



AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER 2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT



Artistic Director, Pam MacKinnon

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

There was so much to celebrate this season!

2022/23 was filled with notions of home. From celebrating the literal homecoming of the adventurous troupe and artist collective The 7 Fingers, to relishing the childhood chapter of playwright Qui Nguyen's autobiographical trilogy in small town Arkansas, to Christopher Chen's San Francisco-set noir and murder mystery that unlocks family secrets, to the iconic American musical The Wizard of Oz, we have been reminded that there is, simply, no place like home.

As we returned to a full slate of exciting programming—including six mainstage productions, year-round classes in our Conservatory, and arts education activities that reached schools and community organizations across the Bay-this year celebrated A.C.T.'s present moment while laying the groundwork for its future. Programming deepened our connection to our audiences and our partnerships with local schools and community organizations. We increased accessibility to all that we do through the expansion of our Bold Access Initiative, which offers free and heavily subsidized tickets to every mainstage production, as well as increased funding for scholarships to our Conservatory training programs. We launched our inaugural All Hallows' Gala and we renamed our landmark theater after longtime San Francisco Bay Area arts philanthropist Toni Rembe, providing A.C.T. with critical support propelling the organization forward during such a tumultuous time.

A.C.T.'s 2022/23 Annual Report reveals a year of deepened investment in our local community through the transformational power of theater. None of this would be possible without the support of our generous audiences and donors.

Thank you for supporting A.C.T.

With gratitude,

Jeff Minick

Chair, A.C.T. Board of Trustees



Joaquín Torres

President, A.C.T. Board of Trustees







MISSION

American Conservatory Theater is an essential gathering place that brings artists and communities together to inspire and provoke joy, empathy, curiosity, and conversation.

OUR 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 theatermakers and audiences to celebrate liveness.

OUR VALUES

INCLUSION:

We see inclusion as essential, and embrace a diversity of voices and perspectives in all that we do. Transparency, collaboration, trust, and respect are core.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING:

We value continuous evolution of ourselves, our art form, and our community. We are open to change, surprise, risk, and the best ideas.

PARTICIPATION:

We are invested in all who engage and collaborate in our work – artists, audiences, staff, students, volunteers, donors, and the community as a whole.

RIGOROUS FUN:

We are serious about the impact of our work and simultaneously experience joy in what we do.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

A.C.T. commits to being an inclusive and anti-racist organization where everyone can thrive. The moral imperative that drives our commitment is the transformational power of art made possible when true inclusion is realized, when a diversity of perspectives and experiences is respected, and when oppressive systems are collectively dismantled—leading to better art, more supportive and welcoming environments, and improved outcomes for all.

In 2020, we published an EDI strategic plan and list of current commitments that can be viewed on our website. This is a living document and will continue to develop and evolve over time.











MAINSTAGE PROGRAMMING PASSENGERS

ON BECKETT



FROM THE 7 FINGERS DIRECTED, WRITTEN, AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY SHANA CARROLL

SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 9, 2022 **TONI REMBE THEATER**

From the creators of Dear San Francisco, Passengers combined contemporary dance, circus arts, singing, acrobatics, and theater into a story that explores a community of strangers with one thing in common: each person has somewhere to go. Audiences experienced tearful goodbyes, anticipatory reunions, and fateful encounters inside the Toni Rembe Theater. In a thrilling and poignant performance, these jaw-droppingly talented performers used feats such as aerial routines, juggling, tightrope walking, and more to explore the intricate connections between all of our lives.

A FULL-THROTTLE JOURNEY... **GUARANTEED TO LEAVE YOU BREATHLESS.**

- Mercury News

ELECTRIC... THE PHYSICAL ARTISTRY AND BEAUTY OF THE **PERFORMERS IS JUST** WHAT THE DOCTOR **ORDERED**.

- Broadway World







CONCEIVED AND PERFORMED BY BILL IRWIN AN IRISH REPERTORY THEATRE PRODUCTION PRODUCED BY OCTOPUS THEATRICALS

OCTOBER 19-23, 2022 **TONI REMBE THEATER**

A.C.T. favorite Bill Irwin can't escape Samuel Beckett. He has spent a lifetime captivated by the Irish writer's language. In this intimate 90-minute evening, Irwin explored a performer's relationship to Beckett, mining the physical and verbal skills acquired in his years as a master clown and Tony Award-winning actor. Irwin's approach to the comic, the tragic, to every side of Beckett's work-including Waiting for Godot, Texts for Nothing, and more-allowed audiences to experience the language in compelling new ways.

In partnership with Irish Culture Bay Area and the Consulate of Ireland, San Francisco, on October 23, 2022, A.C.T. hosted "Irish Day at the Theater." This special celebration began with live music by Kyle Alden and Rebecca Richman, Irish-themed nibbles courtesy of Kerrygold and Johnny Foleys, and a riveting post-show talkback with Bill Irwin, moderated by Beckett scholar Joshua Gang, Associate Professor of English at UC Berkeley (author of "Behaviorism, Consciousness, and the Literary Mind").



PART LECTURE. **PART SHTICK, THIS 90-MINUTE SOLO IS A MUST-SEE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED** IN THE THEATER AS A PRISM THROUGH WHICH TO EXPLORE **MEANING AND MORTALITY**.

- Bay Area News Group



= 1,000 people

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

THE HEADLANDS



BY **CHARLES DICKENS** ADAPTED BY **CAREY PERLOFF** AND **PAUL WALSH** MUSIC BY **KARL LUNDEBERG** CHOREOGRAPHED BY **VAL CANIPAROLI** DIRECTED BY **PETER J. KUO** BASED ON THE ORIGINAL DIRECTION BY **CAREY PERLOFF**

DECEMBER 1-24, 2022 TONI REMBE THEATER

Due to the COVID-19 shutdown, A.C.T.'s 2020/21 and 2021/22 productions of *A Christmas Carol* were reimagined as a spatially-designed radio play that was made available to stream on-demand through your laptop, smartphone or mirrored to your SmartTV.

In December 2022, A.C.T. celebrated the return of its beloved production of the Charles Dickens classic **A Christmas Carol**. Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and those deliciously spooky ghosts, the Bay Area's favorite holiday tradition returned to the stage. This version of **A Christmas Carol**—adapted by Paul Walsh and Carey Perloff stayed true to the heart of Dickens's timeless story of redemption and brings a playful sensibility to his rich language. **A Christmas Carol** is a decades-long cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become a holiday tradition for families all around the San Francisco Bay Area. A.C.T.'s *A Christmas Carol* is an exceptional artistic experience for a young actor, with a cast comprising students ages 8 to 13 from the Young Conservatory alongside veteran professional actors from throughout the Bay.



THE BEST CHRISTMAS CAROL EVER... A GUARANTEED GOOD TIME.

– KCBS Radio







BY CHRISTOPHER CHEN DIRECTED BY PAM MACKINNON

FEBRUARY 9-MARCH 5, 2023 TONI REMBE THEATER

The Headlands is a complicated love letter to our city, San Francisco. Obie Award-winning playwright Christopher Chen dives deep into his San Francisco roots to tell the story of true crime fan Henry Wong. For Henry, his father's unexplained death is the ultimate cold case. But as he digs into the SFPD evidence, he's haunted by the myths and misdirections of his own family history. How did his parents really meet? What's behind the detective's warnings about the case? And what is hidden in the Marin Headlands?

This West Coast premiere of **The Headlands** was originally scheduled as a part of A.C.T.'s 2019/20 Season, and was postponed due to the COVID-19 shutdown in March 2020. We were proud to follow through on our commitment to producing Chen's play as a part of A.C.T.'s 2022/23 Season.



Christopher Chen is an A.C.T. - commissioned playwright.

The Headlands was A.C.T.'s highest-grossing non-holiday show since 2016/17, with over 10,000 single ticket buyers, many new to A.C.T.



WHAT MADE THE **EXPERIENCE CREATIVELY FULFILLING WAS** PAM'S INSTINCTIVE **OPENNESS. THIS IS ONE OF HER HALLMARKS: AN OPEN. COLLABORATIVE PROCESS THAT ORGANICALLY LEADS TO A FIRM ARTISTIC STAMP ON EACH PROJECT... ACTORS ARE EMBOLDENED TO TRY** THINGS AND PURSUE THEIR IMPULSES—WHICH. IN PAM'S ROOMS. SOMEHOW MOSTLY TURN OUT TO BE THE **RIGHT IMPULSES. IT'S** A TESTAMENT TO THE **PROFESSIONAL CREATIVE** SPACE SHE SETS UP. **EVERYONE JUST SEEMS TO BE GALVANIZED AND ROWING IN THE SAME DIRECTION.**

- Christopher Chen



POOR YELLA REDNECKS: VIETGONE 2

THE WIZARD OF OZ



BY QUI NGUYEN DIRECTED BY JAIME CASTANEDA

MARCH 30-MAY 7, 2023 STRAND THEATER

In 2018, A.C.T. audiences enjoyed the first part of playwright Qui Nguyen's hip-hop trilogy about a Vietnamese family who swapped war-torn Saigon for rural '70s Arkansas. During our 2022-23 season, we were delighted to finally produce the second part of the story. The lovers from part one, Tong and Quang, are now married . . . that's the good news. The bad news is that with low-wage jobs, a son struggling with English, and rumors of old flames, the challenges are only beginning. Nguyen reunited with Vietgone director Jaime Castañeda to draw from rap, leap into martial arts, and dig deep into his own family journey. Funny, sexy, and subversive, Poor Yella Rednecks confirms Nguyen as a groundbreaking American voice.

This production of Poor Yella Rednecks: Vietgone 2 was originally scheduled as a part of A.C.T.'s 2019/20 Season, and was postponed due to the COVID-19 shutdown in March 2020. We were proud to follow through on our commitment to producing Nguyen's play as a part of A.C.T.'s 2022/23 Season

Qui Nguyen is an A.C.T. - commissioned playwright.



WILDLY EXUBERANT. **UNABASHEDLY OVER-THE-TOP.** AND GLEEFULLY **IMAGINATIVE.**

- Broadway World





BY L. FRANK BAUM

WITH MUSIC AND LYRICS BY HAROLD ARLEN AND E.Y. HARBUG BACKGROUND MUSIC BY HERBERT STOTHART DANCE AND VOCAL ARRANGEMENTS BY PETER HOWARD ORIGINAL ORCHESTRATION BY LARRY WILCOX BASED UPON THE CLASSIC MOTION PICTURE OWNED BY **TURNER ENTERTAINMENT CO.**

AND DISTRIBUTED IN ALL MEDIA BY WARNER BROS. ADDITIONAL ORCHESTRATIONS BY ADA WESTFALL DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY SAM PINKLETON

JUNE 1-25, 2023 **TONI REMBE THEATER**

A.C.T. presented the classic musical, *The Wizard of Oz*, from Tony Award-nominated director/choreographer Sam Pinkleton (Soft Power and Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812) and Tony Award-winning designer David Zinn (Edward Albee's Seascape at A.C.T.). The sweeping music and lyrics by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg, the beloved characters, and the enthralling journey of a young girl from a grayscale Kansas prairie to a world filled with color, danger, and magic. For decades this enchanting classic musical has been a part of some of the best moments of our lives. When audiences entered the Toni Rembe Theater to experience The Wizard of Oz, they connected with rekindled memories—as well as the spark of unexpected surprises and twists!

50 people from local dance companies and community organizations had the opportunity to dance the jitterbug as part of A.C.T.'s mainstage production The Wizard of Oz.

Students and community members from ten local schools collaborated with The Wizard of Oz's director Sam Pinkleton and set designer David Zinn to create over 570 pieces of original artwork that were incorporated into the actual set, and hung throughout the walls of the Toni Rembe Theater



MEMBERS

= 1,000 people

CONSERVATORY PROGRAMS

A.C.T.'s Conservatory training programs prepare actors of all ages and experience levels to explore their craft and grow as artists. A.C.T.'s intensive programs—the Summer Training **Congress** and **San Francisco Semester**—provide comprehensive training for aspiring and professional actors seeking a lifelong investment and career in the theater, while **Studio A.C.T.** helps adults expand their creativity through part-time, professionalcaliber theater classes.

A.C.T. remained committed to providing financial support for every student who expressed a need. Thanks to lead support from The Bernard Osher Foundation and the Hearst Foundations. during our 2022-23 season, A.C.T. proudly offered a significantly increased number of scholarships across all Conservatory programs, enabling us to continue to attract and retain a diverse student body.

SIGNING UP, DOING THE WORK, AND **COMPLETING THE CLASS WAS A** VICTORY FOR ME. **ANXIETY AND FEAR KEPT ME AWAY ACTING FOR MANY. MANY YEARS. I WAS GLAD TO HAVE SOME** FUN AND GET MY FEET WET AGAIN... I BECAME MORE **CONFIDENT OVERALL. ESPECIALLY WITH BEING OPEN AND VULNERABLE.**

"

- Studio A.C.T. Student

"

SERVED THROUGH THE CONSERVATORY ENGAGED IN 45,000 **HOURS OF THEATER TRAINING DURING** THE 2022/23 SEASON.

YOUNG CONSERVATORY

As a part of our commitment to advancing the craft of theater, A.C.T. is dedicated to training the next generation of actors. The Young Conservatory (YC) is A.C.T.'s internationally recognized pre-professional theater training program for students in grades 3-12. Over the past year, approximately 550 young people enrolled in classes and performance groups, providing a safe and equitable space for students to express themselves.

In August 2022, the Young Conservatory produced **The Code**, a new pop-rock musical by local songwriting and performing duo The Kilbanes and directed by Jessica Holt. First presented at the 2019 New Strands Festival and commissioned by A.C.T. specifically for the YC, **The Code** gave young actors the chance to participate in and witness the development process of a new work from start to finish. A total of five performances took place in the Strand, reaching over 970 audience members.







EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Since 2011, A.C.T. has served more than 40 partner schools and community-based organizations in the Bay Area, providing intensive, teaching artist residencies, workshops, theater tours, theater activity guides, and special student-only matinee performances, all at low- or no-cost. Through our Education & Community Programs, A.C.T. sustains nine uniquely customized, intensive residencies at partner schools and community organizations. A.C.T. is also a cohort of the Jerry Rosenstein Arts Project (JRAP), which seeks to increase equitable access to the arts by providing middle school teachers with professional development workshops and inschool residencies that enhance their ability to integrate theater into their daily teaching practice.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, A.C.T. brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 21.000 individuals in a typical operating year, while providing our local community with entertaining access to the creative process.





FROM A.C.T., I LEARNED THAT IT'S **OKAY THAT IT'S YOUR FIRST TIME TO PERFORM, JUST GIVE IT YOUR** ALL. IT'S OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES. I ALSO REALIZED THAT YOU COULD **BECOME A FAMILY WITH PEOPLE. I APPRECIATE MEETING TEACHERS** AND STUDENTS THAT CARE ABOUT ME. BEING IN A.C.T. MADE ME NOTICE THAT I HAVE A VOICE.

- Chayla, DHS Student



Photo of student artwork of home provided for *The Wizard of Oz* Photo by: Sarah Sugg



- Access SFUSD: The Arc
- Aptos Middle School
- Bessie Carmichael: Galing Bata
- Downtown High School
- Francisco Middle School
- Hilltop High School
- Lowell High School
- Marina Middle School
- Mission High School
- Peralta Elementary School
- Visitacion Valley Middle School





HIGHLIGHTS:

On August 16-17, 2023 A.C.T. supported Larkin Street Youth Services Performing Arts Night, which is held in the Rueff at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater. For this special evening, we provide a stage manager, lighting board operator, costumes, and production management. We also partnered with La Cocina Marketplace to provide food for the evening.

The A.C.T. Student Matinee Program was recognized by AccessSFUSD: The Arc as their Community Partner of the Year.

WHEN I JOINED [THE PROJECT]. I HONESTLY THOUGHT I WASN'T **GOING TO DO ANYTHING BECAUSE I NEVER WOULD SEE MYSELF DOING** THIS TYPE OF STUFF. AFTER BEING IN THIS CLASS. I FEEL LIKE I'VE UNLOCKED TRAITS IN MYSELF I **NEVER EXPECTED WERE IN ME. IN** THE WORDS OF WONI LACY, 'IT'S NOT ON ME, IT'S IN ME'.

- Noia, DHS Student



NEW WORKS AND NEW VOICES





DAVID ADJMI AND WILL BUTLER Untitled Sleepy Hollow Musical Will Butler is an Oscar

nominated composer and

a former member of the band Arcade Fire.



KATE ATTWELL Big Data

A.C.T. will present the world premiere of Big Data in January 2024.



CHRISTOPHER CHEN Untitled



EISA DAVIS : Girls :||: Chance :||: Music :||: women in an increasingly turbulent and unstable world.



ALESHEA HARRIS A Feast of Rabbits: A co-commission with Center Theatre Group.



NAOMI IIZUKA

Untitled Cupid and Psyche play



CRAIG LUCAS (WITH DESIGNER DAVID ZINN) A Christmas Carol

A.C.T. will present the world premiere of this production in December 2024.

A.C.T. is proud to commission new works from artists around the country. Some of the artists we are currently working with include:





RYAN NICOLE AUSTIN, ADESHA ADEFELA, and BEAU LEWIS* Co-Founders











MFONISO UDOFIA

Her Portmanteau, the fourth play in the cycle,

Kufre n' Quay





KAREN ZACARIAS Untitled La Llorona Spooky Comedy *completion commission



MAKE-A-THING COMMISSIONS

During our 2022/23 season, commissioned artists included Julius Rea and LeeAnn Dowd.



In August 2023, A.C.T. produced the world premiere of *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical*, the Broadway-bound musical based on the iconic TV show that brought Black music, dance, and style into every living room in America.

The acclaimed creative team of *Hippest Trip* includes Tony Award-nominated playwright and MacArthur Genius Dominique Morisseau (Broadway's Ain't Too Proud: The Detroit Project), Tony Award-nominated choreographer Camille A. Brown (A.C.T.'s Toni Stone; Broadway's Once on This Island), and the Apollo Theater's acclaimed executive director Kamilah Forbes.

> I AM SO EXCITED TO HELP BRING THE NARRATIVE OF ONE OF OUR CULTURE'S MOST INFLUENTIAL AND LEGEND-MAKING ENDEAVORS TO THE STAGE. HAVING GROWN UP ON THIS SERIES AND BEING IMMERSED IN THE CULTURE AROUND IT. I NEVER KNEW WHAT IT TOOK TO MAKE IT THE ICONIC STAPLE THAT IT IS. THROUGH THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CHALLENGES BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY, DON CORNELIUS'S UNCOMPROMISED VISION, AND THE REVOLUTIONARY DANCE CULTURE THAT THE SHOW MADE VISIBLE TO THE MAINSTREAM. THERE ARE A MILLION HANDPRINTS ON WHAT WE KNOW AS SOUL TRAIN. I CANNOT WAIT TO PARTNER WITH THIS LEGENDARY CREATIVE TEAM OF INCREDIBLE WOMEN TO CELEBRATE THE HISTORY AND THE UNSUNG HEROES OF OUR NATION'S LONGEST RUNNING TELEVISED MUSIC AND DANCE SERIES."





A.C.T. is thrilled to have commissioned and to produce the world premiere of Kate Attwell's Big Data, which will play in our 1.000-seat Toni Rembe Theater from Feburary 15-March 10, 2024. *Big Data*: In a time when technology has given unprecedented access to our behaviors and choices, can your digital footprint capture who you really are? Can it be used to predict your future choices? Inspired by her experience touring Mozilla's "Glass Room" pop-up interactive exhibit, Attwell explores the vertiginous possibilities of the new age of AI.



FINANCIALS A.C.T. FISCAL YEAR 2023 OPERATING INCOME AND EXPENSES



Bequests 2%

Special Events 3%

> Foundation 14%

> > **Corporations 2%**

8%







BOLD ACCESS INITIATIVE

During the 2022/23 season, A.C.T. expanded its Bold Access Initiative. As a part of our committed effort to offer bold access to A.C.T.'s programs, we are providing free and heavily subsidized tickets and scholarships to 80,000 individuals. Tickets are available across every mainstage production with almost 20,000 of the tickets offered free of charge to our education and community partners. We are committed to play our part in removing the financial barrier to participation for youth and adults as theater has transformative impact at all ages.

For more information please visit: https://www.act-sf.org/about-us/boldaccess-initiative

ALL HALLOWS' GALA

A.C.T.'s inaugural All Hallows' Gala was held on Friday, October 28, 2022 at August Hall, San Francisco. The event featured artistic stage presentations with stage and screen stars Bill Pullman and BD Wong and raised essential funds for the theater's artistic. actor training, and education and community programs.





imón and Cristy Johnston Lim



Special Guest Artist Bill Pullman performs "A Lunar Labyrinth" by Neil Gaimar



Gala Co-Chairs Kathleen Donohue and Jeff Minick



A.C.T. Trustee and Special Guest Artist BD Wong



(C Faculty), Wes Guimaraes (MFA'22) and Eliza Kaye (MFA '21





Maliek Turner, Bianca Mallory, and Jill Cowa

A SPECIAL THANKS

American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) is deeply grateful to the many individuals, government agencies, and corporate and foundation partners whose dedication helped bring the visions of so many theater artist's work to life on our stages, in our Conservatory, and in our local schools and communities. We also extend our thanks to the artists who bring these stories to life and to our dedicated staff and volunteers who help make it all happen.

A.C.T. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As of June 30, 2023

Jeff Minick, Chair Joaquín Torres, President David L. Jones. Treasurer Robina Riccitiello, Secretary Celeste Ford. Vice Chair Priscilla Geeslin, Vice Chair Kirke M. Hasson, Vice Chair Rusty Rueff, Vice Chair Steven L. Swig, Vice Chair Adriana López Vermut, Vice Chair David Riemer, Immediate Past Chair Nancy Livingston Levin, Chair Emerita, in memoriam Norman Abramson Schatzie Allen-Jefferson Jennifer Bielstein Jill Cowan Patrick Devlin Kathleen Donohue Jesse Lee Eller Linda Jo Fitz Ken Fulk Rachel Garlin Lara Hitchcock Jo Hurlev Mary Hynes Rodney Earl Jackson Jr. Jascha Kaykas-Wolff Luba Kipnis Cristy Johnston Limón Heather Stallings Little Pam MacKinnon Rodman Marymor Michele Miller Toni Miller Laura Posev Toni Rembe Daniel Sturman Jomar Tagatac Marcia Barrow Taylor Mark Townslev BD Wong Jay Yamada



EMERITUS ADVISORY BOARD

As of June 30, 2023

Barbara Bass Bakar Rena Bransten Jack Cortis Jerome L. Dodson Dagmar Dolby William Draper III John Goldman James Haire Sue Yung Li Christine Mattison Joan McGrath Deedee McMurtry Mary S. Metz Abby Sadin Schnair Cherie Sorokin Barry Lawson Williams **Carlie Wilmans** Kay Yun

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER 415 Geary Street San Francisco, CA 94102 Box Office: 415.749.2228 | act-sf.org