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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER, San Francisco’s Tony Award–winning nonprofit theater, nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training, and an ongoing engagement with our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Ellen Richard, we embrace our responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent our relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of our creative work. Founded by pioneer of the regional theater movement William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. Since then, we’ve performed more than 350 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. We reach more than 250,000 people through our productions and programs every year.

The beautiful, historic Geary Theater—rising from the rubble of the catastrophic earthquake and fires of 1906 and immediately hailed as the “perfect playhouse”—has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped a gaping hole in the ceiling, destroying the proscenium arch and dumping tons of debris on the first six rows of orchestra seats, the San Francisco community rallied together to raise a record-breaking $30 million to rebuild it. The theater reopened in 1996 with a production of The Tempest directed by Perloff, who took over after A.C.T.’s second artistic director, gentleman artist Ed Hastings, retired in 1992.

Perloff’s 20-season tenure has been marked by groundbreaking productions of classical works and new translations creatively colliding with exceptional contemporary theater; cross-disciplinary performances and international collaborations; and “locavore” theater—play made by, for, and about the San Francisco area. Her fierce commitment to audience engagement ushered in a new era of InterACT events and dramaturgical publications, inviting everyone to explore what goes on behind the scenes.

Perloff also put A.C.T.’s conservatory and educational programs at the center of our work. A.C.T.’s 45-year-old conservatory, led by Conservatory Director Melissa Smith, serves 3,000 students every year. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs. Our M.F.A. Program students often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area as alumni. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19; Studio A.C.T. for adults; and the Summer Training Congress, an intensive program that attracts enthusiasts from around the world.

A.C.T. also brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 9,000 Bay Area school students each year. Central to our ACTsmart education programs, run by Director of Education Elizabeth Brodersen, is the longstanding Student Matinee (SMAT) program, which has brought tens 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 in-depth study materials to Bay Area schools and after-school programs.

With our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood marked by the opening of The Costume Shop theater and the current renovation of The Strand Theater across from UN Plaza, A.C.T. is poised to continue its leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.
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VOLUNTEER!

A.C.T. volunteers provide an invaluable service with their time, enthusiasm, and love of theater. Opportunities include helping out in our performing arts library and ushering in our theater.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT ACT-SF.ORG/VOLUNTEER.

INTERACT

At A.C.T.’s FREE InterACT events you can mingle with cast members, join interactive workshops with theater artists, or meet fellow theatergoers at hosted events in our lounges. Join us for our upcoming production of Major Barbara and InterACT with us!

BIKE TO THE THEATER NIGHT
January 8, 8pm

In partnership with the SF Bicycle Coalition, ride your bike to A.C.T. and take advantage of secure bike parking, low-priced tickets, and happy hour prices at our preshow mixer.

PROLOGUE
January 14, 5:30pm

Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion and Q&A with director Dennis Garnhum. Can’t make this event? Watch it live—online! Visit act-sf.org/interact for details.

THEATER ON THE COUCH *
January 17

Take part in a lively discussion in our lower-level lounge with Dr. Mason Turner, chief of psychiatry at SF’s Kaiser Permanente Medical Center.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES *
January 21 at 7pm
January 26 & 29 at 2pm

Join an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

OUT WITH A.C.T. *
January 22, 8pm

Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGTB party.

WINE SERIES
January 28, 7pm

Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine tasting event in our third-floor Sky Lounge.

PLAYTIME
February 1, 1pm

Get hands-on with theater at these interactive preshow workshops.

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

*Events take place immediately following the performance.
Dear Friends,

*Underneath the Lintel* is a play that could only have been created in an era of real books—and, indeed, real libraries. One day a lonely librarian picks up a tattered volume in the overnight book-return pile and discovers that it is 113 years overdue. What could this possibly mean? In answering that question, our protagonist goes down a rabbit hole of discovery, piecing together ever more obscure clues to a mystery that is ultimately a mystery about himself.

Each one of us could probably put together a scavenger hunt of our own lives, a set of clues about where we’ve been, whom we’ve loved, what we’ve hidden from, and what we’ve kept ourselves occupied with. What do those scraps ultimately add up to? How do we “read” our own histories? For the wildly imaginative playwright Glen Berger, no bus ticket or transit map or old pair of trousers is left behind by chance. In the archaeology of the self, every object is a clue, to be fathomed, interpreted, wondered at. “Box of scraps. Significant scraps. Or rather . . . they’re all I have . . . to prove a life.”

*Underneath the Lintel*, a one-person play about a man of little significance, follows on the heels of our wildly successful production of *1776*, a 26-person musical about several men of enormous significance. I love this juxtaposition: epic storytelling side by side with an exquisite miniature; the rambunctious roar of colonial Philadelphia yielding to the seductive, poetic murmurings of a Dutch librarian. There are so many ways to tell a story. Cast your eyes across the set of *Underneath the Lintel* and you will discover props, painted drops, costumes, and artifacts from decades and decades of A.C.T. history. Each one of those artifacts tells its own story, hides its own secrets. “Anything at all,” says Berger, “can be an invitation to the miraculous.” And the “miraculous” is framed by the proscenium arch of the theater, which is perhaps the ultimate “lintel.” A frame. A shape that we stand under for a moment, to contemplate our existence.

So tonight, David Strathairn will stand under the lintel of the Geary stage and tell you a story. If you give yourselves over to that story, you will come out the other end transformed. Such is the beauty of live theater. What does this librarian’s story mean to a world obsessed with technology, in which the traces we leave behind are virtual more often than real? As A.C.T. prepares to reclaim The Strand, an old movie theater in Central Market, and turn it into two new stages, we have been immersed in the irony of excavating a ruined theater filled with ghosts half a block from the tech capitals of Twitter, Yammer, Spotify, and Square. How will these two worlds collide? Will libraries with real books still exist in the next millennium? Will people continue to get together to tell their stories in real time, like moths around a flame? I hope so.

The interaction of old forms of knowledge with new technologies has a long history. One of the funnier examinations of this theme is found in the 1957 William Marchant play *Desk Set*, which was made into a classic romantic comedy film starring Spencer Tracy as a computer engineer who tries to introduce a new machine called “Emerick” into a major broadcasting company’s research division, which is run by a razor-sharp Katharine Hepburn. As part of our new free program, Scripts: A.C.T.’s Play Reading Series, we are delighted to host a reading of this entertaining play on November 10 at 7 p.m., directed by A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director Mark Rucker. We hope that both *Underneath the Lintel* and *Desk Set* will help you reflect on not only how you know what you know, but why there is such distinct pleasure in following the thread of a particular search, wherever it takes you—and how much surprise there can be in discovering that what you were looking for isn’t at all what you expected it to be.

Welcome!

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
SAN FRANCISCO'S PREMIERE NONPROFIT THEATER COMPANY

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San Francisco Chronicle

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A.C.T. continues its tradition of presenting reimagined classic works with its first-ever mainstage production of Shaw’s great political comedy *Major Barbara*. In this intriguing and witty tangle of religion and business, a young Salvation Army officer becomes disillusioned when her church accepts money from a millionaire weapons manufacturer—her own father. Confronted with the conflict of supporting her cause through funds supplied by the very industry she preaches against, Barbara must decide if the battle between good and evil is as simple as it seems. Exploring themes of business, faith, family, and morality, *Major Barbara* remains one of Shaw’s most topical and richly invigorating works.

“*In this clever comedy,*” director Dennis Garnhum tells us, “Shaw divides a family between two very powerful subjects: war and poverty. You’ll be dazzled by the ideas.” *Major Barbara* is coproduced with one of A.C.T.’s favorite Canadian collaborators, Theatre Calgary, where Garnhum serves as artistic director. The production will feature an international cast of Canadian and American actors, including some of our own third-year M.F.A. Program students. This continues another A.C.T. tradition: that of seeking partnerships with our neighbors to the North.

A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff has been labeled a “feisty ally” of Canadian work and artists in the States, and over the last decade has brought San Francisco audiences the plays of George F. Walker, Morris Panych, Wajdi Mouawad, and Michel Tremblay; countless Canadian-trained actors, including the inimitable Seana McKenna, who will return this season in *Napoli*; and productions of *The Overcoat* and *No Exit*. Like *Major Barbara*, our 2010 *Phèdre* was a coproduction with another top-tier Canadian theater company, the Stratford Festival; after premiering in San Francisco, A.C.T.’s *The Tosca Café* went to Theatre Calgary for a second run.

*When Tosca* traveled to Canada, the role of the Bartender, originated by A.C.T. core acting company member Jack Willis, was taken over by the remarkable Dean Paul Gibson, who will play the silver-tongued Andrew Undershaft in this production of *Major Barbara*. Perloff argues that Canadian actors “are incredibly lucky in that they have frequent opportunities to do large classical plays, so their muscle is very honed.” This rigorous routine has prepared them for The Geary’s majestic stage, as you will see in January when *Major Barbara* comes to A.C.T.
Underneath the Lintel

An Impressive Presentation of Lovely Evidences

BY Glen Berger

DIRECTED BY Carey Perloff

STARRING David Strathairn* as The Librarian

THE SETTING

Here. Now.

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL IS PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.

Underneath the Lintel is produced through special arrangement with Broadway Play Publishing Inc. The script to this play may be purchased from B P P I at http://www.BroadwayPlayPubl.com. Underneath the Lintel was first presented at the Yale Summer Cabaret in New Haven in 1999; it premiered off Broadway at the Soho Playhouse in 2001.
A NOTE from the PLAYWRIGHT

by GLEN BERGER

A SPOT OF GROCERY SHOPPING, A FEW DIAPERS CHANGED, DINNER, A CHAT ON THE PHONE, A SHOWER, A SHAVE, AND AN ARDUOUS MISSION RETRIEVING A SMALL ROUND DOG TOY FROM UNDER THE COUCH—THAT HAS BEEN MY DAY TODAY, AND ALL IN ALL, LITTLE TO WRITE HOME ABOUT, CERTAINLY NOTHING DEMANDING DEEP CONSIDERATION, NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, NOTHING STRANGE. THAT IS, IF IT WEREN’T FOR THREE INCONTROVERTIBLE FACTS:

1) The universe contains well over 500,000,000,000 galaxies, with each galaxy containing over 1,000,000,000,000 stars, of which our vast, blazing, and life-bestowing sun . . . is one.

2) The Earth is 4,600,000,000 years old, in which time, from the Precambrian Era to the present, a dizzying, terrifying number of inhabitants—amoebas and trilobites, dust mites and Neanderthals—have all struggled to live from one hour to the next. (Indeed, more living creatures are in my stomach [and yours] at this moment than the total number of human beings that have ever existed.)

3) I will die. I will be dead in 60 years, though it’s entirely conceivable that I’ll be dead before the week is out.

And suddenly all the props holding up my warm and secure little existence are kicked away and used for kindling. The imagination is taxed to exhaustion and left numb and agape when it even begins to fathom the implications of these Facts. They beggar the most breathless hyperbole. Three simple Facts, three confirmed and undeniable Facts—the immensity of the universe, the incomprehensibly vast history of the Earth, and our inescapable mortality—loom over all of us like three paisley mastodons. When I shine these three Facts upon any moment in my life, suddenly nothing, absolutely nothing, isn’t strange, bewildering, and out of all whooping. These Facts turn every memorable or trivial or utterly forgettable moment of my existence—shopping, eating trout with spouse, lying prostrate retrieving dog toy—into the
Apotheosis of the Comic and Tragic, the Inconsequential and Crucial, the Banal and Profound. These Facts loom so large, in fact, that they are rather easily ignored. Three paisley mastodons get up with us in the morning and sleep with us at night but, for the most part, they're very quiet pachyderms, and consequently, amazingly, they blur into the unimportant background, even though one day, with trumpeting bellows, they will trample me into oblivion. Time and again I explain to myself that these Facts are interesting, profound even, but not pertinent to my daily life. NO. In truth, everything else is but shadow compared to these Facts. They are the trump cards to all the ordinary cards I hold in my hand and call "my life."

I write plays to help me keep these Three Facts in the front of my head. In other words, I write to try to keep myself engaged with the Bewilderment and Infinite. But why did I write Underneath the Lintel in particular?

All my plays are first inspired by music, and Underneath the Lintel was inspired particularly by certain klezmer/Yiddish music from the 1920s (and earlier). The "jaunty melancholy," the "dancing-despite-it-all" quality it contained, the defiance even—a certain "finding-joy-despite-all-the-evidence-to-the-contrary" quality in the music—compelled me to try to express it as a play.

In 1976, in Laetoli, in Tanzania, some members of Mary Leakey's archaeology team were throwing chunks of dried elephant dung at each other, as archaeologists are wont to do in their free time, I suppose. When one of the paleontologists dove to the ground to avoid being pelted by dung, he noticed fossilized footprints of an animal, left in hardened volcanic ash from 3.8 million years ago. After two years of excavation, all number of animal prints were discovered, including, unexpectedly, unmistakably, the footprints of hominids—our ancient australopithecine ancestors. The fact that these prints were preserved—prints by an anonymous ancestor going about a no doubt everyday activity—testifies to me of the great Conundrum of History: What is saved, and what is lost?

There used to be a sequence in Underneath the Lintel that I considered and then excised before the New York production. After the Librarian points out the words on the moth's wing, and calls them a "ghostly vestige," he mentions how "vestige" comes from the Latin word "vestigium," meaning "footprint." The Librarian then alludes to the footprints left by our ancestors in Laetoli, and (unbeknownst to the Librarian) we see a slide of those Laetoli footprints, and then a subsequent 15-second slideshow depicting the subsequent four-million-year history of Humankind, full of our best and worst, and ending with a picture of a footprint left by the first man on the moon.

I loved the idea, and it looked really horrible when we actually tried to execute it, and then I hated the idea. So the sequence is out. But hopefully the idea can still be found in the play. "Still, we'll proceed," the Librarian says over and again, somehow we'll proceed, we haven't a choice, and perhaps such a sentiment has somehow driven the evolution of humanity itself, in tiny steps. Oh yes, we'll often go sideways or backwards, but continue we will, and perhaps "there is joy, too, in that." What, after all, do we do with the fact that suffering has dogged humanity (and certainly not just humanity, but the three-billion-odd species that have populated this planet) every step of the way? Calculated cruelty as well as utterly random events—ten million die in the senselessness of World War I and a woman is struck down by a frozen block of urine. The fact that we die is a great fat conundrum, and it will continue to be a conundrum for me until . . . well until I die. What does my little life mean when set against the huge backdrop of human history? And what's human history set against the ridiculously unimaginable backdrop of the history of the universe? (At the Rose Planetarium in New York, there's a walk representing the history of the observable universe, and at the end of the walk there's a single hair, representing the 50,000 years of human existence.) And what do we do with the fact that, because we only live our lives once, a single event, or a single mistake, can send our lives into a wholly unanticipated and undesired direction?

So it was while I was listening to the klezmer music, and trying to think of a dramatic structure that would allow me to encompass a lot of history (in lieu of the Three Facts), that I remembered the story of the Wandering Jew. Now I was quite aware that the myth of the Wandering Jew was originally an anti-Semitic tale, but the myth had taken on more complex meanings in its 700-odd-year history, and I felt, besides, that an artist can always appropriate myths for his own ends. (I
would later discover that a film made in Yiddish by Jews in the early 1930s called *The Wandering Jew* was made to warn a generally ignorant world of the growing Nazi menace. In the film, the Wandering Jew is depicted as a noble figure, bearing witness to history. I’ve received letters calling *Underneath the Lintel* anti-Semitic. That said, I’ve also received letters calling the play too “pro-Zionist,” and also “anti-Christian,” for the portrayal of a cruel Christ, I suppose. So go figure.

The first performance of *Underneath the Lintel* in New York was scheduled for September 18, 2001. The Soho Playhouse, being in Soho, was inaccessible for a week after the 11th, but we invited the neighborhood to see the show on the 19th. Yet, although the events of 9/11 were singular and tragic, they were not, unfortunately, so out of the ordinary, when one considers the whole of history. On September 11, people were murdered out of anger and ignorance, victims who didn’t want to die, and weren’t expecting to die just then. Considered in this light, such events occur on larger and smaller scales every day, and have been occurring every day for thousands of years.

In a sense, despite the Wandering Jew’s seemingly unique situation, his predicament is the predicament of all humanity—he made a mistake, a single mistake “underneath the lintel,” when he put fear and self-interest ahead of compassion. Everyone does it all the time. And he was forced to live with that mistake the rest of his days. Did the punishment fit the crime? No. But that’s often true of punishments and crimes. And even though he was condemned to live for a near-eternity, the fact that he is not allowed to be anything more than a being in Soho, was inaccessible for a week after the 11th, but we invited the neighborhood to see the show on the 19th. Yet, although the events of 9/11 were singular and tragic, they were not, unfortunately, so out of the ordinary, when one considers the whole of history. On September 11, people were murdered out of anger and ignorance, victims who didn’t want to die, and weren’t expecting to die just then. Considered in this light, such events occur on larger and smaller scales every day, and have been occurring every day for thousands of years.

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The Librarian made a mistake underneath the lintel—sending the one girl he ever loved away. His ensuing, long-sublimated spiritual crisis feeds his determination to find meaning in the clues he uncovers. But my point isn’t that we should all believe in the Wandering Jew, or even in God, for that matter. Rather, anything at all—for the Librarian it was an impossibly overdue book—can be an invitation to the miraculous. And also this: That in the face of overwhelming existential bewilderment and terrible suffering, to respond with a little defiant dancing (in all its myriad forms) is a very human and very wondrous thing.

On one end of a spectrum is Coincidence, on the other end Profound Serendipity. The only difference between the two is how much meaning we choose to ascribe to a particular event. I’m still working out where on the spectrum I should put the following:

A few months back, I was paging through an encyclopedia of philosophy when I came across the word “Sublime,” which is defined as “the presence of transcendent vastness or greatness. . . . While in one aspect, it is apprehended and grasped as a whole, it is felt as transcending our normal standards of measurement. . . . It involves a certain baffling of our faculty with feeling of limitation akin to awe and veneration; as well as a stimulation of our abilities and elevation of the self in sympathy with its object.”

The word sublime comes from “sub” (under) + “limen” (which, like “limit,” is a word derived originally from . . . “lintel”). Though we rarely recognize the place, underneath the lintel is where we stand every day, every moment, of our life.

This essay was first published in 2003 as the “Afterword” to the printed edition of Underneath the Lintel.
WHO’S WHO IN UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL

DAVID STRATHAIRN* (The Librarian) first performed in San Francisco in Robert Woodruff’s production of Harold Pinter’s The Birthday Party at the Eureka Theatre in 1975. He returned to San Francisco to play Prospero in Carey Perloff’s production of The Tempest, celebrating the reopening of The Geary Theater in 1996, and then again in 2012 in Wajdi Mouawad’s Scorched. Other theater credits include productions in New York of Strindberg’s Dance of Death, Oscar Wilde’s Salome, Tom Stoppard’s Hapgood at Lincoln Center, Richard Nelson’s Conversations in Tusculum, Sam Shepard’s A Lie of the Mind and Eyes for Consuelo, Pinter’s The Birthday Party and Mountain Language, both directed by Perloff at the Classic Stage Company, and a revival of The Heiress on Broadway last winter. His film credits include Twisted and Hemingway & Gelhorn, both directed by Phil Kaufman in San Francisco; George Clooney’s Good Night, and Good Luck; Steven Spielberg’s Lincoln; seven films with novelist and filmmaker John Sayles; and Dolores Claiborne, the opera of which, written by Tobias Picker, premiered at San Francisco Opera just last month.

DAN HIATT* (Understudy) has been seen at A.C.T. as Stephen Hopkins in 1776, Tom in Round and Round the Garden, Taylor in Curse of the Starving Class, the Magistrate in The Government Inspector, Bob Acres in The Rivals, Guildenstern in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Cornelius Hackl in The Matchmaker, Yepikhodov in The Cherry Orchard, Roderigo in Othello, Mell in The Play’s the Thing, and Smith in The Threepenny Opera. Other Bay Area credits include Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Dinner with Friends, and Menocchio at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; The Life and Times of Nicholas Nickleby and many others at California Shakespeare Theater; This Wonderful Life, The Immigrant, and A Flea in Her Ear at San Jose Repertory Theatre; Twentieth Century at TheatreWorks; Picasso at the Lapin Agile at Theatre on the Square; Noise Off at Marine’s Memorial Theatre; and The Real Thing and Lifec3 at Marin Theatre Company. Regional theater credits include work with Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, the Huntington Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C., Studio Arena Theatre, the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and Stage West in Toronto.

GLEN BERGER’s (Playwright) plays include Underneath the Lintel (more than 450 performances off Broadway; several Best Play awards; more than 200 productions in the United States; translated into eight languages), O Lovely Glowworm (2005 Portland Drammy Award for Best Script), and Great Men of Science, Nos. 21 & 22 (1998 Ovation Award and L.A. Weekly Award for Best Play). His television credits include two Emmy Awards (ten nominations) and more than 150 episodes for children’s series, including Arthur (PBS), Peep (Discovery/The Learning Channel), Big and Small (BBC), and Fetch (PBS), for which he was head writer for all five of its seasons. Berger was also the co-bookwriter for Spider-Man Turn Off the Dark on Broadway, directed by Julie Taymor, with music by Bono and Edge of U2. He has recently written a book about that experience—Song of Spider-Man—published by Simon & Schuster, which hits the shelves November 5, 2013. He is an alumnus of New Dramatists.

NINA BALL (Set Design) is an award-winning scenic designer whose designs have been seen at Marin Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, San Francisco Playhouse, Aurora Theatre Company, Center REPertory Theatre, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Z Space, Marin Shakespeare Company, Napa Valley Conservatory, Word for Word, TheatreFIRST, Berkeley Playhouse, The Jewish Theatre, Musical Theatre...

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States
WHO'S WHO IN UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL

JESSIE AMOROSO (Costume Design) is in his fifth season at A.C.T. and is currently the costume director for the company. Bay Area theater design and styling credits include work at the California Theatre Center, New Conservatory Theatre Center (NCTC), The Julia Morgan Theatre, Solano Community College Theater, the Berkeley City Club Theater, the Marines’ Memorial Theatre, the Herbst Theatre, Herbst Pavilion, and the Palace of Fine Arts. Other highlights include designing two world premieres for Brad Erickson at NCTC, most recently American Dream. At Theater Artaud he designed Caligula, featuring Nancy Carlin, and at Z Space he designed A Round-Heeled Woman, starring Sharon Gless. He is a graduate of California State University, Hayward (now California State University, East Bay).

ALEXANDER V. NICHOLS (Lighting Design and Projection Design) returns to A.C.T. for his 14th production. Theater credits include the Broadway productions of Wishful Drinking, Hugh Jackman Back on Broadway, and Nice Work If You Can Get It and off-Broadway productions of Los Big Names, Horizon, Bridge and Tunnel, Taking Over, Through the Night, In the Wake, and In Masks Outrageous and Austere. Regional theater credits include designs for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, the Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Dance credits include resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet. He was the lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre and has been the resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, among others. Other projects include the museum installation Circle of Memory,

**JAKE RODRIGUEZ** (Sound Design) has carved out sound and music for multiple theaters across the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Recent credits include *Girlfriend* at Actors Theatre of Louisville; *Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatsright* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *Emotional Creature* at the Pershing Square Signature Center; *Scorched and Maple and Vine* at A.C.T.; *Barred Child*, *Bruta*, and *Annapurna* at Magic Theatre; *Hamlet* at California Shakespeare Theater; *Care of Trees* at Shotgun Players; and *The Companion Piece* at Z Space. Rodriguez is the recipient of a 2003 Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award and a 2004 Princess Grace Award.

**BEATRICE BASSO** (Dramaturg) serves as artistic associate at A.C.T., focusing on season planning, new work development, and production dramaturgy (*Stuck Elevator, The Tosca Project, and Clybourne Park*). She previously served as dramaturg and literary manager at Long Wharf Theatre, where she collaborated on new works by Julia Cho, Noah Haidle, Craig Lucas, Dael Orlandersmith, and David Cale, among others. As a freelance dramaturg, she has collaborated on a number of new-play festivals and theaters, including the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Seattle’s A Contemporary Theatre, and Theatre Calgary in Canada. Basso’s translations from Italian have been produced by OSF and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. A.C.T. is producing her translation of Padua in Italy after studying acting and theater studies from the University of Padua and the University of Pavia. Basso was recently presented in Stockholm, and visual choreography for LIFE: A Journey Through Time, recently presented at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

**ELISA GUTHERTZ** (Stage Manager) most recently worked on *Arcadia, 4000 Miles, The Normal Heart, The Scottsboro Boys, Endgame* and *Play, Scorched* at A.C.T. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include *Once in a Lifetime, Clybourne Park, Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, November, Boleros for the Disenchanted, Rich and Famous, The Rainmaker, A Number,* and *Eve Ensler’s The Good Body,* among others. She has also stage-managed *The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly, Last Summer, Rhinoceros, Big Love, Civil Sex, Collected Stories,* and *Cloud Tectonics* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include *The Good Body* at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, *Big Love* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and *The Vagina Monologues* at the Alcazar Theatre.

**MEGAN Q. SADA** (Assistant Stage Manager) most recent credits include A.C.T.’s *Arcadia, Dead Metaphor, Elektra, Endgame* and *Play, Scorched,* "WHO’S WHO IN UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL"

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Once in a Lifetime, Clybourne Park, Round and Round the Garden, and A Christmas Carol; Magic Theatre’s The Other Place, Bruja, Annapurna, Or, The Brothers Size, Oedipus el Rey, and Goldfish; and California Shakespeare Theater’s The Verona Project. Other professional credits include Lydia (Marin Theatre Company), Culture Clash’s 25th Anniversary Show (Brava Theater Center), and Fiddler on the Roof (Jewish Ensemble Theatre). Sada graduated with a B.F.A. in theater from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

PRISCILLA AND KEITH GEESLIN (Executive Producers) recently produced Arcadia, Armistead Maupin’s Tales of the City, Scapin, The Tosca Project, Curse of the Starving Class, and The Rivals for A.C.T. A member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees since 2003, Priscilla serves as a vice chair of the board. A principal of Francisco Partners, Keith serves on the board of trustees of the high school he attended in Pennsylvania, The Hill School. Priscilla also volunteers her time on the boards of the San Francisco Symphony, NARAL Pro-Choice California Leadership Council, and San Francisco General Hospital Foundation.

JERI LYNN AND JEFFREY W. JOHNSON (Executive Producers) have been supporters of the arts in the Bay Area for many years. Jeri has been an A.C.T. season ticket holder since 1974. She credits A.C.T., the San Francisco Symphony, and the San Francisco Ballet as her prime motivation for relocating to San Francisco in her 20s. Currently serving as a cochair of the Education and Community Programs Committee of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, Jeri was very involved in education in Marin County, volunteering in the schools, serving on the school board in Tiburon, and finally working as the chief business official for the Tiburon school district for almost ten years. Jeffrey was a real estate lawyer in San Francisco and a real estate developer in Silicon Valley. They both retired ten years ago.

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

GET INTO THE ACT THIS WINTER AT OUR TONY AWARD-WINNING CONSERVATORY!

See what’s NEW! Satisfy your creative impulses at one of the best acting schools in the country! Studio A.C.T. offers a broad range of classes and enrollment is currently underway. Visit our website to see our expanded curriculum, which now includes stage combat, public speaking, the art of translation, the world of the play, and more. All classes are taught by theater experts!

NEW!

The World of the Play

Enhance your theatergoing experience with lively and thought-provoking discussions led by A.C.T. Dramaturg Michael Paller! In a series of six round-table discussions preceding matinee performances, meet other theater lovers as you delve into the themes and cultural context of A.C.T.’s most compelling productions. Appropriate for students of all ages and levels of experience.
South Africa in the 1950s: Apartheid rages. In the poverty-stricken township of Sophiatown, Philomen comes home to find his beautiful wife, Matilda, in bed with another man. The man flees through the window but leaves behind his suit, draped carefully over a chair. Philomen's punishment for his wife's betrayal is at once whimsical and cruel: Matilda must treat the forgotten suit as a welcomed guest that will accompany her wherever she goes. It becomes a humiliating and heavy reminder of her infidelity, pushing her ever closer to tragedy.

The Suit is an understatedly haunting tale of love, adultery, and revenge during an age of severe oppression. It was originally a short story by South African writer Can Themba in 1967, the year before the author's untimely death at the age of 43. Themba was labeled a communist in 1966, and his stories were banned in South Africa until the 1980s. He posthumously received the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver for "excellent achievement in literature, contributing to the field of journalism and striving for a just and democratic society in South Africa."

Acclaimed theatrical trailblazer Peter Brook and longtime collaborator Marie-Hélène Estienne were first introduced to the story of The Suit shortly after apartheid was abolished in the 1990s, when they saw a dramatic adaptation by Barney Simon and Mothobi Mutloatse performed at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. Brook and Estienne were immediately captivated by the story's pain and humanity simmering just beneath a façade of lighthearted simplicity. With composer Franck Krawczyk, they began work on a music-infused adaptation in French called Le costume, which premiered in Paris in 1999 and traveled the world. Eventually the team reverted to the script's original English and presented it as The Suit.

Over the years, Brook says that the feeling of the play has changed in very subtle but important ways: when The Suit was first produced, "all theaters were riddled with angry, agitprop, politically aware plays; the background of apartheid didn't need underlining—it was in the air. So we concentrated on the essential human story. In doing it again, now, we found we could develop with the presence not only of apartheid, but the presence of all the ruthless, cruel dictatorships and regimes all over the world."

After A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff saw The Suit at Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2012, she rushed backstage and pleaded with the company manager to let her bring the show to San Francisco. Perloff says of the production: "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 book 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."

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This season, Bike to the Theater Nights officially became the greenest component of our impressive InterACT line up. Partnering with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, we're offering our pedal-powered theatergoers special discounts to select performances and red-carpet treatment once they arrive.

A.C.T. first partnered with the SF Bicycle Coalition in 2010 during the world premiere of The Tosca Project, a dance-theater event that explored a century of local history from the barstools of the famous North Beach nightspot, Tosca Cafe. Such a San Francisco story begged for a special San Francisco--flavored event, and what is more San Francisco than biking down Market Street on your way to the theater? SF Bicycle Coalition members received exclusive discounts on Tosca tickets and cyclists enjoyed free valet-bike parking, monitored by SF Bicycle Coalition volunteers.

Last season it was only fitting that we bring the program back for 4000 Miles, a comic drama about a young man who moves into his feisty grandmother's New York apartment after biking 4,000 miles crosscountry. In addition to discount tickets and parking perks, cyclists enjoyed a preshow happy hour with complimentary drinks and snacks. It was such a success that we had to add extra nights, and we decided we had to have them for every production. Every first preview is now a Bike to the Theater Night at A.C.T.

"We're thrilled to see so many people participating in A.C.T.'s Bike to the Theater Nights," says SF Bicycle Coalition Communications Director Kristin Smith. "Our mission is to promote the bicycle for everyday transportation. Making it easy for people to pedal to events around San Francisco encourages more people to ride, and it opens up space on public transit and parking spaces for those who need them. Rolling up right in front of the theater and having someone valet your bike for you is the best and easiest way to get to the theater. No worrying about missing your bus, or circling for parking—just a spot right in front."

Smith continues, "The SF Bicycle Coalition loves partnering with other organizations like A.C.T. that are making San Francisco a better, more enjoyable place to live. Bike to the Theater Nights encourage our bike-loving members to see more plays, and hopefully encourages other theatergoers to try biking."

For Bike to the Theater Nights, SF Bicycle Coalition volunteers provide valet bike parking starting one hour prior to curtain. (Patrons are asked to bring their own locks. And wear a helmet!) Patrons who bike to the theater receive a special discount on tickets using the code THEATERSFBC when ordering online or by phone.

Because A.C.T. hopes to provide a space for the intersection of cycling enthusiasts, theater lovers, and those who want to practice green living, we have made Bike to the Theater Night a subscription event. In addition to enjoying free valet bike parking, subscribers are invited to happy hour before the show where they can connect and make friends with other people who are passionate about art, exercise, and the environment, all while enjoying complimentary drinks and snacks. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and watching this unique and important community blossom.
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Bike to the Theater Nights

| Oct. 23 | Underneath the Lintel |
| Dec. 6  | A Christmas Carol   |
| Jan. 8  | Major Barbara       |
| Feb. 12 | Napoli!             |
| Mar. 19 | Venus in Fur        |
| Apr. 23 | The Suit            |
| June 4  | The Orphan of Zhao  |

“ROLLING UP RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE THEATER AND HAVING SOMEONE VALET YOUR BIKE FOR YOU IS THE BEST AND EASIEST WAY TO GET TO THE THEATER.”

TO LEARN ABOUT A.C.T.’S INTERACT EVENTS, VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/INTERACT
They flew in from New Hampshire, New Mexico, South Carolina, and New Jersey; they crossed the Bay from Oakland, Berkeley, and Walnut Creek; the San Franciscans jumped on MUNI or their bikes: 14 teachers—some fairly new to their field, some veterans with decades of experience—looking to charge their creative batteries in a week-long intensive at A.C.T. Most were high school theater, English, or language arts teachers, but there were also a social studies teacher and two Spanish teachers. One educator who attended instructs the first and second grades. Another teaches preschool. All of them were looking for innovative theater tools to bring back to their classrooms in the fall of 2013. All of them longed for a community of adults with whom they could share an artistic experience. And so they came back to the source at A.C.T. and found what they were looking for.

Launched in the summer of 2012 and funded by a generous donation from The Moca Foundation, Back to the Source (B2TS) aims to reconnect teachers to their dramatic selves, while offering strategies for using theater to support creative learning across curricula. Over the course of last summer's weeklong institute, B2TS faculty led participants in hands-on coursework daily: voice and speech in the morning, followed by a devised acting project and a course exploring playwriting in the afternoons. Special sessions included a workshop focusing on developing original and relevant work with diverse students (led by Destiny Arts Center Artistic Director Sarah Crowell) and a tour of A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. Throughout the week, 2012 B2TS alumnus (and SFUSD Visual and Performing Arts Department instructor) David Greenbaum spearheaded Trading Tricks and Treats of the Trade, during which participating teachers had the opportunity to share their own best practices.

The week culminated with a public presentation of the teachers' devised acting project, monologues they had written, and exercises they felt captured the spirit of the work they had done during their time with us. One freshly written scene illustrated the scientific principle of lift (i.e., how planes stay aloft) with a dialogue between an eager screenwriter and an unwilling film producer; another explained how sound waves work by following the exploits of a supremely flatulent protagonist; another taught Spanish through rap. But B2TS is much more about process than product, and the true measure of success is the fact that these teachers continue to collaborate with each other months after they've left A.C.T. They share lesson plans and inspire each other, linked by their common experience. “I feel excited to go back and share the work with my students,” one participant told us after last summer's session. “I feel invigorated and validated. I feel that I have sources to go back to—this includes materials as well as colleagues.” Success.

In addition to our week-long B2TS summer session, last spring we partnered with the SLANT (Science, Literacy, and Arts iNT egration) initiative of the San Francisco Unified School District. Two Taste of the Source professional development workshops were designed with science teachers in mind, as we explored what it means to integrate theater across the curriculum.

“AFTER BACK TO THE SOURCE, I FEEL ALIVE, REFRESHED, INVIGORATED, AND READY TO TAKE ON THE COMING YEAR. I FEEL LIKE I HAVE NOT ONLY NEW TOOLS TO GIVE MY STUDENTS A WELL-ROUNDED ENRICHING CLASS, BUT ALSO THE RESOURCES AND MORE IMPORTANTLY THE SUPPORT.”

TERALYN TANNER
Charleston, South Carolina

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BACK TO THE SOURCE 2014, VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/BACKTOTHESOURCE
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“After Back to the Source, I feel alive, refreshed, invigorated, and ready to take on the coming year. I feel like I have not only new tools to give my students a well-rounded enriching class, but also the resources and more importantly the support.”

TERALYN TANNER
Charleston, South Carolina

To find out more about Back to the Source 2014, visit: act-sf.org/backtothesource

CONNECT WITH US
November is Prospero Society Month

by Helen Rigby

Named after the wise and benevolent magician in William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, A.C.T.’s Prospero Society honors the philanthropy and vision of individuals who have provided for the future of the theater by including A.C.T. in their estate plans.

November is Prospero Society Month at A.C.T., and our beloved members will be receiving special treatment at The Geary and in the V.I.P. Lounge, making it a great time for you to explore making a satisfying contribution to A.C.T. while still meeting your own personal and financial goals. Perhaps you have already included us in your estate plans, but haven’t told us. Please let us know and you will receive lifetime membership, recognition in all A.C.T. performance programs, access to the V.I.P. Lounge, and invitations to special events like the annual Prospero Society Luncheon.

Currently 108 Prospero Society members are providing for the future of A.C.T. Won’t you join them? For information about joining the Prospero Society, contact Associate Director of Development Helen Rigby at 415.439.2469 or hrigby@act-sf.org.

▲ NANCY THOMPSON, CENTER, AND HER HUSBAND, Andy Kerr, with A.C.T. Conservatory Director Melissa Smith at the 2012 Conservatory Awards Luncheon (photo by Drew Altizer)
A Q&A WITH PROSPERO SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEMBER
NANCY THOMPSON

WHEN DID YOU BECOME A THEATER LOVER? I was in a play in fourth grade and quickly realized that, when you are in the play, you can't actually see the play. Since I wanted to see the whole play, I decided I preferred being an audience member.

WHEN DID YOU DISCOVER A.C.T.? I moved here 38 years ago, and a friend of mine had a subscription to A.C.T. He would invite me to join him every now and then, and I would attend when a play appealed to me. I’ve been attending ever since.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE PRODUCTIONS AT A.C.T. I like contemporary plays—something unexpected and visually exciting. Some of my favorite A.C.T. productions have been The Overcoat, Shockheaded Peter, The Black Rider, Brief Encounter, and last season’s wonderful Dead Metaphor.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE PROSPERO SOCIETY? We've received so much joy at A.C.T., and the Prospero Society provided a way we could show our appreciation. Now I am more involved as a member of the Prospero Society Committee and feel even more compelled to support the organization. A.C.T. doesn’t only need funds for today (although I strongly believe in giving annual donations, as well), it also needs money for the future. Joining the Prospero Society also gives you many nice benefits (and, of course, tax advantages). I joke with prospective Prospero members by telling them, “You can't take it with you!”

WHY IS A.C.T. AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR LIFE? My husband and I enjoy live theater, and A.C.T. presents a huge variety of outstanding theater productions. We have met a lot of theater lovers over the years, and we feel like we are part of the A.C.T. family.

"WE ARE PART OF THE A.C.T. FAMILY."

JANUARY IS M.F.A. MONTH AT THE GEARY
AND WE’RE CELEBRATING WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF M.F.A. VARIETY

The A.C.T. production of Underneath the Lintel takes place in a down-and-out vaudeville theater, and this January our Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program will resurrect that forgotten genre. Popular from the early 1880s until the early 1930s, vaudeville’s variety shows grouped a series of unrelated acts together into an evening of amazing entertainment. We will celebrate M.F.A. Month in January with short shows in this style, providing mainstage audiences with a sample of all that our actors-in-training are up to. You’ll see clowning and singing, choreographed fights and well-rehearsed scenes, and so much more!

Before performances of Major Barbara, ticket holders can attend M.F.A. Variety upstairs in our fifth-floor cabaret space, The Garret. These shows will take place Tuesday through Friday, opening Wednesday, January 7, and closing Thursday, January 31. Doors will open at 7 p.m. and drinks will be available for purchase. The 30-minute performances will take place from 7:15 to 7:45, leaving you plenty of time to get to your seats. With their varied repertoire, you could see a different set of acts every night of the week!

A.C.T.’s M.F.A. Program students are the finest young actors in the nation. “I am not sure people realize just how much we do, how far and wide our actor training goes, in the M.F.A. Program—or how virtuosic our students are,” says Conservatory Director Melissa Smith. “Their training is a 360-degree experience, and we are thrilled to show off their versatility in this new series.” M.F.A. Variety is your opportunity to get a glimpse of these up-and-coming artists while they are attending our rigorous three-year program, before they launch their promising careers on local and national stages, not to mention the silver screen. You’ll be telling all your friends, “I saw them when . . .”
NEW FREE READING SERIES AT THE GEARY

by Dan Rubin

There is really nothing like a fully realized production of a play. What you see onstage is collaboration at its absolute finest, the result of months, sometimes years, of preparation followed by weeks of rehearsal, as actors and designers come together to create an entirely new reality. On the other hand, there is also nothing like the raw, informal reading of a script. There is an intimacy among actors and plays when they first meet one another and begin the exploration. Watching a book-in-hand reading is watching a process of discovery—one in which the world of the play is created word by word and line by line. Watching a script reading is a wonderfully rigorous exercise in imagination. So it is with great pleasure that A.C.T. launches a new addition to its artistic programming, Scripts: A.C.T.’s Play Reading Series.

A.C.T. has long presented script readings at The Geary. Alongside the 2011 run of Harold Pinter’s The Homecoming, we hosted a Pinter celebration. In addition to reading scenes from the master playwright’s best-known work, during a segment called Basement Pinter we also explored his lesser-known pieces. In conjunction with Larry Kramer’s The Normal Heart, our season-opener last year, we staged a reading of Dustin Lance Black’s “8” to continue the conversation about gay rights and marriage equality.

The idea to formalize the pairing of a mainstage show with an informal reading arose at the end of last season, when, during Tom Stoppard’s Arcadia, the production’s cast presented a reading of Hapgood, another of Stoppard’s science plays. Our audience had such a wonderful time watching the transformative power of these terrific artists as they left one role behind to put on another that we decided to make such complementary readings regular events.

Scripts aims to introduce plays that illuminate the shows in our subscription season. With 1776, a musical about the creation of the Declaration of Independence, we presented David Hare’s scathing political comedy Stuff Happens, about how we landed in the Iraq War. With Underneath the Lintel, a play about the journey of a solitary librarian, we will present William Marchant’s Desk Set, the 1957 comedy about a boisterous team of female research librarians who refuse to be replaced by a machine.

Scripts is free to all A.C.T. ticketholders, but you must reserve general admission tickets so we know you are coming! Members of our Producers and Directors Circles enjoy premiere seating and a preshow reception. Friends of A.C.T. will get reserved seating, as well.

PLAY PAIRINGS FOR SCRIPTS

NOVEMBER SPECIAL (NOV 10)
Underneath the Lintel, served best with Desk Set, by William Marchant

JANUARY SPECIAL (JAN 26)
Major Barbara, served best with For Services Rendered, by Somerset Maugham

MARCH SPECIAL (MAR 2)
Napoli!, served best with The Testament of Mary, by Colm Toibin

APRIL SPECIAL (APR 6)
Venus in Fur, served best with Quills, by Doug Wright

MAY SPECIAL (MAY 4)
The Suit, served best with Let There Be Love, by Kwame Kwei-Armah

JUNE SPECIAL (JUN 22)
The Orphan of Zhao, TBA
CAREY PERLOFF (A.C.T. Artistic Director) recently celebrated her 20th year as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed Arcadia, Elektra (coproduced by the Getty Villa in Malibu), Endgame and Play, Scorch'd, The Homecoming, Tosca Cafe (co-created with choreographer Val Caniparoli and recently toured Canada), and Racine’s Phèdre in a coproduction with the Stratford Festival. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. José Rivera’s Bolerus for the Disenchanted; the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda’s After the War (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of A Christmas Carol; the American premieres of Tom Stoppard’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Harold Pinter’s Celebration; A.C.T.-commissioned translations/adaptations of Hecuba, The Misanthrope, Enrico IV, Mary Stuart, Uncle Vanya, A Mother, and The Voyage Inheritance (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Boy; and major revivals of ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, The Government Inspector, Happy End (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), A Doll’s House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Threepeny Opera, Old Times, The Rose Tattoo, Antigone, Creditors, The Room, Home, The Tempest, and Stoppard’s Rock ’n’ Roll, Travesties, The Real Thing, and Night and Day. Perloff’s work for A.C.T. also includes Marie Ndiaye’s Hilda, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein’s No for an Answer and David Lang/Mac Wellman’s The Difficulty of Crossing a Field, and the West Coast premiere of her own play The Colossus of Rhodes (Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist).

Her play Luminescence Dating premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre, was coproduced by A.C.T. and Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. Kinship was developed at the Perry-Mansfield New Play Festival and at New York Stage and Film (2013); Waiting for the Flood has received workshops at A.C.T., New York Stage & Film, and Roundabout Theatre Company. Higher, was developed at New York Stage and Film and presented at San Francisco’s Contemporary Jewish Museum in 2010; it won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award and received its world premiere in February 2012 in San Francisco. Her one-act The Morning After was a finalist for the Heideman Award at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Perloff has collaborated as a director on new plays by many notable writers, including Gotanda, Nilo Cruz, Timberlake Wertenbaker and Robert O’Hara.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound’s Elektra, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, CSC won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s opera The Cave at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

A recipient of France’s 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 Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Perloff is on the board of the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Sarasota, Florida, and is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

ELLEN RICHARD (Executive Director) joined A.C.T. as executive director in August 2010. She served previously as executive director of off Broadway’s nonprofit Second Stage Theatre in New York City. During her tenure at Second Stage, she was responsible for the purchase contract of the Helen Hayes Theatre and substantial growth in subscription income and growth in individual giving. Under Richard’s leadership, Second Stage provided the initial home for the Broadway productions Everyday Rapture, Next to Normal, and The Little Dog Laughed.

From 1983 to 2005, Richard enjoyed a rich and varied career with Roundabout Theatre Company. By the time she departed as managing director, Roundabout had been transformed from a small nonprofit on the verge of bankruptcy into one of the country’s largest and most successful theater companies of its kind. Richard is the recipient of six Tony Awards as producer, for Roundabout productions of Cabaret (1998), A View from the Bridge (1998), Side Man (1999), Nine (2003), Assassins (2004), and Glengarry Glen Ross (2005). Producer of more than 125 shows at Roundabout, she had direct supervision of all general and production management, marketing, and financial aspects of the theater’s operations. She conceptualized and oversaw the redesign of the three permanent Roundabout stages—Studio 54, the American Airlines Theatre, and the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre. She directed the location search for Cabaret and supervised the creation of that production’s environmental Kit Kat Klub.

Prior to her tenure at Roundabout, Richard served as business manager of Westport Country Playhouse, theater manager for Stamford Center for the Arts, and business manager for Atlas Scenic Studio. She began her career working as a stagehand, sound designer, and scenic artist assistant.

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; she has also taught and directed in the M.F.A. Program, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught introductory, intermediate, and advanced acting. She has taught acting classes to students of all ages at 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., California Shakespeare Theater, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre; in New York at Primary Stages and Soho Rep; and in England at the Barbican Theatre (London) and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Smith holds a B.A. from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from Yale School of Drama.