

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

VIGIL

Written and directed by MORRIS PANYCH



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ABOUT A.C.T.

KEVIN BERNER



AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, 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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American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.

Edward Hastings
Artistic Director 1986–92

A.C.T. Box Office
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A.C.T. Website
act-sf.org

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KEVIN BERNE



Dear Friends,

With this production of *Vigil*, we are delighted to welcome back triple threat Morris Panych, whose multiple talents (as

actor/director/playwright) have been put to use in a dauntingly rich series of theatrical successes. We first met Morris during *The Overcoat*, a memorable piece of physical storytelling that he conceived and directed with fellow Canadian artist Wendy Gorling. Morris has insatiable curiosity about human beings and their strange, often sad, surprising destinies. He writes with mordant humor about those moments in which we find ourselves at the end of our collective ropes, searching for the next step. *Vigil* is built on such a moment, as a man in a dead-end job connects with a woman who, against all odds, changes his life.

When we read *Vigil*, we realized it was the perfect way to reunite our favorite theatrical couple, Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis, seen so memorably together at A.C.T. in another Canadian play, Michel Tremblay's *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*. Between Marco and Olympia there is a trust and a delight that is palpable and freeing: they are willing to try anything and go anywhere in the rehearsal process, knowing that the other one is there as a safety net. We have loved exploring this landmark of contemporary Canadian theater together, watching these two theatrical lions revel in Panych's wit and compassion; we hope you enjoy their company as much as we have.

While the *Vigil* creative team has been cooking away in our rehearsal studios over the last few months, the rest of us have been busy imagining A.C.T.'s next season. Every year, the fine art of putting together a season becomes ever more complex, and by late February the offices of most artistic directors seem to resemble the kitchens of overworked chefs trying to create the perfect meal in chaotic and unpredictable conditions. But if a great meal is in part a celebration of the lives of the people around the table, a great year in the theater should also be a reflection of the complexity and surprise of living in the world today. There is no question that, as funding gets tighter, theater has been forced to get smaller and smaller in its scope. Yet this is a moment in which seeing the larger society onstage can be

not only thrilling but important: perhaps one of the reasons I have fought for so long to keep classical theater alive on our stage is that the chance to see multiple stories and multiple points of view at work onstage widens our lens and connects us not only to our past but to our larger present and to a shared future. The same can be true of a beautifully imagined contemporary play.

At its heart, live theater is about storytelling; what is constantly evolving is the manner in which we tell those tales. In recent years, it's become increasingly enthralling to watch the ways in which movement, music, film, simple visual effects, and the live body of the actor can all become part of the "language" of live theater. Both in our M.F.A. Program and on our stage, we keep returning at A.C.T. to the notion of "play" and transformation, from the imaginative vaudevillian quality of *Brief Encounter* to the highly theatrical *Caucasian Chalk Circle* staged by John Doyle to the evocative metaphoric barroom of our upcoming *Tosca Project*. Thus it is fitting that the cornerstone of our 2010–11 season is based on one of the most playful, memorable, moving series of "tales" ever penned: a brand new musical of Armistead Maupin's **TALES OF THE CITY**. Creating a theatrical version of Maupin's *Tales* has been a dream of ours for many years, and we think we've assembled the perfect artistic team to honor and celebrate these delicious stories (originally written as columns for the *San Francisco Chronicle*) of disparate souls finding family at 28 Barbary Lane. It is only fitting that this world premiere musical, with a book by Jeff Whitty (*Avenue Q*) and music by the Scissor Sisters' Jake Shears and John Garden, will begin in the town in which these tales were born, with the collaboration of its beloved author, and we are thrilled that you, our A.C.T. audience, will be the first people in the country to experience it.

"Play" is never more evident than in the work of master clown Bill Irwin, who will open our 2010–11 season by directing and starring in his own riotous adaptation of Molière's **SCAPIN**, in a production that Bill envisions as a valentine to his beloved Bay Area, where he honed his exceptional clowning skills as a charter member of the Pickle Family Circus. *Scapin*, the story of a wildly transformational servant who manages to rescue love from disaster, is perfectly suited to Irwin's wide-eyed belief in the magical power of physical comedy to transcend so many differences and unite an audience of all ages and backgrounds. Indeed, this will be infectious entertainment for the whole family, a fitting sequel to the extraordinary *Fool Moon* of many seasons ago.

Equally magical, but in a much darker vein, is the pungent outrageous language of one of modern drama's greatest

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

APR 29–MAY 23

ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN

BY Alan Ayckbourn
DIRECTED BY John Rando



“Left me helpless
with hilarity”

Daily Telegraph

PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNÉ



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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

wordsmiths: Harold Pinter. Next season we are proud to celebrate the life of the late great Pinter with a major production of **THE HOMECOMING**, which I will direct, featuring our extraordinary core company and favorite guest actors in roles that seem to be written for them. Holding his own with this modern master is an extraordinary new American talent, young African American writer Tarell Alvin McCraney, whose coming-of-age play **MARCUS; or The Secret of Sweet** is part of a remarkable trilogy called *The Brother/Sister Plays*. We are particularly excited to join forces with two sister theaters across the Bay Area, Magic Theatre and Marin Theatre Company—who will produce the other two plays in the trilogy—to create a citywide introduction to this richly poetic, humorous, compassionate new voice, who tells tales of pre-Katrina Louisiana that are both deeply personal and astonishingly mythic.

Because no season at A.C.T. seems to be complete without the collaboration of visionary international artists, we follow the success of *Brief Encounter*, *Phèdre*, and *The Overcoat* with a breathtakingly original new piece of “fusion theater” created by Vancouver’s provocative Electric Company Theatre: a version of Sartre’s existential comedy **NO EXIT** featuring live film and stunning visual surprises in a nontraditional, hugely theatrical multimedia exploration of the essence of human freedom. For the final show of the season, we have several hot prospects on the fire, and you’ll be the first to know when we’ve made a final selection.

The experience of watching a story unfold in real time with the real passion and sweat of live performers inhabiting the same space as the audience is unforgettable. Nothing about live theater is “canned”: every night, the audience experiences it for the first time. And every night, there is a chance that something will change, shift, fail, surprise; as with a great sports event, the outcome is never entirely predictable. This is the moment for all of us to find new ways to connect to each other, new ways to understand the “bigger stories” of our common humanity, new ways to promote civic dialogue and cultural literacy. With *Round and Round the Garden* and *The Tosca Project* still to come, we are celebrating one of our most imaginative and successful seasons ever, and we look forward to next year with great anticipation and appetite.

Here’s to the future!

Yours,

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director

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ANNOUNCING THE 2010-11 SEASON



Bill Irwin (photo by Joan Marcus)

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 THREE

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 Tim Matheson)

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

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE VERY SPECIAL EVENTS

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

March

- 30** **Vigil Prologue** 
Featuring playwright/director Morris Panych. 5:30 p.m.
- 31** **Vigil Opening Night Dinner**  
Featuring playwright/director Morris Panych. 5:30 p.m.

April

- 1–17** **Riot, by Ursula Rani Sarma**
A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and Young Conservatory Zeum Theater
- 2** **Vigil Theater on the Couch** 
After the 8 p.m. performance
- 6** **Vigil Audience Exchange** 
After the 7 p.m. performance
- 7** **Vigil Out with A.C.T.** 
After the 8 p.m. performance
- 10** **Vigil Saturday Salon**  
Featuring A.C.T. Associate Artist and Young Conservatory Director Craig Slight. Noon
- 11** **Prospero Society Annual Brunch**
11:30 a.m.
- 11** **Vigil Audience Exchange** 
After the 2 p.m. performance
- 14** **Vigil Audience Exchange** 
After the 2 p.m. performance
- 17** **Cocktails with Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis**
After the 2 p.m. performance  
- 18** **Crystal Ball: A.C.T.'s 2010 Season Gala**
Forum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- 22** **A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program Class of 2010 Showcase**
Zeum Theater. 5 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.

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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.

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VIGIL

Written and directed by Morris Panych

Scenery and costumes by Ken MacDonald
Lighting by Alan Brodie
Sound by Alessandro Juliani and Meg Roe
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw
Assistant to the Director Shelley Carter

CAST

Kemp Marco Barricelli
Grace Olympia Dukakis

UNDERSTUDIES

Kemp—Warren David Keith; *Grace*—Joan Mankin

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Joseph Smelser, *Stage Manager*
Danielle Callaghan, *Assistant Stage Manager*

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Jack Willis, Claire Zawa

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The Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver, and Belfry Theatre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada,
co-produced the premiere production of *Vigil*.

Vigil is staged by arrangement with Pam Winter, Gary Goddard Agency,
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A PLAY FOR ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE

An Interview with *Vigil* Playwright/Director Morris Panych and Designer Ken MacDonald

BY DAN RUBIN



KEN MacDonald (LEFT) AND MORRIS PANYCH

It all began with a postnuclear cabaret in 1982. Morris Panych and Ken MacDonald were living together at the time, and they had collaborated on a musical the summer before: Panych as an actor, MacDonald as the designer. “It was pretty simplistic,” remembers Panych about the show, “and I thought, ‘If *this guy* can write *this*, I can write a musical.’” Panych was quickly tiring of being an actor and was looking for a change. MacDonald started coming home to find pages of lyrics awaiting him on the piano. He had never composed before, but neither had he designed before he was given his first professional gig. He had been a high school art teacher who was hired on a friend’s recommendation: “Ken can draw things.” So Panych was not at all surprised when his partner composed 18 songs for *Last Call: A Postnuclear Cabaret*. The musical encounter between the two survivors of a nuclear holocaust immediately became a Canadian sensation.

Musicals, however, turned out not to be Panych’s genre of choice, and around this time MacDonald was getting more and more work as a designer. Panych transitioned to writing straight plays. In 1989, he premiered *7 Stories*, which explores what Panych calls “the grotesquely wonderful and relentlessly fantastic aspects of human behavior” through the story of a suicidal man standing on the ledge of an apartment complex. The dark, absurdist comedy was Panych’s break-out success, establishing him as one of the important English Canadian voices of his generation. It was also the origin of a defining characteristic of his work: his collaboration, as both the playwright and director in the room, with MacDonald as the production’s designer. MacDonald designed the award-winning set for *7 Stories*. Since then he has designed the sets for the premieres of all of Panych’s work; in fact, he has been the designer on *all* the 50-plus shows Panych has directed.

Fascinated by existentialism and indebted to the theater of the absurd, Panych has created a body of more than 20 original plays and half a dozen adaptations. His work often explores what it is that makes life worth living in a world increasingly defined by miscommunication, mediocrity, and loneliness. The playwright tempers this heavy pursuit by imagining ridiculous protagonists—often awkward social misfits or comically curmudgeonly everymen—and issuing a relentless infusion of gallows humor and wordplay.

In no play are these tactics better showcased than *Vigil*. With its premiere in 1995, *Vigil* became another immediate Canadian hit and Panych’s most internationally produced play, translated into 19 languages. It has been seen in London’s West End and off Broadway. Although Panych’s work has often played in the United States, Panych and MacDonald had never worked as a creative team in this country before A.C.T.’s invitation to realize *Vigil* for Bay Area audiences. During preliminary rehearsals at A.C.T. last fall, we took advantage of their time in San Francisco to ask them a few questions about the show.

RUBIN: Why, of all your plays, do you think *Vigil* has had the life that it’s had?

PANYCH: I think people understand in their guts what that story is. Looking after an old relative: it’s a big problem right now, and every society has to deal with it in a fundamental way.

MACDONALD: We baby boomers are exactly in those years: All of our parents are dying right now.

PANYCH: There isn’t a single person sitting in this theater who won’t fundamentally understand what a horrible situation that is. This play is like a bloodletting for them.

RUBIN: So its cathartic?

MACDONALD: They laugh the whole way through and then they are crying.

PANYCH: It’s like they’re afraid to think those things that we all think: “Why don’t you just die?” It’s not really what you’re thinking, because, of course, you’re not thinking that. But there’s a kind of a delicious sharing of a true feeling, deep in your guts, that there is something very difficult about the situation. [Marco Barricelli’s character] Kemp is confronted head on with this problem. Every time there is a new production in another country, in another language, I think, “Wow, it’s being done in Tokyo?” But, yeah, there are old people in Tokyo and there are young people thinking, “I don’t want to deal with my parents.”

RUBIN: Was that the position you were in when you wrote *Vigil*? Were you dealing with a dying parent?

MACDONALD: My mother.

PANYCH: His mother. Your parents are fine until they can't move. The minute that happens, that illness, if you're the person [who will become the caretaker], you realize, "My life is effectively over in terms of what I thought it would be. The freedoms that I had before, I no longer have." This person is now going to take up so much time and energy and effort that you have to rethink everything.

We're just so selfish now. We're so concerned about doing our own thing, because we don't live in family groups anymore. We live in weird urban groups, so family is seen as "a problem." *Vigil* addresses that. It's a satire, essentially, but the springboard was Ken's mother becoming terribly infirm, to the degree that she couldn't move.

MACDONALD: And when my mum was in the hospital, we heard the nurse saying to this old woman in the bed beside her, "Oh, dear, your nephew isn't going to be able to come and visit you. Sorry to tell you . . . Do you want me to wipe the tears away from your eyes?" She couldn't wipe her own tears away. No one was coming to see her. I think it gave Morris the idea of [a character] writing to a relative saying, "I'm dying. Come and take care of me."

PANYCH: That scene made me really sick. It was just awful.

MACDONALD: The loneliness of it.

PANYCH: I'm really interested in a certain kind of morality. I think the theater is the best next place for moral teaching, but in a way that's not religious. In *7 Stories*, a man jumps from the ledge of a building, but his umbrella goes up and he flies to the building across the street. There's this whole notion: if your life is meaningless, then you create your own meaning, which is incredibly liberating and freeing. Your life no longer belongs to any other idea.

RUBIN: Would you say that is the difference between existentialism and nihilism?



PRELIMINARY COSTUME DESIGN MOCKUPS FOR GRACE (TOP) AND KEMP, WHICH WERE ALTERED OVER THE COURSE OF REHEARSAL, BY KEN MACDONALD

PANYCH: Yes. I'm not a nihilist at all. I believe there is some purpose, but that purpose is internal. I don't think it's a big universal purpose. I think there's a purpose for people to be on the earth, but I think it is to do some good things while they are here. That's the moral lessons of these plays.

RUBIN: How would you describe the style of *Vigil*?

PANYCH: *Vigil* is naturalism that explodes onto a large scale. The internal part of *Vigil* is very naturalistic and then, as it goes out, it becomes more and more absurd. We have to tell the audience that when the lights come up they aren't watching TV. They're not watching a real story. They're watching a fable. They are watching something bigger than life. It's supposed to be like a dream or a strange little book you read. It's supposed to take you somewhere outside yourself.

RUBIN: Is there anything inherently "Canadian" about your work? Where the plays come from? Where the designs come from?

MACDONALD: I don't think so. We got an amazing Canada Council for the Arts grant in 1991—we both got \$18,000 to go to Europe to see theater. We went to Europe for four months and we saw 88 plays and it was pretty incredible. We saw them all together and I kept a journal. It's been a reference point for years.

PANYCH: I've always tried hard, when I'm writing plays, not to identify a place.

MACDONALD: Or time.

PANYCH: But especially a place.

MACDONALD: [In *Vigil*,] I don't want the newspaper that Kemp reads to say "San Francisco" on it. *Vigil* is taking place now, but you'll see nothing onstage that couldn't have been there since 1956. Same with most of [Morris's] plays: they have almost a classic American mid-century look, but it isn't in Canada, it isn't in the States, and it isn't in Europe. It's just anywhere, everywhere.

A.C.T. WOMEN CELEBRATE V-DAY

As many people were preparing to celebrate Cupid's holiday last month, the women of A.C.T. were gearing up for a very different kind of V-Day by presenting a reading of Eve Ensler's groundbreaking

Vagina Monologues. A series of theatrical vignettes that began as a one-woman show performed by Ensler off-Broadway in 1996, **The Vagina Monologues** has since become an international phenomenon, translated into 45 languages and performed in more than 130 countries, raising awareness about female sexuality and violence against women around the world.

Presented in the American Conservatory Theater's intimate Garret room in two late-night showings, the event was produced

by A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program students **Emily Kitchens** (class of 2010), **Mairin Lee** (class of 2010), **Ashley Wickett** (class of 2011), and **Christina Lorenn Elmore** (class of 2012) for the



A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENT MAIRIN LEE PERFORMING THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES

benefit of V-Day (Ensler's fundraising and awareness organization) and **La Casa de Las Madres**, a San Francisco shelter for women and children. The students recruited women from throughout A.C.T.—including Artistic Director Carey Perloff, A.C.T. Associate Artist René Augesen, Bay Area actor Barbara Oliver, and an array of administrative staff members and other students—to perform the monologues, supported by male students and staff who proudly dubbed themselves “V-Men.” Audiences turned up from all over the Bay Area, contributing a net of almost \$2,000 (double their original goal) to both beneficiaries.

The event was the brainchild of Kitchens, who organized V-Day events while an undergrad at the University of Evansville. “The first time in my life I ever felt empowered by being a woman was being a part of this play,” she says. “When I got to A.C.T., I thought: The leaders of this organization are women. We should be celebrating that. It's so easy to feel helpless in the world, hearing about what's going on in the Congo, or in the Tenderloin, or anywhere. How can we help? We have a space, we have people who love to do theater, and we have powerful, beautiful women—we can pitch in, a little bit.”

For A.C.T. staff members, many of whom had never performed for an audience, the V-Day event was a chance to come together to support an important cause. “It was incredibly powerful to have women from all corners of the A.C.T. community together,” says **A.C.T. Conservatory Coordinator Hannah Cohen**.

“I felt like there weren't any boundaries, like student/teacher/administrator, or actor/nonactor. And both nights, there wasn't even that divide between the audience and the performers. It was just this incredible communal event.” Kitchen adds: “That's one of the most amazing things to me about *The Vagina Monologues*—it's not about the performance, per se. Some of the staff were terrified out of their minds, but they got up there and did it! And they were all breathtaking performances. But at its heart, the experience was about giving. It was so unselfish. And very humbling.”

Kitchens and her fellow students worked in consultation with A.C.T. administrative staff across every department, learning as they went the nitty-gritty details of making theater happen. With the support of a recent grant from The James Irvine Foundation, A.C.T. is developing a program to support students in creating their own entrepreneurial performance opportunities throughout the Bay Area, and events like this are important early steps in that process. “This is exactly what we want the students to be doing—producing their own work,” says **A.C.T. Administrative Director Thomas Proehl**. “I helped them set specific goals, and gave them the understanding that we are behind them, but ultimately, it was up to them to make it happen. They did an incredible job.”

A RIOTOUS URGE TO CREATE

In April the A.C.T. Conservatory presents the world premiere of **Riot**, a new play by award-winning Irish/Indian playwright **Ursula Rani**



PLAYWRIGHT URSULA RANI SARMA WITH M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENT ALEX UBOKUDOM IN BATH, ENGLAND

Sarma. In a coproduction between our Young Conservatory (YC) and Master of Fine Arts Program, *Riot* will feature M.F.A. Program students from the class of 2010 alongside YC actors, telling a story that explores the relationships of eight young people in a residency clinic for emotionally disturbed teens. Sarma weaves the relationships among the patients, their doctor, and their nurses into a moving portrait of the deep human need for connection, understanding, and freedom.

“Ursula's voice is fresh and decidedly Irish, with muscle and illuminative language,” says **YC Director Craig Slaughter**. “She has a sharp ear for the concerns of young people and her youthful characters are detailed, complex, and nuanced.”

Riot comes to A.C.T. as part of an ongoing collaboration between our YC and the United Kingdom's Theatre Royal Bath (TRB), who have been co-commissioning new plays from U.K. and U.S. writers for young audiences annually since 2002.

Last summer M.F.A. and YC actors traveled to Bath for a two-week developmental workshop of *Riot* with Sarma. While there, the A.C.T. students stayed with the families of actors in TRB's youth theater program; after A.C.T. premieres *Riot* in San Francisco, the TRB actors will produce the play in Bath. Next year the process will reverse, as TRB actors travel to A.C.T. to workshop a new play by a U.S. writer that will later premiere in Bath.

"Lee Lyford [TRB's youth theater director] and I were very keen on the sociological benefits of sharing the art form, creating new work that crosses cultures on an international level, and the growth and enlightenment that comes from living with people from a different culture," says Slaight. "The benefits from this learning base are enormous on so many fronts. We are raising the bar on the quality of work that young people engage with in the theater."

Riot is the seventh play developed in this unique collaboration, which allows students access to the process of play development on a level rarely seen in young actor training. "The average teen sees plays in finished books, and has no real sense of the writer's role in the theater," says Slaight. "I've never seen teens more excited than they are when working with a writer on a new play—eyes wide open, with such unconditional reverence for the writer."

Slaight hopes to continually cultivate that reverence in the upcoming generation of theater makers. "Without new work the theater would die. Re-inventions of the classics have a great place in our collective societal understanding of the human experience. But we must also grapple in the moment with the artists of today. It's our responsibility to lead the way in offering a place for new work to grow and flourish. In our experience training young actors at A.C.T., it is more than obvious that working on new plays is at the heart of the seminal urge to create."

ALUMNI AT A GLANCE

© MICHAEL ABRAMS



CHRISTOPHER TOCCO WITH MEREDITH NAPOLITANO IN *THE SATIN SLIPPER*.

Tony Award winner **Anika Noni Rose**, star of Disney's hit film *The Princess and the Frog*, hosted the 41st NAACP Image Awards, which aired on Fox on February 26; she will also headline the *Crystal Ball*, A.C.T.'s singular season

gala, on April 18 in San Francisco. **Elizabeth Banks '98** hosted the Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards portion of the Oscars on February 20. Actor-writer **Daniel Beaty '01** returns to LA's Geffen Playhouse with his new solo show, *Through the Night*, March 16–April 4. **Christopher Tocco '09** is in *The Satin Slipper*, by Paul Claudel, at The Storm Theatre in association with Blackfriars Repertory Theatre in NYC.

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directorscircle

A.C.T.'S DIRECTORS CIRCLE IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF *VIGIL*

The Directors Circle will attend an exclusive reception with actors Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis on April 17, 2010, as a thank you for sponsoring *Vigil* and playing a leading role in the artistic success of A.C.T.

A.C.T. Directors Circle members make annual contributions of \$1,500 to \$9,999, demonstrating their passion for live theater. By bringing innovative, groundbreaking productions to the Bay Area, producing compelling reinterpretations of classical works, and providing Bay Area students with educational experiences and exposure to live theater, Directors Circle members know they are actively strengthening the future of the theatrical art form.



ACTOR OLYMPIA DUKAKIS WITH DIRECTORS CIRCLE MEMBERS DALE IKEDA AND SUE YUNG LI



ACTOR MARCO BARRICELLI AND A.C.T. ARTISTIC CONSULTANT BEATRICE BASSO AT A DIRECTORS CIRCLE EVENT

Each season, Directors Circle members collectively choose a production to sponsor; this year they overwhelmingly elected to support *Vigil* and honor the beloved Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis. To thank them for the critical role the Directors Circle plays at A.C.T., members are offered many opportunities to witness the artistic process and meet the artists behind the production. In addition to the exclusive invitation to meet the cast of *Vigil*, members will be welcomed at a **Technical Rehearsal** in the theater, the **Opening Night Dinner** with playwright and director Morris Panych, and a **Saturday Salon** and luncheon with an A.C.T. artist.

These are among the numerous benefits and privileges Directors Circle members receive throughout the year to ensure they experience each season to the fullest.

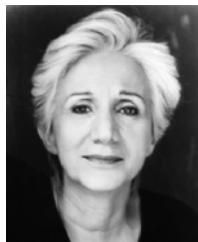
For more information about *Cocktails with Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis* and the other benefits of Directors Circle membership, please contact Liv Nilssen, A.C.T. Manager of Individual and Alumni Relations, at 415.439.2450 or lnilssen@act-sf.org, or visit www.act-sf.org/donorlevels.

WHO'S WHO IN VIGIL



MARCO BARRICELLI (Kemp), artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz, has been an actor, director, and educator since 1982.

After eight seasons with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, he became an associate artist at A.C.T., where he directed and taught in the Master of Fine Arts Program. His A.C.T. performance credits include roles in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *The Real Thing* (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award), *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Three Sisters*, *American Buffalo* (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award), *Buried Child*, *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, *The Beard of Avon*, *Celebration* and *The Room*, *Enrico IV* (Dean Goodman Award), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Dean Goodman Award), *The Invention of Love* (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award; Dean Goodman Award), *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Mary Stuart*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *The Rose Tattoo* (Drama-Logue Award), among others. He has also worked on Broadway and regionally with Long Wharf Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe, and South Coast Repertory, among others. Television appearances include *L.A. Law* and a recurring role on the NBC series *The Book of Daniel*. Teaching acting has also taken him abroad to work with the Accademia Nazionale d'arte Drammatica Silvio D'Amico in Rome and the Prima del Teatro in Italy. He is a Fox Fellow and graduate of The Juilliard School.



OLYMPIA DUKAKIS (*Grace*) last appeared at A.C.T. in *A Mother* (2004); she has also appeared at A.C.T. in the title role of

Hecuba (1995 and 1998), the world premiere of Leslie Ayzavian's *Singer's Boy* (1997), and Michel Tremblay's *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again* (also with Marco Barricelli, 2002). She has worked on more than 200 productions on and off Broadway and in regional theaters throughout the United States. Her most recent theater credits include *The Singing Forest* at The Public Theater; an adaptation of *The Tempest*; *Rose*, by Martin Sherman, at the National Theatre in London and on Broadway; and *Credible Witness*, by Timberlake Wertenbaker, at the Royal Court Theatre, London. She received two OBIE Awards for Brecht's *Man Is Man* and Christopher Durang's *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*. Her many film credits include *Moonstruck* (Academy Award and Golden Globe Award), *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *Away from Her*. Television credits include the *Tales of the City* trilogy (Emmy Award nominations). Dukakis was a founding member of the Whole Theatre, where she was artistic director for 19 years, and has taught acting at Columbia University, in New York University's graduate program (15 years), and in workshops throughout the United States and Europe. She is married to actor Louis Zorich.



WARREN DAVID KEITH (*Understudy*) has been seen at A.C.T. in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Arcadia*, *Machinal*, and *Mary Stuart*. Other credits

include *Heartbreak House* and *Rhinoceros* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *The Winter's Tale*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*, at California Shakespeare Theater; *Indiscretions*, *Life*

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.

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X3, and *The Good German* at Marin Theatre Company; *Spinning into Butter*, *The Learned Ladies of Park Avenue*, and *Twelfth Night* at TheatreWorks; *Death Defying Acts*, *A Life in the Theatre*, and *Hysteria* at Aurora Theatre Company; *A Common Vision* and *The Rules of Charity* at Magic Theatre; and *Othello* and *Twelfth Night* at the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival. His film appearances include *Haiku Tunnel*, *Raising Arizona*, *Fargo*, and *The Big Lebowski*.



JOAN MANKIN
(*Understudy*) has been seen at A.C.T. in *The Government Inspector*, *Travesties*, *The Gamester*, *The Three Sisters*, and *Dinner at Eight*. She

played Anne in the Robert Wilson/Tom Waits collaboration *The Black Rider* at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. She is an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Ideal Husband*, *Uncle Vanya*, and, most recently, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other recent roles include Barbara in *boom* at Marin Theatre Company, the title role of *Sylvia's Advice on How to Age Gracefully on the Planet Denial* at Ashby Stage, Mother in *Dead Man's Cell Phone* at SF Playhouse, and Henny in *Bosoms and Neglect* at Aurora Theatre Company. Film credits include *Bee Season*, *Made in America*, and *Desert Hearts*. She has directed for Magic Theatre, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, and the Bricks and Earth Circus of Calgary, as well as performances for the San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival filmed for HBO. Mankin is on the faculty of the Clown Conservatory of the San Francisco Circus Center and in 2008 went to China to teach clowning to professional acrobats.

MORRIS PANYCH (*Playwright/Director*) is probably best known for his work on *The Overcoat*, which he co-created and -directed with Wendy Gorling. He adapted the play and directed it for film. The production has now toured to Britain, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Other work includes several productions for Tarragon Theatre—notably his own plays, including *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl*, winner of Canada's prestigious Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding production and direction, as well as a Governor General's Award for playwriting. Directing credits for The Canadian Stage Company include *Hysteria*, *Amadeus*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Vigil*, and, most recently, *Take Me Out*. In Vancouver, he has directed more than 50 plays, including a celebrated adaptation of *The Imaginary Invalid* and an award-winning production of *She Loves Me* for the Arts Club Theatre Company. When Panych is not directing plays, he is writing them. So far he has penned more than 20 plays, many of which have gone on past their initial productions to national and international success—most notably *Vigil*, which to date has been translated into 19 languages and received highly praised productions in London's West End (Wyndham's Theatre) and in Paris at Théâtre La Bruyère. He has also directed for television (*Da Vinci's Inquest*) and opera (*Susannah* and *The Threepenny Opera*, both at Vancouver Opera).

KEN MACDONALD's (*Scenic and Costume Designer*) most recent design credits include *Parfumerie* with Souleppper Theatre Company and *The Trespassers* and *Moby Dick* for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Other credits include *A Little Night Music*, *Hotel Peccadillo*, and *Design for Living* (Shaw Festival Theatre); *The Overcoat* (Vancouver Playhouse

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Who's Who

Theatre Company, The Canadian Stage Company [CanStage], and Canadian, U.S., and U.K. tours; *Habeas Corpus* and *Vigil* (CanStage); *Glengarry Glen Ross*, 'night, Mother, Blithe Spirit, and *The Government Inspector* (Soulpepper); *Benevolence*, *The Dishwashers*, *Earshot*, and *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl* (Tarragon Theatre); *The Constant Wife*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Dishwashers*, *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Hamlet*, and *Vigil* (Arts Club Theatre Company, Vancouver); *The Amorous Adventures of Anatol*, *Fronteras Americanas*, *The History of Things to Come*, *Death and the Maiden*, and *Waiting for the Parade* (Vancouver Playhouse); and *Susannah* and *The Threepenny Opera* (Vancouver Opera). Upcoming projects include *Art* with CanStage, *The Doctor's Dilemma* for the Shaw Festival, and *Faith Healer* for Soulpepper.

ALAN BRODIE (*Lighting Designer*) is a Canadian designer based in Vancouver. A frequent collaborator of Morris Panych and Ken MacDonald, he was responsible for the Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award-winning lighting design for *The Overcoat*, which played at A.C.T. in 2005. He has worked for most regional theater companies across Canada, as well as the Shaw Festival Theatre and the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, the Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, Pacific Opera Victoria, and The National Ballet of Canada. He has received six Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards for lighting design (Vancouver), as well as numerous nominations in Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto. Upcoming productions include a new contemporary dance work for Nederlands Dans Theater and *The Doctor's Dilemma* and *Age of Arousal* for the Shaw Festival. Most recently he

was part of the lighting design team for the opening ceremonies for the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

MEG ROE and ALESSANDRO JULIANI (*Sound Designers*) are a Vancouver-based artistic team who began their partnership in 2003. Since then they have had the privilege of working together at theaters across Canada. Recent collaborations include *The Madonna Painter* (Centaur Theatre Company, Montreal); *The Miracle Worker*, *Vincent in Brixton*, and *Equus* (Playhouse Theatre Company, Vancouver); *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Romeo and Juliet* (Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, Vancouver); *Vigil* (Theatre Calgary); *Skydive* (Realwheels, Vancouver; national



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tour); *Metamorphoses* (The Citadel Theatre, Edmonton); *Life Savers* (Ruby Slippers Theatre, Vancouver); *The Palace Grand* (Electric Company Theatre, Vancouver); *Toronto, Mississippi* (Theatre Aquarius, Hamilton, Ontario); and *Black Comedy* (Arts Club Theatre Company, Vancouver). Upcoming, Roe will direct and Juliani will star in *Henry V* at Bard on the Beach.

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.

JOSEPH SMELSER (*Stage Manager*) has stage-managed *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*, *The Government Inspector*, *The Circle*, and *The Rivals* at A.C.T. He formerly served as resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, production manager for Aurora Theatre Company, and production stage manager for the California Shakespeare Festival. For eight years, Smelser worked

at Seattle Repertory Theatre, where he was the production stage manager, staff producer, and associate artistic director for Sharon Ott. He was also the stage manager for the reading of *The World of Nick Adams* at Davies Symphony Hall, the regional theater tour of Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, and *Piano* at the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard University.

DANIELLE CALLAGHAN's (*Assistant Stage Manager*) previous A.C.T. credits include *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Souvenir*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Speed-the-Plow*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Blackbird*, and *Death in Venice*. Other favorite shows include *Mauritius* with Magic Theatre; *My Buddy Bill* and *All My Sons* with the Geffen Playhouse; *Albert Herring*, *Don Pasquale*, and *The Rape of Lucretia* with San Francisco Opera's Merola Program; and *Così fan tutte* and *Lorca, Child of the Moon* with the UCLA Department of Music.

BARBARA and GERSON BAKAR (*Executive Producers*) have been involved with A.C.T. for three decades. A New York native and former CEO of I. Magnin and Emporium-Weinstocks, Barbara has served as a trustee of A.C.T. since 1992. Gerson and Barbara have produced numerous A.C.T. plays, including *Urinetown, the Musical*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *After the War*, and *Souvenir*. Gerson, an award-winning Bay Area developer, currently serves on the board of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Barbara also serves as a director and former chair of the UCSF Foundation board and directs the **achieve** program, offering high school enrichment and scholarships.

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

BURT and DEEDEE McMURTRY

(Executive Producers) married soon after graduating from Rice University in Houston and have lived on the San Francisco peninsula most of the 52 years since. They recently produced A.C.T.'s productions of *Rock 'n' Roll*, *Happy End*, and *The Imaginary Invalid*. Both Burt and Deedee feel that the theater is an important asset to the people of the Bay Area and are pleased to support it. Deedee has played a pivotal role not only as a member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, but also as co-chair of the Producers Circle with Frannie Fleishhacker, ensuring that A.C.T. has the funds needed to produce inspiring work onstage each year. An electrical engineer by training and a venture capitalist, Burt lent his time as a member of the planning committee for *The Next Generation Campaign* and is the immediate past chair of the board of trustees of Stanford University.

PATTI and RUSTY RUEFF (Executive Producers)

are A.C.T. subscribers who have both loved and actively participated in theater their entire lives, attending various theaters together for the past two decades. After serving on the boards of regional theaters in Dallas, Texas, and Taos, New Mexico, they wanted to get involved in theater in the Bay Area, where they made their permanent home in 1998. Rusty, former CEO of the digital music commerce company SNOCAP and executive vice president of Electronic Arts (EA), joined the A.C.T. Board of Trustees in 2003 and now chairs the Committee on Trustees and Governance. Patti is a former special events consultant. She chaired A.C.T.'s wildly successful *Ruby Jubilee* in April 2007 and co-chaired the 2006 and 2008 A.C.T. galas. Patti is currently in her first term as president of the Hillsborough Auxiliary for the Family Service Agency of San Mateo County.



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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 José Rivera's *Boleros* for

the Disenchanted, Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*, 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* and *The Room*; A.C.T.-commissioned translations/adaptations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *A Mother* (based on Maxim Gorky's *Vassa Zheleznova*); Harley Granville-Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie 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 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 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.

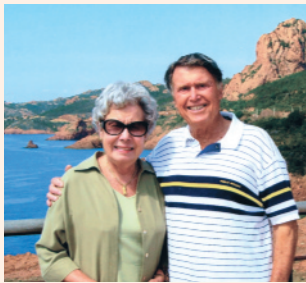
MELISSA SMITH (*Conservatory Director*) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory's Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory,

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.

For the latest
A.C.T. news and
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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER OF THE DIRECTORS CIRCLE



LOIS AND RICHARD HALLIDAY IN FRANCE



directorscircle

Richard and Lois Halliday of Orinda are proud longtime subscribers and members of A.C.T.'s Directors Circle.

Though Richard and Lois both graduated from UC Berkeley in 1947, they didn't meet until later that year at a mutual friend's house in Lake Tahoe. Sixty-two years later, the California natives live in Orinda, boasting three accomplished children, four beloved grandchildren, and four decades of attending theater at A.C.T.

Richard and Lois were amateur actors in high school and college and maintain a keen interest in the art form—just one of the reasons they appreciate A.C.T. "We enjoy the core acting company and the fact that training fantastic theater artists is a part of A.C.T.'s mission," says Richard. "We like to see performers stretching themselves in different roles, especially when they are tackling the classics. That's real acting!"

Lois adds, "In the early days, I ushered at A.C.T. to get to see the show. Now, we are fortunate to be able to give to A.C.T., and we do it because we care about the theater, believe it should exist for the long term, and know that ticket sales do not cover the whole cost of putting on the show."

"We love being a part of the Directors Circle because we feel like we are part of the A.C.T. family. Dinners before the opening night of a production are a great chance to meet other donors and the artists who are involved with making the play. We always have wonderful conversations about the work."

When they are not attending A.C.T., the Hallidays are avid world travelers whose favorite places to visit include Alaska, France, Italy, and South Africa. They are regular bridge partners, and Dick is an avid tennis player.

The Directors Circle is a group of generous donors who give between \$1,500 and \$9,999 to A.C.T. annually, playing a leading role in the artistic success of each season. For more information about the Directors Circle, please visit www.act-sf.org/donorlevels or contact Liv Nilssen, A.C.T. Manager of Individual and Alumni Affairs, at 415.439.2450 or lnilssen@act-sf.org.

MEET BEN KAHRE 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 **Ben Kahre**.

NICKNAME Benjer, BK.

BIRTHPLACE Fort Wayne, IN.

HOMETOWN Evansville, IN.

FIRST THEATER EXPERIENCE When I was five, I hid in a box covered in wrapping paper and sang a Christmas carol when they lifted me out during a nativity play.



FAVORITE THEATER EXPERIENCE

Seeing the one-person play *Underneath the Lintel* in London. At the time it blew my mind how one actor could engage me in his story so fully. It still gives me chills.

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE, I WOULD WANT TO PLAY Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

MY STORY My parents have always been very supportive and I owe a lot to them for helping me get where I am today. They knew that I always wanted to pursue further education in acting and encouraged me to make it a reality. The only question was where I wanted to go and if that school had a need for me. Being very interested in physical theater and acrobatics as well as acting, I auditioned for schools that had movement programs that interested me. I decided to come to A.C.T. because of its location in the heart of San Francisco and the constant drive for change in the organization and its community.

RANDOM FACT My birthday is on the Fourth of July. As a kid I thought the fireworks were for me . . . I cried when I learned the truth.

EDUCATION I have a bachelor of science in theater performance from the University of Evansville.

SPECIAL SKILLS Rock climbing, juggling, proficiency in following IKEA instructions, and whip-cracking circus tricks (think Indiana Jones).

HOBBIES Singing, reading, watching great classic movies, and playing football.

RECOMMENDATIONS Music: Diego Sandrin, Ernie Halter, Kings of Leon. TV: *Empire Falls*, *True Blood*, *Firefly*, and *Slings and Arrows*.

LOOKING BACK ON FIRST LOOK

This past January, A.C.T. core acting company members, faculty, staff, and students came together to workshop seven new plays by established and emerging playwrights. Some of these projects received showings in our intimate Hastings Studio Theater. These no-pressure presentations ranged from a Q & A session with Ping Chong about *The Bright Eye of the Moon* to a fully realized script-in-hand staging of Christina Anderson's *BlackTop Sky*. This is what people had to say:



The Bright Eye of the Moon
Ping Chong developed the first act of his adaptation of Chinese writer Eileen Chang's haunting story.

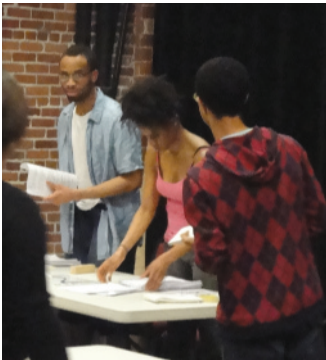
"Ping had a chance to hear and see Act I. Both were important, because Ping is interested in rhythms, both

verbal and physical. Rhythms contain meaning. Since the visual element is such a large part of his work, seeing the actors in the space helped him further imagine what he wants the world to look like and how the characters move through it."

—Michael Paller, dramaturg

"In a way there is more at stake with a work-in-progress, because anything can happen and you have the power as the actor to influence the playwright's views. This forced me to really bring my whole self in the room each day because we were such an integral part of the progression of this piece."

—Sara Hogrefe, M.F.A. Program class of 2010



BlackTop Sky
Christina Anderson explored the physical world of her play in a script-in-hand reading.

"I needed to see the play to figure out what needed to change or grow. Stephen and the cast created a fully staged reading in only a few days! Because of that process, I have a better sense of the play's pace

and rhythm. I have a stronger faith in the power of the physical narrative."

—Christina Anderson, playwright

"It was a very active/physical staged reading. I think it captured the essence of the piece beyond just the aural understanding of it. It was a joy to work as an African American artist with Christina (who is African American) on an African American play with African American students.

—Stephen Buescher, director

"I've never felt text work within me on this level. At the end of the presentation, I was spent and felt I had completed an epic journey"

—Jon Joseph Gentry, M.F.A. Program class of 2010



Title TBD
Eisa Davis began work on a new play about Isis and Osiris, air travel, and environmentalism.

"The project seemed a bit daunting at first—how do you workshop a play you haven't written? I'd never brought actors into the process so

early. But it was absolutely thrilling to see the students all, without exception, jump headfirst into the world I was beginning to sketch, populating it with their imaginations and experience. I was thoroughly impressed with their professionalism, their sense of play, their attentiveness, their commitment, and joy."

—Eisa Davis, playwright



I Dream of Chang and Eng
Philip Kan Gotanda dramatized the lives of the original Siamese twins.

"My biggest concern about the play was to what degree the text played. This is an ambitious palette I'm working with, given the number of characters, variety of

geographies, cultures, and eras evoked, and fragmented manner of storytelling. Given access to the company and students . . . I was able to hear the play without its textual largeness being sacrificed. [This allowed for] strong textual work, which included a critical restructuring of scenes. The reading told me much. In particular I was buoyed by how well the play worked. And because of that, it was clearer as to what areas needed rewriting and clarification."

—Philip Kan Gotanda, playwright

ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): A.C.T. DRAMATURG MICHAEL PALLER AND DIRECTOR/PLAYWRIGHT PING CHONG; PLAYWRIGHT EISA DAVIS; PLAYWRIGHT PHILIP KAN GOTANDA; (L TO R) M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENTS ALEX UBOKUDOM AND LAKISHA MICHELLE MAY WITH DIRECTOR STEPHEN BUESCHER. PHOTOS BY DAN RUBIN.



producerscircle

Frannie Fleishhacker, *Co-chair* * Deedee McMurtry, *Co-chair*

Producers Circle members make annual gifts of \$10,000 or more to A.C.T. Their extraordinary generosity supports season productions, actor training in our conservatory, and arts education in our community. Members are invited to participate in the 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 February 1, 2009–March 1, 2010, period. For information about membership, please contact Paul Knudsen at 415.439.2353 or pknudsen@act-sf.org.

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Randy Taradash, *Associate Director of Marketing and Promotions*
Edward Budworth, *Group Sales Representative*
Audra Davis, *Web Content Manager*
Amelia Nardinelli, *Senior Graphic Designer*
Nina Fujikawa, *Graphic Designer*
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Jack Lloyd, *Revenue Manager*
Laurie Lee, *Copywriter*
Rose Marie Hogan, *Marketing Associate*
Tim Faust, *Marketing Intern*
Samantha Mansfield, *Graphics Intern*

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Dan Rubin, *Publications & Literary Associate*
Katie May, *Intern*

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Mark C. Peters, *Subscriptions Manager*
David Engelmann, *Head Treasurer*
Lynn Skelton, *SMAT and Group Sales Treasurer*
Doris Yamasaki, *Subscriptions Coordinator*
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Tim Hilyard, *Theater Services Manager*
Eva Ramos, *House Manager*
Oliver Sutton, *Security*

Operations

Lesley Pierce, *Manager*
Len Lucas, Jeffrey Warren, *Assistant Facilities Managers*
Joe Vigil, *Facilities Crew*
Curtis Carr, Jr., Jamie McGraw, *Security*

CONSERVATORY

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Andrew Hurteau, *Director of Studio A.C.T.*
Christopher Herold, *Director of Summer Training Congress*
Jack Sharrar, *Director of Academic Affairs*
Rebecca Nestle, *Inside Out Project Coordinator*
Jerry Lopez, *Director of Financial Aid*
Hannah Cohen, *Conservatory Coordinator*
Stacy Beckley, Eliza Leoni, *Conservatory Associates*
Caresa Capaz, *Conservatory Administrative Associate*
Matt Jones, *Bursar/Payroll Administrator*

Master of Fine Arts Program Core Faculty

René Augesen, *Acting*
Nancy Benjamin, *Co-Head of Voice and Dialects*
Stephen Buescher, *Head of Movement, Director*
Jeffrey Crockett, *Head of Voice*
Manoel Felciano, *Acting, Director*
Anthony Fusco, *Acting*
Steven Anthony Jones, *Acting*
Domenique Lozano, *Acting, Director*
Frank Ottiwell, *Alexander Technique*
Michael Paller, *Director of Humanities, Director*
Jack Sharrar, Ph.D., *Theater History*
Melissa Smith, *Head of Acting, Director*

Gregory Wallace, *Director, Acting*
Jack Willis, *Acting, Director*
Jill Walmsley Zager, *Co-Head of Voice and Dialects*

M.F.A. Program Adjunct Faculty

Jane Hammett, *Singing*
Giles Haverгал, *Director*
Gregory Hoffman, *Combat/Weapons*
Philip Charles Mackenzie, *Acting on Film*
Jonathan Moscone, *Acting, Director*
Kari Prindl, *Alexander Technique*
Lisa Anne Porter, *Voice*
Robert Rutt, *Singing*
Elyse Sharfman, *Alexander Technique*

Studio A.C.T.

Rachael Adler, *Acting*
Andy Alabran, *Acting*
Frances Epsen Devlin, *Singing*
Jeffrey Draper, *Voice and Speech*
Paul Finocchiaro, *Acting*
Nick Gabriel, *Acting*
Marvin Greene, *Acting*
Jessica Heidt, *Audition Technique*
Christopher Herold, *Acting*
Greg Hubbard, *Acting*
Andrew Hurteau, *Acting*
Mark Jackson, *Movement*
W. D. Keith, *Audition Technique*
Rose Adams Kelly, *Alexander Technique*
Drew Khalouf, *Voice and Speech, Acting*
Domenique Lozano, *Shakespeare, Acting*
Trina Oliver, *Acting*
Marty Pistone, *Acting*
Lisa Anne Porter, *Acting, Shakespeare, Voice and Speech*
Mark Rafael, *Acting*
Regina Saisi, *Improvisation*
Vivian Sam, *Dance*
Naomi Sanchez, *Singing*
Barbara Scott, *Improvisation*
Lynne Soffer, *Speech, Acting, Text Work*
Damon Sperber, *Acting*
Matthew Graham Smith, *Movement*

Young Conservatory

Christina Anselmo, *Acting*
Nancy Gold, *Physical Character, Acting*
Cindy Goldfield, *Acting*
Jane Hammett, *Musical Theater, Directing, Acting*
W. D. Keith, *Director*
Domenique Lozano, *Director*
Christine Mattison, *Dance, Choreographer*
Pamela Rickard, *Acting*
Robert Rutt, *Musical Arranger, Accompanist*
Vivian Sam, *Musical Theater, Dance*
Summer Serafin, *Acting*
Craig Slaughter, *Director, Acting*
Amelia Stewart, *Director, Acting*
James Wagner, *Acting*

New Plays Program

Ursula Rani Sarma, Craig Slaughter, *Playwrights*

YC Accompanist

Thaddeus Pinkston

Library Staff

Joseph Tally, *Head Librarian*
G. David Anderson, Elena Balashova, Laurie Bernstein, John Borden, Helen Jean Bowie, Joan Cahill, Barbara Cohrsen, William Goldstein, Rich Henry, Pat Hunter, Connie Ikert, Martha Kessler, Nelda Kilguss Barbara Kornstein, Ines Lewandowitz, Emily Lord-Schlereth, Ann Morales, Patricia O'Connell, Roy Ortopan, Dana Rees, Beverly Saba, Roger Silver, Marianne Sullivan, Carol Summer, Jane Taber, Sam Thal, Jean Wilcox, Nancy Zinn, *Library Volunteers*

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.

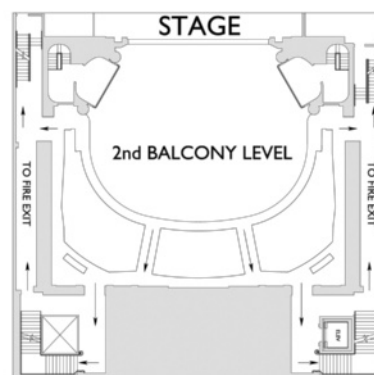
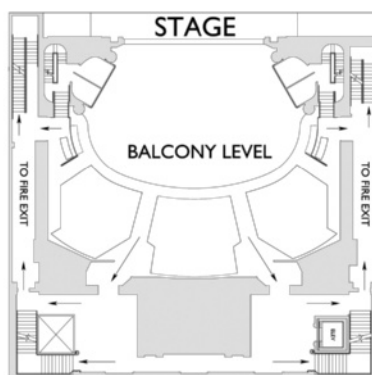
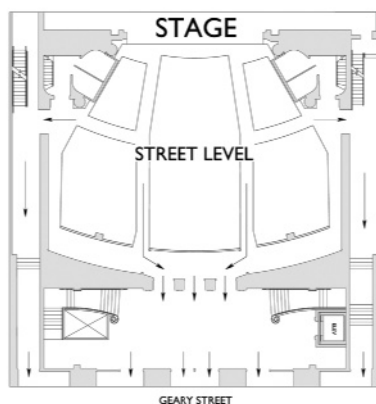


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American Conservatory Theater Exits





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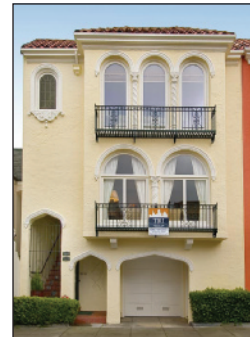
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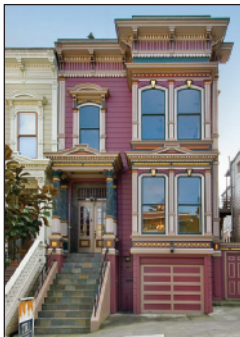
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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE AND OTHER AVAILABLE PROPERTIES, PLEASE SEE www.NinaHatvany.com



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