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ON THE COVER Photo by Kevin Berne ABOVE Inside the Geary Theater

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(1999)

by David Hirson Directed by Richard Jones

with

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Wrong Mountain

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Beth Dixon Ilana Levine Bruce Norris **Reg Flowers** Larry Pine **Daniel Davis** Tom Riis Farrell Beth Dixon **Reg** Flowers Jody Gelb

Anne Dudek Mary Schmidtberger **Daniel Jenkins** Mary Schmidtberger Tom Riis Farrell **Daniel Davis** Jody Gelb

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There will be one intermission.

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"IT'S A BIT LIKE DREAMING"

by Peter Cieply

In 1990, a little-known writer named David Hirson made his playwrighting 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.

WRONG MOUNTAIN AUTHOR DAVID HIRSON IS MUCH LIKE HIS PLAYS—WITTY, QUIRKY, SERIOUS, AND ELUSIVE. 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-yearold 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 cast of La Bête, which opened at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre on Broadway in January 1991. Wrong Mountain is scheduled to open at the O'Neill in December.

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





Hirson

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 Elomire as a mouthpiece to continued on page 48



Salvatore Ferragamo



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For more information, call (415) 749-2ACT or go online at www.act-sfbay.org. Come to A.C.T. for the most entertaining education in town. A.C.T. offers several ways for you to learn about the season's productions and to express your views on the issues they raise:

A.C.T. PROLOGUES

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.

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 and artists.

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 (\$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.

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AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

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Julianna Fjeld and Jeff Scoffern in a scene from the 1998 Studio A.C.T. production of Maxim Gorky's Lower Depths, which featured several Deaf actors and ASL-interpreted performances.



THE COUNTDOWN HAS BEGUN!

As A.C.T.'s 1999–2000 season gets underway with sell-out performances of *The Threepenny Opera*, contributions to A.C.T.'s Hewlett Challenge Fund have begun to roll in. Last summer, the prestigious William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded A.C.T. a \$300,000 challenge grant in recognition of the great strides the company has made in recent seasons toward fiscal stability. Provided A.C.T. can produce an operating surplus of at least \$300,000 by June 30, 2000, the Hewlett Foundation will match that amount by awarding A.C.T. \$100,000 for operating expenses and an additional \$200,000 for reduction of the company's accumulated debt.

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 Deafcommunity 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 Audree 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 as a 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 Vanacore 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 Vanacore. "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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A.C.T. News, continued from page 28

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 AChristmas Carol, The House of Mirth, and Edward II. 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 avanacore@act-sfbay.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, lowincome 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 32



Young audience members enjoy a performance of Fool Moon at A.C.T.

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A.C.T. News, continued from page 30

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 preshow 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-sqaure-foot entertainment center that includes 15 state-of-the-art movie theaters, San Francisco's first SONY-IMAX[®] theater, three familyfriendly attractions, exciting restaurants, and worldclass shopping. Metreon is located at Yerba Buena Gardens at 4th Street and Mission and can be visited on the Web at 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 <u>www.act-sfbay.org</u>. *continued on page 34*

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 Cahill
Geraldine Collins
Maureen Dan
Elaine Foreman
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For information about the Friends of A.C.T., call (415) 439-2301. For information about ushering, call (415) 439-2349.



THE THREEPENNY OPERA Book and Lyrics by Bertolt Brecht Music by Kurt Weill Translated by Michael Feingold Directed by Carey Perloff

World Premiere **W R O N G M O U N T A I N** By David Hirson Directed by Richard Jones

American Premiere **THE INVENTION OF LOVE** By Tom Stoppard Directed by Carey Perloff

World Premiere **THE HOUSE OF MIRTH** From the novel by Edith Wharton Adapted and directed by Giles Havergal

2 PIANOS, 4 HANDS By Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt Directed by Ted Dykstra

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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.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.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 Christ*mas 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.

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AVAILABLE AT SELECT FINE JEWELERS FOR INFORMATION ON AN AUTHORIZED BOUCHERON JEWELER NEAR YOU, PLEASE CALL 877.715.7330 (I to r) Theresa Walsh, Justin Okin, Elizabeth Allen, Zach Kenney, Caitlin Talbot, Jonathan Sanders, and Chris Ahlman in Timothy Mason's Time on Fire



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 ageappropriate 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 chal-

lenge 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 Manin-the-Moon Marigolds* [1995]) had previously been known as a



Young Conservatory

directs students in

Automata Pietà.

Director Craig Slaight

Constance Congdon's

writer for young people. The others have risen to the challenge to create plays whose teen protagonists confront strikingly mature problems. Pintauro's *Reindeer Soup* (1992) featured a family of



Felicia Benefield and Dominic Manchester in Timothy Mason's Less Than Human Club

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 highquality new writing for the theater.

As the New Plays Program embarks on its second decade of newplay development, plans are under way to launch the program's firstever 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."

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 firstever public productions of commissioned plays: Constance Congdon's *Automata 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 <u>www.act-sfbay.org</u>.

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Karen Hallock '98 and Andrew Alabran '98 in

Raised in Captivity (photo by Ken Friedman)



Theatre: Mirror of the Invisible World at the Goodman sion credits include "Early Edition."

recent revival of 1776 on Broadway; L'il Abner 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,



DANIEL DAVIS* (Maurice Montesor, Stevens) 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 Ruling Class (Dr. Herder), Othello (Iago), Ah! Wilderness (Uncle Sid), Heartbreak House (Randall Utterwood), Romeo and Juliet (Mercutio), Absurd Person Singular (Sidney Hopcroft), and The History of the American Film (Jimmy). Other A.C.T. credits include the title role in

Horatio, Hay Fever (Richard Greatham), the premiere production of A Christmas Carol (Mr. Fezziwig), Julius Caesar (Brutus), Crucifer of Blood (Dr. Watson), and William Ball's productions of Richard II (Clarence), The Bourgeois Gentleman (Music Master), Equus (Dr. Dysart), and The Winter's Tale (Autolycus). After A.C.T., Davis resumed his career in New York, where he played Salierian 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 Williamstown 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 Moriarty on "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and six seasons as Niles the Butler on "The Nanny."



BETH DIXON* (Claire, Salome Blackwood) has performed in New York in Therese 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 Horizons, MCC, Second Stage, Theatre Row, and La MaMa E.T.C. 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 Theater, Rochester's Geva Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and McCarter Theatre. Dixon's screen credits include The Ballad of the Sad Cafe, "Trinity," "Home Improvement," "Storm of the Century," "Oueen," "One Life to Live," "The City," and "Law and Order."



Theatre: and A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Winter's Tale at the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival. Televi-TOM RIIS 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-off Broadway. His New York stage appearances include the

MHM SOHA

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 Cameron Crowe film. 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 Mare Winningham.



VH0'S'V

REG 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 Theater in Philadelphia. Most recently, Flowers was featured off Broadway in The Trial of One Short-Sighted Black

Woman vs. Mammy Louise and Safreeta 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 University of the Arts and the Yale School of Drama.



JODY GELB* (Miranda Cortland-Spärks, Woinan in bookshop) 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. Theater credits also include 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, Mother, Where Were You When I Woke Up Screaming and My in the Middle of the Night' all over New York City. Her

Bed Was on Fire in the Middle of the Night? all over New York City. Her screen credits include The Last Day in the Life of Brian Darling for HBO, Mo Gaffney's Women Aloud, and Robert Altman's section of the film Aria.



DANIEL JENKINS* (Clifford Peak) makes his A.C.T. debut in Wrong Mountain. Broadway credits include originating the role of Huck in Big River (Tony Award nomination), Josh in the musical Big, and Prior in Angels in America. 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 Lee 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 Garry Trudeau's "Tanner '88." Other film credits include Five Corners, What Happens After, Clory, In Country, and the upcoming Cradle 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 Mán, Charlie Brown (Broadway cast album), The Last Night of Ballyhoo, and Jake's Women. Off-Broadway credits include Shmulnik's Waltz, Soulful Scream of a Chosen Son, Forgetting Frankie, and Raft of the Medusa. 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. Theater credits also include Hand to Hand, Escape from Happiness, and Summervinds at the New York Stage and Film Company, and Cloud Nine, The Wedding, and Morocco at the Berkshire Theatre Festival. Tclovision credits include "Tanner '88" (HBO), "Seinfeld" (The Contest), "NYPD Blue," "Partners," "Lois and Clark," "Hudson Street," "Law & Order," "Hope and Gloria," "Thirtysomething," and "Second Chances." Her film credits include Drop Back Ten, Is That All There Is? Just Looking, Roommates, Looking for an Echo, Me and Veronica, The Party Favor, and Making Sandwiches.



BRUCE NORRIS* (Adam) was seen most recently in New York in La Terrase 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 Chaucer in Rome last summer at the Williamstown 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, Life 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.



LARRY PINE* (Guy Halperin) performed in the Broadway production of Angels in America. Off-Broadway credits include The Chemistry of Change, Mizlansky/Zilińsky, Bus Stop, Talk Radio, Alice in Wonderland (Obie Award), The End of the World, and Endgame (Obie Award), Additional theater 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). Film 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. Pine's television appearances include "OZ," "Law & Order," "New York Undercover," "Miami Vice," "Hit Man," "Prince Street," "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd," and the television movie A Will of Their Own.



RON_RIFKIN* (Henry Dennett) received a 1998 Tony Award for best supporting actor for the Broadway revival of Cabaret, Recent theater credits also include Arthur Miller's Broken Glass, Turgenev's Month in the Country, and Neil Simon's Proposals. He originated the role of Isaac Geldhart in the award-winning Jon Robin Baitz play The Substance of Fire (Obie, 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, Last 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 miniseries such as The Sunset Gang and Concealed Enemies for PBS; Buying a Landslide for BBC; Evergreen, The Winds of War, and Dress Gray; and the series "The Trials of Rosie O'Neill," "One Day at a



Time," "ER," "Law & Order," "Falcon Crest," "Soap," and "Hill Street Blues." Most recently, he costarred on "Leaving L.A." and "The Outer Limits" (Cable ACE nomination).

> MARY SCHMIDTBERGER* (Winifred Hill, Anne) has appeared in the feature films See Jane Run, Celebrity, Lining Out Loud, The Peacemaker, Emily's Last Date (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.

YAN NYCCEPPENTER SAL

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 Theatro 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, Elmire in Tartuffe, Abbie in Desire under the Elms, Toinette in The Imaginary

Invalid, Jill Rillington in Man of the Moment, Rosaura in Life Is a Dream, and the title roles of Candida, Miss Julie, and Hedda Cabler. Her Shakespeare credits include Olivia, Titania, Silvia, Lady Percy, Lady Capulet, Adriana, and Portia.



BRYAN T. DONOVAN* (Understudy) has performed in New York productions of Tina Landau's Dream True at the Vineyard Theatre and Strike Up the Band and L'il Abner in the Encores! series at City Center. Regional theater credits include the world premiere of High Society at A.C.T., An Actor's Nightmare at Jupiter Theater, Fanny Hill at Goodspeed Opera House in Chester, Connection, Keely & Du at Luna Stage, Another Midsummer Night at American Music Theater Festival, and Pygw Brock Theatin "Walk Children"

malion at Meadow Brook Theatre. Television: "All My Children."



MICHAEL SANTO* (Understudy) appeared most recently as Einstein in Picasso at the Lapin Agile at Arizona Theatre Company, Eliot Once Removed in the premiere of Nagle Jackson's Taking Leave with the Denver Center Theatre Company, and Lord Queensberry in Gross Indecency at Theatre on the Square. Local theater credits include The Tempest at A.C.T. and productions with the California Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre,

Aurora Theatre Company, and Theatre Works (Éddie in the Bay Area premiere of *Conversations with My Father*). He has also performed at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse, Portland Rep, Empty Space, Alaska Rep, A Contemporary Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Portland Stage Company, and the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.



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 Allesandro Scarlatti's Gli equivoci nel sembinate, 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 Lon-

don dobuts as a playwright with his first play, La Bête, for which he received the Outer Critics Circle's John Gassner Award, the New York Newsday//Oppenheimer Award, and the Dramatists Guild's Marton Prize for best new American playwright. La Bête 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 Bête, Hirson won the 1992 Laurence Olivier Award for comedy of the year. In April 1999, he was honored by the 18th 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 Bête on Broadway and at the Lyric Hammersmith in London; Black Snow at the American Repettory Theatre; All's Well That Ends Well at the Public Theater/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 Jenufe in Amsterdam; Julius Caesar and The Midsummer Marriage in Munich; Der Ring des Nibelungen at the Royal Opera House/Covent Garden; Pelléas et Mélisande at Opera North; L'Enfant des sortilèges and Der Zwerg in Paris; and Hansel and Gretel at 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; Openwelt 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 CADLE (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 (Glyndebourne Festival); Eugene Onegin (Opera North); costumes for Kátya Kábanova (New Zealand International Festival); sets for Penelope (GSMD); sets for She Stoops to Conquer; sets and costumes for Phaedra and Catalpa (Gate Theatre, Dublin); sets and costumes for Gangster Number One (Almeida Theatre, London); NHO'S WHO

and Svejk (Gate Theatre, Notting Hill). He also designed the sets and costumes for the Gate Theatre/Lincoln Center coproduced season of 19 plays by Samuel Beckett which ran again this year at the Beckett Festival at the Barbican Centre. Future plans include a production of *The Beggar's Opera* (Opera du Rhin).

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 Grosse Sonate, Paul Taylor's Cascade, and Trisha Brown's Five-Part Weather Invention. Tipton also teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama.

JOHN GROMADA (Sound Designer) has composed music for the Broadway revivals of Misalliance, 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 scores and designs of The Skriker (Drama Desk Award) and Machinal (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, Vita 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, Hamlet for the American Shakespeare Festival, A Life for the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada, and Angels 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, Disney's Beauty and the Beast, Fool Moon, and Prelude to a Kiss. 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, Gaol Gate/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 Weathervane Theatre. Cousens is a graduate of Brown University. **DENNIS LUDWICK SERRAS** (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 (*Coproducer*), 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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MHO'S WHC

Dreaming, continued from page 24

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

Elomire, 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 plea-

sures 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

IMAGES OF SUCCESS (!?) Don Ameche with Cher at the 1986 Academy Awards; Tommy Tune shares his 1982 Tony Award with Ann Miller and Milton Berle.



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 beforget the playwriting and get a good therapist.

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

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









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 Amer-

ican 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 Chub 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



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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-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 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. 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 awardwinning 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 administrates), directed numerous ATP studio 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 (Dramaturg, Director of Humanities) joined A.C.T. in 1996 after eight years with Theatre de la Jeune Lune, where he worked on such awardwinning projects as Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream, Germinal, Don Juan Giovanni, and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. His translation of Strindberg's Creditors 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 Esbjornson. 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 Notebooks, Re-interpreting Brecht, Strindberg's Dramaturgy, Theatre Symposium, Essays in Theatre, Studia Neophilologica, 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 Appétit! and Creditors. She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for 12 years and production stage manager at the 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 Obsidian.

FIRST CRUSH CORPORATE SPONSOR OF WRONG MOUNTAIN

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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KGO NEWSTALK AM 810 also returns to support A.C.T. as a cosponsor of *A Christmas Carol*. KGO made its A.C.T. sponsorship debut in 1996 with the Geary Theater inaugural production of *The Tempest*. KGO has been Northern California's most-listened-to radio station for more than 20 years, due to its commitment to the community-a commitment to provide the most complete information about world and local events, a forum for discussion, and support for arts, civic, and other nonprofit community organizations.

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A.C.T.'s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 834–3200. On the Web: <u>www.act-sfbay.org</u>.

BOX OFFICE AND TICKET INFORMATION

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 12-8 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, and 12-6 p.m. Sunday and Monday. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12-6 p.m. daily.

BASS

Tickets are also available at BASS centers, including The Wherehouse and Tower Records/Video.

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Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our Web site at <u>www.act-sfhay.org</u>. Seating quality is consistent with that available by phone or in person. A.C.T's popular E-mail Club (accessible through the Web site) offers members reminders of upcoming shows, special offers and last-minute ticket discounts, and the latest company news.

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Half-price tickets are sometimes available on the day of performance at TIX on Union Square. Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the box office 90 minutes before curtain. Matinee senior rush tickets are available at noon on the day of the performance for \$10. All rush tickets are subject to availability, one ticket per valid ID. Student subscriptions are also available at half price. Senior citizen discounts are available for full-season and sampler series subscriptions. A.C.T. also offers one Pay What You Wish performance during the run of each production: patrons are allowed to pay any amount for tickets when they bring in a donation of canned food.

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SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Geary Theater Tours

A.C.T. offers guided tours (\$8, \$6 subscribers and seniors, \$4 students) of the Geary Theater on selected Wednesday and Saturday mornings. For information, call (415) 749-2ACT or visit A.C.T. online.

A.C.T. Extras

For information on A.C.T. Prologues, Audience Exchanges, and *Words on Plays* audience handbooks, please turn to the "A.C.T. Extras" page of this program.

Student Matinees

Matinees are offered at 1 p.m. to elementary, secondary, and college school groups for selected productions. Tickets are \$10. For information call (415) 439-2383.

Conservatory

A.C.T. offers instruction in a wide range of theater disciplines. The Master of Fine Arts Program offers a rigorous three-year course of actor training, culminating in a master of fine arts degree. The Summer Training Congress is an intensive program for those with some performing arts background. Studio A.C.T. offers evening and weekend classes, including Corporate Education Services, to enthusiasts at every level of experience. The Young Conservatory is a broad-based program for students 8–18. Call (415) 439–2350 for a free brochure.

Costume Rental

More than 10,000 costumes, from handmade period garments to modern sportswear, are available for rental. For information call (415) 439--2379.

Parking

A.C.T. patrons can park for just \$8 at the San Francisco Hilton and Towers for up to five hours, subject to availability. Enter on Ellis Street between Mason and Taylor. Show your ticket stub for that day's performance upon exit to receive the special price. After five hours, the regular rate applies.

AT THE THEATER

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

A.C.T. Merchandise

Posters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, nightshirts, mugs, note cards, scripts, and *Words on Plays* are available for purchase in the main lobby and at the Geary Theater Box Office.

Refreshments

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

GEARY THEATER EXITS





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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.

Rest rooms 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) 749–2ACT 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.

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