

A.C.T. AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

CAREY PERLOFF, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | ELLEN RICHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER'S *WILL ON WHEELS* TAKES THE BARD TO A RECORD NUMBER OF BAY AREA SCHOOLS

The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2015
to perform *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*.

• MARCH 3–21, 2014 •

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, February 4, 2014—The American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program continues to grow its annual *Will on Wheels* program, which tours works of William Shakespeare to schools around the Bay Area, with a record-setting 24 performances this year. The 2014 *Will on Wheels* tour spotlights abridged versions of two Shakespeare classics: *Romeo and Juliet* and a two-woman production of *As You Like It*. Both productions feature student actors from the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program class of 2015. The 90-minute production of *Romeo and Juliet*—directed by A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program Head of Movement **Stephen Buescher**—brings Shakespeare's most famous tragic love story to life for high school students in new and relevant ways, while the playful 60-minute production of *As You Like It*—directed by A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director **Mark Rucker**—promises to delight younger audiences, while still delivering the high classical quality that A.C.T. has become so well known for. Both productions will tour **March 3–21, 2014** to 24 schools and other venues around the Bay Area, including Bessie Carmichael School, Canon Kip Senior Center, Downtown High School, Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, Ida B. Wells High School, and Oakland Technical High School. Two weeks prior to the performance, A.C.T. provides teachers with a thorough study guide, as well as lesson plan suggestions for the teachers to prepare their students for the performance. Since its debut during the 2006–07 season, *Will on Wheels* has reached more than 11,000 students.

Along with the performance, the actors will each participate in pre and postshow workshops at the schools and community spaces where they will be performing. These workshops are a part of A.C.T.'s goal to train true "citizen artists"—a term that encompasses the holistic development of the professional artist, involving dedication to craft, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to society. The ultimate goal is to graduate A.C.T. citizen artists who can teach, mentor, and effect social change through the art of live performance.

Ranked as one of the top programs in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, the **A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program** was the first theater training program in the country not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award the master of fine arts degree. The M.F.A. Program functions as the cornerstone of the A.C.T. Conservatory, which also includes the Summer Training Congress, Studio A.C.T., the Young Conservatory, and the brand new San Francisco Semester. As one of the most competitive and prestigious actor training programs in the country, A.C.T. accepts a small, select group of students for each incoming class—a company of actors who will work, perform, and develop together as an ensemble. The cast of *Romeo and Juliet* includes these members of the class of 2015: **Josie Alvarez, Joel Bernard, Raphael Jordan, Stefanée Martin, Jarrod Mims Smith, Benjamin Quinn, Dominique Salerno, Glenn Stott, Ryan Williams French**. The cast of *As You Like It* includes these members of the class of 2015: **Kemiyondo Coutinho** and **Danielle Frimer**,

About American Conservatory Theater

American Conservatory Theater nurtures 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 Carey Perloff and Executive Director Ellen Richard, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent the rich theatrical traditions 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. For more information about A.C.T., go to www.act-sf.org.

About the Directors

Stephen Buescher (*Head of Movement and Physical Theater*) is an actor, director, and teacher who has taught physical theater in various master's programs, including Brown University/Trinity Rep Consortium, Yale School of Drama, the University of Connecticut, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He has choreographed and coached movement for various theaters including American Conservatory Theater, Trinity Rep, Long Wharf Theatre, and The Providence Black Repertory Company. Buescher has performed nationally and internationally with the Dell'Arte Company and is a Co-Founder of Workhorse, an ensemble-based company. He is a recipient of TCG's New Generations Program grant and has served on the board of the Network of Ensemble Theaters and Trash Mash-Up. He is a graduate of The Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre and California Institute of the Arts.

Mark Rucker, associate artistic director of A.C.T., has directed *4000 Miles, Maple and Vine, Once in a Lifetime, Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet, The Rainmaker, and The Beard of Avon* at The Geary Theater and A.C.T.'s productions of *Higher* at The Theater at the Children's Creativity Museum and *Luminescence Dating* at Magic Theatre. He is an associate artist at South Coast Repertory, where he has directed more than 20 productions, including world premieres by Richard Greenberg, Christopher Shinn, Annie Weisman, and Culture Clash. Other regional theater credits include work at Yale Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, Intiman Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Syracuse Stage,

The Old Globe, Ford's Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, The Acting Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and Asolo Repertory Theatre. Rucker's feature film, *Die, Mommie, Die!* won a Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

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