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ABOVE
Inside the Geary Theater

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By David Hinson
Directed by Richard Jones
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Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. During the past three decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people; today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 220,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996, A.C.T.'s efforts to develop creative talent for the theater were recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award.

Since Perloff's appointment in 1992, A.C.T. has enjoyed continued success with groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations of contemporary playwriting. Guided by Perloff and Kitchen, who joined the company in 1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable period of unprecedented audience expansion and renewed financial stability. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

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A.C.T. PRESENTS

Wrong Mountain

(1999)

by David Hirson

Directed by Richard Jones

with

Daniel Davis  Beth Dixon
Anne Dudek  Tom Riis Farrell
Reg Flowers  Jody Gelb  Daniel Jenkins
Ilana Levine  Bruce Norris  Larry Pine
Ron Rifkin  Mary Schmidtberger

Scenery and Costumes by
Giles Cadle
Lighting Design by
Jennifer Tipton
Sound Design by
John Gromada
Creature Designs and
Prosthetics by
Stephan Dupuis
Casting by
Jay Binder, C.S.A.
San Francisco Casting by
Meryl Lind Shaw
Assistant Director
Dennis Serras
Movement Consultant
Bonita Bradley
A.C.T. Resident Sound Designer
Garth Hemphill
Assistant Lighting Designer
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Wrong Mountain

The Cast
Henry Dennett, a poet • Ron Rifkin
Claire, his ex-wife • Beth Dixon
Jessica, his daughter • Ilana Levine
Adam, his son • Bruce Norris
Peter, his son-in-law • Reg Flowers
Guy Halperin, Claire’s fiancé • Larry Pine
Maurice Montesor, festival director • Daniel Davis

Festival Actors:
Duncan Hyde-Berk • Tom Riis Farrell
Salome Blackwood • Beth Dixon
Jason Elmore • Reg Flowers
Miranda Cortland-Sparks • Jody Gelb
Ariel • Anne Dudek
Winifred Hill, a playwright • Mary Schmidberger
Clifford Peak, a playwright • Daniel Jenkins
Anne, a poet • Mary Schmidberger
Leibowitz, Dennett’s physician • Tom Riis Farrell
Steven’s, a bookseller • Daniel Davis
Woman in bookshop • Jody Gelb

Understudies
Henry Dennett, Guy Halperin, Leibowitz, Duncan Hyde-Berk—Michael Santo; Claire, Salome Blackwood, Miranda Cortland-Sparks, Woman in bookshop—Jacqueline Antaramian Jessica, Cheyenne, Ariel, Winifred Hill, Anne—Mollie Stickney Adam, Peter, Jason Elmore, Clifford Peak—Bryan T. Donovan
Maurice Montesor, Steven’s—Tom Riis Farrell

Additional Credits
Deborah Sussel, Vocal Coaching; Gregory Hoffman, Fight Staging
Lisa Lefkowitz, "Maurice Montesor" photography
Jack Bowdan, C.S.A., Mark Brandon, Laura Stanczyk,
Casting Associates: Sarah Prosser, Casting Assistant

Place and Time
Here and Now

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There will be one intermission.
“IT’S A BIT LIKE DREAMING”

by Peter Giepky

In 1990, a little-known writer named David Hirson made his playwriting debut—on Broadway—with La Bête, a clever comedy based loosely on Molière’s Misanthrope and written in 17th-century rhyming couplets. The script, depending on which critic you read, was either brilliant and funny or too smart for its own good. La Bête captured five Tony and six Drama Desk nominations and London’s 1992 Olivier Award for comedy of the year, and won Hirson the Outer Critics Circle Award for best new playwright. The show’s run was cut short, however, by unusually unkind reviews from the then most powerful theater critics, the New York Times’s Frank Rich and David Richards.

Set among an acting troupe resident on a royal French estate, La Bête pitted the high-mindedness of the troupe’s leader, Elomire, against the buffoonery of the bête, the self-absorbed troubador Valere, and in so doing questioned the nature of serious versus popular art. Rich’s review took Hirson to task for writing what he perceived to be a simplistic message play.

Many people disagreed with the Times, and said so. One reader wrote the editor that reading its reviews was “like watching someone shoot down an exotic bird that has magically appeared among a flock of sparrows.” In another letter, 28 theater luminaries—Betty Comden, Adolph Green, Katharine Hepburn, David Henry Hwang, Kevin Kline, Harold Prince, and Jerome Robbins among them—urged theatergoers to see the show and judge it for themselves. (By then, it was already too late. The show closed, and the letter was printed after the fact in TheaterWeek.)

Nearly ten years later, Hirson is back with Wrong Mountain, a very different play, but with similar themes. And similar good fortune: after premiering at A.C.T., Wrong Mountain is headed for Broadway.

“I suppose it is an important part of the story that I’ve written these two plays and they’re both being done in this way,” the 41-year-old playwright says modestly. “I’m not sure what the reasons for that are, but it is a peculiar circumstance.”

Hirson is much like his plays—witty, quirky, serious, and elusive, and his modesty seems genuine. He’s as surprised as anyone at his success.

His remarkable two-for-two average does seem to have a lot to do with fortunate coincidence. He sent La Bête to producer Stuart Ostrow after hearing him say on a talk show that he was looking for unusual scripts. Hirson sent a copy of Wrong Mountain to La Bête director Richard Jones for his thoughts, and the Dodgers (coproducers of Wrong Mountain at A.C.T. and on Broadway) just happened to see
the script lying on Jones’s desk. They’d been intrigued by La Bête and wondered if they could read the new work.

Hirson seems genuinely willing to entertain all interpretations of his work, so he refrains from explicit explanations and personal revelations, preferring to let audiences make up their own minds about what he’s trying to say in his writing.

What happened after La Bête? The polarity of the reactions must have been a lot to digest, and the experience must have felt like a hard act to follow.

With La Bête, a number of people entered my life whom I respected immensely, and I wanted to write something else that would please those people—I wanted them to be interested in the next thing I would do.

Eventually I realized that was a completely crippling thought. As soon as I tried to figure out what was going to please them, I was paralyzed. So I went through a long period of trying to get back to where I began—writing from a sense of passion and opening myself up again to the possibility of surprising myself with something I hadn’t worked out in my head.

It’s hard to get to that place, where I can honestly explore what’s going on in my own head and expose some thoughts that I might be having on Monday—which then change on Tuesday, which then change on Wednesday. It’s that kind of interplay of ideas that I find exciting.

How did Wrong Mountain get started?

I kind of work in slow motion. I have to wait until something presents itself to me and starts insisting on being written. I look at my notebooks in the period that followed La Bête, and I see I was casting about, looking for something to write about, rather than having this thing which I ultimately wrote choose me.

Initially I didn’t really know what the play was. It was a collection of things I’d been thinking about, of characters that had invaded my consciousness. I’d walk down the street and find a phrase that would excite me, and I’d write it down on a matchbook; or an idea that seemed funny to me and though I didn’t know what it was related to, I’d write that down on the back of an envelope. And when I go back and look at the brown box that contains all my ideas for this play, it was these fragments that just began to insinuate themselves into my consciousness.

How do you begin shaping those fragments into a play? Do you have a specific process?

I begin on the first page and work my way to the last page—I don’t write drafts. I sometimes can spend several weeks on a single page—I’ve sometimes spent several weeks on a single phrase, and just felt completely defeated and ready to give it all up. It’s a very frustrating way to work. I don’t sit down and bash something out and rework it and rework it—I’ve never done that with any kind of writing. I tend to take a page and polish and polish and then move on. Given the fact that I write in such a way that there’s a great deal of structure and there are a great number of motives in the text, I think people find it unusual or not credible that I could be writing from first word to last.

It does seem unusual, and extremely difficult. How do you keep your bearings and achieve structure?

I write in such a way that I’m always looking ahead, and trying to keep a lot of plates spinning at the same time. I like to put buoys out into the water, and think, I’m going to get to that one and then the next one, and then I just jump in and thrash around. And sometimes I find that in the thrashing around, the best stuff comes. If I can get myself to the next buoy without getting too far off course, then at least I can maintain the structure and the integrity of the thing that I’m writing.

In both La Bête and Wrong Mountain, I think I had a sense of where each was going to end up—not intellectually, but the feeling of what the end of the play should be like. I got to that place and felt: That is what I originally had in mind. The integrity of the feeling of the thing remained intact—that’s what I think I have a stronger sense of than what it’s actually going to say. Because what it says is always spinning—that’s not something you can ever put a pin in and say, OK, now we have this all figured out.

You’re verbally very dexterous. La Bête was in rhyming couplets, there is a lot of wordplay in Wrong Mountain, and even in conversation your love of language is evident. How does that quality figure into your writing process?

The way I work often has to do with the way things sound—the way the phonemes go together, the sort of music they make. The ideas often begin to form out of the way the words flow. Just to write an idea very often is impossible for me, because I sometimes need to learn what the idea is from the way it sounds.

I occasionally find that I want to force a character to say something, and it can look fine when I do it, but
then I'll wake up the next morning and look at it and it will seem completely artificial. Whereas, if I go away from my desk and walk down the street, or go to sleep, or do anything except try to write, something will come to me which—I just know from the sound of it—is authentic, and I realize: That may stand. Because that is some true voice in my head that's very hard for me to get to, and the only way to get to it is not to try. It's a bit like dreaming.

Though Wrong Mountain is still heady, it has a lot going on visually, and offers the scenic designer some real challenges. Is that something you learned from La Bête?

When I saw what Richard Jones did visually in La Bête—which was a very densely verbal play—I realized you can do some fantastic things on stage if you have that visual imagination. So I tried to write a play that would have that kind of visual vocabulary, as this play does—the moon, the mountains, the corn, mirrors, the Lithia water, the worm. I thought, What would someone like Richard do with this stuff? And how exciting to have this visual vocabulary serving as counterpoint or underscoring or as some kind of ironic commentary on the text itself. So this is another dense, verbal text, but it has a very powerful visual vocabulary operating all the time.

In La Bête, you were accused of using Elmire as a mouthpiece to

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These lively one-hour presentations are conducted by each show's director and are open to the public regardless of whether you are seeing the performance that evening. Prologues, sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco, are a perfect way to get a behind-the-scenes look at the creative process behind each production. 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.

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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 and artists.

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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 ($21 for opening night subscribers); 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.

Please join us for these free events:

**ON WRONG MOUNTAIN**
*in the Geary Theater*

**A.C.T. PROLOGUE**
October 26, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

*Featuring Director Richard Jones*

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It is critical to the company's continued success that A.C.T. embark on the new millennium without a deficit, and the Hewlett Foundation grant will go a long way toward meeting that goal. To meet the Hewlett challenge, however, we need your help! Please mail gifts to A.C.T. Hewlett Challenge, 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, or call (415) 439-2353 for more information.

PRESENTING A.C.T.'S FIRST DEAF-COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A.C.T. is proud to announce the formation of the company's first Deaf-community advisory committee. The committee's members (the majority of whom are Deaf) include Bay Area educators, actors, and hearing interpreters, as well as A.C.T. staff: actor Audrey Norton, one of the founders of The National Theater of the Deaf; Antoinette Abbamonte, a Los Angeles-based actor and the first Deaf instructor at A.C.T.; Susan Gonzalez, developer of the San Francisco Unified School District's American Sign Language program; foreign language curriculum; Rob Roth, chief executive officer of D.C.A.R.A., a service/advocacy agency and clearinghouse for Deaf community events in the Bay Area; Jim Brune, acting manager of the Deaf Gay and Lesbian Center; interpreters Dan Langholtz, Charlotte Toothman, Joseph Quinn, Aaron Brace, and Kendra Keller; and A.C.T. Outreach Manager Amy Vana core and Conservatory Associate John Dixon.

The new group, formed to help A.C.T. build upon its long history of working with the Deaf community, had its first meeting August 16. "One of the first ideas suggested by this committee has already proved invaluable," says A.C.T. Outreach Manager Amy Vana core. "We asked Deaf individuals from diverse backgrounds all over northern California what shows they most want to see interpreted during A.C.T.'s current season, what we can do to help them enjoy their experience at the theater, and what A.C.T. can do to attract continued on page 30

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more Deaf patrons and students. That’s a terrific way to initiate dialogue and develop strong relationships."

The community voted to see A.C.T.’s upcoming productions of A Christmas Carol, The House of Mirth, and Eduard H. Dates and times of interpreted performances are still to be determined. If you would like to get on A.C.T.’s e-mail list to receive announcements about upcoming ASL-interpreted performances and other information relevant to the Deaf community, please send an e-mail message to avanacone@act-sf@bay.org.

WELCOMING NEW FRIENDS TO THE GEARY THEATER

A.C.T.’s increased efforts to reach out to a diversity of communities in the Bay Area over the last year have brought to the Geary Theater hundreds of new audience members of different ages, cultures, and backgrounds. College students and educators—from kindergarten teachers to university professors—have been invited to purchase half-price subscriptions through presentations by A.C.T. staff to elementary and secondary school leaders and campus visits to City College of San Francisco, UC Berkeley, the Academy of Art College, San Francisco State University, and Mills College. In addition, increased communication with African-American professional organizations, a variety of ethnic media, and nonprofit organizations that serve immigrants, low-income families, and other groups has helped attract a broader audience to A.C.T. productions.

These new audience members bring with them a wonderful new energy born of the excitement of watching a live performance for the first time in the grand Geary Theater. Please join us in welcoming our newest patrons to the A.C.T. family!

continued on page 28

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**ACT ONE AT METREON**

Act One, A.C.T.'s social and educational affiliate, kicked off the new season and celebrated the first performance of *The Threepenny Opera* on September 2 with a state-of-the-art pashow reception hosted by Metreon—A Sony Entertainment Center. Approximately 100 people attended the party and enjoyed fine food generously donated by Catering by the Buckhorn (one of the restaurants at Metreon).

Metreon, which opened in June, is a four-story, 350,000-square-foot entertainment center that includes 15 state-of-the-art movie theaters, San Francisco's first SONY-IMAX® theater, three family-friendly attractions, exciting restaurants, and world-class shopping. Metreon is located at Yerba Buena Gardens at 4th Street and Mission and can be visited on the Web at [www.metreon.com](http://www.metreon.com).

Act One is closely involved in A.C.T. through education, special events, volunteer work, and fundraising. Members can still look forward to partying before *Wrong Mountain* (November 10) and *The Invention of Love* (January 26). To get in the act, call Act One President Elizabeth Sennett at (415) 536-8548 or visit A.C.T. online at [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org).

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**HONORING A.C.T.'S FRIENDS**

Do you enjoy working with diverse people and learning more about the theater? The Friends of A.C.T., the company's volunteer auxiliary, offers many opportunities for people interested in contributing their time and talent to A.C.T. Volunteers assist with mailings and work with administrative departments, help at selected performances, staff the library, and more.

Friends do so much for A.C.T. throughout the year that we can never thank our volunteers enough for the critical support they provide. We would like to recognize the Friends listed below who have volunteered during recent months:

- G. David Anderson
- Alison Augustin
- Marie Bauer
- Helen Buckner
- Joan Cohill
- Geraldine Collins
- Maureen Dan
- Elaine Foreman
- Frances Frieder
- Barbara Gerber
- Celia Gersco
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- Joe Rosenbail
- Beverly Seba
- Ellen Spornado
- Sam Thel
- Sylvia Coe Polk
- Rick Vite
- Jean Wilcox
- Johanna Wilkens

For information about the Friends of A.C.T., call (415) 439-2301.

For information about ushering, call (415) 439-2349.
A.C.T. Breaks Subscription Records!
As of this writing, A.C.T. has already surpassed its season subscription goals, with 21,300+ subscribers on board for the 1999–2000 season. That means A.C.T. has broken the company’s all-time subscription record, set in 1977. With more people than ever attending A.C.T. performances—and subscription prices holding at last season’s levels—subscribing is definitely the best way to see the shows you don’t want to miss and to get the seats you prefer. For information and to subscribe to A.C.T., call (415) 749-2ACT or visit us online at www.act-sfbay.org.

Celebrate the Season with A.C.T.
A.C.T. kicks off the holiday season on the opening night of A Christmas Carol, December 3, with a 6:30 p.m. Christmas tree lighting featuring cast members and carol sing-alongs.

Then on Sunday, December 5, at 2 p.m., join us for Good Cheer A.C.T. Tea, a holiday benefit at the Geary Theater following the matinee performance of A Christmas Carol. Guests will enjoy a visit with the Carol cast and A.C.T. staff, including Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Managing Director Heather Kitchen, a backstage tour of the theater, and a delicious high tea. Tickets to the event include center orchestra seats. Proceeds will benefit A.C.T.’s artistic educational programs.

In the spirit of the season, guests are invited to bring unwrapped gifts of new clothing (socks, gloves, coats, etc.) to keep neighborhood children warm and dry. Donations will benefit the Bundle Up Program of the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation.

To receive an invitation to Good Cheer A.C.T. Tea, please call Amy Kirk in the A.C.T. Development Department at (415) 439-2308.

A.C.T. also offers an American Sign Language-interpreted performance of A Christmas Carol on Sunday, December 12, at 2 p.m. Orchestra seats for Deaf and hearing-impaired theatergoers are available at the special discounted price of $19. Deaf patrons can call A.C.T. via TTY at (415) 749-2370.

Attention Holiday Revelers!
What is Christmas without cookies and hot cider? Refreshments will be available in the Sky Lobby and Fred’s Columbia Room in the Geary Theater during the hour before each performance of A Christmas Carol.

Holiday Shopping at A.C.T.
Find the perfect stocking stuffers at A.C.T! A.C.T. Christmas tree ornaments, mugs, note cards, posters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, nightshirts, scripts, and more are available for purchase in the box office and lobby before each performance and during intermission.
A DECADE OF NEW PLAYS FOR YOUNG ACTORS

by Jessica Werner

The A.C.T. Young Conservatory New Plays Program began, as many successful innovations do, with a challenge. "In searching for dynamic work for our teenage acting students to perform, I realized just how unheard the voices of young people have been in the theater," says Young Conservatory Director Craig Slaight, reminiscing about the impulse he had in 1989 to launch the New Plays Program, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this fall. The Young Conservatory offers a broad range of theater courses to young people aged 8 to 18, and age-appropriate material for student productions has always been a rare commodity. "Traditional plays written for children didn't present enough of a challenge for the caliber of student that comes to A.C.T.," yet I felt compelled to find ways for them to experience the stage in works relevant to their age and circumstances. I remember saying to myself at the time, Where better could we challenge America's finest playwrights to write new plays with a youthful perspective than at A.C.T., where our twofold mission—to produce fine theater and train outstanding actors—fosters an ongoing interaction between young students and experienced professionals?

"I felt A.C.T. had the potential to become a home for playwrights to create challenging multigenerational new work, born in an atmosphere free from the demands for commercial success. But, I thought, Who would understand the need for this kind of work? Who would accept our challenge to 'see the world through the eyes of the young?'"

Since its inception, the program has commissioned works from an impressive range of seasoned dramatists, including Timothy Mason, Constance Congdon, Lynne Alvarez, Daisy Foote, Mary Gallagher, Jim Grimsley, Joe Pintauro, Brad Slaight, and Paul Zindel. Twelve of the plays commissioned to date have been published by Smith & Kraus and continue to affect the lives of young people in theater productions and classrooms throughout the United States and Canada.

Each year A.C.T. commissions a distinguished playwright to write a dramatic work from the point of view of young characters, which in turn is developed in an intensive workshop process. "We didn't want to just do the usual overproduced children's repertoire," says Slaight, "and you can't expect a 15-year-old to play Willy Loman. I dreamed of increasing the literature for the American theater to encompass a range in which the life experiences of young people could resonate."

"What makes me say yes to Craig [when he asks me to write a new play for the program] is the same thing that makes my fellow playwrights say yes," says Timothy Mason, who has written three plays for the New Plays Program, including its inaugural production, Ascension Day (1990), Time on Fire, which premiered at A.C.T. in August, and The Less Than Human Club (1994), which will be presented by the Young Conservatory at the Magic Theatre in July. "What Craig is doing simply doesn't exist anywhere else. When you write a play for the New Plays Program, you know that what you are doing will actually expand the literature for the stage. A portion of literature, one that was previously lacking, virtually nonexistent, will now exist because of your work at A.C.T. That is a great enticement.

"I remember when I had just completed The Less Than Human Club in the summer of 1994, I was at a playwrights' gathering at Lanford Wilson's house in Long Island. It was an opportunity for an impromptu first public reading of the play. It went over very well, everyone laughed and cried. And then [Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright] Paul Zindel came over to me and longingly asked, 'Do you think Craig Slaight would ever commission a play from me?' I said, 'Yes, I think he probably would.'"

WRITING WITHOUT "WRITING DOWN"

Writing age-appropriate material for young actors can be quite a challenge for playwrights whose literary voices are distinctly adult. Playwrights commissioned by the New Plays Program often worry their work may be too dark, too weighty, to be tackled by teenage actors. Among all the New Play Program's commissioned writers, only Zindel (The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds [1995]) had previously been known as a
writer for young people. The others have risen to the challenge to create plays whose teenage protagonists confront strikingly mature problems. Pintauro's *Reindeer Soup* (1992) featured a family of motherless kids starving in the Canadian wilderness with their idealistic, impractical father. *A Bird of Prey* (1996), by Atlanta playwright and novelist Jim Grimsley, tackled a gay teen's personal battle with his own sexuality and the ubiquity of casual violence. "It's actually a tough play for adults to watch kids do, but it wasn't that tough on the kids," says Grimsley. "I wasn't going to 'write down' to their level, because I think they can handle anything. There's no hiding the real world and its violence from them."

"Each of the three works I have written for A.C.T. has been set in a different historical period," says Mason, "from the Revolutionary War of 1775 to the social tumult of 1968. Yet I have discovered with each one that the concerns of adolescents are absolutely universal: Where do I fit in? Do I have a purpose, a sense of worth? Could anyone love me? These questions do not change, and the actors tap into the characters' emotional lives beautifully."

**THE WORKSHOP PROCESS**

Just like the development process through which new plays must go prior to a professional mainstage production, every New Plays Program project undergoes a five-to ten-week workshop and rehearsal period. Each playwright spends several weeks in residence at A.C.T. during that period, often incorporating the students' input into their scripts, before the play is performed to an invited audience.

"The students were just great," says Daisy Foote about her experience at A.C.T. in the summer of 1998 developing her play *When They Speak of Rita*. "They were certainly a lot more cooperative than some of the adult actors I've worked with. They are open and accepting, they're not thrown by changes. I guess as we get older, fear becomes part of our language, but they don't have that yet."

"The brilliance of Craig's vision springs from his understanding of young people's eagerness to rise to high expectations," adds A.C.T. Conservatory Director Melissa Smith. "Whenever I visit a Young Conservatory rehearsal, I hear the same vocabulary we use in the master of fine arts program, and I see that the young actors work toward the same goals our older actors do. The training they receive is appropriate for their age, but it is also utterly professional."

**TRANSATLANTIC COLLABORATION**

Back in 1989, as plans for the New Plays Program were still evolving, Slaight said that it was his "hope that our process will result in a significant work about young people that can be produced by other groups around the country and around the world." The New Plays Program now boasts an international reputation as a source of high-quality new writing for the theater.

As the New Plays Program embarks on its second decade of new play development, plans are under way to launch the program's first-ever transatlantic commission and production. In association with London's acclaimed Royal National Theatre—home to National Connections, a new play development program for young people much like A.C.T.'s—student actors in the A.C.T. New Plays Program will travel to London next spring for workshops at the National and at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. The New Plays Program has commissioned a play from renowned British playwright Bryony Lavery, which will be performed at A.C.T. in August 2001.

"Craig contacted me earlier this year, and I was astounded to discover how similar our programs are," says Suzy Graham-Adriani, producer of the National's youth theater projects. Graham-Adriani will be in residence at A.C.T. to direct Lavery's play, the script of which will then be included in *New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, Volume IV*. "I am thrilled about the collaboration because I found we work from such similar philosophies. We have both reckoned with the incredible void that exists in dramatic literature for young people. We also share a deeply held belief that writers are at the heart of the theater. The contributions of writers of the highest caliber, writers whose work we would want to see on our mainstages, enrich the literature for young actors in profound, long-lasting ways."

Looking toward the future, Slaight also hopes to enrich the New Plays Program with new writing for middle-school actors, whose unique dramatic needs ("somewhere between *Babar the Elephant* and *Death of a Salesman*") are even more difficult to meet.

"The theater should reflect all of our life experiences, regardless of our age," says Slaight. "And we plan to spend the next decade making sure it does."

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**THE A.C.T. YOUNG CONSERVATORY PRESENTS NEW WORK AT THE MAGIC THEATRE**

This season, the A.C.T. Young Conservatory's New Plays Program will present its first-ever public productions of commissioned plays: Constance Congdon's *Autonoma Pietà* (which premiered at A.C.T. last May), a contemporary comic fantasy about a teen fashion doll who comes to life, will run January 13-23, 2000. Timothy Mason's *Less Than Human Club*, a potent drama about young teens struggling with identity during the tumultuous 1960s, is scheduled to appear in July.

All performances take place at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco's Fort Mason Center. Tickets are $10. For tickets and information, call (415) 749-2ACT or visit us online at [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org).
The conservatory at A.C.T. encompasses four nationally recognized programs that provide study in acting and related subjects to people from throughout the United States and around the world. For more information, please call 415 439-2350 or visit online at www.act-sfbay.org.

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM
(Formerly the Advanced Training Program)
The cornerstone of the A.C.T. Conservatory, this rigorous three-year program leads to an M.F.A. degree.

DANIEL DAVIS* (Maurice Montessori, Staten) is remembered by San Francisco audiences from his six seasons (1974-80) with A.C.T., which included many collaborations with director Allen Fletcher: Peer Gynt, The Raging Class (Dr. Herder), Odysseus (Ulysses), Ali! Wilderness (Uncle Sid), Heartbreak House (Randal Usterwood), Romeo and Juliet (Mercutio), Alonzo Person Singular (Sidney Hopper), and The History of the American Film (Jimmy). Other A.C.T. credits include the title role in Horatio, Hay Fever (Richard Creatham), the premiere production of A Christmas Carol (Mr. Fezziwig), Julius Caesar (Brutus), Crucible of Blood (Dr. Watson), and William Ball's productions of Richard III (Clarence), The Bourgeois Gentleman (Music Master), Equus (Dr. Dyer), and The Winter's Tale (Autolycus). After A.C.T., Davis resumed his career in New York, where he played Saliari in the Broadway and touring productions of Amadeus. Regional theater credits also include productions at Seattle Repertory Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, the New York Shakespeare Festival/New York's Second Stage, and ten summers with the Willows buddish Theatre Festival. Most recently, he was Ash in the West Coast premiere of Patrick Marber's Dealer's Choice at the Mark Taper Forum. Film credits include The Hunt for Red October and Havana. Television credits include the role of Professor Moriarity on "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and six seasons as Niles the Butler on "The Nanny."

BETSY DIXON* (Claire, Salome Blackwood) has performed in New York in Thérèse Raquin at Classic Stage Company, Dangerous Corner at Tisch School of the Arts, and Before It Hits Home at the Public Theater, as well as in productions at the Women's Project, Playwrights' Horizon, MGC, Second Stage, The Roundabout, and La MaMa. ETC. Regional theater credits include performances at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, Studio Arena Theatre, Center Stage, Capitol Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Hartford Stage Company, Yale Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Rochester's Geva Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and MacKeller Theatre. Dixon's screen credits include The Ballad of the Sad Café, Trinity, "Home Improvement," "The Coward of the Century," "The Quiet," "One Life to Live," "The City," and "Law and Order."

ANNE DUDEK* (Ariel) appeared off Broadway in The Iphigenia Cycle. Her Chicago and regional theater credits include Three Tall Women at Portland Stage Company; Metamorphoses at Lookingglass; The Cherry Orchard, An Ideal Husband, and The Iphigenia Cycle at the Court Theatre; Mirror of the Invisible World at the Goodman Theatre; and A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Winter's Tale at the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival. Television credits include "Early Edition."

TOM RIS FARRELL* (Leibowitz, Duncan Hyde-Berk) is a founding member of The Barrow Group, a New York City-based theater company, which won a 1995 New York Drama Desk Award for sustained excellence off Broadway. His New York stage appearances include the recent revival of 1776 on Broadway; W.I.I. Amsden in the Encores! series of vintage musicals at City Center; and View of the Dome at New York Theatre Workshop. Film credits include The Out-of-Towners, The Devil's Advocate.
Commandments, Sleepless in Seattle, Scent of a Woman, and Shadows and Fog. Upcoming projects include Martin Scorsese's Bringing Out the Dead and a new cable movie. Television work includes "NYPD Blue, "Spin City," and several "Law & Order" episodes, as well as the television movies The Love Letter with Campbell Scott and The Deliverance of Elaine with Marc Winningen.

**RED FLOWERS** (Jason Elmore, Peter) received an L.A. Theatre Ovation Award and was nominated for a Frontier Award for his performance in Angels in America. He has appeared at the Denver Center Theatre Company, Yale Repertory Theatre, Freedom Repertory Theatre, Capital Rep, Geva Theatre, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and The Wilma Theatre in Philadelphia. He recently played Bassanio in The Merchant of Venice. Flowers was featured off Broadway in The Trial of One Short-Sighted Black Woman vs. Mammy Louise and Saffreeta Mae at the New Federal Theatre. His solo show Out of the Bag has been produced in workshop at the New York Performance Alliance and is currently in development. Flowers is a graduate of the University of the Arts and the Yale School of Drama.

**JOY GELB** (Miranda Costanzo-Sparks, Woman in the moulds) played Eleanor Widener in the original Broadway company of Titanic, directed by Richard Jones, and Mrs. Walker and others in the original Broadway company of The Who’s Tommy. She has performed in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and London Assurance at the Old Globe Theatre and Elmer Gantry at the La Jolla Playhouse. Gelb has performed her solo show, Moth, National Touring and Regional. Additional credits include Uncle Vanya, Light Up the Sky, Aunt Dan and Lemon, The Mandrake, Night of the Iguana, A Life in the Theatre, Much Ado About Nothing, Heartbreak House, and The Treatment (at London’s Royal Court). Her screen credits include Celebrity, Vanya on 42nd Street, Addicted to Love, Sunday (Sundance Grand Jury Prize), Dead Man Walking, The Ice Storm, Girl 6, Zoo, Before and After, Jaded, Awakening of Angels, and Woody Allen’s latest project, among others. Pines television appearances include "OZ," "Law & Order," "New York Undercover," "Miami Vice," "Homicide," "Prince Street," "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd," and the television movie A Will of Their Own.

**DANIEL JENKINS** (Clifford Peck) makes his A.C.T. debut in Wringer Mountain. Broadway credits include originating the role of Huck in Big River (Tony Award nomination), Josh in the musical Big and Bolder, and Falstaff in Henry V. Recent Off-Broadway credits include Tina Landau and Ricky Gordon’s Dream True and Nicky Silver’s Maiden’s Prayer. Among his favorite regional credits are the title roles in Joe Blessing’s Fortinbras, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (dir. Lisa Peterson), and two years with Actors Theatre of Louisville. For Robert Altman, Jenkins was O.C. in O.C. and Stiggs, Willie Keith in The Caine Mutiny, Court Marshal, and Stringer in Caryl Churchill’s "Tanner 88." Other film credits include The Amusement Park, What Happens After, Glory, In Country, and the upcoming Credle Will Rock (dir. Tim Robbins). On television, he was seen on "Cracker" and as a series regular on "Going to Extremes."

**ILANA LEVINE** (Jessica) has performed on Broadway in You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Broadway cast album), The Last Night of Ballyhoo and Prior in Angels in America. Off-Broadway credits include Sholem Aleichem, Soulful Scream of a Chosen Son, Forgiving Frankenstein, and Rafi of the Middle East. A member of the critically acclaimed theater company Naked Angels, she has performed in their productions of Machinal, Shorts in the Dark, Gunplay, Hot Keys, and Winter Shorts. She is also the producer of the Actors’ Group of New York.

**BRUCE NORRIS** (Adrian) was seen most recently in New York in La Terrasse at the Manhattan Theatre Club and in John Guare’s Marco Polo Sings a Solo at the Signature Theatre Company. He also appeared in Guare’s Glengarry in Roche last summer at the Williamsburg Theatre Festival. Other New York theater credits include Biloxi Blues and An American Daughter on Broadway; A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Wenceslas Square at the New York Shakespeare Festival; and productions of What the Butler Saw, The Arabian Nights, Love During Wartime, and The Debutante Ball at Manhattan Theatre Club. Recent film appearances include A Civil Action and The Sixth Sense. Norris is also the author of several plays, including The Infidel, which will be produced this spring at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre Company.


**RON RIFKIN** (Henry Deane) received a 1998 Tony Award for best supporting actor in the Broadway revival of Cabaret. Recent theater credits include Arthur Miller’s The Crucible, Eugene O’Neill’s Long Day’s Journey into Night, and Neil Simon’s Propositions. He originated the role of the Methodist minister in Isaac Gellhorn’s award-winning J.C. Robin Baitz play The Substance of Fire (Oberon, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, and Drama-Logue awards) and performed in Baitz’s Three Hotels (Lucille Lortel Award, Drama Desk nomination) and has made numerous other theater appearances. His film credits include The Negotiator, L.A. Confidential, the film adaptation of The Substance of Fire, Woody Allen’s Husbands and Wives and Manhattan Murder Mystery, Lost Summer in the Hamptons, Wolf, JFK, The Sting II, The Big Fix, The Sunshine Boys, Silent Running, and the upcoming Boiler Room and Keeping the Faith. Television credits include made-for-television movies and mini-series such as The Sunset Gang and Conceived and Meant for PBS; Buying a Landslide for BBC; Evergreen, The Winds of War, and Nazi; and the series "The Trials of Rosie O’Neill." One Day at a Time...
MARY SCHMIDTBERGER* (Winifred Hill, Anne) has appeared in the feature films See Jane Run, Celebrity, Living Out Loud, The Persuasiveness, Emily's Last Dance (Sundance: Best American Short, British Short Film Festival), Written in the Stars, and A Manic-Depressive Moment. She has guest starred on "Malcolm & Eddie" and has a recurring role on "Dharma & Greg." Schmidtberger received her B.A. from Columbia College, Columbia University.

JACQUELINE ANTARAMIAN*, (Understudy) has performed at Lincoln Center, in numerous theaters in Los Angeles, and at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, and she spent several seasons at the Denver Center Theatre Company. Among her theater credits are: Gina in The Wild Duck, Hannah in Arcadia, Hester Prynne in The Scarlet Letter, Serafina in The Rose Tattoo, Rose in Dancing at Lughnasa, Elimele in Tartuffe, Abbie in Days of Wine and Roses, and the title roles of Candida, Miss Julie, and Hedda Gabler. Her Shakespeare credits include Olivia, Titania, Polonius, Lady Perse, Lady Capulet, Adriana, and Portia.

BRYAN T. DONOVAN* (Understudy) has performed in New York productions of Tine Landau's Dream True at the Vineyard Theatre and Strike Up the Band and Lil Abner in the Encore's series at City Center. Regional theater credits include: The Tempest at the Theatre, Tannenhill at Goodspeed Opera House in Chester, Connecticut, Keely & Dumm at Luna Stage, Another Midsomer Night at American Music Theater Festival, and Pygmalion at Meadow Brook Theatre. Television: "All My Children." (Understudy)


MOLLIE STICKNEY* (Understudy) has appeared in several A.C.T. productions, including The West Coast premiere of Arcadia. As a former Young Conservatory student, under the guidance of Craig Slaight, she performed with the late Sydney Walker in When We Are Married. Stickney is a 1995 graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program and will appear at A.C.T. later this season in Tom Stoppard's Invention of Love.

DAVID HIRSON (Playwright) was born in New York City and educated at Yale University and at Magdalen College, Oxford. As an undergraduate, he was commissioned to translate Alessandro Scarlatti's GL'equivoque nel semifinale, which was performed at Yale and later broadcast on public radio. He has contributed essays and criticism to such journals as the Times Literary Supplement, London Review of Books, and Los Angeles Times Book Review. He made his Broadway and London debuts as a playwright with his first play, La Bete, for which he received the Outer Critics Circle's John Gassner Award, the New York Newsday/Oppenheimer Award, and the Dramatists Guild's Martin Prize for best new American play. La Bete also received the special best play citation in Best Plays of 1990-91, as well as five Tony Award nominations and six Drama Desk Award nominations (including one for best play of 1991). For the London production of La Bete, Hirson won the 1992 Laurence Olivier Award for comedy of the year. In April 1999, he was honored by the 10th annual William Inge Festival as the outstanding new voice in American theater. Wrong Mountain is his second play.

RICHARD JONES (Director) has directed extensively for the theater and opera. Theater credits include: Too Clever by Half, A Flea in Her Ear, and The Illusion at London's Old Vic; Le bourgeois gentilhomme at the Royal National Theatre; Into the Woods at the Phoenix Theatre; La Bete on Broadway and at the Lyric Hammersmith in London; Black Snow at the American Repertory Theatre; All's Well That Ends Well in the Public Theatre/New York Shakespeare Festival; Titanic on Broadway; and Holy Mothers at The Ambassadors/Royal Court Theatre. Opera credits include: The Love for Three Oranges and Die Fledermaus at English National Opera; Der Fliegende Holländer and Jenůfa in Amsterdam; Julius Caesar and The Midsummer Marriage in Munich; Der Ring des Nibelungen at the Royal Opera House/Court Garden; Pelléas et Mélisande at Opera North; L'Enfant des sorcières and Der Zauberflöte in Paris; and Hensel and Gretel at the Welsh National Opera. Awards include: Olivier Award for Too Clever by Half; Evening Standard Award for The Illusion; Olivier and Evening Standard awards for Into the Woods; Openmacht Production of the Year 1994 Award for Julius Caesar, and Evening Standard Award for outstanding artistic achievement of 1996 for Der Ring des Nibelungen.

GILES GABLE (Scenic and Costume Designer), a London-based designer, studied architecture at Kingston Polytechnic (London) and stage design at Nottingham Polytechnic. His work includes The Midsummer Marriage (Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich); FLIGHT (Clydebourne Festival); Eugene O'Neill (Opera North); costumes for Kyūya Kishōmon (New Zealand International Festival); sets for Penelope (GSM); sets for She Stoops to Conquer; and costumes for Phèdre and Cailín (Gate Theatre, Dublin); sets and costumes for Gangster Number One (Almeida Theatre, London);
JENNIFER TIPTON (Lighting Designer) is well known for her work in theater, dance, and opera. Her recent work includes: in opera, Hansel and Gretel for Welsh National Opera, Dialogues of the Carmelites for Santa Fe Opera, and Louise for San Francisco Opera; in theater, The Trojan Women for the Shakespeare Theater in Washington, D.C., and The First Picture Show at A.C.T. and the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles; in dance, Twyla Tharp’s Sizzle; Paul Taylor’s Cascade, and Trisha Brown’s Feed/Part Weather Inversion. Tipton also teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama.

JOHN GRÖMADA (Sound Designer) has composed music for the Broadway revivals of Miss Saigon, Holiday, Summer and Smoke, A Few Good Men, and A Long Day’s Journey into Night. Sound designs on Broadway include Twilight: Los Angeles: 1992, Park Your Car in Harvard Yard, and Sex and Longing. New York Shakespeare Festival credits include the score for Tartuffe and the score and designs of The Striker (Drama Desk Award) and Much Ado About Nothing (Obie Award), among others. He has also designed the New York premieres of Communicating Doors, The Baltimore Waltz, Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune, Defying Gravity, SubUrbia, Vista and Virginia, After-Play, In the Summer House, The Art of Success, and many others. His work has been heard at Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, Roundabout Theatre Company, Vineyard Theatre, WPA, Circle in the Square, Circle Rep, the Atlantic Theatre Company, and more than 30 regional theaters and abroad. Additional honors include an L.A. Drama-Logue Award, Theatre Crafts International Design Award, and three Drama Desk Award nominations.

RICK ECHOLS (Hair and Makeup) has worked on more than 200 A.C.T. productions since 1971. He designed wigs and makeup for A.C.T.'s television productions of Cyrano de Bergerac, A Christmas Carol, and The Taming of the Shrew, as well as many other television and film productions. He also designed hair and makeup for the original production of Cinderella at the San Francisco Ballet, Hansel and Gretel for the American Shakespeare Festival, A Life for the Candel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada, and Angel in America for the Eureka Theatre Company. Echols returned to A.C.T. in 1996 after four and a half years on the road with the national tour of Les Misérables.

JAMES HARKER* (Stage Manager) Recent Broadway credits include You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown, the Tony Award-winning revival of A View from the Bridge, Jackie, D’Aton’s Beauty and the Beast, Footloose, and Pippin. Off-Broadway credits include What the Butler Saw, La Bohème with Linda Ronstadt, and The Marriage of Bette and Boo. He was a member of the Long Wharf Theatre for nine seasons.

HEATHER COUSENS* (Assistant Stage Manager) worked on Titanic: A New Musical (dir. Richard Jones) from the workshop through the Broadway run and first national tour. Previous stage management credits include Bring in ’da Noise, Bring in ’da Funk on Broadway, Great Gate at Purgatory with the National Asian-American Theatre Co., King Lear with the New York Shakespeare Festival, two plays by Hrotsvitha at The Cloisters with Voice and Vision, Our Country’s Good with Western Union Theatre Co., and two seasons with Western Cape Theatre. Cousens is a graduate of Brown University.

DENNIS LUDWICK SEBRA (Assistant Director) has acted and directed in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, England, and Japan. He will begin the M.F.A. program at the University of Southern California in January, broadening his theatrical vocabulary to include film and interactive media. Upcoming work includes projects with Santa Clarita Rep and Angel Interactive.

DODGER THEATRICAL HOLDINGS (Coprincipal), Broadway’s most prolific producer, originated at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1978 before migrating to the New York Shakespeare Festival and finally to off and on Broadway, where it has shared in a host of Tony and Obie awards.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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espouse the supremacy of “high” over “popular” art—an issue that resurfaces in Wrong Mountain. Is that a fair reading of your work?

It’s strange to me that an audience would think that I would, across the boards, share the view of Emile, when I so lovingly devoted 500-some-odd lines to introducing the character of a fool [Valere has a hilarious 25-minute entrance speech]. He surely must be in me somewhere—as all the characters are. If you’re looking for autobiography, take all the characters in La Bête and all the characters in Wrong Mountain, and you’re beginning to get a sense of what goes on in my head and therefore of who I am. But I don’t think you can point to any one of them and have any sense of what my views are or what I think about the world.

The writing of a play is about working all of these things out, and not coming to any conclusions that are anything other than ambiguous. I suppose if I did come to any conclusions, these wouldn’t be interesting enough problems to wrestle with in the first place. Ultimately, the questions being wrestled with are: What is a good life? or What is the proper relation between politics and art? or in the case of Wrong Mountain, What does it mean if a man’s greatest triumph comes from having done something he viewed with absolute contempt? There are no easy answers to any of those questions, and one of the pleasures of writing is—as seriously as you can without losing your sense of humor—holding those things in the light and looking at them from as many angles as you can.

Was there any one idea or image that brought all the fragments together to become Wrong Mountain?

I think the image in my head of a man who is being devoured from within by this parasite. I can’t tell you where that image came from or why that propelled me through a play, but the image intrigued me and I wanted to find out what that image was about.

Sounds like something you need to talk to your therapist about.

[Laughs.] I do think that, rather than talking to a therapist, playwriting is a very good way of working these things out. I mean, the alternative would be—forget the playwriting and get a good therapist.

But then you wouldn’t have a play on Broadway. Exactly.

Peter Cisley is a Bay Area-based arts writer whose work has appeared in American Theatre, InTheater, and Stagebill.

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CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) assumed artistic leadership of A.C.T. in 1992. Perloff has since led the company to unprecedented success, including the receipt of the prestigious 1996 Jujamcyn Theaters Award and the triumphant reopening of the Geary Theater following its $28.2 million restoration. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff’s work at A.C.T. includes last season’s acclaimed production of Euripides’ Hecuba and the American premiere of Tom Stoppard’s Indian Ink. Other work at A.C.T. includes Friedrich Schiller’s Mary Stuart, Harold Pinter’s Old Times, Stoppard’s Arcadia, Tennessee Williams’s Rose Tattoo, Sophocles’ Antigone, Strindberg’s Creditors, Chekhov’s Uncle Vanya, David Storey’s Home, the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Boy, and the Geary Theater inaugural production of Shakespeare’s Tempest, which featured the Kronos Quartet. In 1993, Perloff directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s opera The Cave at the Vienna Festival and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and in 1998 she staged Christoph Gluck’s Iphigénie en Tauride for the San Francisco Opera Center.

Before joining A.C.T. Perloff was artistic director of the Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound’s Elektra, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, Bertolt Brecht’s Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, and many other classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, CSC won the 1988 Obie Award for artistic excellence, as well as numerous Obies for acting, design, and direction.

Perloff received a B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and currently teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

This season at A.C.T. Perloff stages a major revival of Brecht-Weill’s Threepenny Opera and the American premiere of Stoppard’s Invention of Love; she will also remount her acclaimed Mary Stuart at the Huntington Theatre Company.

HEATHER M. KITCHEN (Managing Director), now in her 25th year of professional theater management and production, joined A.C.T. as managing director in 1996. She is a member of the executive committee of the U.S. League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the arts evaluation and accreditation team of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the board of governors of the Commonwealth Club of California, and the board of directors of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the peninsula. Before joining A.C.T., she served as general manager of the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Alberta, where she was responsible for a five-theater complex that produced up to 16 productions annually. A native of Canada, she has served as a strategic planning consultant for leading arts and educational institutions, taught at eight universities and colleges throughout the country, and served on the Canada Council Theatre Advisory Committee and the executive committee of the Edmonton Professional Arts Council. Kitchen received an honors degree in drama and theater arts from the University of Waterloo and earned her M.B.A. from the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario.

MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director), the master acting teacher of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, has taught acting to students of all ages throughout the United States. Before assuming leadership of the A.C.T. Conservatory in 1995, she was director of the program in theater and dance continued on page 52
at Princeton University, where she taught acting, scene study, and Shakespeare for six years. Also a professional actor, she has performed in regional theaters and in numerous off-Broadway plays. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

**JAMES HAIRE (Producing Director)** began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* and *George* (a musical by Carol Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water*. Off Broadway he produced Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theater Crafts International's award for excellence in the theater in 1989, and in 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle.

**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 speaker and adjudicator throughout the country. He has published ten anthologies for young actors, three of which were selected by the New York Public Library as “Outstanding Books for the Teenage.” In 1989, he founded the Young Conservatory’s New Plays Program; 11 new works by professional playwrights have been developed, nine of which have been published by Smith & Kraus in New Plays from A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory. In January 1998 Carey Perloff awarded Slaight the first Artistic Director’s Award for his contributions to A.C.T.

**BRUCE WILLIAMS (Director of Summer Training Congress & Community Programs)** has had a 24-year working relationship with A.C.T., where he has taught in the Advanced Training Program (ATP); Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. (which he also administers), directed numerous ATP mainstage productions, and acted in more than 40 mainstage productions. He has also performed on numerous other West Coast stages and has worked extensively in film, television, and voice-over.

**PAUL WALSH (Dramaturgy, Director of Humanities)** joined A.C.T. in 1996 after eight years with Theatre de la Jeune Lune, where he worked on such award-winning projects as *Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream*, *Germinal*, *Don Juan Giovanni*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. His translation of Strindberg's *Creditor* was produced by CSC, Kitchen Dog Theatre, and A.C.T.; his translation of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* was produced by Hidden Theater, the Penobscot Theater, and the Actor's Collective. Thanks to an NEA grant he is working on Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* with Kevin Kling and David Esham. Walsh received his Ph.D. in drama from the University of Toronto in 1988 and taught at Southern Methodist University 1989-95. Publications include articles in *The Production Notebook*, *Re-Interpreting Brecht*, Strindberg's *Dramaturgy*, *Theatre Symposium, Essays in Theatre, Studio Neophilosophica, Canadian Theatre Review, and Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook*.

**MERYL LIND SHAW (Artistic Manager/Casting Director)** joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993. During the previous 17 years, she stage-managed more than 60 productions throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.'s *Bon Appetit!* and *Creditor*. 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 was active with Actors' Equity Association for many years and served on the AEA negotiating committee in 1992 and 1993. Other casting projects include San Francisco's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and the CD-ROM game *Odyssey*.

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First Crush, a newcomer to San Francisco’s downtown dining scene, makes its A.C.T. debut with sponsorship of *Wrong Mountain*.

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Show your ticket stub for that day's performance upon exit to receive the special price. After five hours, the regular rate applies.

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Bar service is available one hour before the performance in the lower lobby and on the second balcony level. Reservations for refreshments to be served at intermission may also be made, at either bar or in the main lobby, 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. Or you may leave it and your seat number with the house manager, so you can be notified if you are called.

Perfumes
The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented after-shave lotions, even in small amounts, can cause severe physical reactions in some individuals. As a courtesy to fellow patrons, please avoid the use of these products when you attend the theater.

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

Latecomers
A.C.T. performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated before intermission only if there is an appropriate interval.

Listening Systems
Headsets designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium are available free of charge in the lobby before performance. Please turn off your hearing aid when using an A.C.T. headset, as it will react to the sound system and make a disruptive noise.

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

Restrooms are located in the lower lobby, the balcony lobby, and the uppermost lobby.

Wheelchair seating is available on all levels of the Geary theater. Please call (415) 770-2ACT in advance to notify the house staff of any special needs.

AFFILIATIONS
A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American theater, and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

A.C.T. logo designed by Landor Associates.

The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

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A.C.T. is funded in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency.

How else could three minutes salary say "I love you"?

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Somewhere between starting your sentence with “If I had money...” and “Now that I have money...” you might want to come to us and choose from thirty five of the world’s top money managers for your financial advice. It just might help you from ever having to start a sentence with “When I had money...”