

A.C.T. Completes its 2013-14 Season with the West Coast Premiere of the Internationally Acclaimed Music-Infused *The Suit*
Thursday, May 30, 2013

Based on "The Suit" by Can Themba, Mothobi Mutloatse, and Barney Simon Direction, adaptation, and music by Peter Brook, Marie-Hélène Estienne, and Franck Krawczyk. APRIL 23-MAY 18, 2014

SAN FRANCISCO (May 30, 2013) – From legendary theatrical innovators **Peter Brook**, **Marie-Hélène Estienne**, and **Franck Krawczyk** comes the acclaimed music-infused production, *The Suit*. Fresh from sold-out runs in New York, Paris, and London, *The Suit* will make its West Coast premiere at **American Conservatory Theater** as part of its 2013–14 season. When a husband catches his beautiful wife in the arms of her lover, the lover flees—but leaves his suit behind. As her penance, the husband makes his wife “treat the suit as an honored guest,” to accompany her wherever she goes. From the dinner table to walks around the neighborhood, the suit becomes a whimsical yet cruel reminder of her infidelity. Traditional African melodies interweave with jazz standards to underscore this simple yet surprising tale, set in Apartheid-era Johannesburg. Reminiscent of *The Scarlet Letter* and overflowing with the same inventiveness as *The Overcoat* and *Brief Encounter*, *The Suit* features innovative staging that integrates virtuosic musicians directly into the action, making Brook’s haunting production of this heartbreaking fable sing. *The Suit* will perform at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater (415 Geary Street, San Francisco) **April 23–May 18, 2014**. To subscribe to A.C.T.’s 2013–14 season or for more information, please call **415.749.2250** or visit act-sf.org.

Says A.C.T. Artistic Director **Carey Perloff**: "Last spring I went to Brooklyn Academy of Music to see *The Suit*, with no agenda other than to delight in the work of one of my favorite artists. Seventy-five minutes later, I rushed backstage and, in the best French I could muster, told the stage manager and company manager from the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord that I wanted to bring the piece to San Francisco next season. *The Suit* is magical in the most elemental and purely theatrical way. With almost no scenery or props, three actors and three remarkable musicians conjure a South African world of love and infidelity, of loyalty and revenge, that is pungent and sweet and sad and surprising. *The Suit* reminded me of how I felt when I first read Brook's seminal work *The Empty Space*—that all it takes is a good story on a bare stage to captivate an audience and help them imagine a whole world. I am so honored to have a chance to celebrate this bold new work by Marie-Hélène Estienne and Peter Brook—another international adventure for the A.C.T. community"

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:

• **Prologue:**

Tue., May 6 at 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., May 2, 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., May 6, at 7 p.m. | Sun., May 11, at 2 p.m. | Wed., May 14, at 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., May 7, 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.

• **Wine Series:**

Tue., May 13, at 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., May 17, at 2 p.m.

Before this matinee performance, get hands-on with theater with the artists who make it happen at this interactive workshop.

• **Bike to the Theater Night**

Wed., April 23

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.

The Suit is the final title of A.C.T.'s 2013–14 season, which kicks off with passionate (and patriotic) fireworks as A.C.T. presents the West Coast premiere of Tony Award–winning director Frank Galati's triumphant new staging of the musical *1776* (**September 11–October 6, 2013**), a vivid musical look at the revolutionary events that shaped our republic more than 230 years ago as our founding fathers wrestled with infighting, held heated debates, and negotiated compromises while drafting our Declaration of Independence. Filled with glorious music and unforgettable characters, this incredible new production comes to us straight from its celebrated run at Asolo Repertory Theatre, and will include 15 Bay Area actors new to the production. Hailed by critics as “brilliant,” “thrilling,” and “utterly riveting,” *1776* takes us on a timely, rousing, and suspenseful adventure into the fascinating first chapter of American history. When it premiered on Broadway in 1969, *1776* ran for more than 1,200 performances and was the recipient of three Tony Awards, including Best Musical. The *New York Times* called it “cliff-hanging drama . . . as magical as a fairy tale,” and *Sarasota Magazine* praised Galati's new production as “beautifully staged . . . exciting and suspenseful.” As relevant today as it was when it was written, this musical telling of our nation's birth features the songs “Sit Down, John,” “Mama Look Sharp,” and “He Plays the Violin.”

In October, Academy Award nominee **David Strathairn** (*Lincoln, Good Night, and Good Luck; Scorched* at A.C.T.) returns in a captivating solo drama *Underneath the Lintel* (**October 23–November 17, 2013**) by Glen Berger. In this gripping ghost story an eccentric librarian discovers a weather-beaten book in a return bin—113 years overdue. Sparked by a message left in its margins, he embarks on a magical quest that takes him around the world and 2,000 years into the past. With astonishing twists and turns, *Underneath the Lintel* draws us into an unforgettable odyssey that is both “powerfully human and ultimately sublime” (*Variety*), ending with the indelible comment “I was here.”

After its record-breaking run last season, A.C.T. is joyously welcoming back the Bay Area's favorite holiday tradition, the Charles Dickens classic *A Christmas Carol* (**December 4–28, 2013**). Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and those deliciously spooky ghosts, this version of *A Christmas Carol*, adapted by Paul Walsh and Carey Perloff, stays true to the heart of Dickens's timeless story of redemption and brings a playful sensibility to his rich language. *A Christmas Carol*—now in its 37th year—is a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become an annual holiday outing for families around the Bay Area. Bay Area favorite **James Carpenter** returns for his eighth year in the role of Ebenezer Scrooge.

Continuing its mission of bringing reimagined classic works to the stage, A.C.T. will present a sumptuous new production of George Bernard Shaw's political comedy *Major Barbara* (**January 8–February 2, 2014**). In this intriguing tangle of religion and business, a Salvation Army officer becomes disillusioned

when her church accepts money from a whiskey distiller and an armaments manufacturer—her own father. If the price of supporting the poor is complicity with the country’s most successful gun factory, what is Barbara to do? Exploring the timely themes of business, faith, family, and morality, *Major Barbara* remains one of Shaw’s most topical and richly invigorating works. Coproduced with one of A.C.T.’s favorite Canadian collaborators, Theatre Calgary (who hosted A.C.T.’s production of *The Tosca Project* during its 2011 tour), this is the first staging of *Major Barbara* during A.C.T.’s tenure at The Geary Theater. *Major Barbara* will be directed by Theatre Calgary Artistic Director **Dennis Garnhum** and will feature an international cast of both Canadian and American actors.

Next, A.C.T. will travel to 1940s Italy with A.C.T. favorite **Marco Barricelli** (artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz; *Vigil* at A.C.T.) and Stratford Festival star **Seana McKenna** (*Phèdre* at A.C.T.), who return to lead the cast of *Napoli!* (**February 12–March 9, 2014**), a vivid new translation of Eduardo De Filippo’s poignant Italian comedy. During the chaotic days of World War II in Naples, an enterprising woman sets up a small-time black market business to keep her family afloat. She prospers, but maybe a bit too much—compelling her husband to ask hard questions about morality, civility, and the state of their society. De Filippo’s masterful blend of humor and pathos tells the story of an unforgettable and wildly entertaining family determined to survive at any cost. This production celebrates the Year of Italian Culture in the United States.

With spring comes the Northern California premiere of the sexy new comedy *Venus in Fur* (**March 19–April 13, 2014**), the 2012 Tony Award-nominated play that electrified (and titillated) Broadway audiences. When a young actress auditions for a demanding playwright/director’s adaptation of a classic novel that explores sexual domination, their encounter explodes into a playful, witty, and erotic game of cat and mouse, dangerously blurring the lines between fantasy and reality—and seduction and power. Penned by theatrical mastermind **David Ives** (*All in the Timing*), *Venus in Fur* was named one of the “year’s best” plays by more than a dozen major publications, and the *New York Times* called it “seriously smart and very funny . . . a suspense-packed study of the erotics of power.”

Following the run of *The Suit*, A.C.T.’s 2013–14 season will culminate with the United States premiere of James Fenton’s beautiful reinvention of *The Orphan of Zhao* (**June 4–29, 2014**), a classic Chinese legend that has its roots back in the fourth century BCE, directed by Carey Perloff. The inimitable stage and screen star (and San Francisco’s own) **BD Wong** (*M. Butterfly*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*) will make his A.C.T. debut in this luminous production. In the aftermath of a political coup, an epic story of self-sacrifice and revenge plays out as a young orphan discovers the shattering truth behind his origin. 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.”

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