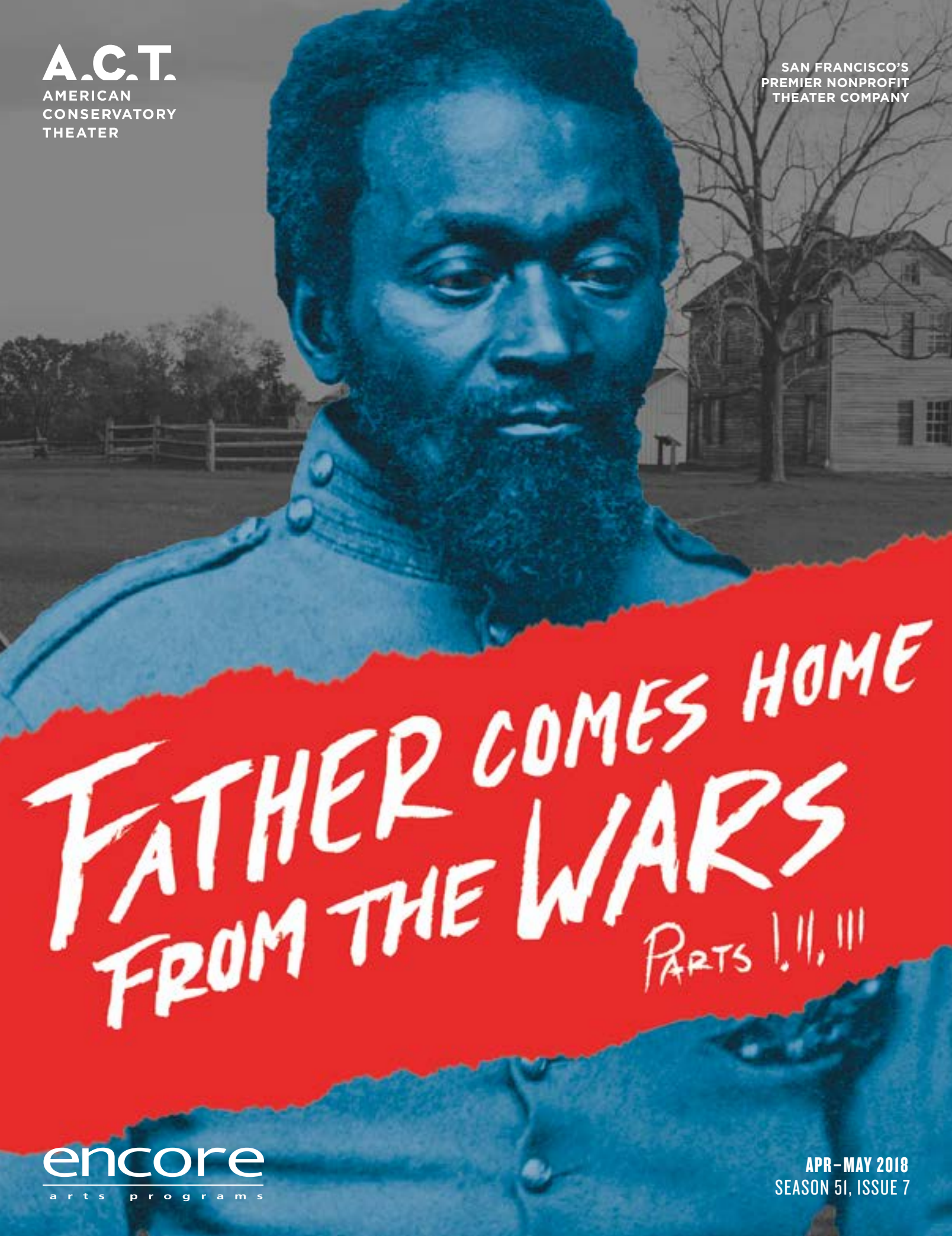
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APR–MAY 2018
SEASON 51, ISSUE 7



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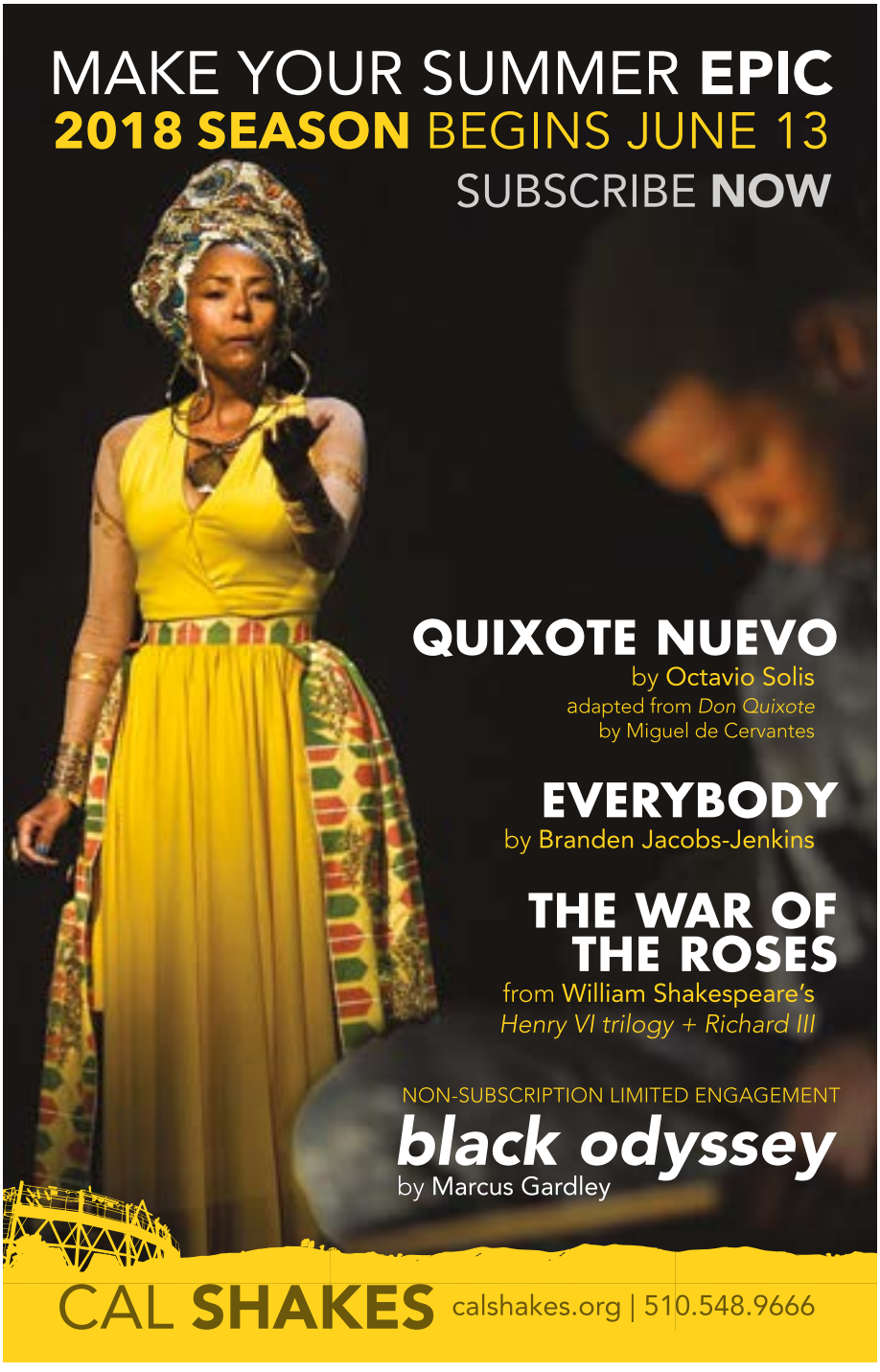
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SAN FRANCISCO'S THEATER COMPANY

American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco's Tony Award–winning nonprofit theater, nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training, and ongoing engagement with our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Peter Pastreich, we embrace our responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our rich theatrical traditions and literatures, while exploring new artistic forms and communities. Founded by William Ball, a pioneer of the regional theater movement, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. We have since performed more than 350 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. Every year we reach more than 250,000 people through our productions and programs.

Rising from the wreckage of the earthquake and fire of 1906 and hailed as the "perfect playhouse," the beautiful, historic Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped the roof apart, San Franciscans rallied together to raise a record-breaking $30 million to rebuild the theater. The Geary reopened in 1996 with a production of *The Tempest* directed by Perloff, who took over in 1992 after the retirement of A.C.T.'s second artistic director, gentleman artist Ed Hastings.

Perloff's 25-season tenure has been marked by groundbreaking productions of classical works and new translations creatively colliding with exceptional contemporary theater; cross-disciplinary performances and international collaborations; and theater made by, for, and about the Bay Area. Her fierce commitment to audience engagement ushered in a new era of InterACT events and dramaturgical publications, inviting everyone to explore what goes on behind the scenes.

A.C.T.'s 50-year-old Conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, is at the center of our work. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program is at the forefront of America's actor training programs. Meanwhile, our intensive Summer Training Congress attracts students from around the world, and the San Francisco Semester offers a unique study-abroad opportunity for undergraduates. Other programs include Studio A.C.T.—our expansive course of theater study for adults—and the Professional Development Training Program, which offers actor training for companies seeking to elevate their employees' business performance skills. Our alumni often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area, as well as on stages and screens across the country.

A.C.T. also brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 16,000 Bay Area students and educators each year. Director of Education & Community Programs Elizabeth Brodersen oversees the world-famous Young Conservatory (for students ages 8 to 19) and our ACTsmart education programs, including the Student Matinee (SMAT) program that has brought hundreds of thousands of young people to A.C.T. performances since 1968. We also provide touring Will on Wheels Shakespeare productions, teaching-artist residencies, in-school workshops, and study materials to Bay Area schools and community-based organizations.

With our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood marked by the renovation of The Strand Theater and the opening of The Costume Shop Theater, and the recent appointment of Pam MacKinnon as A.C.T.'s Artistic Director Designate, A.C.T. plays a leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.

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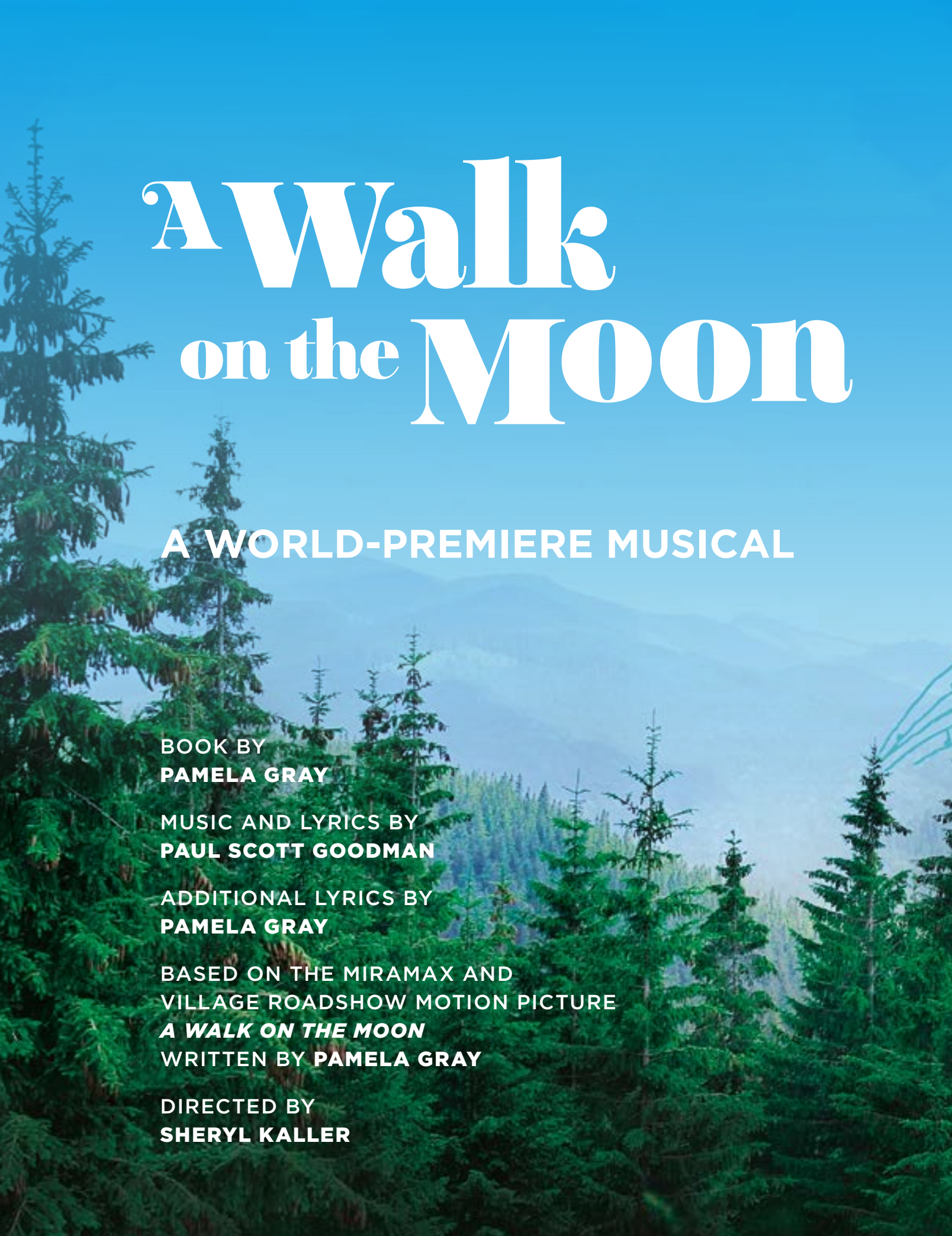
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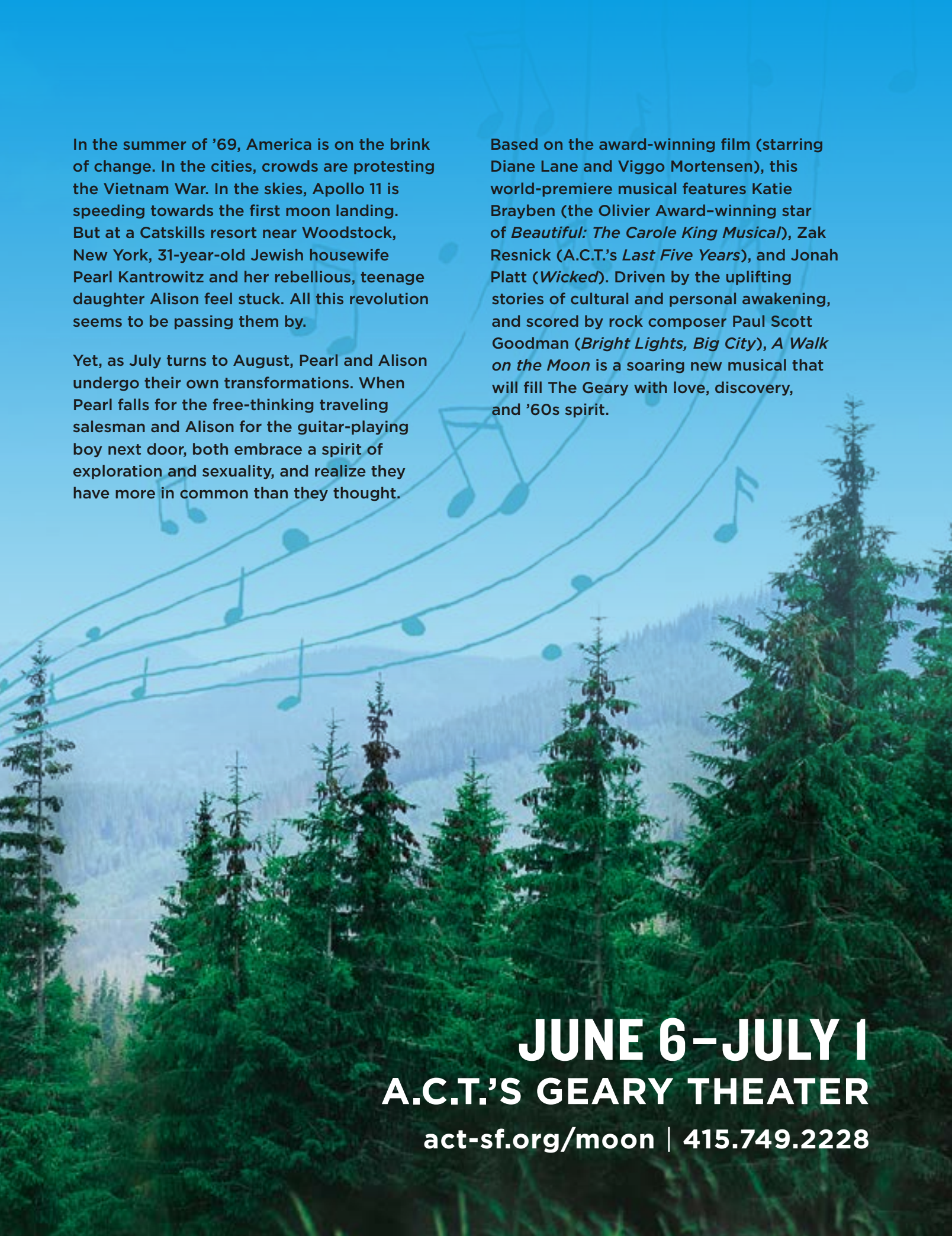
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A Walk on the Moon
A WORLD-PREMIERE MUSICAL
BOOK BY
PAMELA GRAY
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
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ADDITIONAL LYRICS BY
PAMELA GRAY
BASED ON THE MIRAMAX AND
VILLAGE ROADSHOW MOTION PICTURE
A WALK ON THE MOON
WRITTEN BY PAMELA GRAY
DIRECTED BY
SHERYL KALLER



In the summer of ’69, America is on the brink of change. In the cities, crowds are protesting the Vietnam War. In the skies, Apollo 11 is speeding towards the first moon landing. But at a Catskills resort near Woodstock, New York, 31-year-old Jewish housewife Pearl Kantrowitz and her rebellious, teenage daughter Alison feel stuck. All this revolution seems to be passing them by.

Yet, as July turns to August, Pearl and Alison undergo their own transformations. When Pearl falls for the free-thinking traveling salesman and Alison for the guitar-playing boy next door, both embrace a spirit of exploration and sexuality, and realize they have more in common than they thought.

Based on the award-winning film (starring Diane Lane and Viggo Mortensen), this world-premiere musical features Katie Brayben (the Olivier Award–winning star of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*), Zak Resnick (A.C.T.’s *Last Five Years*), and Jonah Platt (*Wicked*). Driven by the uplifting stories of cultural and personal awakening, and scored by rock composer Paul Scott Goodman (*Bright Lights, Big City*), *A Walk on the Moon* is a soaring new musical that will fill The Geary with love, discovery, and ’60s spirit.

JUNE 6–JULY 1

A.C.T.’S GEARY THEATER

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American-made drama of grit and heart

SWEAT

by **Lynn Nottage**
Directed by **Loretta Greco**
SEP 26–OCT 21, 2018, AT THE GEARY

"A bracingly topical portrait of American dreams deferred"
The New York Times

A.C.T. kicks off the 2018–19 season with the Pulitzer Prize–winning drama that had Broadway critics and audiences on their feet. In Reading, Pennsylvania—the blue-collar heart of America's steel industry—a tight-knit group of factory workers has gathered in the local bar for generations to share laughs, hopes, and cold beers. But as recession looms and a union lock-out turns assembly line into picket line, lifelong friends find themselves pitted against each other in the struggle to survive. Inspired by the stories of Rust Belt workers, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage (*Ruined*) unites heart and humor to forge a searing drama of the grit, drive, and resilience of our conflicted American dreams.

"A thrilling gender-flipped slice of Manifest Destiny"
Time Out New York

MEN ON BOATS

by **Jaclyn Backhaus**
Directed by **Tamilla Woodard**
OCT 17–DEC 16, 2018, AT THE STRAND

"*Men on Boats* is off-the-canyon-walls funny"
Chicago Tribune

Spinning historical, theatrical, and gender conventions on their heads, this subversive tale of ten men, four boats, and two rivers contains *none* of the above. Pack your gear for this contemporary telling of 19th-century American explorer and one-armed Civil War veteran John Wesley Powell, who assembles a brawny band of trappers, adventurers, and soldiers to explore Wyoming's waterways. Inspired by Powell's actual travel log from 1869, Jaclyn Backhaus's ingenious and nimble script is provocative, laugh-out-loud theater, performed by a diverse cast of female-identifying and gender-fluid actors who infuse America's historic myths of male conquest with a sly blast of subtext.

Pulitzer Prize–winning comedy

EDWARD ALBEE'S SEASCAPE

Directed by **Pam MacKinnon**
JAN 23–FEB 17, 2019, AT THE GEARY

"Wry, charming and surprisingly hopeful"
Los Angeles Times

In her A.C.T. debut, Artistic Director Designate Pam MacKinnon continues her career-long exploration of American theater's legendary playwright, Pulitzer Prize winner Edward Albee (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *A Delicate Balance*). In this wildly imaginative and satirical comedy, a newly retired couple picnic on a beach and squabble when they're interrupted by two human-sized, English-speaking lizards. Are they an evolutionary miracle, or a threat? And which couple is the greater risk to the other? As the two pairs begin to communicate, they come uneasily together, discovering how life changes can spark terror and restlessness in any creature of habit. Albee returns to The Geary for the first time in a decade, with a sparkling fantasy of growing up and growing old, fear and adventure, love and laughter.

An achingly poignant drama about legacy and forgiveness

HER PORTMANTEAU

by **Mfoniso Udofia**
Directed by **Victor Malana Maog**
FEB 13–APR 14, 2019, AT THE STRAND

"Powerful . . . moving . . . extraordinary"
The New York Times

Traveling from Lagos, Nigeria, to visit her mother and American-born sister for the first time in two decades, thirtysomething Iniabasi arrives to a snowy landscape, and even chillier truths inside a small Manhattan apartment. As Nigerian traditions clash with American realities, the family is forced to confront its literal and emotional baggage and its painful legacies across language, continents, and cultures. In spring 2019, A.C.T. and Magic Theatre will each present one, independent chapter from Mfoniso Udofia's sweeping nine-part saga about a family of Nigerian immigrants and their American-born children.

Buzzer-beating basketball drama

THE GREAT LEAP

by **Lauren Yee**
Directed by **Lisa Peterson**
MAR 6–31, 2019, AT THE GEARY

"[This] imaginative vault over the decades . . . asserts a quiet, beautifully unexpected power"
The Denver Post

When a college basketball team from San Francisco is invited to China for an exhibition game in 1989, a smack-talking American coach faces his protégé—now grown and bent on crushing the Westerners. But after a high school star from Chinatown joins the American team, his actions in Beijing become the accidental focus of attention, escalating the fractured history between the coaches. Funny, urgent, and contemporary, this slam dunk of a sports drama from Bay Area playwright Lauren Yee explores identity, global politics, and the collision of cultures and generations. Soaring across time and continents, from the hardball courts of San Francisco's Chinatown to a Beijing on the brink of revolution, *The Great Leap* builds tension right up to the buzzer.

Inventive period drama that pops with 21st-century spirit

VANITY FAIR

by **Kate Hamill**
Based on the novel by
William Makepeace Thackeray
Directed by **Jessica Stone**
A coproduction with
Shakespeare Theatre Company
APR 17–MAY 12, 2019, AT THE GEARY

"A gift to actors and a goody bag for its audience"
The New York Times

From acclaimed playwright Kate Hamill (2017 Playwright of the Year, *Wall Street Journal*) comes a rollicking new stage adaptation of William Makepeace Thackeray's classic 19th-century novel that pops with 21st-century spirit. Ambitious Becky Sharp may not have been born with wealth or status, but she's determined to attain both—at any cost. Armed with fierce wit and calculating charm, Becky forges her own path through London's high society, dealing herself into a game she was never invited to play. Displaying the celebrated audacity and verve that she brought to her adaptation of *Sense & Sensibility*, Hamill conjures an inventive and lively period drama featuring one of literature's original "nasty women."

PLUS ONE SHOW TO BE ANNOUNCED!

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Summer Sessions begin June 11



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YC YOUNG CONSERVATORY

(AGES 8–19)

A wide array of class opportunities awaits the young performer in your life at A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory! The summer is a great time to explore **musical theater**, **improvisation**, **stage combat**, and more in a safe and fun environment. Summer Session includes individual classes and complete tracks, making the summer a perfect fit for every performer.

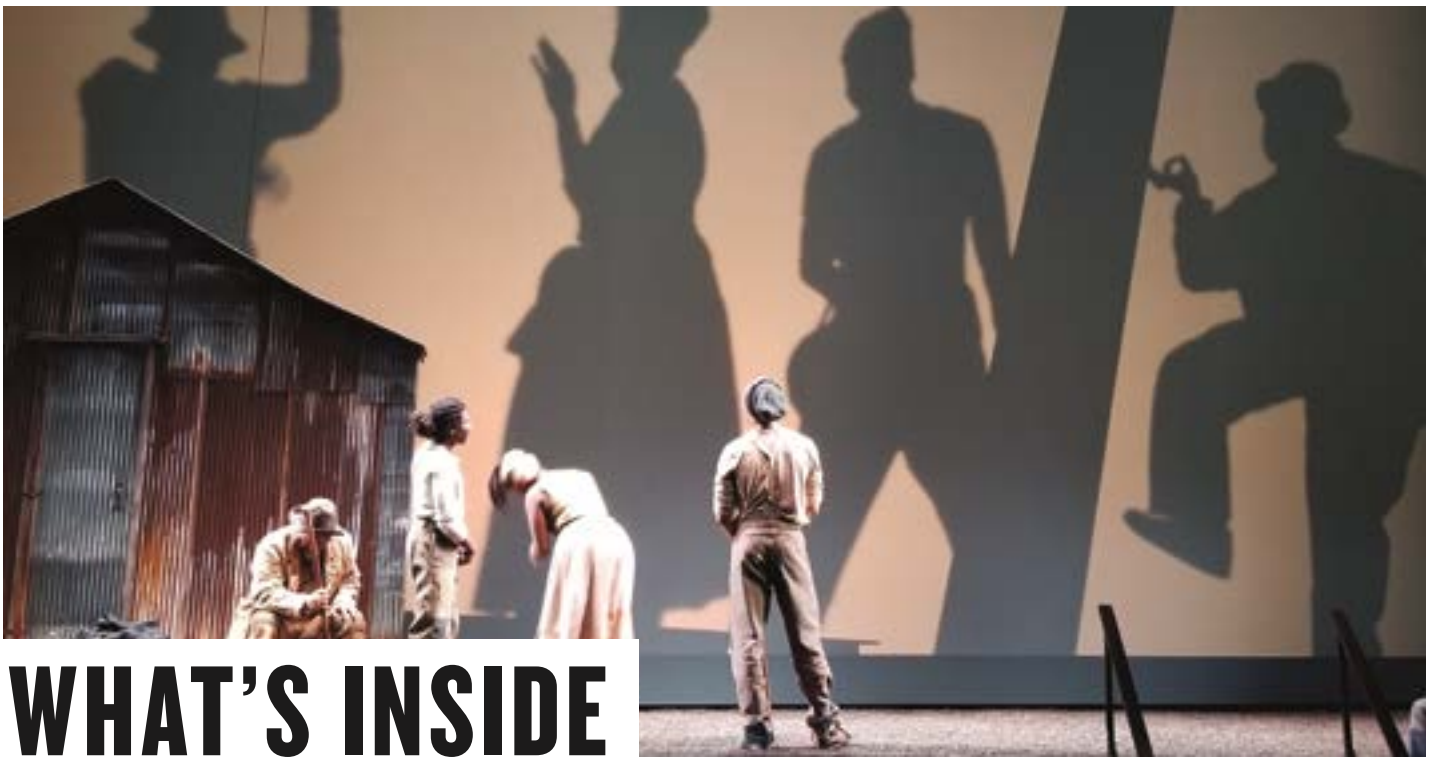
STUDIO A.C.T.

(AGES 19+)

Whether you're interested in exploring performance onstage or expanding your executive presence at work, Studio A.C.T. has the class for you. Summer classes include **Executive Presence**, **Stage Combat Intensives** (with certification in up to four weapons), and **Discipline for Deviants**, a workshop dedicated to the **craft of drag performance**.

Enroll now at act-sf.org/yc or act-sf.org/studio.

PHOTO BY KAT YEN



WHAT'S INSIDE

Actors Steven Anthony Jones, James Udom, Eboni Flowers, and Julian Elijah Martinez in rehearsal for Yale Repertory Theatre and A.C.T.'s 2018 production of *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*.

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interACT

At A.C.T.'s free InterACT events, you can mingle with cast members, join interactive workshops with theater artists, and meet fellow theatergoers at hosted celebrations in our lounges. Join us for *A Walk on the Moon* and InterACT with us!

A WALK ON THE MOON

(JUN 6–JUL 1)
AT THE GEARY THEATER

BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT
JUN 6, 7 PM
Ride your bike to A.C.T. and take advantage of secure bike parking and low-priced tickets at our preshow mixer, presented in partnership with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

KDFC PROLOGUE
JUN 12, 5:30 PM
Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion with a member of the *Walk on the Moon* artistic team.

THEATER ON THE COUCH*
JUN 15, 8 PM
Sponsored by Kaiser Permanente, this exciting postshow discussion series addresses audience questions and explores the minds, motivation, and behavior of the characters.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGE*
JUN 17, 2 PM; JUN 19, 7 PM; JUN 27, 2 PM
Join us for an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

OUT WITH A.C.T.*
JUN 20, 8 PM
Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGBTQ+ party.

WENTE VINEYARDS WINE SERIES
JUN 26, 7 PM
Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine-tasting event.

PLAYTIME
JUN 30, 12:45 PM
Get hands-on with theater at this interactive preshow workshop.

To learn more and order tickets for InterACT events, **visit act-sf.org/interact**.

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A Thousand Splendid Suns

JULY 17–29 | A.C.T.'S GEARY THEATER

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

BY **Ursula Rani Sarma**

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY **Khaled Hosseini**

ORIGINAL MUSIC WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **David Coulter**

DIRECTED BY **Carey Perloff**



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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Welcome to The Geary and *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*! Producing a Suzan-Lori Parks play has been a dream of mine since I came to A.C.T. 25 years ago, so it's fortuitous and joyful for me that it's finally happening now.

Father Comes Home is a play of immense scope and ambition. What you are seeing today represents the beginning of a proposed nine-part cycle, with the first three parts covering the Civil War, slavery, and the American South. Having grown up in a military household, Suzan-Lori has said that her childhood was defined by her father leaving for and coming home from war. In her latest work, she has created a young enslaved man, aptly named Hero, who is agonizing about whether to go off to war himself. His quandary is immeasurably more difficult because he has been promised his freedom in exchange for fighting on the Confederate side. The play asks us to think about the price and nature of freedom. Is freedom something bestowed from the outside, or something we must grant ourselves from within? In times of immense turmoil, what do we owe ourselves, our families, our community? These existential questions are endlessly complex and dramatically thrilling.

Father Comes Home represents a writer at the top of her game. I remember my very first encounter with Suzan-Lori, nearly 30 years ago, when Liz Diamond told me about a play she was directing at BACA Downtown called *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom*. We trekked out to Brooklyn to see it, and the swirl of language, laughter, horror, and history was intoxicating. I vowed to follow the work of this major new voice, who had already coined a theatrical language all her own. Turning history on its head, Suzan-Lori looks deep into the hole in which African American stories have disappeared and resurrects them. She asks new questions about things we thought we understood, transforms Abraham Lincoln into a Black man, and watches women reinventing their identities so as to feel that they even exist in the world.

In the case of *Father Comes Home*, she uses the *Odyssey* as a loose framework to explore the archetypal hero's journey. This is an interesting moment for that Homeric reference, as it coincides with the publication of the first major translation of the *Odyssey* by a female scholar, Emily Wilson. In Wilson's version, the moral contradictions inherent in Homer's tale seem particularly vivid. Wilson calls Odysseus "a complicated man," and he is both admirable and arrogant, heroic and horrifying. He longs to come home, but repeatedly destroys that possibility through his own recklessness. He dreams of reuniting with his beloved wife, Penelope, but is constantly unfaithful. Who is this contradictory man, and what is the nature of his conflict? Suzan-Lori gives us her own speculations in *Father Comes Home*.



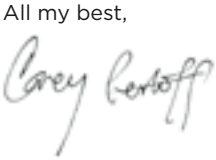
It's very gratifying to have the imaginative and visionary Liz Diamond at the helm of this production, a director who has a 30-year history with Suzan-Lori Parks. Liz runs the directing program at Yale School of Drama, and we are co-producing this production with Yale Rep, another great pleasure. While we welcome many new artists to A.C.T. with this production, *Father Comes Home* also serves as a homecoming for beloved A.C.T. actors Gregory Wallace and Steven Anthony Jones, whom we welcome back with great joy.

One epic will follow another, as our acclaimed production of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* returns to The Geary in July. There are now two companies of *Suns*, one playing across Canada and the other traveling up the West Coast, and we couldn't be happier that this adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's beloved novel is having such an extended life. *Suns* was commissioned by A.C.T.'s New Works program, which is now hard at work developing another new piece, the musical *A Walk on the Moon*, which closes our season this year. As with *Suns*, we have created a custom-made development process for *Moon* to support the creative team of Pamela Gray, Paul Scott Goodman, and Sheryl Kaller as they shape the original film into a sexy and bittersweet musical about a Borscht Belt bungalow colony in the summer that a man first walked on the moon and hippies took over a field for the Woodstock music festival. While wildly different in tone and location, both *Moon* and *Suns* tell the story of three generations of women navigating change in a turbulent world. We hope you'll have the opportunity to experience them both this summer.

Finally, we're excited to introduce Pam MacKinnon's first season as A.C.T.'s next artistic director, which begins with the Pulitzer Prize–winning *Sweat*. Everyone here looks forward to sharing the next chapter of A.C.T.'s life with you.

And now, enjoy *Father Comes Home from the Wars*!

All my best,



Carey Perloff
Artistic Director

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NEW STRANDS FESTIVAL 2018



MAY 17–20

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A.C.T.

CAREY PERLOFF, *Artistic Director*
PETER PASTREICH, *Executive Director*

IN ASSOCIATION WITH YALE REPERTORY THEATRE

PRESENTS



BY **SUZAN-LORI PARKS**
DIRECTED BY **LIZ DIAMOND**
CHOREOGRAPHED BY **RANDY DUNCAN**

CREATIVE TEAM

SONGS AND ADDITIONAL MUSIC	**SUZAN-LORI PARKS**
SCENIC DESIGNER	**RICCARDO HERNÁNDEZ**
COSTUME DESIGNER	**SARAH NIETFELD**
LIGHTING DESIGNER	**YI ZHAO**
SOUND DESIGNER AND MUSIC DIRECTION	**FREDERICK KENNEDY**
FIGHT DIRECTOR	**RICK SORDELET**
VOCAL SUPPORT	**CHRISTINE ADAIRE**
CASTING DIRECTORS	**TARA RUBIN CASTING, JANET FOSTER, CSA**
DRAMATURGS	**CATHERINE MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ, CATHERINE SHEEHY**
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	**KAT YEN**

STAGE MANAGEMENT

STAGE MANAGER	**DEIRDRE ROSE HOLLAND***
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	**CHRISTINA HOGAN***

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SECOND, SECOND RUNAWAY	**ROTIMI AGBABIAKA***
PENNY	**EBONI FLOWERS***
THIRD, THIRD RUNAWAY	**SAFIYA FREDERICKS***
THE COLONEL	**DAN HIATT***
THE OLDEST OLD MAN	**STEVEN ANTHONY JONES***
HOMER	**JULIAN ELIJAH MARTINEZ***
THE MUSICIAN	**MARTIN LUTHER MCCOY***
LEADER, FIRST RUNAWAY	**CHIVAS MICHAEL***
SMITH	**TOM PECINKA***
HERO	**JAMES UDOM***
ODYSSEY DOG, FOURTH	**GREGORY WALLACE***

UNDERSTUDIES

SECOND, THE OLDEST OLD MAN, LEADER, FIRST RUNAWAY	**MICHAEL J. ASBERRY***
SECOND RUNAWAY, PENNY, THIRD, THIRD RUNAWAY	**BRITNEY FRAZIER***
HOMER, HERO, ODYSSEY DOG, FOURTH	**KADEEM ALI HARRIS****
THE MUSICIAN	**DAVID JAMES**
THE COLONEL, SMITH	**CRAIG MARKER***

Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3 is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

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*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

**Member of A.C.T.'s M.F.A. Program class of 2018 appearing in this production courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

WRITING FROM THE GUT

THE LIFE AND WORK OF SUZAN-LORI PARKS

BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN



PHOTO BY TAMMY SHELL

Don't ask playwright Suzan-Lori Parks what her plays mean. "This meaning thing, I think it's something made up by people who didn't want to feel anymore," she says. "They wanted to compartmentalize, they wanted to contain, so they made up meaning." Parks is a force that refuses to be contained. She is a lover of jazz and opera, William Faulkner and William Shakespeare, *Roots* and *Downton Abbey*. Her beaming smile, booming laugh, and rhythmic voice draw you in. She is fiercely intelligent, puckish, meticulous.

Parks was born on May 10, 1963, in Fort Knox, Kentucky. As the middle child in an army family, she moved around a lot, living in Texas, California, North Carolina, Maryland, Vermont, and Germany. From an early age, Parks was an energetic storyteller, but it wasn't until she was in a college writing class taught by novelist James Baldwin that the idea of being a playwright crossed her mind. Baldwin saw how animated Parks was when she was reading her work for the class, and suggested she try writing plays. "And I was like, 'What the fuck? Plays?' I hated theater," said Parks. "Just fake people doing bullshit. But James Baldwin said try it, so there I was."

After graduating from Mount Holyoke College, Parks studied acting for a year at Drama Studio London. She wanted to understand the physicality of language onstage. "Language is a physical act," she says. "It's something which involves your entire body—not just your head. Words are spells which an actor consumes and digests—and through digesting creates a performance on stage. Each word is configured to give the actor a clue to their physical life." From this acting training grew her unique, muscular voice; her specificity of language down to each syllable imbues her characters with energy.

In 1986, Parks moved to New York City, where she temped as a paralegal and searched for a home for her work. On a subway ride home, Parks approached *Village Voice* theater critic Alisa Solomon and asked her where she could send her plays. "They're kind of unconventional," Parks told her. Solomon passed her manuscripts on to Mac Wellman, the literary advisor at Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association (BACA). "He sort of flipped, and sent it to me," says director Liz Diamond, "and I sort of flipped."

Diamond directed Parks's *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* at BACA Downtown in 1989. It was an immediate success, winning the Obie Award for Best New American Play in 1990. "1990 was like a brave-new-world kind of thing," says Parks. "Everybody and their mama was telling me what they were going to do for me. And talk is cheap." But one voice rose above the clamor: director and producer George C. Wolfe. As artistic director of The Public Theater, Wolfe played an active role in developing and producing Parks's next four plays: *The America Play* (1994), *Venus* (1996), *In the Blood* (1999), and the Pulitzer Prize–winning *Topdog/Underdog* (2003).

Following *Topdog/Underdog*'s Broadway run, many theater critics tried to define Parks as *the* Black woman playwright. "I don't mind the label, but I do mind what happens next: Black woman playwright equals some sort of play. People say the black experience is X, and usually the X is the sorrows and frustrations and angers of people who have been wronged. That's all we get to write about. That's the black experience. Well, that's very important, but it's not my thing."

> "LANGUAGE IS A PHYSICAL ACT. IT'S SOMETHING WHICH INVOLVES YOUR ENTIRE BODY—NOT JUST YOUR HEAD."
>
> —SUZAN-LORI PARKS

Since winning the Pulitzer in 2003, Parks has continued to push the boundaries of her storytelling. She has written several screenplays, a novel, and the book for *Unchain My Heart, the Ray Charles Musical*. She has edited and updated the libretto for the Tony Award–winning 2012 Broadway production of *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess.* And in 2006, she broke the record for the largest collaboration in American theater history, when roughly 700 theaters premiered *365 Days/365 Plays* over the course of a year.

Parks's latest challenge is *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, a nine-part play cycle. Parts 1, 2, and 3 feature all of the elements that make Parks's work so unique: her muscular language; her jazz-inspired rhythms, repetitions, and revisions; and her impeccable timing and sense of humor. In this story of Hero and Homer, Parks fuses her love of the plays and poetry of ancient Greece with her exploration of history—both her own memories of waiting for her father to return from a tour in Vietnam, and unearthed areas of American history—to tackle the big concepts of identity and freedom.

Parks is in no hurry to complete the other six parts of this epic. She knows it will follow the descendants of Hero and Homer into the 20th century, and has written a rough outline. But her gut is telling her to wait. "When you're pregnant with a baby, when it's 5 months old, are you going to pull it out and take a look at it? No. It will come in time."



PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS

BLACK, GRAY, AND BLUE

BLACK AMERICANS IN THE CIVIL WAR

BY SIMON HODGSON AND ELSPETH SWEATMAN

As soon as the first shots rang out on April 12, 1861, the American Civil War was classified, glorified, and romanticized as a white man's war. The voices of the nearly four million Black Americans, more than 90 percent of whom were enslaved, were erased. It is *their* voices that playwright Suzan-Lori Parks re-earths in *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*, bringing us face to face with a painful, complicated, and shameful aspect of America's history, one with which we are still coming to terms.



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Like Parks's protagonist, Hero, many enslaved Black men were forced to accompany their owners from the cotton field to the battlefield. Up before dawn, body servants had to polish boots, mend uniforms, clean weapons, forage for food, and cook meals. Throughout all of this, these enslaved men had no agency. Even in uniform, their lives were a never-ending ordeal of surviving the cruelty, humiliation, and brutality of white men.

While it was the battlefields that captured public attention, in a war where railroads, large-scale manufacturing, and logistical campaigns were as vital as soldiers, no Black American survived untouched. Toiling away as laborers, miners, hospital porters, and factory workers were 3.5 million free and enslaved Black people. Some free men volunteered for this dangerous war work, wishing to defend their city or state. But they frequently worked side by side with enslaved men who were impressed, conscripted, or simply offered up by their owners.

For those on the home front, the Civil War was a time of faith and fear. Reports of approaching Union troops buoyed hopes of escape and freedom, but also raised the threat of families being torn apart as owners marched away all able-bodied enslaved men to prevent them falling into the enemy's hands. The introduction of curfews, travel permits, and local patrols further restricted the daily lives of many Black Americans. Communities were divided as communication with neighboring free men and women was forbidden. Punishments for escape attempts became even more brutal; in many instances, they were death sentences. Those who did manage to reach Union lines quickly discovered that they were no more welcome there; white Union soldiers were just as cruel, with some even turning escapees over to their former owners.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln relented to pressure from abolitionists and Black civic leaders and allowed Black Americans to enlist in the Union Army. Over the next two years, 180,000 would serve in the army and see action on more than 50 occasions. Despite proving themselves on the battlefield, Black Union soldiers faced inequality in the provisions and medical care that they received, the promotion opportunities that they were offered, and the punishments that they received. If captured by Confederate soldiers, they faced execution or the terror of being sold into slavery.

Although slavery was *technically* abolished in the United States in December 1865, Black Americans have continued to face systemic discrimination, racism, and prejudice. The threat of violence, torture, and lynching, as well as the Jim Crow laws—dehumanizing legislation passed in many Southern states that systematically kept Black Americans in de facto slavery—were daily reminders of the limitations of their "freedom." Even now, 50 years after the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, millions of Black Americans struggle to gain equal access to housing, healthcare, education, social services, fair treatment within the judicial system, and the opportunity to participate in America's political system.

The repercussions of slavery, segregation, and the Civil War are very much alive in contemporary America. We see this in scholarly research into Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, the current Black Lives Matter movement, and theatrical explorations of how this history continues to impact Black communities, such as A.C.T.'s 2018 *Every 28 Hours Black Arts Festival: A Healing Experience* and Parks's *Father Comes Home from the Wars*. When Hero raises his arms in the "Hands up, don't shoot" pose, Parks shows us how her protagonist's struggle for freedom is one that is ongoing. For millions of Black Americans, the question of what it means to be free in America is yet unanswered.

PHOTO BY JAY YAMADA



OPPOSITE, FROM TOP
Dan Hiatt and James Udom in Yale Repertory Theatre and A.C.T.'s 2018 production of *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*; 44th Mississippi Infantry Regiment Sergeant A. M. Chandler and his enslaved body servant, Silas Chandler.

LEFT
A.C.T.'s 2018 *Every 28 Hours Black Arts Festival: A Healing Experience*, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement.



PHOTO BY JOAN MARCUS

MAKING MYTHS

AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR LIZ DIAMOND

BY SIMON HODGSON

The first time director Liz Diamond picked up a script by Suzan-Lori Parks, she was smitten. "I fell in love with her work," says Diamond, "with the stories she was telling, with her voice as a writer, and with Suzan-Lori herself—this blazingly smart, fierce, funny, vibrant, young artist." In 1989, Diamond directed Parks's *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* at Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association (BACA) Downtown, launching a partnership that has lasted 30 years. As she prepared to direct *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* at both Yale Repertory Theatre and A.C.T., the chair of directing at Yale School of Drama spoke to us about the images that have inspired her design, her collaboration with the playwright, and why Parks's play matters now.

What was your initial reaction to Parks's work?
The playwright Mac Wellman sent me her play *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom*. As I began to read, my understanding of dramatic structure was blown away. Here was a work by an American writer playing with what it means to be a *play*! Suzan-Lori was using popular and poetic forms of speech—rhythmic wordplay, jokes within jokes, puns—to such a radical degree. She was messing with theatrical time: telling a story across great swaths of history, and through characters who morphed into others from one part of the play to the next. I had never read a play by a writer that so gleefully deconstructed and reconstructed time, space, and character.

"THE QUESTION IS ALIVE IN ALL OF US, AND ACHINGLY SO: WHAT DOES IT COST TO BE FREE? THAT PARADOX—WHY SHOULD FREEDOM COST *ANYTHING*?—IS AT THE HEART OF THE PLAY."

Which images or artists have sparked your thinking for this production?
I looked at photographs of war ruins: images of Richmond, Virginia, after it was burned, and of World War I battlefields. I also shared with the design team an image I've always held onto: the silhouetted figures on a hill at the end of Ingmar Bergman's *Seventh Seal* [1957]. Also one image that scenic designer Riccardo Hernández brought—a still from *Ivan's Childhood* [1962], directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, of a Russian boy peering into the war-devastated ruins of his home.

There's an extraordinary African American artist named Elizabeth Catlett, who did a series of black-and-white linoleum cuts called *The Negro Woman* (1946–47), featuring the figures of African American women renowned and unknown. In using shadow and silhouette in our design, we were inspired by the high contrast between dark and light, and the way Catlett captures the idiosyncrasy of an individual human face but also magnifies it to become universal, representing a much larger human struggle. Yi Zhao's lighting design is geared toward that. He likens it to a double exposure on a film negative. And Riccardo's set is a canvas on which the larger shadows of these characters can play.

How do you approach the challenge of playing at both Yale Rep and A.C.T.?
We're lucky, because in both cases we're working in proscenium houses with a comparable stage footprint, wings, flyspace, and substantial depth, so the design doesn't have to undergo radical revision. But The Geary is *big*. [*Laughs*] I've never worked in a house with two balconies. I'm going to be learning a lot. Happily, some of the cast are Geary veterans. "You've got to lift your chin *up*," is what [actor] Gregory Wallace tells us.

What impact does the *Odyssey* have on *Father Comes Home*?
I think that Suzan-Lori would like us to understand that she's not just drawing on epics from across the world, but creating a new one, hers and ours. "When you think about this play," she said to me, "you want to say to yourself: 'As the *Agamemnon* [the classic Greek play by Aeschylus] was to the Trojan War, so *Father Comes Home* is to the Civil War.'" It's a kind of myth-making. The *Odyssey* is telling the story of the return of a hero, and this play is too. Suzan-Lori riffs—on the Homeric epic, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the American tall tale—and ingeniously mixes lyric poetry with 21st-century vernacular, weaving it together with song to construct a deeply moving and subversively funny story about the struggle of an enslaved African American man to recognize, to understand, and ultimately to *practice* freedom.

Is it that focus on freedom that gives this play its haunting resonance today?
The question is alive in all of us, and achingly so: what does it cost to be free? That paradox—why should freedom cost *anything*?—is at the heart of the play. With our country so divided by racism, xenophobia, and grotesque economic and social inequality, it feels more important than ever to stage Parks's great play. We need her unflinchingly honest and humane plays on our stages, to show us, with all her warm humor and fierce compassion, what it costs in America to "own your own self." Throughout her artistic life, Suzan-Lori has tried to practice freedom, and that commitment is alive in this play, and in all her work.



WORDS ON PLAYS

Want to know more about *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*? *Words on Plays* is full of interviews and original essays that give you a behind-the-scenes look. Proceeds from sales of *Words on Plays* benefit A.C.T.'s education programs.

Available at the box office and lobby, at the bars, and online at **act-sf.org/wordsonplays**.

WHO'S WHO IN *FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS (PARTS 1, 2 & 3)*



ROTIMI AGBABIAKA*

(Second, Second Runaway) is performing on the Geary stage for the first time. He most recently appeared as Pegleg in *The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets* (Shotgun Players). Other credits include *Bootycandy* (Brava! for Women in the Arts); *Sojourners* and *runboyrun* (Magic Theatre); *Choir Boy* (Marin Theatre Company); *A Raisin in the Sun* (California Shakespeare Theater); *Once on This Island* (TheatreWorks); *The Amen Corner* (Alter Theater); and several productions with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, of which he is a member. As a director, he helmed the world premiere of *VS.* (TheatreFIRST). His solo play, *Homeless*, won Best Solo Performance at the San Francisco Fringe Festival, and his latest solo piece, *Type/Caste*, received the Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Solo Production. Rotimi studied at the Moscow Art Theatre and received an MFA in acting from Northern Illinois University.



EBONI FLOWERS*

(Penny) is making her A.C.T. debut with *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. Most recently she was seen in the same production at Yale Repertory Theatre. Her New York credits include *Too Heavy for Your Pocket* (Roundabout Theatre Company), *Dead Dog Park* (Bedlam), *Paradox of the Urban Cliché* (The Wild Project), *Miss Julie* (August Strindberg Repertory Theatre), and *Court-Martial at Fort Devens* (Castillo Theater). Other theater credits include *Too Heavy for Your Pocket* (Alliance Theatre); *Times!* (Youth Ensemble of Atlanta); and *Three Sisters*, *The Trojan Women*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival). She has been seen on television in *Blue Bloods*, *Show Me a Hero*, and *Friends of the People*. She received her bachelor's degree from Clark Atlanta University, and her MFA from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival/ University of Alabama.



SAFIYA FREDERICKS*

(Third, Third Runaway) returns to A.C.T., where she previously appeared in Tom Stoppard's *Hard Problem* and as the female understudy in *Small Mouth Sounds*. Other regional credits include *Grandeur* at Magic Theatre, the world premiere of *Aubergine* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *Once on This Island* at TheatreWorks, the Witch in *Into the Woods* at San Francisco Playhouse, and *Much Ado about Nothing* and *black odyssey* at California Shakespeare Theater. Past favorites include The Civilians' production of *In the Footprint* at ArtsEmerson in Boston and *By Hands Unknown* at the New York International Fringe Festival. On screen, she can be seen as the female lead in *Black Gold (America Is Still the Place)* alongside Mike Colter, *Bitter Melon* made last fall, and the upcoming movie *Sorry to Bother You*, which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival.



DAN HIATT*

(The Colonel) was most recently seen at A.C.T. as Petey in *The Birthday Party*. Other roles at A.C.T. include Polonius in *Hamlet*, James Reiss in *King Charles III*, the ensemble of *Love and Information*, Tom in *Round and Round the Garden*, Bob Acres in *The Rivals*, Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Cornelius Hackl in *The Matchmaker*, and Sid Davis in *Ah, Wilderness!* His Bay Area credits include *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and *Dinner with Friends* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* and many others at California Shakespeare Theater, *The 39 Steps* at TheatreWorks, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at Theatre on the Square, *Breakfast with Mugabe* at Aurora Theatre Company, and *Anne Boleyn* at Marin Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include work with Shakespeare Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Huntington Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, and Ford's Theatre.



STEVEN ANTHONY JONES* (The Oldest Old Man)

was the artistic director of the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, the premier African American theater company in the Bay Area. Most recently, he appeared in A.C.T.'s *Hamlet* as Claudius/Ghost, and he also directed Philip Kan Gotanda's *After the War Blues* at UC Berkeley. He has worked in theater, television, and film for 40 years. He has performed in the works of August Wilson, Charles Fuller, Athol Fugard, Tom Stoppard, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Molière, Shakespeare, and Anton Chekhov. He was in the original cast of the Pulitzer Prize–winning *A Soldier's Play* produced by the Negro Ensemble Company (Obie Award for Distinguished Ensemble Performance). He performed, taught, and directed at A.C.T. for 22 years as a member of the core acting company. His film and television credits include *Midnight Caller* and *Trauma*. Jones received his theater training at Karamu House in his hometown, Cleveland, Ohio. He is a graduate of Yankton College.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States



JULIAN ELIJAH MARTINEZ*

(Homer) was most recently seen in *Mud* with Boundless Theatre Company. Other theater credits include *Alligator* (New Georges); *The Square Root of Three Sisters* (The Dmitry Krymov Lab); *Adam Geist* (Yale Summer Cabaret); *9 Circles* (Forum Theatre); *Locomotion* (The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts); *The Hampton Years* (Theater J); *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chesapeake Shakespeare Company); *Man of La Mancha* (The Hangar Theatre); and *Hamlet* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (Orlando Shakespeare Theater). Television credits include *Elementary*, *Big Dogs*, *High School Lover*, and *Madam Secretary*. Martinez is a former co-artistic director of Yale Cabaret, and a company member of the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company and FullStop Collective. Martinez received his MFA from Yale University and his BFA from Elon University.



MARTIN LUTHER MCCOY*

(The Musician) is an actor, guitarist, singer-songwriter, producer, and a San Francisco native. One of the prominent figures in the Bay Area's 1990s neo-soul scene, McCoy continues to create and support socially conscious music today. He tours as lead singer with the interdisciplinary alt-art-rock performance group Moon Medicin, a project led by keyboardist and visual artist Sanford Biggers. In the near future, he will release his fourth full-length studio album, a self-titled LP focusing on original material. McCoy is best known for his work with the seminal hip-hop collective the Roots, as well as his performance in Julie Taymor's 2007 film *Across the Universe*. He has performed with Dave Matthews, Jill Scott, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and many others.



CHIVAS MICHAEL*

(Leader, First Runaway) is making his A.C.T. debut. His other theater credits include *Antony and Cleopatra* (The Royal Shakespeare Company; The Public Theater); *Brooklyn OMNIBUS* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); *Romeo and Juliet* (Classic Stage Company; Villa La Pietra, Florence); *The Broadway Problem* (Lincoln Center Out of Doors Festival); *Sliding into the Beast* (New York Theatre Workshop; Continuum Company); *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *Wild with Happy* (Baltimore Center Stage); *The Servant of Two Masters* (The Guthrie Theater); *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Much Ado about Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare on the Sound); *Hamlet* and *The Illusion* (New Orleans Shakespeare Festival); and *Airline Highway* (Southern Rep Theatre). Michael received his BA from Dillard University and his MFA from New York University's Graduate Acting Program.



TOM PECINKA*

(Smith) was most recently seen in the world premiere of Adrienne Kennedy's *He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box* at Theatre for a New Audience. Other New York theater credits include *Troilus and Cressida* (The Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park), *Torch Song* (Second Stage Theater), and *A Soldier's Tale* (a collaboration of the Yale School of Music and Yale School of Drama at Carnegie Hall). His regional credits include *Arcadia* (Yale Repertory Theatre, Connecticut Critics Circle Award nomination); *Cloud 9* (Connecticut Critics Circle Award nomination) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hartford Stage); *Deathtrap*, *Design for Living*, and *The Cat and the Canary* (Berkshire Theatre Group); and *As You Like It* and *The Two Gentlemen of*



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Verona (Shakespeare on the Sound). He received his BA from Fordham University and his MFA from Yale School of Drama.



JAMES UDOM*

(Hero) is returning home to the Bay Area to make his A.C.T. debut with *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. His off-Broadway credits include *Tamburlaine the Great* (Theatre for a New Audience), *Macbeth* (The Public Theater), and *The Winter's Tale* (Pearl Theatre Company). Other regional theater credits include *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare & Company); *Romeo and Juliet* (Elm Shakespeare Company); *Of Mice and Men* and *King Lear* (Hubbard Hall); *Miss Julie* (Yale Summer Cabaret); and *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Odyssey* (We Players), among others. He has trained with Shakespeare & Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and Dell'Arte International Ensemble, and is graduating this year with an MFA in acting from Yale School of Drama. Udom is the recipient of the 2017 Princess Grace Award (Grace LeVine Theatre Award) and the 2012 National Irene Ryan Scholarship Award for Best Actor.



GREGORY WALLACE*

(Odyssey Dog, Fourth) was an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member for 12 years and has been seen at A.C.T. in more than two dozen productions, including *Clybourne Park*, *The Tosca Project*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Angels in America* (San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award). Other theater credits include *Our Country's Good* (Broadway), *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (New York Theatre Workshop), *As You Like It* (The Public Theater), *Much Ado about Nothing* (Alliance Theatre), *The Screens* (Guthrie Theater), *The Learned Ladies* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *King Lear* (Whole Theatre), *The Queen and the Rebels* (Baltimore Center Stage), and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre). Screen credits include Peter Sellars's *Cabinet of Dr. Ramirez*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Crime Story*, and *Internal Affairs*. Wallace is an associate professor of acting at UC San Diego and a professor of acting at Yale School of Drama.



MICHAEL J. ASBERRY*

(Understudy) is making his A.C.T. debut with *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. Asberry was last seen in *Red Speedo* with Center REPertory Company. Other theater credits include *Fences* (Pacific Conservatory Theatre); *Driving Miss Daisy*, *The Whipping Man*, and *"Master Harold" ... and the Boys* (Sacramento Theatre Company); *Nora* (Shotgun Players); *The Box* (Z Space); *Romeo and Juliet* (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival); *Landless* (Alter Theater); the Best of PlayGround; *Seven Guitars* (Artists Repertory Theatre); *Day of Absence*, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *King Hedley II*, and *Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine* (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre); *Superior Donuts* (TheatreWorks); *Topdog/Underdog* (6th Street Playhouse); and *Satellites* (Aurora Theatre Company). Film appearances include *San Andreas*, *Mr. Incredible and Pals*, *Chasing Rodriguez*, and *Portable Storage*. Television credits include *Chance* (Hulu), *Trauma* (NBC), and *Nash Bridges* (CBS). Asberry has recorded voiceover spots for Pine Sol, Sweetos, General Motors, and Electronic Arts.



BRITNEY FRAZIER*

(Understudy) is a Bay Area actor, director, playwright, and teaching artist. She has collaborated with Campo Santo, The Cutting Ball Theater, Shotgun Players, Brava! For Women in the Arts, Ubuntu Theater Project, Marin Theatre Company, San Francisco International Arts Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, and A.C.T. Most recently, Frazier played Hedda in *Hedda Gabler* at The Cutting Ball Theater and Woman #2 in *Home* at the Lorraine Hansberry Theater. As a teaching artist, Frazier has directed for Disney Theatrical Productions, California Shakespeare Theater, the East Bay Center for Performing Arts, StageWrite, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and The Marsh. As a playwright, Frazier has written four original plays: *Obeah*, *Dysphoria*, *Pressure High*, and *Laveau* (a commission from TheatreFIRST). Directing credits include Star Finch's *Take the Ticket* in the recent production of *Participants* at TheatreFIRST.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States



Barbara Bream, joined in 2011

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KADEEM ALI HARRIS**

(Understudy) is in his third year of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and made his Geary debut this past December with *A Christmas Carol*. His favorite roles in M.F.A. productions have been Zak in *Clickshare*, Romeo/Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Wong in *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. Regional credits include *Fences* (California Shakespeare Theater) and *Love and Information* (Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati). Harris has appeared in readings with the Bay Area Playwrights Festival and Shotgun Players. He's a committed teaching artist who has taught in New York City, Cincinnati, and the Bay Area. He is a recipient of the Bratt Family Diversity Scholarship.



DAVID JAMES

(Understudy) has toured internationally and recorded with the hip-hop groups Spearhead and the Coup, as well as with the Beth Custer Ensemble, with whom he has performed live scores to silent films in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Russia, the Republic of Georgia, and the Museums of Modern Art in San Francisco and New York. James currently leads the ensemble David James's GPS, and co-leads the group Afrofunk Experience.



CRAIG MARKER*

(Understudy) returns to A.C.T. having performed in *The Circle* and *Curse of the Starving Class*. Recent credits include his roles as King Henry VIII and James I in *Anne Boleyn* and Nick Bright in *The Invisible Hand* at Marin Theatre Company, Frederick Fellows in *Noises Off* at San Francisco Playhouse, and Alcippe in *The Liar* at Center REPertory Company. Marker has performed at California Shakespeare Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Portland Center Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Aurora Theatre Company, TheatreWorks, Shotgun Players, the Barbican Centre (UK), Birmingham Repertory Theatre (UK), Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and the International Festival of Ancient Greek Drama. Marker is a graduate of the theater program at California State University, East Bay.

SUZAN-LORI PARKS (Playwright, Songs, Additional Music) was named one of *TIME* magazine's "100 Innovators for the Next New Wave," and is the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (*Topdog/Underdog*). She is also a MacArthur "Genius Grant" prize recipient. Other awards include the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical (*The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*), the Gish Prize for Excellence in the Arts, an Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History, a Horton Foote Prize, and three Obie Awards. Her screenwriting credits include *Girl 6* (directed by Spike Lee), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (produced by Oprah Winfrey), and *Anemone Me* (produced by Christine Vachon and Todd Haynes). Parks teaches at New York University and serves at The Public Theater as its Master Writer Chair. She has recently written a screen adaptation of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, a new screenplay about Billie Holiday, two new stage plays, and a musical adaptation of the film *The Harder They Come*. She fronts her band Suzan-Lori Parks & The Band.

LIZ DIAMOND (Director) is a resident director at Yale Repertory Theatre, the chair of directing at Yale School of Drama, and has been directing new plays and classical work off Broadway and nationally for over 30 years. Regional and world premieres of new work include Catherine Trieschmann's *Crooked*; Lucinda Coxon's *Happy Now?*; Seamus Heaney's *Cure at Troy*; Octavio Solis's *Gibraltar*; Marcus Gardley's *Dance of the Holy Ghosts*; and Suzan-Lori Parks's *Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*, *The America Play*, *Betting on the Dust Commander*, and *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom*. Productions of classical and modern works include Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, and new translations of *Phèdre*, *The Trojan Women*, and *Miss Julie*. She is the winner of the Obie Award for Outstanding Direction and a Connecticut Critics Circle Award. She will direct her translation of Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall later this year.

RANDY DUNCAN (Choreographer), a native of Chicago, is a three-time recipient of Chicago's Ruth Page Award for Outstanding Choreographer of the Year. He has received numerous other awards, including the Artistic Achievement Award from the Chicago National Association of Dance Masters and three Black Theatre Alliance Awards. Duncan's work can be seen in the Joffrey Ballet, Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, and many others. While working in such theaters as the Goodman Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, Court Theatre, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, he has created original choreography for *Hair*, *Carousel*, *Zoot Suit*, *Once on This Island*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Amadeus*, *Antigone*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and the Pulitzer Prize–winning play *Ruined*. Duncan teaches worldwide and for the past 23 years has been on the faculty of The Chicago Academy for the Arts, where he now serves as Dance Department Chair.

RICCARDO HERNÁNDEZ

(Scenic Designer) serves on the faculty of Yale School of Drama and has designed the following plays for Yale Repertory Theatre: *Assassins*, *Indecent*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Autumn Sonata*, *Battle of Black and Dogs*, *The Evildoers*, *The America Play*, and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*. His Broadway credits include *Indecent*,

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States
**Member of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program class of 2018 appearing in this production courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

The Gin Game, *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*, *The People in the Picture*, *Parade*, *The Tempest*, and *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*. Hernández has designed over 250 national and international theater and opera productions. His most recent credits include *Admissions* (Lincoln Center Theater), *Oedipus El Rey* (The Public Theater), *The Invisible Hand* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Don Giovanni* (Santa Fe Opera), *Grounded* (The Public Theater and Westport Country Playhouse), and *The Dead* (Abbey Theatre). Hernández has an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Scenic Design.

SARAH NIETFELD (Costume Designer) is making her A.C.T. debut with *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. Her recent costume design credits include *Everything That Never Happened* and *Bulgaria! Revolt!* (Yale School of Drama); *How We Died of Disease-Related Illness* (Yale Cabaret); and *Antarctica! Which Is to Say Nowhere* (Yale Summer Cabaret). Her recent scenic design credits include *The Quonsets* and *This Sweet Affliction* (Yale Cabaret). Seattle credits include *August: Osage County* (Balagan Theatre), *Austen Translation* (Jet City Improv), and *The Old Maid and the Thief* (Cornish College of the Arts). Born in Ireland and raised in Seattle, she has worked on both sides of the pond, including Fuel Theatre in London in association with the Royal National Theatre, the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, La Jolla Playhouse, the Guthrie Theater, and Seattle Opera. Sarah holds a BFA from Cornish College of the Arts and an MFA from Yale School of Drama.

YI ZHAO (Lighting Designer) is designing at The Geary for the first time with *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*, which previously played at Yale Repertory Theatre. His New York credits include *Pipeline* at Lincoln Center Theater; *Actually* at Manhattan Theatre Club; Suzan-Lori Parks's *In the Blood* and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World* at Signature Theatre; *Red Speedo* at New York Theatre Workshop; and *Futurity* and *Revolt. She*

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Said. Revolt Again. at Soho Repertory Theatre. Regionally, his work is frequently seen at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, and The Wilma Theater, and has appeared on the stages of the Guthrie Theater, Mark Taper Forum, Huntington Theatre Company, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. His designs for opera, music, and dance have been seen at ArtsEmerson, Curtis Institute of Music, and Ballet de Lorraine in France. He is a recipient of the 2016 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Theatre.

FREDERICK KENNEDY (Sound Designer and Music Direction) is making his A.C.T. debut with *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*. Kennedy is a third-year MFA candidate at Yale School of Drama, where his credits include *If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and *Othello*. Other credits include *Native Son* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *The Trojan Women*, *Adam Geist*, *Alice In Wonderland*, and *ENVY: The Concert* (Yale Summer Cabaret); and *Re:union*, *Débâcles*, *Lake Kelsey*, *Vignette of a Recollection*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *And Tell Sad Stories of the Death of Queens*, *How We Died of Disease-Related Illnesses*, and *I'm with you in Rockland* (Yale Cabaret). In addition, he recently wrote, co-directed, and performed in *Collisions*, also at Yale Cabaret, and was the associate sound designer and music coordinator for Yale Rep's *Scenes from Court Life, or the whipping boy and his prince*.

RICK SORDELET (Fight Director) has worked on 72 Broadway shows including *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Indecent*. His most recent credits include *The Seafarer* (Irish Repertory Theatre) and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Perseverance Theatre). He has 53 international tour credits, including *Tarzan*, *Aida*, *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Ben Hur Live*. Sordelet has worked for several opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House, and La Scala in Milan. In addition, he has numerous film and television credits, such as *Dan in Real Life*, *The Game Plan*, *Kevin Can Wait*, and *Guiding Light*. Sordelet is an instructor at Yale School of Drama, and is the recipient of the Edith Oliver Award for Sustained Excellence from the Lucille Lortel Foundation and the Jeff Award for Outstanding Fight Director for *Romeo and Juliet* at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

CATHERINE MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ (Dramaturg) names New Orleans and Nicaragua home and calls culture-making her vocation. She is a graduating MFA candidate in dramaturgy and dramatic criticism at Yale School of Drama, where her credits include founding El Colectivo, Yale School of Drama's Latinx affinity space, as well as dramaturging *Seven Guitars* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must be a Muhfucka* and *Amy and the Orphans* (Yale School of Drama); *Antony + Cleopatra* (Yale Summer Cabaret); and *Camille*, *This American Wife*, and *And Tell Sad Stories of the Death of Queens* (Yale Cabaret). She currently serves on the Latinx Theatre Commons advisory committee and Literary Managers & Dramaturgs of the Americas board of directors. Past credits include productions at Joe's Pub/Kimmel Center, Baltimore Center Stage, National Endowment of the Arts, El Círculo Teatral (Mexico), Borderlands Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and Northwestern University.

CATHERINE SHEEHY (Dramaturg) is resident dramaturg at Yale Repertory Theatre and the chair of dramaturgy and dramatic criticism at Yale School of Drama. Her Yale Rep credits include *Happy Days*, *Elevada*, *These Paper Bullets!*, *In a Year with 13 Moons*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Bossa Nova*, *POP!*, *Trouble in Mind*, and *The King Stag*. She's a founding member of New Neighborhood. Her adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* has been produced at Asolo Repertory Theatre and Dallas Theater Center. She has worked at Theatre for a New Audience, Royal Shakespeare Company, The Public Theater, Signature Theatre, O'Neill Playwrights Conference, Center Stage, and on a project in development at HBO. She is a former associate editor of *American Theatre* magazine and a former editor of *Theater* magazine. She received her doctorate from Yale in 1999 for her dissertation *If You Care to Blast for It: Excavating the Lost Comic Masterpieces of the American Canon*.

TARA RUBIN (Casting Director) has been casting at Yale Repertory Theatre since 2004. Her Broadway credits include *Falsettos*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Cats*, *Disaster!*, *School of Rock*, *Doctor Zhivago*, *It Shoulda Been You*, *Gigi*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, *Aladdin*, *Les Misérables*, *Mothers and Sons*, *Big Fish*, *The Heiress*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *A Little Night Music*, *Billy Elliot*, *Shrek*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Young Frankenstein*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Mary Poppins*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The Producers*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Jersey Boys*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Off Broadway, Rubin has worked on *Here Lies Love*, *Old Jews Telling Jokes*, and *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*. Her regional credits include productions at Paper Mill Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, the Old Globe, and Bucks County Playhouse.

JANET FOSTER, CSA (Casting Director) has cast for A.C.T. for six seasons including *Hamlet*, *The Hard Problem*, *King Charles III*, *John*, *Arcadia*, *Stuck Elevator*, *The Orphan of Zhao*, *Elektra*, *Endgame* and *Play*, *Scorched*, and *Napoli!* On Broadway she cast *The Light in the Piazza* (Artios Award nomination), *Lennon*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Taking Sides* (co-cast). Off-Broadway credits include *True Love*, *Floyd Collins*, *The Monogamist*, *A Cheever Evening*, and *Later Life*. Regionally, she has worked at Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, The Old Globe, and American Repertory Theater. Film, television, and radio credits include *Cosby*, *Tracey Takes On New York*, *The Deal*, *Advice from a*

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Caterpillar, *The Day That Lehman Died* (Peabody, SONY, and Wincott awards), and *"T" Is for Tom* (Tom Stoppard radio plays, WNYC and WQXR). She also cast *LifeAfter*, a GE Theater podcast.

DEIRDRE ROSE HOLLAND*

(Stage Manager) has worked on many regional theater projects and productions, including the 2016 New Strands Festival, *John*, *On Beckett*, *Chester Bailey*, *Let There Be Love*, and *Ah, Wilderness!* at A.C.T.; *Measure for Measure* and *The Liar* at Santa Cruz Shakespeare; *As You Like It*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Lady Windermere's Fan* at California Shakespeare Theater; *Cyrano* and *2 Pianos 4 Hands* at TheatreWorks; *The Big Meal*, *Game On*, *Next Fall*, *Next to Normal*, *A Christmas Carol* (2011 and 2012), and *Spring Awakening* at San Jose Repertory Theatre; *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* and the world premiere of *Bonnie & Clyde* at La Jolla Playhouse; and the Shakespeare Festival 2011, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (2010), and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* at The Old Globe. Holland holds an MFA in stage management from UC San Diego.

CHRISTINA HOGAN* (Assistant Stage Manager)

returns to A.C.T. after working on *Hamlet*, *Monstress*, and *Love and Information*. Her other theater credits include *The Baltimore Waltz*, *runboyrun*, *And I and Silence*, *Hir*, *Arlington*, *Every Five Minutes*, *The Happy Ones*, *Terminus*, *Se Llama Cristina*, and *Any Given Day* (Magic Theatre); *It Can't Happen Here* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *Skeleton Crew* and *The Wolves* (Marin Theatre Company); *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Verona Project*, and *The Pastures of Heaven* (California Shakespeare Theater); and *very still & hard to see* (A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program). Hogan has a BA in theater arts from Saint Mary's College of California.

FRED M. LEVIN AND NANCY LIVINGSTON (Company Sponsors)

are stewards of the Shenson Foundation and theater-goers who have subscribed to A.C.T. for 28 years. They recently supported *King Charles III*, *The Unfortunates*, and *Between Riverside and Crazy*. A San Francisco native, Levin attended A.C.T. performances as a student while Livingston developed her passion for theater at her hometown Cleveland Play House. A former advertising copywriter, Livingston is Immediate Past Chair of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees and serves on the dean's advisory board at the College of Fine Arts at Boston University. Levin serves on the boards of the San Francisco Symphony, the Asian Art Museum, and the San Francisco Film Society (which his father founded). Both Livingston and Levin serve on the Council of Advocates of Boston Arts Academy and on the Advisory Board of the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC.

JOHN LITTLE AND HEATHER STALLINGS LITTLE (Executive Producers)

have produced *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *The Last Five Years*, *Indian Ink*, *Venus in Fur*, and *Endgame* and *Play* at A.C.T. Heather is a CPA-turned-writer who worked in investment banking and as the chief financial officer of a company that manages the affairs of professional athletes. A frequent adventure traveler, she writes travel stories as well as fiction. She is the author of *Click City* (the novel and fiction serial seen in the *San Francisco Chronicle*) and the novel *False Alarm*. Her short fiction has appeared in *ZYZZYVA*. Heather joined the A.C.T. Board of Trustees in 2011. John previously served on the Asian Art Museum board of trustees. He is an entrepreneur and inventor and enjoys adventure travel, skiing, tennis, and photography.

YALE REPERTORY THEATRE,

the internationally celebrated professional theatre in residence at Yale School of Drama since 1966, has championed playwrights including Christopher Durang, August Wilson, Suzan-Lori Parks, Sarah Ruhl, Amy Herzog, and many others. Thirteen Yale Rep productions have advanced to Broadway, garnering more than 40 Tony Award nominations and ten Tony Awards. Yale Rep is also the recipient of the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Yale's Binger Center for New Theatre, established in 2008, has distinguished itself as one of the nation's most robust and innovative new play programs. To date, the Binger Center has supported the work of more than 50 commissioned artists and underwritten the world premieres and subsequent productions of 27 new American plays and musicals at Yale Rep and theaters across the country. The Tony Award–winning play, *Indecent*, created by playwright Paula Vogel and director Rebecca Taichman, which was commissioned and first produced by Yale Rep in 2015, was recently broadcast on PBS's *Great Performances*.

TARA RUBIN CASTING STAFF

Lindsay Levine, C.S.A.; Laura Schutzel, C.S.A.; Kaitlin Shaw, C.S.A.; Merri Sugarman, C.S.A.; Eric Woodall, C.S.A.; Claire Burke; Felicia Rudolph

SPECIAL THANKS

Ralph Chipman
Hanna Diamond Chipman
Yura Kordonsky

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FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

MEET A.C.T. PRODUCER ANNE SHONK

BY TAYLOR STEINBECK



PHOTO BY SIMONE FINNEY

When Anne Shonk was young, her mother introduced her to the theater. Her family couldn't afford to see many shows, but the productions they did attend—such as the San Francisco premiere of *Evita* with Patti LuPone and Mandy Patinkin—had a huge impact on Shonk. Now, she is a mother herself, and shares her lifelong passion for the stage with *her* daughter. She and Michelle have been A.C.T. subscribers for almost 15 years, and attend everything from mainstage rehearsals to special events to Conservatory performances. We sat down with Shonk to find out more about her enthusiasm for A.C.T., and why she believes that theater transcends generations.

What drew you to A.C.T.?
The people, the programming, and The Geary. It's a wonderful old theater—I look for every opportunity that I can to sit in that jewel of a space.

You're also on the board of A.C.T.'s Master of Fine Arts Program. What does that mean to you?
We're the only M.F.A. Program in the country unaffiliated with a university, and we're both highly regarded and well-ranked. I've been on the board for four years, and it's been great getting to know the M.F.A. actors. Michelle and I try to go to every M.F.A. performance. If you're at all involved with the theater and you want to see good theater continue, how else can you assure that but by training a new generation?

What do you love most about the producer experience?
The producer level provides the opportunity to attend the initial "meet and greet" with the playwright, cast, and creative team, and follow the production as it matures in time for opening night. I also love sitting in the booth with the stage manager and hearing the show called from beginning to end. That's a special treat.

What is your favorite A.C.T. memory?
We were producers for *The Unfortunates* (2016) and got to know the cast and creatives well. We still keep in touch with a lot of them. One time we attended a rehearsal that didn't finish until midnight and the actors were amazed that we were still there. On the closing night of the show, we arrived late, and the ushers squeezed us into the third row. Afterwards, several cast members said, "When we saw you guys come in, we felt like all the family was here," which was a special feeling.

Why is it so important that you share this love of theater with your daughter?
It's not just my daughter! When I talk about A.C.T. with other people, it's utterly apparent that it's something I care about. People comment all the time, "You're really passionate about that, aren't you?" The arts are extremely important—it matters that I pass my passion on to everyone I can.

For more information about membership benefits and how you can become a producer of a work on an A.C.T. stage, visit **act-sf.org/support** or contact A.C.T. Deputy Director of Development Tiffany Redmon at **415.439.2482** or **tredmon@act-sf.org**.



VIDEO STILL BY CHRISTINE MILLER

BY *MOON* AND BY *SUNS*

A.C.T. CONTINUES TO DEVELOP NEW WORK WITH *A WALK ON THE MOON*

BY SIMON HODGSON

As America reverberated with the murmurs of protests and revolution this spring, a rehearsal room off West 26th Street in New York rang with the sounds of Woodstock and the '60s. For nine days in March, the cast and creatives of *A Walk on the Moon*, along with A.C.T. staff, were in town for the workshop of this stunning musical premiering at The Geary in June.

Set in a Catskills bungalow colony in the summer of 1969, *A Walk on the Moon* follows the awakening of two women—31-year-old housewife Pearl and her rebellious daughter, Alison—as they discover themselves and their place in an era of musical and cultural revolution. Based on the 1999 film of the same name written by Pamela Gray, the book of this world-premiere musical is also written by Gray, with music composed by Paul Scott Goodman, and directed by Sheryl Kaller.

For the creative trio behind *Moon*, the workshop offered a chance to hear the numbers sung aloud by actors Brigid O'Brien (A.C.T.'s *A Little Night Music*) and Zak Resnick (A.C.T.'s *The Last Five Years*) and to work directly with A.C.T.'s artistic team. "The cast and creative team showed me things about this story—a story that is in my DNA—that I hadn't seen before," says Gray. "That's just so exciting for me as a writer."

For the A.C.T. staff members who traveled to New York for the workshop (including Artistic Director Carey Perloff, Associate Artistic Director Andy Donald, Casting Director Janet Foster, and Production Manager Audrey Hoo), it was an opportunity

to shape the production—sharpening the storytelling, collaborating with the actors, and organizing the complicated logistics of the production—weeks before the *Moon* cast arrives in San Francisco for rehearsals on May 1.

"Putting on a new musical is a fascinating and challenging process," says Foster. "It takes years of collaboration. After seeing the *Moon* workshop, I was thrilled. It's in really good shape." All the A.C.T. staff who went to New York came back with the songs humming in their heads.

The March 2018 workshop for *Moon* is part of A.C.T.'s tradition of investing in new artists and developing new work. Over the last two decades, this includes David Mamet's adaptation of *The Voysey Inheritance* (2005), *After the War* (2007), *The Tosca Project* (2010), *Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City* (2011), *Monstress* (2015), and last season's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Adapted from Khaled Hosseini's novel by playwright Ursula Rani Sarma, *Suns* was commissioned and developed at A.C.T. over several years before winning critical and audience acclaim in 2017. Over the last 18 months, it's played in multiple theaters across North America and returns to The Geary for a two-week run in July.

Just like *Suns*, many of these beloved productions were painstakingly developed in A.C.T.'s studios and the New Strands Festival. Bay Area audiences can get to know a new cohort of upcoming theater artists in this year's festival, which features work by Marisela Treviño Orta, Susan Soon He Stanton, Tegan and Sara, and Ngozi Anyanwu. Now in its third year, the festival has attracted thousands of local theater lovers with its multidisciplinary range of readings, master classes, panel discussions, and works in progress.

> "THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM SHOWED ME THINGS ABOUT THIS STORY—A STORY THAT IS IN MY DNA—THAT I HADN'T SEEN BEFORE."
>
> —PAMELA GRAY

After wowing audiences at last year's New Strands Festival, *The Great Leap* is the latest addition to A.C.T.'s growing list of new works, and will be part of our 2018–19 season. Written by rising Bay Area playwright Lauren Yee, the story is loosely based on Yee's father and focuses on a Chinatown basketball star caught up in a college match between teams from San Francisco and Beijing.



PHOTO BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN

OPPOSITE
(L to R) Actors Brigid O'Brien, Zak Resnick, and Nick Sacks at the New York workshop of *A Walk on the Moon*.

ABOVE
A.C.T. Movement Director Stephen Buescher and M.F.A. Program actor Jennifer Apple (class of '18) in a 2016 workshop for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

While The Strand has earned a reputation as a Bay Area incubator for new work, Artistic Director Designate Pam MacKinnon and A.C.T.'s artistic team are also eager to introduce San Francisco audiences to new writers at The Geary. "If we work on a world premiere like *Moon*, let's give it the biggest stage we have," says Donald. "Not a lot of theaters can take that chance and have the stage to do it." MacKinnon is equally intent on presenting new voices across A.C.T.'s stages: "It's time to dream big," she says. "I'm excited to fill The Geary and The Strand with bold, surprising stories."

To buy tickets for the world premiere of *A Walk on the Moon* (Jun 6–Jul 1), visit **act-sf.org/moon**.

For tickets for *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Jul 17–29), visit **act-sf.org/suns**.

To reserve tickets for 2018's New Strands Festival (May 17–20), visit **act-sf.org/newstrands**.



JOURNEY ON

A CELEBRATION OF OUR M.F.A. PROGRAM CLASS OF 2018

BY ELSPETH SWEATMAN

At this time every year, a bittersweet air pervades A.C.T.'s 30 Grant offices as we prepare to say goodbye to our Master of Fine Arts Program graduating class. For three years, our stages, studios, and hallways have been filled with the infectious energy, passion, and dedication of these 12 artists. They have met every challenge, from acting in productions of *Love and a Bottle* (2016) and *Clickshare* (2017) to writing and directing Sky Festival performances to working with Bay Area communities as Citizen Artists to bringing festive cheer in this season's *Christmas Carol*. As they look ahead to forging their own path as theater-makers, we caught up with some of them to discover what they've learned.



RIVKA BOREK

"One of the most thrilling moments of my training was sharing the stage with two of my M.F.A. Program teachers, Anthony Fusco and Domenique Lozano, in *Hamlet*. To act alongside your teachers is surreal—a cross-generational occurrence that doesn't happen often. To go from a student to feeling like a true collaborator with professional actors and director Carey Perloff was incredibly fortifying."



JUSTIN GENNA

"I have learned from my fellow actors that being generous and humble is a must. And when you go onstage, know that everything you need, you already have. It's right there; you just have to reach out and grab it."



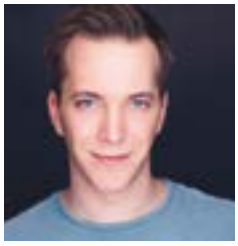
PHOTO BY KEVIN BERNE

LEFT
A.C.T.'s M.F.A. Program class of 2018 (L to R): Peter Fanone, Rivka Borek, Vincent J. Randazzo, Justin Genna, Kadeem Ali Harris, Adrianna Mitchell, Lily Narbonne, Oliver Shirley, Beatriz Miranda, Leonard A. Thomas, Jennifer Apple, and Justin Edward Keim.

BELOW
Headshots by Lauren Toub.

CONGRATULATIONS, M.F.A. PROGRAM CLASS OF 2018! WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU ACCOMPLISH NEXT.

For more information about A.C.T.'s Master of Fine Arts Program, visit act-sf.org/mfa.



JUSTIN EDWARD KEIM

"I came into this program thinking that acting was just like walking up to a coat rack and putting on certain coats for certain characters. In our very first class with [acting professor] Melissa Smith, she said, 'The character comes from inside you. You are the character.' It was a revelation. All the incredible teachers and mentors have taught me to be okay with being vulnerable, to share a piece of myself with the audience."



BEATRIZ MIRANDA

"Our training is so professional. With the help of our mentors and coaches, we get to explore our bodies and minds in such a playful way that I sometimes forget it is work. Having been a part of a mainstage production this year, I have tangible evidence of the great training I have received in the M.F.A. Program."



OLIVER SHIRLEY

"A.C.T. has instilled in me a confidence that I will carry with me for the rest of my career. The production staff, stage managers, technical staff, and my amazing classmates have taught me by example how to conduct myself in an artistically satisfying and professional manner."



LEONARD A. THOMAS

"I have been exposed to so many things—mainstage productions, master classes, Sky Festival productions—and allowed to grow and stretch myself creatively, personally, artistically. I have learned how to be an artist and how to continue growing into a better performer and human being."



A.C.T. CELEBRATES CAREY

A LOOK BACK AT THE 2018 SEASON GALA

BY A.C.T. PUBLICATIONS STAFF

ALL PHOTOS BY DREW ALTIZER









OPPOSITE
A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff.

THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT)
M.F.A. students Adrianna Mitchell, Kimberly Hollkamp, Emma Van Lare, Carlos O. Andrickson, Edward Neville Ewell, and A.C.T. alum Anika Noni Rose; Perloff and Tom Stoppard; BD Wong; Tracy Chapman, Anya Gurholt, and Perloff.

For one night in April, the stars came out to celebrate Artistic Director Carey Perloff. A.C.T. artistic luminaries united with trustees, friends, and family at the Four Seasons Hotel to toast (and roast) the artistic director at our 2018 Season Gala. In the process, they broke all records, not only raising $1.2 million for our actor training and Education & Community Programs, but also establishing the Carey Perloff Classics Fund, ensuring future productions from that canon for generations to come.

Dotted among the tables at the elegant, black-tie event were dozens of recognizable faces, including singer-songwriter Tracy Chapman, renowned actors Marco Barricelli, Anthony Fusco, Brigid O'Brien, Anika Noni Rose, David Strathairn, Shona Tucker, and BD Wong, as well as Sir Tom Stoppard, the Oscar-winning playwright and Perloff's longtime collaborator, who surprised her with a breakfast-time visit to her home.

In an evening of love and laughter, Stoppard was just one of the artists presenting tributes to Perloff. "Carey possesses an appetite for theater no one else can claim," he said, "and a complete engagement with the art and theory of theater." Gregory Wallace, the actor and former A.C.T. company member, paid tribute via video and recalled working with Perloff on *The Tosca Project* (2010): "She's like a tsunami," he said, "but in a good way!"

The event was also a family affair, as husband Anthony Giles, daughter Lexie Perloff-Giles, and son Nick Perloff-Giles took the stage to acknowledge an unparalleled artist, director, playwright, and mother. After the tributes, guests kicked back to an electronic set from Nick Perloff-Giles (aka DJ Wingtip).

Many thanks to event co-chairs Priscilla Geeslin and Nancy Livingston, to the guest artists and M.F.A. Program actors who performed so beautifully, to A.C.T.'s generous board members, to the hardworking gala committee, and to all the theater lovers who supported this year's gala. It was joyful, celebratory, funny, and irreverent—a fitting send-off to a much loved leader.

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Nancy is the immediate past chair of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees. She serves on the boards at the College of Fine Arts at Boston University and the National Council for the American Theatre. Fred serves on the boards of the SF Symphony, the Asian Art Museum, and the SF Film Society.

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Priscilla is a vice chair of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees and chairs the Development Committee. She serves on the boards of SF General Hospital Foundation, the SF Symphony, Grace Cathedral, and NARAL Pro-Choice America. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith is the president of SF Opera's board of trustees.

TONI REMBE AND ARTHUR ROCK

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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A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 25th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she has overseen a huge growth in the quality and scope of A.C.T.'s work, helped to rebuild the earthquake-damaged Geary Theater and the new Strand Theater in Central Market, and has forged collaborations between A.C.T. and theaters across the United States and Canada. Known for innovative productions of classics and championing new writing and new forms of theater, Perloff has directed classical plays from around the world, 10 plays by Tom Stoppard (including the American premieres of *The Invention of Love* and *Indian Ink*, also at Roundabout Theatre Company, and two productions of *Arcadia*), and many productions by favorite contemporary writers such as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, José Rivera, and Philip Kan Gotanda. Favorite productions include *Hecuba*, *Mary Stuart*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Tosca Café*, *The Voysey Inheritance*, *Scorched*, and *Underneath the Lintel*.

Perloff is also an award-winning playwright. Her recent play *Kinship* premiered at the Théâtre de Paris in 2014; *Higher* won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award; and *Luminescence Dating* premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre. Perloff's book, *Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater* (City Lights Press), was selected as San Francisco Public Library's One City One Book read for 2016.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the premiere of Ezra Pound's *Elektra*, the American premiere of Pinter's *Mountain Language*, and many classic works. Named a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government, Perloff received a BA Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford.



PETER PASTREICH (Executive Director) joined A.C.T. after a 50-year career in arts management. He spent 21 years as executive director of the San Francisco Symphony, a period that included the tenures of music directors Edo De Waart, Herbert Blomstedt, and Michael Tilson Thomas, and during which the orchestra increased its endowment from $12 million to $120 million. Pastreich was the chief administrator responsible for the construction of Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, and for its acoustical renovation.

Before coming to San Francisco, he spent 12 years as executive director of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and six years as managing director of the Mississippi River Festival. In addition, Pastreich has done management consulting for the Berlin Philharmonic, Southbank Centre in London, Detroit Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Australia. He has also served as mediator in orchestra and opera union negotiations in Detroit, Louisville, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Sacramento, Seattle, and San Antonio.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1938, Pastreich received a BA in English literature from Yale University in 1959. In 1999, he was made a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government and was named an honorary member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees by Local 16 of the Stagehands Union.



MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director, Head of Acting) has served as Conservatory director and head of acting in the Master of Fine Arts Program at A.C.T. since 1995. During that time, she has overseen the expansion of the M.F.A. Program from a two- to a three-year course of study and the further integration of the M.F.A. Program faculty and student body with A.C.T.'s artistic wing, while also teaching and directing in the M.F.A. Program, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. She also successfully launched the San Francisco Semester, a semester-long intensive designed to deepen students' well of acting experience, broaden their knowledge of dramatic literature, and sharpen their technical skills—all while immersing them in the multifaceted cultural landscape of the Bay Area. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of the Program in Theater and Dance at Princeton University, where she also taught introductory, intermediate, and advanced acting. She has taught acting classes to students of all ages in various colleges, high schools, and studios around the continental United States, at the Mid-Pacific Institute in Hawaii, New York University's La Pietra campus in Florence, and the Teatro di Pisa in San Miniato, Italy. She is featured in *Acting Teachers of America: A Vital Tradition*. Also a professional actor, she has performed regionally at the Hangar Theatre, A.C.T., the California Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre; in New York at Primary Stages and Soho Rep.; and in England at the Barbican Centre in London and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Smith holds a BA from Yale College and an MFA in acting from Yale School of Drama.

F.Y.I.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

A.C.T.'s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, 415.834.3200. On the web: act-sf.org.

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A.C.T. BOX OFFICE

Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, one block west of Union Square; or at 1127 Market Street at 7th Street, across from the UN Plaza. Walk-up hours are Tuesday–Sunday (noon–curtain) on performance days, and Monday–Friday (noon–6 p.m.) and Saturday–Sunday (noon–4 p.m.) on nonperformance days. (For Strand Box Office walk-up hours, please visit act-sf.org.) Phone hours are Tuesday–Sunday (10 a.m.–curtain) on performance days, and Monday–Friday (10 a.m.–6 p.m.) and Saturday–Sunday (10 a.m.–4 p.m.) on nonperformance days. Call 415.749.2228 and use American Express, Visa, or MasterCard; or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours a day on our website at act-sf.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current ticket subscribers and those who purchase ticket insurance enjoy ticket exchange privileges. Packages are available by calling 415.749.2250. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person.

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AT THE THEATER

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary Street. The lobby opens one hour before curtain. Bar service and refreshments are available one hour before curtain. The theater opens 30 minutes before curtain.

ABOUT OUR PLAYS

Copies of *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s in-depth performance guide, are on sale in the main lobby, at the theater bars, at the box office, and online at act-sf.org/wordsonplays.

REFRESHMENTS

Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available one hour before the performance in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level and the Sky Bar on the third level. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. Bar drinks are now permitted in the theater.

CELL PHONES

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

PERFUMES

The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and scented aftershave lotions, even in small amounts, can cause severe physical reactions in some individuals. As a courtesy to fellow patrons, please avoid the use of these products when you attend the theater.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE

Leave your seat location with those who may need to reach you and have them call 415.439.2317 in an emergency.

LATECOMERS

Performances begin promptly, and late seating is at the house manager's discretion. Latecomers may have to watch the performance on a video monitor in the lobby until intermission. Latecomers and those who leave the theater during the performance may be seated in alternate seats (especially if they were in the first few rows) and can take their assigned seats at intermission.

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.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDINGS of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

RESTROOMS are located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Mezzanine Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

Wheelchair Seating is located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** is now available in the house management closet in the lobby of The Geary.

LOST AND FOUND

If you've misplaced an item while you're still at the theater, please look for it at our merchandise stand in the lobby. Any items found by ushers or other patrons will be taken there. If you've already 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.

AFFILIATIONS

A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of Theatre Bay Area, the Union Square Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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

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

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

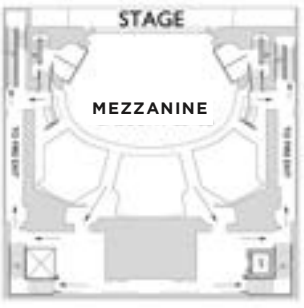
The scenic shop, prop shop, and stage crew are represented by Local 16 of the IATSE.

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

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