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—San Francisco Chronicle

May 31–Jun 2 ZELLERBACH HALL
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 community engagement. We embrace our responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our rich theatrical traditions, while exploring new artistic forms and communities. Founded by William Ball, a pioneer of the regional theater movement, A.C.T. opened in San Francisco in 1967. We have since performed more than 400 productions to more than seven million people.

Hailed as the “perfect playhouse,” the beautiful Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped the roof apart, San Franciscans raised a record-breaking $30 million to rebuild the theater. The Geary reopened in 1996 with The Tempest, directed by Carey Perloff, who took over as A.C.T.’s third artistic director in 1992 after the retirement of Edward Hastings.

Perloff’s tenure was marked by translations of classical works; cross-disciplinary performances and international collaborations; and theater made by, for, and about the Bay Area. Exploring powerful stories by celebrated artists and introducing audiences to extraordinary emerging voices in American theater continues under A.C.T.’s current artistic director, Pam MacKinnon.

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. Our Summer Training Congress attracts students from around the world, while 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 employees’ business performance skills. Our alumni often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area, as well as on stages and screens nationwide.

A.C.T. brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 20,000 Bay Area students and educators each year. Among our Education & Community Programs are the Young Conservatory (students ages 8–19), our Fellowship Program for emerging theater professionals, and our ACTsmart school and community 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 the appointments of Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, our continuing commitment to the development of new work and new artists, and our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood with The Strand and The Costume Shop theaters, A.C.T. plays a leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.
Vanity Fair
by Kate Hamill
Based on the novel by William Makepeace Thackeray
Directed by Jessica Stone
A coproduction with Shakespeare Theatre Company
Some people want love. Others want glory. Becky Sharp wants everything, and she’ll do anything to get it. Bound by the class structure of 1800s London, Becky must wield her sharp wit and sharp tongue in ways that challenge society’s expectations. “I’m not interested in writing characters who exist to get the audience’s approval,” says playwright Kate Hamill. “They exist because they’re a more complicated reflection of how people actually deal with getting what they want.”

Named 2017’s playwright of the year by The Wall Street Journal, Hamill is a master at infusing classic English literature with contemporary verve. She has also adapted Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, and Sense and Sensibility, which our M.F.A. Program actors will present in The Rueff at The Strand Theater May 9–11. “I’m reclaiming these classics with a female gaze,” Hamill says. “Right now we are interrogating women’s roles, how women are judged by society, and the rules that women have traditionally been supposed to follow.”

In Vanity Fair’s colorful, disorienting world of Victorian burlesque, what’s more important: being “good,” or coming out on top?

APR 17–MAY 12, 2019
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EDITOR
SIMON HODGSON

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
ELSPETH SWEATMAN

CONTRIBUTORS
JENNIFER BIELSTEIN
ARIANA JOHNSON
PAM MACKINNON
JOY MEADS
ANNIE SEARS

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What if you had just a few more minutes left to live? Obie Award–winning playwright Will Eno (The Realistic Joneses) crafts an intimate and profoundly moving comedy drama about the pleasure, humor, and sheer absurdity of life.

How can we understand the present, if we won’t acknowledge the past? Viewing race, colonialism, gender, and power through the lens of cricket, this time-traveling world premiere launches an exciting new voice in American theater.

In 1980s Thatcher’s Britain, Marlene celebrates a promotion in a restaurant with legendary, historical, and mythical women. Each shares her own story of sacrifice and success, but where’s the sisterhood? The most unforgettable dinner party you’ll ever attend.

At a Manhattan magazine, competing twentysomethings Ani, Dean, and Kendra are only interested in scoring a book deal to kick-start a career. But after disaster strikes, who will write the story? This scalpel-sharp dark comedy was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

To become the first woman to play professional baseball in the Negro Leagues, Toni Stone must confront hostile crowds, ruthless team owners, and players who slide spikes first. Enjoy the real-life story of an extraordinary, trail-blazing Bay Area athlete.

Tony Award–nominated choreographer Sam Pinkleton (Soft Power; Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812) reimagines this swirling, sci-fi cult classic for San Francisco 2020. With a dazzling mix of sequins and fishnet stockings, let’s do the Time Warp again!

After the rollicking success of Vietgone (2018) at The Strand, playwright Qui Nguyen returns to A.C.T. for the second chapter in his kickass, hip-hop trilogy about a Vietnamese family who swap war-torn Saigon for rural ’70s Arkansas.
Welcome to A.C.T. and Lauren Yee’s *The Great Leap*!

Some of you may have seen a reading of this play, also directed by Lisa Peterson, at the New Strands Festival in 2017. Since then, the play had its world premiere directed by California Shakespeare Theater’s Eric Ting at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts along with Seattle Repertory Theatre, both in their smaller spaces, as well as a New York premiere starring BD Wong at Atlantic Theater Company’s 99-seat second stage. We decided to bring this “basketball-court-meets-film-strip” play (in Lisa’s words) up to grand scale. And this deeply personal, wildly playful, and innately political tale is a beautiful fit. Lauren Yee is the first female Asian American playwright to be produced at The Geary Theater, steps away from where she grew up and where this story starts.

I first read *The Great Leap* shortly after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting in Parkland, Florida. The play resonated as a call to action, with the teenage characters teaching others that today is your day to step up and make a difference. As a girl growing up in suburban Buffalo, we had a basketball net in our driveway where I used to shoot hoops with my father. Although I was more of an orchestra and drama kid, basketball and soccer were also part of my outlook. I was tall and, while not super athletic, I was fearless and could do some damage in gym class. Title IX, though relatively recent, was in full swing; I benefited, and I valued being a member of a team, as well as personally challenged. I liked the competition; still do.

Six months into living in San Francisco, I am taken with how important sports are to the Bay Area, whether that’s remembering Dwight Clark and “The Catch” at Candlestick Park in 1982, or talking about Steph Curry’s game the night before, or saying good-bye (for now) to the Oakland Raiders. But just as importantly, I see kids and adults in parks in every season, playing on asphalt courts and patches of grass. Basketball, baseball, cricket, football … we come together for a couple of hours, turn off our cell phones and commit to the present. Sounds like theater.

Enjoy!

Pam MacKinnon
Artistic Director

Dear Friends,

Sports and theater. Both require physicality, fast thinking, and responsiveness from the players. Both bring people together for a shared live experience. Both are influenced by the reactions and energy of their audiences.

Basketball and theater merge in *The Great Leap*. Lauren Yee’s story explores identity, global politics, and the collision of cultures and generations through sports. In addition to building their characters, actors in *The Great Leap* sharpened their basketball skills through practice sessions on the courts at the University of San Francisco, only blocks away from the theater!

Soccer and theater merge in Sarah DeLappe’s *The Wolves*, presented by our Young Conservatory at The Strand Theater in April. We see nine young women on a soccer team, playing ferociously while at the same time thinking about all the things that high schoolers worry about, from weekend house parties to Cambodian politics to college recruiters. *The Wolves* is a play featuring the kind of characters and issues that our Young Conservatory actors are hungry for, and we’re excited to give them the opportunity to explore and discover all that this incredible play has in store.

We have recently announced our 2019–20 Season. Within that line-up, you’ll find two sports-themed plays: *Testmatch* in the fall begins by exploring the inter-team dynamics when a cricket match is rained out, and ends up sparking discussion about British colonialism and who gets to take advantage of the rules. *Toni Stone*, in March 2020, is the true story of Bay Area resident Toni Stone, who beat the odds to become the first woman to play professional baseball at the tail end of the Negro Leagues. Both of these plays draw on all we love about sports, and use the power of storytelling to put it on the stage.

Introduce the sports fans in your lives to the world of theater over the next year and let’s see how much we all have in common!

See you at the theater,

Jennifer Bielstein
Executive Director

FROM THE ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
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THE GREAT LEAP

CAST
(in alphabetical order)

Saul
ARYE GROSS

Manford
TIM LIU

Connie
RUIBO QIAN

Wen Chang
BD WONG

UNDERSTUDIES

Wen Chang
STEVEN ENG

Saul
ROGER GRUNWALD

Manford
STEVEN HO

Connie
LISA HORI-GARCIA

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Stage Manager
LESLEY M. RADIN

Assistant Stage Manager
CHRIS WATERS

Stage Management Fellow
MIRANDA RAMOS

CREATIVE TEAM

Scenic Designer
ROBERT BRILL

Costume Designer
MEG NEVILLE

Lighting Designer
YI ZHAO

Sound Designer
JAKE RODRIGUEZ

Projection Designer
HANA S. KIM

Voice and Dialect Coach
CHRISTINE ADAIRE

Movement Coach
DANYON DAVIS

Dramaturg
JOY MEADS

Casting Director
JANET FOSTER, CSA

A.C.T. PRODUCING TEAM

Associate Artistic Director
ANDY DONALD

General Manager
LOUISA BALCH

Director of Production
MARTIN BARRON

The Great Leap is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
ONSTAGE NOW

GAME ON

AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT LAUREN YEE AND HER FATHER LARRY YEE

BY JOY MEADS
Throughout her work, Yee has consistently drawn on the culture of her hometown, San Francisco. In a note in the script of *The Great Leap*, she writes, “Growing up, my father played basketball. Every day, all night, on the asphalt courts and rec centre floors of San Francisco Chinatown. It was the only thing he was good at. He was never good enough that he was going to play for the NBA or even at the college level but for a 6’1” Chinatown kid from the projects, he was good. Really good. I know this because even today, people still stop me on the street and try to explain what a legend he was. They tell me his nickname (Spider), his position (center), and his signature move (the reverse jump shot).” We spoke with Lauren Yee and her father Larry to learn more about the stories that inspired her.

**Lauren, how did you take these family legends and turn them into a play for the stage?**

Those basketball stories were a part of the family lore I never really investigated. It was only when I was thinking about what I might write for Denver Center for the Performing Arts that I really dug into these tales. And in going back to talk to my dad, I’ve discovered that I wrote some of these things into the script without even knowing it was in his story.

**Larry, how did your relationship with basketball begin?**

When I was about seven years old, I started playing at a playground in Chinatown. Then I played pick-up basketball at the local rec center, which is now called the Betty Ong Rec Center. They used to put on a Chinese New Year tournament. Well, I won a few tournaments, so I was recruited to play in Taiwan in 1977. They were a professional team, we were a pick-up team.

**It sounds like you guys were the underdogs.**

Larry: We never looked at ourselves as underdogs. [Laughs] We beat their top team. When we played other teams, they’d call it a friendship game. But when the ball is up in the air, one time, one of our guys went right by this heavyset Chinese guy and made the shot and everybody in the stands said, “Wow!” But the next time he did that, he ended up on the floor.

**Lauren, when you decided to write a play about basketball, did you know how you were going to dramatize the sport?**

I didn’t, because in spite of my father being very athletic, all three of his kids never took after him. Basketball is a sport I never really appreciated. So there was a lot of catching up I had to do to write this play because, in addition to it being a play about basketball, it is a play where basketball is reflected in the storytelling, the vocabulary, the staging, and the visuals. Even though you know you’re not seeing a traditional basketball game played onstage, there’s the same excitement and tempo and rhythm that you get when you’re watching a game.

**How did you build that into the play?**

Lauren: The structure of the acts and how quickly characters get into scenes and say what they want—that feels to me very much like changes of possession in basketball. A lot of the scenes feel as though they happen in transition as one team gets the ball and they’re trying to hurtle down the court to score.

**We think of basketball as an American sport, but it’s just as popular in China.**

Lauren: China has had basketball almost as long as America has. It was brought to China in the late 1890s. It’s a sport that in [Chinese Communist Party leader] Mao Zedong’s eyes really reflected communism. Everyone plays with the same goal. And basketball is a great equalizer—all you need is a ball and a hoop. You don’t even need an asphalt court; you can play on a dirt floor or on a road. It’s about people working together—there’s nothing more Chinese than basketball.
When *The Great Leap* characters Saul and Wen Chang first meet in 1971, an air of unease permeates China. The Communist Party of China (CCP) is in control, and it doesn’t tolerate any opposition. “You did not want to be someone,” Wen Chang says. “You wanted to be the person three people behind someone. Because being someone could get you killed.” When he is chosen as Saul’s translator, Wen Chang finds himself under tremendous pressure to prove not only that he’s loyal to the Party, but that he’s loyal *enough*.
The Great Leap Forward (1958–61)

Wen Chang was three years old in 1949, when the CCP—led by Mao Zedong (1893–1976)—established the People’s Republic of China. Nearly a decade later, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward, an ambitious plan to increase industrial production and jumpstart China’s economy. The Party’s goal was to produce 39 million tons of steel in 1959, a dramatic increase from the 5 million produced in 1957. Inspired by Mao’s ambition to meet this goal, Chinese citizens built furnaces in their backyards and melted whatever steel they could find—pipes, pots, pans, tools. Production increased, but up to a third was useless scrap metal. Because citizens were focusing on steel, few were farming. Decreased grain production and unsustainable Party-recommended farming practices led to widespread famine, causing more than 30 million deaths from 1958–61.

The Great Leap Forward was not only a push for economic growth, but also a deepening of communist ideals. Mao encouraged the working class to take collective ownership of the Chinese economy. He sought an even playing field, putting everyone in the same position, with the same resources, working towards the same goal: an economically sound China. But after the famine, excitement around this system dwindled. In turn, Mao made a push to revive the communist spirit, a campaign that would become known as the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution (1966–76)

In 1966, Mao published the May 16 Notification, announcing that capitalist ideals and traditions had infiltrated the CCP and must be purged. Those in positions of power—notably local political leaders and schoolteachers—were harrassed and interrogated until they admitted any anti-communist thoughts, at which point onlookers would verbally abuse, beat, and sometimes execute them. To find state enemies, Mao formed the Red Guards: 11 million high school and college students who reported and punished signs of old ideas, cultures, customs, and habits.

The Red Guards were introduced to equalize power, but Mao quickly lost control of them. In response, he disbanded the Red Guards and sent 16 million students, young people, and intellectuals to the countryside to be reeducated through hard labor. Wen Chang was among these “sent down youths.” Like him, those selected to play on the Chinese basketball team had “survived the past decade by keeping their heads down, their knees bent, and their eyes on the ground in front of them,” he says. But when Wen Chang finds himself on a Beijing basketball court in 1971, he can no longer hide in the masses.

After Mao Zedong

By 1989, when Wen Chang and Saul return to that basketball court as adversaries—Chinese against American, communism against democracy—Mao has died and Deng Xiaoping (1904–97) has become China’s foremost leader. Deng was firmly allied with the CCP, but shifted the Party’s direction. He engaged with Western countries and eased the regime’s intolerance of criticism by journalists and artists, but maintained a strong grip by punishing outright attacks.

Today, capitalism in China isn’t vilified as it was during Mao’s 27-year reign, although government control is still prevalent. Many Party members have accumulated great wealth without threat of public humiliation. But Mao’s presence still infuses the country. The younger Chinese generation is intrigued by the idea of Mao, and some are calling for a return to a “China model” that relies on Party control. As echoed in The Great Leap, history is cyclical; each step forward into the future brings a longing for an idealized past.

---

**The Chinese ping-pong team invites the American team to play.**

**US President Richard Nixon visits Mao Zedong in China.**

**Mao dies. 1976**

**China establishes diplomatic relations with the US.**

**1979**

**1984**

**Tiananmen Square Protests occur. 1989**

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Words on Plays

Want to know more about The Great Leap? Words on Plays is full of interviews and original articles 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.
Try to keep up with teenage soccer team the Wolves as they stretch, run drills, and size up the opposition. But in between their passes are performance anxieties, family tensions, and complex conversations . . . Left lunge. Global genocide. Tampons. Do they have Skype in Cambodia? Right lunge. She got Plan B? There’s the college recruiter! You’re coming to the party this weekend?

For these nine young women, becoming an adult doesn’t always come with a game plan.

THE WOLVES
by SARAH DELAPPE  Directed by JESSICA HOLT

The Wolves

APR 17–20, 2019
THE RUEFF AT
A.C.T.’S STRAND THEATER

To purchase tickets, visit act-sf.org/ycshows.
The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

415.749.2228
Asian Repertory Theatre, and Dallas Theater Center, as well as in Germany, Austria, and Cambodia. Eng serves on the faculty of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, Atlantic Theater Company, and HB Studio. He is also a proud co-founder of National Asian Artists Project, a nonprofit serving theater artists of Asian descent through performance, outreach and educational programming. He holds an MFA from George Washington University and a BFA from Southern Methodist University. steveneng.us

ROGER GRUNWALD (Understudy) recently starred in The Obligation, his one-person Holocaust drama (2018 Theater Bay Area Award finalist for Outstanding Solo Production). In early 2018, he was the understudy for and appeared several times as Alex Priest in A.C.T.’s production of Heisenberg and, more recently, understudied the role of Charlie in A.C.T.’s production of Edward Albee’s Seascape. Between 2014 and 2018, Grunwald toured in an original presentation he co-created called The Mitzvah Project, a short, Holocaust-themed play and lecture which he presented at over 80 universities, theaters, high schools, and religious organizations in the US, Canada, the UK, and Israel. He co-starred in the premiere episode of the HBO series Vinyl, directed by Martin Scorsese, and has portrayed Otto Frank in numerous productions of the play Anne and Emmett, including a special 2018 production in Amsterdam. A native San Franciscan, Grunwald graduated from UC Berkeley and trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Born and raised in the Bay Area, Ho has had the amazing opportunity to work with some fantastic theaters in his hometown, including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Ubuntu Theater Project, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Theatre of Yugen, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Davis Shakespeare Festival, and Silicon Valley Shakespeare. Ho received his training at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, California. @steven_t_ho

LISA HORI-GARCIA (Understudy) is excited to be working on such an amazing show with this phenomenal company. She was most recently seen on A.C.T.’s Strand stage in Men on Boats. Hori-Garcia is an actress, director, teaching artist, and collective member of the Tony Award–winning San Francisco Mime Troupe (SFMT), where she has been a principal actor and collaborator since 2004. Hori-Garcia has worked for theater companies all over the Bay Area. Her most recent theater credits include The Gangster of Love (Magic Theatre), As You Like It (California Shakespeare Theater), Madame Ho (Eugenie Chan Theater Projects), and Seeing Red: A Time-Traveling Musical (SFMT). She received her BA from Smith College and her MFA in acting from University of Southern California. lisahorigarcia.com

LAUREN YEE (Playwright) is delighted to be in her hometown, San Francisco. Her play Cambodian Rock Band, with music by Dengue Fever, premiered at South Coast Repertory and is currently running at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, followed by productions at La Jolla Playhouse and Victory Gardens Theater. The Great Leap has been produced at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Atlantic Theater Company, and the Guthrie Theater, with future productions at Arts Club Theatre Company and InterAct Theatre Company. Yee also has an upcoming production of The Song of Summer at Trinity Repertory Company. Honors include the Horton Foote Prize, Kesselring Prize, Primus Prize, a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University, and the top two plays on the 2017 Kilroys List. She’s a member of New Dramatists and the Ma-Yi Writers Lab, and is an alumni playwright with The Playwrights Realm. She has written for Mixtape (Netflix). Current commissions include Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center Theater, Portland Center Stage, Second Stage Theater, South Coast Rep, and Trinity Rep. She earned a BA from Yale University and her MFA from UC San Diego. laurenyee.com

STEVEN HO (Understudy) is ecstatic and beyond grateful to be returning to A.C.T. after having been part of Vietgone last year.

LISA PETERSON (Director) is a two-time Obie Award–winning writer/director. Her projects at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where she is associate director, include Watch on the Rhine, Office Hour (written by Peterson and Denis O’Hare), It Can’t Happen Here, An Iliad, Mother Courage, and Antony & Cleopatra. Other recent West Coast productions include Culture Clash (Still) in America (South Coast Repertory); You Never Can Tell (California Shakespeare Theater); Hamlet (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); and Sweat and Chavez Ravine (Center Theatre Group). Recent New York credits include The Waves (adapted from Virginia Woolf) by Peterson and composers David Bucknam/Adam Gwon at The Great Leap at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; and Vietgone at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. The Great Leap has been produced at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Atlantic Theater Company, and the Guthrie Theater, with future productions at Arts Club Theatre Company and InterAct Theatre Company. Yee also has an upcoming production of The Song of Summer at Trinity Repertory Company. Honors include the Horton Foote Prize, Kesselring Prize, Primus Prize, a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University, and the top two plays on the 2017 Kilroys List. She’s a member of New Dramatists and the Ma-Yi Writers Lab, and is an alumni playwright with The Playwrights Realm. She has written for Mixtape (Netflix). Current commissions include Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center Theater, Portland Center Stage, Second Stage Theater, South Coast Rep, and Trinity Rep. She earned a BA from Yale University and her MFA from UC San Diego. laurenyee.com

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
New York Stage & Film; Ernest Shackleton Loves Me (Second Stage Theater); To the Bone (Cherry Lane Theatre); Hamlet in Bed (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater); and King Liz (Second Stage). She regularly works at the Guthrie Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, Vineyard Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, and many others. Peterson and Denis O’Hare are working on a new play called The Good Book, coming up at Berkeley Rep this spring.

ROBERT BRILL (Scenic Designer) returns to A.C.T., having previously designed Love and Information, At Home at the Zoo, Blackbird, and The First Picture Show. His Broadway credits include Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations, Summer: The Donna Summer Musical, Assassins (Tony Award nomination), Jesus Christ Superstar, Guys and Dolls (Tony Award nomination), Buried Child, Design For Living, A Streetcar Named Desire, and the set and club design for the critically acclaimed revival of Cabaret, among others. Brill’s other credits include Frozen—Live at the Hyperion (Disney California Adventure Park), Faust (Metropolitan Opera/English National Opera), and The Laramie Project (presented throughout the US, including Brooklyn Academy of Music), as well as numerous world-premiere operas, including Moby-Dick, Cold Mountain, Everest, Doubt, The Manchurian Candidate, and It’s a Wonderful Life. He is a founding member of Sledgehammer Theatre, a recipient of the Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration, and professor of scenic design at the UC San Diego. robertbrilldesign.com

MEG NEVILLE (Costume Designer) has worked on recent productions including The Music 21.
Man (Arizona Theatre Company), Heisenberg (A.C.T.), Imaginary Comforts (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), and Reel to Reel (Magic Theatre). Among her Berkeley Rep credits are Hand to God; It Can’t Happen Here; One Man, Two Guvnors; Macbeth; X’s and O’s (A Football Love Story); An Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures; Party People; Pericles, Prince of Tyre; and Eurydice. Other regional credits include The Cocosanuts, Long Day’s Journey into Night, The Taming of the Shrew, and Ghost Light (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); numerous Shakespeare and Shaw productions for California Shakespeare Theater as an artistic associate; new works at Magic Theatre; and productions at the Guthrie Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Dallas Theater Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Baltimore Center Stage, Hartford Stage, Atlantic Theater Company, The Public Theater, and New York Stage and Film. She is a graduate of Brown University and Yale School of Drama.

YI ZHAO (Lighting Designer) returns to the Bay Area after last season’s Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3) at A.C.T. and A Doll’s House, Part 2 at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Previous New York projects include Pipeline (Lincoln Center Theater); Actually (Manhattan Theatre Club); Suzan-Lori Parks’s In the Blood and The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World and Lynn Nottage’s Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine (Signature Theatre Company); The House That Will Not Stand and Red Speedo (New York Theatre Workshop); and Futurity, Thunderbodies, and Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again. (Soho Rep.). His work is frequently seen at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, and The Wilma Theater, and has appeared at the Guthrie Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, Huntington Theatre Company, and Shakespeare Theatre Company, among others. His opera, music, and dance designs have been seen at ArtsEmerson, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Opera Omaha, Curtis Institute of Music, and France’s Ballet de Lorraine. He is a recipient of the 2016 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Theatre. yi-zhao.com

JAKE RODRIGUEZ (Sound Designer) is a sound designer and composer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. His recent credits include Women Laughing Alone with Salad and The Events (Shotgun Players); Sweat, Vietgone, and Her Portmanteau (A.C.T.); Everybody (California Shakespeare Theater); Angels in America and An Octoroon (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); we, the invisibles (Actors Theatre of Louisville); A Thousand Splendid Suns (A.C.T., Theatre Calgary, Grand Theater, The Old Globe); The Christians (Playwrights Horizons, the Mark Taper Forum); Girlfriend (Kirk Douglas Theatre); and Mr. Burns, a post-electric play (A.C.T., the Guthrie Theater). Rodriguez is the recipient of a 2004 Princess Grace Award.

HANA S. KIM (Projection Designer) is a projection designer whose recent credits include Eve’s Song (The Public Theater) and The Untranslatable Secrets of Nikki Corona (Geffen Playhouse), both directed by Jo Bonney; Sweat (A.C.T.) and The Gangster of Love (Magic Theatre), both directed by Loretta Greco; Little Black Shadows, directed by May Adrales (South Coast Repertory); Weightless, directed by Becca Wolff (Z Space); Wonderful Town, directed by David Lee (Los Angeles Opera); and The Christians, directed by Hana S. Sharif (Baltimore Center Stage). She is a recipient of the 2018 Richard E. Sherwood Award from Center Theatre Group and a Princess Grace Award for theater.
and a former associate with Bill T. Jones. Davis has coached individuals and taught group workshops in a variety of settings, including school programs, correctional facilities, Middlebury College, the 52nd Street Project, and The Public Theater.


**DANYON DAVIS (Movement Coach)** is the head of movement at A.C.T. He formerly served as the head of movement at Stella Adler Studio of Acting, and he’s also a former faculty member at the Neighborhood Playhouse, Circle in the Square Theatre School, and HB Studio’s Hagen Core Training program. Davis assisted Moni Yakim, founding faculty member and head of movement at the Juilliard Drama Division, for many years. He also performed, taught, and directed with the Guthrie Theater. He is a former collaborator with the SITI Company.

**CHRISTINE ADAIRE (Voice and Dialect Coach)** is head of voice at A.C.T. She is a Designated Master Linklater Voice Teacher, trained by the world-renowned voice teacher Kristin Linklater. She has worked as an actor, voice coach, and director in many American regional theaters, including The Old Globe, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman Theatre, Lyric Opera, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Court Theatre, American Players Theatre, Theatre for a New Audience (NYC), Santa Cruz Shakespeare, La Jolla Playhouse, and Shakespeare & Company. Adaire has taught at DePaul University, National Theatre School of Canada, University of Massachusetts–Amherst, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and Roosevelt University. She’s taught workshops in Shanghai, Barcelona, London, Australia, and New Zealand. Her current area of research and writing is transgender voice. She works with transgender/gender-diverse individuals so they can modify their voice to more fully express their gender identity.

**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 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.

**LESLIE M. RADIN (Stage Manager)** returns to A.C.T. after working on *A Thousand Splendid Suns, Napoli!* and five seasons of *A Christmas Carol*. She has worked at Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Center REPertory Company, and Santa Cruz Shakespeare. She has traveled with Berkeley Rep productions to the Hong Kong Arts Festival and The New Victory Theater in New York. Her favorite past productions include *Fairview, Angels in America, AuberGINE, Wittenberg, Sisters Matsumoto, Passing Strange, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, and In the Next Room (or the vibrator play).*

**CHRIS WATERS (Assistant Stage Manager)** returns to A.C.T. after working on *Sweat* earlier this season. He has worked off Broadway at The Public Theater and locally at Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Magic Theatre, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, and Z Space. Favorite past productions include *Office Hour, Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations, Hand to God, King Lear, Orlando,*
and A House Tour of the Infamous Porter Family Mansion with Tour Guide Weston Ludlow Londonderry. Waters holds an MA in theater management from UC Santa Cruz.

**KEVIN AND CELESTE FORD** (Executive Producers) moved to the Bay Area in 1978 and purchased A.C.T. season tickets to support and watch two classmates from the University of Notre Dame who were enrolled in the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program. The Fords have not missed a production at A.C.T. since. Celeste is the board chair and founder of Stellar Solutions, an aerospace engineering services business, and Kevin is on the board as well. Stellar Solutions was founded in 1995 and has received accolades, including the National Baldrige Award for performance excellence and *Fortune* magazine’s Great Places to Work list. The company’s engineers work on a variety of satellite projects, including the science mission to Mars, commercial communication satellites, and defense and intelligence satellites. Celeste and Kevin have three grown children who join them at A.C.T. productions whenever they can. Celeste, who was an engineer by day and actress by night in college, currently serves on the A.C.T. Board of Trustees.

**PATTI AND MILLEDGE HART** (Executive Producers) are long-serving executive leaders in the technology industry. Patti as a serial CEO of numerous public companies and Milledge as an investment banker. Along with their son Dustin, they have created the Hart Family Foundation, which has performing arts as a top priority and, as a result, has chosen to support the mission of A.C.T. For many years, Patti served as a student while Livingston developed her passion for theater at her hometown Cleveland Play House. A former advertising copywriter, Livingston is chair emerita 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 served 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.

**JO S. HURLEY** (Executive Producer), a member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, has been a subscriber since 1970 and a donor since 1975. She is the chair of the Prospero Society Committee, a member of the board’s Education and Community Programs Committee, Development Committee, the Committee on Trustees and Governance, and a trustee host to an M.F.A. Program student. Hurley is passionate about supporting A.C.T. as an executive producer as well as in the long term through legacy giving. Hurley often joins the staff in the V.I.P. Lounge, chatting with donors about her love of theater and the Prospero Society. She is also an ardent patron of the San Francisco Symphony. She is a member of the advisory board for Women Philanthropists for Kansas University and the Kansas University Endowment Association, and a volunteer at Lima Center, a daytime shelter for the homeless and at SFMarin Food Pantry.

**NANCY LIVINGSTON AND FRED LEVIN** (Executive Producers) are stewards of The Shenson Foundation and theater-goers who have subscribed to A.C.T. for 35 years. They recently supported *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*, *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 served on the board as well. Livingston 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 chair emerita 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.

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Frank Allocco and Scott Sidwell, USF Athletics Department
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**ADDITIONAL CREDITS**

Ariana Johnson, Assistant Director
Justin Humphres,
Associate Scenic Designer
Yi-Chien Lee, Nicholas Kim, Anna Robinson,
Assistant Scenic Designers
Annette McCloskey,
Scenic Design Associate
Jason Vaughan,
Head Video Technician
Haley Miller, Video Assistant
Tim Bohle, Wigs Supervisor
Andrea Falkner, Production Props Artisan
Chi Wan Lee, John O’Connor High School Production Placement

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDINGS**

Audience members may take photos in the theater before and after the performance and during intermission. If you post photos on social media or elsewhere, you must credit the production’s designers by including the following names:

Robert Brill (Scenic Designer), @robertbrill
Meg Neville (Costume Designer), @megneville
Yi Zhao (Lighting Designer), yi-zhao.com
Jake Rodriguez (Sound Designer), @sounjaerk
Hana S. Kim (Projection Designer), hananow.com

Please note: Photos are strictly prohibited during the performance. Photos of the stage are not permitted if an actor is present. Video recording is not permitted in the theater at any time.

@ACTSanFrancisco #TheGreatLeap
What do you get if you combine hot chocolate, caroling, Santa Claus, and a seasonal classic by Charles Dickens? The answer: *A Dickens of a Holiday*, A.C.T.’s second annual holiday event that raises essential funds for our artist training and Education & Community Programs, which benefit over 20,000 Bay Area students each year. In an event generously hosted by Macy’s at its Union Square flagship store with lead sponsorship support provided by Hilton Union Square and Parc 55 Hotels, dozens of families enjoyed cookies and cupcakes, crowd-pleasing holiday performances by members of A.C.T.’s M.F.A. and Young Conservatory programs, and photo ops with cast members of *A Christmas Carol*, before walking along Geary Street for a matinee performance of the holiday favorite.

The magic of the day kept on giving, as event sponsors provided over 100 complimentary *Carol* tickets to under-resourced families throughout the Bay Area, helping to make spirits bright. Our deepest thanks to everyone who took part, from event chair Adriana López Vermut and the event Host Committee to more than 100 participants. Here’s to A.C.T.’s newest seasonal tradition! ■
A NEW CANON

A.C.T.’S NEW STRANDS PROGRAM ENTERS A NEW CHAPTER

BY A.C.T. PUBLICATIONS STAFF

The past three years at A.C.T. have seen the launch of the New Strands Festival—a week of workshops, mixers, and public readings—and the world premieres of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2017) and *A Walk on the Moon* (2018). Now, with the arrival of new work specialist Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and the appointment of prominent dramaturg Joy Meads to the newly created position of Director of Dramaturgy and New Works, A.C.T. is entering an exciting chapter of its artistic life: a new investment in artists and projects with the potential to join the American canon.

For the artistic team, the last months have been electric: their shared passion for new work spilling out into animated hallway conversations, emails filled with midnight inspirations, and a few fledgling programmatic experiments all directed towards creating the most robust conversation possible between the greatest artists of generations past and the leading voices of today. “That’s what makes us unique,” says Associate Artistic Director Andy Donald. “A play from a new voice like Mfoniso Udofia can live in the same season—or even playhouse—as Edward Albee and Eugène Ionesco. We want to encourage playwrights to shape work for both the 1,000-seat Geary as well as the brand new 300-seat Strand. Their imagination can go in any direction.”

A.C.T.’s new works department is challenging playwrights to think about any and all possibilities, including writing for our Young Conservatory, M.F.A. actors, or community-based programs, as well as our mainstage. Our current commissions run the gamut from playwright Susan Soon He Stanton writing for the M.F.A. Program, to the multi-disciplinary work *Mi Cuba* (featuring Grammy Award nominee Alfredo Rodriguez and former San Francisco Ballet dancer Lorena Feijoo), to partnerships with other organizations here in the Bay and across the country. Other commissioned artists include Eisa Davis, Casey Lee Hurt, the Kilbanes, and M.F.A. Program alum Udofia (whose play, *Her Portmanteau*, is currently playing at The Strand Theater).

The initial phase of building A.C.T.’s new work development program is grounded in a rigorous interrogation of what artists need to create their best work. The new experimental initiatives designed to meet those needs range from lofty aesthetic issues to the purely practical. “When we have a playwright in town, we ask them if they have everything they need,” says Meads. “How can we help them make the most of their time here? Do they need a quiet place to remove themselves from the demands of their daily lives and write? Do they have new pages that they would like to hear read by our M.F.A. students?” One new initiative is the Hot Desk Residency at our partner, Mozilla. For one week, a playwright will have a quiet, uninterrupted space to work, complete with a beautiful view of the Bay, great wifi, and snacks. They’ll also have the opportunity to engage
with tech workers about the creative process and absorb the rhythms of life in the tech sector. Award–winning playwright David Adjmi recently completed the first of these residencies.

Another tenet of A.C.T.’s New Strands program is grounded in the questioning of the standard methods of new work development. “We want to develop plays in a way that’s different from how you would develop a *New Yorker* article,” says Meads. “A play is more than just words.” When a playwright works with A.C.T., they partner with Meads, producer Andy Donald, and artistic director Pam MacKinnon. “Right from the beginning of the process, we’re thinking about all of the languages of theater and how we can draw upon the imaginations of set, costume, and sound designers during the developmental process to make the piece richer,” says Meads.

“I love working with a wide variety of playwrights, as an early sounding board and interrogator, as a comrade through rehearsal with actors and designers to mine a story’s deep intent, putting in rewrites up to opening night sometimes,” says MacKinnon. In her second season as artistic director, MacKinnon brings two new works to The Geary and The Strand. Lydia R. Diamond’s *Toni Stone*, which charts the life of the first woman to play professional baseball at the tail end of the Negro Leagues, arrives in the Bay following its world premiere at Roundabout Theatre Company this summer, directed by MacKinnon (the director has supported and developed this work over the last six years). Another world premiere—*Testmatch*, by new voice Kate Attwell—explores inequality, power, and the legacy of colonialism through a world-class women’s cricket team. “I’m excited for A.C.T. to develop and launch these two big idea sports plays into the world,” says MacKinnon.

The upcoming New Strands Festival will be another early expression of the promise of this new department, featuring readings of new plays by playwrights Jiehae Park (winner of the Princess Grace and Weissberger Awards) and Emily Feldman (directed by three-time Obie Award winner Daniel Aukin), plus a new performance by Drama Desk Award–nominated mentalist Vinny DePonto, among many other offerings.

These new productions and the creation of A.C.T.’s new works department spell a promising future for A.C.T.’s New Strands program and for emerging voices. “We are creating the best possible environment for the next great works of the American theater to take root and flourish,” says Meads.

Stay tuned for more information about this year’s New Strands Festival, running May 16–19 at The Strand Theater. To learn more about A.C.T.’s New Strands Program, visit act-sf.org/newstrands.
Looking to transition from marketing to directing, he assistant-directed the world premiere of Beau Willimon’s *The Parisian Woman*, directed by Pam MacKinnon. “I remember thinking, ‘There’s Pam. She just directed a show on Broadway, and now I’m her assistant director,’” says Kuo. During those few short weeks of working together, MacKinnon showed Kuo that his artistic instincts were strong. That experience launched him into more artistic work at Geffen Playhouse and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and into an MFA directing program at The New School in New York. We sat down with Kuo to hear how he found himself back working on the West Coast with MacKinnon as A.C.T.’s associate conservatory director.

**How did you get from The New School to A.C.T.**?

When it was announced that Pam was A.C.T.’s new artistic director, we saw a show one more time before she left New York. I started talking to her about my post-graduation plans. I didn’t quite know what I wanted to do yet, but I really wanted to implement this idea that I’d been developing about how equity, diversity, and inclusion work can affect the artistic process, not just in the plays that we select, the stories that we’re telling, and the people that we’re casting onstage, but also in informing an actor about character and storyline, why a story is the way it is, and why power structures and relationships are the way they are.
During that meeting, Pam was already thinking about you for A.C.T.’s associate conservatory director. What do you do in that role?

I live in both an administrative and an artistic realm. Both are important to me and I wouldn’t want to give either of them up. The administrative work keeps me grounded, and the artistic work keeps me free. What I love the most is teaching, which is rather new to me and I’m learning how much I love it. Right now, my class focuses on building collaboration. How do you communicate with your fellow actors and your director when you need something as an actor? How do you communicate with the playwright and advocate for your character without being critical of the writing or prescriptive about it? How do you engage in the story that the playwright wants to tell?

One of the best lessons I can impart to an actor is how to be comfortable with advocating for themselves and the art. The best thing an actor can do when working on a new play is advocate for the play and how that character does or does not fit in that play and that story. What does the playwright want to do? What is the story the play wants to tell? And how do we get to that as clearly as possible?

In May, you direct the first- and second-year M.F.A. Program actors in Medea. Why did you choose that story to tell in 2019?

Medea has been a passion project for a long time. I love female-centric stories and watching women be empowered. It’s really important for us to be able to see that; it’s something we don’t get to see very often. What I’m looking forward to exploring is Medea as an other. She’s a foreigner. She’s an outsider whom the kingdom is rejecting. That’s something I connect to as someone who has been othered.

And as I was researching more of Medea, I realized that she’s not seeking justice; she’s not seeking something that’s fair for everyone. She wants vengeance. She wants Jason to suffer. The fact that this was written back in Grecian times is insane. A woman is given room to say, “If you’re going to trample me, I’m going to trample you.” What I’m really interested in seeing in the final moments of the play is how that vengeance costs her. When we’re dealing with stories about people who are othered or oppressed, it seems like vengeance is the answer but there’s a cost. I’d love for us to see a moment where she has to live with what she has done.

To purchase tickets for our upcoming M.F.A. Program productions, including Medea (May 8–12) and Sense and Sensibility (May 9–11), visit act-sf.org/mfashows.
Season Presenters

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

PRISCILLA AND KEITH GEESLIN**
Priscilla is a vice chair of A.C.T.’s Board of Trustees and Development Committee chair. She is vice president of the SF Symphony, Grace Cathedral, and past chair of NARAL Pro-Choice America’s Foundation Board. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith is president of SF Opera’s board of trustees and a board member of Episcopal Community Services.

JAMES C. HORMEL AND MICHAEL P. NGUYEN-HORMEL*
James, the first openly gay US ambassador, founded the James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL). Michael works alongside James on their charitable giving foundation, and has served on the SFPL Commission for two terms. A trustee of A.C.T., Michael is profoundly passionate about the arts and humanities.

FRED M. LEVIN AND NANCY LIVINGSTON, THE SHENSON FOUNDATION**
Nancy is the Chair Emerita 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 San Francisco Symphony, the Asian Art Museum, and the SF Film Society.

TOMI 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.

ROBINA RICCITIELLO†
Robina is communications director for the Million Person Project, a company that helps people identify their core values to tell their personal story. She is involved with the UCLA Depression Grand Challenge, an effort to cure depression by the end of this century, and with NARAL Pro-Choice America.

MARY AND STEVEN SWIG†
Steven has served on A.C.T.’s board since 1986 and is cofounder of Presidio Graduate School. Mary is on the Women's Leadership Board of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. They serve on the boards of the Solar Electric Light Fund and the Americans for Cures Foundation.

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

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Scott Tignor, Subscriptions Coordinator
Andy Alarban, Liam Blaney, Richard Clair
Peter Davey, Leontyne Mbelle-Mbong, Alex Mechanic, Treasurers

MELISSA SMITH
Conservatory Director

FRONT OF HOUSE
Kevin Nelson, Theater Manager
David Whitman, House Manager and Volunteer usher Coordinator
Megan Murray, Genevieve Pabon, Tuesday Play, House Managers
Oliver Sutton, Security
Ramsey Aburameleh, Monica Amihit, Shannon Amihit, Forrest Choy, Bernadette Fons, Niall Harper-Malaves, Anthony Hernandez, Caleb Lewis, Svetlana Karassyova, Susan Monrose, Haley Nielson, Trever Pearson, Scott Phillips, Tyler Pickers, Mike Richmond, Travis Rowland, Trace Sylvester, Cevie Toove, Robyn Williams, Bandleaders
Susan Allen, Rodney Anderson, Brandon Bowman, Serena Broussard, Danut Brat, Jose Camello, Barbara Casey, Wendy Chang, Niyah Cummings, Kathy Darc, John Dohl, Larry Emms, Doris Flamm, Claire Gardnt, Liz Gehoff, Carol Grace, Blue Kessler, Ryszard Koprowski, Sharon Lee, Sadie Li, David Lingier, Joe MacDonald, Maria Markoff, Val Mason, Sam Mesinger, Edvire Moore, Kathy Napostino, Mary O’Connal, Brandon Pilapil, Mark Salado, Steve Saltzman, Walter Schoonmaker, Michael Sousa, Melissa Stern, Dawn Whitmore, Lorraine Williams, Junie Yee, Uschrs

THE STRAND CAFE
Rafael Monga, Cafe Manager
Labrina Hazel, Bartender

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Vincent Amato, School & Community Programs Operations Manager
Valeria Ramos, School Programs Manager
Stephanie Willborn, Community Programs Manager
Joseph Hallay, School Programs Associate
Elizabeth Harlperin, Student Matlinex
Hannah Clague, School & Community Programs Fellow

YOUNG CONSERVATORY
Jill MacLean, Craig Slight Director of the Young Conservatory
Sophia Nguyen, Young Conservatory & Studio A.C.T. Associate
Rachel Laskey, Young Conservatory Administrative Assistant
Alondra Alarban, Acting
Christian Kosimo, Acting
Enrico Banson, Musical Theater
Denise Blase, Musical Theater
Kimberly Braun, Musical Theater
Nancy Gold, Physical Theater, Acting
Dan Griffin, Movement
Jami Hammell, Musical Theater
W. D. Keith, Director
Domenique Lozano, Director, Acting
Danielle O’Dea, Stage Combat
Thaddeus Pinkston, Accompanist
Constanza Rizzelle, Musical Theater
Lauren Rosi, Musical Theater
Vivian Sam, Musical Theater, Dance
Lauren Donald, Acting
Trish Tillman, Acting
Valerie Weak, Acting
Krista Wigle, Musical Theater

CONSERVATORY
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Christopher Horaldo, Director of Summer Training Congress
Jack Sharrar, PhD, Director of Academic Affairs
Jerry Lopez, Director of Financial Aid
Charlotte Brockman, Conservatory Manager
Sophia Nguyen, Young Conservatory & Studio A.C.T. Associate
Callie Garrett, Conservatory Associate, Academic Programs
Matt Jones, Bursar/Payroll Administrator
Miranda Reilly, Young Conservatory/Studio A.C.T. Fellow
Hannah Rosenzweig, Conservatory/Academic Fellow

M.A.F. PROGRAM CORE FACULTY
Christina Adaire, Head of Voice
Daryn Davis, Head of Movement
Peter J. Kuo, Collaboration Building
Joy Meads, Character and Text
Lisa Porter, Head of Text and Dialects
Jack Sharrar, PhD, Theater History
Melissa Smith, Head of Acting, Conservatory Director

M.A.F. PROGRAM ADJUNCT FACULTY
Milissa Carey, Singing, Director
Andy Donald, Arts Leadership
Janet Foster, Acting
Anthony Fusco, Acting
Jasmin Hoo, Citizen Artist
Mark Kahan, Performance Making
Darryl Jones, Acting, Director
W. D. Keith, On-Camera Acting
Philip Charles Mackissic, Jr., On-Camera Acting
Heidi Marshall, On-Camera Acting
Saana McKenna, Acting
Dario O’Dea, Combat
Caymichael Patton, On-Camera Acting
Kari Prindl, Alexander Technique
Virginia Scott, Clowning
Elyse Shaframan, Alexander Technique
Lissa Townsend, Director, Choreographer
Sydney Willborn, Citizen Artist

STUDIO A.C.T.
Mark Jackson, Program Director
Liz Anderson, On-Camera Acting, Improv
Haidi Carlsten, Acting, Voice, Musical Theater
Julie Douglas, Acting, Clown
Frances Epsen-Devilin, Musical Theater
Paul Hiebler, Acting
Margo Hall, Acting
W. D. Keith, Acting
Drew Khalef, Speech, Shakespeare
Kari Prindl, Alexander Technique
Mark Rafael, Acting
Katie Rubin, Stand-Up Comedy, Acting
Patrick Russell, Acting, Clown
Naomi Sanchez, Musical Theater
Michael Craig Sullivan, Playwriting
Caitlin Tella, Movement
Lauri Wayth, Acting, Musical Theater

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Liz Anderson, Fontana Butlerfield, Mark Rafael, Katie Rubin, Patrick Russell, Radhika Rao

CONSERVATORY COMPANIONS
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ACCREDITATION
A.C.T. is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools and will be accredited by the U.S. Department of Education.

PAM MACKINNON
Artistic Director

ARTISTIC
Andy Donald, Associate Artistic Director
Janet Foster, Director of Casting and Artistic Associate
Jay Moalas, Director of Dramaturgy and New Works
Allie Moss, Literary Manager and Artistic Associate
Ken Savage, Associate Producer
Ariana Johnson, Kayla Minton Kaufman, Artistic Fellows

ASSOCIATE ARTISTS
Marco Barricelli, Olympia Dukeakis, Anthony Fusco, Giles Haverhill, Bill Irwin, Steven Anthony Jones, Andrew Polsky, Jim Stoddard, Gregory Wallace, Timberlake Wallis, Marni White, Mark Zorn

COACHES
Christina Adaire, Lisa Anna Potter, Voice and Text
Daryn Davis, Movement
Dave Maier, Daniella O’Dea, Fights
Daneal Feyer, Music

PRODUCTION
Martin Barron, Director of Production
Robert Hand, Production Manager
Jack Horton, Production Manager
Marlara Schwartz, Assistant Production Manager
Chris Lundahl, Design and Production Associate
Michelle Symons, Conservatory Production Manager
Haley Miller, Conservatory Design and Production Associate
Sean Kay-Kettar, Conservatory Technical Director
Miranda Erin Campbell, Conservatory Production and Stage Management Coordinator
Lavine Leyu Luo, Production Management Fellow

STAGE MANAGEMENT
Elisa Guthertz, Stage Manager
Dane Bae, Samantha Greene, Elisa Guthertz, Christina Hogan, Leslee Johnson, Cristine Reynolds, Stage Managers
Cheryl Honerlah, Maggie Manzano, Chris Waters, Hannah Woodward, Assistant Stage Manager
Amanda Marshall, Production Assistant
Brianna Grabowski, Miranda Ramos, Noah Usher, Stage Management Fellows

PRO PRODUCTION
Albo Greenerald, Supervisor

COSTUME SHOP
Jessie Amoralos, Costume Director
Callie Floor, Rental Manager
Keeley Weilam, Build Manager/Draper
Jaff Valentina, Inventory Manager
Maria Montoya, Head Stitcher
Kelly Koehn, Accessories & Crafts Artisan
Chantelle Groves, Groves, Hand Stitcher
Victoria Mortimer, Costume Administrator
N.J. Bice, Kinsey Thomas, Costume Fellows

WIG SHOP
Lindsay Sair, Wig Master
Lyte Alston, Wigs Fellow

STAGE STAFF
THE GEARY:
Miguel Ongpin, Head Carpenter
Suzanna Bailey, Head Sound
Amy Domas, Head Electrician
Candace Dracule Shinkle, Head of Props
Colin Wada, Flyman
Mary Mantile, Wardrobe Supervisor
Diane Cornelius, Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor
Loren Lewis, Joe Nelson, Stage Door Monitors

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510.748.9001, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.

A.C.T.-SF.ORG
A.C.T. Profiles

Pam Mackinnon (Artistic Director) is celebrating her inaugural season as A.C.T.’s fourth artistic director. She is a Tony, Drama Desk, and Obie Award–winning director, having directed upwards of 70 productions around the country, off Broadway, and on Broadway. Her Broadway credits include Beau Willimon’s *The Parisian Woman* (with Uma Thurman), *Amelie: A New Musical*, David Mamet’s *China Doll* (with Al Pacino), Wendy Wasserstein’s *The Heidi Chronicles* (with Elisabeth Moss), Edward Albee’s *A Delicate Balance* (with Glenn Close and John Lithgow), Edward Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, and Outer Critics Circle nomination), and Bruce Norris’s *Clybourne Park* (Obie Award for Excellence in Direction, Tony and Lucille Lortel nominations). After five years as board chair of Clubbed Thumb, a downtown New York theater company dedicated to new American plays, she sits on its advisory board. She is an artistic associate of the Roundabout Theatre Company, a Usual Suspect of New York Theatre Workshop, and an alumna of the Drama League, Women’s Project, and Lincoln Center Theatre’s Directors’ Labs. She is also the executive board president of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC). She grew up in Toronto, Canada, and Buffalo, New York, acted through her teens, but majored in economics and political science at the University of Toronto and briefly pursued a PhD in political science at UC San Diego, before returning to her true passion: theater.

Jennifer Bielstein (Executive Director) joins A.C.T. with more than 25 years of theater management experience. She is currently president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT)—an organization that represents 74 theaters nationwide—having previously served as LORT’s vice president; chair of its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; secretary; and on multiple union negotiating teams. Before relocating to the Bay Area, Bielstein was the managing director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, managing director of Actors Theatre of Louisville, and executive director of Writers Theatre in Chicago. She has also worked for Steppenwolf Theatre Company, About Face Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and the Lincoln Park Zoo, as well as serving on the boards of the League of Chicago Theatres, Theatre Forward, the Arts and Cultural Attractions Council, and other civic boards. She has received the Center for Nonprofit Excellence’s Pyramid Award of Excellence in Leadership, and has been recognized as one of Louisville’s *Business First*’s 40 Under 40. In 2017, Bielstein was named by *Twin Cities Business* magazine as a Person to Know, and, in 2018, *Minnesota Business* magazine named her as a Real Power 50 member. Bielstein is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, attended Stanford’s Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders in the Arts, and earned an MBA from Bellarmine University, where she received the MBA Faculty Merit Award and was inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma, the honor society for business programs.

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. In 2013, she launched the San Francisco Semester, a semester-long intensive that deepens students’ acting. In 2016, she was honored by Theatre Bay Area as one of 40 individuals who have changed the face of Bay Area theater. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of the Program in Theater and Dance at Princeton University. 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, and 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.
AFFILIATIONS

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

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

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GEARY THEATER EXITS

STAGE

ORCHESTRA

MEZZANINE

BALCONY

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