

AUGUST 2023

23 SEASON
24
SEASON 57



BOOK BY **DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU**

MUSIC SUPERVISION, ORCHESTRATIONS, & ARRANGEMENTS

BY **KENNY SEYMOUR**

CHOREOGRAPHED BY **CAMILLE A. BROWN**

DIRECTED BY **KAMILAH FORBES**



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1631 15th Ave W.
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are unceded and we support the Duwamish
Tribe in their struggle to gain Federal Tribal
Recognition. We honor with gratitude the
land itself. This acknowledgement does not
take the place of authentic relationships with
Indigenous communities, which we seek to
build. We hope that this step of honoring these
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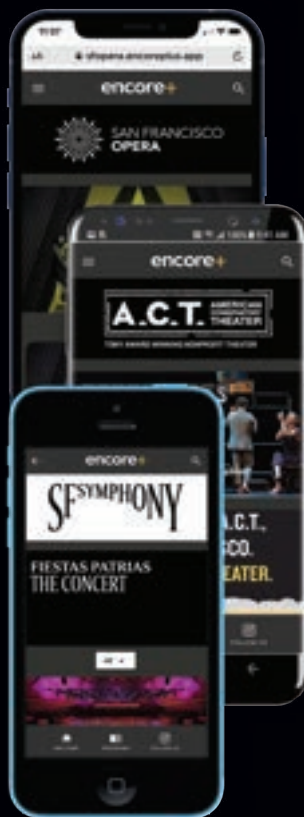
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THIS IS YOUR THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO

American Conservatory Theater is an essential gathering place that brings artists and communities together to inspire and provoke. Now in its sixth year under 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.

In our 2022/23 Season, we celebrated the emotion and meanings of HOME with the 7 Fingers' delightful and acrobatic *Passengers*; Bill Irwin's exploration of Samuel Beckett in *On Beckett*; our beloved holiday tradition *A Christmas Carol*; the west coast premiere of Christopher Chen's *The Headlands*; Qui Nguyen's highly-anticipated *Poor Yella Rednecks: Vietgone 2*; and finally, *The Wizard of Oz*, directed by Sam Pinkleton, which quickly broke all records to become our highest-grossing non-holiday show since 2016.

A.C.T. is steadfastly committed to transformative learning through 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. While the Conservatory's MFA Program ended with the Class of 2022, we honor and celebrate the tremendous impact the program has had on individual artists and on American theater as a whole.

In addition, our Education & Community Programs bring theater and arts education curricula to schools and community-based organizations across the Bay Area. For over a 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, and creation through collaboration, and have fostered the artists and audiences of the future.

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

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 are 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. A.C.T. donates to the Shuumi Land Tax to support the repatriation of these Indigenous lands. For more information on how you can support the Ohlone community, please visit act-sf.org/indigenous-community.

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The cast rehearses at A.C.T.'s studios. Photo by Bekah Lynn.

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EDITOR

SYCHE PHILLIPS

CONTRIBUTORS

JENNIFER BIELSTEIN
KATIE CRADDOCK
BEN FONG-TORRES
NATALIE GREENE
PETER J. KUO
PAM MACKINNON
DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

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Sheku Kanneh-Mason, *cello*

British cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason returns to Berkeley with a program that includes staples by Bach, Britten, and Cassadó, alongside works composed especially for him by Welsh composer Gwilym Simcock, English composer Edmund Finnis, and Cuban composer Leo Brouwer.

"The sweetness of his tone is a wonder to behold...Talent like this comes along rarely."

—Los Angeles Times

Nov 1
ZELLERBACH HALL

John Cameron Mitchell and Amber Martin in *Cassette Roulette*

Tony Award-winning star of stage and screen John Cameron Mitchell teams up with international cabaret powerhouse Amber Martin for *Cassette Roulette*, an irreverent and hilarious evening of songs and stories—all chosen by the hand of fate and the artists' unpredictable game of "cassette roulette."

Nov 4
ZELLERBACH HALL

Kristin Chenoweth *For the Girls*

Musical comedy diva and winner of Emmy and Tony Awards for both her singing and acting, Kristin Chenoweth presents an evening of unforgettable songs made famous by great women singers who have inspired her, from Doris Day's "When I Fall In Love" to Barbra Streisand's "The Way We Were," Peggy Lee's "I'm a Woman," and Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You."

Nov 15
ZELLERBACH HALL

BAY AREA PREMIERE Urban Bush Women *Hair & Other Stories*

The formidable Brooklyn-based performance ensemble Urban Bush Women visits with *Hair & Other Stories*, a full-length dance-theater work exploring race, identity, and concepts of beauty through the lens of Black women's hair.

"The Urban Bush Women are committed, triple-threat performers who dance, sing, and act with a sometimes searing sense of truthfulness."

—The New York Times

Dec 1–3
ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE

Matthew Whitaker

There is a playful spirit of curiosity and exploration in Matthew Whitaker's approach to the keyboard, whether he is tackling bebop, electric fusion, R&B, or Latin rhythms. Now, he's released his third acclaimed recording and features music by Thelonious Monk, Chick Corea, Duke Pearson, and Duke Ellington.

"It is astounding. The fleetness of finger, the touch and taste, the grit and grime when he needs it—Whitaker has it all."

—Downbeat

Dec 8
ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE

WEST COAST PREMIERE Taylor Mac & Matt Ray's *Bark of Millions*

A Parade Trance Extravaganza for the Living Library of the Deviant Theme

Taylor Mac, the MacArthur Fellow, Kennedy Prize winner, and Pulitzer Prize finalist visits with *Bark of Millions*, an epic four-hour rock opera meditation on queerness. Featuring 54 original songs—one song per year since the Stonewall uprising—this West Coast Premiere is inspired by queer antecedents throughout world history and is performed by a diverse cast of 13 ensemble members and a band of 11 musicians.

"Taylor Mac uses his many talents to get us to listen, think and feel. The effect is heartening, vital and liberating."

—The London Times

Feb 23–25
ZELLERBACH HALL

FROM THE ARTISTIC + EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

WELCOME TO *HIPPEST TRIP - THE SOUL TRAIN MUSICAL* AT A.C.T., YOUR THEATER!

Few things are more exciting than launching a world premiere musical. There are thousands of touch points, opinions, decisions, creative hours logged, conversations, rewrites, re-dos, en route to this moment. Like a play, it starts on the page, authored by a single artist—in this case Dominique Morisseau—but in rigorous conversation with many, many folk early and often: director Kamilah Forbes; choreographer Camille A. Brown; executive producer Tony Cornelius, who became a character in the show; music supervisor, orchestrator, and arranger Kenny Seymour; and music curator Jimmy Keys, to name a few, and all before getting into production and design. Much story is held by history, imagination, movement, a musical line or mash-up, a lyric. The concentric circles of collaborators are many for any musical of this scale and with 80+ guest artists and an A.C.T. staff and crew of 150+ all working together to realize a vision, this is the biggest show A.C.T. has put on stage in its fifty-seven-year history. I am energized by today's performance as much as I have been energized by the step-by-step process that got us here.

We have long had a saying at A.C.T. "We just have to get to *Soul Train*." These words took us through the pandemic, boldly. *Hippest Trip* has been announced several times, rescheduled several times. It has been cornerstone programming for four years at A.C.T., while Jennifer and I have only been here five... so a lifetime!

At A.C.T. we explore a theme each season through our slate of programming. *Hippest Trip* has been part of seasons that were to or have explored themes of LEGACY (never announced because of the pandemic), HOME (most recently on display with *The Wizard of Oz* in June 2023), and now kicking off the 23/24 season for real with the theme of THE HUSTLE and that resilience to create something bigger than yourself and hopefully surprise the world and thrive. All these themes apply to this story of Black excellence and entrepreneurship; intergenerational support and conflict; generosity, love and exploitation; anger and hope. It feels appropriate that a story of this scale and scope should probe LEGACY, HOME, and THE HUSTLE and not be boxed into carrying only one A.C.T. season theme. This show is big!

A.C.T. is here 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. That's our company's mission. Let us know how we are doing.

Thank you in advance for spreading the word about A.C.T. and *Hippest Trip - The Soul Train Musical*! Let's pack the house and live up to Don Cornelius's LEGACY of HUSTLE to give Black performers a platform and a HOME to make and share bold artistry and groove.

Love, Peace, and Soul,



Pam MacKinnon
Artistic Director


A.C.T. is your theater. Please let us know what you think and what you need. We are here to bring audiences and artists together, and *Hippest Trip* is a perfect way to deliver A.C.T.'s mission and values. Many of us have our own personal experiences with *Soul Train*—I grew up watching it every week and dancing in front of my television dreaming that I could ever be even half as talented as the dancers and musicians. It is thrilling to share the story of Don Cornelius, Pam Brown, and the behind-the-scenes making of this important show that influenced so much of our American culture. We are incredibly excited to be a part of this world premiere musical and that we get to launch it in our own backyard here in San Francisco!

We welcome you into the creation of this production. If you are already familiar with A.C.T., thank you for subscribing or returning, and if you are new to A.C.T. we'd love to welcome you back to another production this season. Our 2023/24 season is packed with exciting work: another world premiere in Kate Attwell's *Big Data*; the final year of our beloved *A Christmas Carol* (a new version is coming in 2024!); Kristina Wong's triumphant return to the Bay with her show *Sweatshop Overlord*; and to close out our season, we're bringing you the 2022 Tony Award winner for Best Musical, *A Strange Loop*, and the 2022 Tony Award winner for Best Play, *The Lehman Trilogy*.

The best thing you can do to support the performing arts is to buy tickets. Please encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to check out this production. If you will commit to the entire season as a subscriber you can get the best prices, lock in your favorite seats, and take advantage of our flexible ticket exchange policy, since schedules change all the time. Check out act-sf.org/subscribe for more information and subscriber benefits.

A.C.T. is your theater. Thank you for choosing to spend your time with us!

Enjoy the show,



Jennifer Bielstein
Executive Director



PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE

RULES OF PLAY

WE ARE TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE **LIVENESS.**

All and any laughter is welcome. Laughter from many that can make a whole room shake. Laughter that is a beacon of any one person's connection to the story told. And laughter that betrays nerves as a story builds tension. Please laugh and let others around you laugh. It is why we have come together.

We encourage all response. You, the audience, are part of the storytelling equation. Feel free to express yourself and let those around you express themselves. We are building a community with each performance.

Theater is alive and precious in that aliveness. The stories are honed and rehearsed and told with—not just to—you, the audience. If you miss a phrase or two, please know that the show will take care of you. It'll come round again to catch you up and pull you forward. You can trust in the craft, so you can enjoy yourselves.

We ask that you turn off your mobile devices during the performance. This is out of respect for us all coming together to be part of a story told in this space and in living time.

Please share the fun. We ask that you save taking photos or video to before and after the performance and during intermission. We love seeing posts on social media: our programs held high among friends, floating before the set or curtain or lobby spaces. Tell folks about your experience. These shows have short runs and then are gone.

We encourage you to be present, mindful, and together in these spaces. Be kind to your neighbor and fellow theater lover. Help nurture and welcome new and young theater goers; for some this is their first time seeing a play. Give each other room, but also smile and say hello, as you pass on the way to your seats, or at intermission standing in a line, or as you walk out into your city.

WELCOME TO A.C.T. THIS IS YOUR THEATER.

Our intent is to be a truly inclusive theater, welcoming to all. Including these in each program was influenced by artist Dominique Morisseau's Rules of Engagement.

**PAM
MACKINNON**
Artistic Director

**JENNIFER
BIELSTEIN**
Executive Director



PRESENTS

**HIPPEST TRIP:
THE SOUL TRAIN
MUSICAL**

THIS PRODUCTION IS MADE POSSIBLE BY

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HIPPEST TRIP

THE SOUL TRAIN MUSICAL

Book by **Dominique Morisseau**

Music Supervision, Orchestrations, & Arrangements by **Kenny Seymour**

Choreographed by **Camille A. Brown**

Directed by **Kamilah Forbes**

CAST

TERENCE ARCHIE* ENSEMBLE	ANGELA BIRCHETT DELORES CORNELIUS	QUENTIN EARL DARRINGTON DON CORNELIUS
KAYLA DAVION JODY WATLEY	SIDNEY DUPONT TONY CORNELIUS	JENNIFER MARIE FRAZIER ENSEMBLE
MCKENZIE FRYE ENSEMBLE	CAMERON HAH CHERYL SONG, ENSEMBLE	AMBER IMAN PAM BROWN
RICH JAMES TYRONE PROCTOR, ENSEMBLE	JAQUEZ JEFFREY DANIEL	JUSTIN JORRELL ENSEMBLE
JAH I KEARSE ENSEMBLE	ALAIN "HURRIKANE" LAUTURE DON CAMPBELL, ENSEMBLE	ALORA TONIELLE MARTINEZ ENSEMBLE
MIKI MICHELLE* ENSEMBLE	MAYTE NATALIO ROSIE PEREZ, ENSEMBLE	ACHÉ RICHARDSON ENSEMBLE
ROUKIJAH "NUTELLAK" ROOKS ENSEMBLE	SEQUOIIA ENSEMBLE	CHARLENE "CHI-CHI" SMITH DAMITA JO, ENSEMBLE
	MALEEK WASHINGTON ENSEMBLE	

UNDERSTUDIES/SWINGS

TERENCE ARCHIE* DON CORNELIUS	ANGELA BIRCHETT PAM BROWN	UNISSA CRUSE SWING
JENNIFER MARIE FRAZIER DELORES CORNELIUS	MCKENZIE FRYE JODY WATLEY	JUSTIN JORRELL TONY CORNELIUS
MIKI MICHELLE* DAMITA JO	AMANDA LE NGUYEN SWING, CHERYL SONG	ALORA TONIELLE MARTINEZ ROSIE PEREZ
ACHÉ RICHARDSON TYRONE PROCTOR	SEQUOIIA JEFFREY DANIEL	AYA TRAVICK-BEST SWING
		MALEEK WASHINGTON DON CAMPBELL

STAGE MANAGEMENT

KEVIN BERTOLACCI PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER	SHANNON HAMMONS ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	WESLEY APFEL ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
---	---	--

CREATIVE TEAM

JASON SHERWOOD SCENIC DESIGNER	DEDE AYITE COSTUME DESIGNER	JEN SCHRIEVER LIGHTING DESIGNER
JONATHAN DEANS SOUND DESIGNER	AARON RHYNE PROJECTION DESIGNER	MIA NEAL WIGS DESIGNER
JIMMY KEYS MUSIC CURATOR	ZANE MARK DANCE MUSIC ARRANGER	SEAN KANA MUSIC DIRECTOR
JOY MEADS DRAMATURG	X CASTING/VICTOR VAZQUEZ, CSA CASTING	MATTHEW JOHNSON HARRIS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
ADESOLA OSAKALUMI ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER AND DANCE CONSULTANT	RICKEY TRIPP ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER	

*Dance Captain †Fight Captain

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
Recording notice: The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production, or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited.

Produced by special arrangement with
Matthew Weaver, Jeffrey Tick,
and Richard Gay.

A.C.T. PRODUCING TEAM

ANDY CHAN DONALD
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LOUISA LISKA
DIRECTOR OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT
& OPERATIONS

AMY DALBA
GENERAL MANAGER

MARTIN BARRON
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

JACK HORTON
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

THE BAND

KEYBOARD 1 / CONDUCTOR **SEAN KANA**
KEYBOARD 2 **ERYN ALLEN**
VIOLIN **MICHELLE MARUYAMA**
VIOLA **FRANK SHAW**
GUITAR **DAVE MAC NAB**
BASS **RICHARD DUKE**
REEDS **LARRY DE LA CRUZ**
TRUMPET **JOHN TROMBETTA**
TROMBONE **DEREK JAMES**
DRUMS **CLAYTON CRADDOCK**
PERCUSSION **JOHN DOING**
PERCUSSION **JEFF REDLAWSK**

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ONLINE!

We want to see your *Soul Train* line videos, photos of you at the theater, and hear what you have to say! Tag us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Threads using **@ACTSanFrancisco** and **#ACTSoul**

Thank you to our *Hippest Trip* Presenting Partners!

Bringing large-scale musicals—like this one—from script to stage takes an extraordinary amount of resources. We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals who made generous contributions in support of our production of *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical*. Their meaningful gifts have helped to underwrite hundreds of free and heavily subsidized performance tickets, ensuring that everyone in the community has the opportunity to experience the beauty and brilliance of live theater and legendary storytelling.

Linda Burroughs
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Joanna Ebizie
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Robina Riccitiello
Barry Williams and Lalita Tademy
Hilary Valentine
Marsha and David Veit
John and Zaza Wu

Special Thanks

We extend our deepest thanks to the following for their community leadership, which sparked connections and inspired countless others to join the “Soul Train” and become involved with this production.

Jill Cowan
Jerome L. Dodson
Barry Williams

IN CONVERSATION: DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU AND TONY CORNELIUS

EDITED BY KATIE CRADDOCK

AS *HIPPEST TRIP* REHEARSALS LIT UP A.C.T.'S STUDIOS IN DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO, BOOK WRITER DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU ZOOMED WITH TONY CORNELIUS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND THE SON OF *SOUL TRAIN*'S CREATOR, DON CORNELIUS. DOMINIQUE AND TONY FIRST FOUND THEMSELVES IN DEEP CONVERSATION YEARS AGO AS SHE BEGAN CRAFTING THE EARLIEST DRAFTS OF *HIPPEST TRIP*. HERE, THEY CONNECTED OVER QUESTIONS OF LEGACY, TRUSTING ARTISTS, BLACK EXCELLENCE, AND EXTRAORDINARY PRODUCING.

DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU: Tony, you're Don Cornelius's son, but you have your own journey with *Soul Train*. Can you talk about your journey with the show?

they really wanted to stop him from doing this. He was competing against the likes of Dick Clark. But he just wanted to do what he did best.

TONY CORNELIUS: I can start from the beginning where I never wanted to be involved if it had anything to do with *Soul Train*, because in the neighborhood, that's all I heard: "Oh, that's Don's son, 'Soul Train.'" I was in grammar school, and they lined us up and called "Joe" and "Mike" and "Kathy" and whoever. And then when he got to me, "Soul Train." He wouldn't call my name. That started in third grade. It drove us crazy that people were talking about it all the time. But as we grew up, my brother and I, we started to put our arms around it. I started accepting the joy that people felt when they danced on the show at Channel 26 or when they talked about a Black man on TV, Black commercials about Black people in Afros.

Then I went to film school and got involved in the company. I learned from the bottom up: I was a runner, then a coordinator, then a production manager, and then an executive in charge of production. Then I started my own thing and learned so much from [my father]. It was a real education and he really put his arm around me. I mean, sometimes he didn't put his arm around me. He wanted to keep us away from it because this is a tough business. And



DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU



TONY CORNELIUS

DM: What is that? How would he define the thing he did best?

TC: He knew how to dance. He had good ears. He knew there was nothing else like it. He knew he wanted to promote Black excellence. I think those are the things that drove him. And he hung around people like Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King, who were promoting Black positivity. I have a picture of him when he started as a radio guy and a newsman, running Martin Luther King down with a microphone.

DM: That's what he was made of, and a lot of that is in you. What's your role with *Soul Train* now? How have you carried it forward?

TC: I've carried it forward by being open to people who want to help carry the legacy, whether it be working with BET on *American Soul* or working with you on *Hippest Trip*. I've been doing the *Soul Train* cruise for about 11 years now. People really enjoy it and come back every year.

And when my father left this Earth, I started the Don Cornelius Foundation. It's dedicated to those who are struggling with suicide and mental health.

I'm always trying to figure out how to keep our Blackness going – to put programs together that help us along the way.

DM: What do you think it was that made the show last so long? What's the secret to that sauce?

TC: In the cities that were involved, there was a Black population tuning in every Saturday. As bad as they probably wanted to put hockey on instead, it was making money. A lot of people don't realize that it was a fight every day against executives who said, maybe we shouldn't do this show anymore. My father had to convince them to keep it on the air. He was always trying to make it better.

He did things for free. When the show first went on the air, he didn't make a dime. It was hard work and he lost a lot of sleep. Our family had to take a backseat. When you're working that hard, you spend a lot of time away and it gets challenging.

DM: You and I talked a lot in 2020, because what else was there to do? I would stay on the phone for long hours during the pandemic and talk.

I had just lost my father. It's funny how they stay with you, or come back to you. The other day, I was talking about my dad a lot. I have another play going up next year, and it's one he inspired; I dedicated it to him. I talk about my father a lot working on *Hippest Trip*, too. I talked about him on three different calls that day.

Later, I went to pick up my son. When I turned on my car, my father's voice was coming through the speakers. I was like, "What is happening? Why am I hearing my dad's voice?" It sounded like a recording. I couldn't see any evidence of it on my phone when I was listening to it. I realized, "Oh, this is a voicemail he left me." But why was it playing? It wasn't no app open. It was just a weird thing that got triggered. I thought, "This man's trying to talk to me right now." I felt like I had invoked him.

I look at stories as a place to make people immortal, to bring them back and to give them new life and maybe even a new perspective. As you work on projects about *Soul Train*, do you feel connected to your father in a different way? Does working on things about him give you a different perspective?

TC: It does. And I think about what he would think. He's all on the side of my ribcage. Things that he talked about, isms that he talked about. I remember working on the *Soul Train Awards* and Puffy was rehearsing all night long, and the budget was going through the roof. The electricians, the stage—it was two o'clock in the morning. Now my father's at home asleep and I'm in charge. We got into a little face-to-face because I said, "Hey man, you got to move this along." They finally finished, and I guess a rumor spread that me and him had got into this thing.

The next day my father pulled me aside and said, "Hey son, let me explain something to you. Without them, there's no us. If you're going to be in this business, you have to let artists do what they do. And if they do what they do, guess what happens? You get all the credit for it."

DM: That's a hell of a lesson, and that's a particularly potent statement at this time when artists [the Writers Guild of America and the Screen Actors Guild] are striking. They feel undervalued and underappreciated, and then over-policed and over-handcuffed with no dividends to show for it. To hear that an executive

had that point of view—it's a little revolutionary. Are there other qualities that made him an extraordinary producer?

TC: He was also extremely persuasive. When I saw him in action at an event, or trying to book an act, he was charming as hell.

We were trying to book Whitney Houston one time. He had called her management twice, and they didn't call him back. I went in his office and said, "Dad, why don't you try one more time?"

He said, "You know what, Tony? I'm not going to do that." I said, "Well, why?" He said, "They're calling somebody back. They're just not calling me back."

I would blame the manager, but he slowed me down there. He said, "Tony, sometimes you have to understand it's not the manager and it's not the agent, it is the talent." Sometimes the talent doesn't want to do it.

DM: I'm taking a lesson right now—to know your worth, and to not keep chasing someone. If it's not an even exchange, keep it moving. That's powerful.

With *Soul Train*, some of those artists or TV execs might be uncomfortable to go back and admit, "Maybe I wasn't the one that saw the vision right away." But not everybody has long vision. Sometimes we have foresight, and sometimes we have hindsight.

“ IF YOU’RE GOING TO BE IN THIS BUSINESS, YOU HAVE TO LET ARTISTS DO WHAT THEY DO. ”

TC: [My father] made a couple mistakes himself. He said one of his biggest mistakes was not letting Madonna do the show. They introduced him to Madonna. He was like, “Oh God, this woman can’t sing.” She just had this aura. It’s something. And when she became a big star, he was like, “Oh man, I should’ve booked her.”

DM: You’ve done a TV show about *Soul Train*, and now we’re making a musical about it. Don Cornelius is such a storied character in history. What do you think people would be surprised to learn about your father?

TC: He wrote every show. From the beginning to the end, he wrote every show.

People are surprised that he owned it from soup to nuts. James Brown asked him years ago, “Well, who you with?” And he said, “It is just me.” “Well, who you really with?” “It’s just me.” “Don, who you really with?” “Well, it’s just me.” I feel insulted when people wonder whether it was his, because as Black folk, they’ve done a lot of things that stopped us from having our own, and this was his. It was his baby.

DM: What most excites you about having a *Soul Train* musical now?

TC: What excites me most is that we get to see Black excellence. I love that we’re able to showcase the abilities of talented people. We get to extend this world that [my father] created. In some states, they’re trying to erase our history. When you get down to the real nucleus of why we’re doing things, that’s what I appreciate most. Not everything [my father] worked on materialized, but it never stopped him. I use that energy for myself and I’m passing it on to you, and you can pass it on to somebody else. We just have to keep going.

DM: That’s very inspirational. You know, a lot of people around here in the Bay have been saying they’re excited about the show and they say, “The Bay really needs this.” That’s the thing we keep hearing from local folks. I thought, “I feel like I need it.” We going to give the Bay something the Bay needs, something we need, and that’s truly exciting. Every conversation I have with you, I’m always more enriched than the last one. It has definitely helped me give this book real gravitas and heart and soul. Thank you for being willing to talk, for being a partner, for being willing to share in this journey with us. And I mean, I just cannot wait for the Bay to see this show.

TC: I’m going to say what a very close friend of mine said to me when my father died. He said, “Tony, whatever decision you make is the right decision.” And I’m saying that to you: whatever decision you make, Dominique, is the right

decision, okay? I’m handing it off because as I said earlier, when you let artists do what they do, guess who gets the credit for it?

DM: That’s a gift, man. That’s a gift to all of us.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ONLINE!

We want to see your *Soul Train* line videos, photos of you at the theater, and hear what you have to say! Tag us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Threads using **@ACTSanFrancisco** and **#ACTSoul**

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'SOUL TRAIN' VS. DICK CLARK: BATTLE OF THE BANDSTANDS

BY BEN FONG-TORRES



Ahmir Thompson, better known to music fans as Questlove, is nuts. In a book, *The Hippest Trip in America*, by Nelson George, he calls *Soul Train* “the biggest love of my life, more than any career or woman. My mom probably places on top of that, but *Soul Train* is probably the biggest love of my life.” (Ahmir serves as a producer of the musical, *Hippest Trip*. What a surprise.)

But I’m no fool. Dianne, my wife, is the biggest love of *my* life. That may be, in part, because we both were addicted to *Soul Train*, in the early ‘70s, watching every Saturday morning here in San Francisco. In a time of civil unrest, an unwanted war and a yawning generation gap, *Soul Train* provided respite and sheer entertainment. When Betamax came along, I began recording the most popular feature, the Soul Train Line, of delightful, innovative young dancers, flashing fashions as well as moves.

In spring of 1973, while at *Rolling Stone* magazine, I visited the *Soul Train* set in Los Angeles. The show was at war with Dick Clark, as the star of *American Bandstand*, a staple on ABC, was trying to derail Don Cornelius, creator and host of *Soul Train*, which was syndicated, on far fewer stations.

“The Battle of the Bandstands,” as we called it, is vividly captured in *Hippest Trip* by the playwright, Dominique Morisseau.

For my report, I spoke with Cornelius, Clark, and supporters of both men. The article is excerpted here.

After I’d conducted my interview with Cornelius, Dianne joined me on the set of “The Hippest Trip.” It was trippy, all right, all those bold ‘70s colors and patterns we’d seen on our 19-inch Sony TV come to life. Here was Cornelius, checking out his podium. Over there was Bill Withers, the special guest, tuning his guitar.

Before *Soul Train*, and as a kid, Dianne loved *American Bandstand*, and it wouldn’t be long before she and I had a chance to spend a star-filled night with Dick Clark Himself in Las Vegas. But we never got onto the *Bandstand* set; we never met the *Bandstand* dancers in their black-and-white TV prime.

Now, Cornelius and the *Soul Train* Gang welcomed us into their whirl of a world as though we were fans and friends.

We were.

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“Look,” says Dick Clark, ever friendly, trying to cut the call short: “I don’t dig Black people not liking white people. I’ve been seeing too much of that for too long already.”

Clark, ever young at 42 and getting set to note the 20th anniversary of his *American Bandstand*, was especially short because, in this instance, he was the white man not being dug.

Two months ago, a program called *Soul Unlimited* showed up in the *Bandstand* slot, on a Saturday afternoon. It looked to be a Black version of *Bandstand*: Black host, Black guest artists, 90% Black dancers, and soul music and fashions. In fact, it looked to be a Dick Clark version of *Soul Train*, a Black music dance show (itself borrowing from the original *Bandstand*) now in its third year as a syndicated show. And the network-powered new entry infuriated some of *Soul Train*’s friends and followers.

Rev. Jesse Jackson, for one, fired off a letter to Martin Pompadur, an ABC vice president. Jackson and *Soul Train* creator-producer-host Don Cornelius both work out of Chicago, and each week *Soul Train* closes with a plug for Jackson’s organization, Operation PUSH.

Soul Train, wrote Jackson, was the first Black-owned, Black-sponsored entertainment show to make it in television. Even on as independent a route as syndication, the hour-long show was highly-rated in each of its 70 markets.

“*Soul Train*’s success,” he said, “has partially been at the expense of Dick Clark’s *American Bandstand*. Many of the stations carrying *Soul Train* are ABC affiliated. *Soul Train* has consistently out-rated and overshadowed *Bandstand*.”



Photos by Dianne Fong-Torres. Photo of Dianne (above) by Ben Fong-Torres.

In response, Jackson charged, Clark “launched a campaign to recruit *Soul Train* dancers for *American Bandstand*, selling them on the fact that *Bandstand* was a network show.” Clark then began aiming his cameras at the Black dancers, whose fashions and steps have been a key factor in *Soul Train*’s cult-like success with both Blacks and whites.

“Dick Clark’s purpose, in my opinion, was to tell the public that his show was all things to all people and it was not necessary to watch the ‘Black show’—all could be seen on *American Bandstand*. Needless to say, this was an inexcusable insult to Don Cornelius and *Soul Train*.”

But *Bandstand*’s ratings continued to slide, Jackson claimed, and Clark then came up with *Soul Unlimited*, hiring L.A. DJ Buster Jones as host and assigning *Bandstand*’s producer, Judy Price, as producer of the show, which would appear every fourth week. The first Clark show got twice the ratings of *Bandstand* and cut into *Soul Train*, said Jackson. “In other markets where *Soul Train* airs on ABC, the show was preempted for *Soul Unlimited* due to the power and pressure of the network. In short, *Soul Unlimited* seriously endangers *Soul Train*, not because it is a better show, but because ABC, as a power, is able to outspend *Soul Train* in promotion, production and talent recruitment.”

Don Cornelius himself called Clark’s action “an open and overt attempt to seize control of the Black-oriented TV entertainment medium away from the Blacks who first cultivated it and made it successful,” all because, he said, *Bandstand* had been rendered “obsolete” by *Soul Train* and that “almost all of the most popular Black artists have welcomed the opportunity to do *Soul Train* while unfortunately there are hardly any of the more popular rock artists willing to do *American Bandstand*.”

As for *Soul Unlimited*’s host, Cornelius refused to criticize him for taking the job. But, he said, “We noticed a rather absurd reaction to the letters of protest received by the network; Buster Jones was listed at the end of their most recent broadcast as Executive Producer. It disturbs me that Clark’s only reaction to the criticism has been to further exploit Buster Jones by giving him a title that disguises who the real Executive Producer of *Soul Unlimited* is.”

Dick Clark, the man who gave us so many good times, from *Bandstand* in Philadelphia through *Where the Action’s At* in Hollywood through *In Concert* today...Dick Clark exploiting African Americans? We had to hear from the man himself.

Clark was ever-smooth. I mean, there’s no story here. “It’s strictly business,” he said. “I just met with Don Cornelius and Jesse Jackson in Chicago; poured oil upon the troubled waters.”

Asked why he gave his host the title of Executive Producer, Clark dismissed the importance of any title. “It’s like tits on a bull,” he said. “There are other ‘executive producers’ on the show.” Then, pained: “Don’t get into this shit.”

Why did he start *Soul Unlimited* when *Soul Train* had been made available to ABC, to alternate with *Bandstand*?

“That’s my time period,” said Clark. “They want to put a Black *Bandstand* on, then I’ll do it.”

Don Cornelius, reached after the meeting, didn’t sound too interested in anything Clark had to offer. Dick, he said, was prepared to ask ABC to drop *Soul Unlimited*; in return, he and Cornelius would co-produce some Black specials for the network.

“I said I’d have no objections to working with him,” said Cornelius. “But it’d look kinda silly.”

Cornelius laughed at Clark’s explanation of why Buster Jones was listed as Executive Producer. “This is probably the most disturbing point. He could argue, ‘I have as much a right to do a Black show as you,’ but putting a DJ’s name on there...that’s too much.”

Jones said he’d never met Cornelius but sympathized with his protest. “I’d be upset, too. But that’s what it is: competition. I don’t feel bad. I had no intention of killing *Soul Train*; all I wanted was a gig.”

We just heard from Dick Clark Productions: *Soul Unlimited* is being canceled. “Dick Clark is happy and Don Cornelius is happy,” said Clark’s publicist. “Well, I guess that means your story’s no longer newsworthy, huh?”

About the Author

Ben Fong-Torres was a writer and editor at *Rolling Stone* from 1969 to 1981. His cover story subjects included Ray Charles, Bob Dylan, Marvin Gaye, Linda Ronstadt, Sly Stone, and Paul McCartney.

His life and career are documented in *Like a Rolling Stone*, streaming on Netflix. He is a real-life character in the movie, *Almost Famous*. He programs Moonalice Radio (MoonaliceRadio.com) and has a DJ show from 9 to 12 a.m. and p.m. Pacific. He recently received an honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from the California State University Board of Trustees and San Francisco State University.



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WHO'S WHO IN HIPPEST TRIP



TERENCE ARCHIE
(Ensemble, U/S Don Cornelius) A

Detroit native, Archie is a resident of New York City and graduate of the

North Carolina School of the Arts. He originated the role of Apollo Creed in *Rocky* on Broadway, as well as the German translated production at Operettenhaus in Hamburg. Broadway credits also include *Ragtime*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Company*. Favorite Off-Broadway and regional shows include *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Second Stage), *All The Way* (Denver Center), *Guys and Dolls* (Old Globe), *The Squirrels* (La Jolla), *Arabian Nights* (Berkeley Rep/Arena Theatre), and *The Odyssey* (Seattle Rep). Recent TV credits include *Elementary*, *The Blacklist*, and *Raising Kanan*.



ANGELA BIRCHETT
(Delores Cornelius, U/S Pam Brown) is

excited to be back in San Francisco! She was last seen in

San Francisco in the 2015 Revival of the First National Tour of *The Color Purple*. Birchett made her Broadway debut with the show as well. Other credits include *Hairspray*, *Dreamgirls*, *Once on This Island*, *Rent*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *Grease*. Television and film highlights include Lifetime's *The Clark Sisters: First Ladies of Gospel* and *Kevin Can Wait* (CBS). Birchett is also an accomplished live music host, band leader, and musician in New York City. AngelaBirchett.com @angelabirchett (she/her)



QUENTIN EARL DARRINGTON
(Don Cornelius)

is humbled to share with you all this evening. Most recently, he starred in the new hit

Broadway musical, *MJ the Musical*, as Rob/Joe Jackson, following his acclaimed performance as Agwe in the Tony Award-winning revival of *Once on This Island*, for which he earned a Grammy nomination. He starred as Coalhouse Walker Jr. in the Tony-nominated revival of *Ragtime* and was seen as Old Deuteronomy in the Broadway revival of *Cats*. God's blessing on Q's life has taken him across the globe, performing, teaching, and serving in 46 US states, Canada, the Caribbean, South America, Europe, Russia, New Zealand, and Africa. National Tours: *Memphis*, *The Color Purple*, *The Lion King*, *Ragtime*. TV: *Blue Bloods*, *NCIS NOLA*, *The Blacklist*, *Elementary*, *Madam Secretary*, *The Good Fight*, and recurring on *The Code*. MFA: University of Central Florida, BFA: University of South Florida. Love God, Serve God...Love People, Serve People.



KAYLA DAVION
(Jody Watley)

was most recently seen in *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* on Broadway as the Tina alternate

playing the title role at some performances. She is a Chita Rivera Award nominee and recipient. Other credits include Broadway: *Waitress the Musical* (Dawn U/S, Ensemble), *King Kong* (Ann Darrow U/S, Ensemble). Off Broadway: *White Girl in Danger*

(Florence). TV: *The Good Fight*. Film: *Better Nate Than Ever*. She sends many thanks to her family and her tribe! "Thank you God for never withholding your promises...Lead with Love!" @KaylaDavion



SIDNEY DUPONT (Tony Cornelius)

is a 2022 Tony Award nominee, originating the role of Washington Henry in *Paradise*

Square at the Barrymore Theater. He made his Broadway debut in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* in 2015 and continued with the First National Tour and Australian Company. Other National Tours include *Memphis* and *A Chorus Line*. DuPont has also appeared in regional productions all over the country including the world premiere of *Paradise Square* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre (TBA nomination), *Man of La Mancha* (The Shakespeare Theater), *In the Heights* (The Geva Theater), and *Gypsy* (North Carolina Theater). Television/commercial: *FBI: Most Wanted* (CBS) and *Cartier*. DuPont has also stepped behind the scenes as a director, choreographer, cinematographer, and award-winning screenwriter. "Who am I?...I am the conclusion of my Ancestors' story and I am the prologue to my descendants wildest dreams."



JENNIFER MARIE FRAZIER
(Ensemble, U/S Delores Cornelius) is a Bay Area native who began her training at the age

of nine. She has studied at Cal State East Bay, Laney College, and dance studios/theaters from Tokyo to Los Angeles. Some past credits include *Crowns* (Ivory Arts), *Sister Act*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Memphis*, *Dreamgirls*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Berkeley Playhouse), *My Brother Marvin: The Life of Marvin Gaye* (The Paramount Theater). Frazier is also a licensed cosmetologist and serves her community and local theaters as a makeup and wig/hair designer. She's elated to be a part of this cast! IG @_jjtwelve



MCKENZIE FRYE
(Ensemble, U/S Jody Watley) is a multidisciplinary performing artist and songwriter from Detroit, MI.

Frye is a Howard University graduate with a BFA in Musical Theatre. Frye's Broadway credits include the 2022 revival of *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*. Off Broadway and regional credits include: *The Bluest Eye* (Huntington Theatre), *Syncing Ink* (Alley Theatre /The Flea Theater), *Wig Out!* (Vineyard Theatre), *Harriet's Return* (Kennedy Center), *Dreamgirls* (Arkansas Repertory Theatre), *River Deep* (Peter Jay Sharp Theater), *Damn Yankees* (The Black Rep). Film and TV credits include *wishing...*, *The Stronger*, and *Law & Order*. @mckenziefrye



CAMERON HAH
(Cheryl Song, Ensemble) is a multi-medium artist based in New York City. A Texas native, Hah graduated from the

University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance. Since relocating to New York and completing Broadway Dance Center's Professional Semester, she has performed at the Players Club, the Argyle Theatre, and on Peacock's *Poker Face*. Hah is most grateful to honor Cheryl Song's legendary 14-year *Soul Train* career and lasting impact on little Asian girls everywhere watching their TVs! Love to CTG, Mom, Dad, and Morgan! Instagram/TikTok @cameronhah (she/her)



AMBER IMAN
(Pam Brown) is a performer, filmmaker, activist, and one of the most sought-after theater artists and vocalists working

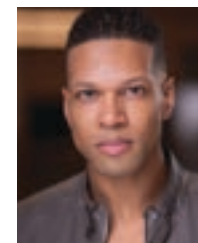
today. Broadway: Nina Simone in *Soul Doctor* (Clive Barnes Award nom) and George C. Wolfe's *Shuffle Along* (with Audra McDonald, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Billy Porter, etc.). Other credits include the National Tour of *Hamilton* and Off Broadway and regional appearances with New York Theatre Workshop, New World Stages, Two River Theater, the Kennedy Center, and many more. TV/Film: *High Maintenance* (HBO), and her self-produced short film *Steve*, a critical darling at film festivals across the country. Last summer, Iman starred in two highly anticipated Broadway-bound musicals: *Lempicka* at La Jolla Playhouse (Craig Noel Award, Outstanding Featured Performance in a Musical) and *Goddess* at Berkeley Rep. Iman is the proud Co-Founder of the Broadway Advocacy Coalition and Black Women on Broadway. In 2021,

Iman was honored with a Tony Award for her work with BAC. Her one woman show, *An Evening with Amber Iman*, is available on Audible! @amberiman_ amberiman.com



RICHARD JAMES
(Tyrone Proctor, Ensemble) is a Panama native who grew up in Flatbush, Brooklyn where his eclectic

dance style was deeply influenced by his culture and the people that surrounded him. James got his first real taste of the entertainment industry as a teen, where he was discovered and hired to model for various commercial print ads. During his high school and college years (Lehman College) he was also a competitive track and field athlete but his passion for the arts never died. Currently, James is represented by United Talent Agency (NY) and can be spotted modeling and dancing in various international print ads, music videos, and in popular Netflix series such as *Pose*. In the Future, he hopes to open his very own dance studio for children of low-income households where he can share his love for the arts.



JAQUEZ
(Jeffrey Daniel) resides in NYC by way of his hometown, Chicago, IL. He is the recipient of the Chita Rivera Award

for Outstanding Ensemble in the Broadway musical *King Kong* (2019). Broadway/First National Tour credits: *Mrs. Doubtfire* (OBC), *King Kong* (OBC), *Motown* (Bway), *The Bodyguard* (First Nat.), *Matilda* (First Nat.) Favorite NYC credits: *Anyone Can Whistle Live* at Carnegie Hall (Featured Soloist), *Apollo Club Harlem* (Featured Dancer). He attended New York University, where he received

his BFA in Dance. Jaquez was a model for Bonobos Back to Business Campaign. When he isn't performing onstage or in front of the camera, Jaquez is listening to disco deep cuts, practicing yoga, and vibing out on his roller skates!



JUSTIN JORRELL
(Ensemble, U/S Tony Cornelius)

is beyond blessed and extremely proud of this moment in *Hippest*

Trip with the A.C.T. family. He is a Graduate of NC A&T SU. Some of Justin's credits include *Pass Over* (Kitch), *The Wiz* (Scarecrow), *Hype Man* (Verb), *The Civil War* (Fredrick Douglass), *The Colored Museum* (Son/Guy/Walter-Lee). Giving all praise to the Most High. Thank you to my Family, we do it together. Ask Justin to be your Host @jorrellsixx



JAHI KEARSE
(Ensemble) is a

performer, musician, creator, activist, and proud father, making his debut at A.C.T.

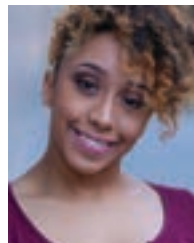
Broadway credits include *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations* (Imperial Theatre); *Holler If Ya Hear Me* (Palace Theatre); and *Baby It's You* (Broadhurst Theatre). Off Broadway and regional credits include *The Fortress of Solitude* and *The Total Bent* (The Public Theater); *Passing Strange*, *People Places & Things*, *Topdog/Underdog*, and *In the Red and Brown Water* (Studio Theatre); *Lungs*, *Bars & Measures*, and *Satchmo at the Waldorf* (B Street Theatre); *A Christmas Carol* (Dallas Theater Center); and *Seussical* (Alliance Theatre). IG @jahikearse



ALAIN "HURRIKANE" LAUTURE (Don Campbelllock, Ensemble)

Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Hurrikane found interest in

dance in early 2007. Known in the underground scene for his spontaneous freestyle as a "Locker," and his versatility as a dancer, granted him awards at many competitions and battles including "Juste Debout 2011" and "Locking Forever" during Amsterdam's Summer Dance Forever Festival 2017 and 2018. He has performed for MTV, Samsung, Madonna, and Janet Jackson. Beginning to dive deeper into his artistic journey, Hurrikane recently performed as a dancer in the Tony-nominated *Skeleton Crew* on Broadway.



ALORA TONIELLE MARTINEZ
(Ensemble, U/S Rosie Perez)

is a professional dancer, choreographer, and

educator from New York City. She began her career at the age of 8, performing with Luciano Pavarotti as part of The Metropolitan Opera House choir. Tonielle is the rehearsal director for Les Ballet Afrik, a Bessie-nominated company that has performed at prestigious venues such as the Joyce Theater, The Guggenheim, and Lincoln Center. She is also a member of The Ladies of Hip Hop. Tonielle's dance credits include Madonna, performing at the VMAs and Soul Train Awards, as well as being involved in Broadway musicals like *On Your Feet* and *Legally Blonde*. Her choreography was featured on the HBO Max series *Legendary*. Special thank you to my family, my mother, and to my beloved dad.



MIKI MICHELLE
(Ensemble, U/S Damita Jo)

is a multifaceted artist with a "true north" for heart-centered connection. From solo backpacking

trips to meditation and study with Indigenous tribes in the Amazon rainforest, she expands her artistic range by enriching her life. As a versatile performer, Michelle has worked with artists such as Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Janelle Monáe, Jon Batiste, and Coldplay, showcased her artistry in commercials (Apple, GAP, LuLuLemon), and been a part of several productions including *Champion* (The Metropolitan Opera), *On Your Feet* (Gateway Playhouse), and *iLuminate* (New World Stages). Throughout all of her work, illuminating love through embodied awareness is her ultimate mission. Connect with Miki @Miki_Michelle.



MAYTE NATALIO (Rosie Perez, Ensemble)

was born and raised in NYC and received her BFA from SUNY Purchase.

She has performed and toured with the Parson's Dance Company, Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Kyle Abraham, Darrell Moultre, Mylene Farmer, and Kanye West. Favorite TV and film credits include *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (Amazon), *The Get Down* (Netflix), *Jesus Christ Superstar Live* (NBC), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Netflix), and *Harlem* (Amazon). Favorite regional credits include *Stagger Lee* and *Hair* (Dallas Theater Center) and *Aida* (Ogunquit Playhouse). Off-Broadway credits include *Queen of the Night*, Third Rail Project's *The Grand Paradise*, and *Cabin in the Sky* (New York City Center).



**ACHÉ
RICHARDSON
(Ensemble, U/S
Tyrone Proctor)**

is an all around artist/performer from Philadelphia, PA. He has been

training/performing since 3 years old and has been given great opportunities along the way, such as singing amateur night at the Apollo Theater and placing first. Richardson has performed behind artists like Lil Nas X and also performed under Nike for New York Fashion Week. Richardson also became one of the first male dancers for the Philadelphia 76ers dance/entertainment team. Performing has always been a part of his life, growing up in church and being a part of the arts in school. He plans to see his work/art around the world.



**ROUKIAH
"NUTELLAK"
ROOKS**

(Ensemble) is a professional movement artist and fitness entrepreneur based

in New York City. She graduated from University of the Arts, receiving a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Dance. After graduating, she enrolled in the International Sports Science Association, gaining her certification in personal training and nutrition. Today, Rooks is a freelance artist and fellow of Ladies of Hip Hop, an NYC-based street dance company. She's performed at Jacob's Pillow, The Guggenheim, Lincoln Center, and more. Rooks has also worked with major brands such as Rock the Bells, Snipes, Red Bull, and Nike. Additionally, Rooks is the Founder and CEO of *GETFITNK LLC*. To learn more about Rooks, her journey, and/or brand, follow Nutellak.r/Getfit.nk.



**SEQUOIIA
(Ensemble, U/S
Jeffrey Daniel) a**

San Francisco native, is excited to be part of *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical* in

his hometown! A New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts graduate, SeQuoiia is a multi-talented actor, choreographer, percussionist, rapper, and vocalist. He self-produced and released two EPs titled *Project 23* and *Sometimes We Forget To Dance*. Other credits include the Metropolitan Opera's *Champion* (Dancer) and the upcoming film *Freaky Tales* (Dancer). SeQuoiia joined Camille A. Brown's creative residency this summer and appeared in Maleek Washington's *Shades 2.0 D.A.P. Diamonds and Principals*. SeQuoiia dedicates this show and everything he does to his beautiful daughter Halo. Você é meu mundo inteiro. Seu espírito me mantém em movimento e crescendo. Tudo é para você meu amor.

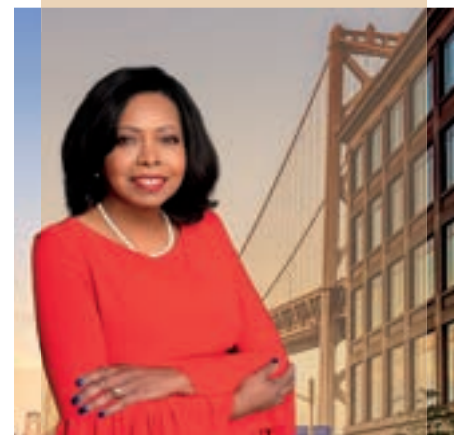
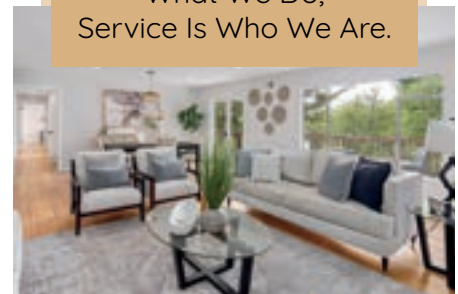


**CHARLENE
"CHI-CHI"
SMITH (Damita
Jo, Ensemble)** is honored to play Damita Jo Freeman, one of the most noteworthy

original *Soul Train* dancers for the World Premiere of *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical* here at A.C.T. Smith's Broadway debut was in *Holler If Ya Hear Me* (Palace Theater). Television credits include *The Get Down* (Netflix) and *The Detour* (TBS). Commercial credits include Dunkin', AT&T, Honey Nut Cheerios (Choreographer/Dancing Mom); other choreography credits: *Fried Chicken & Latkes* (Rain Pryor-National Black Theatre); Nickelodeon HALO Awards, and a critical PSA: *Mom Genes Fight PPD* (Community Films). This is for Mommy, my Miller men, especially My SONshine Kane.



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MALEEK WASHINGTON (Ensemble, U/S Don Campbellock), a

native New Yorker, is a performer, choreographer, and

teaching artist at Broadway Dance Center. Previously Maleek has worked with Sia, Kyle Abraham, Rihanna, ASAP Rocky, and is currently a collaborator with Camille A. Brown & Dancers. While creating an extensive career as a teaching artist, Washington has taught at Joffrey Jazz and Contemporary, Boston Conservatory, LaGuardia Highschool for Performing Arts, Juillard, Move NYC, and NYU Tisch, to name a few. With multidisciplinary, experiential performance works that investigate the people, practices, and spaces shaping Washington's black identity, he is proud to present his art at Pepatian, BAAD, the legendary Movement Research at Judson Church, and in 2023 at the 92nd Y. Washington is also a 2017-18 Dancing While Black Top 10 Choreographic finalist. Maleek is honored to be nominated for a 2021 Bessie Award for Outstanding Breakout Choreographer. He was named a 2022 Princess Grace Award winner for choreography and recently 2023 Bessie nominee for Outstanding Performer.

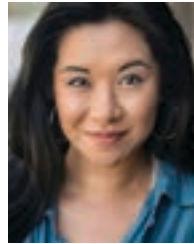


UNISSA CRUSE (Swing, U/S) is

originally from Baltimore, Maryland. The University of Maryland-College Park graduate has

performed for theater, TV, and film throughout her career. Unissa's credits include *Hairspray Live!* (NBC); *West Side Story*, *Mary Poppins* (Utah Festival Opera); *Thumbelina* (Imagination Stage); *Remember Me: The Mahalia Jackson Story* (Hulu), and *The Grammys* (CBS). Unissa has also

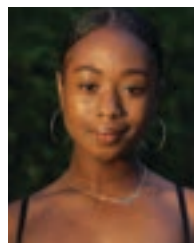
represented commercial brands such as Target, Nordstrom Rack, and Calvin Klein. Unissa, now a bi-coastal creative, prides herself on being a light in every room. Unissa is honored to be a part of A.C.T.'s latest world premiere! Follow @unissa.cruse on Instagram! (she/her)



AMANDA LE NGUYEN (Swing, U/S Cheryl Song) is

an active Vietnamese American performer based in

the Bay Area. Before coming off of *Poor Yella Rednecks* (American Conservatory Theater), she was recently seen in the company of *A Christmas Carol* (A.C.T.), *Patty Di Marco* in *School of Rock* (Palo Alto Players), *Annelle* in *Steel Magnolias* (Los Altos Stage Company), and *Tong* in *Vietgone* (City Lights Theatre Company). Other recent credits include the musical adaptation of *Twelfth Night* (SF Playhouse), *Shout! The Mod Musical* (South Bay Musical Theatre), and the local tour of *Don't Let Pigeon Drive the Bus* (Bay Area Children's Theatre). Love to her beautiful family and friends. Hey, Bub. @haus_of_win (she/her)



AYA TRAVICK-BEST (Swing, U/S) is a multi-

hyphenate creative who has danced for artists such as Busta Rhymes and E-40, and crewed

for productions including *Project Runway* and Showtime's *Flatbush Misdemeanors*. Her professional dance career began at seven, joining the Golden State Warrior's Jr Jam Squad for several seasons. Later credits include the Adcolor Awards, BET LA Live Experience, and the MTV Video Music Awards. Aya is a graduate of Oakland School for the Art's dance

program and the University of California at Los Angeles film program.

DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

(Playwright) is the author of *The Detroit Project (A 3-Play Cycle)*: *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company/Broadway, Tony Award nom for Best Play), *Paradise Blue* (Signature Theatre), and *Detroit '67* (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem and NBT). Additional plays include: *Confederates* (Signature Theatre), *Pipeline* (Lincoln Center Theatre), *Sunset Baby* (LAByrinth Theatre), *Blood at the Root* (National Black Theatre), and *Follow Me To Nellie's* (Premiere Stages). She is the Tony Award-nominated bookwriter on the Broadway musical *Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations* (Imperial Theatre). TV/Film projects: Co-Producer on *Shameless* (Showtime), the film adaptation of the documentary *STEP* (Fox Searchlight), and consultant on the Netflix animated feature, *Tunga*. Awards include: PoNY Fellowship, TEER Trailblazer Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, Audelco Awards, NBF'T August Wilson Playwriting Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, OBIE Award (two), Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, one of Variety's Women of Impact for 2018, and a MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow. In 2022, Dominique was awarded the key to the city by the Mayor of Detroit.

KENNY SEYMOUR (Music Supervision, Orchestrations, & Arrangements)

Broadway/Off-Broadway: *Ain't Too Proud: The Life & Times of the Temptations* (Music Supervisor/Music Director & Arranger), *The Harder They Come* (Music Supervisor, Orchestrator, Arranger), *Rock & Roll Man* (Dance Arrangements, Additional Orchestrations & Synth Programming), *Memphis* (Music Director/Conductor), *Amazing Grace* (Orchestrator), *MARLEY: A Premiere Musical* (Music Supervisor/Arranger/

Orchestrator), *The Tallest Tree In The Forest* (Music Director/Arranger/Incidental Music), *The Wiz* - La Jolla Playhouse (Dance Music Arranger). Film/TV: *Talking with the Taxman About Poetry* (Composer - Global Music Award for Best Original Score). Arranger/Orchestrator for shows on *Fox*, *BET*, and *NBC* including the Inaugural Ball for President Barack Obama. Mr. Seymour has performed around the world, from the Legendary Apollo Theatre and Carnegie Hall to the Montreux Jazz Festival. Education: Manhattan School of Music, Berklee College of Music. kennyseymour.com

CAMILLE A. BROWN

(Choreographer), three time Tony Award nominated director/choreographer, is the first Black woman in 67 years to direct and choreograph for Broadway with *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* in 2022. The production garnered seven Tony nominations including two nominations for Brown as director and choreographer. She is the 2023 winner of the Broadway Black award for Best Direction/Broadway (*for colored girls...*) Other Broadway: *Choir Boy* (Tony nom, Choreography) and *Once on This Island* (Drama Desk nom, Choreography). Off-Broadway choreography credits include *Toni Stone* (Roundabout Theatre, A.C.T.), *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Bella* at Playwrights Horizons (Audelco Award, Choreography), and *Fortress of Solitude* at the Public (Lucille Lortel Award nom). At the Metropolitan Opera, Brown became the first Black director in the history of the MET Opera mainstage with Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (which she co-directed with James Robinson and choreographed), and also choreographed Blanchard's *Champion* and *Porgy & Bess*. Film/TV includes the Oscar nominated *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, Emmy nominated *Jesus Christ Superstar*

Live (NBC), and *Harlem* (Amazon). She is the Founder and Director of Camille A. Brown & Dancers, and has Honorary Doctorates from The University of North Carolina School of the Arts and Drew University. She received the 2020 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Choreography. [@camilleabrown](http://camilleabrown.org)

KAMILAH FORBES (Director) is the Executive Producer of the Apollo, in addition to her work as an esteemed award-winning director and producer for theater and television. Forbes is a powerful leader, widely known for her ability and commitment to continue to highlight the ideas, complexities, and work of artists in the hip-hop community and beyond. She has received awards for both directing and producing, including the 2019 NBTF Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award and an NAACP Image Award. Forbes's directing credits include *Between the World and Me*; *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*; *Blood Quilt*; and *Sunset Baby*. This Howard University alum has also collaborated on *The Wiz Live*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Mountaintop*, and *Stick Fly* on Broadway. She has produced several works for television, most notably the seventh season of the Tony Award and Peabody Award-winning series *Russell Simmons presents Def Poetry* on HBO. Forbes's most recent directorial work, *Between the World and Me*, aired as a special event on HBO and HBO Max in November 2020 to critical acclaim. Outside of her work at the Apollo, Forbes is slated to direct the Broadway premiere of *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical*.

JASON SHERWOOD (Scenic Designer)

designed the 2020 Oscars (Emmy Award), *RENT: Live on Fox!* (Emmy Award), world tours for Sam Smith, the Spice Girls, and the People's Choice Awards on E!. His recent theater work includes *The Secret Garden* at CTG, *The Griswolds' Broadway Vacation* at the 5th Ave, *Evita* at City Center/

ART/STC, *Endlings* at NYTW/ART, and *An American Tail* at CTC. His creative direction work includes an installation for AMEX's Centurion New York, the Pride Arch for 2019 World Pride, Sara Bareilles's *Amidst the Chaos* Tour, window installations for Saks 5th Ave, events for Pandora Music, and more. He is a Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award, and Henry Hewes Design Award nominee.

DEDE AYITE (Costume Designer)

is a two-time Tony Award-nominated costume designer working in theater, opera, and film. Her most recent Broadway credits include *Topdog Underdog*, *Ohio State Murders*, *American Buffalo*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *A Soldier's Play*, *Slave Play*, *Chicken & Biscuits*, *American Son*, and *Children of a Lesser God*. Her select Off-Broadway credits include *Merry Wives* (The Public Theater); *Seven Deadly Sins* (Tectonic); *Days of Wines and Roses*, *Secret Life of Bees*, *Marie and Rosetta*, (Atlantic); *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark*, (Signature); *Nollywood Dreams*, *BLKS*, *School Girls...* (MCC); *Bella: An American Tall Tale* (Playwrights Horizons); and *Toni Stone* (Roundabout). Regionally, Ayite's work has appeared at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Steppenwolf, Arena Stage, and more. She has worked in television with Netflix, Comedy Central, and FOX Shortcoms. Ayite earned her MFA at the Yale School of Drama and has received a TDF/Kitty Leech Young Master Award, Obie, Drama Desk, Henry Hewes, Lucille Lortel, Helen Hayes, Theatre Bay Area, and Jeff Awards.

JEN SCHRIEVER (Lighting Designer)

Broadway credits include *A Strange Loop* (Tony nomination, also currently running on the West End), *Death of a Salesman* (Tony nomination), *1776*, *Birthday Candles*, *Lackawanna Blues*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Lifespan*

of a Fact, Eclipsed, Ghetto Klown. Jen recently lit *A Transparent Musical* at the Mark Taper Forum in LA. Opera credits include *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (World Premiere, Seattle Opera), *Die Fledermaus*, *Pearl Fishers* (Metropolitan Opera); *Faust*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *La Traviata*, (Mariinsky, Russia). Jen has an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence and is an adjunct at Purchase College. Mom to Henry. jenschriever.com

JONATHAN DEANS (Sound Designer) has a wealth of experience in sound design. He has worked on various musical productions both on Broadway and West End, and plays and spectacles worldwide, such as Cirque du Soleil. His ability to create immersive soundscapes has earned him a reputation as one of the leading sound designers in the entertainment industry. He is known for his attention to detail and ability to seamlessly integrate sound into the overall production, elevating the music and audience's experience. designingsound.com

AARON RHYNE (Projection Designer) Broadway: *for colored girls...*, *The Sound Inside* (Outer Critics Circle Award), *Anastasia* (Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award), *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Drama Desk Award), *Bonnie and Clyde*. TV: *Hasan Minhaj: The King's Jester*. Opera: *The Thirteenth Child* (Santa Fe Opera), *The Ghosts of Versailles* (LA Opera), *La Traviata* (Wolftrap), *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Florida Grand, Opera Colorado). Disney: *Frozen* (Disneyland), *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Tangled*, and multiple other productions for Disney Parks and Cruise Lines. Ballet: Septime Webre's *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sun Also Rises* (Washington Ballet). @aaronrhynedesigns aaronrhyme.com

MIA NEAL (Wig Designer) Academy Award, Emmy, Drama Desk, BAFTA, and Critics Choice recipient. Mia's theater credits include *Shuffle Along*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *West Side Story*, *KPOP on Broadway*, *Ain't No Mo'*. Film and TV credits: *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Uncut Gems*, *Jazzman's Blues*, *White Noise*, "Annie Live." Mia is a Gary, IN, native and attended Jackson State University and Juilliard Wig/Makeup Apprentice Program.

JIMMY KEYS (Music Curator) aka "J. Keys," is a Hip Hop artist, music producer, and composer who worked in the music industry for many years in marketing and promotions, curating programs for top DJs in the country, and working with brands including Universal Records, BET, and Bad Boy Records. As a composer and producer, Jimmy has worked in theater on various projects, including: *Skeleton Crew* (MTC/Broadway; Atlantic Theatre Company); *Confederates* (Signature Theatre); *Third Grade*, *Jezelle the Gazelle*, *Revelations*, and *A Human Experiment* (Playing On Air). Jimmy is also currently developing a show for TV and releasing an EP with Cultural Bastards entitled "The Drawing Board."

ZANE MARK (Dance Music Arranger) is a composer, orchestrator, and arranger with credits that include his co-writing *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*, for which he received Tony and Grammy Award nominations. Some of his other Broadway credits include *Mrs. Doubtfire the Musical*, *The Cher Show*, *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *Motown*, *Pippin*, *Leap of Faith*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Never Gonna Dance*, and *The Full Monty*. His off-Broadway credits include *Smart People*, *Harlem Song*, *The Brother/Sister Plays*, and *Radiant Baby*.

SEAN KANA (Music Director) was Associate Music Director on the 2018 pre-Broadway tour of *Ain't*

Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations. Sean has been Broadway by the Bay's Resident Music Director since 2012, where his most notable accomplishments are *In the Heights* (TBA Best Music Direction), *Miss Saigon*, *Les Misérables*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Sean has worked around the Bay Area at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, Center Repertory Theatre, and more. He has toured to Cuba, China, Italy, France, London, and throughout the US, and has worked at the Lenaea Musical Theatre festival for five years now. Sean is an accomplished vocal technician, teaching the fusion of musical styles under the classical technique. He is a San Francisco State University alum.

JOY MEADS (Dramaturg), a native of Oakland, is director of dramaturgy and new works at American Conservatory Theater. A.C.T. credits include *Poor Yella Rednecks: Vietgone 2*, *The Headlands*, *Fefu and Her Friends*, *Communion*, *Testmatch*, *Wakey, Wakey, Sweat*, *Men on Boats*, Edward Albee's *Seascape*, *Her Portmanteau*, *The Great Leap*, and *Rhinoceros*. Prior to A.C.T., she was literary manager/artistic engagement strategist at Center Theatre Group. CTG credits include *Archduke*, *Good Grief*, *Appropriate*, *Forever*, *Marjorie Prime* (2015 Pulitzer Prize finalist), *A Parallelogram*, *The Royale*, and *Sleep* (also: Brooklyn Academy of Music and Yale Repertory Theatre). Previously, Meads was literary manager at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and associate artistic director at California Shakespeare Theater. Meads is a co-founder of The Kilroys. (she/her)

X CASTING/VICTOR VAZQUEZ, CSA (Casting) is the founder and lead Casting Director of X Casting (xcastingnyc.com). He has cast projects for Broadway, off-Broadway, London's West End, TV (upcoming: *Genius: MLK/X* for 20th TV, Nat Geo, Disney+), and

film. He is the proud son of Mexican immigrants. In the 70s and 80s his dad was a house DJ in Los Angeles who watched *Soul Train* to keep up with music trends. His DJ name was Zygnus—it meant the “sounds of the universe.” Victor grew up as a baby behind that DJ table. (he/him)

MATTHEW JOHNSON HARRIS (Associate Director) is a director, choreographer, writer, and developer. Harris most recently choreographed *Take Me to The World: A Tribute to Stephen Sondheim* at Carnegie Hall and served on the directing teams for the Tony-nominated *Hangmen* and Tony-winning revival of *Parade*. In 2016, Harris founded The Mosaic Project which raises money for different nonprofits that support marginalized groups and promotes interfaith through concerts and productions starring Broadway performers. Under his direction there have been 13 productions, featuring 100+ Broadway performers, and over \$100,000 raised. He aspires to tell stories that celebrate individual identity while simultaneously creating more intersectionality.

ADESOLA OSAKALUMI (Associate Choreographer and Dance Consultant) has choreographed *Skeleton Crew* at Manhattan Theater Club, *Cullud Wattah*, *Coal Country*, and *Othello* at The Public Theatre, *This Land Was Made* and *Good Grief* at The Vineyard Theatre, *Drinking in America* and *Jam On The Groove* at The Minetta Lane Theater, and the film *School of Rock*. As an actor Osakalumi has starred in *Skeleton Crew*, *Fela!*, and *Equus* on Broadway, *runboyrun* at New York Theater Workshop, *Syncing Ink* at The Flea Theater, and in *Endgame* (NBC) and *Blue Bloods* (CBS.) Osakalumi thanks the Creator, my Ancestors, my Family, and this incredible team. adesola.com IG: @adesolaosakalumi

RICKEY TRIPP (Associate Choreographer) Director/Choreographer: *Rent*, Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Choreographer: *A Raisin in the Sun* (Public Theater, NYC) *Kinky Boots* (Broadway at Music Circus), *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* (Detroit Opera, Opera Omaha), *Rent* (Signature Theater), *A Wonderful World*, World Premiere (Miami New Drama). TV/Film: *Eileen* (Universal Pictures) Sundance Film Festival 2023, *A Thousand and One* (Universal Pictures) Sundance Film Festival U.S. Grand Jury Prize 2023. *Encore!* (Disney). Rickey is currently on faculty for Immersive Artist Experience and a Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® Technique, Certified Mentor. He received a BA in Dance from San Jose State University. (he series)

STORI AYERS (Writer's Associate) is an actor, director and co-founder of [RARE] Lotus Productions. For the past 11 years she's been creating art with Dominique Morisseau. She's an original cast member and producer of Morisseau's *Blood at the Root*, served as her Executive Assistant for 5 years, and directed the world premiere of *Confederates* at Signature Theatre, NYC. She also directed *Paradise Blue* at the Geffen Playhouse, *Skeleton Crew* at Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati, *Blood at the Root* at Chautauqua Theatre Company, and *Third Grade* for Playing On Air. Ayers was the Associate Director of *Skeleton Crew* on Broadway. She also played Chelle and Bunny in productions of *Detroit '67* and *Regine* in *Mud Row*.

ANN JAMES (Intimacy and Cultural Coordinator) made her debut as the first Black Intimacy Coordinator of Broadway in 2021 for Antoinette Nwandu's *Pass Over*. James serves as an intimacy and sensitivity consultant for *Hamilton* (USA) and *Hamilton* (UK), and is currently serving as an Intimacy/Cultural

consultant in New York City for *Parade*, *Sweeney Todd*, *White Girl in Danger*, *How to Defend Yourself*, *Amani*, and at La Jolla Playhouse for *The Outsiders*.

KEVIN BERTOLACCI (Production Stage Manager) is making his A.C.T. debut. Previous Broadway credits include the original production of *Caroline, or Change*, which also played just next door at the Curran in 2005; Tony Award-winning Best Musical, *Fun Home*; Kander and Ebb's *Curtains*; *Rocky the Musical*; the 2021 revival *West Side Story*; *Scandalous*; Twyla Tharp's *Come Fly Away*; *The Woman in White*; and three Shakespearian tragedies: *Macbeth* with Daniel Craig and Ruth Negga, *King Lear* with Glenda Jackson, and *Julius Caesar* with Denzel Washington. He is a proud member of the Actors' Equity Association since 2001.

SHANNON HAMMONS (Assistant Stage Manager) has recently worked in San Francisco with *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Broadway credits include *The Music Man*, *Moulin Rouge!*, *Harry Connick Jr.: A Celebration of Cole Porter*, *Pretty Woman*, *On Your Feet!*, *How to Succeed...*, and *Promises, Promises*. Off-Broadway: *Avenue Q*. Performing Broadway credits: *A Funny Thing...Forum*, *Contact*, and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

WESLEY APFEL (Assistant Stage Manager) returns to A.C.T. after *Poor Yella Rednecks: Vietgone 2* earlier this year. Recently, he stage managed *Lear* (CalShakes); *UNSEEN* and *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); and the west coast premiere of *Predictor* (Capital Stage). NY credits include the original productions of *Gutenberg! The Musical!*, *The Graduate*, *Festen*, *Bat Boy*, *The Musical of Musicals*, *The Thing About Men*, and shows with The Public Theater, Paper Mill Playhouse, and Barrington Stage. Bay Area credits include *Somewhere* (TheatreWorks); *This Is How It Goes*,

After the Revolution, Detroit (Aurora Theatre); *Scenes from 71* Years, Night Over Erzinga, ReOrient* (Golden Thread, Resident Artist); *The 39 Steps, Lucky Stiff, Xanadu* (Center REP); over 25 productions with Capital Stage, Sacramento Theater Company, and Music Circus. For Frances. (he/him)

MATTHEW WEAVER (Producer)

is a multi-faceted producer who has experienced unparalleled success working across film, TV, and theater. His numerous accolades include 5 Tony Award nominations for Broadway's *Rock of Ages*, a Grammy nomination for *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead* (Netflix), and 8 Primetime Emmy Awards and 3 James Bear Awards for *Chef's Table* (Netflix). Film includes: *Rock of Ages, We're the Millers, The Heartbreak Kid, Hesh, Sympathy for Delicious, Pretty Persuasion, Jiro Dreams of Sushi, The First Monday in May, Surfwise*, and more. Current/upcoming projects include *The Life and Near Death of Travis Barker* (Amazon), a documentary about the Blink-182 drummer's 2008 plane crash; *Drag: The Musical*, starring Alaska Thunderfuck, set to open in the West End in fall 2023; *Wonderland* (Hulu), a story based on his years growing up in New York in the 70s with his openly gay father; and *Nothing To Lose: The Untold Story of '80s Hard Rock* (Paramount+), a nonfiction series exploring the hard rock band explosion that launched from L.A.'s Sunset Strip.

JEFFREY TICK (Producer) was the co-owner of the Helen Hayes Theatre, the only independently owned venue on Broadway, whose longest and most successful show was the musical *Rock of Ages*. After selling the Helen Hayes to a nonprofit theater company in 2015, Jeff decided to produce *Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical*. Jeff also currently owns Tick and Company, a full-service insurance brokerage company based in New York. Love, Peace, and Soul!

RICHARD GAY (Producer)

founded 5Pack Entertainment and has produced a globally televised concert event (*Juneteenth: A Global Celebration of Freedom*) and large-scale music festivals. He served in the COO role for leading entertainment brands, including Live Nation Urban, Vh1, Superfly, and BET. His professional relationship with *Soul Train* began when Gay worked with Don Cornelius as a young partner at Booz Allen, expanded when he led the BET team that acquired *Soul Train* over a decade later, and continues today with his bringing *Hippest Trip* to the stage. Gay is a proud graduate of Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

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Nicole Anderburg, Costume Shop Overhire
Anixter Rice Music Service, Copyist
Gabe Armstrong, Video Key
Gabe Aronson, Animator
Stori Ayers, Writer's Associate
Robert Bennett, Carpenter
Juliet Bernal, Hair & Makeup Crew
Lucy Briggs, Deck Crew
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A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Written by Dana Meyers,
 Charmaine Sylvers, Nidra Beard,

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Written by Dana Meyers,
 Howard Hewett

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 Robert Mickens, Robert Bell

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Written by Al Mcay, Maurice
White, Phillip Bailey

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Written by Stevie Wonder

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Written by Harry Wayne
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Written by Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff

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Written by Hal David, Burt Bacharach

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PHENOMENAL: THE VALIDATION OF SOUL TRAIN

BY NATALIE GREENE
WITH DANNY DUNCAN AND
LAURA ELAINE ELLIS

Soul Train aired for the first time in 1970, and after that, the world was never the same. Families around the nation, young and old, looked forward to watching Soul Train every week. A.C.T.'s Associate Director of Education Natalie Greene sat down with two generations of San Francisco choreographers to hear about what Soul Train meant to them.

I'm a baby boomer, so in the 60s, I was a teenager. Dance shows were a CRAZE. In the early 60s everyone watched *American Bandstand*—and it was all white kids, dancing to the latest grooves on the R&B charts. White teenagers dancing to Black artists like the Supremes, Chubby Checker, Gladys Knight & the Pips. The progression came because of the civil rights movement and integration. I remember when they first had Black kids on the show, just two couples at first, and we were shocked! Because for years it was only white kids, it was news! It was a big, big deal that *American Bandstand* allowed Black teenagers to come and join the party. It was phenomenal.

I remember the excitement of television. Black people were really not on television in the 1950s, can you imagine? If a Black person appeared on the Ed Sullivan show, or if you saw a commercial with a Black person on it, everyone would gather around. Someone in the house would scream, "Lena Horne is on television!" and everyone in the family would run to the TV. It was phenomenal. Until integration came, that's the way it was. You didn't see Black people on television, unless they were servants—no one carrying a briefcase or in a position of power.

In many cities, the local TV had a show called *Dance Party*, a riff on *American Bandstand*. I went to Benjamin Franklin Junior High School in San Francisco, and they called for us to be on *Dance Party*. And we were Black kids! We went downtown and we were on TV dancing to the Supremes, The Four Tops, The Temptations...dancing with the white kids, integrated finally!

When the 70s came about, the popularity of *Dance Party* had waned. Then Don Cornelius had the brilliant idea of doing something like *American Bandstand* for Black children. But he elevated it in the sense that the R&B stars were his guests, and the dancers became known by name just like we'd all known Peggy from *American Bandstand*. The great dancers in that program became our household names, it caught on! It became a big, big thing. *Soul Train* offered me soul dancing, social dancing, and integrating social dancing caught on for the masses. It's amazing that the *Soul Train* line is something people still dance today.

Danny Duncan

Choreographer, Director, Dramaturg
Beloved Educator, San Francisco born and raised
Director of the SFArtsED Players

It was incredible to see people who looked like me on TV every Saturday afternoon. I was a dancer growing up, danced and trained from the age of six, but we all grooved. We all did the latest dances. It was incredible to do these dances and see these people who looked like us, and that we could depend on seeing that every single Saturday.

The commercials were Black-focused. Don Cornelius even had Black-owned hair care products in the commercial breaks. The games were Black-focused, I remember this thing called the Scramble Board. They took the names of Black politicians, artists, athletes—it was historical names, current names, notable names in the Black community that contributed to America. They jumbled up the letters and dancers undid the jumble. What came forward on the Scramble Board and in the interviews with the artists, was that you got to hear people who looked like you talking about their careers, who they are and how they got where they are.

For children like me growing up in the 70s, during the Black Power movement, we knew quite a bit about people contributing to make America what it was. My story for example, I'm 6th generation American, my son is 7th generation American. We know there's not really anything in this country that our people didn't have our hands on. We know the White House was built by African American hands. Monticello. The signal light. The filament. We knew these things, we knew this about our history. There's no traffic light without Black folks, no computer motherboard or video games. So seeing *Soul Train* on television was a validation of what we already knew. It validated our pride. This is what we mean by Ungawa, Black Power.

Seeing young people on the show that looked like me, being represented, seeing that so boldly, so funkified, it was an amazing thing. It was funk, it was soul, it was style, it was classy. It wasn't like, "Oh, I wish I could be that." It was like, "We are that. That's me." It validated what we already knew.

Laura Elaine Ellis

Dancer, Choreographer, Educator
Executive Director of the African and
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Producer of the Black Choreographers Festival

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TRAINING TO LEARN WITH THE HIPPEST TRIP ACTORS

By Peter J. Kuo

The origins of A.C.T. and *Soul Train* mirror each other in serendipitous ways. Both started in the mid 1960s by engaging in performance and education. A.C.T. hosted a company of actors who performed and constantly trained, while Don Cornelius's *Soul Train* featured local talent in Chicago-area high schools. Centering the values of learning through performance and training, I spoke with *Hippest Trip* performers Charlene "Chi-Chi" Smith and Unissa Cruse. They shared how training, mentorship, and performance opportunities have influenced them as artists and educators.

Is there a teacher or a mentor who had a significant impact on the kind of artists you are today?

Unissa: My dear friend, Aurelio Michael, is a powerhouse...a performer, voiceover artist, and speaker. She has always been comical and brave. Aurelia has taught me the importance of personal style, self-reflecting, and owning my truth. She leads by example, and I take notes. I often ask myself, "How would Aurelia tackle this next quest?" Aurelia inspired me to become unstoppable, and I've been consistently blessed.

Chi-Chi: My friend, Tom McKie, was a teacher at Rutgers. The first day I took his Hip Hop class, he asked me, "Are you a dancer?" I always answered "yes," but recently I had become convinced that dancers had been training all their lives, and I hadn't. On that September in 2000, for the first time, I said "No. I don't have any training." He responded, "Neither do I." From then, he took me under his wing and taught me patience, discipline, and how to be generous and open to attract generous and open people. Tom took me to different underground hip hop parties and events and introduced me to another good friend and mentor, Adesola Osakalumi [associate choreographer on *Hippest Trip*].

Tell me about a skill, practice, or lesson you learned in your own training, that you utilize today as part of your artistry.

Unissa: I learned the importance of stillness...actively choosing quiet to clear the mind and embrace my surroundings. It creates more space to learn and absorb. I also meditate, read, and write. Little things have large

impacts. My favorite lesson comes from one of my quotes, "What you feed your mind becomes truth." I channel it each time I take a leap of faith. For example, I said these words to myself prior to auditioning for *Hippest Trip*. And I'm proud to say...they worked.

Chi-Chi: Grace and patience. Whether it's with kids or adults, sometimes, you got to say things four times. Perhaps with a different tone of voice in your body. Grace and patience are easy for me to access when I'm leading a room, but when I'm alongside others who are talking, playing around, and missing directions because they're not focusing, I have little to no patience for that. I tend to do more when others around me do less, maybe because service is my love language. This happened recently in rehearsal, and I realized it wasn't necessary (or fair) for me to try to do both my job and everyone else's. So, I returned to patience and grace and sat myself back down.

What is something you learn from performing for a live audience that you incorporate into your artistic practice?

Unissa: When I perform, it is not about me. It is about you...the audience. To perform is to give, share, and inspire. My goal is to evoke feeling and stimulate your mind. Each time I perform, my purpose is to serve the community. Dance is more than steps; it's an art form that reshapes storytelling and changes lives. Audiences have expressed gratitude to me because they felt something beautiful inside. Even if only one person is inspired, I've accomplished something.

Chi-Chi: Live audiences are my favorite because of the instant feedback. It helps fuel what's happening on stage. We get to exchange energy back and forth in the moment. But I learned you also must rely on what you're there to do. If it's an audience of 4 or 4,000, you should still put on a good show. When an audience is responsive, it helps fuel me to continue giving back to them; when an audience is quieter, I must rely on the work at hand and know that I am still telling the story. Every time I perform for a live audience, I'm reminded of the importance of being prepared, aware, and flexible.

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Jerry is the former president of Parnassus Investments. Now retired, he serves on the boards of San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Symphony, as well as on the Emeritus Board of A.C.T. Thao serves on the board of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. 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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Robina is the Board Secretary 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.

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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.

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(L to R), Phil Wong, Sam Jackson, and Keiko Shimosato Carreiro in *The Headlands*.
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Chanel Tilghman, Katrina Lauren McGraw, and Travis Santell Rowland in *The Wizard of Oz*.
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BASED ON THE ORIGINAL DIRECTION
BY **CAREY PERLOFF**

DEC 6-24, 2023
TONI REMBE THEATER



FINAL YEAR!

The cast of A Christmas Carol 2023. Photo by Kevin Brame.



BIG DATA
BY **KATE ATTWELL**
DIRECTED BY **PAM MACKINNON**,
A.C.T.'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND TONY AWARD WINNER

FEB 15-MAR 10, 2024
TONI REMBE THEATER

KRISTINA WONG,
SWEATSHOP OVERLORD

"HIGH ENERGY...DELIGHTFULLY ACIDIC...
MAKES YOU LAUGH OUT LOUD FOR REAL"
—BROADWAY WORLD

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **KRISTINA WONG**
DIRECTED BY **CHAY YEW**

MAR 30-MAY 5, 2024
STRAND THEATER



PULITZER PRIZE
FOR DRAMA
2020 TONY AWARD
BEST MUSICAL
2022

BOOK, MUSIC, AND LYRICS BY **MICHAEL R. JACKSON**
CHOREOGRAPHY BY **RAJA FEATHER KELLY**
DIRECTED BY **STEPHEN BRACKETT**

APR 18-MAY 12, 2024
TONI REMBE THEATER

THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND NEAL STREET PRODUCTIONS PRESENT

THE LEHMAN TRILOGY

TONY AWARD FOR BEST PLAY 2022

"MAGNIFICENT"
—THE NEW YORK TIMES

BY **STEFANO MASSINI** ADAPTED BY **BEN POWER**
DIRECTED BY **SAM MENDES**

MAY 25-JUN 23, 2024
TONI REMBE THEATER

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A.C.T. STAFF

PAM MACKINNON Artistic Director

JENNIFER BIELSTEIN Executive Director

Artistic

Andy Chan Donald, *Associate Artistic Director*
Joy Meads*, *Director of Dramaturgy and New Works*
Aleksiej Aarsaether*, *Producer of Performance Residencies & Rentals*
Katie Craddock*, *Literary Manager and Casting Associate*

Commissioned Artists

Kate Attwell; Ryan Nicole Austin, Beau Lewis, & Adesha Adefela; Julia Cho & Seret Scott; Elsa Davis; Aleshea Harris; Naomi Iizuka; Craig Lucas & David Zinn; Will Power; Mfoniso Udofo; Anne Washburn; Lauren Yee; Karen Zacarias

Production

Martin Barron, *Director of Production*
Jack Horton, *Associate Director of Production*
Michael Anderburg, *Conservatory Production Manager*
Megan McClintock, *Resident Stage Manager*

Costume Shop

Jessie Amoroso, *Costume Director*
BJ Bandy, *Costume Build Manager/Draper*
Grace Robertson, *Costume Shop Assistant*
Mika Rubinfeld, *Costume Shop Administrator*
Kelly Koehn, *Craft Artisan*
Peter Gravenor, *First Hand*
Jessica Carter, *Wigs, Hair, and Makeup Manager*
Alexander Class, *Wig Supervisor*

Prop Shop

Abo Jose Greenwald, *Prop Shop Supervisor*
Robin Maegawa, *Prop Shop Assistant*

Crew (Local 16)

Stephanie Killian, *Head Props*
Shawn Annetson, *Head Carpenter*
Brandon Gage, *Flyrail*
Ian Roth, *Head Sound*
Eddie Masias, *Head Electrician*

Wardrobe (Local 784)

Wendy Lynn, *Head Wardrobe*
Lauren Cohen, *Wardrobe Assistant*

Administration

Audrey Thesing, *Office Associate*
Xavier Dzielski, *Executive Assistant*

Human Resources

Chrystal Ellis Sweazey*, *Director of Human Resources and EDI*
Alejandra Maria Rivas*, *EDI Manager*
Brianna Banks-Oliver, *Interim HR Manager*

General Management

Louisa Liska, *Director of General Management & Operations*
Amy Dalba*, *General Manager*
Sam L. Wong, *Company Manager*
Nina Fay, *Artist Logistics Coordinator*
Emma Penny, *General Management Associate*

Finance

Jim Sivori*, *Chief Financial Officer*
Ning Xiao, *Controller*
Eric Law, *Senior Accountant*
Yvonne Chen, *Staff Accountant*

Information Technology

Thomas Morgan, *Director*
Joone Pajar, *Network Administrator*

Operations

Leopoldo Benavente, *Interim Facilities and Operations Manager*
Jeffrey Warren, *Associate Facilities Manager*
Matt Stewart, *Facilities Crew Member*

Development

Caitlin A. Quinn, *Director of Development*
Sasha Habash, *Deputy Director of Development*
Nicole Chalas, *Associate Director of Development*
Irma Ramirez, *Director of Special Events*
Will Gaines, *Associate Director of Individual Giving*
Derek Collard, *Special Events and Donor Engagement Manager*
Kevin Dolan, *Development Operations Specialist*
Gabriel Rivera, *Annual Fund Coordinator*
Malaika Kirkwood, *Development Assistant*
Katie Maggard, *Development Researcher and Prospect Manager*

Marketing & Public Relations

Adam Thurman, *Director of Marketing & Communications*
Syche Phillips, *Deputy Director of Marketing*
Kevin Kopjak/Prismatic Communications, *Public Relations Counsel*
Samantha Lomax, *Digital Engagement Manager*
Sarah Sugg, *Video Content Producer*
Laura Clatterbuck, *Lead Visual Designer*
Dani Karonis, *Graphic Designer*
Nakia Gibbs, *Digital Marketing Associate*

Ticket Services

Julie Gotsch, *Director of Ticketing and Sales Operations*
Jorena de Pedro-Viernes, *Box Office Manager*
Mark C. Peters, *Subscriptions Manager*
David Englemann, *Head Treasurer*
Sienna Sherman, *Head Treasurer*
Elizabeth Halperin, *Assistant Head Treasurer*
Andy Alabran, *Treasurer*
Jane McKay, *Treasurer*

Audience Services

Megan Murray*, *Director of Audience Services*
Jerry Chirip, *Audience Services Associate*
Sudeshana Karki, *Audience Services Concessions Manager*
Bernadette Fons, *Audience Services Concessions Associate*
Joe Henkin, *House Manager*
Sadie Li, *House Manager*
Traci Mar, *House Manager*
Genevieve Pabon, *House Manager*
Tuesday Ray, *House Manager*
Mark Saladino, *House Manager*

Bartenders

Ramsey Abouremeleh, Philip Aung, Mimi Bui, Aramis Ceden, Matthew Daly, Terri De Martini, Warren Duprey, Clara Fulk, Chris Hayes, Anthony Hernandez, Anthony Hoey, Sam Hoffman, Fred Izard, Emiliano Jimenez, Stan Joe, Robert Jones, Tyler MacDonald, Yamel Alexandra Miranda, Susan Monson, Francisco Mujica Shawn Paton, Austin Poznoski, Damian Samuel, Todd Van Fleet, Yvonne Walden, Kacey Wilson, Tygre Wolf, June Yee

Ushers

Susan Allen, Rodney Anderson, Trent Anderson, Katie Baldwin, Crawford Banks, Felix Bishop, Serena Broussard, Philip Carberry, Myah DeStefans, John Doll, Katherine Dominguez, Molly Donoho, Lindsey Drew, Christine Ford, Miletta Foster, Gerry Garber, Claire Eugenia Gerndt Jr, Jaiyah Gordon, Carol Grace, Aron Gruber, Jack Hargis, Kathleen Keeler, Alec Le, Sharon Lee, Steven Lemay, John Light, Palima Lukins, Maria Markoff, Kescha Mason, Val Mason, Kenneth McKellar, Meechai McKellar, Felix McTague, Mary O'Connell, Nathaniel Paluga, Isabel Poling, Audrey Soss, Melissa Stern, David Tavernas, Christopher Willers, May Yasui

Safety

Loren Lewis, *Ambassador*
Jesse Nightchase, *Ambassador*
Angel Rodriguez, *Ambassador*
Idriss Sow, *Ambassador*

Education & Community Programs

Juan Manzo*, *Director of Education & Community Programs*
Natalie Greene, *Interim Director of Education*
Shannon R. Davis, *Director of Community Connections*
Elizabeth Halperin, *Student Matinee Coordinator*
Anelisa Montoya, *School and Community Programs Coordinator*
Rebecca Ennals, *Community Connections Liaison*

Teaching Artists

Andy Alabran, Yari Cervas, Janel Chante, Gwynnevere Cristobal, Laura Elaine Ellis, Sierra Gonzalez, Anne Kobori, Ely Sonny Orquiza, Brennan Pickman-Thoon, Annie Rovzar, Faith von Minden

Conservatory

Peter J. Kuo*, *Director of the Conservatory*
Fran Astorga*, *Conservatory Manager*
Kelsey Tremewan, *Conservatory Adult Programs Coordinator*

Library Staff

Hana Kadoyama, *Librarian*

Library Volunteers

Theresa Bell, Laurie Bernstein, Helen Jean Bowie, Bruce Carlton, Barbara Cochrane, Richard Dillenbeck, Ken Holsclaw, Emerald Keehan, Martha Kessler, Nelda Kilguss, Barbara Kornstein, Gail MacGowan, Vineet Mishra, Connie Pelkey, Dana Rees, Dave Sikula, Roger Silver, Jane Taber, Susan Torres, Joyce Weisman, Jean Wilcox, Marie Wood, Joann Wu

Studio A.C.T.

Mark Jackson, *Director of Studio A.C.T.*
Kelsey Tremewan, *Conservatory Adult Programs Coordinator*
Liz Anderson
Heidi Carlsen
Frances Epsen-Devlin
Deb Fink
Paul Finocchiaro
Margo Hall
Maya Herbsman
Monique Jenkinson
Drew Khalouf
Peter J. Kuo
Carolina Morones
Thaddeus Pinkston
Mark Rafael
Kate E. Ryan
Chauntée* Schuler Irving
Elyse Shafarman, MA
Dee Dee Stephens
Mia Tagano
Jomar Tagatac
Laura Wayth
Valerie Weak

Young Conservatory

Jill MacLean, *Director of the Young Conservatory*
Emily Cooper, *Young Conservatory Associate Programs Manager*
Justin P. Lopez, *Young Conservatory Administrative Assistant*
Andy Alabran, *Acting, Voice & Dialect*
Kristy Aquino, *Musical Theater*
Joe Ayers, *Musical Theater, Acting*
Enrico Banson, *On-Camera, Musical Theater*
Kimberly Braun, *Musical Theater*
Janel Chanté, *Musical Theater, Acting*
Meredith Joelle Charlson, *Dance/Choreographer*
Gwynnevere Cristobal, *Musical Theater, Acting*
Kimberly Hollkamp Dinon, *Acting*
Nancy Gold, *Physical Character, Acting*
Lore Gonzales, *Acting & Improvisation*
Nicole Helfer, *Cabaret, Viewpoints*
Jessica Holt, *College Prep*
Baily Hopkins, *On-Camera*
Dario Johnson, *Voice*
Göran Norquist, *Acting, Musical Theater*
Brennan Pickman Thoon, *On-Camera, Acting*
Leandra Ramm, *Cabaret, Voice*
Ely Sonny Orquiza, *Acting, Devised Theater*
Valerie Weak, *Acting, Shakespeare, College Prep*

Conservatory Accompanists

Robert Allen, Daniel Feyer, Paul McCurdy, Thaddeus Pinkston, Lindsay Rader, Naomi Sanchez

San Francisco Semester Faculty

Mark Jackson, *Performance Making*
Michael Mohammed, PhD, *Voice*
Patrick Russell, *Physical Theater*
Jack Sharrar, PhD, *Cultural Landscaping*
Dee Dee Stephens, *Acting Styles*

Professional Development

Dillon Heape, Ben Quinn, Mark Rafael, Radhika Rao, Katie Rubin, 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.

CAREY PERLOFF
Artistic Director Emerita

JAMES HAIRE
Producing Director Emeritus

MELISSA SMITH
Conservatory Director Emerita, in memoriam

CRAIG SLAUGHT
Young Conservatory Director Emeritus

A.C.T. PROFILES



PAM MACKINNON

(A.C.T. Artistic Director) is in her sixth season as A.C.T.'s fourth artistic director. She is a Tony, Drama Desk, and Obie Award-winning director, having directed upwards of 80 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 Woolf?* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards for Best Direction of a Play), and Bruce Norris's

Clybourne Park (Tony Award nomination and Obie Award for Best Direction of a Play). Her most recent credits include world premieres of Bruce Norris's *Downstate* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company, London's National Theatre, Playwrights Horizons), 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.), Christopher Chen's *Communion and The Headlands* (A.C.T.), and Maria Irene Fornés's *Fefu and Her Friends* (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. (she/her)



JENNIFER BIELSTEIN (Executive Director) joined A.C.T. in 2018. She serves on the board of TCG (Theatre Communications Group), is a member of the International Women's Forum, the Advance SF Advisory Panel, and the leadership team of the SF Arts Alliance, 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 80 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)

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ONLINE!

We want to see your *Soul Train* line videos, photos of you at the theater, and hear what you have to say! Tag us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Threads using [@ACTSanFrancisco](#) and [#ACTSoul](#)

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

REFRESHMENTS

Join us in Fred's Columbia Room & Nancy's Bar on the lower level, or the Sky Bar on the 3rd floor, to enjoy a full, relaxed bar and treats experience. You'll find delicious ready-to-drink cocktails, soft drinks, and snacks at one of our Quick Bars on the 2nd floor, Mezzanine. You can preorder for intermission pick up at act.salesvu.com or by scanning the code below:



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.

MOBILE DEVICES

If you carry a mobile device, including a phone, tablet, or watch with alarm, please make sure to completely turn them off while in the auditorium. Vibrating devices still produce audible sounds in a quiet auditorium. Text messaging during the performance is disruptive and not permitted.

CHECK TO CHARGE

Mobile devices can be charged in coat check while you watch the show. You are welcome to check your phone into a charger at our attended coat check on the lower level. We're happy to offer this service without a fee.

SENSORY SUPPORTS

Fidgets, ear protection and eye protection are available free of charge in coat check.

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.

LATECOMERS

A.C.T. performances begin on time, so it is important to arrive with enough time to comfortably get settled and enjoy the show. Latecomers will be held in the lobbies until an appropriate late seating opportunity is called. Latecomers with seats in the first five rows will also be reseated to the best available seats as late arrivals in those rows are disruptive to the entire theater. Late coming parties may or may not be seated together based on availability of new seating where moving seats is required.

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 a grant from Grants for the Arts.

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.



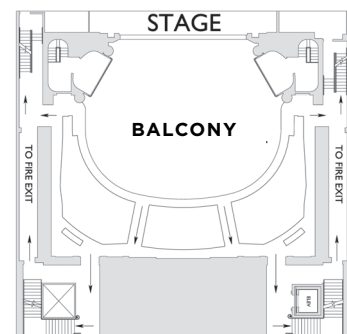
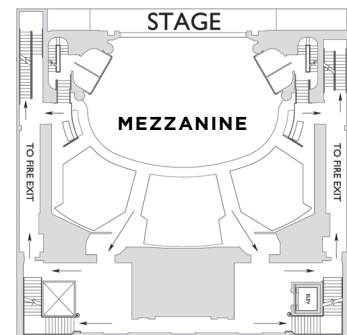
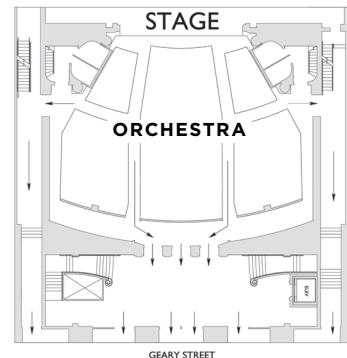
Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

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

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.

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ARTHUR MILLER'S

Death of a Salesman

DIRECTED BY: TED LANGE

TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER | OCT 28 - NOV 12, 2023

Cinderella

DIRECTED BY: SHERRI YOUNG
HERBST THEATER | DEC 15 - DEC 17, 2023



DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU'S

PIPELINE

DIRECTED BY: NATAKI GARRETT
TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER | MARCH 16 - MARCH 31, 2024



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

DIRECTED BY: GIULIO CESARE PERRONE
MARINES' MEMORIAL THEATER | MAY 11 - MAY 26, 2024



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