a number

by Caryl Churchill

directed by Anna D. Shapiro
American Conservatory Theater
nurturesthe art of live theater through
dynamic productions, intensive actor
training in its conservatory, and an
ongoing dialogue with its community.
Under the leadership of Artistic Director
Carey Perloff and Executive Director
Heather Kitchen, A.C.T. embraces its
responsibility to conserve, renew, and
reinvent its relationship to the rich
theatrical traditions and literatures that
are our collective legacy, while exploring
new artistic forms and new communities.
A commitment to the highest standards
informs every aspect of A.C.T.’s creative
work.
Founded in 1965 by William Ball,
A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco
season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In
the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national
and international reputation, winning
a Tony Award for outstanding theater
During the past four decades, more
than 300 A.C.T. productions have been
performed to a combined audience of
seven million people; today, A.C.T.’s
performance, education, and outreach
programs annually reach more than
270,000 people in the San Francisco Bay
Area. In 1996, A.C.T.’s efforts to develop
creative talent for the theater were
recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn
Theaters Award. In 2003, to celebrate
A.C.T.’s 35th anniversary and Perloff’s
10th season, A.C.T. created a new core
company of actors, who have become
instrumental in every aspect of its work.
Today A.C.T. is recognized nationally
for its groundbreaking productions of
classical works and bold explorations
of contemporary playwriting. Since
the reopening of the Geary Theater in
1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable
period of audience expansion and
producing alternative work at Zeum
Theater, which now serves as a venue for
student productions and exciting new
plays. The company continues to produce
challenging theater in the rich context of
symposia, audience discussions, and
community interactions.
The conservatory, led by Melissa
Smith and George Thompson, now serves
3,000 students every year. It was the first
actor training program in the United
States not affiliated with a college or
university accredited to award a master of
fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette
Bening, Denis Washington, and Teri
Hatcher are among the conservatory’s
distinguished former students. With
its commitment to excellence in actor
training and to the relationship between
training, performance, and audience, the
A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has
moved to the forefront of America’s actor
training programs, while serving as the
creative engine of the company at large.

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A Number 3
ABOUT A.C.T.

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A Number 3
STUDIO A.C.T. invites you to attend two special spring performances:

**AND THE WORLD GOES ROUND**

The studio performance at A.C.T. is on Thursday, April 25, at 2 p.m., at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco. Free admission.

**THE MARRIAGE OF BETTIE AND BOO**
by Christopher Durang
Directed by Christopher Herald

Studio A.C.T. performing at Theatre Rhinoceros
2931 16th Street, San Francisco
May 19, 20, 21 & 22 at 7 p.m.

For your other Studio A.C.T. shows:
June 19-August 11 and the A.C.T. Summer Training Program, please see june programs page for more information.

**Dear Friends,**

It’s hard to believe that next season will be A.C.T.’s 40th! And equally hard for me to believe that it will be my 13th as artistic director. When I arrived at A.C.T. in June 1992, my daughter was two and a half, the Geary Theater lay in ruins, the finances of the theater were in deep disarray, the conservatory was in transition, and the company was still reeling from the death of its founder, Bill Ball. Fifteen years later, the Geary has risen magnificently from the rubble (thanks to the generosity of many of you) and has become a house once again for a rich array of theatrical adventures; the company has retired its accumulated deficit, balanced the books, and embarked upon an ambitious endowment campaign; all four branches of the conservatory are thriving; and my daughter is looking at colleges.

A huge portion of A.C.T.’s success is due to the extraordinary contribution of A.C.T.’s executive director, Heather Mary Kitchen, who is currently celebrating her tenth season with A.C.T. Heather came to us from what she lovingly calls “the old country” (Canada) with a breadth of producing skills and business talents that have combined to raise the bar on everything we do at A.C.T. She is the best partner any artistic director could ever ask for, and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank her in print for re-animating A.C.T. in every possible way and for making A.C.T. a wonderful place to be an artist. This also seems a fitting moment to thank the incredible artists, staff people, and audience members who have taken us to great heights over these 40 years, and to dream a little about the future.

In planning next season, we sought both to celebrate our past and to imagine our future. We begin by gathering names of many artists who have been central to A.C.T.’s creative life over the years, and of course that list begins with the inimitable Tom Stoppard, whose work has transformed this theater again and again. So we are thrilled to open this 40th anniversary season with Stoppard’s astonishing vaudeville about art and politics, Travesties. Written in 1974, Travesties dazzlingly imagines a moment in 1917 when three revolutionaries—James Joyce, Vladimir Lenin, and Tristan Tzara—found themselves in the same library in Zürich working on their respective tomes. Unitlting all three is an acerbic and hilarious British civil servant named Henry Carr, who rails against the arogance of both artists and politicians in equal measure, beginning with his brilliant observation that “to be an artist at all is like living in Switzerland during a war. To be an artist in Zürich, in 1917, implies a degree of self-absorption that would have glazed over the eyes of Narcissus.” With sublime roles for a host of comic actors, including our marvelous core company, Travesties will help us launch our celebration with panache and joy.

We follow Travesties with one of the 20th century’s juiciest plays, Lillian Hellman’s The Little Foxes, directed by Laird Williamson. Laird has worked his subtle magic on the Geary stage for more than 25 years, and it was important to all of us that he play a role in this season. The piece that most called to him was The Little Foxes, a terrifyingly prescient look at the nature of greed and betrayal in American culture.

“The century’s turning,” says Ben Hubbard, the treacherous businessman, to his equally mercenary sister, Regina, in 1900.

“The world is open. For people like you and me. . . . There are hundreds of Hubbards sitting in rooms like this throughout the country. All their names aren’t Hubbard, but they are all Hubbards and they will own this country some day.” This fierce and fascinating melodrama was a great success in the early years of A.C.T. and feels ever more urgent today.

Five seasons ago we had a remarkable success with a play by W. Somerset Maugham called The Constant Wife. Since that time, we have longed to present another delightful Maugham play, The Circle, and this celebratory season seemed the perfect opportunity. With enormous wit and surprising candor about the true nature of love and marriage, The Circle explores a young relationship on the brink of collapse and compares it to a mature marriage that collapsed many years ago in the face of “romantic love.” When all else fails, Maugham asks, which is the better star to be hitched to: the institution of marriage, or the shining and volatile star of romantic love? After all, as Arnold explains to his passionate wife, “You can’t expect a man to go on making love to his wife after three years. I’m awfully busy!” The Circle will reunit us with acclaimed director Mark Lamos (Eldorado II) for a marvellous evening of love, lust, and language.

CONTINUED
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

It’s hard to believe that next season will be A.C.T.’s 40th! And equally hard for me to believe that it will be my 15th as artistic director. When I arrived at A.C.T. in June 1992, my daughter was two and a half, the Geary Theater lay in ruins, the finances of the theater were in deep disarray, the conservatory was in transition, and the company was still reeling from the death of its founder, Bill Ball. Fifteen years later, the Geary has risen magnificently from the rubble (thanks to the generosity of many of you) and has become a home once again for a rich array of theatrical adventures; the company has retired its accumulated deficits, balanced the books, and embarked upon an ambitious endowment campaign; all four branches of the conservatory are thriving; and my daughter is looking at colleges.

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, continued

At the same time that we wanted next season to celebrate some of the finest plays of our past, we also wanted to surprise you with some entirely new and extremely bold writing.

BLACKBIRD, a vivid new work by Scottish writer David Harrower, reminded us of Marnet's Osanna in its searing and provocative examination of troubled relationships. A young woman returns to a man with whom she had an affair many years back, when she was only a girl. Together they return to the impulse that brought them together in the first place, in a shattering exploration of the deep conflicts between love and power. BLACKBIRD is currently an enormous hit in London, and we're honored to be the first to show it to you on the West Coast.

Our brilliant core company actor Rene Auberjonois has longed to return to Ibsen since her triumph with A Doll's House several years ago, so for this anniversary season she is taking on an even more complicated and volatile heroine, HELDA CABLE. HELDA is a bourgeois woman who dreams of glory and excitement and yet barely dares to step outside her own home. But she exerts her will on all who surround her, particularly on the passionate Lowborg. “And then you see—then he will have regained power over himself again. Then he will be free for the rest of his life!” she exclaims, as she sends him to his doom. Watching this great actress wrestle with such a great role should be one of the highlights of our season.

The 40th anniversary season gathers steam in the spring, we will bring you the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda’s ambitious and moving epic AFTER THE WAR, which I will direct. Commissioned and developed by A.C.T., featuring a large company led by A.C.T. Associate Artist Steven Anthony Jones, AFTER THE WAR is an unforgettable look at San Francisco in 1948. We find ourselves in Japantown, where two young Japanese Americans who have been interned in the camps return home to a city that has radically changed during the war, as people of every background struggle to find their piece of the American dream. Set in a boarding house that becomes a marvelous microcosm of postwar America, AFTER THE WAR traces the lives, loves, and tremendous losses of a richly imagined group of characters, in a play filled with the jazz rhythms of the Fillmore and the ethnic stew of San Francisco. Next year marks the 100th anniversary of Japantown, and we are thrilled to participate in the city-wide celebration with this magical new play.

The cream on the cake of our anniversary season will be the long-awaited return of the divine Rene Auberjonois to the Geary stage. Rene left an indelible mark on A.C.T. through his unforgettable performances as a member of the original A.C.T. company in Taraff, Chekhov's Anna, The Ruling Class, and many, many more. What better way to mark this occasion than to watch a comic actor at the top of his game take on Molière’s last great play, THE IMAGINARY INVALID, in which a man is so in love with life that he is chronically convinced he is dying. Directed by the masterful Ron Lagomarsino (The Gamester) and adapted by A.C.T. favorite Constance Congdon, The Imaginary Invalid is our valentine to all of you who have been part of A.C.T.'s life for so many years, and a gift to those of you who have joined us in recent years. You have been the audience every artistic director dreams of: you have kept me challenged and engaged and truly nurtured for 15 years. I cannot thank you enough, and I look forward to sharing a wonderful anniversary season with you next year!

Yours,

Cary Perloff
Artistic Director

RENE AUBERJONIS IN THE 1997 A.C.T. PRODUCTION OF "DEATH OF A SALESMAN"

RENE AUBERJONIS AS NORA HELMER IN A.C.T.'S 1994 PRODUCTION OF "A DOLL'S HOUSE"
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BLACKBIRD, a vivid new work by Scottish writer David Harrower, reminded us of Marnet’s The Glass Menagerie in its searing and provocative examination of a troubled relationship. A young woman returns to a man with whom she had an affair many years back, when she was only a girl. Together, they return to the impulse that brought them together in the first place, in a shattering exploration of the deep conflicts between love and power. Blackbird is currently an enormous hit in London, and we’re honored to be the first to show it to you on the West Coast.

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Sound by Rob Milburn & Michael Bodeen
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw
Assistant Director Laley Lippard

THE CAST
Salter Bill Smitsovich
Bernard, Bernard, Michael Josh Charles

UNDERSTUDIES
Salter—James Carpenter, Bernard, Bernard, Michael—Gabriel Marin

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Elisa Guthery, Stage Manager
Katherine Niemann, Assistant Stage Manager
Alex Marshall, Intern

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BIOLOGY IS NOT DESTINY

BY BRIAN ALEXANDER

A few years ago I visited Douglas Melton, a renowned stem cell scientist at Harvard, who told me that if the university had any guts it would approve and fund this experiment:

Let's take monkeys and take human embryonic stem cells and put them in a monkey blastula [embryo]. So here's the question: What portion of the monkey's brain and vocal chords do I need to have composed of human cells to allow the monkey to speak? This is an extremely legitimate scientific question. Suppose I discover you only need this portion of the brain up here to give the monkey speech... If you and I were to walk into my lab right now and the monkey would say, "Oh Doug, so this is Brian," it would chill us, right? That would really say, What is it about being human?

What indeed? What is "human"? At first this can seem a silly question. But the advance of biological science is forcing us to ask and tell us that we have to come up with some better answer than "our genes." Certainly our genes make us homo sapiens, the way Stravins's tute makes the Blue Danube Waltz. But what happens when you give that tune to say, Drizzy Gillespie, and he makes additions and deletions and turns it into a jazz series of bebop riffs? Is it still the Blue Danube Waltz?

If it is, we have to expand our definitions. Similarly, we will have to realize that "human" is not only in our genes, but also in our self-conception. Our humanity comes from within us, not only from some immutable law of nature. We make it up. This is a scary proposition, because it would allow Melton's monkey to be human, not because he is human according to some immutable law, or according to his genes, but because he is up to it. To concede the power to declare the definition of "human"—and, by extension, "human rights," "human duties," "human individuality"—is a frightening responsibility.

A MODERNIST WORK IN PROGRESS

This is, in part, the sort of responsibility Caryl Churchill explores in A Number.

Though cloning features prominently, it's really a dramatic device Churchill uses to explore the human dimensions of love, kinship, and familial failing. She seems to have grasped the idea that while the myths of human cloning—the cloned armies, the teams of Michael Jordan, the re-creation of ourselves—is flawed in many ways, it does force us to ask ourselves the uncomfortable questions.

Both Saltz and his son Bernard (B2) fall prey to the cloning myth. "They've damaged your uniqueness," Saltz tells B2 when confronted with the news that additional, unauthorized copies of Bernard have been made. And B2 later says that a clone may not be "very like but very something terrible which is exactly the same generic person."

In fact, there is no such thing as "exactly the same generic person," especially when it comes to the hypothetical idea of cloning a human being in a lab. There are scientific reasons for this. For example, the mitochondria, the little powerhouse of cells, have a small number of their own genes. When a cell from a person to be cloned is placed into an egg to begin the process, that egg will not have the same mitochondrial DNA as the mother's egg used to conceive the original person. Second, the way in which genes are switched on and off, epigenetics, varies according to many, often unknown circumstances, including our environment. And of course, a clone would probably not gestate in the same mother and certainly not at the same time.

In other words, identical twins would be closer genetic copies than any lab-created human clone could ever be. Yet even they soon diverge genetically in small ways. We are all unique.

The Talmud seems to agree: "For a human being stamps many coins with one stamp, and all of them are alike; but the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, has stampled every man with the stamp of Adam the First, and nevertheless not one of them is like the other." But there are different, even more important, reasons why you could never copy people. Churchill seems to understand the truth that being human, as opposed to homo sapiens, is not really about genes at all.

This simple statement can be a profoundly disturbing one. Perhaps we find comfort in the familiar and the invariable, which become reference points for our self-knowledge. In a world of change, we want to grasp hold of something that seems permanent and unique. If we can do that, we won't have to think quite as hard about who we are, what makes us human, and just how separate us from other living things.

When scientists joke and prod at the inmutable, we become anxious, because nobody can predict just where the questioning will stop or what the answers will be. The unchanging may turn out to be quite changeable after all. This, perhaps more than any purely scientific breakthrough, is the true revolution of cloning and such related technologies as in vitro fertilization, embryonic stem cells, and genetic engineering.

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Technology, architecture, politics, art all changed with the coming of modernism, and not always for the good. Nazism and Leninist communism were two sides of the same modernist coin. Each believed in the perfectibility of man and his society through science, and that by following scientific principles man could be molded and shaped like machines. Just take a look at Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will, a modernist masterpiece.

On the other hand, C. S. Lewis saw the modernist impulse as destructive. "Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men," he wrote in Abolition of Man. "Stepping outside the Tao, they have stepped into the void."

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I am fascinated by the whole concept of parenting. I have no idea why people really do have children and although I'm sure it's different for everyone I have always suspected that it's about a wish. Maybe it's for a picture you have in your mind, or simply for a kind of happiness or meaning or peace. I suspect it can also be for, some people, a wish for redemption or, more dangerously, for restitution. Whatever it is, I am convinced it is inextricably linked to the wish that your parent(s) had for you. And it is in this chain, this continuum, that if Number unfolds.

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A Note from the Director

Ann D. Shapiro
BIOLOGY IS NOT DESTINY

BY BRIAN ALEXANDER

few years ago I visited Douglas Melton, a renowned stem cell scientist at Harvard, who told me that if the university had any guts it would approve and fund this experiment:

Let's take monkeys and take human embryonic stem cells and put them in a monkey blastula [embryo]. So here's the question: What portion of the monkey's brain and vocal chords do I need to have composed of human cells to allow the monkey to speak? This is an extremely legitimate scientific question. Suppose I discover you only need this portion of the brain up here to give the monkey speech . . . If you and I were to walk into my lab right now and the monkey would say, "Oh Doug, so this is Brian," it would chill us, right? That would really say What is it about being human?

What indeed? What is "human"? At first this can seem a silly question. But the advance of biological science is forcing us to ask it and telling us that we have to come up with some better answer than "our genes." Certainly our genes make us homo sapiens, the way Strauss's tase makes the Blue Danube Waltz. But what happens when you give that tune to say, Dizzy Gillespie, and he makes additions and deletions and turns it into a jazzy series of bebop riffs? Is it still the Blue Danube Waltz?

If it is, we have to expand our definitions. Similarly, we will have to realize that "human" is not only in our genes, but also in our self-conception. Our humanity comes from within us, not only from some immutable law of nature. We make it up. This is a scary proposition, because it would allow Melton's monkey to be human, not because he is human according to some immutable law, or according to his genes, but because he says he is. To give power to the declaration of "of human"—and, by extension, "human rights," "human duties," "human individuality"—is a frightening responsibility.

A MODERNIST WORK IN PROGRESS

This is, in part, the sort of responsibility Caryl Churchill explores in A Number.

Though cloning features prominently, it's really a dramatic device Churchill uses to explore the human dimensions of love, kinship, and familial failing. She has to grasp the idea that while the myth of human cloning—the cloned armies, the teams of Michael Jordan, the re-creation of ourselves—is flawed in many ways, it does force us to ask ourselves the uncomfortable questions.

Both Saltzer and his son Bernard (B2) fall prey to the cloning myth. "They've damaged your uniqueness," Saltzer tells B2 when confronted with the news that additional, unauthorized copies of Bernard have been made. And B2 later says that a clone may not be "very like but very something terrible which is exactly the same generic person."

In fact, there is no such thing as "exactly the same generic person," especially when it comes to the hypothetical idea of cloning a human being in a lab. There are scientific reasons for this. For example, the mitochondria, the little powerhouse of cells, have a small number of their own genes. When a cell from a person to be cloned is placed into an egg to begin the process, that egg will not have the same mitochondrial DNA as the mother's egg used to conceive the original person. Second, the way in which genes are switched on and off, epigenetics, varies according to many, often unknown circumstances, including our environment. And of course, a clone would probably not gestate in the same mother and certainly not at the same time.

In other words, identical twins would be closer genetic copies than any lab-created human clone could ever be. Yet even they soon diverge genetically in small ways. We are all unique.

The Talmud seems to agree: "For a human being stamps many coins with one stamp, and all of them are alike; but the King of the kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, has stamped every man with the stamp of Adam the First, and nevertheless not one of them is like another;" ("Kiddushin 30a"). But there are different, even more important, reasons why you could never copy people. Churchill seems to understand the truth that being human, as opposed to homo sapiens, is not really about genes at all.

This simple statement can be a profoundly disturbing one. People find comfort in the familiar and the immutable, which become reference points for our self-knowledge. In a world of change, we want to grab hold of something that seems permanent and unique. If we can do that, we won't have to think quite as hard about who we are, what makes us human, and just how little separates us from other living things.

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Anna D. Shapiro
Natural law tells us our place in the world and in our societies. We know where the boundaries are, what acceptable behavior looks like, the dues we owe to others. We certainly know who is human. Since natural law is the ultimate basis for the U.S. Constitution, we should obey our leaders unless they themselves break the natural law. It is in these ways that our social and political culture is ordered. If it weren't, we would simply be making it up as we went along, and that, goes the argument, is unacceptable, because if we are simply making it up we can too easily make tragic errors.

The problem with this view is that natural law itself is something of a fuzzy concept based on a line of philosophy running from Aristotle through Thomas Aquinas and on to Thomas Hobbes. And if natural law is open to interpretation and shifting ways of thinking, it needs a written score of its own. What better a place than our unchanging biology, the formula that dictates our lives?

Our biology tells us how long we'll live, how we will make children, how we will be vulnerable to nature. We know who is male and who is female, who is an individual person. Genes set our natural boundaries. Our natural boundaries help us interpret natural law. Natural law is the basis for free democracy, the best form of government, even if it is susceptible to the passions of the enfranchised masses.

Some conservatives, like Wolfson, view the biotechnical prospect with such alarm precisely because it threatens this system. They fear it will reveal to average folk that there are no rules, or at least that the rules are much more expansive than we had thought. Once that knowledge is released, society and government could be threatened.

SECOND CHANCES

As it has turned out, however, our biology is far jazzier than most of us like to think. Take, for example, chimeras. Sometimes, if two eggs are fertilized by two different sperm, fraternal twin embryos begin to develop. But along the way, one embryo may be absorbed into the other. A baby is born. This new person now has the genes of two people. Some human chimera have a mixed set of genitals—true hermaphrodites. They are neither female nor male. Sometimes their skin color features zebra-like striations, literally the coloring of two separate people. So, is this person one, or two, or three?

Introduce the man-made riff of biotechnology and we can make embryos in dishes. We can take cells, like, say, a type called fibroblasts, and turn them into nerves. Hocus pocus! Already the U.S. Department of Defense is funding a program to give wounded soldiers the regenerative power of salamanders, so that if a soldier loses a finger, or even an arm, it will grow back.

Such work is proving that biology is not destiny except in the most mundane sense—where your high cholesterol comes from, your brown hair, whether you have a shot at the NBA. As a cloning expert once told me, "There are other ways of making people identical. We can put them through the same schools and subject them to eight hours of TV every day. That works a lot better."

In A Number a father has failed. He recognizes his failure and wants another chance. So he turns to cloning. He is trying to break through natural human boundaries, but he's misguided because he thinks genes are destiny. We don't really get second chances at parenting.

The cloning has negative consequences. Some of the copies of Salters's sons, their perception based more on the flawed relationship with their "father" than their status as clones, and by the idea that genes make sons and fathers, are troubled by the knowledge of being a clone.

But one has not. He has taken responsibility for himself, not relied on his genes to tell him who he is. This has allowed him to find comfort in his kinship not only with his clone brethren, but also with other humans, monkeys, even lettuce.

This is where we stand right now, juggled on one side by pessimists and on the other by optimists. The pessimists believe that, freed from the natural boundaries imposed by our biology, we will not choose wisely, that should Doug Melton ever make a monkey that talks to us, our own meaning will be destroyed.

The optimists do not believe "human" is so fragile. They see our conception of human as flexible, like jazz. This view is more difficult, of course. Departing from the original score also means we could drift. We've certainly done it before. To succeed with the new knowledge that we've been improvising will require responsibility, wisdom, and discipline. But this new concept of ourselves could prove all the stronger for its flexibility, because it will not rely on genes or "natural law" but on values like love, kinship, and, perhaps the most human feeling of all, hope.


THE MYSTERIES OF CARYL CHURCHILL

BY SARAH LYALL

Caryl Churchill is one of the most critically acclaimed playwrights in the English-speaking world, and perhaps the single most acclaimed female one, but she is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. In a world where serious playwrights constantly sit on panels, hold forth at academic conferences and appear on behalf of institutions like the British Council, Churchill remains a rare thing, a hugely successful playwright who lets her work speak entirely for itself.

Churchill is generally regarded with something close to awe in the London theater world for her passion, curiosity, rigor, openness to collaboration, and for being, as the critic Charles Spencer wrote in the Daily Telegraph, "the least predictable of contemporary playwrights." Her elusiveness can be maddening for those trying to understand her plays, which are elliptical, provocative, shocking, and increasingly pared down; they seem to cry out for a cool authoritative voice to help answer the questions they raise. But by the same token, it adds to her mystique and forces audiences, so often sozooed with official interpretations, to take some initiative. That is certainly the case with A Number, which premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 2002.

A slip of a play, only 65 minutes long, it has just two parts: Salters, a cuffed and defensive father, and three of his sons, clones of each other. On the surface, A Number is about the moral and personal implications of genetic engineering. But there is much more to it. In a barrage of tense, spare conversations between Salters and the sons, the work also explores sibling rivalry; the expectations and responsibilities of parents and children; nature versus nurture; and the essence of identity itself.

"Ms. Churchill is not offering us a debate on the ethics of cloning," the critic Michael Billington wrote in the Guardian. "What she does, in a series of fraught, emotional encounters, is use the scientific possibility to address basic human questions: above all, what is the source of that mysterious thing we call personality?"

Churchill stopped giving interviews years ago, but as to her personal details, this much is known: now 68 years old, she has been writing plays for more than 40 years. She was born in London in 1938, just before World War II broke out, and spent most of her teens in Montreal, where her family moved when she was ten. In 1957, she went to Oxford and began to write plays for student productions. Four years later, she married a barrister, David Harter. She wrote even while her three sons were small, mostly short radio plays, characterized by a necessary economy of style that carries through to her current plays.

But it was a difficult time, and she said later that she had been writing "depressed plays about depression."

"I was fed-up with the situation I found myself in in the 1960s," she said in an interview some years later. "I didn't like being a barrister's wife and going out to dinner with other professional people and dealing with middle-class life. It seemed claustrophobic. Having started off with undefined idealistic assumptions about the kind of life we could lead, we had drifted into something quite conventional and middle class and boring. By the mid 1960s, I had this gloomy feeling that when the Revolution came I would be swept away."

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Andrej Szczeklik,
Catharsis: On the Art of Medicine (2005)

In an interview in 1989, Churchill tried to explain, "I do enjoy the form of things," she said. "I enjoy finding the form that seems best to fit what I'm thinking about. I don't set out to find a bizarre way of writing. I certainly don't think that you have to force it. But on the whole, I enjoy plays that are non-naturalistic and don't move in real time."

She is also adored, and her privacy fiercely protected, by her friends in the theater world. She can be guarded, even with the directors who work with her, when it comes to the thought processes behind her plays. A strikingly handsome woman, she is strong and forceful and does not let people push her around in rehearsal, theater friends say, but she can be reticent when it comes to accounting for the plays themselves.

Still, directors love working with her because of her theatrical instincts and her willingness to use the text of her play as the starting point, rather than the endpoint, of a production.

"She's terrific in rehearsal," Stafford-Clark said. "Her theatrical intelligence—which is not the same thing as ordinary intelligence—is very astute. She doesn't have much ego, but she's quite forceful and stubborn about what she believes in."

Her work seems of its time and also timeless, Nicola said: "What excites me about A Number is that it is a 20th-century psychological drama re-imagined for the 21st century. As much as things may actually, physically change, the human drama is the same."

"It seems to be the great crime of the day, that we're dehumanized over and over again," Nicola added. "But she always tries to remind us that we're human and that we have souls."

Other British playwrights are known for their distinctive, consistent traits: Harold Pinter's plays are always Pinteresque; and Tom Stoppard invariably reveals himself with his erudition and clever, multilayered wordplay. But Churchill is a constant surprise.

"If you look at the arc of her creative life, she's someone in her sixties who is as out on the edge and willing to reinvent herself as she was in her twenties," Nicola said. "Most artists—whether painters or novelists or composers—find some sense of what their voices and concerns are in their twenties and thirties, and in their sixties and seventies they're still doing variations on it. But it's not true of her. She's as fresh and new and unpredictable and inspiring now as she was at the beginning of her working life."


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A Number
15
[c]loining really is a highly unnatural form of reproduction and will lead to equally unnatural relationships between parents and their children. A cloned child will be at the same time both the child and the twin of the parent from whom it inherits its genes but will have no blood relationship with the older parent at all. That parent will bring up a younger version of his or her spouse. The enthusiasts are already predicting that we’re going to take control of the biological side of our nature, no longer leaving it to ‘the blind powers of nature selection, and then we’ll be in the “posthuman world,” where we’ll mix human genes with the genes of other species, so in the end we won’t know what a human being is anymore.

However, do we really have to accept that sort of world under the false standard of freedoms? Do we have to regard ourselves as the slaves of inevitable technical progress? How should we define the border beyond which biotechnology should not be allowed to interfere in the human organism? What do we ultimately want to protect? The essence of our humanity, the heart of our human dignity, and the laws that arise from it? The notion of human dignity, a major theme of the pontificate of John Paul II, is staggeringly topical for us today, the border crossed by Asclepius, whose penalty was to be struck down by a thunderbolt, really does exist, however hard it is for our eyes to see.

Andrzej Szczeklik,
Catharsis: On the Art of Medicine (2005)

Capacity of landlords. But subjects plunged by her subsequent plays are so multifarious as to make it impossible to pin down her work. To name just a few, she takes on 1980s greed in Serious Money (1987); the steep price of women’s success in Top Girls (1982); the brief period of revolutionary idealism in 17th-century England in Light Shining in Buckinghamshires (1976); the limits of playwriting as a form, and of the ability of words to express meaning in Blue Heart (1997); the horror of a violent world in Far Away (2000).

“Though she has described herself as a socialist and a feminist, it is difficult to categorize Churchill,” the critic Benedict Nightingale wrote in the Times of London. “She is certainly not a preacher or a propagandist, while her mind is as wide ranging and unpredictable as her creative genius.”

Although their personal significances are hidden under her art, Churchill’s plays sometimes can provide personal clues as to who she is and what her contemporaneous obsessions are. Owners, which raises disturbing questions about motherhood and babies, for instance, was written in a three-day frenzy when Churchill had just come home from the hospital after “a particularly gruesome late miscarriage,” she revealed in an interview in 1980.

“It’s too familiar on the first time a lot of things that had been building up in me over a long time, political attitudes as well as personal ones,” Churchill said.

Similarly, Far Away—a dystopian play in which a child inadvertently sees her uncle henching prisoners into a barn and beating them, and later features a world at war and a grotesque parade of orange-clad condemned prisoners bizarrely dressed in elaborate hats—most likely has its roots in Churchill’s experience as a grandmother, said James C. Nicola, artistic director of New York Theater Workshop, which presented the U.S. premiere of A Number in 2004.

“I couldn’t help but look at the play as a response to Cary’s dealing with her love of her grandchildren and thinking, What do I say to them about this horrific world that we live in, and how can I prepare them for it without frightening or intimidating them?” he said.

If Churchill’s plays have one signature, it is their highly stylized conceits. The works are as creative in form as they are varied in content, as if she wants to push the boundaries each time. They feature, in different instances, flashbacks, twisted chronologies, huge leaps of logic, elements of absurdity, overlapping dialogue, different actors playing the same character in different scenes, interjected songs, and, in the case of Serious Money, dialogue written almost entirely in verse. “She is a structuralist,” said Max Stafford-Clark, artistic director of the Out of Joint theater company and longtime director of Churchill’s work. “It’s not just the range of subject matter, but also the form which is continually surprising to critics and audiences.”

In an interview in 1989, Churchill tried to explain, “I do enjoy the form of things,” she said. “I enjoy finding the form that seems best to fit what I’m thinking about. I don’t set out to find a bizarre way of writing. I certainly don’t think that you have to force it. But on the whole, I enjoy plays that are non-naturalistic and don’t move in real time.”

She is also adored, and her privacy fiercely protected, by her friends in the theater world. She can be guarded, even with the directors who work with her, when it comes to the thought processes behind her plays. A strikingly handsome woman, she is strong and forceful and does not let people push her around in rehearsals, theater friends say, but she can be reticent when it comes to accounting for the plays themselves.

Still, directors love working with her because of her theatrical instincts and her willingness to use the text of her play as the starting point, rather than the endpoint, of a production. “She’s terrific in rehearsal,” Stafford-Clark said. “Her theatrical intelligence—which is not the same thing as ordinary intelligence—is very acute. She doesn’t have much ego, but she’s quite forceful and stubborn about what she believes in.”

Her work seems of its time and also timeless, Nicola said: “What excites me about A Number is that it’s a 20th-century psychological drama re-imagined for the 21st century. As much as things may actually, physically change, the human drama is the same.”

“It seems to be the great crime of the day, that we’re dehumanized over and over again,” Nicola added. “But she always tries to remind us that we’re human and that we have soul.”

Other British playwrights are known for their distinctive, consistent traits: Harold Pinter’s plays are always Pinteresque; and Tom Stoppard invariably reveals himself with his erudition and clever, multilayered wordplay. But Churchill is a constant surprise.

“If you look at the arc of her creative life, she’s someone in her sixties who is as out on the edge and willing to reinvent herself as she was in her twenties,” Nicola said. “Most artists—whether painters or novelists or composers—find some sense of what their voices and concerns are in their twenties and thirties, and in their sixties and seventies they’re still doing variations on it. But it’s not true of her. She’s as fresh and new and unpredictable and inspiring now as she was at the beginning of her working life.”

WHO’S WHO IN A NUMBER

JOSH CHARLES  (Salter’s Son) recently appeared in the world premiere of Richard Greenberg’s The Well-Appointed Room with the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. Other theater credits include the U.S. premiere of Neil Labute’s The Distance from Here (MCC Theatre/Tramway Desk Award, outstanding ensemble), A Dance Lesson (Long Wharf Theatre), and Confrontation, by Jonathan Marc Sherman (Club Oasis). Upcoming films include The Darvins Awards and Fast Track. Other film credits include Four Brothers, Seeing Other People, S.W.A.T., The Gracie, Pie in the Sky, Coldblooded, Little City, Things to Do in Denver When You’re Dead, Three Kings, Crossing the Bridge, Dead Poets Society, and Hairspay (in which he made his film debut at the age of 15). On television, he has appeared in the films Murder in Mississippi, Cooperstown, Norma Jean and Marilyn, and Our America and starred as Dan Rydell in the acclaimed series “Sports Night.”

WHO’S WHO

GABRIEL MARIN (Understudy) most recently appeared at A.C.T. as Doctor Baugh in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Other A.C.T. credits include A Doll’s House, Glenroy, Don Rosso, The Tempest, Mary Stuart, Full Moon, and The Royal Family. Bay Area credits also include work at San Jose Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, TheatreWorks, Marin Theatre Company, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and Thick Description. Carpenter has performed at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in more than 30 productions, most recently in The People’s Temple. He is an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theatre, where he appeared recently as Ralph NIchols in The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby. Out-of-town credits include productions at Arizona Theatre Company, Dallas Theatre Center, and the Huntington Theatre Company. Film and television credits include The Raisermaker, Metro, Singing, The Sunflower Bay, and appearances on “Nash Bridges.”

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BILLY SMITROVICH (Salter) appeared on Broadway in the world premiere of Arthur Miller’s The American Clock. Off-Broadway and regional theater credits include The Winter’s Tale, The Skin of Our Teeth, and the world premiere of A. R. Gurney’s Fair East (all at the Williamsstown Theatre Festival; Fair East went on to Lincoln Center) and Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune (New York’s Westside Arts Theatre), as well as numerous performances at a wide variety of venues, including Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Hong Kong International Arts Festival, Long Wharf Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and The Classic Theatre. Upcoming films include The Contract and Heaven’s Fall. Other film credits include Mrs. Harris, Thirteen Days, Air Force One, The Ghosts of Mississippi, The Phantom, The Trigger Effect, and Independence Day. Smitrovich has appeared on television in Law & Order, Numbers, Fat Actress, NYPPD Blue, Nash Bridges, Without a Trace, The Practice, Nero Wolfe, “Millennium,” Crime Story, and “Life Goes On,” among many others.

CARYL CHURCHILL (Playwright) is one of Britain’s leading playwrights. She has written numerous plays for the Royal Court Theatre, London, and for a number of leading theater companies, including Monstrous Regiment, Joint Stock, and Second Stage. Her plays also include Owners, Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Cloud Nines, Top Girls, Fm, Serious Money, Mad Forest, The Striker, Hotel, This Is a Chair, Blue Heart, and For Ayush.

ANNA D. SHAPIRO (Director) recently joined the Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble, with whom she has directed Bruce Norris’s The Pain and the Itch and Purple Heart (also in Galway, Ireland), Robert Anderson’s I Never Sang for My Father, Brooke Berman’s Until We Find Each Other, Michael Healey’s The Draugr Bay, Warren Leight’s Side Man (also in Ireland, Australia, and Vail, Colorado), Richard Greenberg’s Three Days of Rain, and the world premieres of Tracy Letts’s Man from Nebraska, Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros’s The Ordinaries Yearning of Miriam Buddhism, and綜町絵の《月》. Other credits include The Draugr Bay with ensemble member John Mahoney at the Papermill Playhouse, Iron at Manhattan Theatre Club, Jon Robin Brown’s A Fair Country at the Huntington Theatre Company, The Infidel at Philadelphia Theatre Company, and Edwin Sanchez’s Trickfagen in Broken Hearts for the Atlantic Theatre Company. Shapiro is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and the recipient of a 1996 Princess Grace Award. She joined the faculty of Northwestern University as head of the graduate directing program in theater in the fall of 2002.

DAVID KORINS (Set/Scenic Designer) designed Bridge and Tunnel on Broadway. Select New York credits include Living Room in Africa, Orange Flower Water (Drama Desk Award nomination), Blackbird (Drama Desk nomination and Hewes Design Award), and Stone Cold Dead Serious, all for the award-winning Edge Theatre Company, which Korins cofounded in 2001; the world premiere of Christopher Durang’s Mio Wibercome (Playwrights Horizons and McCarter Theatre); Praise Stroud (The Public Theater); Tryp (PennMooread Theatre); Dog See God (Century Center for the Performing Arts); Oedipus at Palm Springs (New York Theatre Workshop); Swimming in the Shallows (Second Stage Theatre); Lucile Lortel Award nomination); Terrorism (The New Group/The Play Company); Them Pain (based on nothing) and Indoor/Outdoor (The Daryl Roth Theatre); and the world premiere of Sam Shepard’s The God of Hell (The New School). Regional credits include productions at the Huntington Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and more.

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WHO’S WHO

GABRIEL MARIN
(Understudy) most recently appeared in the West Coast premiere of Our Lady of 121st Street at the SF Playhouse. He has been seen in A.C.T.’s First Look series as Szymon in Warsaw and as Guy in La Bella Familia; he was also the understudy for Brick in A.C.T.’s Geary Theatre production of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Marin has appeared with Aurora Theatre Company, The Actors’ Gang, Chicago Dramatists, Marin Theatre Company, The Playhouse, the Bay Area Playwrights Foundation, Traveling Jewish Theatre, PlayGround, The Open Fist Theatre Company, The Z Space Studio, the Magic Theatre, Word for Word, Thic Description, and Central Works Theatre Ensemble. Marin will next appear in The Baseball Plays with Z Space. He is a former member of the A.C.T. Young Conservatory.

CARLY CHURCHILL
(Playwright) is one of Britain’s leading playwrights. She has written numerous plays for the Royal Court Theatre, London, and for a number of leading theater companies, including Druids Reps, Joint Stock, and Second Stage. Her plays include Outliers, Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Cloud Nine, Top Girls, Fun, Serious Money, Mud Forest, The Striker, Hotel, This Is a Chair, Blue Heart, and For Aisy.

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Who's Who

Rentals supervisor for A.C.T. Upcoming projects include Twelfth Night for Foothill Theatre Company/Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival.

RUSSELL H. CHAMPA (Lighting Designer) has designed Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Hypocrite, Inheritance, and Waiting for Godot at A.C.T. Recent and current designs include Witness at the Mark Taper Forum, The Other Side at Manhattan Theatre Club, and the 2006 Hothouse Festival at the Magic Theatre. He also designed Julia Stiles' God Said ‘Ha!’ at the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway. Other New York theaters for which Chapman has designed include Manhattan Theatre Club, Classic Stage Company, New York Stage & Film, the Promenade Theatre, the Union Square Theatre, and La MaMa ETC. Regionally, he has designed for Trinity Repertory Company, McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, ACT Theatre, Seattle, California Shakespeare Theatre, The Actors’ Gang, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, The Shakespeare Theatre, The Wilma Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

ROB MILBURN & MICHAEL BODEEN (Sound Designer) composed music and sound for A.C.T. productions of The Time of Your Life and Dark Rapture and designed sound for The Gospel at Colonus. Broadway credits include music composition and sound for One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest and The Speed of Darkness, music for My Thing of Love, and sound for A Year with Frog and Toad, Mr. Rainey’s Black Bottom, Hollywood Arms, King Hedley II, Buried Child, The Song of Jacob Zulu, and The Grapes of Wrath. Off Broadway credits include music and sound for Boy Gets Girl, Red, Space, and Marvin’s Room.

The acts and stage designers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Who's Who

Milburn and Boden have also created music and sound at many of America’s resident theaters (often with Chicago’s Goodman and Steppenwolf theaters) and at several international venues.

MERYL LIND SHAW (Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for the Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of White Christmas, Jumpy, and Picasso at the Lapin Agile, as well as the first workshop of The Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-Rom game Obsidian. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she stage-managed more than 60 productions in theatres throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.’s Creators and Bon Appetite! She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She has served on the Bay Area advisory committee of Actors’ Equity Association, the negotiating committee for the LORT contract (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival.

ELISA GUTHERTZ (Stage Manager) most recently worked at A.C.T. on this season’s Sonial Perruchet in Chicago. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Wolf, The Good Body, Lover Lajan, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Miraculous, Long Day’s Journey into Night, Zariff, Mary Stuart, The Rose Tattoo, and A Streetcar Named Desire. She has also stage-managed The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer, Rhinoceros, Big Love, Civil Sex, Collected Stories, and Cloud Tactics at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include Eve Ensler’s The Good Body at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Big Love at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and The Vagina Monologues at the Acutar Theatre.

KATHERINE Riemann (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked on productions of Gem of the Ocean, Hilda, A Christmas Carol, Lovers James, The Constant Wife, American Buffalo, Frank Lazarus’s Hans Christian Andersen, Shbebhead Peter, The House of Mirth, The Decameron of Love, and Wrong Mountain for A.C.T. She has also worked on productions of Our Town, Cloud Nine, Culture Clash in America, and The Oresteia for Berkeley Repertory Theatre and on The Importance of Being Earnest and Much Ado about Nothing for California Shakespeare Theater.
WHO’S WHO

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American Conservatory Theater
A.C.T. Profiles

CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 14th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed A.C.T.'s acclaimed productions of A Christmas Carol (a new adaptation by Perloff with dramaturg Paul Walsh), David Mamet's new adaptation of Granville-Barker’s The Voyes Inheritances, Tom Stoppard's The Real Thing, Constance Congdon's A Mother, (an A.C.T.-commissioned adaptation of Gorey's The Assimilator), Ibsen's A Doll's House, Beckett's Waiting for Godot, Stoppard's Night and Day, and Chodhry's Three Sisters. Her production of Maria Nijimbere's visionaries new work Hula, coproduced at A.C.T.'s second space (Zoom) with Laura Pels Productions, traveled to Washington D.C.'s Studio Theater and then to New York's 59E59 Theatre last fall. She was recently awarded France’s Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has directed for A.C.T. the premieres of Stoppard’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Pinter’s Celebration and The Room, A.C.T.-commissioned translations of Horace, The Misanthrope, Ennio IV, Mary Stuart, and Uncle Vanya; the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Boy; and acclaimed productions of The Threepenny Opera, Old Times, Arcadia, The Rose Tattoo, Antigone, Cruikshank, Home, and The Tempest. Her work at A.C.T. also includes the world premieres of Bran Betzien’s Nine for a Number, David Lang/MacWellman’s The Disfigured of God’s Field, and at the West Coast premieres of her own play The Colloids of Rhode (a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award). Her play Luminous Dating was developed under a grant from the Ensemble Studio Theatre/A}lfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project, was workshopped at New York Stage and Film, premiered in New York in April 2005 as the mainstage offering of the First Light Festival at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, and will be produced by Dramatists Play Service this fall. Her new play, Waiting for the Flood, was completed as part of A.C.T.'s First Look festival in January. She has collaborated with many notable contemporary writers, most recently Philip Kan Gotanda on his new play after the War (an A.C.T. commission) at the Sundance Institute in July 2004 and Robert O'Hara on Amsterdam for the 2005 O'Neill Playwright Conference.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premières of Euripides’ Electra, the American première of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, direction, and design, and as well as the 1998 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world première of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s Opera The Cave at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Perloff received a B.A. in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tsich 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. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director), since joining A.C.T. in 1996, has strengthened the organization’s infrastructure and overseen the company’s expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.’s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in the tourism and production management range across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credits include the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, Theatre New Brunswick, New Play Centre, Vancouver, and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of The Citadel Theatre, Kitchen managed a five-theater performing arts complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, an International Children’s Festival, and a Teen Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the benchmark study Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton. An active community member, Kitchen serves on the boards and executive committees of the Commonwealth Club of California, as well as the board of the National Corporate Theatre Fund in New York. She is a past member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula, and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in Edmonton and has served three terms on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, Canada Council of the Arts, and Forba magazine's business and the Arts Awards. The San Francisco Business Times recently named Kitchen one of the 15 most influential women in the Bay Area nonprofit arena.

MELISSA SMITH (Founding Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T., in addition to serving as the master acting teacher of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T., Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University where she has been an associate professor for six years. She has worked with people of all ages in venues around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actor, she has performed in numerous off-off-Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including A.C.T. In 2004 she toured London and Birmingham (UK) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of Continental Divide. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

JAMES HAIRE (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theatre. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little and Georgie (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen’s Don’t Drink the Water. Off Broadway he produced Ibsen’s Little Eyolf (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw’s Arms and the Man. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theater Crafts Internationally’s award of the year in 1989, and in 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle.

GALLERY AT THE GEARY

PAUL JERMANN: RECENT PAINTINGS AND COLLAGES

"LIFE" BY PAUL JERMANN (OPPOSITE) ON CASSAD, 2005

If you can live it, you can buy it. So now you can buy it too. You can buy it through this artist. The artist is Paul Jermann, and the painting is called "LIFE." The painting is situated at the Geary Theatre, which is located at 485 Geary Street in San Francisco. The painting is a vibrant collection of recent paintings and collages by renowned California artist, illustrator, and graphic designer Paul Jermann, who is on view at the Geary Theatre April 28-July 9.

After studying fine art at the School of Applied Arts in Vienna and the California College of Arts and Crafts, Jermann spent 20 years as a graphic designer and illustrator in Los Angeles and San Francisco. His design and illustration clients have included Walt Disney Pictures, Warner Bros., Miramax, Paramount Pictures, Touchstone Pictures, Sprint, Pacific Bell, the L.A. Zoo, Portal Publications, and the Boston Globe. His work has won awards from Print, Creativity, The Art Directors Club of Los Angeles, and The Art Directors Club of San Diego.

Jermann now lives in San Francisco and has focused during the last five years on his fine art, particularly his colorful, energetic acrylic paintings and dynamic collages.

The artist will attend an opening reception at the Geary Theatre on Thursday, May 4, 4:30-7:00 p.m. Each Gallery at the Geary artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For more information about Paul Jermann, please visit the gallery at thegeary.com or www.PaulJermann.com or contact Kevin Simmons at 415.474.1066 / ksimmons@pauljermann.com.
CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 14th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed A.C.T.’s acclaimed productions of A Christmas Carol (a new adaptation by Perloff with dramaturgy by Paul Walsh), David Mamet’s new adaptation of Granville-Barker’s The Voysey Inheritance, Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing, Constance Guideroli’s A Mother (a C.T.-commissioned adaptation of Gorzy’s Vasa Zlatezna), Isabelle’s Doll’s House, Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, Stoppard’s Night and Day, and Chokhov’s Three Sisters. Her production of Maria Nijima’s visionary new work Hilda, coproduced at A.C.T.’s second space (Zoom) with Laura Pels Productions, traveled to Washington D.C.’s Studio Theatre and then to New York’s 59E59 Theatre last fall. She was recently awarded France’s Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has directed for A.C.T., the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and others. She has also directed productions of Sophocles’ The Inventors of Love and Indian Doll and Pinter’s Celebration and The Room. A.C.T.’s recent productions of Hedda, The Misantrophes, Enron IV, Mary Stuart, and Uncle Vanya; the world premiere of Leslie Aykina’s Singer’s Boy; and acclaimed productions of The Threepenny Opera, Old Times, Arcadia, The Rose Tattoo, Antigone, Creditor, Home, and The Tempest. Her work at A.C.T. also includes the world premieres of MBlizstein’s No for an Answer, David Lang/McWillies’ The Difflugion of Field, and the West Coast premiere of her own play Topol’s The Colossus of Rhodes (a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award). Her play Luminous Dating was developed under a grant from The Ensemble Studio Theatre/April P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project, was workshopped at New York Stage and Film, premiered in New York in April 2005 as the mainstage offering of the First Light Festival at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, and will be performed by Dramatists Play Service this fall. Her new work, Waiting for the Flood, was commissioned as part of A.C.T.’s First Look Festival in January. She has collaborated with many notable contemporary writers, most recently Philip

Kan Gotanda on his new play after the War (an A.C.T. commission) at the Sundance Institute in July 2004 and Robert O’Hara on Amsterdam for the 2005 O’Neill Playwrights Conference.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Eura Pond’s Elders, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, direction, and design, as well as the 1998 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.

Perloff received a B.A. in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tsich 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. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director) since joining A.C.T. in 1996, has strengthened the organization’s infrastructure and oversees the company’s expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.’s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in the arts, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credits include the Stanford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, Theatre New Brunswick, New Play Festival, Vancouver, and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of The Citadel Theatre, Kitchen managed a five-theater performing arts complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, an International Children’s Festival, and a Teen Festival. As a member of the executive committee of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen authored the benchmark study Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton. An active community member, Kitchen serves on the boards and executive committees of the Commonwealth Club of California, as well as the boards of the National Corporate Theatre Fund in New York. She is a past member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Red Cross, the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters, San Francisco and the Peninsula, and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in Edmonton and has served three terms on the executive committee of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, Canada Council of the Arts, and Forba magazine’s business and the Arts Awards. The San Francisco Business Times recently named Kitchen one of the 15 most influential women in the Bay Area nonprofit arena.

MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T., in addition to serving as the master acting teacher of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T., Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University for the American premiering for six years. She has worked with people of all ages in venues around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actor, she has performed in numerous off-off Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including A.C.T. In 2004 she toured London and Birmingham (U.K.) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of Continental Divide. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theatre from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

JAMES HAIRE (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theatre. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of A Day Miss Read and Drinks a Little and Georgy (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen’s Don’t Drink the Water. Off Broadway he produced Isabelle’s Little Eyolf (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw’s Arms and the Man. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theater Crafts Internationally award of excellence in the theater in 1989, and in 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle.

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Sinc since its first season in San Francisco in 1967, American Conservatory Theater has been bringing extraordinary theatrical experiences to Bay Area audiences and providing quality acting training for people of all ages and skill levels in its nationally renowned conservatory. As the company embarks on its 40th anniversary season, A.C.T. is pleased to announce the launch of The Next Generation Campaign to secure its future for the next generation of theater artists.

The Next Generation Campaign will establish an endowment of $25 million to provide with the financial wings necessary to soar to new artistic heights in the years ahead. With more than $13.5 million in commitments to date, A.C.T. is off to a resounding start and invites its loyal patrons to join us in staging the future of theater for generations to come.

For more information, contact Jenn Chapin at 415.439.2464 or jchapin@act-s.org.
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The following members of the A.C.T. community, whose names have been added to the donor roll, have made gifts through their estates:

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corporate MATCH GIFTS

The following corporations have generously matched gifts made by their employees to A.C.T., multiplying the impact of three contributions. A.C.T. extends our gratitude to these corporations and invites all their employees to join in supporting theater in the San Francisco Bay Area:

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National Corporate Theatre Fund is a nonprofit organization created to increase and strengthen support for theater businesses that are considered to be the most distinguished professional theaters. The following foundations of which A.C.T. is a member, and corporate sponsors support theaters through their contributions of $100,000 or more to National Corporate Theatre Fund:

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Written and Directed by Craig Slatigh Choreography by Christine Mattison Musical Direction by Krista Wiga Musical Arrangements by Robert Rutt June 2–25, 2006, Zeum Theater

Left to right: DeWayne Wilson, Alonzo Y Lumumbas, Jason Speed, Fuaa Lauraume, Jillian Stinnett, Kim C. Fredericks, Andrew McColl, Arian Farna, Joel Tannahill, G. S. Kimble, Claire McPherson, Dena J. Wood, Amari Parker

26 American Conservatory Theater A Number 27
A.C.T. Young Conservatory Extends Its Reach

Seeking a wider reach for its renowned New Plays Program, in 1999 the A.C.T. Young Conservatory inaugurated a joint venture with the prestigious National Theatre in London with the idea of collaborating on new plays and productions for young actors. That partnership has generated several new plays by leading playwrights from both sides of the Atlantic, including Bryony Lavery, Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Daniels, Timothy Mason, and Constance Congdon.

In 2003, the YC extended its reach to form a similar association with Theatre Royal Bath (TRB). The first co-commission by A.C.T. and TRB was A Far Day, by Atlanta playwright Jim Grimsley. Much like the model developed with the National Theatre, the new venture brought young actors from TRB to San Francisco, where they spent two weeks working on the play and studying in the YC, while staying with families of A.C.T. students. They then returned to Bath and presented the new play to UK audiences. A.C.T. subsequently produced the play at Zeum Theatre in San Francisco in November 2003.

In 2004, the two theaters swapped roles to complete the cycle, as A.C.T. coordinated the second new production, Broken Helioshyde, by British playwright Sharron MacDonald, which premiered at A.C.T. in June 2005. Theatre Royal Bath also produced the new play in its home theater.

The second two-year round of collaborations began last summer, when ten young actors were in residence at A.C.T., working on a third new play, Nightingales (about American and British nurses in World War II), co-commissioned from Constance Congdon (author of A.C.T.'s The Misanthrope and A Mother). Nightingales premiered at Zeum in March. As the YC continues its international expansion, this summer select YC actors and director will be in residence in Zurich, Switzerland, where a new collaborative link has been established between the YC and the Hochschule Musik und Theater. The play is the fruit of the YC's commissions in languages and English, and will be written by Swiss playwright Paul Steinnmann and directed by A.C.T.'s Domenic Lonzo.
For Your Information

Administrative Offices
A.C.T.'s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108; 415.884.3200. On the Web: www.act.org.

Box Office and Ticket Information
Geary Theater Box Office
Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square. Box office hours are 12-6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12-4 p.m. Sunday and Monday. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12-6 p.m. daily. Call 415.749.2427 and use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our Web site at www.act.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance scheduling privileges and last-minute ticket insurance. Subscriptions available by calling 415.749.2290. A.C.T. certificate can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person at the box office.

Discounts
Half-price tickets are sometimes available on the day of performance at TIX on Union Square. Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the box office two hours before curtain. Matinee senior rush tickets are available at noon on the day of the performance for $10. All rush tickets are subject to availability and may be subject to a $5 service fee. Student and senior citizens subscriptions are also available. A.C.T. offers one Pay What You Wish performance during the regular run of each production.

Group Discounts
For groups of 15 or more, call Edward Bushwhack at 415.439.2473.

At the Theater
The Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary Street. The auditorium opens 30 minutes before curtain. The lobby opens one hour before curtain. Bar service and refreshments are available one hour prior to curtain.

A.C.T. Merchandise
A.C.T.-branded souvenirs—clothing, jewelry, DVDs, mugs, and other novelty items—as well as books, scripts, and Wind in the Pines, are on sale at the souvenirs desk in the main lobby and at the Geary Theater Box Office.

Refreshments
Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available one hour before the performance in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level and the Sky Bar on the third level. There is also a main-bar in the main lobby. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preselling food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. Food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium.

Beepers!
If you carry a pager, beeper, cellular phone, or watch with alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater. Text messaging during the performance is very disruptive and not allowed.

Perfumes
The chemicals found in perfumes, colognes, and second-hand deodorants, even in small amounts, can cause severe physical reactions in some individuals. As a courtesy to fellow patrons, please avoid the use of these products when you attend the theater.

Emergency Telephone
Leave your seat location with those who may need to reach you and have them call 415.439.2296 in an emergency.

Latecomers
A.C.T. performances begin on time. Latecomers will be seated before the first intermission only if there is an appropriate interval.

Listening Systems
Headsets designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium are available free of charge in the lobby before performance. Please turn off your hearing aid when using an A.C.T. headset, as it will react to the sound system and make a disruptive noise.

Photographs and recordulns of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

Restrooms
Restrooms are located in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level, the Balcony Lobby, and the Garret on the uppermost lobby level.

Wheelchair seating is available on all levels of the Geary Theater. Please call 415.749.2427 in advance to notify the house staff of any special needs.

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is now available on site.

Affiliations
A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Grandiose Bay, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the Gram for the Arts/ San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.
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Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours a day on our Web site at www.act.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy performance scheduling privileges and last-minute ticket insurance. Subscriptions available by calling 415.749.2250. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person at the box office.

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A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-629 of the IATSE.

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