big Music Show. Listen to Pandora radio.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS When I was offered the job as general manager of the Gate Theatre in London, the producer was interrupted midway through our call; there was a flood in the theater and the lead screw's bra had broken ten minutes before curtain. I took the job, fixed the leak, invested in some spare brassieres, and had a great time.

Janette A. Gallegos
Director of Marketing and Public Relations

BIRTHPLACE Dallas, Texas.
HOMETOWN Austin, Texas, but I spent a significant portion of my youth overseas—England, Tunisia, Egypt.
AT A.C.T. SINCE December 2006.
FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE The marketing and PR team gets together for an hour each Thursday to write notes to subscribers. It has been a great way for us to get to know way too much about each other.
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? To creatively and innovatively promote the arts, artists, process, and experience at A.C.T. I see A.C.T. developing bold, inspirational new work and artists that enrich the artistic community in and beyond the Bay Area.
LITTLE-KNOWN FACT My great-grandfather (maternal) was executed by Puncho Villa, and my grandfather (paternal) was the head architect of the Aswan Dam and an advisor to King Farouk.
RECOMMENDATIONS See: any country outside the United States. Read: To Kill a Mockingbird, Pince Invadish Home from Hot Climates, One Hundred Years of Solitude, The Art of War, The Story of Ferdinand, and Where the Wild Things Are. Listen to Prince, Nina Simone, Kings of Leon, and anything produced by Rick Rubin.

Tim Whalen
Director of Development

BIRTHPLACE South Dakota.
HOMETOWN Rapid City, South Dakota.
FAVORITE A.C.T. EXPERIENCE There are so many, I can’t pick just one... at the top of the list are The Overcoat, Happy End, After the War, and Soveryy Todd.
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF A.C.T.? My vision is for a $30 million endowment to be in place by December 2009 supporting each new season in a significant way, and for our annual fundraising capacity to increase to a level that allows the artistic team to do the work they want without being held back by financial constraints.
LITTLE-KNOWN FACT I was a captain in the U.S. Army for four years.
RECOMMENDATIONS See: any dance choreographed by Mark Morris and theater directed/produced by Robert Lepage. Listen to music played or orchestrated by Yo-Yo Ma.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A.C.T., of course. I have had the immense privilege of working with several really stellar organizations, among them KQED, The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and Cal Performances at UC Berkeley.

For more information about A.C.T.’s senior management team, please visit www.act-sf.org/management.

PHOTO BY KIM GIBbons

THE NEXT GENERATION CAMPAIGN

Staging the Future of Great Theater for the San Francisco Bay Area

In addition to providing vital annual support for this season’s programming, when you make a gift to A.C.T. this year, you will be helping the theater establish its first-ever endowment. With a goal of $30 million, this permanent, growing asset will give A.C.T. the financial wings to soar to new artistic heights in the years ahead.

Thanks to loyal audience members like you, A.C.T. has become a San Francisco Bay Area cultural treasure and a nationally respected leader in actor training. Now A.C.T. has the very real opportunity to move to a new level of excellence—to stage more ambitious productions featuring distinguished visiting artists, to attract a greater number of top-tier students and faculty to our conservatory, and to strengthen our ability to commission and develop provocative new work that keeps theater vibrant.

To take this major creative leap forward, we will need everyone’s help. All gifts to The Next Generation Campaign, large and small, will make a difference as we strive to build the financial foundation for A.C.T. to commit to the bigger artistic challenges it is so eminently capable of meeting. In hopes of encouraging greater participation in The Next Generation Campaign, close friends of the theater Jeff and Laurie Ubben have issued a challenge to our audience: they will match all new or increased gifts to A.C.T. this season dollar for dollar up to $1 million!

As you make plans to renew your 2008-09 season subscription this month, please consider a tax-deductible contribution to A.C.T. and join us in this historic effort to create an endowment for the theater. Not only will you be supporting the work we enjoy on the stage and in the classroom today, but you will be helping A.C.T. stage the future of great theater for the next generation. Thank you!

PHOTO BY KIM GIBbons

PHOTO BY KIM GIBbons
on Euston Road in London.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**AT A.C.T.** Since December 2006.

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CAMPAIGN DONORS SHARE A PASSION FOR LIVE THEATER

Donors to The Next Generation Campaign have many reasons for supporting this historic effort to establish an endowment for A.C.T., but central to their participation in the campaign is a shared passion for the live theater experiences they have enjoyed over the years. Their personal stories are testimony to the transformative role A.C.T. plays in entertaining and inspiring the members of our community.

JO AND JED HURLEY

Jo and Jed Hurley have been coming to A.C.T. ever since Bill Ball brought the company to San Francisco in 1967. They have fond memories of the days of rotating repertory, when, as Jo recalls, "an actor would have the lead role in one production and a supporting role in another, and would run from one venue to the other on the same night! Somehow the actors would never be out of breath," she laughs.

When Carey Perloff became artistic director, the Hurleys felt the quality and depth of productions became even better. "Carey has taken the theater to a whole new level artistically," Jed says. "The productions at A.C.T. are not only entertaining, but they are thought provoking," adds Jo. "They expand your mind."

The Hurleys are members of A.C.T.'s Directors Circle and Prospero Society and have made a generous gift to The Next Generation Campaign. "If you care about something, you need to support it beyond buying tickets. That alone is not going to keep an arts organization around," Jo explains. "And I truly hope A.C.T. will be here for the next generation—and many future generations beyond that!"

Jo also contributes her time by serving on the event committee for Illuminate the Night, A.C.T.'s annual gala that benefits the A.C.T. Conservatory. Her volunteer experience has given her new insights into the important role A.C.T. plays in training young actors. "I didn't realize that there was so much more to the conservatory than the M.F.A. Program. What A.C.T. does to engage young people, not to mention adults, in theater is truly amazing," explains Jo. "We are pleased that our gift to The Next Generation Campaign will not only support the wonderful work on the stage, but also the training of the next generation of theater artists," adds Jed.

"It means a lot to me to support this endowment because of what it will mean for A.C.T.'s future. I take personal pleasure giving back for all the wonderful moments A.C.T. has given me."

— Bill Huron

Bill has dedicated his generous gift to The Next Generation Campaign to Linda's memory, "I was happy to be asked and given an opportunity to assist," says Bill. "I'm retired and live on a fixed income, so it was a little scary at first to consider making this gift. But it means a lot to me to support this endowment because of what it will mean for A.C.T.'s future. I take personal pleasure giving back for all the wonderful moments A.C.T. has given me."

ANNE AND RICK RILEY

Although they have been coming to A.C.T. for more than 20 years, Anne and Rick Riley are relative newcomers to the theater compared to the Hurleys and Bill Huron. Friends introduced them to A.C.T. in the early 1980s, and they soon became subscribers. They kept their subscription even while raising their two children because, as Anne puts it, "A.C.T. provided us with a special place to spend time together." The Rileys appreciate the variety of plays A.C.T. produces each season, and the

"We enjoy the experience of having something new each season," says Rick. "We like to stay on top of what's new and interesting in the theater, and A.C.T. has been an important part of that." Anne adds, "I love the idea of sharing this experience with my husband. It brings us closer together."

WILLIAM HAVN

Despite the fact that he lives 90 miles away in Cloverdale, Bill Hawn manages to make time to see every A.C.T. production each season. He and his late wife, Linda, first subscribed in 1969, and, although they skipped a couple of seasons when Bill was serving in the U.S. Air Force overseas, they have been loyal subscribers ever since. "My wife and I shared a passion for great theater," Bill says. "We'd go to Ashland, New York, and London, but it was so exciting to have an important cultural resource like A.C.T. right here in the Bay Area."

Today Bill, a member of A.C.T.'s Directors Circle and Prospero Society, enjoys coming to A.C.T. and participating in donor events because of the opportunities to socialize, meet new, interesting people, and get an inside look at the creative process. "I love getting that insight into a play," Bill explains. "It engages you quicker when you see it onstage."

continued on page 10
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Conservatory. Her volunteer experience has given her new insights into the important role A.C.T. plays in training young actors. "I didn't realize that there was so much more to the conservatory than the M.F.A. Program. What A.C.T. does to engage young people, not to mention adults, in theater is truly amazing," explains Jo. "We are pleased that our gift to The Next Generation Campaign will not only support the wonderful work on the stage, but also the training of the next generation of theater artists," adds Jed.

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Bill has dedicated his generous gift to The Next Generation Campaign to Linda’s memory; "I was happy to be asked and given an opportunity to assist," says Bill. "You retired and live on a fixed income, so it was a little scary at first to consider making this gift. But it means a lot to me to support this endowment because of what it will mean for A.C.T.'s future. I take personal pleasure giving back for all the wonderful moments A.C.T. has given me."

ANNE AND RICK RILEY

Although they have been coming to A.C.T. for more than 20 years, Anne and Rick Riley are relative newcomers to the theater compared to the Hurleys and Bill Havn. Friends introduced them to A.C.T. in the early 1980s, and they soon became subscribers. They kept their subscription even while raising their two children because, as Anne puts it, "A.C.T. provided us with a special place to spend time together." The Rydies appreciate the variety of plays A.C.T. produces each season, and the
quality of the acting, it's so powerful," says Anne. "Each time we leave a play, we have a great conversation on the way home and often during the days following."

Anne, a nurse, and Rick, a remodeling contractor, have shared their love of theater with their children, who participated in drama in school. In addition to being members of A.C.T.'s Director's Circle, they recently made a commitment to The Next Generation Campaign because of the impact theater has had on their children's lives, and because their gift will allow other children to experience theater in the A.C.T. Conservatory. "What kids learn from theater is truly unique," says Anne. "It allows them to find a creative outlet and requires discipline and tenacity."

The Rykels were further inspired by others who have made significant gifts to The Next Generation Campaign. Rick explains, "It's great to see so many giving back to A.C.T., an organization that gives so much to this community, and to know that our gift is making a difference."
WHAT IS THE UBBEN CHALLENGE?

Because every gift to The Next Generation Campaign matters, Jeff and Laurie Ubben have promised to match all new and increased gifts this season dollar for dollar up to $1 million. If you did not make a contribution to A.C.T. last year, the entire amount of your gift will be matched by the Ubbens—essentially doubling your gift. If you did make a contribution to A.C.T. last year (thankful), the amount of your gift today that is above and beyond last year’s gift will also be matched dollar for dollar by the Ubbens. There has never been a better time to make a new tax-deductible contribution to A.C.T. or to increase your contribution from last year. Thanks for helping us meet the Ubben challenge!

ALUMNI

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

IN NEW YORK: Heidi Armbruster ’02 appears in Fifth Column at The Mint. Alexandra Wilson ’05 plays the lead in Aaron Sorkin’s The Fourteenth Amendment at the Music Box Theatre. David Ryan Smith ’07 is understudying Pasing Strange at the Belasco Theatre. Chris Fitzgerald ’07 performs in Young Frankenstein at the Hilton Theatre. Tony Award winner Anika Noni Rose appears in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at the Broadhurst Theatre. Derek Cecil ’07 performs in Les Liaisons Dangereuses at the American Airlines Theatre. Jody Flader ’07 is featured in the world premiere of The Shag Bearears of Kayral Island at The Vineyard Theatre. Claire Brownell ’06 is understudying 39 Steps at the American Airlines Theatre. Albert Jones ’07 appears in One Man... Two Guvnors at the Theatre for a New Audience. Stafford Clarke Price ’01 plays Robert Graves in The Oxford Roof Climber’s Rebellion at Urban Stages. Peter Bertz ’93 performed on

Broadway in Toddy’s The Power of Darkness. Davis Duffield ’04 appeared in the Broadway revival of Cymbeline de Bergerac. Hal Brooks ’93 is a recipient of the 2007-09 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for directors. His production of Nijla Sun’s No Child...which won an OBIE Award last year, is on its national tour; he recently directed the New York premiere of Ariel Dorfman’s Widows at 59E59 Theaters. Daniel Beatty ’01 completed a sold-out extended run of his OBIE Award-winning one-man play, Emergency-SEE! at The Public Theater. Jacob Ming-Trent ’01’s recent credits include Richard II in 39@39 with Theater of the Expendable, Widower’s Houses with Epic Theatre Ensemble off Broadway, the role of Jerry Mitchell in Late Order, and a new play by Marcus Gardley. Marc Stuart Weiss ’96 directs two pieces in the Long Island City One-Act Festival and the premiere of Time Is the Mercy of Eternity for Six Figures Theatre Company in Manhattan. The show Days and Nights, which he created with Purple Man Theater for the New York International Fringe Festival, was highlighted in the New York Times and New York magazine as one of five shows to check out in the festival.

Patrick McNally ’90 directed and produced the world premiere of Goodbye April, Hella May at HERE and appeared in several episodes of The Naked Brothers Band on Nickelodion. D.J. Lapiet ’04 is In Body Part, by Ishmael Reed at The Nuyorican Poets Cafe.

NOTES:

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ELSEWHERE: The A.C.T. mainstage production of The Government Inspector featured performances by Raife Baker ’08, Alex Morf ’08, Shannon Taing ’08, Amanda Sykes ’08, Jud Williford ’04, Andrew Harteau ’93, and Rod Grapp ’87, while Williford, Grapp, and T. Edward Webster ’02 are featured in Course of the Starving Class. Ryan Rilette ’97 completed a six-year tenure as artistic director of Southern Repertory Theater in New Orleans to take up a new position as managing director of Martin Theatre Company; he also recently completed filming In the Electric Mist. Andrew Kelsey-YC performs in As Much As You Care at the Celebration Theatre in Los Angeles. Neil Hopkins ’02 recently performed guest-starring roles on Dirty Sexy Money and Shark and has a recurring role on Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles. He also completed the short film Hit Factor, a script read at A.C.T.’s 2007 Alumni Weekend, with James Cromwell. Alex Moggridge ’00 appears on Law & Order: Criminal Intent. Matthew Nicklau ’07 is featured on Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. Alan Blumenfeld ’77 completed a new film with Robert De Niro and Al Pacino, Righteous Kill, and has filmed guest-starring roles on Dirty Sexy Money and the HBO show 12 Miles of Bad Road, with Lily Tomlin; Blumenfeld also continues his recurring role as Maudy Parkman, the Nightmare Man, on Heroes. Academy Award winner Denzel Washington stars in the film American Gangster. Tony Award nominee Omar Metwally ’97 can be seen in the leading role of the James Ivory film The City of Your Final Destination, with Anthony Hopkins. Rachel Black ’01 and Heidi Amsbruter ’02 appear with George Clooney in the Academy Award–nominated film Michael Clayton. Andrew McClan ’06 appears in The History Boys at The Ahmanson Theatre. Drew Hirshfield ’06 is in Amadeus at The Wilma Theater in Philadelphia. Matt Blair YC appeared in Wit with Emma Thompson and Twelfth Night in Stratford-upon-Avon. Lucas Rocco Alfiano ’07 stars in The Other Side, an award-winning internet spin-off of the CBS television series Ghost Whisperer. He also plays the lead in The Last Coast, an independent film premiering at the SXSW Film Festival. Darren Modder-Kelley ’93 finished the original film script From Inside to Intimacy. Sara Kathryn Bakker ’98 plays Portia and Calpurnia in Julius Caesar at the American Repertory Theatre and has appeared on Law & Order. Jane Jones ’81 directs Twelfth Night at Portland Center Stage in Oregon. Lauren Lane ’89, after ten years and three television series, is still a member of Tim Robbins’s Actors Gang. She teaches acting at Texas State University and is an original cast member of The Dick Montague, which plays once a month at the Hyde Park Theatre in Austin. Nancy Carlin ’83’s recent credits include directing The Clean House for The B Street Theatre in Sacramento and acting in Man and Superman at California Shakespeare Theatre and Hysteria at Aurora Theatre Company. She is writing, with composer Michael Rubinyi, Miss Understanding: The Serendipity Adventure of a 7-Year-Old Jastistic Boy. Art Manke ’84 recently received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Direction of Bach at Leipzig at South Coast Repertory; recent credits also include directing the world premiere of The Ice-Breaker for the Magic Theatre and the Laguna Playhouse, The Constant Wife for the Pasadena Playhouse, and an episode of Hannah Montana for the Disney Channel. Naomi Peters ’01 played Cordelia in King Lear at Kansas City Repertory Theatre. She can also be seen in Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull doing utility stunts; Company Retreat, directed by Campbell Scott; as stunt double for Lindsay Sloane in The Six Wives of Henry LeFay; and as stunt double for Nealla Gordon in Push. Jamison Jones ’94 can be seen in the film He Was A Quiet Man, directed by Frank Cappello. Richard Garner ’82 is in his 22nd year as co-founder and producing artistic director of Georgia Shakespeare in Atlanta. Deonstay Wilson ’96 has won a Wallace Berbode Foundation/William and Flora Hewlett Foundation grant to fund the commission by A.C.T. of a sequel to his play American Limbo.

If you are an alumnus/a of an A.C.T. training program (Advanced Training Program, Master of Fine Arts Program, Studio A.C.T., Summer Training Congress, or Young Conservatory), we’d love to know what you’re up to. Please write to Ashley Forrette at afo@act-sf.org and tell us about your recent accomplishments.

Alumni Spotlight

A STUDENT OF THE BUSINESS: A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM ALUMNUS RYAN RILETTE ’97

Ryan Rilette is an artist who, after nearly two hectic decades working in the theater, can not be pinned down. Depending on the day, he can be branded accurately as an actor, director, artistic director, producer, managing director, champion of new playwriting, proud father, and good guy.

After graduating from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program in 1997, Rilette moved to New York, joining with other A.C.T. alumni to form Rude Mechanicals Theater Company. Carving out an innovative niche for themselves in the competitive New York theater scene, Rude Mechanicals thrived by applying the training they received at A.C.T. to reimagining classical works and presenting premiere productions of bold contemporary plays. Rilette recently returned to his alma mater to direct members of the A.C.T. class of 2008 in Sarah Ruhl’s adaptation of Virginia Woolf’s gender-bending Orlando. He commented, “After coming through [A.C.T.], the shorthand you have with the people you work with means you can work so much faster. The cast of Orlando has such a great language for working together. That’s what Rude Mechanicals had and that’s why we wanted to continue to work together after we graduated.”

Rilette directed Orlando while tying up his six-year tenure as artistic director at Southern Repertory Theater in New Orleans and preparing for his new gig as managing director of Marin Theatre Company. He adamantly encourages actors to create their own opportunities. “Producing your own work is a really smart thing for actors to do, to remind yourself that you’re not just a chair waiting in a prop shop to be used. You can be in control of your own career. Just because you are an actor doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be a student of the business.”
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FINDING SYNERGIES

GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN THEATER

In crafting a plan for the future of A.C.T., the theater's leadership focused on finding strategic synergies among the three primary areas of A.C.T.'s creative life: mainstage producing, actor training, and the development of new work for the American stage. The students in A.C.T.'s M.F.A. Program and Young Conservatory, led by Conservatory Director Melissa Smith, are an essential part of that process, serving as a kind of "research-and-development" lab for readings and workshops of mainstage-bound classic plays and increasingly getting involved with the development of new work.

Several A.C.T. mainstage productions have found their footing in workshops and studio productions involving M.F.A. Program students, including this season's The Rainmaker, The Government Inspector, and Titus Andronicus. Each January, the graduating class of the M.F.A. Program participates in a new works festival, reading roles—often together with veteran professional actors—in workshops of new plays by established and emerging theater artists. This year, the class of 2008 turned its talents to exploring new plays by up-and-coming young writers Deontay Wilson (himself a 2006 A.C.T. M.F.A. Program graduate), Francine Volpe, and Noah Hall.

"We have our new works program, and it made sense to develop an association with the school," says Associate Artistic Director Pink Pasdar, who oversees A.C.T.'s First Look program of new-play development. "Our students will go on to work on new plays with living writers, and we wanted to expose them to that experience with the resources of the school still behind them."

Kevin Dedes, a member of the M.F.A. Program graduating class of 2008 who participated in one of the January workshops, agrees. "I started to realize where in a playwright's process actors are actually useful, and where we're maybe not so useful." Dedes was surprised to discover how well his classical training prepared him for work on new plays that are living texts, subject to revision and reconstruction.

Pasdar and Smith are particularly excited to look for new plays that suit the M.F.A. Program students, while also identifying artists for future collaboration on one of A.C.T.'s stages. "Melissa and I realized that we have similar taste in new work, and bringing new plays into the M.F.A. Program is a great way to engage playwrights and directors we hope to have long-term relationships with," says Pasdar.

Smith and Young Conservatory Director Craig Slight are also working to find synergy within the conservatory itself. Over the last 18 years, the Young Conservatory's acclaimed New Plays Program has successfully commissioned and premiered many new plays for children by distinguished playwrights. This year the YC and M.F.A. Program are pooling resources on a coproduction of Amy Herzog's The Wendy Play, a new work that includes roles for teenage and adult actors.

Smith adds, "I'm excited because I've seen the way that mentoring the YC has changed the M.F.A. Program students, who perform with YC students each year on the mainstage in A Christmas Carol and teach in the YC during the summer. On the one hand the YC actors develop relationships with actors who aren't adults to them, and on the other hand, when the M.F.A. Program actors teach, they solidify the things that they've been learning themselves. When the students work on contemporary plays, new plays, it triggers in them more questions about their own aesthetic and what they want to say in theater."

"We have natural resources here. I think organizations really succeed when they work effectively with what they have, and I think that's what's happening here."

The Executive Director's Award went this year to Joseph Tally, head librarian of A.C.T.'s Allen Fletcher Theater Collection. Boasting 12,000 theater-related titles and staffed by 24 volunteers, the library serves the entire A.C.T. community and is an invaluable resource for staff and students. While Tally has been at A.C.T. for just over a year, he has already overseen a major library renovation. "He hired Joe when we were expanding and reconfiguring our library space to better serve the conservatory and staff, and he shepherded that process beautifully," says A.C.T. Executive Director Heather Kitchens. "This award is really about Joe's selflessness and kindness, and the extraordinary amount of extra effort he puts into what he does." Kitchens adds that she looks for people who represent a certain spirit of mentorship and continuity: "Joe has built on the shoulders of those who came before him, which I think is an important part of who we are as an organization, and continuing to build resources for the next generation."

Perloff and Kitchen also recognized A.C.T.'s longest-term staff members, among them M.F.A. Program faculty members Frank Oritelli and Deborah Susael, Box Office Manager Richard Bernier, Company Manager Dianne Pichard, Producing Director Jim Haire, House Manager Eva Ramos, Security Staff Member Curtis Carr, and actor/director Ken Ruta. Joining this august group is Operations Manager Leslie Pierce, who this year marks her 25th season with A.C.T. "We always celebrate the additions to the 25-year club," Perloff says, "but we especially salute in Leslie her dedicated service as A.C.T.'s owner's representative during the reconstruction of the Geary, juggling everyone's needs while helping us return safely to this incredibly gorgeous building."
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HONORING A.C.T.'S OWN

Each January, A.C.T. staff and friends gather to celebrate two auspicious moments in the history of the theater: the birthday of A.C.T.'s glorious home, the American Conservatory Theater (formerly known as the Geary), which originally opened on January 10, 1910, and its rebirth in January 1996, after undergoing extensive reconstruction to repair damage caused by the Loma Prieta earthquake. At the same time, A.C.T. takes the opportunity to honor staff members who have made exceptional contributions to the theater's success in the preceding calendar year.

The recipient of this year's Artistico Director's Award is Senior Graphic Designer Amelie Nardinelli, who is responsible for creating a wide variety of A.C.T.'s promotional materials and collateral, including season brochures, advertisements, and mainstage performance posters, the annual report, and the M.F.A. Program bulletin. "It is a tremendous challenge to visualize the material we're working on," says Perllo, "to evoke a complex piece of theater in a way that's true to the play but at the same time is rich enough visually that people will want to come see the piece. Amelie is imaginative, has humor and patience, and is a pleasure to work with. I think she really has raised the bar in terms of how we represent our work."

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THE A.C.T. 2007–08 SEASON

AT THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
ORDINARY TOOLS; THE DESIGNER OF FLEET STREET
Musical and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz
Based on a story by Hugh Wheeler
From an adaptation by Christopher Galtioli
Directed and designed by Janet doggett
Aug 30–Sep 20

THE RAINMAKER
by N. Richard Nash
Directed by Mark Lamos
Oct 25–Nov 25

SPEED-THE-PLOW
by David Mamet
Directed by Lonny Price
Jan 4-Feb 3

THE BLOOD KNOT
by Athol Fugard
Directed by Charles Randolph Wright
Music composed and arranged by Troy Christen
Feb 8-Mar 9

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR
by Nikolai Gogol
Directed by Carye Perloff
Mar 20–Apr 20

CURSE OF THE STANDING CROSS
by Sean Schepp
Directed by Peter DiCello
Apr 15–May 25

THE PITT SHEET IS A SHAME
by John Ford
Directed by Carye Perloff
Music composed and performed by Brian Nadeau
May 3–Jul 10

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
by Charles Dickens
Adapted by Carye Perloff and Paul Webb
Music by Neil Lonneberg
Choreographed by
Vis Composers
Directed by Terrence Lowery
Based on the original direction by Carye Perloff
Dec 5–Dec 20

AT VERIA BIANA CENTER FOR THE ARTS
THE TODA PROJECT: A movement theatre project
created by Carye Perloff and Paul Webb
Oct 20–25

At ZUMA THEATER
SHARPTEETH
by Jesse Rivera
Directed by Chris York
Jan 30–Feb 16

FIRST LINES
A series of free play workshop readings
Apr 11–26

American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco
www.act-sf.org 415.749.2ACT

Who’s Who

JUD WILLSFORD
(Wildey), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has appeared at A.C.T. in The Government Inspector, The Imaginary Invalid, Happy End, The Revival, The Time of Your Life, and six seasons of A Christmas Carol. Other theater credits include Maxi Jackson’s American Suicide with Z Plays and Encore Theatre Company; The Imaginary Invalid at The People’s Light Theatre; All’s Well That Ends Well, The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, and Trinculo in The Tempest at California Shakespeare Theater; Sergus in Argo and the Man at Chautauqua Theatre; and Rufus Oakwood in Saturn: The Musical. Film credits include Wrong Time, Rite Spur with Olympia Dukakis and The Tripper, directed by David Arquette. He received his B.F.A. in theater from the University of Evansville and his M.F.A. in acting from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program.

JERI LYN COHEN
(Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T. in A Mother and The Time of Your Life. She is a former member of Word For Word Performing Arts Company, where she has originated roles in more than a dozen critically acclaimed productions. She has worked at theaters throughout the Bay Area, including Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, BRAVA Theatre, Campo Santo, Encore Theatre Company, Eureka Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Stage Company, and Traveling Jewish Theatre. She has toured internationally with the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

JACK WILLIS
(Wizon) has appeared in more than 20 productions throughout the United States, including recent performances at A.C.T. in Blood Knot, The Rainmaker, Huckle Gallows, A Christmas Carol, The Little Foxes, Happy End, Cat 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 Theater Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in Julius Caesar, The Crucible, Art, and The Old Neighborhood. His off-Broadway credits include The Raisin in the Sun, World, Wet Vics, The Iphigenia Cycle, and Oldballs. He appeared in Gypsy with Patti LaBelle at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. Film and television credits include The Talented Mr. Ripley, The Crucial Miss Rock, The Out-of-Towners, Love Hearts, I Come in Peace, Problem Child, Last & Order, Ed, and Dallas. Willis is a co-founder of Anuka Repertory.

MAYA LAWSON
(Understudy) returns to her native San Francisco, where she was once a student in the A.C.T. Young Conservatory. Favorite roles include Katherine Benoit in Book-It Repertory’s Pride and Prejudice at Portland Center Stage, Queen Elizabeth in Nunnally Women, Herma in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Francine in Museum, Narcissus in Metamorphosis, Frau Griebel in The Brecht Project (dir. Richard E. T. White), and, most recently, The Virgin Montagues at The Hudson Theatre in Los Angeles. Film credits include Brand upon the Brain! with Isabella Rossellini (dir. Guy Maddin). Lawson received her B.F.A. in acting from Cornish College of the Arts.

PETER DI ROBI (Director) has served as a director, associate producer, and resident director at The Public Theater over the past five years. He most recently directed the world premiere of Becky Shama, by Gina Glenfeld, at the Humana Festival of New American Plays. Directing credits at The Public include Adrienne Kennedy’s Men, Heza Do You Meet the Beatrice?, Bob Glaudini’s Jack Goes Boating (with LABrithm: Theater Company), Measure for Measure (SSDF Callaway Award for Excellence in Direction; Drama League Award nom. for Distinguished Production of a New Play), Richard III (Newday top-tier New York production of 2004), Birk, and Glaudini’s A View from 15th Street (also with LABrithm). He was previously the artistic director of Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska. For Perseverance, selected directing credits include The Seagull, The Winter’s Tale, Romeo and Juliet, and The Glass Menagerie, as well as the West Coast premiere of Suzanne-Lori Patter’s In the Blood and the world premiere of Chay Blyth’s The Closet. Regional and national credits include productions at Trinity Repertory Company and California Shakespeare Theater. Prior to his work at Perseverance, DiBolli lived and worked in the Czech Republic, where he cofounded Asylum, a multinational squat theater in Prague. He will begin his new position as artistic director of the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston this summer.

The above and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
Who's Who, continued from page 16

JUD WILLFORD (Wesley), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has appeared at A.C.T. in The Government Inspector, The Imaginary Invalid, Happy End, The Revival, The Time of Your Life, and six seasons of A Christmas Carol. Other theater credits include Mark Jackson’s American Suicide with Z Plays and Encore Theatre Company; The Imaginary Invalid at The People’s Light Theatre; All’s Well That Ends Well, The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, and Trinculo in The Tempest at California Shakespeare Theater; Serius in Arno and the Man at Chaussauqua Theatre; and Rufus Oakwood in Saturn: The Musical. Film credits include Wrong Time, Rite Spur with Olympia Dukakis and The Tripper, directed by David Arquette. He received his B.F.A. in theater from the University of Evansville and his M.F.A. in acting from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program.

JACK WILLIS (Witten) has appeared in more than 200 productions throughout the United States, including recent performances at A.C.T. in Blood Knot, The Rainmaker, Huckleberry, A Christmas Carol, The Little Foxes, Happy End, Cat 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 Theater Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in Julius Caesar, The Crucible, Arc, and The Old Neighborhood. His off-Broadway credits include The Restless Rise of Autumn UI, World of Mirah, The Iphigenia Cycle, and Vibalua. He appeared in Gypsy with Patty LaPone at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. Film and television credits include The Talented Mr. Ripley, The Crucial Rock, The Out of the Garden, Love Hurts, I Came in Peace, Problem Child, Lara & Order, Es, and Dallas. Willis is a co-founder of Anusha Repertory.

MAYA LAWSON (Understudy) returns to her native San Francisco, where she was once a student in the A.C.T. Young Conservatory Favorite roles include Katherine Benoît in Book-It Repertory’s Pride and Prejudice at Portland Center Stage, Queen Elizabeth in Nunnins Women, Hermia in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, François in Museum, Narcissus in Metamorphosis, Frau Griebel in The Brecht Project (dir. Richard E. T. White), and, most recently, The Virgin Montagüe at The Hudson Theatre in Los Angeles. Film credits include Brand Upon the Brain! with Isabella Rossellini (dir. Guy Maddin). Lawson received her B.F.A. in acting from Cornish College of the Arts.

PETER DeBOIS (Director) has served as a director, associate producer, and resident director at The Public Theater over the past five years. He most recently directed the world premiere of Beetle Shima, by Gina Grimstoloff, at the Humana Festival of New American Plays. Directing credits at The Public include Adrienne Kennedy’s The Most You Can Do, Bob Gaudio’s Jersey Boys (with L.A.Brynhart, Theorist Production). Nominated for the Jefferson Award for Excellence in Direction; Drama League Award nom. for Distinguished Production of a New Play), Richard III (Necessity top-two New York production of 2004), Biro, and Glaudin in A View from 15th Street (also with L.A.Brynhart). He was previously the artistic director of Perseverance Theatre in Juneau, Alaska. For Perseverance, selected directing credits include The Smallatti, The Winter’s Tale, Romeo and Juliet, and The Glass Menagerie, also as West Coast premiere of Smallatti (Para’s in The Blood and the world premiere of Chay Yew’s The Long Shore). Other regional credits include productions at Trinity Repertory Company and California Shakespeare Theater. Prior to his work at Perseverance, DeBois lived and worked in the Czech Republic, where he co-founded Ayslum, a multinational squat theater in Prague. He will begin his new position as artistic director of the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston this summer.

The above and stage manager credits are employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

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Cure of the Starving Artist 17
Who’s Who

LOY ARCENAS (Scene Designer) has designed The Invention of Love, Indian Ink, Leuce James, Glengarry Glen Ross, and The Matchmaker for A.C.T. He has also designed scenery for the premieres of Love Valour Compassion! produced by 4 Star on the Strand, Spark, Does Ross, Blue Winders, Corpus Christi, A Man of No Importance, and the off-Broadway and national tours of The Virginia Monologues. Directing credits include Long Live Czar's The Romance of Magna RBide (OBIE Award); Warren Leight's No Foreigners beyond This Point; Carlyle Brown's A Big Blue Nail; Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas's Blind Maestro Singing; Hong Qui's Middle Finger; Planet, and Weiser, and Philip Kan Gotanda's Floating Week. For his design work, he has received Drama Desk nomination, an L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award, a Jiff Award, Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, and an OBIE for Sustained Excellence of Set Design. He is from the Philippines.

LYDIA TANJH (Costume Designer) recently designed Brainwashed, The Rainmaker, and the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda's After the War for A.C.T. She has designed Berkeley Repertory Theatre productions of The Glass Menagerie, Our Town, Honour, Master Class, Hedda Gabler, and Slaves! Recently, she designed The Merry Wives of Windsor at California Shakespeare Theatre and Pygmalion at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Tanjh has designed for many of Gotanda’s plays, including Sisters Materiun (Seattle Repertory Theatre), The Wind Cries Mary (San Jose Repertory Theatre), and Ballad of Yachiyo (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). She has also designed for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, The Laguna Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Geva Theatre Center, East-West Players, San Asian Repertory Theatre, Asian American Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, The Children's Theatre, The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Huntington Theatre Company, Syracuse Stage, and Ariza Stage. She has received five Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards and two Drama- League Awards. Film credits include The Joy Luck Club, Hot Summer Winds, Dim Sun, Gotanda's The Wish, A Thousand Purses of Gold, and Lift Times Good.

JAPHY WEIDEKING (Lighting Designer) recently designed lighting for Brett C. Leonard's Unconditional and Stephen Adly Guirgis's Little Flowers of East Orange (both at L.A. Bythin Theatre Company/The Public Theatre). Other notable projects include Bob Galvin's Jack Goes Boating, directed by Peter DeBois (The Public Theatre, 2007 Drama Desk Award Nom, and L. Williams Lottel Award nom), Sophocles’ Electra, directed by Peter Stein at the ancient theater of Epidavros in Greece and at The National Theater of Korea in Seoul; Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin (Opera de Lyon); Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew (Royal Shakespeare Company, Edinburgh International Festival); David Harrower's Blackbird (West End, London); Gogol's The Last Days of Judas Iscariot (LAB/The Public); Warren Leight's No Foreigners beyond This Point (Ma-Yi Theatre Company/Culture Project); and The Flying Machine's Frankenstein at Soho Rep (Drama Desk Award nom,). Upcoming projects include Rosinbass's Castle and Il Pregiornon at La Scala in Milan.

FABIAN OBIISO (Original Music/ Sound Designer) worked at A.C.T. on The Imaginary Invalid. Other musical theater credits include The Long Season, Black No More, The Caucaioon Chick Circle, Yoruba, Mother Courage and Her Children, Nothing Forever, The Romance of Magna Rubin, Yellow Moon Rising, and The House of Bernarda Alba. Off-Broadway credits include Durrang and True Sisters and a Piano at The Public Theater; Gross, A Very Common Procedure, Whose the Night, Last Easter, Bright Ideas, Inquire with Faye, and Smote at MCC Theatre; La Terrasse, Nest, and Seeking the Geniuses at Manhattan Theatre Club; Grosnah at Theatre for a New Audience; Serviceman at The New Group; Clues at Atlantic Theatre Company; The Ratting Cage at the Vineyard Theatre; Phaedra at Delaware at CTC Theatre; The Right Kind of People and When They Speak of Rite at Primary Stages; and Ma-Yi Theatre Company's No Foreigners beyond This Point, among others. Regionally, he has composed and designed for Arena Stage, Goodman Theatre, the Guthrie Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Cincinnati Playhouse, the Huntington Theatre Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartford Stage, the Kennedy Center, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz, to name a few. His work has been recognized by the American Theatre Wing's Hewes Design Award, as well as Helen Hayes, Barrymore, NAACP, and Jacki awards.

MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg) began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a playwright and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's Small Craft Warnings at the Sorovmentin Theatre in Moscow.


MERYL LIND SHAW (Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. He 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, Jersey, and Picasso at the Lapidus Agency, as well as first workshop of The Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-ROM game Othulian. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, he stage-managed more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.'s Creditors and Ben Appelt! She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She has served on the Bay Area advisory committee of Actors’ Equity Association, the negotiating committee for the LORT contract (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival.

ELISA GUTHERTZ (Stage Manager) most recently worked on Speed-the-Pleno and The Rainmaker at the American Conservatory Theatre and on the A.C.T. production of Dead to订单 at A.C.T. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include Blackbird, The Little Fox, A Nozom, Sexual Perusians in Chicago, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and a Moon for the Misbegotten, Will, and Comedy on the Bridge at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Urinetown, The Musical at San Jose Stage Company; Striktig 12 at TheatreWorks; Samuel/R at Aurora Theatre Company; and Ragtime and She Loves Me at Footlight Music Theatre. She recently worked on Satellites at Aurora Theatre Company and is the production coordinator at TheatreWorks in Merlo Park.

GERSON AND BARBARA BASS BAKAR (Executive Producers) have been involved with A.C.T. for three decades. A New York native and former CEO of L. Magnin and Emporium- Weinstein, Barbara has served as a member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees since 1992. Gerson and Barbara have produced numerous A.C.T. productions, including Urinetown: The Musical, Leuce James, Genre of the Queen, and After the War. Gerson, an award-winning Bay
LOY ARCENAS (Scenic Designer) has designed The Invention of Love, Indian Ink, Lessee James, Glengarry Glen Ross, and The Matchmaker for A.C.T. He has also designed scenery for the premiers of Local Valor! at Arena-Playhouse (LA Weekly Theater of the Year); Once on This Island, Spunk, Dido, Rose, Blue Windmills, Corpus Christi; A Man of No Importance, and the off-Broadway and national tours of The Virginia Monologues. Directing credits include Lonnie Carter’s The Romance of Magna Rubia (OBIE Award); Warren Leight’s No Forreigners Beyond This Point; Carlyle Brown’s A Big Blue Nail; Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas’s Blind Mouth Singing; Has Ong’s Middle Finger; Planet, Space, and Philip Kan Gotanda’s Floating Week. For his design work, he has received Drama Desk Award nominations, an L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award, a Jeff Award, Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, and an OBIE for Sustained Excellence of Set Design. He is from the Philippines.

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ELISA GUTHERTZ (Stage Manager) most recently worked on Speed-the-Plow and The Rainmaker at the American Conservatory Theatre and on the A.C.T. Tour of Death of a Salesman at Zeller Auditorium. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include Blackbird, The Little Fox, A Number, Sexual Perversity in Chicago, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Ann, and a Michigan.

The Good Body, Losing James, Writing for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Misbehaves, Long Day’s Journey into Night, Tartuffe, Mary Stuart, The Rose Tattoo, and A Streetcar Named Desire. She has also stage-managed The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer, Rhinoceros, Big Love, Civil Sex, Collected Stories, and Cloud Taints at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include Eve Ensler’s The Good Body at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Big Love at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and The Virginia Monologues at the Acaiuran Theatre.

KAREN SZPALER (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked with A.C.T. on A Christmas Carol (2006 and 2007), The Imaginary Invalid, Blackbird, and M.F.A. Program productions. Favorite past shows include Cyrano, Pefes de la Nuit, The Iliad Manager, Brandehaine, and Comedy on the Bridge at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Urinetown, The Musical at San Jose Stage Company, Stroking 12 at TheatreWorks; Salome at Aurora Theatre Company; and Ragtime and She Loves Me at Footlight Music Theatre. She recently worked on Satellites at Aurora Theatre Company and is the production coordinator at TheatreWorks in Merido Park.

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Arna developer, currently serves on the board of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Barbara also serves as a director and former chair of the UCSF Foundation board and directs the Achieve program, which offers high school enrichment and scholarships.

WILLIAM (BILL) AND PHYLLIS DRAPER (Executive Producers) are longtime A.C.T. subscribers. Bill served as chairman of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees during Bill Ball’s tenure as artistic director in the early 1990s, before moving to Washington to serve as president and chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. Also former undersecretary general of the United Nations, Bill is a venture capitalist who currently serves on the boards of the World Affairs Council of Northern California, United Nations Association of the United States of America, Atlantic Council of the United States, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, and Hoover Institution. Phyllis moved to the Bay Area after graduating from Smith College. She was a founding member of the board of Charles Armstrong School, now in Belmont, and has served on numerous community boards.

MORT AND FRAN NIE FLEISHEIM BACER (Executive Producers) are both longtime A.C.T. volunteers. The son of one of A.C.T.’s founding trustees and a San Francisco native, Mort is a member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees and serves on several A.C.T. committees. He is co-chair, with Joan Danforth, of the Prospero Society, which honors individuals who include A.C.T. in their estate plans. Frannie serves as co-chair of the Prospero Circle with Deedee McCormick. She enjoys working to build this critical organization and plan the annual dinner. Mort and Frannie also recently produced The Circle and The Roads. Mort serves as a trustee of Greenbelt Alliance, treasurer of the Fleishacker Foundation, and a member of the Advisory Council of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association. Frannie is president of The Francis Club and serves on the board of That Man May See at UC San Francisco.

PRISCA AND KEITH GEESLING (Executive Producers) recently produced The Roads and the workshop production of The Teens at A.C.T. A member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees since 2003, Prisca serves on the board’s executive committee and chairs the creation of new plays as chair of the new works committee. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith also serves on the board of trustees of The Hill School, the high school he attended in Pennsylvania. Prisca also volunteers her time serving on the boards of San Francisco Arts Education Project, the San Francisco Symphony, and Grace Cathedral.

STEVEN AND MARY SWIG (Executive Producers) have supported A.C.T. and attended productions since the company’s arrival in San Francisco. A member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees since 1996 and the president of Presidio World College, Steven also serves on numerous community boards, including the boards of his alma mater, the University of Oregon, and Americans for Cures Foundation (stem cells). The president and CEO of Mary Green Manilil, Mary also serves on the board of the Solar Electric Light Fund, among others. Together Steven and Mary also produced recent A.C.T. productions of The Restless and Hotlips Holbert.

CARLIE WILMANS (Executive Producer) joined the A.C.T. Board of Trustees in 2005 and, with a passion for developing new, multidisciplinary works, lends her time to The Next Generation Campaign committee and the new works committee. Born and raised in San Diego County, Wilmans is a director of the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation. With bachelor’s and master’s degrees in art history, she devotes her time to the boards of several other arts organizations, including San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California College of the Arts, and the San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary.

A.C.T. 2008–09 SEASON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Broadway last season. “In this revealing, smart, and disturbing look at a marriage, Albee has managed to make us understand what drives Peter to that infamous park bench,” says Perloff. “In doing so, he has revived one of the great American classics of the 20th century.” Bold ideas, movement, music, and rich language—A.C.T.’s 42nd subscription season promises to deliver everything you expect from A.C.T. We are grateful for your continued support, and invite you to step inside the theater, grab a seat, and join us for one exciting ride.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT CURSE OF THE STARLING CLASS?

WORDS ON PLAYS, A.C.T.’s in-depth performance guide series, offers insights into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the A.C.T. subscription season. Each entertaining and informative issue contains a synopsis, advance program notes, study questions, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

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PRISCA AND KEITH GEESSLIN (Executive Producers) recently produced The Realos and the workshop production of The Texas Project at A.C.T. A member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees since 2003, Prisca serves on the board's executive committee and chairs the creation of new plays as chair of the new works committee. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith also serves on the board of trustees of The Hill School, the high school he attended in Pennsylvania. Prisca also voluntarily spent time serving on the boards of San Francisco Arts Education Project, the San Francisco Symphony, and Grace Cathedral.

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A.C.T. Profiles

CAREY PIERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 16th season as artistic director of A.C.T., the most recently directed annual production of Gogol’s The Government Inspector. Philip Kas Gootando’s gift to the War (an A.C.T. commission), Tom Stoppard’s Travesties, Bertolt Brecht/Ruth Wells’ Endgame (including a critically acclaimed national tour and recording), and A Christmas Carol (a new adaptation by Perrott with dramaturg Paul Wahl). Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theatre, Perrott has directed for A.C.T. the American premiere of Frédéric Grapperon’s Le Voyage de Terre; The Illusionists; The Woman’s World; The Headlong; and A Mother; David Mamet’s new adaptation of Shakespeare’s The Trojan Women. With Elgin Morley’s Le Petit Theatre, he has recently directed a new translation of Voltaire’s Candide-Despair, the premiere reading of Martin Brest’s The Pushers and the San Francisco Culture, the new musical Written in Sand, directed with the American premiere of The Dying City by Paul Auster Minnelli, and the A.C.T. commission of Michael Weller’s The Boycott;

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director) now in her 12th season with A.C.T., is a champion of the organization’s infrastructure and oversees the company’s expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.’s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in stage, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Cuisine of the Stratford Festival Canadian Stage Company, Chatham-Kent Festival Theatre, Theatre New Brunswick, the National Theatre of Scotland and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of the City’s Theater Kitchen, kitchen manager, and industrywide director of theater kitchen and complex school that annually produced 16 productions, including Children’s International Festival and a Ten Film Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Cuisine

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DIRECTORS CIRCLE

Danne Hohe, Co-chair  Jonathan Kitchen, Co-chair

Directors Circle members make annual contributions of $1,000 or more to A.C.T. Their exceptionally generous support powers production, programming, and instruction in our Pickup a variety of bowls, including invitations to opening night festivities, complimentary parking access, and admission to the V.I.P. reception presented every year. We are grateful to our Directors Circle members for their generosity during the 2001–2002 fiscal year, and information about membership, please contact Mr. John Matheny at 415.419.2450 or at mail@act.org.
A.C.T. Profiles

CAREY PELLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating his 16th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where he recently directed and co-starred in the productions of Gogol’s The Government Inspector. Phillip Kan Goto’s gifts for the War (an A.C.T. commission), Tom Stoppard’s Travesties, Bertolt Brecht/Ruthe Wells Hall’s Close (including a critically acclaimed world premiere recording), and A Christmas Carol (a new adaptation by Pfeffer with dramaturg Paul Wylie), A.C.T. knows for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theatre, Pfeffer has directed for A.C.T. The American premiere of Chekhov’s The Three Sisters, Brandt’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Pinter’s Goodnight and Home; The San Francisco premiere of Chekhov’s The Cherry Orchard; the world premiere of Frankinc & De Holers’ The Championship Theatre; and the 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Pellegrini 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 Dutch 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 Aubrey and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director) now in her 12th season with A.C.T., she is responsible for the overall strategy, infrastructure and operations and overseeing the company’s expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.’s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in stage, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Kitchen has served as the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, Theatre Nouveau, and Neonsphere Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of the Citadel Theatre, Kitchen managed the operations of a multi-stage complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, on International Children’s Festival, and a Film Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the benchmark study Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton. An active community member, Kitchen serves on the board and executive committee of the Commonwealth Club of California, as well as the board of the National Corporate Theatre Project New York. She serves on the board of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of San Francisco and the Peninsula, and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in San Francisco and has served three terms on the executive of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, Canada Council Arts of the Arts, and the Business and the Arts Awards. The San Francisco Business Times named Kitchen one of the most influential women in business in the Bay Area for the past four years.

MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. in addition to serving as the casting director of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T. in 1995, Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting for six years. She has worked with people of all ages in venues around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actress, she has performed in numerous off-Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including A.C.T. in 2004 where she toured London and Birmingham (U.K.) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of Continental Divide, Smith holds a B.S. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

JAMES HARRIE (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Enos J. Gallagher’s National Repertory Theater as an actor and stage manager. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of Miss Remember Drinks a Little and Georgy (a musical by Carrie Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen’s Don’t Drink the Water. Harrie has also worked as a television producer, and as a director for the film was directed by Judith Levy as part of A.C.T.’s First Look Festival. Harrie has also taught workshops at Stanford University and Stanford Pre-College, directed by Chay Wey. Her latest play, Higher, was developed at New York Stage and Film, and she’s currently at work as a director with many notable contemporary writers, most recently Phillip Kan Goto, and on his new play after his hit for the Sundance Institute, Robert O’Hara, an Audacious for the O'Neill Playwrights Conference and Irish playwright Lucy Caldwell, on Guardado, also for the O’Neill conference. Before joining A.C.T., Pellegrini was artistic director of Classic Stages New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound’s Ébébre, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Pellegrini’s leadership, Classic Stages won multiple OBIE Awards for acting, direction, and design, as well as the 1998 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s opera The Cave at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music. A major exponent of France’s Chercheurs de l’Oublie des Arts et des Lettres and the National Theater in Paris, A.C.T.’s 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Pellegrini received a B.A.

directors circle

Damee Hope, Co-chair  Jonathan Kitchen, Co-chair  Deedee McMurtry, Co-chair

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associate producers: Michael Lines, Amy Farber, Kelli Maxon, Amanda Echegoyen, Liza Klein, Michael French, Lisa Kuo, Scott Gans, and Brian Hailey. This program was made possible in part with funds from the California Arts Council, a state agency.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Barbara R. Binkin
Lesley Coleman and Donor Unidentified

PRODUCERS

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

FRIDAY MORNING DRAWING GROUP

Figurative art has a long and rich history in the Bay Area, even during the periods when nonrepresentational art dominated popular taste. Supporting that tradition is the ritual of drawing from live models. Since 1996, Tom Magensn has held Friday life-drawing sessions in his Church Street studio. The seven artists represented in this show meet to paint or draw from a professional model, chosen for his or her unique qualities. There’s no judging for vantage points among the group, as all of the artists recognize that every view of the model offers something exciting to work with.

Seven artists represent the core of the group. Magensn, Susan Trubow, Nancy Baughman, and Barbara Rastizza made up the original group, later joined by Diana Howard, Serge Kogan, and Greg Lynch. They work in various media—charcoal and ink, oil and gouache—using different techniques and seeing color differently. They live different lives, and travel from San Marco to Oakland, but each Friday assemble again and again to be inspired by the most compelling subject there is: the human form.

A reception celebrating the work of the Friday Morning Drawing Group will be held at the theater on Thursday, May 1, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. The current show runs from April 23 through July 6, 2008.

Each artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For sale inquiries, please contact Kevin Summers at 415.474.1066 / lcncater@actsf.org. Visa, Mastercard, and Discover cards accepted.

June 5 – July 6

’Tis Pity She’s a Whore

by John Ford

Directed by Carey Perloff

Music composed and directed by Benfire Madigan Shive

Tickets from $14

WORLD PREMIERE

I’m Still Standing

A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF ELTON JOHN

Written and directed by Craig Slight

Musical direction by Jane Hammett

score and arrangements by Robert Rutt

Tickets: $14 – $64

MAY 31 – JUN 21

Studio A.C.T. and Young Conservatory Summer Sessions

Learn a new skill, sing a new song, and push your theater skills farther than you thought they could go!

Sign up for A.C.T. or the Young Conservatory today and experience the highest-quality training in a wide range of theatrical disciplines. Taught by established theater professionals, A.C.T. classes are open to adults and children at all levels of experience, and are held on evenings and weekends in downtown San Francisco.

Studio A.C.T.: June 2–August 16
Young Conservatory: June 16–August 22
(YO offering four, two, and one-week sessions)

Summer Training Congress

Students, teachers, and professional actors from around the world gather in San Francisco each summer for these rigorous and rewarding five- and two-week programs.

5-Week Session: June 16–July 18
Final Application Deadline: May 1

2-Week Session (Classical Acting): July 21–August 1
Final Application Deadline: June 2

American Conservatory Theater

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I'm Still Standing

World Premiere

Celebration of the Music of Elton John

Written and directed by Craig Slaight
Musical direction by Jane Hemmert
Choreography by Christine Mattison
Musical arrangements and piano accompaniment by Robert Rutt

Tickets from $14

Tickets: 415-448-7499

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A.C.T. STAFF
Cary Philoff
Aristea Director
Heather Kenihan
Executive Director
Melissa Smith
Conservatory Director
James Hains
 Conservatory Director
Thomas C. Pearl
Administrative Director
A.C.T. Merchandise
A.C.T.-branded merchandise—clothing, jewelry, DVDs, music, and other novelty items—as well as books, scripts and Wes on Plays, are on sale in the main lobby, at the Ticket Services office, and online.

RENEWAL 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 12-2 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, and 12-6 pm, Sunday and Monday. During non-performance weekday hours, box office hours are 12-6 pm. Day call: 415.749.2420. Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our website at www.aact.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance rehearsal privileges and last-ticket insurance. Subscriptions are available by calling 415.749.2420. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or in person.

Discounts
Half-price tickets are sometimes available on the day of performance to TIX on Union Square. Half-price tickets and open-seat tickets are available at the A.C.T. Ticket Services office two hours before curtain. Matinee senior rush tickets are available on the day of the performance for $12. All rush tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis, one ticket per valid I.D. Student and senior citizen subscriptions are also available. A.C.T.'s offer one Pay What You Wish performance during the regular run of each production.

Group Discounts
For groups of 15 or more, call Edward Budas at 415.749.2473.

A.C.T. Merchandise
A.C.T. provides a wide range of merchandise for purchase on site and online, as well as options for ordering merchandise by phone or mail.

American Conservatory Theater EXITS
The director is a member of the U.S. Secret Service and the DEA's Internal Affairs Division.

For Your Information
The city of San Francisco is home to a vibrant arts and entertainment scene, featuring a wide range of cultural events, from music concerts to theatre productions.

The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers for LORT theatres are represented by the American Unions of Actors and Stagehands, IATSE.

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

A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.
DISCIPLINE
vs.
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At Bingham, Osborn & Scarborough, our discipline gives you flexibility.

Bill Urban, Principal