

American Conservatory Theater

presents

JEAN STAPLETON

in

BON APPÉTIT!

Two Musical Monologues

Music by

LEE HOIBY

Words by

RUTH DRAPER and JULIA CHILD

Directed by

CAREY PERLOFF

Musical Direction

TODD SISLEY

Scenic Design

DONALD EASTMAN

Costuming, The Italian Lesson

RITA RIGGS

Adaptations

MARK SHULGASSER

Costuming, Bon Appétit!

JEAN PUTCH

Lighting Design

KENT DORSEY

Stage Management

MERYL LIND SHAW

The Cast

The Italian Lesson

Mrs. Clancy Jean Stapleton

Bon Appétit!

Julia Child Jean Stapleton

Pianist

TODD SISLEY

There will be one ten-minute intermission.

The Italian Lesson by permission of Clancy Productions; Mark Shulgasser and Dean Rolston, Executive Producers.

Bon Appétit! by permission of Aquarius Music Co.



Notes from the Director

Welcome to *Bon Appétit!* In celebrating the holidays this year, A.C.T. also celebrates three great American women: Ruth Draper, Julia Child, and Jean Stapleton.

It could be said that Ruth Draper was America's first "performance artist," a brilliant comic who in 1920 began to write and perform her inventive monologues all over the world. *The Italian Lesson*, one of her most celebrated pieces (written in 1926), details the busy morning of a society matron who attempts to squeeze Dante into her day, while fielding phone calls, dispensing charity, ordering dinner, nurturing a romance, and performing committee work, all in the same breath. It was this monologue that supposedly inspired Lily Tomlin to begin writing and performing her own comic characters.

Julia Child is, in many ways, Ruth Draper's perfect companion. A consummate chef, her cooking shows are



A.C.T. Artistic Director, Carey Perloff

more than mere lessons in the culinary arts. They are vivid monologues filled with anecdotes and aperçus,

entire one-act plays (and sometimes three-act plays!) revolving around a given gastronomic adventure. *Bon Appétit!* is taken from a 1970 broadcast of Julia Child concocting Le Gateau au Chocolat l'Eminence Brune. "When you want to make a cake," Julia chortles, "you really have to have a battle plan." Remember that this is the woman who invented a B.A. degree in gastronomy.

Jean Stapleton was drawn to the work of these two women by composer Lee Hoiby, whose discovery of the inherent musicality in both Draper's and Child's performances gives us a new perspective on two familiar and beloved characters. After attending a performance of *Bon Appétit!* several years ago, Julia Child insisted that from then on she would sing all her recipes. We hope that Ruth Draper would have felt the same way.

— Carey Perloff

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTING EPICURES

A.C.T. gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and companies for making *Bon Appétit!* a delectable experience:

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WHO'S WHO IN *BON APPÉTIT!*

JEAN STAPLETON has just completed a successful run in Horton Foote's *The Roads to Home* at the Lambs' Club Theatre Company in New York. In September 1992 she was seen on TNT in Foote's *The Habitation of Dragons*, and in early 1993 she will appear in *The Parallax Garden* on A&E Cable Network for the General Motors Playwrights Theatre.

Ms. Stapleton began her dramatic training at the American Actors Company and at the American Theatre Wing in New York. With her Broadway debut in *In the Summer House*, her career as an actress flourished. She has since appeared on Broadway in *Funny Girl*, *Juno*, and *Rhinoceros*, as well as in the Broadway stage productions and motion picture versions of *Bells Are Ringing* and *Damn Yankees*. Her first national tour was in the original touring company of *Harvey*, which she soon followed with the national tour of the now-classic *Come Back, Little Sheba*.

Through the years, the theater has remained her first love, and her stage performances have brought her tremendous personal satisfaction, as well as critical praise. Ms. Stapleton starred in the Los Angeles Music Center productions of *The Time of the Cuckoo* and *Oklahoma!*. During hiatus periods of her television series "All in the Family," she toured in *Morning's at Seven* by Paul Osborn. She also starred in a national tour of George Kelly's *Daisy Mayme*, the John F. Kennedy Center production of *The Late Christopher Bean* in Washington, D.C., and the revival of George Kelly's *The Show-Off*. She has performed in numerous summer stock companies in New England and at the Totem Pole Playhouse in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Stapleton added an operatic debut to her already impressive list of credits.



Her grand opera bow came in a production of Leonard Bernstein's comic operetta *Candide* for the Baltimore Opera Company. Also for the Baltimore Opera, she starred in the world premiere of *The Italian Lesson*. Ms. Stapleton has also appeared on stage in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Sweeney Todd*, and a revival of *Arsenic and Old Lace* on Broadway, as well as a national tour.

From 1989 to 1991, Ms. Stapleton appeared with CSC Repertory Ltd. — The Classic Stage Company in New York, first in a double bill of Harold Pinter plays, *The Birthday Party* and the American premiere of *Mountain Language*, for which she won an Obie Award; second as Philamante in *The Learned Ladies* by Moliere, a role she will reprise for A.C.T. audiences in the spring of 1993; and last in the New York premiere of Lee Hoiby's musical monologues, which you are seeing tonight.

In addition to her role as Edith Bunker in the landmark series "All in the Family," for which she earned three Emmy's, national acclaim, and a permanent place in the hearts and memories of millions, Ms. Stapleton's career in television has included starring roles in numerous telefilms and specials, among them television's first presentation of the classic comedy *You Can't Take It with You*, Hallmark Hall of Fame's *Aunt Mary* (one of the 1980-81 season's highest-rated telefilms), Jules Feiffer's *Grown Ups* (for PBS's "Great Performances"), *Angel Dusted*, *Dead Man's Folly*, *A Matter of Sex*, *Isabel's Choice*, *Eleanor: First Lady of the World* (which earned her an Emmy nomination), and *Fire in the Dark*. Ms. Stapleton also had a special recurring guest role in the hit series "Scarecrow & Mrs. King." Other television credits include the Fairy Godmother in "Cinderella" and the Ogress in

"Jack and the Beanstalk" for Showtime's "Faerie Tale Theatre," a hip Mother Goose in Shelley Duvall's "Mother Goose Rock 'n' Rhyme" for The Disney Channel, PBS's "Trying Times," the Arts & Entertainment Network's production of Paul Zindell's "Let Me Hear You Whisper," and the CBS series "Baghdad Cafe," co-starring Whoopi Goldberg. Among her feature film credits are *Something Wild*, *Up the Down Staircase*, *Cold Turkey*, *Klute*, and *The Buddy System*.

Among other accomplishments, Ms. Stapleton was a key participant in the effort to have Eleanor Roosevelt's Hyde Park home, Val-Kill, designated as a historic site. She is currently a trustee of the Actors' Fund of America and president of the Advisory Board of the Women's Research and Education Institute in Washington, D.C., and serves on the board of the World Federalist Association.



LYNNE SOFFER (*Understudy*) appeared last season in A.C.T.'s productions of *Good* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. She made her mainstage debut at A.C.T. in the spring of 1991 when she assumed the leading role of Lydia de Jager in Lisette Lecat Ross's *Dark Sun*. Bay Area audiences have also seen her work in Encore Theatre Company productions of *Uncle Vanya*, *June 2d*, and *Women Beware Women*, and most recently in Victoria Rue's *Cancerbodies* at Brava. Ms. Soffer has performed with the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA), Alaska Repertory Theatre, Sherwood Shakespeare Festival, Acadia Repertory in Maine, and in New York City with Direct Theatre and the 29th Street Project. She has toured extensively throughout Alaska performing *Shakespeare's Women* and has taught and directed in that state's Artists-in-Schools program periodically for the past thirteen years. Ms. Soffer currently teaches Acting, Text, and Speech at A.C.T. and has served as a dialect coach for Berkeley Repertory Company, Theatre Artists of Marin, PCPA, and A.C.T.

LEE HOIBY's (*Composer*) three-act setting of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was commissioned by the Des Moines Opera and premiered there in 1986, followed by a second production at the Kansas City Lyric Opera in 1987. Jean Stapleton introduced Mr. Hoiby's setting of *The Italian Lesson* at the Baltimore Opera in 1985 and *Bon Appétit!* at the Kennedy Center in 1989, and reprised both productions at CSC Repertory Ltd.—The Classic Stage Company in New York last season under Carey Perloff's direction. *Summer and Smoke*, an opera with libretto by Lanford

Wilson based on Tennessee Williams' play, was commissioned by and premiered at the St. Paul Opera in 1971 and produced by the New York City Opera in 1972; the Chicago Opera Theater production was telecast nationally on PBS in 1981. Mr. Hoiby's first full-length opera, *A Month in the Country* (libretto by William Ball after Turgenev) premiered at the New York City Opera in 1964; *The Scarf*, a one-act opera commissioned by Mary Curtis Zimbalist, premiered at the first Spoleto Festival in 1958 and has since been presented in over fifty productions. Other works by Mr. Hoiby include the cantata *A Hymn of the Nativity*, the opera-oratorio *Galileo*, two piano concertos, two orchestral suites, and the ballet suite *After Eden*, which is in the repertory of many American and European dance companies. He has written incidental music for over twenty theater productions for A.C.T. (including A.C.T.'s annual holiday presentation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*), the American Shakespeare Festival, the Public Theatre, television, and Broadway.

Mr. Hoiby is also a noted pianist who appears in recitals of the standard repertory and his own work, as soloist in his own concertos, and frequently as accompanist to singers and instrumentalists who perform his music. His work has been performed by Leontyne Price (who has included Hoiby songs on her recital programs for twenty-five years), Arleen Auger, Dalton Baldwin, Katherine Ciesinski, Will Parker, Ben Holt, Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Karen Beardsley, Peter Orth, Menahem Pressler, Daniel Heifetz, the Dorian Wind Quintet, An die Musik, and Leonard Raver.

In 1989, Mr. Hoiby's work was the subject of a retrospective concert at the Kennedy Center on the American Composer Series, and a two-week festival of his work was presented by the music department of the University of California at Long Beach. His sixty-fifth birthday was celebrated by a program of choral and chamber works given by the William Ferris Chorale in Chicago. Recent performances of his work include *O Captain! My Captain!* in New Orleans, *The Nations Echo Round* with the Colorado Children's Chorale, and "the Balcony Scene" (an excerpt from the opera-in-progress *Romeo and Juliet*) at American

Opera Projects in New York. His new one-act opera *This Is the Rill Speaking*, based on a play by Lanford Wilson, will be produced by the Theater Lab at New York's Circle Repertory Company in March 1993. Recent and upcoming publications from G. Schirmer include the vocal score of *The Tempest*, *Thirteen Songs for High Voice*, *Five Whitman Songs* for baritone, an album of piano works, the vocal duet *Bermudas*, and *Bon Appétit!*.

Mr. Hoiby was born in Wisconsin in 1926. He studied piano with Gunnar Johansen and Egon Petri, and composition with Gian Carlo Menotti at the Curtis Institute. His work has been recognized with awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Ford Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

MARK SHULGASSER (*Adaptor*) conceived of *Bon Appétit!* as a companion piece to *The Italian Lesson*, which he directed at its premiere at the Newport Musical Festival in 1984. He has been associated with Lee Hoiby as librettist, director, and producer since 1979.

TODD SISLEY (*Musical Director, Pianist*) attended the New England Conservatory, State University of New York at Purchase, and University of Michigan. He studied with Lois Shapiro, Seymour Bernstein, and Martin Katz, and was the recipient of two Tanglewood Fellowships, the Karl Haas Scholarship, and an E. Power Biggs Fellowship. He has performed in New York's Alice Tully Hall, Florence Gould Hall, the Cranwell Opera House in Lenox, Massachusetts, and upstate New York's Troy Music Hall. Among his collaborators have been cellist Carlos Prieto and saxophonist Harry White. He has been the assistant conductor for the Lake George Opera Festival and the Reimann Opera Theatre at New York University. Mr. Sisley has appeared with numerous chamber groups, including the Harsimus Ensemble, the New York Chamber Ensemble, and the St. Cecilia Chamber Orchestra. He recently completed the successful New York and Boston runs of *Bon Appétit!* and is looking forward to playing Lee Hoiby's *This Is the Rill Speaking* at Circle Repertory Company in New York next March.



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DONALD EASTMAN (*Scenic Design*) made his A.C.T. debut this season with the designs for *Creditors*, directed by Carey Perloff. Principal designer for New York's CSC Repertory Ltd.—The Classic Stage Company, his other work with Ms. Perloff includes *Phaedra Britannica*, *Don Juan of Seville*, *Happy Days*, *Elektra*, and last season's production of *Creditors*. Other New York productions include *Cuba and His Teddy Bear* with Robert De Niro on Broadway, *Jungle Cities* at the Public Theatre, and productions for the New York Shakespeare Festival, Mabou Mines, the American Place Theatre, and La Mama E.T.C. His regional credits include designs for productions at the Long Wharf Theatre, Center Stage in Baltimore, Virginia Stage Company, Capital Repertory Company in Albany, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. A grantee of the National Opera Institute, he has designed for the Washington Opera, Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Virginia Opera, and Long Beach Opera. Mr. Eastman received the 1989 Obie Award for sustained excellence.

KENT DORSEY's (*Lighting Design*) returned to A.C.T. this season to design scenery and lighting for *The Pope and the Witch*. His scenic designs were previously seen here in *The Marriage of Figaro* in 1991. His New York set and lighting design credits include productions of *About Time*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *Yankee Dawg You Die*, *Suds*, and *Another Antigone*, and he made his Washington, D.C. debut with his lighting for *The Cocktail Hour* at the Kennedy Center. He has worked as both scenic and/or lighting designer for directors Jerry Zaks, Jack O'Brien, Ellis Rabb, Adrian Hall, John Hirsch, John Tillinger, Ed Call, Luis Valdez, Charles Marowitz, and Sharon Ott. He has designed scenery and/or lighting for over sixty productions at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, *CatsPlay*, *Rashomon*, *Tartuffe*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. He has designed for many resident companies, including the La Jolla Playhouse, the Ahmanson at the Doolittle, Playwrights Horizons, Denver Center Theatre Company, The Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger in Washington, D.C., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo, Philadelphia Drama Guild, South Coast Repertory, Los Angeles The-

atre Center, A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, San Jose Repertory Theatre, El Teatro Campesino, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Eureka Theatre Company, and Arizona Theatre Company. He also designed the sets and lighting for the West Coast premiere of *The Lighthouse* for San Diego Opera. Mr. Dorsey's recent Bay Area work includes scenery for *Cole!*, *Speed the Plow*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* as Associate Artist for Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

MERYL LIND SHAW (*Stage Manager*) debuted at A.C.T. this season as Assistant Stage Manager for *Creditors*, after twelve years as Resident Stage Manager at Berke-

ley Repertory Theatre, where she stage-managed over forty shows, including *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *McTeague*, *The Illusion*, *The Speed of Darkness*, *A View from the Bridge*, *The Misanthrope*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *The Birthday Party*, *Execution of Justice*, and *U.S.A.* She stage-managed the world premiere of *In Perpetuity Throughout the Universe* at Baltimore's Center Stage and was Production Stage Manager at the California Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She has also stage-managed at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, the Eureka Theatre Company, and the Alcazar. Ms. Shaw is a member of the board of directors of the California Shakespeare Festival.

