

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN

BY Alan Ayckbourn

DIRECTED BY John Rando

SPECIAL ISSUE!
See inside for A.C.T.'s
report on The Next
Generation Campaign



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ABOUT A.C.T.

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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, 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 320 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of more than seven million people; today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 230,000 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, 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, Anika Noni Rose, 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*

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KEVIN BERNE



Dear Friends,

I love virtuosity. One of my favorite things about live theater is watching a performer do something remarkable in

real time (like Olympia Dukakis telling the entire story of a woman's life and feelings just through the expressivity of her face and body in *Vigil*), or seeing a single directorial touch that explodes the emotional life of a play (like Emma Rice's film of the waves crashing against the shore and the lovers falling backwards at their first meeting in *Brief Encounter*), or listening to an exquisitely expressed piece of language that cuts to the heart of a feeling, as in Racine's *Phèdre*: "This is not sweet love coursing through my veins / But Venus tooth and claw gnawing my limbs."

Virtuosity is the first thing that came to mind when I reread Alan Ayckbourn's *The Norman Conquests* as we prepared for this production of *Round and Round the Garden*, which is the third part of that trilogy of plays. Ayckbourn is such an effortless craftsman that one could easily overlook the sheer virtuosity of this delightful cycle, which explores a perfectly balanced ensemble of six characters and their tangle of hilariously fraught relationships. It helps that the performers in our production of *Garden* have collaborated with each other often in the course of many productions over many years, so they have a rich history upon which to build. They are aided immeasurably by comic master John Rando, our director, and by the vividly imagined physical world of designer Ralph Funicello, a member of the A.C.T. artistic family who has been creating onstage worlds in our gorgeous theater since the company's earliest days in San Francisco. Ralph had the wonderful notion of creating an ivy-covered house that is as hairy and full of libido as Norman himself. This is a play about unbridled desire as it collides with bourgeois convention, and while it is certainly a product of its time, reveling in new notions of open marriage, feminism, and free expression, it contains within it absolutely universal truths about the unpredictable nature of male-female relationships and the restlessness of the human spirit.

Meanwhile, as I write this letter, our studios and offices are abuzz with activity: we are preparing to go into rehearsals with our world premiere of *The Tosca Project*, to launch the 2010

graduates of our esteemed Master of Fine Arts Program into their professional careers, and to open Craig Slaughter's visionary Rufus Wainwright musical for the Young Conservatory, *Beautiful Child*. At the same time, we are in the midst of an institution-wide strategic planning process to explore the next ten years at A.C.T., both in terms of the kinds of work we want to explore and the role we want to play in the community.

And we are thrilled to have announced our 2010-11 season, which is filled with the ambitious, eclectic, and entertaining work for which A.C.T. is acclaimed. Next season is all about visionary collaborations and storytelling: it includes our welcome to the astonishing new writer Tarrell McCraney with his *Marcus; Or the Secret of Sweet*, part of a city-wide celebration of his remarkable trilogy, *The Brother/Sister Plays*; our international collaboration with Vancouver's visionary Electric Company Theatre on their multimedia *No Exit*; our celebration of the late great Harold Pinter with his masterpiece *The Homecoming*, accompanied by a memorial to his life and work; our reunion with the divinely funny Bill Irwin, who teams up with our core acting company, our exceptional M.F.A. Program students, and the best local clowns to create *Scapin*; and our much-anticipated musical exploration of Armistead Maupin's iconic and beloved *Tales of the City*.

We couldn't be more excited about the variety, scope, and sheer pleasure of the work ahead, and look forward to sharing it with all of you.

Finally, we want to take a moment to celebrate the wildly successful conclusion of our *Next Generation Campaign*, which provides the first-ever endowment for our distinguished institution, to ensure that it will have a long and healthy life well into the future. To ALL of you who have been part of this effort, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The fact that we accomplished this hugely ambitious campaign in the worst economy in memory is a testament to the depth of passion and commitment of this community for live theater and for training future generations of theater artists and audiences. We have much in store for you, and are deeply grateful for your continued support.

Yours,

Carey Perloff,
Artistic Director

ABOVE CAREY PERLOFF TEACHING IN THE A.C.T. MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM (JOSHUA ROBERTS, CLASS OF 2011, LEFT)

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**ROUND AND
ROUND
THE GARDEN**

by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by John Rando

<i>Scenery by</i>	Ralph Funicello
<i>Costumes by</i>	Lydia Tanji
<i>Lighting by</i>	Alexander V. Nichols
<i>Sound Design by</i>	Jake Rodriguez
<i>Assistant Sound Designer</i>	JJ Bergovoy
<i>Dramaturg</i>	Michael Paller
<i>Casting by</i>	Meryl Lind Shaw
<i>Assistant Director</i>	Derek Collard

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Tom	Dan Hiatt
Annie	Delia MacDougall
Norman	Manoel Felciano
Reg, Annie's brother	Anthony Fusco
Sarah, Reg's wife	Marcia Pizzo
Ruth, Norman's wife, Annie and Reg's sister	René Augesen

UNDERSTUDIES

Norman, Reg, Tom—Nicholas Pelczar; Ruth, Sarah, Annie—Mollie Stickney

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Elisa Guthertz, *Stage Manager*
Megan Q. Sada, Claire E. Zawa, *Assistant Stage Managers*

SETTING

The Garden

Act I, Scene 1: Saturday, 5:30 p.m.	Act II, Scene 1: Sunday, 11:00 a.m.
Act I, Scene 2: Saturday, 9:00 p.m.	Act II, Scene 2: Monday, 9:00 a.m.

Round and Round the Garden will be performed with one 15-minute intermission.

This production is made possible at A.C.T. by

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Round and Round the Garden is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

THE MOLIÈRE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

BY KATIE MAY

The author of some 74 plays, Alan Ayckbourn is one of the most produced playwrights of all time (second only to Shakespeare) and the most produced playwright in his own lifetime. He also holds the record for having the most plays running simultaneously in London's West End (*The Norman Conquests*, *Absurd Person Singular*, and *Absent Friends*) and on Broadway (*The Norman Conquests* and *Absurd Person Singular*), all in the year 1975. His plays have won countless awards, including a Laurence Olivier Special Award in 2009 for lifetime contribution to the theater.

Despite his popularity, Ayckbourn's work has typically been met with a certain amount of academic snobbery. Often hailed as the "Molière of the middle classes" for his precise and almost cruelly comic depiction of a particularly ordinary slice of English life, Ayckbourn has been attacked for the narrowness of his view, by critics who favor instead his more political contemporaries (and fellow knights) Sirs David Hare, Tom Stoppard, and Harold Pinter. Director Peter Hall, who championed Ayckbourn's plays at London's National Theatre, once told him: "If you didn't write so much they'd realize you were quite good."

Ayckbourn makes no apologies, however, either for his commercial success or for his injection of comedy into even his most serious dramas. "I have an ability to make audiences laugh, so I should treasure that. I don't want to lose that," said Ayckbourn in a 2007 interview with London's *Telegraph*. "There are plenty of people who can make audiences cry. Unlike David Hare, who writes about the state of the nation and current affairs, I write about domestic affairs. I see myself more as a Jane Austen who never bothers with the Napoleonic wars going on around her."

Instead, Ayckbourn deals with the smaller, more personal wars that take place in his characters' living rooms, kitchens, and gardens. He is an expert illustrator of the quotidian experience—the quiet desperation and small, sad struggles of everyday people—which is, perhaps, why his plays continue to resonate across decades and generations of new audiences. (*The Norman Conquests* were revived in 2008 to huge success both in London and on Broadway, earning a sheaf of Tony and

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(L TO R) ROSALIND ADAMS (ANNIE), ALEX MARSHALL (SARAH), CHRISTOPHER GODWIN (NORMAN), AND JANET DALE (RUTH) IN THE WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTION OF *ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN* AT THE LIBRARY THEATRE, SCARBOROUGH, ENGLAND, IN 1973

Drama Desk awards, including for best revival of a play). Despite his unrelenting commitment to making his audiences laugh, Ayckbourn is in fact a master of contrasts—his deeply flawed characters are typically so desperately unhappy that it is a wonder his audiences don't cry more often. Perhaps it is a testament to the precision of his craft and his seemingly flawless timing that Ayckbourn is able to bring the lightness of laughter to some of the darkest situations; among his best running jokes are the continually thwarted attempts at kitchen suicide found in *Absurd Person Singular* and the painfully

awkward group of acquaintances in *Absent Friends* who just can't seem to say the right thing while comforting the bereaved Colin after his fiancée has died in a drowning accident. (When asked if she would like milk in her tea, Marge innocently replies: "Yes, but don't drown it.")

In his 2002 book, *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*, Ayckbourn writes: "Comedy is an essential part of any play. Without light how can we possibly create shadow? It's like a painter rejecting yellow. I think if I've contributed anything to the sum of modern playwriting it has been to encourage comedy and drama to exist together as they used to in the days of old." This philosophy is perhaps no better illustrated than in Ayckbourn's smash hit, and possibly seminal work (it's hard to pick from 70+ full-length plays), *The Norman Conquests*, in which an inexplicably and often confoundingly charming Norman relentlessly pursues both of his sisters-in-law, right beneath his wife's nose, in a trilogy of plays that both celebrate and poignantly satirize the sexual freedom of the early 1970s and the dark truths and disappointments that often lie beneath the surface of any marriage.

Following his appointment as permanent artistic director of The Library (now the Stephen Joseph) Theatre in Scarborough, England, in 1972, *The Norman Conquests* were Ayckbourn's 1973 commission to himself. The project came about as the result of an off-the-cuff remark to a journalist who had asked him at the end of the previous summer's season, "What are you working on next?" Ayckbourn, who admits he had no idea what he was going to be

working on next, airily replied: “Possibly a trilogy, who knows?” When the same journalist called the following March to ask how the trilogy was coming along, Ayckbourn realized he had better get to work. Two weeks later, *Table Manners*, *Living Together*, and *Round and Round the Garden*—later collectively titled *The Norman Conquests*—were born.

Because Scarborough is a vacation destination with tourists arriving and departing daily, Ayckbourn was careful to bear in mind that few people would be able to attend the theater three nights in a row. As a result he wrote three thematically related plays—each telling the same story of a weekend of hilariously attempted infidelity, but each depicting events taking place in three different parts of the house—plays that not only stand alone, but were also written “crosswise.” In other words, rather than progressing linearly to write one play after the other, Ayckbourn wrote scene one of *Round and Round the Garden* (considered the most conventionally structured play of the three, with an identifiable beginning, middle, and end), followed by scene one of the other two plays, then scene two of all three plays, and so on to the story’s conclusion. “I found myself grappling with triplet sisters all with very different personalities,” writes Ayckbourn of the trilogy. “Each play, although dealing with the same characters and events, began to develop a distinct atmosphere of its own. . . . Although very closely related thematically and in every other way, they were meant to be enjoyed as individual plays.”

Collected below (by Simon Murgatroyd, Ayckbourn’s official archivist) are some of Ayckbourn’s thoughts, expressed in interviews throughout his long and prolific career, about comedy, drama, and the creation and enduring appeal of *Round and Round the Garden* and its sister plays.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO WRITE *THE NORMAN CONQUESTS* AS THREE SEPARATE PLAYS?

I wanted to explore offstage life. That is, the life of characters immediately before they come on and just after they leave the

stage. I was also interested in experimenting with theatrical form. Whether in viewing the same weekend three times and making each play a complete evening in itself, I could also uncover fresh insights and altered perceptions of the characters each time someone sat down to re-see it. And whether seeing them in different orders would change their perception. As far as I know this had never been tried and although it owes a lot to the form, it’s not strictly multiviewpoint theater. I love pushing theater to see how far it will shove.

HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT TO WRITE *THE NORMAN CONQUESTS* CROSSWISE?

I think it all seemed fairly easy at the time. The problem was that one can never, as the writer, read the plays individually with an innocent eye. I needed several fresh pairs of eyes to read them before I was assured that they worked “downwards” as well as crosswise. It was the natural way to write those plays. I needed to cross-plot the parallel stories and it was the simplest way of keeping track. I finished two of them in one night. I doubt that I’ll ever do that again.

WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THE DINING ROOM, SITTING ROOM, AND GARDEN AS LOCATIONS FOR YOUR TRILOGY?

They were sort of logical locations. I’d just done kitchens (three of them) in *Absurd Person Singular*, so I couldn’t use them again. Living rooms and dining rooms seemed ideal locations for people to assemble or pass through, giving me a great freedom to move my characters about. A lot of *The Norman Conquests* is about getting people on and off. The garden naturally followed and gave the piece a nice contrast. Drama always has such a different feel when it’s out of doors.

BENEATH THE HUMOR OF *THE NORMAN CONQUESTS*, THERE IS A DARKER SIDE WHERE HUMAN WEAKNESSES ARE EXPOSED. WAS IT YOUR INTENTION TO WRITE THE PLAY IN THIS WAY?

I always set out, when I write a play, with some fairly serious intentions. The stronger the serious base upon which I build a play, the more I can allow my humorous side to run away a bit. I love this tension that the comic and the serious create when they run successfully side by side. It’s a matter of balance: too dark becomes unbearable; too light and you are in danger of laughing at the characters, which is really, for a writer, a terrible act of betrayal.



SET MODEL FOR *ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN* BY SCENIC DESIGNER RALPH FUNICELLO

WHEN YOU WROTE THIS TRILOGY, WERE YOU AIMING FOR COMEDY THAT CAME FROM A REALISTIC VIEW OF SOCIETY, OR A PARODY OF PEOPLE THAT WE RECOGNIZE, BUT EXAGGERATED VERSIONS OF THEM?

I was looking to write a comedy that sprang from genuine observation of the recognizable. Not being a natural “gag” writer, I always rely on character and situation to create laughter. For that to operate properly, we need first to believe in the people we’re watching.

WHAT INSPIRED THE CENTRAL CHARACTER, NORMAN, AND WAS IT TO DO WITH THE TIME, THE POST-1960S?

Norman was of his time, certainly. It amused me to conceive a character who felt it his God-given duty to please every woman he met. He sees himself as a New Man. In fact he is just an Old Man in New Man’s clothing. Well, sort of. The joke is that he goes to inordinate lengths to seduce women who, for various reasons, don’t really need that much persuading.

WAS THERE ANYONE IN PARTICULAR ON WHOM YOU BASED NORMAN’S CHARACTER?

Not really. I once said Norman was how I’d love to be; Tom was how I appeared; and Reg was what I feared I’d become. They’re all parts of me, male and female characters.

I think Norman is not uncommon. I once asked a friend of mine what the secret was of his success with women. “Simple,” he said, “I ask them.”

HOW DID AUDIENCES RESPOND TO *THE NORMAN CONQUESTS* WHEN YOU FIRST WROTE IT IN 1973, AND DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE WILL RESPOND IN A SIMILAR WAY NOW?

Heaven knows how they’ll take it now. I hope they’ll enjoy them. They were written for fun and the plays, looking back on them, all have a great innocence about them. The characters get quite het up occasionally but they’re totally devoid of malice or dark intentions. It’s a celebration of love and that’s still around, thank God. ■

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ALAN AYCKBOURN



ALAN AYCKBOURN AT THE TIME
ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN
WAS WRITTEN

Alan Ayckbourn was born in Hampstead in 1939 to a violinist father and a mother who was a writer. No doubt he inherited their creativity, but a bigger gift was his first close-up view of two people who couldn’t be happy together. By 1945 they had split up, and in 1948 his mother married her bank manager. They were utterly incompatible, and she had a complete

breakdown before Alan persuaded her to leave home. He left school at 17 with two A-levels and an exhaustive knowledge of miserable relationships perceived through the woman’s eyes, which may explain so much of his writing. Two years in regional theater as an actor and stage manager led in 1959 to the writing of his first play, *The Square Cat*, for Scarborough’s theater-in-the-round at the instigation of his then employer and subsequent mentor, Stephen Joseph. Some 73 plays later, his work has been translated into more than 35 languages, is performed on stage and television throughout the world, and has won countless awards. There have been English and French screen adaptations, the most notable being Alain Resnais’s fine film of *Private Fears in Public Places*.

Major successes include *Relatively Speaking*, *How the Other Half Loves*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *Bedroom Farce*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *The Norman Conquests*, *A Small Family Business*, *Henceforward...*, *Comic Potential*, *Things We Do for Love*, *House & Garden*, and *My Wonderful Day*. Ayckbourn is also a noted director, and it was only in 2009 that he retired as artistic director of the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, a post he held

AYCKBOURN ON COMEDY

I’ve found that the darker the drama the more you need to search for the comedy. If you don’t let the audience off the hook occasionally to laugh when you want them to, you’ll find them roaring with laughter during moments you didn’t intend. One of the endearing features of the human race is that we can’t generally keep serious for long. Be thankful for it. If we could we’d probably have become extinct long ago.

for 36 years. Indeed, he would perhaps consider his greatest achievement to be the establishment of this permanent home for the theater-in-the-round company he first worked for all those years ago, when the splendid two-auditoria complex fashioned from a former Odeon Cinema opened in 1996.

Ayckbourn’s current plans include directing a revival of *Taking Steps* at Richmond’s Orange Tree in-the-round theater, a revival of *Communicating Doors* for the Stephen Joseph Theatre, and, in the autumn of this year, the premiere of his 74th play, *Life of Riley*. In addition to the many honorary degrees and other awards he has received, he was recently inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame, received the Society of London Theatre Special Award, and this year was honored with the Critics’ Circle Award for Services to the Arts. He was knighted in 1997.

*Biography supplied by Alan Ayckbourn’s official website,
www.alanayckbourn.net.*

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RYAN MONTGOMERY



CORPORATE PARTNERS ON THE SET OF *ROCK 'N' ROLL* WITH A.C.T. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CAREY PERLOFF (LEFT)

RYAN MONTGOMERY



CORPORATE PARTNERS NETWORK ONSTAGE WITH A.C.T. DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS LESLIE BIRES (RIGHT)

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ORANGE PHOTOGRAPHY



A.C.T. ALUMNA ANNETTE BENING (LEFT) MINGLES WITH CORPORATE PARTNERS.

VALERIE O'RIORDAN



LISA STEINDLER (CENTER, SEATED), DIRECTOR OF A.C.T.'S ARTREACH PROGRAM, WITH ARCHBISHOP RIORDAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

RYAN MONTGOMERY



A.C.T. TRUSTEES GREET NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS AT AN ONSTAGE LUNCHEON.

MAKING MUSIC WITH *BEAUTIFUL CHILD*

"When I have finally found my room filled with toys
Be banging on my crib excited by noise . . .
Oh, how I'll feel like a beautiful child
Such a beautiful child again.

—"Beautiful Child," by Rufus Wainwright

JAY YAMADA



THE YOUNG CONSERVATORY COMPANY OF *I'M STILL STANDING: A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF ELTON JOHN* (2008)

In May A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory (YC) will present the world premiere of *Beautiful Child*, an original musical written by YC Director and A.C.T. Associate Artist Craig Slight and directed by A.C.T. Associate Artist Domenique Lozano, featuring and inspired by the songs of singer/songwriter **Rufus Wainwright**. The latest in a series of productions developed by and for the YC to pay tribute to the work of a modern composer, *Beautiful Child* follows the journey of six teens trying to reclaim the innocence of their childhoods—childhoods uncompromised by adult manipulation or sullied by the corruption of the adult world.

In creating these unconventional theatrical works, says Slight, "I'm constantly listening to music, looking particularly for composers who have a body of work that tells a story. Rufus Wainwright has always fascinated me. He's an incredibly intelligent modern-day song writer, who is difficult to categorize. He's very much a crossover, appealing to older as well as younger people. He is enigmatic, and his music is eclectic. I was interested in looking at what happens to young people when they're the product of corrupt parents. In considering the life journey of young people, I feel one must consider the difficulty of finding your place in the world, which is frequently at the heart of Wainwright's lyrics."

Past original YC musicals—all created by Slight—have featured the music of Simon and Garfunkel (*Dangling Conversations*, 2002), Bob Dylan (*Forever Young*, 2003; toured to

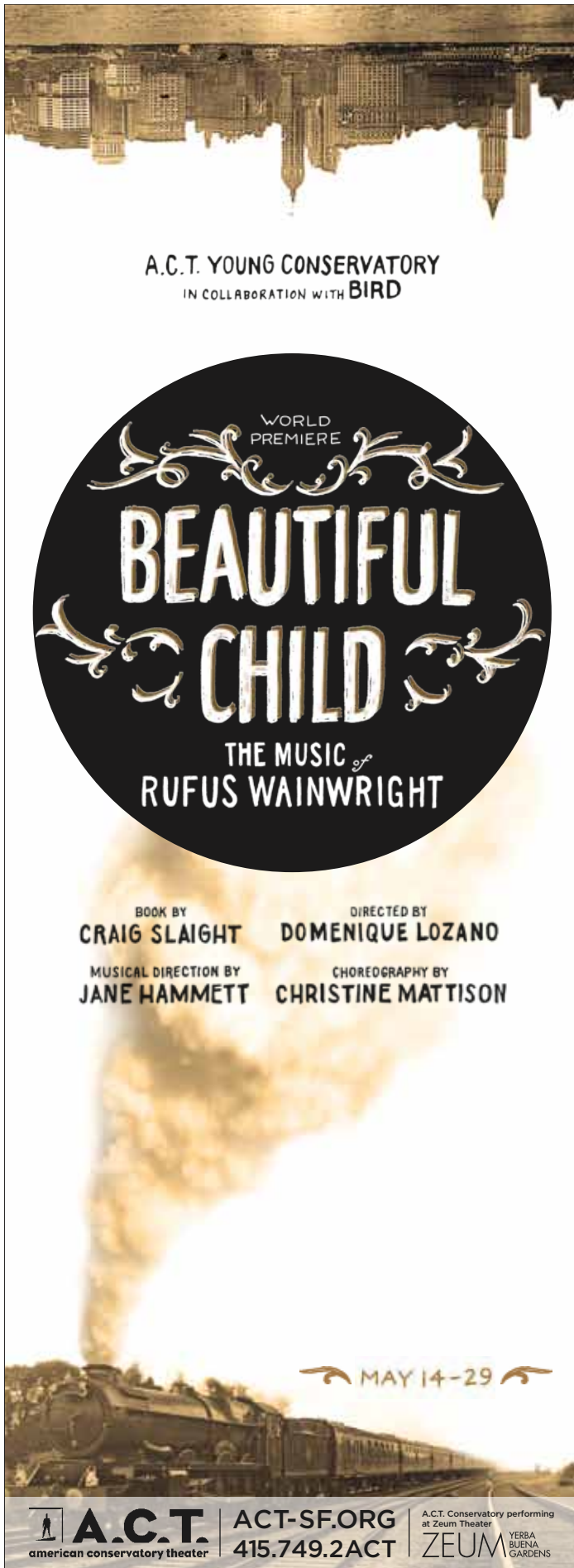
the National Theater in London), Joni Mitchell (*Ladies of the Canyon*, 2004), James Taylor (*Shed a Little Light*, 2005), Sting (*Fields of Gold*, 2007), and Elton John (*I'm Still Standing*, 2008). Each composer has been supportive of Slight's goal of enabling young artists to discover the dramatic possibilities inherent in his or her body of music.

In keeping with the YC's mission to develop new work that views the world through the eyes of young people, Slight eschews traditional musical convention in favor of creating original pieces that explore a composer's songs within a unifying narrative structure written specifically for teens. The productions began as "sort of staged music videos," according to Slight, "but then with our Bob Dylan piece, I

experimented with using two different forms of text, current news clippings and the poetry of R. D. Lang, and it was wonderful. Eventually I felt the need for more of a story. So in 2006 I wrote a book that incorporated 20 songs by Lennon and McCartney called *Across the Universe*."

Across the Universe also marked the beginning of a continuing collaboration between A.C.T. and San Francisco's **Bird School of Music**, which provides training to young musicians in the Bay Area. This fruitful partnership has resulted in three more musicals featuring Bird musicians as the band supporting YC actor/singers, and has continued to distinguish the YC as an innovator in the training of the next generation of theater artists. "Most high schools put on a musical every year," says Slight. "They're usually doing Broadway blockbusters, a fine place for that, you can have many young people involved. But I was more interested in finding ways in an acting school to deepen the acting work, while strengthening the music technique, for singer/actors. So creating music/theater performance pieces seemed a better fit," says Slight.

"I've always felt that, as the flagship theater of Northern California and a major regional voice in the country, we should be not just consuming but also contributing to the body of work, while providing a variety of experience to our performers and our audiences."



SHOWCASING OUR TALENT

This spring, after completing three years of intensive actor training at A.C.T., the graduating Master of Fine Arts Program **class of 2010** will embark upon careers as professional actors. The culmination of their studies is a showcase production presented annually to professional theater and film directors, agents, and casting directors in the frighteningly competitive entertainment centers of San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles. The showcase provides A.C.T. students with an invaluable opportunity to exhibit their talents to industry professionals and discuss potential career opportunities.

Each of the students has been guided throughout their final year by A.C.T. Associate Artist **Gregory Wallace** in choosing and perfecting for performance three two-and-a-half minute scenes. "What's interesting about this group of actors," Wallace reports, "is that they are emotionally generous *and* intricate *and* complicated *and* talented *and* versatile, so they can reveal many layers in themselves." The challenge is getting all that great stuff across to discriminating professional observers in the brief amount of time each actor has onstage. "Showcase is basically a taste," explains Wallace. "A really good taste so the audience will want the rest of the gourmet meal these actors have to offer." On the tasting menu this year are scenes by playwrights Theresa Rebeck, James McClure, and Sharman Macdonald.

"All year we've been bringing in scene after scene," student **Nick Childress** recalls. "You come in with 20 options, and you try each of them on, and the object is to find out which ones fit you best and really show them who you are." Even with the pressure of industry professionals in the audience, student **Caroline Hewitt** stresses that, as with any performance, "the really important thing is that, after the show, I can lay my head on my pillow and go to sleep at night knowing I've done good work."

These young artists have also grown in their business acumen, as they themselves have had to raise much of the \$30,000 required for travel and venue rentals by staging fundraising events and soliciting donations. The A.C.T. community has united around the soon-to-be-graduates: first- and second-year M.F.A. Program students helped third-year students put up a production of Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman*, and visiting artist Geraint Wyn Davies performed a special presentation of the one-man show *Do Not Go Gentle* to benefit the showcase fund, while people from all over A.C.T. have dug deep to make individual contributions.

Wallace muses: "My hopes for showcase are that it is lots of fun, and surprising, and that the casting directors and agents leave the performance wanting to know each and every one of these actors better. I actually think it's going to be pretty easy to do that. For the students, this event is an incredible chance that most aspiring actors in the big city just don't get—it's like seven years of pounding the pavement in an afternoon."

www.act-sf.org/showcase

A.C.T.'S M.F.A. 8 PRODUCE THEIR OWN *LIE OF THE MIND*

"A sudden, brutal act of domestic violence throws two families into crisis. What follows ruptures all notions of memory, love, and home in the American landscape. A.C.T.'s **M.F.A. 8** explore the poetic complexities of **Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*** in their first public performance."

So reads the latest draft of a press release written by the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program's first-year class of the **M.F.A. 8** as they prepare for their upcoming production of Shepard's sardonic twist on the American western, which opens April 28, 2010, in Hastings Studio Theater. Last fall, A.C.T. ushered in a new era of actor training that incorporates a more comprehensive education in theater making. In addition to their curriculum of acting, vocal work, physical theater, etc., students now take seminars with A.C.T.'s administrative and production departmental leaders with the goal of understanding all the elements that go into producing live theater.

This new approach to training is made possible by a generous innovation grant from **The James Irvine Foundation**. Conservatory Project Coordinator Rebecca Nestle explains, "The Irvine Foundation is particularly interested in innovation as it relates to audience engagement in the arts as a whole. So our proposal was to train this first-year class—as well as the classes that will follow—to produce their own work and take it out into the community to look for those audiences in their 20s and 30s who are not going to theater and try to engage them with performances by their peers."

With this mandate, the class of 2012 has been working closely with our marketing department to learn how best to promote *A Lie of the Mind*, their first public production as a class. "This is a great way for the students to become a more integral part of the larger A.C.T. community," says Public Relations Manager Evren Odcikin, "and I'm excited to see what we can learn from them about new ways to market to their age group, while they learn from us real administrative skills that will make them more complete theater makers."

Student **Alexander Crowther** enjoys the challenges presented by Odcikin and his colleagues: "They've brought many tough questions forward: 'Why is this a story that can only be told onstage?' 'Who will come to see this show?'" Student **Ben Kahre** agrees that confronting these tough questions is beneficial: "By asking us to help market our own shows, A.C.T. is putting more responsibility into our hands and helping us grow as potential leaders. The landscape of American theater is demanding, and the more tools we have to succeed in a constantly changing environment the more opportunities present themselves."

Like all M.F.A. Program productions, *A Lie of the Mind* serves a pedagogical purpose. As a modern American play, it represents an important style of playwriting for the students to master before starting their careers. *Lie* also "sits well at the end of their first year," says Conservatory Director Melissa Smith. "Shepard's work



TIMOTHY FAUST

JESSICA KITCHENS AND MATT BRADLEY IN REHEARSAL FOR *A LIE OF THE MIND*

is thought of as 'hyper-real' or 'super-real.' The students can take all the work they've done so far on truth and size and apply it on a more expansive scale." Outside of the classroom, *Lie* is also an ideal play for the public performance debut of the **M.F.A. 8**. "We're starting with *Lie* because it is accessible," observes Nestle. "It's a quirky play that should engage people's imagination, and if the idea is to get new people interested in theater, this play is wacky enough to do that."

"*Lie* is a fantastic first production for our class because it is truly a challenging, ensemble-based piece with rich imagery and language," adds student **Christina Lorenn Elmore**.

While *A Lie of the Mind* is the first of many public projects the class of 2012 will produce while at A.C.T., the M.F.A. Program's mission focuses on who these artists will be after they graduate. "We are interested in empowering the students," explains Nestle. "We want them to graduate and feel control over their careers instead of feeling like they have to wait by the phone."

Student **Jason Frank** agrees: "Getting our hands dirty and learning what it means to create and mount our own work is just another step towards becoming a consummate theater professional. That, I believe, is something that will truly set us apart from other actors—the facility not only to act on a professional stage, but also to create meaningful work for ourselves."

Performances are in Hastings Studio Theater, 77 Geary Street: Wednesdays, April 28 & May 5, at 3 p.m.; Thursdays, April 29 & May 6, at 7 p.m.; Fridays, April 30 & May 7, at 3 p.m.; and Saturdays, May 1 & May 8, at 7 p.m. www.act-sf.org/Lie

Round and Round the Garden program continues on page 17, after *The Next Generation* Campaign report.

MEET COURTNEY THOMAS A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM CLASS OF 2012

In each program of the A.C.T. mainstage season, we are pleased to introduce to you one of A.C.T.'s remarkable first-year M.F.A. 8 students. In this issue, meet **Courtney Thomas**.

NICKNAMES Court, CoCo, Snacks.

BIRTHPLACE Redwood City, CA.

HOMETOWN Daly City, CA.

FIRST THEATER EXPERIENCE Performing *Mufara and His Beautiful Daughters* with the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Youth Academy. It is an African adaptation of *Cinderella*, and I played the equivalent of Cinderella's wicked step-sister.



FAVORITE THEATER EXPERIENCE: Seeing *Hairspray* on Broadway!

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE, I WOULD WANT TO PLAY Oya in *In the Red and Brown Water*, by Tarell Alvin McCraney, and Elphaba in *Wicked*.

MY STORY When I was 16, my mom saw me watching *Chicago* and asked if I would be interested in doing something like that. I answered, "Yea, I guess." The next week, I was enrolled at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Youth Academy, and I haven't looked back since.

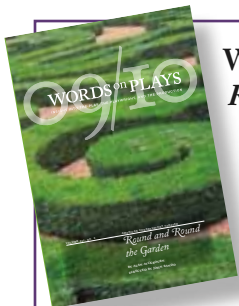
RANDOM FACT I was a huge tomboy when I was little: football, climbing trees, three broken arms . . . you name it, I was there.

EDUCATION St. Ignatius College Preparatory and a B.F.A. from Howard University.

SPECIAL SKILLS Revamping a business résumé.

HOBBIES Watching a good movie and researching.

RECOMMENDATIONS *Inglourious Basterds*, by Quentin Tarantino.



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT *Round and Round the Garden*?

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, artist interviews, and additional information about the cultural context of the play.

Individual issues of *Words on Plays* for each production are available in the theater lobby and online at act-sf.org. For more information, call 415.749.2250.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN A.C.T. CORPORATE PARTNER



KENNETH MCNEELY WITH A.C.T. ALUMNA ANIKA NONI ROSE

A.C.T.'s generous corporate partners make exceptional investments to support our acclaimed arts education programs in schools and the actor-training programs in our top-ranked conservatory—support that truly makes a difference in the lives of thousands of young people

throughout our community and in our conservatory programs. Few companies exemplify this commitment as profoundly as AT&T, the highest-ranking of Bay Area firms in corporate giving and esteemed by A.C.T. as presenting sponsor of the holiday family classic *A Christmas Carol* and A.C.T.'s 2010 season gala, the *Crystal Ball*, which benefits the conservatory. Under the leadership of Kenneth McNeely, president of AT&T California, AT&T has partnered with A.C.T. to ensure that dynamic and transformational family productions and student programming remain alive and vital, energizing the cultural life of our community. McNeely explains why A.C.T. continues to be a part of AT&T's giving priorities:

At AT&T, we're committed to making a real difference in the communities where we live and work, especially by supporting innovative programs that inspire young people and enrich our community as a whole. We're a company dedicated to connecting people with their world. Connecting people is something that the performing arts do, as well—they bring people together, from all cultures and all walks of life, and can give us a window into history, stir emotions, and be a source of education—our primary area of giving. That's why we're so proud to support A.C.T., the production of *A Christmas Carol*, and the *Crystal Ball*, which benefits the students and actor-training programs of the conservatory. On behalf of AT&T and our 12,000 employees in the Bay Area, I salute A.C.T. and its outstanding performance, education, and outreach programs that connect people to the arts every day.

For information about becoming a corporate partner of A.C.T., please contact Director of Corporate and Community Partnerships Leslie Bires at 415.439.2477 or lbires@act-sf.org.

THE *ACT* of STORYTELLING

ANNOUNCING THE 2010–11 SEASON



Bill Irwin (photo by Ken Friedman)

SCAPIN

by
MOLIÈRE
Adapted by
BILL IRWIN
and
MARK O'DONNELL

Master clown and Tony Award winner Bill Irwin returns to A.C.T. with his 21st-century take on Molière's 17th-century farce.

WEST COAST PREMIERE

MARCUS

OR THE SECRET OF SWEET
THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS: PART III

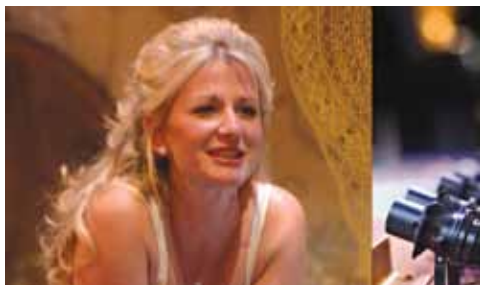
by
TARELL ALVIN
MCCRANEY

Directed by
MARK RUCKER

One of the great new works of the decade, *Marcus* concludes the Bay Area-wide three-theater presentation of McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays*.



Tarell Alvin McCraney (photo by Deana Lawson)



René Augesen (photo by Kevin Berne)

THE HOMECOMING

by
HAROLD PINTER

Directed by
CAREY PERLOFF

A.C.T. honors the Nobel Prize-winning playwright with a major revival of this provocative and sexually charged masterpiece.

U.S. PREMIERE

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PRESENTS
THE VIRTUAL STAGE & ELECTRIC COMPANY THEATRE'S
PRODUCTION OF

NO EXIT

by
JEAN-PAUL
SARTRE

Adapted from
the French by
PAUL BOWLES

Conceived and
directed by
KIM COLLIER

This acclaimed live cinematic event puts Sartre's classic in extreme closeup as cameras throughout the theater capture the onstage experiences of three strangers and the mysterious valet who brought them together.



Jonathon Young and Lucia Frangione in *No Exit* (photo by Michael Berz)

WORLD PREMIERE



Armistead Maupin (photo by Christopher Turner)

TALES OF THE CITY

A NEW MUSICAL

Based on ARMISTEAD MAUPIN'S
TALES OF THE CITY and MORE TALES OF THE CITY

Libretto by JEFF WHITTY

Music and lyrics by JAKE SHEARS and JOHN GARDEN

Directed by JASON MOORE

The Tony Award-winning creators of *Avenue Q* and the musical minds behind the Grammy-nominated band Scissor Sisters bring theatrical life to Armistead Maupin's iconic novels about life, love, and sex in our city.

PLUS
ONE MORE PLAY
TO BE ANNOUNCED!



SUBSCRIBERS RECEIVE UP TO 50% OFF REGULAR TICKET PRICES
Plus, enjoy priority seating, free ticket exchanges, and more.

For more information, visit
ACT-SF.ORG/SEASON













PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE VERY SPECIAL EVENTS

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

April

- 4/28–5/8** A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2012 presents
A Lie of the Mind
Hastings Studio Theater (77 Geary St., 6th Floor)

May

- 4** ***Round and Round the Garden Prologue*** 
Featuring director John Rando. 5:30 p.m.
- 5–8** A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2011 presents
Once in a Lifetime
Zeum Theater
- 5** ***Round and Round the Garden Opening Night Dinner***  
Featuring director John Rando.
Garret. 5:30 p.m.
- 7** ***Round and Round the Garden Theater on the Couch*** 
After the 8 p.m. performance
- 11** ***Round and Round the Garden Audience Exchange*** 
After the 7 p.m. performance
- 12** ***Round and Round the Garden OUT with A.C.T.*** 
After the 8 p.m. performance
- 13** **Prop and Scene Shop Tour** 
Featuring a sneak peek at *The Tosca Project* set
A.C.T. Scene Shop. 5:30 p.m.
- 14–29** The Young Conservatory presents
Beautiful Child: The Music of Rufus Wainwright
Zeum Theater
- 15** ***Round and Round the Garden Saturday Salon***  
Featuring Scene Shop Foreman Mark Luevano and Properties
Supervisor Ryan Parham.
Garret. 11:45 a.m.
- 16** ***Round and Round the Garden Audience Exchange*** 
After the 2 p.m. performance
- 19** ***Round and Round the Garden Audience Exchange*** 
After the 2 p.m. performance
- 20** **Costume Shop Tour** 
Featuring a sneak peek at *The Tosca Project* costume designs
A.C.T. Costume Shop. 5:30 p.m.

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



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

PROLOGUES

Free preshow discussions with the director and a member of the A.C.T. artistic team before the first preview performance.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

Lively Q&A sessions with the cast and A.C.T. staff after the performance. Tickets to any performance grants you entry!

OUT with A.C.T.

A.C.T.'s popular LGBT-night parties with free wine and catered treats immediately following the 8 p.m. performance.

THEATER ON THE COUCH

Members of the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis explore the minds, motives, and behaviors of the characters in the play after the 8 p.m. performance.

ACT-SF.ORG/INTERACT



annualfund



directorscircle



producerscircle

BECOME an A.C.T. DONOR

By contributing to A.C.T., you also receive invitations to the following exclusive donor perks:

TOURS and TECH REHEARSALS

DESIGN PRESENTATIONS

Hear a presentation of the director's and designers' vision at the cast and creative team's first meeting.

OPENING NIGHT DINNERS

Dine with Artistic Director Carey Perloff and the director of the production in A.C.T.'s private dining room before the opening performance.

SATURDAY SALONS

Enjoy an elegant luncheon and engaging conversation with a member of the A.C.T. creative community before the matinee performance.

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

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ACT-SF.ORG/DONORLEVELS

WHO'S WHO IN *ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN*



RENÉ AUGESSEN (*Ruth*), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, made her A.C.T. debut in *The Misanthrope*; she has since appeared in

almost two dozen productions, most recently *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *A Christmas Carol*, *November*, *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*, *War Music*, *Brainpeople*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and *Rock 'n' Roll*. New York credits include *Spinning into Butter* (Lincoln Center Theater), *Macbeth* (with Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, The Public Theater), *It's My Party . . .* (with F. Murray Abraham and Joyce Van Patten, ArcLight Theatre), and *Overruled* (Drama League). Regional theater credits include *Mary Stuart* (dir. Carey Perloff, The Huntington Theatre Company); several productions, including the world premieres of *The Beard of Avon* and *The Hollow Lands*, at South Coast Repertory; and productions at the Great Lakes Theater Festival, Baltimore's CENTERSTAGE, the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Stage West. Film and television credits include *The Battle Studies*, *Law & Order*, *Guiding Light*, *Another World*, and Hallmark Hall of Fame's *Saint Maybe*. Augesen is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.



MANOEL FELCIANO (*Norman*), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has appeared at A.C.T. in *The Caucasian*

Chalk Circle, *November*, *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*, and *Rock 'n' Roll*. For his portrayal of Tobias Ragg in *Sweeney Todd* on Broadway, he was nominated for the Tony Award and won the Broadway.com

Audience Award and Broadwayworld.com Choice Award for Favorite Featured Actor. Other Broadway credits include *Brooklyn*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Cabaret*. Off-Broadway credits include *Trumpet*, *Shockheaded Peter*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* (New York Shakespeare Festival). Regional theater credits include *Ragtime* (The Kennedy Center), *Three Sisters* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and *Sunday in the Park with George* (Reprise Theatre Company). Film and television credits include *Uncertainty*, *Trauma*, *The Unusuals*, *Life on Mars*, *One Life to Live*, and *All My Children*. He has appeared in concert in *The World of Nick Adams* (San Francisco Symphony) and the world premiere of Nathaniel Stookey's *Zipperz* (Oakland East Bay Symphony). Felciano is also a singer-songwriter; *Moonshot*, his debut album of originals, is available in the lobby. Born and raised in San Francisco, he holds a B.A. from Yale University and an M.F.A. from New York University.



ANTHONY FUSCO (*Reg*), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has appeared at A.C.T. in *The Caucasian Chalk*

Circle, *November*, *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*, *War Music*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Government Inspector*, *The Rainmaker*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Travesties*, *The Rivals*, *The Voyage Inheritance*, *The Gamester*, *A Mother*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Three Sisters*, *Night and Day*, *The Room and Celebration*, *Enrico IV*, *The Misanthrope*, *Edward II*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Other Bay Area credits include leading roles in *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Arms and the Man*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Skin of Our Teeth* for California Shakespeare Theater; *My Old*

Lady at Marin Theatre Company; and Traveling Jewish Theatre's production of *The Chosen*. On Broadway, he was in Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* and *The Real Inspector Hound*. Fusco's many off-Broadway credits include *The Holy Terror*, *Cantorial*, *Danton's Death*, and *A Life in the Theatre*. He trained at Juilliard and The Barrow Group School.



DAN HIATT (*Tom*) has been seen at A.C.T. as Taylor in *Curse of the Starving Class*, the Magistrate in *The Government Inspector*, Bob Acres

in *The Rivals*, Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Cornelius Hackl in *The Matchmaker*, Yepikhodov in *The Cherry Orchard*, Roderigo in *Othello*, Mell in *The Play's the Thing*, and Smith in *The Threepenny Opera*. Other Bay Area credits include *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Dinner with Friends*, and *Menocchio* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *The Life and Times of Nicholas Nickleby* and many others at California Shakespeare Theater; *This Wonderful Life*, *The Immigrant*, and *A Flea in Her Ear* at San Jose Repertory Theatre; *Twentieth Century* at TheatreWorks; *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at Theatre on the Square; *Noises Off* at Marine's Memorial Theatre; and *The Real Thing* and *Lifex3* at Marin Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include work with Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, the Huntington Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., Studio Arena Theatre, the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and Stage West in Toronto.

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

Who's Who



DELIA MACDOUGALL (Annie) has been seen at A.C.T. in *Rock 'n' Roll*, *The Government Inspector*, the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda's *After the War*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *The Learned Ladies*. She has appeared with California Shakespeare Theater in *Pericles*, *Man and Superman*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Arms and the Man*, among others. Local credits include shows at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, and San Jose Repertory Theatre. Other credits include productions at Intiman Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theater, the Alley Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, and La MaMa E.T.C. MacDougall is an actor, director, and company member with Word for Word Performing Arts Company and an actor and director with Campo Santo.



MARCIA PIZZO (Sarah) was last seen at A.C.T. in *Rock 'n' Roll*. Other A.C.T. credits include *A Mother*, *Opera Comique*, *You Never Can Tell*, *Passion Cycle*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Most recently, she appeared in the world premiere of *First Day of School* at SF Playhouse. Other Bay Area credits include leading roles in *Restoration Comedy*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest* for California Shakespeare Theater; *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *The Servant of Two Masters* for Marin Shakespeare Company, where this

summer she will play Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*; *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma!*, *The King and I*, *Anything Goes*, *Annie*, and *The Wizard of Oz* for the Mountain Play Association; *Mary Stuart* for Pacific Repertory Theatre; *The Women* for Marin Theatre Company; and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at Theatre on the Square. Film credits include *Bicentennial Man*, *Fruit of the Vine*, *This Space Between Us*, and *Delta Fever*. Pizzo is a graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program.



NICHOLAS PELCZAR* (Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T. in *War Music*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Other Bay Area credits include *boom* at Marin Theatre Company; *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* at Pacific Repertory Theatre; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; *Marius* and *Dublin Carol* at Aurora Theatre Company; Daniel Handler's *4 Adverbs* at Word for Word Performing Arts Company; and the *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *Othello*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* at California Shakespeare Theater. He is a recent graduate of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program. In addition to A.C.T. Pelczar has trained at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, Prima del Teatro in San Miniato (Italy), and Michael Howard Studios in New York. He is a graduate of the University of Virginia.



MOLLIE STICKNEY (Understudy) attended the A.C.T. Young Conservatory and Summer Training Congress and is a graduate of the Master of Fine Arts Program. She

has appeared in A.C.T. mainstage productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *When We Are Married*, *Arcadia*, and *Gaslight*. She has also performed locally at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Theatre on the Square, and SF Playhouse.

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 Dora Awards). Last season at A.C.T. he directed John Guare's *Rich and Famous*. Other Broadway credits include *The Wedding Singer*, *A Thousand Clowns*, *Dance of the Vampires*, and Neil Simon's *The Dinner Party*. With New York City Center's Encores!®, he has directed *On the Town*, *Damn Yankees*, *Face the Music*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *The Pajama Game*, *Do Re Mi*, and *Strike Up the Band*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Toxic Avenger* (2009 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Musical); *The Downtown Plays* (Tribeca Theatre Festival/ Drama Dept.); *Pig Farm* (Roundabout Theatre Company); *Bright Ideas* (MCC Theater); *Polish Joke* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Mere Mortals* (Primary Stages); *Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight* (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 Alley Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Geffen Playhouse, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Cleveland Play House, and Syracuse Stage. Upcoming projects include *The Guardsman* at Berkshire Theatre Festival and *A Fox on the Fairway* (world premiere) at Signature Theatre. Rando was a Drama League directing fellow

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Edouard Manet, *The Fifer* (detail), 1866.
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Who's Who

and in 2004 received an Outstanding Young Texas Exes Award from The University of Texas.

RALPH FUNICELLO (*Scenic Designer*) has designed the scenery for 50 productions at A.C.T., where he started his career in 1972 and received an honorary master of fine arts degree in 2005. He has also designed more than 250 productions of plays and operas throughout the world, including the Broadway productions of *Julius Caesar*, *Brooklyn Boy*, *Henry IV* (Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, and Tony award nominations), *King Lear*, *QED*, and *Division Street*; the off-Broadway productions of *Saturn Returns*, *Ten Unknowns* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *Prides Crossing*, and *Labor Day*; and New York City Opera's *La Rondine*, San Diego Opera's *Don Quichotte*, and LA Opera's *The Dwarf* and *The Broken Jug*. He is an associate artist at The Old Globe in San Diego and has designed for major regional theater companies across the country, as well as for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada and the Royal Shakespeare Company. He has received the Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in design and collaboration and awards from the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, *Drama-Logue* magazine, *Back Stage West*, and the United States Institute for Theatre Technology. He currently holds the position of Don Powell Chair in Scene Design at San Diego State University.

LYDIA TANJI (*Costume Designer*) has designed *The Quality of Life*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Brainpeople*, *The Rainmaker*, *After the War*, and *Woman in Mind* for A.C.T. Recent designs include *Death and the King's Horseman* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival,

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.

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 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*.

ALEXANDER V. NICHOL'S (*Lighting Designer*) theater credits include the Broadway production of *Wishful Drinking* (Carrie Fisher), originally presented at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Off-Broadway productions include *Los Big Names*, *Horizon*, *Bridge and Tunnels*, and *Taking Over*. He also production designs for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, The Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Dance credits include several seasons as resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford City Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet. He was the lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House and is the resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His



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Image: Georges Seurat, *Eiffel Tower*, ca. 1889. Oil on panel.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Heidi Armbruster

'02 is in the Red Bull Theater revival of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* off Broadway.

Andrea Harris

'97 plays Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Cornelia in *Hamlet*, and Lady in *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon.



Andrew Hurteau '93 is in *Equivocation* at Marin Theatre Company through May 5. **Mark Manske** '91 (Advanced Training Program), **Andy Alabran** '98, **Alex Moggridge** '00, and **Kelsey Ventner** '09 are in *A Seagull in the Hamptons* at Shotgun Players.

Aimee Bruneau '98 narrated the Audie-nominated audio romance *The House on Tradd Street*, by Karen White. Next fall **Dawn-Elin Fraser** '97 takes up her new position as assistant arts professor at NYU. **Marilee Talkington** '04, with her theater company, Vanguardian Productions, wrote and starred in *Truce. The Other Place*, by **Sharr White** '93 (Advanced Training Program), which was workshopped at A.C.T. during our First Look festival last January, is a part of MCC Theater's 2010–11 season off Broadway.



TOP MARILEE TALKINGTON '04
BOTTOM KELSEY VENTNER '09 AND ALEX MOGGRIDGE '00 IN
A SEAGULL IN THE HAMPTONS

Who's Who

designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, and ODC. Recent projects include *November* at A.C.T., the museum installation *Circle of Memory*, in collaboration with Eleanor Coppola, presented in Salzburg, Austria, and video and visual design for *LIFE: A Journey Through Time*, with photographer Frans Lanting and composer Philip Glass, presented at Alice Tully Hall.

JAKE RODRIGUEZ (*Sound Design*)

has carved out sound and music for multiple theaters across the Bay Area and beyond. Recent credits include Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll* and *Speed-the-Plow* at A.C.T.; *Girlfriend*, *Passing Strange*, *The People's Temple*, and *Fêtes de la Nuit* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *Oedipus el Rey* at Magic Theatre; *Don Juan* at San Francisco State University; *Salomé* at Aurora Theatre Company; *Eurydice* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater; and *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* at California Shakespeare Theater. Rodriguez is the recipient of a 2003 Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award and a 2004 Princess Grace Award.

MICHAEL PALLER (*Dramaturg*)

joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's *Small*

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.

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 the forthcoming *Tennessee Williams: The Playwright in Context* (Smith & Kraus) and has written theater and book reviews for the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *Newsday*, and *Mirabella* magazine. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

MERYL LIND SHAW (*Casting Director*)

joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for 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 *The Caucasian Chalk* at A.C.T. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include *November*, *Boleros for the Disenchanted*, *Rich and Famous*, *The Quality of Life*, *What You Will*, *Curse of the Starving*

Who's Who

Class, Speed-the-Plow, The Rainmaker, Blackbird, The Little Foxes, A Number, Sexual Perversity in Chicago, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Well, and Eve Ensler's *The Good Body*. 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.

MEGAN Q. SADA's (*Assistant Stage Manager*) most recent credits include A.C.T.'s *A Christmas Carol*, Magic Theatre's productions of *Oedipus el Rey* and *Goldfish*, and Marin Theatre Company's *Lydia*. Other professional credits include *Culture Clash's 25th Anniversary Show* (Brava Theater Center), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Jewish Ensemble Theatre), *Mrs. Shakespeare* (The Village Theater at Cherry Hill), and *The Immaculate Misconception* (Hilberry Theatre). Sada graduated with a B.F.A. in theater from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, where she often stage-managed and directed, including productions of *Sweet Charity* at the Bonstelle Theatre and *The Last Five Years* at the Studio Theatre.

CLAIRE E. ZAWA (*Assistant Stage Manager*) spent a week assisting on the recent A.C.T. production of *Vigil* and served as the assistant director on *November*. Select Equity stage-management credits include *Cathay: Three Tales of China*, conceived, written, and directed by Ping Chong, at Seattle Repertory Theatre, The New Victory Theater, The Kennedy Center, and the Vienna Festival; *Julius Caesar* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz; *You Can't Take It with You* and *Bad Dates* following a season-long internship (2003–04) at Seattle Repertory Theatre; and *The*

Neverending Story, among others, at Seattle Children's Theatre. Zawa also works as a director and production manager and is a graduate of Macalester College. Following *Round and Round the Garden*, she will return to Shakespeare Santa Cruz for *Love's Labor's Lost*.

CHRIS AND LESLIE JOHNSON (*Executive Producers*) were both born and raised in the Bay Area and have been supporting A.C.T. since 2002. They were recently executive producers on *Rock 'n' Roll, Blackbird,* and *Curse of the Starving Class*. Directors of the Hurlbut-Johnson Fund, the Johnsons support many Bay Area arts organizations and recently endowed the Hurlbut-Johnson Chair in Diabetes Research at UC San Francisco.

JOAN S. LANE (*Executive Producer*) attended performances at the Geary Theater, now the American Conservatory Theater, even before A.C.T. adopted the historic landmark building as its home. Together with her late husband, Ralph, she has supported A.C.T. for 27 years, including providing significant support to the effort to rebuild the theater after the Loma Prieta earthquake. She recalls having seen everyone from Tallulah Bankhead to Basil Rathbone and the Lunts at the theater. She also was an executive producer on A.C.T.'s world premiere productions of *After the War* and *War Music*.

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A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (*Artistic Director*) is celebrating her 18th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed *Timberlake*

Wertenbaker's new version of Racine's *Phèdre* in collaboration with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival; other recent productions include José Rivera's *Boleros for the Disenchanted*, Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll* (a coproduction with The Huntington Theatre Company, nominated for an Elliot Norton Award for Best Production), and John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. 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*; 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 Voyage Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian's *Singer's Boy*; and major revivals of *The Government Inspector*, 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 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 Theatre 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 for A.C.T. and a new *Elektra* 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.

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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Director of External
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Vinly Eng, *Producing Associate*
Carly Cioffi, *Artistic Administration*
Beatrice Basso, *Artistic Program Consultant*
Mark Rucker, *Associate Artist/Line Producer*

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Gregory Wallace, Jack Willis

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Domenique Lozano, Morris Panych,
Carey Perloff, John Rando, Emma Rice,
Mark Rucker, Craig Slaughter, Gia Solari

Choreographers

Val Caniparoli

Composers/Orchestrations

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Karl Lundeberg, Nathaniel Stookey

Musical Directors

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Text, and Dialect

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Stage Managers
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Stage Managers

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Ian Smith, *Assistant Technical Director*

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Amanda Togliatti, *Costume Shop*
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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.

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: 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. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12–6 p.m. Tuesday–Friday. 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 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 \$20. 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

The American Conservatory Theater 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, 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. 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 Theatre Bay Area, the Union Square Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.



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.

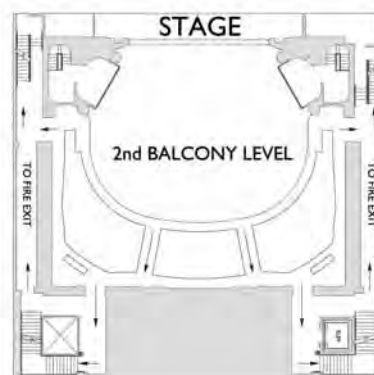


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American Conservatory Theater Exits



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beyond just roadside.



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