RICH AND FAMOUS

by JOHN GUARE
Directed by JOHN RANDO

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american conservatory theater

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American Conservatory Theatre
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 Theatre 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 Theatre (now the American Conservatory Theatre) 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 Zears Forum, 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 5,000 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 Elisabeth Burch are among the conservatory’s distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.

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American Conservatory Theatre was founded in 1965 by William Ball.
Edward Hastings
Artistic Director 1986-92

A.C.T. Box Office
415.749.4ACT

A.C.T. Website
www.a ct.org

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January/February 2009
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American Conservatory Theater

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Rich and Famous
Dear Friends,

It’s a kind of wonderful irony that at this moment of fiscal anxiety across the country, we are starting the new year at A.C.T. with a play called Rich and Famous. But perhaps it is also wonderfully apt. Is it not our insatiable desire to become rich (if not famous) at all costs that got us into this mess to begin with? Master playwright John Guare has long been interested in America’s fascination with celebrity and with our eternal longing to find meaning in our ever-changing, rapidly evolving American culture. Because we are a country founded upon notions of manifest destiny, we hunger to live up to our own self-created myths of progress and vision, and when we fail, we fail hard. Rich and Famous, a play from 1994 that Guare has rewritten and reimagined for this A.C.T. revival, is about a playwright, Bing Ringling, whose 844th play is finally getting produced. In one phantasmagoric night, we watch the elation and despair of that most cruel of events, the theatrical opening night, as Bing shoots for the stars, wearing cufflinks labeled R and F for, yes, “RICH” and “FAMOUS.” Why do we do so ardently for our 15 minutes of fame? Do we honestly believe we’ll be happier if we achieve it? Is there nothing deeper/broader/more satisfying to which to aspire?

Guare has been asking these questions since he first arrived on the theatrical scene in New York nearly 40 years ago. He is the quintessential theatre animal, a writer who revels in the insane possibilities of live theater, and whose work is filled with fantasy, magic, gorgeous language, improbable bursts of song, and strangely inspired coincidences. For Guare, a play is like a bottle with a genie inside: unpack it and surprising things emerge. In Rich and Famous, Bing Ringling hopes that what will emerge from his uncoiled play is the dancing spirit of a lost culture, or, as his lead character articulates: “If I could’ve been born anybody—my pick of a Kennedy or a Frank Sinatra or a Henry Ford or the King of Greece—out of that whole list of births, I still would’ve picked to be an Etruscan.” He conjures a marvelous image of a universe of dancing people, wildly passionate pagans, trapped inside ancient urns: “Maybe what we see being held prisoner in museums is not line drawings of Etruscans, but the Etruscans themselves, dancing right inside the pots.”

Like Tom Stoppard in Rock ‘n’ Roll, Guare is seeking the hidden spirit of aarchy and creativity that drives a culture forward; even after 40 years in the theater, he seems convinced that if this spirit could be released on a more regular basis, our culture would be more fertile, more alive, more productive.

Ultimately, what matters more than fame or money is life itself, a life fully lived, in all its contradictions and sorrow and longing. “Before I was born / Angels flitted down / and promised me / I’ll be / Rich and Famous” goes one song in the play. “Where are those angels? … What do they think they’re up to? I’m looking. I’m searching. I’m marching.”

At this perilous economic moment in our history, we are all looking and searching and marching. We are asking ourselves what it means to be American in this complicated new world; we are trying to take responsibility for what has gone so deeply wrong with our economy; we are thrilled with the prospect of change and frightened by the sacrifices that change is bound to require. It is up to those of us who make theater, and to everyone who cares about it, to ask big questions: How do we contribute to the national dialogue? How can we offer hope and pleasure in difficult times? How are we needed by our communities, and how can artists help lead? It is a moment when, rather than shrinking, we should be expanding, extending our reach, proclaiming our ambitions. That is a difficult task to do when resources are scarce and fear is in the air. But maybe if we attempted to let the Etruscans out of their pots, we would be able to dance again, in new and surprising ways.

Many thanks for joining us.

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director

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Many thanks for joining us.

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
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producers
Gene and Abby Schmier

associate producers
Gayle and Steve Brogden, Dr. and Mrs. Ronald E. Cape,
Kenneth Jaffe and Karen White, Joseph and Lisa Skokan

Rich and Famous by John Guare, is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc. in New York.
The producers wish to thank the Tiff Costume Collection for its assistance in this production.
Special thanks to Clare Devroe.

Rich and Famous presents

RICH AND FAMOUS

By John Guare

Directed by John Rando

Scenery by
Scott Bradley
Costumes by
Gregory Gale
Lighting by
Alexander V. Nichols
Sound by
Jeremy J. Lee
Musical Director
Laura Burton
Dramaturg
Michael Puller
Gardening by
Meryl Lind Shaw
New York Casting Consultant
Laura Stanecyj
Assistant Director
Ryan Purcell

Sung by John Guare; Music for "Three Sisters" by Michael Friedman

THE CAST

Bing Ronging
Bing Ronging
Leanara, Veronica Gulpp-Vestige, Allison, Moss
Aphro, Haru Krishna
Stage Manager, Anatol Torah, Dad, Tybalt Dunleavy

Brooks Ashmanakas
Mary Birdsong
Gregory Wallace
Stephen DeRosa

Performance Pianist Laura Burton

UNDERSTUDIES
Bing Ronging, Stage Manager, Anatol Torah, Dad, Tybalt Dunleavy—Stephen Barker Turner
Leanara, Veronica Gulpp-Vestige, Allison, Moss—Jody Geiss, Aphro, Haru Krishna—David A. Moss

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Elisa Guthertz, Stage Manager
Heath Belden, Assistant Stage Manager
Melissa Margolin, Stage Management Intern

TIME AND PLACE
New York City, the 1970s

Rich and Famous will be performed without an intermission.

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Gene and Abby Schmier

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produced by San Francisco Playhouse

on stage at the ACT Strand Theater

Starring Tracie Thoms and Michael Urie

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BECOMING RICH AND FAMOUS

BY JOHN GUARE

When you’re young, life is this joyous deck of cards flung up into a high wind. All random. Who will I love? Where will I end up? What’s my story? That’s the magic.

In 1965, I was 27 years old with a master’s from Yale that told me I was a playwright. I knew everything about plays. I just didn’t have anything to write about. How could I? I had been in school for 19 years. I had served six months in the Air Force Reserve. I had never lived life. I had no fingerprints.

In 1965, determined to correct that, I flung my deck of cards in the air and went to Europe to find the subject I knew was waiting for me. I armed myself with the thumb of chance and started hitchhiking. I wanted to be the kind of guy who’d have “care of American Express, Cairo, Egypt” for an address. That’s what I gave my family and friends. Was there even an American Express in Cairo?

The day I went to Rome was the day the pope spoke at Yankee Stadium to bring peace to the world. All the papers featured shots of the pope in places I had fled, like Queens Boulevard. I wandered around Rome. No future here. I got caught in a rainstorm and found refuge in a museum dedicated to Etruscans. I spent hours in that weird place looking at pots of a vanished tribe that appeared to have danced themselves into oblivion. I liked that. I wrote a riff about them. The rain cleared. I stuck out my thumbs.

Six weeks later, I was in Cairo in a bar. The paper placemat has questions in English. “Name the largest city in Africa.” I think, "Johannesburg? Nairobi?" I turn the placemat over. Cairo is the answer? I am in Africa?

There was an American Express in Cairo. I found an annoyed and passionate letter from my parents boasting that, while I was off seeing the world, the world came to them. The pope whizzed by them this close on his way to Yankee Stadium. They poured out their hearts about what that day promised them and the ramifications of what I had missed. I saw a side of them I had never seen. Formerly solemn memories popped. Had I come all this way to find my subject? I started writing, The House of Blue Leaves, that day in Cairo.

By August 1966, I was back in America. We did a reading of the first act of Blue Leaves at the newly founded Eugene O’Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut. It went over terrifically. People in the audience gave me a grant to become a fellow at Yale along with four other young playwrights such as Sam Shepard and Barbara Garson, who had written a scandalous play called MacBird about LBJ plotting to kill JFK. We were given $5,000, the use of a camera. We would spend the year learning how to make movies.

Finger that. I would use the time to write the second act of Blue Leaves. Two friends, Warren Lycan and Betty Ann Beech, optioned it to produce in New York. While I knew what the events had to be, I didn’t have the technical skill to handle nine people onstage. I promised them I would deliver.

Yale that year was miraculous. Robert Brustein had shaken up the midtown drama school by bringing in the great poet Robert Lowell, whose new play would be directed by Jonathan Miller and star Irene Worth. Linda Lavin appeared in an open by William Bolcom and Arnold Weinstein called Dynamite Tonight. A young actor named Ron Leibman was in a dazzling production of Pinter.

I looked at Yale seniors about to graduate knowing that they would be drafted and sent off to this bloody Asian quagmire that the pope had not managed to prevent. I wrote a play about a Yale man and how Vietnam would change his path.

I couldn’t figure out how to begin it. I went to my parents’ apartment to dump my winter clothes. In some unopened suitcase, I found that notebook from my hitchhiking trip containing a speech about Etruscans. It ended at the exact same place where my new play began. I learned that was what a writer’s life was—living a life where you’d be ready to catch it when it came. But the unconscious wouldn’t reveal itself if you sat around waiting for it. This new play would be called. Mazoaka. We did it in July 1967, at the O’Neill. People from the newly opened Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles saw it and produced it there to ravishing reviews.

Warren and Betty Ann wanted to know the state of act two of Blue Leaves. “It’s coming.”

Back in New York, the Mark Taper Forum forwarded me a Western Union telegram from Jerome Robbins, the choreographer and director of West Side Story, saying he had read Mazoaka. It’s was even in New York he would love to meet with me. He included his number. I picked up the phone and dialed. Mr. Robbins answered. I blurted out, “I live in New York!”

We met that day in February 1968 at Peter MacMullan’s bar on West 19th Street. Jerry had started a workshop called the American Lyric Theater Workshop. He and a chosen group of actors were developing exercises for a new form of theater. Jerry wanted a playwright to weave these exercises into a dramatic piece. Would I? I was 30 and working with Jerry Robbins.

The work Jerry was creating was fascinating, but I had no idea how to make a play out of this material. Jerry then gave me a concoct-play by Brecht called The Exception and the Rule. Could I find a way to turn it into a musical?

Brecht’s play dealt with a capitalist merchant crossing a desert with a cooie, whom he used. His defense at the trial is he treated the cooie so horribly that he had every reason to think that the cooie would kill him in revenge so he killed him first. Justifiable homicide was the verdict. The merchant was free. Jerry thought of Zero Mostel and Richard Pryor as the merchant and cooie.

I thought that in this time of racial unrest and assassinations, a group of artists would organize a benefit to promote racial harmony. This play would be part of the celebration, like the pope coming to Yankee Stadium to bring peace to the world, only with Brecht instead of His Holiness.

I imagined the theater transformed into a TV studio for a live performance of the play. All the tensions of the play would spill over into the real lives of the actors involved in the benefit performance. It would all end in disaster.

Leonard Bernstein loved it and wanted to write the music, but only if Stephen Sondheim would do the lyrics. I went to Jerry’s house to meet Steve and convince him to work solely as a lyricist this one last time. Jerry showed me into his living room and said, “John, this is Steve.” He shut the door behind him and left me
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Waren and Betty Ann wanted to know the state of act two of Blue Leaves. It's coming.

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Brecht's play dealt with a capitalist merchant crossing a desert with a cooie, whom he orders. His defense at the trial is he treated the cooie so horribly that he had every reason to think that the cooie would kill him in revenge so he killed him first. Justifiable homicide was the verdict. The merchant was free. Jerry thought of Zero Mostel and Richard Pryor as the merchant and cooie.

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I imagined the theater transformed into a TV studio for a live performance of the play. All the tension of the play would spill over into the real lives of the actors involved in the benefit performance. It would all end in disaster.

Leonard Bernstein loved it and wanted to write the music, but only if Stephen Sondheim would do the lyrics. I went to Jerry's house to meet Steve and convince him to work solo as a lyricist this one last time. Jerry showed me into his living room and said, "John, this is Steve." He shut the door behind him and left me
to do the persuading. Steve and I looked at each other, realizing the burden Jerry left on me. We burst out laughing. He liked my idea. He’d do the lyrics.

The project quickly turned into a nightmare. Lenny could only work in the middle of the night. Jerry could only work in the morning. I’d meet with Jerry, go home, spend the day doing my rewrites, go uptown to meet with Lenny and Steve. Steve and I would then review the notes in some all-night bar. I would go home and type and be at Jerry’s at 9 a.m. I remember months of no sleep, a lot of bourbon and pizza slices. Jerry took me to his house at 36th and Locust for a weekend of work. He showed me the room where I’d be staying, locked the door behind me, and said I could come out when he approved of the pages I’d type and slip under the door. I could have jumped out of the window onto the lawn below if there was fire, but it all seemed to be part of some great story.

We auditioned material for Zoro Mostel, who approved. We had dates for production. We kept getting further away from what I had brought to the project, but Jerry was the boss. One day at an audition at the Shubert Theatre, Jerry excused himself before the next actor came on to sing. Lenny and I waited for Jerry to return. We went looking. The guy at the stage door told me Mr. Robbins had taken a car to Kennedy Airport to go to England. Lenny burst into tears. I was exhilarated in some way to be free of the nightmare this project had become. Warren and Betty Ann said, “Now will you go back to work on Blue Loaves?”

I had written a play for my Yale friends Ron Leibman and Linda Lavin. Cap Out opened in early 1971 on Broadway to devastatingly bad reviews. One paper said it wasn’t a review; it was an obituary. Six weeks later in the Fringe poll of the critics, the same critics voted me the most promising playwright of the season over a lot of other writers who had good, even great reviews. No comfort. I went to the Arctic Circle to start hitching and lick my wounds.

I had to come home and finish Blue Loaves. A producer who had seen my work at the O’Neill recommended me to Mike Forman, who was starring his American film career. Milton and I worked on the screenplay of Taking Off. I finished Blue Loaves, which opened in February 1971. Steve Sondheim sent a telegram that read, “Have a wonderful opening. Your entire future depends on it,” which made me quake with laughter and horror because it was true. The play got good reviews.

Joe Papp asked Mel Shupin, the director of Blue Loaves, to direct Two Gentlemen of Verona in the park, with music by Galt McDermott of Hair. Mel brought me on as a lyricist and collabrotrist. The musical designed to play in the park and on the streets turned into a hit and transferred to Broadway.

On December 2, 1971, the ecstatic reviews came out. Yes! This was the way life was going to be from now on! A hit play off Broadway and a smash musical on Broadway. On the morning of December 3, 1971, the Blue Loaves theater burned down, the sets and costumes vandalized. In the tenement next door to the theater, a man was found with his throat cut. Police determined it was three separate, overlapping incidents. The uninsured play never closed. We just burned up.

Joe Papp and I had a falling out. I would no longer work at the Public. I turned down offers to do more musicals and instead went to Nantucket to start a theater and do a new play inspired by my trip to the Arctic. While on Nantucket, I met Adele, the woman who was my wife, in an empty house. The person we had each come to visit had left the island and not locked his door.

Ten years had gone by.

I wrote Rich and Famous to understand where, who the hell I was. Three sacred moments I had worked with in the past frame of time named Lenny, Jerry, and Joe became Anzal Torah. I wanted to get my parents, my past, my dreams out of me and start all over again. Dreams, the past—they don’t get slucked off that neatly.

It’s only now that I can recognize this wasn’t a chaotic time with one event tumbling chaotically after another. My plays were the only constant in the past ten years. Random? Forget it. The plays were a runaway locomotive that ran on invisible railroad tracks linking all these events.

The only answer I learned and still stick to all these years later is all I could do was keep writing.

When I was a kid, I prayed to God, “Please make me a playwright.” I forgot to pray for any of the adjectives—like a happy playwright, or successful, or good. I just prayed to be a playwright. That’s been my life since 1949, when I wrote these plays at age 11 and put them on in Bobby Schollm’s garage in East Atlantic Beach, New York, on Long Island.

I still live on the same street and look at that garage across the street and feel the same excitement and need I felt then as I do now.

Thank you, Carey and A.C.T., for letting me come back and revisit this play.
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THE THRILL OF THE PLAY
An Interview with John Guare

BY DAN RUBIN

Climbing off the success of The House of Blue Leaves and Two Gentlemen of Verona, John Guare wrote Rich and Famous over the course of three days in 1974. “Having what I dreamed of having only made me question where I was headed,” he wrote in the preface to The War against the Kitchen Sink, a collection of five of his plays. He wrote Rich and Famous with two actors in mind, the husband-and-wife duo Ron Leibman and Linda Lavin. Directed by Mel Shapiro, Rich and Famous opened at Joseph Papp’s Public Theater in 1974. A highly praised 1977 production at the Trinity Square Repertory Company in Providence followed, as did a New York revival in 1980.

In preparation for A.C.T.’s 2009 production, Guare reread the text of the play for the first time in 30 years, incorporating passages and concepts from his first commercially produced play, Mapleaster (1968), and adding new songs. In an interview with A.C.T., two weeks before rehearsals began, Guare describes the experience of writing, and revisiting, a play he considers a personal landmark.

HOW DID YOU APPROACH RENWORKING THE RICH AND FAMOUS SCRIPT FOR THE A.C.T. PRODUCTION?
What had always troubled me about the play when I wrote it was I could never figure out what Bing’s play was, the play that was opening that night. A couple of years ago I was walking along the beach of Long Island, and it came to me out of the blue: since it takes place on the night of the guy’s first commercially produced play, the play that should be opening that night should be [my first commercially produced play, Mapleaster]. So all I did was adjust [Rich and Famous] so that the play we are hearing is a part of Mapleaster that is very important to me, this speech about the Etruscans, so I made that the core of this play.

BUT MUZZELA WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED. WHAT WENT INTO THE DECISION TO MAKE ONE OF YOUR SUCCESSES BING’S FLOP?
When Rich and Famous was done, people would say, “Well, is this guy a good playwright or not?” So I decided to make it [the monologue from] Muzella: I wasn’t being autobiographically true, but it was a piece of work that I really loved and was in a play that was sort of lost. I wrote it when I was stuck in the Etruscan museum in Rome. I didn’t know what it meant, but it seemed absolutely astonishing—this race of people that just vanished. Where did they go? And they’re out there waiting for us.

DIID YOU SHARE BING’S ANXIETY WHEN MUZZELA PREMIERED?
It was a nightmare. The night it opened, it was on a double bill with Sam Shepard’s Red Grass. They were both our first commercially produced plays. Sam was not there that night (he was in Europe or California or somewhere), and I could not bear the idea of opening night, which I had been waiting for so long, being so sickening. I remember, I went to Staten Island and took a trip on the ferry just to kill time, and I came back on the ferry figuring that the performance must be over. But when I got to the Provincetown Playhouse, I saw the audience outside on the street, because the play hadn’t begun yet—the lights for this little theater were so bright that they blew out the transformer, and they had to wait for the electrician to come and bring a new generator in.

THE REVIEWS OF THE ETRUSCAN CONUNDRUM, BING’S PLAY, ARE NOT FAVORABLE, AND YOU QUOTED A 1966 REVIEW FOR YOUR PLAY CO-DJU THAT CLAIMED THAT IT WASN’T A REVIEW BUT AN OBITUARY. DO YOU READ YOUR REVIEWS?
After that night, I never read them again. Good or bad.

IN YOUR ESSAY YOU WRITE THAT, WITH RICH AND FAMOUS, YOU TOOK YOUR EXPERIENCES FROM THE TEN YEARS LEADING UP TO THE PLAY AND IN A SENSE EXORCISED THEM FROM YOURSELF.
That’s what I needed to write at that time. It wasn’t a situation where I sat down and said, “I am going to will this play into existence.” It’s a landmark in my life of where I was 35 years ago.

WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE TO WRITE THAT PERIOD OF YOUR LIFE?
It’s like a dog living in an eternal present. It was wonderful to go back and see, “Oh, this is where I was 35 years ago,” and you just move back into that. It’s a very sweet feeling: it made me think of Ron Leibman and Linda Lavin, whom I love, and Mel Shapiro, and the two places where the play was first done, in Williamstown and at a wonderful theater in Lake Forest, outside Chicago, the Academy Festival Theatre. And it makes me think, “Oh well the play’s story is not over. It found its way from the Public to A.C.T.”

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE JUST NOW FINISHED A PLAY THAT YOU STARTED 30 YEARS AGO?
Yes. Paul Valery, the French poet, says a writer never finishes a work, he merely abandons it. That’s what an opening night is about you say “Okay, this is as much as I can do with the play now.” It’s the same with Toon Stoppard going back and rewriting Rock ’n’ Roll [for A.C.T.] after two successful productions.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE RENEWED INTEREST IN YOUR WORK IN SAN FRANCISCO?
It’s great. The last time I had a play done at A.C.T. was many years ago [1972], when they apparently did a perfect production of The House of Blue Leaves with Joy Carlin, a great San Francisco actress. She directed Boum and Nocturne, another play of mine, at Aurora Theatre Company last year. She made San Francisco very appealing for me. And another theater [SF Playhouse] is doing Landscape of the Body this season.

DO YOU THINK IT IS EVERY ARTIST’S DREAM TO BECOME RICH AND FAMOUS, OR IS THE PROBLEM WITH BING THAT HE IS ONLY FOCUSING ON WEALTH AND NOTREATY?
No. In a famous exchange of telegrams, Samuel Goldwyn, the movie producer, wrote George Bernard Shaw saying that he wanted to make movies of his plays and that he would ensure they were treated with the highest possible artistic standards and would oversee that Shaw’s vision was protected. Shaw telegraphed him back and said, “Your problem, Mr. Goldwyn, is that you only want to talk about art and I only want to talk about money.” Who wouldn’t like to be recognized? Who says, “I hope, as an artist, I’m really never recognized?”

DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS A PLAYwright or a PHILOSOPHER?
I don’t know. I think of myself as a writer. I think of myself as a writer who has a lot of ideas and I try to put them in plays. I think of myself as a writer who has a lot of ideas and I try to put them in plays. I think of myself as a writer who has a lot of ideas and I try to put them in plays.

HOW MUCH INVOLVEMENT DO YOU HAVE DURING THE FIRST PRODUCTION OF A PLAY?
A playwright can forgo their right of approval, but I love to sit in on set and costume design meetings. Working with the director on casting to me is the most important part of the play. That is the thrill of building a play. The minute you finish your play and it’s accepted for production, a whole new universe begins peopled by actors and designers and the theater. The process of putting on a play is exhilarating and life giving. The fact of wondering who is going to come into your life is the thing. Putting on a play is a whole other step along the way; it may all go wrong or it may all go right. The production of the play is part of the completion of the writing of the play.

HAS THAT EXHILARATION ALWAYS BEEN THERE, EVER SINCE YOU WROTE YOUR FIRST PLAY AT AGE 17?
Absolutely.

HAS IT EVER WANTED?
No. How could it wind? Every play has its own rules.

DO YOU LEARN SOMETHING NEW WITH EVERY PLAY?
Yes, but it’s not of use to the next play. Every time you start a new play you are starting from scratch. I think you have to keep painting yourself into corners with each play, and see how you’re going to get out of it. You take a subject that you’ve not dealt with before, events that have happened before, and say, “How am I going to tell this story?” Every story demands a new way, its own way to be told. You can’t use the last play’s tools to tell the next play’s story.

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Who's Who in Rich and Famous

BROOKS ASHMANSKAS
(Bing Ringling)
Broadway credits include The Ritz, Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me (Tony/ Drama Desk Award nominee), The Producers, Gypsy with Bernadette Peters, Little Me with Martin Short, Dream, and Bad Frump in How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying with Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker. Off-Broadway credits include Wise Guys, Labor Day, London Suite, Songs for a New World, Tonight at 8:30, It Changos Every Year, and Pit to Be Tied. Ashmanskas’s regional credits include Present Laughter with Victor Garber and She Loves Me at the Huntington Theatre Company; Bye Bye Birdie, Girl Crazy, and Side Show at the Kennedy Center, annual national Tours at Arena Stage; and the world premiere of Paper Moon at Paper Mill Playhouse; as well as productions at Hartford Stage, The Old Globe, and the Willamstown Theatre Festival (including A Pla$$ for Her Ear, directed by John Rando). He received his education from Bennington College.

STEPHEN DEROSA
(Stage Manager/Assistant Torah/Djad/) Dunsany) has appeared on Broadway in Hairspa (Wilkur) Tumblad; also first national tour, Into the Woods (The Baker), Threemight Century (Roundabout Theatre Company), Henry IV (Lincoln Center Theatre), and The Man Who Came to Dinner (Roundabout/PBS live broadcast). Off-Broadway credits include Walmatropic, The TT Girl/ing, A Plus to Her Ear, directed by John Rando). He received his education from Bennington College.

MARY BIRDSONG
(Launa/Veronica Gudge-Feige/ Allison/Mom) won a Theatre World Award in 2007 for her Broadway debut in Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me and later appeared on Broadway as Valma Von Taselle in Hairspa. Off Broadway, she appeared in Elaine May’s Adult Entertainment. Favorite theater roles include Judy Garland in Judy Speaks (which she wrote) and Portia in Julius Caeser (which Shakespeare wrote), both in New York City. Birdsong just wrapped the TV pilot Suburban Shootout for HBO and has appeared on Reno 911! (Deputy Kimball), The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, Ed, and Late Night with Conan O’Brien. This spring she can be seen in the film Adventuristan (directed by Stephen Gable). Other film credits include Made of Honor with Patrick Dempsey, Reno 911: Miami, Beer League, and the just-wrapped High School with Adrien Brody and Michael Chiklis. Her voice can be heard on many commercials, and she sings in the rock bands 99 Cents Whore and Cottonhead.

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benefiting A.C.T.’s acclaimed conservatory for actor training and arts education programs in our community

This season you can help A.C.T. educate the next generation of theater artists and audiences when you take a chance on winning the hottest new accessory for green living: the smart fortwo passion cabriolet! Improve your curb appeal—when you win the smart fortwo you also receive your own private parking space in front of A.C.T. for one year. Driving to the theater has never been so easy, so much fun, or so good for the planet—enter the A.C.T. Smart Car Raffle today!

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For more information visit www.act-sf.org/smartcar

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Raffle Details: Chances of winning are 1 in 750. The winning ticket will be drawn at A.C.T.’s season gala, Windswept the Night, Sunday, April 19, 2009. Purchasers need not be present to win.
(Tickets purchased at the gate, if available, will be sold for $100 each.) As the raffle is a chance to win, your ticket purchase is not tax deductible for charitable purposes.

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Mud
by Maria Irene Fornés

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

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Brooklyn credits include The Rita, Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me (Tony/ Drama Desk Award nominee), The Producers, Gypsy with Bernadette Peters, Little Me with Martin Short, Dream, and Bad Brump in How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying with Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker. Off-Broadway credits include Who Goes, Labor Day, London Suite, Songs for a New World, Tonight at 8:30, It Changes Every Year; and Pit to Be Tiad. Ashmankas’s regional credits include Present Laughter with Victor Garber and She Loves Me at the Huntington Theatre Company; Bye Bye Brinni, Girl Crazy, and Side Show at The Kennedy Center; musicals in the Arena Stage; and the world premiere of Paper Moon at Paper Mill Playhouse; as well as productions at Hartford Stage, The Old Globe, and the Williamsburg Theatre Festival (including A Few Good Men in For Her, directed by John Rando). He received his education from Bennington College.

STEPHEN DEROSA (Stage Manager/Intails)
Tarah/D.D./Jebby/Dundury) has appeared on Broadway in Hair/spray (Wilbur Turnblad; also first national tour), Into the Woods (The Baker), Threepenny Century (Roundabout Theatre Company), Henry IV (Lincoln Center Theatre), and The Man Who Came to Dinner (Roundabout/PBS live broadcast). Off-Broadway credits include Warring in the Trenches, The IT Girl, Newsies, Do Re Mi (Encore!), The Mystery of Irma Vep, and Love’s Fire (The Acting Company/Public Theater/Royal Shakespeare Company/Bobcino). Regional credits include productions at the Berkeley Theatre Festival, the Williamsburg Theatre Festival; the Alley Theatre; The Old Globe; the Huntington Theatre Company; Aird Theatre Company; and many others. Television credits include Law & Order, Rescue Me, Suddenly Susan, Third Watch, Totally 70s, Comic Book Live, and Ugly Betty. He can be heard on the CD Infinite Joy: The Songs of William Finn. DeRoss received his M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama.

MARY BIRDSONG
(Leonora/Yermina Gudge-Vestige/ Allison/Mom) won a Theatre World Award in 2007 for her Broadway debut in Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me and later appeared on Broadway as Velma Von Tussle in Hairspray. Off Broadway, she appeared in Elaine May’s Adult Entertainment; Favorite theater roles include Judy Garland in Judy Speaks (which she wrote) and Portia in Julius Caesar (which Shakespeare wrote), both in New York City. Birdsong just wrapped the TV pilot Suburban Shootout for HBO and has appeared on Reno 911! (Deputy Kimball), The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, Ed, and Late Night with Conan O’Brien. This spring she can be seen in the film Adventureland (directed by Superbad’s Greg Mottola). Other film credits include Made of Honor with Patrick Dempsey, Reno 911: Miami, Beast League, and the just-unwrapped High School with Adrien Brody and Michael Chiklis. Her voice can be heard on many commercials, and she sings in the rock bands 99 Cents Who and Cottonhead.

Rich and Famous 17
GREGORY WALLACE (Aphra/ Hare Krishna), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in "Theatrical Inspections, The Imaginary Invalid, Troilus and Cressida, Gem of the Ocean, The Gaucho, A Doll's House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Duchess, Night and Day, Blithe Spirit, Celebration and The Room, "Master Harold!... and the Boys, The Misses Sloane, Edward II, A Christmas Carol, Tartuffe, In Jeopardy! Holding History, and Angels in America (Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award). Other theater credits include Our Country's Good (Broadway), A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire (New York Theatre Workshop), At You Like It (Public Theater), Much Ado About Nothing (Alliance Theatre), The Scream (Guthrie Theatre), The Learned Ladies (Williamstown Theatre Festival), King Lear (Whole Theatre), The Queen and the Rebels (CENTERSTAGE), and "Rome's Strategem (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Screen credits include Peter Sellars' The Cabinet of Dr. Rumi, The Beverly Hillbillies, Dark Shadows, Crime Story, and Internal Affairs. He is a Fox Fellow and a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

DAVID A. MOSS (Understudy) most recently appeared as the lead in Orffelina and Malvolio in Twelfth Night at College of Marin, Douglas and Pistol in Henry IV, Part 1 and 2 at Marin Shakespeare Company, and in a workshop of Marcus Gardley's The Road to the West in A.C.T.'s First Look program. He will play Priam in the upcoming A.C.T. production of War Music and has a featured role in the independent film Because of You.

STEPHEN BARKER TURNER (Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T. in "A Christmas Carol", "Pic Pickle" at the Wharf, Government Inspector, The Rainmaker, Heddleudders, Love, and Luminence Dating. Other Bay Area credits include Cymbeline (Dean Goodman Choice Award), The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby (role role) and Twelfth Night at California Shakespeare Theatre. Off-Broadway credits include productions with the New York Shakespeare Festival, Classic Stage Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, MCC Theater, Primary Stages, and The Next Stage. Regionally he has performed at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Arena Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, INTIMATES, Denver Center Theatre Company, Hartford Stage Company, New York Stage & Film, the Humana Festival of New American Plays, and Yale Repertory Theatre, among others. Turner's film and television credits include The Sopranos, Sex and the City, and the Last & Order franchise, among others. Turner is a graduate of The Juilliard School, on the faculty of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre School, and a Fox Fellow.

JOHN GUARE (Playwright) has won the OBIE, Tony, Olivier (London), and New York Drama Critics Circle (three times) awards for such plays as The House of Blue Leaves, Six Degrees of Separation (for which he also wrote the screenplay), and The Translators. Among his other works are his Academy Award-nominated screenplay for Louis Malle's Atlantic City and the plays Landscape of the Body, A Few Stout Individuals, Boomer and Niger, and The Lysistrata Jones. Guare's adaptation of His Girl Friday opened to acclaim at London's National Theatre. In 2003 he won the PEN/Laura Pels Master Dramatist Award. He received the 2004 Gold Medal in Drama from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the 2005 OBIE for sustained excellence. He founded and co-edits the Lincoln Center Theater Review, is a member of the Dramatists Guild, and teaches playwriting at the Yale School of Drama. He lives in New York and Rome with his wife, Adele Chatfield-Taylor, who is president of the American Academy of Rome.

JOHN RANDO (Director) is the Tony Award- and Outer Critics Circle Award-winning director of Urinetown, The Musical (also at A.C.T. and Canadian premiere, six Drama Awards). Other Broadway credits include The Wedding Singer, A Thousand Clowns, Dance of the Vampires, and The Dinner Party. With New York City Center's Encore!, he has directed On the Town, Dames at Sea, Face the Music, On Your Toes. The casts and stage managers employed in his production are members of Unitedscenic Arts and stage managers in the United States. 

WIDLER

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Who's Who

GREGORY WALLACE (Aphra/Hare Krishna), in A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, The Government Inspector, The Imagiary Invalid, Troilus and Cressida, Gem of the Ocean, The Gaucho, A Doll's House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Dazzle, Night and Day, Blithe Spirit, Celebration and The Room, "Master Harold...and the Boys", The Missionaries, Edward II, A Christmas Carol, Tarragon, Incarnation: Holding History, and Angels in America (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award). Other theater credits include Our Country's Good (Broadway), A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire (New York Theatre Workshop), At You Like It (Public Theater), Much Ado About Nothing (Alliance Theatre), The Screws (Guthrie Theater), The Learned Ladies (Williamstown Theatre Festival), King Lear (Whale Theatre), The Queen and the Rebel (CENTERSTAGE), and The Romeo and Juliet (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Screen credits include Peter Sellars' The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The Beverly Hillbillies, Dark Shadows, Crime Story, and Internal Affairs. He is a Fox Fellow and a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

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WHO'S WHO

I Sing, The Pajama Game, De Re Mi, and Strike Up the Band. Off-Broadway credits include The Downtown Play (Tribecca Theatre Festival/Drama Dept.), Pig Farm (Roundabout Theatre Company), Bright Ideas (Manchester Class Company), Polish Joke (Manchester Theatre Club), No More Heroes (Primary Stages), The Irishman Knows (Paul Madrid Promenade Theatre), The Comedy of Errors (The Acting Company), and The Venetian Twins, When Ladies Battle, and Twelfth Night (The Pearl Theatre Company). Regional credits include productions at The Old Globe, the Mark Taper Forum, the Geffen Playhouse, the Willamantic Theatre Festival, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Cleveland Play House, and Syracuse Stage, among many others. Upcoming projects include The Faint Hearted Musical (at Broadway) and The Man Who Came to Dinner (Alley Theatre). Rando was a Drama League directing fellow and in 2004 received The Outstanding Young Texas Artist Award from the University of Texas.

LAURA BURTON (Musical Director/Performance Pianist) has served as assistant conductor/ musical director for more than 30 musicals at the Stratford Festival in Canada. Credits in the United States include composing at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, music direction for A Christmas Carol at A.C.T., and the national tour of The Mikado and H.M.S. PINAFORE, which included stops at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and City Center in New York. Arranging/conducting credits include The Misanthrope and Don Carlos for Souplepre Theatre Company and A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Elephant Man for the Canadian Stage Company in Toronto, as well as more than a dozen productions at Stratford Festival. Favorites at Stratford include Hamlet (starring Paul Gross), Romeo and Juliet, Inherit the Wind, Measure for Measure, Shakespeare's Universe, and Journey's End. Burton has been honored with four Guthrie Awards, including the Louis Applebaum Award for most promising composer, and two Sterling Awards for musical direction at The Citadel theatre in Toronto (for The Music Man and Oliver, both directed by Robin Phillips).

SCOTT BRADLEY (Scenic Designer) designed the Broadway productions of August Wilson's Seven Guitars (Drama Desk Award, Tony Award nom.), and Turner's Come and Gone (1988 Drama Desk Award nom.; also 20th anniversary production at Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Off-Broadway credits include The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci (Second Stage Theatre, Lucille Lortel Award nom.), Sarah Ruhl's Eurydice (Lucille Lortel Award, Drama Desk Award nom.), the world premiere of Rohan's Passion Play (Arena Stage, Helen Hayes Award nom.), and Dead Man's Cell Phone (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). Recent designs include The Blunt Eye (Long Wharf Theatre), Forces (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Sea of Tranquility (The Old Globe), and The Glass Menagerie (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Upcoming set designs include The Velveteen Rabbit (in collaboration with the Canadian Stage Company in Toronto, as well as more than a dozen productions at Stratford Festival. Favorites at Stratford include Hamlet (starring Paul Gross), Romeo and Juliet, Inherit the Wind, Measure for Measure, Shakespeare's Universe, and Journey's End. Burton has been honored with four Guthrie Awards, including the Louis Applebaum Award for most promising composer, and two Sterling Awards for musical direction at The Citadel theatre in Toronto (for The Music Man and Oliver, both directed by Robin Phillips).

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Previous Bay Area designs include Protest and Continental Divide at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Cabaret and Picture of Dorian Gray at San Jose. Favorite New York credits include Talk Radio (associate designer, Broadway), Tarasov (assistant designer, Broadway), and Holland, Danae Revolution (Les Freres Corneille), Poise Chie Up (LABYRINTH THEATRE COMPANY), All The Wrong Reasons (New York Theatre Workshop), and The Thieves (Soho Rep). Regionally, his work has been heard at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Syracuse Stage, Signature Theatre (D.C.), the Coconut Grove Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and others. He has been awarded the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award and Austin Critics' Table Award and nominated for the Helen Hayes Award (D.C.). Lee teaches at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

ALEXANDER V. NICOLIS (Lighting Designer)’s credits include designs for A.C.T., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, the Huntington Theatre Company, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Off-Broadway credits include Los Big Naranjos, Harwick, Sarah Jane's Bridge & Tunnel, and Taking Over. Nicholas created the production design for Carrie Fisher's current show Wishful Drinking. Dance credits include resident designer for the Pennsylvania Ballet, the Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet, light designer for the Arizona Opera, and resident designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His designs have been set on San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, The Hong Kong Ballet, the Singapore Dance Theatre, and the AOC/Dance Theatre Company. He is the associate-in-charge of the lighting installation Circle Bar M, with Eleanor Coppola, in Salzburg and the video LIFE: A Journey through Time, with Franz Lustig and Philip Glass, presented by Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland.

MICHAEL PALLER (Director/Stage Manager) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Huntington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's Small Craft Warning at the Moscow University Theatre. He is the author of Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homelessness, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and has written caustic reviews for the Washington Post, Village Voice, Newsub, and MinnPost reviews. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

MERILYN LIND SWALL ( Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for Magic Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of White Christmas and Pajama Game at the Lunt-Fontanne. She was also a consultant for A.C.T. and B.B.Waginger, an Asian-American Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, The Hong Kong Ballet, the Singapore Dance Theatre, and the AOC/Dance Theatre Company. She is the associate-in-charge of the lighting installation Circle Bar M, with Eleanor Coppola, in Salzburg and the video LIFE: A Journey through Time, with Franz Lustig and Philip Glass, presented by Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland.

ELISA GUTHERTZ (Stage Manager) most recently worked on The Quality of Life, What You Will, Carousel at the Starving Class, Speed-the-Plow, and The Rainmaker at the American Conservatory Theatre and on the A.C.T. production of Death in Venice at Zeum Theatre. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include Blackbird, The Little Fanny, A Number, Sexual Perversity in Chicago, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Will, Eric Yake's The Good Body, Lost, James, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Misfits, Long Day's Journey into Night, Tartuffe, Mary Stuart, The Rose Tattoo, and A Street Named Desire. She has directed and stage-managed the Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer, Rhinoceros, Big Love, Civil Sex, Collected Stories, and Cloud Ten at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include The Good Body at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Big Love at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and In the Next Room at the Goodman Theatre.

HEATH BELDEN (Assistant Stage Manager) has stage-managed A Street 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, most recently, with A.C.T. Belden has worked on such new plays as Sarah Ruhl's Eurydice, Ken Weintein's Spin Moves, and Charles L. Mewes's Wintertime. He received a M.F.A. degree from UC San Diego.
Who's Who

BRENNER, LAWRENCE (Law Student) has received his A.B. degree from Harvard University and an LL.B. degree from Harvard Law School. He is a partner in the law firm of Bremer, Morris & Brenner in New York City. He is a member of the American Bar Association and the New York State Bar Association. He is married to Mrs. Beverly Brenner and has two children, Andrew and Elizabeth.

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JERICHO LEE (Sound Designer) makes his A.C.T. debut with Rich and Famous. The former stage manager employs his production skills to direct the integrity, insight, and innovation we prize as our clients. For further information, please contact Nancy J. Geenberg at 52042 cornice St. Foley.com

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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 To Play She Is Where, 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 Waddell) of A Christmas Carol, the American premieres of Tom Stoppard’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Harold Pinter’s The Collector and The Room, A.C.T.-commissioned translations/adaptations of Henrik Ibsen’s The Master Builder, Anne Enright’s The Butterfly Act (adapted by David Mamet), the world premiere of Leslie Ayellow’s Singer’s Boy and major revivals of Bertolt Brecht/Keith Waterhouse’s Happy End (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), A Doll’s House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Soldiers, Thérese Desqueyroux, Old Times, The Ruiz Tovar, Antigone, Clouds, House, The Tempest, and Stoppard’s Travesties, The Real Thing, Night and Day, and Astroturf. Perloff’s work for A.C.T. also includes Marie NDiaye’s Millepetits, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein’s No for an Answer and David Lang/Mac Low’s Mass. The Difficulties of Growing a Field, and the West Coast premiere of her own play The Golfer of Rhodes (Susan Seitz Bickham Award 2012). Her prominent Dramaturgy during a ten-year stretch with 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 at Stanford University. Her one-act play The Morning After was a finalist for the Heideman Award at Acton Theatre Festival of Los Angeles. Perllof 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 Three Project, with choreographer Val Caniparoli, a major production of Pina (translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival); and a new black for the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Before joining A.C.T., Perlloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Etra Porada’s Eta, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Perlloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1998 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korcz’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, Perlloff 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 Touch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director), now in her 13th season with A.C.T., has strengthened the organization’s infrastructure and overseen the expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the addition of the A.C.T.梅花, an Asian Heritage program guidance at the University of Western Ontario during a 15-year career in stage, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. She has directed 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 Economies 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 on the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund in New York. She is a past member of San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Business Association Board of Directors, chair of the board’s Gay Men and Lesbian Women’s Auxiliary in San Francisco 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 Foster 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 (Executive Director) oversaw 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 in 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 various around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actor, she has performed in numerous 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 Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and is a Northwestern University graduate. She is a founding member of A.C.T.’s in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

JAMES HAIKE (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theatre as an actor and stage manager. He also staged and managed the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little and George Segal’s (as directed by Terrence McNally). At the national tour of Woody Allen’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Off Broadway he produced Ibsen’s Little Eyolf directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shank’s lintra and the Miss. Haine joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his wife were awarded a Performance Center's International Award for excellence in the theater in 1989. In 1992 Haine was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle.

Please join A.C.T. for these events

KORET PROLOGUE A conversation with the director before the preview performance
- Tuesday, 1/13 (3:00-4:30 p.m.)
- Thursday, 1/27 (3:00-4:30 p.m.)

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES Free post-performance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members
- Tuesday, 1/20
- Sunday, 1/25
- Wednesday, 2/4
- Tuesday, 2/24
- Sunday, 3/1
- Wednesday, 3/11

KORET KIT hides a master performance

KORET VORSPAZT ARTISTS SERIES To Be Announced
- Monday, 2/23, 5:30 p.m.

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

A.C.T. Donor Events

Save the Date! Illuminate the Night Season Gala 2009

Featured: 30th anniversary celebration for A.C.T. and world premiere of A.C.T.’s latest production, a new musical for children and adults alike, to be announced.

SAVE THE DATE! ILLUMINATE THE NIGHT SEASON GALA 2009
A benefit for A.C.T.’s division of performing arts for children and adults alike, to be announced. A.C.T. will celebrate its 30th anniversary on April 15th, 2009, with a world premiere of a new musical for children and adults alike, to be announced.

Opening Night Dinner
Dine with the director before the opening night performance of Sweeney.
Wednesday, 2/18, 5:30 p.m.

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

For more information, call 415.474.2319 or visit www.aact.org
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 To Play She or When, 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 Phillip Kan Gotanda’s After the War (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Waddell) 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 theatrical adaptations of Chekhov’s, The Misalliance, Emma, Iii, Mary Stuart, Uncle Vanya, and A Mother (based on Maxim Gorky’s Klia Zhdanova); Harley Granville-Barker’s The Rybka Imperatore (adapted by David Marzorati); and the world premiere of Leslie Acrona’s Singer’s Roy, 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, Clybourne Park, The Tempest, and Stoppard’s Travesties, The Real Thing, Night and Day, and Stradivarius. Perloff’s work for A.C.T. also includes Marie Niskanen’s Hilda, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein’s No for an Answer and David Lang/Mac Wellman’s The Difficulty of Growing a Field, and the West Coast premieres of her own play The Collected Rhodos (Sarah Smith Blackham Award winner). Her previous productions during A.C.T.’s tenure at New York’s Ensemble Studio Theatre, were 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 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 Three Project, with choreographer Val Caniparoli, a major production of Phèdre (translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival; and a new black for the Geary 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 premieres of Ezra Pound’s Zadek, The American premieres of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic revivals. 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 Korine’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 Theatrical 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 Touch 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 Lexi and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director) is now in her 15th season with A.C.T., A.C.T. has strengthened the organization’s infrastructure and overview of the expanded programming and performance of new work and the addition of the year to A.C.T.’s acknowledged 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. A.C.T. commissioned the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlotte’s Web Festival, Theatre North Brunswick, New Play Cinema, 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 Economics Impact of the Performing Arts in Edmonton. A community member, Kitchen serves on the board of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, as well as the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund in New York. She is a member of the board of Trustees of the San Francisco Ballet. In 2018, she contributed to the Selection Committee of the San Francisco Business Times’ 10 Most Influential Women in Business in the Bay Area for the past 5 years.

MELISSA SMITH (Georgetown Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training, 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 in director of the programs in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting for six years. She has worked with people of all ages in various areas 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 to tour London and Birmingham (UK) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of Continual Driveway, Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and a M.F.A. in acting from 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 staged the Broadway productions of Red and Black and Green (a musical by Caisey Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen’s Don’t Drink the Water. Off Broadway he produced Of Mice and Men (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw’s Arden’s and the Mass. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his partners were awarded Theatre Canada’s National Award for excellence in theater in 1985, and in 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle.

A.C.T. Donor Events

IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND A.C.T. EVENTS WITH A GUARANTEED SEAT, PLEASE REVIEW OUR SEATING CHARTS AT WWW.ACT-SCF.ORG.

PLEASE JOIN A.C.T. FOR THESE EVENTS

KORET PROLOGUE
A conversation with the director before the preview performance
• Tuesday, 1/13 (3:00-4:00 p.m.)
• Saturday, 1/17 (3:00-4:00 p.m.)

KORET AUDIENCE EXCHANGES
Free post-performance discussions with the actors and/or A.C.T. staff members
• Tuesday, 1/20
• Saturday, 1/24
• Monday, 1/26
• Saturday, 2/4
• Tuesday, 2/24
• Sunday, 3/1
• Wednesday, 3/11

KORET EDUCATION TOURS
Private tours of A.C.T. with our Hosts Volunteers
• Wednesday, 3/11

KORET VISITING ARTISTS SERIES
To Be Announced
• Monday, 2/23, 5 p.m.

RICH AND FAMOUS

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

SAVING THE DATE! ILLUMINATE THE NIGHT SEASON GALA 2009
A benefit for the A.C.T. ensemble for actors and directors. Judy Kaye is being honored. Details to come.

For more information, call 415.749.2ACT or visit www.ACT-SCF.ORG.

SUNDAY, 1/11
LUNCHEON WITH DREW McINTYRE, MICHAEL TEPPO Before the main performance of Thérèse at 8 p.m. $70 per person. Reservations required. Proceeds benefit A.C.T. For information, contact A.C.T. Development Office, 415.749.2410.

OPENING NIGHT DINNER

THE ROAK RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
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’s Kid’s Club items for children 12 and under and “Smart Sipping” selections that are higher in protein and lower in sodium and fat.

Additional menu choices include Westin’s Kid’s Club items for children 12 and under and “Smart Sipping” selections that are higher in protein and lower in sodium and fat.

SUNDAY, 1/11
LUNCH

DINNER

For more information, call 415.749.2ACT or visit www.ACT-SCF.ORG.
A.C.T. Conservatory Performs

At Ziehl Theater

A production of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and core acting company.

PHILISTINES
February 12-28, 2009

by Maxim Gorky
in a new version by Andrew Upton
Directed by Richard E. T. White

Set in a turn of the century Russian household, this modern spin on Maxim Gorky’s classic is a perfectly etched blend of outrageous family drama and fierce dark comedy.

A production of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and Young Conservatory.

WORLD PREMIERE

VOLEYGIRLS
March 12-28, 2009

by Rob Ackerman
Directed by W. D. Keith

Fast-paced and funny, this brand-new play about a down-and-out girls’ high school volleyball team captures the spirit and passion of everything you love about team sports.

On tour to Bay Area high schools

The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program’s “Get up, Wake up, Shakespeare tour”

MACBETH
March 16 - 20, 2009

by William Shakespeare
Directed by Giles Havergal

It’s double, double, toil and trouble this spring as our ever-popular Shakespeare tours return to Bay Area high schools with Macbeth. To find out more about these unique tours, call 415.439.2383.

A.C.T.-SF.ORG/CONSERVATORY | 415.439.2350
A.C.T. Conservatory Performs

Frankie Fleshacker, Co-Chair  *  Deedee Mckinley, Co-Chair

Producers Circle members make annual gifts of $10,000 or more to A.C.T. Their extraordinary generosity supports season productions, actor training in our conservatory, and arts education in our community. Members are invited to participate in the artisan development of A.C.T.’s seasons by attending production meetings and taking part in numerous behind-the-scenes opportunities. We are privileged to recognize these members’ generosity during the November 1, 2007—November 30, 2008, period. For information about membership, please contact Paul Knudsen at 415.439.2353 or pknudsen@act.org.

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Larry and Robert Varalos
Jack and Sue Walsworth
Geoff and Lisa Ward
Anita Yor and Steve Westly

On tour to Bay Area high schools

The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program’s “Tell Me Which Shakespeare Play” Tour

MACBETH
March 16—19, 2009

By William Shakespeare Directed by Giles Havergal

It’s double, double, toil and trouble this spring as our ever-popular Shakespeare tours return to Bay Area high schools with Macbeth. To find out more about these unique tours, call 415.439.2353.

ARTSF.ORG/CONSERVATORY  |  415.439.2350

Rich and Famous 25
An Annual Fund donor makes annual contributions of $75-$1,499 in support of A.C.T.’s operations and programs. They receive a variety of benefits in thanks for their generosity, including invitations to special events, behind-the-scenes tours of the theater, and opportunities to meet and interact with A.C.T. artists. To those who are privileged to receive these donor’s gratitude during the November 1-2017 to November 30, 2017 period. Special thanks to our list giving all those who have generously supported the Annual Fund. For information about the Annual Fund, please contact Emily at 415.554.2422 or emily@act-sf.org.
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

TICKET SERVICES INFORMATION
A.C.T. Ticket Services
Visit us at 401 Geary Street at Mason, near to the theater, one block west of Union Square. Hours are 12–2 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and 1-2 p.m. Sunday and Monday. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12–2 p.m. daily. Call 415-749-4200 or use the online American Express MasterCard. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415-749-2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours a day on our website at www.aact.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy ticket exchange privileges and last-ticket insurance. Packages of 5 tickets or calling 415-749-2800. Half-price student and educator packages are also available. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone, or in person.

Discounts
Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the A.C.T. Box Office window hours two hours before curtain. Matinee rush tickets are available at noon on the day of the performance for $22 for premiums and $17.50 for all others. All rush tickets are subject to availability, one per valid ID. Student and senior citizen subscriptions are 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 Broch at 415-749-4273.

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. offers a selection of merchandise—clothing, jewelry, DVDs, music, and other novelty items—as well as books, scripts and Ward’s Plays on an in-store basis in the main lobby, at the Ticket Services office, and online.

Refreshments
Full bar services, savory, and sweet items are available one hour before the performance in Fierce Queen’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 providing 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, a cellular phone, or an electronic organizer, please make sure that it is set to “drip” while you are in the theater. Text messaging during the performance is very disruptive and not allowed.

Perfumes
The chemist can find perfumes, cologne, and scented after-shave lotions, even in small amounts, can cause severe physical reactions in some individuals. As a courtesy to fellow patrons, please use the air ventilation devices when you attend the theater.

Emergency Telephone
Leave your seat location with those who may need to reach you and have them call 415-749-4273 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 to the audience in the auditorium are available free from the lobby before performances. Please turn off your hearing aid when using an A.C.T. headset, to avoid interfering with the sound system and making a disruptive noise.

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Rich and Famous
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