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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER CULMINATES ITS 2013–14 SEASON WITH THE U.S. PREMIERE OF JAMES FENTON’S ACCLAIMED ADAPTATION OF *THE ORPHAN OF ZHAO*

Starring Tony Award–winner BD Wong, *The Orphan of Zhao* is the epic tale of family, honor, and revenge!

A Co-Production with La Jolla Playhouse

▪ JUNE 4–29, 2014 ▪

SAN FRANCISCO (April 9, 2014) – **American Conservatory Theater** (A.C.T.) culminates its 2013–14 season with the U.S. premiere of James Fenton’s acclaimed adaptation of *The Orphan of Zhao*, a classic Chinese legend that has its roots in the fourth century BCE. Directed by **Carey Perloff** and starring Tony Award–winner and San Francisco’s own **BD Wong** (making his A.C.T. debut), *The Orphan of Zhao* is an epic story of self-sacrifice and revenge. In the aftermath of a political coup, a country doctor is forced to sacrifice his own son in order to save the last heir of a noble and massacred clan. Often described as the Chinese *Hamlet*, this enduring tale was the first Chinese play to be translated in the West nearly 300 years ago and has inspired countless operas, plays, and movies. The *Guardian* praised Fenton’s adaptation as “haunting . . . [a] drama hewn out of a myth that speaks across the centuries,” and *The Times of London* called it “an emotionally piercing marvel.” *The Orphan of Zhao* will perform at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater (415 Geary Street, San Francisco) **June 4–29, 2014**. Press night is Wednesday, June 11, 2014. **Tickets** (\$20–\$120) are on sale now and may be purchased online at act-sf.org or by calling **415.749.2228**.



Says Perloff: "Discovering *The Orphan of Zhao* was incredibly eye-opening for me, an insight into a vivid moment in Chinese culture and an introduction to a major classic of suspense and sacrifice rarely seen in the Western theater. The Zhao story has been told in China for a millennium, most recently in a vivid Chinese film called *Sacrifice*. Its arrival on the Geary stage, starring BD Wong, continues our exploration of Chinese culture with a remarkable company of Asian American actors and theater artists, including *Stuck Elevator* composer Byron Au Yong who is

composing the many songs and live musical interludes in the production. We hope our audiences will be as transported and surprised by this stunning piece of world theater as we were when we first encountered it."

The cast for *The Orphan of Zhao* includes **Marie-France Arcilla** (*Stuck Elevator* at A.C.T.; *Working* at Prospect Theater Company), **Stan Egi** (*Golden Child* off Broadway), **Philip Estrera** (third-year A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts student; *A Christmas Carol* at A.C.T.), **Nick Gabriel** (A.C.T. Resident Artist; *Napoli!* at A.C.T.), **Cindy Im** (*Stuck Elevator* and *4000 Miles* at A.C.T.; *The Snow Queen* at San Jose Repertory Theatre), **Orville Mendoza** (*Peter and the Starcatcher* on Broadway; *Miss Saigon* National tour), **Paolo Montalban** (*Pacific Overtures* and *The King and I* on Broadway), **Brian Rivera** (*Yellowjackets* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *Macbeth* at Sacramento Shakespeare Festival), **Sab Shimono** (*Pacific Overtures* on Broadway; original cast member of *Mame* on Broadway), **Julyana Soelistyo** (Tony Award–nominee for *Golden Child* on Broadway), **Daisuke Tsuji** (*King Lear* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Dralion by Cirque du Soleil*), and **BD Wong** (*M. Butterfly*; *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*).

The creative team for *The Orphan of Zhao* includes scenic designer **Daniel Ostling** (*Major Barbara* and *Stuck Elevator* at A.C.T.), costume designer **Linda Cho** (2014 Tony Award nominee for *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*; *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at The Old Globe), lighting designer **Lap Chi Chu** (*Romeo and Juliet* at California Shakespeare Theater; *Other Desert Cities* at the Mark Taper Forum), sound designer **Jake Rodriguez** (*Rock 'N' Roll* and *Blackbird* at A.C.T.), composer **Byron Au Yong** (*Stuck Elevator* at A.C.T.), with movement by **Stephen Buescher** (Head of Movement and Physical Theater at A.C.T.'s M.F.A. Program).

A.C.T. will offer numerous **InterACT events**—many of which are presented free of charge—in association with *The Suit* that will give patrons opportunities to get closer to the action while making a whole night out of their evening at the theater. Visit act-sf.org/interact to learn more about subscribing to these events throughout the season:

- **Bike to the Theater Night**
Wed., June 4
Providing a greener alternative to theater transportation, A.C.T. and the San Francisco Bike Coalition offer free valet bike parking, as well as a special discount on tickets, for these select performances.
- **Prologue:**
Tue., June 10, 5:30 p.m.
Get inside the artistic process at this lively preshow discussion with A.C.T. artistic staff.
- **Theater on the Couch:**
Fri., June 13, following the 8 p.m. performance
Led by Dr. Mason Turner, chief of psychiatry at San Francisco's Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, this exciting postshow discussion series explores the minds, motives, and behaviors of the characters and addresses audience questions.
- **Audience Exchanges:**
Tue., June 17, 7 p.m. | Sun., June 22, 2 p.m. | Wed., June 25, 2 p.m.
After the show, stick around for a lively Q&A session with the actors and artists who create the work

onstage.

- **OUT with A.C.T.:**
Wed., June 18, following the 8 p.m. performance
The best LGBT night in town! Mingle with the cast and enjoy free drinks and treats at this popular afterparty.
- **Symposium:**
Saturday, June 21, 2 p.m.
You're invited to join us after the show for a lively discussion! A.C.T. invites you to join us in the theater immediately following your performance for a discussion and Q&A with a local expert. The discussion will be moderated by A.C.T. dramaturg **Michael Paller**. **Can't make it to the event? We'll be streaming it live online!**
- **Wine Series:**
Tue., June 24, 7 p.m.
Before the show, raise a glass at this wine tasting event featuring leading sommeliers from the Bay Area's hottest local wineries.
- **PlayTime:**
Sat., June 28, 12:30 p.m.
Before this matinee performance, get hands-on with theater with the artists who make it happen at this interactive workshop.

A.C.T.'s production of *The Orphan of Zhao* is sponsored by **BNY Mellon Wealth Management, National Endowment for the Arts**, and **United Airlines**. *The Orphan of Zhao* is made possible by executive producers **Jo S. Hurley; Jack and Susy Wadsworth; Nola Yee**; producers **Marcia and Jim Levy; Robina and John Riccitiello; Dr. and Mrs. Gideon Sorokin; Laney and Pasha Thornton; Aaron Vermut and Adriana Lopez Vermut**; and associate producers **Richard Davis and Bill Lowell; Marcia and Geoffrey Green; Betty Hoener; Sue Yung Li and Dale Ikeda; Merrill Randol Sherwin; Beverly and Loring Wyllie**; with additional support by **Hafner Vineyard; Pause Wine Bar**; and **Piazza Market Catering**.

A.C.T. would like to acknowledge its 2013–14 company sponsors **Frannie Fleishhacker; Priscilla and Keith Geeslin; Mr. and Mrs. John Goldman; Ambassador James C. Hormel and Michael P. Nguyen; Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston, The Shenson Foundation; Burt and Deedee McMurtry; Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock; Patti and Rusty Rueff; Ms. Kathleen Scutchfield; Mary and Steven Swig; Jeff and Laurie Ubben**.

A.C.T. subscribers enjoy incredible savings, unparalleled access, exclusive benefits, and personalized customer service. Subscribers save as much as **33 percent off single-ticket prices**. Full-time students, educators, and administrators with valid ID save up to 50 percent off select packages. Senior discounts are available for certain series. A.C.T.'s competitive subscriber benefits include **free ticket exchanges** up to the day of scheduled tickets, **priority seating, ticket insurance**, access to **convenient prepaid parking** one block away from the theater, and **discounts for neighborhood restaurants**. To order a subscription, visit www.act-sf.org/subscribe or call **415.749.2250**.

FACT SHEET**WHAT: *The Orphan of Zhao***

Starring Tony Award-winner and San Francisco's own **BD Wong** (making his A.C.T. debut), *The Orphan of Zhao* is an epic story of self-sacrifice and revenge. In the aftermath of a political coup, a country doctor is forced to sacrifice his own son in order to save the last heir of a noble and massacred clan. Often described as the Chinese *Hamlet*, this enduring tale was the first Chinese play to be translated in the West nearly 300 years ago and has inspired countless operas, plays, and movies.

WHO: Directed by Carey Perloff

Creative team: scenic designer Daniel Ostling; costume designer Linda Cho; lighting designer Lap Chi Chu; sound designer Jake Rodriguez; original music Byron Au Yong and movement by Stephen Buescher.

Featuring: **Marie France Arcilla; Stan Egi; Philip Estrera; Nick Gabriel; Cindy Im; Orville Mendoza; Brian Rivera; Sab Shimono; Julyana Soelistyo; Paolo Montalban;** and **BD Wong.**

WHERE: A.C.T.'s Geary Theater, 415 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108**WHEN: June 4–29, 2014**

Press Night: Wednesday, June 11, 2014

InterACT Events

Bike to the Theater Night..... 6/4 (8 p.m.)
 Audience Prologue6/10 (5:30 p.m.)
 Theater on the Couch.....6/13 (8 p.m.)
 Audience Exchanges.....6/17 (7 p.m.), 6/22 (2 p.m.), 6/25 (2 p.m.)
 OUT with A.C.T.....6/18 (8 p.m.)
 Symposium.....6/21 (2 p.m.)
 Wine Series.....6/24 (7 p.m.)
 PlayTime.....6/28 (12:30 p.m.)

TICKETS: \$20 -\$120**PHOTOS: http://act-sf.org/home/about/press_room.html****TIX & INFO: 415.749.2228 | act-sf.org****PRESS CONTACT: Kevin Kopjak, Charles Zukow Associates, 415.296.0677 or kevink@charleszukow.com**