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**AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER AND THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA
PRESENT BD WONG AND CAREY PERLOFF IN CONVERSATION**

▪ MONDAY, MAY 19, 7:30 P.M. ▪

SAN FRANCISCO (April 21, 2014) – In advance of **American Conservatory Theater's** (A.C.T.) upcoming 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, **A.C.T. and the Commonwealth Club of California** are proud to present **BD Wong and A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff in Conversation** for one-night-only – **Monday, May 19 at 7:30 p.m. at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater** (415 Geary St., San Francisco). Wong will discuss his upcoming A.C.T. debut, as well as his illustrious career! General admission tickets are \$20. Tickets are on-sale now and may be purchased online at act-sf.org or by calling **415.749.2228**.

Says **George Dobbins**, Vice President of Programming at the Commonwealth Club of California: "We are honored to be in concert with a program featuring the creative genius behind A.C.T., director, playwright and artistic Director, Carey Perloff and the versatile, BD Wong, who is the only actor to be honored with the Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Clarence Derwent Award, and Theater World Award for the same performance in *M Butterfly* on Broadway. This is sure to be an outstanding event."

BD Wong received the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Theater World, Clarence Derwent, and Tony Awards for his Broadway debut in *M. Butterfly*—an unprecedented achievement. His television credits include *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, *All-American Girl*, *Oz*, *And the Band Played On*, and *Awake*. On film, Wong can be seen in *Jurassic Park*, *The Freshman*, *Father of the Bride*, *Seven Years in Tibet*, *Executive Decision*, *The Salton Sea*, *Stay*, and *Mulan*. On Broadway, Wong has performed in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and *Pacific Overtures*. Regional theater credits include, *Herringbone* (Williamstown Theatre Festival, McCarter Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse). Upcoming projects include *Focus* (Warner Bros.), *The Normal Heart* (HBO), and *Jurassic World* (Universal). He is also the author of the critically acclaimed memoir "Following Foo..." (Harper Entertainment). Wong is a San Francisco native and a graduate of Lincoln High School.

Carey Perloff is celebrating her 21st year as artistic director of A.C.T., and is known for championing innovative productions of classics and new writing for the theater. Perloff has directed a wide range of work at A.C.T., most

recently including *Elektra*, *Endgame* and *Play, Scorched, The Homecoming, Tosca Cafe* (cocreated with Val Caniparoli and recently toured Canada), A.C.T.–commissioned translations/adaptations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, and her own play *The Colossus of Rhodes* (Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist). Her latest play, *Higher*, won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award and received its world premiere in 2012. Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, which won numerous OBIE awards under her leadership. A recipient of the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the National Corporate Theatre Fund's 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She will provide oversight and input throughout the project, disseminate the research findings to the theater community at large, organize the final convening, and formulate and oversee implementation for any next steps identified by the research.

Directed by Perloff, *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* is a co-production with La Jolla Playhouse and will perform at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater **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**.

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** (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* at The Old Globe; *The Light in the Piazza* at Arena Stage), 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.**

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The Commonwealth Club of California is the nation's oldest and largest public affairs forum. They produce over 400 annual events on topics ranging across politics, culture, society and the economy to 20,000 members. The Club has offices in San Francisco and San Jose, with regular events in both cities, as well as programs in Lafayette in the East Bay and in Mill Valley in Marin. For members outside the Bay Area, the Club's weekly radio broadcast - the oldest in the U.S., dating back to 1924 - is carried across the nation on public and commercial radio stations. The website archive features audio and video of recent programs, as well as selected speeches from their long and distinguished history. The mission of The Commonwealth Club of California is to be the leading national forum open to all for the impartial discussion of public issues important to the membership, community and nation. Founded in 1903, The Commonwealth Club has played host to a diverse and distinctive array of speakers, from Teddy Roosevelt in 1911 to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor Alec Baldwin and author Christopher Hitchens in recent years. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and Bill Gates have all given landmark speeches at The Club. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational organization, The Commonwealth Club relies on the support of its membership, the Business Council and foundation grants to continue its role in fostering open public discussion in the San Francisco Bay Area and throughout the nation via radio, Internet and television.