NOVEMBER
★ BY DAVID MAMET ★
DIRECTED BY RON LAGOMARSINO

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A.C.T. nurtures the 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, 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 performance and training in 1979. During the past four decades, more than 320 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of more than seven million people; today, A.C.T.’s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 230,000 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 2001, 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 (now the American Conservatory Theater) in 1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable period of audience expansion and financial stability. In 2001, A.C.T. began 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 interaction.

The conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, 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, Denzel Washington, and Elizabeth Banks 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.

American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.
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Dear Friends,

It is astonishingly hard to truly laugh about what is going on in the American political arena today. But somehow David Mamet makes us do exactly that in his outrageous new farce November. A writer of ruthless wit, Mamet is an equal opportunity attacker, skewering every special interest group with relentless glee as he imagines what really goes on during an average day in the Oval Office. I first saw this play in New York last season, and of course as I was watching it I began to visualize our own core company in the roles. I couldn’t wait to see René Augeesen take on the fierce and hilarious lesbian speechwriter, Clarice Bernstein, with her newly adopted Chinese baby and her longing to marry her girlfriend on national television. I pictured Anthony Fusco trying to keep a lid on the insane shenanigans as Chief of Staff Archer, and Steven Anthony Jones (who is indeed part Cherokee!) as the aggrieved Native American chief whom the president wishes to bribe into making codfish the official Thanksgiving meat. Once we knew Manoel Felciano was joining our company, we concocted the idea of him playing the Representative of the National Association of Turkey and Turkey By-products Manufacturers, whose much-maligned birds are waiting outside the Oval Office to be pardoned by the president. And when it came time to cast the president, we could think of no one more perfect than Andy Polk, who dazzled us all with his over-caffeinated Charlie Fox in Mamet’s Speed-the-Plow two seasons ago. So we were off and running.

Directing this political prank is longtime favorite Ron Lagomarsino, who helmed The Gamester and The Imaginary Invalid for us and has a marvelous working relationship with our whole company. What he loved the most when he read November was that beneath the snarky surface lies a surprisingly trenchant exposé of political expedience and the hypocrisy of public discourse. He relished the challenge of getting into the rehearsal room with this text and these actors, and I can’t remember a first read-through quite as hilarious as this one—despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that we are caught up in so many seemingly intractable political quagmires today.

It has been a thrilling fall at A.C.T., as we have enjoyed overwhelming response to our season opener, Brief Encounter, and started the year having exceeded our subscription goals, while introducing our exciting new 10UP program in the second balcony. Interestingly, the joyful imagination of the Kneehigh Theatre company (creators of Brief Encounter) was echoed in the halls of our studios this September, when we welcomed back our M.F.A. Program students with a new creative explosion called The Leap. (See “Inside A.C.T.” on page 17 for details.) By the end of that two-day workshop, we had watched moments of beautiful invention, inspired silliness, total confusion, and exquisite emotion. We began to feel the boundaries between students and teachers, actors and directors, staff and artists melt away, and to understand how the inspired work of the Kneehigh company had grown out of a similar commitment to the core values of play, experimentation, vulnerability, and collaboration. It was a wonderful and charged way to begin the year.

As always, we want to remind you that coming to A.C.T. is more than seeing a play: it is diving into an intense discussion with a group of psychoanalysts at Theater on the Couch; it is watching a new play tackled by rising M.F.A. Program stars at Zeum; it is listening to our talented teens sing their hearts out at a Young Conservatory cabaret; it is reading our blogs and responding to our chats; it is engaging with provocative literature and sharing the joys and sorrows of life with like-minded people all around you. I am always sad that our audience can’t experience firsthand the ferment that goes on within our studios as our students learn and our actors create, day after day. But we hope that some of that energy comes across to you, from our stages, in the pages of our dramaturgy, online, and when you encounter all of us at the theater. We have many adventures in store for you this season, and we’re deeply grateful to have you along for the ride.

Enjoy November!

Yours,

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director
A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by Charles Dickens  Adapted by Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh
Music by Karl Lundeberg  Choreography by Val Caniparoli
Directed by Domenique Lozano  Based on the original direction by Carey Perloff

“THIS IS A CAROL BUILT TO BANISH ‘BAH HUMBUGS’ FOR YEARS TO COME”

Oakland Tribune

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THIS JANUARY AT A.C.T.

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WORLD PREMIERE

PHÈDRE

By Jean Racine
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Worthemaker
Directed by Cary Sperotto

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A.C.T. presents

NOVEMBER

by David Mamet
Directed by Ron Lagomarsino

Scenery by Erik Flatmo
Costumes by Alex Jaeger
Lighting by Alexander V. Nichols
Sound by Cliff Caruthers
Dramaturgy by Michael Paller
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw
Artistic Line Producer Mark Rucker
Assistant Director Claire Zawa

THE CAST
(in order of appearance)
Charles Smith Andrew Polk
Archer Brown Anthony Fusco
A Representative of the National Association of Turkey Manoel Felciano
and Turkey By-products Manufacturers René Augesen
Clarice Bernstein Steven Anthony Jones
Dwight Grackle

UNDERSTUDIES
Charles Smith, Archer Brown, A Representative of the National Association of Turkey
and Turkey By-products Manufacturers, Dwight Grackle—Andrew Hurteau; Clarice Bernstein—Jeri Lynn Cohen

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Elisa Guthertz, Stage Manager
Heath Belden, Assistant Stage Manager
Stephanie Schliemann, Assistant Stage Manager

SETTING
An office

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

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November was first presented by Jeffrey Richards, Jerry Frankel, Jam Theatricals, Bat-Barry Productions, Michael Cohl, Ergo Entertainment, Michael Filerman, Ronald Frankel, Barbara and Buddy Freitag, James Fuld, Jr., Roy Furman, JK Productions, Harold Thau, Jamie deRoy/Ted Snowdon, and Wendy Federman at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, Broadway, opening January 17, 2008.
“SELL A COUPLE PARDONS, CALL IT A DAY.”

The following list includes some of the most notable pardons in U.S. history, as well as the total acts of clemency granted by certain presidents. The presidential power of clemency includes the ability to grant a full pardon, commute a sentence, and/or remit a fine for any federal offense.

GEORGE WASHINGTON (16)
Tom the Tinker, leader of the Whiskey Rebellion; first pardon granted by a U.S. president

JAMES MADISON (196)
Jean LaFitte and the Baratarian pirates

ANDREW JOHNSON (unknown)
All Confederate soldiers
Conspirators in Lincoln assassination

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (3,687)
David Tavan, bootlegger

HARRY S. TRUMAN (2,044)
Oscar Collazo, attempted assassin
Japanese Americans who resisted the draft during World War II

RICHARD M. NIXON (926)
Jimmy Hoffa, labor leader

GERALD R. FORD (409)
Richard Nixon
Confederate general Robert E. Lee
Iva Toguri D’Aquino (“Tokyo Rose”), broadcaster of Japanese propaganda during World War II, the only U.S. citizen convicted of treason to be pardoned

JIMMY CARTER (366)
G. Gordon Liddy, mastermind of Watergate burglary
Vietnam draft evaders
Confederate President Jefferson Davis

RONALD REAGAN (406)
George Steinbrenner, New York Yankees owner, illegal contributor to Nixon campaign
W. Mark Felt and Edward S. Miller, FBI officials who authorized illegal break-ins
Junior Johnson, moonshiner and NASCAR superstar

GEORGE H. W. BUSH (77)
Reagan officials involved in the Iran-Contra affair

BILL CLINTON (459)
His brother, Roger Clinton, Jr., cocaine possession
Patty Hearst, socialite hostage and bank robber
Marc Rich, fugitive billionaire pardoned in the last few hours of Clinton’s presidency after donating $450,000 to the president’s library
Henry O. Flipper, black army officer convicted of “conduct unbecoming an officer” in 1882

GEORGE W. BUSH (200)
Lewis “Scooter” Libby, CIA leak scandal (sentence commuted)
May and Flower, Stars and Stripes, Liberty and Freedom, Biscuits and Gravy, Marshmallow and Yam, Flyer and Fryer—turkeys

TURKEY PARDONING TIMELINE
1863 or ‘64 Lincoln supposedly spares son Tad’s pet turkey.
1947 Truman receives a Christmas turkey from the National Turkey Federation and Poultry and Egg National Board. He eats it.
1963 Just days before his own assassination, Kennedy spares a turkey, saying, “We’ll just let this one grow. It’s our Thanksgiving present to him.”
1987 Reagan is the first president to use the word “pardon” in regards to a gifted turkey, but only to deflect queries about Iran-Contra affair pardons.
1989 Bush senior saves “Big and Stupid” in the first National Turkey Pardoning Ceremony. Two birds—the National Turkey and the Alternate National Turkey—have received presidential pardons every November since.

SOURCE FOR PARDON STATISTICS: HTTP://WWW.USDOJ.GOV/PARDON/ACTIONS_ADMINISTRATION.HTM.
OVAL OFFICE The Oval Office was originally constructed in 1909, during the Taft administration, and reconstructed (and moved to its present location in the West Wing) in 1933. Oval rooms were commonly featured in many of the federal-style homes and buildings constructed in the early years of American democracy. George Washington, for example, enjoyed entertaining in the two oval rooms of his Philadelphia home, which allowed him to take up a position of honor in the center of the room with each of his guests an equal distance from him.

PHONES For security reasons, cordless and wireless phones are prohibited in the Oval Office. Mobile devices like BlackBerries and iPhones are confiscated before visitors enter the room. There is no wi-fi in the White House.

THE FIXIN’S Since the Truman administration, most presidents have hired top New York designers, but George W. and Laura Bush hired a decorator out of Fort Worth to tone down the colors brought in by Bill and Hillary Clinton’s Arkansas designer. In January 2009, the Obama family announced that Santa Monica designer Michael S. Smith would redecorate the White House living quarters. Erik Flatmo’s scenic design incorporates gold curtains from the Clinton administration, but many of the details are based on the recent Bush administration’s décor, including the sunburst rug, striped fabric covering the sofas, and generally Western aesthetic.

RESOLUTE DESK Many presidents have used the Resolute desk in the Oval Office. It was made from timbers of the HMS Resolute, an abandoned British ship discovered by an American vessel and returned to the queen of England as a token of friendship. Queen Victoria later commissioned the desk from William Evenden and presented it to Rutherford Hayes in 1880. The desk has twice been modified. Franklin Roosevelt requested that the kneehole be fitted with a modesty panel carved with the presidential seal so people could not see his leg braces. Harry Truman had an eagle motif installed on the panel in 1945.

WHAT THE PRESIDENTS THOUGHT Gerald Ford said the White House was “the best public housing I’ve ever seen.” Harry Truman referred to the White House as a “glamorous prison,” the “great white sepulchre of ambitions,” and the “taxpayers’ house.” Thomas Jefferson once described the presidency as “a splendid misery,” and Andrew Jackson called it “dignified slavery.”
HOW MANY AMERICANS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHTBULB?

David Mamet’s United States of Practicality

BY DAN RUBIN

In 1976, playwright David Mamet was working as a contributing editor with Oui magazine. Among his other duties, he wrote captions for cartoons, as well as puns, gags, and one-liners. It was in this capacity that he penned what he calls “the American joke”:

How many Americans does it take to change a lightbulb?
One.

Mamet’s America is built upon a pragmatic and determined work ethic he first witnessed in his hometown, Chicago. Many of his characters are relentless in their pursuit of the American dream—which Mamet defines as personal materialistic success—while many of his plays are, at their core, reiterations of a statement he made to a reporter in 1982: “The American Dream has gone bad.”

Despite his preoccupation with American identity, Mamet long resisted the idea that his plays deal with politics. In a 1995 interview with Playboy he claimed, “My plays are not political. They’re dramatic. I don’t believe that the theater is a good venue for political argument. Not because it is wrong but because it doesn’t work very well.” When asked how his political views influence his fictional writing for theater, television, and film, Mamet usually dodges. For example, in a 2005 interview about his television series The Unit (about a top-secret U.S. military force), he was asked for his opinions on the war in Iraq—“I have very strong feelings but I don’t think it’s appropriate to air them”—and President George W. Bush—“It would be impolite of me to subject your readership to my thoughts on politics. It’s like a kid asking for a bedtime story and my explaining that once there were three bears, and then going on about bears down through history.”

Even during interviews around the time of November’s January 2008 Broadway opening, he asserted, “I’m not the guy to ask about politics. I’m a gag writer.” The interviewer pointed out that Mamet had been airing his political views for years in books and on the syndicated online Huffington Post. In fact, in one of Mamet’s more recent essays, the 2006 “Workers and Managers,” he offered a scathing description of the Bush administration as the “American corporation run wild”:

I had despaired, these past five years, of that entity I described to myself as “The American People.” This people, to my mind, had elected, reelected, and suffered the depredations of an unprincipled, ungovernable

THE RIGHT IS MOOING ABOUT FAITH,
THE LEFT IS MOOING ABOUT CHANGE,
AND MANY ARE INCENSED ABOUT THE
FOOLS ON THE OTHER SIDE—BUT, AT
THE END OF THE DAY, THEY ARE THE
SAME FOLKS WE MEET AT THE WATER
COOLER. HAPPY ELECTION SEASON.
—David Mamet, 2008

PHOTO OF DAVID MAMET BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE
behave like swine, and that this, indeed, is not only a fit subject, of human nature has both prompted and informed my writing for not think that people are basically good at heart; indeed, that view could not exist together. He therefore eventually concluded, “I do heart.” But, he realized, these realities—cynicism and idealism—business is exploitative, and that people are generally good at accepting “as an article of faith that government is corrupt, that had considered himself a card-carrying liberal for many decades, a longtime subscriber to the Democrats’ “party of labor,” Mamet “It’s called,” he added, “I started thinking about politics.”

Growing up a child of the ‘60s, the son of a union lawyer, and a longtime subscriber to the Democrats’ “party of labor,” Mamet had considered himself a card-carrying liberal for many decades, accepting “as an article of faith that government is corrupt, that business is exploitative, and that people are generally good at heart.” But, he realized, these realities—cynicism and idealism—could not exist together. He therefore eventually concluded, “I do not think that people are basically good at heart; indeed, that view of human nature has both prompted and informed my writing for the last 40 years. I think that people, in circumstances of stress, can behave like swine, and that this, indeed, is not only a fit subject, but the only subject, of drama.”

Mamet decided that it was enough that “people in general seem to get from day to day; and that we in the United States get from day to day under rather wonderful and privileged circumstances.” The pragmatism of the Constitution—“a spectacularly effective compact”—is based on the understanding that faults of human nature will ultimately balance each other out without government intervention. Mamet began to respect corporations for delivering “those goods and services . . . without which we could not live” and the military as being “made up of those men and women who actually risk their lives to protect the rest of us from a very hostile world.” Even his distaste for the George W. Bush administration became tempered:

I found not only that I didn’t trust the current government (that, to me, was no surprise), but that an impartial review revealed that the faults of this president—whom I, a good liberal, considered a monster—were little different from those of a president whom I revered.

Bush got us into Iraq, JFK into Vietnam. Bush stole the election in Florida; Kennedy stole his in Chicago. Bush outing a CIA agent; Kennedy left hundreds of them to die in the surf at the Bay of Pigs. Bush lied about his military service; Kennedy accepted a Pulitzer Prize for a book written by Ted Sorenson. Bush was in bed with the Saudis, Kennedy with the Mafia. Oh.

Out of this political rebirth came November, an equal-opportunity behind-the-scenes spoof of presidential power. Michael Feingold of The Village Voice explains that Mamet, in November, has “created a cartoon analogue for presidential corruption, not specific to either party.” As such, the play refrains from championing any partisan political argument. Its commentary is an ironically uncontroversial one: the political machine is fueled by money. Who is going to argue with that?

While writing November, David Mamet came to the realization that, like the worlds he creates in his plays, America is mostly populated by people who are trying to do a little better than just get by. While he confesses that he no longer believes people are basically good, he also admits, “In my life . . . everything was not always wrong, and neither was nor is always wrong in the community in which I live, or in my country.” This communal well-being does not depend on the goodness of people, or on laws that attempt to force people to be more altruistic than they are, but rather on a symbiotic system of social checks and balances. It is this practical optimism that permeates November, as Mamet told New York magazine in 2008:

It’s not a cynical play. I might flatter myself by calling it a populist play, because there’s one polemic going on between the president, who’s unutterably corrupt, and his speechwriter, who’s in his view unutterably naive. At one point she says to him, “People say we’re a country divided, but we’re not a country divided, what we are is a democracy.” And I think that is the meeting ground of the two positions. That the only country that’s not divided is totalitarian.

The good news is it’s a spectacular country. We’ve been around for 230 years in spite of human nature, because that’s what the Constitution is all about. It’s saying, of course everyone’s gonna try and take control. Of course they’re gonna subvert every law that’s supposed to keep them in line. Of course the president is gonna want to be imperial, of course Congress is gonna want to become obstructionist, of course the judges are gonna be activist. Duh. They figured this out in 1787 and drew up a few sheets of paper that have kept the country in line. It’s a great place to live.
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LEAPING INTO THE SCHOOL YEAR

Fall is always a busy time for a theater company, as cast, crew, and staff gear up for the new season. Additionally A.C.T. is home to a conservatory with a nationally renowned master of fine arts program, so for us the fall is also the beginning of the school year. This particular fall marks the first time that A.C.T. kicked off the academic year with “The Leap.”

The brainchild of A.C.T.’s new full-time head of movement and physical theater, master teacher Stephen Buescher (who comes to A.C.T. from his position as director of movement and physical theater at the Brown University/Trinity Rep Consortium), The Leap was an intensive two-day “bootcamp” of collaborative workshops and devised theater that brought together all three classes of M.F.A. Program students, the core M.F.A. Program faculty, A.C.T.’s core acting company and associate artists, and various members of A.C.T.’s artistic staff, including Artistic Director Carey Perloff, in early September. What started out as student- and faculty/staff-only assigned groupings quickly became a free-form intermingling of all ages and levels of experience. “It was a great beginning to work with each other as equal collaborative artists, rather than the segregation of first-, second-, and third-year students, faculty, staff, etc., we are all accustomed to,” says Buescher. “Everyone was delighted to see even the most senior members of the faculty and artistic team take the same risks that the students are asked to take in the classroom.”

“The Leap at first seemed like a radical departure for A.C.T., but as I have been talking to folks,” Buescher continued, “I realize that The Leap was in fact a ‘return’ to ideas that have been central to A.C.T. since the company’s inception. A.C.T. was founded on the idea that a company of actors should continuously train and perform together. The school has a new full-time core faculty, there is a new direction to the number of students that comprise the program, there is renewed emphasis on uniting the producing and training wings of the organization, and the theater building is turning 100, which all seemed like good opportunities for us to look simultaneously and collectively backward and forward as we consider A.C.T.’s evolution.”

“After some trepidation, taking The Leap was pure pleasure,” observes A.C.T. Director of Academic Affairs and core faculty member Jack Sharrar, who has been with A.C.T. since 1989. “The workshop provided a wonderful opportunity to meet one another on a personal level and to share in dynamic exploration of the creative process.” Adds M.F.A. Program third-year student Lakisha May: “The Leap was amazing! It was nice to begin the year from a place of exploration. Ultimately, and most importantly, it removed any notion that there is a hierarchy in art. We ALL (Carey, company members, students, and teachers) were on the same level artistically, succeeding and failing in the name of telling a story.”
Claire Brownell ‘06 (Annabella/Pamela/Margaret) and Allison Jean White ‘05 (understudy) are performing in the 19-city national tour of Broadway’s The 39 Steps. Anika Noni Rose is the voice of the Princess in Disney’s new film The Princess and the Frog. Domenic Nolfi (YC) portrays Nick, one of the four Jersey Boys, on Broadway. Alan Blumenfeld ‘77 starred in Molière’s The Miser and appeared in Julius Caesar at The Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum, where Katherine James ‘77 is codirector of the new plays program. Marcia Pizzo ‘95 performs in First Day of School at SF Playhouse and will perform in A.C.T.’s spring production of Round and Round the Garden. Rod Gnapp ‘87 and James Wagner ‘08 appeared in Mauritius at Magic Theatre. Gnapp also appeared in Awake and Sing! at Aurora Theatre Company, which featured Patrick Russell ‘09 as Ralph. Nick Gabriel ‘09 appeared (as the Master of Ceremonies) with Jeff Draper ‘95 in Cabaret at Center REPertory Company; Gabriel also appeared with Kelsey Venter ‘09 in I Love You Because at North Coast Repertory Theatre. Venter will perform in The Threepenny Opera with the Shotgun Players. Ryan Rilette ‘97, producing director of Marin Theatre Company, directs Boom there, featuring Nicholas Pelczar ‘09, who recently starred in Hamlet at Pacific Repertory Theatre. Dawn-Elin Fraser ‘97 spent the summer coaching voice and dialects at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, before taking up her new position as assistant professor of theater at Florida Atlantic University. Patrick McNulty ‘00 performed in My Name Is Asher Lev at Marin Theatre Company, directed by Hai Brooks ‘93. Sarah Culberson ‘01 is on a national tour to promote her new book, A Princess Found: An American Family, an African Chieftdom, and the Daughter Who Connected Them All. Rob Seitelman ‘04 appears in The Wizard of Oz at the Berkeley Playhouse. Ken Sonkin ‘84 directed The Producers at Solano College Theatre. Alex Morf ‘08 and Jud Williford ‘04 appeared in Romeo and Juliet at California Shakespeare Theater with Nick Childress ‘10, Patrick Lane ‘11, and Ashley Wickett ‘11. Williford also appeared in Private Lives at Cal Shakes and is performing in Fat Pig at Aurora Theatre Company, while Morf performs in The Alchemist at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. Andrew Hurteau ‘93, director of Studio A.C.T., appeared recently in The Floating Light Bulb at Traveling Jewish Theatre and will appear in Equivocation at Marin Theatre Company and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead at Theatre First in Oakland. Graham Outerbridge ‘07 performed in Is Life Worth Living? at Mint Theater Company in New York. Cat Walleck ‘09 is performing in The Royal Family at Manhattan Theatre Club; she also appeared in What the Butler Saw at Marin Theatre Company. Rondrell McCormick ‘09, Lloyd Roberson II ‘09, and Ryan Montgomery ‘97 shot a web series written and directed by Deontay Wilson ‘06. Johnny Moreno ‘97 recently performed in El Otro with Thick Description. David Valdez ‘04 presented his new one-man show, Scarred for Life: Tales of a Mexican-American Trying to Get Out of East L.A., at the Ashby Stage in Berkeley. Jeff Irwin ‘08 has been cast by A Noise Within in Noises Off.

Current students have also been busy outside the classroom. Over the summer, Caroline Hewitt ‘10 performed in The Winter’s Tale at Chautauqua Theater Company. Mairin Lee ‘10 appeared in The Farm with the Shotgun Players. Jon Gentry ‘10 appeared in Fayette-Nam with Asian American Theater Company. Emily Kitchens ‘10 performed in A Midssummer Night’s Dream and Julius Caesar at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Kyle Schaefer ‘10 performed in Candide at Berkshire Theatre Festival. Richard Prioleau ‘11, David Jacobs ‘10, and Tobie Lee Windham III ‘10 took the reins of production into their own hands, performing David Mamet’s American Buffalo, under the direction of Stefannie Azoroh ‘11, in a public production staged in Tobie and Stefannie’s San Francisco apartment.
MEET ALEXANDER CROWTHER
A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM CLASS OF 2012

In each program of the A.C.T. mainstage season, we are pleased to introduce to you one of A.C.T.’s remarkable first-year M.F.A. students. In this issue, meet Alexander Crowther.

NICKNAME Alex.

BIRTHPLACE Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.

HOMETOWN Aurora, Ontario, Canada.

FIRST THEATER EXPERIENCE Oliver in Oliver! I remember being trapped in a coffin onstage and hearing the audience.

FAVORITE THEATER EXPERIENCE As an actor, Widows, by Ariel Dorfman. In the final scene of this beautiful and upsetting play, I was screaming at the top of my lungs over pounding music ("Lacrimosa" from Preisner’s Requiem for My Friend), ordering the execution of all the women of the village. As an audience member, William Hutt performing Vladimir’s final monologue in Waiting for Godot.

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE, I WOULD WANT TO PLAY King Lear . . . give me 50 years.

MY STORY I was a kid who enjoyed telling stories, singing songs, and mimicking Canadian politicians. Good outlets were the performance spaces found in backyard jungle gyms and converted-cardboard-box puppet theaters. By the time I was able to channel this creative energy into community theater and high school productions, I had developed the idea that pursuing advanced training would be a good life choice. This idea took me to the University of Windsor (Ontario), and now I find myself in San Francisco, looking forward to the next three years with A.C.T.

RANDOM FACT I have never read Harry Potter.

EDUCATION B.F.A. in acting from the University of Windsor.

SPECIAL SKILLS Playing piano by ear.

HOBBIES Doodling, exploring San Francisco on foot.


“McDonagh is the most WICKEDLY FUNNY, brilliantly abrasive young dramatist on either side of the Irish sea… a born storyteller.”
The New York Times

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November 19
From free parties to in-depth discussions with the artists, A.C.T. offers the following events for all—at no additional cost:

**PROLOGUES**
Free preshow discussions with the director and a member of the A.C.T. artistic team before the first preview performance.

**AUDIENCE EXCHANGES**
Lively Q&A sessions with the cast and A.C.T. staff after the performance. Tickets to any performance grants you entry!

**OUT with A.C.T.**
A.C.T.’s popular LGBT-night parties with free wine and catered treats immediately following the 8 p.m. performance.

**THEATER ON THE COUCH**
Members of the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis explore the minds, motives, and behaviors of the characters in the play after the 8 p.m. performance.

**ACT-SF.ORG/INTERACT**

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Hear a presentation of the director’s and designers’ vision at the cast and creative team’s first meeting.

**OPENING NIGHT DINNERS**
Dine with Artistic Director Carey Perloff and the director of the production in A.C.T.’s private dining room before the opening performance.

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Enjoy an elegant luncheon and engaging conversation with a member of the A.C.T. creative community before the matinee performance.

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Due to the spontaneous nature of live theater, all times are subject to change.
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A.C.T.’s Home: 100 Years and Counting

Saturday, January 9, 2010

10AM-1PM subscriber and donor event  2PM-6PM everyone welcome

Join A.C.T. in celebrating our Historic Theater’s 100th Birthday with a free open house honoring a century of craft, design, and performance. Experience San Francisco’s crown jewel from behind the scenes with backstage tours, theatrical demonstrations, and live performances.

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When Jessica Galloway faced a complicated case of Stage III breast cancer, she turned to UCSF for her surgery, treatment and even access to a new clinical trial. Our groundbreaking cancer research is just one reason UCSF has an international reputation for quickly translating scientific innovations into life-saving treatments. Now, we’re building a new hospital complex—including children’s, women’s specialty and cancer hospitals—where our world-class doctors can practice medicine in the most technologically advanced facilities available anywhere. With your help, just imagine the possibilities.

Help us build the new UCSF hospitals at Mission Bay.
RENE AUGESEN (Clarice Bernstein), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, made her A.C.T. debut in The Misanthrope; she has since appeared in 21 A.C.T. productions, most recently At Home at the Zoo, War Music, Brainpeople, ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore, and Rock ’n’ Roll. New York credits include Spinning into Butter (Lincoln Center Theater), Mачет (with Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, Public Theater), It’s My Party . . . (with F. Murray Abraham and Joyce Van Patten, ArcLight Theatre), and Overruled (Drama League). Regional theater credits include Mary Stuart (dir. Carey Perloff, The Huntington Theatre Company); several productions, including the world premieres of The Beard of Aven and The Hollow Lands, at South Coast Repertory; and productions at the Great Lakes Theater Festival, Baltimore’s Centerstage, the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Stage West. Film and television credits include The Battle Studies, Law & Order, Guiding Light, Another World, and Hallmark Hall of Fame’s Saint Mayb. Augesen is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

MANOEL FELCIANO (A Representative of the National Association of Turkey and Turkey By-products Manufacturers), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has appeared at A.C.T. in At Home at the Zoo and Rock ’n’ Roll. For his portrayal of Tobias Ragg in Sweeney Todd on Broadway, he was nominated for the 2006 Tony Award and won the Broadway.com Audience Award and Broadwayworld.com Choice Award for Favorite Featured Actor. Other Broadway credits include Brooklyn, Jesus Christ Superstar, and Cabaret. Off-Broadway credits include Trampetry, Shockheaded Peter, and Much Ado About Nothing. Regional theater credits include Ragtime at The Kennedy Center and work with Reprise Theatre Company, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Old Globe, and Bay Street Theater. Film and television credits include Uncertainty, The Unusuals, Life on Mars, One Life to Live, and All My Children. He has appeared in concert in The World of Nick Adams (San Francisco Symphony, dir. Carey Perloff) and the world premiere of Nathaniel Stookey’s Zipperz (Oakland East Bay Symphony). Felciano is also a singer-songwriter; Moonsbot, his debut album of originals, was released in 2007. Born and raised in San Francisco, he made his professional stage debut with San Francisco Opera at age ten. He holds a B.A. from Yale University and an M.F.A. from New York University.


STEVEN ANTHONY JONES (Dwight Grackle), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Blood Knot, The Imaginary Invalid, After the War, Happy End, Gem of the Ocean, Female Transport, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, The Three Sisters, The Dazzle, Night and Day, Burial Child, A Christmas Carol, (Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Present), Celebration and The Room, “Master Harold”…and the boys, The Misanthrope, The Invention of Love, The Threepenny Opera, Tartuffe, Indian Ink, Hecuba, Insurrection: Holding History, Seven Guitars, Othello (title role), Antigone, Miss Evers’ Boys, Clara, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Saint Joan, King Lear, Golden Boy, and Feathers. Other local theater credits include Fuente Ovejuna and McTeague (Berkeley Repertory Theatre); As You Like It (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival); The Cherry Orchard, Every Moment, and The Island (Eureka Theatre); Sideman (San Jose Repertory Theatre); and Division Street (Oakland Ensemble Theatre). He originated the role of Private James Wilkie in the original production of A Soldier’s Play at the Negro Ensemble Company in New York. His many film and television credits include two seasons of”...
Who’s Who

of Midnight Caller and a recurring role on the new NBC series Trauma.

ANDREW POLK (Charles Smith), a Bay Area native, returns to A.C.T., where he last appeared as Charlie Fox in David Mamet’s Speed-the-Plow. He has appeared in New York in Mouth to Mouth (The New Group), The Accomplices (2007 Drama Desk Award nomination), Walmartopia (Minetta Lane Theatre), The Green Zone (Lincoln Center Directors Lab), Flight (Lucille Lortel Theatre), Critical Darling (The New Group), Vick’s Boy (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater), and The Truth Teller (Circle Repertory Company), among many others. He appeared in the Broadway tour of Biloxi Blues (Carbonell Award, Helen Hayes Award nomination). Regionally, he has been seen at the Alliance Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Arena Stage, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Trinity Repertory Company, and, most recently, Philadelphia Theatre Company (At Home at the Zoo), among many others. Film and television credits include Loverboy, Private Parts, Entropy, 30 Rock, Law & Order, Law & Order: SVU, Law & Order: CI, and Third Watch. Polk trained at London’s Webber-Douglas Academy under a Fulbright scholarship. He is also artistic director of The Cape Cod Theatre Project.

JERI LYNN COHEN (Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T. in A Mother and The Time of Your Life. She is a charter member of Word for Word Performing Arts Company, where she has originated roles in more than a dozen critically acclaimed productions. She has worked at theaters throughout the Bay Area, including Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, BRAVA! for Women in the Arts, Campo Santo, Encore Theatre Company, Eureka Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Stage Company, and Traveling Jewish Theatre. She has toured internationally with the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

ANDREW HURTEAU (Understudy) was last seen at A.C.T. in The Government Inspector. Also at A.C.T., he understudied Peter and Jerry in last season’s Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo and understudied and performed the role of Jorgen Tesman in Hedda Gabler. Elsewhere, he was seen last spring as Max Pollack in Traveling Jewish Theatre’s The Floating Light Bulb, and last fall he appeared as Ivan Curry in The Seafarer at Marin Theatre Company. At California Shakespeare Theater, he has appeared as the Duke of Albany in King Lear, Lord Stanley in Richard III, and Charles Cheeryble in The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby. At Center REPtory Theatre he was seen as Richard Nixon in Nixon’s Nixon and as Max Prince in Neil Simon’s Laughter on the 23rd Floor. Over the past 15 years he has worked at theaters throughout the Bay Area, including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Word for Word Performing Arts Company, and SF Playhouse.

DAVID MAMET (Playwright), Pulitzer Prize–winning playwright and two-time Oscar nominee, director, essayist, novelist, and poet, has been a force in American theater since 1976. When his first staged plays, Sexual Perversity in Chicago and American
Buffalo (later filmed with Dustin Hoffman and Dennis Franz), both opened in New York that year, Mamet won the OBIE Award for distinguished playwriting and American Buffalo was voted best play by the New York Drama Critics’ Circle. In 1978, he received the Outer Critics’ Circle Award for his contribution to American theater. In 1984, Glengarry Glen Ross won Mamet another New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for Best Play, four Tony Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize; it was made into a major motion picture in 1992 and won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play in 2005. Other plays include Edmond and The Cryptogram (both OBIE Award winners), as well as The Water Engine, The Woods, Reunion, A Life in the Theatre, Lakeboat, Speed-the-Plow, Oleanna, The Old Neighborhood, Boston Marriage, Romance, and November. His latest play, Race, opens on Broadway in December. Mamet’s translations and adaptations include Faustus; Pierre Laville’s Red River; Anton Chekhov’s The Cherry Orchard, Three Sisters, and Uncle Vanya; and Harley Granville-Barker’s The Voysey Inheritance (commissioned and premiered by A.C.T. in 2005). His critically acclaimed debut feature film, House of Games, was selected to close the New York Film Festival in 1987. Other films on which Mamet served as writer and director include Homicide, which opened the 1991 Cannes Film Festival; Oleanna, based on his own play; The Spanish Prisoner, which became one of the most popular independent films of 1998; Heist; The Winslow Boy, adapted from the Terrence Rattigan play; Spartan; and State and Main. Mamet has also won acclaim for numerous screenplays, including The Verdict and Wag the Dog (both nominated for the Academy Award for Best Screenplay), and The Postman Always Rings Twice, The Untouchables, We’re No Angels, Hoffa, and The Edge.

Ronn Lagomarsino (Director), a native San Franciscan, has directed A.C.T. productions of The Imaginary Invalid and The Gamester. On Broadway he has directed Alfred Uhry’s Tony Award–winning play The Last Night of Ballyhoo and My Favorite Year. Off Broadway he has directed Christopher Kyle’s Plunge, Uhry’s Driving Miss Daisy (Pulitzer Prize, Drama Desk Award nomination), Joseph Dougherty’s Digby (Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle award nominations), Beth Henley’s Abundance, John Patrick Shanley’s Women of Manhattan, and Evan Smith’s Remedial English. He is the recipient of the Outer Critics Circle Award for Driving Miss Daisy, Laughing Wild, and Only You. Regional credits include Noises Off at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Hay Fever at the Kenyon Festival Theater, The Foreigner at South Coast Repertory (West Coast premiere), and Passing By at Hartford Stage, where he served as resident director for two seasons. Lagomarsino was also associate director of Berkshire Theatre Festival, where he co-authored and staged Vicious Circle. He has also directed the world premieres of Jane Anderson’s Looking for Normal (Geffen Playhouse) and I Am Not Mark Twain, by Steven Cragg (Aspen Comedy Festival; Best One-Man Play). He has developed many new works at New York Stage and Film, Sundance Institute’s Theatre Program, and the O’Neill.

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage members in the United States.
National Playwrights Conference. Television credits include the pilots of *Picket Fences* (Directors Guild of America Award), *Homefront* (Emmy nomination), *Courthouse*, and *Grapevine*, the movies *Pop Rocks*, *Snowglobe*, *Running Mates*, and *Dinner at Eight*; and episodes of *thirtysomething*, *My So-Called Life*, *Once and Again*, *All My Children*, *The Unit*, *Shark*, *The Starter Wife*, and *Privileged*. The recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Directing Fellowship, Lagomarsino is a graduate of Santa Clara University (valedictorian) and New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.

**ERIK FLATMO** (Scenic Designer) has designed scenery for *The Government Inspector* and *The Imaginary Invalid* at A.C.T. Regionally, his sets have also been seen at Asolo Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Magic Theatre. He is a frequent collaborator of choreographer Joe Goode. His New York credits include projects at The Kitchen, Danspace Project, Dance Theater Workshop, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, and The Play Company. His designs for opera have been seen at San Jose Opera and the San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program. Flatmo is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and teaches set design at Stanford University.

**ALEX JAEGER** (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for *Speed-the-Plow* and *Rock ‘n’ Roll* for A.C.T.; *Morbidity and Mortality* and *Mauritius* for Magic Theatre; *Two Sisters and a Piano* for The Public Theater in New York; *Skylight*, *All My Sens*, *True West*, *Nostalgia*, *Play Strindberg*, *Pinocchio*, and others for South Coast Repertory; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Handler*, *Stop Kiss*, *Fuddy Meers*, and *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *The Paris Letter* and *Eclipsed* for Center Theatre Group (Kirk Douglas Theatre); *Doubt*, *Tally’s Folly*, and *Looped* for the Pasadena Playhouse; and several productions for The Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. Other credits include productions with the Geffen Playhouse, The Theater @ Boston Court, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Jaeger is the recipient of many design awards, including an L.A. Ovation Award, three Backstage Garland Awards, four Drama-Logue awards, a Maddy Award, and an NAACP nomination.

**ALEXANDER V. NICHOLS** (Lighting Designer) theater credits include the Broadway production of *Wishful Drinking* (Carrie Fisher), originally presented at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Off-Broadway productions include *Los Big Names*, *Horizon*, *Bridge and Tunnels*, and *Taking Over*. He also production designs for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, The Huntington Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Dance credits include several seasons as resident designer for Pennsylvania Ballet, Hartford City Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet. He was the lighting supervisor for American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House and is the resident visual designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. His designs are in the permanent repertory of San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, and ODC. Recent projects include the museum installation *Circle of Memory*, in collaboration with Eleanor Coppola, presented in Salzburg, Austria, and video and visual design for *LIFE: A Journey Through Time*, with photographer Frans Lanting and composer Philip Glass, presented at Alice Tully Hall.

**CLIFF CARUTHERS** (Sound Designer) has created soundscapes and music for more than a hundred Bay Area productions. He is an artistic associate of The Cutting Ball Theatre, the resident sound designer for TheatreWorks, and a company member of Crowded Fire Theater Company. Recent theater projects include *Brainpeople* for A.C.T., *Happy Days* for the Guthrie Theater, *Crime and Punishment* and *TRAGEDY: a tragedy* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *Yellow Face: A Satirical Self-Portrait* and *Caroline, or Change* for TheatreWorks, *Victims of Duty* and *Mud* for The Cutting Ball, *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* and *Bug* for SF Playhouse, *Anna Bella Eema* and *Drip* for Crowded...
WHO’S WHO

Fire, and The Creature for Black Box Theatre. He is also cocurator of the San Francisco Tape Music Center and technical director of the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival (SFEMF). He has performed his electronic music at the Prague Quadrennial, 964 Natoma, Deep Wireless, Noise Pancakes, SFEMF, the San Francisco Tape Music Festival (SFTMF), and the Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS).

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 has written theater and book reviews for the Washington Post, Village Voice, Newsday, and Mirabella magazine. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

MERYL LIND SHAW (Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for Magic Theatre, The Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of White Christmas, Jimy, and Picasso at the Lapin Agile. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she stage-managed more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.’s Creditors and Bon Appetit! 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. She has taught or guest lectured at A.C.T., Rutgers University, Carnegie Mellon University, Santa Clara University, St. Mary’s College, and San Francisco’s Academy of Art University, among others.

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November 27
ELISA GUTHERTZ (Stage Manager) most recently worked on Boleros for the Disenchanted at A.C.T. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include Rich and Famous, The Quality of Life, What You Will, Curse of the Starving Class, Speed-the-Plew, The Rainmaker, Blackbird, The Little Foxes, A Number, Sexual Perversity in Chicago, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Well, and Eve Ensler’s The Good Body. She has also stage-managed The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer, Rhinoceros, Big Love, Civil Sex, Collected Stories, and Cloud Tectonics at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include The Good Body at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Big Love at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and The Vagina Monologues at the Alcazar Theatre.

HEATH BELDEN (Assistant Stage Manager) has stage-managed My Name Is Asher Lev, What the Butler Saw, A Streetcar Named Desire, and The Subject Tonight Is Love for Marin Theatre Company, The Full Monty and Little Shop of Horrors for American Musical Theatre of San Jose, Once Upon a Mattress for 42nd Street Moon, four seasons with Marin Shakespeare Company, and five operas with Pocket Opera and assisted seven productions at A.C.T. He received an M.F.A. degree from UC San Diego.

STEPHANIE SCHLIEemann (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked on Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo, War Music, Blood Knot, The Circle, and A Christmas Carol at A.C.T. Other local stage-managing credits include Flower Drum Song, Guys and Dolls, The King and I, Gypsy, and The Wizard of Oz at American Musical Theatre of San Jose; Orson’s Shadow at Marin Theatre Company; Le Nozze de Figaro and The Magic Flute at Opera San Jose; and Hannah and Martin, Bad Dates, and Tuesdays with Morrie, among others, at San Jose Repertory Theatre. She has also worked with TheatreWorks, Teatro ZinZanni, and the San Francisco School of Circus Art. She has been a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association since 2005.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT DAVID MAMET’S NOVEMBER?
Pick up Words on Plays, the smart souvenir!

Words on Plays, A.C.T.’s in-depth performance guide series, offers insight into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the A.C.T. subscription season. Each entertaining and informative issue contains a synopsis, advance program notes, study questions, artist interviews, and additional information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

The November edition of Words on Plays includes a revealing interview with scenic designer Erik Flatmo; an original essay about David Mamet’s politics; the truth about piggy planes, the National Turkey Pardoning Ceremony, and the Micmac tribe; the history of presidential pardons and executive orders; examinations of the current state of Chinese adoption, gay marriage, and flu pandemics; and so much more!

Individual issues of Words on Plays for each production are available in the theater lobby and online at act-sf.org. You can email wordsonplays@act-sf.org for more information. Subscriptions to Words on Plays are also available at a discounted price that includes postage for mailing each issue to your home. For more information about subscriptions, call 415.749.2250.

Here’s what San Francisco Chronicle theater critic Robert Hurwitt has to say:

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CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 18th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed José Rivera’s Bolero for the Disenchanted, Tom Stoppard’s Rock ’n’ Roll, and John Ford’s ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. 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 and The Room, A.C.T.–commissioned translations/adaptations of Hecuba, The Misanthrope, Enrico IV, Mary Stuart, Uncle Vanya, and A Mother (based on Maxim Gorky’s Vasa Zheleznieva); Harley Granville-Barker’s The Voysey Inheritance (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Boy; and major revivals of The Government Inspector, Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill’s Happy End (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), A Doll’s House, Waiting for Godot, The Three Sisters, The Threepenny Opera, Old Times, The Rose Tattoo, Antigone, Creditors, Home, The Tempest, and Stoppard’s Travesties, The Real Thing, Night and Day, and Arcadia. 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. Her play Waiting for the Flood has received workshops in A.C.T.’s First Look series and at New York Stage & Film and Roundabout Theatre Company; her latest play, Higher, was developed at New York Stage and Film and as part of A.C.T.’s First Look series at Stanford University. Her one-act play 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 contemporary writers, including Gotanda, Robert O’Hara, and Lucy Caldwell. She most recently directed a major production of Phèdre (translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and is currently developing a new dance-theater piece, The Tuscan Project, with choreographer Val Caniparoli for A.C.T. and a new Elektra for the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

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 The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage 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 Beta 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. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

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. in 1995, Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting 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 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 Theater as an actor and stage manager. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon 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 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 International’s award for 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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Begin the journey of artistic discovery and pick up a flyer in our lobby, or join our online community at act-sf.org/toscamovement.

*The Tosca Project is illustrative of the direct costs of producing a show at A.C.T. All gifts to the 2009–10 Annual Fund will support *The Tosca Project* as well as the rest of the productions in our 2009–10 season.

Photo of Sabina Allemann in *The Tosca Project* by Erik Tomasson
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$10,000–$49,999
Autodesk, Inc.

$5,000–$9,999
CyberTools for Libraries
Grace Street Catering
Halter Vineyard
Hahn Estates
Hil Marriot
Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.

$1,000–$4,999
La Boulange Café and Bakery
Rose Mazzock
Giram’s Cookies
Highflyer Wines

CORPORATIONS MATCHING ANNUAL FUND GIFTS

As A.C.T. is both a cultural and an educational institution, many employers will match individual employee contributions to the theater. The following corporate matching gift programs honor their employees’ support of A.C.T., multiplying the impact of those contributions.
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PROSPERO SOCIETY MEMBER

Safeguarding the rich heritage of live theater for future generations requires the enduring commitment of theater lovers in the Bay Area. Patrons of A.C.T. who have made provisions in their will or estate plans, and notified A.C.T. of their intent to make a planned gift, are honored with membership in the Prospero Society. Prospero Society members—like Prospero Society Steering Committee member John McCallister—are recognized for their visionary philanthropy in performance programs and invited to special events throughout the year.

McCallister explains what the Prospero Society experience means to him:

Some of the best experiences for me as a Prospero Society member continue to be my close connection to the theater and the opportunities to meet other members. I always look forward to receiving my invitations to Saturday Salons and the annual Prospero Society brunch, where I can reconnect with other people with similar interests in the arts over lunch and the show afterwards. I have subscribed to the same series at A.C.T. ever since the company's second season in San Francisco [1968], and over these many years A.C.T. has enriched my life immensely by bringing a wonderful mix of classical and new works to life. As I was planning my estate, I decided to make a firm commitment to A.C.T. in my trust to be sure that A.C.T. has the backbone needed to produce worthwhile, thought-provoking theater for generations to come.

A native second-generation San Franciscan, McCallister has lived in San Francisco his entire life. He developed an interest in theater after being invited by his aunt to see A.C.T. Founding Artistic Director William Ball's productions of Endgame and Tartuffe in A.C.T.'s inaugural season. Now retired, McCallister worked for many years for Crown Zellerbach in various capacities—marketing, accounting, and production. In addition to the arts, he has a passion for travel. He recently returned from a trip to Vietnam and plans to travel to France next spring.

For information about becoming a member of the Prospero Society, please contact Tim Whalen at 415.439.2472 or twhalen@act-sf.org.
American Conservatory Theater Exits