

JANUARY 2022

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freestyle love supreme

CONCEIVED BY ANTHONY VENEZIALE
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AND ANTHONY VENEZIALE
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Marilyn Kallins
marilyn@kallinsmediasales.com
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Encore Media Group
PO Box 30784
Seattle, WA 98113-0784
800.308.2898 • 206.443.0445
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THIS IS YOUR THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO

American Conservatory Theater is an essential gathering place that brings artists and communities together to inspire and provoke. Now four years into the leadership of Tony Award-winning Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, A.C.T. is charged with fulfilling its mission to engage the spirit of the San Francisco Bay Area, activate stories that resonate, promote a diversity of voices and points of view, and empower theater makers and audiences to celebrate liveness. A.C.T. is a Tony Award-winning nonprofit theater serving almost 200,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area annually through theater, training, education, and community programs. The organization values inclusion, transformational learning, participation, and rigorous fun.

A.C.T.'s MFA Program is the last freestanding graduate acting training program in the country not affiliated with a university. We have determined that in order to thrive, the program must be in partnership with a university as is modeled throughout our field. At this point in time we do not have a partnership in place that would enable us to continue the MFA Program, so it will end with the Class of 2022. We remain deeply invested in delivering the highest-level of training to the final class, and there remains the opportunity to support them through the Melissa Yandell

Smith Legacy Fund. We honor and celebrate the tremendous impact the MFA Program has had on individual artists and on the American theater as a whole.

While the graduate training program is coming to an end, A.C.T. is steadfastly committed to transformative learning by maintaining its Conservatory, which offers a robust array of theater-based classes and training programs, including Studio A.C.T., the Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, San Francisco Semester, and Institutional Professional Development. These programs help participants discover their inner artistry, while also training the artists who will shape the cultural landscape of our society.

In addition, our Education & Community Programs bring theater and arts education curricula to schools and community-based organizations across the Bay Area. For an entire decade, these programs have provided annually close to 20,000 young people and educators from around the region with opportunities to experience the transformational potential of dramatic storytelling, critical thinking, creation through collaboration, and fun, and have fostered the artists and audiences of the future.

American Conservatory Theater is your theater, San Francisco. Welcome!

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COMING NEXT AT A.C.T

FEFU AND HER FRIENDS

by **María Irene Fornés**

Directed by **Pam MacKinnon**

Mar 24–May 1 | A.C.T.'s Strand Theater

Hailed as game-changing, provocative, and genius, *Fefu and Her Friends* is one of the most influential—and invisible—plays of the 20th century. An innovation of immersive theater, nine-time Obie Award winning theater artist and educator María Irene Fornés's rapturous comedy-drama allows the audience to be a fly on many walls in this unconventional tale of eight women gathering at a New England country home in 1935.

Utilizing the multi-storied, multi-roomed Strand Theater as non-traditional theater space, audiences will be broken up into four groups that independently tour Fefu's home. Stories and histories come into play as you happen across conversations as Fefu's bohemian and raucous cohorts gossip, question, flirt, provoke, and ultimately reveal (or hide?) the universal understandings between women. As muscular and searing in its deliberate use of language as Albee and Miller at their best; as acidic as Clare Boothe Luce's iconic play *The Women*; and patron saint to blockbuster hits like *Sleep No More*—Fornés's *Fefu and Her Friends* is an invitation to a theatrical experience like none other.

A.C.T.'s production of *Fefu and Her Friends* is dedicated in memory of A.C.T. Trustee Olympia Dukakis.

ACT-SF.ORG/FEFU



WHAT'S INSIDE

CHRIS SULLIVAN, WAYNE BRADY, ANTHONY VENEZIALE, ANEESA FOLDS, AND KURT CROWLEY (ON KEYBOARD) IN *FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME* ON BROADWAY. PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS.

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EDITOR
LIVIAN YEH

CONTRIBUTORS
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PAM MACKINNON
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FROM THE ARTISTIC + EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

WELCOME TO A.C.T. AND THE GEARY!

Thank you for coming out to a show. I feel deep gratitude for your being here. We're happy to host and hope you lean into the creative fun of it all. A.C.T. is a mission driven not-for-profit theater, serving the City and the Bay. If this is your first time at the Geary Theater, welcome! If you have been a long-time A.C.T. subscriber or occasional theatergoer, welcome back!

It has been almost two years since A.C.T.'s Geary Theater has had an audience. A.C.T. has been very active through the pandemic with professional actor training, Young Conservatory classes, and work with San Francisco educators and students as well as with our community partners. We have been a hive of virtual creativity, developing and premiering an interactive Zoom play, producing classic play readings, a radio *Christmas Carol*, and a film of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. We have commissioned many theater artists including under the banner "Make-A-Thing," a few of whose projects you can check out in our lobby spaces today.

This season A.C.T. explores the theme of reunion. Reunion is needed; it's a balm, an act of generosity and an offer of vulnerability after time away from each other. We return to each other changed but able to recognize that we have something shared, a foundation upon which to build. Each show in our 2022 season explores this theme in different ways.

First up is *Freestyle Love Supreme*! The sheer calculus of how the crew after years of honing their craft before stepping out on stage with only a spine of a story but no script is a tremendous feat. Many of the performers have known each other for decades. This show started among college friends, and their sporadic reunions got them to Broadway, and now to the Geary to launch a US tour. Improvising, rhyming, creating neologisms, adding an extra foot to the meter to open our ears, going deep and personal to open our hearts, making us laugh. The crew reunites to entertain and give each audience a platform to collaborate in making song and story greater than its parts.

A.C.T. is here to inspire and hold conversation. We're here to celebrate and play, to build community. Tonight there is no fourth wall. The show is an invitation. Have fun! Also, please treat each other and yourself with care. We all are rebuilding social muscle, coming through the pandemic vulnerably, yet strong. Say hi. Make room. Keep those masks on, please. We're in this together.

This is your theater, San Francisco. Tell your friends. A reminder, all laughter is welcome. Explore our website. Be in touch. Find your creative side.

Enjoy!



Pam MacKinnon,
Artistic Director

DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to *Freestyle Love Supreme*! We're so excited to open our doors and to welcome you into the theater! If you're new to A.C.T., we're delighted to meet you. If you're returning for the first time since March 2020—welcome back. Thank you all so very much for being here. This is your theater, San Francisco!

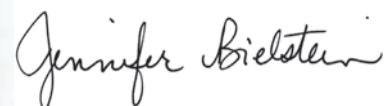
At A.C.T., we're committed to engaging the spirit of the Bay Area, and to creating a supportive and welcoming environment for all. We believe that when a diversity of perspective and experience is embraced, we have better art and importantly, we help to build a stronger community. To learn more, please visit act-sf.org/about-us.

Freestyle Love Supreme is full of joy and hope, which makes it the perfect show to bring us together again. We're so pleased to partner with Salesforce on this production, with additional support from the Koret Foundation, to give a gift of free tickets to community organizations and low-priced tickets to the entire Bay Area. We're pleased to welcome everyone back to in-person theater after so many months without! To support A.C.T. as a nonprofit organization, as ticket prices do not cover our costs, and to keep ticket prices affordable for all, please consider making a donation at act-sf.org/donate. Your investment plays a critical role.

Freestyle is just the beginning of our big-hearted 2022 season. In addition to mainstage shows, A.C.T.'s Conservatory offers you the chance to stretch your creative muscles with classes at Studio A.C.T. and to see the stars of tomorrow through the Young Conservatory and Master of Fine Arts students. We also have a range of education programs with teachers and students from SFUSD and throughout the region. At A.C.T., community is at the heart of everything we do, and you—our audiences, donors, and subscribers—are what make our work possible and meaningful.

We have banded together with arts organizations of all disciplines across the entire Bay Area to ensure you feel confident in being at our performances, exhibitions, and events. Please check out BayAreaArtsTogether.org to see the wealth of opportunities you have to be inspired, to feel joy and hope, and to be part of this wonderful Bay Area arts community that is only possible because of your participation. As a huge part of this, the safety of our audiences, artists, technicians, and staff are our utmost priority. At A.C.T., we've updated HVAC systems and have optimized safety protocols across our venues in alignment with COVID-19 health orders and guidelines. For details: act-sf.org/covid19.

Freestyle Love Supreme is a celebration of togetherness, of the spark and endless possibilities inspired by a group of people gathering on and off stage. We are so glad to be in community with you at this show, and we're excited to see you at the theater throughout 2022.



Jennifer Bielstein,
Executive Director

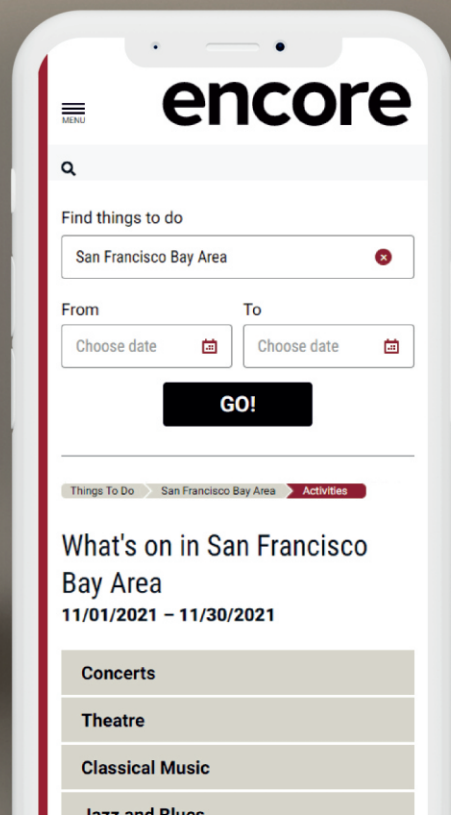


What are you doing next weekend?

SEE
WHAT'S ON



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MACKINNON**
Artistic Director

**JENNIFER
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PRESENTS

FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME

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freestyle love supreme



CONCEIVED BY
ANTHONY VENEZIALE

CREATED BY
**THOMAS KAIL LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA
ANTHONY VENEZIALE**

STARRING
**ANDREW BANCROFT RICHARD BASKIN JR. KURT CROWLEY JAY C. ELLIS
ANEESA FOLDS KAILA MULLADY MORGAN REILLY JAMES RUSHIN
CHRIS SULLIVAN ANTHONY VENEZIALE**

SCENIC DESIGN
BEOWULF BORITT

COSTUME DESIGN
LISA ZINNI

LIGHTING DESIGN
JEFF CROITER

SOUND DESIGN
NEVIN STEINBERG

ARTHUR LEWIS

MUSIC SUPERVISORS
BILL SHERMAN

CHRIS SULLIVAN

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THOMAS KAIL

CAST

FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME IS

ANDREW BANCROFT *AKA* Jelly Donut
RICHARD BASKIN JR. *AKA* Rich Midway
KURT CROWLEY *AKA* The Lord and Lady Crowley
JAY C. ELLIS *AKA* Jellis J
ANEESA FOLDS *AKA* Young Nees
KAILA MULLADY *AKA* Kaiser Rözé
MORGAN REILLY *AKA* Hummingbird
JAMES RUSHIN *AKA* Not Draggin
CHRIS SULLIVAN *AKA* Shockwave
ANTHONY VENEZIALE *AKA* Two Touch

CAMEO PERFORMERS

(at certain unannounced performances)
UTKARSH AMBUDKAR *AKA* UTK the INC.
WAYNE BRADY *AKA* Mr. Brady Baby *AKA* Chocolate Bars
JAMES MONROE IGLEHART *AKA* J-Soul
CHRISTOPER JACKSON *AKA* C-Jack
LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA *AKA* Lin-Man

FOUNDING MEMBERS OF FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME

CHRISTOPHER JACKSON, THOMAS KAIL, ARTHUR LEWIS,
LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, BILL SHERMAN, CHRIS SULLIVAN,
ANTHONY VENEZIALE



Help us build the Foundations of Freestyle!

Scan this code, or head to freestylelovesupreme.com/audience,
to submit a word to be used in the show!



The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited. Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones, pagers and watches.

REMEMBERING MELISSA YANDELL SMITH

BY AVANTHIKA SRINIVASAN

Melissa Yandell Smith, captain of her high school field hockey team and a double Yale, whose voice could be recognized out of a thousand, **was a woman unlike any other**. When I first met her in February 2016, I knew she'd change my life, but little did I know how profoundly and in how many ways she would do so. Though she had run A.C.T.'s MFA Program for decades and was known to be the epitome of tough love, what struck me was how joyous yet vulnerable and sensitive she was. She led with an air of simplicity, which contained profound knowledge and experience, not just about acting but also about life. Every moment in acting class was filled with awe and wonder as I watched her observe qualities in students they themselves weren't aware of. Through countless hours in class and in her office discussing what it meant to bring one's authentic self to acting, she taught me how to embrace my identity. As an Indian immigrant, I spent a lot of time rejecting my culture and trying to assimilate into what it meant to be American. But because of her, I started singing again. I started going to temples again. I started to value the qualities in myself that I had spent so much time rejecting.

After I graduated, our friendship blossomed to include weekly phone calls and FaceTime sessions, moments that became the highlight of my days as she would offer invaluable advice on navigating life as an artist in New York City and would share her own experiences as a young woman pursuing her dream of being an actor. And no conversation would be complete without discussing the next book we'd read together or the next up-and-coming restaurant we had to try. Though her battle with cancer progressed over the years, her outlook on life never changed. During my visits to San Francisco to spend time with her, I noticed that no matter how she was feeling that day, she would approach every task with such curiosity and grace. Three days before she passed, we took a drive to Land's End, a trip that would be her last excursion. **As we sat for an hour and looked out onto the Pacific Ocean, she reflected on her life and her time at A.C.T. with pride and contentment**. It was a moment that made me realize what a huge part of her life the MFA Program had been, and how those 25 years not only shaped the students she taught, but also her as a person. **Melissa's legacy lies in the students she trained**. To me, she will forever be my teacher, mentor, best friend, and family. Though she may not be present physically, she continues to speak to me in her own way and will forever inspire my journey as an actor and as a human being.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AVANTHIKA SRINIVASAN

ONSTAGE NOW



TARIK DAVIS, ANEESA FOLDS, LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, AND JAMES MONROE IGLEHART
IN FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME ON BROADWAY. PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS.

FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME COMES TO THE BAY

BY A.C.T. STAFF

A.C.T. is the first stop on the *Freestyle Love Supreme* national tour. We chatted with three cast members about their Bay Area connections, working on a show that changes every night, and their favorite hip-hop artists from the Bay.

What makes the Bay Area the perfect launchpad for *Freestyle Love Supreme* in 2022?

Aneesa Folds: Many members in our group have roots or have lived in the Bay Area at some point. It comes up a lot on stage so I know how much it means to them. I'm excited to soak in the city and the beautiful people who live in it. I hope to see a diverse audience that appreciates hip-hop, improv, and theater.

Andrew Bancroft: I lived in San Francisco for 13 years and have lifetime friends and memories here. Some of

the first times I freestyled on stage were in Oakland. The Bay is where I reconnected with Anthony "Two Touch" Venezia. He and I started a sister group to FLS called The Freeze, where we rapped with Daveed Diggs and James "J-Soul" Iglehart. Some of my favorite comedy performances were with my buddy Kenny Taylor as well as the sketch group Killing My Lobster. The Bay is constantly reinventing itself through creativity, and I can't wait to be here for a full month interacting with Bay audiences.

Anthony Venezia: I lived in San Francisco for 15 years, and coming back to the Bay feels like a homecoming. We have so many friends and family out here—the Felonious crew, The Freeze, Mortified, and of course there's an improv company I co-founded with

Sammy Wegent called Speechless that still lives out here and does shows at Club Fugazi. It's a triple Mitzvah.

What are you bringing from your Bay Area roots into the show?

Bancroft: I try to bring a little of that Oakland rap battle energy into shows. We stay very positive on stage, but there are moments where we get to express frustrations in a funny way. I feel like the Bay's hip-hop scene also has a strong history of fusing intelligence, playfulness, and activism. If we can take even a little inspiration from artists like Hieroglyphics and E-40, we'll be doing all right.

Venezia: I will be using every neighborhood insight (I see you Mission burritos/new fancy high-rises downtown/fog in the Richmond/

commuters in the Dogpatch) that I can possibly muster into each show. Whatever the hometown crowd wants to give us—we will run with it. I'm just sad to see Buster Posey retiring.

How do you describe the origins of a show that is being rewritten every night?

Veneziale: The show started out as a way to check in with your friends and hear what's good—it's based on the Black art form of hip-hop born in the Bronx. Let me tell you about my day, my community, my life. We paired that with the art form of improv comedy which started as a way to help immigrant kids speak their authentic voice in Chicago (thank you Viola Spolin).

What are the fun and challenges of creating a new show every night?

Folds: Our show is completely made up every night. We get our words, stories, and ideas from the audience. They are a member of the show and we can't do it without them. That's what makes *Freestyle Love Supreme* so unique and special.

Bancroft: We try to break out of any patterns or habits that we find ourselves forming. That's why we take new words and stories from the crowd every night, rotate the cast, and the musicians adapt to everything as well. The best way for us to keep things fresh is to truly LISTEN to the audience. There's infinite variety baked into the crowd each night.

What do you hope the audience will take away from *Freestyle Love Supreme*?

Folds: I hope they walk away feeling joy. It's what we need most in the world right now. After spending a year and a half inside, being able to connect with humans has been a beautiful thing. Can't wait to laugh with you San Fran!

Bancroft: The past 2 years have been incredibly trying for people. We've been isolated from one another and stuck in an echo chamber of bad news. While we can't change those headlines, we can create an hour and a half of true connection. Our show is a moment to truly listen to each other and turn our experiences into music, laughter, and even tears.

Who are your favorite hip-hop artists from the Bay Area?

Folds: Tupac, Shock G, and Kamaiah.

Bancroft: I mentioned E-40 and Hieroglyphics, and of course you have to shout Too \$hort. I also love a lot of the Quannum projects, like Blackalicious and Lyrics Born—brilliant lyrics and delivery. Can't forget Shadow for turntablism. And how can I miss our boy, Daveed Diggs?!

Veneziale: The Hieroglyphics, E-40, Mac Dre, Daveed Diggs, clppng, Souls of Mischief, Del the Funkie Homosapien, Digital Underground (2Pac), if we include Sac then Blackalicious too!



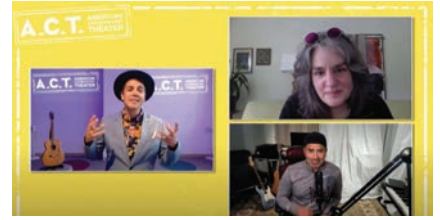
TARIQ DAVIS, KAILA MULLADY, ANDREW BANCROFT, BILL SHERMAN (ON KEYBOARD), AND JAMES MONROE IGLEHART IN *FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME* ON BROADWAY. PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

BY A.C.T. STAFF

Even though our theaters have been dark since March 2020, A.C.T. has been busier than ever. Take a look at what our artistic, conservatory, and education & community programs have been up to.

MAY



- A.C.T.'s Spring Forward goes virtual
- MFA class of 2020 graduates over zoom

2020

MARCH



The cast of *Toni Stone*, photo by Kevin Berne

- Recordings made available to stream of *Toni Stone* (by Lydia R. Diamond, directed by Pam MacKinnon) and *Gloria* (by Branden Jacobs Jenkins, directed by Eric Ting)
- Conservatory programs, including Young Conservatory and Studio A.C.T., pivot to online learning

APRIL



- InterACT at Home launches, containing Meads Reads, Takes on a Scene, Take 10, and more
- Education & Community Programs begins virtual programming

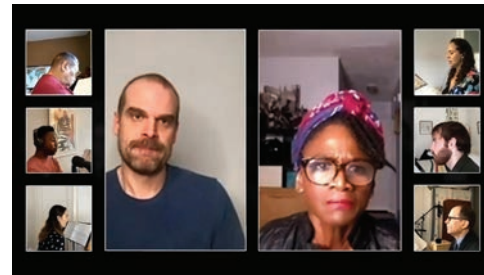
APRIL



Filmed staged readings of *Arms and the Man* (by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Colman Domingo) and *The Matchmaker* (by Thornton Wilder, directed by Dawn Monique Williams)

Pictured: Ariel Shafir (left); Will Dao, Aldo Billingslea, Ashley J. Hicks, Leontyne Mbele-Mbong, Catherine Castellanos (right, clockwise from center)

MARCH



Filmed stage reading of *Trouble in Mind* (by Alice Childress, directed by Awoye Timpó), first in our A.C.T. Our Loud series

Pictured: center L to R: David Harbour and Patrice Johnson Chevannes. The other actors clockwise starting bottom left: Eliza Kaye, Kadeem Ali Harris, Steven Anthony Jones, Lauren Spencer, Johnny Rice, Anthony Fusco

2021

MAY & JUNE



- A variety of virtual programming abounds:
- Virtually Speaking with Ken Ruta
- The world premiere of *Communion* (by Christopher Chen, directed by Pam MacKinnon), featuring Stacy Ross (pictured)



- Adapted a play into a film, collaborating on a bi-coastal release of *Animal Wisdom* with Heather Christian (pictured) with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company and The Bushwick Starr



- Virtual productions of *The House of Yes*, *As You Like It*, and *Describe the Night*, featuring our MFA students
- MFA Class of 2021 graduation
- MFA Class of 2021 Digital Showcase

JULY



First podcast episode of *Place: here. Time: now* released

SEPTEMBER



Virtual productions of *In Love and Warcraft* by Madhuri Shekar, *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse, *Ironbound* by Martyna Majok, *Moon Man Walk* by James Ijames

JUNE



The MFA Class of 2020 presents their digital Showcase

OCTOBER



Virtual production of *Blood Wedding* by Federico García Lorca

DECEMBER



A.C.T. presents virtual performances galore, including *A Christmas Carol: On Air*, a radio play adaptation of our classic holiday show; and the Downtown High School Exhibition (pictured)

NOVEMBER



—Peter J. Kuo and Danyon Davis take over leadership of the Conservatory and MFA after Melissa Yandell Smith announces her departure.
—Virtually Speaking with Annette Bening

AUGUST



Actor training programs begin re-introducing in-person classes

NOVEMBER



A.C.T. welcomes in-person audiences to the Strand Theater for a free reading of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, directed by Pam MacKinnon

Pictured above: Evangeline Edwards and Wesley Guimarães

All photos and screenshots courtesy of American Conservatory Theater

WHO'S WHO IN FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME



ANDREW BANCROFT (Jelly Donut) is a writer and performer in New York. He made his Broadway debut with *Freestyle Love*

Supreme in 2019. Bancroft is a co-founder of FLS Academy and a member of the band Moondrunk. As rapper Jelly Donut, he has been featured in MTV's "TRL," *Rolling Stone* and *Time*. Bancroft writes musicals and is an award-winning ad writer/creative director. He loves whales. He is grateful to FLS, his family and his friends for their love and support. IG: @mcjellyd



RICHARD BASKIN JR. (Rich Midway) is a pianist, vocalist, songwriter and actor. Favorite pastimes include exploring food,

languages and cultures! He has worked with world-renowned artists, including Bobby McFerrin, George Benson, Ben Folds and Kurt Elling. *Freestyle Love Supreme* was his first Broadway show and he is elated to be on tour with *FLS*.



KURT CROWLEY (The Lord and Lady Crowley). As MD and keyboard player, previous work in theater includes *Hamilton*, *Freestyle*

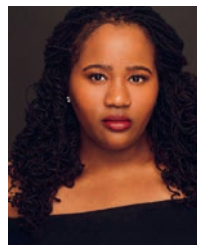
Love Supreme, *Bring It On: The Musical* and *In the Heights*. Executive music producer of *tick, tick...BOOM!* and vocal supervisor on *In the Heights* (Warner Bros.). He has written arrangements for Vail Dance Festival,

Kennedy Center Honors, *Somewhere* (Hartford) and the European tour of *Carmen La Cubana*. Co-arranger and music producer for *Bolero* and *Of Thee I Sing* with Juilliard, conceived and produced the piece *Variations on America*, featuring Yo-Yo Ma and Chris Thile. Te amo, Carlito.



JAY C. ELLIS (Jellis J) is honored to join FLS, repping LGBTQ+ perspectives in hip-hop! Off-Broadway: *Black Hole Wedding*

(Signature), *Saturday Night Fever* (TRW). Regional: *Passing Strange*, *Chess* (Playhouse Square). Film: *Wormwood Falling* (Shriek Theatre), *Poncho* (Corin Michalski), *Interrogation* (Stephen Caple Jr.). Created/Directed *BARS*, hip-hop musical; Playhouse Square & Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music (Alma Mater). Instructor @FLSAcademy. Gratitude@ Vicky, Scott, Greg, Dr. Weagraff #BWMT! Love@ Kyle, Woof@ Bagley. Mama&Pops forever. Instagram: @Jellis14; Twitter: @Too_Jellis; Website: jayellis.net.



ANEESA FOLDS (Young Nees). Credits include Broadway: *Freestyle Love Supreme*. Off-Broadway/ NYC: *Sistas the Musical*. Regional:

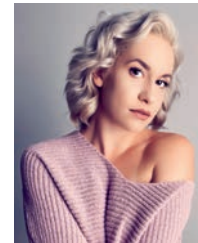
North Shore Music Theatre, Goodspeed Opera House, Arrow Rock Lyceum. National tour: *Ragtime*. Film/ VO: *Vivo, tick, tick...BOOM!* Features include Disney Channel, "Sesame Street," and *Rolling Stone*. Instructor at FLS Academy. Much love to my team,

family and friends. Follow Aneesa's journey @aneesafolds and aneesafolds.com. Yeeerrrr!



KAILA MULLADY (Kaiser Rözé) is the 2015 and 2018 World Beatbox Champion. She travels the world incorporating

singing, beatboxing, and theatre to push the boundaries of storytelling and show just what the human instrument is capable of. She is passionate about teaching others how to beatbox through her Beatbox Education Platform, The Academy of Noise.



MORGAN REILLY (Hummingbird) is thrilled to be joining the FLS family! A singer/songwriter & multi-instrumentalist

from Allentown, PA, her original music can be found on all streaming platforms. A world of gratitude to Mom, Dad, Ian, Peter, Marianne, German, and her incredible team. Every show is for you, Grandpop. Instagram/TikTok/ Voisey: iammorganreilly



JAMES RUSHIN (Not Draggin) recently made his Broadway debut in *Freestyle Love Supreme*. New York City-based multi-instrumentalist,

composer, producer and music director Rushin is often at work developing new shows and new bands. Most recently on *Far From Canterbury* and as Slappi/ Bass in *Eighth Grade President*. @not_dragging.



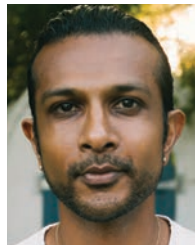
CHRIS SULLIVAN (Shockwave) has appeared on *The Electric Company*, *The Daily Show*, *The Real Housewives of NYC*, *SportsNation*,

The Hamilton Mixtape and various programming for MTV and College Humor. Shockwave has trained and performed with The UCB Theatre, The PIT, Annoyance Theatre and Beatboxer Entertainment and is a co-creator of the FLS Academy. Love and gratefulness to the Ars Nova family, Foxboro High School Music Program, Angus MacGyver, Britt and Yoda. @offbookbeatbox



ANTHONY VENEZIALE (Two Touch) is conceiver and co-creator of FLS and FLS Academy. Founding member of American

Immigrants (San Francisco). He has used improv techniques to create endeavors for television (Cartoon Network, Sesame Workshop, Boardwalk Pictures), for theatre (FLS, *The Freeze*, *American Immigrants*) and for business (TED, Google, Adobe, Salesforce and many more). He is a co-founder of speechlessinc.com, an improv thinking company that helps humans create, collaborate and find their authentic voice, as well as co-founder of the FLS Academy where we use equitable play to foster diverse communities of creative voices. Stage: *Freestyle Love Supreme*, *Servicemen*. TV: *Sex and the City*, *Looking*, *Kid of the Year*. Special thanks to all my teachers including Caricia, Jett and Oci—the loves of my life.



UTKARSH AMBUDKAR (UTK the INC./At Certain Performances).

Utkarsh (B.F.A. NYU) is happy to be back home with the

FLS crew. Off-Broadway: *Rafta*, *Rafta...*, *Animals Out of Paper* (Lucile Lortel nom.), *Modern Terrorism...*, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Film: *Free Guy*, *Brittany Runs a Marathon*; *Pitch Perfect*; *Blindspotting*; *Game Over*, *Man!* TV: “Ghosts” (October 2021), *Never Have I Ever*, *White Famous*, *The Mindy Project*, *The Muppets*, *Brockmire*. Utkarsh’s albums *Petty* and *Vanity* are now available on all platforms.



WAYNE BRADY (Mr. Brady Baby AKA Chocolate Bars/At Certain Performances) is

thrilled to have recently returned to Broadway in

Freestyle Love Supreme. A six-time Emmy Award winner and Grammy nominee, Wayne previously starred in *Kinky Boots* (Broadway), *Chicago* (Broadway) and as Aaron Burr in *Hamilton* (Chicago). Television: *The Good Fight*, *Black Lightning*, *Let’s Make a Deal*, *The Masked Singer*, *The Wayne Brady Show*, *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Colony*, *Don’t Forget the Lyrics*, *Girlfriends*. Thanks Lin and Tommy! Shout to my baby, Maile, and Mandie for always loving me.



JAMES MONROE IGLEHART (J-Soul/At Certain Performances) is

so excited to be back on stage with his FLS family!

Broadway: *Hamilton* (Lafayette/Jefferson), *Aladdin* (Genie, Tony

Award), *Memphis* (Bobby), ...*Spelling Bee* (Mitch). TV: Netflix series *Maniac* (recurring), *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* (recurring), *Gotham*, *Elementary*, *Perfect Harmony*, *Tangled: The Series*, *Duck-Tales*, *Elena of Avalor*, *Vamperina*, *Hellava-Boss*. Film: *Three Christs*, Disney’s *Disenchanted* (2022). To my wife, Dawn, thank you for freestyling through life with me for the last 20 years. I can’t wait to see what else we make up!



CHRISTOPHER JACKSON (C-Jack/At Certain Performances).

Founding member of FLS and a Tony Award-nominated

actor as well as a Grammy and Emmy award-winning songwriter/composer best known for starring as George Washington in the award-winning musical *Hamilton*. He is currently starring in the hit CBS drama *Bull* and in *And Just Like That* on HBO Max. Additional Broadway credits include *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *Bronx Bombers*, *After Midnight*, *In the Heights*, *Memphis* and *The Lion King*. His film and television credits include *Hamilton* on Disney+, *In the Heights*, *When They See Us*, *Freestyle Love Supreme* on Pivot, *Moana*, *Central Park* on Apple TV+ and many more. He is developing future projects for film and TV with his company, Honorific Prods. Twitter: @ChrisSingin. Instagram: @cjack930.

THOMAS KAIL (Co-Founder, Director, Producer). Broadway directing credits include *Hamilton*, *In the Heights*, *Lombardi*, and *Magic/Bird*. Off-Broadway selected directing credits include the world premiere of *Hamilton*, *Dry Powder*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, and *Kings* at The Public Theater; the world premiere of *The Wrong Man* at MCC Theater; the world premiere of *In the Heights*; *Brokeology*; and the world premiere of

When I Come to Die at Lincoln Center Theater; and the world premiere of *Daphne's Dive* at Signature Theatre. Broadway producing credits include *Derren Brown: Secret* and *Freestyle Love Supreme*. Television directing and producing credits include *Hamilton* on Disney+, *Fosse/Verdon* on FX, and *Grease: Live* on Fox. Graduate of Wesleyan University.

CODY RENARD RICHARD

(Associate Director) is ecstatic to be back with the *FLS* fam! Cody has worked on 14 Broadway productions, favorites include *Pass Over*, *Hamilton*, *Kinky Boots*, and *After Midnight*. TV: *Annie Live!* (upcoming), VMAs, Tony Awards, *Jesus Christ Superstar Live!*, *Hairspray Live!*, *The Wiz Live!*, Cirque du Soleil: *Paramour*, *OVO*, *Wintuk*. Other favorites: Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, City Center Encores! Cody has served as adjunct faculty at Columbia, Fordham, and NYU. He has been featured by CNN, *Forbes*, *Variety*, and as *Out Magazine's* 2020 Out 100 honoree. CRR Scholarship program founder. codyrenard.com. @codyrenard.

PATRICK VASSEL (Associate Director)

Broadway: *Hamilton* (associate and supervising director), *Magic/Bird* (AD). Off-Broadway: *Freestyle Love Supreme* (Greenwich House), *Hamilton* (The Public Theater), *Working* (Prospect). Credits include *In a Little Room* (Ten Bones); *Sorin*, *Six Characters...* (Notre Dame); *Welcome to the Gun Show* (ANT Fest); *Nothing Left to Burn* (O'Neill semi-finalist, Ars Nova ANT Fest).

BEOWULF BORITT (Scenic Design)

FLS at Ars Nova in 2005. Broadway: *Act One* (Tony Award), *The Scottsboro Boys* (Tony nomination), *Thérèse Raquin* (Tony nomination), *Come From Away*, *Be More Chill*, *The New One*, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Meteor Shower*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Prince of Broadway*, *Hand to God*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, ...*Spelling*

Bee, LoveMusik, *Rock of Ages*, *Chaplin*, *Bronx Bombers*, *Grace*, *The Two and Only*, *On the Town*, *Sunday in the Park...* Off-Broadway: 100 shows.

LISA ZINNI (Costume Design)

Freestyle Love Supreme (Broadway and Off-Broadway), *West Side Story* (IHI Stage Around 360 production in Tokyo), *Remember Our Song*, and *Breaking Bricks* (Tulsa Ballet). Broadway associate designer of *Six*, *School of Rock*, *Cats*, *An American in Paris*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Hair*, and *Rent* (including the national and international tours) and *Rent: Live* on Fox. Twenty years of regional and Off-Broadway design credits. Web series *Submissions Only*. 3D curator for the Museum of Broadway. LisaZinni.com.

JEFF CROITER (Lighting Design)

Broadway: *Bandstand*, *Falsettos*, *Holiday Inn*, *Something Rotten!*, *Penn & Teller*, *Newsies*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Pee-wee Herman Show*, *Next Fall*, *Mothers and Sons*, among others. Off-Broadway includes *Beyond Babel*, *Mac Beth*, *The Other Josh Cohen*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Cost of Living*, and *The Last Five Years*. Received Tony, Hewes, and Bass awards and Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Lortel, NAACP, Ovation, and AUDELCO nominations. Jeff is a producer of the 4Wall Roundtable and the animated series *Light Humor*.

NEVIN STEINBERG (Sound Design)

Recent Broadway: *Freestyle Love Supreme*, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*, *Hadestown* (Tony Award), *Hamilton*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *The Cher Show*, *Bandstand*, *Bright Star*, *It Shoulda Been You*, *Mothers and Sons*, Rodgers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Tony nomination), *The Performers*, *Magic/Bird*. More than 30 Broadway productions with Acme Sound Partners and five additional Tony

nominations: The Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Fences*, *Hair*, *In the Heights*.

MCKENZIE MURPHY (Production Stage Manager)

Broadway: *Mean Girls*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *If/Then*, *Cinderella*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Wit*, *Everyday Rapture*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *9 to 5*. Other credits include NBC's *The Wiz Live!*, MTC, Signature Theatre, MCC. Thank you to Cody and my family!

ANGELA M. GRIGGS (Assistant Stage Manager)

Broadway: *Pass Over*, *Freestyle Love Supreme*, *Jagged Little Pill*. Off-Broadway: *Slave Play*; *Mlima's Tale*; *Stuffed*; *Picnic*; *Come Back*, *Little Sheba*. Touring: *Once on This Island* national tour. Other credits: Grow with Google tour, Victoria's Secret Fashion Show.

HOLLI CAMPBELL (Company Manager)

Broadway: *Hamilton*, *The Humans*, *Blackbird*, *Dames at Sea*, *Gigi*, Rodgers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, and *The Glass Menagerie*. Director of curriculum for Beyond the Stage Door @beyondthestagedoor. She is a graduate of the University of Evansville and a proud New Orleanian. All my love to mom and Phil, Dad and Sue and Hannah.

MICHAEL AARONS (Music Coordinator)

Broadway: *Jagged Little Pill*, *Moulin Rouge!*, *Hamilton*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Flying Over Sunset*, *Diana*. Off-Broadway: *Little Shop of Horrors*. Tours: *Frozen*, *Hamilton* (national tours, Los Angeles), *Pretty Woman*, *Dear Evan Hansen*. Aarons is a partner of M2 Music with Michael Keller. m2music.nyc.

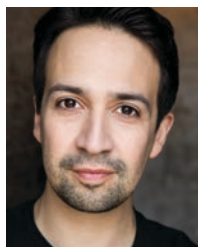
HUDSON THEATRICAL ASSOCIATES (Technical Supervisor)

Over 100 Broadway productions and tours. Recent: *Chicken & Biscuits*; David Byrne's *American Utopia*; *Mrs. Doubtfire*; *Caroline, or Change*; *Girl from the North Country*; *Jagged Little Pill*; *Hadestown*; *Ain't Too*

Proud; Hamilton; Aladdin. HTA is a member of Neil A. Mazzella's Hudson family, which includes Hudson Scenic Studio, Sean Gorski, Christy Perez, Sam Ellis, Frank Swann, Brianne Tabak, and Irene Wang.

CANDI ADAMS PR (Press Representative). Broadway: *Freestyle Love Supreme* (Special Tony Award), Al Pacino in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Man of La Mancha* with Brian Stokes Mitchell, *Fortune's Fool* with Frank Langella, *Fiddler on the Roof* with Alfred Molina. Off-Broadway: Richard Nelson's *The Michaels Abroad; Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish, directed by Joel Grey. Press for The Public Theater (NY): *Hamilton*, *Fun Home*, *Latin History for Morons*, *Seawall/A Life*, *Sweat*, *Eclipsed*, *Here Lies Love*, *Hair*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. candiadamspr.com.

BASELINE THEATRICAL (General Management). Founded by Andy Jones in 2014 and joined by Nick Lugo, Baseline's Broadway credits include *Hamilton; Pass Over; Freestyle Love Supreme; Derren Brown: Secret; The Cher Show; The Great Comet...; The Last Ship*. Off-Broadway: Audible Theatre at Minette Lane, The Enigmatist. National tours: *Hamilton*. Recently established Beyond the Stage Door, a no-cost educational intensive created to prepare underrepresented undergraduates for theater management careers. baselinetheatrical.com.



LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA (Co-Founder, Producer, Lin-Man/At Certain Performances). Pulitzer Prize,

Grammy, Emmy and Tony award-winning songwriter, actor, director, and producer. Creator and original star of Broadway's Tony-winning *Hamilton* and *In the Heights*.

Additional Broadway: *Freestyle Love Supreme* (2020 Special Tony Award recipient), *Bring It On: The Musical* (co-composer/co-lyricist, Tony nomination for Best Musical) and *West Side Story* (2009 revival, Spanish translations). Recipient of the 2015 MacArthur Foundation Award, the 2018 Kennedy Center Honors, and the 2019 Portrait of a Nation Prize. Emmy Award winner with Tom Kitt for their song "Bigger" from the 67th Annual Tony Awards. Mr. Miranda, and The Miranda Family, are active supporters of initiatives that increase people of color's representation throughout the arts and government, ensure access to women's reproductive health, and promote resilience in Puerto Rico. TV/film: *Hamilton* (2021 Emmy Award), *His Dark Materials*, *Fosse/Verdon*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2018 Emmy nomination), *Saturday Night Live* (2017 Emmy nomination), *Sesame Street*, *The Electric Company*, *House*, *DuckTales*, *200 Cartas*, *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*, *Moana* (Grammy Award for Best Original Song), *Mary Poppins Returns*, *In the Heights* and *Vivo*. Additional 2021 film releases: *tick, tick...BOOM!* (film directorial debut) and Disney's *Encanto*.

JENNY & JON STEINGART (Producers). Theater: *Freestyle Love Supreme* (Special Tony Award); Sir Patrick Stewart's *A Christmas Carol; Mean Girls; Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish; and *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*. Film/TV: *We Are Freestyle Love Supreme* (Hulu), *Black Dynamite* (Sony Film/Adult Swim TV). Co-founding partners of the Japanese animation studio Ultra Super Pictures (Trigger, Sanzigen, Ordet and Liden films) and FLS Academy. They are also the founders of Ars Nova, New York City's premier theater for emerging artists and new work.

JILL FURMAN (Producer).

Broadway: *Freestyle Love Supreme* (Special Tony Award), *Hamilton* (Tony Award), *In the Heights* (Tony Award), Rodgers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, *The Heiress*, *Seminar*, *West Side Story*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Sly Fox*, and *Fortune's Fool*. Film/television: *Hamilton* (Emmy Award), *In the Heights* and *We Are Freestyle Love Supreme*. In 2011, Furman received the Robert Whitehead Award for Outstanding Achievement in Commercial Theater Producing. Furman is a co-founding partner of Freestyle Love Supreme Academy. She is on the board of the Lung Cancer Research Foundation, the Corporation of Brown University and the President's Advisory Council for the Arts at Brown.

FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME is a stage show where MCs, musicians, and beatboxers take the audience on a completely improvised musical ride, all based off of audience suggestions. FLS has performed on stages from Cape Town to Melbourne to Edinburgh to NYC and practically everywhere in between. They are the recipient of a special 2020 Tony Award and the subject of the Hulu documentary *We Are Freestyle Love Supreme*.

FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME ACADEMY was created by members of Broadway's hit show *Freestyle Love Supreme* in 2018 to foster an inclusive community of diverse, creative voices. FLS Academy teaches improv, beatboxing, and freestyle rap, with a focus on supportive teamwork and telling your story! Learn more at FLS.Academy.

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

ChopEniana
 (music Frédéric Chopin)
Pas de Deux or Modern Work
 to be announced
Go For Barocco
 (music by J.S. Bach)
Walpurgisnacht
 ("Walpurgisnacht")
 (music by Charles Gounod)

Dance aficionados revel in the company's smart send-ups of iconic repertory, and ballet "newbies" are delighted by the high-camp drama executed with flair and finesse.



Feb 4 & 5
 ZELLERBACH HALL

WAYNE SHORTER & ESPERANZA SPALDING'S ...(Iphigenia)

West Coast Premiere
 A Cal Performances Co-commission

Wayne Shorter, *composer*
 esperanza spalding, *librettist and performer*
 Lileana Blain-Cruz, *director*
 Clark Rundell, *conductor*
 Members of the Wayne Shorter Quartet

A living legend of jazz collaborates with one of the brightest lights of the younger generation in this new work that reimagines what opera can be, and asks us to reexamine the stories we have inherited and the choices we make as a society.

Iphigenia is co-commissioned by Cal Performances; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; The Broad Stage, Santa Monica, CA; ArtsEmerson Boston, MA; Carolina Performing Arts; and Mass MoCA.

Feb 12
 ZELLERBACH HALL



Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration

West Coast Premiere

Jason Moran, *producer and piano*
 Alicia Hall Moran, *producer and mezzo-soprano*
 Tania León, *conductor*
 Imani Winds

In a series of "gripping portraits of a vast social upheaval" (*Chicago Tribune*), Alicia Hall Moran and Jason Moran's deeply personal presentation *Two Wings* explores the Great Migration of six million Black Americans from the rural South to northern cities and beyond.

An *Illuminations*: "Place and Displacement" event.
calperformances.org/illuminations

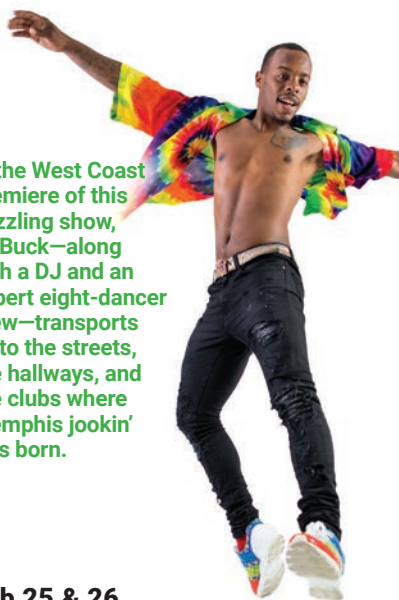
Feb 17
 ZELLERBACH HALL



Memphis Jookin': The Show featuring Lil Buck

West Coast Premiere

In the West Coast premiere of this dazzling show, Lil Buck—along with a DJ and an expert eight-dancer crew—transports us to the streets, the hallways, and the clubs where Memphis jookin' was born.



Feb 25 & 26
 ZELLERBACH HALL

Ted Hearne and Saul Williams' Place

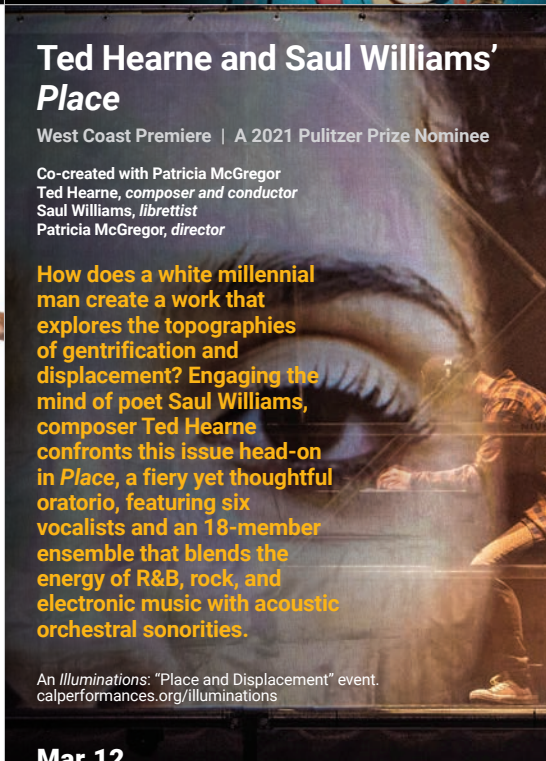
West Coast Premiere | A 2021 Pulitzer Prize Nominee

Co-created with Patricia McGregor
 Ted Hearne, *composer and conductor*
 Saul Williams, *librettist*
 Patricia McGregor, *director*

How does a white millennial man create a work that explores the topographies of gentrification and displacement? Engaging the mind of poet Saul Williams, composer Ted Hearne confronts this issue head-on in *Place*, a fiery yet thoughtful oratorio, featuring six vocalists and an 18-member ensemble that blends the energy of R&B, rock, and electronic music with acoustic orchestral sonorities.

An *Illuminations*: "Place and Displacement" event.
calperformances.org/illuminations

Mar 12
 ZELLERBACH HALL



Angélique Kidjo's Yemadja: A Story of Africa

Bay Area Premiere
 A Cal Performances Co-commission

Starring Angélique Kidjo
 Conceived by Angélique Kidjo, Jean Hebrail, and Naïma Hebrail Kidjo
 Book and Lyrics by Naïma Hebrail Kidjo
 Music by Angélique Kidjo and Jean Hebrail
 Developed with and Directed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce
 Kerry James Marshall, *production designer*

In her first foray into musical theater, Cal Performances' 2021–22 season artist-in-residence Angélique Kidjo explores themes of love, betrayal, honor, and revenge against the backdrop of slavery in 19th-century West Africa.

Yemadja is co-commissioned by ArtsEmerson; The Broad Stage at Santa Monica College, Cal Performances, Ruth and Stephen Hendel, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, MASS MoCA, and Yale Schwarzman Center.

Produced by THE OFFICE performing arts + film.
 An *Illuminations*: "Place and Displacement" event.
calperformances.org/illuminations

Apr 23
 ZELLERBACH HALL





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The New York Times



National
Theatre



TRILOGY

BY STEFANO MASSINI ADAPTED BY BEN POWER
DIRECTED BY SAM MENDES

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH
NEAL STREET PRODUCTIONS

**“YOU DARE NOT MISS IT.
DO ANYTHING YOU CAN
TO GET A TICKET.”**

NEWYORKPOST

**APR 20–MAY 22
GEARY THEATER
ACT-SF.ORG/LEHMAN**

BECAUSE OF YOU, A.C.T. IS HERE TO STAY

A.C.T. gratefully acknowledges the following Producers Circle members who very generously continued their annual giving while our theaters were dark. You played a vital role in ensuring A.C.T. was able to rebound strongly from such a critical time, and your unwavering commitment to this institution has not gone unnoticed. Today—in large part because of *you*—we are thrilled to be able to share the magic and joy of live theater with our community once again.

The following list recognizes donors in alpha order by last name who retained their Producers Circle membership throughout the 2020/21 Season.

Anonymous	Mr. Joel Krauska and Ms. Patricia Fox
Norman Abramson in celebration of David. V Beery	Paola and Richard Kulp
Paul Angelo and Cindy Low	Ken Lamb
Paul Asente and Ron Jenks	Mr. and Mrs. John P. Levin
Barbara Bass Bakar	Marcia and Jim Levy
Dr. Barbara L. Bessey	John Little and Heather Stallings Little
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We are deeply grateful for our extraordinary community of donors whose steadfast support is crucial to fueling our mission driven work on-and-off stage. Please turn to page 30 of this program to view A.C.T.'s full list of contributors. Thank you!

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

—SPOTLIGHT ON SALESFORCE

salesforce

BY A.C.T. STAFF

It all began with a tweet.

When A.C.T. board member Rusty Rueff saw that Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff raved about Broadway's *Freestyle Love Supreme* on Twitter, he knew that it was an opportunity for partnership. A.C.T. was bringing the show to the Bay Area, and who better to collaborate with than a leading company in our community? Our development, marketing, and artistic teams came together and produced a personalized video message to Benioff, complete with a freestyle rap from *FSL* co-creator and cast member Anthony Veneziale. Rueff's idea was a success, and Salesforce agreed to partner with A.C.T. to provide subsidized tickets for our Bay Area community. "I believe the arts have the power to transform lives and lift communities," says Benioff. "As we begin to safely return to live, in-person performances, I am honored to assist A.C.T. in making this production more accessible for all in the San Francisco Bay Area."

Salesforce's deep commitment to the local community made it the perfect partner for A.C.T. While many tech companies left the area during the pandemic, Benioff and Salesforce were vocal about their decision to stay, emphasizing their loyalty to the region. "Salesforce has been supportive at every turn," says A.C.T. Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein. "They quickly responded to make it possible for the arts to help heal and revive their headquarter community. We're grateful for their belief in this production, in A.C.T., and in the power of live theater."

The tickets subsidized by Salesforce, with additional support from the Koret Foundation and a cohort of generous individual supporters, will allow us to offer more than 5,000 tickets free to our education and community partners and up to 15,000 tickets at the deeply discounted rate of \$5 or \$10 to the community at large.

Businesses that partner with arts organizations enliven their workplaces and make clear to employees that they are making an important investment in the community. The arts and tech sectors are both driven by a desire to innovate and create, and a partnership with a theater like A.C.T.—which brings the magic of live theater to almost 200,000 Bay Area residents each year, including 21,000 students and young people—helps to foster creativity by encouraging and cultivating it in the next generation of the Bay Area workforce.

"The partnership between Salesforce, *Freestyle Love Supreme*, and A.C.T. at this monumental moment is boldly exciting," says A.C.T. Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon. "We are all eager to work together to fill the beautiful Geary Theater with song and laughter."

To find out how your company can collaborate with A.C.T., please contact Nicole Chalas, Associate Director of Development, at nchalas@act-sf.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK, LYNN YEH

THE WAY FORWARD—A.C.T. BRINGS

MICRO-COMMISSIONS TO THE GEARY

BY JOY MEADS



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

With *Freestyle Love Supreme*, A.C.T. is not only celebrating our long-awaited return to live, in-person performance, but also the first fruits of a new initiative. During the pandemic, we invited a group of brilliant, necessary artists to create *Make-a-Thing* micro-commissions. **Our only directive was that the artist should channel the impulses that felt most urgent and necessary to them into a short creative project—in other words, to “make a thing.”** Whether it was a piece of writing, a short film, an installation, or something else entirely, as long as it was something that the artist felt driven to create, we were happy.

As conversations about what constitutes “essential” work filled the news, we at A.C.T. and our artist collaborators have been forced to interrogate the necessity of art and creativity. In a time of profound uncertainty, we decided to trust our artists to show us the way forward. The visionaries who took up our challenge are:

- Rotimi Agbabiaka, actor
- Carlos Aguirre, actor and emcee
- Jaclyn Backhaus, playwright
- Shannon R. Davis, director
- Anthony Fusco, actor
- Ntokozo Fuzunina Kunene, scenic and costume designer
- Sam Pinkleton, director and choreographer, and Keiko Carreiro, actress and designer
- Emma Van Lare and Summer Brown, actors
- Dominique Rider, director, and Arminda Thomas, dramaturg, with Classix theater company
- Phil Wong, actor and musician

At A.C.T., we are fiercely protective of the theater’s role as a refuge for rich spoken language and we swoon over plays that leave us word-drunk, but we are equally passionate about theater’s other creative languages: image and spectacle, sound and music, the movement of bodies through space. We believe in the generative capacity of artists of each of theater’s sub-disciplines. We have commissioned choreographers, directors, actors, and designers, as well as writers. We are profoundly grateful to these wonderful artists for daring to create in a time of destruction and loss, for making something new among the ashes of the old.

We invite you to experience the first of our *Make-a-Thing* micro-commissions across our lobbies today. You’ll see more of them in the months to come. Over the last years, each one of us has carried a weight of inestimable loss upon our shoulders, and I suspect I’m not alone in feeling occasional despair. Activist and philosopher Maxine Greene said that “imagination allows for empathy, for a turning in to another’s feelings, for new beginnings in transactions with the world.” At A.C.T., we are preparing for our own new beginnings. It is in such times that we need artists the most.

Information about the artists and digital versions of some projects can be found on our website: act-sf.org/MakeAThing

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY

BY LIVIAN YEH



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

This year marks the ten-year anniversary of A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs department. In the decade since its founding, the department has reached over 125,000 students, teachers, and community members, partnered with more than 40 schools, and collaborated with 112 teaching artists.

It all started with two women and one cold call. In 2011, Eunice Nuval, an educator working at Downtown High School (DHS), was looking for a partner organization for her students. "I was going down a list of theaters in San Francisco, and I thought, why not call the most high profile one?" she recalled. "No one else answered the phone, but Elizabeth did."

Elizabeth Brodersen was A.C.T.'s newly appointed director of education. Formerly the publications editor at A.C.T., she was aware of the needs of schools and educators in the Bay Area from producing education guides: to support the student matinee (SMAT) program. She met with Nuval at DHS, and an ongoing partnership was born.

"It was really focused and intentional," said Nuval. A.C.T. teaching artists would host workshops in writing, acting, and theater production skills at DHS, and the high schoolers visited A.C.T. for classes every Wednesday. Nuval said her students were transformed by the experience. "It changed attendance for us. The students gained public speaking and writing skills. Some of them had never been to the theater. [The program] brought them a sense of belonging, that this is also their city."

Brodersen credits much of the success of the education department to many MFA students through the years, especially Nick Gabriel (class of 2009) and Tyrone Davis (class of 2012), both of whom continued working with the education department after graduation. Close to the high school students in both age and demographics, the MFA actors designed their own workshops in improvisation, writing, and performance for teens. Their dedication to community programs helped to establish the Citizen Artist curriculum, wherein each MFA student has the opportunity to work with partner schools and organizations.

The program's success has lasting impact on both organizations as well as the community at large. Downtown High School remains a valued partner, and A.C.T. added similar initiatives at Ida B. Wells High School, Hilltop Special Services Center, and Mission High School. Other partner organizations have included 826 Valencia, Tenderloin Boys and Girls Club, the Filipino Education Center at Bessie Carmichael Pre K-8 School, Larkin Street Youth Services, and Community Works West. Community building has been a tenet in A.C.T.'s strategic planning process, and the department officially became Education & Community Programs in 2013. As Nuval puts it, "We were always taught at A.C.T. that theater is about taking care of each other."



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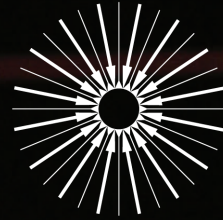
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**BAY AREA
ARTS
TOGETHER**



Toni Stone, A.C.T. March 2020, by Lydia R. Diamond, directed by Pam MacKinnon, choreographed by Camille A. Brown, pictured Dawn Ursula and Kenn E. Head. Photo by Kevin Berne.

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Jerry is president of Parnassus Investments and serves on the boards of San Francisco Opera and A.C.T. Thao and Jerry have established scholarships for music education at the San Francisco Symphony, undergraduate education at UC Berkeley, and high school education for 125 girls in Vietnam.

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Priscilla is a vice chair of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees. She is President of the SF Symphony, a board member of Grace Cathedral, and a board member and former chair of NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation. Keith is president of SF Opera's board and a board member of Episcopal Community Services.

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Past chair of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees, Toni is a retired partner at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. Arthur was one of America's first venture capitalists. Along with other community endeavors, they are cofounders of the Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Center for Corporate Governance at Stanford Law School.

ROBINA RICCI TELLO

Robina is the President of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees and Communications Director for the Million Person Project, a company that helps people identify their core values to tell their personal story. She is involved with the UCLA Depression Grand Challenge, an effort to cure depression by the end of this century, and with NARAL Pro-Choice America.

KAY YUN AND ANDRE NEUMANN-LORECK

Former President of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees and now an Emeritus Trustee, Kay is a partner at private equity fund Health Evolution Partners. She is a trustee of Parnassus Funds and a board member of San Francisco University High School. Andre, the founder of On Tap Consulting, has held executive roles in startups and Fortune 500 companies.

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Nancy Gold, *Physical Character, Acting*
Michael Mohammed, *Musical Theater*
Andrew Mondello, *Musical Theater*
Thaddeus Pinkston, *Accompanist, Musical Arranger*
Salim Razawi, *Acting*
Corinna Rezzelle, *Musical Theater*
Elena Ruggiero, *Musical Theater*
Vivian Sam, *Musical Theater, Dance*
Katelyn Tan, *Accompanist*
Valerie Weak, *Acting*
Krista Wigle, *Musical Theater, Voice*

Conservatory Accompanists
Daniel Feyer, Christopher Hewitt, Louis Lagalante, Paul McCurdy, Thaddeus Pinkston, Naomi Sanchez, Katelyn Tan

Professional Development
Ben Quinn, Mark Rafael, Katie Rubin, Patrick Russell, Radhika Rao, Dominique Salerno

*denotes a member of the Staff EDI Committee

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 Theatre Bay Area, the Union Square Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau.



REAL THEATER CLASSES FOR REAL PEOPLE



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PAM MACKINNON

(A.C.T. Artistic Director) is in her fourth season as A.C.T.'s fourth artistic director. She is a Tony, Drama Desk, and Obie award-winning director, having directed upwards of 75 productions around the country, off Broadway, and on Broadway. Her Broadway credits

include Beau Willimon's *The Parisian Woman* (with Uma Thurman), David Mamet's *China Doll* (with Al Pacino), Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles* (with Elisabeth Moss), Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* (with Glenn Close and John Lithgow), Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia*

Wolf?, and Bruce Norris's *Clybourne Park*. Her most recent credits include world premieres of Bruce Norris's *Downstate* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company, London's National Theatre), Lydia R. Diamond's *Toni Stone* (Roundabout Theatre Company, A.C.T., and Arena Stage), Kate Attwell's *Testmatch* (A.C.T.), Edward Albee's *Seascape* (A.C.T.), and Christopher Chen's *Communion* (A.C.T.). She has been recognized as among the 25 Most Influential San Franciscans of 2020 by *San Francisco Magazine*, along with Jennifer Bielstein. Pam is the most recent past president of SDC, the national union representing stage directors and choreographers, and remains on their board. (she/her)



JENNIFER BIELSTEIN (Executive

Director) joined A.C.T. in 2018. She serves on the board of Theatre Forward, is a member of the International Women's Forum, was part of Mayor Breed's Economic Recovery Task Force, and is the immediate past-president of the

League of Resident Theatres (LORT)—an organization that represents 76 theaters nationwide—having previously served as LORT's vice president; chair of its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; secretary; and on multiple union negotiating teams. She has been recognized as among the 25 Most Influential San Franciscans of 2020 by *San Francisco Magazine*, along with Pam MacKinnon, and as one of the Most Influential Women in Bay Area Business by the *San Francisco Business Times* in 2021. Before relocating to the Bay Area, Bielstein was the

managing director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, managing director of Actors Theatre of Louisville, and executive director of Writers Theatre in Chicago. She has also worked for Steppenwolf Theatre Company, About Face Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and the Lincoln Park Zoo, as well as served on multiple arts and civic boards. She has received the Center for Nonprofit Excellence's Pyramid Award of Excellence in Leadership, has been recognized as one of Louisville's *Business First's* 40 Under 40, by *Twin Cities Business* as a Person to Know, and by *Minnesota Business* magazine as a Real Power 50 member. Bielstein is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, attended Stanford's Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders in the Arts, and has an MBA from Bellarmine University, where she received the MBA Faculty Merit Award, was inducted into the honor society Beta Gamma Sigma, and in 2021 was recognized as a Distinguished Alumna. (she/her)

ABOUT THE THEATER

MAILING ADDRESS

415 Geary St
San Francisco, CA 94102

ONLINE: act-sf.org

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A.C.T. BOX OFFICE

Address: 405 Geary Street and
1127 Market Street

Tel: 415.749.2228

Visit our website for hours of operation

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION DISCOUNTS

Full-time students, educators, and administrators save up to 50% off season subscriptions with valid ID. Visit act-sf.org/educate for details.

GROUP DISCOUNTS

Groups of 10 or more save 20%! For more information contact groups@act-sf.org or 415.749.2228.

AT THE THEATER

The Geary lobby opens one hour before curtain. The theater opens 30 minutes before curtain.

REFRESHMENTS

Services temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions.

PHOTOGRAPHY & RECORDING

Audience members may take photos in the theater before and after the performance and during intermission. If you post photos on social media or elsewhere, please include the designer names listed on the lobby board. Please note: Photos are strictly prohibited during the performance. Video recording is not permitted in the theater at any time.

CELL PHONES

If you carry a pager, beeper, cell phone, or watch with alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater. Text messaging during the performance is very disruptive and not allowed.

PERFUMES

The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented aftershave 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 415.439.2397 in an emergency.

LATECOMERS

A.C.T. performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated before the first 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 performances. 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.

AFFILIATIONS

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 Theatre Bay Area, the Union Square Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.



A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.



The scenic shop, prop shop, and stage crew are represented by Local 16 of the IATSE.



A.C.T. is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from Grants for the Arts.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As part of our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion at A.C.T., we are in the process of building a meaningful relationship with the local Indigenous community. As part of this we begin by honoring the lands upon which we do our work. We would be proud to offer deep gratitude to the tribal band of Ramaytush Ohlone peoples and their lands that cover Northern California and down the Pacific coastline. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the 1700s, the Ramaytush Ohlone numbered approximately 1500 persons, and made their life on the sacred lands. Only a few families survived and still remain. Those descendants make up the membership of the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone (ARO) today. We honor the Ohlone as a people, their resilience, and all they have done and continue to do in maintaining sacred and ancestral lands, ceremony, and communities to this day.

RESTROOMS

Gender diversity is welcome at A.C.T. We invite audiences to use the restroom that best fits your gender identity or expression. If preferred, a single-user restroom can be found on the 5th floor.



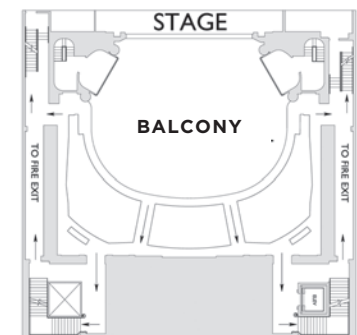
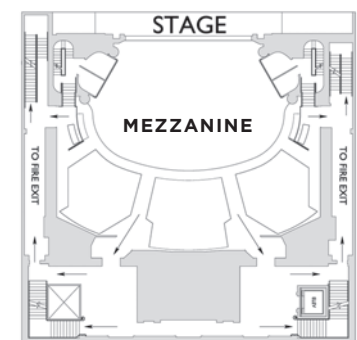
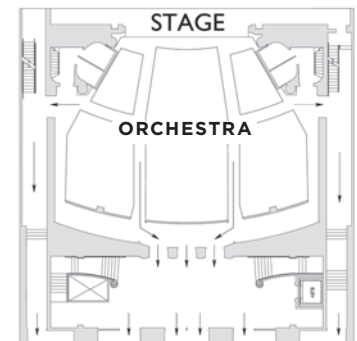
Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

An **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** is available in the house management closet in the lobby of the Geary.

LOST AND FOUND

If you've misplaced an item while you're still at the theater, please look for it at the merchandise stand in the lobby. Any items found by ushers will be taken there. If you've left the theater, please call 415.439.2471 and we'll be happy to check our lost and found for you. Please be prepared with the date you attended the performance and your seat location.

GEARY THEATER EXITS



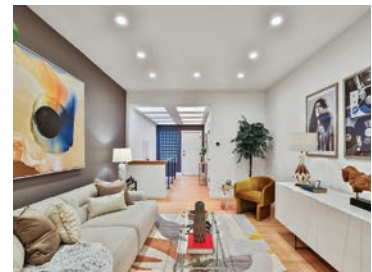
Thank you to our clients for another great year!
We look forward to working with you in 2022!



2500 Broadway
6 Bed | 5 Full 2 Half Baths | 3 PKG | \$17,000,000
Magnificent estate on a premier corner lot. Direct Bay views, elevator, pentroom, 3-car garage parking. 2500Broadway.com



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1 Bed | 1 Full 1 Half Bath | 1 PKG | \$1,295,000
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Team Hatvany

415.710.6462

Team@teamhatvany.com

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@hatvanyrealestate

DRE # 01152226 | 01484878 | 01928433 | 02016667

