

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

the Quality of Life

Written and directed by
JANE ANDERSON

Produced in association with the
Geffen Playhouse and Jonathan Reinis Productions

 **A.C.T.**
american conservatory theater

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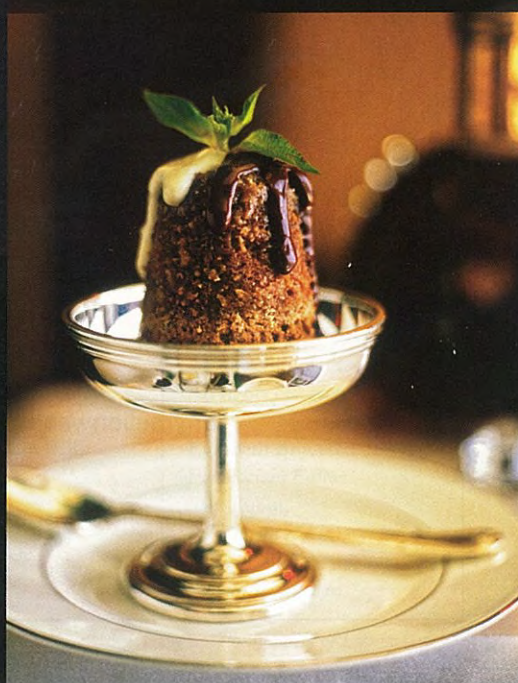
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ABOUT A.C.T.



KEVIN BERNER

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

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

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. During the past four decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people; today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 250,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996, A.C.T.'s efforts to develop creative talent for the theater were recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award. In 2001, to celebrate A.C.T.'s 35th anniversary and Perloff's 10th season, A.C.T. created a new core company of actors, who have become instrumental in every aspect of its work.

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

reopening of the Geary Theater (now the American Conservatory Theater) in 1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable period of audience expansion and financial stability. In 2001, A.C.T. began producing alternative work at Zeum Theater, which now serves as a venue for student productions and exciting new plays. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

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



Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director* • Heather Kitchen, *Executive Director*

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American Conservatory
Theater was founded in
1965 by William Ball.

Edward Hastings
Artistic Director 1986–92

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AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OLYMPIA DUKAKIS



Dear Friends,

As many of you know, I have long considered A.C.T. my artistic home. This amazing company has both entertained and enlightened San Francisco audiences for more than four decades, and I am proud to be a part of that distinguished tradition. At its finest, theater is provocative and challenging, and, one hopes, leaves audiences better informed about the world around them. That is precisely the kind of theater A.C.T. creates, which is why, especially during these challenging times, I urge you to support this company's continuing success.

Because they share my enthusiasm for A.C.T. and the valuable role this company plays in our lives, the trustees of the Shenson Foundation have pledged to match *every* gift to A.C.T.'s annual fund this season with a contribution of \$100, up to a total of \$150,000! **Your participation in the Annual Fund has never been as vital as it is today, thanks to this generous matching grant.**

In the near future you will be hearing from A.C.T. When you do, I ask that you join me in support of this remarkable organization. Together, we can make a real difference for A.C.T. this season.

Sincerely,

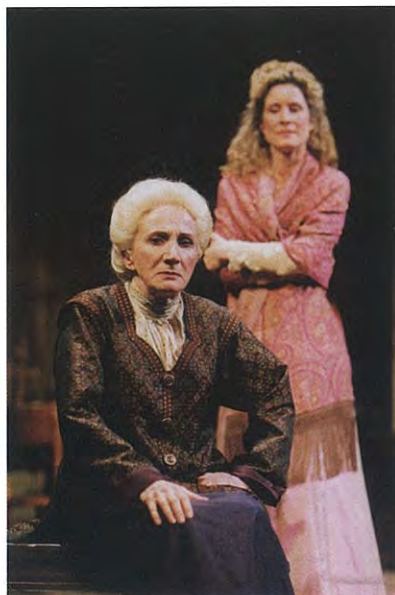
A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Olympia Dukakis".

Olympia Dukakis

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OLYMPIA DUKAKIS AT A.C.T. (L TO R): *HECUBA* (1998, PHOTO BY RICHARD FELDMAN); WITH MARCIA PIZZO IN *A MOTHER* (2004, PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN); WITH MARCO BARRICELLI IN *FOR THE PLEASURE OF SEEING HER AGAIN* (2002, PHOTO BY KEN FRIEDMAN).



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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KEVIN BERNE



Dear Friends,

Welcome to *The Quality of Life*! There is something both painfully real and profoundly metaphoric about forest fires, and we who live in northern California have firsthand experience of the

conflicting emotions fire can engender. This month marks the anniversaries of both the Oakland and Mount Vision fires, and this summer and fall we have witnessed major conflagrations up and down the California coast. We live in an ecosystem that demands constant burning and regeneration, yet we repeatedly put ourselves in situations in which we risk losing everything to the flames. Playwright Jane Anderson's *The Quality of Life* takes place on a landscape both desolate and oddly magical, inhabited by an extraordinary couple trying to make sense of the destruction that surrounds them. In the aftermath of a fire, amidst the detritus of what remains, lie enormous possibilities and enormous pitfalls. Anderson mines them all.

A.C.T. first enjoyed Anderson's work many years ago when we premiered her play *Food and Shelter*. A writer of huge compassion and delicious humor, she has grown immeasurably over the past decade, and when we read her richly imagined new play, we were immediately drawn to its heart and to its feisty, fallible, fabulous characters. We were not alone in this reaction: four remarkable actors grabbed the chance to inhabit Anderson's piece. We are delighted to introduce to A.C.T. audiences Laurie Metcalf, a visionary artist who helped to found the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago and

has gone on to perform memorable roles on stage, film, and television, and JoBeth Williams, who will surely be familiar with her beautiful work in virtually every medium over the past decade. We are also thrilled to welcome back Steven Culp, whose work in *Angels in America* and *Blackbird* has inspired A.C.T. audiences, as well as Dennis Boutsikaris, who starred in a recent workshop of my own play *Higher*. It makes us equally happy to lure back set designer Donald Eastman (*After the War*), costume designer Lydia Tanji (*After the War*, *The Rainmaker*), and lighting designer Kent Dorsey (*The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*), and to welcome composer Richard Woodbury.

It is always a creative risk to take a new play and put it into a house the size of A.C.T.'s, but it is also deeply satisfying. *The Quality of Life* tells a story specifically for us, right now, right here, a story that we hope will break your heart and make you laugh and open your eyes to those big questions we tend to put aside in the mad hurry of our daily lives. Anderson has a generosity of spirit that pervades her writing, and a sense of surprise and wonder about the world that is both unsentimental and invigorating. We hope with this production you will celebrate the return of a wonderful dramatic voice to A.C.T., and have a chance to reflect upon events and experiences which are possibly quite close to your own lives.

Thank you as always for your support and your adventurous spirit.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C Perloff'.

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director

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Above: Andrea Mantegna, *The Virgin with the Sleeping Child*, (detail) 1465/70. Oil on canvas. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, acquired as gift from James Simon, 1904. Right: Leonardo da Vinci, *Angel for the Madonna of the Rocks*, (detail) ca. 1483–1485. Metal point heightened with white on prepared paper. Collection of the Biblioteca Reale, Turin, and used with permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Photograph by Fabrizio Fenucci / Y. Press srl.ise



Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director* • Heather Kitchen, *Executive Director*

in association with the Geffen Playhouse and Jonathan Reinis Productions
presents

the Quality of Life

Written and directed by Jane Anderson

Scenery by Donald Eastman
Costumes by Lydia Tanji
Lighting by Kent Dorsey
Sound by Richard Woodbury
Dramaturg Michael Paller
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw
Assistant Director Tanner Agron

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Dinah JoBeth Williams
Bill Steven Culp
Neil Dennis Boutsikaris
Jeannette Laurie Metcalf

UNDERSTUDIES

Bill—Steve Irish; *Neil*—Stephen Klum; *Dinah, Jeannette*—Anne Darragh

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TIME AND PLACE

Ohio and northern California. The present.

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

The world premiere of *The Quality of Life* was presented at the Geffen Playhouse, Los Angeles, 2007.

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MUSE OF FIRE

An Interview with Jane Anderson

BY DAN RUBIN



PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR JANE ANDERSON

Jane Anderson's professional playwriting career literally began with a bang. The tragic 1986 explosion of the Challenger shuttle inspired her first full-length play, *Defying Gravity*. This event propelled her away from a successful career as a solo performer and writer for television, directing her toward the creation of theatrical works that

"channel our times" through the exploration of such challenging topics as sexual "normalcy," personal and national disaster, and the American culture wars.

"I realized that the Challenger explosion was too profound an event to make into a personal showcase," Anderson recalls. "That's when it finally occurred to me that the writer is there to serve the subject, not the other way around. Maybe that's why I never remember my own lines—I stopped being impressed with myself."

Anderson has been writing for the stage ever since, while maintaining her celebrated and award-winning career in film and television as a writer and a director. Her plays have been produced off Broadway and in theaters around the country, including Actors Theatre of Louisville, McCarter Theatre Center, Long Wharf Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, and Pasadena Playhouse. Her published plays include *Looking for Normal*, *The Baby Dance*, and *Smart Choices for the New Century*, as well as *Defying Gravity*. She first worked with A.C.T. in 1990, when she developed and premiered *Food and Shelter* with director Joy Carlin as part of A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress Series.

The project that would become *The Quality of Life* started in 2000, when Anderson began a professional relationship with both the Geffen Playhouse and Laurie Metcalf during the Geffen's production of Anderson's *Looking for Normal*. After the completion of *Normal*'s run, the Geffen commissioned Anderson to write *The Quality of Life*, which opened in the autumn of 2007 and garnered four Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award nominations.

A month before rehearsals for A.C.T.'s production of *The Quality of Life* began, Anderson spoke with us about her career as a writer and director for both theater and film and the origins of *The Quality of Life*.

HOW DID YOU LEARN TO WRITE FOR THEATER?

When I was 19, I moved to New York City determined to be a star. I took acting classes and voice classes and tap and ballet. I auditioned and acted in terrible plays in closet-sized theaters. More importantly, I watched. I second-acted Broadway shows and went to every off- and off-off-Broadway piece I could find. Then in 1976, I was in the New York premiere of a play called *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* by this new playwright, David Mamet. No one knew back then that he would turn into an institution. Rehearsing that play taught me how to write. The act of figuring out his subtext and how to play the rhythms of his dialogue—it was the best training I could have had as a playwright.

A few years later I helped put together a group of writers, directors, and actors called the Writers Bloc. I joined the group as an actress, but soon I started writing little scenes. I started to bring back the same characters until they started developing real flesh and bone. Later, when I had the confidence to write full-length plays, I brought back some of those characters. *Food and Shelter* was created out of some of those early hints of scenes.

But before I became a bona fide playwright, I took another left turn and hit the cabaret circuit and made a small name for myself doing shows at clubs like The Duplex and Don't Tell Mama. Billy Crystal came to my act, scouting for talent for a television variety show he was producing, *The Billy Crystal Comedy Hour*. I was hired and brought out to L.A. I thought it would be my big break, my own *Saturday Night Live*, but the show was canceled after three weeks. I stayed in L.A. and kept doing my one-woman show. I needed a steady job so I wrote a spec TV script and got work as a staff writer on a sitcom. Working on staff was invaluable to me as a writer because it took the preciousness out of the process. I learned how to rewrite, which is the most essential part of a writer's craft. Before, I thought everything that came out of my typewriter was God's gift. No writer should operate that way. You have to have humility and you have to be able to look at a scene and say,

OPPOSITE: AFTERMATH OF THE MOUNT VISION FIRE ON POINT REYES, 1995. PHOTO BY TAMIA MARG.





FUNERAL SCENE: ON THE DEATH OF THE HUSBAND ALL HIS WIVES THROW THEMSELVES INTO THE FIRE. FROM THE BOOK OF THE MOGUL, 17TH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT. THIS IMAGE IS A DEPICTION OF SATI (OR "SUTTEE"), AN INDIAN TRADITION OF IMMOLATION BY A WIDOW ON HER HUSBAND'S FUNERAL PYRE. SATI IS FIRST MENTIONED IN THE ANCIENT HINDU EPICS. THE EARLIEST HISTORIC CASE WAS RECORDED 2,300 YEARS AGO BY INVADING GREEKS, BUT THE PRACTICE ONLY BECAME COMMON IN THE LAST 800 YEARS. IN ADDITION TO ACCOUNTS OF VOLUNTARY SATI, THERE ARE MANY RECORDED INSTANCES OF WOMEN BEING FORCED TO COMMIT THE ACT, SOME HEAVILY DRUGGED AND OTHERS PHYSICALLY BOUND AND THROWN INTO THE FIRE. SATI HAS BEEN ILLEGAL IN INDIA SINCE 1829 AND NOW REPORTEDLY OCCURS ONLY ONCE OR TWICE A DECADE.

"That doesn't work," and get rid of it without regret. It was only then that I was ready to go back to the theater and write a proper play.

HOW DID THE *QUALITY OF LIFE* COME TO EXIST?

The premise came from this: I have two friends, a couple in their late 50s who are truly devoted to each other. The husband said to me one day that, when they found out his wife had breast cancer, he was prepared to take his own life if she died. "Really?" I asked, "You're kidding." He said, "Look, I've had a wonderful life, I've traveled all over the world, done work that I love, gotten awards. I've done it all. But without her, my life would have no meaning and I would be living in a world of gray."

I was deeply moved by the intensity of his love for her. And, of course, when you hear somebody say that, you start examining

your own relationship: If my beloved died, would my life be so miserable that I wouldn't want to go on? Or do I value my life too much to do that? Does that mean I value my life more than her, or is committing suicide because of grief a copout? There's this Buddhist belief that suffering is just a fact of life, and it is your job to take whatever grief or pain that life hands you and find a way to move through it. On the other hand, and the reason why I call the play *The Quality of Life*: Are we obliged to keep living if the quality of our lives is so absolutely awful?

DID THESE SAME FRIENDS LOSE THEIR HOME TO A FIRE AS THE CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY DO?

No. The play is a combination of events. One of my brothers lost his home in a terrible fire on the Inverness Ridge—the Mount Vision fire in '95. It was an awful loss. It took him years to get over it.

But the marvelous thing is, now he's rebuilt and his place is more magical than ever. All of the Bishop pines on the ridge burned, but those particular trees need fire to propagate: they need that intense heat to explode the pine cones and spread the seed. After the first rain, thousands of little pinelets started emerging, and they grew up so thick and so fast that every Christmas when my family goes up there, my brother will take his chainsaw and cut us a couple of Christmas trees. Those trees are now 30, 40

feet high. The regeneration is incredible. You know forests want this. It's part of their process.

I love the fire as a metaphor. I have always wanted to stage a play at a burn site. I remember seeing a play by Lanford Wilson called *Lemon Sky*; there's this marvelous speech that the young protagonist has where he describes the hills in L.A. scorched by a fire, and the eerie outline of the blackened trees in the ash. I was only 18 when I heard that speech, but I could never get the imagery of out of my head.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR WRITING PROCESS?

In my early days, when I was just developing my discipline, I used to write from 9 to 5 with a little break for lunch. I thought that's the way to go. Then I realized that if you keep writing past a point of exhaustion you're not doing your muse any favors. The

subconscious is a very delicate organism. It will rebel if you work it too hard, and I've learned to back off. It's the same with raising my son. If you want a kid to do something, you have to give them a positive action. So if they keep touching a delicate glass, instead of saying, "Don't touch that! Don't touch that! Put that down!" you say, "Come here, go pick up that block, isn't that cool?" You distract them with a positive. You have to do the same thing with your muse. Every time you write a sentence you can't start saying to yourself, "Stupid idea, stupid, stupid." It's a horrible thing to do! You wouldn't do that to a friend or to a child, but we do it to ourselves all the time. If you want your muse to relax and create you have to make gentle suggestions to yourself: "Why don't you try *this* direction? There, there, you'll be fine."

DO YOU DO THE SAME WHEN YOU ARE DIRECTING?

Oh yes, absolutely. I have great respect for actors, and I don't want anyone to ever think that I think of them as children, but their muse is as delicate as mine, perhaps even more so. Here's the thing that writers and directors have to remember—especially writers, because as a writer [by the time I walk into the rehearsal room] I've already done 90% of my creating. I've made all my wrong turns, and I've done it in private, and I've done it months ago, maybe even years ago. So I'm arriving on the first day of rehearsal kind of smug because I've already solved it: "I'm done, finished!" A lot of writers make the mistake that, because they've already figured it out, they think that what's on the page is perfectly clear to everyone else. But the actors arrive on the first day of rehearsal in that same raw terrified state that I'm in when I sit down to write that first page of my play. Writers think that because they're working from that blank page it's much scarier, but it is just as terrifying for an actor to look at a script with these words and these people they don't know yet and face the huge task of finding their way in. So, as the director, my job is to protect them from the writer.

HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOUR CAST FROM THE WRITER WHEN YOU ARE THE WRITER?

Well, often I just have a running monologue with the writer inside, saying, "Shut up, just shut up, just calm down." It's exhausting, but hey, I signed up for it. And I love it. I love directing. I came into it as a film director when I started directing my screenplays. I love directing because the director gets to choose the visual look of a play or a film and the music and the soundscape. I find those other media as exciting as the written word.

DO YOU PREFER THE CONTROL YOU HAVE AS THE DIRECTOR OF FILM COMPARED TO THEATER?

I love them both. I also have to remind the film director in my head that this is theater. The reason you really have to back off as a director in theater is because the actors are the ones who eventually

WEDDING NIGHT

By Jalaluddin Rumi

The day I've died, my pall is moving on—
But do not think my heart is still on earth!
Don't weep and pity me: "Oh woe, how awful!"
You fall in devil's snare—woe, that is awful!
Don't cry "Woe, parted!" at my burial—
For me this is the time of joyful meeting!
Don't say "Farewell!" when I'm put in the grave—
A curtain is it for eternal bliss.
You saw "descending"—now look at the rising!
Is setting dangerous for sun and moon?
To you it looks like setting, but it's rising;
The coffin seems a jail, yet it means freedom.
Which seed fell in the earth that did not grow there?
Why do you doubt the fate of human seed?
What bucket came not filled from out the cistern?
Why should the Yusaf "Soul" then fear this well?
Close here your mouth and open it on that side
So that your hymns may sound in Where-no-place!

—Look! *This Is Love: Poems of Rumi*, translated by
Annemarie Schimmel (Shambhala, 1996)

run the show onstage, so they have to completely and utterly own it. A film actor often doesn't entirely have to own the part because their performance gets shaped in the editing room, and as the director I get to choose my favorite takes. Film actors don't get a month of exploration. Often, they show up a week before, we have a read-through, maybe you have a few rehearsals; but film actors are performing on the fly. They have done an enormous amount of prep before showing up to the set, but usually there's not a lot of exploring to be had once the shooting starts.

In theater, the actors get a whole month of finding their way through the play, so you can afford a few wrong turns. When you have a week to rehearse for a film and an actor starts to go down the wrong hole, you say, "Wait a minute, actually the line means this and the character is really going after A instead of B." And they're grateful for that because you have to take shortcuts. If you do that for a stage actor the first week of rehearsal, you crush the exploration process.

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Saturday, December 13, 2008, 10 a.m.

On the Upcoming A.C.T. Production of *Rich and Famous*

John Guare, author of *Rich and Famous*

Saturday, January 10, 2009, 10 a.m.

On Florence Foster Jenkins and the Upcoming A.C.T. Production of *Souvenir*

Guests to be announced

Sunday, March 8, 2009, following the matinee performance

On the Upcoming A.C.T. Production of *War Music*

Lillian Groag, author/director of *War Music*

Saturday, April 18, 2009, 10 a.m.

On the Upcoming A.C.T. Production of *Boleros for the Disenchanted*

José Rivera, author of *Boleros for the Disenchanted*

Panelists and topics subject to change.

For more information, visit www.act-sf.org.

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Screenwriting is all about story structure; plays are about character development and so is the one-hour television series. Screenwriting is like architecture: you have to have a blueprint to hang your characters and tone on. I've tried writing screenplays starting on page one without knowing where I was going, and I've always run into a huge jam. There's a structure to a film that's very specific, and when I start writing a film, I start by drawing a horizontal line across a sheet of paper dividing it into three acts and writing out basic plot points. And then I write the script. With plays I don't do that. It's a completely different process—I let myself meander, I let the characters tell me where to go. I don't impose a structure until I know what the play's about.

I'm delighted to be able to work in these different media. It keeps me fresh. Writers shouldn't have to limit themselves to just one field. Visual artists will switch from painting to sculpture to printmaking and play with every tool in the box. Besides, this thing we call show business is so fickle—when I'm bashed by the critics in one medium, I'll just switch to the other. My muse is grateful for that.

For a transcript of the full-length interview, pick up a copy of The Quality of Life issue of Words on Plays.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LIFE?

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, full-length transcripts of artist interviews, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

Individual issues of *Words on Plays* for each production are available in the theater lobby and online at www.act-sf.org. Full and partial subscriptions to *Words on Plays* are also available for the entire 2008-09 season.

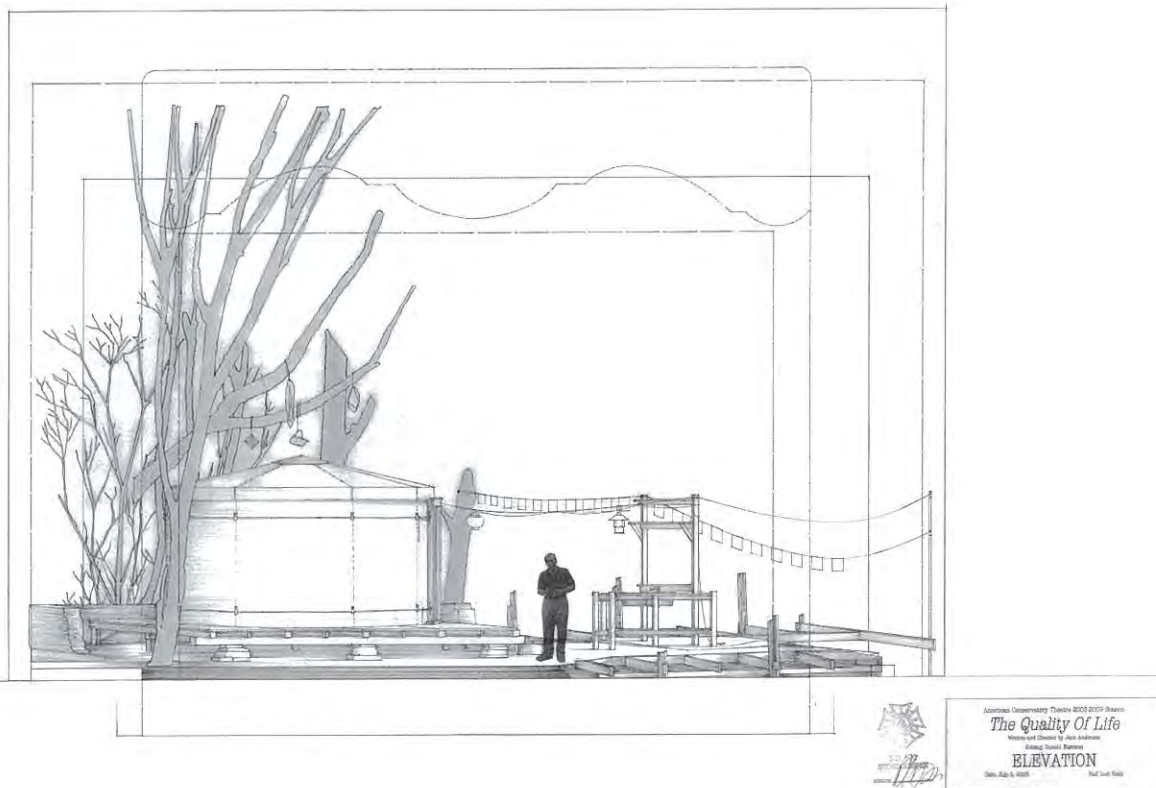
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THE INNATE POWER OF NATURE, LIGHT, AND AIR

Designing *The Quality of Life* for A.C.T.

BY LESLEY GIBSON



Playwright Jane Anderson's stage directions for the opening scene of *The Quality of Life* describe Dinah and Bill sitting alone in their living room, "isolated in a pool of light," with a single photo of their late daughter hanging above them. When *The Quality of Life* premiered in the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater in Los Angeles last year, an audience of 115 watched the action from three sides of a thrust stage, experiencing the intimacy of the couple's grief at a close enough distance to all but reach out and touch the actors.

Following the final performance of its successful L.A. run, A.C.T.'s artistic and production teams prepared to welcome the play into the 1,000-seat American Conservatory Theater, with its 77-foot-wide stage and majestic gold-leaf proscenium. A new group of designers, familiar with A.C.T.'s historic house, were brought in to re-imagine the sensory experience of the play—which travels from the closeness of that opening scene to the expanse of a fire-ravaged northern California hillside—in a way that would make the most of the theater's grandeur and sophisticated technology while allowing the comic and often tender emotional themes of the play to shine through.

Just before rehearsals began in San Francisco, we talked to the designers about the process of re-setting the stage for a brand-new production of *The Quality of Life* at the American Conservatory Theater. Below are excerpts from their remarks.

SCENIC DESIGNER DONALD EASTMAN

WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE DESIGN FOR THIS PLAY?

DONALD EASTMAN: I was interested in capturing the power of setting the people against the sky, as opposed to a painted drop of trees, which is what they had in [the original production]. The characters in this play have lost everything. This set has to look like loss. You want to see small people in a big sky with nothing left. Of course, the set is richer than that, but it's all about: Which way is the view, which way are we looking out from the cliff of the house? It's a hill house, so it's perched up somewhere, so that's why I tried to put the feeling of the view at the back, so we can see sky, as opposed to a comforting, foresty, idyllic thing.

ABOVE: SKETCH FOR THE SET OF *THE QUALITY OF LIFE* AT A.C.T. BY SCENIC DESIGNER DONALD EASTMAN

WHAT PARTICULAR CHALLENGES CONFRONTED YOU IN DESIGNING A SET FOR A THEATER TEN TIMES THE SIZE OF THE ORIGINAL VENUE?

The most important thing is that, when the setting is realistic, you have to keep the emotional air right. In this play you don't want to look at a lot of stuff; you want to feel like there's nothing. So there are areas where there is a lot of detail, but then there are areas where it just chills, so you get a rest from all the information.

When you're in a more intimate theater, you're really *in* the location. Things tend to seem real to you. But when you get [far] back, it becomes so much more about making a picture. Ultimately, you're making a kind of a picture that can in turns be haunting, familiar, evocative, and emotional.

HOW DID YOU RESEARCH THIS PROJECT?

There are great photos taken by Jane's family of the Mount Vision fire [that took place on Point Reyes in 1995]. All the details you could ever want are in those photos. So it was that, combined with a sense of architecture, and also a sense of how fires happen. Fires come up a hill, and the house on the hillside gets hit, and perhaps farther up the hill is the road that the fire truck can get to, but the fire truck can't get down to the house. So they're hosing everything and it's eventually at that place where they can make some sort of impact on the site.

When you look at the set you kind of feel that geography: the cliff is off to the left, the fire is coming up from below, and eventually trees start reappearing on the other side. That's probably where people come in from the road. So a lot of detail and research has gone into it, but at the same time we're not copying; it's not a play about a specific event.

We're also facing the challenge that [in this setting] we don't want to make Jeannette and Neil look like hippies, or crazy. It has to stay essential, with a sense of style and Eastern grace. They're going through a lot; all four characters are going through a lot. It has to be sympathetic, but somehow also hopeful. It's a fine line we're walking.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE DESIGN TO BALANCE THE HOPEFULNESS WITH THE HOPELESSNESS?

I think the idea that nature is tempering it all really helped—the qualities of light, the beautiful haze that happens when the sun is setting and everything is becoming golden and all of a sudden it feels like an enchanted place; or when the moon is lit at night and there is the little glow of light bulbs and lanterns, tempered with the deep indigo sky. Emotionally it just keeps becoming a new place. And then there certainly are times when it's just very clear, and you see the light coming through the remaining trees. All of the poetry comes from the innate power of nature, light, and air.



NEIL



JEANNETTE

COSTUME DESIGNER LYDIA TANJI

IN YOUR DESIGN NOTES YOU ASSIGNED EACH CHARACTER A COLOR SCHEME. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ILLUSTRATE ABOUT EACH CHARACTER THROUGH COLOR?

With Bill, we wanted to keep him in cool colors and stripes. The blues will accentuate his pragmatic character and contrast the warm colors that Neil will wear. And then Dinah is in spring colors—light aqua, pink, pale greens. Dinah and Bill's colors are easily ordered from a catalog and available at any Midwestern mall or chain store, like Target, Mervyns, JCPenney, Sears, etc.

Jeannette and Neil's colors are more "Berkeley"—shades of spirituality, custom dyed, richer, more vibrant. So Jeannette is in very vibrant purples and turquoise, with Neil in yellows, rust, and maroon. And at the end we have him in indigo, which has a lot of significance in African and Asian cultures. And anywhere I could, I tried to slip in some kind of ethnic piece into their accessories or wardrobe, because of their interest in anthropology and that kind of worldly, intellectual milieu that is Berkeley.

SOUND DESIGNER RICHARD WOODBURY

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN FOR THE SONIC LANDSCAPE OF THIS PLAY?

I have two roles: I am both the composer and the sound designer. On the one hand I have been working with Jane to come up with

ABOVE: COSTUME SKETCHES BY LYDIA TANJI



BILL



DINAH

the various musical themes and orchestrations that will support the production, primarily in the transitional moments. And then I'm also responsible for the sonic environment, sound-scapes that will happen within the various scenes.

The music itself will be original. We're trying to get something that leaves it open for the audience to experience the play as both a comedy and as a comment on the processes these two couples go through in dealing with their loss. One of the things that the play does is reveal information gradually as the play goes on, so we didn't want the music to get ahead of the information that's in the play. If you start with a very sad theme, the audience will think, "Oh, this is a sad play." Or if you start with a very funny theme, they think, "Oh, this is a comedy." This play lives in both of those places.

WHAT PARTICULAR CHALLENGES DOES DESIGNING FOR A LARGE THEATER POSE FOR A SOUND DESIGNER?

There are a couple of transitions that in a small space might have been overwhelming, but the way we're building them for the larger space, we feel it can handle the larger scale transitions, sonically. For example, in the second scene, after the prologue, we will actually have the sounds of the fire roar through the theater as our transition. This will be quite loud and cinematic, which in a smaller theater might seem like overkill.

ARE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE ANY PARTICULAR EFFECT OVERALL?

My goal is always to support the sense of the place and time of the play, and then its emotional and dramatic values. In this play, because it happens in an environment that has been ravaged, and because it happens outdoors, I will attempt to accentuate the violence of what's happened to the place, but also the fact that it's set in this natural beauty, in this calm that's after the storm, so to speak.

The other big one is to stay out of the way. It's become sort of a cliché in sound design to say, "If no one notices what I've done, I've done my job well." People shouldn't walk out of the theater saying, "Oh, those were marvelous crickets, weren't they?" They should just accept the world that has crickets in it. It should just seem like it's a natural part of the world.

LIGHTING DESIGNER KENT DORSEY

WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH HAVE YOU DONE TO PREPARE FOR THIS PROJECT?

KENT DORSEY: I have had personal experience with wildfires. I bought a house in the Oakland Hills in 1991. The fires ended on a Sunday, and

we were scheduled to move in the following Friday. The house was still there, but at the time the insurance company told us they thought it was lost; no one could tell where anything was because all of the roads were so damaged. So I know a lot about what wildfires look like, and what the light and the air is like after a wildfire. A lot of what I'll be doing will be based on the memory of that.

HOW DOES THE SIZE OF THE THEATER AFFECT YOUR DESIGN?

In the original production, because they were dealing with a much smaller space, the lighting design had to be a little more abstract. But with this show, the set that Donald [Eastman] has built is really like an open hillside, and the larger space allows us to be much more naturalistic and mimic the light of the sun or the moonlight. Also, with such a large stage, the general lighting scheme will be able to achieve a more dramatic, even filmic quality, which is especially appropriate for this play, considering Jane's background in television and film.

For transcripts of full-length interviews with The Quality of Life cast and creative team, pick up a copy of Words on Plays at the merchandise stand in the lobby of the theater.

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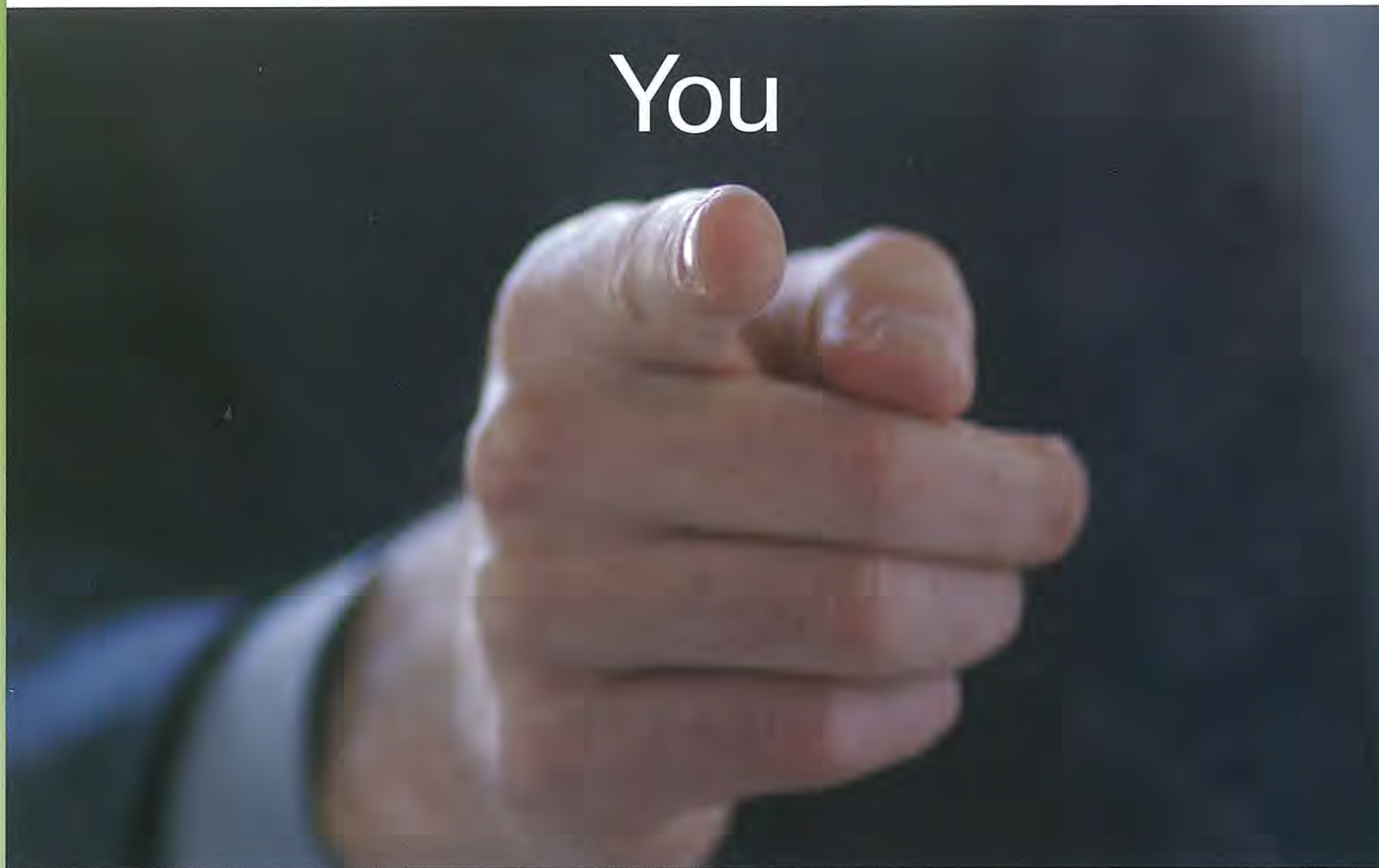


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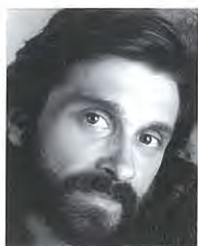
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WHO'S WHO IN *THE QUALITY OF LIFE*



DENNIS BOUTSIKARIS (Neil) originated the role of Neil in the Geffen Playhouse production of *The Quality of Life* in 2007. His Broadway

credits include *Amadeus* (Mozart), *Filumena* (dir. Sir Laurence Olivier), and *Bent*. Off Broadway, he received an OBIE Award for *Sight Unseen* at Manhattan Theatre Club. Other off-Broadway credits include *The Nest of the Wood Grouse* (OBIE for Outstanding Performance), *The Boys Next Door*, *A Picasso* (Picasso) at Manhattan Theatre Club, *That Championship Season*, and *Julius Caesar* (Cassius) at the New York Shakespeare Festival. Boutsikaris has appeared in many television movies, including *Chasing the Dragon* (CableACE nomination, Best Supporting Actor) and *And Then There Was One, Love and Betrayal: The Mia Farrow Story* (as Woody Allen), and *Survival on the Mountain*. On television he has been a series regular on *Stat*, *The Jackie Thomas Show*, and Sidney Lumet's *100 Centre Street* and has lost many, many cases on *Law & Order*. His film work includes **batteries not included*, *The Dream Team*, *Boys on the Side*, *In Dreams*, *Crocodile Dundee II*, and, most recently, Wes Craven's *25/8* and Oliver Stone's *W* (as Paul Wolfowitz). He is the recipient of two Audie Awards for his work narrating more than 60 audio books.



STEVEN CULP (Bill) received Drama-Logue Awards for his performances in *Angels in America* (A.C.T.) and the West Coast

premiere of *Raised in Captivity* (South

Coast Repertory Theatre). Over the last two decades he has appeared in numerous theatrical premieres, among them Tony Kushner's *Slavs!* and Phyllis Nagy's *Trip's Cinch* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), Terrence McNally's *The Lisbon Traviata* (Theatre Off Park), Neil Simon's *Actors and Actresses* (Hartman Theatre), A. R. Gurney, Jr.'s *Sweet Sue* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), Keith Reddin's *Highest Standard of Living* (Playwrights Horizons), Jonathan Tolins's *If Memory Serves* (Pasadena Playhouse), and Lillian Groag's *The White Rose* (The Old Globe). Other theater credits include *Blackbird* (A.C.T.), *Art* (South Coast Rep), *Coastal Disturbances* (Circle in the Square, Broadway), *Light Up the Sky* (Ahmanson Theatre), *Richard III* (New York Shakespeare Festival), and many other plays at regional theaters across the country. Culp received Screen Actors' Guild Awards in 2004 and 2005 (Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series) as part of the cast of ABC's *Desperate Housewives*. He also starred in the ABC series *Traveler*. Since making his primetime TV debut in the Emmy Award-winning NBC miniseries of Gore Vidal's *Lincoln*, Culp has appeared in many series and television movies, including notable recurring roles in *JAG*, *The West Wing*, *Star Trek: Enterprise*, and *ER*. Most recent television appearances include *The Closer*, *Saving Grace*, *Eli Stone*, *The Cleaner*, *Medium*, *Boston Legal*, and the upcoming miniseries *Impact*. Culp's feature films include *Thirteen Days* (as Robert F. Kennedy), *The Emperor's Club*, *Spartan*, *The Sisters*, *Nurse Betty*, *Firehouse Dog*, and *James and the Giant Peach*.

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.



LAURIE METCALFE (Jeannette) is an original member of Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company, now in its 33rd

season. Past Steppenwolf productions include *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *Coyote Ugly*, *Educating Rita*, *Libra*, and *Balm in Gilead*, for which she received New York's Drama Desk, OBIE, and Theatre World awards. At the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles, she received Ovation Awards for her performances in Jane Anderson's *Looking for Normal* and Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. She has appeared on Broadway in *My Thing of Love* and in David Mamet's *November*, for which she received a Tony Award nomination. She appeared on the television series *Roseanne* and *The Norm Show*. Film credits include *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *Internal Affairs*, *Making Mr. Right*, *Uncle Buck*, *JFK*, *Toy Story*, *Bulworth*, *Scream 2*, and *Leaving Las Vegas*.



JOBETH WILLIAMS (Dinah) is probably best known for her starring roles in the films *Poltergeist* (I and II), *The Big Chill*, *Teachers*,

Switch, *Fever Pitch*, *Stir Crazy*, and *Kramer vs. Kramer*, among many others. She has been nominated for three Emmy Awards (for the television movies *Baby M* and *Adam* and for *Frasier*) and has had the lead in two series, John Grisham's *The Client* and the CBS half-hour *Payne* (opposite John Larroquette).

"Who's Who" continues on page 26.

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Who's Who, *continued from page 23*

Last season Williams was seen in a recurring role on *Dexter* for Showtime. Her theater work in New York includes *Body Awareness* (Atlantic Theater Company), Marsha Norman's *Last Dance*, *Moonchildren*, *Ladyhouse Blues*, *A Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talking*, John Guare's *Gardenia*, and *The Vagina Monologues*. In regional theater she has played the leads in *Antony and Cleopatra* (The Old Globe), *Idiot's Delight* (opposite Stacy Keach, The Kennedy Center), *The Threepenny Opera* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (McCarter Theatre Center), *Uncle Vanya*, *Tartuffe*, and *The School for Wives*, among others. She originated the role of Dinah at the Geffen Playhouse in Jane Anderson's *The Quality of Life*, for which she received a *Back Stage West* Garland Award and an Ovation Award nomination. She has been nominated for two Golden Globes and an Academy Award for directing the short film *On Hope*. Other directing credits include the Showtime film *Frankie and Hazel* and episodic television. She is a graduate of Brown University.



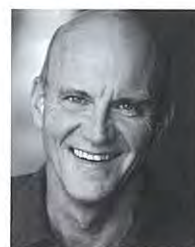
ANNE DARRAGH
(Understudy) last appeared at A.C.T. in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Recent performances include *The Busy*

World Is Hushed at Aurora Theatre Company and *Tir na nÓg* ("Land of Youth") at Magic Theatre. Locally she has also performed with AlterTheatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Brava Theater Center, Campo Santo, Encore Theatre Company, Eureka Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, PlayGround, Theatre Rhinoceros, and San Jose Repertory Theatre.



STEVE IRISH
(Understudy) most recently played Froggy LeSueur in *The Foreigner* at San Jose Repertory Theatre and Henry Kissinger in *Nixon's*

Nixon at Center REP Theatre. Other Bay Area credits include Mae West's *Sex* at Aurora Theatre Company and *Man and Superman* at California Shakespeare Theater. He has also been seen at A.C.T. in *The Gamester*, *Lilies or, The Revival of a Romantic Drama*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Irish received critical acclaim for his portrayal of Orson Welles in Marin Theatre Company's *Orson's Shadow* and starred in *The Long Christmas Ride Home* and *'Bot* at Magic Theatre. Regional credits include *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2* at Washington, D.C.'s Shakespeare Theatre; *The Show-Off* and *Twelfth Night* at Baltimore's CENTERSTAGE; *Oleanna* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at Capital Repertory Theatre; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* off Broadway at Classic Stage Company; *Fool for Love* at Portland Stage Company; and *The Scarecrow*, opposite Orson Bean, and *Richard III*, opposite Alfred Molina, both in Los Angeles. He appeared in the feature films *Just Like Heaven* and *The Darwin Awards*. Irish trained at The Juilliard School.



STEPHEN KLUM
(Understudy) was last seen at A.C.T. as William Marshall in *The Little Foxes*. He also sang in the chorus of A.C.T.'s world premiere

production of *Frank Loesser's Hans*

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Who's Who

Christian Andersen. In the Bay Area, he was most recently seen as Shelly Levene in *Glengarry Glen Ross* at San Jose Stage Company. Other Bay Area credits include productions at California Shakespeare Theater (*King Lear*, *Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*), The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival (*Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Love's Labor's Lost*), Marin Shakespeare Company (*Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*), and Pacific Alliance Stage Company (*Proof*, *A Tuna Christmas*, *Sylvia*). In musical theater, he has played Tevye (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Don Quixote (*Man of La Mancha*), Frederick (*A Little Night Music*), and Daddy Warbucks (*Annie*). In New York City, he made numerous appearances on *The Guiding Light* and *One Life to Live*.

JANE ANDERSON's (*Playwright and Director*) plays have been produced off Broadway and in theaters around the country, including A.C.T., Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, McCarter Theatre Center, Long Wharf Theatre, the Geffen Playhouse, and Pasadena Playhouse. Her published plays include *Looking for Normal*, *The Baby Dance*, *Defying Gravity*, *Smart Choices for the New Century*, *Lynette at 3am*, and *The Last Time We Saw Her*. Other works include *The Pink Studio* and *Hotel Oublette* (Susan Smith Blackburn Prize). Film work: Anderson wrote and directed *The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio*. She wrote and directed *Normal* for HBO, which garnered six Emmy Award nominations, three Golden Globe Award nominations, and Directors Guild of America and Writers Guild of America award nominations for outstanding directing and writing. She wrote HBO's *The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader-Murdering Mom*, for which she received an Emmy, a Writers Guild Award, and a PEN Center USA Award for Best Teleplay. Her other television films include *When Billie Beat Bobby* and *The Baby Dance*, which received a Peabody Award, three Golden Globe nominations, and four Emmy nominations. She wrote and directed the first segment of *If These Walls Could Talk 2* (starring Vanessa Redgrave), which earned Emmy nominations for Outstanding Writing and Made-for-Television Movie. Other screenwriting credits include *How to Make an American Quilt* and *It Could Happen to You*.

DONALD EASTMAN (*Scenic Designer*) designed *After the War*, *The Rivals*, *Hilda*, and *Creditors* at A.C.T. He has also designed for the New York Shakespeare Festival, Lincoln

Center Festival, New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, numerous productions with Carey Perloff at Classic Stage Company, and at America's leading regional theaters. Premiere productions include *On the Open Road*, by Steven Tesich; *Les Trois Dumas*, by Charles Smith; *The Gimmick*, by Dael Orlandersmith; *such small hands*, by Tina Howe; *Constant Star*, by Tazewell Thompson; and the plays of Maria Irene Fornes. Eastman received the 2006 Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award for *The Rivals*, a Village Voice OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence, and the 2005 Barrymore Award for Outstanding Design and is a grantee of the NEA/National Opera Institute. Upcoming productions include *Falstaff* for Seattle Opera, *Sweet Bird of Youth* for Arena Stage, and *Arjuna's Dilemma*, by Douglas J. Cuomo, for Music-Theatre Group at BAM's Next Wave Festival.

LYDIA TANJI (*Costume Designer*) has designed *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Brainpeople*, *The Rainmaker*, and *After the War* for A.C.T. She is concurrently designing *Death and the King's Horseman* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, *Crime and Punishment* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Syracuse Stage. For Berkeley Rep she has also designed costumes for *The Glass Menagerie*, *Our Town*, *Master Class*, *Homebody/Kabul*, and *Slavs!*, among others. Other regional theaters with which she has worked include Seattle Repertory Theatre, Portland Center Stage, the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, Laguna Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, East West Players, California Shakespeare Theater, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, San

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Jose Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, The Children's Theatre Company, The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Huntington Theatre Company, Geva Theatre Center, Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, and Arena Stage. She has received six Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards and two *Drama-Logue* Awards. Film credits include *The Joy Luck Club*, *Hot Summer Winds*, *Dim Sum*, *The Wash*, *Thousand Pieces of Gold*, and *Life Tastes Good*.

KENT DORSEY's (*Lighting Designer*) scenic design has been seen at A.C.T. in *Hedda Gabler*, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, *American Buffalo*, *Light Up the Sky*, *Pygmalion*, *The Pope and the Witch*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Lighting designs at A.C.T. include *The Pope and the Witch*, *Bon Appétit!* and *The Late Great Ladies of Blues and Jazz*. He has designed scenery and/or lighting for most of the major regional theater companies in the United States, including The Kennedy Center, the Ahmanson Theatre, The Old Globe (more than 95 productions), La Jolla Playhouse, Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., the Geffen Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and The Cleveland Play House. His New York theater productions include *About Time*, *Alligator Tales*, *Another Antigone*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *Silence*, *Suds*, and *Yankee Dawk You Die*. Dorsey designed the scenery and lighting for *Silence/Chinmoku*, a world premiere in Tokyo by The Subaru Acting Company.



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Andy Warhol, *The Marx Brothers* from *Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century*, 1980, synthetic polymer paint and silk-screen ink on canvas, 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm) © 2008 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / ARS, New York / Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York / www.feldmangallery.com

The exhibition was organized by the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, and The Jewish Museum, New York. *Warhol's Jews: Ten Portraits Reconsidered* and companion catalogue are made possible by the Blavatnik Family Foundation. Lead support for the San Francisco presentation comes from Bank of America and the Jim Joseph Foundation.



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Jane Anderson would like to dedicate this production to
Terry Ryan, Tony Shultz, and Jacqui Landrum,
three great souls who graced this earth.

Who's Who

RICHARD WOODBURY (*Sound Design*) was the sound designer for recent Broadway productions of *August: Osage County* and *Talk Radio* and created original music and/or sound design for Tony Award-winning productions of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *The Young Man from Atlanta*. Goodman Theatre credits include music and/or sound design for *Talking Pictures*, *The Actor*, *Blind Date*, *Rabbit Hole*, *King Lear*, *Frank's Home*, *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove*, *A Life in the Theater*, *Dollhouse*, *Finishing the Picture*, *Hughie*, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*, *Lobby Hero*, and many others. Steppenwolf Theatre Company credits include music and/or sound design for *August: Osage County*, *I Just Stopped By to See the Man*, *Hysteria*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Memory of Water*, *The Libertine*, and others. His work has also been heard at regional theaters including the Alley Theatre in Houston, the Geffen Playhouse and Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles, Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, and others. He has received Joseph Jefferson and Helen Hayes awards for outstanding sound design and the Ruth Page Award for Outstanding Collaborative Artist, as well as several nominations for Drama Desk and Ovation awards. He has composed numerous commissioned scores for dance, including, most recently, *Monument* and *Overflow* for Carrie Hanson in Chicago and *Pentimento* for the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in New York. Woodbury is a faculty member at Columbia College Chicago, serving as music director of The Dance Center.

MICHAEL PALLER (*Dramaturg*) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career

Who's Who

as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's *Small Craft Warnings* at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and has written theater and book reviews for the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *Newsday*, and *Mirabella* magazine. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

MERYL LIND SHAW (*A.C.T. Casting Director*) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has also cast roles for Magic Theatre, The Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of *White Christmas*, *Jitney*, and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she stage-managed more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.'s *Creditors* and *Bon Appétit!* She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She has served on the Bay Area advisory committee of Actors' Equity Association, the negotiating committee for the LORT contract (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival. She has taught or guest lectured at A.C.T., Rutgers University, Carnegie

Mellon University, Santa Clara University, St. Mary's College, and San Francisco's Academy of Art University, among others.

ELISA GUTHERTZ (*Stage Manager*) most recently worked on *What You Will*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Speed-the-Plow*, and *The Rainmaker* at the American Conservatory Theater and on the A.C.T. production of *Death in Venice* at Zeum Theater. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include *Blackbird*, *The Little Foxes*, *A Number*, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Well*, Eve Ensler's *The Good Body*, *Levee James*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Misanthrope*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Tartuffe*, *Mary Stuart*, *The Rose Tattoo*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She has also stage-managed *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Rhinoceros*, *Big Love*, *Civil Sex*, *Collected Stories*, and *Cloud Tectonics* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include *The Good Body* at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, *Big Love* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and *The Vagina Monologues* at the Alcazar Theatre.

HEATH BELDEN (*Assistant Stage Manager*) has stage-managed *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Subject Tonight Is Love* for Marin Theatre Company, *The Full Monty* and *Little Shop of Horrors* for American Musical Theatre of San Jose, *Once Upon a Mattress* for 42nd Street Moon, four seasons with Marin Shakespeare Company, five operas with Pocket Opera, and five productions at A.C.T. Belden has worked on such new plays as Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*, Ken Weitzman's *Spin Moves*, and Charles L. Mee's *Wintertime*. He received an M.F.A. degree from UC San Diego.

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JONATHAN REINIS's (*Producer*)

New York Broadway productions include Harvey Keitel in *Jerry Springer: The Opera* in concert at Carnegie Hall (2008), *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical* (2006–07), *Kiki and Herb: Alive on Broadway* (Tony Award nomination, 2006), *Dame Edna* (Tony Award, 2000), Russell Simmons's *Def Poetry Jam* (Tony Award, 2003), *Bill Maher: Victory Begins at Home* (Tony Award nom., 2003), and *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* (Tony Award nom., 1999). Off-Broadway productions include *Room Service*, Marga Gomez's *Los Big Names*, Josh Kornbluth's *Love & Taxes*, and *Shay Duffin As Brendan Behan: Confessions of an Irish Rebel*. San Francisco/Bay Area and touring productions include Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2008; national tour), Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, Josh Kornbluth's *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*, Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss* (with Sean Penn, Woody Harrelson, Nick Nolte, and Cheech Marin), *Dame Edna, Ennio, His Way*, *Sandra Bernhard*, Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (national tour), the premiere of John Leguizamo's *Freak, Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, and *Forever Tango* (national tour). Reinis built Theatre on the Square in downtown San Francisco and operated it for more than 20 years (1981–2002).

THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

(*Producer*) has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its mix of classic plays and provocative new works, the Geffen Playhouse has been awarded more than 30 regional theater awards, including five accolades for best overall production and a special Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Best New Play in Los Angeles. As part of

the community, the Geffen Playhouse's education and outreach programs impact the lives of more than 27,000 community members each year by providing life-changing access to the arts. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who donated the initial funds for the theater, the nonprofit organization is helmed by Producing Director Gilbert Cates, Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Susan Barton, and Chairman of the Board Frank Mancuso. For more information, please visit GeffenPlayhouse.com.

MORT AND FRANNIE

FLEISHHACKER (*Executive Producers*) are both longtime A.C.T. volunteers. A San Francisco native, and the son of one of A.C.T.'s founding trustees, 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 Producers Circle with Deedee McMurtry. She enjoys working to build this critical organization and plan the annual dinner. Mort and Frannie have also recently produced *Curse of the Starving Class*, *The Rivals*, and *The Circle*. Mort serves as a trustee of Greenbelt Alliance, treasurer of the Fleishhacker Foundation, and a member of the Advisory Council of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association. Frannie is president of The Francisca Club and serves on the board of That Man May See at UC San Francisco.



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A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF
(Artistic Director) is celebrating her 17th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*,

and Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda's *After the War* (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of *A Christmas Carol*, the American premieres of Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love* and *Indian Ink* and Harold Pinter's *Celebration* and *The Room*; A.C.T.-commissioned translations/adaptations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *A Mother* (based on Maxim Gorky's *Vassa Zheleznova*); Harley Granville-Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayzavian's *Singer's Boy*; and major revivals of Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill's *Happy End* (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), *A Doll's House*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Old Times*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Antigone*, *Creditors*, *Home*, *The Tempest*, and Stoppard's *Travesties*, *The Real Thing*, *Night and Day*, and *Arcadia*. Perloff's work for A.C.T. also includes Marie Ndiaye's *Hilda*, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein's *No for an Answer* and David Lang/Mac Wellman's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, and the West Coast premiere of her own play *The Colossus of Rhodes* (Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist). Her play *Luminescence Dating* premiered in New York at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, was coproduced by A.C.T. and the Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. Her play *Waiting for the Flood* has received workshops in A.C.T.'s First Look series and at New York Stage & Film and Roundabout Theater Company; her latest play, *Higher*, was developed at New York Stage & Film and as part of A.C.T.'s First Look series at Stanford University. Her one-act play *The Morning After* was a finalist for the Heideman Award at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Perloff has collaborated as a director on new plays by many notable contemporary writers, including Gotanda, Robert O'Hara, and Lucy Caldwell. She is currently developing a new dance-theater piece, *The Tosca Project*, with choreographer Val Caniparoli; a major production of *Phedre*

(translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival; and a new *Bacchae* for the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound's *Elektra*, the American premiere of Pinter's *Mountain Language* and *The Birthday Party*, and many classic works. Under Perloff's leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's opera *The Cave* at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

A recipient of France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the National Corporate Theatre Fund's 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

USA KOHLER



HEATHER KITCHEN

(Executive Director), now in her 13th season with A.C.T., has strengthened the organization's infrastructure and overseen the company's

expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.'s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in stage, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credits include the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, Theatre New Brunswick, New Play Centre, Vancouver, and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of The Citadel Theatre, Kitchen managed a five-theater performing arts complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, an International Children's Festival, and a Teen Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the benchmark study *Economic*

Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton. An active community member, Kitchen serves on the board of the Commonwealth Club of California, as well as the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund in New York. She is a past member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula, and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in Edmonton and served three terms on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, Canada Council of the Arts, and *Forbes* magazine's Business and the Arts Awards. The *San Francisco Business Times* has named Kitchen one of the most influential women in business in the Bay Area for the past five years.

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

JAMES HAIRE (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater as an actor and stage manager. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* and *Georgy* (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water*. Off Broadway he produced Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theater Crafts International's award for excellence in the theater in 1989, and in 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle.



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A.C.T. ALUMNI NOTEBOOK

Graduates of the A.C.T. Conservatory grace stages and screens across the country. Here's what a few of our illustrious alumni have been up to recently. (Unless otherwise indicated, year indicates date of completion of the Master of Fine Arts Program, formerly known as the Advanced Training Program.)

Annette Bening '82 appears on screen in *The Women*, written and directed by Dianne English. **W. Allen Taylor '89** stars in the one-man show *In Search of My Father...Walkin' Talkin' Bill Hawkins* at the Abrons Arts Center in New York. **Peter Ackerman '96** wrote the book for the musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, which premieres on Broadway next season. **Michael DeGood '96** and **Johnny Moreno '97** star in the independent film *Callback: The Unmaking of Bloodstain*,



JAHMELA BIGGS '08 IN *YELLOWJACKETS* AT BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE

written by DeGood, which opened in San Francisco October 17. **Elizabeth Banks '98** stars alongside Seth Rogen in *Zack and Miri Make a Porno* and portrays Laura Bush in Oliver Stone's *W.* **Adam Ludwig '02** performed in *Crave* at Atlantic Stage. **Seton Brown '07** has accepted a teaching position at Wittenburg University. **Christin Davis '07** worked on the film *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee* with Julianne Moore, due out next year. Davis and **Brian Stevens '07** are members of the sketch comedy group Honorable Mention, which recently presented *Summer Gets an Honorable Mention* in Manhattan. **Kurt Uy '07** recently played Laertes in an outdoor production of *Hamlet* for New York's Gorilla Repertory Theater Company and made an appearance on *As the World Turns*. **Jahmela Biggs '08** appeared in the world premiere of *Yellowjackets*, by Itamar Moses (Young Conservatory [YC]), at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. **Alex Morf '08** and **Raife Baker '08** appeared in *Twelfth Night* at California Shakespeare Theater. **Kevin Dedes '08** was recently cast in San Jose Repertory Theatre's *Splitting Infinity*. **Jonas Goslow YC** appeared in *Old Wicked Songs*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, at the Guthrie Theater. **Aya Cash YC** appeared in Chekhov's *Three Sisters* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival. **Alysha Umphress YC** performed in *Goodtime Charley* at The York Theatre Company. **Tro Shaw YC** will perform on Broadway in the new revival of *West Side Story*, with a pre-Broadway run at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C.



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List complete April 2008

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THE GALLERY AT A.C.T.



STANFORD AND THE A'S, BY DAVID M. GIBSON

Find yourself with some extra time before a performance or during intermission? Want more exposure to fine art, but don't make it to art galleries as often as you'd like? Now you need to 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 2008–09 season.

DAVID M. GIBSON: PASTEL PAINTINGS AND PENCIL DRAWINGS

From September 11 to November 23, the Gallery at A.C.T. presents a retrospective of a life built around drawing. For more than 30 years artist David M. Gibson has gleaned inspiration from his immediate surroundings, creating pastel paintings, monotypes, and pencil sketches of landscapes and the artist's most intimate space—his studio. "I consider my work a celebration of drawing," says Gibson, "the act, the process, the personal nature of it. And of looking carefully at what is right in front of me as a way to get at the universal." His paintings and drawings are created through a process that aims to accentuate the evidence of the work that goes into each piece. "The work is all representational, it is all drawing at its essence."

A Bay Area native, Gibson received his master of fine arts degree in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1971. Before returning to the Bay Area in 2006, he lived in Chicago, upstate New York, and Montréal, where his work continues to be on display at the Gallerie St-Ambroise. Recent paintings have been displayed at the SFMOMA Artists Gallery, and in 2007 he was awarded fellowships at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Lademoen Kunstnerverksteder in Trondheim, Norway.

Each artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For sales inquiries, please contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 or krscreativeoptns@aol.com. Visa, MasterCard, and Discover cards accepted.

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A.C.T. thanks the physicians and staff of the Centers for Sports Medicine, Saint Francis Memorial Hospital, for their care of the A.C.T. Company: Dr. James Garrick, Dr. Victor Prieto, Dr. Minx Hong, Don Kemp, P.A., and Chris Corpus.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE EVENTS ...



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

KORET PROLOGUE

A conversation with the director before the preview performance

- Tuesday, 10/28 (5:30–6 p.m.)
- Tuesday, 1/13 (5:30–6 p.m.)

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

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

- Tuesday, 11/11
- Sunday, 11/16*
- Wednesday, 11/19*
- Tuesday, 1/20
- Sunday, 1/25*
- Wednesday, 2/4*

*indicates matinee performance

OUT WITH A.C.T.

A gathering of gay and lesbian theatergoers, immediately following the 8 p.m. performance

- Wednesday, 11/5
- Wednesday, 1/21

THEATER ON THE COUCH

An exciting collaboration between A.C.T. and The San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis. After the show, the panel will discuss the psychological aspects of the play and take questions from the audience in Fred's Columbia Room.

- Friday, 11/7
- Friday, 1/16

KORET VISITING ARTISTS SERIES

A Conversation with John Guare

Immediately following the 1 p.m. performance
Moderated by A.C.T. Artistic Director
Carey Perloff

- Saturday, 12/13, 10 a.m.

■ THE QUALITY OF LIFE ■ RICH AND FAMOUS

All events take place in the American Conservatory Theater, unless otherwise indicated.

A.C.T. Donor Events

PROP AND SCENE SHOP TOUR

Take a tour of the prop and scene shop, where A.C.T. productions are built from the ground up.

Thursday, 11/6, 5:30 p.m.



MEET THE CAST

Following the performance, enjoy a conversation with the cast of *The Quality of Life*.
Thursday, 11/13, after the 8 p.m. performance



To support A.C.T. and receive invitations to Annual Fund, Directors Circle, and Producers Circle events, please contact Liv Nilssen at lnilssen@act-sf.org or 415.439.2450.

SATURDAY SALON

Lunch with a member of the artistic team before the matinee performance of

The Quality of Life

Saturday, 11/8, 12 noon



PRODUCERS CIRCLE DINNER

Dine onstage with a special performance by Bonfire Madigan Shive.
Monday, 11/24, 6:30 p.m.



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

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 415.749.2ACT OR VISIT WWW.ACT-SF.ORG.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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

TICKET SERVICES INFORMATION

A.C.T. Ticket Services

Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, one block west of Union Square. Hours are 12–8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12–6 p.m. Sunday and Monday. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12–6 p.m. daily. Call 415.749.2ACT and use American Express, Visa, or MasterCard. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our website at www.act-sf.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy ticket exchange privileges and lost-ticket insurance. Packages are available by calling 415.749.2250. Half-price student and educator packages are also available. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person.

Discounts

Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the A.C.T. Ticket Services office two hours before curtain. **Matinee senior rush tickets** are available at noon on the day of the performance for \$22 for Premiere and \$17 for all other sections. All rush tickets are subject to availability, one ticket per valid ID. **Student and senior citizen subscriptions** are also available. A.C.T. offers one **Pay What You Wish** performance during the regular run of each subscription production, excluding special events.

Group Discounts

For groups of 15 or more, call Edward Budworth at 415.439.2473.

AT THE THEATER

A.C.T. is located at 415 Geary Street. The lobby opens one hour before curtain. Bar service and refreshments are available one hour before curtain. The auditorium opens 30 minutes before curtain.

A.C.T. Merchandise

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

Refreshments

Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available one hour before the performance in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level and the Sky Bar on the third level. There is also a minibar in the main lobby. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. Bar drinks are now permitted in the auditorium.

Cell Phones!

If you carry a pager, beeper, cellular phone, or watch with alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater. Text messaging during the performance is very disruptive and not allowed.

Perfumes

The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented after-shave lotions, even in small amounts, can cause severe physical reactions in some individuals. As a courtesy to fellow patrons, please avoid the use of these products when you attend the theater.

Emergency Telephone

Leave your seat location with those who may need to reach you and have them call 415.439.2396 in an emergency.

Latecomers

A.C.T. performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated before the first intermission *only* if there is an appropriate interval.

Listening Systems

Headsets designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium are available free of charge in the lobby before performance. Please turn off your hearing aid when using an A.C.T. headset, as it will react to the sound system and make a disruptive noise.

Photographs and recordings of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

Rest rooms are located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

 **Wheelchair seating** is available on all levels of the theater. Please call 415.749.2ACT in advance to notify the house staff of any special needs.

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** is now available on site.

AFFILIATIONS

A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.



A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

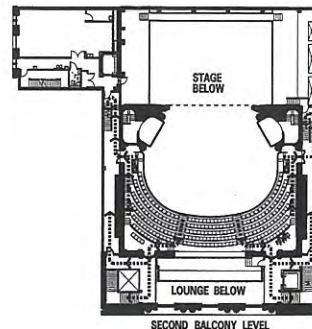
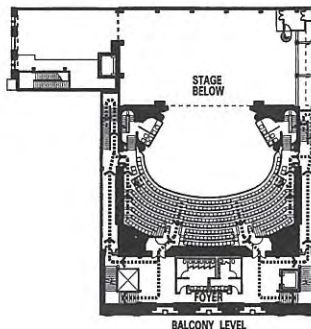
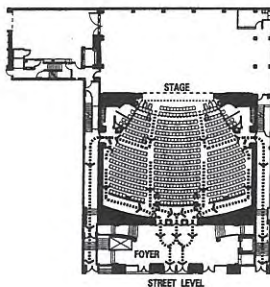


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