

A.C.T. AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

CAREY PERLOFF, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | ELLEN RICHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press photos and kits: act-sf.org/press

“Downright brilliant! When was the last time you met a new play that was so smart it made your head spin?”

—*New York Times*

“Get in line ASAP! This bizarre, funny, bleak, wonderful show is even better than its hype. One of the most affecting tributes to theater and tenacity you’re likely to see all year.”

—*New York Post*

“The play is both scary and sweet, funny but dead serious, unique and wonderfully theatrical.”

—*Time magazine*

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER IN A COPRODUCTION WITH THE GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENTS THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF ANNE WASHBURN’S *MR. BURNS, A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY*

February 18–March 15, 2015

SAN FRANCISCO (January 8, 2015) – After playing to sold-out audiences in New York, **American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)**, in a coproduction with the Guthrie Theater, is thrilled to present the West Coast premiere of Anne Washburn’s *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (February 18–March 15, 2015). In a post-apocalyptic Northern California, a group of strangers bond by recreating the infamous “Cape Feare” episode of *The Simpsons*. From this fortuitous meeting, distant memories of “Marge” and “Homer” become the basis for shaping a new society as the play travels decades into the future. An outrageous and enthusiastically acclaimed dark comedy by Bay Area-born playwright Anne Washburn, *Mr. Burns* is both a marvelous meta-tribute to the iconic first family of contemporary pop culture and a celebration of the power of generational storytelling. Hailed as one of the Top Ten Plays of 2013 by the *New York Times*, *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* “has arrived to leave you dizzy with the scope and dazzle of its ideas. Ms. Washburn makes us appreciate anew the profound value of storytelling in and of itself, and makes a case for theater as the most glorious and durable storyteller of all” (*New York Times*). Press night for *Mr. Burns, a post electric play* is Wednesday, February 25, 2015. Tickets (ranging from \$20–\$120) are available at the A.C.T. Box Office at 415.749.2228 or online at www.act-sf.org.

Holder of 31 Emmys, a Peabody Award, and the record for the longest-running sitcom in television history (561 episodes and counting), *The Simpsons* is a cultural time capsule and a piercing look into the complexities of human nature. A masterful example in writing and animation that showcases the lasting impact of successful parody, “Cape Feare” was first aired in 1993 as the second episode of *The Simpsons*’ fifth season. One of the most celebrated *Simpsons* episodes and consistently ranked as a top fan favorite, it premiered just two years after Martin Scorsese’s 1991 remake of the original 1962 film *Cape Fear*. *The Simpsons*’ unforgettable spoof spans the entire film while making additional references to classic horror movies such as *Psycho* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and various television shows and musicals. To celebrate A.C.T.’s premiere of *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*, KBCW, 44 Cable 12 is airing an entire week of fan-favorite episodes of *The Simpsons* beginning February 2 at 11:30 p.m. The classic “Cape Feare” episode that is at the heart of *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* will air **Friday, February 6 at 11:30 p.m.** *The Simpsons* is broadcast locally every weeknight at 11:30 p.m. on KBCW, 44 Cable 12.

A.C.T. Artistic Director **Carey Perloff** says: "Anne Washburn has a prodigious imagination. In *Mr. Burns*, she imagines a post-apocalyptic world in which the only way to stay sane is to try to piece together long-lost cultural artifacts, such as an episode of *The Simpsons*. Whether you're a *Simpsons* obsessive or a relative newcomer to the legendary cartoon is irrelevant—*Mr. Burns* is magical because of the way Washburn gets us involved in re-creating a story from the past in order to feel that we are less lost in the present. Equally hilarious and disturbing, her play is the kind of fantastically original writing that every artistic director looks for, and Guthrie Artistic Director Joe Dowling and I leapt at the chance to produce it together, with Mark Rucker at the helm and a wonderful company of Bay Area and Minneapolis-based actors. It will be a memorable adventure."

The cast of *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* includes **Nick Gabriel, Anna Ishida, Charity Jones, Tracey A. Leigh, Jim Lichtscheidl, Kelsey Venter, Andrea Wallenberg, and Ryan Williams French.**

Directed by A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director, **Mark Rucker**, the creative team for *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* includes set design by **Ralph Funicello**, lighting design by **Alex Nichols**, costume design by **Alex Jaeger**, score by **Michael Friedman**, lyrics by **Anne Washburn**, music direction by **David Möschler**, and sound design by **Dan Moses Schreier**.

In association with *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*, A.C.T. will offer numerous **InterACT events**—many of which are presented free of charge—that will give patrons opportunities to get closer to the action while having an entire night out at the theater. Visit act-sf.org/interact to learn more about subscribing to these events throughout the season:

- **Bike to the Theater Night**
Wednesday, February 18
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:**
Tuesday, February 24, 5:30 p.m.
Before the curtain goes up, get behind the artistic process at this fascinating preshow discussion with the director and artistic staff.
- **Theater on the Couch:**
Friday, February 27, 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:**
Tues., March 3, 7 p.m. | Sun., March 8, 2 p.m. | Wed., March 11, 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.:**
Wednesday, March 4, 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, March 7, following the 2 p.m. performance
A.C.T. invites you to join us in the theater immediately following your performance for a discussion moderated by A.C.T. dramaturg Michael Paller.
- **Wine Series:**
Tuesday, March 10, 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:**
Saturday, March 14, 12:45 p.m.
Before this matinee performance, get hands-on with the artists who make it happen at this interactive theater workshop.

A.C.T.'s production of *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* is made possible by executive producers **Sarah and Tony Earley, Jo S. Hurley, and Wells Fargo**; producers **Kevin and Celeste Ford, Robina and John Riccitiello, David and Carla Riemer, and Mr. and Mrs. Gene Schnair**; and associate producers **Anonymous; Gayle and Steve Brugler, Ms. Linda Kurtz, and Pat Lamey and Stephanie Hencir**. *Mr. Burns* is sponsored by **Bartlett Hall**, with additional support provided by **Acorn Winery, Campari, Inspiration Vineyards, and Piazza Market Catering**.

A.C.T. would also like to acknowledge its 2014–15 company sponsors **Frannie Fleishhacker; Priscilla and Keith Geeslin; Jeri Lynn and Jeffrey W. Johnson; Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston, The Shenson Foundation; Burt and Deedee McMurtry; Barbara Ravizza and John S. Osterweis; Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock;** and **Doug Tilden and Teresa Keller**, as well as its season partners, **Wells Fargo** and **PG&E**.

A.C.T.'s 2014–15 season continues with the sumptuous jazz-filled production, ***Let There Be Love***; the West Coast premiere of Caryl Churchill's internationally acclaimed new work, ***Love and Information***; and Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler's most rapturous and seductive musical, ***A Little Night Music***.

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FACT SHEET

WHAT: *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*

In a post-apocalyptic Northern California, a group of strangers bond by recreating the popular “Cape Feare” episode of *The Simpsons*. From this fortuitous meeting, distant memories of “Marge” and “Homer” become the basis for shaping a new society as the play travels decades into the future. An outrageous and enthusiastically acclaimed new comedy by Anne Washburn, *Mr. Burns* is both a marvelous meta-tribute to the iconic first family of contemporary pop culture and a celebration of the power of generational storytelling.

WHO: Directed by Mark Rucker

Cast: Nick Gabriel, Anna Ishida, Charity Jones, Tracey A. Leigh, Jim Lichtscheidl, Kelsey Venter, Andrea Wallenberg, and Ryan French Williams

Creative team: Set design by Ralph Funnicello, lighting design by Alex Nichols, costume design by Alex Jaeger, score by Michael Friedman, lyrics by Anne Washburn, music direction by David Möschler, and sound design by Dan Moses Schreier

WHERE: **A.C.T.’s Geary Theater**, 415 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108

WHEN: **February 18 – March 15, 2015**

Press Night: Wednesday, February 25, 2015

InterACT Events

Bike to the Theater Night: February 18 (7 p.m.)

Audience Prologue: February 24 (5:30 p.m.)

Theater on the Couch: February 27 (8 p.m.)

Audience Exchanges: February 24 (7 p.m.); March 8 (2 p.m.); March 11 (2 p.m.)

OUT with A.C.T: March 4 (8 p.m.)

Symposium: March 7 (4 p.m.)

Wine Series: March 10 (7 p.m.)

PlayTime: March 14 (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

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