Sexual Perversity in Chicago
by David Mamet
Directed by Peter Riegert

Special Issue!
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January/February 2006
Volume 12, No. 4

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American Conservatory Theater nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive artist training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Executive Director Heather Kitchen, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent its relationship to the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.'s creative work.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. During the past four decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of seven million people; today, A.C.T.'s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 270,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996, A.C.T.'s efforts to develop creative talent for the theater were recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award. In 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 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 and George Thompson, now serves 3,000 students every year. It was the first actor training program in the United States not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a master of fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Dennis Washington, and Teri Hatcher are among the conservatory’s distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.

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American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.

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Sexual Perversion in Chicago
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Sexual Perversion in Chicago

4 American Conservatory Theater
Dear Friends,

Over the past decade, David Mamet has become, along with Tom Stoppard, the most produced contemporary playwright at A.C.T. I think this is because, like Stoppard, Mamet has the astonishing ability to craft language that pierces our prosaic and fills the face of such devastation. That experience reaffirmed his passion for live theater and his desire to return to the Geary.

So when we decided to produce Sexual Perversion this season, I asked Peter to dinner to talk about the play. It was a play he knew so well that within moments he was regaling me with Danny’s juiciest monologues (remembered from 30 years ago!) and revealing all the rehearsal secrets he could remember. Knowing that Peter had recently launched his directing career, by the end of the dinner I found myself asking him if he would like to stage Sexual Perversion for us, and he agreed. It is always fascinating to take remarkable artists and place them in a new context, to watch actors direct, directors write, designers direct, and so on. It is important to us at A.C.T. to give artists the chance to stretch beyond their comfort zones, and we are thrilled to give Peter the chance to re-explore a great play from his past with some remarkable talents of today.

Sexual Perversion in Chicago is a play about twenty-somethings trying to make sense of their lives. It is about the terror we all have of actually connecting with another human being, and the excuses we find for evading intimacy. It is about the unbelievable and often hilarious ways we manipulate language to get what we want and to avoid recognizing things we don’t want to deal with. Thirty years after its creation, this play still feels remarkably vivid and fresh, the newly discovered voice of a young writer who was to go on to change the face of American theater. It is fitting, therefore, that at the same time we are presenting Sexual Perversion at the Geary, we are also spending the months of January and February at Zeum Theater, opening a new series of workshops of brand-new plays as part of our popular First Look series. We hope that your appetites will be whetted to join us at Zeum and to discover the next generation of audacious new playwrights.

Many thanks for joining us!

Yours,

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
Dear Friends,

Over the past decade, David Mamet has become, along with Tom Stoppard, the most produced contemporary playwright at A.C.T. I think this is because, like Stoppard, Mamet has the astonishing ability to craft language that pierces our consciousness and fills the Geary Theater with its muscle, wit, bite, and danger. Even a small-cast play like American Buffalo launched itself like a grenade into this house several seasons back, and reverberated for months afterwards.

Sexual Perversity in Chicago premiered in Chicago in 1974, and the first New York production, staged by the late, great San Francisco director Albert Takakaukas, featured a remarkable young actor named Peter Riegert in the role of Danny. I didn’t know him at the time, but more than 10 years later, when I was casting a major revival of Harold Pinter’s The Birthday Party in New York, I offered Peter the pivotal role of Goldberg. I felt no need to audition him, but Peter was so taken aback by my unconditional offer that he asked me what made me think he could “do Pinter.” I replied that anyone who could handle Mamet’s language the way Peter had could surely navigate the menace, silences, and hilarity of Pinter. After all, Mamet was mentored by Pinter from the beginning of his career (he sent Pinter early drafts of each new play for comments), just as Pinter was mentored by Beckett. The linguistic continuum is unmistakable.

Thus began a 20-year collaboration between Peter Riegert and myself, a collaboration filled with mutual love of the absurd and relish for language in all its forms. We last worked together on the double bill of Pinter’s one-acts Celebration and The Room, at an extraordinary moment in all of our histories: A.C.T. opened those plays at the Geary on September 12, 2001, the day after the Twin Towers were shot down. Peter was overwhelmed by the audience response that night, by the palpable hunger on everyone’s part to share the same space and to communicate something human and alive to each other in the face of such devastation. That experience reaffirmed his passion for live theater and his desire to return to the Geary.

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Many thanks for joining us!

Yours,

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director
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A.C.T.
American Conservatory Theater

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director • Heather Kitchen, Executive Director

presents

Sexual Perversity in Chicago

By David Mamet
(1974)

Directed by Peter Riegert

Starring
Kent Dorsey
Christine Dougbery
Alexander V. Nichols
Lindsay Jones

Assisted by
Bernard Telsey Casting and Meryl Lind Shaw

Dylan Russell

THE CAST
(in alphabetical order)

Danny
David Jenkins
Joan
Elizabeth Kapplow
Deborah
Marjan Neshat
Bernie
Gareth Saxe

UNDERSTUDIES
Deborah, Joan—Mollie Stickney; Danny, Bernie—Jud Williford

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Elisa Guthertz, Stage Manager
Heath Belden, Assistant Stage Manager
Alex Marshall, Intern

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“THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEAN”

BY JESSICA WERNER

Danny: I love you.
Debra: Does it frighten you to say that?
Danny: Yes.
Debra: It’s only words. I don’t think you should be frightened by words.

—Sexual Perversion in Chicago

When David Mamet published a collection of his lectures on theater in 1997, he chose for his book’s title The Three Uses of the Knife, explaining that the knife is a perfectly simple, yet versatile, symbol for his often penetrating, even at times threatening, approach to drama. It’s an apt guiding image for a playwright whose unmistakably sharp, blisteringly real language onstage has always been known for two things: being precise and cutting deep.

Mamet recounts in the book an anecdote famously told by the blues singer Huddie Ledbetter (“Leadbelly”). “You take a knife, you use it to cut the bread, so you’ll have the strength to work; you use it to shave, so you’ll look nice for your lover; on discovering her with another, you use it to cut out her lying heart.” For Mamet, this graphic three-liner illustrates the essential economy and ideal progression of dramatic structure, and it also demonstrates, he writes, “the attempt of the orderly, affronted mind to confront the awesome.”

Whether he’s writing about low-life con artists (American Buffalo), scheming real estate salesmen (Glengarry Glen Ross), political correctness and sexual harrassment in academia (Oklahoma!), or the romantic entanglements of urban twenty-somethings (Sexual Perversion in Chicago), Mamet has throughout his career created characters who “confront the awesome” complexities of one thing in particular: our confoundingly inarticulate attempts to make ourselves and our deepest yearnings understood by one another. This struggle to speak exactly what we mean is felt most acutely when matters of the heart come into play.

“My plays are about people trying to become connected,” Mamet told the Chicago Tribune Magazine in 1977. “People who are confused, full of very contradictory impressions, trying to do good—to get Tolstoyan about it. But no one knows how. No one ever quite makes it.” Language may be the most advanced system we have for communicating our desires, Mamet seems to be saying in all of his plays, but it is woefully inadequate for the task.

GETTING INTO TROUBLE

Mamet was just 25 years old when he wrote Sexual Perversion in Chicago at his Organic Theater in 1973, touching off a career that very soon had the theater communities of New York and elsewhere standing up and taking notice. Mamet had graduated in 1969 from Goddard College in Vermont (which he would later call “sex camp,” dismissing the mock-intellectual pursuits of students whose main obsession, as he saw it, was with getting each other into bed). After a junior year taken at work-study acting with Sanford Meisner in New York, Mamet began to write plays, honing his dramatic voice in short, minimalist one-acts (including Lighthouse, Duck Variations, Squirrels, Reunion, and All Men Are Whores). He was enamored of Harold Pinter, a playwright he extolled for writing “the stuff you hear in the street, the stuff you overhear in the taicab.” Mamet was drawn to people, most often men, whose actions speak louder than words, to gangsters and thieves and macho swingers, to “people who don’t institutionalize their thought,” he told the New Yorker’s John Lahr in 1997. His ear became trained on the everyday slips and fractured rhythms of societal interaction in order to get through to each other, struggling through slang and curses and awkward silences, lacking polish yet unexpectedly expressive.

“Voltaire said words were invented to hide feelings, and that’s what this play’s about, how what we say influences what we think,” a 28-year-old Mamet told the New York Times in one of his earliest press interviews, talking about Sexual Perversion in Chicago, his first commercially produced work and his breakout success. “The play—about two single young men and two single young women in Chicago, each looking for love and sex and a way to navigate the up-for-grabs mores of the ’70s dating scene—opened in June 1976 at the Theater School’s annual student-night-stand-off Broadway premiere featuring actors Peter Riegert as Danny and Frank Murray as Bernard (and directed by longtime A.C.T. director Alan Takooshian). The play ran for an entire year, winning the Village Voice’s OBIE Award for best new American play, and was singled out by Time magazine (with Mamet’s Duck Variations) as among the year’s ten best plays.

“Mamet’s reputation just exploded during that year I performed in Sexual Perversion in Chicago,” said Riegert, in a conversation in December, shortly before he began rehearsals as director of A.C.T.’s production of Mamet’s bold career-making play. “Sexual Perversion alerted the whole theater world that there was a ferociously interesting writer, who understood that words are what get us into trouble, and it’s words that get us out of trouble.”

Critics caught on quickly that this signature mix of jargon, jokiness, and brutality had reached the arrival of one of the finest linguistic craftsmen in American drama. When Mamet’s American Buffalo opened on Broadway the next year, he earned the 1977 Drama Critics’ Circle Award for best American play and was hailed as the most exciting Broadway debut of a new American playwright since Edward Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Jack Kessim in Newsweek described Mamet as “that rare bird, an American playwright who’s a language playwright... the first playwright to create a formal and moral shape out of the undeleted exploitations of our foul-mouthed time.”

“Sexual Perversion in Chicago caused a lot of turmoil when it premiered because [the dialogue contained] so many ‘bucks’ and ‘shits,’ remembers Riegert, “but its drama reached far beyond the graphically of the words themselves. I think one thing the play is really about—and it’s even more apparent now that we’re re-examining it 30 years later—is the degree to which nothing really changes. The world changes around us, but the dynamic of how people relate to one another really doesn’t. And that’s the ‘perversion’ Mamet is talking about; not four-letter words. What was true back then is true now. No matter how sophisticated we think we are, we make the same mistakes in our attempts to communicate and understand each other. I think human beings are funny in their own self-destructive ways. We’re a lot closer to what we make fun of than we realize.”

Even though Sexual Perversion in Chicago recalls a post-sexual revolution, pre-AIDS era in which the roles between the sexes in and out of the bedroom were being freely re-imagined, the play’s triumph may be its ability to transcend its historical moment of bellbottoms and one-night stands and reveal a bolder truth: that intimate relationships are minefields of buried fears and misunderstandings. “When I read the play, I thought, this sure isn’t politically correct, but it is absolutely immediate and as entirely dead-on today as it was 30 years ago about the ways that people have always screwed up their love lives, and always will, and they’re too scared to truly connect and commit to anything larger than themselves,” says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, who has directed Riegert in Pinter’s The Birthday Party (at New York’s Classic Stage Company, 1988) and Celebration (at A.C.T., 2001) and invited him to recreate Mamet’s early masterpiece at A.C.T., this time as director.

After nearly 35 years as a successful actor—including his straight shot to fame as Boon in John Landis’s Animal House in 1978—Riegert started working as a director about five years ago. He adapted his first film, Bo Courier, from O.Henry short story, and the film was nominated for an Academy Award for best short

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Sexual Perversion in Chicago 11


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AFTER NEARLY 35 YEARS AS A SUCCESSFUL ACTOR—INCLUDING HIS STRAIGHT SHOT TO FAME AS BOON IN JOHN LANDIS’S ANIMAL HOUSE IN 1978—RIEGERT STARTED WORKING AS A DIRECTOR ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO. HE ADAPTED HIS FIRST FILM, BO COURIER, FROM O.HENRY SHORT STORY, AND THE FILM WAS NOMINATED FOR AN ACADEMY AWARD FOR BEST SHORT
“THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEANT”

BY JESSICA WERNER

DANNY: I love you.
DERORAH: Does it frighten you to say that?
DANNY: Yes.
DERORAH: It’s only words. I don’t think you should be frightened by words.

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Whether he’s writing about low-life con artists (American Buffalo), scheming real estate salesmen (Glengarry Glen Ross), political correctness and sexual harrassment in academia (Oleanna), or the romantic entanglements of urban twenty-somethings (Sexual Perversion in Chicago), Mamet has throughout his career created characters who “confront the awesome” complexities of one thing in particular: our confoundingly inarticulate attempts to make ourselves and our deepest yearnings understood by one another. This struggle to speak exactly what we mean is felt most acutely when matters of the heart come into play.

“My plays are about people trying to become connected,” Mamet told the Chicago Tribune Magazine in 1977. “People who are confused, full of very contradictory impressions, trying to do good—to get Tolstoyan about it. But no one knows how. No one ever quite makes it.” Language may be the most advanced system we have for communicating our desires, but in all of his plays, but it is woefully inadequate for the task.

GETTING INTO TROUBLE

Mamet was just 25 years old when he wrote Sexual Perversion in Chicago at his Organic Theater in 1973, touching off a career that very soon had the theater communities of New York and elsewhere standing up and taking notice. Mamet had graduated in 1969 from Goddard College in Vermont (which he would later call “sex camp,” dismissing the mock-intellectual pursuits of students whose main concern, as he saw it, was with getting each other into bed). After a junior year taken at New York Studio School with Sanford Meisner in New York, Mamet began to write plays, honing his dramatic voice in short, minimalist one-acts (including Lakeboat, Duck Variations, Squirrels, Reunion, and All Men Are Whores). He was enamored of Harold Pinter, a playwright he extolled for writing “the stuff you heard in the street, the stuff you overheard in the taxi cab.” Mamet was drawn to people, most often men, whose actions speak louder than words, to gangsters and thieves and macho swingers, to “people who don’t institutionalize their thought,” he told the New York’s John Lahr in 1997. His ear became trained on the everyday slips and fractured rhythms of society and to one another really doesn’t. And that’s the ‘perversion’ Mamet is talking about; not four-letter words. What was true back then is true now. No matter how sophisticated we think we are, we make the same mistakes in our attempts to communicate and understand each other. I think human beings are funny in their own self-destructive ways. We’re a lot closer to what we make fun of than we realize.”

Even though Sexual Perversion in Chicago recalls a post-sexual revolution, pre-AIDS era in which the roles between the sexes in and out of the bedroom were being fiercely reimagined, the play’s triumph may be its ability to transcend its historical moment of bellbottoms and one-night stands and reveal a bitter truth that intimate relationships are minefields of buried fears and misunderstandings. “When I read the play, I thought, this sure isn’t politically correct, but it is absolutely immediate and as entirely dead-on today as it was 30 years ago about the ways that people have always screwed up their love lives, and always will, because they’re too scared to truly connect and commit to anything larger than themselves,” says A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, who has directed Riegert in Pinter’s The Birthday Party (at New York’s Classic Stage Company, 1988) and Celebration (at A.C.T., 2001) and invited him to remount Mamet’s early masterpiece at A.C.T., this time as director.

After nearly 35 years as a successful actor—including his straight shot to fame as Boon in John Landis’s Animal House in 1978—Riegert started working as a director about five years ago. He adapted his first film, Bo Courier, from an O. Henry short story, and the film was nominated for an Academy Award for best short

American Buffalo opened on Broadway the next year, he earned the 1977 Drama Critics’ Circle Award for best American play and was hailed as the most exciting Broadway debut of a new American playwright since Edward Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Wool?” Jack Kroll in Newsweek described Mamet as “that rare bird, an American playwright who’s a language playwright—the first playwright to create a formal and moral shape out of the undeleted expulsives of our foul-mouthed time.”

—Sexual Perversion in Chicago caused a lot of tumult when it premiered because [the dialogue contained] so many ‘fuck’s’ and ‘shits,’” remembers Riegert, “but its drama reached far beyond the graphiness of the words themselves. I think one thing the play is really about—and it’s even more apparent now that we’re re-examining it 30 years later—is the degree to which nothing really changes. The world changes around us, but the dynamic of how people relate to one another really doesn’t. And that’s the ‘perversion’ Mamet is talking about; not four-letter words. What was true back then is true now. No matter how sophisticated we think we are, we make the same mistakes in our attempts to communicate and understand each other. I think human beings are funny in their own self-destructive ways. We’re a lot closer to what we make fun of than we realize.”

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—Peter Riegert

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DON SCOTT MACDONALD: RECENT OIL PAINTINGS

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Macdonald has been painting since childhood (winning a local art award when he was 12), yet worked professionally as a guitarist, performing with bands and doing studio work in Los Angeles, before a rehearsal accident caused the loss of much of his hearing—and prompted his return to his first creative medium, painting. Since then, his work’s elegance has co-evolved with its simplicity, and has become “highly idiomatic, yet often evoking a shock of recognition in the viewer,” says Macdonald.

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a conversation with A.C.T. Artists: Director Carey Perloff and director Peter Roget
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free post-performance discussions with actors and members of the production team, directly following Sexual Perversion in Chicago
Tuesday, January 17 (after the 7 p.m. performance)
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Wednesday, February 1 (after the 2 p.m. performance)

OUT WITH A.C.T.
a gathering of gay and lesbian theatergoers
Wednesday, January 18 (after the 8 p.m. performance)

For more information, call 415.749.2ACT or visit www.act-sf.org.

THEATER ON THE COUCH
Theater on the Couch is an exciting new collaboration between A.C.T. and The San Francisco Foundation for Psychoanalysis to generate lively dialogue among the audience and a panel of respected local psychoanalysts. After the show, the panel will discuss the psychological aspects of the play and take questions from the audience.

Friday, January 20 (after the 8 p.m. performance)

HAIR
See the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2006 perform the classic American tribal love-rock musical, downstairs in Fred’s Lounge.
Friday, January 27 (after the 8 p.m. performance)
Saturday, January 28 (after the 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. performances)
Sunday, January 29 (after the 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. performances)

Please note: The Saturday, January 28, 2 p.m. performance of Hair is sold out.
five-action film in 2001; his first full-length feature, King of the Corner, was released in 2005. He arrives at A.C.T. with a uniquely informed perspective on a play that helped launch his career, as well as on its famous playwright. “It’s interesting to return to this play so many years later, and to work with actors who are now the same age I was when I was in it,” says Riegert. “I can’t wait to see what they find.”

THE INSATIABLE NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD

It has been easy for some critics to label Sexual Perversity’s four characters (as well as many of Mamet’s other misguided strivers) as hopeless cynics about love, but Riegert is quick to disagree. “I don’t really see them as cynical. I see Danny and Deborah and Bernie and Joan as struggling to get along, trying to make their way as adults. If the play is cynical about anything, I think it’s cynical about the romanticization of the fact that we actually get any better at this struggle to understand each other.”

“There’s this wrestling match [between the sexes] that has gone on forever, and this play sits squarely in that tradition,” adds Riegert. “Sexual Perversity reminds me of a refrain in the T.S. Eliot poem ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.’

If one, settling a pillow by her head,
Should say: That is not what I meant at all.
That is not it, at all . . .
That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all.

“I think that’s exactly what Mamet writes about, as well as what Pinter and Beckett write about: while we have language to communicate, and communicating is something we’re supposedly good at, we are actually so often misinterpreted, seeming to be something we’re not and saying things that belie what we seem. The confusion and inability to get across what you mean in Sexual Perversity, written in the 1970s, is consistent with Prufrock,” written in 1917. Men and women have always complained about the insatiable need to be understood. Just like in Sexual Perversity, we give each other advice and we say things we later don’t mean, perpetuating this endless need for clarity amid vile contradictions. I guess that’s why human beings created art, because language wasn’t enough. We needed metaphor.

“Music is a good analogy for understanding how to do a Mamet play. Reading his plays, and speaking his lines as an actor, is a lot like reading a score, since he’s a writer with a very developed sense of meter. Every single word is its own note, and every pause is as valuable as a word or a paragraph. It’s a kind of musicianship, like scoring a piece for instruments, and in this case it’s for a four-piece combo.”

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THE MAGIC OF WOMEN

BY DAVID MAMET

ONE

Some people declare difficulty with the formulation “I pray to
God,” as they find it ludicrous to state as a certainty that God
exists. I have no doubt of God’s existence, but I doubt my own.

Not to burden a legitimately self-occupied reader with my own
dream problems, but I’ve never been quite sure that I exist; and
have always considered myself, at best, a figment of someone’s
imagination. As that imagination cannot (as per supra) be my
own, imagine my consternation.

Work both distracts and fulfills me. It brings me great joy. But
this joy, yet again, is that of nonexistence. In work I am happy,
as I am subsumed, and, so, again, “not there.” I am sure many
philosophers (the bulk, no doubt, German) have felt as I, and have
expressed themselves, if not more cogently, at least in longer or
more-compounded words.

I have felt fairly certain that I exist in dealing with my children,
their needs taking precedence—at most times—over my troubled
state; and with women. I like women. I have a perfect marriage;
most of my colleagues, over the years, have been women. I think
I get along with them, in the main, better than I do with men. I
find it easier to spend extended time with women than with men.
This essay prompts me to ask why, and to respond that, I believe,
it is because I feel they do not care if, in fact, I exist.

TWO

Women, to me, are much more interesting than men, who run to
type with a depressing regularity.

And there is seldom a male interchange free of invidious
comparison. Who, each assesses, is wealthier, smarter, fitter,
stronger?

Women make such assessments, too, but of the man per se,
not of the man as a potential adversary. Perhaps this is why I find
their company so restful.

Then, there is sex. Call me limited, but I still find it astonishing:
that a woman would allow or desire me to do that...? This may
be attributable to the sclerotic self-image described above. For,
indeed, I have known men who take women’s sexuality completely
as a matter of course.

Many of these men have been that which an earlier age
described as “successful with women.”

This is not to say that I, myself, have not behaved boorishly, or
even inexcusably, with women. I have, and, should I roast in hell,
it will be with a sense of justice served.

But these men I write of were, notably, devoid of that sense
of gratitude mentioned above.

I do not know whether their success was due to straightforward
bluntness, or to a sense of relief on the part of their women.
Perhaps to both.

Perhaps the men were as those Polynesian islanders of the
Bounty Era who, solemn related, took sex truly as a matter of
course. Perhaps these successful men were不受touched by a sense
of gratitude. Perhaps this freed them to act in a manner, finally,
more responsible than my own.

In any case, my particular experience of women, neurotic or
whole, has been of their generosity.

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I also find rather magical their capacity for sexual abandon...

Perhaps I simply find it erotic; but, then, what is the difference?
Our great philosopher Eric Hoffer wrote in his seventies,
mourning the coming of age and the attendant passage of the
“magic glow of desire.”

In America, we live in a world curiously prudish and puritan.
Sexuality may be decried as license or permitted as pornography.
But it cannot simply be acknowledged. (This is one of the reasons
for the Left’s paternalistic championship of things homosexual:
The word has “sex” in it, and that one may pronounce it in, in
these times, an erotic adventure.)

“Twas said of old that two of the world’s most beautiful sights
are fear in a man’s eyes, and desire in a woman’s. Each, of
course, indicates surrender. This is a display of a different order than
more acquiescence—we may find gratification in acquiescence, but we
will not find beauty. Men do not surrender well. Their capitulation,
in these dishonest times, most usually has in it an element of sullen
reserve—but wait ’til next time.”

The Japanese swordsmen wrote of a state of conquest called
to hold down the pillow.” Here, the beaten opponent is, spiritually,
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has been truly subdued. This opponent has made the ultimate
acknowledgment—that his life is no longer his own. The woman
overcome by desire has, similarly, if only temporarily, pledged
her life.

For the period of erotic transport she has removed herself, and,
so, her lover, from the sad hypocrisy of the world and its endless
negotiations.

Here, rather than triumph, a transient and reversible emotion,
the attendant may feel awe.

For he is participating in the irreducible.

FOUR

The magic of women is their frankness.

Men are, in the main, prevaricating, temporizing, and pathetic
creatures. We do not deal well with loss, success, or change.

Women seem to handle these more effectively.

Perhaps this is an effect of their less-equivocating biology:

Pregnancy is perfect, for all of our contemporary fascination
with sanctimony.

Speaking of which, our modern temperal religion has set out,

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Our effort lacks both the mystery of the Catholic and the rationality
of the Jewish faith. It is just good old-fashioned wish-fulfillment: Canute
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But, as the Christians and the Jews have long known, the sea will continue
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Military officers are hounded from the service in disgrace for
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In our day, we are deprived not

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but also that of Pte-fee Hernaez; those things not specifically allowed are forbidden. What a dreary prospect.

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—Maureen Dowd, Are Men Necessary?, When Sexes Collide (G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2005)

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2005–06 SEASON

The Overcoat
Created by Morris Panitch and Wendy Garling
Adapted from "The Overcoat," by Nikolai Gogol
Music by Dmitri Shostakovich
AUG 25–SEP 25

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
by Tennessee Williams
Directed by Israel Hicks
OCT 13–NOV 13

Sexual Perversity in Chicago
by David Mamet
Directed by Peter Riegert
JAN 5–FEB 5

Gem of the Ocean
by August Wilson
Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson
FEB 10–MAR 12

The Rivals
by Richard Brinsley Sheridan
Directed by Lillian Graag
MAR 23–APR 23

A Number
by Caryl Churchill
Directed by Anne D. Shapiro
APR 28–MAY 28

Happy End
by Bertolt Brecht
Music by Kurt Weill
Book and Lyrics adapted by Michael Feingold
Directed by Carey Perloff
JUN 8–JUL 9

"August Wilson at the top of his form."
The New York Times

Gem of the Ocean
by AUGUST WILSON
DIRECTED BY RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON

Feb 10–Mar 12 Tickets from $12

SUBSCRIPTIONS STILL AVAILABLE!

A.C.T. american conservatory theater
Geary Theater
San Francisco


www.act-sf.org | 415.749.2ACT
2005–06 SEASON

The Overcoat
Created by Morris Panych and Wendy Gorling
Adapted from "The Overcoat," by Nikolai Gogol
Music by Dmitri Shostakovich
AUG 25–SEP 25

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
by Tennessee Williams
Directed by Israel Hicks
OCT 13–NOV 13

Sexual Perversity in Chicago
by David Mamet
Directed by Peter Riegert
JAN 5–FEB 5

Gem of the Ocean
by August Wilson
Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson
FEB 10–MAR 12

The Rivals
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Annual Report 2004–05 In Good Company
Dear Friends,

Welcome to American Conservatory Theater’s 2004-05 annual report. Every season we invite you to A.C.T. to experience with us the power and joy of theater. With this annual report, we invite you to look behind the productions you see on our stages—to understand at a deeper level our organization, our fiscal standing, and our mission. It is because of you, our donors and our audience, that A.C.T. is able to continue stretching artistic boundaries, educating new talent, and advocating for the future of American theater. For your support—your contributions, your applause, and your continued commitment to the arts—we offer you our deepest thanks. We hope you will enjoy this look inside our organization and we hope you will become even more involved in the future. Thank you!

Caryn Turkoff
Artistic Director
Heather Kitchen
Executive Director
Mary M. Metz
Chair, Board of Trustees

American Conservatory Theater nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. 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.

Stretching Artistic Boundaries

The 2004-05 season at the Geary Theater took our audiences and our artists in bold new directions. From the stunning musical spectacle of The Black Rider to the hilariously naughty verse of The Gamemaster to Lisa Kron’s genre-busting Well, A.C.T. continued to present daring new artistic perspectives. This season we also welcomed back audience favorites David Mamet, who brought ury, modern sensibility to his commissioned adaptation of Harley Granville-Barker’s classic The Voysey Inheritance, and Tom Stoppard, who collaborated with us on a new production of his love story The Real Thing. Edward Albee’s raw and profound The Goat or, Who is Sylvia? had audiences talking long after the curtain fell, while A Moon for the Misbegotten bathed the Geary in Eugene O’Neill’s timeless poetry. Whether exploring new forms of theater, shedding fresh light on classical dramatic literature, or celebrating the most visionary artists of our time, this season A.C.T. was once again the hub of a constantly thriving—and growing—artistic community.


A.C.T. core company member Pati Agans and Ken Ruta seek to avoid the thorny territory of corporate acumen in David Mamet’s adaptation of The Voysey Inheritance, a world-premiere A.C.T. commission that brought lip-service to the heads has relevance to Henley Granville-Barker’s Edwardian classic.
Dear Friends,

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Mary K. Metz
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Four of last season’s productions have already traveled from A.C.T. to the world at large: The Black Rider went on to a hit world tour; Well will soon debut on Broadway; David Mamet’s adaptation of The Voysey Inheritance moved on to a popular run at Kansas City Repertory Theatre; and Well received its off-Broadway premiere in fall 2005.

Jaynie Hoang and Marcia Russell struggle with the conflicting issues at the heart of audience favorite Edward Albee’s The Goat or, Who is Sylvia? which marked the return of Albee’s work to the Geary stage for the first time in 30 years.

Don R. McManus and Pamela Reed struggle with the conflicting issues at the heart of audience favorite Edward Albee’s The Goat or, Who is Sylvia? which marked the return of Albee’s work to the Geary stage for the first time in 30 years.
Throughout the 2004–05 school year the halls, studios, and performance spaces of A.C.T. were buzzing with the energy of our tremendously talented and dedicated students. Young Conservatory (YC) students built confidence, imagination, and talent in the classroom, as well as performing a full season (including two world premieres as part of the YC New Plays Program), Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program students continued their immersion in the highest-caliber professional actor training. M.F.A. actors also studied in a new international summer exchange program with acclaimed Italian theater program Prima del Teatro (in association with the Teatro di Pisa and the prestigious Accademia Nazionale d’Arte Drammatica “Sylvio d’Amico”). In our classrooms in San Francisco, on evenings, weekends, and in intensive summer sessions, Studio A.C.T. and Summer Training Congress students took advantage of the adult actor training offered by A.C.T., honing their craft, learning new skills, and creating innovative studio-performance presentations. From a treasured place deep within the larger company, students and alumni of the A.C.T. Conservatory invigorate the theater of today by exploring the rewards of an in-depth education, discovering the artists within themselves, and emerging truly poised to take commanding roles as the theater professionals of tomorrow.

More than 2,000 students attended classes in the A.C.T. Conservatory during the 2004–05 academic year.

n enormous amount of artistic activity at A.C.T. occurs beyond the Geary stage: for every play you see produced onstage, countless others are in the process of being workshoped or presented in our studios and our second performance venue at Zeum Theater. By integrating the development of new work into every aspect of the company’s artistic life, A.C.T. continues its commitment to providing an environment in which theater artists can realize their visions with the help of an engaged and informed audience. The First Look series at Zeum proved itself a bright upstart in its second season, with staged readings, studio workshop presentations, and fully mounted productions of new plays (including a hit production of French author Marie Ndiaye’s chilling domestic drama Hilda). Also part of First Look this year were staged readings of new plays by such up-and-coming writers as Imam Moses, Jamie Pachino, A.C.T.’s own Carey Perloff, Michael Springgate, and (in his last season as an A.C.T. core acting company member) Marco Barricelli, as well as intensive ongoing development of A.C.T.’s new 4 Christmas Carol. Whether you saw their work in a staged reading at Zeum this year or will know their plays by heart in the future, the playwrights whose development A.C.T. supports are passionately engaged in the creation of the new literature of the theater.
Throughout the 2004-05 school year the halls, studios, and performance spaces of A.C.T. were buzzing with the energy of our tremendously talented and dedicated students. Young Conservatory (YC) students built confidence, imagination, and talent in the classroom, as well as performing a full season (including two world premieres as part of the YC New Plays Program), Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) Program students continued their immersion in the highest-caliber professional actor training. M.F.A. actors also studied in a new international summer exchange program with acclaimed Italian theater program Prima del Teatro (in association with the Teatro di Pisa and the prestigious Accademia Nazionale d’Arte Drammatica “Sylvio d’Amico”). In our classrooms in San Francisco, on evenings, weekends, and in intensive summer sessions, Studio A.C.T. and Summer Training Congress students took advantage of the adult actor training offered by A.C.T., honing their craft, learning new skills, and creating innovative studio-performance presentations. From a treasured place deep within the larger company, students and alumni of the A.C.T. Conservatory invigorate the theater of today by exploring the rewards of an in-depth education, discovering the artists within themselves, and emerging truly poised to take commanding roles as the theater professionals of tomorrow.

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n enormous amount of artistic activity at A.C.T. occurs beyond the Geary stage: every play you see produced on stage, countless others are in the process of being workshopped or presented in our studios and our second performance venue at Zanem Theater. By integrating the development of new work into every aspect of the company’s artistic life, A.C.T. continues its commitment to providing an environment in which theater artists can realize their visions with the help of an engaged and informed audience. The First Look series at Zanem proved itself a bright upstart in its second season, with staged readings, studio workshop presentations, and fully mounted productions of new plays (including a hit production of French author Marie Ndiaye’s chilling domestic drama Hilda). Also part of First Look this year were staged readings of new plays by such up-and-coming writers as Itamar Moses, Jamie Pachino, A.C.T.’s own Carey Perloff, Michael Springgate, and (in his last season as an A.C.T. core acting company member) Marco Barricelli, as well as intensive ongoing development of A.C.T.’s new 4 Christmas Carol. Whether you saw their work in a staged reading at Zanem this year or will know their plays by heart in the future, the playwrights whose development A.C.T. supports are passionately engaged in the creation of the new literature of the theater.

Marco Barricelli threatens Ellen Karas in Marie Ndiaye’s Hilda, which traveled on to major theaters in Washington, D.C., and New York. A sparse and unsparing look at a wealthy woman’s obsession with her domestic help, Hilda received its U.S. premiere as part of First Look in a coproduction with internationally renowned Laura Pels Productions.
American Conservatory Theater

Statement of Financial Position
June 30, 2006 (with comparative totals for 2004)

Annual contributions to A.C.T. have increased by 26% over the last three years.

ASSETS

Unrestricted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Fund</th>
<th>Board-Designated Fund</th>
<th>Capital Fund</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted/Endowment</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$257,186</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$916,223</td>
<td>$25,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>282,863</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>267,197</td>
<td>409,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>396,243</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>110,346</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>1,128,209</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,128,209</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total current assets</td>
<td>1,576,649</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,232,786</td>
<td>452,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and equipment—net</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>16,209</td>
<td>1,341,972</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>342,746</td>
<td>5,907,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term grants and pledges</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>127,501</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfund balances</td>
<td>4,744,022</td>
<td>(386,852)</td>
<td>(5,065,231)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>686,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>$6,986,438</td>
<td>$350,250</td>
<td>$14,476,071</td>
<td>$2,380,773</td>
<td>$6,947,928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operating Fund</th>
<th>Board-Designated Fund</th>
<th>Capital Fund</th>
<th>Total liabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$950,620</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$110,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenues</td>
<td>5,404,195</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital lease obligation, current portion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$89,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total current liabilities</td>
<td>6,404,015</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>89,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital lease obligation, net of current portion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>220,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>6,404,015</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>220,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td>472,328</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$935,200</td>
<td>$14,181,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities and net assets</td>
<td>$519,756</td>
<td>$350,250</td>
<td>$14,476,071</td>
<td>$2,380,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support and Revenues

Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>$2,609,743</td>
<td>$31,204</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$75,300</td>
<td>$1,807,080</td>
<td>$4,606,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>584,221</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>135,280</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>778,500</td>
<td>1,045,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>276,625</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>364,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grants and appropriations</td>
<td>389,869</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>378,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>461,437</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>462,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated materials and services</td>
<td>161,720</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>158,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>9,538,877</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,538,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box office revenue</td>
<td>9,538,877</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,538,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatory tuition/fee/professions</td>
<td>1,009,208</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,009,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>10,222</td>
<td>447,624</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>103,900</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>621,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production enhancement</td>
<td>421,496</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>421,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concessions</td>
<td>230,800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>230,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and publications</td>
<td>208,839</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>208,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease and space rentals</td>
<td>190,702</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>190,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume rentals</td>
<td>184,221</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>184,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>11,757</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total revenues</td>
<td>17,707,677</td>
<td>(102,006)</td>
<td>$4,800</td>
<td>402,500</td>
<td>2,082,880</td>
<td>20,159,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
<td>912,272</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>912,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total support and revenues</td>
<td>18,620,099</td>
<td>(102,006)</td>
<td>$4,800</td>
<td>402,500</td>
<td>2,082,880</td>
<td>20,159,740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenses

Program services

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Artistic | 5,900,060 | - | 227,080 | - | 5,773,080 |
| Production | 2,101,598 | - | - | - | 2,101,598 |
| Conservatory | 2,892,477 | - | - | - | 2,892,477 |
| Supporting services | 2,340,604 | - | - | - | 2,340,604 |
| Development | 1,106,728 | - | - | - | 1,106,728 |
| Total expenses | 16,806,261 | - | - | - | 16,806,261 |
| Change in net assets | 10,818 | (102,006) | 192,375 | 148,781 | 2,082,880 | 304,326 | 2,643,627 |
| Net assets, end of year | 432,398 | 2,006,870 | 14,101,150 | 2,196,338 | 6,647,754 | 24,803,119 | 24,156,606 |

The financial information as of and for the year ended June 30, 2005, has been derived from American Conservatory Theater's 2005 financial statements, audited by Burg, Jipper & Mayor, LLP independent auditors. The condensed financial information should be read in conjunction with the 2005 audited financial statements and related notes. Contact American Conservatory Theater’s office for copies of the complete audited statements.
Statement of Financial Position
June 30, 2006 (with comparative totals for 2004)

American Conservatory Theater

Assets

Unrestricted

Operating Fund

Board-Designated Fund

Capital Fund

Temporarily Restricted (Endowment)

Current assets

Cash and cash equivalents

$275,186

$257,332

$19,854

$1,189,489

$1,068,716

Receivables

Grants and pledges—net

282,863

267,197

75,666

616,726

1,045,330

Other

376,242

110,365

500,892

724,466

Prepaid expenses

1,125,429

1,125,429

365,490

Total current assets

1,978,858

1,978,858

1,003,861

Non-current assets

Property and equipment—net

-19,542,002

-19,542,002

20,836,657

Investments

16,289

1,341,972

-935,780

5,977,965

28,036,657

Long-term grants and pledges

-20,000

-840,248

871,248

205,500

Other assets

127,981

127,981

127,981

127,981

Interfund balances

4,784,822

196,852

(5,082,671)

(985,161)

Total assets

4,870,790

3,082,029

16,478,371

2,846,773

6,947,528

31,935,459

29,884,707

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities

$906,400

$83,000

-3,030,759

$1,900,000

$1,060,000

Deferred revenues

5,809,195

-509,195

5,809,195

3,972,508

Capital lease obligations, current portion

-98,127

-98,127

-98,127

Total current liabilities

6,404,615

69,922

6,474,537

5,720,712

Capital lease obligations, net of current portion

6,404,615

69,922

6,474,537

5,720,712

Net assets

472,758

295,000

14,181,108

2,520,239

6,967,528

24,092,231

24,106,586

Total liabilities and net assets

$4,953,548

$3,377,629

$17,663,479

$29,407,012

$29,911,293

Support and Revenues

Support

Contributions

Individuals

$2,689,743

-31,224

-75,500

$1,827,300

$4,690,027

$5,042,800

Foundations

154,231

-315,000

275,668

774,231

1,045,780

Corporations

278,825

-81,000

364,825

256,249

Government grants and contributions

369,809

-3,700

373,609

517,000

Special events

461,637

-1,000

460,637

375,630

Donated materials and services

151,730

-4,890

146,840

116,177

Revenues

Box office reportable season

9,530,817

-5,529,687

4,990,000

Conservatory tuition/fee/productions

1,000,200

-1,065,180

1,810,000

Investment income

16,322

447,206

105,900

627,181

424,701

Production enhancement

471,356

421,356

50,711

Concessions

250,800

-250,800

239,760

Marketing and publications

200,839

-200,839

163,900

Lease and space rentals

190,702

-190,702

190,702

Costume rentals

194,331

-194,331

176,210

Other income

11,307

-11,307

42,806

Interfund transfers

-837,500

-837,500

-837,500

-837,500

Total revenues

10,639,167

(102,066)

4,890

403,560

2,846,773

24,092,231

24,106,586

Net assets released from restrictions

312,229

-312,229

-312,229

-312,229

Total support and revenues

10,951,496

(112,092)

4,890

403,560

2,846,773

24,092,231

24,106,586

Expenses

Program services

Artistic

5,960,000

227,000

-5,731,000

5,230,706

Production

2,101,298

-2,101,298

Conservatory

2,892,677

-2,892,677

Supporting services

General and Administrative

2,346,084

-2,346,084

Development

1,258,382

-1,258,382

Total expenses

10,869,416

19,910,000

31,892,348

24,092,152

Change in net assets

10,688

102,668

192,755

146,206

828,890

300,324

2,642,627

Net assets, beginning of year

421,579

1,039,870

15,108,522

2,045,148

4,949,875

24,106,905

22,113,308

Net assets, end of year

$420,258

$339,370

$14,181,108

$2,520,239

$6,967,528

$24,092,231

$24,106,586

The financial information as of and for the year ended June 30, 2006, has been derived from American Conservatory Theater’s 2006 financial statements, audited by Burr, Higginbotham, & Mayer, LLP independent auditors. The condensed financial information should be read in conjunction with the 2006 audited financial statements and related notes. Contact American Conservatory Theater’s office for copies of the complete audited statements.
American Conservatory Theater is deeply grateful for the generous support of the individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies whose annual contributions make great theater possible.

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Vivak Strand, M.D., and Jack Loftis, Ph.D. alums from 1989
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Vesla Strand, M.D., and Jon Luft, Ph.D., alumnae from 1989

“The cost of creating and constructing just one period costume for the season’s hit comedy The Great Gatsby was approximately $8,000.”
Every season A.C.T. sells substantially discounted tickets to more than 3,000 students, educators, and seniors.

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Edward Hastings
Artistic Director, 1986–92

First Look at Zeum Theater
U.S. Premiere
Hilda
By Marie Ndiaye
Translated by Erika Rundell
Directed by Carey Perell
Coproduced with Laura Pels Productions

One, No One
Adapted by Nesta Saidu from Luigi Pirandello’s novel
Uno, nessuno e cimitero
Translated and adapted by Marco Barilli and Beatrice Basso
Directed by Nesta Saidu
Featuring Marco Barilli

The Four of Us
By Roman Mores
Directed by Pam MacKinnon

First Master of Fine Arts Programs at Zeum Theater
Once in a Lifetime
By Mss. Hertz and George S. Kaufman
Directed by Margaret Booker

Lilies, or The Revival
A Romantic Drama
By Michel Marc Bouchard
Translated by Linda Gabotai
Directed by Serge Denjean
Produced in association with Théâtre Rhinocéros

Female Transport
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Directed by Anne Kaufman

Young Conservatory Productions at Zeum Theater
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Directed by W. D. Keigh

West Coast Premiere
Schoolgirl Figure
By Wendy MacLeod
Directed by Domonique Lonza

World Premiere
Broken Hallelujah
By Sharmat Macdonald
Directed by Craig Slaight

World Premiere
Shed a Little Light
The Music of James Taylor
By Craig Slauf

American Conservatory Theater

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Carolyn Atherton, American Express, donor since 1989

Forty years ago, on June 21, 1965, American Conservatory Theater opened its doors with the one-act play The Who and the What. Fourty years later, we are honored to present this beautifully restored production of the original, now titled Fortynineteen.

American Conservatory Theater

Fortynineteen
By Peter J. Karp
Directed by Peter J. Karp
Produced by Zeum Theater
Zeum Theater
245 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

American Conservatory Theater

Noon Talk Presented by Zeum Theater
June 21, 2005

Dear Tony
By John Patrick Shanley
Directed by Peter J. Karp
Produced by Zeum Theater
Zeum Theater
245 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

American Conservatory Theater

Noon Talk Presented by Zeum Theater
July 21, 2005

Doomed Love
By John Patrick Shanley
Directed by Peter J. Karp
Produced by Zeum Theater
Zeum Theater
245 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

American Conservatory Theater

Noon Talk Presented by Zeum Theater
August 21, 2005

The Voice of the People
By Don Zver
Directed by Peter J. Karp
Produced by Zeum Theater
Zeum Theater
245 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

American Conservatory Theater

Noon Talk Presented by Zeum Theater
September 21, 2005

First Look at Zeum Theater
U.S. Premiere
Hilda
By Marie Ndiaye
Translated by Erika Rundell
Directed by Carey Perell
Coproduced with Laura Pels Productions

One, No One
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Directed by Craig Slaight

World Premiere
Shed a Little Light
The Music of James Taylor
By Craig Slauf

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American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by Brian Boland.
Edward Hastings
Artistic Director, 1986–92

FORTYFIVE: The use of the Founders’ name by the Founders.
In 1965, the American Conservatory Theater founded the new company at Fortynineteen, which was a home for arts and culture. The Founders, including John Patrick Shanley and Robert Wood, believed in the power of art to change the world. Today, American Conservatory Theater continues this legacy by creating innovative productions that challenge and inspire audiences.

BASILIUS: Basil and Basil in a Mirror are a team of filmmakers who created a film in 1965 that explored the power of art to change the world. The film, titled Basil and Basil in a Mirror, presented a story of two artist friends who use art to express their emotions and connect with others. Their story resonated with the Founders and inspired them to continue their own work.

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Catherine Atherton, American Express, donor since 1980


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Well by Lisa Kron Directed by Leigh Silverman featuring Lisa Kron and Jayne Houdyshell

The Gamestar by Frederick Thomas Based on Le Jeune, by Jean-Francois Regnault Directed by Ron Lagomarsino

World Premiere Adaptation The Voysey Inheritance by Harley Granville-Barker Adapted by David Mamet Directed by Carey Perloff

A Moon for the Misbegotten by Eugene O’Neill Directed by Laird Williamson

The Goat, or Who is Sylvia? by Edward Albee Directed by Richard E. T. White

Master of Fine Arts Program Productions at Fred’s Columbus Room (Geary Theater)

Pippin Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz Book by Roger O. Hirson Musical Direction by Peter Matzke Directed by Nathan Bayard

First Look at Zeum Theater
U.S. Premiere
Hilda by Marie Ndiaye Translated by Erika Rundle Directed by Carey Perloff Co-produced with Laura Pols Productions

One, No One
Adapted by Naomi Said from Luigi Pirandello’s novel Uno, nessuno e nemmeno te. Translated and adapted by Marco Barilli and Beatrice Basso Directed by Nestor Said Featuring Marco Barilli

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World Premiere Broken Hallelujah by Sherman Macdonald Directed by Craig Gilbert

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WHO’S WHO IN SEXUAL PERVERTS IN CHICAGO

DAVID JENKINS* (Danny) is making his A.C.T. debut. New York credits include Back from the Front (New York Fringe Festival), Kazimir and Karoline (Livin Credi, dir.), and The Cherry Orchard (Zeldia Fichandler, dir.). Chicago credits include Henry and the Second Guzman, The Whipping Boy (Griffin Theatre Company), The Time of Your Life (Raven Theatre), and Tack Everlasting (Lifeline Theatre), among others. Television credits include “Law & Order: Criminal Intent” and “Guiding Light.” Jenkins received his M.F.A. degree from New York University.

ELIZABETH KAPLOW* (Juan) recently played Catherine in the Triad Stage production of Proof (Independent Weekly Best Lead Performance Award). Other credits include WTC View at the New York Fringe Festival, a staged reading of To Be or Not To Be at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Ti Gillian on Her 37th Birthday at The New Theater, The Philosophers, One in a Lifetime, Speed the Plow, The Woman, The Country Wife, and The Minotaurus. Film and television credits include WTC View, Flight to Savannah, Downtown, S.W.I.S., “Guiding Light,” and the recently released film version of Rent. Kaplow is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and the New World School of the Arts in Miami, Florida.

MARJAN NESHAT* (Deborah) most recently played Miranda in The Tempest at Shakespeare on the Sound. She originated the role of Mary Scaccia in the off-Broadway production of The Golden Ladder at The Player’s Theatre. Other New York credits include Estelle in No Exit, Patience Clay in Leatherbacking, Hilly Dale in The Price Is Right, and Hito in Snowdome. Regional credits include Cordelia in Edward Albee’s Finding the Sun, Duchess Isabella in The Last Days of Don Juan, Luba Grodzenski in Gleines, and Abigail in The Crucible. Her film credits include Cry Funny Happy (Sundance 2003), Bought and Sold (a.k.a. A Jersey Tale, Tribeca 2003), Affle, Cony Island Baby, and the forthcoming A Season of Madness and 508 Nelson. On television she has appeared in “Law & Order” and “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit.” Neshat received her B.F.A. degree from SUNY Purchase.

GARETH Saxe (Barnie) recently appeared as the Vicomte de Valmont in Dangerous Liaisons and as Jack in The Importance of Being Earnest, both for The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Other recent credits include Tom Prior in the off-Broadway production of Outward Bound for Keen Company, Faulkland in The Rivals at Boston’s Huntington Theatre Company, and The Public Theater’s Richard III. For Mint Theater Company in New York, Saxe played Kenneth Dwyer to Frances Sternhagen’s Ms. Dovely in J. M. Barrie’s Echoes of the War, and Luther in the Drama Desk–nominated production of D. H. Lawrence’s The Daughter-in-Law. Last summer he had the pleasure of working with Julia Lokve (best director at Sundance for Moment of Impact) on her new film and on director Michael Goldburg’s new comedy short, Happy Trails. Saxe is a graduate of New York University’s M.F.A. acting program.

MOLLIE STICKNEY* (Understudy) made her A.C.T. debut in When We Are Married in 1989 while a student in the Young Conservatory. She graduated from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program (then known as the Advanced Training Program) in 1995, going on to perform in A.C.T. Geary Theater productions of Arcadia, The Matchmaker, Gaslight, and Dark Rapture. She has performed on many Bay Area stages, including the Magic Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

JUD WILLIFORD* (Understudy) most recently was seen as Bob Cratchit in A.C.T.’s new production of A Christmas Carol. He has also been seen at the Geary Theater in The Time of Your Life and in three other seasons of A Christmas Carol. A graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, he has also performed in M.F.A. Program productions as The Master in The Master and Margarita, Snug in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet at Zeum Theater. Other theater credits include: All’s Well That Ends Well, The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, and Trinculo in The Tempest at California
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ELIZABETH KAPLOW* (Joan) recently played Catherine in the Triad Stage production of Proof (Independent Weekly Best Lead Performance Award). Other credits include WTC Vivo at the New York Fringe Festival, a staged reading of Threshold at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Tis Gillion on Her 37th Birthday at The New Theater, The Philistines, Once in a Lifetime, Speed the Plow, The Weedwoman, The Country Wife, and The Minotaur. Film and television credits include WTC Vivo, Flight to Savannah, Downstream, S.W.I.K., "Guiding Light," and the recently released film version of Rent. Kaplow is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and the New World School of the Arts in Miami, Florida.

MARJAN NESHAT* (Deborah) most recently played Miranda in The Tempest at Shakespeare on the Sound. She originated the role of Mary Scaccia in the off-Broadway production of The Golden Ladder at The Player's Theatre. Other New York credits include Estelle in No Exit, Patience Clay in Leatherstocking, Billy Dale in The Price Is Right, and Hito in Snowdown. Regional credits include Cordelia in Edward Albee's Finding the Sun, Duchess Isabella in The Last Days of Don Juan, Luba Grodzinski in Oleins, and Abigail in The Crucible. Her film credits include Cry Happy Happy (Sundance 2003), Bought and Sold (a.k.a. A Jersey Tale, Tribeca 2003), Affes, Conry Island Baby, and the forthcoming A Season of Madness and 508 Nelson. On television she has appeared in "Law & Order" and "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit." Neshat received her B.F.A. degree from SUNY Purchase.

GARETH Saxe* (Berno) recently appeared as the Vicomte de Valmont in Dangerous Liaisons and as Jack in The Importance of Being Earnest, both for The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Other recent credits include Tom Prior in the off-Broadway production of Outward Bound for Keen Company, Faulkland in The Rover at Boston's Huntington Theatre Company, and The Public Theater's Richard III. For Mint Theater Company in New York, Saxe played Kenneth Dowey to Frances Sternhagen's Ms. Dowey in J. M. Barrie's Echoes of the War, and Luther in the Drama Desk Award-nominated production of D. H. Lawrence's The Daughter-in-Law. Last summer he had the pleasure of working with Julia Lokve (best director at Sundance for Moment of Impact) on her new film and on director Michael Goldburg's new comedy short, Happy Trails. Saxe is a graduate of New York University's M.F.A. acting program.

MOLLY STICKNEY* (Undersudy) made her A.C.T. debut in When We Are Married in 1989 while a student in the Young Conservatory. She graduated from the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program (then known as the Advanced Training Program) in 1995, going on to perform in A.C.T. Geary Theater productions of Aravida, The Matchmaker, Gaslight, and Dark Rapture. She has performed on many Bay Area stages, including the Magic Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

JUD WILLOFORD* (Undersudy) most recently was seen as Bob Cratchit in A.C.T.'s new production of A Christmas Carol. He has also been seen at the Geary Theater in The Time of Your Life and in three other seasons of A Christmas Carol. A graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, he has also performed in M.F.A. Program productions as The Master in The Master and Margarita, Snug in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet at Zeum Theater. Other theater credits include: All's Well That Ends Well, The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, and Trincol in The Tempest at California Who's Who in Sexual Perversion in Chicago Sexual Perversion in Chicago 17
What's Who

Shakespeare Theater, Sergius in Arms and the Man at Chautauqua Theatre, and Rufus Oakwood in Saturn: The Musical. He received his B.F.A. degree in theater from the University of Evansville.

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 the 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. Other plays include Edmond and The Cryptogram (both OBIE Award winners), as well as The Water Engine, A Life in the Theatre, Lakeboat, Speed-the-Plow, Oleanna, Boston Marriage, Faustus, and Romance (which had its world premiere at the Atlantic Theater Company in February). He has adapted four works by Chekhov (First, The Cherry Orchard, Three Sisters, and Uncle Vanya), and Harley Granville-Barker’s The Voysey Inheritance. Spanish marked Mamet’s ninth film as writer-director. His critically acclaimed debut feature film, House of Games, was selected to close the New York Film Festival in 1987. His next films were Things Change, cowritten with Shel Silverstein; Homicide, which opened the 1991 Cannes Film Festival; Oleanna, the only film Mamet has adapted and directed from one of his plays; The Spanish Prisoner, which became one of the most popular independent films of 1997; and The Windows of the World, adapted from the Terrence Rattigan play; State and Main; and Edmond, adapted by Mamet from his play for upfront release. Mamet has won acclaim for numerous screenplays, including The Fabulist and Rag the Dog (both nominated for Academy Awards for best screenplay), and The Postman Always Rings Twice, The Untouchables, Where No Angels, Huggo, and The Edge. He has also written children’s plays and books, numerous volumes of essays, and a book of poems and is the creator and writer of a new television series, “The Unit,” currently in production. Mamet has taught acting at his alma mater, Goddard College, as well as at the University of Chicago, Yale School of Drama, and New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, where, with William H. Macy, he established the Atlantic Theater Company in 1985.

PETER RIEGERT’s (Director) last seen on the Geary Theatre stage in Celebration and The Room, directed by Carey Perloff; he has been seen on Broadway in Oleanna, The Mother’s Daughter, American Daughter, The Noro, Crouched Scenes from King Kong, and Dance with Mr. Off-Broadway credits include Mountain Language and The Birthday Party (dir. Carey Perloff), Let It Be Romantic!, Sexual Perversity in Chicago. His extensive film career includes King of the Corner Animal House, Local Hero, A Man in Love, Crossing Delancey, Object of Beauty, Urn, The Mask, Cold, Blooded, Infinity, A Block in the System, How to Kill Your Neighbors’ Dog, Jerry and Tom, and Traffic. His numerous television credits include HBO’s “The Sopranos” and Barbarians at the Gate, Showtime’s Bojangles, The Baby Dance, North Shore Fish, and Blues Brother. The PBS miniseries “Concealed Enemies” for American Playhouse, “W. Eugene Smith: Photograph Made Difficult” for American Masters; and CBS’ “Elvis Independent” directed by David Rieger. Rieger directed the Academy Award–nominated live-action short film By Courier. His feature film directorial debut was King of the Corner, released in 2005, which he co-wrote with author Gerald Shapiro, based on his collection of short stories Bad Jews and Other Stories.

KENT DORSEY’S (Scenic Designer) scenic design has been seen at A.C.T. in The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?, American Buffalo, Light Up the Sky, Pygmalion, The Pope and the Witch, and The Marriage of Figaro. Lighting designs at A.C.T. include The Pipe and the Witch, Ben Appellit and The Late Great Ladies of Blues and Jazz. He has designed scenery and/or lighting for most of the major regional theater companies in the United States, including the Kennedy Center, The Ahmanson Center Theatre Group, The Globe (more than 59 productions), La Jolla Playhouse and Playhouse on the Pacific, The Old Globe, Monterey, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., the Geffen, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and the Cleveland Play House. His New York theater productions include About Time, Alligator Tales, Another Antigone, The Cocktail Hour, Silver, Bub, and Yambot, and The First Love. In 1999, Dorsey designed the scenery and lighting for Silence/Chimoduma, a world premiere in Tokyo by The Subaru Acting Company.

CHRISTINE DOUGHERTY (Costume Designer) has previously designed for A.C.T. American Buffalo, Taking Steps, The Pope and the Witch, and The Play’s the Thing. She designed the world premiere of The Late Henry Moss, written and directed by David Shepard, for the Magic Theatre at Theatre on the Square. Recent credits include The Blue Room (dir. Edward Payson Call, The Cleveland Play House) and Private Lives (dir. Kent Gash, Shakespeare Santa Cruz), New York theater credits include About Time with James Whitmore and Audra Lindley. Other theater credits include productions at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, the Milwaukee Rep, The Cleveland Play House, ACT (Seattle), Studio Arena Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Westwood Playhouse, San Diego Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Valparaiso Opera, Long Beach Opera, Opera San Jose, BalletMet, and Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble. Film credits include Boys’ Night Out and The Outsiders.

Recently, Dougherty was captain and monitor for The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979–2005 for artist Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Dougherty has also worked for Christo as troubleshooter, quality controller, fabric consultant, prototype builder, supervisor, and instructor on Running Fences, Wrapped Walkways, Surrounded Islands, Wrapped Reichstag, Le Pont-Neuf: L’Embarquement, and The Umbrellas with her father, Ted Dougherty. Her plein air watercolors are currently on exhibit at the Rockridge Café in Oakland, with the work of watercolorist Ana LeGault.

ALEXANDER V. NICHOLS (Lighting Designer) design work spans from lighting and projections to scenery and costumes for dance, theater, opera, and art installations. His designs have been on the stages of such companies as Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, the Alley Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Huntington Theatre, California Shakespeare Theatre, the National Theatre of Taiwan, San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, Alvin Alley American Dance Theater, ODC/SF, Hubbard Street Dance, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, as well as the Kronos Quartet, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, and Rinde Eckert. Nichols has served as lighting designer for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Pennsylvania Ballet, and Hartford Ballet and as lighting designer for American Ballet Theatre. Other dance credits include designs for choreographers Christopher A. Ambrosini, San Carlson, Val Caniparoli, Sonya Dashewski, Bill T. Jones, Jean Grand Maitre, Mark Morris, Mikko Nissinen, Kevin O’Day, Kirk Peterson, Stephen Petronio, Dwight Rhoden, Michael Smuin, and Brenda Way. Other projects include the exterior lighting of the Sentinel Building, Francis Ford Coppola’s historical headquarters in San Francisco, and structural and lighting design for the traveling art installation Circle of Memory.

LINDSAY JONES (Sound Designer), based in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, is a composer/sound designer for theater and film. Off-Broadway credits include the monument-shaping Shepard’s God of Hell, dedication or The Stuff of Dreams, In the Continuum, Carey Perloff’s Luminescence Dating, O Jerusalem, Beautiful Thing, and Cloud Land. In Chicago, Oleanna, The Great Goodhood. Her plein air watercolors are currently on exhibit at the Rockridge Café in Oakland, with the work of watercolorist Ana LeGault.

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Who's Who

Shakespeare Theater, Sergius in Arms and the Man at Chautauqua Theatre, and Rufus Oakwood in Satyr: The Musical. He received his B.F.A. degree in theater from the University of Evansville.

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LINDSAY JONES (Sound Designer), based in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, is a composer/sound designer for theater and film. Off-Broadway credits include the original production of Shepard’s The God ofHell, dedication to The Staff of Dreams in the Continuum, Carey Perloff’s Luminescence Dating, O Jerusalem, Beautiful Thing, and Cloris Land 3000 and Oleanna. The Off-Broadway, American Daughter directed by Rebecca Taichman. In 2005, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and the Cleveland Play House. His New York theater productions include About Time, Alligator Tides, Another Antigone, The Cocktail Hour, Slimmer, Shabb, and Young Dong Yoo. Dir. Dorsey designed the scenery and lighting for Silence/Chimobu, a world premiere in Tokyo by The Subaru Acting Company.

The names and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actor’s Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
MERILIND SHAW (A.C.T. Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for the Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of White Christmas and The Sound of Music. She was also the first woman to design a season at the Mark Taper Forum and has cast many productions at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She is known for her collaborative approach to theatre and has worked with numerous directors to create dynamic, audience-friendly productions.

Who's Who

ASCAP Plus Awards, nominations for a Barrymore Award, an NAACP Theatre Award, and an Asian Critics Table Award, and was the first sound designer to win the Michael McGaviggino Emerging Designer Award.


BERNARD TELSEY CASTING, C.S.A.: Bernie Telsey, Will Cantler, David Frechette, Trevor Gray, Craig Burns, Tiffany Little Canfield, Stephanie Rank, Betsy Sherwood

CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 14th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently presented A.C.T.’s acclaimed productions of A Christmas Carol (a new adaptation by Carey) with dramatist Paul Walsh), David Mamet’s new adaptation of Georgette Barger’s The Furies, A Night at the Opera, Tidewater, and The Thing, Constance Congrue’s A Mother (an A.C.T.-commissioned adaptation of Goby’s Vause Thistledown), Devis A Doll’s House, Rickett’s Waiting for Gude, Stoppard’s Night and Day, and Chekhov’s The Three Sisters. Her production of Maria Nanina’s visionary new work Hida, co-produced at A.C.T.’s second space (Zeum) with Laura Pels Productions, traveled to Washington D.C.’s Studio Theater and then to New York’s 59E59 Theater last fall. She was recently awarded France’s Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perlof has directed for A.C.T. the regional premiere of Stoppard’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Pinter’s Celebration and The Bassoon, A.C.T.-commissioned translations of Hevra, The Masque, An Enemy of the People, and Uncle Vanya, the world premiere of Leslie Ayarsky’s Singer’s Boy and acclaimed productions of The Seagull, Old Times, Arcadia, The Rose Tattoo, Antigone, Creditor, Home, and The Tempest. Her work at A.C.T. also includes the world premiere of The Trojan Horse for an Anonymous Donor and Liquid/Max Wellman’s The Difficulty of Crossing a Field, and the West Coast premiere of Danai Gusmón’s The Birds. Her 2017 production of The Seagull was nominated for a Weekly’s Bay Area Theater Critics’ Circle Award.

A.C.T. Profiles

MERILIND SHAW (A.C.T. Casting Director) recently staged-managed A Streetcar Named Desire for Pacific Alliance Stage Company, Once Upon A Mattress, starring Luci DeLaire, for 42nd Street Motte, five operas with Donald Pippin’s Pocket Opera, and two seasons with Marin Shakespeare Company. Belden has worked on such new plays as Sarah Ruhl’s Eurydice, Ken Watanasz’s Shocks, and Charles L. Men’s Wintertime. He has also been the stage manager for noted directors including Lee Waters, Barbara Damashek, Daniel Fish, Tina Landau, and Marco Barcellini. Belden received an M.F.A. degree from UC San Diego and has stage-managed several shows for A.C.T.’s own M.F.A. Program.

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HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director), since joining A.C.T. in 1996, has oversaw the growth and development of A.C.T. and oversaw the company’s expansion to include the development and performance of new works and the addition of a third year to A.C.T.’s acclaimed Master of Fine Arts Program. Her decision to undertake an M.B.A. degree from the Richard Ivey School of Business at The University of Western Ontario followed a 15-year career in stage management, and production management in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credit include the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Stratford Festival, Theater thumbnail text: A.C.T. presents A Christmas Carol. For more information, please call 415.749.2250. Readers spend 72 minutes reading Encore Arts Programs. 2004 Research, 2004, San Francisco
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American Conservatory Theater
Winds on Plays, A.C.T.'s in-depth performance guide series, offers insights 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, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

Individual issues of Winds on Plays for each production are available in the lobby and online at www.aact.org. Subscriptions to Winds on Plays are also available for the entire 2005-06 season. For more information call 415.749.2250.

Who's Who

ASCAP Plus Awards, nominations for a Barrymore Award, an NAACP Theatre Award, and an Austin Critics' Table Award, and was the first sound designer to win the Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award.

BERNARD TELSEY CASTING


Bernard Telsey Casting, C.S.A.:
Bernie Telsey, Will Cantor, David Kramer, James L. Carter, Craig Burns, Tiffany Little Canfield, Stephanie Yankwitt, Betsy Sherwood

Savoring every moment and living full, active lives.

Merlin Lind Shaw (A.C.T. Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. He has cast roles for the Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of White Christmas and The Music Man. He is also a freelance casting director for the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, CT, the Alley Theatre in Houston, the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, as well as the first workshop of The Count of Monte Cristo and the CD-ROM game Obiwan. 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 Creators and Bon Appetit! She received an M.F.A. degree from UC San Diego and has stage-managed numerous shows for A.C.T.’s own M.F.A. Program.

A.C.T. Profiles

CAREY PERLICH

(Artistic Director) is celebrated for his 14th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where he most recently directed A.C.T.’s acclaimed productions of Christmas Carol (a new version adapted by Perllich with dramaturg Paul Walsh), David Mamet’s new adaptation of Gravestone: Barker’s The Furies, Daven’s The Birth of a Nation, Thing, Constantin Costin’s A Mother (an A.C.T.-commissioned adaptation of Gorby’s Vasa Zdziebloski), Diven’s A Doll’s House, Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, Stoppard’s Night and Day, and Chekhov’s Three Sisters.

Her production of Maria Malibran’s visionary new work, Hilda, coproduced at A.C.T.’s second space (Zeum) with Laura Pols Productions, traveled to Washington D.C.’s Studio Theater and then to New York’s 59E59 Theater last fall. She was recently named Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

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Heath Belden’s (Executive Director) recent stage-managed A Streetcar Named Desire for Pacific Alliance Stage Company, Once Upon A Mattress, starring Lee DeLaria, for 42nd Street Moon, five operas with Donald Pippin’s Pocket Opera, and two seasons with Marin Shakespeare Company. Belden has worked on such new plays as Sarah Ruhl’s Eurydice, Ken Weitzman’s Spin, Mozes, and Charles L. Mees’ Wintertime. He has also been the stage manager for noted directors including Lee Waters, Barbara Dambash, Daniel Fish, Tina Landau, and Marco Barcellini. Belden received an M.F.A. degree from UC San Diego and has stage-managed several shows for A.C.T.’s own M.F.A. Program.


Prior to joining A.C.T., Perllich was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound’s Edna, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works.

Under Perllich’s leadership, Classic Stage Company was nominated for eight OBIE Awards in 1997 for its artistic direction, and as well as the 1998 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s opera The Cave at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Perllich received a B.A. in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the 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 Leniz and Nicholas.

Savoring every moment and living full, active lives.

Melissa Smith (Executive Director) oversees the operations of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T., in addition to serving as the master acting teacher of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T., Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting for six years. She has worked with students 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 in regional theaters, including A.C.T. In 2004 she toured London and Birmingham (U.K.) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of Clifford Odets’ Clifford Odets’ Clueless. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theatre from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

James Haire (Producing Director) began his career at the University of Chicago’s A.C.T. and has worked at the San Francisco Bay Area’s great theaters, including A.C.T.,SF Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Cal Shakes, where he produced the National Tour of Dario Fo’s Love & Death. He has served as the Executive Producer of the San Francisco Fringe Festival, the Executive Director of Contention Direvtial. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theatre from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

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Winds on Plays, A.C.T.’s in-depth performance guide series, offers insights 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, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

Individual issues of Winds on Plays for each production are available in the lobby and online at www.aact.org. Subscriptions to Winds on Plays are also available for the entire 2005-06 season. For more information call 415.749.2250.
A.C.T. PRESENTS...
A "FIRST LOOK" AT NEW PLAYWRITING

In recent years, A.C.T. has significantly deepened its commitment to the development of new playwriting, a goal central to the company's mission to "explore new artistic forms and new communities." In 2003, A.C.T. launched the highly successful First Look program, which supports the development of diverse and inspiring theatrical voices through workshops, staged readings, and professional productions of new plays, presented at A.C.T.'s alternate performance space in Zeum Theater. Through First Look, A.C.T. seeks to foster an atmosphere of freedom and rigorous exchange in which writers can test new material at every stage of its development.

This season, another ambitious slate of new writing from both sides of the Atlantic will take shape at Zeum. In January, A.C.T. showcases five new plays in a festival of workshops culminating in semistaged public readings, giving our artistic community the chance to nurture vital work by the next generation of groundbreaking playwrights. The upcoming First Look Festival is a mix of new takes on classic works and original stories by new voices, told over five weekends. Each Friday and Saturday night brings a different play, with an audience exchange following Saturday's presentation, giving the audience a chance to take part in the dialogue that shapes each new work. Please join us!

FIRST LOOK FESTIVAL 2006

January 20-February 18 • Zeum Theater

PHÈDRE
By Jean Racine
Adapted by Timbre/Blake Wetsnaker
Directed by Brigitte Jacques-Wajman
With Olympia Doufakis

DONNA WANTS
By Karen Hartman
Directed by Jonathan Moscone
With Rene Augesen

THE SHAKER CHAIR
By Adam Bock
Directed by Anne Kaulflman
Presented in collaboration with Encore Theater and the Z Space

WARSOW
By Paul Webb
Directed by Carey Perloff

WAITING FOR THE FLOOD
By Carey Perloff
Directed by Judith Ivey

TICKETS
$10 General Admission, per performance
$7 A.C.T. Subscriber/Student/Senior
$40 Festival Pass—good for all performances
*Dates, times, and performers subject to change.

www.act-sf.org | 415.749.2ACT

RELEASE YOUR INNER ACTOR...

...by taking advantage of your A.C.T. subscriber benefits and saving 20% on a Studio A.C.T. course this spring.

A comprehensive evening and weekend training program offering the highest-quality instruction in acting and other performance skills to adults in the Bay Area. Studio A.C.T. presents four 10-week sessions each year, beginning in September, January, March, and June. Most classes meet once a week for three hours, and each session typically offers beginning- to advanced-level classes in acting, scene study, improvisation, voice and speech, audition techniques, Shakespeare, physical acting, playwriting, and singing. Instructors are working Bay Area theater artists who love to teach.

Don't miss out on these intriguing course options, coming this spring:

The Advanced Studio Project matches students with a professional director in the creation, rehearsal, and performance of a full-length studio production. An invited audience attends performances, and an auditon is required for this course.

Musical Theater Performance is designed to provide the singer/actor with an intensive, supportive learning environment in which to expand his or her knowledge of musical theater performance techniques. Class members work on scenes and songs from the musical theater repertoire, and the course culminates in a cabaret performance for an invited audience.

Registration starts February 1 for classes beginning March 20. Call 415.429.2332 or visit us on the Web at www.ACTActorTraining.org for more information.

A.C.T. M.F.A.
PROGRAM ALUMNI UPDATE

Graduates of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program continue to thrill audiences of stage and screen across the country. Here are a few recent highlights:

Steven Bailey '96 appears regularly as Joe the bartender on the popular ABC series "Grey's Anatomy." He appeared in a previous season as an anesthesiologist, but, because his face was always disguised by a surgical mask, the producers were able to offer him a larger recurring role this season. Bailey, who horrified viewers with his convincing performance on the FOX series "My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancee," was featured in an article in the New York Times (October 16, 2005), which emphasized his classical training at A.C.T. and his preference for serious dramatic acting over a career in "reality" television.

Rachel Bluck '01 has launched a play reading group in New York City for A.C.T. alumni, known as Home Base. Home Base is a place where A.C.T. graduates can come together once a month to participate in a theatrical process that is nurturing and creative. The group's goal is to offer a fertile environment for participation and dialogue, where A.C.T. actors can network and support fellow artists who have trained for a lifelong investment in the theater. Home Base West was recently formed in the Los Angeles area by Kerry and Jamie Rosenblatt '01.

Clayton B. Hodges '05 plays the leading role in Bent at Theatre Rhinoc San Francisco, which finishes its run January 8. Hodges's involvement in the production is a continuation of a relationship that began last spring when he appeared to widespread acclaim in Eidos, or The Revival of a Romantic Drama, a coproduction between A.C.T. and Theatre Rhinoc and the first professional collaboration between the M.F.A. Program and a local theater.

Anika Noni Rose, who won a Tony Award last year for her performance in Carolina, or Change on Broadway, has been cast as Lorraine in the film version of Dreamgirls, which starts filming in January. The film also stars Beyonce Knowles, Jamie Fox, and Eddie Murphy and is written and directed by Bill Condon (author of the screenplays for Chicago, Gods and Monsters, and Kinsey).
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For nearly 50 years, Altria Group, the parent company of Kraft foods Inc., Philip Morris International Inc., and Philip Morris USA Inc., has supported hundreds of arts organizations that celebrate the visions and voices of established and emerging artists. Altria believes the arts are an essential part of a vibrant and strong community and speaks a universal language that builds bridges between people and places. At Altria Group supporting the arts is an integral part of our commitment to responsibility.

In addition to supporting the arts, Altria Group provides support to organizations that help feed the hungry and provide nutritious meals to the elderly and people living with debilitating illnesses and that strengthen the safety net available to victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Altria is delighted to support A.C.T.’s 2005–06 season. We hope you enjoy all of the fabulous performances and come back season after season.

Enjoy!

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“First Republic made an instant impression on us. They actually perform when other banks just talk.”

IRA SPANIERMAN
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