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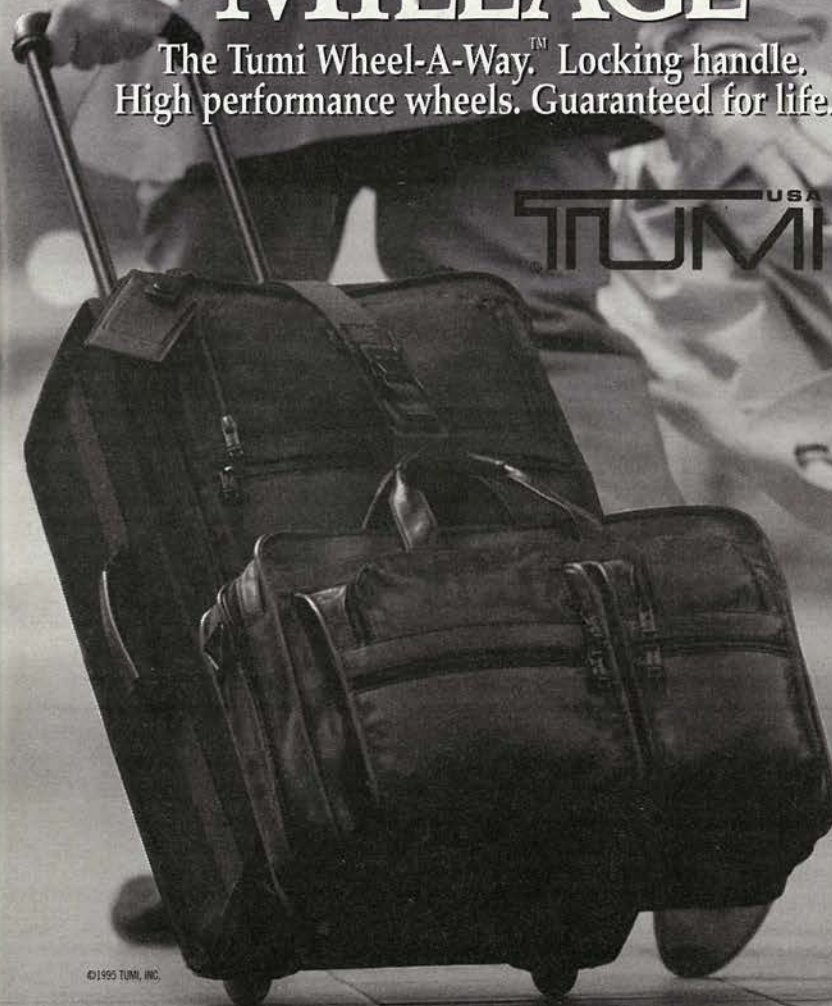
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DIRECTED BY LAIRD WILLIAMSON

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DIRECTED BY RICHARD SEYD

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Edward Hastings,  
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A.C.T.

Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director*

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conceived and adapted by Robert Brustein  
music composed and adapted by Hankus Netsky and Zalmen Mlotek  
lyrics by Arnold Weinstein  
directed and choreographed by David Gordon  
September 12 - October 13, 1996

**THE ROSE TATTOO**

by Tennessee Williams  
directed by Carey Perloff  
October 24 - November 24, 1996

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

from the novella by Charles Dickens  
adapted by Laird Williamson and Dennis Powers  
directed by Laird Williamson and Candace Barrett  
December 1 - December 26, 1996

**TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT**

from the novel by Graham Greene  
adapted and directed by Giles Havergal  
January 2 - February 2, 1997

**MACHINAL**

by Sophie Treadwell  
directed by Laird Williamson  
February 6 - March 9, 1997

**THE ROYAL FAMILY**

by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber  
directed by Albert Takazaukas  
March 20 - April 20, 1997

**SINGER'S BOY**

by Leslie Ayvazian  
directed by Carey Perloff  
May 1 - June 1, 1997

**MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION**

by George Bernard Shaw  
directed by Richard Seyd  
June 12 - July 13, 1997

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## Stagebill

Vol. 3, No.1 October 1996

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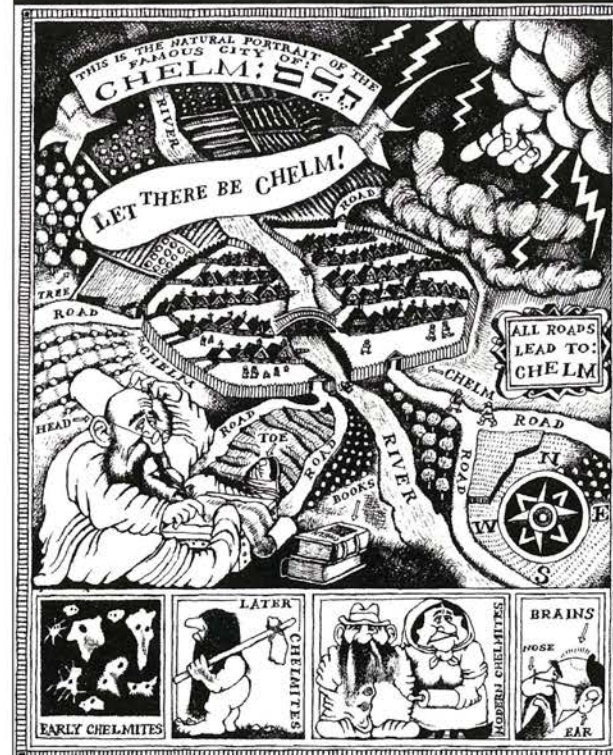
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## CONTENTS



About A.C.T.	10
A.C.T. Staff	12
Program Notes	17
A.C.T. Profiles	34
From the Artistic Director by Carey Perloff	44
News from A.C.T.	46
Who's Who	58
Geary Theater Campaign	65
Contributors	72
For Your Information	77



Above: Map of Chelm by Uri Shulevitz,  
whose great-grandmother was married to the rabbi of Chelm.

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**AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER** is an artist-driven, Tony Award-winning theater whose mainstage work is energized and informed by a profound commitment to developing the next generation of theater artists. 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 vision is the interaction of original and classical work on the mainstage and at the heart of the A.C.T. Conservatory.

Terrence McCarthy



*The 86-year-old Geary Theater, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, reopened in January 1996.*

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the historic Geary Theater in 1967. During the past three decades, almost 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of almost seven

million people in Japan, Russia, 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 200,000 people in the 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 1,400 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 86-year-old Geary Theater, which was damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, reopened in January 1996 after undergoing major renovation resulting in updated stagecraft, enhanced patron amenities, and a total seismic restructuring.



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A.C.T.

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*continued on page 14*

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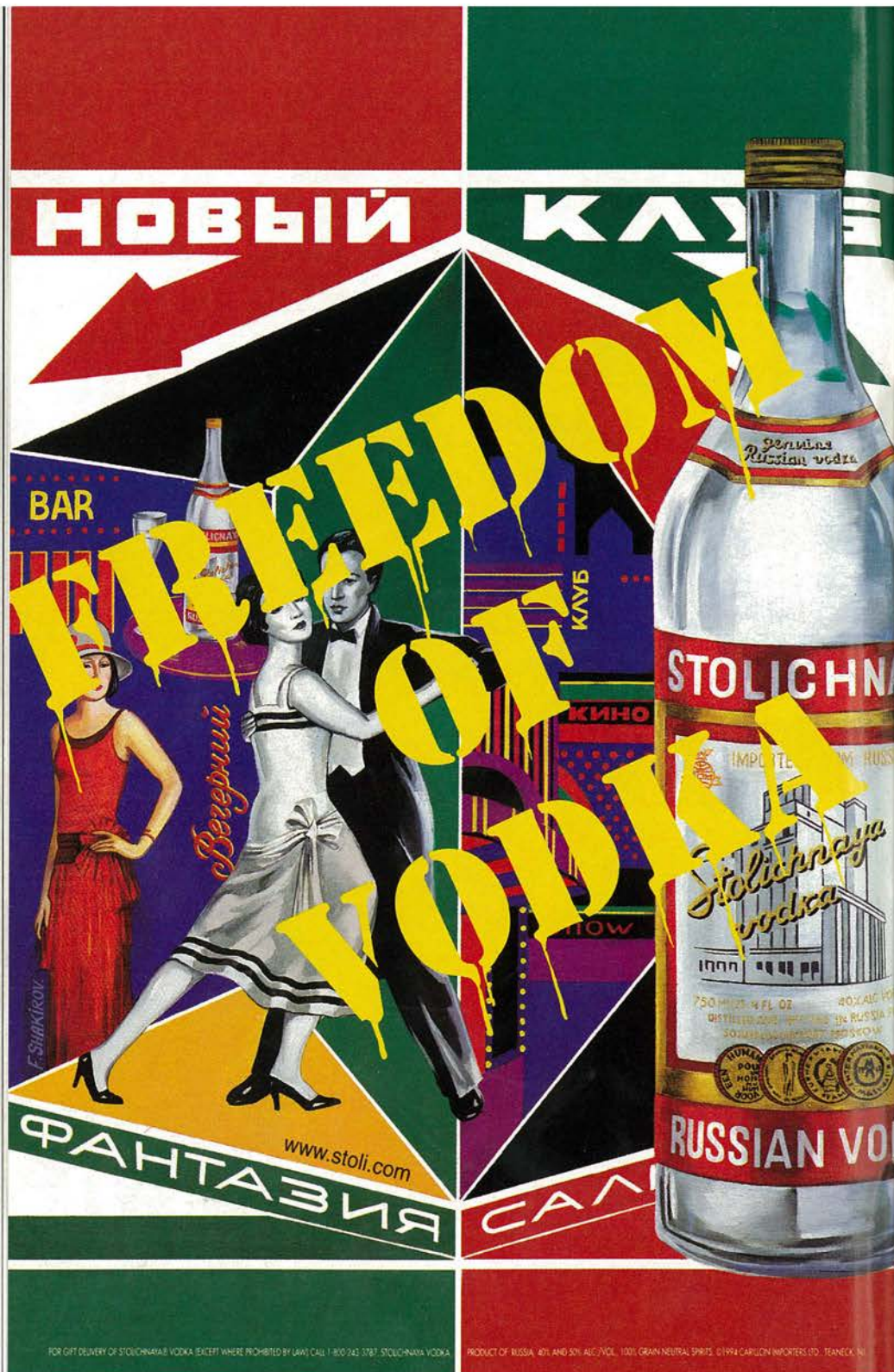
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presents

# Shlemiel the First

(1994)

a coproduction with the American Repertory Theatre and  
the American Music Theater Festival

Based on the play by Isaac Bashevis Singer  
Conceived and adapted by Robert Brustein

Directed and choreographed by David Gordon

*Music composed, adapted,  
and orchestrated by*

Hankus Netsky

*Musical arrangements, additional music,  
and musical direction by*

Zalmen Mlotek

*Lyrics by*

Arnold Weinstein

*Editorial supervision by*

David Gordon

*Scenery by*

Robert Israel

*Costumes by*

Catherine Zuber

*Lighting by*

Peter Maradudin

*Sound by*

Christopher Walker

*Associate Director*

Chuck Finlon

*Assistant Musical Director*

Michael Larsen

*Casting by*

Jan Geidt

*San Francisco casting by*

Meryl Lind Shaw

*Stage Management Staff*

Ed Fitzgerald

Michele M. Trimble

Francesca Russell, Intern

*Shlemiel the First* is part of CrossCurrents, a major multiyear initiative of the American Repertory Theatre and the American Music Theater Festival designed to create and sustain a body of new music theater works.

CrossCurrents is sponsored by Philip Morris Companies, Inc.

*Shlemiel the First* was made possible by a generous award for new work from the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. Major gifts for the production were received from Myra H. and Robert K. Kraft and Lizbeth and George Krupp. Additional support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts/Opera-Musical Theater Program, Barbara and Steven Grossman, Dr. and Mrs. Martin Peretz, and the Dorot Foundation.

*Shlemiel the First* was originally produced in association with Lincoln Center Productions.



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A.C.T.

## Shlemiel the First

**The Cast**  
(in order of appearance)

<i>Tryna Rytza (Mrs. Shlemiel)</i>	Maureen McVerry
<i>Shlemiel</i>	Thomas Derrah
<i>Gittel, Sender Shlamazel, Yenta Pasha</i>	Marilyn Sokol
<i>Mottel, Moishe Pipik</i>	Remo Airdi
<i>Zeinvel Shmeckel, Man in House</i>	Vontress Mitchell
<i>Mendel Shmendrick, Chaim Rascal</i>	Scott Ripley
<i>Dopey Petzel, Zalman Tippih</i>	Will LeBow
<i>Gronam Ox</i>	Charles Levin
<i>Ensemble</i>	Dawn-Elin Fraser*, Johnny Moreno*, Samantha Phillips, Ryan Rilette*, Jonathan Sale*
<i>Music Conductor, Pianist</i>	Michael Larsen

**The San Francisco Klezmer Experience**  
Stuart Brotman—bass; Jody Stecher—mandolin, banjo, guitar  
Alan Hall—percussion; Rick Elmore—trombone  
Stephen Saxon—trumpet; Sheldon Brown—clarinet  
Daniel Hoffman—violin, viola, recorder

**Understudies**  
For Maureen McVerry and Marilyn Sokol—Samantha Phillips  
For Thomas Derrah, Vontress Mitchell, and Charles Levin—Robert Weinapple  
For Remo Airdi, Scott Ripley, and Will LeBow—Colin Thomson  
For the Ensemble—Omar Metwally\*

There will be one intermission.

\*Second-year students in the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program

# Songs in Shlemiel the First

Music by Hankus Netsky  
Additional music by Zalmen Mlotek  
Lyrics by Arnold Weinstein  
Additional lyrics by David Gordon

## Act I

"Wake-Up Song"  
Mrs. Shlemiel

"We're Talking Chelm"  
Gronam Ox, Yenta Pasha, Sages

"Yenta's Blintzes"  
Yenta Pasha

"Beadle with a Dreydl"  
Shlemiel

"He's Going to Die"  
Zalman Tippish

"Mrs. Shlemiel's Lament"  
Mrs. Shlemiel, Yenta Pasha,  
Women

"Geography Song"  
("Rumania, Rumania")  
Gronam Ox, Mrs. Shlemiel, Yenta  
Pasha, Sages, Shlemiel

"My One and Only  
Shlemiel"  
Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel

"Rascal's Lament"  
Chaim Rascal

## Act II

"My One and Only  
Shlemiel" (reprise)  
Mrs. Shlemiel

"Meshugah"  
Mottel, Gittel, Shlemiel, Mrs.  
Shlemiel

"Twos"  
Gronam Ox, Sages

"The Screen Song"  
Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel

"Can This Be Hell?"  
Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel

"Matters of the Heart"  
Yenta Pasha, Mrs. Shlemiel,  
Women

"Wisdom"  
Gronam Ox, Yenta Pasha, Chaim  
Rascal, Sages

"We're Talking Chelm"  
(reprise)  
The Company

# SINGER'S STORY

by Jessica Werner

*What are writers?  
The same kind of entertainers  
as magicians.  
As a matter of fact, I admire  
someone who can balance  
a barrel on his feet  
more than I do a poet.*

—"Shosha,"

by Isaac Bashevis Singer

When Isaac Bashevis Singer died in 1991 at the age of 87, he enjoyed the unique dual status of a prized treasure and an intriguing enigma of the literary world. Considered by many the 20th century's master storyteller, Singer wrote exclusively in Yiddish and vividly evoked the world of his Jewish roots in pre-war Poland, yet his writing captivated a wide and faithful audience around the world. He believed in God, yet scorned religious dogma; he studied philosophy, but accepted the supernatural, and he had a child's love for the fantastic. Although he dismissed most critical analysis of his work and claimed he was nothing more than a simple teller of tales, recounting the folktales he heard as a child at his mother's knee, few modern writers have given us characters as psychologically complex and stories as well crafted, with such endearing humor.

Over the course of his extremely prolific career, Singer produced dozens of short stories (for which he is best known), 14 novels, nu-

merous children's books, memoirs, and plays, as well as countless news articles written during his decades as a journalist for *The Jewish Daily Forward*, the Yiddish newspaper in New York that originally serialized almost all of his writing. He earned nearly every award available in the world of letters, including the Newbery and National Book awards for his children's books, culminating in the Nobel Prize for literature in 1978.

The only Yiddish-language writer ever to earn the honor, Singer expressed his lifelong appreciation for the centuries-old tongue in his Nobel acceptance speech:



Isaac Bashevis Singer

Beltmann

*The Yiddish mentality . . . does not take victory for granted. It does not demand and command, it muddles through, sneaks by, smuggles itself amidst the powers of destruction, knowing somewhere that God's plan for creation is still at the very beginning.*

For Singer, Yiddish was not only a language, it was a guiding philosophy in which there is "gratitude for every day of life, every crumb of success, each encounter of love. Yiddish [is] a language of exile, without a country, without frontiers, that is not supported by any government." Singer himself can be credited with helping to keep alive the vanishing language he employed to recreate the vanished past his stories so faithfully capture.

Humanity, as Singer perceived it, was deeply comical, even in its

most beguiling mysteries. "Why do I continue to write in Yiddish?" he continued in his Nobel address. "Because I love to write ghost stories, and nothing fits a ghost like a dying language!"

#### A LITERARY GOLD MINE

Singer was fond of telling people that "all of my writings are from 10 Krochmalna Street," referring to the childhood address in Warsaw that served as the source of his boundless inspiration.

*It was a Jewish street, and as far as I was concerned, it was the center of the universe. I say to myself that just as other people are digging gold which God has created billions of years ago, my literary gold mine is this street. I keep returning to it with the feeling that there are still treasures which I haven't used up.*



*A newsstand in Warsaw in the thirties, featuring 27 Jewish dailies*



*Singer's passport, issued by the P.E.N. Club in Warsaw in 1932*

After years of struggling to eke out a living as a rabbi in the town of Radzymin in Eastern Poland, Singer's father moved the family to Warsaw in 1908 and set up shop as the head of a community rabbinical court. The pious rabbi's devotion to the rigors of Jewish thought was tempered in the young Singer by his grandfather's passion for the cabala, the body of Jewish mystical texts populated by mythical creatures that would later reappear in Singer's stories.

"I was brought up in a home where the supernatural was our daily life," Singer recalled late in his life. "We all believed in spirits and demons." Responding to an interviewer's question about why the supernatural plays so large a role in his stories, Singer responded: "I don't know if I should call myself a mystic, but I feel always that we are surrounded by . . . mysterious powers, which play a great part in everything we are doing. I would say that telepathy and clairvoyance play a part in every love story."

Singer's mother was the family's revered storyteller. She filled

Singer's mind with timeless Jewish folktales about animals, mystics, traveling merchants, and most importantly, about the fools of Chelm, the legendary characters of Jewish folklore who would resurface in his most-loved children's stories and become the "sages" of *Shlemiel the First*. Chelm itself, the setting for *Shlemiel the First*, replicates Singer's mother's native village, Bilgoray, the quintessential Eastern European *shtetl* (village) where Singer and his mother spent four of his teenage years.

In the preface to *When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw*, a collection of children's stories from which *Shlemiel the First* is drawn, Singer wrote, "Some of these stories my mother told me. These are folktales she heard from her mother and grandmother. All the stories are products of a way of life rich in fantasy and make-believe."

#### COMING OF AGE AS A WRITER

The Warsaw in which Singer grew up was the center of the thriving Yiddish literary world

Roman Vishniac



The rabbi

and had a profound effect on his development as a writer. Warsaw's Jewish population supported numerous daily and weekly Yiddish newspapers, which regularly printed the work of journalists, poets, scholars, and novelists. Isaac Loeb Peretz, Poland's great Yiddish voice of the Enlightenment in Jewish literature, was at the height of his fame when Singer was a young child, and the Russian-born fiction author Sholom Aleichem was exalted as the model storyteller for aspiring Yiddish writers. Singer read his first books by non-Yiddish authors years later when Americans sent books, in Yiddish translations, to Poland as part of the war relief effort. Enthralled by his first taste of

secular reading, Singer devoured books on philosophy and the Russian classics; Dostoyevsky remained one of his literary idols throughout his lifetime.

Singer's older brother, Isaac Joshua (the acclaimed writer of the 1936 epic novel *The Brothers Ashkenazi*), often clashed with their father's orthodoxy. In 1914, he moved out of the family home and into an artist's studio, an event that was pivotal in his younger brother's decision to follow his own artistic instincts and pursue writing. During visits to his brother's studio, young Isaac Bashevis enjoyed his first taste of the nontraditional world, and it was there that he met his first "emancipated" Jews, including a host of Yiddish poets and playwrights and women who modeled nude for painters. In Singer's memoir of his life in Poland, *In My Father's Court*, he remarks on the eye-opening effect this world had on his life and eventually on his writing: "Even in my stories it is just one step from the study house to sexuality and back again."

Singer then had a brief stint as a rabbinical student, the consequence of his refusal to accompany his parents to another *shtetl* where his father was taking a new post. Soon bored by the didacticism of his studies, Singer fled the seminary in 1923 and found work in Warsaw as a proofreader for the Yiddish literary magazine *Globus*. He set to work on his first novel, and *Satan in Goray*—a gothic tale of demonic possession and cabalistic mysticism—was serialized in the magazine in 1933.

In the meantime, Singer's brother, who would continue to have a

tremendous impact on Singer's life and intellectual development, moved to the United States and began publishing his own novels in New York. Inspired by his brother's success and finally committed to a life as a writer, Singer emigrated to New York in 1935.

### SINGER IN NEW YORK

New York was for Singer initially a place of disillusionment and fear about his ability to survive as a writer of Yiddish. As the autobiographical narrator of his story "A Day in Coney Island" remarks,

*Though the editor of a Yiddish paper published a sketch of mine from time to time in the Sunday edition, he told me frankly that no one gave a hoot about demons, dybbuks [evil spirits], and imps of 200 years ago. At 30, a refugee from Poland, I had become an anachronism.*

As he struggled to find his literary niche during the ensuing years, Singer consoled himself with the company of fellow Jewish emigré writers and artists. New York's Yiddish literary scene was booming, in response to the flood of Jewish immigrants who had been pouring into the city since the late 19th century; by 1916 New York's Yiddish daily newspapers enjoyed a combined circulation of 646,000, not counting the weeklies, quarterlies, and other publications that regularly hit the newsstands.

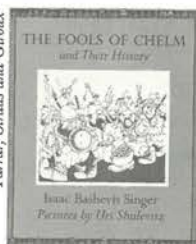
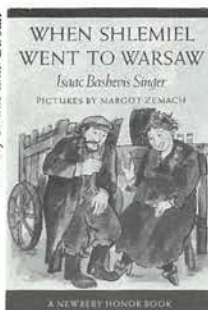
The Yiddish theater scene also flourished, with audiences in New York's Lower East Side filling 20 theaters each night to see Yiddish plays. I. J. Singer's 1932 novel *Yoshe Kalb* was adapted to the

stage and remained a favorite revival production at the Yiddish Art Theater throughout the thirties. The Folksbiene (a popular amateur Yiddish theater) and *The Forward* were housed in the same building, and Singer ensconced himself in both worlds, submitting articles to *The Forward* and frequenting performances downstairs. Yiddish theater, according to Singer, was for Jewish-American immigrants "a remarkable mixture of university and place of amusement," an environment in which immigrants from the same European *shtetlakh* could reunite through the drama of their shared heritage.

In 1943 Singer became an American citizen, and by 1945—with the publication of his novel *The Family Moskat* in *The Forward*—he had hit his stride as a writer with a mature style, inspired by traditional Yiddish literature but enriched by a quality singularly his own. "Yiddish critics told me I was not writing in the tradition of Yiddish literature," Singer commented, "and in a way they were right, because traditional Yiddish literature strikes me as sentimental, primitive, petty. You had to pity the poor Hasidic boy who was in love with a rich girl. These things looked dead to me, so far from real comedy and tragedy." Traditional plot lines also left no room for Singer's frank portrayals of sexuality, which he believed should be fair game in modern, albeit Yiddish, fiction.

At the age of 41, Singer finally found a permanent home for his writing and the faithful readership for which he had longed. Saul Bellow's translation of Singer's mas-

FOR SINGER,  
YIDDISH WAS  
A GUIDING  
PHILOSOPHY IN  
WHICH THERE IS  
"GRATITUDE FOR  
EVERY DAY OF LIFE,  
EVERY CRUMB OF  
SUCCESS, EACH  
ENCOUNTER OF  
LOVE."



terful story "Gimpel the Fool," published in *Partisan Review* in 1953, carried Singer's voice to a much wider audience than ever before, firmly establishing his legendary command of the short-story form.

"Gimpel the Fool" examines the life of *dos kleine menshele* (the common man), a humble, hapless, gullible fool who inhabits much of Yiddish fiction. For Singer there was comic tragedy in the plights of his pitiable fools, and his stories enthrall readers with their insistence that the unwitting triumph of these characters holds out the hope of redemption for reader and Shlemiel alike. Singer's archetypal fool achieves a certain freedom only after coming to terms with his own foolish nature.

Like Shlemiel, Gimpel embodies Singer's belief that there is a certain holiness in the fool's naiveté. "I would say there is a Gimpel in every human being and a sinner in every saint," he wrote. "The saint believes he can make all of humanity like him. This is his foolishness, but without it humanity wouldn't have reached where we are. I too am one of these fools."

### THE LAST VESTIGE OF STORYTELLING

Arguably Singer's favorite form of fiction, however, was the children's story. To Singer, children's fables were "the last vestige of storytelling, logic, faith in the family, in God, and in real humanism," and his passion for children's stories reflected his abiding love for the rich Jewish folkloric tradition.

Singer's fictional world has much in common with the world of Jewish folklore, a world in

which anything is possible and magic is routine. "Why are people interested in folktales?" Singer asked his creative writing class at Bard College.

*Because we are limited. . . . If you walk in the street you know that you are not invisible, you are going to be seen. If you have no wings, you know you cannot fly. But folklore gives you wings, gives you the little cap that makes you invisible, gives you little boots so you can walk seven miles in a second. This appeals immensely to our human emotions. Folklore doesn't give a hoot about the mind. It works only for your feelings. . . . Folklore does in a few drops what art has to add a lot of water to do.*

Singer was 62 years old and already a world-famous writer when he wrote his first children's book, *Zlateh the Goat*. He crafted some of his most memorable tales over the subsequent 25 years, including "The First Shlemiel," one of the stories that served as the basis for *Shlemiel the First*.

"In my writing there is no basic difference between tales for adults and for young people," he wrote in the preface to *When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw*. "The same spirit, the same interest in the supernatural is in all of them. I even mention the same villages and towns. In our time, when literature is losing its address and the telling of stories is becoming a forgotten art, children are the best readers."

When Singer received the National Book Award for *A Day of Pleasure*, he explained to the audience that his love of children's stories was also a rejection of the

overly critical and psychological probing of adult readers and critics. In his inimitably witty manner, he listed the ten most important reasons why he began writing for children:

1. Children read books, not reviews. They don't give a hoot about the critics.
2. They don't read to find their identity.
3. They don't read to free themselves of guilt, to quench the thirst for rebellion, or to get rid of alienation.
4. They have no use for psychology.
5. They detest sociology.
6. They don't try to understand Kafka or Finnegans Wake.
7. They still believe in God, the family, angels, devils, and witches.
8. They love interesting stories, not commentary, guides, or footnotes.
9. When a book is boring, they yawn openly without any shame or fear of authority.
10. They don't expect their beloved writer to redeem humanity. Young as they are, they know that it is not in his power. Only adults have such childish delusions.

Whether he was writing for children or adults, the power of Singer's storytelling is universal and eternal, and it appeals to the Shlemiel in all of us. As Singer once said, after all, "An old man is nothing but a little boy." ■

*Material for this article was drawn from the biography Isaac Bashevis Singer: The Magician of West 86th Street, by Paul Kresh, the documentary film Isaac in America, and interviews in The New York Times Magazine, The Forward, Newsweek, and The Paris Review.*



The Literature (1920) is a detail of a large mural (The Introduction to the Jewish Theater) by Marc Chagall for the Moscow Yiddish Art Theater. Here, the traditional scribe takes the role of storyteller. He has written on his Torah scroll in Hebrew, "Once upon a time..."

# A FEW NOTES ON CHELM

by Mel Gordon

EXACTLY WHY  
CHELM'S SAGES  
WERE CHOSEN TO  
BE THE SUPREME,  
IF OFTEN  
ENDEARING, FOOLS  
OF THE JEWISH  
WORLD REMAINS A  
MYSTERY.

Jewish-American tourists traveling in Eastern Europe are often startled to discover that Chelm (or Khelm), the celebrated foolstown of Jewish lore and the setting for *Shlemiel the First*, is not an imaginary Brigadoon-like *shtetl* but a dour, real-life, industrialized metropolis of 68,000, sitting some 60 kilometers southeast of Lublin near the Polish-Ukrainian border. Chelm's fame today rests mostly on its superpolluted atmosphere and soil, growing unemployment, and high number of birth defects.

Just 100 years ago, tales about the stupidity of Chelm's "wise" Jewish denizens and their utterly inane problem-solving abilities began to appear in Yiddish. The "wise men of Chelm" stories were apparently borrowed directly from earlier Russian and German sources—Durachesok, an imaginary Russian village of complete ignoramus, and the German market town of Schildburg, an ordinary city that somehow became the laughingstock of Europe by the 1690s.

Scholars of Eastern European folklore are unable to explain how Chelm became the Lourdes of Jewish idiocy. Before 1940, when Chelm's population of 30,000 was slightly more than half Jewish, it resembled practically every other outlying Polish town with its unalloyed mixture of Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, White Russians, *Volksdeutsch*, Russians, Gypsies, and Tartars. One would

suppose that Chelm's ratio of simpletons and lunatics to savants and geniuses was also typical.

Exactly why Chelm's sages were chosen to be the supreme, if often endearing, fools of the Jewish world remains a mystery. A 300-year-old Jewish custom in Chelm's Lublin province, however, suggests one origin: Jews from the *shtetlakh* around Lublin routinely assigned an insulting appellation to their neighboring community. The rude nickname, which almost always stuck, was based on some isolated and nefarious activity from the distant past. For instance, the pious Jews of Kuzmir maintained several majestic synagogues and performed especially strict religious ceremonies, but Jews from the surrounding *shtetlakh* bitingly referred to them as *kuzmirer meshumdim* (Kuzmir apostates). This is because one Jewish Kuzmirite, named Khatskele, generations ago, decided to convert to Christianity.

Who knows? Maybe once there was a single simpleton walking backwards in the streets of Chelm. ■

*Mel Gordon is a professor of theater arts at UC Berkeley. His book, Shtick: 300 Years of Jewish Humor, is forthcoming from Koch International. He will speak at A.C.T. Perspectives: "A Celebration of Yiddish Theater and the Klezmer Revival in America," on October 7 at the Geary Theater.*

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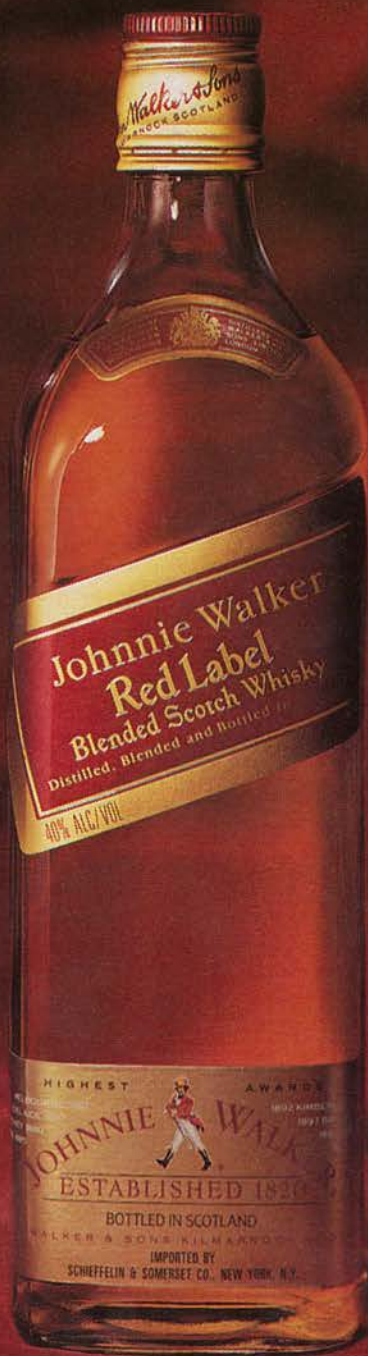
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**CAREY PERLOFF** (*Artistic Director*) assumed artistic leadership of A.C.T. in June 1992. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and new works adapted from or inspired by classical works and themes,

Perloff opened her first A.C.T. season with August Strindberg's *Creditors*, followed by acclaimed productions of Timberlake Wertenbaker's new translation 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 99 percent of capacity during A.C.T.'s record-breaking 1994-95 season. Last season she directed A.C.T.'s highly successful West Coast premiere of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* and the Geary Theater inaugural production of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. This season at A.C.T. she directs *The Rose Tattoo*, by Tennessee Williams, and the world premiere of *Singer's Boy*, by Leslie Ayvazian.

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 Perloff's 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 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 formerly served on the San Francisco Arts Commission.

**JAMES HAIRE** (*Producing Director*) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he managed were *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (with Le Gallienne, 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 *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* (with Julie Harris, Nancy Marchand, and Estelle Parsons) and *Georgy* (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water*. Off Broadway he produced Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971 as production

continued on page 36



American Ballet Theatre is recognized as one of the great dance companies of the world. (Pictured, Susan Jaffe in *Swan Lake*.)

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stage manager. In 1985 he was appointed production director, and 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. Haire holds a B.A. from the University of Arizona, an M.A. from the Northwestern University School of Speech, and an honorary M.F.A. from the A.C.T. Conservatory.

**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 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, Slaughter is a consultant to the Educational Theater Association and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and is a frequent guest speaker and adjudicator throughout the country. He has published eight anthologies for young actors, three of which have been selected by the New York Public Library as "outstanding books for the teenager." In 1989, he founded the Young Conservatory's New Plays Program; to date eleven new works by professional playwrights have been developed, nine of which have been published by

Smith & Kraus in two volumes of *New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory*.

**PAUL WALSH** (*Dramaturg & Director of Humanities*) has extensive experience as a dramaturg, translator, and adaptor. His translation of Strindberg's *Creditors* was directed by Carey Perloff at New York's Classic Stage Company in 1991 and at A.C.T. in 1992. His work also includes *Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream*, *Germinal*, *Don Juan Giovanni*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Honeymoon China* at Theatre de la June Lune in Minneapolis, as well as projects at The Guthrie Theater, Undermain Theater, and Kitchen Dog Theater. His critical writings have appeared in numerous publications, including *Theater Symposium*, *Essays in Theatre*, *The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process*, *Re-interpreting Brecht*, and *Strindberg's Dramaturgy*. Walsh received his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto's Graduate Center for the Study of Drama and has taught theater history and dramatic literature at Southern Methodist University.

**MERYL LIND SHAW** (*Casting Director*) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993. During her previous 16 years as a member of the Bay Area theater community, she stage-managed more than 60 productions, including A.C.T.'s *Bon Appétit!* and *Creditors*. She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for 12 years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She also stage-managed at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Eureka Theatre, Alcazar Theater, and Baltimore's Center Stage. She was active with Actors' Equity Association for many years and served on the A.E.A. negotiating committee in 1992 and 1993. Shaw's most recent casting projects include the San Francisco production of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and the forthcoming CD-ROM game *Obsidian*. This season she also teaches in the A.C.T. Conservatory's Advanced Training Program.

continued on page 38

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**SEATTLE:** *Paramount Theatre....*  
**BOSTON:** *Boston Symphony Orchestra*

# Stagebill

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## ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

**KATE EDMUNDS**, scenic designer in residence at A.C.T., has created the sets for *The Cherry Orchard*, *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**, lighting designer in residence at A.C.T., has designed *Shlemiel the First*, *The Matchmaker*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Dark Rapture*, *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 200 productions for such companies as The Guthrie Theater, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Center Stage, Old Globe Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and South Coast Repertory. Other recent Bay Area productions include *Ballad of Yachiyo*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and *The Woman Warrior* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Maradudin has received 4 Los Angeles Theatre Critics' Circle Awards, 24 Drama-Logue Awards, and an Angstrom Award for lifetime achievement in lighting design.

**RICHARD SEYD** 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 Three-penny 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 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 *The Pope and the Witch*, George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, the Bay Area premiere of David Mamet's *Oleanna*, Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Shakespeare's *Othello*, and Thornton Wilder's *Matchmaker*. This season at A.C.T. he directs *Mrs. Warren's Family*.

**ALBERT TAKAZAUCKAS** has created notable productions in the Bay Area and beyond and has become a national and international director of opera and theater. Recent credits include debuts with the Canadian Opera Company and Tulsa Opera, as well as ongoing work with the Virginia Opera, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Utah Opera, New Jersey Opera Festival, Kennedy Center, and A.C.T. Since his debut with A.C.T. in 1986, he has directed many renowned productions, including *The Floating Lightbulb*, *Saturday*, *Sunday and Monday*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Light up the Sky*, and *Gaslight*. Takazauckas is the recipient of numerous awards and a grant from the NEA. Last season he created and directed *A Galaxy on Geary*, A.C.T.'s gala reopening of the Geary Theater, and performed the same function for the opening of the Lucy Lockett Cabe Theatre in Wildwood Park, Arkansas. This season at A.C.T. he directs Kaufman and Ferber's *Royal Family*.

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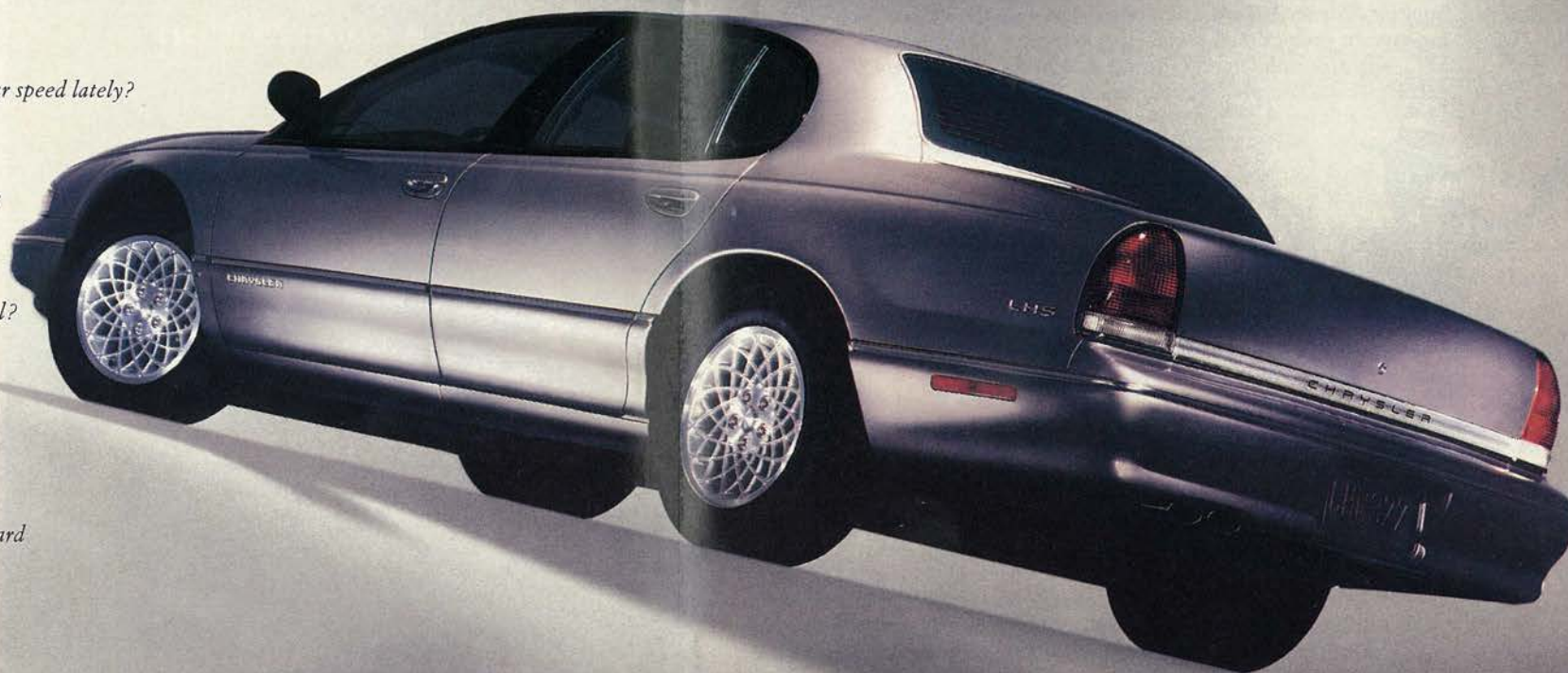
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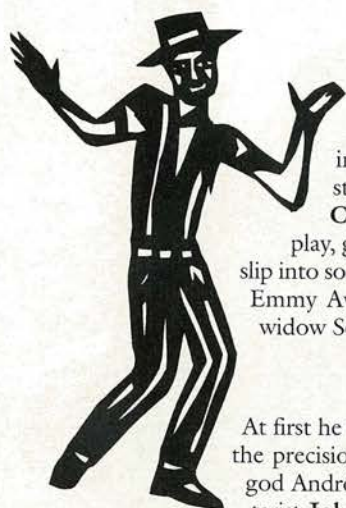


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# Performance HIGHLIGHTS

On November 27, 1978, then Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk were murdered in their City Hall offices. By the end of the night, over 40,000 people were marching up Market Street, each holding a lighted candle, overflowing the stretch between the Castro and City Hall. A candlelight march has been staged on that date every year since then, a memorial to Milk and his charismatic activism. This year the march will be made more poignant as the **San Francisco Opera** holds the curtain a half-hour for *Harvey Milk*, the new opera that sings the story of Milk's life and message of political and social empowerment. Co-commissioned by the SFO with Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera, *Harvey Milk* gets its West Coast premiere beginning November 9.



\* \* \* \* \*

Tennessee Williams's plays most often conjure love missed, misplaced, maimed. But Williams called *The Rose Tattoo* his "love-play to the world," his one script in which his characters are redeemed, rather than destroyed, by passion. Beginning October 24, **American Conservatory Theater** stages the Tony Award-winning play, giving Artistic Director Carey Perloff an opportunity to slip into something sumptuous. The production features Obie and Emmy Award-winning actress Kathleen Widdoes as the lusty widow Serafina.

\* \* \* \* \*

At first he was simply the classical guitarist *nonpareil*, embodying the precision and technique befitting the heir apparent to guitar god Andrés Segovia. But his restless curiosity eventually led guitarist **John Williams** to a crossover career with musical adventures as far-flung as film scoring, classical-rock fusion, jazz, pop, and world music. On November 10 **San Francisco Performances** brings the multidexterous maestro to Davies Symphony Hall after a three-season absence from the Bay Area.

\* \* \* \* \*

Frances Hodgson Burnett could hardly have guessed in 1909 that the book she was writing would become the children's story for the 1990s. *The Secret Garden's* charms have lately graced countless stages in the Broadway musical version; a delightful film version followed, to great acclaim. Now, **Oakland Ballet** tells the story in dance. The ballet, by Founding Artistic Director Ronn Guidi and set to music by the very Edwardian Sir Edward Elgar, premieres at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, November 15-17. —Peter Cieply

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DEAR FRIENDS,

We are thrilled to welcome you to A.C.T.'s 30th anniversary season and our first full season back home in our beautifully restored Geary Theater.

This fall our welcoming song is the joyful sound of klezmer music, brought to life in a delightful

musical inspired by the timeless stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer. *Shlemiel the First* is the product of some of the richest imaginations in the American theater: writer/adaptor Robert Brustein, choreographer/director David Gordon, musicians Zalmen Mlotek and Hankus Netsky, lyricist Arnold Weinstein, costume designer Catherine Zuber, and set designer Robert Israel.

As a theater piece, *Shlemiel* celebrates those rare moments in life when the ordinary suddenly becomes extraordinary, when the familiar is glimpsed through a lens that, for a moment, makes everything surprising and wonderful.

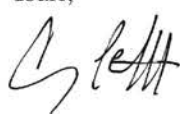
Perhaps this is what theater always strives to do: to help us see familiar situations in radically new ways, to break the habits of our daily existence and wake us up to what is truly alive about our own everyday worlds. This season's plays at A.C.T. center around that

moment of transformation from the ordinary to the sublime: the moment when Serafina delle Rose, the grieving widow of *The Rose Tattoo*, risks everything to grasp at a second chance for love; when retiring bank clerk Henry Pulling suddenly encounters the thrill of international scandal in *Travels with My Aunt*; when the quiet, submissive wife of *Machinal* commits a shocking act of desperation; when *The Royal Family's* young mother, Gwen, realizes that she's destined for the stage; when the endlessly chattering suburban Grace ascends to new heights in *Singer's Boy*; and when Vivie discovers the shocking truth about the source of her mother's wealth in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.

All of us remember moments in our lives when transformation could be palpably—sometimes painfully, sometimes thrillingly—felt. We hope this season will provide you with moments of rich discovery and a few reminders of how deliciously unexpected life can be.

Welcome! Our partnership with you, our audience, challenges us to create our best work. We're honored to have you with us at A.C.T.

Yours,



Carey Perloff  
Artistic Director

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# SPOTLIGHT ON A.C.T.'s 1995-96 SEASON

Ken Friedman



David Strathairn  
as Prospero in the  
January 1996  
Geary Theater  
inaugural  
production of  
*The Tempest*  
(with David  
Patrick Kelly as  
Ariel)

As the curtain rises on A.C.T.'s 30th year in San Francisco, A.C.T. is proud to celebrate the success of the 1995-96 Geary Theater Homecoming Season. A.C.T.'s award-winning productions, increasing ticket sales, popular community outreach and educational programs, and vital fundraising efforts make it possible for A.C.T. to continue to bring the transformative power of live theater to Bay Area audiences.

Last season's seven-play slate opened with Artistic Director Carey Perloff's acclaimed production of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, which played to 95 percent of

capacity, and concluded with Richard Seyd's popular staging of *The Matchmaker*, featuring Jean Stapleton in the title role. The A.C.T. coproduction of August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* won a Tony Award nomination for best dramatic production, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson earned the Tony for best featured actor for his portrayal of Canewell on Broadway. On the home front, A.C.T. productions collectively took 22 Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award nominations, garnering wins in five categories, while *SF Weekly* readers named A.C.T. the best theater company in San Francisco in their 1995 "Best Of" poll.

A.C.T. brought in a strong performance at the box office, as well: a total of 205,610 theatergoers purchased tickets to 308 performances; Perloff's staging of *The Tempest*, the inaugural production in the newly renovated Geary Theater, played to a 99 percent-capacity audience, with Associate Artist Albert Takazaukas's production of *Gaslight* finishing its run at more than 90 percent of capacity. Subscription sales also increased to 18,663 (up from the previous season's 17,030), evidence of the renewed commitment of the company's long-term supporters as well as of the enthusiasm of A.C.T. newcomers.

The crowning event of the season was the eagerly anticipated

*continued on page 48*



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**A.C.T. CELEBRATES  
THE SUCCESS OF  
THE 1995-96  
GEARY THEATER  
HOMECOMING SEASON.**

*Keith David and  
Viola Davis in the  
November 1995  
A.C.T. coproduction  
of August Wilson's  
Seven Guitars*



January reopening of the renovated Geary Theater. The sold-out opening celebration, *A Galaxy on Geary*—the largest fundraising event in A.C.T. history—grossed more than \$400,000 for the A.C.T. Conservatory's scholarship fund, and almost 5,000 Geary fans explored the theater at the subsequent open house. A.C.T. successfully concluded The Geary Theater Capital Campaign after exceeding its goal of \$27.5 million.

Last season's theatrical achievements were complemented by the continued popularity of A.C.T.'s educational and community programs. Almost 4,000 Bay Area residents attended A.C.T.'s symposia, prologues, and audience exchange discussions—all of which are offered free of charge. The first full season of the conservatory's

ArtReach visiting artist project brought theater workshops into the classrooms of 450 San Francisco students, and A.C.T.'s "Bring What You Can/Pay What You Wish" performances allowed 457 patrons who would otherwise not have been able to attend A.C.T. to obtain tickets on a sliding scale in exchange for food donations to Project Open Hand.

The 1995-96 season also witnessed the birth of ACT1, an affiliate organization founded by trustee Julie Stein to encourage young Bay Area professionals to get involved with A.C.T. through education, fundraising, and special events. More than 700 people attended *Comedy Night at the Geary*, last spring's ACT1 benefit, which grossed more than \$15,000 toward the ACT1 scholarship fund.

A.C.T.'s 1995-96 fundraising triumphs also included the award of an extraordinary \$350,000 grant from The James Irvine Foundation to fund development of a third year in the conservatory's Advanced Training Program, as well as a \$50,000 three-to-one matching grant from the California Arts Council to support commissions from minority and women playwrights.

Students also flocked to Studio A.C.T. (the conservatory's evening training program) and to A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and Summer Training Congress in record numbers: attendance of 1996 summer programs totalled more than 800.

All of these programs continue into the current season as part of A.C.T.'s efforts to introduce as many people as possible to the joys of great theater.

*continued on page 50*

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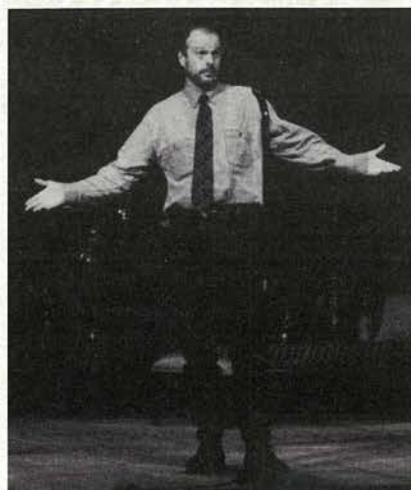
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## THE A.C.T. ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM PRESENTS *THE REINCARNATION OF JAIMIE BROWN*

This fall the A.C.T. Conservatory implements the initial phase in the expansion of its Advanced Training Program (ATP) with the public presentation of *The Reincarnation of Jaimie Brown*, by award-winning playwright Lynne Alvarez. Thanks to the support of

The James Irvine Foundation, the ATP, currently a two-year certificate program which allows for an optional post-graduation M.F.A. thesis project, will be expanded to include a mandatory third year of study leading to an M.F.A. degree. The additional year will emphasize rehearsal and performance, culminating in a student public performance series presented in small local theaters.

The development of the ATP's M.F.A. Program will progress over the next three academic years; the graduating class of the year 2000 will be the first to have completed all three years within the new program. Conservatory Director Melissa Smith has encouraged the ATP's expansion as a way to provide M.F.A. candidates with in-house project supervision by A.C.T. faculty,



and to give all ATP students more extensive training in public performance. The new structure will also help A.C.T. to enhance community outreach efforts and to forge links between the conservatory and underserved local communities.

The inaugural third-year project, *The Reincarnation of Jaimie Brown*, will be performed by eight M.F.A. candidates selected from the 1996 ATP graduating class, in collaboration with San Francisco's New College of California. Performances will be held at New College, located at 766 Valencia Street, October 3-6 and 10-13. A.C.T. Conservatory faculty member Margo Whitcomb directs. *The Reincarnation of Jaimie Brown* is itself a product of the A.C.T. Conservatory; it was first workshopped by the Young Conservatory's New Plays Program in May 1995.

All performances are open to the public. For tickets and further information, please call the A.C.T. Conservatory at (415) 439-2435.



On May 19, 1996, Rick Overton (above right) and Jake Johannsen (above) were joined by Margaret Smith, Jean Stapleton, and Don Johnson at Comedy Night at the Geary, a benefit for the A.C.T. Conservatory Scholarship Fund.

Photos by Karena Dacker

## A TRAVELING JEWISH THEATRE COSPONSORS A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

On October 7, in conjunction with *Shlemiel the First*, A.C.T. presents the initial symposium of the 1996-97 A.C.T. Perspectives season, "A Celebration of Yiddish Theater and the Klezmer Revival in America." Through A.C.T. Perspectives, the company's free public symposium series, A.C.T. invites renowned scholars, theater artists, and professionals to discuss issues raised by the season's plays. In the spirit of A.C.T.'s continuing commitment to community collaboration, the *Shlemiel the First* symposium is cosponsored by the San Francisco-based theatrical troupe, A Traveling Jewish Theatre.

Artistically and culturally unique, A Traveling Jewish Theatre is an artist-led ensemble with the mission of creating and performing works based on a wide variety of viewpoints and backgrounds that express the complexity of the Jewish experience. Since its founding in 1978, the company has created

more than a dozen original theater pieces and produced a four-part series for Public Radio International, "Heart of Wisdom: Audio Explorations in Jewish Culture."

A Traveling Jewish Theatre has performed in more than 60 cities worldwide, including Chicago, New York, Berlin, Oslo, Prague, and Jerusalem. Members of the ensemble also teach solo performance, improvisation, and ensemble creation through the company's workshop program.

A.C.T. Perspectives symposia are held on selected Monday nights throughout the season from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Geary Theater. This season's symposia also include: "The Rose Tattoo and the Complex Legacy of Tennessee Williams" (November 18); "From Page to Stage: Theatrical Adaptation from Literature" (January 6); "Women in Theater and Film: Contemporary Explorations" (May 19); and "Alternative Trends in the British Theater" (June 23). For more information, please call the A.C.T. Literary Department at (415) 439-2469.

A.T.J.T.  
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A.C.T. alumnus Denzel Washington received an honorary M.F.A. degree at the May 31, 1996, graduation ceremony of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program.



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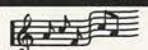
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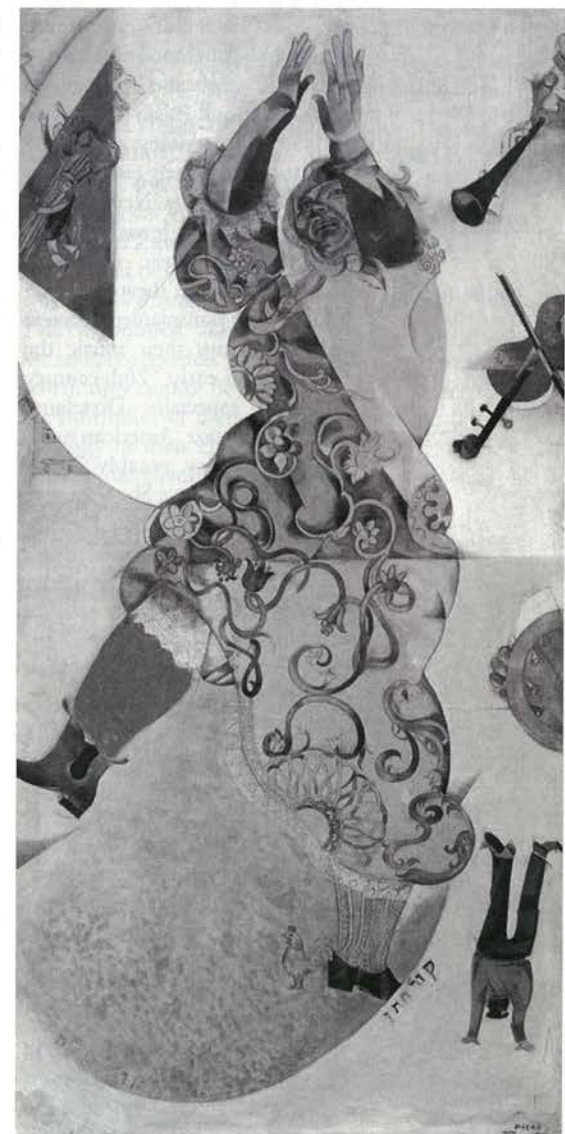
# SHLEMIEL'S MUSIC

by Elizabeth Brodersen

The sounds of *Shlemiel the First* are a mixture of adapted Yiddish theater and folk songs, set to the joyous strains of klezmer music. From the Hebrew *kle* and *zomer* (vessels of song), klezmer is the centuries-old traditional dance music of Jewish weddings, holidays, and bar mitzvahs.

According to Hankus Netsky, leader of the Klezmer Conservatory Band—whose 1993 performance inspired Robert Brustein to transform *Shlemiel the First*, the play, into *Shlemiel the First*, the musical—the origins of klezmer date back 800 years to Jewish cantorial music. Because instrumental music was considered a symbol of the holy temple, rabbis banned it after the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed circa 150 B.C.E. Eventually, however, orchestras were permitted to participate in secular festivities, and wandering *klezmerim* (musicians) became an essential element of Jewish life.

After large numbers of Jews made their homes in Eastern Europe in the 1300s, the Gypsy sounds of local performers, which echoed the familiar wails of Middle Eastern prayer, found their way into klezmer music. The *klezmerim* of the *shtetl* (village) played much the same role as the Gypsy musicians of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, lending their talents to every community celebration. They also suffered from similar prejudice. Many people condemned the *klezmerim* for their free



Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

The Dance, by Marc Chagall (1920), is also a detail of The Introduction to the Jewish Theater. The Hebrew inscription, which translates, "Voice of the groom, voice of the bride," is taken from a traditional Jewish wedding song.

A REGULAR

KLEZMER

REVOLUTION IS

TAKING PLACE.

lifestyle, considering them irresponsible, sexually active, and violent. Isaac Bashevis Singer himself expressed this folk prejudice in his story "The Dead Fiddler," about a young woman possessed by the soul of a licentious, drunken, and blasphemous musician.

Klezmer music and *klezmerim* fled the Russian and Polish pogroms of the late 19th century, eventually migrating with their countrymen to the United States. New York became a center of Jewish culture, and klezmer music flourished alongside Yiddish theater and literature. The transplanted *klezmerim* integrated into their music the sounds of early 20th-century America, especially Dixieland, ragtime, and jazz. American musicians of the day, notably Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, were in turn influenced by their klezmer colleagues, and klezmer tunes gained widespread popularity (Sammy Cahn's English version of "Bei Mir Bist Du Schon," for example, became the Andrews Sisters' biggest hit).

After World War II, however, as rock and roll was born, the great *klezmerim*, whose traditions had been handed down for generations, began to die out. Klezmer music languished in nostalgia, largely unheard outside the wedding hall, until the seventies, when contemporary artists like Netsky (originally a jazz artist) at the New England Conservatory and bluegrass mandolinist Andy Statman took up the cause and brought klezmer back into the mainstream. Like their ancestors, today's klezmer groups incorporate elements of the music of their

"new" age and home, including reggae, funk, and pop.

Today, klezmer is making a huge comeback: Hundreds of klezmer recordings are available in record stores, and Zalmen Mlotek, *Shlemiel the First's* musical director, has brought the music to Broadway. Netsky, who has appeared on "Late Night with David Letterman" and created a children's video with Robin Williams, recently worked with Itzhak Perlman on the cross-over album and PBS documentary film *In the Fiddler's House*. Jazz clarinetist Don Byron, who is African American, has generated some controversy by crossing over to klezmer. The internationally renowned Brave Old World (with whom *Shlemiel* bassist Stuart Brotman plays) and the eclectic Klezmatics, whose members have worked with diverse artists from LL Cool J and Bongwater to Mel Tormé, often hold concerts in rock venues. Klezmer bands have even shown up on MTV, "Beverly Hills 90210," and "Saturday Night Live."

Here in the Bay Area—where the klezmer revival was sparked by the Berkeley-based Klezmerim, with whom *Shlemiel's* Stephen Saxon and Sheldon Brown once played—the annual Klezmer Mania Festival gains in popularity each year. At least a dozen groups are active in Northern California, including Daniel Hoffman's klezmer-Middle Eastern fusion band Davka, California Klezmer (Rick Elmore), Klezmania, Di Ganivim, and Hotzeplotz.

It seems that a regular klezmer revolution is taking place. ■

# A COMPENDIUM OF *SHLEMIELS*, *SHLIMAZELS*, AND OTHER THINGS YIDDISH

**shlemiel** also **schlemiel** \shleh-MEAL n: 1. a foolish person, a simpleton 2. a "fall guy," a hard-luck type, a submissive and uncomplaining victim 3. a clumsy, butter-fingered, all-thumbs type 4. a social misfit, congenitally maladjusted 5. a pipsqueak, a Caspar Milquetoast 6. a naive, trusting, gullible customer 7. anyone who makes a foolish bargain or wagers a foolish bet (this usage is wide in Europe; it probably comes from Chamisso's tale, *Peter Schlemihl's Wunderbare Geschichte*, a fable in which the protagonist gives up his shadow in return for Fortunatas's purse).

It is important to observe that *shlemiel*, like *nebech* or *shlimazel*, carries a distinctive note of pity. In fact, a *shlemiel* is often the *nebech's* twin and the *shlimazel's* clone. The classic attempt to discriminate between the types runs: "A *shlemiel* is always spilling hot soup—down the neck of a *shlimazel*." Or, to make a triple distinction: "When a *shlemiel* trips, he knocks down a *shlimazel*; and a *nebech* repairs the *shlimazel's* glasses."

A *shlemiel* can make a fortune—through luck. A *shlimazel* can't: he loses a fortune, through bad luck. Can a brilliant man be a *shlemiel*? Of course he can; many a savant is: the absent-minded professor, the impractical genius, are paradigms of *shlemielkeit*.

*Shlemiel* is said to come from the name Shlumiel, the son of a leader of the tribe of Simeon (Numbers, 2). Whereas the other generals in Zion often triumphed on the field of war, poor Shlumiel was always losing. . . .

As mentioned above, *shlemiels* are usually regarded with pity, not scorn: they cannot be blamed for the infirmities of their judgment, the folly of their choices, or the naiveté that governs their hapless course through life. I know no better way to pinpoint the characterization than with these classic definitions:

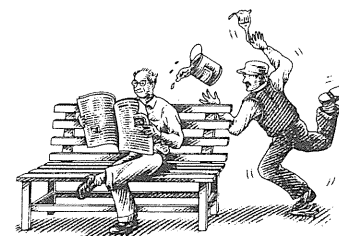
*A shlemiel falls on his back and breaks his nose.*

*A shlemiel takes a bath, and forgets to wash his face.*

*A shlemiel is always knocking things off tables—and a nebech always picks them up.*

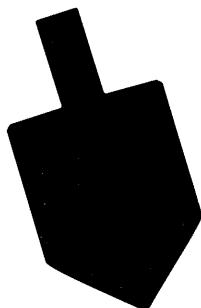
*A shlemiel rushes to throw a drowning man a rope—both ends.*

*When a shlemiel wants to hang himself, he grabs a knife.*



shlimazl

shlemiel



Dreydl

*A shlemiel measures water with a sieve.*

*A shlemiel doesn't know how to find a notch in a saw.*

Do not confuse a *shlemiel* with a *shlimazel* or a *nebech* or a *shmook* or a *shmendrick* or a *shmuck*. Each of these human types has its own distinctive attributes, albeit several are so close to each other that the distinctions are extremely subtle—indeed so subtle that they seem synonymous.

—From *The Joys of Yinglish*,  
© 1989 by Leo Rosten



**beadle** \BEE-del\ *n*: an officer in a synagogue; traditionally a sort of drudge or low-ranking church bureaucrat.

**blintz** \blintz\ *n*: a light pancake wrapped around a filling, often cottage cheese.

**borsht** \borsht\ *n*: beet soup, served hot or cold; a cheap, traditional Eastern European staple.

**challa** \khalla\ *n*: a braided loaf of white bread, glazed with egg white.

**chutzpah** \KHOOTS-pah\ *n*: brazen nerve, gall.

**dreydl** \DRAY-del\ *n*: a four-sided die shaped like a spinning top and used, traditionally, in a children's Chanukah game. The sides are marked with Hebrew letters—*nun*, *gimel*, *he*, and *shin*, which stand for the words *nes*, *gadol*, *hayah*, and *sham*, respectively. Taken together, the words mean, "A great miracle happened there," and refer to the miracle at the temple which Chanukah celebrates.

**dybbuk** \DIB-book\ *n*: an evil spirit or devil, especially the soul of a dead person that inhabits a living person because of some debt or trouble during life.

**farblondjet** \far-BLON-jit\ *n*: way the hell lost.

**gefilte fish** \ge-FIL-teh\ *n*: literally, "filled fish," but traditionally a cake or loaf made of various chopped or ground fishes and mixed with eggs, salt, onions, and pepper.

**Gehenna** \ge-HEN-na\ *n*: Hell; named after a supposedly cursed valley south of Jerusalem, where children were sacrificed to the idol Moloch, according to the Old Testament.

**gevalt** \ge-VOLT\ *interj*: cry of astonishment or fear; from the German *Gewalt*, for violence or force <oy, gevalt!>.

**kabbalah** also **caballah** or **cabala** \ka-BAH-la\ *n*: Jewish mysticism; originally the Jewish oral tradition, which claimed an unbroken link of tradition from biblical forefathers.

**kaddish** \COD-dish\ *n*: Jewish prayer for the dead.

**kasha** \COSH-eh\ *n*: traditional cooked cereal or porridge, but also a riddle or confusion; a person who causes confusion is said to have "cooked up a kasha."

**knish** \knish\ *n*: little dumplings filled with groats, grated potatoes, onions, chopped liver, or cheese; also a vulgarism for vagina.

**kreplach** \KREP-lokh\ *n*: a triangular or square dumpling filled with chopped meat or cheese, usually served in soup; similar to Italian ravioli.

**kvell** \kvell\ *v*: 1. to gush with pride <naturally they *kvelled* at their boy's bar mitzvah> 2. to

gloat over someone's defeat <every decent man will *kvell* when that sadist goes to jail>.

**kvetch** \kvetch\ *v*: 1. to eke or squeeze <he manages to *kvetch* out a living> <don't *kvetch* the peaches> 2. to fuss or be ineffectual 3. to gripe or fret 4. to stall, delay 5. to shrug <he *kvetches* his shoulders>.

**latke** \LOT-keh\ *n*: a potato pancake.

**melamed** \me-LAH-med\ *n*: 1. a teacher, especially of elementary Hebrew, which is not a traditionally high position; hence 2. a *shlemiel* 3. an unsophisticated, impractical type.

**meshugge** \me-SHUG-geh\ *adj*: crazy.

**midrash** \MID-rosh\ *n*: high-minded analysis of scripture.

**Moishe Pupik** \MOY-sheh PUH-pik\ *n*: a generic name for dummies, oafs, or the clumsy and inept.

**nafka** \NOFF-kah\ *n*: prostitute.

**pipik** \PIP-ek\ *n*: 1. belly button 2. a colloquialism for penis.

**putz** \putz\ *n*: 1. like *shmuck*, slang for jerk, but more offensive; 2. a vulgarism for penis.

**shivah** \SHIH-vah\ *n*: the seven solemn days of mourning for the dead, beginning immediately after the funeral, when Jews "sit *shivah*" in the home of the deceased.

**shlimazl** also **shlemazel** \shlih-MOZZ-el\ *n*: a chronically unlucky person, a born loser.

**shmatte** \SHMOT-teh\ *n*: 1. a rag <that's no dress, it's a *shmatte*> 2. cheap junk 3. an unrespectable person 4. a woman of weak character or weak will, or, simply, a slut <as a girl she was decent, but now she's a *shmatte*> 5. a sycophant.

**shmeggege** \shmeh-GEH-geh\ *n*: 1. an untalented or petty person 2. a sycophant or a whiner.

**shmendrick** \SHMEN-drik\ *n* (from the name of a character in an opera by Yiddish playwright Abraham Goldfaden): 1. a small, thin pipsqueak; perhaps an apprentice *shlemiel* 2. a nobody, someone lacking in influence or importance, or both 3. a boy or young man 4. a child 5. a colloquialism for penis (usually used by women to deride by diminutizing).

**shnorrer** \SHNOR-er\ *n*: 1. a beggar, chiseler, cheapskate, or bum 2. a compulsive bargain hunter.

**tsatskele** also **tchotchkele** \TSATS-keh-leh\ *n* (diminutive of *tsatske* or *tchotchke*): 1. a toy or plaything 2. a cheap little trinket 3. a bruise or contusion 4. a nobody 5. a misfit or maladjusted child 6. a loose or kept woman 7. an ineffectual person, a fifth wheel.

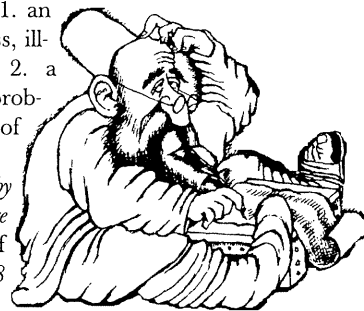
**yenta** \YENT-ah\ *n*: 1. a vulgar, tactless, or shrewish woman 2. a rumormonger, someone who can't keep a secret.

**zaftig** \ZOFF-tig\ *adj*: 1. juicy, as in a plum or peach 2. provocative, seminal, germinal <the book is full of *zaftig* ideas> 3. plump, well rounded (said of a woman).

**zetz** \zets\ *n*: a strong blow or punch.

**zhlub** \zhlub\ *n*: 1. an insensitive, graceless, ill-mannered person 2. a bumpkin or lout (probably an ancestor of slob).

—Adapted by  
Michael Moore  
from *The Joys of*  
*Yiddish*, © 1968  
by Leo Rosten





**REMO AIRALDI** (*Mottel, Moishe Pipik*) performs frequently at the American Repertory Theatre, where his credits include *Mottel*, *Moishe Pipik*, and Chaim Rascal in the world premiere of *Shlemiel the First*, *Monsieur*

*Loyal* in *Tartuffe*, Father Lewis in *Buried Child*, and Antonio in *The Tempest*, as well as roles in *Henry V*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Oresteia*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Henry IV*, *Silence*, *Cunning*, *Exile*, *Dream of the Red Spider*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Balcony*, and *Archangels Don't Play Pinball*. He recently toured Taiwan in *The King Stag* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Other Boston-area productions include 1940s *Radio Five* at Club Cabaret and *The 1940s Radio Hour* and *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Nickerson Theatre.



**THOMAS DERRAH** (*Shlemiel*) comes to A.C.T. following the successful run of *JACKIE: An American Life*, in which he played 27 roles, at Boston's Wilbur Theatre. He has appeared in more than 70 productions at the

American Repertory Theatre, including recent performances in *Ubu Rock*, *Tartuffe*, *The Tempest*, *The Oresteia*, *An Evening of Beckett*, and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. He has toured internationally with the A.R.T. company and has performed at the Duke of York's Theatre in the West End, as well as at numerous regional theater companies throughout the United States. His film and television work has been aired on cable and national networks, most recently on PBS's "American Playhouse." He received a special achievement award from the New England Theatre Conference for excellence in acting and the 1994 Elliot Norton Award for sustained excellence in theater. Derrah received his M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama and teaches at the A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theatre Training and Harvard University.



**WILL LeBOW** (*Zalman Tip-pish*) has performed in numerous productions at the American Repertory Theatre, including *Tartuffe*, *Alice in Bed*, *The Tempest*, *Ubu Rock*, *Demons*, *Henry V*, *The Oresteia*, *Picasso at the Lapin*

*Agile*, *Henry IV*, and the Taiwan tour of *The King Stag*. Other regional theater credits include *Twelfth Night* at Merrimack Repertory Theatre; *I'm Not Rappaport* at Gloucester Stage; *Hamlet* and *Much Ado about Nothing* at Boston Shakespeare Company; and *The Miser*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, and *Loot* at New York's Comedy Stage Company. LeBow is the voice of Stanley on the award-winning animated television series "Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist." Other screen credits include *Second Sight*, the NBC special "The Discovery," and featured roles on "Spenser for Hire" and "Miller's Court."



**CHARLES LEVIN** (*Gronam Ox*) has performed in numerous American Repertory Theatre productions, including *The Tempest*, *Buried Child*, *Ubu Rock*, *The Oresteia*, the Taiwan tour of *The King Stag*, and the world premiere of *Shlemiel the First*. During three seasons at Yale Repertory Theatre, he appeared in *The Frogs*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Possessed*, *Happy End*, and Alvin Epstein's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He appeared in the Broadway production and national tour of *City of Angels* and in off-Broadway productions of *One Night Stand* and *Nuts*. Television credits include regular roles on "Alice," "Goodnight Beantown," and "Capital News," and recurring roles on "Hill Street Blues," "Family Ties," "L.A. Law," "NYPD Blue," and "Seinfeld," among many others. Levin's film credits include *Immediate Family*, *Honeysuckle Rose*, *This Is Spinal Tap*, *Manhattan*, and *Annie Hall*.

# BAH! HUMBUG!

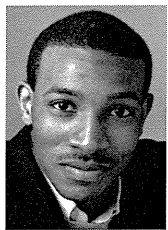


COMING TO A.C.T. IN DECEMBER



**MAUREEN McVERRY** (*Tryna Rytza*) has appeared at A.C.T. as Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*, Kitty Packard in *Dinner at Eight*, the Gypsy in *Scapin*, and Sister Gabriella in *The Pope and the Witch*. She was featured as Kay in

the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival production of *Oh Kay!* and in two long-running San Francisco shows: *Noises Off* and *The Curse of the Werewolf*. At Marin Theatre Company she has appeared in *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*, *Born Yesterday*, *Room Service*, and *Noises Off*. She is the winner of five Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards and two Drama-Logue Awards. Since 1994 she has performed her evolving one-woman cabaret show, *Verry McVerry*, including an appearance last fall at San Francisco's Plush Room. McVerry's film and television credits include *Nine Months*, *The Dead Pool*, *True Believer*, *Big Business*, *The Ox and the Eye*, and "Full House."



**VONTRESS MITCHELL** (*Zeinvel Shmeckel*) appeared as Zeinvel Shmeckel in the American Repertory Theatre's world premiere of *Shlemiel the First* and as The Man in the A.R.T. New Stages production of *The America Play*.

He has recently appeared as Roderigo in *Othello* with the Juggernaut Theatre in New York, which will be performed at the Royal Shakespeare Company in spring 1997. Other A.R.T. credits include *Henry IV*, *Black Snow*, and *The Threepenny Opera*. He is also a 1995 graduate of the A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theatre Training.

**SCOTT RIPLEY** (*Chaim Rascal*) has performed in numerous productions at the American Repertory Theatre, including the role of Valère in *Tartuffe*, Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, several roles in *Ubu Rock*, and Truffaldino in the Taiwan tour of *The King Stag*. He was seen



in the world premiere of *The Who's Tommy* and in *Much Ado about Nothing*, both directed by Des McAnuff at the La Jolla Playhouse. Regional theater credits also include *Alchemy of Desire* at the

Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and *Game of Love and Chance* at the Washington Stage Guild. Ripley graduated from Annapolis and flew the Navy's A-6 Intruder for six years before attending the professional actor training program at UC San Diego, where he received his M.F.A.



**MARILYN SOKOL** (*Yenta Pasha, Gittel, Sender Shlamazel*) celebrates this season her 30th anniversary in show business. She has appeared on Broadway in *Conversations with My Father*, *Welcome to the Club*, *Great God Brown*, and *Don Juan*. She also performed in the

American Repertory Theatre world premiere of *Shlemiel the First* and in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the St. Louis MUNY. Regional theater credits include *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at the New York Shakespeare Festival and Folger Shakespeare Theatre, *Candide* at the Goodman Theatre, *Die Fledermaus* at Circle Repertory Theatre, *The Sisters Rosenzweig* at the Alliance Theatre Company, and Genet's *Screens* and *The Beggar's Opera* at the Chelsea Theatre. She is the recipient of an Obie Award, an Emmy Award, and a Bistro Award for cabaret. She has also worked with the San Francisco Mime Troupe and The Open Theatre. Film and television credits include *The Basketball Diaries*, *Family Business*, *Foul Play*, *The Goodbye Girl*, *The Front*, "Law and Order," "Barney Miller," "All That Glitters," and "Sesame Street." Sokol will join the Broadway company of *Grease* this fall.

**THE SAN FRANCISCO KLEZMER EXPERIENCE** is a newly formed ensemble, passionately dedicated to the soulful and ecstatic

dance music of the Jews of Eastern Europe. Created by violinist Daniel Hoffman, The San Francisco Klezmer Experience boasts an all-star roster of the Bay Area's nationally recognized and innovative klezmer music community, including current or former members of such klezmer heavyweights as The Klezmerim, Brave Old World, Davka, Shirim, and California Klezmer. Bassist Stuart Brotman, clarinetist Sheldon Brown, trombonist Rick Elmore, percussionist Alan Hall, string master Jody Stecher, and trumpeter Stephen Saxton join Hoffman to bring a new level of artistry to this sweet and exhilarating music.



**SAMANTHA PHILLIPS** (*Understudy*) appeared in *Shlemiel the First* in Philadelphia and on the show's Florida tour. She has also appeared at the American Repertory Theatre as Betty in *The Threepenny Opera*, Europa in *The Tempest*, and Maria Lecizenski in *Ubu Rock*.

Other theater credits include Cathy Strophic in the Chapman Dance Project's premiere of *Short Leash*, Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV, Part 1* at the Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre, Bessie in *A Child's Christmas in Wales* at the Bloomburg Theatre Ensemble, and Madam Thérèse in the Red Heel production of *La Bête*. Phillips recently made her feature film debut in *Celtic Pride*, with Dan Ackroyd, Dan Stern, and Damon Wayans.



**COLIN THOMSON** (*Understudy*) was last seen locally as Dromio of Ephesus in *The Boys from Syracuse* at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival (directed by A.C.T. Associate Artist Albert Takazaukas), Leo Szilard

in *The Lady Upstairs* at Theatre Rhinoceros, and The Man in *The First Baseman* with Word for Word. Since 1989 he has worked with a wide range of companies in theaters from Salmon, Idaho to Solvang, California. Other

Bay Area credits include the roles of Max in *Lend Me a Tenor* and Leon and Davey in *The Voice of the Prairie*. Thomson can also be heard in the CD-ROM games *Deadlock* and *Lunar Golf*.



**ROBERT WEINAPPLE** (*Understudy*) has appeared recently in the Bay Area in *Rocket to the Moon* at the Aurora Theatre Company, *Silk Stockings* for 42nd Street Moon, and *Phantom* with the Diablo Light Opera Compa-

ny. Local theater credits also include *As You Like It* at TheatreWorks; *Inspecting Carol*, *A Shayna Maidel*, and *Born Yesterday* with Marin Theatre Company; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* with the Marin Shakespeare Company. Weinapple also teaches and directs at schools throughout the Bay Area and works with symphonies nationwide hosting "Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?" children's concerts.

**ROBERT BRUSTEIN** (*Adaptor*) is the founding director of Yale Repertory Theatre and the American Repertory Theatre. He has supervised more than 200 productions, of which he has directed 12 (including his own adaptations of *The Father*, *Ghosts*, *The Changeling*, the Pirandello trilogy: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *Right You Are [If You Think You Are]*, and *Tonight We Improvise*). His play *Demons* was broadcast on Boston's WGBH radio in April 1993 and was performed at A.R.T. New Stages in 1994. He is the author of 11 books on theater and society, including *Reimagining American Theatre*, *The Theatre of Revolt*, *Making Scenes*, and *Who Needs Theatre?* for which he received his second George Jean Nathan Award for dramatic criticism. His eleventh book, *Dumbocracy in America*, was released in 1994. Brustein is also director of the Loeb Drama Center, professor of English at Harvard University, and drama critic for *The New Republic*. He has received numerous honors, including the George Polk Award in journalism, the El-

liot Norton Award for professional excellence in Boston theater, the New England Theatre Conference's award for outstanding creative achievement in the American theater, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for distinguished service to the arts.

**DAVID GORDON** (*Director, Choreographer*) directed and choreographed the original production of *Shlemiel the First* for the American Repertory Theatre and American Music Theater Festival and on tour. In 1971 Gordon founded the David Gordon/Pick Up Performance Company, a nonprofit organization which supports his work in live performance and media. He was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1981 and 1987 and has been a panelist and chairman of the dance program panel of the NEA. His video work has appeared on "Great Performances," "Alive TV," and the BBC and Channel 4 in Great Britain. *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* written and directed by Gordon with music by Philip Glass and visual design by Red Grooms, received Bessie and Obie awards, and the script was published in *New American Theater* by Grove Press. He recently collaborated with Ain Gordon on *The Family Business*, which premiered at the Dance Theatre Workshop in New York City in 1994, received an Obie Award, and was presented at the New York Theatre Workshop and the Mark Taper Forum in 1995. Last spring they collaborated again, with Arnold Weinstein, on *Punch and Judy Get Divorced*, which David Gordon also directed and choreographed for the American Music Theater Festival. Gordon received a National Theatre Artist residency grant to work with The Guthrie Theater, where he directed and choreographed *The Firebugs* last summer. He is currently working with Ain Gordon on a commission for the Mark Taper Forum.

**HANKUS NETSKY** (*Music Adaptor, Composer, Orchestrator*) is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist and composer. He is chairman of the New England Conservatory Jazz Department and is the founder and director of the

Boston-based Klezmer Conservatory Band. He has taught Yiddish music at Hebrew College and the New England Conservatory and has lectured extensively on the subject in the United States, Canada, and Europe. His film scores include *The Fool and the Flying Ship*, a Rabbit Ears children's video narrated by Robin Williams, and *The Forward: From Immigrants to Americans*. He composed the incidental music for the NPR series "Jewish Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond" and served as musical director for Joel Grey's *Borshchapades '94*. He recently collaborated with violinist Itzhak Perlman on *In the Fiddler's House*, a klezmer music video, recording, and touring project. Netsky received his B.A. and M.A. in composition from the New England Conservatory.

**ARNOLD WEINSTEIN** (*Lyricist*) recently collaborated with Robert Altman on the libretto for *McTeague*, a new opera by William Bolcom for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The Lyric Opera also recently commissioned Weinstein, Bolcom, and Arthur Miller to adapt Miller's *View from the Bridge*. He also collaborated with Bolcom on *Dynamite Tonight!*, presented at Yale Repertory Theatre in 1966 and 1976, and on *Casino Paradise*, presented at the American Music Theater Festival in 1990. He has also worked with artists Andy Warhol, Larry Rivers, Howard Kanovitz, and Marisol and collaborated last spring with David and Ain Gordon on *Punch and Judy Get Divorced*. His plays include the award-winning *Red Eye of Love*, recently published by Sun & Moon Press, and a story theater adaptation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, directed by Paul Sills, for Yale Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, and subsequently Broadway. Weinstein also wrote "The Story Theater" television series. *What Did I Do? The Unauthorized Autobiography*, his collaboration with Larry Rivers, was published by Harper Collins in 1993.

**ZALMEN MLOTEK** (*Additional Music, Musical Arrangements, Musical Director, Creative Consultant*), an internationally known authority on Yiddish music, has taught at Columbia Uni-

versity and Yeshiva University. He brought klezmer music to Broadway and off-Broadway stages as cocreator, musical director, and conductor of the Drama Desk Award-winning production *Those Were the Days*, the first bilingual musical to be nominated for two Tony Awards. He also created, musically directed, and conducted the music for *The Golden Land*, produced by the American Music Theater Festival and later performed in New York and on national and international tours. He has served as musical director and conductor for the Williamstown Theater Festival and the Great Lakes Theater Festival, is the conductor of the Di Goldene Keyt/Yiddish Chorale, and performs internationally with the Lipovsky/Mlotek/Warschauer Trio. He was the artistic director of the Lincoln Center Klezmer Festival, during which he collaborated with Itzhak Perlman on the PBS "Great Performances" film *In the Fiddler's House*. Mlotek recently completed the music for *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, a Rod Serling/Joan Micklin Silver film for Showtime.

**ROBERT ISRAEL** (*Scenic Designer*) has designed sets and costumes for more than 60 opera productions worldwide; he has collaborated with Philip Glass on *The Voyage, Satyagraha*, and *Akhenaten*. Recent projects include *Aida* for the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, *The Fairy Queen* for the English National Opera, *The Fiery Angel* for Opéra de Paris and the Netherlands Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* for the Glimmerglass Festival and the National Opera of Canada, *Don Giovanni* for the Los Angeles Opera, *Katja Kabanova* for the Metropolitan Opera, *Don Giovanni* for the Florence Opera, *Aida* and *The Ring Cycle* for Seattle Opera, and *Alice in Wonderland* for London's National Theatre. He created the sets for the American Repertory Theatre productions of *Shlemiel the First*, *Tartuffe*, and *Orphée*. His work has been exhibited at numerous museums and galleries. Israel is the chairman of the U.C.L.A. Theater Department.

**CATHERINE ZUBER** (*Costume Designer*) designed the costumes for A.C.T.'s acclaimed production of *Angels in America*. Broadway design credits include *The Red Shoes*, *Philadelphia*, *Here I Come*, and the Tony Award-nominated revival of *The Rose Tattoo*, featuring Mercedes Ruehl. Off-Broadway credits include the current hit musical *Cowgirls*, as well as *Silence, Cunning*, *Exile* and *The Merchant of Venice* at The Public Theater, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Troilus and Cressida* at the Delacorte Theatre, and *Jack's Holiday* at Playwrights Horizons. As the resident costume designer at the American Repertory Theatre, she has created costumes for more than 40 productions, including the world premiere of *Shlemiel the First*, Philip Glass's *Orphée*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and *The Naked Eye*. Regional theater credits include the musical *Time and Again* at the Old Globe Theatre and productions at The Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Center Stage, and the Mark Taper Forum. Zuber's designs have also been seen at the New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Theatre St. Louis, and American Ballet Theatre, among others. Upcoming projects include *Salomé* at the Canadian Opera Company, *Florencia en el Amazonas* at the Houston Grand Opera, and a new musical version of *The Triumph of Love*.

**CHRISTOPHER WALKER** (*Sound Designer*) is resident sound designer at the American Repertory Theatre, where he designed the sound for *Shlemiel the First*, *An Evening of Beckett*, *Alice in Bed*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Naked Eye*, *Buried Child*, *Ubu Rock*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Accident*, *Demons*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Oresteia*, *Hot 'n' Throbbing*, *The America Play*, *A Touch of the Poet*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *What the Butler Saw*, and *Those the River Keeps*. He has also composed music and designed the sound for productions at Seattle's Intiman Theatre, Bathhouse Theatre, and Alice B. Theatre, as well as numerous productions at the University of Washington and Cornish College of the Arts. Walker also scores for

dance and has composed for the Allegro Dance Festival, the Bumber-shoot Festival, and On the Boards.

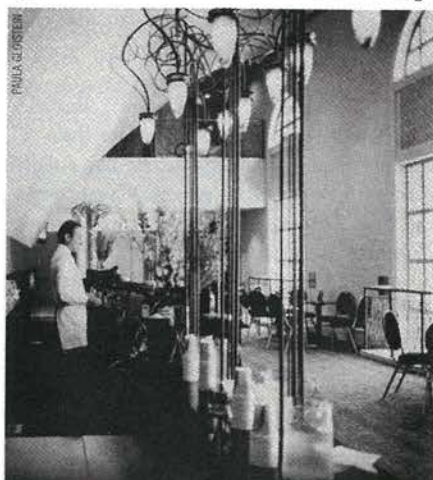
**CHUCK FINLON** (*Associate Director*) was the associate director of the American Repertory Theatre's world premiere production of *Shlemiel the First*. He has assisted David Gordon on many other projects, including *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* and *Punch and Judy Get Divorced* at the American Music Theater Festival, *The Firebugs* at The Guthrie Theater, and *The Family Business* at Dance Theatre Workshop, the New York Theatre Workshop, and the Mark Taper Forum. Finlon has choreographed and taught in New York City and beyond and has danced with the companies of Kenneth Rinker, Robert Kovich, Jane Comfort, and David Gordon.

**MICHAEL LARSEN** (*Assistant Musical Director*) has performed as a pianist for Broadway productions of *Annie*, *Nine*, and *42nd Street*. As a pianist, conductor, and/or associate director, he worked on off-Broadway productions of *The Golden Land* and *On Second Avenue*, and touring productions of *The Golden Land* and *The Sheik of Avenue B*. Nightclub and variety show credits include conducting and arranging music for Larry Kert, Gloria DeHaven, and Meritt and Moreau, among others. He is currently resident director at the Joseph Amato Theatre of the Broward Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA) in Ft. Lauderdale, where he has directed *Me and My Girl*, *Annie Warbucks*, and a new musical, *Only a Kingdom*. As an associate creative director of Stagedoor Manor Performing Arts Training Center for the past 18 seasons, Larsen has staged more than 50 productions. His former students include actors Jon Cryer, Mary Stuart Masteron, Josh Charles, Natalie Portman, and playwright Jonathan Marc Sherman.

**ED FITZGERALD** (*Stage Manager*) stage-managed *Shlemiel the First* at the American Repertory Theatre, in Philadelphia, and on the Florida tour. His Broadway credits include

*Carrie*, *Tap Dance Kid*, *A Little Family Business*, and *Da*. He has worked on numerous other projects with David Gordon, including *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* on its national tour, *The Family Business* in New York and at the Mark Taper Forum, *Punch and Judy Get Divorced* in Philadelphia and Boston, and the recent dance concert at Jacob's Pillow. Fitzgerald's other recent stage-management credits include A.R. Gurney's *Overtime* and Philip Kan Gotanda's *Day Standing on Its Head* at the Manhattan Theatre Club, and Robert Ashley's quartet of new operas, *Now Eleanor's Idea*.

**MICHELE M. TRIMBLE** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) has worked on A.C.T. productions of *The Matchmaker*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Arcadia*, *Hecuba*, *The Play's the Thing*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Last season she also worked with San Jose Repertory Theatre on *Mirandolina*. Other credits include Marin Shakespeare Company's *Richard III* and *Much Ado about Nothing*.



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In addition to Fred's Columbia Room, the newly renovated Geary Theater features a stunning lounge overlooking Geary Street, located between the two balconies. Stop by before the show or during intermission for a refreshment or just to enjoy the view.



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

### WEB SITE

Visit A.C.T. online at [www.act-sfbay.com](http://www.act-sfbay.com).

### BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

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

Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square. 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.

#### *Ticket Information/Charge by Phone/Charge by Fax:*

Call (415) 749-2ACT and use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card. Or fax your ticket request with credit card number to (415) 749-2291.

#### *Ticket Policy:*

All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance rescheduling privileges and lost-ticket insurance. If you are unable to attend at the last minute, you may make a contribution by donating your tickets to A.C.T. The value of donated tickets will be acknowledged by mail. Tickets for performances already past cannot be considered a donation.

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### TICKET PRICES

<i>Previews</i>	
Center Orchestra	\$30
Orchestra/Loge	\$28
Balcony	\$23
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<i>Sunday-Thursday/Weekday matinees</i>	
Center Orchestra	\$40
Orchestra/Loge	\$38
Balcony	\$30
Gallery	\$19

<i>Friday/Saturday/Opening night/ Sunday matinee</i>	
Center Orchestra	\$47.50
Orchestra/Loge	\$44
Balcony	\$35
Gallery	\$19

#### *Subscriptions:*

Full-season subscribers save up to 29% and receive special benefits including parking, restaurant, and extra-ticket discounts, the ability to reschedule performance dates by phone, and more. Call the Subscription Hotline at (415) 749-2250 to find out about our four- and seven-play packages.

#### *Discounts:*

Half-price tickets are sometimes available on the day of performance at TIX on Union Square in San Francisco. Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the theater box office beginning 90 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.

#### *Group Discounts:*

For groups of 15 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 346-7805 for special savings.

#### *Gift Certificates:*

Perfect for every celebration, gift certificates can be purchased in any

amount from the A.C.T. box office. Gift certificates are valid for three years and may be redeemed for any performance.

### SPECIAL PROGRAMS

#### *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 Student Matinee Coordinator Jane Tarver 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 \$42 for the entire season. A limited number of copies of individual

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

handbooks are also available for purchase by single-ticket holders at the A.C.T. Box Office and in Fred's Columbia Room for \$8 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.

### Parking:

A.C.T. patrons can park for just \$7 at the San Francisco Hilton and Towers. Enter on Ellis Street between Mason and Taylor. Show your ticket stub for that day's performance upon exit to receive the special price for up to five hours of

parking, subject to availability. After five hours, the regular rate applies. (A limited number of full-season subscribers enjoy an even greater discount, but the offer is already sold out for this season.)

## AT THE THEATER

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

**A.C.T. Souvenirs**, including posters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, nightshirts, mugs, and note cards, are available in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level and at the Geary Theater Box Office, located next to the theater.

**Bar service** is available in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level and in the Sky Lobby on the second balcony level. Food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium.

### Beeepers!

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.

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

**Rest rooms** are located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garrett on the uppermost lobby level.

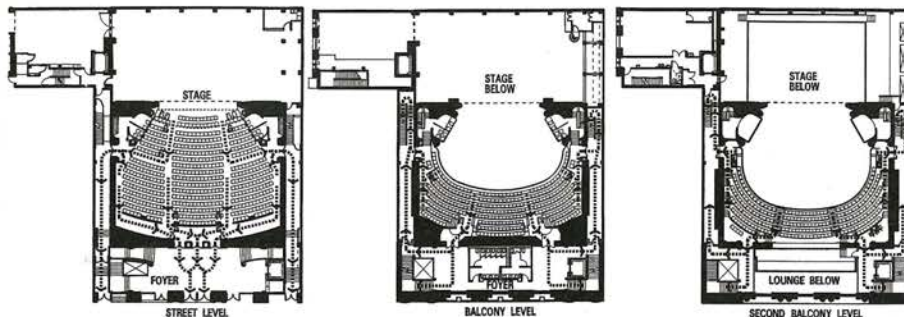
**Smoking** is not permitted in the building.

### Wheelchair Access:

The Geary Theater is accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

## GEARY THEATER EXITS

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