



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak, Charles Zukow Associates | 415.296.0677 | kevink@charleszukow.com

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF *WORDS ON PLAYS*

All 175 editions of the celebrated performance guide series
now available online

SAN FRANCISCO (January 24, 2019)—**American Conservatory Theater** (A.C.T.) announced today that *Words on Plays*—the institution’s in-depth performance guide series—is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Created in 1994 in response to audience members requesting the program before seeing the show, this entertaining and informative publication offers revealing artist interviews, original articles, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the plays included in A.C.T.’s subscription season.

“Through penetrating interviews with brilliant artists, deep dives into the history and cultural context of the work, and stimulating articles about the questions it raises, each edition of *Words on Plays* spurs insight and conversation,” said **Joy Meads**, A.C.T.’s Director of Dramaturgy and New Works. “*Words on Plays* is an invaluable resource for anyone eager to engage more deeply with the work on stage and what it reveals about ourselves and our society.”

Originally a print-only publication created in-house at A.C.T. with a photocopier, *Words on Plays* is now offered digitally and in a sleek print format. Additionally, A.C.T. has now made all editions of *Words on Plays* available online with a new indexing system to assist educators, students, and theater-lovers alike in finding productions and topics of interest. The archives may be accessed online at act-sf.org/wordsonplays.

Within the last 25 years, there have been 175 editions of *Words on Plays*, accounting for a total of 269 interviews, 1,158 original articles, 8,643 total pages, and 3.2 million total words. *Words on Plays* has featured interviews with notable subjects from the world of theater including five-time Tony Award winner **Susan Stroman**, Academy Award-winning playwright and screenwriter **Tarell Alvin McCraney** (creator of “Moonlight”), Tony Award winning-playwright **David Henry Hwang**, playwright **José Rivera**, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **David Mamet**, Tony Award-winning actor **Bill Irwin**, former Artistic Director of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre **Emma Rice**, Drama Desk and Obie Award-winning director **Rachel Chavkin**, award-winning Bay Area playwright **Lauren Yee**, two-time

Pulitzer Prize–winning playwright **Lynn Nottage**, Tony Award nominee **John Douglas Thompson**, and acclaimed playwright **Mfoniso Udofia**.

Says **Bill Irwin**, “*Words on Plays* can often make the difference between a squirmy, uneasy launch with an audience and an early-on feeling of engagement—of synch. For an actor, the feeling is palpable. This group of people I’m stepping in front of has a feeling for what we’re up to here. We’re in the same room together. So much better than when that’s not the case.”

Adds **Tamilla Woodard**, director of A.C.T.’s recent production of *Men on Boats*, “Offering a high-level critical examination of the world of the play, *Words on Plays* circumvents the analytical and explanatory leanings of similar efforts and provides the reader with a richly panoramic addition to the theatrical experience. This gorgeous publication is a deep dive for the curious minded. With its vibrant photos and illustrations, and compelling essays and artists interviews, *Words on Plays* extends the experience of the theatrical event. Whether you read it pre-performance or post attendance, it feeds the imagination and offers a way for the artists surrounding the play, the play itself and the spectator to continue the conversation with each other! You will devour it cover to cover.”

Words on Plays is currently written and edited by A.C.T.’s Publications team: Simon Hodgson, Elspeth Sweatman, and Annie Sears. Other key contributors in recent seasons include Joy Meads, Allie Moss, Pam MacKinnon, Michael Paller, Elizabeth Brodersen, Kayla Minton Kaufman, and Ariana Johnson.

Words on Plays remains A.C.T.’s primary education tool, sent free of charge to all teachers bringing their students to see A.C.T. shows. Each purchase of *Words on Plays* directly supports the ACTsmart education programs, serving teachers and students throughout the Bay Area. *Words on Plays* can be purchased show by show online or at the theater, and season-long subscriptions are also available as at act-sf.org/wordsonplays or by calling 415.749.2250.

#

ABOUT AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

American Conservatory Theater is a Tony Award–winning theater and educational institution dedicated to nurturing the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing engagement with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, A.C.T. embraces its 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 A.C.T.’s 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, A.C.T. has performed more than 400 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. A.C.T. reaches more than 250,000 people through its productions and programs every year. For more information, visit act-sf.org.