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American Conservatory  
Theater was founded in  
1965 by William Ball.

Edward Hastings,  
Artistic Director, 1986-92



A.C.T.

Carey Perloff, *Artistic Director*

**1996-97 REPERTORY SEASON**

■  
**SHLEMIEL THE FIRST**

based on the play by Isaac Bashevis Singer  
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 Barret  
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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## ABOUT A.C.T.

**AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER** is a Tony Award-winning repertory theater and conservatory. From the conservatory classroom to the stage of the Geary Theater, A.C.T. nurtures the art of live theater through vivid mainstage productions, intensive actor training, and a dynamic dialogue with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, A.C.T. artists and audiences share a commitment to the highest standards in the creation of engaging, entertaining, and compelling work worthy of the landmark theater that is A.C.T.'s home.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater

in 1967. During the past three decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people in Japan, the former Soviet Union, and the United States. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and inter-

national 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 San Francisco Bay Area. A.C.T.'s efforts in the commissioning and performance of new work were recognized with this season's prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award.

Since Perloff's appointment in 1992, A.C.T. has enjoyed unprecedented success with groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations of

contemporary playwriting. In the belief that an atmosphere of constant learning engenders work that is fresh, uncompromising, and alive, A.C.T. provides a fertile ground for the growth of new and established theater artists and audiences. While looking toward the future, A.C.T. also embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent its relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy.

From the beginning, A.C.T.'s philosophy has called for the union of superior repertory performance and intensive actor training. The 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. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, and Winona Ryder are among its distinguished former students. With the 1995 appointment of Melissa Smith as conservatory director, A.C.T. has renewed its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, making the conservatory a vital force in the ongoing evolution of the theatrical art form to which A.C.T. is committed.



*The 87-year-old Geary Theater, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, reopened in January 1996 after undergoing a major renovation.*

Térence McCarthy

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# REVIEW

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

## On Singer's Boy

### A.C.T. PROLOGUE

May 6, 1997

5:30 p.m.

Featuring  
Director Carey Perloff

### A.C.T. AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

May 18 (matinee),  
21 (matinee), and 27  
Additional performances  
to be announced

### A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

*Women in Theater and Film:  
Contemporary Explorations*

May 19, 1997

7-9 p.m.

Featuring panelists:

Academy Award Winner  
Olympia Dukakis

Documentary Filmmaker  
Deborah Hoffman

(*Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter*)

UC Davis Theater Professor  
Janelle Reinelt



A.C.T.

### A.C.T. PROLOGUES

Sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco, these lively one-hour presentations are conducted by each show's director. Prologues are held before the Tuesday preview of every production, at 5:30 p.m., in the Geary Theater. Doors open at 5 p.m.

### AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

These informal, anything-goes sessions are a great way to share your feelings and reactions with fellow theatergoers. Audience Exchanges take place in the Geary Theater for 30 minutes immediately after selected performances and are moderated by A.C.T. staff members.

### A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

This popular series of free public symposia is back in 1996-97 from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Monday evenings in the Geary Theater. Each symposium features a panel of scholars, theater artists, and professionals exploring topics ranging from aspects of the season's productions to the intersection of theater and the arts with American culture. Everyone is welcome—you need not have seen the play to attend.

### WORDS ON PLAYS

Each entertaining and informative audience handbook contains advance program notes, a synopsis of the play, and additional background information about the playwright and the social and historical context of the work. A subscription for seven handbooks is available by mail to full-season subscribers for \$42; limited copies of handbooks for individual plays are also available for purchase at the Geary Theater Box Office, located at 405 Geary Street at Mason, and at the merchandise stand in the main lobby of the Geary Theater, for \$8 each.

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Vol. 3, No. 7 May 1997

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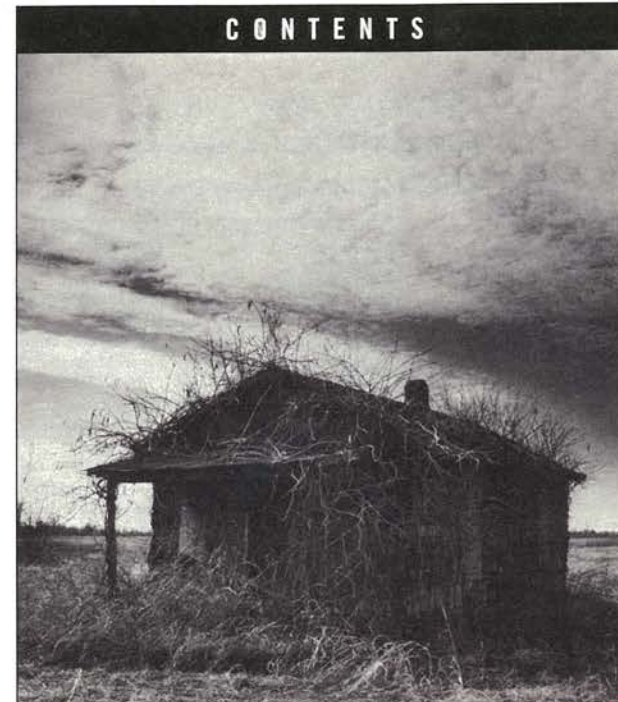
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A.C.T.

Above: Abandoned plantation shack. Mississippi Delta, 1989, by Ken Light.  
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A.C.T.

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continued on page 14



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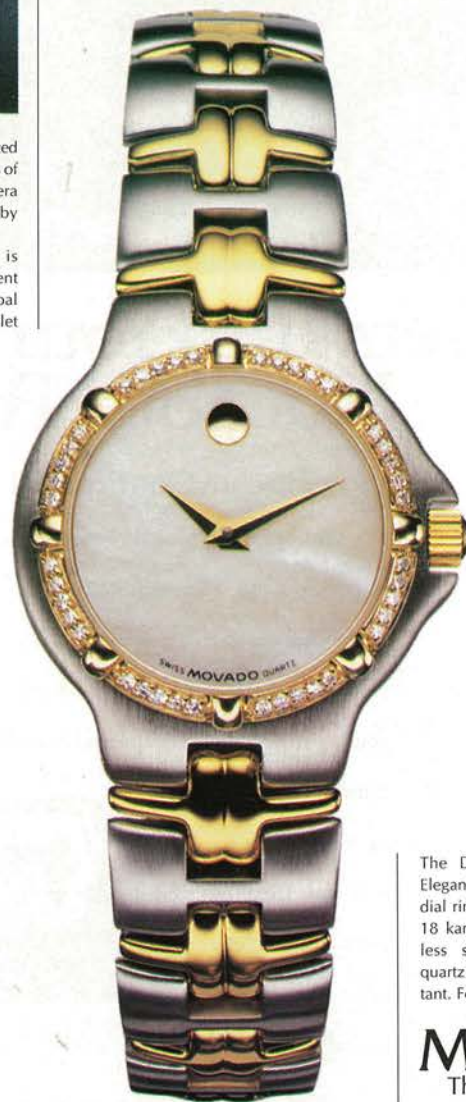
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# Singer's Boy.

(1997)

by Leslie Ayvazian

Directed by Carey Perloff

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*Costumes by* Susan Hilferty

*Lighting by* Peter Maradudin

*Original Music by* David Lang

*Sound by* Stephen LeGrand

*Movement by* Margaret Jenkins

*Production Dramaturg* Paul Walsh

*Casting by* Meryl Lind Shaw

*Stage Management Staff*

Kate Stewart

Michele M. Trimble

Kelly K. Butler, Intern

*Assistant Director*

Margo Whitcomb



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A.C.T.

## Singer's Boy

### The Cast

(in order of appearance)

Grace	Olympia Dukakis
The Old Man	Gerald Hiken
The Old Woman	Anne Pitoniak
The Boy	Stephen Caffrey
The Singer	Michele Shay

### Understudies

Grace	Sharon Lockwood
The Old Man	Edward Sarafian
The Old Woman	Roberta Callahan
The Boy	Bryan Close
The Singer	Lucinda Hitchcock Cone

Vocal Preparation for The Singer—Peter Maleitzke

Piano music recorded by David Arden, founder and director of the New School of Piano in San Francisco and recording artist on Koch and New Albion.

### Additional Credits

Assistant to Leslie Ayoazian—Gordon Cox  
Assistant to Olympia Dukakis—Stephanie Walsh



There will be no intermission.



# IN WOMAN'S VOICE

by Jessica Werner



Leslie Ayvazian had already enjoyed a successful 20-year career as an actress when three years ago, at the age of 45, she made the pivotal decision to devote herself entirely to playwriting. "I had always been writing behind the scenes," she remembers, "and I have kept an index box filled with ideas on my desk for years. But by my mid forties, I was finally certain of the perspective I had achieved and knew that writing was in my blood." Redefining herself as a writer was also Ayvazian's personal testament to the need for complex, intelligent, and powerful women's roles and voices in American theater where, she had observed during her years as an actress, they have been noticeably scarce.

A touchstone for nearly all of Ayvazian's creative work for the past 10 years has been the group Voices of Earth, which she co-founded with longtime collaborator and friend Olympia Dukakis (whom Ayvazian met 20 years ago when she directed Dukakis in a production of several plays by women at Joseph Papp's Public Theatre in New York), Remi Bosseau (who appeared in A.C.T.'s *Hecuba* with Dukakis in 1995), and actress Joan MacIntosh. Through Voices of Earth, the four women investigate and reenact the ancient guiding myths of historically matriarchal societies, hoping to empower women with increased self-knowledge and confidence. "If you can imagine a world where women are revered," Ayvazian has said, "I like to write from that image. That's why I've chosen to write."

About her years on the stage, Ayvazian recalls, "I was largely in plays by men, playing roles that were male interpretations of what women are, and at one



Playwright Leslie Ayvazian (above), actor Olympia Dukakis (right), and director Carey Perloff (opposite) explore the *Singer's Boy* script in a workshop at A.C.T. in December 1996. Photos by Darryl Bush.

point it became too much for me. I felt that female characters, written from contemporary women's points of view, weren't present to the degree they should be. So I proceeded on faith that I wasn't walking into the void and chose to write a play with five women characters who all come from places of strength." The result was *Nine Armenians*, Ayvazian's first full-length drama, which, with tender insight and emotion, chronicles the lives of her grandparents while at the same time shedding light on the "ethnic cleansing" massacres of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks in the early part of this century. *Nine Armenians* opened at Seattle's Intiman Theatre Company in 1995 and went on to an acclaimed run at New York's Manhattan Theatre Club last fall, catapulting Ayvazian into the spotlight of newfound success. She received numerous honors for the play, which will open at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in July.

## SINGER'S BOY UNFOLDS

Before *Nine Armenians* had received a single production or review, Ayvazian set to work on her next play, inspired by the genesis of a single character, Grace—a middle-aged woman attending to her elderly parents in their ivy-engulfed house. Ayvazian shared initial pages of the script with Dukakis, who felt an immediate affinity with Grace and brought the first draft of *Singer's Boy* to A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff. Perloff (who directed Dukakis in *Hecuba*) was similarly intrigued and approached Ayvaz-



ian about a potential collaboration, eventually commissioning her to flesh out Grace's story into a full-length drama.

When she read Ayvazian's early draft of *Singer's Boy*, Perloff says she was struck as a director by the fact that, unlike many well-crafted contemporary plays which lie inert on the page, it "calls out to be brought to life on stage."

"I write plays specifically for the theater," says Ayvazian, "because only the theater can ignite and inspire the imagination and so many of the senses. A theatrical framework can take you anywhere, in a special way that reminds me of what is possible in sacred spaces like temples. Theater has the power to open hearts, and when the heart is open, transformation is possible."

Far removed from the conventional family drama, *Singer's Boy* continues the tradition established by ground-breaking playwrights from Sophie Treadwell to Caryl Churchill and Maria Irene Fornes, whose experimental writing has re-formed the landscape of 20th-century playwriting and paved the way for women writers, like Ayvazian, whose expressive styles eschew traditional naturalism. Ay-

"THEATER HAS THE  
POWER TO OPEN  
HEARTS, AND WHEN  
THE HEART IS OPEN,  
TRANSFORMATION IS  
POSSIBLE."

—LESLIE AYVAZIAN



vazian also admits being influenced in her writing by both Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter—to whose work Perloff has compared Ayvazian's writing—and her style echoes their enigmatic, yet emotionally direct, language.

"I write very metaphorically," says Ayvazian. "I don't take photographs of life and put them on stage. I don't write plays that require kitchen sinks. If I were a painter, I wouldn't be painting portraits; I would be painting abstractions."

## REALITY AS MUSE

"The truth, however, is that as dreamlike and ethereal as *Singer's Boy* may seem," Ayvazian continues, "it is all grounded in absolute reality." In

1989 she moved out of Manhattan with her husband and two-year-old son into the Victorian house she had inherited from her grandparents in the small town of Leonia, New Jersey. "When we moved in, the house was still filled with my grandparents' trunks and cabinets and pictures of their life in Armenia. It has become not only my muse, insofar as I crafted *Nine Armenians* from the artifacts of my grandparents' lives I found in its basement, but it is also something of a performance piece for me."

Ayvazian's house, much like Grace's, is completely covered by ivy. "I am constantly making choices about how much to let the ivy take over: which windows will get covered, which will stay open, how much of the door will be hidden. I consider it an incredible metaphor

for my state of mind—of how much I am letting the light in and how open I am to the outside world. And I have wondered what it would be like to just let the ivy entirely smother the house. What would it be like to choose not to leave, to choose instead to stay inside and just give up? The question of how much to let the ivy grow across my door—which is essentially the balancing act we all

encounter between responsibility and desire—is a day-to-day challenge."

## WRITING WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

During months of successive dramatic readings, staged workshops, studio rehearsals, and continuous revisions, Ayvazian, Dukakis, Perloff, and actors on both coasts explored the relationships of the characters in *Singer's Boy* and the issues central to Grace's struggle—primarily her profound need to personally narrate, and

thus embody, her own life story. "Women tend to be in *other* people's narratives," says Perloff, "in part because I think we are still not convinced of a woman's right to be at the center of her own story. And when women find themselves outside the central story, they tend to ask questions like: How do other people feel about me? Am I making this into an environment in which other people are happy? Have I done right by this person? I don't think men spend nearly as much time on these doubts because they tend to actually live at the center of their own narratives. And, not surprisingly, their plays reflect this."

Ayvazian concurs, explaining that "critics sometimes take issue with the preponderance of female characters in my plays and what they view as a need for more prominent male characters." She continues, "But I have never heard a critic complain that a woman's role in *any* play should be more prominent. No one reads *Death of a Salesman*, in which Linda enters only at the end with one lovely little monologue, and complains that she should have a larger role."

Issues of perennial concern to women—motherhood, inequality between the sexes, and the competing demands of public career and private family life, among others—have been of primary interest to Ayvazian in her work both on and off the stage. "One reason I started writing was that I felt women were terribly underrepresented in theater, that our voices just weren't out there," she says. "Every week I would count how many plays were in the *New York Times* theater listings, and how many of those plays were written by women. The odds are often like this: of some 90 plays running in New York City, approximately five will be by women. Those are *astounding* numbers most people aren't even aware of." While women's voices are now heard more often in American theater (fifteen to twenty percent of nonprofit theater productions today are written by women, compared to seven percent in the early 1970s), the progress is the result of years of struggle in a male-dominated industry that has never been particularly hospitable to women play-



Kathleen Chalfant and Linda Emond in the 1996 Manhattan Theatre Club production of Leslie Ayvazian's *Nine Armenians*





Aztec representation of the moon, from the Florentine Codex (c. 1579)

wrights. Only about ten percent of the Dramatists' Guild's 2,000 female members are currently actively employed as writers, compared to twenty percent of its 4,000 male members.

In 1987 Ayvazian cowrote and performed the play *Mama Drama* with four other actresses, three of whom were pregnant at the time. The play was performed through the nine months of their concurrent pregnancies, and *Mama Drama*, which opened to acclaim at the Cleveland Playhouse after all three baby sons were born, has since been published by Samuel French and performed by troupes around the country.

Ayvazian's role as a mother continues to affect the themes she explores in her writing and has given her a firsthand appreciation of the daily challenges confronted by many women artists. "I have learned to write in interrupted sections," she explains, "in between heating up bottles and rocking a cradle and handing my son things he needs. He sits at my feet while I write and draws on the pages of my drafts."

### AN ONGOING JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

A.C.T. audiences are fortunate to be the first to experience Ayvazian's new play—not only for the opportunity to discover a bold new voice in American theater, but also because audience involvement is an essential compo-

nent of any new play's maturation, a process which continues even after a play receives its initial production. (A.C.T. fosters audience participation in the growth of *Singer's Boy* by hosting discussions with A.C.T. staff and cast members after most *Singer's Boy* performances.) "A new play's first audience," remarks Perloff, "helps the playwright refine her dramatic voice and becomes a part of the play and how it is perceived by others forever after."

The extensive development *Singer's Boy* has undergone at A.C.T. underscores the ongoing process of discovery inherent in writing and producing new plays that are rich in interpretive possibilities. Just as parents are never sure, even when their children are fully grown, whether their parenting will ever be truly finished, the creative process, especially when it involves collaboration, can be equally open-ended.

Ayvazian speculates that she will continue to explore and revise the *Singer's Boy* script even after its world premiere at the Geary Theater. "I am fascinated by the fact that Degas never stopped painting," she notes with amusement, "an attitude I can certainly understand. He used to take his paints with him when he went to dinner at his patrons' houses. He would get up from the table and repaint the very pictures that had been on their walls for five and ten years." *Singer's Boy*, like Ayvazian's life—as a mother, artist, and collaborator—is an ongoing journey of discovery which audiences will continue to enjoy for many years to come. ■

## ABOUT "THOSE PYRAMIDS IN MEXICO" . . .

by Paul Walsh

*Imagine. The priests holding the pumping red hearts to the purple sky. Blood in the priest's hair. Blood on the walls. And Cortés arrives with his instructions from God and the king of Spain!*

—Grace in *Singer's Boy*, by Leslie Ayvazian

The poetic tapestry of *Singer's Boy* is woven of fables, legends, scraps of historical memory, old stories, collective dreams, and archetypal myths of exploration, conquest, and longing. The house Grace inhabits with her parents threatens to be overrun with vegetation like the ancient pyramids of Mexico. The men—her father and the boy who does odd jobs—climb up and

down the chimney as if conquering the universe. And Grace herself, caught in the present and longing for a half-remembered past, desperately tries to fix her thoughts on Cortés: "Those pyramids in Mexico, they interest me," she says early in the play. "At one time, the pyramids were Aztec temples. Then Cortés arrived. Hernando Cortés! A conqueror!

LIKE CORTÉS AND

HIS BELOVED

MALINCHE, GRACE

KNOWS THAT TO

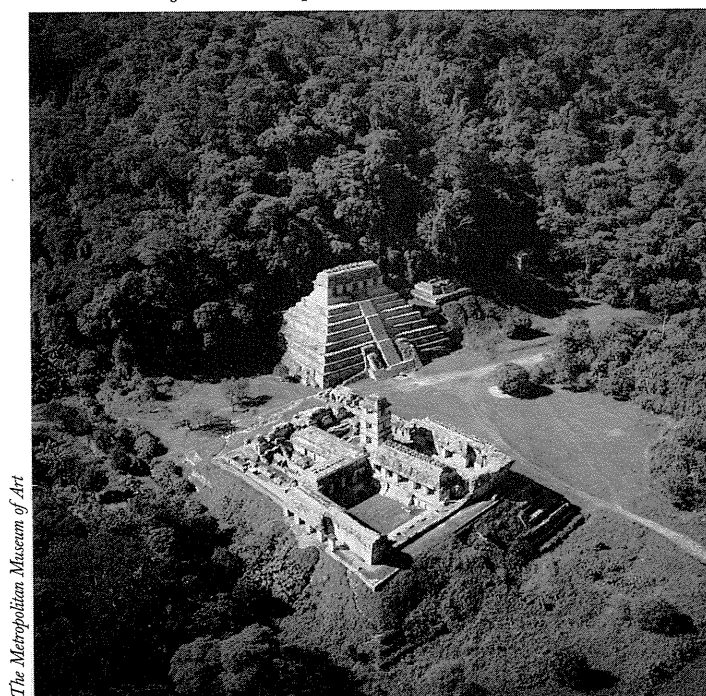
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A lawyer! A Man Who Talked!"

"He shall be the greatest who can be loneliest," Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), "the most conceited, the most deviant, the human being beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, overrich in will. Precisely this shall be called greatness: being capable of being as manifold as whole, as ample as full." In describing his



Hernando Cortés, shortly after the conquest of Mexico

*Übermensch*, Nietzsche was also sketching the portrait of the man we remember today as the most notorious conquistador of them all: Hernando Cortés, the man who history says defeated the Aztec empire of Moctezuma II.

Elsewhere in the same book Nietzsche adds:

*High and independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, even a powerful reason, are regarded as perilous; everything that elevates an in-*

*dividual above his fellows and frightens the neighbors is called evil, and only the modest, submissive, conforming, mediocre mentality is called good. Any high and hard nobility and self-reliance is almost felt to be an insult and arouses mistrust.*

This too speaks to perceptions of Cortés in the modern world and perhaps to the reason Grace finds herself thinking of him. Obsessions are passageways to secret chambers of meaning where truths can be revealed about ourselves, about life on the mountaintop, about death and our conquest over it, about longing for wholeness or healing or joy.

## RELIGIONS OF BLOOD

Cortés entered the arena of world history in 1519 when, with an army of 508 Spanish soldiers, he set out to conquer the lands west of Cuba, rumored to be rich in gold. Placing his expedition at the service of the Spanish king and the Christian God, he offered the local inhabitants the chance to welcome Christ and swear allegiance to Spain or be massacred.

Unlike previous Aztec rulers, Emperor Moctezuma II was neither a great warrior nor a decisive statesman. He was more interested in omens and astrology than warfare and was uncertain whether the Spaniards were gods or men. Mounted and arrayed in battle armor, Cortés convinced Moctezuma that he was the creator-god and legendary ruler Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent, who is also the ascending spiral tower worshipped as the dying and resurrected god from whom all art and culture flow. As fate would have it, Cortés landed in

Mexico on the day "One Reed," the day of Quetzalcoatl's birth in the Aztec calendar. Upon hearing the legends, Cortés began to pose as the god-man, remaking himself as the deity he would himself overthrow. Moctezuma surrendered, Tenochtitlan (modern Mexico City) capitulated, and the century of Aztec dominion over the central valley of Mexico came to an end.

Among the Mayans on the Yucatan, and later among the highland Aztecs, Cortés found a religious and political order that bewildered and terrified him. At its center was the sacrifice of blood, including human blood. Cortés's religion, too, had been based on the sacrifice of blood, but this was the mystical and metaphorical blood of Christ, shed 1500 years before. In Mexico, blood flowed continuously: an estimated 30,000 women, children, and captive warriors were sacrificed each year in the chambers atop the Aztec pyramids. For, the Aztecs believed, if the gods were not fed with blood and human hearts, the sun would not rise and the corn would not grow. Hearts were torn from the breasts of the victims and held up to the sun like husked corn; the "ascending eagle" of the sun fed on the sacrificed hearts and on their blood. The obsidian knife of sacrifice was also the food-producing tool of sustenance. The opposites of life and death met at the moment the heart became the sun and the blood was transformed into rain.

For the Aztec warrior, the supreme distinction was to take prisoners to be sacrificed or to be taken prisoner and sacrificed him-



Opposite:  
The feast of the Aztec god Texcatlipoca and his sacrificial victim, from the Florentine Codex



self. But, as Erich Neumann remarks in *The Great Mother*:

*[T]o take a prisoner, to bear a child, to be sacrificed as a prisoner and to die in childhood are identical. . . . Every man is a warrior, but as such he is also a sacrifice. And just as the woman who gives birth 'takes a prisoner,' that is to say, gives birth to a future sacrificial victim, so the prisoner's captor is not only his 'mother' (for child-bearing and taking a prisoner are the same) but is also said to be his father.*

All this came

to an end with the Spanish conquest, in which an estimated 12 to 15 million Indians were massacred, and the vegetation of the jungle covered the sacred pyramids of sacrifice for hundreds of years. In their place came to stand the image of the Christianity of Spain: the image of a virgin mother who bore a divine child.

The Aztecs, too, had their virgin mothers of divine children. Ometéotl, the celestial androgyne, creator and foundation of the universe, was divided at the birth of a dutiful child into male and female aspects. That child was Quetzalcoatl (and perhaps Cortés). More famous was Coatlicue, the ferocious virgin goddess who bore a son, Huitzilopochtli. She devoured human flesh and gave

the Aztecs corn; he was the god of war and associated with the hummingbird that brought fecundity with the rainy season. The Aztec virgins and their children were as distinct from their Christian

counterparts as the Aztec cosmology was from that of Spain, but the image of virginal mother and sacrificial child linked the two worlds. When Cortés smashed the idols at the tops of the pyramids, he simply replaced one set of mothers with another.



The Aztec earth goddess Tlazolteotl, from the Codex Borbonicus (date unknown)

## LA MALINCHE

It is another woman, however, who is placed alongside the name of Cortés in the histories and legends of the conquest. This woman is La Malinche, the "one who spoke," as Grace calls her in *Singer's Boy*. Early in their journey of conquest, after defeating the people of the island of Tabasco in a bloody confrontation, Cortés was presented with gifts that included an aristocratic woman of extraordinary beauty and equally extraordinary talents. Traded as a slave to the Tabascans some years earlier, La Malinche had learned the local Mayan language; but she was also fluent in Nahuatl, the highland language of the Aztecs, and is said to have ac-

continued on page 56

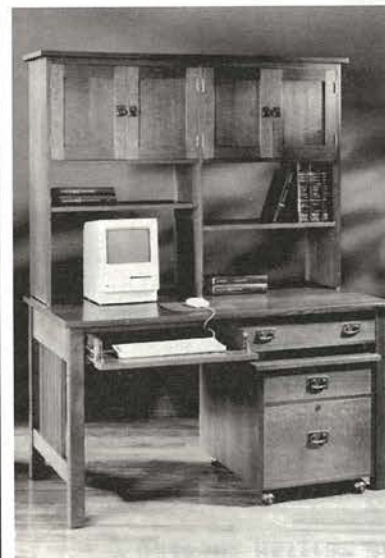
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**CAREY PERLOFF** (*Artistic Director*) assumed artistic leadership of A.C.T. in June 1992 and has led the company to unprecedented success, including the receipt of the 1996 Jujamcyn Theaters

Award for theatrical excellence. 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 directed *The Rose Tattoo*, by Tennessee Williams (winning a Drama-Logue Award for outstanding production), 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 Al-

varez's translation of Tirso de Molina's *Don Juan of Seville*, Michael Feingold's version of Alexandre Dumas's *Tower of Evil* with Kathleen Widdoes, 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.



**HEATHER KITCHEN** (*Managing Director*) joined A.C.T. as managing director in October 1996. She has extensive experience in theater management and production, has served as a strategic planning consultant for

arts and educational institutions, and has taught management and theater courses for more than 20 years throughout Canada. Most recently she served as general manager of the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Alberta, where she was responsible for a five-theater complex which produced up to 16 productions annually. Prior to her work at the Citadel, she was company manager for the Stratford Festival while on tour. Her stage management experience includes the Stratford Festival, the Canadian Stage Company in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company, and the New Play Centre of Vancouver. She was also production manager at Theatre New Brunswick for three years. Kitchen received an honors degree in drama and theater arts from the University of

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Waterloo and earned her M.B.A. from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario.

**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 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, Slaight 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, four 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 Centre for the Study of Drama and has taught theater history and dramatic literature at Southern Methodist University.

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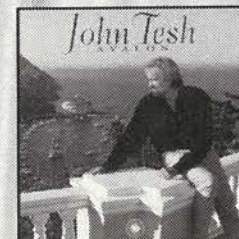
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**MERYL LIND SHAW** (Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993. During her previous 16 years as a member of the Bay Area theater community, she stage-managed more than 60 productions, including A.C.T.'s *Bon Appétit!* and *Creditors*. 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.

## ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

**KATE EDMUNDS**, scenic designer in residence at A.C.T., has created the sets for *The Rose Tattoo*, *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 *The Royal Family*, *Machinal*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Shlemiel the First*, *The Matchmaker*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Dark Rapture*, *The Tempest*, *Gastlight*, *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 theaters he has designed more than 200 productions for such companies as The Guthrie The-

ater, 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 four 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 Profession*.

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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE  
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CAREY PERLOFF, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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## A.C.T. PROFILES

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**ALBERT TAKAZAUCKAS** has created some of A.C.T.'s most popular productions, including *Gaslight*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Light Up the Sky*, *The Floating Lightbulb*, *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*, and *A Lie of the Mind*. A noted national and international director of opera and theater, his 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, and Kennedy Center. His theater work also extends to New York, Washington, D.C., Toronto, London, and Ashland. Last season Takazauckas 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 directed Kaufman and Ferber's *Royal Family*. Takazauckas is the recipient of numerous awards and a grant from the NEA.

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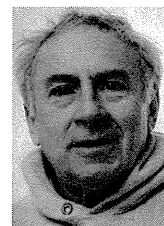
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## WHO'S WHO



**STEPHEN CAFFREY\*** (*The Boy*) makes his A.C.T. debut in *Singer's Boy*. Theater credits include *I Hate Hamlet* at the Royal George Theater in Chicago, *The Scarlet Letter* at Classic Stage Company, *Bargains* at the Old Globe Theatre, *The Miser* at Hartford Stage Company, *Normal Heart* and *A Doll's House* at the Hangar Theatre in New York, and *Jeffrey* at Theatre on the Square in San Francisco. His television experience includes appearances on "Chicago Hope," "L.A. Law," "All My Children," the CBS miniseries "Nothing Lasts Forever," "Robin Cook's Virus," "Young Indiana Jones," and a regular role on "Tour of Duty." Caffrey's film credits include *Buried Alive II*, *The Babe*, and *Longtime Companion*.



**GERALD HIKEN\*** (*The Old Man*) appeared at A.C.T. most recently as Firs in *The Cherry Orchard*, Malachi Stack in *The Matchmaker*, Gonzalo in *The Tempest*, and Jellaby in *Arcadia*. Other A.C.T. credits include *Hecuba*, *Antigone*, *The Learned Ladies*, *Pygmalion*, and *Scapin*.



**ANNE PITONIAK\*** (*The Old Woman*) has appeared with the Actors Theatre of Louisville in *Keely and Du*, *Getting Out*, *Agnes of God*, *Talking With*, *The Gin Game*, *Third and Oak*, *On Golden Pond*, and *My Sister in This*

*House*, and on the international tour of *Getting Out*. She has also appeared in New York productions of *'Night*, *Mother*, *Talking With*, and *The Octette Bridge Club*. Other regional theater credits include *Picnic* and *Pygmalion* at the Roundabout Theatre Company, *Richard III* at Hartford Stage Company, *The Guardsman* and *Sweet Bye and Bye* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, *Media Amok* at the American Repertory Theatre, and *Steel Magnolias* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre. She has also performed on television and film.



**OLYMPIA DUKAKIS\*** (*Grace*) made her first appearance at A.C.T. in the title role of *Hecuba*. She has appeared in more than 200 productions on and off Broadway and in regional theaters throughout the United States. She has received two Obie Awards and an ACE Award, and earned an Academy Award for the film *Moonstruck*. Her many film credits include *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Dad*, and the *Look Who's Talking* trilogy. Television credits include "Tales of the City," *Lucky Day* (Emmy Award nomination), *Sinatra* (Emmy Award nomination), *The Last Act Is a Solo* (ACE Award), and *Young at Heart* (Emmy Award nomination). Upcoming films include *A Match Made in Heaven* on CBS and the feature *Picture Perfect*. As a founding member and producing artistic director of the Whole Theatre in Montclair, New Jersey (1971-90), she received the New Jersey governor's Walt Whitman Creative Arts Award. Dukakis is a founding member of Voices of Earth (with Leslie Ayvazian, Joan MacIntosh, and Remi Bosseau) and The National Museum of Women in the Arts.

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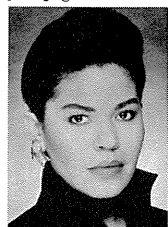
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Bryan Close in A.C.T.'s 1996-97 hit *Travels with My Aunt* (photo by Ken Friedman)



from page 45



**MICHELE SHAY\*** (*The Singer*) last appeared at A.C.T. in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* as Louise, a role she originated and for which she received NAACP, Drama-Logue, and Outer Critics' Circle awards, as well as a Tony Award nomination. She is best known for her performances on Broadway in Sam Art Williams's *Home* and Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls...*, and off Broadway in Lisa Loomer's *Waiting Room* (Vineyard Theatre), *The Playboy of the West Indies* (Lincoln Center), Mustapha Matura's *Meetings* (Obie Award), and as Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (opposite William Hurt) in Central Park. Regional theater credits include performances at The Guthrie Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, the Negro Ensemble Company, and the Mark Taper Forum. Look for her in the new film *O.K. Garage*, starring John Turturro. Most recently, Shay made her directing debut with Alice Childress's *Wedding Band* at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



**ROBERTA CALLAHAN\*** (*Understudy*) has been seen at A.C.T. in *Machinal*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *The Matchmaker*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Dinner at Eight*, and *The Duchess of Malfi*. She has also performed in summer stock, regional, off-off-Broadway, off-Broadway, and Broadway productions, in a wide variety of theaters ranging from the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco to Lincoln Center in New York. Her roles have ranged from Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* to Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She received a Drama-Logue Award for her performance in *Hedda Gabler* and the Marian Scott Actor's Achievement Award for her portrayal of Madame Arcati in *Blithe Spirit*. Callahan has also worked in film and television.



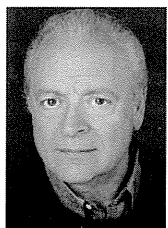
**BRYAN CLOSE\*** (*Understudy*) has appeared at A.C.T. as Perry Stewart in *The Royal Family* and in *Travels with My Aunt* with Ken Rota, Charles Dean, and Geoff Hoyle. He is the recipient of the Sally and Bill Hambrecht Professional Theater Intern Fellowship and a 1996 graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, where his studio credits include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Tuzenbach in *The Three Sisters*, and Jed Rowan in *The Kentucky Cycle*. He spent the last two summers with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, where he played Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* and Touchstone in *As You Like It*. Other credits include Carl in *The Baltimore Waltz* and Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*.



**LUCINDA HITCHCOCK CONE\*** (*Understudy*) has appeared in numerous Bay Area theater productions, including *Cabaret* at TheatreWorks, *Woodie Guthrie's American Song* and *Reckless* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *Rumors* at San Jose Repertory Theatre, *My Fair Lady* at American Musical Theater of San Jose, *Picnic* and *All in the Timing* at Marin Theatre Company (MTC), *Sylvia* at the B Street Theater, and the San Francisco production of *Rapmaster Ronnie*. She received 1994 Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards for her work in *Lips Together*, *Teeth Apart* at MTC and *A Mad World My Masters* at the Eureka Theatre Company, and a Los Angeles Drama-Logue Award for *The Three-penny Opera*. She has also performed at the Hartford Stage Company, Folger Theater, Studio Arena Theatre, St. Louis Repertory, Indiana Repertory Theatre, GeVa Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Portland Stage Company, and Odyssey Theatre Ensemble. She appeared in the national tour of *Big River* and off Broadway in the Obie Award-winning production of *Eyes on the Harem*. Cone is a member of the Circle Rep Lab and studied mime with Étienne Decroux.



**SHARON LOCKWOOD\*** (*Understudy*) has appeared at A.C.T. in *The Royal Family*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Matchmaker*, *Gaslight*, *Saturday*, *Sunday* and *Monday*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *The Pope and the Witch*. She has performed frequently at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, including major roles in *The Triumph of Love*, *Volpone*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Reckless*, *Servant of Two Masters*, *The Convict's Return*, and *GeniUs* (as the Genie). Marin Theatre Company credits include *A Perfect Ganesh*, *Inspecting Carol*, and *Lend Me a Tenor* (Drama-Logue Award). Lockwood has appeared in more than 30 San Francisco Mime Troupe productions since 1970. Other stage credits include *The Seagull* at San Jose Repertory Theatre and Dario Fo's *About Face* off Broadway. Film credits include the interactive feature *The Psychic Detective*, *The Long Road Home*, and *Mrs. Doubtfire*.



**EDWARD SARAFIAN\*** (*Understudy*) has performed with theater companies throughout California, including San Jose Stage Company (*Dracula*, *A Musical Nightmare*), Center Repertory Theatre (*Harvey*, *The Merchant of Venice*), South Coast Repertory (*La Ronde*), and Theatre First (*Racing Demon*). He received a Drama-Logue Award for his portrayal of Nat Miller in *Ah, Wilderness!* at TheatreWorks, where his credits also include *As You Like It*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Passion*, *You Never Can Tell*, and *Camping with Henry and Tom*. Sarafian received his B.A. in theater arts from San Francisco State University.

**LESLIE AYVAZIAN** (*Playwright*) received the Roger L. Stevens, Susan Smith Blackburn (second place), and Columbia Literary awards for her play *Nine Armenians*, which was presented at the Intiman Theatre Company in



Seattle and the Manhattan Theatre Club last fall, and will open at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles this July. Writing credits also include *Footlights*, a one-woman show produced at the Westside Arts Theater and the Vineyard Theatre in New York; *Emma in Concert*, an HBO film written in collaboration with Richard Greenberg; and *Mama Drama*, written in collaboration with four other actresses and produced at the Cleveland Playhouse. Also an actress, Ayvazian has appeared on Broadway in *Lost in Yonkers* and, most recently, on television in "Law and Order." She is a cocreator of Voices of Earth with Olympia Dukakis, Joan MacIntosh, and Remi Bosseau. Ayvazian teaches playwriting at Columbia University. She is wife to architect Sam Anderson and mother to ten-year-old Ivan Anderson.

**LOY ARCENAS** (*Scenic Designer*) has designed *The Matchmaker* at A.C.T., *The Night of the Iguana* on Broadway, *The Ballad of Yachiyo* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and South Coast Repertory, and *Elektra* at the Dallas Opera, and directed and designed *Flipzoid* and *Swoony Planet* in New York. World premiere design credits include *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *Once on This Island*, *Spunk*, *Three Hotels*, *Blue Window*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Three Postcards*, *The Day Room*, and *The Baltimore Waltz*. Arcenas has received an Obie Award for sustained excellence in set design, several Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle awards, the Joseph Jefferson Award, the Michael Merritt Award for design collaboration, and a Drama Desk Award nomination. For the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program he has directed Len Jenkin's *Dark Ride* and Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*.

**SUSAN HILFERTY** (*Costume Designer*) designed *Nothing Sacred* at A.C.T. She works throughout the United States, from Broadway to the Bay Area. Her designs are currently seen on the national tour of *How to Succeed in Business with-*



out *Really Trying*. Numerous Berkeley Repertory Theatre productions include *Woman Warrior* (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award). She has collaborated with playwright Athol Fugard as set and costume designer and codirector on 20 productions and also designs for dance (Eliot Feld, Jennifer Muller, and Alvin Ailey), opera (Glimmerglass Opera and Washington Opera), film (Laurie Anderson's *Home of the Brave*), and television (Emmy Award nomination for *A Different Twist*). Hilferty has received many awards for her designs and teaches graduate design at New York University.

**DAVID LANG** (*Composer*) has written music for A.C.T. productions of *The Tempest*, *Hecuba*, and *Antigone*. He holds degrees from Stanford University, the University of Iowa, and the Yale School of Music (Ph.D. 1989) and has studied with Jacob Druckman, Hans Werner Henze, and Martin Bresnick. His numerous awards include the Rome Prize, BMW Music-Theatre Prize, Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, New York Philharmonic Revson Fellowship, and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts. His commissions include *International Business Machine* for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, *Eating Living Monkeys* for the Cleveland Orchestra, *Bonehead* for the American Composers Orchestra, and *Spud* for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. In 1995 Santa Fe Opera premiered his commissioned opera *Modern Painters*. Upcoming projects include a large-scale work for the San Francisco Symphony and music for a new production by choreographer Susan Marshall. Lang is cofounder of New York's Bang on a Can Festival.

**STEPHEN LeGRAND** (*Sound Designer*) is in his 11th season as resident sound designer and composer at A.C.T., where his work has recently been heard in *The Royal Family*, *Travels with My Aunt*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Matchmaker*, *Gaslight*, and *Arcadia*. With collaborator Eric Drew Feldman he has received awards for the music for *The Lady's*

*Not for Burning* at A.C.T., *The Tooth of Crime* and *The Rivals* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and *Fen* at the Eureka Theatre. He has also written scores for *Yankee Dawg You Die*, *Lulu*, and *Fuente Ovejuna* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and music for *The Wash* at the Mark Taper Forum.

**MARGARET JENKINS** (*Movement Consultant*) designed the movement for *The Tempest* and *Hecuba* at A.C.T. She is the artistic director of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, founded in San Francisco in 1973. Before her return to San Francisco, she danced in New York with Twyla Tharp's original company, among many others, and served as Merce Cunningham's special assistant for 12 years. Jenkins and Ellie Klopp, her associate artistic director, have begun a new evening-length project with Olympia Dukakis which will premiere as part of her company's 25th anniversary at the Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens in the fall of 1998.

**KATE STEWART**\* (*Stage Manager*) has stage-managed many A.C.T. productions, including *Buried Child*, *Hay Fever*, *A History of the American Film*, *Hotel Paradiso*, *Julius Caesar*, and, most recently, *Othello*. In New York she worked as a stage manager, company manager, and production manager for many theaters, including Circle Repertory Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, the American Opera Center at Juilliard, and Lincoln Center. On and off Broadway, she has worked with such directors as Jerry Zaks, Greg Mosher, Arthur Laurents, Lynne Meadow, Melvin Bernhardt, John Tillinger, and Michael Bennett. Favorite productions include *The House of Blue Leaves* at Lincoln Center, *Crimes of the Heart* at Manhattan Theatre Club, and *Scandal*, Michael Bennett's final production.

**MICHELE M. TRIMBLE**\* (*Assistant Stage Manager*) has worked on A.C.T. productions of *Machinal*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Shlemiel the First*, *The Matchmaker*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Arcadia*, *Hecuba*, and *The Play's the Thing*. Other stage-management credits include San Jose Repertory

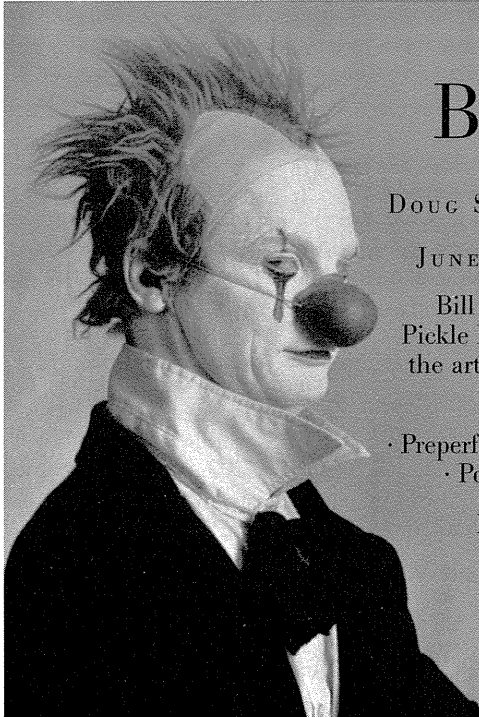
Theatre's *Mirandolina* and Marin Shakespeare Company's *Richard III* and *Much Ado about Nothing*.

**MARGO WHITCOMB** (*Assistant Director*) collaborates with Carey Perloff for the fourth time, having previously assisted her on A.C.T.'s *Tempest*, *Arcadia*, and *Hecuba*. She just finished guest directing *Cloud Nine* at UC Riverside and mounting the A.C.T. Conservatory Advanced Training Program (ATP) showcase in New York City and Los Angeles. Last year she directed the conservatory's first M.F.A. project, *The Reincarnation of Jaimie Brown*, and adapted and directed Euripides' *Hippolytus* for the ATP. She received her M.A. in theater history and literature from UC Santa Barbara and her M.F.A. in directing from the University of Washington in Seattle. Also an actor, Whit-


comb has appeared in numerous plays, films, and television programs.

**G. BRIAN KARAS** (*Cover Artist*) has illustrated more than 40 books for children—ranging from bedtime lullabies to westerns and a hip-hop rendition of the Cinderella fable, *CinderElly*. Other titles include *I Know an Old Lady*, *Saving Sweetness*, *Sleepless Beauty*, and *Truman's Aunt Farm*. His editorial work has appeared in numerous publications, including the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, and *New York Times*. The first story which he both wrote and illustrated, *Home on the Bayou*, was published in 1996.

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States



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PACIFIC Restaurant and The Pan Pacific Hotel continue their long tradition of A.C.T. support by cosponsoring *Singer's Boy*, their ninth sponsorship of an A.C.T. production.

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PACIFIC Restaurant specializes in California cuisine. Chef Yoshinori Kojima incorporates local ingredients to create such delectable

items as potato gnocchi with braised rabbit and roasted garlic basil sauce, and crispy New Zealand red snapper persillades with mashed potatoes and sauce provençal. After dinner, patrons can indulge in desserts prepared by pastry chef Otto Eckstein or sip Pacific Flair coffee beside one of the fireside lounges while listening to live piano entertainment. Complimentary parking is available during lunch and dinner.

All A.C.T. audience members can savor PACIFIC Restaurant's exquisite prix fixe, three-course dinners; A.C.T.'s major donors enjoy additional benefits. For hotel reservations call (415) 771-8600; for dinner reservations call (415) 929-2087.

## SAN FRANCISCO FOCUS

*San Francisco Focus* magazine teams up with A.C.T. for the fourth time in three seasons to cosponsor *Singer's Boy*.

For 30 years, *San Francisco Focus* has conveyed the voice of the Bay Area artist to more than a half-million readers. Through consistent editorial coverage, event sponsorships, and community involvement, *Focus* communicates and interacts with its readers in a manner unmatched by other media in the Bay Area. *Focus* has become a guide to local arts activity, covering arts and entertainment issues monthly in its Bay Beat section, in which seven editors explore theater, dance, contemporary music, opera, nightlife, books, and visual arts happenings throughout the Bay Area. And

twice each year *Focus* highlights the arts in cover stories in its Fall Arts Preview and Spring Arts Achievement issues.

*Focus's* new editor-in-chief, Dale Eastman, is committed to ongoing coverage of the performing, literary, and visual arts and to celebrating creative talent in the Bay Area. "*Focus* is very pleased to partner with Carey Perloff and her talented cast and artistic team for the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian's imaginative new play," says Eastman. "We hope you enjoy tonight's outstanding performance!"

*Focus* is widely available at newsstands and through subscription, and can be found on the World Wide Web at [www.sffocus.com](http://www.sffocus.com).

Sylvia Coe Tolk's support of A.C.T. goes back to the company's earliest days, when A.C.T. Founding Director William Ball invited her to a dinner honoring the company's ten most generous donors in recognition of her gift of \$200. She has been an enthusiastic patron ever since and currently supports A.C.T.'s commitment to actor training by underwriting a fellowship for A.C.T. Professional Theater Intern Peter Ackerman.

After graduating from Vassar College, Tolk lived in New York and Europe while developing her career in art and theater. She worked in television and acted in stage productions ranging from summer stock to off Broadway before deciding to move to Europe. While living abroad in the early 1960s, she achieved a world record in mountain climbing by becoming the first woman to sum-

mit all four ridges of the Matterhorn.

Tolk moved to San Francisco in 1968, drawing architectural renderings for interior designers and storyboards for television commercials while obtaining her master of fine arts degree from the Academy of Art College. Her artwork has since gained recognition in London, Paris, and San Francisco, and she now works as a freelance artist in San Francisco.

"As committed as I am to the visual arts," says Tolk, "theater is my first love, and I give as much as I can to A.C.T. I am tremendously impressed by the PTI program and what Carey Perloff has done for theater in the Bay Area."

Special thanks also to *Singer's Boy* cosponsors **Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rock** and opening-night sponsors **Joan Eckart** and **Shirley Ross Davis**.

## SYLVIA COE TOLK

## THE A.C.T. LIBRARY NEEDS YOU!

A.C.T. needs several volunteers to help maintain the Allen Fletcher Theater Collection. Volunteers spend 1½ to 4 hours in the library each week, helping to make the 8,000-volume collection accessible to A.C.T. Conservatory students, faculty, and staff. Volunteers receive coupons good for tickets to A.C.T. preview and opening-night performances.

To sign up, please call A.C.T. Library Coordinator Joe Rosenthal at (415) 861-0428.



# A.C.T. CELEBRATES SUBSCRIBERS

This spring A.C.T. celebrated its dedicated subscribers with stellar events held in and around the Geary Theater. On February 24, first-year subscribers chatted with A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, Managing Director Heather Kitchen, and Conservatory Director Melissa Smith, while students from the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program performed on the Geary stage.

And on March 26, opening-night subscribers wined, dined, and mingled with A.C.T. cast, crew, students, and staff members at John's Grill after the performance of *The Royal Family*.



A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff (left) greets subscribers at the Geary Theater.



Agnes Chen Brown and her husband, Robert E. Brown, A.C.T. subscribers for almost 30 years, celebrate the opening of *The Royal Family* at John's Grill.



A.C.T. subscribers, artists, and staff mingle in the Geary Theater's beautiful Sky Lobby.

## EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY PLAYS BY WOMEN

In conjunction with this production of Leslie Ayvazian's *Singer's Boy*, the A.C.T. Conservatory explores the work of some of the 20th century's most imaginative women writers.

Throughout April, the second-year students of the **A.C.T. Advanced Training Program** embarked on studio productions of unconventional plays by contemporary women playwrights: Beth Henley's *Impossible Marriage*, directed by Veronica Brady, played in repertory with Winsome Pinnock's *Mules*, directed by Diane Wynter, and Maria Irene Fornes's *Conduct of Life*, directed by Gaen Murphree, alternated with Marlane Mayer's *Moe's Lucky Seven*, directed by Cynthia Stokes. Meanwhile, students in **Studio A.C.T.'s** Advanced Studio Project are at work on a new adaptation by Victoria Rue of Isabel Allende's acclaimed memoir-novel, *Paula*.

## YOUNG CONSERVATORY BOOK HONORED BY NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The New York Public Library has selected *New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, Volume II*, edited by Young Conservatory Director Craig Slight, for its prestigious 1997 Books for the Teen Age list. This annual roster, published by the library since 1929, selects the best books for teenagers published during the previous year.

Slight's impressive volume consists of plays written for the Young Conservatory's renowned New Plays Program, which commis-

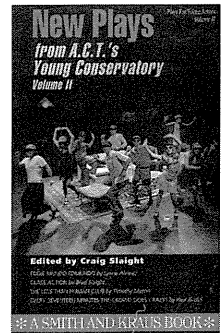
sions original works by outstanding contemporary writers specifically for performance by students attending the Young Conservatory's Performance Workshop each summer. *Volume II* contains plays by Lynne Alvarez, Brad Slight, Timothy Mason, and Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Zindel.

Three other publications edited by Slight (with A.C.T. Conservatory Registrar Jack Sharrar) have also been honored with this award in the past.

## EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THEATER . . .

A.C.T. offers the well-read audience member a wide variety of publications intended to enhance the theater-going experience. From play scripts and books on theater production to the Young Conservatory's award-winning publications and *Words on Plays* (A.C.T.'s in-depth performance guide), you can find out everything you ever wanted to know, and more, about A.C.T.'s plays and productions. For those interested in what's happening on the local and national theater scene, current copies of the magazines *Callboard* (published by Theatre Bay Area) and *American Theatre* (published by Theatre Communications Group in New York) are also available for purchase.

All items are available in the A.C.T. gift shop in the Geary Theater lobby before each performance and during intermission, as well as at the Geary Theater Box Office seven days a week. For more information about A.C.T. publications, visit our award-winning Web site at [www.act-sfbay.org/words](http://www.act-sfbay.org/words). ■





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quired fluent Spanish in a few weeks. Throughout the conquest of Mexico, La Malinche served as Cortés's interpreter, counselor, and companion, consulting on matters of general policy, local psychology, and culture—and bearing him three sons. It is even said that it was La Malinche who convinced Moctezuma to surrender to Cortés.

When his conquest of Mexico was complete, Cortés abandoned La Malinche and their children to return to Spain with his wife. Later he settled in Honduras. La Malinche came to be reviled among the people of Mexico, branded a collaborator and a traitor who sold her tongue and her soul to the invader. Although this is how she is still remembered today, she is also associated with La Llorona, the "weeping one," who haunts the quiet places throughout Mexico crying for her lost children and continuing to intercede to save

them from the Spanish sword.

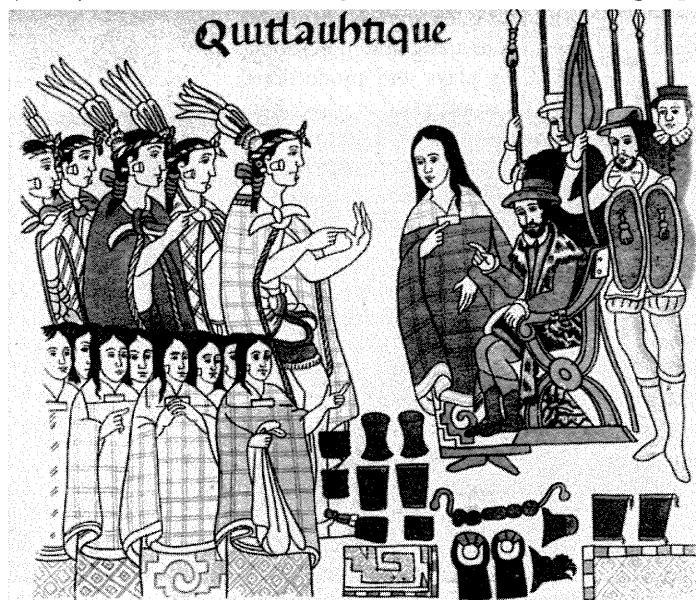
Does any of this help to explain Grace's obsession with Cortés and the temple-pyramids of ancient Mexico? Perhaps not. But like Cortés—who stood on a mountaintop and saw a world of unknown possibilities, who left home in order to remake himself as a god—Grace glimpses a world that somehow has escaped her. And like Cortés and his beloved Malinche, Grace knows that to ascend the steps of the pyramid is to embrace a cosmos sustained by sacrifice.

In his fifth and last letter to the king of Spain, dated February 3, 1544, and written from Valladolid, Spain, where Cortés was embroiled in legal battles, the 59-year-old conquistador wrote:

*I thought that having toiled in my youth it should profit me to find rest in my old age: and so for forty years I have labored, going sleepless, eating poorly and at*

*times not at all, bearing armor on my back, risking my life in dangers, freely spending my means and years, and all in the service of God. . . . I am old, poor, and in debt in this realm. . . . I am no longer of an age to spend my time traveling from inn to inn, but must rather settle down and make up my account with God. It is a long one, and I have but short time to balance it, but it will be better to lose my fortune than my soul. ■*

Cortés, with La Malinche interpreting, negotiates the peace agreement with the Tlaxcalans. From the Lienzo de Tlaxcala (c. 1550).



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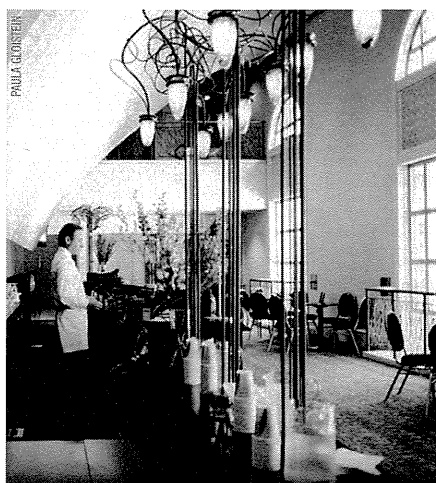
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A.C.T.

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### BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

#### The Geary Theater 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.

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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.

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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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## AT THE THEATER

The **Geary Theater** is located at 415 Geary Street at Mason. The auditorium opens 30 minutes before curtain.

**A.C.T. souvenirs**, including posters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, nightshirts, mugs, and note cards, are available in the main lobby and at the Geary Theater Box Office.

**Bar service** is available in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level and in the Sky Lobby on the second balcony level one hour before the performance. Reservations for refreshments to be served at intermission may also be made during the hour before performance. Food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium.

### Beepers!

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

### Emergency Telephone:

You can be reached at any time during a performance. Leave your seat

location with those who may need to reach you and have them call (415) 439-2396 in an emergency.

### 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.

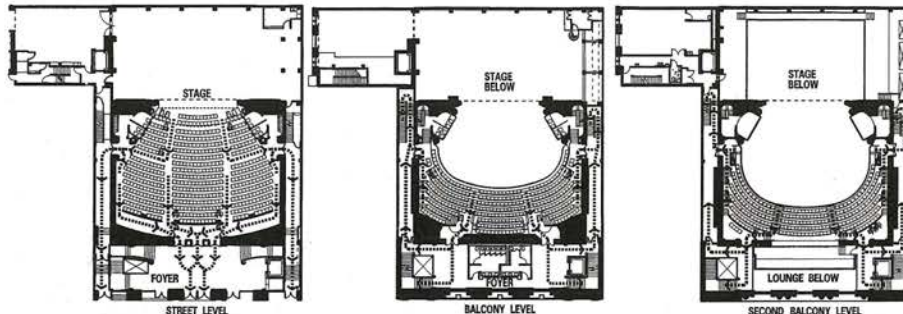
**Smoking** is not permitted in the building.

### Wheelchair Access:

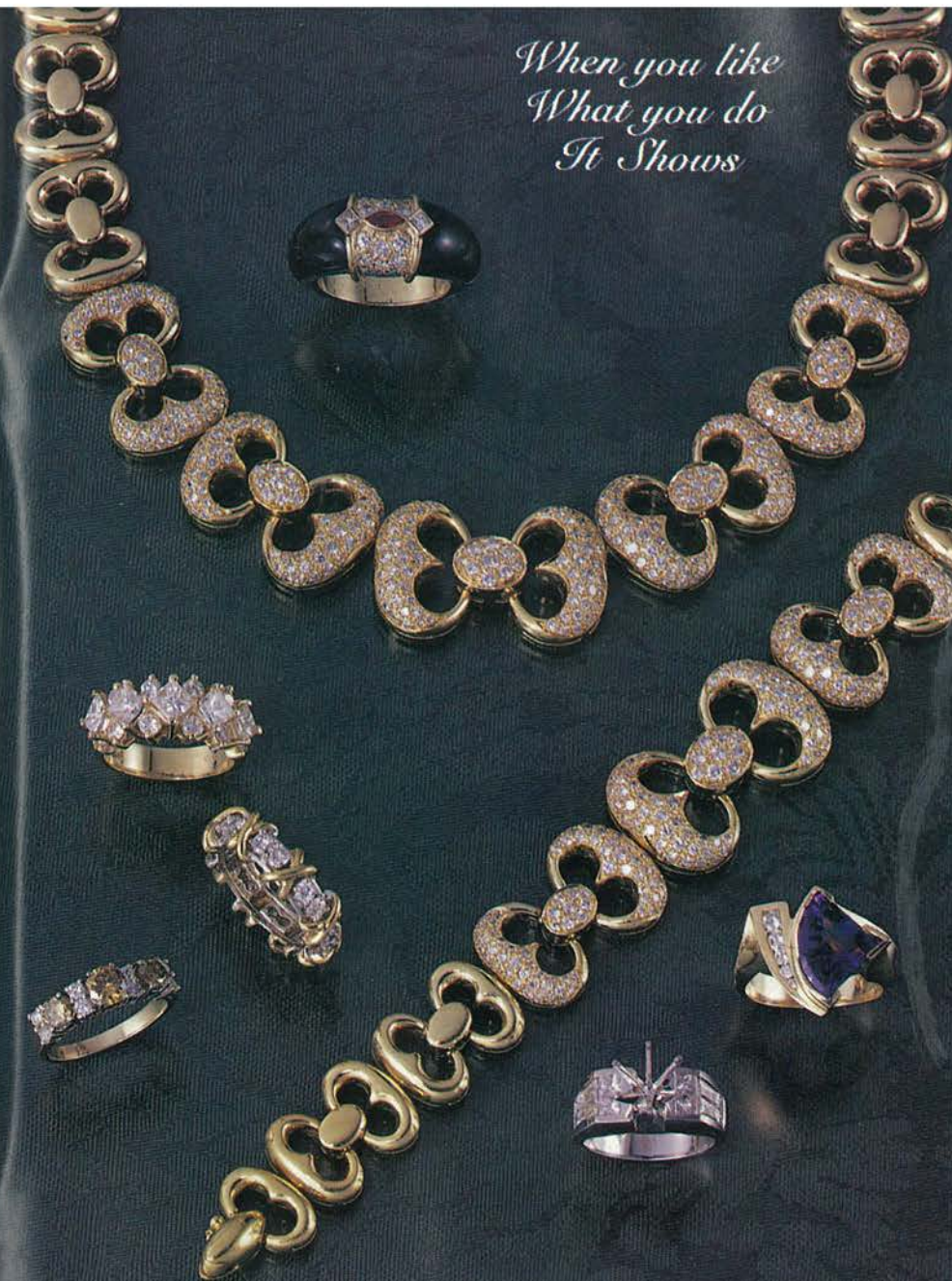
The Geary Theater is accessible to persons in wheelchairs. Please call (415) 749-2ACT in advance to notify the house staff of any special needs.

## GEARY THEATER EXITS

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



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