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1995-1996 SEASON

# DARK RAPTURE

*Stagebill*



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The American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.

Edward Hastings,  
Artistic Director, 1986-92



Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director*

### 1995-96 REPERTORY SEASON

#### ARCADIA

by Tom Stoppard  
directed by Carey Perloff  
October 12, 1995 - December 3, 1995  
*Stage Door Theatre*

#### SEVEN GUITARS

by August Wilson  
directed by Lloyd Richards  
November 9, 1995 - December 23, 1995  
*Marines Memorial Theatre*

#### GASLIGHT

by Patrick Hamilton  
directed by Albert Takazaukas  
December 14, 1995 - January 28, 1996  
*Stage Door Theatre*

#### THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare  
directed by Carey Perloff  
January 18, 1996 - February 18, 1996  
*Geary Theater*

#### DARK RAPTURE

by Eric Overmyer  
directed by David Petrarca  
February 29, 1996 - March 31, 1996  
*Geary Theater*

*in rotating repertory at the Geary Theater*

#### THE CHERRY ORCHARD

by Anton Chekhov  
directed by Barbara Damashek  
April 4, 1996 - June 7, 1996

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by Thornton Wilder  
directed by Richard Seyd  
April 18, 1996 - June 9, 1996

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Terrence McCarthy



The 86-year-old Geary Theater, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, reopened in January.

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gized and informed by a profound commitment to actor training. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, A.C.T. is committed to nurturing its rich legacy while expanding its reach into new areas of dramatic literature, new artistic forms, and new communities. Central to A.C.T.'s work is the interaction of original

and classical work on the mainstage and at the heart of the A.C.T. Conservatory.

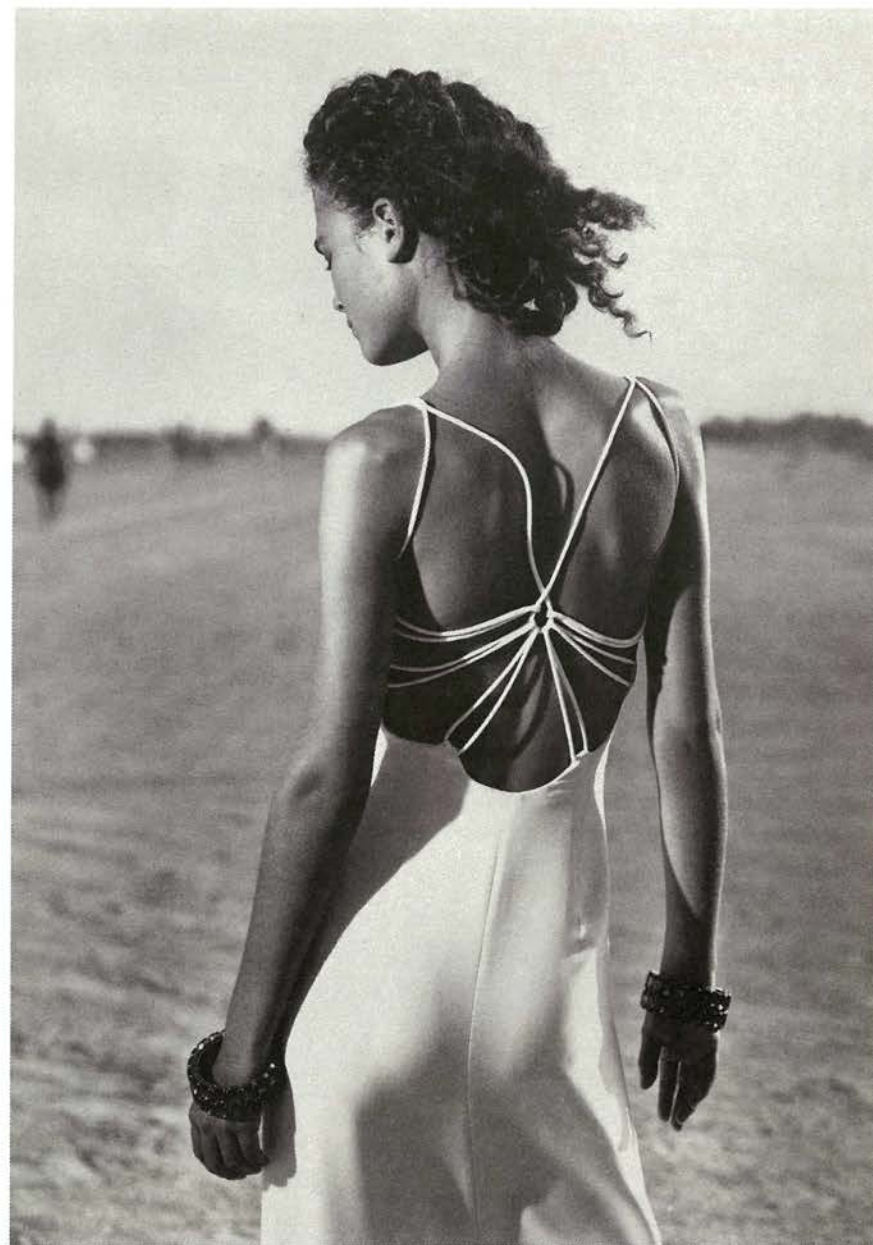
Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the historic Geary Theater in 1967. During the company's thirty-one-year history, more than two hundred productions have been performed to a combined audience of six million people in Japan, the U.S.S.R., and throughout the United States. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. Today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than two hundred thousand people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Since Perloff's appointment in

1992, A.C.T. has enjoyed unprecedented success with groundbreaking, innovative productions of classical works and bold explorations of contemporary playwriting. A.C.T. seeks plays that are provocative, entertaining, and complex in vision, plays that embrace the uniqueness of live performance. A.C.T. is particularly interested in theater that celebrates the richness of language, revolves around the transformative power of the actor, and invites multiple interpretations. Most importantly, A.C.T.'s goal is to create theater that engages the imagination of its audience.

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 fourteen 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-six-year-old Geary Theater, which was damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, has undergone major renovation resulting in updated stagecraft, enhanced 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. To date, A.C.T.'s capital campaign has raised more than \$27 million of the funds necessary to complete the reconstruction.



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# Stagebill

Vol.2, No.5 March 1996

## American

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Above: Photo by UPI/BETTMANN

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# A.C.T.'S TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO THE GEARY THEATER



(l to r) Chairman of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees Alan L. Stein, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, Artistic Director Carey Perloff, Producing Director James Haire, FEMA Regional Director Shirley Mattingly, former Artistic Director Edward Hastings, and Administrative Director Thomas W. Flynn inaugurate the Geary Theater at A Galaxy on Geary.

January 1996 was a stellar month at A.C.T., as the company welcomed audiences to the reopening festivities of the gloriously refurbished Geary Theater.

On January 10, luminaries of stage, screen, and society flocked to *A Galaxy on Geary* to celebrate A.C.T.'s long-awaited return to the Geary. The sold-out event, a benefit for the A.C.T. Conservatory, began with elegant preperformance dinners at Macy's Home Store, The Pan Pacific Hotel, and the Grand Cafe. After dinner, street artists entertained patrons arriving for the all-star performance, created and directed by A.C.T. Associate Artist Albert Takazauckas.

A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff was joined onstage by special guests for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially reopen the Geary for "business." A parade of artists then took the stage to honor the Geary's triumphant return: colleagues from the Bay Area arts

*continued on page 10*

Top right: A.C.T. alumna Annette Bening reads a congratulatory letter to A.C.T. from President Bill Clinton during *A Galaxy on Geary*. Bottom right: Young Conservatory student Eli Marienthal (top) and Advanced Training Program student Tom Kane (bottom) perform a scene from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.



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John O'Hara, San Francisco Chronicle



Bay "Sally" Morris

At the preperformance Producers, Backers, and Angels Dinner in Macy's Home Store: (l to r) Nancy Pelosi with A Galaxy on Geary cochair Ellen Maguin Neuman; Robert Girard, A.C.T. Trustee Phoebe Cowles, Ruth Stein, and Carey Perloff.

community, including the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, representatives of the San Francisco Ballet and Opera, and Kitka; A.C.T. company alumni René Auberjonois, Annette Bening, Joy Carlin, William Paterson, Ruth Kobart, Peter Donat, Andrea Marcovicci, and Lise Bruneau; as well as some of the newest members of the A.C.T. family—*Tempest* cast members David Strathairn and Michael Tucker (with his wife Jill Eikenberry) and students from the A.C.T. Conservatory.

Just three days later, A.C.T. hosted an all-day open house for the

Bay Area community, welcoming more than four thousand theater-lovers who explored the nooks and crannies of the newly renovated Geary. The entire building was open to A.C.T.'s devoted patrons, who had waited eagerly for more than six years for their first chance to reenter their theatrical home.

A.C.T. is grateful for the generous support of all those who made A.C.T.'s Geary Homecoming Celebration a spectacular success. The real star, of course, was the grand, glittering Geary Theater itself.

continued on page 12



Terrence McCarthy

At the A.C.T. Open House, visitors to the Geary Theater size up costumes from A.C.T.'s season-opening production of *Arcadia*.

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from page 10

## INTRODUCING STUDIO A.C.T. (FORMERLY THE ACADEMY)

The A.C.T. Conservatory has expanded its part-time theater training program for adults and given it a new name: Studio A.C.T. Formerly The Academy, Studio A.C.T. continues to provide lively, high-quality, and affordable classes to students eighteen and older.

Since taking the helm of Studio A.C.T. in November 1995, distinguished A.C.T. company member and acting teacher Bruce Williams has guided the program in exciting new directions, initiating three new programs in the Studio A.C.T. winter/spring session: "Weekend Intensives," all-day Saturday workshops exploring a variety of theater-related subjects; the "Backstage at the Geary Series," providing in-depth, behind-the-scenes explorations of the rehearsal, design, and performance process of selected A.C.T. mainstage productions in the Geary Theater; and "Corporate Education Services," offering seminars on communication skills, public speaking, and stress management to businesses either in A.C.T. studios or on site. Williams is also available for individual counseling to help students tailor a course of study to their specific goals.

Studio A.C.T. continues to offer its regular curriculum of acting, scene study, voice and speech, audition techniques, Shake-

speare, stage combat, musical theater, improvisation, directing for actors, Alexander Technique, and singing. Four ten-week sessions are offered throughout the year; the spring session begins April 1. For information, call (415) 834-3286.

## PERSPECTIVES ON THEATER

The California Council for the Humanities (CCH) has honored A.C.T. with a \$10,000 grant to fund the third consecutive season of A.C.T. Perspectives, a series of free public symposia highlighting the dramatic fusion of theater and contemporary life. The CCH, which receives its major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, is an independent, non-partisan organization whose mission is to bring the insights of the humanities to the California public.

Thanks to the generosity of the CCH, A.C.T. audiences have already experienced "Chaos & Creativity" (*Arcadia*); joined August Wilson in conversation with director Lloyd Richards (*Seven Guitars*); and explored "The Transformation of Character" (*The Tempest*).

Still to come this season are "Adventures in Language: New Waves in Contemporary Playwriting," March 11 (*Dark Rapture*); and "The Playwright and the Actor: New Forms and New Methods," April 29 (*The Cherry Orchard*).

All symposia are held on selected Monday nights from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Geary Theater and are free of charge. For more information, call the A.C.T. literary department at (415) 439-2469.

continued on page 14

Studio A.C.T.'s spring session begins April 1.



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## CATCHING NEW WAVES IN AMERICAN PLAYWRITING

This month's *Dark Rapture* installment of A.C.T. Perspectives, "Adventures in Language: New Waves in Contemporary Playwriting," explores the work of a revolutionary group of "heightened language" playwrights—which includes Eric Overmyer and A.C.T. playwright-in-residence Mac Wellman—who have challenged the conventional norms of American naturalism over the last two decades. Taking the dais on March 11 to discuss new dramatic forms are Wellman; the renowned poetry critic and humanities scholar, Professor Marjorie Perloff, from Stanford University; dramaturg and critic Marc Robinson, an assistant professor at the Yale School of Drama; and moderator Douglas Messerli, publisher of Sun & Moon Press.

The Monday-night panel discussion at the Geary Theater is part of a three-day celebration of new directions in American playwriting cosponsored by A.C.T. and the San Francisco State University (SFSU) Departments of Theatre Arts and Creative Writing and the Poetry Center and American Poetry Archives at SFSU. Wellman is joined by colleagues Overmyer, Len Jenkin, Jeffrey M. Jones, and Bay Area playwrights Erik Ehn, Octavio Solis, Eugenie Chan, Brighde Mullins, and Roy Conboy, as well as A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, dramaturg Paul Walsh, and Professor Joel Schechter, chair of the SFSU Department of Theatre Arts, for a

weekend of readings and workshops.

The weekend workshops take place from noon to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 9, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 10, in Knuth Hall, the Creative Arts Building at SFSU. For more information, call (415) 439-2469.

## THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE A.C.T. CONSERVATORY

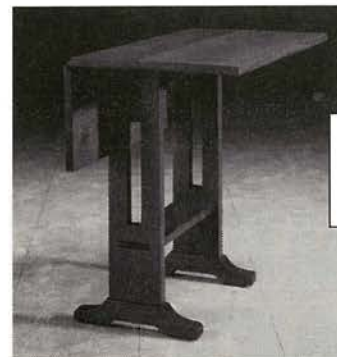
The James Irvine Foundation has awarded A.C.T. a three-year, \$350,000 grant to fund development of the community outreach and public performance components of the Conservatory's Advanced Training Program (ATP). The San Francisco- and Los Angeles-based foundation, a longtime A.C.T. supporter, also provided critical support for extraordinary expenses during the transition period immediately after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the subsequent Geary Theater Campaign.

The Irvine Foundation's generosity enables the Conservatory to increase its emphasis on performance and community presence for ATP students. Most significantly, the grant will fund the development of a public performance series, cast with second-year ATP and M.F.A. Program students and presented in small Bay Area theaters. The plays selected will represent diverse cultural viewpoints to extend A.C.T.'s appeal to a wider audience.



A.C.T. playwright-in-residence  
Mac Wellman

## Strictly Stickley



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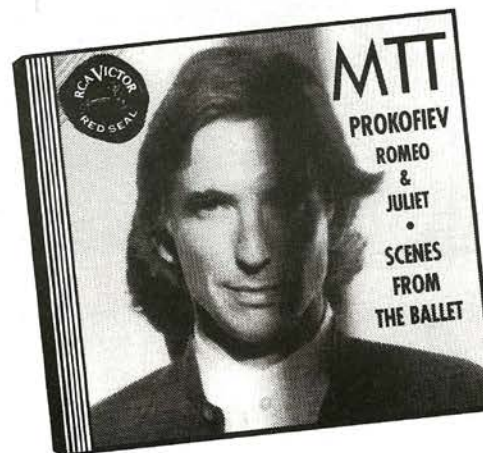
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American Conservatory Theater

Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director*

Thomas W. Flynn, *Administrative Director*

James Haire, *Producing Director*

presents

# DARK RAPTURE

(1992)

by Eric Overmyer

Directed by David Petrarca

*Scenery by* Adrienne Lobel

*Costumes by* Sandra Woodall

*Lighting by* Peter Maradudin

*Sound and Original Music by* Rob Milburn

*Casting by* Meryl Lind Shaw

*New York Casting by* Victoria Visgilio

*Stage Management Staff*

Juliet N. Pokorny

Elisa Guthertz

Sara K. McFadden-Intern



*Dark Rapture* received its premiere at the Empty Space Theatre, Seattle, in May 1992.

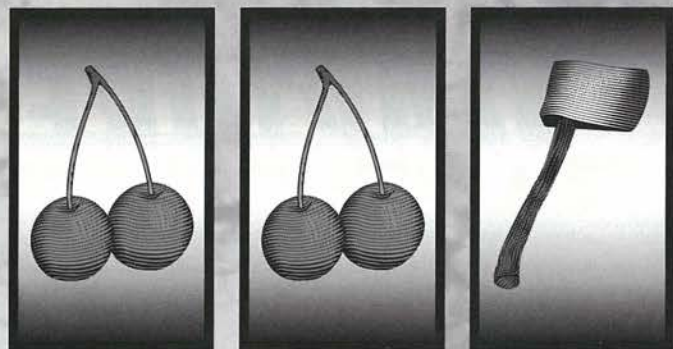


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A.C.T. RETURNS TO THE  
GEARY THEATER



# THE CHERRY ORCHARD

THE CHERRY ORCHARD BY  
**ANTON CHEKHOV**

TRANSLATED BY  
**PAUL SCHMIDT**

DIRECTED BY  
**BARBARA DAMASHEK**

**GEARY THEATER**

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# DARK RAPTURE

## The Cast

(in order of appearance)

<i>Ray</i>	Richard Snyder
<i>Babcock</i>	Shawn Elliott
<i>Julia</i>	Deirdre Lovejoy
<i>Lexington, Scones</i>	Matt DeCaro
<i>Vegas, Mathis, Cabo San Lucas waiter</i>	Rod Gnapp
<i>Tony, Danny</i>	Mark Feuerstein
<i>Ron, Seattle bartender</i>	Mark Rosenthal
<i>Renee, Key West waitress</i>	Jossara Jinaro
<i>Max</i>	Zachary Barton
<i>Nizam, Lounge singer</i>	Ümit Çelebi

## Understudies

<i>Ray</i> —Phillip Stockton
<i>Babcock, Lexington, Scones</i> —Brian Keith Russell
<i>Julia, Renee, Max, Key West waitress</i> —Mollie Stickney
<i>Vegas, Mathis, Tony, Danny, Cabo San Lucas waiter</i> —Leith Burke
<i>Ron, Nizam, Seattle bartender, Lounge singer</i> —Christopher Hickman

There will be one intermission.



# PREFACE

Sung-won Chen



THE  
AMERICAN  
CRIME NOVEL.  
RAYMOND  
CHANDLER.  
ELMORE  
LEONARD.  
DARK  
RAPTURE: A  
THEATRICAL  
ANALOGUE.  
THE LINGO  
OF BAD  
BEHAVIOR.  
—E.O.

A painting is the revelation of a discovery, not the culmination of a plan.

—Picasso, *paraphrased*

The resistance to cliché is what distinguishes art from life.

—Kundera, *paraphrased*

I don't speak any English, just American, without tears.

—Elvis Costello

I have tried to make discoveries in [my] plays, and I have tried to avoid cliché. A play ought to reveal itself slowly, to an audience and to its author. This takes patience, and contemporary audiences and critics are impatient, used to a diet of instantly recognizable cliché conventions. I want to be surprised in the theater. I want theatricality in the theater. I want charged, shaped, and heightened language. An authentic American language for the theater. No more Anglophilia. I want bravura perfor-

mance. I want ideas as well as feelings. I want ambiguity and complexity and imagination. I don't want literalness, preaching to the choir, sentiment, political correctness or polemic, easily explainable motivations or naturalistic dialogue or cliché characters. I'm not interested in what the dramaturg James Magruder characterizes as "talking about my problems in your living room

plays." I don't want TV on stage. The American theater is in a parlous state. Our best writers remain underproduced in the regional theater, as well as in New York. Theater and critics alike have failed to nurture an audience for new (in the best sense of the word) work, and the climate remains reactionary, mired in naturalism.

Theater cannot compete with film and television as a popular art form. If it is not to go the way of other antique, hand-made arts and become completely esoteric, it must rediscover its authenticity. As Chiaramonte says in *Theatre in Utopia*, theater is not elitist, but it is for those who love it. I hope [this play is] authentically theatrical, written in a real and new American, and I hope those who love theater will find some pleasure here.

—Eric Overmyer

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# DON'T FENCE THEM IN

by Marc Robinson

This spring the work of several revolutionary writers, known for their imaginative and poetic use of the American language, is highlighted on the A.C.T. mainstage and in its conservatory. While the cast of *Dark Rapture* prepared to bring Overmyer's work to the Geary Theater stage for the first time, Advanced Training Program students presented studio productions of A.C.T. Resident Playwright Mac Wellman's *Bad Infinity*, Overmyer's *In Perpetuity* throughout the Universe, Len Jenkin's *Dark Ride*, and Erik Ehn's *AOK*.

The production of these plays is a fundamental component of A.C.T.'s mission to complement innovative productions of classical drama with contemporary works that celebrate the uniqueness of live performance and engage the imagination of our audience. Although the new theatrical forms created by these "heightened language" playwrights may seem a departure from the familiar naturalism of twentieth-century American theater, they are in many respects—particularly in their con-

cern with themes of shifting identity and poetic exploration of the modern English language—akin to the work of such British writers as Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, and David Storey, whose plays have been featured on the A.C.T. mainstage. From *Sophocles* to Overmyer, the journey may not be as long as it seems.

In this article, Marc Robinson—Assistant Professor (Adjunct) of Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism at the Yale School of Drama—provides a context for the new movement in contemporary playwriting spearheaded by these writers and their colleagues.

Wellman, Overmyer, Jenkin, Ehn, and Jeffrey Jones are joined by several Bay Area playwrights for a weekend symposium on contemporary playwriting at San Francisco State University, March 9–11. Wellman and Robinson are also featured panelists at the subsequent A.C.T. Perspectives symposium on *Dark Rapture*, "Adventures in Language: New Waves in Contemporary Playwriting," March 11 at the Geary Theater.



Sung-won Chen



## THE DRAMA OF THE GREAT ESCAPE

"I wanted to generate a real movement for the theater," Mac Wellman admits, allowing himself a self-deprecating smile as we discuss his two influential play anthologies, *Theater of Wonders* and *7 Different Plays*. "There's not yet a tradition of American dramatic writing. It's wide open. So I started by picking those people who have a vision of drama that comes first of all from language."

The best-known writers included in Wellman's 1987 and 1989 collections (issued, respectively, by Sun & Moon Press and

Broadway Play Publishing) are Len Jenkin, Eric Overmyer, Jeffrey Jones, and, unabashedly, Wellman himself. Each of these playwrights shows cheerful disdain for the ordinary and enthusiasm for the idiosyncratic, sometimes exotic, variations on stage speech. "Gritty, dirty, slimy American language, when spoken in the theater, can really hurt people," Wellman says, relishing the thought.

Not for these writers the docility of so many plays—"journalism with wings," Wellman calls them. Instead, the creations of Wellman and his colleagues dazzle with improbability, willfully disorienting spectators used to more temperate drama. The writing may not yet define

a movement, but it has in recent seasons proven to be the American theater's most articulate alternative to comfortable realism—disruptive, unpredictable, and restless.

"Restless," in fact, may be the best word to use in attempting to unify a collection of writers that so deftly and deliberately eludes classifica-

tion. Wanderlust runs through much of their work, as they chafe against the restraints of convention by writing plays full of actual departures. Love of language has led the playwrights to search for—or create a-fresh—places where people speak with unmistakable individuality about undiscovered ex-

perience. Jenkin ventures into obscure, shadowy regions of the American landscape; Overmyer slides back to periods or places where language approached music; Jones reclaims the gaudy never-never land of 1950s B-movies and the no-less-remote territory of classical Western literature; and Wellman lifts off to distant solar systems, sites for his bemused science fictions and loopy comedies of manners.

Even the titles of their plays reflect a fascination with travel and mythic destinations: Wellman's *Starluster*, *Cleveland*, *Albanian Softshoe*, and *Professional Frenchman*; Overmyer's *On the Verge*, or *The Geography of Yearning*, and *In Perpetuity through-*

RAY:  
DIDN'T YOU EVER  
WANT TO START  
OVER?  
BURN OFF YOUR  
OLD LIFE?  
MAKE A CLEAN  
BREAK?

*out the Universe*; Jones's *Tomorrowland* and *Der Inka von Peru*; Jenkin's *Dark Ride*, *American Notes*, and *My Uncle Sam*. For writers based in the particularly insular theatrical world of New York, the geography of yearning simply amounts to the yearning for a larger sense of geography: Theirs is drama of the great escape.

## LEN JENKIN: THE RENEWAL OF WONDER

Len Jenkin is the most peripatetic. His characters are invariably on the road or only momentarily present. They often find themselves in seedy motels or all-night restaurants, communicating with others through pay phones or postcards. Jenkin's plays are lodged all over the U.S., yet his locales never seem familiar. His travelers maintain a foreigner's perspective on the landscape, staying just long enough in one place for its strangeness to register, and leaving before its mystery is solved.

The travel urge contains an idea of drama. "My theater resists one

space," Jenkin said to me. "Most theater is comfortable with a living room set—you don't have to move anything. But plays only get interesting when the stage directions present impossible challenges, like the earthquake in [his 1982 adaptation of] *Candide*." To travel in Jenkin's world all a character need say is, "Let us start at once," and a boat slides on stage, manned with rowers, its prow sporting a model of the destination, Constantinople; its aft, one of the home port, Venice.

His dramas themselves are on the run, moving out of themselves as backgrounds, identities, and styles constantly change. The "viewmasters" that various characters carry in *My Uncle Sam* are miniature versions of a typical Jenkin play. They present a world seen in facets; one catches discrete images of many places but, like a tourist, never acquires a full exposure to any single setting. Jenkin translates the traveler's segmented vision into dramatic structure. His plays are vast hives, and inside each compartment a partial view of



Reuters/Behman



experience is on display.

In *Dark Ride*, Jenkin works a complex variation on this model of linear travel. The play pushes vertically into its own many-layered action: One scene presents a man reading a book; the next, an episode from that book, in which a woman reads a note from her absent lover; the third, a scene from that very note. The instability that comes from these fluctuating contexts is the protocol for all his drama, Jenkin suggests—and if he had his way the entire culture would show more distrust of permanence. “I’d love to see theater energetically stomping around the U.S.A.,” Jenkin has written. “Rent 7-11s and put on plays by the highwayside.” Or, as Jenkin’s character Gogol puts it (speaking of his performances and by extension all of Jenkin’s plays), “I hope they have

opened a wound that won’t close, a dark space in the center of the chest, in which darkness, if they look carefully, they can see the stars.”

Looking carefully, Jenkin himself shows the most delight; and that refreshing love of surprise is what distinguishes his aesthetic. Jenkin’s surrogates are the writers that populate the fringes of his plays, enchanted by the action swirling around them and wondering, like us, what’s next. The Author in *My Uncle Sam*, the reporters in *Kid Twist* and *American Notes*, the failed novelist in *Five of Us* and, most explicitly, the translator trying to decode the story that becomes *Dark Ride* all call attention to the role language plays in the renewal of wonder. They also suggest that Jenkin’s plays address themselves to writing, or the rush of discovery that accompanies writing, more than anything else. “The imagination is on the verge of recovering its rights,” wrote Eric Overmyer, paraphrasing André Breton; and that sense of anticipation runs through Jenkin as well.

#### THE NATIVE SPEECH OF ERIC OVERMYER AND JEFFREY JONES

The search for ways to release the spectacular from the ostensibly banal propels much of Jeffrey Jones’s and Eric Overmyer’s work as well. For them, the imagination recovers more than its rights; it forages into a closely packed stash of cultural debris and retrieves situations, figures, idioms, even styles of syntax long discarded. Their plays are full of well-worn language transformed into bracing poetry.

In Overmyer’s *On the Verge*, when three Victorian explorers travel forward in time to the 1950s, terms like “jacuzzi” and “rock-and-roll” and phrases like “let your hair down” take on otherworldly significance. The women’s astonishment on hearing them for the first time becomes ours, and vernacular changes into hieroglyphics. In 1988’s *In a Pig’s Valise*, Overmyer’s film noir musical with a score by Kid Creole, the speaking rhythms may be familiar from our reading of Raymond Chandler, but the words inside bounce away before we catch them.

When Divina quotes *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* in *Wipeout*, Jeffrey Jones’s recent collage of found material, the text sounds as mystical as the excerpts from Plato another character has just spoken. And the monosyllabic banter in his earlier *Seventy Scenes of Halloween*, which often concerns nothing more weighty than candy corn, has grim consequences in a setting populated by nutty witches and monsters. Ionesco has described the avant-garde as a quiet return to something lost, rather than relentless, worried invention; and after Overmyer and Jones make the trip they present their quirky findings with all the brio of a huckster in front of a Len Jenkin carnival attraction.

“We’re all such talkers,” says

## ERIC OVERMYER 175



Peter Gunningham

Eric Overmyer’s most produced play is *On the Verge, or the Geography of Yearning*, which has been performed extensively throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, and has been translated and performed in Paris and Oslo. *In Perpetuity throughout the Universe* has

been translated into Québécois and presented at the CEAD in Montreal, and into Bulgarian and performed at the Bulgarian National Army Theater in Sofia. He is the recipient of grants and fellowships from the McKnight Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Le Comte du Nouy Foundation. He has written extensively for film and television, and he is the author of a play for radio, *Kafka’s Radio*, produced by KNYC. His other plays include *Native Speech*, *In a Pig’s Valise*, *The Heliotrope Bouquet* by Scott Joplin and Louis Chauvin, *Mi Vida Loca*, and *Don Quixote de La Jolla*. Overmyer lives in New York and New Orleans, makes a living in Los Angeles, and is married to actress Ellen McElduff.

Jones about his colleagues, and he’s right: A need to clarify experience with speech consumes many of their characters. Lyricism, however, rarely brings with it self-consciousness. In these plays, the loftiest linguistic flights usually take off from the rhythmic looseness of private patters or the roomy dimensions of small talk. This poetry is filled with what Overmyer calls “native speech” (the title of an early play). It may sound strange, but it retains the poignancy that underlies any attempt to forge a language as personal as one’s point of view.

When Hungry Mother, the cre-



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puscular deejay loping through Overmyer's *Native Speech*, goes on the air, he barrages listeners with manic, antic phrasemaking, giving off sparks of inscrutable lingo along the way. Caught up in the addictive fever of speech, he becomes an "argot astronaut." Mac Wellman's characters give themselves over to language with the same abandon; no one's language sounds stranger than Wellman's, but his esoteric verse is actually closer to Overmyer's street-smart variety than it at first appears.

#### MAC WELLMAN'S DELIRIOUS NARRATIVE

Wellman has been called recklessly obscure, but the opacity serves a purpose. "Theater is only comprehensible in this country if it can be paraphrased," he complains. In rebellion, he designs plays to allow for verbal unruliness, a sprawling ebullience learned, perhaps, from Joyce or Sterne. "I'd love to write plays that read like *Tristram Shandy*," Wellman says.

But Wellman's writing shares

most with Gertrude Stein, and she provides valuable lessons in how to steer through them. She too was frustrated with orthodox narration and set out to vandalize its homey structure of auspicious beginnings and resounding ends. Since so many people have stories to tell, she reasoned, another one would be merely superfluous. At any rate, stories are better left to the life spent outside of the theater. Inside, the challenge is to depict experience "without telling what happened . . . to make a play the *essence* of what happened."

Her strategies are also Wellman's. He embraces Stein's celebrated idea of a "continuous present," designed to focus attention on individual moments of a text, or a composition of elements, instead of on laboriously paced linearity. Rather than establish a narrative and then embellish it with images, Wellman works the other way around. "Was it Heraclitus who said that the most beautiful thing in nature is a random assembly of objects?" he asks me. Wellman conjures an assort-

ment of mannerist figures, conversations charged with sourceless anxiety, turning points severed from intrigues playing themselves out off stage, and then, as he says, "watches the struggle for a narrative to emerge."

Those delirious narratives are risky to ride and exhausting to retrace. In *Cleveland*, a high-school coed named Joan dreams of being a Trotskyite anti-pope, battles enemies from rival territory, and holds back a counterreformation before finally going to the prom. With all his plays, Wellman, like a character in 1989's *Whirligig*, longs for "inenarrable"

stories—those, he explains, "which are impossible to narrate." John Sleight, a character from Wellman's play *The Bad Infinity*, calls his latest art work "safe, because it's blank." "For blank read *dead*," says a fellow character. To keep his own inventions lively, Wellman feeds them neologisms and red herrings, then lets them churn dramatic situations until all the possible combinations of characters and consequences of events have been exhausted. He displays the same scavenger's miserliness shown by the other three writers and sanctioned by Stein, who advocated "using everything" and making a play "as simply different as possible." Stein termed the result a land-

scape; following suit, Wellman calls his "an accumulation, like a crystal."

Stein's terrestrial metaphor nicely evokes Wellman's traveling sensibility, which is even more adventurous than that of Jenkin, Overmyer, or Jones, yet derived from the same faith that life is else-

where. When it comes to his desultory structure, Wellman staunchly believes a play "should go where it wants to go." His characters do the same: even the planet's gravity can't restrain them. *Albanian Softshoe* takes place on galactic highways linking the ice moons of Saturn. The tin-colored Xuphus in *Whirl-*

*igig* has just landed after a wearying trek from the distant orb of Tlooth. Language, as it is for all these writers, is the preferred vehicle for travel. In *Whirligig* a young woman's verbal euphoria sends her flying to all the places she can list before taking a breath. Her catalogue includes planets called "Bistro," "Goethe," and "Hroswitha" —"anywhere out of here," she hollers, "you're all a bunch of yahoos." The runaway never leaves the dingy bus station where *Whirligig* is set, yet by the end she has transformed, with typical Wellman effortlessness, into an extraterrestrial "Girl Hun," eager to vanquish any who threaten her independence.

RAY:  
THIS IS WHAT WE  
REALLY WANT.  
DEEP DOWN. THIS  
IS WHERE WE GET  
OUR STORIES.  
SURVIVING  
CATASTROPHE.



UPI/Redman



## THE PERPETUAL OUTSIDER

"I think most Americans feel a profound desire to escape," says Wellman. "I sure do. But I know there's nowhere to escape to." Traces of his despair also turn up in Jenkin, Overmyer, and Jones, and darken their superficially whimsical plays. The wanderlust that pervades their work, Wellman suggests, has its origin in anger, a deep dissatisfaction with the skewed, wasteful, and wasting spirit of everyday life. In many of these plays the characters are questioning and unsure, cut off and cagey. Jenkin speaks of his fascination with people who get lost, who suddenly say, "Whoops, where are my shoes?" before stumbling into the random violence that erupts in every one of his plays. Hungry Mother rages to the blight around him, his radio show reaching almost no one in the abandoned slum. The figures of Overmyer's later plays don't even bother to protest—instead they seek refuge in nostalgia. Even in Wellman's drama, where characters come in clusters, no one quite meshes with anyone else. Conversation is replaced by talking past one another or perpetually changing the subject. At moments in the work of all four writers, characters shrewdly dislodge themselves from societies on the brink of collapse. That detachment leaves many of

VEGAS:  
LIKE THE MAN  
SAID, WHEREVER  
YOU GO, THERE  
YOU ARE.

them free to assume experimental personalities and deploy temporary attitudes towards the disarray before them. Jenkin's characters let shifting situations determine what aspects of themselves to reveal.

Like space and time, his characters also are composed of compartments. No single view of a person is definitive. The denizens of Overmyer's *In a Pig's Valise*, shrouded in fog and unfiltered cigarette smoke, spend the entire play trying

to unmask true identities or keep aliases intact. Disguise is a staple of Wellman's work, too. Most of his creatures are foreigners—Americans finding themselves in Lisbon (*Starluster*), Europeans trapped in suburban Washington, D.C. and eager to dissemble (*The Professional Frenchman*), or (as he calls the inhabitants of *The Bad Infinity*) "appearances variously modulated." And the moody, mod sextet of Jones's quotation plays trade names, genders, and biographies as frequently as Jones shifts sources for their dialogue. Characters flee identities with the same zest they flee cities and countries. In a rejection of the musty convention of character "consistency," they abandon the old, easily labeled figments of themselves, changing facades to maintain their distinctiveness and preserve a liberating outsiderhood.

For these characters, perpetual

*continued on page 45*

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Craig Slaight, *Acting, Directing, Performance Workshop*

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Barry Lloyd

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A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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# Performance HIGHLIGHTS

If you like your classics with a scoop of fun and a dollop of whimsy, try **Quartetto Gelato**. The current favorite flavor of the classical crossover craze, the quartet combines accordion, mandolin, oboe, and violin in sets that mix Mozart, gypsy fiddling, and "Danny Boy." But their popular, populist approach to classical music is grounded in a virtuosity that makes critics take the fun seriously. Catch them at Herbst Theatre on April 14, courtesy of **San Francisco Performances**. On April 17, SFP brings **Trio Fontenay** to the Herbst for an all-Beethoven concert. The Fontenays are "almost without peer among trios currently in circulation," according to the *New York Times*. Then on April 20, SFP presents **Nnenna Freelon**, an ascending star in the jazz pantheon. The chanteuse and songwriter was singing in obscurity in North Carolina until Ellis Marsalis discovered her. Three albums and numerous raves later, she's now being compared to Ella, Billie, and Sarah.



\* \* \* \* \*

George Gershwin's popular songs have long served as perfect vehicles for excursions by jazz singers and soloists. On April 21, **Cal Performances** brings jazz piano wunderkind **Marcus Roberts** to Hertz Hall in Berkeley, playing selections from his latest album, *Gershwin for Lovers*. The 31-year old Roberts got his break when he met—you guessed it—Ellis Marsalis, who hooked him up with son Wynton. After six years in Wynton's quartet, Roberts' new solo career is soaring. On April 24, **Salif Keita** comes to Zellerbach Hall. Keita fuses African, jazz, funk, Europop, and R&B influences into his own passionate version of roots rock. Then on April 28, the **Ensemble Modern** takes the stage at Zellerbach with composer **John Adams** conducting. The Europeans rank among the most renowned ensembles today specializing in contemporary music. They'll play selections from Adams' recent collaboration with June Jordan and Peter Sellars, and Frank Zappa's *Yellow Shark*.

\* \* \* \* \*

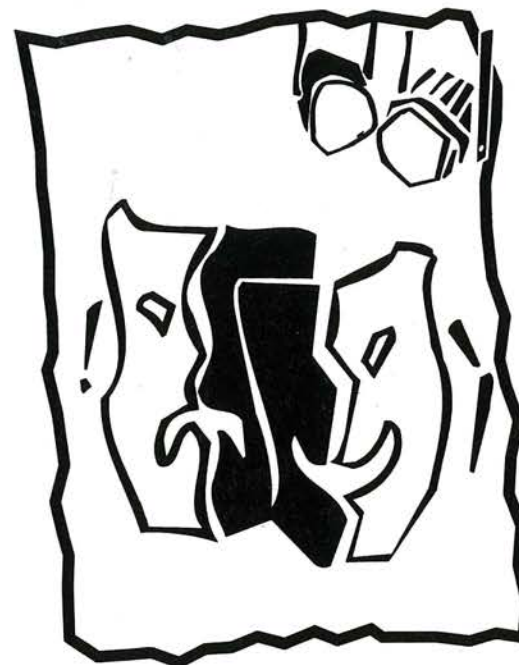
Comfortably resettled into their refurbished home at the Geary Theater, **American Conservatory Theater** shakes things up with an ambitious expedition in rotating repertory. A.C.T.'s stellar season concludes with Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* and Thornton Wilder's *Matchmaker*, which features the legendary **Jean Stapleton**. *The Cherry Orchard* runs April 4–June 7; *The Matchmaker*, April 18–June 9.

—Peter Cieply

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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 A.C.T. season with August Strindberg's *Creditors*, followed by acclaimed productions of Timberlake Wertenbaker's new translations of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, and David Storey's *Home*. Her world-premiere production of Wertenbaker's version of Euripides' *Hecuba*, with Olympia Dukakis in the title role, played to ninety-nine-percent capacity for its entire run during A.C.T.'s record-breaking 1994-95 season. This season she directed A.C.T.'s highly successful West Coast premiere of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* and the Geary Theater inaugural production, Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

In the summer of 1993, Perloff 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 Classic Stage Company (CSC) 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, David Strathairn, and Peter Riegert) on a double bill with his *Birthday Party*, Tony Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica*, Thornton Wilder's *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 *Tower of Evil*, Beckett's *Happy Days* (with Charlotte Rae), Brecht's *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.

In Los Angeles, Perloff staged Pinter's *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.

**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

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in 1993 he assumed his current position. Haire 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.

**MELISSA SMITH** (*Conservatory Director*), the master acting teacher in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, has taught acting to students of all ages in many venues throughout the United States. Prior to assuming leadership of the A.C.T. Conservatory in June 1995, she was director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting, scene study, and Shakespeare for six years. Also a professional actor, she has performed off-off Broadway and in regional theater: her credits include Sonya in *Uncle Vanya*, directed by Lloyd Richards at Yale Repertory Theatre and in New York, and numerous other plays including the work of Mac Wellman and David Greenspan. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama. She has also trained and taught at the Caymichael Patten Studio in New York.

**CRAIG SLAIGHT** (*Young Conservatory Director*) spent ten years in Los Angeles directing theater and television before joining A.C.T. in 1988. An award-winning educator, Slaight is a consultant to the Educational Theater Association and a panel member for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. He has published six anthologies for young actors and is a frequent guest speaker and adjudicator throughout the country. In 1989, he founded the Young Conservatory's New Plays Program; to date eleven new works by professional playwrights have been developed, five of which have been published by Smith & Kraus in *New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory*. Volume Two of *New Plays* was released in December 1995.

**KATE EDMUNDS** (*Associate Artist*), scenic designer in residence at A.C.T., has created the sets for *The Tempest*, *Arcadia*, *Hamlet*, *Antigone*, *Pecong*, *Scapin*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Full Moon*, *Oleanna*,

*Angels in America*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Othello*, and *Hecuba*. She has designed many productions for Berkeley Repertory Theatre and has designed extensively throughout the United States at a wide range of regional, Broadway, and off-Broadway theaters.

**PETER MARADUDIN** (*Associate Artist*), lighting designer in residence at A.C.T., has designed *The Tempest*, *Gaslight*, *Arcadia*, *Othello*, *The Play's the Thing*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Home*, *Oleanna*, *Full Moon*, *Scapin*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Pecong*, *Pygmalion*, *The Learned Ladies*, *Antigone*, and *Hecuba*. On Broadway, he designed the lighting for *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and for regional theater he has designed more than 150 productions for such companies as The Guthrie Theater, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Old Globe Theatre, Alliance Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and South Coast Repertory. Other recent Bay Area productions include *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *The Woman Warrior* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Maradudin has received four Los Angeles Theatre Critics' Circle Awards, twenty Drama-Logue Awards, and an Angstrom Award for lifetime achievement in lighting design.

**RICHARD SEYD** (*Associate Artist*) served as associate artistic director of A.C.T. from 1992 to 1995. He has received Drama-Logue and Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards for his productions of *Cloud 9*, *About Face*, *Noises Off*, *Oleanna*, and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. As associate producing director of the Eureka Theatre Company, he directed (among other plays) *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 *The Mad Dancers* for the Mark Taper Forum's New Play Series. He directed *The*

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*Learned Ladies* (with Jean Stapleton) for the Classic Stage Company (CSC) in New York during the 1991-92 season and directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the California Shakespeare Festival 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 *Pybe and the Witch*, Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, the Bay Area premiere of David Mamet's *Oleanna*, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and Shakespeare's *Othello*. This season at A.C.T. he directs Thornton Wilder's *Matchmaker*.

**ALBERT TAKAZAUCKAS** (*Associate Artist*) has created productions of theater and opera throughout the United States. His directing credits span operatic works from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, and his diverse theater repertoire ranges from American musical comedy to plays by Chekhov, Van Kliest, and Shakespeare. His productions have been seen off Broadway in New York, at the Kennedy Center, San Francisco Opera, and Seattle Opera, and in London and Toronto. Last summer he received national critical attention for his staging of Britten's *Turn of the Screw* for the New Jersey Opera Festival in Princeton and for his local revival of Rodgers and Hart's *Boys from Syracuse* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Highlights of his upcoming season include the Virginia Opera's opening production of *Rigoletto*, directing debuts with the Tulsa Opera and National Opera of Canada in Toronto, and productions of *A Little Night Music* and *La Nozze de Figaro*, which will inaugurate a new theater in Wildwood Park for the Performing Arts in Arkansas. Takazauckas is the recipient of numerous Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards, several Los Angeles Drama-Logue Awards, a Cable Car Award, and an endowment from the NEA. He began his association with A.C.T. in 1986 with Woody Allen's *Floating Light Bulb*, followed by such favorites as *A Lie of the Mind*, *Burn This*, *Dinner at Eight*, and *Light up the Sky*. This season at A.C.T. he directed Patrick Hamilton's *Gaslight* and

*A Galaxy on Geary*, celebrating the reopening of the newly renovated Geary Theater.

**MERYL LIND SHAW** (*Casting Director*) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993 after sixteen years as a member of the Bay Area theater community. She has stage-managed more than sixty productions, including *Bon Appétit!* and *Creditors* at A.C.T. She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years and 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 Baltimore's Center Stage. She has been active with Actors' Equity Association for many years and served on the A.E.A. negotiating committee in 1992 and 1993. This season Shaw also teaches in the A.C.T. Conservatory's Advanced Training Program.

**MAC WELLMAN** (*TCG Resident Playwright*), poet and playwright, was born in Cleveland and is a resident of New York City. He joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1994 under the auspices of Theatre Communications Group's National Theatre Artist Residency Program and The Pew Charitable Trusts. Recent productions of his work include *Swoop* and *Dracula* at Soho Repertory Theatre, *The Hyacinth Macaw* at Primary Stages, *The Land of Fog and Whistles* as part of the Whitney Museum/Philip Morris "Performance on 42nd" series, and *A Murder of Crows* at Primary Stages and elsewhere. He has received numerous honors, including NEA, McKnight, Rockefeller, and Guggenheim fellowships. In 1990 he received a *Village Voice* Obie Award for best new American play for *Bad Penny*, *Terminal Hip*, and *Crowbar*. In 1991 he received another Obie for *Sincerity Forever*. Two collections of his plays have recently been published: *The Bad Infinity* (PAJ/Johns Hopkins University Press) and *Two Plays* (Sun & Moon Press). Sun & Moon also published *A Shelf in Woop's Clothing*, Wellman's third collection of poetry, and his most recent novel, *Annie Salem*.

*Fence*, continued from page 28

outsiderhood strengthens their acute awareness of the unexplored aspects of environment and experience—because they are not wedged into societies, they're not inured to its delights and take nothing for granted. Only by keeping their distance, by cultivating what Wellman calls antisocial behavior, can they retain their special sense of the unleashed capacities in language or continue to take child-like joy in novelty.

On a broader level, their refusal to be known or placed may reflect their creators' impatience with a theater community's persistent efforts to bleach over the sometimes lurid individuality of its artists. For these four playwrights are outsiders themselves (Jones calls them "literary juvenile delinquents"), rarely mentioned when critics ask "where are the American play-

wrights?" and passed over in discussions of their putative kindred spirits, the artists of Theatre of Images. Jones thinks full acceptance will never come. "If the Aunt Sallies and Aunt Pollies are running the theater," he says, "then the Huck Finns are going to have trouble." With inclusion ever more elusive, these writers have made marginality the substance—and transience the driving force—of their drama. Until they win acknowledgment as a movement, they will keep moving, sending back chronicles written in the local languages and as crowded with attractions as their itineraries. ■

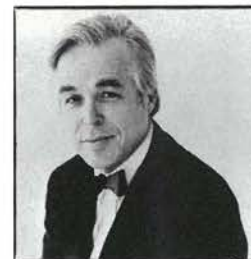
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# NEW FORMS IN THE A.C.T. CONSERVATORY

Paralleling the production of Eric Overmyer's *Dark Rapture* on the mainstage, the A.C.T. Conservatory is experimenting this spring with new forms of contemporary theater in studio productions and workshops. During the 1996 winter/spring session, the conservatory's Advanced Training Program inaugurated its New Forms performance series with innovative productions of plays by Overmyer and several of his colleagues, while the Young Conservatory launched the sixth season of its renowned New Plays Program. The conservatory's commitment to new work is part of the larger A.C.T. mission to foster the artistic expression of living writers, while offering students a rare opportunity to explore the poetic—and often unconventional—linguistic riffs of contemporary playwriting.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE YOUNG

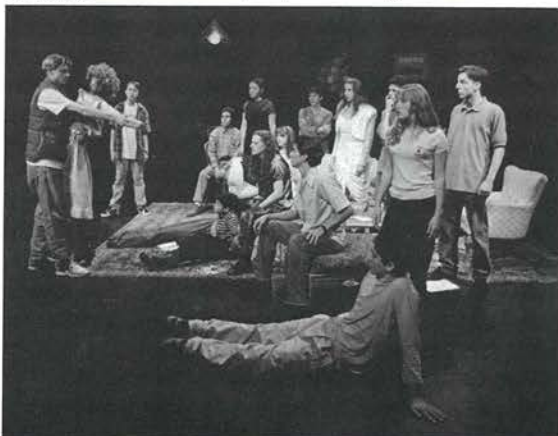
The A.C.T. Young Conservatory (YC) has a long tradition of nur-

turing playwrights and their plays. Founded in 1989 by YC Director Craig Slight, the New Plays Program commissions original works by outstanding writers specifically for performance by students attending the YC's Performance Workshop each summer. Previous playwrights have included Paul Zindel, Timothy Mason, Mary Gallagher, Joe Pinturo, Brad Slight, and Lynne Alvarez. Their work has been compiled by Slight and published by Smith & Kraus in *New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory*, as well as produced on professional stages and in classrooms throughout the United States. (Smith & Kraus released Volume II of *New Plays* in February.)

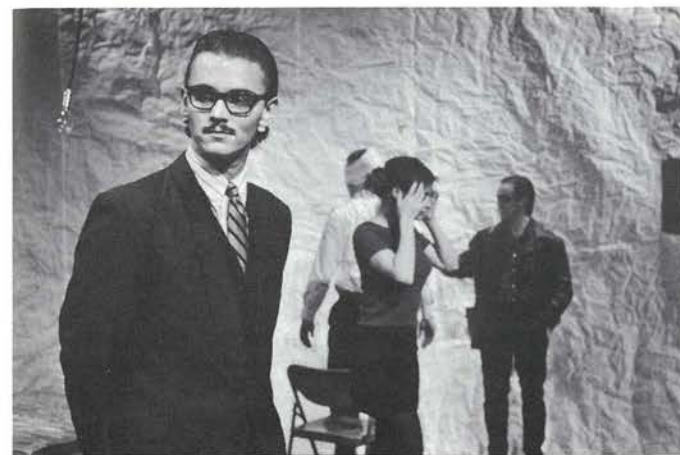
The YC has commissioned playwright and novelist Jim Grimsley, author of the acclaimed *Mr. Universe* and a finalist for the 1995 PEN/Hemingway Award for his novel *Winter Birds*, to write a new play for the 1996 workshop. In addition, YC students will perform Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Horton Foote's most recent play, *Laura Dennis*, in the spring senior performance workshop, for students fourteen to eighteen years old. Foote has been the New Plays Program's advisor since its inception.

The New Plays Program encourages playwrights to tackle themes relevant to the often difficult journey to young adulthood. "I seek plays that see the world through the eyes of the young, without talking down to them or perpetuating clichés about childhood and ado-

Young Conservatory students in the 1995 Performance Workshop production of Paul Zindel's *Every Seventeen Minutes the Crowd Goes Crazy!*



Bob Adler



(l to r) Gregory Ivan Smith, Robert Scott Bowman, Jennifer Katz, and Michael DeGood in the ATP production of Len Jenkin's *Dark Ride*

lescence," says Slight. He envisions the program as a way to develop in aspiring young actors an appreciation for the role of the playwright at the heart of the theater, as well as the opportunity A.C.T. has to both nurture and challenge writers. "The YC is an ideal environment," he believes, "for playwrights to develop challenging new work in a creative atmosphere, free from the demand for commercial success."

For last summer's Performance Workshop, the YC commissioned a new play from Paul Zindel, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his play *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* and is a successful author of children's fiction. Zindel was in residence at the YC for two weeks to work on *Every Seventeen Minutes the Crowd Goes Crazy!* "There in San Francisco that summer," he has written about the experience, "I got to know [the young actors] well during the rehearsal period. We used improvisations, interviews, and theater exercises to plumb the memories and

dreams of the cast—for many of these young people were living the stuff of the comedy and anguish in my play. They gave of their hearts and souls to make the characters come alive." Major funding for the New Plays Program is provided by the LEF Foundation, the Roberts Foundation, and the Fred Gellert Foundation.

## WRITING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

This season Conservatory Director Melissa Smith implemented the New Forms series to highlight the writing of Overmyer and others whose work shares a heightened sense of language and imagination. In February, second-year Advanced Training Program (ATP) students performed four of the plays

Peter Ackerman in the ATP production of Mac Wellman's *Bad Infinity*



Ken Friedman





Elizabeth Eidenberg, Shannon Malone, and Laura Humberger in the ATP production of Erik Ehn's *AOK*.

from this group: *The Bad Infinity*, by Mac Wellman, A.C.T.'s playwright-in-residence; *Dark Ride*, by Len Jenkin; *AOK*, by Erik Ehn; and Overmyer's *In Perpetuity throughout the Universe*.

"Exposing students to new forms of playwriting stresses the importance of working with plays that are currently being written," explains Smith. "These plays have an immediacy for young actors, because they are created within the context of the students' own lives. The language of these plays is very different from that of classical drama and demands a complex set of skills, which will be as vital to them when they graduate as the skills necessary to perform Shakespeare." Smith has opened the second-year performances to the public for the first time this year.

An essential element of both the YC's New Plays Program and the ATP's New Forms series is the involvement of writers in the rehearsal process, an invaluable learning tool for actors. Playwrights commissioned by the YC work directly with students during their residency, refining and re-

working their texts in the process. ATP students have been fortunate this season to have two of the New Forms playwrights—Mac Wellman and Erik Ehn—attend rehearsals, thereby gaining an element of collaboration absent from the production of classical works.

Wellman has also spearheaded an effort to bring together local playwrights—including Ehn, Octavio Solis, Eugenie Chan, and Amy Freed, among others—in a writers' collaborative dedicated to discovering ways that A.C.T. can provide a supportive environment for new work.

Their discussions have in turn benefitted the conservatory; Ehn and Solis conducted in-house readings and workshops of works-in-progress with ATP students this spring. Solis and Leslie Ayvazian will also be at A.C.T. for workshops of new plays commissioned under the auspices of a matching grant from the California Arts Council.

A.C.T. hopes with all of these projects—including upcoming installments of the A.C.T. Perspectives symposium series—to commit its resources to nurturing this country's next generation of theater artists. As A.C.T. Artistic & Literary Associate Larry Biederman observes, "It is A.C.T.'s primary concern to create a place where artists can come together to create theater that is specific to its medium, and to foster a type of writing that advances theater as a unique and inimitable art form." ■

—Jessica Werner

## DENNIS POWERS

On December 12, 1995, A.C.T. lost one of the most beloved members of the company, Dennis Powers. He was fifty-nine.

Best known for his and director Laird Williamson's popular adaptation of Charles Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, which ran for eighteen consecutive seasons at A.C.T., Powers worked at A.C.T. for twenty-seven years until his retirement in the spring of 1995.

Born and raised in Oakland, Powers graduated from UCLA in 1958 and began his career as a copy clerk at the *Oakland Tribune*. He rose through the ranks to become book review editor and theater editor, before accepting a management position at Stanford Repertory Theatre. In 1967, A.C.T.'s founding artistic director, William Ball, hired Powers as a press representative. During his almost three-decade tenure at A.C.T., Powers worked as an adaptor, casting director, publications director, and associate artistic director.

A skilled writer and editor, Powers served as dramaturg or adaptor on A.C.T. productions of *Oedipus Rex*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *King Richard III*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Saint Joan*, and *Diamond Lil*. Williamson 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 Powers was associated are the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Pacific Conserva-

tory of the Performing Arts, and San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theater. His reviews and articles appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Saturday Review*, *Los Angeles Times*, *American Arts*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Powers was intimately involved with all aspects of A.C.T. life, and was much loved for his compassion, humor, and unfailing respect for the artist's voice in every person he encountered. "Dennis was one of the first people who guided me through the richness of A.C.T.'s tradition," says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff. "Yet he also had an undying belief in A.C.T.'s future and an incredible love for actors."

"One of the great things about working with Dennis was his belief in the power of words, the integrity of language," adds former A.C.T. Artistic Director Edward Hastings. "It was an inspiration to ask Dennis, 'What do you think of this?' and, with his critical eye and ear, he would always answer with something helpful and meaningful. I miss him—we all miss his good advice, and his laughter."

This season's production of Patrick Hamilton's *Gaslight* was dedicated to Powers, and A.C.T. hosted a memorial service in his honor on February 26 at the Geary Theater. Powers is survived by his father, Godfrey Powers; his sister, Deborah Powers; and his brother, Dale Powers. ■



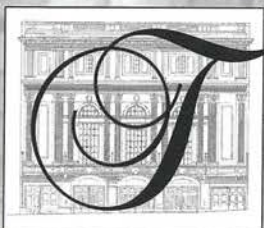
Powers in 1967, soon after joining A.C.T.





A.C.T. RETURNS TO THE  
GEARY THEATER

# Celebrate A.C.T.'s Homecoming



The stunning artwork for *The Tempest* and our Homecoming Celebration Logo with architectural detail of the Geary Theater grace T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, notecards, and posters. Great gifts for the theater-lovers on your list!



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All items available at the Geary Theater Box Office and at the lower lobby level gift shop.

## W H O ' S W H O



**ZACHARY BARTON** (*Max*) has lived and worked in San Francisco since 1983. She previously appeared at A.C.T. as Hyacinthe in *Scapin* and as a member of the ensemble in *The Duchess of*

*Malfi*. Other theater credits include *Brilliant Traces* and David Barth's *Und Gretel* at Encore Theatre, Warehouse Repertory's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Barth's *Dance along the Precipice* at Intersection for the Arts, Claire Chafee's *Why We Have a Body* at the Magic Theatre, Sharr White's *Body Parts* in A.C.T.'s student cabaret and at Studio 2505 Mariposa, and Ken Prestininzi's *Beholder* at the West Coast Playwrights Festival. Additional credits include the interactive feature *Psychic Detective*, *Star Wars: Rebel Assault II* and *Full Throttle* on CD-ROM, and Sega's *Ecco* commercial, "Goldfish Dreaming." Her solo cabaret, *One Scary Woman!*, ran for three months last season at the 450 Geary Studio Theatre and will be produced in New York City later this year. In May Barton can be seen in Craig Lucas's *Missing Persons* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.



**ÜMIT ÇELEBI** (*Nizam*, *Lounge singer*) returns to A.C.T., where he previously attended the Summer Training Congress. His off-Broadway credits include *The Triumph of Love* at Classic Stage

Company. Additional New York credits include *The Golem* at the New York Shakespeare Festival, *Hydriotaphia*, written and directed by Tony Kushner, and Irondale Ensemble Project's *Happy End*.

**MATT DeCARO** (*Lexington*, *Scones*) resides in Chicago, where he has appeared most recently at the Goodman Theatre in *Night of the Iguana* and *Richard III*, as Billy Einhorn in



*The House of Blue Leaves* and God in *The Mystery Cycle* at the Court Theatre, as Ira in *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, and as Boolie in *Driving Miss Daisy* at the Briar Street Theatre. He has received

four citations from Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Committee for outstanding achievement in performance. His television credits include roles as policemen on "Crime Stories," "The Untouchables," "Goodnight, Sweet Wife," "The Howard Beach Story," and "Jack and Mike," and he appeared most recently in the film *Richie Rich*. DeCaro is the chairman of the theater department at The Chicago Academy for the Arts.



**SHAWN ELLIOTT's** (*Babcock*) extensive theater credits include the original Broadway cast of *City of Angels*; *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*; *A Park in Our*

*House* at the McCarter Theatre Center; *Principia Scriptoriae* at the Manhattan Theatre Club; the Young Playwrights Festival at Playwrights Horizons; *Crack*, *New Jerusalem*, and *Mondongo* at the New York Shakespeare Festival; *Eulogy for a Small-Time Thief* at the Ensemble Studio Theatre; *Nothing Sacred* at the New York Stage and Film Company; *The Promise* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; *The Tempest* at the La Jolla Playhouse; *Death and the Maiden* at the Philadelphia Drama Guild; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at the Colonial Theater; and Eduardo Machado's *Floating Island* at the Mark Taper Forum. Television credits include "Ghost Writer," "Law and Order," "Miami Vice," "The Cosby Show," "A Man Called Hawk," "Hunter," "Gideon Oliver," "Oye Willie," "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd," and the movies *Promised a Miracle*, *Death in Small Doses*, and *Someone Had to Be Benny*. Elliott's film credits



include *Crossover Dreams*, *Short Eyes*, *Beat Street*, *The Dead Pool*, *Do the Right Thing*, and *Impulse*.



**MARK FEUERSTEIN's** (*Tony, Danny*) numerous off-Broadway credits include Clitandre and Dubois in *The Misanthrope*, Seyton and Donalbain in *Macbeth* at Classic Stage Company, and the title role of *Funky Crazy Boogaloo Boy* at Naked Angels. Regional theater credits include Tony Kushner's *Dybbuk* at Hartford Stage Company and Lanford Wilson's *Three Sisters* at the McCarter Theatre Center for the Performing Arts. He also performed the roles of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Platonov in *Wild Honey*, and Sullen in *The Beaux' Stratagem* at the MacOwan Theatre in London. While a student at Princeton University, he portrayed Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Edmond in *King Lear*, Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, Treat in *Orphans*, and Hotspur in *Henry IV*. Feuerstein studied at LAMDA and the École Phillippe Gaulier on a Fulbright Scholarship.



**ROD GNAPP** (*Vegas, Mathis, Cabo San Lucas waiter*) is a graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program and has worked in theaters throughout the Bay Area. Recent credits include Touchstone in the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival production of *As You Like It*, *Kingfish* at the Magic Theatre, and the Marin Theatre Company production of *Keely and Du*. Gnapp also performed in the Berkeley Repertory Theatre productions of *Mad Forest*, *Lady from the Sea*, and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.



**JOSSARA JINARO** (*Renee, Key West waitress*) is a recent graduate of the theater department at Columbia College in Chicago, where her credits included *Chicago*, *Lady from Maxim's*, and *Blood Wedding*. She appeared in *Raft of the Medusa*, *Dreamgirls*, *The Trip*, and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* at Western Michigan University, and in *The House of Blue Leaves* at the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. Jinaro is also an accomplished singer, dancer, and choreographer.



**DEIRDRE LOVEJOY** (*Julia*) appeared in John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation* on Broadway and in its first national tour. Off-Broadway credits include the role of Helena in the New York Shakespeare Festival productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Obie Award-winning *Machinal* at The Public Theatre; *Henry IV, Part I*, directed by Joseph Papp at the Delacorte Theatre; the world premiere of *The Preservation Society* at Primary Stages; and several productions at the Vineyard Theatre. She created the role of Cassie Doob in Keith Curran's *Church of the Sole Survivor* at Portland Stage and has appeared at Baltimore's Center Stage, Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Actors Theatre of Louisville, and the Philadelphia Festival Theatre. Television and film credits include *The Kennedys of Massachusetts*, *Punch and Judy Get Divorced* for PBS, "All My Children," "One Life to Live," and "Law and Order." Lovejoy received her M.F.A. from New York University.



**MARK ROSENTHAL** (*Ron, Seattle bartender*) has performed in New York productions of *Phaedra* at the Vineyard Theatre and *The Basement at the Bottom of the End of the World* at Joseph Papp's Public Theatre. Other theater credits include *Marvin's Room* at the Goodman Theatre Studio in Chicago and at Playwrights Horizons off Broadway in New York (Theatre World Award and Drama Desk Award nominations), as well as *Balm in Gilead* at the Big Game Theatre and *Carné Vale* at the Econo Art Theatre in Chicago. Film credits include *Uncle Buck* and *Stiffs*; Rosenthal has also appeared on the television series "Tribeca," "Law and Order," "Joe's Apartment," "All My Children," and "Another World."

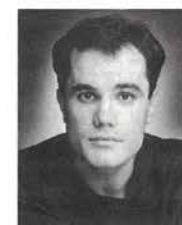


**RICHARD SNYDER** (*Ray*) most recently appeared as Albert Einstein in the Steppenwolf Theatre Company production of Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. He has also appeared in Steppenwolf productions of *Libra*, *Ghost in the Machine*, *Road to Nirvana*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, the Tony Award-winning *Grapes of Wrath*, *Love Letters* (opposite Kate Nelligan), *A Walk in the Woods*, *Lydie Breeze* (at festivals in Australia), *You Can't Take It with You*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, and *Balm in Gilead*. Additional Chicago credits include *A Christmas Carol* and *Down the Shore* at the Goodman Theatre, *Wenceslas Square*, and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The Rear Column* at the Northlight Theatre. Television credits include "Crime Story," "First Steps," "Lady Blue," "Legacy of Lies," "The Woman Who Loved Elvis," and guest-starring roles on "The Untouchables," "Missing Persons," and "Chicago Hope." Snyder's film credits include *Meet the Applegates*, *The Tuskegee*

*Airmen*, *Alien Nation: Millennium*, *The Net* with Sandra Bullock, and the upcoming Mike Nichols film, *Birds of a Feather*.



**LEITH BURKE** (*Understudy*), a recent graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program (ATP), appeared at A.C.T. earlier this season as Adrian in *The Tempest*. His ATP studio production credits include *Translations*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and *Dissed*. A founding member of The Shotgun Players in Berkeley, with whom he performed David Mamet's *Frog Prince*, he has also appeared with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and San Francisco Mime Troupe and at the Magic Theatre and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, among others. Burke's film credits include *93 Million Miles from the Sun* and the soon-to-be-released *Telefunken*, with Ismail Azim.



**CHRISTOPHER HICKMAN** (*Understudy*), recipient of the Mrs. Paul L. Wattis Professional Theater Intern Fellowship, is a 1995 graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program (ATP). At A.C.T., he was seen earlier this season as Augustus and Gus Coverly in *Arcadia* and appeared in ATP studio productions of *Measure for Measure*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Judevine*, *The Wedding*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Imaginary Invalid*. During two summers with the PCPA Theaterfest, he appeared in *Forever Plaid*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and *The Man of La Mancha*. In Chicago, he performed with the Next Theatre Company and Chicago Children's Theatre and wrote and directed *God Bless Adrian*, Michigan for the Still Hunt Theater Company.





**BRIAN KEITH RUSSELL** (*Understudy*) has performed in A.C.T. productions of *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Light up the Sky*, *Pygmalion*, and *A Christmas Carol*. He appeared most recently as Squire Sullen

in *The Beaux' Stratagem* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other Bay Area appearances include *The Two Precious Maidens Ridiculed* and *The Forced Marriage* at Centralworks, *The Elephant Man* at San Jose Repertory Theatre, *Wilder, Wilder*, *Wilder* at Marin Theatre Company, and *Down the Road* at Encore Theatre Company, as well as Len Jenkin's *Poor Folks' Pleasure*, Mac Wellman's *Harm's Way*, Charles Marowitz's adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Sam Shepard's *Unseen Hand* for Diggin' Hole Productions of San Francisco. Russell is a graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program.



**MOLLIE STICKNEY** (*Understudy*) made her A.C.T. mainstage debut earlier this season as Chloë in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* and appeared subsequently as Nancy in A.C.T.'s production of

*Gaslight*. A 1995 graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program (ATP), she is the recipient of the Mrs. Albert J. Moorman Professional Theater Intern Fellowship. As a member of the ATP, she appeared in studio productions of *Measure for Measure*, *The Rimers of Eldritch*, and *The Miser*. While still a Young Conservatory student, she performed in mainstage productions of *A Christmas Carol* and *When We Are Married* (both with Sydney Walker). Other Bay Area theater credits include the title role in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Los Altos Conservatory Theatre and Anya in *The Cherry Orchard* and Lydia Languish in *The Rivals* at the Hillbarn Theatre.



**PHILIP STOCKTON** (*Understudy*) was last seen at A.C.T. in the 1992 production of *Good*. A Bay Area resident for seven years, he has appeared as Henry Harry in *Brilliant*

*Traces* and various roles in *Search and Destroy* for Encore Theatre Company, Carl in *Nobody* and a Fella in the world premiere of David Barth's *Dance along the Precipice* at Intersection for the Arts, and Pale in *Burn This* for Kudzu Productions. Other local theater credits include productions at George Coates Performance Works, Bay Area TheatreSports, and the San Francisco Theatre Project, among others. He has spent five seasons at the PCPA Theaterfest, where his roles have included Lewis Kesseberg in *Devour the Snow*, Pastor Manders in *Ghosts*, and Jonathan Small in *The Crucifer of Blood*. Stockton has also worked in television and film in New York and Los Angeles and received Drama-Logue Awards for John C. Fletcher's production of *Good* at PCPA and Kudzu's *Burn This*.

**DAVID PETRARCA** (*Director*) is a resident director at the Goodman Theatre, where he has staged *Richard II*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and *The Visit*, as well as the world premieres of Wendy MacLeod's *Sin* (also at the Second Stage Theatre off Broadway), Tom Donaghy's *Down the Shore*, David Cale's *Somebody Else's House* and *Deep in a Dream of You* (also at The Public Theatre off Broadway), Sally Nemeth's *Mill Fire* (also at the Women's Project off Broadway), and Scott McPherson's *Marvin's Room*. Petrarca also directed subsequent productions of *Marvin's Room* at the Hartford Stage Company, the Kennedy Center, Playwrights Horizons, and Minetta Lane off Broadway (Outer Critics' Circle Award nomination), as well as in London's West End (London Fringe Award). Additional credits include the world premiere of Tom Donaghy's *Northeast Local* at Trinity Repertory Company and Seattle Repertory Theatre;

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Dallas Theatre Center; Chicago productions of Keith Reddin's *Peacekeeper* for American Blues Theatre, *Nothing Sacred* and *Three Postcards* at the Northlight Theatre, and *Lloyd's Prayer* at the Remains Theatre; and productions at the Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C., Ohio Performance Space in New York City, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and Woodstock Opera House. Petrarca has received a TCG/NEA Director Fellowship and has served as associate artistic director of the Cincinnati Playhouse and the Chelsea Theatre Centre in New York. Later this year, he will stage the premiere of the new musical *The House of Martin Guerre* by Leslie Arden and Anna Cascio at the Goodman Theatre, as well as Chay Yu's *Porcelain* off Broadway.

**ADRIANNE LOBEL** (*Set Designer*) designed the sets for the Tony Award-winning musical *Passion* on Broadway. She has also designed the sets for Peter Sellars's *Nixon in China* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM); *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Così fan Tutte* at Pepsico Summerfare in Paris and Vienna; *The Magic Flute* at the Glyndebourne Festival; *Street Scene* at the Houston Grand Opera, for Francesca Zambello; and *The Hard Nut* and *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* at Opéra National de la Monnaie in Brussels, for Mark Morris. Lobel has also worked in many American regional theaters, including Arena Stage, Hartford Stage Company, the Goodman Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, and the La Jolla Playhouse. She has designed premiere productions of plays by John Patrick Shanley, Jon Robin Baitz, Harry Kondoleon, Beth Henley, and Michael Weller, among others, and received an Obie Award for her work off Broadway. Film credits include *Five Corners* and *Life with Mikey*. She is currently designing a new ballet for the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Mark Morris's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and *Rake's Progress* for the Chatelet Opera in Paris.

**SANDRA WOODALL** (*Costume Designer*) received Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards for the A.C.T. productions of *Light up the Sky* and *Saint Joan*. Other A.C.T. credits include *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Faustus in Hell*, *Burn This*, *Saturday*, *Sunday and Monday*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Recent credits include *Signs and Wonders* for the Dance Theater of Harlem, *The Boys from Syracuse* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Hartford Ballet's *Music of Chance*, and *Remnants of Light* and *Double Contrast* for the Nashville Ballet. She also designed costumes for *The Gates* for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company and the Eureka Theatre Company's world premiere of *Angels in America*. Woodall collaborated with designer Robert Israel on costumes for the Philip Glass opera *Akhenaten* and for Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival presentation of *Miracolo d'Amore*, by Martha Clarke. At the Magic Theatre she collaborated with Irene Fornes on *Drowning* and *Oscar and Bertha* and with Joseph Chaikin on *Talk to Me Like the Rain*, *Counting the Ways*, *Tongues*, and *Savage/Love*.

**ROB MILBURN** (*Original Music, Sound Design*) returns to A.C.T., where he designed the sound for *The Gospel at Colonus* in 1990. Broadway credits include the sound for *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Song of Jacob Zulu*; he also designed the music and sound for *From the Mississippi Delta* and *Marvin's Room* off Broadway and the sound for the national tour of *Angels in America*. Milburn is the resident sound designer for the Goodman Theatre and works extensively with the Steppenwolf Ensemble. His work has traveled to the Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, The Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the La Jolla Playhouse, Trinity Repertory Company, and theaters in Tel Aviv, Sydney, and London.



**JULIET N. POKORNY** (*Stage Manager*) worked at A.C.T. most recently on the 1994-95 season productions of *Angels in America* and *The Play's the Thing*. She has stage-managed several San Francisco premiere productions, including *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding* and *Pageant*. Other local stage management credits include productions at Marin Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the California Shakespeare Festival, and the Magic Theatre, among others. She has also stage-managed at the Seattle Children's Theatre. Pokorny received her B.A. in acting and directing from California State University, Long Beach.

**ELISA GUTHERTZ** (*Assistant Stage Manager*), a Bay Area native, completed a stage management internship at A.C.T. in 1993 and was the assistant stage manager for A.C.T.'s production of *Gaslight* and *A Galaxy on Geary* earlier this season. She has been a production assistant for the past three seasons with the California Shakespeare Festival and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Guthertz is a graduate of the North Carolina School for the Arts.

### Additional Credits

Jeremy Cohen, *Casting Associate*  
Lisa deWolf, *Assistant Sound Designer*

## CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL CHALLENGES A.C.T. TO SUPPORT NEW PLAYS

The California Arts Council (CAC) has awarded a \$50,000 challenge grant to support A.C.T. commissions for five playwrights, the majority of whom are ethnic and/or women writers (including Octavio Solis and Leslie Ayvazian), to write plays that broaden the existing repertoire of American dramatic literature and explore diverse realms of cultural experience. This program represents part of a significant new thrust at A.C.T. to nurture and develop the work of living writers on its stages and in its conservatory. The plays commissioned under the auspices of this grant will further A.C.T.'s plans to develop a second stage for new and experimental works, a priority for the company since the January 1996 return to the Geary Theater.

**The CAC challenge grant requires A.C.T. to raise a 3-to-1 match of \$150,000 in new and increased gifts, which will be dedicated to the development and workshop production of commissioned scripts.**

The California Arts Council, a state agency, was established in 1976 to provide statewide leadership that enables and stimulates individuals and organizations to create, present, teach, and preserve the art of all cultures, thereby enriching the quality of life for all Californians.

A.C.T. patrons who would like to celebrate theatrical language and new forms of theater by helping A.C.T. meet the CAC challenge are invited to call the A.C.T. development office at (415) 834-3251.

## BECOME A MEMBER OF A.C.T.

Each season long-standing patrons and new subscribers alike respond enthusiastically to A.C.T.'s Annual Fund telephone drive by becoming members of A.C.T. A.C.T. members enjoy unique services and benefits, such as behind-the-scenes tours and personalized ticket-exchange privileges, while playing a pivotal role in A.C.T.'s tremendous success through their generous support.

### A.C.T. MEMBERSHIP— MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A.C.T. spends nearly two-thirds of its budget on artistic, educational, and production expenses; customer service and administrative expenses represent the balance. While A.C.T.'s subscription and single-ticket income covers seventy-five percent of all operational costs, the Annual Fund makes up the critical difference.

Membership contributions support mainstage productions, as well as a variety of culturally enriching educational and outreach programs, including A.C.T.'s Student Matinee Series (SMATS). Tickets to SMATS are offered to schools at a fraction of the normal ticket price. Your Annual Fund donation is a powerful resource for introducing young people to live theater.

### MATCHING GIFTS AND DONOR BENEFITS

Depending on your level of membership, you can receive a variety of exciting special benefits, including:

- Invitations to working dress rehearsals
- Two-for-one ticket coupons
- Backstage tours of the Geary Theater
- Complimentary parking for all your subscription performances

You can receive added benefits by participating in your company's matching gift program. Many Bay Area employers, including Bank of America, Chevron Corporation, and Wells Fargo Bank, multiply their employees' charitable power by matching gifts to A.C.T. Participation is easy—simply call your personnel or corporate benefits office to receive a matching gift form and mail it to us with your pledge payment.

**For more information, please call  
A.C.T.'s development department at (415) 439-2451.**





On behalf of the artists, staff, students, alumni, volunteers, and trustees of American Conservatory Theater, thank you for your support during our time outside the Geary Theater. We are elated by our homecoming and delighted that you have chosen to share this joyous occasion with us. Thank you so much.



Carey Perloff  
Artistic Director

## CONTRIBUTORS

*American Conservatory Theater is deeply grateful for the generous support of the many individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies whose contributions make great theater possible. The list below reflects gifts received between December 16, 1994 and January 16, 1996.*

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### The A.C.T. Central Box Office:

Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square. Central Box Office hours are 12 to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12 to 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday.

### BASS:

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

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Half-price tickets are sometimes available on the day of performance at TTX on Union Square in San Francisco. Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the theater box office beginning ninety minutes prior to curtain. Matinee senior rush price is \$8. All rush tickets are subject to availability, one ticket per valid I.D. Student subscriptions are also available at half price.

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### A.C.T. Prologues:

One-hour discussions conducted by each show's director. Presented in the Geary Theater before the Tuesday preview of each production from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. Sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco.

### 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) 439-2469.

### A.C.T. Perspectives:

A public 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. Free of charge and open to everyone. For information call (415) 439-2469.

### 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) 439-2383.

### "Words on Plays":

Handbooks containing a synopsis, advance program notes, and other background information about each of the season's plays can be mailed in advance to Full Season subscribers for the special price of \$35 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 \$6 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. For information call (415) 439-2377.

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A.C.T. patrons can park for just \$6 at the San Francisco Hilton and

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The Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary Street at Mason.

## Beepers!

If you carry a pager, beeper, cellular phone, or watch with alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater to avoid disturbing the performance. Alternatively, 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 Systems:

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

## Wheelchair Access:

The Geary Theater is accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

**Photographs and recordings of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.**

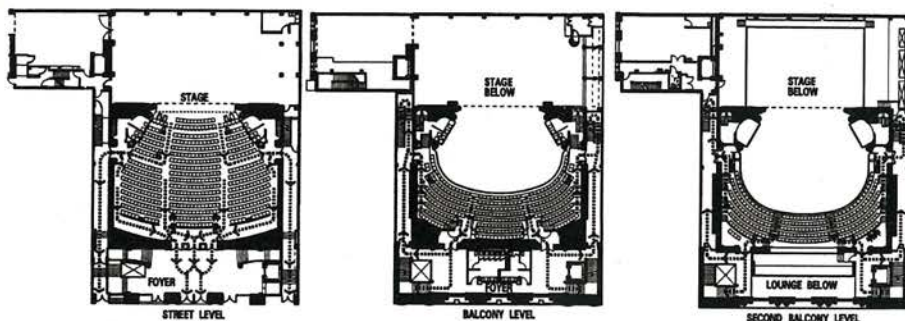
**Smoking** is not permitted in the building.

**Bar service** is available in Fred's Columbia Room, on the lower level, and in the Upper Lounge, on the second balcony level.

**Food and drink** are not permitted in the auditorium.

## GEARY THEATER EXITS

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



# 40<sup>th</sup> MUSIC FESTIVAL AT SEA



## ABOARD THE MERMOZ

1<sup>st</sup> to 13 september 1996

Once again this year the Music Festival at Sea on board Mermoz will spread its magic on the most beautiful shores of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Next September, we will sail along fabulous coastlines, by islands dotted on the sea, bathed in warm autumn sunlight and accompanied by errant seagulls.

To the sound of sonatas, concertos and symphonies - Mozart, Bach, Brahms, Schubert, Chopin, Tchaikovsky.

The Music Festival at Sea is always unique - a blend of discoveries, ancient sites, tradition and friendship.

We will sail straight to Malta, a fortified island where the ship enters the harbour through a "fjord" bordered by high cliffs which form the outer walls of this knights' city.

Then, after sailing around the island of Santorini, a crater invaded by the sea in 1700 BC, on to Fethiye on the coast of Asia Minor. Close by, the ancient theatre of Xanthos, hewn out of the mountainside, awaits us for a concert which will awaken its golden stones.

Now to the objective of our voyage: Israel: the biblical lands and holy places. Ashdod, Jerusalem, Haifa, Saint John of Acre: ports of call long dreamed of, rich in memories and emotion.

A few leagues away, Limassol, the 26 century-old Neapolis, where we will find the ancient theatre of Kourion among its vineyards, marvel at its unbroken view over the sea and enjoy its excellent acoustic.

Back to the south of Turkey for a last port of call: Tas Ucu, where we will discover fascinating and little-known Olba (the Diocaesarea of Roman times), before finishing our voyage in Rhodes.



## IN THE COMPANY OF\*

**Piano**  
MARIA JOAO PIRES  
JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET  
MARKUS GROH  
(1<sup>st</sup> PRIZE, QUEEN ELISABETH COMPETITION, BELGIUM 1995)

**Violin**  
SALVATORE ACCARDO  
AUGUSTIN DUMAY  
VLADIMIR SPIVAKOV

**Viola**  
YURI BASHMET  
WITH MIKHAIL MUNTIAN - PIANO

**Soprano**  
BARBARA HENDRICKS

**Cello**  
MARIO BRUNELLO

**Baritone**  
THOMAS QUASTHOFF  
WITH PETER LANGEHEIN - PIANO

**Flute**  
JAMES GALWAY

**Clarinet**  
PAUL MEYER

**Ensembles**  
• STOCKHOLM CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
Conductor: Joseph Swensen

• THE MOSCOW SOLOISTS  
Conductor and soloist:  
Yuri Bashmet

**Lecturers**  
JOHN AMIS - ALAIN DUHAULT

**Special event in Israel:**  
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
Conductor and soloist:  
Daniel Barenboim

\* Subject to change in case of force majeure

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sept. 1 TOULON (France)  
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sept. 4 At sea  
sept. 5 SANTORINI (Greece)  
sept. 6 FETHIYE (Turkey)  
sept. 7 At sea  
sept. 8 ASHDOD (Israel)  
sept. 9 HAIFA (Israel)  
sept. 10 LIMASSOL (Cyprus)  
sept. 11 TAS UCU (Turkey)  
sept. 12 At sea  
sept. 13 RHODES (Greece)  
Departure to Paris



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