AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
in association with the
STRATFORD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ONTARIO, CANADA

WORLD PREMIERE

PHÈDRE

by JEAN RACINE

Translated and adapted by TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER

Directed by CAREY PERLOFF

A.C.T.
American conservatory theater

encore arts programs
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ABOUT A.C.T.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER  
nurtures the art of live theater through  
dynamic productions, intensive actor  
training in its conservatory, and an ongoing  
dialogue with its community. Under the  
leadership of Artistic Director Carey  
Perloff, 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  
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.
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Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! And welcome to Phèdre.

In October 2008, Timberlake Wertenbaker and I were invited to travel to Canada’s remarkable Stratford Shakespeare Festival to workshop a new translation of Racine’s 17th-century tragedy, which we had commissioned at A.C.T. the year before. After an extraordinary week of work, we were all anxious to continue exploring this rarely produced French classic.

Fast forward to June 2009, when I arrived at Stratford to begin rehearsals for the full production. On the first day of rehearsal, Seana McKenna raised her hand and said something to the effect of: “I’m curious to know where we are in this play. Our characters pray to Greek gods, but we’re wearing 17th-century French costumes while speaking the text in a modern translation underscored with music by an experimental American composer.” She was right. Even in 1675 when it was written, Phèdre was a fascinating hybrid: a highly Catholic play of sexual transgression set in ancient Greece. Performing the play today, the worlds of Louis XIV’s Paris and Euripides’ Athens are conjoined with our own, as we bring 21st-century North American artistry to this classical play of honor and betrayal.

It is the balancing of these elements that makes working on Phèdre such a fascinating adventure. The play begins with a terrible secret: the passionate, uncontrollable love of Phèdre for her stepson Hippolytus. As secret upon secret is exposed, the tide of erotic love threatens to overwhelm the entire societal structure of the court of Theseus. Phèdre’s desire is not only transgressive, it is fate: in some frightening way, she is paying for the sins of her mother, Pasiphaë, who lusted after a bull and gave birth to the Minotaur. Phèdre exerts every ounce of will to resist her longing while secretly knowing that resistance is pointless. In Racine’s pitiless world, eros is a genetic disorder, a visitation from an angry and destructive god. “This is not sweet love coursing through my veins,” Phèdre moans, “but Venus tooth and claw gnawing my limbs.”

The conflict is heightened immeasurably because Phèdre is a queen, presiding over a politically divided court in which her own children are pitted against the potential claims of the stepson she loves. Thus desire, that most private of emotions, is played out in a public arena that is as fraught for Hippolytus as it is for her. The entire action of the play centers on the act of speaking: the characters become convinced that to speak the truth is to purge the pain of their love, but in fact the opposite occurs: the act of naming the desire brings it to life. Speech is irreversible: a single word can cause a cataclysm. But the lovers in this play cannot resist the impulse to articulate their love. And once spoken, their words can never be retracted.

One of the gifts of working with Timberlake is her ability to sculpt a line of dialogue that is both subtle and simple, speakable and resonant, leaving a great deal to the actors’ and audience’s imaginations. For this translation, she has created an unrhymed ten-syllable line in place of the twelve-syllable French alexandrine, and has avoided the rhyming that often makes English translations of French slightly laughable.

Thus our actors speak this verse in natural English rhythms, their bodies sculpted by the shape of French classical costumes while cursing the cruelty of Neptune. In the fusion of these worlds, multiple metaphors and images resonate against each other: the Greek labyrinth and the stultifying French royal court, the restless ache of the cello and the very immediate and recognizable heartbeat of a woman’s desire for a forbidden man.

In the spirit of internationalism with which we began this season, it is a joy to welcome the Stratford Shakespeare Festival company to A.C.T. This is one of the great classical acting troupes in the world, a company blessed with the opportunity to create great roles in major classical plays in four venues eight months a year. They are joined by two of our M.F.A. Program students, for whom this will surely be a highlight of their training at A.C.T. With the arrival of this company we assert our deep belief that theater is best made by artists collaborating together over long periods of time in close association with a highly engaged audience. Thus, as happy as we are to introduce these major Canadian artists to you, we are equally thrilled to introduce you, our extraordinary audience, to them.

Thank you for being here.

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)
UNCOMPROMISING

by Jean Racine (1677)
Translated and adapted by Timberlake Wertenbaker (2009)
Directed by Carey Perloff

Scenery and costumes by Christina Poddubiuk
Lighting by James F. Ingalls
Composer David Lang
Dramaturgy by Michael Paller
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw, Beth Russell
Assistant Director Alison Humphrey
Fight Director/Fight Captain Jud Williford

THE CAST
(in order of appearance)
Hippolytus Jonathan Goad*
Théramène Sean Arbuckle*
Oenone Roberta Maxwell*
Phèdre Seana McKenna*
Panope Sophia Holman†
Aricie Claire Lautier*
Ismène Mairin Lee†
Theseus Tom McCamus*

UNDERSTUDIES
Hippolytus, Théramène, Theseus—Jud Williford†; Phèdre, Panope—Sharon Lockwood*
Oenone, Ismène—Sophia Holman†; Aricie—Mairin Lee†

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Kimberly Mark Webb*, Stage Manager
Heath Belden*, Assistant Stage Manager
Ashley Costa, Stage Management Intern

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States
†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2010

SETTING
Trézène, a coastal city south of Athens

This production is made possible at A.C.T. by
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
David and Susan Coulter; Mimi and Peter Haas Fund

PRODUCERS
F. Eugene and Mary S. Metz, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph K. Perloff; Patrick S. Thompson

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS
Mr. Kimo Campbell; John and Paula Murphy;
Mr. and Mrs. Loring A. Wyllie, Jr.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
The Carey Perloff Artistic Director’s Production Fund, an
endowed fund of The Next Generation Campaign

Originally commissioned and workshopped by American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco, California.
World premiere presented in association with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Stratford, Ontario, Canada.
A

lthough Racine probably would have been a great poet and playwright in any age, the theater that he wrote for in mid-17th century Paris could not have been more perfect for a man of his background, sensibility, and gifts. That background included rigorous religious training with an emphasis on guilt and repression; his highly developed sensibility was attuned to ever-changing, charged fluctuations of emotions under the pressure of desire; and among his gifts was the ability to transcribe those fluctuations into poetry that was at once delicate and detailed in its nuance and powerful, like a fist to the gut, in its impact.

By the age of nine, Racine, who was orphaned at four and raised by his maternal grandparents, found himself in the care of a group of Jansenist hermits near the monastery of Port-Royal des Champs, outside Paris. The Jansenists practiced an austere form of Catholicism and believed, like the Lutherans, that human nature had been ruined by the Fall. Unlike Lutheranism, which suggested that only a born elite could be saved at Judgment Day, the Jansenists believed that salvation might come to those who chose to follow the path of righteousness. This suggested, according to the scholar Martin Turnell, that a properly attentive conscience was at least as important as obedience to an exterior authority. Still, Jansenism was, Turnell writes, “in essentials a pessimistic doctrine which placed man at the mercy of his passions.”

Racine grew up to be a man of great and varied passions, and the facts suggest that more often than not in life he managed to persuade a doubting conscience to look the other way. He owed his first theatrical success to Molière, who had been one of his earliest supporters and had given the first performances of the younger playwright’s work. This didn’t stop Racine, however, from transferring the rights of his second play, Alexander the Great, from Molière’s company to the one at Paris’s most significant public theater, the Hôtel de Bourgogne, after Molière’s production had already opened. His peers considered this to be an unprecedented breach of etiquette, but Molière’s company was more adept at comedy than tragedy, and Racine was certain that the tragedians at the Hôtel de Bourgogne would give him a better production. At the same time that he took his play out from under Molière, he also stole the great comedian’s leading lady, Mlle. DuParc (who also happened to be Racine’s mistress): she joined the company at the Hôtel de Bourgogne and played the lead in Racine’s next play, Andromaque. This also raised eyebrows, but Racine was serenely indifferent to popular opinion. When Mlle. De Parc suddenly died a year later, it was rumored that he had poisoned her to make way for Mlle. Champsély, another mistress and leading lady. Whatever the truth, the Parisian theater was a notorious nest of schemers, plotters, betrayers, and liars, and in this regard Racine didn’t exactly stick out from the crowd, except for the high degree of skill and single-mindedness with which he practiced these extratheatrical arts. His love life, too, was complicated and crowded: when Madame de Sévigné, the famous letter-writer and salon figure, saw his final play, Athalie, she wrote, “Racine has surpassed himself; he loves God as he used to love his mistresses.”

He also had a passion for advancement. Although as a young man he chose the theater over the law and the church, as he grew older he realized that playwriting was no profession for a respectable man (when Molière died, the Church at first refused to bury him in holy ground, partly because he was the author of Tartuffe, but partly because it acknowledged the professional theater only as a place for prostitutes and thieves). He wrote Phèdre in 1676 at the height of his powers and then abruptly retired, married, and had children. Repairing an old rift with the Jansenists, who had disapproved of his life in the theater, he re-embraced the somber religion of his youth. In short order, he was named official historian to Louis XIV and joined the orbit of the Sun King.

Such large, messy passions as Racine’s do not by themselves make. The theater that Racine found when he first turned to playwriting in 1663 provided him with the means to transform them. That theater was one in transition, just the sort that affords the most elbow room for genius, which, by definition, cannot be
labeled or put in a box. There were many reasons for this evolution of theatrical style and form. One was the new importance in the social life of the court and city of women, and their increased attendance at the theater (and in the theater: actresses were coming into their own at about this time, as well). Theatergoing in general was becoming more respectable, and Louis XIII’s powerful councilor, Cardinal Richelieu, became its chief patron as he sought to extend French power both politically and culturally. This changing audience demanded a different, more elevated and refined tone to their entertainment.

The old theater had been a vigorous Baroque enterprise, with plays like those of the Elizabethans: plays with multiple plot lines ranging across time and space and multiple tones (going from comedy to tragedy from one scene to the next), written in a self-consciously theatrical style, often stuffed with violence and death displayed in full view of the audience. By the mid 1600s, the style coming into vogue was Neoclassicism, which replaced the Medieval taste for multiplicity and verbal and visual bombast with the newer Renaissance emphasis on unity and intellectual examination: a play that takes place in one location in real time with a single tone, either tragic or comic. Neoclassicism also insisted that plays be written in five acts, in verse, and had a subject matter that was relatively intellectual, disciplined, and in good taste. That last is important: everything had to be treated with the proper amount of decorum, no extremes of emotion, and certainly no onstage physical violence. This would be a theater that emphasized, in the words of theater historian William D. Howarth, “rational debate, analytical soliloquy, and the vigorous exchange of points of view.” Phèdre is certainly no analytical debate, and in it emotions may seem extreme and reason sometimes hard to come by. The point is that the overexuberant emotionalism of the Baroque theater was now subject to a strict, formal control, one that seemed to suit Racine’s temperament and talent.

All the Neoclassical rules, unbearable restrictions to any of our living playwrights, served him well. If he was unwilling or unable to bridle his passions in his life, he found in the Neoclassical
theater exactly the right form in which to contain them. In his plays, he could, by controlling passions, give them shape, scope, power, and meaning. He could make from the messy emotions of his life, art.

Indeed, Racine wanted everyone to know how ruthlessly he dealt with Phèdre’s passions. In his preface to the published edition he wrote, “No play of mine so celebrates virtue as this one does. The least faults are here severely punished. The mere thought of crime is seen with as much horror as the crime itself . . . the passions are here represented only to show all the disorder which they bring about; and vice is everywhere painted in colors which make one know and hate its deformity.” He recounts how in Hippolytus, Euripides’ version of the story, it is the queen who accuses the prince of attacking her: he found this action to be “too base and foul to put into the mouth of a princess”; better it belong to a lowly servant. So in Phèdre, the idea becomes Oenone’s. When he considered translating Aristotle’s Poetics, which inspired the rules of Neoclassicism, he wrote that tragedy, in arousing the passions of fear and pity, should “remove from them whatever they have of the excessive and the vicious and bring them back to a moderated condition and conformable to reason.”

It certainly was one of his gifts to be able to show a character being overwhelmed by a terrible passion, such as Phèdre is for her stepson, without bloodying the stage literally or figuratively. “The more art is controlled, limited, worked over, the more it is free,” Igor Stravinsky wrote. This was certainly true of Racine, who had to make his unruly passions fit the rigorous constraints of, first, verse, and then the decorous behavior and language expected by his audience. By containing so much emotion and passion in a tightly controlled form, he created a theater of great tension and then great release.
NEXT AT
AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE
by Bertolt Brecht
translated by Domenique Lozano
Directed and designed by John Doyle

"JOHN DOYLE IS FEROCIOUSLY INVENTIVE."

FEB 18–MAR 14

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Ms. Toni Rembe and Mr. Arthur Rock
PRODUCERS: Janet and Lloyd Cluff, Daniel E. Cohen, Natasha and Lincoln Evans-Beauchamp, Rose Hagan and Mark Lemley, Joanne and Kent Harvey, Doug Tilden

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The New York Times

"WICKEDLY DARK"
Variety

PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE

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VIGIL
Written and directed by Morris Panych
Cast: Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis

MAR 25–APR 18

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415 GEARY STREET, SAN FRANCISCO
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PHÈDRE

THE STORY SO FAR
It has been six months since Theseus, legendary hero and king of Athens, left his wife, Phèdre, in the care of Hippolytus, his son by the Amazon Antiope, in the small Greek city of Trézène. Hippolytus had moved to Trézène soon after his father married Phèdre, at which time the new queen made clear she had no intention of living in the same city as her stepson. When Theseus departed, he also left in his son’s care the political prisoner Aricie. No one has heard from Theseus, and rumors are circulating that he may never return.

WHO’S WHO IN TRÉZÈNE

THESEUS, the bastard son of Aegaeus, king of Athens, was raised by his maternal grandfather, King Pitheus of Trézène. To silence rumors, Pitheus suggested that the boy was the son of the sea god, Neptune (to whom, later in life, Theseus would show great devotion). Theseus grew into an adventurer—becoming known both as a heroic slayer of monsters and criminals (second only to Hercules), as well as a shameless philanderer—and eventually reunited with his father. After Aegaeus named him his successor, Theseus won over the people of Athens by going to Crete to conquer the Minotaur. Decades before, King Minos of Crete had lost his son, Androgeus, while the youth was hunting in Attica (a region comprised of 12 small territories surrounding the Saronic Gulf, which includes Athens and Trézène). To prevent war, Athens agreed to send a tribute of seven young men and seven virgin women to Crete every nine years as a mandatory tribute. Once there, they died grisly deaths in the labyrinth of the Minotaur. Theseus volunteered himself as one of the 14, confident that he would return after slaying the monster. He did succeed and he did return, but he failed to signal his success by raising a white sail as he entered the Athenian port. Aegaeus, thinking his only son dead, hurled himself into the sea. As the new king, Theseus set out to unite Attica under one encompassing government, over which he now presides with his wife, Phèdre.

HEMINTAUR as tribute, and among the third such group was Theseus. Phèdre’s sister, Ariadne, fell in love with Theseus and helped him navigate the labyrinth by giving him a piece of string to mark his path. After killing the Minotaur, Theseus left Crete with his new love, but on his journey back to Athens he abandoned her on the isle of Naxos. Years later Phèdre married Theseus to establish an alliance between Crete and Attica, and the Cretan princess became an Athenian queen—as well as mother to Theseus’s first legitimate son.

PHÈDRE is the daughter of Minos (son of Jupiter and king of Crete) and Pasiphaë (daughter of the sun god, Helios). After Minos refused to sacrifice a white bull to Neptune, the vengeful sea god caused Pasiphaë to fall in love with the beast. After consummating her accursed lust, she gave birth to the Minotaur—a half-man/half-bull monster—which Minos hid in an inescapable labyrinth. Every nine years, Minos would deliver 14 unfortunate Athenians to the

HIPPOLYTUS is the son of Theseus and Antiope, an Amazon who broke ranks to fight alongside Theseus when her people unsuccessfully tried to invade Attica. Theseus was eventually compelled to kill Antiope when she crashed the wedding festivities held for him and Phèdre: she entered fully armed and threatened to slaughter the wedding guests. After the wedding, Theseus (at Phèdre’s insistence) dispatched Hippolytus to Trézène to be watched over by Pitheus, Hippolytus’s great-grandfather. Through this relationship, Hippolytus is the undisputed heir to the throne of Trézène; his claim to the Athenian throne, however, is much more dubious, as he is the bastard son of a foreigner.

ARICIE is last of the noble line of Pallas, Athenian King Aegaeus’s brother and Theseus’s uncle. When Aegaeus named Theseus his successor to the throne, the sons of Pallas (Pallantidae) threatened a coup, because in their minds Aegaeus, himself the adopted son of the previous king, had no legitimate blood claim to power—and Aegaeus’s bastard son had that much less. Theseus repressed the uprising by executing all of the brothers, sparing only their sister, Aricie, on the condition that she remain under house arrest and never marry or have children.
Dear Friends:

At the beginning of January we celebrated the successful conclusion of A.C.T.’s $30 million Next Generation Campaign and the 100th birthday of our artistic home, the beautiful American Conservatory Theater. On the heels of these two milestone celebrations, we have embarked upon a long-range strategic planning process to chart our course for the decade ahead. Everyone at A.C.T.—trustees, artists, students, faculty, and staff members alike—have been energized by Carey Perloff’s artistic vision for our future, and I look forward to sharing more about our plans in the months ahead.

In addition to all this activity, I am pleased to share with you that we have begun a nationwide search for a new executive director. A.C.T. has retained the services of Korn/Ferry International to conduct this search, and we are grateful for the partnership of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation for their support in this important process. As we move forward with the search, the board of trustees has asked two members of A.C.T.’s senior management team to assume new roles to ensure continuity during this interim period. Administrative Director Thomas C. Proehl has been named director of administration and operations and is providing greater oversight for finance and budgeting, human resources, information systems, facilities, and the conservatory. Development Director Tim Whalen has been named director of external affairs and is managing our marketing, public relations, publications, and development operations.

The A.C.T. board greatly appreciates Tom and Tim’s willingness to take on greater responsibilities during this time of transition and is grateful for Carey’s artistic leadership and acumen, which inspires us all. Of course, none of this would be possible without audience members like you. So whether you are a longtime subscriber or are attending A.C.T. for the first time, thank you for joining us for the world premiere of this new translation of Racine’s Phèdre. Your presence makes it possible for A.C.T. to bring live theater experiences to thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds each and every season.

Sincerely,

Jack Cortis
Chair, A.C.T. Board of Trustees

A.C.T. SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDES FIRST-EVER ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

We are thrilled to begin the New Year with the announcement that A.C.T. has successfully completed The Next Generation Campaign, the company’s historic effort to create an endowment that will sustain A.C.T.’s commitment to artistic excellence and high-quality actor training for generations to come.

Led by Campaign Committee Chair/A.C.T. Board of Trustees Vice Chair Nancy Livingston and Campaign Cabinet Chair/ A.C.T. Board of Trustees Chair Emeritus Alan L. Stein, together with star of stage, film, and television and graduate of A.C.T.’s actor training conservatory Annette Bening, who served as chair of the Campaign Artistic Advisory Committee, The Next Generation Campaign raised more than $31 million by its close at midnight on December 31, 2009. The Next Generation Campaign is one of the largest endowment campaigns ever undertaken by a theater company in the United States and the most significant fundraising effort in A.C.T.’s 44-year history.

The major objectives of the campaign were threefold: to provide support for artistic excellence on the mainstage (including A.C.T.’s first endowed core acting company position), for excellence in actor training (including A.C.T.’s first three endowed Master of Fine Arts Program scholarships), and for excellence in developing large-scale, visionary new works for the mainstage (including the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Fund for New Works) and for the young actors in the conservatory (including the Craig Slaight New Plays Fund, named in honor of the beloved director of our Young Conservatory).

Thanks to the 3,600 donors, including 116 “Leadership Donors” who made commitments of $25,000 or more to The Next Generation Campaign, A.C.T. has built a solid financial foundation upon which the theater can forge new artistic paths and reach new audiences through a deep and wide-ranging series of initiatives.

Lead donors to The Next Generation Campaign include The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Bernard Osher Foundation, Burt and Deedee McMurtry, and Jeff and Laurie Ubben. Other distinguished supporters include Ray and Dagmar Dolby, James and Jean Douglas, and Ruth and Alan L. Stein. In addition to these munificent individual and foundation supporters, American Express made a generous grant to the campaign to support the restoration of the façade.
of the American Conservatory Theater in honor of the theater’s 100th birthday in January.

“What is thrilling about endowment is that it’s about the future,” says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff. “Through the visionary leadership of Nancy, Alan, and Annette, and the generosity of a huge community of donors, A.C.T.’s future is extremely bright. The Next Generation Campaign allows us to commit to long-term artistic programming, take important creative risks, and sustain the artists, students, and staff who make A.C.T. such a unique and vital institution. We are deeply grateful to every single individual who contributed to its success.”

MEET MATT BRADLEY
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 Matt Bradley.

NICKNAME Mumbles.

BIRTHPLACE Walnut Creek, CA.

HOMETOWN Danville, CA.

FIRST THEATER EXPERIENCE When I was 12 my father took me to see The Phantom of the Opera at the Orpheum Theatre in San Francisco.

FAVORITE THEATER EXPERIENCE Watching The People’s Temple at Berkeley Rep; watching The Merchant of Venice at Cal Shakes.

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE, I WOULD WANT TO PLAY Richard III.

MY STORY In high school I participated in the speech and debate program. During a national qualifying tournament, I hijacked a janitor’s electric cart and gave tours of my school to visiting competitors—they kicked me out of the program. I joined the theater department so my mom wouldn’t find out what happened. She didn’t, for two years. Later, in a production at Cal Shakes, I met a guy named Jud Williford [A.C.T. M.F.A. ’04] and a guy named David Ryan Smith [M.F.A. ’03]. Thanks to them, I decided that University of Evansville and A.C.T. were how to become an actor—so I did that.

RANDOM FACT When I was 12 I was a clown at birthday parties. Smiles, or something . . . Smiles the Clown. I had a knack for twisting balloons into things.

EDUCATION I graduated from the University of Evansville with a B.F.A in theater performance.

SPECIAL SKILLS Balloon animals.

HOBBIES Pop haiku.


HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO THE
AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

On January 9, 2010, we celebrated the 100th birthday of A.C.T.’s historic home. We would like to thank everyone who helped make our Landmark Celebration such a stellar event, including:

Gordon D. Smythe, Smythe & Son
Kevin Berne Photography
as well as the staff, students, artists, crew, board, and other friends of A.C.T.
The Power of Words

Timberlake Wertenbaker translated and adapted Phèdre specifically for North American actors. In adapting the formal verse structure of the French text, she chose a shorter, unrhymed line that flows much more naturally in English. Nevertheless, Phèdre requires actors who can handle the robust language and communicate the complex ideas and visceral emotions characteristic of classical drama. The Stratford Shakespeare Festival’s company is expert at this, as are A.C.T.’s core acting company members. This is not always the case with actors in the United States. “American actors have not always been given the tools for dealing with classical language as an active part of their acting,” says Nancy Benjamin, who with colleague Jill Walmsley Zager recently took on the newly created position of co-head of A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program’s speech and dialects faculty. “Many young actors come out of their training programs, and they are fantastic with American realism, but when they come to classical texts they aren’t as well equipped.”

Benjamin and Zager traveled to A.C.T. on a mission to combat this trend. Based in one of the grandest theatrical houses in North America—designed a century ago specifically to showcase the great plays of the dramatic repertoire—A.C.T. takes very seriously its mission to train new generations of actors capable of performing those plays for contemporary audiences. Helping young actors develop the necessary vocal skills is a fundamental part of that training.

Benjamin is a familiar face for the Phèdre company; she has been working with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival as a voice, text, and dialect coach since 2000. She and Zager split their full-time A.C.T. position so both can maintain their professional careers outside of San Francisco: Benjamin teaches here during the fall term and then returns to Stratford; Zager, who served as the head of voice for the M.F.A. program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 2002–09 and remains on faculty there, spends the fall in Chicago before returning to A.C.T. for the spring term.

Benjamin and Zager join Jeffrey Crockett, A.C.T.’s head of voice, a specialist in Middendorf Breathwork and the Alexander Technique who has been with the conservatory since 1995, to form a full-time complement that serves as resident coaches for A.C.T.’s professional company while also teaching in the graduate program. All three trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, and they approach their work with a shared philosophy that focuses on integration of voice, speech, and textual analysis—an approach that is unusual in the United States.

“For me, voice training for the actor encompasses all aspects of spoken vocal expression—breathwork, exploration of the pitch range, ear training, articulation, dialect work, and text work (learning how to use the language of any text fully, deeply, passionately for communication and expression),” says Benjamin. “Jeff and Jill and I are pursuing an integrated approach to voice training, so that the actor never separates the act of speaking from breath or from thought—all those things are linked together.”

Zager and Benjamin share the same philosophical approach to training, but they each bring a unique perspective, as well. Benjamin, who has extensive training and experience in physical theater and as a director, emphasizes that language is an action with ability to effect change in the world of the play: “To speak is to do. I change the universe when I talk. As profoundly as if I had shut a door, or opened a door, or moved a chair, I change the universe just as profoundly, if not more so, when I put an idea into the air, when I change your mind, when I make you do something I want you to do through the power of my words.” Zager, who has performed professionally as an actor and opera singer for two decades, in addition to teaching and coaching, highlights the importance of language and voice in effecting change in the actor him/herself: “You don’t want an actor to read six parts and merely hear that actor reading six parts. Specificity of voice and dialect are tools to help an actor disappear into a character.”

A.C.T.’s voice and speech faculty are passionate about the type of training they bring to A.C.T., as well as about the importance of vocal strength and dexterity in the professional theater. Benjamin observes, “The job of the actor is to change the world you’ve stepped into, the world of the play, to make something happen. If a young actor can do this with Shakespeare and Shaw and Racine—if he can use that intense action-driven language as a tool, if he understands the argument of the character and of the play with the harder, classical dramas—then he can do it with anything.”

A.C.T.’s Newly Expanded Voice and Speech Faculty (L to R): Jeffrey Crockett, Nancy Benjamin, and Jill Walmsley Zager
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.

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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.

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

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**January**

19 **Phèdre Prologue**
Featuring director Carey Perloff. 5:30 p.m.

20 **Phèdre Opening Night Dinner**
Featuring director Carey Perloff. 5:30 p.m.

22 **Phèdre Theater on the Couch**

26 **Phèdre Audience Exchange**
After the 7 p.m. performance

27 **Phèdre OUT with A.C.T.**

30 **Phèdre Saturday Salon**
Featuring director Carey Perloff. Noon

31 **Phèdre Audience Exchange**
After the 2 p.m. performance

**February**

3 **Phèdre Audience Exchange**
After the 2 p.m. performance

6–7 **Time Heals Everything**
Young Conservatory Cabaret Ensemble
5 p.m. (Garret)

8 **If Love Were All**
Young Conservatory Musical Ensemble
5:30 p.m. (Garret)
THROUGH MARCH 28, 2010

For the first time in 30 years, the artifacts from the tomb of Tutankhamun return to the de Young Museum. This exhibition presents more than 130 important objects, including 50 from the tomb of King Tut, and places the Egyptian ruler in a larger context through an additional 80 objects from the tombs of his ancestors.

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WHO’S WHO IN PHÈDRE

SEAN ARBUCKLE* (Théramène) has spent eight seasons at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, where his credits include Three Sisters, Cabaret, Twelfth Night, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, The Trojan Women, The Merchant of Venice, London Assurance, The Tempest, Timon of Athens, Henry IV Part 1, Agamemnon, As You Like It, Electra, and The Swan: Queen Victoria (The Seduction of Nemeis). New York theater credits include The Waverly Gallery; I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change; and Henry VI. He also appeared in the national tour of Copenhagen. Regionally he has performed at the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Pioneer Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, George Street Playhouse, The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The Laguna Playhouse, and others. Television credits include Law & Order, Law & Order: SVU, Hope & Faith, and Sex and the City. Arbuckle is a graduate of Duke University and The Juilliard School.

JONATHAN GOAD* (Hippolytus) tenth season with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival included the roles of Quarlous in Bartholomew Fair, Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, and Hippolytus in Phèdre. Last season, Goad played Harold Hill in The Music Man and Frondoso in Fuente Ovejuna. In the spring of 2007 he toured to Newfoundland with The Company Theatre’s production of A Whistle in the Dark. Previous lives in theater include Iago (Othello), Leo Katz (Pentecost), Valentine Xavier (Orpheus Descending), Edmund (King Lear), Pericles (The Adventures of Pericles), Hotspur (Henry IV), Philip (King John), Jack Cade (Henry VI), Dmitry (The Brothers Karamazov), Roger Tasset (Tempest–Tost), Costard (Love’s Labour’s Lost), and Theseus (The Two Noble Kinsmen). He recently directed Michael O’Brien’s Mad Boy Chronicle and Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale for Fanshawe College and worked on King Lear with the first-year National Theatre School students.

SOPHIA HOLMAN† (Panope) recently appeared on the A.C.T. mainstage in A Christmas Carol. She has also appeared in A.C.T. M.F.A. Program productions of Her Naked Skin (Lady Celia Cain; dir. Jonathan Moscone), Clothes for a Summer Hotel (Zelda Fitzgerald; dir. Ken Ruta), Hamlet (dir. Carey Perloff), and The Critic (dir. Mark Rucker). New York theater credits include The Happy Prince at The Kitchen and Songs for New York with Mabou Mines (dir. Ruth Maleczech). Film credits include Death to the Tinman (2007 Sundance Film Festival) and Cave Flower (Seattle International Film Festival, 2008). Holman has performed self-written work at venues all around New York City, including the Knitting Factory, Galapagos Art Space, and the Bowery Poetry Club.

CLAIRE LAUTIER* (Aricie) made her Stratford Shakespeare Festival debut this season as Aricie in Phèdre. New York credits include The Waverly Gallery; I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change; and Henry VI. She also appeared in the national tour of Copenhagen. Regionally he has performed at the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Pioneer Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Walnut Street Theatre, George Street Playhouse, The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, The Laguna Playhouse, and others. Television credits include Law & Order, Law & Order: SVU, Hope & Faith, and Sex and the City. Arbuckle is a graduate of Duke University and The Juilliard School.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States
†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2010
include Edward II and The Revenger’s Tragedy (Red Bull Theater), The Dining Room (Keen Company, Drama Desk Award), and Hedda Gabler and Chaucer in Rome (Broadway and Lincoln Center Theater). Regional and international credits include Lady Anne Neville in Richard III and Roxane in Cyrano de Bergerac (Shakespeare Theatre Company), Love’s Labour’s Lost (Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare Theatre Company), and many roles at theaters including centerstage, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and The New Jersey Shakespeare Festival. Lautier can be seen in the films 25/8, Ghost Town, Confessions of a Shopaholic, Elf, House of D, and By Courier (Academy Award nomination, 2001) and on the television shows 3 lbs, Grey’s Anatomy, Numbers, Law & Order, Law & Order: SVU, All My Children, and Guiding Light. She is an honors graduate of Duke University and The Juilliard School.

MAIRIN LEE* (Ismène) recently appeared in the A.C.T. mainstage production of A Christmas Carol. She has also appeared in A.C.T. M.F.A. Program productions of Her Naked Skin, Sweet Charity, The Critic, Macbeth, The Increased Difficulty of Concentration, Hamlet, Clothes for a Summer Hotel, The Diviners, and The Debutante. Other Bay Area credits include Pericles with California Shakespeare Theater and the world premiere of The Farm with the Shotgun Players. Before coming to A.C.T., she received her B.A. in theater arts and communication from Boston College, where she was seen in The King Stag, Candide, Sylvia, and Abingdon Square.

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ROBERTA MAXWELL* (Oenone) celebrates her sixth decade of involvement with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, where she began her career as an apprentice under Sir Tyrone Guthrie. Roles include Lady Macbeth, Rosalind, Olivia, and Nina in Robin Phillips’s 1980 production of The Seagull, starring Maggie Smith. Honors in New York include two OBIE Awards (A Whistle in the Dark and Ashes), a Drama League Award (Slag), a Helen Hayes nomination, a Villager Award (Mary Stuart, dir. Des McAnuff), and a Carbonelle Award (national tour of Lettuce and Lovage, starring Julie Harris). Maxwell has played leading roles in theaters across the United States, including the Ahmanson Theatre (Pygmalion), The Old Globe (Othello and Rashomon), Seattle Repertory Theatre (Saint Joan; dir. John Hirsch), and Connecticut Shakespeare (Juliet and Helena). Broadway credits include Equus, Our Town, and The Carpetbaggers’ Children. Off-Broadway credits include Stevie (Manhattan Theatre Club), Queen Margaret (Classic Stage Company), and The Cripple of Inishmaan (The Public Theater). Film and television includes Popeye, Dead Man Walking, Brokeback Mountain, Warehouse 13, and Copper.

TOM McCAMUS’s* (Theseus) ninth season with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival saw him playing Vershinin in Three Sisters, Justice Overdo in Bartholomew Fair, and Theseus in Phèdre. Recent credits include Misery (The Canadian Stage Company), An Ideal Husband and
Who's Who

The Comedy of Errors (Stratford Shakespeare Festival), The Unanswered Question (National Arts Centre), Thom Pain (Tarragon Theatre, Dora Mavor Moore Award nomination), and Mathilde (Nightwood Theatre). Film and television credits include The Sweet Hereafter (dir. Atom Egoyan), Long Day's Journey into Night (dir. David Wellington), Possible Worlds (dir. Robert Lepage), and, most recently, Cairo Time (dir. Ruba Nadda). McCamus has received a Dora Award for Best Actor for Abundance (Theatre Plus), a Genie Award for Best Actor for I Love a Man in Uniform (dir. David Wellington), and a Gemini Award and an ACTRA Award for Best Actor for Waking Up Wally: The Walter Gretzky Story (dir. Dean Bennett).

SEANA MCKENNA* (Phèdre) celebrates 30 years as a professional actor in more than 100 productions across Canada and the United States and 18 seasons with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. She has played 20 of Shakespeare’s leading ladies, including his wife in the one-woman show Shakespeare’s Will at Stratford. Most recently, she performed solo in the Canadian premiere of The Year of Magical Thinking at the Belfry Theatre, reprising the title role of Medea (Manitoba Theatre Company [MTC]/Mirvish Productions), and starred in Doubt: A Parable (The Canadian Stage Company). Favorite roles include Blanche Dubois, Eliza Doolittle, Maggie the Cat, Masha, Hedda Gabler, Amanda Wingfield, Amanda Pryme, Antigone, and Dotty Otley. Her acting honors include a Jessie Richardson Theatre Award for Wit (Vancouver Playhouse/CanStage), a Genie Award for The Hanging Garden, and Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Saint Joan (Theatre}

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Subscriptions to Words on Plays are available at a discounted price that includes postage for mailing each issue to your home before you see the show. Individual issues of Words on Plays for each production are also available for purchase in the theater lobby and online at act-sf.org. For subscriptions to Words on Plays call 415.749.2250, and email wordsonplays@act-sf.org for more information.
Who’s Who

Plus/National Arts Centre) and Orpheus Descending (MTC/Mirvish). Her directorial debut, New Globe Theatre’s Valley Song, received five Doras, including Outstanding Direction.

SHARON LOCKWOOD* (Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T. in numerous productions, most recently War Music, Philistines, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, The Government Inspector, Hedda Gabler, and A Christmas Carol (2005–09). She originated the role of the 200-year-old woman in the Berkeley Repertory Theatre/La Jolla Playhouse coproduction of Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell, which she also performed in Los Angeles (San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award). Lockwood appeared at the Mark Taper Forum in the world premiere of Nickel and Dimed as Barbara, a role she originated at INTIMAN Theatre in Seattle under Bartlett Sher’s direction. Other theater credits include a 21-year association with Berkeley Repertory Theatre and work with The Old Globe, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, the Alley Theatre, Missouri Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Pacific Alliance Stage Company, and California Shakespeare Theater. She was also a longtime member of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Film and television work includes Mrs. Doubtfire, Midnight Caller, Vonnegut Stories, and The Long Road Home.

TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER’s (Translator/Adaptor) plays include The Grace of Mary Traverse (1985), Our Country’s Good (The Royal Court Theatre/Broadway; Tony Award nomination, 1988 Laurence Olivier Award for Play of the Year, 1991 New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for Best New Foreign Play), The Love of the Nightingale (1989; Eileen Anderson Central Television Drama Award), Three Birds Alighting on a Field (1991 Writers’ Guild Award for Best West End Play, 1991 Drama Critics’ Circle Award, and 1992 Susan Smith Blackburn Award), The Break of Day (1995), After Darwin (1998), Dianne (1999), The Ash Girl (2000), Credible Witness (2001), Galileo’s Daughter (2004), Arden City (2008), and The Line (2009). Translations and adaptations include Marivaux’s False Admissions and Successful Strategies (1983), Ariane Mnouchkine’s Mephisto (1986), Sophocles’ The Theban Plays (1991), Euripides’ Hecuba (1995; A.C.T.), Molière’s The Misanthrope and The Heiress (1996), and The Millenium Bridge (2001). In 2006, Wertenbaker’s adaptation of Andrea Camilleri’s La Clausura (1995) was performed at the International Shakespeare Festival in Padua and at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. She has also adapted plays by Luigi Pirandello, Pirro Bello, and Federico Luchini. Her stage works have received productions in 17 countries as well as numerous productions in the United States. Wertenbaker is also a playwright and director with a number of plays, including Help Me to Do Wrong (1999), with Olympia Dukakis and Laila Robins; ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, directed by David Arquette. He received his B.F.A. in theater from the University of Evansville and his M.F.A. in acting from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program.

CHRISTINA PODDUBIUK (Scenic and Costume Designer) has designed 16 Stratford Shakespeare Festival productions over 12 seasons, including All’s Well That Ends Well in 2008, Hamlet, Love’s Labour’s Lost, Carousel, Memoir, Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and She Stoops to Conquer. Shaw Festival designs include A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Circle, Summer and Smoke, Major Barbara, The Heiress, A Christmas Carol, Wildness!, Widowers’ Houses, Candida, Picnic, Heartbreak House, The Madras House, Lady Windermere’s Fan, and The Chocolate Soldier. For Soulpepper Theatre Company’s 1998 inaugural season, she designed Don Carlos and The Misanthrope, and, more recently, Travesties, Ring around the Moon, Mary Stuart, and King Lear. Her U.S. credits include The Tempest and The Philanderer (Oregon Shakespeare Festival) and Othello and Much Ado About Nothing (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre). Poddubiuik is an honors graduate of McGill University and the National Theatre School.

JAMES F. INGALLS (Lighting Designer) returns to A.C.T., where he has designed The Tosca Project at Yerba Buena, A Mother, The Three Sisters, Buried Child, For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, Goodnight Children Everywhere, Glengarry Glen Ross, The Invention of Love, and The Duchess of Malfi. For Berkeley Repertory Theatre he has designed after the quake, Yellowman, and How I Learned to Drive. Other work in San Francisco includes San Francisco Ballet’s 75th Anniversary New Works Festival; Mark Morris’s Sylvia, Maelstrom, Pacific, and Sandpaper Ballet; Silver Ladders, choreographed by Helgi Tomasson (San Francisco Ballet);

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John Adams’s *Doctor Atomic* and *The Death of Klinghoffer*, both directed by Peter Sellars (San Francisco Opera); and *Kafka Fragments, Platée, The Hard Nut*, and *L’Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato* (Cal Performances/Zellerbach). Recent projects include *Brief Encounters* for the Paul Taylor Dance Company and *The Tales of Hoffman* at The Metropolitan Opera. He often collaborates with Melanie Rios Glaser and The Wooden Floor dancers in Santa Ana.

**David Lang** (*Composer*), one of America’s most performed and honored composers, is the recipient of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in Music for *the little match girl passion*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the vocal ensemble Theater of Voices and directed by Paul Hillier. His recent works include *writing on water* for the London Sinfonietta, with libretto and visuals by English filmmaker Peter Greenaway; *the difficulty of crossing a field*—a fully staged opera for Kronos Quartet, staged by Carey Perloff at A.C.T.; *loud love songs*, a concerto for the percussionist Evelyn Glennie; and the oratorio *Shelter*, with cocomposers Michael Gordon and Julia Wolfe, at the Next Wave Festival of Brooklyn Academy of Music, staged by Ridge Theater and featuring the Norwegian vocal ensemble Trio Mediaeval. Lang is cofounder and coartistic director of New York’s legendary music festival Bang on a Can.

**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 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, 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.

**Kimberly Mark Webb** (*Stage Manager*) is in his 16th season at A.C.T., where his recent credits include *War Music, Rock ‘n Roll, Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Blood Knot*, and *Sweeney Todd*. In addition to a long association with Berkeley...

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Reperatory Theatre, other work includes productions for Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, Boston’s Huntington Theatre Company, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and Aurora Theatre Company. He served as production stage manager at Theatre Three in Dallas for six years.

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

The STRATFORD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL (Coproducer), located in Stratford, Ontario, is the leading classical theater in North America. The festival presents a seven-month repertory season of 12 to 16 plays in four theaters, featuring the works of Shakespeare and other great classical writers, as well as the best in musical theater and contemporary drama, welcoming more than 500,000 visitors each year between the months of April and November. Founded as a summer Shakespeare festival in 1952 by Stratford-born journalist Tom Patterson, with Tyrone Guthrie as its first artistic director, the festival presented its first season in 1953 under a canvas tent, on a revolutionary thrust stage created by internationally renowned designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch. This stage proved as influential as the festival itself. Revolutionizing the performance of classical and contemporary theater in our time, it provided the inspiration for several other stages throughout the world, including those of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and the Chichester Festival Theatre in England. In 1957, that stage was incorporated into a permanent facility, the Festival Theatre (now seating 1,824 patrons), with three more venues added in subsequent years: the 1,093-seat Avon Theatre, 487-seat Tom Patterson Theatre, and the 260-seat Studio Theatre. The festival operates its own in-house artist training school, the Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre, founded in 1998. It also offers a range of activities beyond the stage, including concerts, discussions, lectures, and tours of its backstage facilities and costume warehouse, which is one of the three largest in the world.

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What It Means to Be an A.C.T. Annual Fund Donor

Three years ago A.C.T. embarked on a groundbreaking new production—The Tosca Project—a radically original fusion of movement and theater that will have its world premiere in June. Creating this type of large-scale new work is a huge undertaking for A.C.T., one that is made possible with the support of members of A.C.T.’s Annual Fund.

Harold and Charlotte Davis

A.C.T. subscribers and Annual Fund donors since 1968, met at the Trinity Methodist Church in Berkeley, California, and, finding a shared interest in Shakespeare, enrolled in a Cal extension class. Theater has been a strong bond that they’ve shared for many years. Mrs. Davis explains why A.C.T. continues to be so important to them:

Harold and I truly credit A.C.T. with keeping us connected in our marriage these past 41 years. It’s so special when the lights go down and the curtain opens and we focus on issues of humanity, the universal issues that cross all ages and social groups, and get to see things from a new perspective. We are of modest means, and we’ve always thought that if everyone gave a little, in the end there would be a lot! We’ve grown our giving from $10 in 1968 to $150 this year for The Tosca Project. We pride ourselves on being generous, but we are closely tied to so many organizations—our church, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer International, our colleges—and in each case we only give what we can afford. But we give something every year. When a lot of people give a little, it makes a big difference.

Mrs. Davis, an educator with a doctorate in education from The University of San Francisco, still teaches in the classroom. Mr. Davis, the first City Land Surveyor in Hayward, is now retired, but still participates in the California Land Surveyors Association on the legislative and scholarship committees. As members of The Tosca Project: A San Francisco Movement, Mr. and Mrs. Davis look forward to participating in the production’s development process throughout the rest of the season at exclusive donor tours and events.

Information about the Annual Fund and The Tosca Project: A San Francisco Movement is available in the lobby of the theater, online at act-sf.org/toscamovement, and by calling Liv Nilssen, Manager, Individual & Alumni Affairs, at 415.439.2450.
First Look series and at New York has received workshops in A.C.T.'s Flood Play Service. Her play was coproduced by A.C.T. and Magic York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre, Luminescence Dating premiered in New The Colossus of Rhodes (Susan Smith West Coast premiere of her own play The Difficulty of Crossing a Field Answer No for an premiere of Marc Blitzstein's 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 premiers 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 and 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 most recently directed a major production of Phèdre (translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and is currently developing a new dance-theater piece, The Tosa 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.
Be a part of *The Tosca Project*, participate in the development process, and help to produce the play with your A.C.T. Annual Fund contribution. You’ll get an inside look—from the directors, actors, and dancers in rehearsal to the set, lighting, and costume designers at work in our shops—and learn what it takes to bring a new large-scale work to the stage.

*Tosca Trivia!* What film actor is infamous for trashing and then refelting the pool table in Tosca Café’s notorious back room? Not sure? To find out, visit act-sf.org/toscamovement and log in into the membership page, where you can find the answer, as well as blog posts and photos from *The Tosca Project*.

*The Tosca Project: A San Francisco Movement* is illustrative of the direct costs of producing a show at A.C.T. All gifts will support *The Tosca Project* as well as the rest of the 2009–10 season and Annual Fund.

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Thank you Annual Fund donors! Your longstanding support, year after year, makes an immeasurable difference to A.C.T. and the work we do. Being able to count on your generosity allows us to take artistic risks, produce the best possible work on our stage, and train the next generation of theater artists. **What will happen to this wonderful legacy of support in future generations when you are no longer here to give?**

Endowing your annual gift through your will or other estate plans is a wonderful way to continue your current level of giving after your lifetime and will make you an honored member of A.C.T.’s Prospero Society.

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- Recognition in A.C.T. publications

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Contact Paul Knudsen at 415.439.2353 or pknudsen@act-sf.org to learn more.
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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 artistic development of A.C.T.'s season by attending production meetings and taking part in numerous behind-the-scenes opportunities. We are privileged to recognize these members' generosity during the November 1, 2008–November 30, 2009, period. For information about membership, please contact Paul Knudsen at 415.439.2353 or pknudsen@act-sf.org.

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The following members of the A.C.T. community made gifts in memory and in honor of friends, colleagues, and family members during the November 1, 2008—November 30, 2009, period.

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As A.C.T. is both a cultural and an educational institution, many employers will match individual employee contributions to the theater. The following corporate matching gift programs honor their employees’ support of A.C.T., multiplying the impact of those contributions.

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Phèdre 33
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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.

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

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

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

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

A.C.T. is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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