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Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the historic Geary Theater in 1967. During the past three decades, almost 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of almost seven million people in Japan, Russia, and throughout the United States. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. Today, A.C.T.’s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 200,000 people in the Bay Area.

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continued on page 14
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Shlemiel the First
(1994)

a coproduction with the American Repertory Theatre and the American Music Theater Festival

Based on the play by Isaac Bashevis Singer
Conceived and adapted by Robert Brustein

Directed and choreographed by David Gordon

Music composed, adapted, and orchestrated by
Hankus Netsky
Musical arrangements, additional music, and musical direction by
Musical Arrangements
Zalmen Mitloek
Lyrics by
Arnold Weinstein
Scenario by
David Gordon
Costumes by
Robert Israel
Lighting by
Catherine Zuber
Editing by
Peter Maradudin
Sound by
David Gordon
Associate Director
Christopher Walker
Assistant Musical Director
Chuck Finlon
Casting by
Michael Larsen
San Francisco casting by
Jan Geidt
Meryl Lind Shaw

Stage Management Staff
Ed Fitzgerald
Michele M. Trimble
Francesca Russell, Intern

Shlemiel the First is part of CrossCurrents, a major multiyear initiative of the American Repertory Theatre and the American Music Theater Festival designed to create and sustain a body of new music theater works. CrossCurrents is sponsored by Philip Morris Companies, Inc.

Shlemiel the First was made possible by a generous award for new work from the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. Major gifts for the production were received from Myra H. and Robert K. Kraft and Lizbeth and George Krupp. Additional support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts/Opera-Musical Theater Program, Barbara and Steven Grossman, Dr. and Mrs. Martin Peretz, and the Doris Foundation.

Shlemiel the First was originally produced in association with Lincoln Center Productions.
The Rose Tattoo

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

DIRECTED BY CAREY PERLOFF

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Shlemiel the First

A.C.T.

The Cast
(in order of appearance)

Tryna Rytz (Mrs. Shlemiel)  Shlemiel
Gittel, Sender Shlamazel, Yenta Pezah
Mottel, Moshe Ppik
Zeinweil Shmeckel, Man in House
Mendel Shemenrick, Chaim Rascal
Dopey Ppzlel, Zalman Tppsh
Groman Ox
Ensemble

Maureen McVerry
Thomas Derrah
Marilyn Sokol
Remo Airdale
Vontriss Mitchell
Scott Ripley
Will LeBov
Charles Levin
Dawn-Elin Fraser*, Johnny
Moreno*, Samantha Phillips,
Ryan Rilete*, Jonathan Sale*
Michael Larsen

Music Conductor, Pianist

The San Francisco Klezmer Experience
Stuart Brotman—bass; Jody Stecher—mandolin, banjo, guitar
Alan Hall—percussion; Rick Elmore—trombone
Stephen Saxon—trumpet; Sheldon Brown—clarinet
Daniel Hoffman—violin, viola, recorder

Understudies
For Maureen McVerry and Marilyn Sokol—Samantha Phillips
For Thomas Derrah, Vontriss Mitchell, and Charles Levin—Robert Steinapple
For Remo Airdale, Scott Ripley, and Will LeBov—Colin Thomson
For the Ensemble—Omar Metwalli*

There will be one intermission.

*Second-year students in the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program
Songs in

**Shlemiel the First**

Music by
Hankus Netsky

Additional music by
Zalmen Mlotek
Arnold Weinstein
David Gordon

Lyrics by

Act I

"Wake-Up Song"
*Mrs. Shlemiel*

"We're Talking Chelm"
*Gromam Ox, Yenta Peshu, Sages*

"Yenta's Blintzes"
*Yenta Peshu*

"Beadle with a Dreydil"
*Shlemiel*

"He's Going to Die"
*Zalmen Tippish*

"Mrs. Shlemiel's Lament"
*Mrs. Shlemiel, Yenta Peshu, Women*

"Geography Song"
("Rumania, Rumania")
*Gromam Ox, Mrs. Shlemiel, Yenta Peshu, Sages, Shlemiel*

"My One and Only Shlemiel"
*Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel*

"Rascal's Lament"
*Chaim Rascal*

Act II

"My One and Only Shlemiel" (reprise)
*Mrs. Shlemiel*

"Meshugah"
*Mottel, Gittel, Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel*

"Twos"
*Gromam Ox, Sages*

"The Screen Song"
*Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel*

"Can This Be Hell?"
*Shlemiel, Mrs. Shlemiel*

"Matters of the Heart"
*Yenta Peshu, Mrs. Shlemiel, Women*

"Wisdom"
*Gromam Ox, Yenta Peshu, Chaim Rascal, Sages*

"We're Talking Chelm" (reprise)
*The Company*

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**Singer's Story**

by Jessica Werner

What are writers?
The same kind of entertainers as magicians.
As a matter of fact, I admire
someone who can balance
a barrel on his feet
more than I do a poet.

—"Shosha,"

by Isaac Bashevis Singer

When Isaac Bashevis Singer died in 1991 at the age of 87, he enjoyed the unique dual status of a prized treasure and an intriguing enigma of the literary world. Considered by many the 20th century's master storyteller, Singer wrote exclusively in Yiddish and vividly evoked the world of his Jewish roots in pre-war Poland, yet his writing captivated a wide and faithful audience around the world. He believed in God, yet scorned religious dogma; he studied philosophy, but accepted the supernatural, and he had a child's love for the fantastic. Although he dismissed most critical analysis of his work and claimed he was nothing more than a simple teller of tales, recounting the folktales he heard as a child at his mother's knee, few modern writers have given us characters as psychologically complex and stories as well crafted, with such endearing humor.

Over the course of his extremely prolific career, Singer produced dozens of short stories (for which he is best known), 14 novels, nu-

Isaac Bashevis Singer
The Yiddish mentality . . . does not take victory for granted. It does not demand and command, it muddles through, sneaks by, smuggles itself amidst the powers of destruction, knowing somewhere that God’s plan for creation is still at the very beginning.

For Singer, Yiddish was not only a language, it was a guiding philosophy in which there is “gratitude for every day of life, every crumb of success, each encounter of love. Yiddish is a language of exile, without a country, without frontiers, that is not supported by any government.” Singer himself can be credited with helping to keep alive the vanishing language he employed to recreate the vanished past his stories so faithfully capture.

Humanity, as Singer perceived it, was deeply comical, even in its most beguiling mysteries. “Why do I continue to write in Yiddish?” he continued in his Nobel address, “Because I love to write ghost stories, and nothing fits a ghost like a dying language!”

A LITERARY GOLD MINE
Singer was fond of telling people that “all of my writings are from 10 Krochmalna Street,” referring to the childhood address in Warsaw that served as the source of his boundless inspiration.

It was a Jewish street, and as far as I was concerned, it was the center of the universe. I say to myself that just as other people are digging gold which God has created billions of years ago, my literary gold mine is this street. I keep returning to it with the feeling that there are still treasures which I haven’t used up.

After years of struggling to eke out a living as a rabbi in the town of Radzymin in Eastern Poland, Singer’s father moved the family to Warsaw in 1908 and set up shop as the head of a community rabbinical court. The pious rabbi’s devotion to the rigors of Jewish thought was tempered in the young Singer by his grandfather’s passion for the cabala, the body of Jewish mystical texts populated by mythical creatures that would later reappear in Singer’s stories.

“I was brought up in a home where the supernatural was our daily life,” Singer recalled late in his life. “We all believed in spirits and demons.” Responding to an interviewer’s question about why the supernatural plays so large a role in his stories, Singer responded: “I don’t know if I should call myself a mystic, but I feel always that we are surrounded by . . . mysterious powers, which play a great part in everything we are doing. I would say that telepathy and clairvoyance play a part in every love story.”

COMING OF AGE AS A WRITER
The Warsaw in which Singer grew up was the center of the thriving Yiddish literary world
and had a profound effect on his development as a writer. Warsaw’s Jewish population supported numerous daily and weekly Yiddish newspapers, which regularly printed the work of journalists, poets, scholars, and novelists. Isaac Loeb Peretz, Poland’s great Yiddish voice of the Enlightenment in Jewish literature, was at the height of his fame when Singer was a young child, and the Russian-born fiction author Sholom Aleichem was exalted as the model storyteller for aspiring Yiddish writers. Singer read his first books by non-Yiddish authors years later when Americans sent books, in Yiddish translations, to Poland as part of the war relief effort. Enthralled by his first taste of secular reading, Singer devoured books on philosophy and the Russian classics; Dostoyevsky remained one of his literary idols throughout his lifetime.

Singer’s older brother, Isaac Joshua (the acclaimed writer of the 1936 epic novel *The Brothers Ashkenazi*), often clashed with their father’s orthodoxy. In 1914, he moved out of the family home and into an artist’s studio, an event that was pivotal in his younger brother’s decision to follow his own artistic instincts and pursue writing. During visits to his brother’s studio, young Isaac Bashevis enjoyed his first taste of the nontraditional world, and it was there that he met his first “emancipated” Jews, including a host of Yiddish poets and playwrights and women who modeled nude for painters. In Singer’s memoir of his life in Poland, *In My Father’s Court*, he remarks on the eye-opening effect this world had on his life and eventually on his writing: “Even in my stories it is just one step from the study house to sexuality and back again.”

Singer then had a brief stint as a rabbinical student, the consequence of his refusal to accompany his parents to another *shetel* where his father was taking a new post. Soon bored by the didacticism of his studies, Singer fled the seminary in 1923 and found work in Warsaw as a proofreader for the Yiddish literary magazine *Globus*. He set to work on his first novel, and *Satan in Goray*—a gothic tale of demonic possession and cabalistic mysticism—was serialized in the magazine in 1933.

In the meantime, Singer’s brother, who would continue to have a tremendous impact on Singer’s life and intellectual development, moved to the United States and began publishing his own novels in New York. Inspired by his brother’s success and finally committed to a life as a writer, Singer emigrated to New York in 1935.

**Singer in New York**

New York was for Singer initially a place of disillusionment and fear about his ability to survive as a writer of Yiddish. As the autobiographical narrator of his story “A Day in Coney Island” remarks,

> Though the editor of a Yiddish paper published a sketch of mine from time to time in the Sunday edition, he told me frankly that no one gave a hoot about demons, dybbuks [evil spirits], and imps of 200 years ago. At 30, a refugee from Poland, I had become an anachronism.

As he struggled to find his literary niche during the ensuing years, Singer consoled himself with the company of fellow Jewish emigre writers and artists. New York’s Yiddish literary scene was booming, in response to the flood of Jewish immigrants who had been pouring into the city since the late 19th century; by 1916 New York’s Yiddish daily newspapers enjoyed a combined circulation of 646,000, not counting the weeklies, quarterlies, and other publications that regularly hit the newsstands.

The Yiddish theater scene also flourished, with audiences in New York’s Lower East Side filling 20 theaters each night to see Yiddish plays. I. J. Singer’s 1932 novel *Yoshe Kaid* was adapted to the stage and remained a favorite revival production at the Yiddish Art Theater throughout the thirties. The Folksbiene (a popular amateur Yiddish theater) and *The Forward* were housed in the same building, and Singer ensconced himself in both worlds, submitting articles to *The Forward* and frequenting performances downstairs. Yiddish theater, according to Singer, was for Jewish-American immigrants “a remarkable mixture of university and place of amusement,” an environment in which immigrants from the same European *shetlakh* could reunite through the drama of their shared heritage.

In 1943 Singer became an American citizen, and by 1945—with the publication of his novel *The Family Moskat* in *The Forward—he had hit his stride as a writer with a mature style, inspired by traditional Yiddish literature but enriched by a quality singularly his own. “Yiddish critics told me I was not writing in the tradition of Yiddish literature,” Singer commented, “and in a way they were right, because traditional Yiddish literature strikes me as sentimental, primitive, petty. You had to pity the poor Hasidic boy who was in love with a rich girl. These things looked dead to me, so far from real comedy and tragedy.”

Traditional plot lines also left no room for Singer’s frank portrayals of sexuality, which he believed should be fair game in modern, albeit Yiddish, fiction.

At the age of 41, Singer finally found a permanent home for his writing and the faithful readership for which he had longed. Saul Bellow’s translation of Singer’s mas-
terful story "Gimpel the Fool," published in *Partisan Review* in 1953, carried Singer's voice to a much wider audience than ever before, firmly establishing his legendary command of the short-story form.

"Gimpel the Fool" examines the life of *das kleine menschele* (the common man), a humble, hapless, gullible fool who inhabits much of Yiddish fiction. For Singer there was comic tragedy in the pithy fables, and his stories enthralled readers with their insistence that the unwitting triumph of these characters holds out the hope of redemption for reader and Shlemiel alike. Singer's archetypal fool achieves a certain freedom only after coming to terms with his own foolish nature.

Like Shlemiel, Gimpel embodies Singer's belief that there is a certain holiness in the fool's naiveté. "I would say there is a Gimpel in every human being and a sinner in every saint," he wrote. "The saint believes he can make all of humanity like him. This is his foolishness, but without it humanity wouldn't have reached where we are. I too am one of these fools."

**The Last Vestige of Storytelling**

Arguably Singer's favorite form of fiction, however, was the children's story. To Singer, children's fables were "the last vestige of storytelling, logic, faith in the family, in God, and in real humanism," and his passion for children's stories reflected his abiding love for the rich Jewish folkloric tradition.

Singer's fictional world has much in common with the world of Jewish folklore, a world in which anything is possible and magic is routine. "Why are people interested in folktales?" Singer asked his creative writing class at Bard College.

"Because we are limited. ... If you walk in the street you know that you are not invisible, you are going to be seen. If you have no wings, you know you cannot fly. But folklore gives you wings, gives you the little cap that makes you invisible, gives you little boots so you can walk seven miles in a second. This appeals immensely to our human emotions. Folklore doesn't give a hoot about the mind. It works only for your feelings. ... Folklore does in a few drops what art has to add a lot of water to do."

Singer was 62 years old and already a world-famous writer when he wrote his first children's book, *Zlateh the Goat*. He crafted some of his most memorable tales over the subsequent 25 years, including "The First Shlemiel," one of the stories that served as the basis for *Shlemiel the First*.

"In my writing there is no basic difference between tales for adults and for young people," he wrote in the preface to *When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw*. "The same spirit, the same interest in the supernatural is in all of them. I even mention the same villages and towns. In our time, when literature is losing its address and the telling of stories is becoming a forgotten art, children are the best readers."

When Singer received the National Book Award for *A Day of Pleasure*, he explained to the audience that his love of children's stories was also a rejection of the overly critical and psychological probing of adult readers and critics. In his inimitably witty manner, he listed the ten most important reasons why he began writing for children:

1. Children read books, not reviews. They don't give a hoot about the critics.
2. They don't read to find their identity.
3. They don't read to free themselves of guilt, to quench the thirst for rebellion, or to get rid of alienation.
4. They have no use for psychology.
5. They deconstruct society.
6. They don't try to understand Kafka or Finnegans Wake.
7. They still believe in God, the family, angels, devils, and witches.
8. They love interesting stories, not commentary, guides, or footnotes.
9. When a book is boring, they yawn openly without any shame or fear of authority.
10. They don't expect their beloved writer to redeem humanity. You as you are, they know that it is not in his power. Only adults have such childish delusions.

Whether he was writing for children or adults, the power of Singer's storytelling is universal and eternal, and it appeals to the Shlemiel in all of us. As Singer once said, after all, "An old man is nothing but a little boy."

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Material for this article was drawn from the biography Isaac Bashevis Singer: The Magician of West 86th Street, by Paul Kresh, the documentary film Isaac in America, and interviews in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Forward*, *Newsweek*, and *The Paris Review*. The Literature (1920) is a detail of a large mural (The Introduction to the Jewish Theater) by Marc Chagall for the Moscow Yiddish Art Theater. Here, the traditional scribe takes the role of storyteller. He has written on his Torah scroll in Hebrew, "Once upon a time..."
A FEW NOTES ON CHELM

by Mel Gordon

Jewish-American tourists traveling in Eastern Europe are often startled to discover that Chelm (or Khelm), the celebrated fools-town of Jewish lore and the setting for Shlemiel the First, is not an imaginary Brigadoon-like shtetl but a real-life, industrialized metropolis of 68,000, sitting some 60 kilometers southeast of Lublin near the Polish-Ukrainian border. Chelm’s fame today rests mostly on its superpolluted atmosphere and soil, growing unemployment, and high number of birth defects.

Exactly why Chelm’s sages were chosen to be the supreme, if often endearing, fools of the Jewish world remains a mystery. A 300-year-old Jewish custom in Chelm’s Lublin province, however, suggests one origin: Jews from the shetlakh around Lublin routinely assigned an insulting appellation to their neighboring community. The term’s nickname, which almost always stuck, was based on some isolated and nefarious activity from the distant past. For instance, in the pious Jews of Kuzmir maintained several majestic synagogues and performed especially strict religious ceremonies, but Jews from the surrounding shetlakh bitingly referred to them as kuzmir meschumim (Kuzmir apostates). This is because one Jewish Kuzmirite, named Khatsele, generations ago, decided to convert to Christianity.

Who knows? Maybe once there was a single simpleton walking backwards in the streets of Chelm.

Mel Gordon is a professor of theater arts at UC Berkeley. His book, Shтик: 300 Years of Jewish Humor, is forthcoming from Kehot International. He will speak at A.C.T. Perspectives: "A Celebration of Yiddish Theater and the Klezmer Revival in America," on October 7 at the Geary Theater.
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On Shlemiel the First

- **A.C.T. PROLOGUE**
  - September 17, 1996
  - 5:30 p.m.
  - Featuring
  - Director and Choreographer
  - David Gordon

- **A.C.T. AUDIENCE EXCHANGES**
  - September 24, 1996
  - September 29, 1996 (matinee)
  - October 2, 1996 (matinee)

- **A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES**
  - A Celebration of Yiddish Theater and the Klezmer Revival in America
    - October 7, 1996
    - 7-9 p.m.
    - Speakers to be announced
    - Funded by a migrant from and coproduced by A Traveling Jewish Theatre

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A.C.T. PROLOGUES

Sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco, these lively one-hour presentations are conducted by each show's director. Prologues are held before the Tuesday preview of every production, at 5:30 p.m., in the Geary Theater. Doors open at 5 p.m.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES

These informal, anything-goes sessions are a great way to share your feelings and reactions with fellow theatergoers. Audience Exchanges take place in the Geary Theater for thirty minutes immediately after selected performances and are moderated by A.C.T. staff members.

A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

This popular series of free public symposia is back in 1995–96 from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Monday evenings in the Geary Theater. Each symposium features a panel of scholars, theater artists, and professionals exploring topics ranging from aspects of the season's productions to the intersection of theater and the arts with American culture. Everyone is welcome—you need not have seen a play to attend.

WORDS ON PLAYS

Each entertaining and informative audience handbook contains advance program notes, a synopsis of the play, and additional background information about the playwright and the social and historical context of the work. A subscription for seven handbooks is available by mail to full-season subscribers for $42; limited copies of handbooks for individual plays are also available for purchase by single-ticket holders at the A.C.T. Box Office, located at 405 Geary Street at Mason, and in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level of the Geary Theater, for $8 each.

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The exhibition has been organized by the National Palace Museum, Taipei, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

It is supported in part by The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc., The Starr Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. Transportation assistance has been provided by China Airlines.

Support for local presentation has been generously provided in part by the Chase Manhattan Private Bank, the Bernard Osher Foundation, KGO-NewsTalk AM 810, KGO-TV Channel 7, The San Francisco Chronicle, and Genome in the Arts at the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.
CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) assumed artistic leadership of A.C.T. in June 1992. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and new works adapted from or inspired by classical works and themes, Perloff opened her first A.C.T. season with August Strindberg's Creditors, followed by acclaimed productions of Timberlake Wertenbaker's new translation of Sophocles' Antigone, Anton Chekhov's Uncle Vanya, and David Storey's Home. Her world-premiere production of Wertenbaker's version of Euripides' Hecuba, with Olympia Dukakis in the title role, played to 99 percent of capacity during A.C.T.'s record-breaking 1994-95 season. Last season she directed A.C.T.'s highly successful West Coast premiere of Tom Stoppard's Arcadia and the Geary Theater inaugural production of Shakespeare's Tempest. This season at A.C.T. she directs The Rose Tattoo, by Tennessee Williams, and the world premiere of Singer's Boy, by Leslie Ayvazian.

In the summer of 1993, Perloff staged the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's new music-theater-video opera, The Cave, at the Vienna Festival, which was subsequently presented at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, Royal Festival Hall in London, and Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Perloff served as artistic director of New York's Classic Stage Company (CSC) from 1986 to 1992, where she directed the acclaimed world premiere of Ezra Pound's version of Sophocles' Elektra (with Pamela Reed and Nancy Marchand), the American premiere of Harold Pinter's Mountain Language (with Jean Stapleton, David Straithairn, and Peter Riegert) on a double bill with his Birthday Party, Tony Harrison's Phaedra Britannica, Thornton Wilder's Skin of Our Teeth, Lynne Alvarez's translation of Tirso de Molina's Don Juan of Seville, Michael Feingold's version of Alexandre Dumas's Tower of Evil, Beckett's Happy Days (with Charlotte Rae), Brecht's Reisbarete Rite of Arusto Uz (with John Turturro), and Len Jenkins's Candida. Under Perloff's direction, CSC won the 1988 Obie Award for artistic excellence, as well as numerous Obies for acting, design, and production.

In Los Angeles, Perloff staged Pinter's Collection at the Mark Taper Forum (winning a Drama-Logue Award for outstanding direction) and was associate director of Steven Berkoff's Greek (which earned the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award for best production).

Perloff received her B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

THOMAS W. FLynn (Administrative Director) became A.C.T.'s administrative director in the fall of 1993. For the previous three years, he was A.C.T.'s director of development and community affairs. Flynn also served as campaign director for the Geary Theater Campaign. Prior to joining A.C.T., he held development positions at the Boston Ballet, the Handel and Haydn Society, and Tufts University. Flynn studied East Asian History at Harvard College. He has been a recipient of the Henry Russell Shaw Traveling Fellowship, conducting research on European architecture, and a management fellowship from the American Symphony Orchestra League. Flynn formerly served on the San Francisco Arts Commission.

JAMES Haire (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he managed were The Madwoman of Chaillot (with Le Gallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leora Dana), A Touch of the Poet (with Denholm Elliott), The Seagull (with Farley Granger), The Rivals, John Brown's Body, She Stoops to Conquer, and The Comedy of Errors. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little (with Julie Harris, Nancy Marchand, and Estelle Parsons) and George (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 as production continued on page 36
stage manager. In 1985 he was appointed production director, and in 1993 he assumed his current position. Haire 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. Haire holds a B.A. from the University of Arizona, an M.A. from the Northwestern University School of Speech, and an honorary M.F.A. from the A.C.T. Conservatory.

**Melissa Smith** (Conservatory Director), the master acting teacher in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, has taught acting to students of all ages in many venues throughout the United States. Prior to assuming leadership of the A.C.T. Conservatory in June 1995, she was director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting, scene study, and Shakespeare for six years. Also a professional actress, she has performed off-off Broadway and in regional theater; her credits include Sonya in Uncle Vanya, directed by Lloyd Richards at Yale Repertory Theatre and in New York, and numerous plays including the work of Mac Wellman and David Greenspan. 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. She has also trained and taught at the Gaymichael Patten Studio in New York.

**Craig Slaight** (Young Conservatory Director) spent ten years in Los Angeles directing theater and television before joining A.C.T. in 1988. An award-winning educator, Slaight is a consultant to the Educational Theater Association and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and a frequent guest speaker and adjudicator throughout the country. He has published eight anthologies for young actors, three of which have been selected by the New York Public Library as "outstanding books for the teenager." In 1989, he founded the Young Conservatory's New Plays Program; to date eleven new works by professional playwrights have been developed, nine of which have been published by Smith & Kraus in two volumes of New Plays from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory.

**Paul Walsh** (Dramaturg & Director of Humanities) has extensive experience as a dramaturg, translator, and adaptor. His translation of Strindberg's Creditor was directed by Carey Perloff at New York's Classic Stage Company in 1991 and at A.C.T. in 1992. His work also includes Children of Paradise: Shooting a Dream, Germinal, Don Juan Giovanni, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, and Honeymoon China at Theatre de la Jeune Lune in Minneapolis, as well as projects at The Guthrie Theater, Undermain Theater, and Kitchen Dog Theater. His critical writings have appeared in numerous publications, including Theater Symposium, Essays in Theatre, The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process, Re-interpreting Brecht, and Strindberg's Dramaturgy. Walsh received his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto's Graduate Center for the Study of Drama and has taught theater history and dramatic literature at Southern Methodist University.

**Meryl Lind Shaw** (Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993. During her previous 16 years as a member of the Bay Area theater community, she stage-managed more than 60 productions, including A.C.T.'s Bon Appetit and Creditor. She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for 12 years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She also stage-managed at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Eureka Theatre, Alcazar Theater, and Baltimore's Center Stage. She was active with Actors' Equity Association for many years and served on the A.E.A. negotiating committee in 1992 and 1993. Shaw's most recent casting projects include the San Francisco production of Puccio at the Latin Agile and the forthcoming CD-ROM game Osobian. This season she also teaches in the A.C.T. Conservatory's Advanced Training Program.

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Stagebill

For more information, contact Robert Caulfield (415) 356-0121
ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

KATE EDMUNDS, scenic designer in residence at A.C.T., has created the sets for The Cherry Orchard, The Tempest, Arcadia, Hamlet, Antigone, Prologo, Scapin, Uncle Vanya, Full Moon, Oleanna, Angels in America, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Othello, and Hedda. She has designed many productions for Berkeley Repertory Theatre and has designed extensively throughout the United States at a wide range of regional, Broadway, and off-Broadway theaters.

PETER MARADUDIN, lighting designer in residence at A.C.T., has designed Shattered the First, The Matchmaker, The Cherry Orchard, Dark Rapture, The Tempest, Gaslight, Arcadia, Othello, The Play the Thing, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Home, Oleanna, Full Moon, Scapin, Uncle Vanya, Prologo, Pygmalion, The Learned Ladies, Antigone, and Hedda. On Broadway, he designed the lighting for The Kentucky Cycle and Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, and for regional theater he has designed more than 200 productions for such companies as The Guthrie Theater, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Center Stage, Old Globe Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and South Coast Repertory. Other recent Bay Area productions include Ballad of a Yakbi, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, and The Woman Warrior for Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Maradudin has received 4 Los Angeles Theatre Critics' Circle Awards, 24 Drama-Logue Awards, and an Angstrom Award for lifetime achievement in lighting design.

RICHARD SEYD, as associate artistic director of A.C.T. from 1992 to 1995. He has received Drama-Logue and Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle awards for his productions of Cloud 9, About Face, Noises Off, Oleanna, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead. As associate producing director of the Eureka Theatre Company, he directed (among other plays) The Threepenny Opera, The Island, and The Wick. He has directed the Pickle Family Circus in London; Three High with Geoff Hoyle, Bill Irwin, and Larry Pisoni at the Marines Memorial Theatre; A View from the Bridge and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? for Berkeley Repertory Theatre; As You Like It for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; and The Mud Dancers for the Mark Taper Forum's New Play Series. He directed The Learned Ladies (with Jean Stapleton) for the Classic Stage Company (CSC) in New York during the 1991–92 season and directed A Midsummer Night's Dream for the California Shakespeare Festival in 1991. That year he also directed Sarah's Story at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; Born Yesterday at Marin Theatre Company; and King Lear at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Portland. For A.C.T. he has directed The Learned Ladies, the American premiere of Dario Fo's The Pope and the Witch, George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, the Bay Area premiere of David Mamet's Oleanna, Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Shakespeare's Othello, and Thornton Wilder's Matchmaker. This season at A.C.T. he directs Mrs. Warren's Family.

ALBERT TAKAZAUKAS has created notable productions in the Bay Area and beyond and has become a national and international director of opera and theater. Recent credits include debuts with the Canadian Opera Company and Tulsa Opera, as well as ongoing work with the Virginia Opera, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Utah Opera, New Jersey Opera Festival, Kennedy Center, and A.C.T. Since his debut with A.C.T. in 1986, he has directed many renowned productions, including The Floating Lightbulb, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, A Lie of the Mind, Dinner at Eight, Light up the Sky, and Gaslight. Takazaukas is the recipient of numerous awards and a grant from the NEA. Last season he created and directed A Galaxy on Geary, A.C.T.'s gala reopening of the Geary Theater, and performed the same function for the opening of the Lucy Lockett Cabe Theatre in Wildwood Park, Arkansas. This season at A.C.T. he directs Kaufman and Ferber's Royal Family.

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Performance HIGHLIGHTS

On November 27, 1978, then Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk were murdered in their City Hall offices. By the end of the night, over 40,000 people were marching up Market Street, each holding a lighted candle, overflowing the stretch between the Castro and City Hall. A candlelight march has been staged on that date every year since then, a memorial to Milk and his charismatic activism. This year the march will be made more poignant as the San Francisco Opera holds the curtain a half-hour for Harvey Milk, the new opera that sings the story of Milk’s life and message of political and social empowerment. Co-commissioned by the SFO with Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera, Harvey Milk gets its West Coast premiere beginning November 9.

* * * * *

Tennessee Williams’s plays most often conjure love missed, misplaced, maimed. But Williams called The Rose Tattoo his “love-play to the world,” his one script in which his characters are redeemed, rather than destroyed, by passion. Beginning October 24, American Conservatory Theater stages the Tony Award-winning play, giving Artistic Director Carey Perloff an opportunity to slip into something smuttiest. The production features Obie and Emmy Award-winning actress Kathleen Widdoes as the lusty widow Serafina.

* * * * *

At first he was simply the classical guitarist nonpareil, embodying the precision and technique befitting the heir apparent to guitar god Andrés Segovia. But his restless curiosity eventually led guitarist John Williams to a crossover career with musical adventures as far-flung as film scoring, classical-rock fusion, jazz, pop, and world music. On November 10 San Francisco Performances brings the multidexterous maestro to Davies Symphony Hall after a three-season absence from the Bay Area.

* * * * *

Frances Hodgson Burnett could hardly have guessed in 1909 that the book she was writing would become the children’s story for the 1990s. The Secret Garden’s charms have lately graced countless stages in the Broadway musical version; a delightful film version followed, to great acclaim. Now, Oakland Ballet tells the story in dance. The ballet, by Founding Artistic Director Ronn Guidi and set to music by the very Edwardian Sir Edward Elgar, premieres at UC Berkeley’s Zellerbach Hall, November 15–17. —Peter Gephy

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DEAR FRIENDS,

We are thrilled to welcome you to A.C.T.'s 30th anniversary season and our first full season back home in our beautifully restored Geary Theater.

This fall our welcoming song is the joyful sound of klezmer music, brought to life in a delightful musical inspired by the timeless stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer. Shlemiel the First is the product of some of the richest imaginations in the American theater: writer/adaptor Robert Brustein, choreographer/director David Gordon, musicians Zalmen Mlotek and Hankus Netsky, lyricist Arnold Weinstein, costume designer Catherine Zuber, and set designer Robert Israel.

As a theater piece, Shlemiel celebrates those rare moments in life when the ordinary suddenly becomes extraordinary, when the familiar is glimpsed through a lens that, for a moment, makes everything surprising and wonderful.

Perhaps this is what theater always strives to do: to help us see familiar situations in radically new ways, to break the habits of our daily existence and wake us up to what is truly alive about our own everyday worlds. This season’s plays at A.C.T. center around that moment of transformation from the ordinary to the sublime: the moment when Serafina delle Rose, the grieving widow of The Rose Tattoo, risks everything to grasp at a second chance for love; when retiring bank clerk Henry Pulling suddenly encounters the thrill of international scandal in Travels with My Aunt; when the quiet, submissive wife of Machinal commits a shocking act of desperation; when The Royal Family’s young mother, Gwen, realizes that she’s destined for the stage; when the endlessly chattering suburban Grace ascends to new heights in Singer’s Boy; and when Vivie discovers the shocking truth about the source of her mother’s wealth in Mrs. Warren’s Profession.

All of us remember moments in our lives when transformation could be palpably—sometimes painfully, sometimes thrillingly—felt. We hope this season will provide you with moments of rich discovery and a few reminders of how deliciously unexpected life can be.

Welcome! Our partnership with you, our audience, challenges us to create our best work. We’re honored to have you with us at A.C.T.

Yours,

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director

For tickets and more information about A.C.T.'s 1996–97 season, call the A.C.T. Box Office at (415) 749-2ACT.
Spotlight on A.C.T.’s 1995–96 Season

As the curtain rises on A.C.T.’s 30th year in San Francisco, A.C.T. is proud to celebrate the success of the 1995–96 Geary Theater Homecoming Season. A.C.T.’s award-winning productions, increasing ticket sales, popular community outreach and educational programs, and vital fundraising efforts make it possible for A.C.T. to continue to bring the transformative power of live theater to Bay Area audiences.

Last season’s seven-play slate opened with Artistic Director Carey Perloff’s acclaimed production of Tom Stoppard’s Arcadia, which played to 95 percent of capacity, and concluded with Richard Seyd’s popular staging of The Matchmaker, featuring Jean Stapleton in the title role. The A.C.T. coproduction of August Wilson’s Seven Guitars won a Tony Award nomination for best dramatic production, and Ruben Santiago-Hudson earned the Tony for best featured actor for his portrayal of Canewell on Broadway. On the home front, A.C.T. productions collectively took 22 Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award nominations, garnering wins in five categories, while SF Weekly readers named A.C.T. the best theater company in San Francisco in their 1995 “Best Of” poll.

A.C.T. brought in a strong performance at the box office, as well: a total of 205,610 theatergoers purchased tickets to 308 performances; Perloff’s staging of The Tempest, the inaugural production in the newly renovated Geary Theater, played to a 99 percent-capacity audience, with Associate Artist Albert Takazak’s production of Gaslight finishing its run at more than 90 percent of capacity. Subscription sales also increased to 18,663 (up from the previous season’s 17,030), evidence of the renewed commitment of the company’s long-term supporters as well as of the enthusiasm of A.C.T. newcomers.

The crowning event of the season was the eagerly anticipated INCONTRO

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46

continued on page 48
January reopening of the renovated Geary Theater. The sold-out opening celebration, *A Galaxy on Geary*—the largest fundraising event in A.C.T.'s history—grossed more than $400,000 for the A.C.T. Conservatory's scholarship fund, and almost 5,000 Geary fans explored the theater at the subsequent open house. A.C.T. successfully concluded The Geary Theater Capital Campaign after exceeding its goal of $27.5 million.

Last season's theatrical achievements were complemented by the continued popularity of A.C.T.'s educational and community programs. Almost 4,000 Bay Area residents attended A.C.T.'s symposia, prologues, and audience exchange discussions—all of which are offered free of charge. The first full season of the conservatory's ArtReach visiting artist project brought theater workshops into the classrooms of 450 San Francisco students, and A.C.T.'s "Bring What You Can/Pay What You Wish" performances allowed 457 patrons who would otherwise not have been able to attend A.C.T. to obtain tickets on a sliding scale in exchange for food donations to Project Open Hand.

The 1995–96 season also witnessed the birth of ACT1, an affiliate organization founded by trustee Julie Stein to encourage young Bay Area professionals to get involved with A.C.T. through education, fundraising, and special events. More than 700 people attended Comedy Night at the Geary, last spring's ACT1 benefit, which grossed more than $15,000 toward the ACT1 scholarship fund. A.C.T.'s 1995–96 fundraising triumphs also included the award of an extraordinary $350,000 grant from the James Irvine Foundation to fund development of a third year in the conservatory's Advanced Training Program, as well as a $50,000 three-to-one matching grant from the California Arts Council to support commissions from minority and women playwrights.

Students also flocked to Studio A.C.T. (the conservatory's evening training program) and to A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and Summer Training Congress in record numbers: attendance of 1996 summer programs totalled more than 800. All of these programs continue into the current season as part of A.C.T.'s efforts to introduce as many people as possible to the joys of great theater.

continued on page 50
THE A.C.T.
ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM PRESENTS
THE REINCARNATION OF JAIMIE BROWN

This fall the A.C.T. Conservatory implements the initial phase in the expansion of its Advanced Training Program (ATP) with the public presentation of The Reincarnation of Jaimie Brown, by award-winning playwright Lynne Alvarez. Thanks to the support of The James Irvine Foundation, the ATP, currently a two-year certificate program which allows for an optional post-graduation M.F.A. thesis project, will be expanded to include a mandatory third year of study leading to an M.F.A. degree. The additional year will emphasize rehearsal and performance, culminating in a student public performance series presented in small local theaters.

On May 19, 1996, Rick Overton (above right) and Jake Johannsen (above) were joined by Margaret Smith, Jean Stapleton, and Don Johnson at Comedy Night at the Geary, a benefit for the A.C.T. Conservatory Scholarship Fund.

Photos by Karenis Dachter

THE A.C.T.
ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM PRESENTS
THE REINCARNATION OF JAIMIE BROWN

A TRAVELING JEWISH THEATRE COSPONSORS
A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

On October 7, in conjunction with Shlemiel the First, A.C.T. presents the initial symposium of the 1996-97 A.C.T. Perspectives season, "A Celebration of Yiddish Theater and the Klezmer Revival in America." Through A.C.T. Perspectives, the company's free public symposium series, A.C.T. invites renowned scholars, theater artists, and professionals to discuss issues raised by the season's plays. In the spirit of A.C.T.'s continuing commitment to community collaboration, the Shlemiel the First symposium is co-sponsored by the San Francisco-based theatrical troupe, A Traveling Jewish Theatre.

Artistically and culturally unique, A Traveling Jewish Theatre is an artist-led ensemble with the mission of creating and performing works based on a wide variety of viewpoints and backgrounds that express the complexity of the Jewish experience. Since its founding in 1978, the company has created more than a dozen original theater pieces and produced a four-part series for Public Radio International, "Heart of Wisdom: Audio Explorations in Jewish Culture."

A Traveling Jewish Theatre has performed in more than 60 cities worldwide, including Chicago, New York, Berlin, Oslo, Prague, and Jerusalem. Members of the ensemble also teach solo performance, improvisation, and ensemble creation through the company's workshop program.

A.C.T. Perspectives symposia are held on selected Monday nights throughout the season from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Geary Theater. This season's symposia also include: "The Rose Tattoo and the Complex Legacy of Tennessee Williams" (November 18); "From Page to Stage: Theatrical Adaptation from Literature" (January 6); "Women in Theater and Film: Contemporary Explorations" (May 19); and "Alternative Trends in the British Theater" (June 23). For more information, please call the A.C.T. Literary Department at (415) 439-2469.

SHLEMIEL'S MUSIC

by Elizabeth Brodersen

The sounds of Shlemiel the First are a mixture of adapted Yiddish theater and folk songs, set to the joyous strains of klezmer music. From the Hebrew kele and tama (vessels of song), klezmer is the centuries-old traditional dance music of Jewish weddings, holidays, and bar mitzvahs.

According to Hankus Netsky, leader of the Klezmer Conservatory Band—whose 1993 performance inspired Robert Brustein to transform Shlemiel the First, the play, into Shlemiel the First, the musical—the origins of klezmer date back 800 years to Jewish cantorial music. Because instrumental music was considered a symbol of the holy temple, rabbis banned it after the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed circa 150 B.C.E. Eventually, however, orchestras were permitted to participate in secular festivities, and wandering klezmorim (musicians) became an essential element of Jewish life.

After large numbers of Jews made their homes in Eastern Europe in the 1300s, the Gypsy sounds of local performers, which echoed the familiar wails of Middle Eastern prayer, found their way into klezmer music. The klezmorim of the shtetl (village) played much the same role as the Gypsy musicians of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, lending their talents to every community celebration. They also suffered from similar prejudice. Many people condemned the klezmorim for their free
lifestyle, considering them irresponsible, sexually active, and violent. Isaac Bashevis Singer himself expressed this folk prejudice in his story “The Dead Fiddler,” about a young woman possessed by the soul of a licentious, drunk-en, and blasphemous musician.

Klezmorim were instrumental in helping to preserve Jewish music and culture, and their music was deeply rooted in the Warsaw Ghetto and other Eastern European Jewish communities. The klezmer style of music is characterized by its use of traditional Jewish melodies and harmonies, often played on instruments such as the clarinet, violin, and accordion. Klezmorim were known for their ability to play for dances and other social events, and their music was an important part of the Jewish cultural landscape.

Today, klezmer music is experiencing a resurgence in popularity, with many contemporary klezmorim and klezmer music ensembles performing throughout the world. The klezmer style of music continues to be an important part of Jewish cultural heritage and is enjoyed by audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Hence, the story of Shlumiel is a universal one, applicable to any community that has experienced oppression and discrimination. It is a story of resilience, hope, and the importance of maintaining one’s cultural identity in the face of adversity.

As mentioned above, shlemiels are usually regarded with pity, not scorn: they cannot be blamed for the infirmities of their judgment, the folly of their choices, or the naiveté that governs their hapless course through life. I know no better way to pinpoint the characterization than with these classic definitions:

A shlemiel falls on his back and breaks his nose.
A shlemiel takes a bath, and forgets to wash his face.
A shlemiel is always knocking things off tables—and a nebech always picks them up.
A shlemiel rushes to throw a drowning man a rope—but both ends.

When a shlemiel wants to hang himself, he grabs a knife.
dybbuk [DIB-book] n: an evil spirit or devil, especially the soul of a dead person that inhabits a living person because of some debt or trouble during life.

gemilts fish [geh-FIL-teh] n: literally, “filled fish,” but traditionally a cake or loaf made of various chopped or ground fishes and mixed with eggs, salt, onions, and pepper.

Gehenna [geh-HEHN-na] n: Hell; named after a supposedly cursed valley south of Jerusalem, where children were sacrificed to the idol Moloch, according to the Old Testament.

gemalt [geh-VOLL-t] interj: cry of astonishment or fear; from the German Gemaelt, for violence or force (<y, gemalt>.

kabbalah also caballah or cabala [kah-BAH-la] n: Jewish mysticism; originally the Jewish oral tradition, which claimed an unbroken link of tradition from biblical forefathers.

cosh-dish [kosh-dish] n: Jewish prayer for the dead.

cosha [kosh-eh] n: traditional cooked cereal or porridge, but also a riddle or confusion; a person who causes confusion is said to have “cooked up a cosha.”

knish [knihs] n: little dumplings filled with potatoes, grated potatoes, onions, chopped liver, or cheese; also a vulgarism for vagina.

krepach [krepper] n: a triangular or square dumpling filled with chopped meat or cheese, usually served in soup; similar to Italian ravioli.

ekvell [kvel] v: 1. to gush with pride <naturally they kvelled at their boy’s bar mitzvah> 2. to gloat over someone's defeat <every decent man will kvell when that sadist goes to jail>.

kvetch [kvetsh] v: 1. to eke or squeeze <he manages to kvetch out a living> 2. to fuss or be ineffectual 3. to grope or fret 4. to stall, delay 5. to shrug <he kvetches his shoulders>.


melamed [me-LEH-mehd] n: 1. a teacher, especially of elementary Hebrew, which is not a traditionally high position; hence 2. a shlemiel 3. an unsophisticated, impractical type.

crazy.

midrash [mid-ROSH] n: high-minded analysis of scripture.

Moishe Pupik [moy-SHEH puh-PUK] n: a generic name for dummies, oafs, or the clumsy and inept.


pipik [pih-PUH-kek] n: 1. a belly button 2. a colloquialism for penis.

putz [puh] n: 1. like shmuck, slang for jerk, but more offensive; 2. a vulgarism for penis.

shivah [SHIH-veh] n: seven solemn days of mourning for the dead, beginning immediately after the funeral, when Jews “sit shivah” in the home of the deceased.

shlimazel also shlemazel [shleh-MOHZ-eh] n: chronically unlucky person, a born loser.

shmatte [SHMOT-teh] n: 1. a rag <that’s no dress, it’s a shmatte> 2. cheap junk 3. an unacceptable person 4. a woman of weak character or weak will, or, simply, a slut <as a girl she was decent, but now she’s a shmatte>.

5. a sycophant.

shmeggege [shmeh-GEH-geh] n: 1. an untalented or petty person 2. a sycophant or a whiner.

shmendrick [SHMEN-drik] n (from the name of a character in an opera by Yiddish playwright Abraham Goldfaden): 1. a small, thin, pipsqueak; perhaps an apprentice shlemiel 2. a nobody, someone lacking in influence or importance, or both 3. a boy or young man 4. a child 5. a colloquialism for penis (usually used by women to deride by diminutizing).

shnorrer [SHNOR-er] n: a beggar, chiseler, cheapskate, or bum 2. a compulsive bargain hunter.

tsatskele also tchotchkele [tsatskele [TSATS-keh-le] n (diminutive of tsatske or tchotchke): 1. a toy or plaything 2. a cheap little trinket 3. a bruise or contusion 4. a nobody 5. a misfit or maladjusted child 6. a loose or kept woman 7. an ineffectual person, a fifth wheel.

yenta [YENT-uh] n: 1. a vulgar, tactless, or shrewish woman 2. a rumormonger, someone who can’t keep a secret.

zaftig [ZOFT-iq] adj: juicy, as in a plum or peach 2. provocative, seminal, germinal <the book is full of zaftig ideas> 3. plump, well rounded (said of a woman).

zetz [zet] n: a strong blow or punch.

zhub [zhuh] n: 1. an insensitive, graceless, ill-mannered person 2. a bumpkin or lout (probably an ancestor of slob).

From The Joys of Yiddish, © 1968 by Leo Rosten

—Adapted by Michael Moore
REMO AIRALDI (Motel, Moishe Popy) performs frequently at the American Repertory Theatre, where his credits include Motel, Moishe Pip, and Chaim Rascal in the world premiere of Shlemiel the First, Monsieur Loyal in Tartuffe, Father Lewis in Buried Child, and Antonio in The Tempest, as well as roles in Henry V, The Three Penny Opera, Waiting for Godot, The Oresteia, The Cherry Orchard, Henry IV, Silence, Caming, Exile, Dream of the Red Spider, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, The Baloney, and Archangels Don’t Play Pinball. He recently toured Taiwan in The King Stag and Six Characters in Search of an Author. Other Boston-area productions include 1940s Radio Show at Club Cabaret and The 1940s Radio Hour and Little Shop of Horrors at the Nickerson Theatre.

THOMAS DERRAH (Shlemiel) comes to A.C.T. following the successful run of *Jackie: An American Life*, in which he played 27 roles, at Boston’s Wilbur Theatre. He has appeared in more than 70 productions at the American Repertory Theatre, including recent performances in Ubu Rock, Tartuffe, The Tempest, The Oresteia, An Evening of Beckett, and Picasso at the Lapin Agile. He has toured internationally with the A.R.T. company and has performed at the Duke of York’s Theatre in the West End, as well as at numerous regional theater companies throughout the United States. His film and television work has been aired on cable and national networks, most recently on PBS’s “American Playhouse.” He received a special achievement award from the New England Theatre Conference for excellence in acting and the 1994 Elliot Norton Award for sustained excellence in theater. Derrah received his M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama and teaches at the A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theatre Training and Harvard University.

WILL LEBOW (Zalman Tippish) has performed in numerous productions at the American Repertory Theatre, including Tartuffe, Alice in Bed, The Tempest, Ubu Rock, Demons, Henry V, The Oresteia, Picasso at the Lapin Agile, Henry IV, and the Taiwan tour of The King Stag. Other regional theater credits include Twelfth Night at Merrimack Repertory Theatre, I’m Not Rappaport at Gloucester Stage; Hamlet and Much Ado about Nothing at Boston Shakespeare Company; and The Miser, The Birthday Party, The Real Inspector Hound, and Loot at New York’s Comedies Stage Company. LeBew is the voice of Stanley on the award-winning animated television series “Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist.” Other screen credits include Second Sight, the NBC special “The Discovery,” and featured roles on “Spenser for Hire” and “Miller’s Court.”

CHARLES LEVIN (Gronam Os) has performed in numerous American Repertory Theatre productions, including The Tempest, Buried Child, Ubu Rock, The Oresteia, the Taiwan tour of The King Stag, and the world premiere of Shlemiel the First. During three seasons at Yale Repertory Theatre, he appeared in The Fugue, Troilus and Cressida, The Possessed, Happy End, and Alvin Epstein’s production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. He appeared in the Broadway production and national tour of City of Angels and in off-Broadway productions of One Night Stand and Nuts. Television credits include regular roles on “Alice,” “Goodnight Beantown,” and “Capital News,” and recurring roles on “Hill Street Blues,” “Family Ties,” “L.A. Law,” “NYPD Blue,” and “Seinfeld,” among many others. Levin’s film credits include Immediate Family, Honeyuckle Rose, This Is Spinal Tap, Manhattan, and Annie Hall.
MAUREEN MCVERRY (Ty- na Ryta) has appeared at A.C.T. as Eliza Doolittle in Pygmalion, Kitty Packard in Dinner at Eight, the Gypsy in Scapin, and Sister Gabriella in The Pope and the Witch. She was featured as Kay in the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival production of Oh Kay! and in two long-running San Francisco shows: Notes Off and The Curse of the Werewolf. At Marin Theatre Company, she has appeared in Side by Side by Sondheim, You’re Gonna Love Tomorrow, Born Yesterday, Room Service, and Notes Off. She is the winner of five Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Awards and two Drama-Logue Awards. Since 1994 she has performed her evolving one-woman cabaret show, Gerry McVerry, including an appearance last fall at San Francisco’s Plush Room. McVerry’s film and television credits include Nine Months, The Dead Pool, True Believer, Big Business, The Ox and the Eye, and “Full House.”

VONTRESS MITCHELL (Zein- vel Shmeckel) appeared as Zeinvel Shmeckel in the American Repertory Theatre’s world premiere of Shlemiel the First and as The Man in the A.R.T. New Stages production of The America Play. He has recently appeared as Roderigo in Othello with the Juggernaut Theatre in New York, which will be performed at the Royal Shakespeare Company in spring 1997. Other A.R.T. credits include Henry IV, Black Snow, and The Threepenny Opera. He is also a 1995 graduate of the A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theatre Training.

SCOTT RIPLEY (Chaim Rascal) has performed in numerous productions at the American Repertory Theatre, including the role of Valère in Tartuffe, Ferdinand in The Tempest, several roles in Ubu Rock, and Truffaldino in the Taiwan tour of The King Stag. He was seen in the world premiere of The Who’s Tommy and in Much Ado about Nothing, both directed by Des McAnuff at the La Jolla Playhouse. Regional theater credits also include Alchemy of Desire at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Game of Love and Chance at the Washington Stage Guild. Ripley graduated from Annapolis and flew the Navy’s A-6 Intruder for six years before attending the professional actor training program at UC San Diego, where he received his M.F.A.

Marilyn Sokol (Yenta Polka, Gittel, Sender Shlamazel) celebrates this season her 30th anniversary in show business. She has appeared on Broadway in Conversations with My Father, Welcome to the Club, Great God Brown, and Don Juan. She also performed in the American Repertory Theatre world premiere of Shlemiel the First and in Fiddler on the Roof at the St. Louis MUNY. Regional theater credits include The Merry Wives of Windsor at the New York Shakespeare Festival and Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Candida at the Goodman Theatre, Die Fledermaus at Circle Repertory Theatre, The Sisters Rosensweig at the Alliance Theatre Company, and Genet’s Screens and The Beggar’s Opera at the Chelsea Theatre. She is the recipient of an Obie Award, an Emmy Award, and a Bistro Award for cabaret. She has also worked with the San Francisco Mime Troupe and The Open Theatre. Film and television credits include The Basketball Diaries, Family Business, Foil Play, The Goodbye Girl, The Front, “Law and Order,” “Barney Miller,” “All That Glitters,” and “Sesame Street.” Sokol will join the Broadway company of Grease this fall.

The San Francisco Klezmer Experience is a newly formed ensemble, passionately dedicated to the soulful and ecstatic dance music of the Jews of Eastern Europe. Created by violinist Daniel Hoffman, The San Francisco Klezmer Experience boasts an all-star roster of the Bay Area’s nationally recognized and innovative klezmer music community, including current or former members of such klezmer heavyweights as The Klezmorim, Brave Old World, Davka, Shirim, and California Klezmer. Bassist Stuart Brotman, clarinetist Sheldon Brown, trombonist Rick Elmore, percussionist Alan Hall, string master Jody Stecher, and trumpet Stephen Saxton join Hoffman to bring a new level of artistry to this sweet and exhilarating music.

Samantha Phillips (Understudy) appeared in Shlemiel the First in Philadelphia and on the show’s Florida tour. She has also appeared at the American Repertory Theatre as Betty in The Threepenny Opera, Europa in The Tempest, and Maria Lecizenski in Ubu Rock. Other theater credits include Cathy Strophic in the Chapman Dance Project’s premiere of Short Leash, Mistress Quickly in Henry IV, Part 1 at the Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre, Besie in A Child’s Christmas in Wales at the Bloomburg Theatre Ensemble, and Madam Thérèse in the Red Heel production of La Bête. Phillips recently made her feature film debut in Celtic Pride, with Dan Ackroyd, Dan Stern, and Damon Wayans.

Robert Weinapple (Understudy) has appeared recently in the Bay Area in Rocket to the Moon at the Aurora Theatre Company, Silk Stockings for 42nd Street Moon, and Phantom with the Diablo Light Opera Company. Local theater credits also include As You Like It at TheatreWorks; Inspecting Carol, A Shayna Maidel, and Born Yesterday with Marin Theatre Company; and A Midsummer Night’s Dream and The Tempest with the Marin Shakespeare Company. Weinapple also teaches and directs at schools throughout the Bay Area and works with symphonies nationwide hosting “Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?” children’s concerts.

Robert Brustein (Adaptor) is the founding director of Yale Repertory Theatre and the American Repertory Theatre. He has supervised more than 200 productions, of which he has directed 12 (including his own adaptations of The Father, Ghosts, The Changeling, the Pirandello trilogy: Six Characters in Search of an Author, Right You Are If You Think You Are], and Tonight We Improvise). His play Demons was broadcast on Boston’s WGBH radio in April 1993 and was performed at A.R.T. New Stages in 1994. He is the author of 11 books on theater and society, including Reimagining American Theatre, The Theatre of Revolt, Making Scenes, and Who Needs Theatre? for which he received his second George Jean Nathan Award for dramatic criticism. His eleventh book, Democracy in America, was released in 1994. Brustein is also director of the Loeb Drama Center, professor of English at Harvard University, and drama critic for The New Republic. He has received numerous honors, including the George Polk Award in journalism, the El-
lrot Norton Award for professional excellence in Boston theater, the New England Theatre Conference’s award for outstanding creative achievement in the American theater, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for distinguished service to the arts.

DAVID GORDON (Director, Choreographer) directed and choreographed the original production of Shlemiel the First for the American Repertory Theatre and American Music Theatre Festival and on tour. In 1971 Gordon founded the David Gordon/Pick Up Performance Company, a nonprofit organization which supports his work in live performance and media. He was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1981 and 1987 and has been a panelist and chairman of the dance program panel of the NEA. His video work has appeared on “Great Performances,” “Alive TV,” and the BBC and Channel 4 in Great Britain. The Mysteries and What’s So Funny? written and directed by Gordon with music by Philip Glass and visual design by Red Grooms, received Bessie and Obie awards, and the script was published in New American Theater by Grove Press. He recently collaborated with Ain Gordon on The Family Business, which premiered at the Dance Theatre Workshop in New York City in 1994, received an Obie Award, and was presented at the New York Theatre Workshop and the Mark Taper Forum in 1995. Last spring they collaborated again, with Arnold Weinstein, on Punch and Judy Get Divorced, which David Gordon also directed and choreographed for the American Music Theater Festival. Gordon received a National Theatre Artist residency grant to work with The Guthrie Theater, where he directed and choreographed The Firebirds last summer. He is currently working with Ain Gordon on a commission for the Mark Taper Forum.

HANKUS NETSKY (Music Adaptor, Composer, Orchestrator) is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist and composer. He is chairman of the New England Conservatory Jazz Department and is the founder and director of the Boston-based Klezmer Conservatory Band. He has taught Yiddish music at Hebrew College and the New England Conservatory and has lectured extensively on the subject in the United States, Canada, and Europe. His film scores include The Fool and the Flying Ship, a Rabbit Ears children’s video narrated by Robin Williams, and The Forward: From Immigrants to Americans. He composed the incidental music for the NPR series “Jewish Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond” and served as musical director for Joel Grey’s Borstal Boy ’94. He recently collaborated with violinist Itzhak Perlman on In the Fiddler’s House, a klezmer music video, recording, and touring project. Netsky received his B.A. and M.A. in composition from the New England Conservatory.

ARNOLD WEINSTEIN (Lyricist) recently collaborated with Robert Altman on the libretto for McTeague, a new opera by William Bolcom for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The Lyric Opera also recently commissioned Weinstein, Bolcom, and Arthur Miller to adapt Miller’s View from the Bridge. He also collaborated with Bolcom on Dynamic Tonight!, presented at Yale Repertory Theatre in 1966 and 1976, and on Casino Paradise, presented at the American Music Theater Festival in 1990. He has also worked with artists Andy Warhol, Larry Rivers, Howard Kanovitz, and Marisol and collaborated last spring with David and Ain Gordon on Punch and Judy Get Divorced. His plays include the award-winning Red Eye of Love, recently published by Sun & Moon Press, and a story theater adaptation of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, directed by Paul Sills, for Yale Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, and subsequently Broadway. Weinstein also wrote “The Story Theater” television series. What Did I Do? The Unauthorized Autobiography, his collaboration with Larry Rivers, was published by Harper Collins in 1993.

ZALMEN MLOTEK (Additional Music, Musical Arrangements, Musical Director, Creative Consultant), an internationally known authority on Yiddish music, has taught at Columbia University and Yeshiva University. He brought klezmer music to Broadway and off-Broadway stages as cocreator, musical director, and conductor of the Drama Desk Award–winning production Those Were the Days, the first bilingual musical to be nominated for two Tony Awards. He also created, musically directed, and conducted the music for The Golden Land, produced by the American Music Theater Festival and later performed in New York and on national and international tours. He has served as musical director and conductor for the Williamstown Theater Festival and the Great Lakes Theater Festival, is the conductor of the Di Goldene Keyt/Yiddish Chorale, and performs internationally with the Lipovsky/Mlotek/Warschauer Trio. He was the artistic director of the Lincoln Center Klezmer Festival, during which he collaborated with Itzhak Perlman on the PBS “Great Performances” film In the Fiddler’s House. Mlotek recently completed the music for In the Presence of Mine Enemies, a Rod Serling/Joan Micklin Silver film for Showtime.

ROBERT ISRAEL (Scenic Designer) has designed sets and costumes for more than 60 opera productions worldwide; he has collaborated with Philip Glass on The Voyage, Satyagraha, and Akhenaten. Recent projects include Aida for the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, The Fairy Queen for the English National Opera, The Fiery Angel for Opéra de Paris and the Netherlands Opera, Die Zauberflöte for the Glimmerglass Festival and the National Opera of Canada, Don Giovanni for the Los Angeles Opera, Kafka Kabanov for the Metropolitan Opera, Don Giovanni for the Florence Opera, Aida and The Ring Cycle for Seattle Opera, and Alice in Wonderland for London’s National Theatre. He created the sets for the American Repertory Theatre productions of Shlemiel the First, Tartuffe, and Orphée. His work has been exhibited at numerous museums and galleries. Israel is the chairman of the U.C.L.A. Theater Department.

CATHERINE ZUBER (Costume Designer) designed the costumes for A.C.T.’s acclaimed production of Angels in America. Broadway design credits include The Red Shoes, Philadelphia, Here I Come, and the Tony Award–nominated revival of The Rose Tattoo, featuring Mercedes Ruehl. Off-Broadway credits include the current hit musical Cowsgirls, as well as Silence, Canning, Exile and The Merchant of Venice at The Public Theater, Two Gentlemen of Verona and Troilus and Cressida at the Delacorte Theatre, and Jack’s Holiday at Playwrights Horizons. As the resident costume designer at the American Repertory Theatre, she has created costumes for more than 40 productions, including the world premiere of Shlemiel the First, Philip Glass’s Orphée, Puccini at theLatin Agile, and The Naked Eye. Regional theater credits include the musical Time and Again at the Old Globe Theatre and productions at The Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Center Stage, and the Mark Taper Forum. Zuber’s designs have also been seen at the New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Theatre St. Louis, and American Ballet Theatre, among others. Upcoming projects include Salomé at the Canadian Opera Company, Florencia en el Amazonas at the Houston Grand Opera, and a new musical version of The Triumph of Love.

CHRISTOPHER WALKER (Costume Designer) is resident costume designer at the American Repertory Theatre, where he designed the sound for Shlemiel the First, An Evening of Bckett, Alice in Bed, Long Day’s Journey into Night, The Naked Eye, Barred Child, Ubu Rock, The Three-Penny Opera, The Accident, Demons, Waiting for Godot, The Orleansea, Hot ’n’ Throbbing, The America Play, A Touch of the Poet, The Cherry Orchard, What the Butler Saw, and Those the River Keeps. He also has composed music and designed the sound for productions at Seattle’s Intiman Theatre, Bathhouse Theatre, and Alice B. Theatre, as well as numerous productions at the University of Washington and Cornish College of the Arts. Walker also scores for
dance and has composed for the Allegro Dance Festival, the Bumble-Shoot Festival, and On the Boards.

CHUCK FINLON (Associate Director) was the associate director of the American Repertory Theatre's world premiere production of Shlemiel the First. He has assisted David Gordon on many other projects, including The Mysteries and What's So Funny? and Punch and Judy Get Divorced in Philadelphia and Boston, and the recent dance concert at Jacob's Pillow. Fitzgerald's other recent stage-management credits include A.R. Gurney's Overtime and Philip Kan Gotanda's Dog Whistling on Its Head at the Manhattan Theatre Club, and Robert Ashley's quartet of new operas, New Eleanor's Idea.

MICHAEL LARSEN (Assistant Musical Director) has performed as a pianist for Broadway productions of Annie, Nine, and 42nd Street. As a pianist, conductor, and/or associate director, he worked on off-Broadway productions of The Golden Land and On Second Avenue, and touring productions of The Golden Land and The Sheik on the Avenue B. Nightclub and variety shows include conducting and arranging music for Larry Kert, Gloria DeHaven, and Meritt and Moreau, among others. He is currently resident director at the Joseph Antho Theatre of the Broward Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA) in Ft. Lauderdale, where he has directed Me and My Girl, Annie Warbucks, and a new musical, Only a Kingdom. As an associate creative director of Stage Door Manor Performing Arts Training Center for the past 18 seasons, Larson has staged more than 50 productions. His former students include actors Jon Cryer, Mary Stuart Masterson, Josh Charles, Natalie Portman, and playwright Jonathan Marc Sherman.

ED FITZGERALD (Stage Manager) stage-managed Shlemiel the First at the American Repertory Theatre, in Philadelphia, and on the Florida tour. His Broadway credits include Carrie, Tap Dance Kid, A Little Family Business, and Da. He has worked on numerous other projects with David Gordon, including The Mysteries and What's So Funny? on its national tour, The Family Business in New York and at the Mark Taper Forum, Punch and Judy Get Divorced in Philadelphia and Boston, and the recent dance concert at Jacob's Pillow. Fitzgerald's other recent stage-management credits include A.R. Gurney's Overtime and Philip Kan Gotanda's Dog Whistling on Its Head at the Manhattan Theatre Club, and Robert Ashley's quartet of new operas, New Eleanor's Idea.

MICHELE M. TRIMBLE (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked on A.C.T. productions of The Matchmaker, The Cherry Orchard, Arcadia, Hecuba, The Play's The Thing, and A Christmas Carol. Last season she also worked with San Jose Repertory Theatre on Miranda's. Other credits include Marin Shakespeare Company's Richard III and Much Ado about Nothing.

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<td>$28</td>
<td>$23</td>
<td>$14</td>
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<td>Sunday-Thur./Weekday matinees</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$38</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday/Sat./Opening night/Sunday matinee</td>
<td>$47.50</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$35</td>
<td>$19</td>
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</table>

Subscriptions:
Full-season subscribers save up to 29% and receive special benefits including parking, restaurant, and extra-ticket discounts, the ability to reschedule performance dates by phone, and more. Call the Subscription Hotline at (415) 749-2250 to find out about our four- and seven-play packages.

Discounts:
Half-price tickets are sometimes available on the day of performance at TIX on Union Square in San Francisco. Half-price student and senior rush tickets are available at the theater box office beginning 90 minutes prior to curtain. Matinee senior rush price is $8. All rush tickets are subject to availability; one ticket per valid I.D. Student subscriptions are also available at half price.

Group Discounts:
For groups of 15 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 346-7805 for special savings.

Gift Certificates:
Perfect for every celebration, gift certificates can be purchased in any amount from the A.C.T. box office. Gift certificates are valid for three years and may be redeemed for any performance.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

A.C.T. Prologues:
One-hour discussions conducted by each show's director. Presented in the Geary Theater before the Tuesday preview of each production from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. Sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco.

A.C.T. Audience Exchanges:
Informal audience discussions moderated by members of the A.C.T. staff, held after selected performances. For information call (415) 439-2469.

A.C.T. Perspectives:
A public symposium series held from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Monday evenings throughout the season, featuring in-depth panel discussions by noted scholars and professionals. Topics range from aspects of the season’s productions to the general relation of theater and the arts to American culture. Free of charge and open to everyone. For information call (415) 439-2469.

Student Matinées:
Matinées offered at 1 p.m. to elementary, secondary, and college groups for selected productions. Tickets are specially priced at $8. For information call Student Matinee Coordinator Jane Tarver at (415) 439-2383.

Words on Plays:
Handbooks containing a synopsis, advance program notes, and other background information about each of the season's plays can be mailed in advance to full-season subscribers for the special price of $42 for the entire season. A limited number of copies of individual
handbooks are also available for purchase by single-ticket holders at the A.C.T. Box Office and in Fred's Columbia Room for $8 each (sorry, no phone or mail orders for individual handbooks). For information call (415) 749–2ACT.

Consortium:
The A.C.T. Conservatory offers classes, training, and advanced theater study. The Young Conservatory offers training for students between the ages of 8 and 18. Call (415) 749–2350 for a free brochure.

Costume Rental:
A large collection of costumes, ranging from hand-made period garments to modern sportswear, is available for rental by schools, theaters, production companies, and individuals. For information call (415) 439–2371.

Parking:
A.C.T. patrons can park for just $7 at the San Francisco Hilton and Towers. Enter on Ellis Street between Mason and Taylor. Show your ticket stub for that day's performance upon exit to receive the special price for up to five hours of parking, subject to availability. After five hours, the regular rate applies. (A limited number of full-season subscribers enjoy an even greater discount, but the offer is already sold out for this season.)

AT THE THEATER

The Geary Theater is located at 415 Geary Street at Mason.

A.C.T. Souvenirs, including posters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, nightshirts, mugs, and note cards, are available in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower level and at the Geary Theater Box Office, located next to the theater.

Bar service is available in Fred's Columbia Room on the lower lobby level and in the Sky Lobby on the second balcony level. Food and drink are not permitted in the auditorium.

Beeper!
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 to avoid disturbing the performance. Alternatively, you may leave it with the house manager, along with your seat number, so you can be notified if you are called.

Latecomers:
Latecomers will be seated before the first intermission only if there is an appropriate interval.

Listening Systems:
Head sets designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium are available free of charge in the lobby before performance.

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

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

Smoking is not permitted in the building.

Wheelchair Access:
The Geary Theater is accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

GEARY THEATER EXITS

Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit.

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