

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

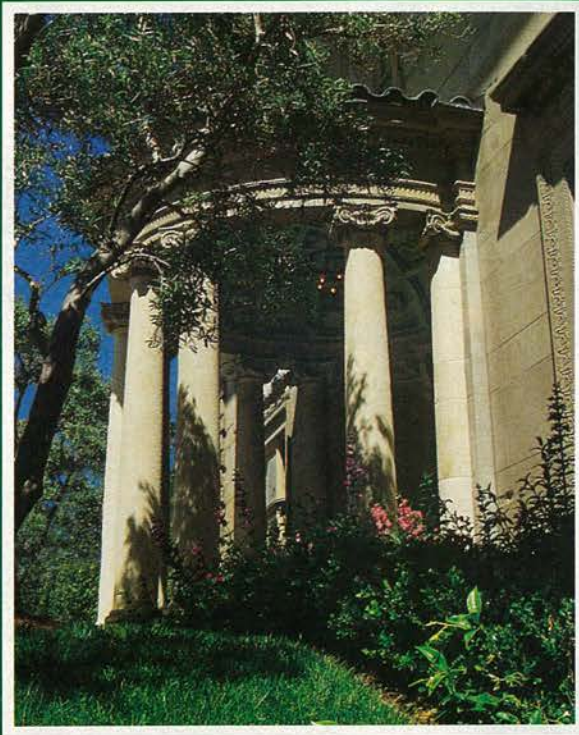
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The American Conservatory
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Artistic Director, 1986-92

Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director*

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ANGELS IN AMERICA A Gay Fantasia on National Themes PART ONE: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

by Tony Kushner
September 27, 1994 through January 22, 1995
Marines Memorial Theatre

ANGELS IN AMERICA A Gay Fantasia on National Themes PART TWO: PERESTROIKA

by Tony Kushner
October 5, 1994 through January 22, 1995
Marines Memorial Theatre

HOME by David Storey October 20, 1994 through December 4, 1994 *Stage Door Theatre*

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

by Tom Stoppard
December 14, 1994 through February 5, 1995
Stage Door Theatre

THE PLAY'S THE THING by Ferenc Molnar, adapted by P.G. Wodehouse February 15, 1995 through April 2, 1995 *Stage Door Theatre*

OTHELLO by William Shakespeare April 13, 1995 through June 4, 1995 *Stage Door Theatre*

HECUBA by Euripides, translated and adapted by Timberlake Wertenbaker April 27, 1995 through June 4, 1995 *Center for the Arts Theater at Yerba Buena Gardens*

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ABOUT A.C.T.

The **AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER** is a Tony Award-winning nonprofit theater in which professional training and production are inextricably linked to create work that aspires to the highest standards of American performance. Under the recent leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, A.C.T. is committed to nurturing its rich legacy while expanding its reach into

new communities and new areas of dramatic literature. Central to A.C.T.'s work is the interaction of original and classical work on our stages and at the heart of our Conservatory.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the historic Geary Theater in 1967. During the theater's

twenty-nine year history, more than two hundred productions have been performed to a combined audience of six million people in Japan, the U.S.S.R., and throughout the United States. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation as a leading theater and training company, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. From 1986 to 1992, A.C.T. experienced a period of rejuvenation and growth under the leadership of Artistic Director Edward Hastings.

Today, A.C.T. continues to fulfill the expectations of Bay Area audiences as a company of national and international recognition with performance, education, and outreach programs that annually reach more than two hundred thou-

sand people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

From the beginning, A.C.T.'s philosophy has called for the union of superior repertory performance and intensive actor training. Its Conservatory, now serving fifteen hundred students every year, was the first training program not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a Master of Fine Arts degree and is a model for the continued vitality of the art form. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, and Winona Ryder are among its distinguished former students.

The eighty-four-year-old Geary Theater, which was damaged in the San Francisco earthquake of 1989, is undergoing major renovation that will result in updated stagecraft, improved patron amenities—including improved seating and sight lines, greater accessibility for the physically disabled, and expanded lounge and restroom facilities—and a total seismic restructuring. A.C.T. anticipates opening a refurbished, state-of-the-art performance space during the 1995-96 season. To date, A.C.T.'s capital campaign has raised \$22 million of the funds necessary to complete the reconstruction.



The interior of the Geary Theater immediately after the Loma Prieta earthquake, October 17, 1989

John Sutton



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Come to A.C.T. for the most entertaining education in town. A.C.T. offers several ways for you to learn more about the season's productions and to express your views on the issues they raise:

A.C.T. PROLOGUES

Sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco, these lively one-hour presentations are conducted by noted actors, directors, and designers who introduce each new A.C.T. play. Prologues are held before the Tuesday preview of every production at 5:30 p.m. in the same theater as the evening's performance.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

This post-show discussion forum began last season with A.C.T.'s acclaimed production of *Oleanna*, David Mamet's explosive examination of sexual harassment. These informal, anything-goes sessions are a great way to share your feelings with fellow theatergoers. Audience Exchanges take place for thirty minutes immediately after selected performances and are moderated by A.C.T. staff members.

A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

This popular series of free public symposia, offered for the first time last season, is back in 1994-95 from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Monday evenings throughout the season. Each symposium features a panel of scholars, theater artists, and professionals exploring topics ranging from aspects of the season's productions to the intersection of theater and the arts with American culture. Everyone is welcome—you need not have seen a play to attend.

"WORDS ON PLAYS"

In response to our many patrons who have asked to receive program notes in advance, this season for the first time A.C.T. offers you the chance to study up on coming plays. Each audience handbook contains a synopsis of the play and background information about the playwright and the social and historical context of the work. A subscription for six handbooks is available by mail to full-season subscribers for \$24; a limited number of copies of handbooks for individual plays are also available for purchase by single-ticket holders at the A.C.T. Central Box Office, located at 405 Geary Street at Mason, for \$5 each.

For more information, call (415) 749-2ACT.

On Home

Stage Door Theatre



A.C.T. PROLOGUE

October 25, 1994

5:30 p.m.

Featuring

Artistic Director Carey Perloff



A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

III

Everyman's Theater:

Postwar British Playwriting

January 30, 1995

7-9 p.m.

Speakers to be announced



A.C.T. AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

November 13, 1994

November 15, 1994

November 23, 1994

Immediately following the performance



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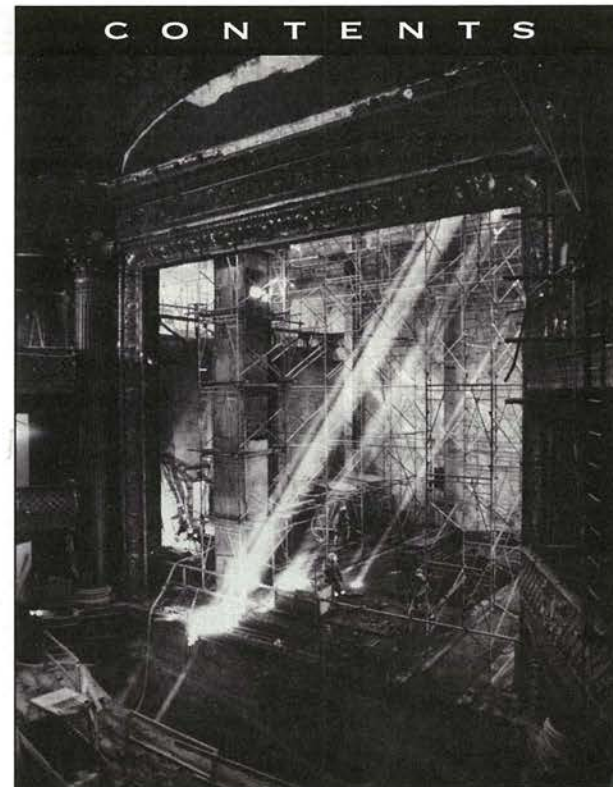
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Above: A. C. T.'s "home," the Geary Theater, is under reconstruction.
Photo by Sherman Takata/Gensler & Associates, Architects.

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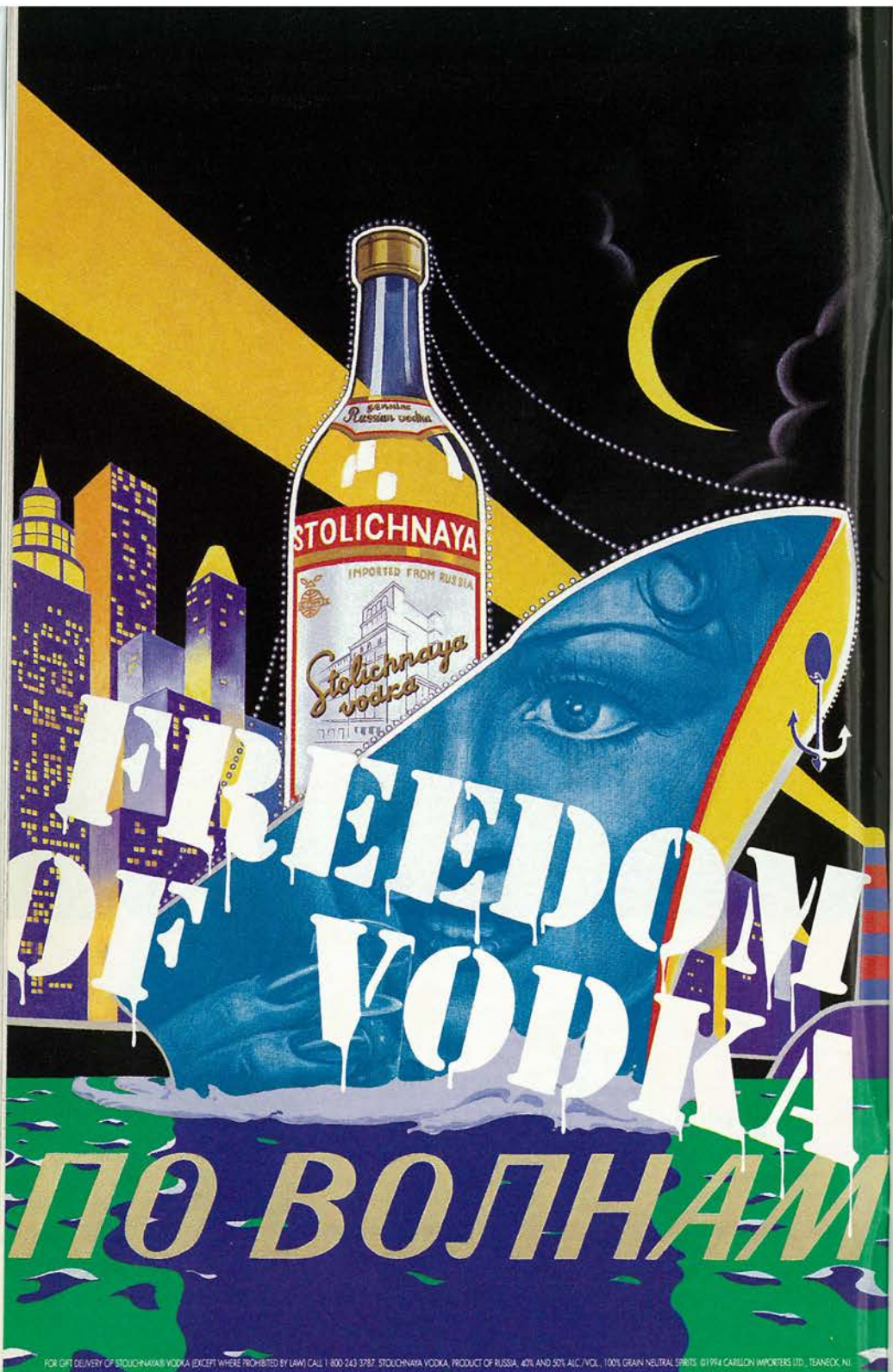
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American Conservatory Theater

H·O·M·E

(1970)

by David Storey
Directed by Carey Perloff

Scenery by Dawn Swiderski
Costumes by Callie Floor
Lighting by Peter Maradudin
Dialect Consultant Lynne Soffer
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw

Stage Management Staff
Alice Elliott Smith, Bruce Elsperger
Daniela Becker—Intern

Assistant to the Director
Glynis Rigsby

This production of *Home* is dedicated to the memory of
beloved company member **Sydney Walker**.



This production was made possible in part
by the generosity of **Ruth and Alan L. Stein**.



Special thanks to **Dr. Jerome Oremland** for contributing his
time and experience to this production.

A L S O A T A . C . T .

ANGELS IN AMERICA

PART I: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES

PART II: PERESTROIKA

A Gay Fantasia on National Themes

By Tony Kushner

Directed by Mark Wing-Davey

Marines Memorial Theater

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the 1992 and 1993 Tony Awards for Best Play, *Angels in America* is the most celebrated drama today. In this electrifying epic, comprised of two full-length plays, a group of friends and strangers confronts issues of faith, sexuality, politics and AIDS in America. It's an unforgettable story – deeply compassionate and surprisingly funny.

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H·O·M·E

The Cast

(in order of appearance)

<i>Harry</i>	William Paterson
<i>Jack</i>	Raye Birk
<i>Kathleen</i>	Joy Carlin
<i>Marjorie</i>	Ruth Kobart
<i>Alfred</i>	Tom Lenoci

Understudies

Harry, Jack—Julian López-Morillas
Kathleen, Marjorie—Wanda McCaddon
Alfred—Michael Fitzpatrick

Act I

Scene 1: Morning

Scene 2: A short time later

Act II

Afternoon

There will be one intermission.

DAVID STOREY'S HOME

by Tim Fisher



Briton David Storey is an accomplished man of letters. Regarded as one of the most prolific and widely acclaimed postwar playwrights of

Britain's "Second Wave," Storey is to date the author of fourteen plays, eight novels, a volume of poetry and three screenplays. His novels have won Britain's prestigious Booker Prize (*Saville*, 1976), the Macmillan Prize (*This Sporting Life*, 1960, his first), and the Somerset Maugham Prize (*Flight into Cam-*

den, 1960). His play *In Celebration* (1969) has been translated into thirty languages. *Home*, Storey's fourth play, was first produced in 1970 and, like his *The Changing Room*, received both a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and a Tony nomination.

David Storey's first encounter with the theater came at age nine. With his older brother he journeyed twelve miles to see a production of *Hamlet* at the Grand Theatre in Leeds. "All I recall," he writes in the introduction to the published version of *Home*, "is one character searching for another along a row of canvas arches, I resisting the temptation to call out that the object of the search was visible to all of us (reading a book) downstage. How absurd it all

seemed—and irritating. Pre-*tence.*" The boys missed the last bus and returned home hours later to find that their parents, sick with worry, had phoned the police to report them missing. "Much agitation when we arrived: relief, recrimination—or, what might have been missing earlier, the previous evening, in my view: *drama.*"

Born the third son of a miner in 1933, Storey grew up in the northern community of Wakefield on a housing estate bounded at either end by a colliery. At his parents' insistence, he studied hard for the grammar school exams to escape the arduous mining life it was very likely he would inherit. "My parents were determined that their children shouldn't go into coal mining. My father described it as 'working like a rat in a hole,' and he certainly didn't want his children to follow on from that."

Storey was accepted at a grammar school, but his break with fate would subsequently exact its own prices, including an unexpected level of estrangement from his family—a dislocation he has examined in many of his novels (particularly *Saville*) and plays. The characters of *In Celebration*, he says, suffer because "their emotional affiliations are to the working class, but their intellectual and professional affiliations are very much towards the middle class." Once at school, Storey also found that the rigid expectations of the British class system still pertained, even though he had "elevated" himself to the educated world. "We were

all embarked on the same rails, ones which were going to carry us to a predetermined end—that is, we'd all end up as schoolteachers or professionals of some sort."

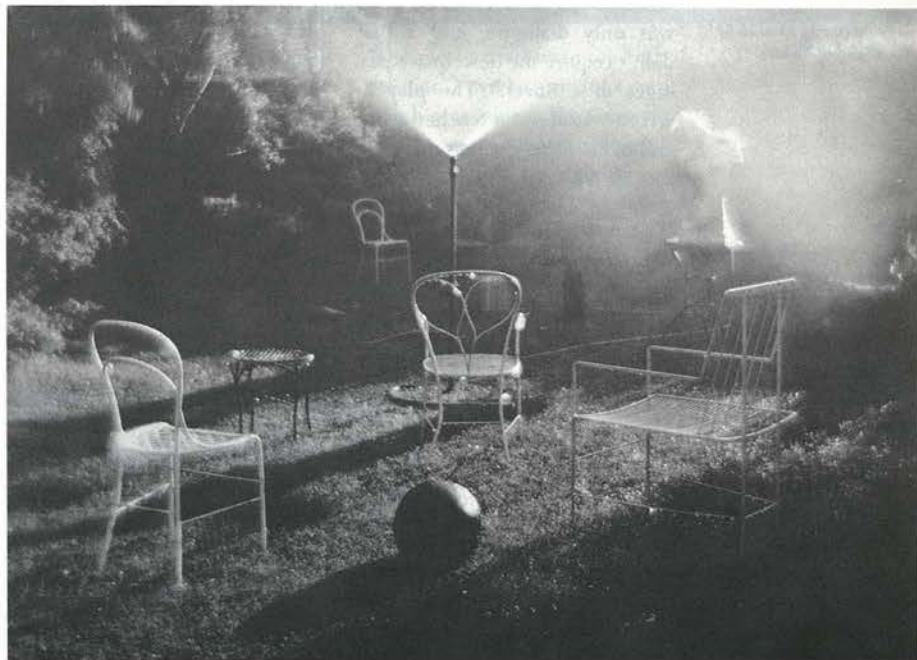
Disenchanted, he chose to become an artist, quitting school at seventeen and telling his parents that rather than attend the university he would enroll in art school—an announcement that did not go over well. "My father and mother thought that the notion of being an artist was a waste of their efforts: an artist was someone who lived and worked in a garret and produced an object which was only vicariously connected with life. Financially they washed their hands of me, though not emotionally. They said it didn't seem reasonable for them to go on supporting me."

Fortunately, Storey had consid-

erable athletic talent which he could exploit to fund his struggling artistic career. He signed a fourteen-year contract with a professional rugby team from Leeds—the basis for both his first novel, *This Sporting Life*, and his acclaimed portrait of a day-in-the-life of a rugby team, *The Changing Room* (1971). Two years later he won a scholarship to the prestigious Slade school and began to commute between rugby in Leeds and painting in London.

In 1956 he finished at Slade, bought himself out of the remaining years of the rugby contract, and started to teach art. During the period from 1952 to 1960, Storey wrote seven novels and numerous short stories and essays; all were rejected time and again. In 1958, coming home to find yet another rejection slip for what

Early Summer Evening in the
Magic Garden, 1954–59



“I WROTE
TWO PLAYS
CALLED
HOME, AND
THIS IS THE
BETTER OF
THE TWO,
I THINK.”

would later become *This Sporting Life*, Storey began to wonder whether he was wasting his time with fiction. "I thought I could write a play over a half-term week-

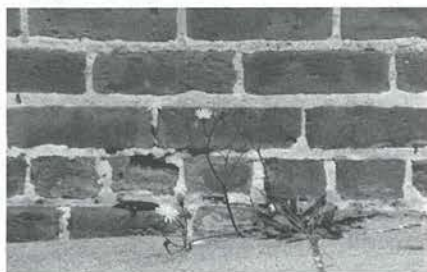
screen version of *This Sporting Life* brought Storey in contact with Lindsay Anderson—then an up-and-coming filmmaker and director himself. A friendship and artistic partnership began that would last for many fruitful years until Anderson's death in September, 1994 at the age of seventy-one. Anderson would direct nearly all of Storey's plays at the Royal Court Theatre, long after the film version of *This Sporting Life* launched his own successful career as a British filmmaker.

During the filming, Anderson asked

end, and get down everything I felt about my situation then: it wouldn't take long, since there was only dialogue, and a play didn't require the descriptive passages of a novel." The play he wrote was about a teacher at the end of his rope: the hero of *To Die with the Philistines*, Arnold Middleton, goes mad and commits suicide. Storey himself went on teaching for two more years before a publisher finally accepted *This Sporting Life*. With the two novels that quickly followed—*Flight into Camden* and *Radcliffe* (1963)—Storey's reputation as an emerging new writer was solidified, and he joined fellow Northerners in making a name for their region as a source of Britain's new artistic talent.

A proposal to make a

Storey if he'd written anything for the theater. When Storey showed him *To Die with the Philistines*, Anderson made plans to mount the play at the Royal Court (where he had recently put up two successful productions) as a "warm up" to making a film of it. The production was ultimately shelved, however, because of complicated scheduling conflicts between the star, Richard Harris, the film crews, and producers. While Storey struggled to get *Philistines* produced elsewhere, the film of



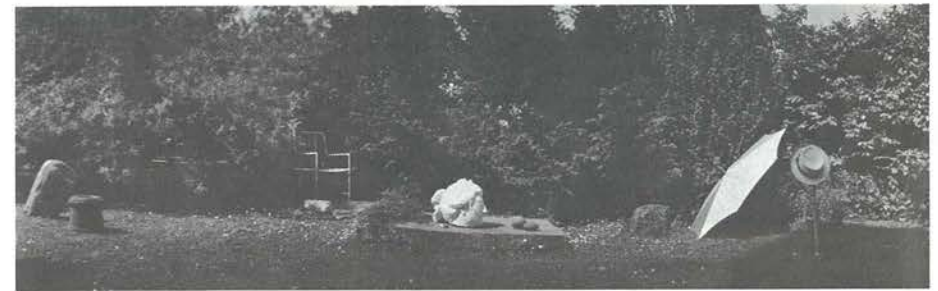
(Left to right) David Storey, Edward Judd, Lindsay Anderson, Barry Keegan, and a sporting-life professional confer on a rugby field during rehearsals for *The Changing Room* (1971).

This Sporting Life won over audiences worldwide, and brought Anderson and Storey greater notoriety, and the movie's leads, Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts, Oscar nominations.

His newfound fame put Storey in an unusual position: he was routinely pressed with invitations to abandon what he had worked so hard to accomplish and "move on." "I got offered a five-film contract with the BBC and the chance to do a feature film and was suddenly faced with the decision of whether I wanted to be a director or a writ-

Royal Court—he wrote a series of plays in rapid succession. "It was as if a dam had burst," he says of that time. "None of the plays took me more than five days to write and, once written, none required more than nominal correction. . . . From my own point of view the Royal Court did seem an actual home, the atmosphere and the personnel I found very conducive to writing all the plays and then producing them in that particular milieu."

One of the works that came from this fit of inspiration was *Home*.

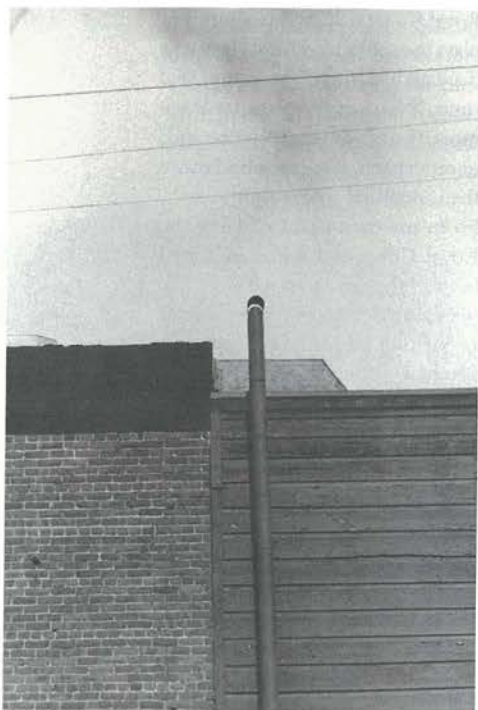


In the Magic Garden, 1948

er. After a lot of anguish, I decided I'd stick with writing."

To Die with the Philistines was finally produced at Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre in 1966—eight years after he'd composed it in total despair. The play was revised, the suicide ending cut, and the titled changed to *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*. Its debut at the Royal Court the next year was followed by a production in the West End in 1967—the year Storey and Tom Stoppard shared the *Evening Standard's* Most Promising Playwright Award. Seeing *Arnold Middleton* produced inspired Storey to take up writing for the stage once more, and, nurtured by William Gaskill's "writer's theater"—the English Stage Company at the

"The play started from the end of the one I wrote previous to it, which was called *The Contractor*, about constructing a marquee on stage for a wedding celebration, its sort of violation and then its disassembly. At the end of that play there was just a wide metal work table on the stage and the tent poles on which the canvas is hauled up during the action, and it struck me that it was like the beginning of a play rather than the end. So I then brought out a white metal work table and two metal work chairs and realized someone would have to come in and sit on one of them and he can't sit very long before someone has to come and say something to him—it really began in that practical way, connecting



one thing to another. I wrote two plays called *Home* and this is the better of the two, I think.”

HOME AND THE SECOND WAVE

The First Wave of postwar British playwriting, or the era of the “angry young men,” was ushered in by John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger*, which was performed by the English Stage Company at the Royal Court in 1956. In the preceding few decades, British theater had mainly been a place where the middle class went to be entertained by the polite, drawing room plays of writers like J.B. Priestley and Noel Coward, or to

experience the refined intellectual language pieces of T.S. Eliot and Christopher Fry; taboos and sensibilities were respected. *Look Back in Anger* broke no new stylistic ground—it followed traditional plot structure and logical realism (Osborne later said it was “a formal, rather old-fashioned play”)—but it disrupted the theater world with its strong emotional force, its contemporary (but not vulgar) language, and its portrayal of Britain as a declining international power, wrought by economic malaise in the aftermath of World War II. Stoppard, Harold Pinter, and Joe Orton emerged from this first wave as the most visible writers of many to come.

The Second Wave is said to have begun around 1967 with Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (also at A.C.T. this season), which opened up theater to more stylistic experimentation from a host of new, predominately university-educated and working-class writers like Storey. But like any author, Storey did not consciously consider himself to be part of any movement at the time. “When I wrote [*Home*] I had very little experience with the theater at all,” he says. “I really started off



Raye Birk (left) and William Paterson (right)



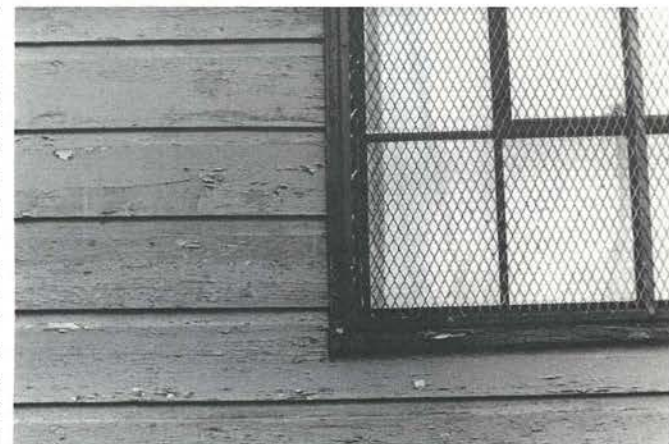
Ruth Kobart

as a novelist and came to plays rather late in my career, in my thirties, so I wasn’t really aware of what was current in the theater. I certainly noticed when I got going in the theater that there were other writers appearing simultaneously, but the majority of them seemed to have been actually working in the theater themselves either as actors or as trainee writers for quite a while, and they all had a fairly solid background of theatrical training and theatrical experience.”

Since the Second World War, British playwriting has become characterized by works that possess an increasingly greater polemical force. “No other western country has reflected a social revolution and a sense of doom so strongly in its theater,” writes Oleg Kerensky in an essay placing Storey’s work in the context of Britain’s long theatrical

history. Storey says this political sensibility is also reflected in comparisons between the British novel and the American novel. “Life is so dynamic in America. It’s very difficult over here to have that kind of eye which is braced and focused by such a dynamic world. That sort of world doesn’t exist in this country, which is very much a decaying world—I would suspect it’s a bit like *Home* . . . the sun going down. I can understand that in a queuing society, which is what American society is, to question in a radical way is difficult—I think it’s always been difficult for American writers—because in their hearts they’re committed to the evolving society . . . which is right, and they should be. And to criticize it too severely, say in the way that Europeans or someone like Beckett criticizes molecular living, is not in their schedule, as it were. The dynamic of the society they’re living in is one that’s evolving and they’re trying to evolve with it. So the hard edge of inquiry is very blunted by good will.”

Unlike many of his British contemporaries, Storey does not



THE
CURRENT
BRITISH
THEATER IS
“DESIGNED
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READ
TOMORROW.”

approach his own writing from a polemical, political, or social agenda. "I've attempted several



(Left to right) Raye Birk, Joy Carlin, William Paterson, and Ruth Kobart

times to construct a magnificent thesis for a play, a rationale for it and a theme of great importance," he says, "and when I've worked on that for a little while and then sat down to write, it's always been an illustration rather than an organic thing. The only plays of mine that have worked, really, have been plays that start with a first line, like the metal work table: What happens next? Well, there's a chair. There's no preconception at all that I can recall of any of the plays that actually work. It's just writing line by line."

Storey is perhaps more accurately placed in the company of other "poetic realist" writers like Beckett, Pinter, and Chekhov. His work has always sought to expose the quiet, seemingly mundane interiors of life, which become in

his pared-down and highly concentrated style more penetrating than any amount of bombast, sensation-

alism, or agitprop. "You end up with a lot of polemical theater which is limited in its interest beyond its own time," he says of the current British theater. "Some of it is consciously designed in that way; in other words, it's designed more like a newspaper—not to be read tomorrow."

Home falls into one of Storey's own three informal classifications

for his plays. There are his "traditional plays of relationships": *In Celebration*, *The Farm* (1973), and *The March on Russia* (1989). His "work plays": *The Contractor*, *Life Class* (1974), and *The Changing Room*. And lastly his "more overtly poetic" works: *Home* and the not-so-successful *Cromwell* (1973).

The canon of Storey's plays shows his obsession with groups and their ability to unify disparate people in a common routine. Within this canon, *Home* is most distinguished by its intimate perspective. One critic, comparing the play to Storey's other works, captured *Home*'s boiled-down quality: "In [*Home*] . . . the picture is more abstract and more poetic. . . . The atmosphere—well-caught in the bare setting—is gentler and more muted."

STOREY THE PLAYWRIGHT, STOREY THE NOVELIST

Storey is often asked to hold forth on many variations of the topic, "Fiction versus Theater." Writing a novel, he says, is like "launching an unmanned ship." A play, he adds, "is like a properly crewed ship: you can modify from moment to moment, take account of the climate of feeling at any particular performance, test out ideas, and if they don't work as you want them to, change them."

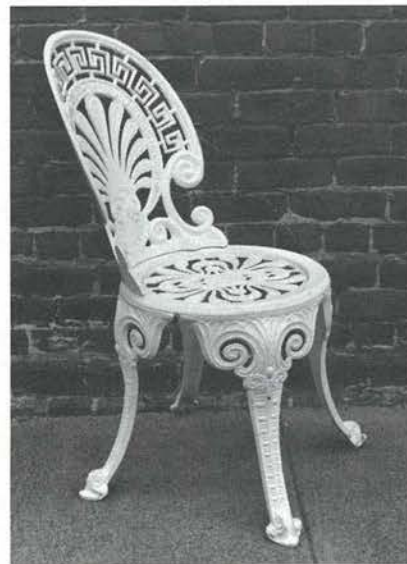
But the process of deciding whether a new idea will become a play, piece of fiction, or even poetry, Storey says, is rather mysterious. "[Each new project] usually pops up itself rather than my sitting down with the predetermined intention to write one or the other. They really formulate themselves, rather irritatingly so: I'm in their hands, rather than me laying down the odds.

On the whole I write every day. *What* I write seems to be determined elsewhere, but the actual labor of writing I'm very keen to do each day, and then I wait to see what turns up. I think I probably publish only about a third of what I've written. . . . It's a wasteful way of working."

Today, Storey is at work on an anthology of his work, another novel, and the exploration of poetry. "I've found as I've got older that I've moved much more towards reading poetry

and am much less interested in reading fiction—which is quite a significant shift. I'm not quite sure what it means, and I've actually found myself *writing* more poetry now. I've put together two books of poetry of rather formidable length; whether they are purely from self-indulgence or not remains to be seen."

He is also waiting to see what the future holds for the arts. "I think it's a difficult period now for younger writers because the great creative dynamic of the century has waned for painting, sculpture, literature, theater, and music, and we're in a cultural trough before the next great revolutionary wave comes—and it eventually will. But the difficulty is trying to elucidate or identify connections with the implicit dynamic that's going to raise the next wave—having seen the giants now disappear in the trough." ■

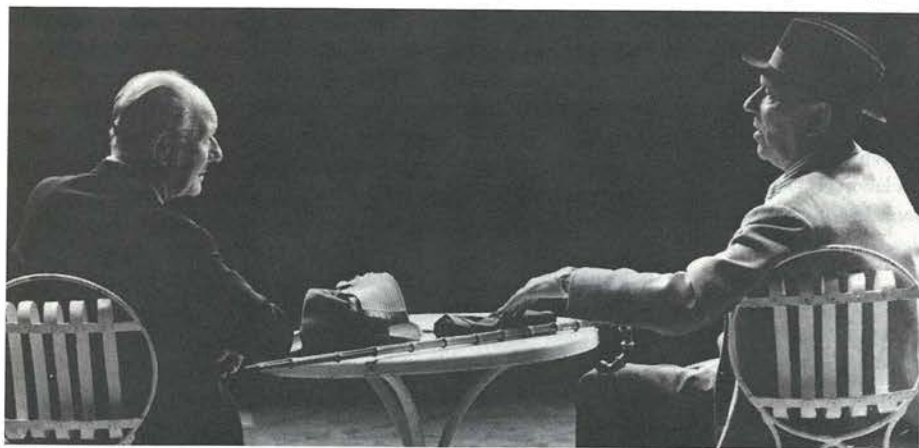


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THE FIRST HOME

Home premiered at London's Royal Court Theatre in June 1970, featuring Sir John Gielgud, Sir Ralph Richardson (the "two knights"), Dandy Nichols, and Mona Washbourne. When it came to Broadway in the fall of that year, the Wall Street Journal declared: "Quite simply, it is the most extraordinary piece of theater in years." Another reviewer seemed to breathe an almost audible sigh of relief with, "At a time when very few writers have a sense of modern visual-reality, and even fewer can find a way of applying language to it, Storey could not be more badly needed or more gladly welcomed."

Both Storey and Home's director, Storey's longtime friend and collaborator Lindsay Anderson, have vivid memories of that landmark first production.



Sir John Gielgud (left) and Sir Ralph Richardson (right) in the first production of Home

Anderson: When we sent [Gielgud] the play, to my amazement, the very next day the casting director at the Court came in with a big grin on her face and said, "Gielgud wants to do it! He thinks it's terribly funny!" Then David

and I met Gielgud and found that he just instinctively wanted to do the play. He did think it was very funny and that's about it. He hadn't really gone into how tricky it was—but perhaps that's how the best decisions are always made.

Storey: The beginning of rehearsals was like watching two horses galloping along while, perched on a delicately fashioned carriage behind, a driver called out, "Whoa! Stop!" finally turning to his fellow passenger and saying, wryly, "Well, we'd better let them have a run . . ."

Anderson: It was during rehearsals that both John and Ralph became extremely frightened: they realized what they'd let themselves in for. They were great

actors, but this was a new thing and it was naturally scary. Ralph would come into rehearsal taking off his crash helmet (he rode his motorbike down to the Court) and he would announce, "Oh, I decided to withdraw from the play. I

woke up in the middle of the night, I was having nightmares. I can't possibly do it. But my wife said, 'Go on, don't be an old fool. Go on. Get down there.' So I'm here."

Storey: It was a strange experience really because the two knights at that point were feeling very much that the theater had moved beyond them—they didn't really know where they

were in terms of a career. They both belonged to an Edwardian tradition of the theater (if there ever was such a thing) and the Royal Court was certainly Brechtian-oriented at that time and belonged to a more contemporary humanist tradition—one in which the audience was there to be instructed rather than entertained. But the two knights had obviously been brought up in a world where it's the actor's privilege to entertain the audience. So that tension was very clearly defined when we began rehearsals, but it was a positive experience all the way through to see two remarkable actors evolving as it were into something that they suspected they were not. And of course afterwards their careers took off quite pleasantly and they found their place again.

. . . What I think was particularly fruitful was the bonding of two traditions which at the time seemed very wide apart: the postwar British theatrical tradition, which



Home (1970)

seemed to be rather more robust and certainly consciously—if not otherwise—entertained social issues in a way that the prewar British theater didn't. And to find that the prewar tradition and the postwar tradition could certainly be bridged and brought together in that particular production I think was probably its most rewarding element. ■



Lindsay Anderson

MEMORY—THAT STRANGE DECEIVER

You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realize that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all. . . . Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it, we are nothing. . . . (I can only wait for the final amnesia, the one that can erase an entire life, as it did my mother's.)

—Luis Buñuel

■
He is, as it were . . . isolated in a single moment of being, with a moat or lacuna of forgetting all round him. . . . He is man without a past (or future), stuck in a constantly changing, meaningless moment."

—From *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, by Oliver Sacks
(© 1985, Simon & Schuster)

If we wish to know about a man, we ask "what is his story—his real, inmost story?—for each of us *is* a biography, a story. . . . For here is a man who, in some sense, is desperate, in a frenzy. The world keeps disappearing, losing meaning, vanishing—and he must seek meaning, *make* meaning, in a desperate way, continually inventing, throwing bridges of meaning over abysses of meaninglessness, the chaos that yawns continually beneath him.

—From *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, by Oliver Sacks
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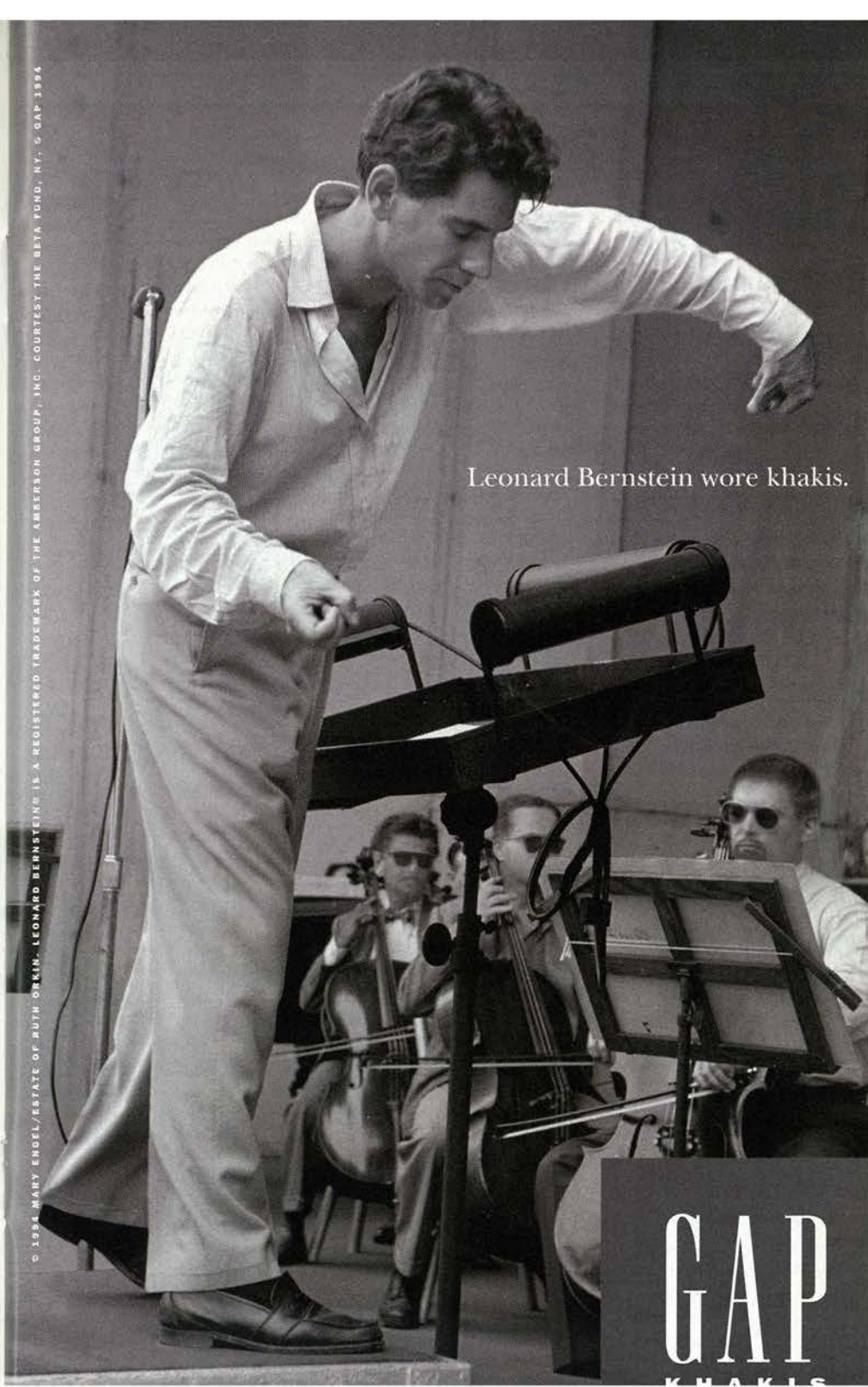
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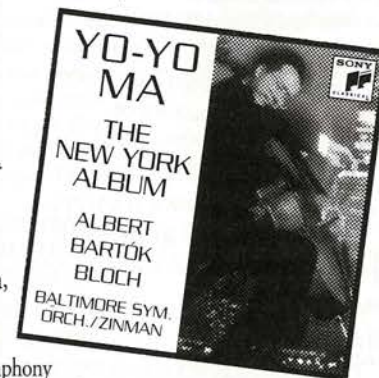
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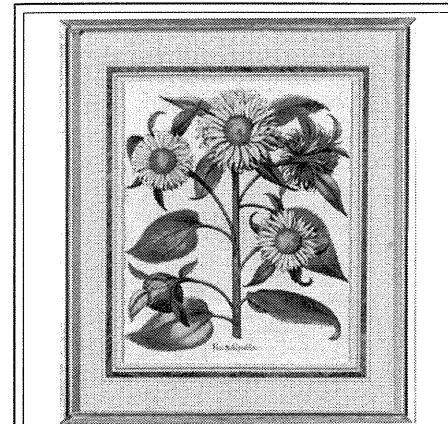
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Performance Highlights

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The American Conservatory Theater's production of *Home*, by British playwright David Storey, brings together a quartet of local legends. Ruth Kobart, Joy Carlin, Raye Birk, and William Paterson, the play's four leads, represent thirteen decades of theater experience among them. All have a history with A.C.T. as well: Carlin is a former associate artistic director; Birk made his acting debut with A.C.T. in 1973; while Paterson and Kobart took their first bows at A.C.T. in 1967. Artistic director Carey Perloff, who directs the production, has had *Home* in mind since coming to A.C.T. in 1992, "but the icing on the cake was the thought of these tremendous actors working together on this moving script." Performances at the Stage Door Theatre through December 4.

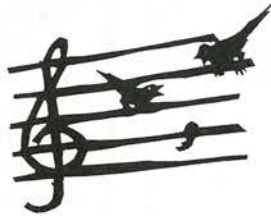
The "Blomstedt Decade" celebration, honoring Herbert Blomstedt's final season as music director of the **San Francisco Symphony**, continues at Davies Symphony Hall. During November, Blomstedt conducts the work of Richard Strauss, one of the maestro's fortés. Blomstedt has led the Orchestra in several acclaimed Strauss recordings, including the *Alpine Symphony*, *Don Juan*, and *Ein Heldenleben*. On November 9, 10, 11, and 12, Blomstedt and the Orchestra perform the German composer's *Death and Transfiguration*, in a concert that also includes Sibelius' Third and Beethoven's Eighth symphonies. Strauss also plays a role in a second concert this month, one by the

San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, the much-lauded ensemble whose members range from age 12 to 20. The Youth Orchestra performs *Don Juan*, along with Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, and, as an ear-opening prelude, "Double Music," a 1941 work by John Cage and Lou Harrison written for *twin* percussion quartets.

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lowing an afternoon performance of *Hérodiade*, featuring Domingo as John the Baptist in Massenet's seldom-heard version of the Herodias-Salome-St. John story. The gala begins at 6 p.m. with a cocktail reception in the lobby, and moves on to a lavish Roman banquet held on the stage, where guests can get a close look at Gerald Howland's elaborate set, built for the new production.

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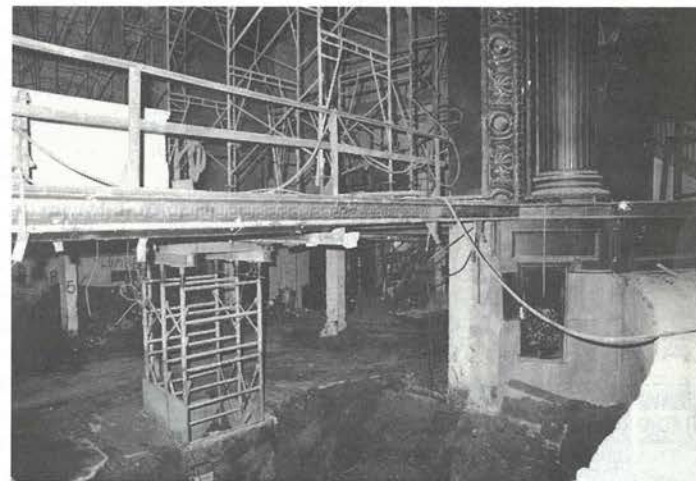
During his days as a Broadway stage manager and production stage manager of A.C.T. plays that toured the country, Producing Director James Haire worked in hundreds of theaters across America; few, he'll tell you, compare with the Geary Theater's majesty or its near-perfect stage-to-audience relationship. "The Geary is one of the most intimate and spectacular theatrical environments in the country for a house its size," he says. "There really is no place like it."

Built in 1909, long before the days of complex special-effects systems, the thirteen-hundred-seat theater enhanced performances on its stage for more than half a century. Now, five years after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the Geary is undergoing a thorough seismic and technological renovation that will bring its stage technology into the twenty-first century and provide patrons with increased comfort and safety.

Haire is quick to caution, however, that none of the manifold improvements will alter the theater's existing character or superior architecture. "As far as the auditorium is concerned," he says, "the only differences audience members will notice is that their seats have more leg room and plush new cushions, there are a lot

more bathrooms to choose from, and the balcony-level windows once again look out on Geary Street."

The massive project will take more than a year to complete and involves many players. The architectural firm of Esherick, Homsey, Doge, and Davis acted as preliminary conceptual and schematic



Looking into the "pit," work proceeds above and below the Geary Theater stage.

design architects, with Gensler and Associates Architects taking over as on-site designers and engineers. Theater Projects Consultants, a Connecticut firm specializing in theatrical architecture, is working closely with Gensler and Haire on the Geary's stage technology and backstage upgrades. A.C.T.'s Administrative Director, Thomas W. Flynn, Facilities Manager Lesley Pierce, and FEMA Liaison Fred Reppond are shepherding the myriad practical and financial details of the day-to-day construction process.

**THE GEARY
THEATER'S
RENOVATION
WILL BRING
ITS STAGE
TECHNOLOGY
INTO THE
TWENTY-
FIRST
CENTURY.**

**HARD HATS,
SHEAR WALLS, AND
FRESH TREADS**

The first phase of the restoration, already underway, calls for hard hats, since workers are gutting most of the building's interior, especially what was damaged by the earthquake. They are pulling out and refurbishing all of the orchestra seating, stairs, stair wells, and auditorium floor. A diagonal truss that supports the rear section of the first balcony will be replaced with horizontal bracing to create a double-height grand lobby in the main foyer. Lastly, the walls, ceilings, and finishes of the front foyers are being demolished to make space at the rear of the orchestra section for a concrete shear wall that runs from basement to roof.

Construction of the shear wall represents the second phase of the renovation. Connected to the Geary Street facade with steel

braces and providing lateral resistance on the theater's east-west plane, it is the core of the building's new seismic restructuring. The south wall will also be reinforced with concrete-encased steel girders and the proscenium wall with concrete fortification along its base and entire height.

In the third and final phase, the rest rooms and lobby below the orchestra section (Fred's Columbia Room) will be extended back toward the rear of the building, and new lobbies, rest rooms, and a conference room will be added to the upper balconies. The orchestra level gets a new carpet and recontoured seats, which will be placed in a staggered pattern to improve sight lines and leg room. Stairwells will receive fresh treads, wainscoting, and plaster walls and ceilings. Wheelchair access and seating will be made available at every level of the auditorium in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Last, but definitely not least, more toilets will be installed in each rest room.

Outside, the delicate terra cotta patterns on the Geary Street facade will be cleaned and restored to their original elegance. The east and west alleyways will become enclosed exit corridors with stairs, ramps, and lighting. The Geary also gets a new roof, strong enough to support new heating, ventilation, and emergency power equipment. The building next door at 333 Mason Street—known as "the Annex"—will be rebuilt into a four-story, reinforced-concrete structure, providing the Geary with mechanical equipment access, additional storage space, dressing rooms for up to

sixty actors, wardrobe facilities, and new production offices.

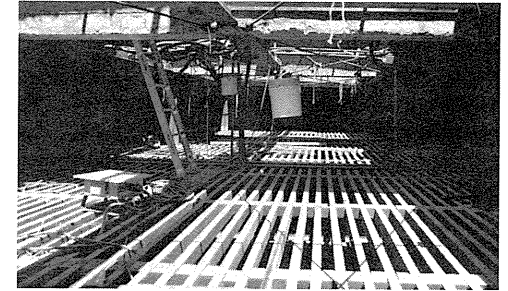
"A BOX OF PARTS"

Some of the most exciting changes to the Geary involve its stage technology. The guiding concepts for the work are *flexibility* and *interchangeable parts*, or, as Bob Scales of Theater Projects Consultants says, "turning the stage into a box of parts." The permanently raked stage will be rebuilt into separate, modular sections, three-feet-by-six-feet, which can be removed, stacked as risers, made into trap doors, or used to hide smoke machines and other instruments of theatrical illusion just below the stage. They will sit atop a motorized adjustable rake that can be raised to any angle. A similar mechanism will enable the orchestra pit to rest in one of three positions: below house level (out of sight), at house level (to add more seats), or at stage level as a thrust extending into the audience.

Backstage, the ancient hemp rigging system, which uses ropes, sandbags, and pulleys to shift large set panels and scenery into place, will be augmented with a modern counterweight and cable system that acts much like a Nautilus machine. Other major backstage improvements include a Mason Street loading ramp and (after demolition of the stage-left wall) a much-needed scene dock for building and storing sets. Less extensive but equally important improvements run the gamut from hanging lights in a new, state-of-the-art concealed grid to rewiring the house so that speakers can be installed anywhere in the auditorium. A high-tech communica-

tions system will allow the crew, stage management, box office, and front-of-house staff to be in touch at all times.

Artistic Director Carey Perloff is eager to utilize the Geary's new technology. "We wanted a space in which major classical work, musi-



The lighting grid will be replaced with a state-of-the-art concealed system.

cals, physically demanding shows, and Brechtian-style theater could co-exist comfortably with intimate drama," she says. "With an adjustable rake we can dance and run on the stage more easily, and we can build three-dimensional scenery that doesn't have to balance at an awkward angle."

Ed Raymond, A.C.T.'s Scene Shop Foreman—and author of many of the new ideas—is also eager to get back to the Geary after years of trying to adapt ambitious A.C.T. productions to the limitations of the smaller Stage Door and Marines Memorial theaters. "Usually it's the space that limits the artistic range of a production," he says. "That will not be the case in the Geary. With the new stage and equipment we can articulate any director's vision. No matter how difficult or involved a show looks on paper, we can consider every idea that a design team gives us as a real possibility."

—Tim Fisher

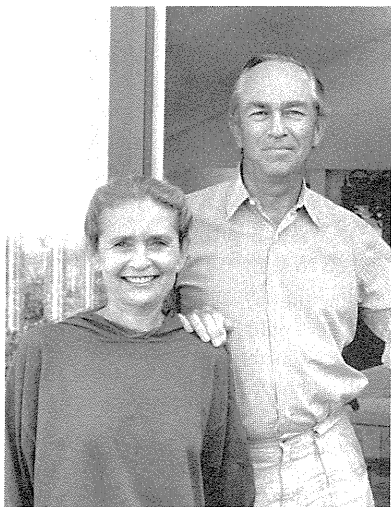


Members of the A.C.T. board of trustees join the renovation team for a tour of the Geary project (left to right): Patrick J. Flannery, Luke Sheridan (Gensler & Associates), Richard Seyd, Ruth Asawa, Charles Kridler (Gensler), Stan Mattison, Howard N. Nemerovski, Mary S. Metz, Shepard P. Pollack, Stephen L. Swig, Charles Lochtefeld (Cahill Contractors), and Sally P. Hambrecht.

Photos on pages 47 and 49 by Sherman Takata/Gensler & Associates. Photo on page 48 by Ken Friedman.

RUTH AND ALAN L. STEIN

Sponsorship of this production of *Home* has been generously provided by A.C.T. board of trustees chairman Alan L. Stein and his wife, Ruth. Spanning more than



two decades, the Steins' involvement with A.C.T. goes back to the company's earliest beginnings, when Cyril Magin and Alan Becker invited Alan to join them on the former California Association for A.C.T. board. The Steins' involvement also extends far beyond their critical financial support. Since becoming board president in 1989, Alan has sought to diversify membership of the trustees and make the board more broadly representative of the community. His greatest responsibilities, however, arise as chair of A.C.T.'s Geary Theater capital campaign committee, charged with raising the \$24 million necessary to restore the eighty-year-old historic theater damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. After five years of soliciting donations from all levels of the community, wrangling funds from government agencies, and working closely with architectural firms, Stein's committee and A.C.T. had reason to celebrate last June when construction equip-

ment rolled down Geary Street to begin work on the building.

Past sponsors of the A.C.T. productions of *Creditors* and *Uncle Vanya*, the Steins came to San Francisco from New York more than twenty years ago. After Alan received his M.B.A. from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, he joined Goldman Sachs and Company, where he remained for twenty-two years. In 1982 he became a general partner, director of investment banking, and a member of the executive committee of Montgomery Securities. He has also served as the secretary of the Business and Transportation Agency for the State of California, and was associate dean of executive education at U.C. Berkeley's business school. A man with a multitude of commitments, he still makes room for other philanthropic activities in the community as well, including work as founding chairman of Bridge Housing, an award-winning nonprofit company formed to provide affordable housing.

Despite their busy schedules, the Steins have always managed to find time for going to the theater. "Ruth and I have been looking forward to *Home* for quite a while," Alan says. "This year has already been an exciting one for A.C.T., with booming subscription sales and commencement of the Geary's reconstruction project. But we're both happy now to concentrate on the season and the plays, because they are the real core of everything that A.C.T. is about."

ALBERT J. MOORMAN

A.C.T. mourns the passing of longtime trustee and devoted benefactor Albert J. Moorman, who died on September 17, 1994. He was seventy-three.

For more than twenty years, Moorman sustained the artistic life of A.C.T. with his unflagging generosity, as vice president first of the board of trustees of the California Association for A.C.T. and later of the board of the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation. His enthusiastic lobbying on behalf of A.C.T. contributed significantly to the increased success of the company's local fundraising efforts, while his leadership as chairman of the board's nominating committee helped to create and sustain a level of excellence and service in A.C.T.'s principal governing body.

After receiving a B.A. in international relations from the University of Minnesota in 1942, Moorman studied corporate and business law at Harvard, graduating with a J.D. in 1948. He and his wife, Elizabeth "Bette" Mills Davis Moorman, then moved to the Bay Area—where an inspired performance by Tallulah Bankhead sparked a love affair with the Geary Theater that was to last more than half a century. Moorman joined McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen, the Bay Area's second largest law firm, and became a partner in 1960. In 1976, he was the first attorney elected to the newly established post of managing partner; he held the position until 1985, longer than any other individual in the firm's history,

helping to make McCutchen a pioneer in the diversification and democratization of American law firms.

Moorman also served on the boards of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the National Corporate Theatre Fund, as chairman of the development committee of the Menlo School and College, on the Committee of Art of Stanford University, and on the advisory committee of the Allied Arts Guild.

"Al was a true friend to A.C.T., a gentle spirit whose wise counsel was critical to the company's



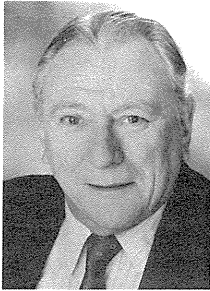
"YOU ARE PART OF THE LIFE OF OUR THEATER, AND PART OF OUR CREATIVE FAMILY. . . . WHEN YOU HEAR APPLAUSE AT THE END OF A PLAY, YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT APPLAUSE IS FOR YOU; FOR ALL OF US AT A.C.T. SEND IT TO YOU WITH OUR GRATITUDE AND LOVE EVER."

—A.C.T. founding Artistic Director William Ball to Albert Moorman (1980)

growth and continued success," says A.C.T. Administrative Director, Thomas W. Flynn. "His enduring faith in A.C.T. and high standard of service are precious legacies that we will treasure for generations to come."

Moorman is survived by his wife Bette, daughter Lisa Moorman Fremont, and son Mark Davis Moorman. A.C.T. has also named a rehearsal studio after Moorman as a lasting tribute to his invaluable contribution to A.C.T. and the arts in the Bay Area.

SYDNEY WALKER



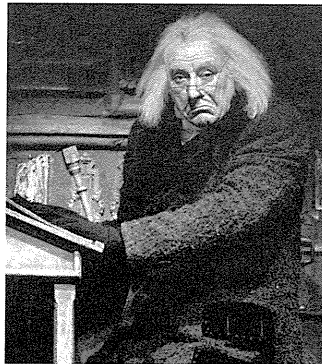
A radiant star of the American stage has been tragically extinguished. On September 30, 1994, beloved A.C.T. company veteran Sydney Walker succumbed to cancer at the age of seventy-three. Walker had been scheduled to appear in A.C.T.'s production of David Storey's *Home*, but was forced to withdraw from the cast due to illness. The production is dedicated to his memory.

"Sydney was a truly extraordinary soul and a one-of-a-kind human being," says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff. "He radiated an incredible joy wherever he went: joy with his work, his life, his students, his fellow man. He seemed to dedicate his life to reaching into our hearts through theater, and he was never happier than when inhabiting a role on stage or helping a student in the classroom. Everyone felt this remarkable gift that he had, everywhere he went."

Walker's distinguished career—which spanned more than 240 stage productions and five decades—reflected a superb mastery of his craft and the uncanny ability to portray a vast range of characters. Born May 4, 1921 in Philadelphia, Walker trained with Jasper Deeter at the nearby Hedgerow Theatre and at Paris's Conservatoire Nationale de Musique. He launched his acting career in 1950 in Michigan and San Francisco—appearing with the San Francisco Opera—before heading east to New York. From 1963-69 he was a leading actor

with APA Repertory Company under the direction of Ellis Rabb; he also appeared for three seasons with the Lincoln Center Repertory Company under Jules Irving.

While in New York, Walker led a double life, taping popular soap operas during the day—including "The Secret Storm," "As the World Turns," and "The Guiding Light"—and appearing by night on the stage in a variety of roles on and off Broadway. He made his Broadway debut in 1960 opposite Sir Laurence Olivier and Anthony Quinn in *Beckett*, followed by leading roles with Helen Hayes, Eva le Gallienne, Lotte Lenya, Uta Hagen, and Anthony Quale in *War and Peace*, *Mary Stuart*, *School for Scandal*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *You Can't Take It with You*, *The Wild Duck* (for which he received a Tony Award nomination), and the CBS Daytime 90 series "Trio for Lovers." At Lincoln Center Repertory he appeared in *An Enemy of the People*, *Playboy of the Western World*, *Antigone*, *The Cru-*



Walker as Scrooge in A.C.T.'s 1987 production of *A Christmas Carol*

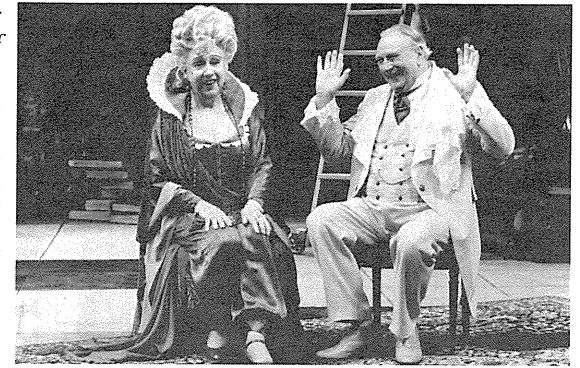
“A LIGHT HAS GONE OUT THAT WON'T COME AGAIN.”

—Dennis Powers

cible, *Twelfth Night*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Enemies*.

In 1974, William Ball invited Walker to join A.C.T. in San Francisco. "He called me July 23, 1974, while I was playing Molière's *The Miser* at Olney Summer Theatre," Walker once recalled, "and said, 'I don't know if this is the second or third time I've invited you to come to A.C.T., but I've decided *this* time not to take *No* for an answer.' I was very impressed with the statement. I came."

In his twenty years as a leading man with A.C.T., Walker taught the art of acting to scores of aspiring actors and appeared in more than sixty productions, from his 1974 portrayal of Hilmar in *Pillars of the Community* to his most recent role as Jean Stapleton's over-fond husband in the 1993 production of Molière's *The Learned Ladies*. Walker toured with A.C.T. to the Soviet Union as Malachi Stack in *The Matchmaker* and captivated generations of A.C.T. theatergoers with his portrayals of James Joyce in *Travesties*, Martin in *Hotel Paradiso*, Father Dewis in *Buried Child*, Bowery Rose in *Diamond Lil*, Truscott in *Loot*, the Judge in *The Chalk Garden*, Chrysalde in *The School for Wives*, Henry Ormonroyd in *When We Are Married*, Piotr in *Nothing Sacred*, and Scrooge in the Laird Williamson and Dennis Powers adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. In recent seasons he played Prospero for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and King Lear for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (the latter under the direction of A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director Richard Seyd), to great acclaim.



Ken Friedman

With Jean Stapleton in *The Learned Ladies* (1993)

In his final years, Walker enjoyed a renaissance in his film career. In 1992, he portrayed the old man who exchanges bodies with a young woman in the film of Craig Lucas's *Prelude to a Kiss* (with Alec Baldwin and Meg Ryan), reprising the role he created at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in 1988. He also appeared as Robin Williams's amorous bus driver in the 1993 film *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Other film credits included the doctor in *Love Story* (with Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal); *Puzzle of a Downfall Child* (opposite Faye Dunaway); the voice of Papa Ewok in George Lucas's *The Ewok Legend*; and narrating John Korty's Oscar-winning documentary *Who Are the DeBolts?*. His television appearances included the made-for-television movies *The Long Road Home*, *Eye on the Sparrow*, and *Shadow of a Doubt* and the dramatic series "The Defenders."

Walker is survived by his sisters Barbara Shive and Dorothy Walker. At his request, his ashes will be scattered over San Francisco Bay. A.C.T. will host a memorial service in his honor on November 10, 1994, at 2 p.m. at the Stage Door Theatre. All who loved him are invited to attend.

“WALKER WAS AS MUCH ALCHEMIST AS ACTOR... HE MADE AUDIENCES LAUGH AND BROKE THEIR HEARTS AT ONCE.”

—Steven Winn,

San Francisco

Chronicle

EDITH SHERIN MARKSON



Edith Sherin Markson, a founding member and devoted friend of A.C.T., and an activist in American-Eastern European theater exchange, died on Saturday, September 10, while visiting in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Born Edith Sherin on July 16, 1913 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Markson was a lifelong theater enthusiast and an inspirational leader in the regional theater movement in the United States. Working first as a theatrical press agent in New York and for the World's Fair, she founded the Fred Miller Theater, later the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, in 1955. There she invited the young William Ball, Ellis Rabb, and Allen Fletcher to direct, and it was in Milwaukee that their ideas for A.C.T. took shape. A decade later, Markson helped found A.C.T. in Pittsburgh, where the company

performed for two years before moving to San Francisco in 1967. As a kind of roving ambassador for the Ford Foundation, Markson, together with her close friend and Ford Foundation vice president McNeil "Mac" Lowry, committed herself to helping the city raise the funds necessary for A.C.T. to make its permanent home in San Francisco. "Mac and Edith were soul mates," says her daughter, Mary Markson Dawe. "On the same path for the enrichment of theater, working together from the beginning, particularly in their vision for regional theater."

During the following two decades, Markson devoted her unflagging support and considerable energy to making William Ball's dream of establishing a great resident conservatory theater a reality. She served as A.C.T.'s development director and vice president of the board of trustees until 1980 and returned to San Francisco to work with former A.C.T. artistic director Ed Hastings from 1987 to 1990, helping to promote A.C.T. both nationally and internationally. "Edith was the godmother of the American regional theater movement," confirms Hastings. "She made us offers we couldn't refuse—and she was never afraid to support who and what she loved."

After A.C.T.'s 1976 tour to Moscow, Leningrad, and Riga (Latvia)—to which she greatly contributed—Markson created the Theater International Exchange Services Foundation and person-

ally engineered many visits between American and Russian, Yugoslavian, and other Eastern European artists and administrators. She also served on the executive board of directors and as vice president of Theatre Communications Group, and on the Theatre Advisory Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. As an advisor for the Ford Foundation, she had since 1991 expedited a new Ford Foundation program administered by Arts International to bring Russian theater managers for internship training with American theater companies.

"She was my sister-in-law and my friend," says Markson's sister-in-law, Jane Alexander, Director of the National Endowment for the Arts. "Edith had countless friends in Russia and elsewhere, and made it possible for those involved in American theater to travel and work behind the Iron Curtain, and for our Soviet counterparts to do the same here. She was equally committed to theater in the United States, contributing her time and expertise to organizations from New York to Wisconsin to California. She will be sorely missed by all in the world of theater."

Markson is survived by her son, Simpson Markson; her daughter Mary Markson Dawe, and her husband Daniel Dawe; granddaughters Sara and Katelyn Dawe and grandson Christopher Markson; and by her brother, director and producer Ed Sherin, and his wife, Jane Alexander.

A memorial service was held for Markson on October 10, 1994; A.C.T. has named a rehearsal studio at 30 Grant Avenue in her



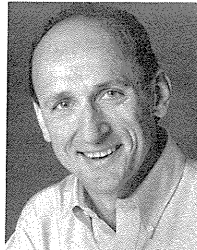
Gamlen Studios

How it all began: Edith Markson and Mac Lowry (then acting president of the Ford Foundation) visit A.C.T. in 1967. The sketches in the background are for William Ball's American Dream.

honor. At her children's request, donations may be made to The Geary Theater Campaign for the American Conservatory Theater, 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, California 94108.

Returning from A.C.T.'s 1978 tour to Japan





RAYE BIRK (*Jack*) lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Candace Barrett, and is proud to be returning to A.C.T., where he was a leading actor for nine seasons. He appeared as Henry Carr in *Travesties*, Tuzenbach in *The Three Sisters*, Dysart in *Equus*, Crocker-Harris in *The Brown-ing Version*, and in the title role in *Pantagleize*, among others. He has acted at theaters throughout the West Coast, including roles in *A Cup of Coffee* at the Pasadena Playhouse, Milton Katselas's *Romeo and Juliet* at the Skylight Theater, and the Mark Taper Forum productions of *Aristocrats*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Green Card*, and Vaclav Havel's *A Private View*, for which he won a Drama-Logue Award. His face has become familiar to television viewers from episodes of "Coach," "Home Improvement," "Sisters," "Picket Fences," "Silk Stalkings," "L.A. Law," "Wonder Years," and "Night Court," among many others. On film he has been seen in *Throw Momma from the Train*, *Naked Gun*, *Doc Hollywood*, *A Class Act*, and, most recently, *Naked Gun 33 1/3*.

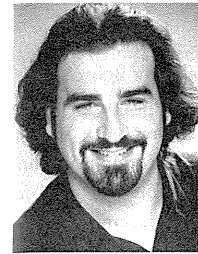


JOY CARLIN (*Kathleen*) is a former associate artistic director of A.C.T. and has been a member of the acting company for many years. She has played Stella in *Light up the Sky*, Belise in *The Learned Ladies*, Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Meg in *A Lie of the Mind*, Enid in *The Floating Light Bulb*, Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kitty Duval in *The Time of Your Life*, Bananas in *The House of Blue Leaves*, Asa in *Peer Gynt*, and Birdie in *The Little Foxes*. Her directing credits at A.C.T. include *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *The*

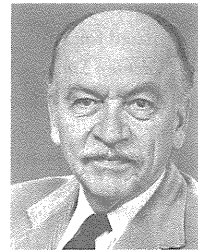
Lady's Not for Burning, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Marco Millions*, *Golden Boy*, *Hapgood*, and the world premiere of *Food and Shelter*. Carlin has also directed productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre (where her recent production of *Death of a Salesman* won her a Drama-Logue Award), Seattle's A Contemporary Theater, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe (where she directed *You Can't Take It with You*). She has also been a resident director and acting artistic director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre. In the spring of 1995 she will direct Clifford Odets's *Rocket to the Moon* at the Aurora Theatre in Berkeley.



RUTH KOBART (*Marjorie*) has been associated with A.C.T. since 1967, when she was cast in *Tartuffe*, the legendary opener of A.C.T.'s first San Francisco season. Having worked under William Ball's direction at the New York City Opera Company, she gained Broadway notoriety in *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (crowned with her Tony nomination) before joining A.C.T. in San Francisco. Among her many credits with A.C.T. are roles in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Hotel Paradiso*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. While on leave from A.C.T., she enjoyed eighteen months portraying Nurse Ratched in the long-running San Francisco production of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. She has also toured nationally with *Annie* and has made a foray into television and film, namely as a series regular on "Bob" and as a frequent guest artist on "Trapper John, M.D.," among others. Her films include *Dirty Harry*, the television movie of the week *Lady from Yesterday*, and, most recently, *Sister Act*.



TOM LENOCI (*Alfred*), recipient of the Shep Pollock & Paulette Long Professional Theater Intern Fellowship, is a 1993 graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program (ATP). As a member of the ATP, he appeared in the main-stage production of Robert Woodruff's *The Duchess of Malfi* and in studio productions of *A Prayer for My Daughter*, *Cymbeline*, *Ivanov* (in the title role), and *The Lower Depths*. Bay Area credits also include the role of Phillip in *25 Fish in Dogpatch* for the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival, *Shadowlands* at Marin Theatre Company, David Barth's *A Dance along the Precipice* at Intersection for the Arts, and the role of Barry, the best man, in the San Francisco production of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*.

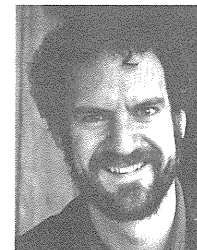


WILLIAM PATERSON (*Harry*) joined A.C.T. in 1967 to play James Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. A graduate of Brown University, Paterson served in the army for four years before starting his professional acting career in a summer stock company. He appeared for at least part of every season for twenty years at the Cleveland Play House, taking time out for live television, films, and four national tours with his own one-man shows. The A.C.T. productions in which he has appeared in major roles include *You Can't Take It with You*, *Jumpers*, *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *All the Way Home* (Japan tour), *Buried Child*, *The Gin Game*, *Painting Churches*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Saint Joan*, and *Saturday, Sunday and Monday* and *Pygmalion*, for both of which he received the Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award for best supporting actor, and *The Cocktail Hour*, for which he received a Bay Area Theatre

Critics' Circle Award for best principal performance. Paterson played Scrooge in the original A.C.T. production of *A Christmas Carol* and performed the role for fourteen seasons. He served for nine years on the San Francisco Arts Commission and for two years as a trustee of the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation.



MICHAEL FITZPATRICK (*Understudy*) is a graduate of the Advanced Training Program at A.C.T. and the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, and attended the College of Santa Fe in Mexico. While a member of the company for three seasons at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (P.C.P.A.) Theaterfest, he appeared in *Big River*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Normal Heart*, and *Baby*, among others. His studio productions at A.C.T. include *Awake and Sing*, *Light up the Sky*, and *The Lower Depths*. Fitzpatrick taught in the Young People's Conservatory at P.C.P.A. and has worked at many theaters in the Sacramento area, winning six Elly Awards for acting and design.



JULIAN LÓPEZ MORILLAS (*Understudy*) has been living and working in the Bay Area since 1973. During fifteen years with the Berkeley (California) Shakespeare Festival, including a term as associate artistic director, he played many roles, including King Lear, Shylock, Brutus, Macbeth, Malvolio, Prospero, and Dogberry. He also directed *The Tempest*, *All's Well That Ends Well*,

Henry IV, Part I, Coriolanus, King John, and Pericles, among others. Other acting and directing credits include work at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Eureka Theatre Company, the Magic Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks of Palo Alto, the Denver Center Theatre Company, San Diego Repertory Theatre, the Court Theatre of Chicago, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. López-Morillas has also directed student productions of *Tartuffe* and *Troilus and Cressida* for the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program.



WANDA McCADDON (*Understudy*) has been acting and directing in the Bay Area for more than a decade. Local credits include Maria Voinitsky in *Uncle Vanya* at A.C.T., Julia in *Lend Me a Tenor* at San Jose Stage Company, Mrs.

Boyle in *Mousetrap* at San Jose Repertory Theatre, Juba in *Heathen Valley* at San Jose Stage Company, Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Sunnyvale Repertory Theater, and Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at California Repertory Theater/Monterey. Her regional credits include the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* and Hesther in *Penny for a Song* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Winnie in *Happy Days* and Miss Helen in *Road to Mecca* at TheatreWorks in Colorado Springs. She has won a Drama-Logue Award for acting and two *San Francisco Chronicle* awards for directing. Film and television credits include "Wolf," "Midnight Caller," "Partners in Crime," *Howard the Duck*, *Ishi*, *Tenderloin*, and *So I Married an Axe Murderer*.

DAVID STOREY (*Playwright*) was born in 1933 in Wakefield, England, the third son of a Yorkshire mine worker. In his twenties, he studied painting

at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, while commuting weekly to Leeds, where he played rugby for the local professional club. Before gaining fame as a writer, he held various jobs, such as postman, farm laborer, workman with crews erecting showground tents, bus conductor, and schoolteacher. His first novel, *This Sporting Life* (1960), takes its inspiration from the author's athletic background; it won the Macmillan Prize and became a successful movie directed by Lindsay Anderson (1963). The creative association of the two artists continued, both on stage and in films, until Anderson's death in September, 1994. Storey has written several other award-winning novels that firmly established his literary reputation: *Flight into Camden* (1960, the John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize), *Radcliffe* (1963, the Somerset Maugham Prize), *Pasmore* (1972, the Faber Memorial Prize), *Saville* (1976, the Booker Prize), *A Prodigal Child* (1982), and *Present Times* (1984). Many of Mr. Storey's dramatic works were first produced at the Royal Court Theatre in London (where he was associate artistic director from 1972-74). They were later successfully performed in New York, in American regional theaters, and around the world, and won numerous distinctions. In addition to *Home* (1970), nominated for a Tony Award and winner of London's *Evening Standard* and New York Drama Critics' Circle awards, his plays include: *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* (1967), *In Celebration* (1969), *The Contractor* (1969), *The Changing Room* (1971), *Cromwell* (1973), *The Farm* (1973), *Life Class* (1974), *Mother's Day* (1976), *Sisters* (1978), *Early Days* (1980), *The March on Russia* (1989), *Stages* (1992), and *Caring* (1992). In 1992 he also published a volume of poems written between 1951 and 1991, entitled *Storey's Lives*.

DAWN SWIDERSKI (*Scenic Design*) has served as the Associate Designer at A.C.T. since 1990. During that time she has designed for numerous Bay Area theaters, including the Regional Center for the Arts, Carmel Bach Festival, and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. She worked as an

assistant art director for the film *Made in America* and is currently a set designer for the Disney film *James and the Giant Peach*. She is a graduate of the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

CALLIE FLOOR (*Costume Design*) earned her B.F.A. from the University of Utah and her Higher Diploma in theater design from the Slade School of Fine Art at University College in London. Since coming to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1987, she has designed for various Bay Area theaters, including the Oakland Ensemble Theatre, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Magic Theatre, Life on the Water, Zaccho Dance Theatre, Chabot College, and Theatre Rhinoceros. She has been honored with five Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award nominations, receiving one for the Magic Theatre's *Man of the Flesh*. Her recent projects include *Trilogy* for Gary Palmer Dancers and the West Coast premiere of the opera *Frida* for City College of San Francisco. She is currently the resident designer for the San Francisco Bay Revels and is A.C.T.'s Costume Rental Supervisor.

PETER MARADUDIN (*Lighting Designer*), designer-in-residence at A.C.T., has designed *Oleanna*, *Full Moon*, *Scapin*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Pecong*, *Pygmalion*, *The Learned Ladies*, and *Antigone*. He designed the lighting in the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* on Broadway, and lit the off-Broadway production of *Bouncers*. For regional theater, he has designed more than one hundred and fifty productions in the last nine years for such companies as the Guthrie Theatre, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Indiana Repertory Theater, and Denver Center Theatre Company. Maradudin has designed frequently in the Bay Area, lighting *The Woman Warrior*, *The Lady from the*

Sea, *Mad Forest*, *Fuente Ovejuna*, *Serious Money*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *Long Day's Journey into Night* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, as well as *The Master Builder* and *Oedipus* for San Jose Repertory Theatre. He has received four Los Angeles Theatre Critics' Circle Awards, twenty Drama-Logue Awards, and an Angstrom Award for lifetime achievement in lighting design.

LYNNE SOFFER (*Dialect Consultant*) has been the dialect coach for various productions at A.C.T., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, the Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Actor's Theatre of Marin, and the Actor's Theatre in San Francisco. She has also served as company speech and dialect coach for two seasons at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (P.C.P.A.) Theaterfest in Santa Maria. An instructor of acting, speech, dialects, and text work, Soffer has taught for a variety of schools and theater companies through Alaska and California and currently teaches for A.C.T. and Voicetrax Studios in Marin. As an actor she has worked for theaters from Maine to Alaska and has been seen by Bay Area audiences in productions at A.C.T., San Jose Repertory Theatre, Encore Theatre Company, Brava! For Women in the Arts, Word for Word, and the 1994 BAIT Fringe Festival.

BRUCE ELSPERGER (*Stage Manager*) returns for his eighth season with A.C.T., where his stage management credits include *Oleanna*, *Scapin*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Golden Boy*, *Right Mind*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *The Learned Ladies*. He has stage-managed *Banjo Dancing* and *Bee Hive* at San Jose Repertory Theatre. He was in Seattle for three years as production stage manager with the Intiman Theatre Company, the Bathhouse Theater, and a Western U.S. tour of *The Big Broadcast*. Before that he was production stage manager with the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (P.C.P.A.) Theaterfest in Solvang and

Santa Maria, California. His directing credits include *A Breeze from the Gulf*, *Bag Lady*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *A Tribute to the American Musical Theater*. A graduate of Drake University, Elsperger has studied in London and worked as an art therapist in schools in Iowa and Montana. He is also the casting director of the San Jose Repertory Theatre.

ALICE ELLIOTT SMITH (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is in her seventeenth season at A.C.T., where she has been the company's master scheduler, production coordinator of Plays in Progress, director of staged readings, associate director of the Troubadour touring program, director of the studio production *Ah, Wilderness!*, and co-director of *Morning's at Seven*, *Picnic*, and the Plays in Progress production of *Rio Seco*. A partial listing of her stage-managing credits include *Private Lives*, *The*

Lady's Not for Burning, *The Floating Light Bulb*, *Faustus in Hell*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *Diamond Lil*, *Woman in Mind*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Judevine*, *Hapgood*, *Burn This*, *Food and Shelter*, *Dark Sun*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *The Pope and the Witch*, *Antigone*, *The Learned Ladies*, *Pecong*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *Oleanna*. Smith is also program director for the Beckett Prison Project, producing the works of Samuel Beckett in maximum security prisons.

GLYNIS RIGSBY (*Assistant to the Director*) studied acting and directing at the University of California, Irvine. She has worked with members of the New World Performance Laboratory and Tadashi Suzuki's SCOT company. She recently appeared as LeGrue in *Red Noses* at the Somar Theater.

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CAREY PERLOFF (*Artistic Director*) assumed artistic leadership of A.C.T. in June 1992. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and new works adapted from or inspired by classical works and themes, Perloff opened her first season at A.C.T. with August Strindberg's *Creditors*, followed by Timberlake Wertenbaker's new translation of *Antigone* and last season's acclaimed production of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. In the summer of 1993 she staged the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's new music-theater-video opera *The Cave* at the Vienna Festival, which was subsequently presented at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, Royal Festival Hall in London, and Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Perloff served as Artistic Director of New York's CSC Repertory, Ltd.-The Classic Stage Company from 1986 to 1992, where she directed the acclaimed world premiere of Ezra Pound's version of Sophocles' *Elektra* (with Pamela Reed and Nancy Marchand), the American premiere of Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language* (with Jean Stapleton and Peter Riegert) on a double bill with his *The Birthday Party*, Tony Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica*, Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Lynne Alvarez's translation of Tirso de Molina's *Don Juan of Seville*, Michael Feingold's version of Alexandre Dumas's *The Tower of Evil*, Beckett's *Happy Days* (with Charlotte Rae), Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (with John Turturro), and Len Jenkin's *Candide*. Under her direction, CSC won the 1988 Obie Award for artistic excellence, as well as numerous Obies for acting, design, and production.

Perloff has directed and developed numerous new plays and translations and is completing work with Timberlake Wertenbaker on a new version of Euripides' *Hecuba* for A.C.T. to be produced in the spring of 1995. In Los Angeles, she staged Pinter's *The Collection* at the Mark Taper Forum (winning a Drama-Logue Award for outstanding direction), and was Associate Director of Steven Berkoff's *Greek* (which earned the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award for best production). Perloff received her B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) in classics and

comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.



BENNY SATO AMBUSH (*Associate Artistic Director*) has directed at A.C.T. *Miss Evers' Boys* and *Pecong* (each nominated for eight, and each winning three, Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards), and *Full Moon*. For A.C.T.'s

1990-91 Plays-in-Progress series, he directed *Pigeon Egghead*, a play about Native Americans which helped inspire the creation of a new Bay Area Native American theater company, Turtle Island Ensemble, currently operating under A.C.T.'s auspices. Other regional directing credits include *Playland* at the Magic Theatre; the world premiere of *Out of Purgatory* at the Old Globe Theatre (which won Ambush a nomination for the Los Angeles Robbie Award for best director of a drama); *Miss Evers' Boys* at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival (filmed excerpts from which appeared in *Deadly Deception* on the acclaimed PBS series "Nova" in 1993); *Fences* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland; and Sherley Anne Williams's *Letters from a New England Negro* for the 1991 National Black Theater Festival and the 1992 International Theater Festival of Chicago (the only American entry). He has also directed the annual Bay Area McDonald's Gospel Fest since 1990.

Before joining A.C.T., Ambush was the Artistic/Producing Director of the Oakland Ensemble Theatre (1982-90), Oakland's first and only resident professional theater, where his directing credits included *Division Street*, *A Night at the Apollo*, *MLK: We Are the Dream*, *Tamer of Horses*, and *Alterations* (which won a Drama-Logue Award for outstanding direction in 1985). He is a board member of Theatre Communications Group and the Bay Area Playwrights' Foundation, producers of the annual Bay Area Playwrights' Festival. He has been active locally, regionally, and nationally in advocacy for cultural equity, non-traditional casting, and pluralism in American art. Ambush received his B.A. from Brown University and his M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego.



RICHARD SEYD (*Associate Artistic Director*) was appointed Associate Artistic Director of A.C.T. in 1992. He has received Drama-Logue and Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards for his productions of *Cloud 9*, *About Face*, and *Noises*

Off. As Associate Producing Director of the Eureka Theatre Company, he directed *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Island*, and *The Wash*. He has directed the Pickle Family Circus in London; *Three High* with Geoff Hoyle, Bill Irwin, and Larry Pisoni at the Marines Memorial Theatre; *A View from the Bridge* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *As You Like It* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; and *Unfinished Stories* for the Mark Taper Forum's New Play Series. He directed *The Learned Ladies* (with Jean Stapleton) for CSC Repertory, Ltd. in New York during the 1991-92 season and directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the opening production for the California Shakespeare Festival's new outdoor amphitheater in 1991. That year he also directed *Sarah's Story* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; *Born Yesterday* at Marin Theatre Company; and *King Lear* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Portland. For A.C.T. he has directed *The Learned Ladies*, the American premiere of Dario Fo's *The Pope and the Witch*, Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, and the Bay Area premiere of David Mamet's *Oleanna*. This season at A.C.T. he directs Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and Shakespeare's *Othello*.

THOMAS W. FLYNN (*Administrative Director*) became A.C.T.'s Administrative Director in the fall of 1993. For the previous three years, he was A.C.T.'s Director of Development and Community Affairs. Flynn has also served as Campaign Director for the Geary Theater Campaign. Prior to joining A.C.T., he held development positions at the Boston Ballet, the Handel and Haydn Society, and Tufts University. Flynn studied East Asian History at Harvard College. He has been a recipient of the Henry Russell Shaw Traveling Fellowship, conducting research on European architecture, and a Management Fellowship from the American Symphony Orchestra League. Flynn is currently a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission.

JAMES HAIRE (*Producing Director*) began his career on Broadway with Eva LeGallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he managed were *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (with LeGallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leora Dana), *A Touch of the Poet* (with Denholm Elliott), *The Seagull* (with Farley Granger), *The Rivals*, *John Brown's Body*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of *Georgy* (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* (with Julie Harris and Estelle Parsons), 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 as Production Stage Manager. In 1985 he was appointed Production Director, and in 1993 he assumed his current position. 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.

JOHN LOSCHMANN (*Conservatory Executive Director*) has been working at the American Conservatory Theater for fourteen years teaching ballet, musical theater, and acting and directing student projects. He has also taught at Northern Illinois University and San Jose State University, and for eight years he was a teacher and dancer with the Pacific Ballet. Loschmann won a Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award for his portrayal of Gregor Samsa in the San Francisco Theatre Project's acclaimed production of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, which went to the Edinburgh Theatre Festival in Scotland. He graduated from Antioch University with a degree in dance and has an M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.

DENNIS POWERS (*Senior Editor & Professional Advisor*) joined A.C.T. in 1967, during the company's first San Francisco season, after six years as an arts writer at the *Oakland Tribune*. Before being named to his present position by Carey Perloff, he worked with William Ball and Edward Hastings as a writer, editor, and casting associate. The A.C.T. productions on which he has collaborated as dramaturg or adaptor include *Oedipus Rex*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *King Richard III*, *The*

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Winter's Tale, *Saint Joan*, and *Diamond Lil*. The most popular of his adaptations, *A Christmas Carol*, was written with Laird Williamson, who was also his collaborator on *Christmas Miracles*, which premiered at the Denver Center Theatre Company in 1985 and was later published. Among the other theaters with which he has been associated are the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Stanford Repertory Theater, Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, and San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theater. Powers's reviews and articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Saturday Review*, *Los Angeles Times*, *American Arts*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*.

MERYL LIND SHAW (*Casting Director*) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993 after sixteen years as a regular in the Bay Area theater community, where she has stage-managed more than sixty productions. At A.C.T., she stage-managed *Bon Appétit!* and *Creditors*. She was Resident Stage Manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years, Production Stage Manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons, and has stage-managed at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Eureka Theatre, Alcazar Theater, and Center Stage in Baltimore. She directed *Willa and Marie* at the Julia Morgan Theatre, and *Joy Carlin in The Belle of Amherst* for the U.C. Berkeley library, and has served as assistant or co-director for *The Sea* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *The Cherry Orchard* at the Eureka Theatre, *Bonjour, La! Bonjour* at the Berkeley Stage Company, and Bill Talen's *Rock Fables* at Intersection Theater. She has been active with Actors' Equity Association for many years and served on the A.E.A. negotiating team for the current L.O.R.T. contract.

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Slaight, and Lynne Alvarez, whose work for the program has been published by Smith & Kraus in *New Plays from the Young Conservatory* and produced on professional stages and in classrooms throughout the country.

Craig Slaight, director of the Young Conservatory, initiated the New Plays Program to address several key issues. As an experienced educator (he recently received the Educational Theater Association's 1994 President's Award), Slaight is all too familiar with the problem of finding material suitable for young acting students. But as a theater professional with a deep commitment to the future of the art form, he feels it is critical to train the next generation of theatergoers as well as the next generation of actors. "The voice of the young is often unheard in dramatic literature," explains Slaight. "That doesn't have to be the case. Young people can learn first-hand that the theater is a place to explore their lives now, not just when they are older. A.C.T. is the kind of place where such exploration is embraced with enthusiasm."

practical experience for their students. The New Plays Program of A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory makes all these dreams come true.

Now in its fifth season, the New Plays Program is a unique project through which A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory commissions new works by outstanding playwrights specifically for performance by students attending the Young Conservatory's Performance Workshop each summer. Previous participants have included playwrights Timothy Mason, Mary Wright, Timothy Mason, Mary Wright, Timothy Mason, and Director Craig Slaight; (front) Maria Sideris and Felicia Benefield



The Less Than Human Club: (back row, left to right) Niels Kirk, Kristin Schwartz, Michael Smith, Kevin Crook, Domenic Manchester, and Lauren Hodges; (middle) Assistant Director Paul Shikany, Playwright Timothy Mason, and Director Craig Slaight; (front) Maria Sideris and Felicia Benefield

continued on page 68

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for producing quality theater and training. I felt the Young Conservatory could therefore be an ideal environment for playwrights to develop challenging new work in a creative atmosphere free from the demand for commercial success."

Thus Slight launched the New Plays Program in the summer of 1990, commissioning award-winning playwright Timothy Mason to write *Ascension Day*. "It is wonderful to be asked to write a play," says Mason about the experience. "A commission like this, with only the suggestion that the piece address in some way the perspective of the young, offers a playwright the artistic freedom to explore a point of view not typically available elsewhere. A.C.T. is making a substantial contribution to the literature of the stage with this program."

Mason's inaugural experience in the New Plays Program was so positive that he returned in Au-



Timothy Mason in rehearsal at A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory

gust 1994 with a new work, *The Less Than Human Club*, which follows a multiethnic group of high school students in the very volatile year of 1968. "That was a pivotal year for me," Mason explains, "as it was for this country. The world around us was in complete flux, and there was massive upheaval—yet in so many ways our concerns were tiny, hormonal. This play is really about me, about the kids I went to school with."

The Less Than Human Club literally began as a dream. "When the offer came from Craig, I was in a panic. I told him I had absolutely no idea what I'd write about—but I couldn't say no. When I hung up, I was terrified, but somehow I fell asleep that night. The moment I woke up I rolled out of bed and wrote the words 'not hardly human.' Under that I wrote 'Nathan Hale High.' Then I listed the characters and their descriptions, and wrote the first thirteen pages, all at once. The entire full-length play was written in three weeks—a record for me!"

Much of Mason's work has been produced by the Circle Repertory Company in New York: *The Fiery Furnace* (with Julie Harris), *Babylon Gardens* (with Timothy Hutton and Mary-Louise Parker), *Only You*, and *Levitation*. Other productions of his work have included *Before I Got My Eye Put Out* at South Coast Repertory, *Bearclaw* at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theater, and *In a Northern Landscape* at Actors Theatre of Louisville.

With a substantial resume of classic children's literature he has adapted for the prestigious Min-

neapolis Children's Theater, Mason is also no stranger to dramatic work for young people. His version of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* has been playing in Russia for six straight years, and this year he briefly interrupted his residency at A.C.T. to attend the premiere of his musical adaptation of Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (he is the only theatrical writer ever to receive permission from the Seuss family to adapt the classic).

Mason hastens to point out that the New Plays Program is not "children's theater" in any derogatory sense of the term. "This is a play like any other play I've done for adult audiences, except that the protagonists are younger. There was nothing in the rehearsal process that differed substantively from any professional rehearsal process I have experienced."

An essential element of the New Plays Program is the writer's two-week residency at A.C.T. working directly with students in rehearsal. This year, as is typical of new pieces done in workshop with a playwright, new pages were added to Mason's initial draft every day. "You get so much from working with young people," Mason explains enthusiastically. "There's a world of difference between a twenty-something actor and a real seventeen-year-old saying these lines. They are so honest and raw, and they look to us for so much."

"After the first rehearsal one of the actors was clearly nervous. He finally revealed that he was concerned about my being there, because he was worried that his

interpretation wasn't what I had envisioned for the character. I explained to him that there was no way that he could produce exactly what I envisioned—and that that's not what I wanted. Otherwise, I wouldn't be writing for the theater. The theater is about collaboration, about each person involved bringing something new and unexpected to the piece, something I never

would have imagined. I told him that it is cross-pollination that creates the most beautiful flowers."

A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory has offered theater training for young people from eight to eighteen since 1972. Professional actors and directors lead students—whose ranks have included alumni Winona Ryder and Nicholas Cage—in a wide spectrum of classes, including varying levels of acting technique, musical theater, vocal production, speech, phonetics, audition, and movement, among many others.

During the 1994-95 season, the Young Conservatory inaugurates its new two-part Young Playwrights Lab for high school students fourteen to eighteen years old: "Discovering the Playwright Within" and "Writing the Play: Heeding Your Inner Voice." For information about Young Conservatory programs, including the 1995 New Plays Program and Performance Workshop, call (415) 834-3244.

—Carla Jablonski



(Left to right) Cast members
Lauren Hodges and
Felicia Benefield

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A.C.T.'s administrative and Conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 834-3200.

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

The A.C.T. Central Box Office is located at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square. Central Box Office hours are 12 to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12 to 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday.

Box Offices at the Stage Door, Marines Memorial, and Center for the Arts Theaters:

Full-service box offices are open 90 minutes before each performance in these venues.

Bass:

A.C.T. tickets are also available at all Bass centers, including The Warehouse and Tower Records/Video.

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A.C.T. Audience Exchanges:

Informal audience discussions moderated by members of the A.C.T. staff, held after selected performances. For information, call (415) 749-2ACT.

A.C.T. Perspectives:

A symposium series held from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Monday evenings throughout the season, featuring in-depth panel discussions by noted scholars and professionals. Topics range from aspects of the season's productions to the general relation of theater and the arts to American culture. The symposia are free of charge and open to everyone. For information, call (415) 749-2ACT.

Student Matinees:

Matinees offered at 1 p.m. to elementary, secondary, and college groups for selected productions. Tickets are specially priced at \$8. For information, call Jane Tarver, Student Matinee Coordinator, at (415) 749-2230.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

"Words on Plays":

Handbooks containing a synopsis and background information on each of the season's plays can be mailed in advance to Full Season subscribers for the special price of \$24 for the entire season. A limited number of copies of individual handbooks are also available for purchase by single-ticket holders at the A.C.T. Central Box Office for \$5 each (sorry, no phone or mail orders for individual handbooks). For information, call (415) 749-2ACT.

Conservatory:

The A.C.T. Conservatory offers classes, training, and advanced theater study. The Young Conservatory offers training for students between the ages of 8 and 18. Call (415) 749-2350 for a free brochure.

Costume Rental:

A large collection of costumes, ranging from hand-made period garments to modern sportswear, is available for rental by schools, theaters, production companies, and individuals. Call (415) 749-2296 for more information.

Parking:

A.C.T. patrons can park for just \$6 at the San Francisco Hilton and Towers. Enter on Ellis Street between Mason and Taylor. Show your ticket stub for that day's performance upon exit to receive the special price for up to five hours of parking, subject to availability. Full Season subscribers enjoy an even greater discount. (Subscriber discount parking packages are already sold out.)

AT THE THEATER

Beepers!

If you carry a pager, beeper, watch, or alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater to avoid disturbing the performance. Alternately, you may leave it with the House Manager, along with your seat number, so you can be notified if you are called.

Latecomers:

Latecomers will be seated before the first intermission only if there is an appropriate interval.

Listening System:

Head sets designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium are available free of charge in the lobby before performance.

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

Smoking is not permitted in the auditorium.

Wheelchair Access:

The Stage Door, Marines Memorial, and Center for the Arts Theaters are accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

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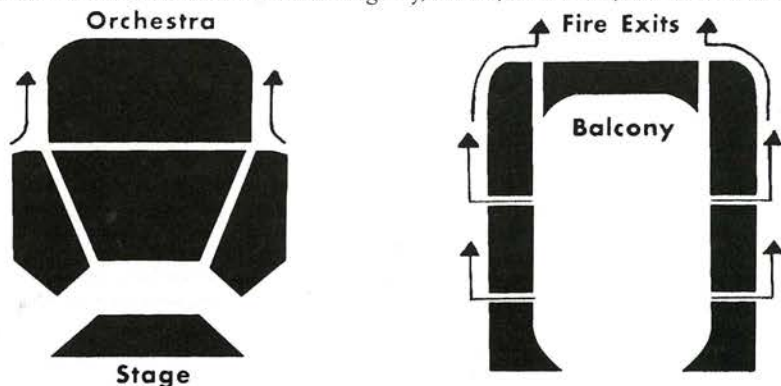
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The **Center for the Arts Theater** is the new state-of-the-art theater at **Yerba Buena Gardens**, located at 700 Howard Street at Third.

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Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit.



ALL ACROSS EUROPE, AS THE NEW DAY ARRIVES, SO DO WE.

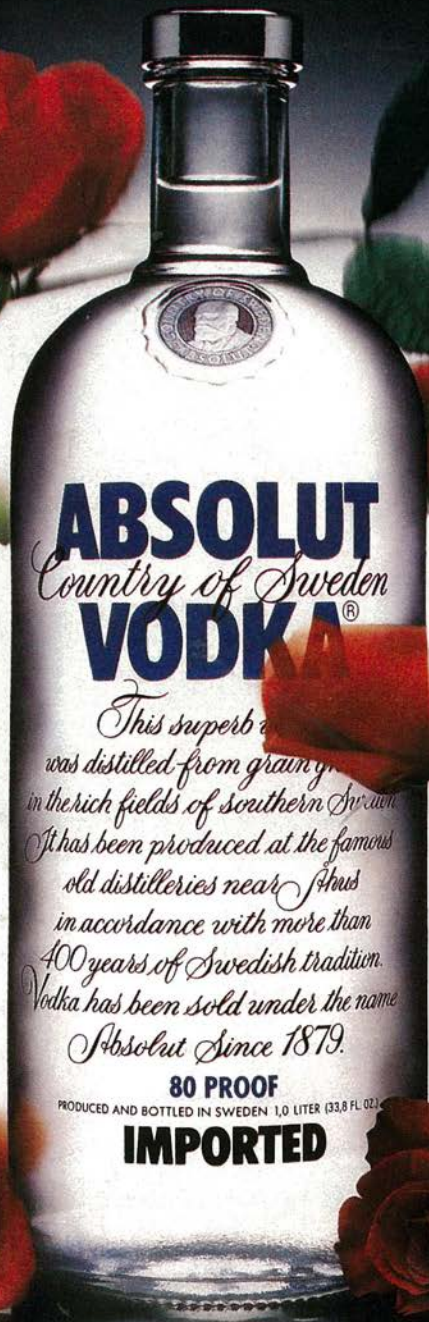


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