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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 earth, 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—theater 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.
Light up your season this winter at the San Francisco Symphony. With the clink of a glass, toast to the magic of the holidays and celebrate the music sure to light up your night. ’Tis the season to shine.

**Peter and the Wolf with John Lithgow**

**Sat Dec 14 1PM • 4PM**

Delight your children with our annual presentation of *Peter and the Wolf*. The San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra is joined by **John Lithgow**, who narrates Prokofiev's charming tale.

*Please note there is no intermission. Recommended for ages 7 and older. Group discount not available.*

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**Handel’s Messiah**

**Thu Dec 19 8PM • Fri Dec 20 8PM • Sat Dec 21 8PM**

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**All Is Bright with the SF Symphony: A Christmas Matinee with the Snowman**

**Fri Dec 20 2PM • Sat Dec 21 2PM**

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What’s Inside

ABOUT THE PLAY

A MAN REDEEMED BY HIS MEMORIES
by Michael Paller

A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR THE AGES
by Dan Rubin

ARTISTIC AMBASSADORS
The Young Conservatory’s International Exchange Goes to Scotland
by Shannon Stockwell

NURTURING THE FUTURE
A.C.T. Puts Schools Onstage
by Emily Means

INSIDE A.C.T.

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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.

EDITOR
Dan Rubin

CONTRIBUTORS
Emily Means
Shannon Stockwell

VOLUNTEER!

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 LGBT 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 this interactive preshow workshop.

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

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

Big openhearted holiday greetings to every one of you! Whether you’re here for the very first time or because A.C.T.’s *A Christmas Carol* is an indispensable part of your annual solstice celebration, we’re thrilled and honored to have you with us.

This version of Dickens’s beautiful story, which Paul Walsh and I created nine seasons ago, grew out of the very depths of A.C.T.’s being. We are, uniquely, an intergenerational theater in which children and adults, professionals and students, masters and emerging artists train, create, and play together on a regular basis. Because we house one of the most renowned M.F.A. programs in America, and because we are blessed with the truly one-of-a-kind Young Conservatory (YC), in which eight-to-nineteen-year-olds study and perform and grow, we made sure that A.C.T.’s *A Christmas Carol* would feature an extraordinary range of artists of all ages, collaborating together on this exquisite tale of redemption and transformation.

This year, our *Carol* is, as always, blessed by the presence of some of the Bay Area’s most beloved veteran actors—including Jim Carpenter, our inimitable Scrooge, and Ken Ruta, who is returning to his role as the unfortunate Jacob Marley—familiar to A.C.T. audiences from numerous productions on our magnificent stage. It also features 29 children from our YC and the entire M.F.A. Program class of 2014. This is an incredible gift: a chance for the larger A.C.T. family to work together and for you, our *Carol* audience, to see the breadth of A.C.T.’s commitment to artists of all ages.

Paul Walsh and I wanted this *Carol* to salute the power of the imagination to transform even the crustiest of souls. Dickens’s novella is exceptionally theatrical: much of it is written in dialogue, and it centers around the striking presence of four ghosts who perform a series of “interventions” on Scrooge until his heart is reawakened and he begins his life anew. Now more than ever, the themes of Dickens’s story of greed and renewal resonate, as we continue to wrestle with the gap between the haves and the have-nots and we struggle to hold on to our empathy and imagination in an increasingly divisive world.

It is worth remembering that Dickens trusted the artistic imagination to lift us out of the darkness and set us on a more inspiring path. It is also worth noting, for those of you who are here with children, that it has been proved again and again that when young people are exposed to the transformative power of live theater, their scholastic work and world view open up in wonderful and surprising ways. With each passing year, A.C.T. becomes more and more deeply engaged in arts education for young people throughout the Bay Area (to find out more, please contact our Education Department at education@act-sf.org), and *Carol* is often the first experience that Bay Area children have of live theater. In the 21 years I have been at A.C.T., this incredible story has been a remarkable constant, a way for us to come together to reassess, to celebrate, to imagine.

We hope you feel that you’ve given yourselves a gift by being here, and we wish you a fulfilling and empathetic year ahead. I invite you to return this winter and spring to experience the artists and artistry of A.C.T.’s extraordinary 2013–14 season.

Yours,

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
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“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 Cafe* 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.
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A MAN REDEEMED BY MEMORIES

BY MICHAEL PALLER

n 1843, the year that he wrote *A Christmas Carol*, the world belonged to Charles Dickens. His first book, *Sketches by Boz*, had been published in 1836, and his career had been on an upward trajectory since. *Boz* had been followed by one success after another, including *The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. He married Catherine Hogarth in 1836 and by 1839 was living with her and their four children (six more would follow) in a fine house in the Regent’s Park section of London with marble columns in the dining room, rich mahogany-paneled doors, a well-stocked library, a walled garden, and a coach house complete with coach and groom. Every inch the dandy, he was instantly recognizable with wavy brown hair down to his shoulders. His velvet and satin waistcoats in deep greens and reds, often embroidered with brightly colored flowers, were festooned with gold watch chains matched with gold tiepins and rings. These were not affectations but irrefutable expressions of physical vitality and intellectual exuberance. He was a character of his own creation, and he knew it: he nicknamed himself “The Inimitable.”

Dickens’s energy could not be held in check by writing alone. In his early years, the books came almost unbidden; he could be found in the parlor amidst family and friends, contributing to the lively conversation while simultaneously working on the latest installment of *Oliver Twist*. Games, jokes, puns, songs, laughter poured from him around the dinner table and hearth, which he dominated with his oversized presence; after dark he stalked London, including its worst slums, often until sunrise, working off an inexhaustible fund of excess energy and exercising keen powers of observation and memory. He struck one, a biographer wrote, as “all fire and charm.”

Beneath the blaze thrown off by his outward life was the darkness of an inner one. His vivacity, vigor, and high spirits were complemented by driving ambition, restlessness, and profound dissatisfaction. Something in the darkness had created the need for the light; the outward joy was rooted in desolation. Where the light took the form of boundless comic energy in his work, the darkness emerged as the melodrama of innocent people, children mostly, abandoned by parents and endangered by the callous, greedy, and cruel.

Where did the darkness originate? In 1822, when he was ten, the family moved from the town of Chatham to London, where the financial condition of his father, John (never strong to begin with), went from bad to worse. Young Charles, who had a voracious appetite for learning and reading, was taken out of school and sent to the pawn shop with the meager family belongings. Among the first items to go was the small library they’d brought from Chatham.

In 1824, as John Dickens’s debts mounted, Charles was put to work. For twelve hours a day, six days a week, he pasted labels on jars of bootblack in a creaking, rat-infested warehouse on the Thames. Soon after, his father was sent to Marshalsea Prison for indebtedness, and, while the rest of the family went to live there with him, Charles was on his own, living in lodgings. When not laboring at the warehouse or visiting his family in the Marshalsea, the solitary 12-year-old boy walked the city, almost always hungry. After about five months, John Dickens was released, and Charles, over the objection of his mother, who thought the family needed the money, was taken out of the blacking house and returned to school. Although his time in the ramshackle warehouse on the water was relatively short, Dickens never got over the experience or forgave his parents for thrusting him into a frightening, alien world where he had to survive on his own.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul. . . . The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in . . . was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time in my life.

Dickens never spoke of the episode to anyone other than his friend and biographer John Forster. Neither his wife nor children learned of it until they read about it in Forster’s biography after Dickens’s death. For all his charm and volubility, there was in Dickens a well of feelings he never revealed; he held this inner life close. None of the people who knew, or thought they knew, the ebullient author of later years had any notion of the darkness he carried inside and could not forget, but as of 1843 could only approach sidewise in his work through a generalized, if sharp, sympathy for the poor.

A number of events led to the writing of *A Christmas Carol*, the two most immediate balancing the pulls in him toward light and dark. A speaking engagement in the northwest industrial city of Manchester in the fall of 1843 took him to the Manchester Athenaeum, a charitable organization that provided education, exercise, and culture to the working and middle classes. As he looked down from the platform over “the bright eyes and beaming faces” of the crowd, he spoke of his gladness that it provided outlets for body and mind amid the clanking machinery of the city’s booming textile factories. Then, returning to London, his walks through the city took him to several Ragged Schools. These were free schools run by volunteers who taught the poorest of the poor. He described one in a letter to his friend the philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts.

The school was held in three most wretched rooms on the first floor of a rotten house: every plank, and timber, and brick, and lath, and piece of plaster shakes as you walk. I have very seldom seen . . . anything so shocking as the dire neglect of soul and body as exhibited among these children. . . . To find anything within them—who know nothing of affection, care, love, or kindness of any sort—to which it is possible to appeal, is, at first, like a search for the philosopher’s stone.
Dickens was so appalled by the conditions and so inspired by the efforts of the volunteer teachers that, in addition to seeking Burdett-Coutts’s aid, he suggested to the editors of the Edinburgh Review that he write an article about the schools. Almost as soon as he suggested it, however, he put the idea aside in favor of writing a book for the holiday season: A Christmas Carol.

The story poured out of him. “[T]he little book established over him a strange mastery that drove it on to completion before the end of November,” writes Edgar Johnson, Dickens’s first major 20th-century biographer. Dickens himself wrote that as he worked, he wept and laughed, and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London 15 and 20 miles a night when all sober folks had gone to bed.

He felt a great release when it was done. He described to a friend how he “broke out like a madman,” and during the holidays that followed he threw himself into festivities as he’d never done before. “Such dinings, such dancings, such conjurings, such blind-man’s-buffing, such theatre-goings, such kissings-out of old years and kissings-in of new ones never took place in these parts before,” he wrote.

What had A Christmas Carol unlocked that caused a release of energy extraordinary even for him? In it, Dickens didn’t use the terrible memories that had haunted him for two decades, but he made a discovery that would, in fits and starts over the next few years, allow him to turn them into literature. For A Christmas Carol is the story of a man redeemed by his memories. For years, Ebenezer Scrooge had either blocked them out or chased them away, and as a result, could not live as a whole person. He worked, he ate, he slept, and rarely if ever raised his eyes above his ledger to see either the hunger and need or the happiness of the people around him. The story tells us, among other things, that a man like Scrooge cannot live fully in the light of the present until he comes face to face with the darkness of his past. This is exactly what he does. As Scrooge watches his painful childhood and youth, he remembers, too, the happier times he has also forgotten. The pain of the lonely young Ebenezer is assuaged by the love of a sister; a boy abandoned by his father finds comfort in a family of Fezziwigs. “Do You Remember?” asks a song in A.C.T.’s version, and the answer is crucial. The man without a past has no future; in recovering his, Scrooge finds a life, a family, and a purpose.

Dickens couldn’t yet draw directly on the experiences of his childhood for A Christmas Carol, but in it he created a character who could face the darkness in his past and, rather than make an orphan of it, acknowledge its value. That opened the way to David Copperfield and Little Dorrit, rich novels that draw on the full range of Dickens’s life and experience, both the darkness and the light. Carol was Dickens’s gift to the world, and to himself, as well.
SUMMER ALINAEEM joined A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory’s musical theater program in spring 2013 and will debut in her first musical this season. She is a member of the Chung Ngai Dance Troupe diabolos team, which performs events throughout the Bay Area. Alinaeem plays the alto saxophone in her middle school symphonic band, and she was the drummer and one of the singers in the band Danger Prone. She is an avid reader and enjoys playing badminton and gardening at the Golden Gate National Park Fort Funston Nursery. She also attends SF Art & Film for Teenagers cinema club movie discussions.

ALEXANDER BIRES returns to A.C.T. for his third year in A Christmas Carol. He is in the eighth grade at Mill Valley Middle School, where he sings in the chorus and has performed in The Pirates of Penzance. Last summer he played Iago the Parrot in Marin Theatre Company’s summer production of Aladdin. He began in the Young Conservatory at age nine in 2009. In addition to acting, he enjoys competitive ultimate Frisbee and is a passionate Mill Valley All Stars baseball player.

COLIN BIRES is a fourth grader at Tam Valley Elementary School in Mill Valley. He joined the Young Conservatory in 2011 and is making his A.C.T. debut in A Christmas Carol this year. At school, he sings in the chorus and has performed in school plays and the annual cabaret. Bires loves hip-hop, break dancing, soccer, and baseball, and he is learning to play the violin.

BLAIR BUSBEE will be receiving her M.F.A. from A.C.T. in May 2014. Past M.F.A. Program shows include Suño, Twelfth Night, Galileo, The Wild Party, Polaroid Stories, the Odyssey, Tartuffe, and The House of Bernarda Alba. Busbee earned her B.F.A. in acting from the University of Evansville, where favorite credits include A Midsummer Night’s Dream and The House of Blue Leaves.

JULIA CALDORNELL is making her debut with A.C.T. She has trained and performed with Starstruck Theatre in the East Bay since the age of nine. Her credits include Beauty and the Beast Jr., The Little Mermaid, Tom Sawyer, and Dear Edwina. Community theater credits include The Moon Maiden, Rhodopis, and The Burning Rice Fields with Montessori School of Fremont. Caldwell is in the sixth grade at Julia Morgan School for Girls, where she is a member of the chorus and the flamenco dance troupe. She is also a student of the A.C.T. Young Conservatory.

JAMES CARPENTER*, a San Francisco Bay Area resident for 25 years, an associate artist with Berkeley Repertory Theatre for 12 years, and an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, returns to A.C.T. for his eighth year as Scrooge. Other A.C.T. credits include Rock ‘n’ Roll, Tit Pity She’s a Whore, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, A Doll’s House, and Glengarry Glen Ross. Theater credits also include work at San Jose Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, The Old Globe, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, the Huntington Theatre Company, and Intim탄 Theatre. Screen credits include the feature films The Rainmaker and Metro, the independent films Singing and The Sunflower Boy, and the series Nash Bridges. Carpenter is the recipient of many Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (BATCC) Awards, BATCC’s 2007 Award for Excellence in the Arts (their lifetime achievement award), and was a 2010 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

NEMUNA CEESEY* is a third-year M.F.A. Program candidate at A.C.T. She has appeared in M.F.A. Program productions of The House of Bernarda Alba, Polaroid Stories, The Wild Party, Twelfth Night, Seven Guitars, and most recently The Country Wife. She also worked for two seasons at Summer Repertory Theatre, performing shows in rotating repertory, including Avenue Q, Sarah Ruhl’s Passion Play, The Mousetrap, The Piano Lesson, and many more. She has worked with Dramatic Adventure Theatre teaching children in underprivileged communities of Ecuador theater and English, which culminated in an original show based on her experience. Last summer she taught in A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory. Ceesay holds a B.A. in theater from UC Irvine’s Claire Trevor School of Arts.

CALISTA CESSWENSI is a fifth grader at Miraloma Elementary School. Her interest in theater started in kindergarten, when she was cast as a Lost Boy in a school production of Peter Pan. Since then, she’s played the following roles in children’s musical theater companies: Scaecrow in The Wizard of Oz, the Genie in Aladdin, Grandpa Joe in Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka Jr, Jojo in Seussical the Musical, and Ms. Hannigan in Annie. When she is not performing, Cesewski plays soccer with the Lava Queens and takes Taiko drumming.
IAN DEVAYNES is a fifth-grade student at Holy Name School in San Francisco. He joined A.C.T.‘s Young Conservatory in summer 2011 when he was eight years old. DeVaynes is following in the footsteps of his sister, Aiko Little, who also began taking classes and performing with the YC when she was eight. This is DeVaynes’s second year performing in A Christmas Carol. He is no stranger to the stage and began performing in preschool. He takes every opportunity to appear onstage and performs hip-hop in his school’s annual talent show. DeVaynes loves music and to sing and dance. He also has a passion for playing sports, baseball being his favorite.

ELLA DOVEY is a fifth-grade student at Marin Country Day School. She is an enthusiastic Young Conservatory member, and this is her debut performance on A.C.T.’s mainstage. From an early age, she has been a passionate participant in the performing arts, whether through ballet in her younger years or playing keyboard in a band with her two siblings. As a seven-year-old aspiring actress, she was among a highly select group chosen from Kids on Camera, a well-respected San Francisco–based television/film acting school, to receive representation by a professional talent agent—but the stage still has her heart. When not pursuing her love for theater and music, Dovey plays volleyball year-round for select travel teams and enjoys reading.

CHLOË DURHAM is a seventh-grade student at Hoover Middle School in San Francisco. This is her second season appearing in A Christmas Carol at A.C.T. She began her acting studies in the Young Conservatory in summer 2012. In spring of that year, she appeared in the title role of the Marsh Youth Theater production of Starhawk’s eco-fable, The Last Wild Witch, and played the role of Becky Thatcher in a stage adaptation of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. She is a singer, musician, and dancer who plays violin and cello. She is in her second year with the Hoover Middle School choir.

PHILIP ESTRERA† is a third-year M.F.A. degree candidate at A.C.T. He has appeared in M.F.A. Program productions of The House of Bernarda Alba, Polaroid Stories, Twelfth Night, Galileo, and most recently Sueño. In 2012 he was in the New York City premiere of Bumbershoot at the New York International Fringe Festival. Estrera holds a B.A. in music and English from Rice University and is a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy.

DASHIELL FERRERO returns to the A.C.T. mainstage for a third season of A Christmas Carol (previously as Rory Wilkins and Edward). Ferrero trains and performs with the Nitty Dupree Studio of Dance. He enjoys soccer, piano, parkour, drums, sign language, trumpet, and filmmaking. He performs as a street drummer at Bay to Breakers and on the Camp Mather summertime stage. Ferrero is in the fifth grade at New Traditions Creative Arts Elementary School in San Francisco.

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†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2014 and an Equity Professional Theatre Intern
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CONNECT WITH US f v g

CINDY GOLDFIELD* is a two-time recipient of both the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle and the Dean Goodman Choice awards. She is celebrating her tenth season of A Christmas Carol at A.C.T. Regional theater acting credits include The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Center REPertory Company); Spring Awakening and Bill W. and Dr. Bob (San Jose Repertory Theatre); Another Midsummer’s Night (TheatreWorks); Brimstone, Moon over Buffalo, and Merrily We Roll Along (The Willows Theatre); Oliver! (Broadway by the Bay); Moving Bodies (Marin Theatre Company); Crimes of the Heart (Playhouse West); OMFG! world premiere (ODC); Texas Chainsaw Manicurist and Cowardly Things (New Conservatory Theatre Center); Mack & Mabel (42nd Street Moon); and the starring role in D’Arcy Drollinger’s Scalpel! (Brava! For Women in the Arts). New York credits include Drollinger’s Project: Lohan, and Mr. Irresistible, with music by Christopher Winslow, at La MaMa E.T.C. Next spring, she will star in the San Francisco production of Mr. Irresistible.

BWW GONZALEZ* appeared as the Ghost of Christmas Present in A Christmas Carol from 2007 to 2009 and again in 2012. Locally she has worked at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. As a company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for nine seasons, she performed leading roles in more than 20 productions, including The Tragedy of Macbeth and The Good Person of Szechuan. She created the role of Phoebe in The Darker Face of the Earth by poet laureate Rita Dove, which she performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Recent television credits include four seasons on Arrested Development. Gonzalez teaches and directs theater and is the recipient of a Citation for Excellence in Theatre. She has earned both a B.F.A. in theater and an M.P.A. in public administration.

ASHER GRODMAN** is a member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2014. He recently appeared in The Country Wife at A.C.T.’s Costume Shop theater and as Charlie in Stones in His Pockets at Summer Repertory Theatre. M.F.A. Program credits include Polaroid Stories, Twelfth Night, The House of Bernarda Alba, Galileo, and The Wild Party. New York and regional theater credits include Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Shrek, Stones in His Pockets, Art***kers, and The Disappearance of Jonah. Screen credits include Mo (with Margo Martindale), Knock Knock, Buzzkill, In That Moment (a short film he also directed, starring Eli Wallach), and most recently Handsome Harry, starring Steve Buscemi. His television credits include Law & Order and As the World Turns. Grodman holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in film and English from Columbia University. He is making his Geary Theater debut with A Christmas Carol.

MARIA GROSS, a native of Providence, Rhode Island, is in the fifth grade and living in San Francisco. Her interest in acting developed on a trip to New York, when she saw numerous Broadway shows, including Newsies, Mary Poppins, and Cinderella. Upon her return, she began studies at A.C.T. and has looked for opportunities to perform and sing. For the past several years, she has sung in the Christmas choir and participated in her school choir. She is making her theatrical debut with A Christmas Carol this season. In addition to performance, she enjoys swimming, studying piano, and sewing.

DILLON HEAPE* recently appeared as Robert Livingston in Frank Galati’s revival of 1776 at A.C.T. He has appeared in A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program productions of Polaroid Stories, The Odyssey, Thieves, The Wild Party, Tartuffe, Twelfth Night, Cloud 9, and The House of Bernarda Alba, which A.C.T. reprised at the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia. He wrote and performed his solo impersonation show, Live and Let Be: A Tribute to Bea Arthur, as part of A.C.T.’s annual Sky Festival. Heape holds a B.F.A. from the University of Evansville, where he appeared in Company, Light Up the Sky, Parade, Into the Woods, and The Farnsworth Invention. Regional credits include work with Summer Repertory Theatre (Avenue Q.
The Mousetrap, Passion Play) and Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival. Heape spent last summer as a teaching artist in A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory.

LATEEFAH HOLDER is an M.F.A. degree candidate graduating from A.C.T. this spring. She is making her mainstage debut in A Christmas Carol. M.F.A. Program credits include The Country Wife, Seven Guitars, Tartuffe, The Wild Party, The Odyssey, Polaroid Stories, very still & hard to see, and The House of Bernarda Alba, which was performed in Moscow, Russia. Other notable credits include Rumors and The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas at Maples Repertory Theatre. Last summer she was a teaching artist in A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory. Holder received her B.A. from Temple University in Philadelphia.

RAFAEL KARPA-WILSON began his theater career as a fourth- and fifth-grade chorus member in middle school productions of Once Upon a Mattress and The Phantom Tollbooth. He has played Banquo in a Marin Shakespeare Company Young Company production of Macbeth and Macduff in a school production. Last year, Karpa-Wilson played the role of the Baker in a school production of Into the Woods Jr. Inspired by this experience, he studied musical theater and acting with A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory last summer. Karpa-Wilson’s movement work includes hip-hop dance at Just Dance Academy in San Rafael. He has achieved the rank of green belt in karate with United Studios of Self Defense in San Anselmo.

TOMMY HUEBNER’s theater credits include Contra Costa Civic Theatre’s Gypsy (Newsboy), Children of Eden (Young Cain), and several other children’s productions. He also performed in the film Emily and Billy (Tommy). Huebner has participated in plays at Black Pine Circle School, jazz band, orchestra (trombone, vocals, cello), and choir. In addition to performance, Huebner’s other love is baseball: he has played youth baseball in El Cerrito for four seasons, including on All-Star teams.

LISA KITCHENS is making her A.C.T. mainstage debut. Her credits include Henry IV, Part II and Man in the Iron Mask at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, White Embers and My Name is Yin at the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival, and numerous productions in A.C.T.’s Master of Fine Arts Program, including The House of Bernarda Alba, which was reprised at the Moscow Art Theatre. Kitchens holds a B.F.A. from the University of Evansville and is the recipient of A.C.T.’s 2013–14 Joan Sadler Award.

ELKE JANSSEN returns to the stage for a second season in A.C.T.’s A Christmas Carol. Janssen is in her third year in the Young Conservatory and studies voice with Betty Schneider. In addition to acting, Janssen has pursued movement studies at ODC and Alonzo King LINES Ballet and circus arts at Camp Winnarainbow. Janssen has appeared in print and television and enjoys dancing, traveling, drawing, archery, and filmmaking.
ISABELLA LAFAARRE is making her Christmas Carol debut. She has been training at A.C.T. for two years and has previously performed in her school’s production of Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka Jr. and Annie Jr. When she’s not participating in acting-related activities, LaFarre enjoys kung fu, track and field, biking, surfing, and playing the bassoon and clarinet. Despite all her extracurricular activities, LaFarre excels in her classes as an honors student at Presidio Middle School.

ROXANNA LAFAARRE is making her Christmas Carol debut. LaFarre has trained as a singer with the San Francisco Girls Chorus and A.C.T. Previously she has performed in her school’s musicals Annie Jr. and Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka Jr. As a dancer, LaFarre was awarded a scholarship to San Francisco Ballet. She also plays the violin and piano, swims, does kung fu, and enjoys drawing, surfing, and horseback riding. LaFarre is a part of the advanced GATE program at Lafayette Elementary School.

BLAKE LEVINSON is a sixth grader at St. Perpetua School in Lafayette. He has studied theater with Barrett Lindsay-Steiner for three years and has appeared in several original productions of Lindsay-Steiner’s musical theater group, Standing Ovations, in Walnut Creek. Levinson has twice been awarded scholarships by the Zachary Smith Memorial Fund for the Performing Arts, appeared with his sister in a film documentary promoting the Oakland Museum of California, and appeared in a national television commercial promoting youth golf, which aired during the 2012 U.S. Open at the Olympic Club. He enjoys soccer, swim team, creative writing, and golf, in which he has achieved eagle level with The First Tee of Contra Costa County. A Christmas Carol is his A.C.T. mainstage debut. He is in his second year with the Young Conservatory.

SHARON LOCKWOOD* has appeared in numerous A.C.T. productions, most recently as Frannie in Dead Metaphor. Other A.C.T. work includes ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Philistines, The Rose Tattoo, The Cherry Orchard, and Hedda Gabler. Most recently, she appeared as Sonia in the West Coast premiere of Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other work there includes The Caucasian Chalk Circle, The Triumph of Love, Volpone, Reckless, and The Alchemist. She originated the role of the 200-year-old woman in the Berkeley Rep/La Jolla Playhouse coproduction of Culture Clash’s Zorro in Hell (San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award). Lockwood originated the role of Barbara in the world premiere production of Nickel and Dimed at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, directed by Bartlett Sher. Other theater credits work with California Shakespeare Theater (most recently American Night), Shakespeare Santa Cruz, The Old Globe, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, the Alley Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and Missouri Repertory Theatre. Film and television work includes Mrs. Doubtfire, Vonnegut Stories, and The Long Road Home.

DELIA MACDOUGALL* has been seen at A.C.T. in Round and Round the Garden, Rock ‘n Roll, The Government Inspector, the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda’s After the War, A Christmas Carol, and The Learned Ladies. She has appeared with California Shakespeare Theater in Macbeth, Pericles, Man and Superman, King Lear, As You Like It, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, and Arms and the Man, among others. Local credits include shows at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, and San Jose Repertory Theatre. Other credits include productions at Intiman Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theater, the Alley Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, and La MaMa E.T.C. MacDougall is an actor, director, and company member with Word for Word Performing Arts Company.

TIMOTHY MARSTON is 12 years old and in the seventh grade at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley. This is Marston’s second year with A Christmas Carol; in 2012 he played the role of Ned Cratchit. He joined the Young Conservatory in fall 2011. He has studied and performed at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre in El Cerrito since 2009. Marston keeps himself busy dancing at Katie’s Dance Studio in El Cerrito and playing the piano and singing with Sheli Nan in Berkeley. He continues to explore voice and singing with Betty Schneider.

SAOIRSE MCMahON is 11 years old and was born in San Francisco. She is in the sixth grade at Claire Lilienthal Middle School. Her introduction to drama was a class she took at her school with the New Conservatory Theatre Center in spring 2012. McMahon changed drama schools and began attending the Young Conservatory Junior Acting Workshop in the winter session in 2013 under the instruction of Nancy Gold, and then in the spring session under the instruction of Michele Levy. A Christmas Carol is McMahon’s professional theater debut.
JARION MONROE* has been seen at A.C.T. as Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol* and the Player in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. His career includes seasons with OSFA, the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Teatro ZinZanni, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, South Coast Repertory, Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, California Repertory Company, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Ahmanston Theatre, and Ukiah Players Theatre (of which he is a cofounder). Film and television credits include principal roles in *The Internship* (as Professor X), *Seinfeld*, and *Kane and Lynch*. He is Lynch in *Kane and Lynch* and Professor Wolfenpluder in the series *Sasquatch*.

AARON MORELAND† is in his third year in the Master of Fine Arts Program at A.C.T. Credits in the program include Canewell in *Seven Guitars*, Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*, Cleante in *Tartuffe*, Black in Andrew Lippa’s *The Wild Party*, G in *Polaroid Stories*, and Pepe el Romano in Stephen Buescher’s production of *The House of Bernarda Alba*, which was recently presented at the Moscow Art Theatre School’s Stanislavsky Festival. Moreland received his B.A. in theater from Temple University in Philadelphia. While there, he received two Irene Ryan Award nominations for his work in *The Seven* and *The Belly* (both directed by Lee Kenneth Richardson). As an ensemble member of the show *SHOT*, he performed at The Kennedy Center as a finalist in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

ANNA YUN NEUMANN-LORECK is making her A.C.T. debut in *A Christmas Carol*. Neumann-Loreck began training with A.C.T. at the beginning of 2012. She is also enrolled in ODC’s contemporary dance program. Prior to that, Neumann-Loreck danced with San Francisco Ballet’s company for four years, performing in the holiday production of *Nutcracker* in 2012. She also studied tap and ballet at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco and took ballet with Miss Tilly for three years. Neumann-Loreck is a fifth grader at Marin County Day School. In addition to theater, she enjoys filming, writing, painting, and surfing.

EVELYN ONGPIN is a third-grade student at St. Stephen Catholic School in San Francisco. She is a surfing and animal enthusiast and has been with the Young Conservatory a little over two years. This is Ongpin’s third project with A.C.T.; her first dramatic appearance onstage was in the 2011–12 season’s *A Christmas Carol*.

ELYSE PRICE* was recently seen in A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program productions of *The Country Wife*, *Cloud 9*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The House of Bernarda Alba*, which was reprised at the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia. In 2012, her play *Noncents* was produced as part of A.C.T.’s annual Sky Festival and performed in San Francisco’s Powell Street Bart Station. In 2007, she founded her theater company, Benefit of the Doubt, in New York City, and she has

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been working with their ever-growing ensemble ever since, creating new work and reimagining classics. Favorite moments include performing in Galway, Ireland, and meeting and collaborating with other young theater companies from around the world.

KEN RUTA* is ten years old and returns to A.C.T. for her second season of A Christmas Carol (previous roles include Precious Wilkins and Little Fan). In addition to her musical theater training at A.C.T., she has performed in The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival Shakespeare Camp production of Macbeth (The Witch) and numerous productions at Katherine Delmar Burke School. Steiner’s dance training includes formal dance recitals at San Francisco’s War Memorial & Performing Arts Center. She continues her vocal training with Betty Schneider.

SASHA STEINER is ten years old and returns to A.C.T. for her third season of A Christmas Carol (previous roles include Precious Wilkins and Little Fan). In addition to her musical theater training at A.C.T., she has performed in The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival Shakespeare Camp production of Macbeth (The Witch) and numerous productions at Katherine Delmar Burke School. Steiner’s dance training includes formal dance recitals at San Francisco’s War Memorial & Performing Arts Center. She continues her vocal training with Betty Schneider.

SAMUEL SUTTON is ten years old and attends Novato’s Rancho Elementary School as a fifth grader. He joined the Young Conservatory in summer 2012. Sutton has performed with various Marin theater groups since he was four years old. Performances with Broadway Bound Kids include Annie, The Sound of Music, The Wizard of Oz, and Peter Pan, in which he played the role of Michael. Sutton has also performed with Marilyn Izdebski Productions in Gypsy and Singin’ in the Rain. Sutton also enjoys dance and studies jazz, ballet, tap, and hip-hop. He someday hopes to be a screenwriter and act in his own movie.

CARMEN STEELE is a fourth-grade student at Katherine Delmar Burke School in San Francisco. She made her A.C.T. debut in last season’s A Christmas Carol. Previous roles include Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Ariel in The Tempest, which she performed with The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival Shakespeare Camp. In addition to acting, Steele enjoys singing with the San Francisco Girls Chorus, skiing, traveling, and reading.

ARIEL TENENBAUM’s performance debut was at the early age of four. Over the next seven years, she performed in many prominent and diverse roles, including the suffering young Cosette in Les Misérables, which won her critical acclaim. In Walt Disney’s Cinderella, she performed the title role, transforming her future with the help of some of her furry friends. Other credits include Mowgli in The Jungle Book; Bielke, the youngest of five daughters in Fiddler on the Roof; and the playful Court Jester in The Princess and the Pauper. Her portrayal of the spunky and outrageous Gladys in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever was one of her favorites. She has been a member of the Young Conservatory since spring 2013.

HOWARD SWAIN* marks his 26th show with A.C.T., where he has acted in such productions as A Lie of the Mind, King Lear, Taking Steps, The Seagull, Saint Joan, The Learned Ladies, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Currents, D.N.R., and The Doctor’s Dilemma. He has worked off Broadway at New York Theatre Workshop and was a member of the national tours of Love, Janis and Picasso at the Lapin Agile. West Coast credits include work with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, The Pasadena Playhouse, The Laguna Beach Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, TheatreWorks, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Symmetry Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, and California Shakespeare Theater. He has appeared in such films as Cherry 2000, Miracle Mile, Teknolust, Night of the Scarecrow, Just One Night, Metro, Smoke & Mirrors, and Frameup and in such television shows as Nash Bridges, Midnight Caller, Kiss Shot, and Bed of Lies.

CARMEL TENENBAUM’s passion for theater began at the age of six. Over the next seven years, she appeared in many productions, including as Gavroche in Les Misérables, which won her a 2013...
Arty Award nomination from the Daily Republic. Other credits include Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz; Kaa, the hypnotic snake in The Jungle Book; the Queen in search of the perfect bride for her son in The Princess and the Pea; and little Ti Moune in Once on This Island. She also appeared in the Italian opera Falstaff. One of her favorite roles took her to the world of spirits as the ghost Fruma Sarah in Fiddler on the Roof. She has been a member of the Young Conservatory since spring 2013.

NINA TORACCA is ten years old and a fifth-grade student at St. Vincent de Paul School in San Francisco. She joined A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory in January 2012, after studying theater arts with Iliza Abbe from 2008 to 2011. Her passion for musical theater began after her first performance, which took place at the Herbst Theatre at age four. Toracca has also performed in numerous musical theater summer programs at St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco. She enjoys playing piano and club soccer and is an active member of the Eco-Committee and vice president of the Spanish Club. Toracca is making her acting debut in A Christmas Carol.

LIAM VINCENT’s other A.C.T. credits include The Normal Heart. He was most recently seen as Bernard in Don’t Dress for Dinner at Center REPertory Company. Other regional credits include productions at the Alliance Theatre, the Huntington Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, Arizona Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. In the Bay Area, his work has been seen at California Shakespeare Theater, TheaterWorks, Aurora Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Encore Theatre Company, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, Shotgun Players, Campo Santo Theatre Company, and Word for Word. He is a graduate of Boston University.

YORK WALKER is a third-year student in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. His M.F.A. Program credits include Seven Guitars, Twelfth Night, Tartuffe, Richard II, The Wild Party, very still & hard to see, The House of Bernarda Alba, and Polaroid Stories. Regional credits include Hairspray (Gateway Playhouse); Let Bygones Be and Heist! (34th Annual Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville); Dracula, A Christmas Carol, and Important People (Actors Theatre of Louisville); and As You Like It, Allisair, and Everything Is Ours (Chautauqua Theater Company). Walker received his B.A. in acting from Illinois State University.

WEINFIELD is returning for his second season in A Christmas Carol. He has performed with Broadway By the Bay and Symphony Silicon Valley and is featured in the short film Emily and Billy. A homeschooled fourth grader, Weinfield studies acting and musical theater at A.C.T. and The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival Shakespeare Camp and television and film acting at Judy Berlin’s Kids on Camera. In addition to performing, Weinfield loves baseball, cooking, and all styles of dance. He was a featured youth poet at the 2013 SF Flor y Canto Youth Poetry Festival. Weinfield is represented by Stars Agency.

CLARA WOLFF lives in San Francisco, where she attends seventh grade at Presidio Hill School. A Christmas Carol is her first professional production. She has studied in the Young Conservatory and the Young Actors’ Theatre Camp. Wolff also enjoys singing, dancing, and playing music, especially the upright bass.

CAMPBELL ZEIGLER is a fifth grader in Walnut Creek and most recently performed the role of Andrea Sarti in Brecht’s Life of Galileo at the Masquers Playhouse. Zeigler’s love of theater began with a voice-over role in Town Hall Theatre Company’s production of Rabbit Hole at the age of five. Since then, he has become a member of A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory and has participated annually in California Shakespeare Theatre’s Summer Shakespeare Conservatory, taking on such roles as Doctor Pinch, Duke Senior, and the ever-sinister Doctor Caius. A presidential history buff, Zeigler has begun his 2038 presidential campaign as a member of his school’s student council and has recently taken up fencing to keep any political opponents at bay.

CHARLES DICKENS was born February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, England. His literary success began when Sketches by Boz, a collection of urban scenes, and The Pickwick Papers, a series of comic narratives written to accompany artistic engravings, were published in 1836. Soon followed Oliver Twist (1839), Nicholas Nickleby (1839), Barnaby Rudge (1841), Martin Chuzzlewit (1844), A Christmas Carol (1843), and David Copperfield (1850). Featuring dramatic plot twists and lively depictions of London street life, the most memorable aspect of his work was a gallery of larger-than-life characters, whose foibles and adventures immediately endeared them to millions of readers. His work, primarily published first in serial format, was easily adapted for the stage and appeared frequently at playhouses throughout England (always without the permission of the author, who did, however, have a great love of the theater and at one point in his life even intended to be an actor). In the 1850s Dickens’s marriage to Catherine Hogarth dissolved, and his work began to tackle darker themes and more fully criticize industrial society. The novels of this
period include Bleak House (1853), Hard Times (1854), Little Dorrit (1857), A Tale of Two Cities (1859), and Great Expectations (1860). He wrote 15 novels in total, and all remain in print. An exhausting series of reading tours late in life led to a decline in Dickens’s health, and he died in 1870 working on the unfinished manuscript of The Mystery of Edwin Drood.

PAUL WALSH (Coadaptor) is professor of dramaturgy and dramatic criticism at the Yale School of Drama. For nine years (1996–2005), he was dramaturg and director of humanities at A.C.T., where his translations of Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House (2004) and Hedda Gabler (2007) were produced. New translations of August Strindberg’s five Chamber Plays were produced last year at San Francisco’s Cutting Ball Theater and have been published by Exit Press. Walsh has worked as dramaturg, translator, and coauthor with theater companies across the country, including the Tony Award–winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune, with whom he collaborated on such notable productions as Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream, Don Juan Giovanni, and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Walsh received his PhD from the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama at the University of Toronto.

KARL LUNDEBERG (Composer), a CBS/Sony recording artist, has recorded four albums with his jazz/world music group Full Circle. He has performed extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Scandinavia, continental Europe, Japan, and Brazil. His contemporary classical music compositions have been performed by a variety of orchestras, including the Boston Symphony, Sinfa Nova, and the National Radio Orchestra of Sweden and featured at the prestigious Mitsu, Perugia, Biennale, Teatro Español, Next Wave, Castle Hill, and San Sebastian festivals. Theater and ballet music includes scores for the American Repertory Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Center Stage, Arizona Theatre Company, Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, The Kennedy Center Theater, South Coast Repertory, the Mark Taper Forum (composer-in-residence, 1996–2001), and the Ahmanson Theatre. Film and television scores include works for PBS, NBC, CBS, ABC, ESPN, NRK (Norwegian State Television), Imagine Films, Paramount Pictures, and United Paramount Network. He served as musical director for the Shakespeare repertory directed by Sir Peter Hall at the Ahmanson Theatre.

DOMENIQUE LOZANO (Director), a resident artist at A.C.T., has directed many projects with A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory and M.F.A. Program, most recently Happy to Stand at A.C.T.’s new venue The Costume Shop. Other shows include the world premieres of Homefront and Beautiful Child: The Music of Rufus Wainwright, the American premiere of After Juliet, the world premieres of Sarah Daniel’s Dust and Constance Congdon’s Nightingales, a coproduction with the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Zürich of Paul Steinnmarch’s Only Victory, the West Coast premieres of Jeffrey Hatcher’s Korczak’s Children and Wendy MacLeod’s Schoolgirl Figure, Caught with Her Pants Down, Richard III, The Comedy of Errors, Amy Herzog’s The Wendy Play, and numerous graduating class showcases. She has directed A Christmas Carol at A.C.T. for the past seven years and translated The Caucasian Chalk Circle, which premiered at A.C.T. in 2010. Other directing credits include The Drawer Boy and Welcome Home, Jenny Sutter with TheatreFIRST; The Countess with Center REPertory Company; Two for the Seesaw with Marin Theatre Company; Inspecting Carol and the West Coast premiere of Jane Martin’s Anton in Show Business with San Jose Stage Company; and The Norman Conquests, Holiday, The Real Thing, and She Loves Me with Napa Valley Repertory Theatre, of which she was a founding member and associate artistic director.

VAL CANIPAROLI’s (Choreographer) versatility has made him one of the most sought-after choreographers in the United States and abroad. Although San Francisco Ballet has been his artistic home for more than 41 years, Caniparoli has also contributed to the repertoires of more than 40 companies, including Joffrey Ballet, Boston Ballet, Scottish Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Northern Ballet Theatre, Pennsylvania Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Ballet West, Washington Ballet, Israel Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Atlanta Ballet, State Theatre Ballet of South Africa, Louisville Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, and Tulsa Ballet. Caniparoli has also choreographed for the Chicago Lyric Opera, San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. He has worked on several occasions with the San Francisco Symphony, most memorably on the Rimsky-Korsakov opera-ballet Mlada, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Caniparoli has received ten grants for choreography from the National Endowment for the Arts, an artist fellowship from the California Arts Council, and two awards from the Choo-San Goh and H. Robert Magee Foundation. Previous work with A.C.T. includes the staging and creation (with Carey Perloff) of Tosca Café and choreography for A Doll’s House, A Christmas Carol, and ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore.

NANCY DICKSON (Music Répétiteur) danced with American Ballet Theatre and San Francisco Ballet. As a principal dancer her repertoire included the Sugar Plum Fairy in Nutcracker, Lise in La fille mal gardee, the title role in Cinderella, and leading roles in ballets by Michael Smuin, George Balanchine, Val Caniparoli, and Jerome Robbins, among others. She has appeared on television in several Dance in America productions for Great Performances, including “Live from the San Francisco Opera House” and “Live from Lincoln Center.” She was the assistant to the director for the Emmy Award–winning Canciones de Mi Padre, starring Linda Ronstadt. Dickson was featured in the award-winning documentary Balances. At A.C.T. she has served as the répétiteur on both A Christmas Carol and The Toscas Project.

ROBERT K. RUTT (Music Director) has performed in all aspects of the entertainment industry over the past 30 years. He has sung tenor with the San Francisco Opera chorus, toured with Opera Northeast in productions of The Pirates of Penzance, H.M.S. Pinafore, The Merry Widow, Madame Butterfly, Carousel, and Kismet, and played Monsieur Reyer in the San Francisco company of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s The Phantom of the Opera. At A.C.T. since 2010, Rutt has been musical
JOHN ARNONE (Scenic Designer) won a Tony for *The Who's Tommy* on Broadway. Other set designs for Broadway include Turgenev’s *Fortune’s Fool* (dir. Arthur Penn), Edward Albee’s *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?, The Full Monty, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992, Sacrilege* (with Ellen Burstyn), *The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public and Grease for Tommy Tune, Sex and Longing* (dir. Garland Wright), *The Deep Blue Sea* (with Blythe Danner), *PatioPorch, Lone Star & Pot. Wars, Marlene, Minnelli on Minnelli*, Gore Vidal’s *The Best Man*, and Arthur Miller’s *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*. He has received two OBIE Awards, for Best Design and Sustained Excellence of Set Design, and, in addition to the Tony, earned the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, Dora Mavor Moore, Outer Critics Circle, American Theatre Wing, Drama Desk, and Olivier awards for *The Who’s Tommy*. His work has been seen at the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, A.C.T., The Old Globe, and La Jolla Playhouse, as well as in London, Vienna, Frankfurt, Berlin, Prague, Australia, Venice, and Athens.

BEAVER BAUER (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for numerous A.C.T. productions, including *Armistead Maupin’s Tales of the City, Scapin, War Music, A Christmas Carol, The Government Inspector, The Imaginary Invalid, The Rivals, Edward Albee’s The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?, The Gamester, The Beard of Avon, The Misanthrope, Edward II, Tartuffe, and Insurrection: Holding History*, among others. She is the resident costume designer at Teatro ZinZanni and has designed the Brian Boitano Skating Spectacular for eight years. She has also designed for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Eureka Theatre Company, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Lamplighters Music Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, the Pickle Family Circus, Classic Stage Company, Theater of Yugen, and the Riviera and Desert Inn hotels in Las Vegas. From 1972 to 1984 she worked for Angels of Light, a troupe that specializes in cabaret and theater, and in 1995 she designed a circus that traveled to Moscow and Japan. Bauer has won several Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards.

NANCY SCHERTLER (Lighting Designer) has designed the Broadway productions of Bill Irwin’s *Fool Moon* and *Largely New York* (Tony nomination) and off-Broadway productions of *Hilda* (dir. Carey Perloff), *Texts for Nothing*, and *The Regard Evening* (dir. Bill Irwin). A.C.T. credits include *Elektra, Scapin, Boleros for the Disenchanted, After the War, The Colossus of Rhodes, and The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*. Schertler has worked extensively at regional theaters across the country, including a decades-long association with Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., where she has worked with directors Zelda Fichandler, Liviu Ciulei, Kyle Donnelly, Garland Wright, and Douglas C. Wager; *The Sisters Matsumoto* for Seattle Repertory Theatre; and *Moby Dick* for Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. Opera credits include world premiers of *Shadowboxer, Clara*, and *Later the Same Evening*, an opera inspired by the work of Edward Hopper, all commissioned by the University of Maryland Opera Studio, under the direction of Leon Major.

JAKE RODRIGUEZ (Sound Designer) 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; *Underneath the Lintel* and *Scorched* at American Conservatory Theater; *Troublemaker*, or *The Frightening Kick-Adventures of Bradley Boatright* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *Hamlet* at California Shakespeare Theater; *Buried Child* and *Bruja* at Magic Theatre; *Emotional Creature* at the Pershing Square Signature Center; *Care of Trees* at Shotgun Players; *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.

MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams’s *Small Craft Warnings* at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and *Williams in an Hour* (Smith & Kraus 2010); he has also written theater and book reviews for the *Washington Post, Village Voice, Newsday*, and *Mirabella* magazine. Last year, he adapted the text for the San Francisco Symphony’s multimedia presentation of *Peer Gynt*. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

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**KAREN SZPALLER**  
(Stage Manager) A.C.T. credits include A Christmas Carol (2006–12), Armistead Maupin’s Tales of the City, Stuck Elevator, The Normal Heart, Maple and Vine, Brief Encounter, The Tosa Project, Curse of the Starring Class, Blackbird, and The Imaginary Invalid. Most recently she stage managed Anne Patterson’s art and theatrical installation Seeing the Voice: State of Grace at Grace Cathedral. Favorite past shows include the national tour of Spamalot in San Francisco; Anna Deavere Smith’s newest work, On Grace, at Grace Cathedral; The Wild Bride, Let Me Down Easy, Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, Eurydice, Fêtes de la Nuit, The Glass Menagerie, Brundibar, and Comedy on the Bridge at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Urinetown: The Musical at San Jose Stage Company; Wild with Happy, Wheelhouse, and Striking 12 at TheatreWorks; Salome at Aurora Theatre Company; and Ragtime and She Loves Me at Foothill Music Theatre. She is the production coordinator at TheatreWorks.

**LESLEY M. RADIN**  
(Assistant Stage Manager) has worked at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Center REPertory Company, San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program, and San Francisco Playhouse. She has traveled with Berkeley Rep productions to the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the New Victory Theater in New York. Favorite past productions include In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play), Passing Strange, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, The Pillowman, and The Secret in the Wings.

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This January our Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program will resurrect the forgotten genre of vaudeville. 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 . . .”

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This is the 36th season that A.C.T. has brought the holiday fable of Ebenezer Scrooge and Tiny Tim to life for San Francisco audiences. When A.C.T. first presented A Christmas Carol in our 1976–77 season, the show immediately became a local sensation and an annual tradition. In 1985, San Francisco Chronicle writer Steven Winn celebrated Carol as “a generous, inclusive marvel” and “a celebration that fills the theater with first-timers—adults as well as children.” “Like Christmas itself,” he concluded, “it becomes all things to all people, reflecting our growth and change with each new exposure to it.”

For many, A.C.T.’s annual holiday production is a beautiful introduction to the wonders of live theater—and this is as true for our young actors as it is for our audiences. This season’s production welcomes 29 actors from our world-renowned Young Conservatory (YC) to the Geary stage. These aspiring performers rehearse and perform for two months alongside some of the Bay Area’s most beloved veteran professional actors, as well as our third-year Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program actors-in-training, who take their young colleagues under their wings.

When Artistic Director Carey Perloff and dramaturg Paul Walsh created our current adaptation of Charles Dickens’s classic tale in 2005, they wrote a script specifically designed for an intergenerational company, in which established actors would share their expertise with younger performers, who would renew the show every year with fresh energy—ensuring a vibrant performance by a close-knit community of artists.

“My first year here we had an actor in the company whose name was Sidney Walker,” remembers YC Director Craig Slaight, “one of the oldest people in the company at the time. He was playing Scrooge. I came through the office reception area one day, and I saw him sitting, talking to the boy playing Tiny Tim. I thought, ‘That’s about as rich as it gets, somebody in his seventies talking to an eight-year-old about the work.’”

Many relationships develop naturally over the course of the production’s run, but a formal mentorship program that Slaight developed also pairs Carol’s M.F.A. Program cast members with younger cohorts from the YC. Before rehearsals begin with the full cast, the M.F.A. Program and YC actors come together for a week of classes, where they discuss the world of Dickens’s play and begin to learn the period movement and voice technique required for the show, as well as the elements of etiquette they will need to know when they step into what is, for many, their first professional rehearsal process.

A rich dialogue ensues, and deep and often lasting bonds are formed between the older and younger students. “When the YC actors have somebody looking out for them in rehearsal and performance, they can ask questions without feeling embarrassed,” says Slaight. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the kids and for the M.F.A. students. I know it pays off onstage, but I also think it pays off in their lives, in discovering the humanness of creating art, in a place that’s very different from most theaters.”

by Dan Rubin

AN INTERGENERATIONAL MARVEL. The cast of A.C.T.’s 2010 production of A Christmas Carol. Photo by Kevin Berne.
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At our Tony Award–winning conservatory, students ages 8 to 19 develop their talents, perform in professional-caliber productions, and gain the confidence to succeed—all in a comfortable, creative, and fun environment. From acting and musical theater to clowning and Shakespeare, Young Conservatory classes are exciting, engaging, and challenging. Designed for students at all levels, classes are taught by active theater professionals with experience and passion for working with young people. By training in the YC, students learn to incorporate the craft of theater into their everyday lives, developing concentration, imagination, professionalism, character, and self-confidence along the way.

“I WILL FOREVER BE INDEBTED TO A.C.T. FOR THE LEAPS IT HAS ALLOWED ME TO TAKE AS AN ACTOR, ARTIST, AND CITIZEN OF THE GREATER WORLD.”

DARREN CRISS, YC ALUMNUS (CURRENTLY APPEARING ON THE TV SERIES GLEE)

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A.C.T.’s Young Conservatory (YC) teaches children and young adults the skills and confidence to successfully navigate not only the stage, but also the world. During the last two summers, some lucky students were given the opportunity to put both sets of navigation skills to the test when they traveled to Scotland as part of the Young Conservatory and Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA) Young Persons Company International Exchange.

YC Director Craig Slaight has always been passionate about providing young actors with excellent scripts, arguing, “If you have young actors, you need the best playwrights.” Through the Grace Magill New Plays Program, the YC has been commissioning new plays since 1989. It was his affinity for commissioned scripts that first connected Slaight with the National Theatre in London in 2000—its new plays program was similarly rigorous and committed to providing outstanding opportunities for its students. After two years, a new partnership was created with Theatre Royal Bath, wherein YC students were sent to Bath to workshop new plays by British playwrights and brought British students to San Francisco to workshop plays by American playwrights. Out of this came Broken Hallelujah, by Sharman Macdonald (2004); Nightingales, by Constance Congdon (2006), and Broken Wings, by Sarah Daniels (2007), to name just a few.

When Theatre Royal Bath lost its funding and was forced to drop this amazing program, A.C.T. sought out another theater to partner with. The summer of 2012 was the first time the YC international exchange took place with APA Young Persons Company in Scotland. APA was an excellent fit: a large, regional theater like A.C.T., with a similar commitment to providing excellent acting opportunities to young students. Eight YC students, selected from more than sixty high school applicants through a rigorous audition process, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean. After a week of intensive acting classes, they workshoped a new play written by DC Jackson, who also wrote the award-winning My Romantic History. For the YC, Jackson wrote [untitled] Reality Project, a play about a mysterious reality show, which the students performed as part of the Youth Theatre Festival in Aberdeen. During the 2012–13 theatrical season, the Aberdeen students participated in a full production of the play in Scotland, while YC students produced it in San Francisco.

Last summer, the exchange came full circle when a group of eight Scottish teenagers came to San Francisco, where they stayed with YC students from the Bay Area, took a one-week intensive acting class at A.C.T., and workshoped a play with American playwright Wendy MacLeod, who wrote The House of Yes (now a major motion picture). Her play, called The Ballad of Bonnie Prince Chucky, explores status, friendship, and popularity on a rugby team. The play was performed by APA students in Aberdeen in November; San Francisco audiences can see the YC perform it in San Francisco next summer.

Peter Scatinni, a 17-year-old YC student who participated in the exchange, says, “It was very fulfilling to work on a show from beginning to end and see every step along the way. It’s something that a lot of people in high school don’t get the opportunity to do. Seeing how things morph and change gives you a whole new perspective on that entire process.” Christina Euphrat, a senior at Sir Francis Drake High School, especially appreciates the confidence she gained from the exchange. “Any doubt in my mind about pursuing theater was completely washed away by the trip to Scotland, because it reminded me how special this art form is,” she says.

Perhaps what left the strongest impression on the students, however, were the lasting friendships made with their overseas counterparts. “You should have seen the weeping,” Slaight remembers of the moment last summer when the Scottish students departed for the airport from our studios at 30 Grant Ave. “It was an incredible experience, going to Scotland and hosting a student and getting to workshop these plays,” says Scattini. “It’s something I know will stick with me for a long time.”
“ONE OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE ASPECTS OF THIS EXCHANGE PROGRAM IS THE FRIENDSHIPS THAT I MADE IN JUST 14 DAYS. OUR CAST BECAME A FAMILY IMMEDIATELY, AND WE QUICKLY LEARNED TO SUPPORT, LOVE, AND PROTECT ONE ANOTHER UNCONDITIONALLY.”

LUCIE FLEMMING, YC ACTOR
Since the launch of A.C.T.’s Student Matinee program in 1968, more than half a million Bay Area students have visited our theaters to experience some of the highest-quality professional productions in the Bay Area. In recent years, A.C.T. has committed to further enriching students’ creative learning with the steady growth of our ACTsmart education programs. Whether in pre- and postshow workshops at school sites, “SMAT chats” following every student matinee performance, or intensive residencies in Bay Area schools, A.C.T. aims to create opportunities for young people to get up close with the artists whose creative energies keep theater vital.

December 2013 marks the fifth consecutive semester of A.C.T.’s ongoing partnership with Downtown High School’s Acting for Critical Thought project. DHS students attend weekly acting classes with A.C.T. Lead Teaching Artist Nick Gabriel and workshops led by A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program students, in addition to writing original monologues and short plays, devising work, and receiving movement training with local theater professionals like Dan Wolf and Stephen Buescher. They also receive support in their dramatic writing from tutors of the 826 Valencia literacy initiative. For these students, each semester’s culminating exhibition performance is often the first time they’ve ever taken a stage or shared their (often very personal) stories.

Inspired by the success of the DHS model, in the 2012–13 school year A.C.T. began a smaller-scale residency in literature classes at Ida B. Wells High School near Alamo Square, another of San Francisco’s continuation (or alternative) school sites. A generous grant from San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth & Their Families (DCYF) now makes it possible for A.C.T. Resident Education Artist Tyrone Davis, in collaboration with Ida B. Wells teacher Josh Zimmerman, to feature a Theater Arts as a Tool for Change class as part of the school curriculum. Students work with Davis and Zimmerman daily to explore the link between theater and the social issues most relevant to them and—like DHS students—visit A.C.T. on a regular basis to attend mainstage and M.F.A. Program performances and receive instruction from first-rate teaching artists from A.C.T.’s community of arts professionals. Each quarter, participating students at IBW host and perform an exhibition of their work. This exciting program is laying the groundwork for what we hope will over time become the school’s first fully realized drama program.

Before the October 3 Student Matinee performance of 1776, 70 fifth graders from Bessie Carmichael Elementary School performed Voice of the People, a mini musical created just for the occasion by San Francisco Unified School District Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) instructor Peter Sroka, on the Geary stage. Following the success of last spring’s Stuck Elevator SMAT event, this is the second time A.C.T. has partnered with Sroka and Bessie Carmichael to present an engaging and educational preshow performance inspired by a mainstage production. Each song of Voice of the People related to 1776, covering such topics as the three branches of government, the power of education, the exclusion of particular groups (e.g., women and people of color) from the political process during the early days of democracy in America, and the courageous individuals throughout our
country’s history who have spoken up for the rights of those groups. Some of the kids could not stop themselves from dancing onstage to Sroka’s catchy tunes, smiles plastered on their faces and full of pride. The house cheered as the fifth graders performed solos, cracked jokes, and thoroughly entertained a sold-out audience of nearly one thousand young people from 19 schools from across the Bay Area and beyond. The costumed adult cast of *1776*, equally charmed by the students’ enthusiastic performance, high-fived the students as they exited the stage to take their seats and enjoy *1776*. “Those kids will never forget that experience,” Sroka smiled. “For some of them, it will be a formative block in their foundations as they build their lives.”

As a result of these residencies, San Francisco students are not only attending theater, they’re making it—and gaining the highly transferable collaborative, critical thinking, and literacy skills, social and emotional competencies, expanded worldview, and sense of self that comes with doing so. Cheered on by master artists and their own school communities, they are raising their voices to tell the stories only they can tell, entering a tradition of education at A.C.T. that goes back to the theater’s founding almost 50 years ago.

Today A.C.T. is not only welcoming Bay Area young people to our performances; we are giving them the stage, in hopes that they will experience a freedom in the art form and gain the confidence that the future of theater—and society—rests fittingly in their competent hands.
Frannie Fleishhacker, Chair

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A.C.T. Profiles

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, Scared, The Homecoming, Tosca Café (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 Boleros 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 Voysey 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 tenured 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 Theater (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.
THANKS to all my clients for the TRUST they place in me, and BEST WISHES to all San Franciscans for a lovely Holiday Season.