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Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak, Charles Zukow Associates  
415.296.0677 | [kevink@charleszukow.com](mailto:kevink@charleszukow.com)

**AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER  
ANNOUNCES THE WORLD-PREMIERE STAGING OF  
JOSEPH DOUGHERTY'S *CHESTER BAILEY*,  
STARRING ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE DAVID STRATHAIRN**

**Guarantee tickets to *Chester Bailey* by becoming an A.C.T. 2015–16 season subscriber!**

**THREE WEEKS ONLY!  
MAY 25–JUNE 2, 2016**

SAN FRANCISCO (July 31, 2015) – A.C.T. favorite and Academy Award nominee, **David Strathairn** (*Underneath the Lintel* at A.C.T.; film: “Good Night, and Good Luck,” “Lincoln,” “The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel”), returns to **American Conservatory Theater** (A.C.T.) for a special three-week engagement of Joseph Dougherty’s *Chester Bailey* (**May 25–June 2, 2016**) at A.C.T.’s Strand Theater. In 1945, in a hospital in Long Island, a young man named Chester Bailey – portrayed by **Dan Clegg** (*Major Barbara* at A.C.T.; *Tribes* at Berkeley Rep; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Cal Shakes) – has fallen under the charge of Dr. Philip Cotton (played by Strathairn). Chester is recovering from devastating injuries that have made his imagination the safest haven he has, while Cotton is tasked with figuring out the best way to heal this unusual patient. When Chester weaves a vivid fantasy about a beautiful woman from his past, Cotton—who is wounded by his own disappointments in life and love—is forced to make an ethical decision that calls into question everything he has ever known and believed to be true. As he is left wondering how he can pierce the bubble of Chester’s illusion without leading him back to a reality of pain and loss, Cotton comes to his own realizations about the fragile nature of love and hope—and the saving grace of the imagination. Written by Emmy Award–winning playwright and screenwriter **Joseph Dougherty** (theater: *Digby*, *My Favorite Year*; television: *thirtysomething* and *Pretty Little Liars*) and directed by veteran stage and television director **Ron Lagomarsino** (theater: *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*; television: “thirtysomething,” “My So-Called Life,” “Pretty Little Liars”), *Chester Bailey* is a compelling account of regret, desire, and the lies we tell ourselves in order to find wholeness and truth. Elegant and spare, profound but unsentimental, this two-person play about unexpected connections is a poetic reverie about the endurance of memory, longing, and imagination in the midst of tragedy. The Irish Repertory Theatre in New York City held a sold-out reading of *Chester Bailey* in 2014.

**Single tickets will not be available until early 2016. The only way to guarantee tickets to *Chester Bailey* is by becoming an A.C.T. 2015–16 season subscriber. To become a subscriber, visit [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org) or call the A.C.T. Box Office at 415-749-2228.**

A.C.T.'s 2015–16 season kicks off with the recently-announced winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Stephen Adly Guirgis's (*The Motherf\*ucker with the Hat, Jesus Hopped the A Train*) outrageous new dark comedy, ***Between Riverside and Crazy* (September 2–27, 2015)**. Directed by **Irene Lewis** (*Race and Dead Metaphor* at A.C.T.), *Between Riverside and Crazy* tells the story of ex-cop and recent widower Walter “Pops” Washington, who is desperately trying to hold on to his prime piece of real estate—one of the last great rent-stabilized apartments in New York City—while simultaneously battling his inner demons. His landlord wants him and his newly paroled son out; his cop friends are begging him to back down from a lawsuit against City Hall; the local liquor store has closed; and a beautiful, mysterious Santeria practitioner promises salvation in the midst of all the chaos. A hilarious and timely story that tackles gentrification, recovery, faith, sketchy houseguests, and the saving grace of family, *Between Riverside and Crazy* is “a genuine original that deserves to be seen by anyone hungry for a smart, exuberantly funny urban dramedy” (*Newsday*). **Press night is on Wednesday, September 9, 2015.** Performances of *Between Riverside and Crazy* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater.

In the fall, A.C.T. will present ***Monstress* (September 16–November 22, 2015)**, two world-premiere one-act plays about love, longing, and the American Dream. In these two tales of contemporary Filipino-American life in the Bay Area, adapted from the acclaimed collection of short stories by San Francisco author Lysley Tenorio, a vibrant array of characters strive for personal transformations that are seemingly impossible, wonderfully moving, and distinctly theatrical. The infamous headline-making eviction of Filipino residents from San Francisco's International Hotel in the 1970s sets the background for Philip Kan Gotanda's stirring *Save the I-Hotel*, which illuminates the dangers of love that crosses forbidden territories. Sean San José's retelling of the title story “Monstress” moves us from the streets of Manila to San Francisco, where a B-movie director has been seduced by the opportunity to work with a shady American filmmaker. An evening of song and story about love and family, hope and indifference, triumph and failure, *Monstress* explores the resilience of a community struggling to find a home in the ever-shifting sands of the American dream. *Monstress* will be directed by A.C.T. Artistic Director **Carey Perloff**, with associate direction by **Sean San José** (*Superheroes* at Cutting Ball Theater). **Press nights are on Wednesday, September 30 and Thursday, October 1, 2015.** Performances of *Monstress* will take place at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater.

Next, A.C.T. will present ***Ah, Wilderness!* (October 14–November 8, 2015)**, Eugene O'Neill's passionate coming-of-age classic. *Ah, Wilderness!* is a tender portrait of a sensitive teenage poet whose experience of first love leads him into the raptures of romantic poetry and the pain of heartbreak. As the Miller clan prepare for their Fourth of July celebrations, their idealistic, literature-quoting 16-year-old son, Richard, is struggling with what it means to be young and in love. As Richard's attempts to sow his wild oats intersect with small-town gossip, hilarious misunderstandings ensue. Full of the vibrant nostalgia of first love and other youthful discoveries, *Ah, Wilderness!* is a humorous portrait of a family's

attempts to stay united in the midst of growing pains, as well as “a valentine to hearty turn-of-the-twentieth-century American life” (*Washington Post*). *Ah, Wilderness!* will be directed by A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director **Mark Rucker** (*4000 Miles* and *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* at A.C.T.). **Press night is on Wednesday, October 21, 2015.** Performances of *Ah, Wilderness!* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater.

After its record-breaking run last season, A.C.T. is happy to welcome back the Bay Area’s favorite holiday tradition, ***A Christmas Carol* (December 2–27, 2015)**. Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and 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 38th year — is a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become a holiday tradition for families around the Bay Area. **Press night is on Thursday, December 10, 2015.** Performances of *A Christmas Carol* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater.

Ring in 2016, A.C.T. will present the acclaimed one-man show ***Satchmo at the Waldorf* (January 13–February 7, 2016)**. This richly imagined biographical play features a collision between two jazz titans, Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, who are both magnetically channeled by John Douglas Thompson, deemed “America’s greatest classical actor” by critic John Lahr. This acclaimed off-Broadway hit, by theater critic Terry Teachout, details Armstrong’s meteoric rise, as well as his fateful relationships with his manager and with Davis. A tale of ambition, artistry, and overreach set just four months before Armstrong’s death in 1971, *Satchmo at the Waldorf* offers viewers a complex, unforgettable glimpse into the heart and soul of one of history’s most iconic jazz legends. *Satchmo at the Waldorf* will be directed by **Gordon Edelstein** (*The Glass Menagerie* at Roundabout Theatre and *Uncle Vanya* at Long Wharf Theater). **Press night is on Wednesday, January 20, 2016.** Performances of *Satchmo at the Waldorf* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater.

Continuing the tradition of introducing eclectic, unforgettable musical projects to the stage, A.C.T. will next present the groundbreaking new musical, ***The Unfortunates* (February 3–April 10, 2016)**. A surreal steampunk romp through uniquely American genres, *The Unfortunates* combines the heat of a gospel revival with the sweet sorrow of the blues. A huge hit at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival last year, the play is based on an old blues song, “St. James Infirmary,” and transports audiences to a world of memory and mythmaking in which courage is tested in magical ways. Big Joe, a stalwart, tough-talking soldier with oversized hands, risks everything to save the armless courtesan Rae from a plague that has decimated all but a handful of survivors. The search for salvation is marked by the characters’ willingness to make music in the face of loss. From a prison camp to a brush with the underworld, *The Unfortunates* is a musical fever dream that’s as life-affirming as it is darkly imaginative. *The Unfortunates* will be directed by **Shana Cooper** (*Love’s Labour’s Lost* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival). **Press nights are on Wednesday, February 17 and Thursday, February 18, 2016.** Performances of *The Unfortunates* will take place at A.C.T.’s Strand Theater.

In spring 2016, A.C.T. will present the West Coast premiere of Will Eno’s brilliant new comedy, ***The Realistic Joneses* (March 9–April 3, 2016)**. In a small American town, two couples who live next door to each other share the same last

name—and much more—in this comedy that had Broadway audiences and critics howling with delight. Soon after the Joneses meet each other, they discover that they are suffering from a similar malady, which leads to a surreal deterioration of language and communication. This results in a complex game of wits that makes ordinary conversation an extraordinary adventure. In Will Eno’s inventive new play, what seems like a series of routine encounters between American neighbors becomes a captivating look at how impossible it is for words to fully capture feeling, and how miraculous it is for human beings to truly know each other. *The Realistic Joneses* will be directed by **Loretta Greco** (*Lackawanna Blues* and *Speed the Plow* at A.C.T.). **Press night is on Wednesday, March 16, 2016.** Performances of *The Realistic Joneses* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater.

A.C.T. will close its 2015–16 season with ***The Last Five Years* (May 11–June 5, 2016)**, which receives a brand-new, fully staged production following the wildly successful concert version at The Geary Theater in spring 2015. Tony Award–winning composer of *Parade* and *Honeymoon in Vegas*, Jason Robert Brown, brings us this powerful and intimate musical about two twenty-something New Yorkers, Cathy (a struggling actress) and Jamie (a rising novelist), who dive headfirst into a marriage fueled by the optimism that comes from finding “the one.” From one of the most imaginative voices in musical theater, the play features a unique structure in which Cathy’s journey is sung from ending to beginning, and Jamie’s from beginning to end. The lovers’ individual accounts reveal that, in a city where professional and personal passions collide and only the strongest relationships survive, navigating the waters of love and matrimony can prove to be daunting. Packed to the brim with humor, ravishing romance, and an exuberant score, *The Last Five Years* takes an unforgettable look at the hope that love will endure the test of time. **Press night is on Wednesday, May 18, 2016.** Performances of *The Last Five Years* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater.

Full-season (7-play) subscriptions will soon be available for **\$91–\$679** and offer incredible savings, unparalleled access, exclusive benefits, and personalized customer service. Subscribers save as much as **50% off single-ticket prices**. Students and educators are eligible to save up to half-price on subscriptions, and senior discounts are available for certain series. To make subscriptions more affordable, A.C.T. also offers all subscribers an **extended payment plan** that allows payment in two easy installments. A.C.T.’s competitive subscriber benefits include **free ticket exchanges** up to the day of your scheduled performance, **guaranteed best seating**, **ticket insurance**, access to **convenient prepaid parking** one block away from the theater, **discounts for neighborhood restaurants**, and the opportunity to subscribe to ***Words on Plays***, A.C.T.’s in-depth theater guide for each show. To renew a current A.C.T. subscription, please call **415.749.2250** or log on to [www.act-sf.org/renew](http://www.act-sf.org/renew).

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