THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE

BY BERTOLT BRECHT

TRANSLATED BY DOMENIQUE LOZANO
DIRECTED AND DESIGNED BY JOHN DOYLE
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY NATHANIEL STOOKEY

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

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The name may seem familiar. After all, Virginia is a retired newspaper writer and columnist for the SF Chronicle. Formerly on the boards of the University of CA Art Museum, SFMOMA Modern Art Council and SF Art Institute, Virginia continues to pursue the aesthetic. She received her MFA, Mills College, just six years ago, and if you appreciate opera, prepare to be charmed (Wagner is a favorite). Ask about living here, our Life Care and new contract options, and why we’re the most complete senior living community in The City. Please call Kate Hoepke for your personal visit, 415.447.5528.
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The Caucasian Chalk Circle 5
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Dear Friends,

The Monday of this year’s Martin Luther King Day was filled with torrential rain. It was my first day off in months and I was determined to stay home, but of course I was inexorably drawn downtown for the first day of rehearsals of The Caucasian Chalk Circle. I walked into the studio in the afternoon, expecting to see our actors sitting around the table with John Doyle, discussing Brecht. Instead, I was greeted by a huge wash of extraordinary music and witnessed the opening scene of the play, already on its feet. The atmosphere in the room was alive and filled with invention; the actors were creating props and scenery out of whatever was at hand, and the heartbreaking story of a culture at war was already palpable. At the center of all the activity, John Doyle sat like a radiant, smiling Buddha, gently paving the way as the actors moved forwards.

That image has stayed with me very strongly in the past few weeks. Doyle comes out of a genuine “poor theater” tradition: he is a master at finding the simplest, truest, most imaginative way to tell a story using the most economical means possible. We first met in the fall of 2007 when he came to restage his visionary Sweeney Todd at A.C.T., and something about our joint sensibilities clicked immediately. He was deeply drawn to A.C.T.’s core acting company, and to the idea of creating work at a theater that is also a school. He proposed the idea of making a piece for A.C.T. that would truly engage our whole ensemble and as many students as possible in a richly collaborative way; having directed our new company member Manoel Felciano on Sweeney in New York, he felt he already had a strong “way in.” Our discussions were happening during the presidential election, while we were wrestling with all the big questions: Why make theater in this particular environment? What kind of work would speak to an audience so divided politically and so fraught economically? What role should we as artists be playing in trying to engender some kind of hope amidst the anxiety and despair? Out of those discussions came the idea to produce Brecht’s war fable, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, which is both a powerful look at the effects of war on ordinary people and a fierce assertion of hope that ultimately “goodness” can survive.

Thus began the remarkable journey that led to this production. Doyle is a magical man and he makes things happen around him in seemingly effortless ways, drawing upon the best that everyone has to offer. In this case, he began a wonderful collaboration with A.C.T. Associate Artist Domenique Lozano, an actress/teacher/director who also happens to have been raised in a German-speaking family. Domenique created this new translation of Chalk Circle specifically for this production and these actors, finding a way to join Doyle’s lyrical minimalist style to a language that is immediate, spare, and speakable. Next to join the team was San Francisco composer Nathaniel Stookey, whose aesthetic immediately appealed to Doyle because of his Junkestra, an “orchestra” comprised of material found in the San Francisco Dump, where he has served as a resident artist! As Doyle’s conception of Chalk Circle evolved, it began to revolve around a group of people making a play together in a ruined theater.

Needless to say, we at A.C.T. feel an immediate and terrifying “sense memory” when the words “ruined theater” are uttered, since we lived with one for so many years after the Loma Prieta earthquake, when our precious playhouse was so badly damaged. Indeed, the photographs of postquake destruction in our theater were enormous triggers for Doyle’s imagination, and the images you see in this production may be very resonant for you, if you remember the desperate condition of this building after that disaster.

Chalk Circle has become a production woven throughout the many layers of A.C.T., involving our own ensemble, our fearless students, our illustrious building, our complicated history, and a rich array of Bay Area artists. It is a great pleasure to welcome an artist such as Doyle, who so deeply understands the heartbeat of A.C.T. We hope he will be a frequent collaborator, and we are delighted to welcome all of you to share The Caucasian Chalk Circle, our second major classical reimagining in this new decade.

Yours,

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director
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The Caucasian Chalk Circle

by Bertolt Brecht

Translated by Domenique Lozano
Directed and designed by John Doyle
Composition and musical direction
by Nathaniel Stookey

Lighting by Jane Cox
Sound Design by Cliff Caruthers
Dramaturg Michael Paller
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw

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STAY DISPUTED, UNDECIDED!
STAY A UNIT, STAY DIVIDED!
HOLD TO THE CRUDE ONE, HOLD TO THE CLEANER ONE!
HOLD TO THE GOOD ONE, HOLD TO THE OBSCENER ONE!
HOLD THEM UNITED!
—Bertolt Brecht, St. Joan of the Stockyards

Bertolt Brecht fled Germany on February 28, 1933, the day after fire destroyed the Reichstag in Berlin. In the next 14 years he lived in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and the United States, with stops in France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. During his decade-and-a-half exile, he wrote a group of plays considered among his greatest: The Life of Galileo, Mother Courage, The Good Person of Szechwan, and The Caucasian Chalk Circle.

He settled in Santa Monica and came face-to-face with the realities of the American entertainment business, which became his primary economic and social environment for the six years he’d spend in the United States. He lived among, and was often supported by, Los Angeles’s large German expatriate community. Like Brecht, those who fled Hitler made for a curious sight along Hollywood Boulevard, among them Thomas and Heinrich Mann, the novelist Leon Feuchtwanger, and the composer Arnold Schoenberg, who, like fellow exiles Igor Stravinsky and Aldous Huxley, represented the flower of European culture adrift in southern California. It was a startling contradiction, but Brecht was a walking contradiction and insisted on them in his work.

We may think of Brecht as a moralizer whose plays were lessons in the superiority of human relations under socialism, but the clear “message” in his plays, along with the striking clarity and directness of his storytelling, arose out of a love of contradiction and complexity. The Caucasian Chalk Circle itself was born through a series of contradictions.

Brecht was a socialist and a supporter of the Soviet Union, but he was never averse to making money. In Los Angeles he tried writing for both the movies and theater. He made no headway in the movies and little that he wrote for the theater was produced before he left the United States in 1947. In the 1940s, there was only one theater to write for: the commercial theater, headquartered on Broadway. Brecht made four attempts to have a play produced on Broadway and was discouraged and frustrated when each one failed.

However, he had high hopes for The Caucasian Chalk Circle. He wrote it in 1944 for another émigré, the actress Luise Rainer, who had won Academy Awards for The Great Ziegfeld and The Good Earth. Indeed, adapting the 1925 play The Circle of Chalk, by Klabund (itself an adaptation of a 14th-century Chinese play by Li Qianfu), was her idea. Brecht knew the play well, and in 1940 had already based a short story on it called “The Augsburg Chalk Circle.” Rainer arranged for a producer named Jules Leventhal to commission Brecht and pay him a monthly salary until he finished the play. Some months later, the three fell out and the production was cancelled. Later, Brecht wrote, “The theater here . . . is the most cold-blooded merchandising of evening entertainment, a branch of the narcotics trade operated by gamblers.” Chalk Circle, he wrote, was “partly conditioned by a revulsion against the commercialized dramaturgy of Broadway.” That, however, was after the fact. Brecht would have been happy to operate among the drug pushers and gamblers; when he appealed to Rainer for work in the first place, he was all in favor of Broadway dramaturgy if it would suit his purposes.

The play itself, like so much of Brecht’s work, thrives on its contradictions. As Brecht points out in his notes on the play, Grusche, a kitchen servant in the household of the governor, saves her infant son’s life, but the law regards her as a kidnapper. Throughout Grusche’s trials, her own interests—to stay out of trouble and not entangle herself with the welfare of the prince whose father has been overthrown—are at odds with the child’s. She has no money, her poverty is a threat to the life she’s determined to save, and caring for the child only adds to her own perilous situation. She decides, for his sake, to find a husband, a choice that almost costs her the soldier to whom she’s already betrothed. Azdak brings another set of contradictions to the play. He turns himself in for sheltering the tyrannical Grand Prince, but the soldiers he surrenders to reward him with a judgeship. When two years later the Grand Prince returns to power, Azdak fears for his life, as his judgments have supported the poor and powerless at the expense of the powerful; but the Grand Prince, whose interests
aren’t those of the poor, reappoints Azdak out of gratitude for saving his life.

The greatest contradictions come in the last scene, when Azdak must determine the true mother of the child. Is it Grusche the kidnapper, or the governor’s wife who deserted him? Azdak confronts Grusche with a bitter proposition: “I don’t believe that he’s your child, but even if he was yours, wouldn’t you want him to be rich? All you have to say is that he isn’t yours. And instantly he’ll have a palace with horses in the stable, beggars at his door, soldiers in his service, and lots of petitioners in his courtyard. What do you say? Don’t you want him to be rich?” The question and the logic are unanswerable, and Grusche is silent. The solution to the test of the chalk circle is also rife with contradiction—and yet any other outcome would seem completely wrong.

Brecht’s embrace of contradiction stemmed in part from his belief that, when it comes to texture in the theater, more is more. Although his productions were acclaimed for their simplicity, critics also noticed the beautiful costumes and the props that were basic but spoke of long, useful lives, every carefully chosen item in exactly the right place and used the right way.

He never sought to take away texture, but always to add. So while the lyrics in his songs would express one emotion, the music would very often express the opposite, and thus provide a comment on them, deepening the texture. He never sought to banish emotion from the theater (which he knew was impossible), but rather to reduce it so as to add to it another human response: judgment. The critic Harold Clurman wrote, “Brecht is a classicist. He seeks . . . a manner which allows the spectator to appreciate the play with that repose and refinement of attention which liberate the spirit without drugging the senses. . . . The goal is wisdom rather than excitement.” Yet while Brecht wanted his audiences to
arrive at socially useful conclusions about what his characters did, he never wished to abandon the entertainment value of theater. He stuffed his plays with drama, comedy, color, and music; their structure has much in common with the medieval mystery plays that strung together a series of one-acts each complete in itself, each making its point without reference to the others, mixing comedy, drama, music, dance, and rich costumes. He looked to Breugel as an exemplar of color and depth (and suggested that actresses playing Grusche study his Dulle Griet [Mad Meg]). Referring to Parisian critics who saw Brecht’s production of Mother Courage, Clurman pointed out another enriching contradiction: abetted by his designers, beneath the seeming simplicity of Brecht’s stage pictures was thick texture and complexity; Brecht’s “visual austerity was so artful that [they,] when they saw his production, spoke of its several hundred shades of brown.”

Brecht added more not only because he liked the aesthetic but because he was, at heart, a skeptic who was rarely satisfied with answers and so kept asking questions. “Skepticism moves mountains,” he wrote. It was the source of knowledge.

Beginning in 1929 Brecht associated himself with communism and the Soviet Union, and he told translator Eric Bentley that as socialism went so would his work and reputation. He saw himself connected to large historical forces in ways that the significant playwrights of earlier generations, such as Chekhov and Pirandello, were not (they belonged to failed historical forces, i.e., the Russian bourgeoisie and Italian fascism).

He was, however, a skeptic and artist before he was an obedient party soldier, and believed, as the Brecht scholar John Willett notes, that while artists should be open to political arguments, in the end they must be free to discover and employ whatever forms are best for their work. He believed this even when he relocated to East Germany in 1948 (and acquired Austrian citizenship and kept his money in Swiss bank accounts). Indeed, the East German party bureaucrats never let go of their suspicion that Brecht was a formalist and an enemy to the aesthetics of socialist realism. They were right. In 1953, speaking of Germany in his diary, he wrote, “This country still gives me the creeps.” He wrote to Bentley, who was the first person to effectively promote his work in America, about the importance of experimentation in theater: “The very divergent forms of theater are certainly not attempts to arrive at a definitive form; the one thing that should be definitive is the diversity of form.”

The Iron Curtain fell, belief in communism has disappeared almost everywhere, and Brecht’s poetry and plays live on. He wouldn’t be pinned down, and in the end his allegiance to complexity and contradiction was deeper than to any systematic political system. Like one of his favorite playwrights, Bernard Shaw, who always gave the best speeches to the characters we’re supposed to disagree with the most, Brecht believed that people came with their virtues and vices mixed together. “People don’t act on the basis of only one motive but always out of various motives that are in part contradictory,” he said. He wanted people to discuss the issues in his plays, but real discussion is possible only when the playwright doesn’t stack the deck in favor of one character and against another, and characters’ words sometimes argue with their actions—in other words, when there’s something to discuss.
In 2005, John Doyle’s multi-award-winning, wildly successful production of Stephen Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd* upended the conventional musical theater world with its stripped-down, all-instruments-on-deck—some have said “neo-Brechtian”—reimagining of the lavish stage spectacle Broadway musical audiences had come to expect.

While he admits to having studied with a member of Bertolt Brecht’s Berliner Ensemble (at the University of Georgia on a fellowship at the age of 20), Doyle laughs when told—as he is repeatedly—that his working style is influenced by Brecht. “If I read that something is Brechtian, I think, ‘Oh I’m not going, it’ll be dreary,’” he has said. “There is a danger of thinking about Brecht, ‘Oh I don’t get emotionally involved,’ and I don’t think that’s good theater. Brecht’s theater is vital and alive. I see a danger in getting too much involved in it as a philosophy.”

A British theater veteran who has in his distinguished career run four theaters as artistic director and staged more than 200 productions, Doyle credits the development of his aesthetic to a fundamental pragmatism born of economic necessity. In 1992 he found himself at Liverpool’s Everyman Theatre with the desire to direct Leonard Bernstein’s *Candide*—and almost no budget. He realized he had just enough money to pay either a cast or an orchestra, but not both. So he found a way to make ten actor-musicians, working on a nearly empty set with the simplest of props, fill both job descriptions. In the process, he discovered what many consider a radical new way of making theater.

It is nevertheless the power of storytelling that remains front and center in his work. For Doyle—who has applied his bare-bones approach to numerous classic works of music theater, including *Pal Joey, Fiddler on the Roof, Mack and Mabel, Cabaret, Company,* and *Oklahoma!*, as well as recent productions of Benjamin Britten’s *Peter Grimes* for The Metropolitan Opera, Brecht’s *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* for Los Angeles Opera, Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* for Cincinatti Playhouse in the Park, and Sondheim’s new *Road Show* for The Public Theater—it is all about the story and the audience’s connection to it. Doyle’s creative approach is at heart “about giving the theater back to the actor, and is asking the audience to let go of all the stuff they knew as ‘theater’ and to take part in the story that’s being told.”

“The major resource is the imagination of the audience,” he says. “My job is to tap that imagination. I like to think that’s my trademark.”

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO DIRECT THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE?**

First of all, it’s a human story. When you really get down to it, it’s a simple story about human beings and about right and wrong. There’s a moral to the tale, and that interested me. But also, I suppose I’m drawn to the fact that the story allows for a particular method of storytelling. It’s nonnaturalistic. It’s not a well-made play . . . it’s beautifully made, but the classical idea of the well-made play is one with a beginning, a development, a climax, and an end, and this is not structured that way. It’s structured in a series of almost vaudevillian episodes, little vignettes one after the other, and that asks the director to do a lot of work in terms of how all of the scenes and images have contrast and theatricality, and I’m drawn to that kind of material.

**WHY WERE YOU INTERESTED IN COMING BACK TO A.C.T. TO DIRECT?**

The only time I’ve been in San Francisco was to see [my] production of *Sweeney Todd* [which launched its national tour at A.C.T. in the fall of 2007]. I particularly like the feeling of [A.C.T.’s] auditorium, I like the feeling of the city, and I’m drawn to the idea that there is a permanent company in this organization. In the United Kingdom, I was raised with that. Also, I really was kind of intrigued by the idea that there is a conservatory as a part of the organization, that skills can be passed down the line or up the line, depending on how you look at it. So, I said to [A.C.T. Artistic Director] Carey [Perloff] that I would like to do the project with the resident company and with some of the students together, so that they are working together and teaching each other. I liked the energy that you have here.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THAT ENERGY?**

I think that the house itself has something about it; you can usually tell when you walk into an old theater, you can smell
what’s happened there before. I’m not normally drawn to working within the proscenium arch; most of my career I’ve done everything I could to destroy it, or get out of it, or rip out the seats and do something else. I’m a little bit of an anarchist as far as all that is concerned. But I’ve sat in your auditorium a few times now, and I’ve enjoyed the relationship between the house and the stage. The stage doesn’t feel too high, which so comfortable when the actors pretend that the audience isn’t there; I find that a little more problematic. I like that idea that we all turn up at the same . . . I like to think of it as the same altar at the same time.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR INSPIRATIONS FOR THIS PRODUCTION?**

I wanted the production to feel like it was happening at a time of destruction, or a time of war, in a culture at war. But I didn’t want that environment to be a remote time; if we make it a war that was “way back then in olden times,” we perhaps might not take responsibility for what’s happening right now. After all, we are at war.

I always tend to start from visual inspiration. I looked at imagery of various wars of the 20th century—the photographs of the Spanish Civil War are remarkable, through Vietnam, and what we watch on CNN every morning. Also, when I came here, I looked at some visual imagery of what had happened to your theater at the time of the [1989] earthquake, when the theater nearly was destroyed. So I thought, “Perhaps I can access some of that imagery, as a place of storytelling that was unsafe for a period of time.” I thought the fact that we’re telling this story in that unsafe environment could be interesting.

**YOU TALKED EARLY ON ABOUT THE NOTION OF “INNOCENCE IN A DANGEROUS LANDSCAPE.” IS THAT IDEA STILL IN YOUR MIND?**

Yes. I’m fascinated by a number of things in any story I tell. Innocence in a dangerous landscape is one of them. Sorry to refer back to *Sweeney Todd* again, but the angle of that was told through the eyes of the most innocent person on the stage, Toby [played on Broadway by A.C.T. Associate Artist Manoel Felciano, who plays the Singer in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*]. I tend to be drawn toward seeing the story through the eyes of the vulnerable. I’m also very interested in the “extraordinary in the ordinary,” that ordinary people behave often in very extraordinary ways, and I feel a responsibility as a storyteller to reflect that. I think one of the great things about theater is that it’s something that can remind us that “we are all the same.” The performer and audience in [the theater] also have sameness. That’s very beautiful. And specifically in this play, I think the combination of light and darkness, the potential slaughter of the innocent coupled with the result that the innocent isn’t slaughtered after all, is beautiful.

**YOU HAVE BECOME KNOWN FOR A VERY COLLABORATIVE WAY OF WORKING IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THAT PROCESS?**

It’s rooted in the idea, well, in one word, which is the word
“play.” We go to see a play, and we go to see people play. Sometimes I think we forget that the starting point in most of our lives is to play. From very early on we are asked to imagine, and then probably around the age of seven we are told to stop doing that. My function as a director is to access the possibility of playing. And to ask the actor to be playful, without setting them up. I try not to tell people what I want them to do, but to set them a task that allows them to show me something that may or may not become what I want them to do. And I try very hard never to ask a question to which I already know the answer. That last bit is the core of my working style. So I ask a question in a vulnerable fashion, not knowing. They will then find from their character viewpoint an answer for me. So it’s up to me set up a wrestling ring that allows for that.

HOW DOES THE MUSIC FIT INTO THIS PRODUCTION?

Very few of the performers themselves are actually musicians. They’re musical, but they’re not actually musicians. A lot of the music is being organically created for the piece, either from instruments or from materials that are available to us in the space. It should, as a musical style, feel very presentational, totally aware that the audience is there. It should not feel like you are watching a musical. What [composer] Nat [Stookey] has written for us is quite complicated, but to my ear, it also has quite a childlike quality lying underneath it. And it’s wonderful to see the actors becoming comfortable with the fact that they can stand there and be holding a viola, or whatever it is, because there’s nobody to take it offstage for them, and they continue to play the next moment with it in their hands . . . to me that’s completely natural. I never even think about it, because I’ve watched people sitting on top of coffins playing cellos—onstage, that is—but I can understand that it takes a little suspension of disbelief. Again that’s about imagining, pretending . . . and that’s good.

WHY DO YOU THINK BRECHT IS RELEVANT TODAY?

Brecht was writing parables to reflect the state of the world as he knew it. I think as theatrical storytellers, if we have any right to exist, if the movies aren’t doing it better than us, then that’s a challenge to us. We must take responsibility for telling stories that reflect the state of the world that we’re in today. He’s writing a story, in this case, about what is fair. And who judges whom. And do we trust our judges. And who determines what is right or wrong: Does nature determine it? Does nurture determine it? Does society determine it? Nothing has changed in that, it seems to me. Every day, in every newsreel, it’s a balance between what is right or wrong, or who is or is not telling us what to do. That’s no different. In fact, maybe we’re getting worse. So I think the subject is definitely relevant.

The second part of the answer to your question would be that he had this extraordinary, evolving theatrical style, which broke convention. It did indeed break through the fourth wall. It was not Noël Coward—no disrespect to Noël Coward—but Brecht was saying, “Okay, we don’t need these curtains, we don’t need real scenery to do what we do. We are going to tell you what a story is about and then do it.” The Greeks did the same thing, and so did Shakespeare. Brecht, it seems to me, was taking everything that the Victorians had done to us in theater and smashing it.

If theater has a future, and I do believe it has or I wouldn’t be sitting here talking to you, it is to explore with the audience the fact that we are theatrically storytelling. As opposed to putting movies onstage, or doing the real thing. I have discovered more and more that when I try to reenact something onstage “for real,” it’s not as good as reality. It can’t be. So I have to try to enact something that asks the audience to participate in that vision of reality, and then it’s theater. Because they’ve filled in the gap.

Brecht was writing political theater, and that’s tougher for us because our need to scream and shout, our need to say “No!” erodes over time, I think. I was raised as a child of the ‘60s, through the ’60s into the ’70s, in political theater, with the belief that it was important to stand up and say it. But it has gradually become harder to do that. I have spent quite a bit of my career working in nontheater environments—working with communities, with prisoners, with the socially disadvantaged, and sometimes with people who were mentally and physically challenged—in the belief that we can all tell a story.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle
I don’t see a separation between the actor and the human being; I believe that we all have that facility in us. How it is accessed, or how much skill it requires is a different thing, but I think we all have it in us. So that’s a long answer to your question, but to say that I think the relevance of the story still exists and the methodology of how he’s storytelling in that way is fascinating. We’ve grown from that, and theatricality has changed with that, and at the same time the importance of trying to make people listen, viscerally make people sit up and listen, is really fascinating.

BERTOLT BRECHT (1898–1956)

Born in Augsburg, Bavaria, Bertolt Brecht was publishing poems in a local newspaper by the age of 16. His first produced play, Drums in the Night, was performed at the Munich Kammertheater in 1922. In 1924 he moved to Berlin, where he worked as a theater critic and as Max Reinhardt’s assistant and dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater while writing a number of plays. His early works include In the Jungle of Cities (1923) and Life of Edward II of England (1924), but his first real success came with The Threepenny Opera in 1928, followed a year later by Happy End. He began reading Marx’s Das Kapital in the mid 1920s; the influence of this work is already noticeable in his first collaboration with Kurt Weill, the song cycle Mahagonny (1927; also the full-length opera The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny [1930]). Marxism did not become a driving force in his work, however, until the late 1920s/early 1930s, when he wrote Saint Joan of the Stockyards (1929) and a number of short didactic plays.

Brecht was forced to flee Germany in 1933 with his wife, Helene Weigel, and their two children, and after living in Switzerland, Denmark, and Finland he settled in California in 1941, where he remained during the war. During these years, he wrote what are generally considered his most important plays: Mother Courage and Her Children (1939), The Good Woman of Setzuan (1940), The Life of Galileo (1943), and The Caucasian Chalk Circle (1944). In 1947, having been called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Brecht left the United States for Switzerland, and in 1949 he was asked by the government of East Germany to form a state-financed theater company. He moved to East Berlin and founded the Berliner Ensemble, taking up residence in 1954 in the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, which he ran until his death.
**VIGIL**

Written and directed by **MORRIS PANYCH**

Cast **MARCO BARRICELLI** and **OLYMPIA DUKAKIS**

**MAR 25–APR 18**

“Deliciously MISCHIEVOUS”
Tony Christie (New York)

“Acerbically FUNNY and sneakily AFFECTING”
Backstage.com

“WICKEDLY DARK”
Variety

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**THE TOSCA PROJECT**

June 3–27

Conjuring a world in which love, betrayal, and hope emerge from the shadows and disappear with the clink of a glass, *The Tosca Project* is a world premiere dance-theater work that brings internationally acclaimed artists from San Francisco Ballet together with a cast of renowned actors. Drawing inspiration from the infamous North Beach watering hole that bares its name, and set to an exciting score of music from Hendrix to Puccini, this gorgeously choreographed and achingly moving event continues A.C.T.’s exploration of multidisciplinary storytelling through original large-scale works.

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In the “explosively hilarious” (London’s Guardian) third installment of Alan Ayckbourn’s acclaimed trilogy *The Norman Conquests*, librarian Norman, to whom family members refer as a “badly built haystack,” channels his inner Casanova in fervent attempts to seduce his two sisters-in-law, as well as his estranged wife, during a weekend family gathering. Tony Award–winning director John Rando (*Urinetown, the Musical*) takes A.C.T. Round and Round the Garden this spring in his wickedly sophisticated interpretation of Ayckbourn’s “gleefully torrid little world” (Entertainment Weekly).

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**MARCO BARRICELLI** and **OLYMPIA DUKAKIS**, photo by Kevin Berne.
IN GOOD COMPANY

In January A.C.T. welcomed company members from the Stratford Shakespeare Festival for our production of Jean Racine’s Phèdre. Like A.C.T., Stratford employs a company of actors who perform in numerous shows over the course of the season, allowing audiences to experience their favorite actors in a variety of roles. “It is fun to see actors in different roles over the years. I enjoy seeing what seem like old friends performing,” says Cynthia Yelland, who has been an A.C.T. subscriber since the days of William Ball. For actors, says Stratford company member Seana McKenna, who performed Phèdre’s challenging title role, the wonderful thing about being part of a company is the familiarity: “You don’t have to spend time getting to know each other—you know who you’re working with. And you develop wonderful relationships with your fellow actors.”

A.C.T. founder William Ball started the theater in 1965 with the primary mission of creating and sustaining a high-quality ensemble acting company outside of New York City that embraced the European concept of conservatory—in which continuous training and production are integral to the professional actor’s creative life—in a way that, in this country at that time, had no precedent. He was dissatisfied by the necessity “to mold a group of strangers into an acting ensemble within the impossibly brief period of rehearsals for a single production,” and he argued companies make for healthier theatrical communities: “A.C.T. is based on the proposition that if you put actors together for a long period of time, they can affect each other’s work through the continuity of their work and also by knowing that they have job security. If actors have these things and don’t have to worry about reviews or the temperament of the director, all they have to do is go to work. Then these artists can concentrate on acting, they can constantly act well without fear.”

The role of the core acting company at A.C.T. waxed and waned over the decades, but when Artistic Director Carey Perloff arrived in 1992, she determined the presence of full-time, year-round actors to be essential. “The notion of a core company was one of the things that first drew me to A.C.T. I believe actors do their best work when they have some degree of control over their own destinies. In the case of our company, that means that the actors are deeply involved in selecting the repertoire and take enormous responsibility for the work of the entire theater.” This is what originally convinced core company member René Augesen to make A.C.T. her home in 2001. She explains, “I came here because they said, ‘Here’s the season we want you to do,’ and it was a great season. Then they told me that I would be a part of planning the next season, and I thought ‘Yeah, right. That’s not going to happen,’ but it actually did.”

Perloff explains that the selections in a season not only incorporate shows the actors want to perform in, but also plays that will push them: “They will be doing Mamet in November and Brecht the next February; they may be asked to sing, or to do verse drama, or to play screwball comedy. So their skills don’t lie dormant.” How does this translate for audiences? “We understand instinctively that when a group of musicians have played together over time, there is a synergy and constancy in the sound and feel of the music that is essential,” Perloff says. “When you go to the ballet and watch dancers who have been together for years partner each other in risky and complex ways, it is clear that only the trust that comes with deep familiarity and consistency allows that kind of work to happen. Similarly, the trust that comes from a history of playing together can allow actors to tackle difficult material with incredible freedom producing the richest possible experience for the audience.”

With a project like John Doyle’s production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle—which grew out of the ensemble’s bold and organic exploration of the text in the rehearsal room—the company’s trust of one another is essential. “It’s like, ‘Thank god these people are here,’” says core company member Gregory Wallace (who joined A.C.T. in 1999) about his fellow company members. “That’s the part that makes us feel that we can work with a bit more ease. We love working together. We look forward to it.” Augesen agrees: “There’s a safety there. You’re required as an actor to go into a room and fail every day. When you’re working with a bunch of actors that you don’t know, there’s trepidation, but I feel completely comfortable with
these people.” “Because we’ve made asses of ourselves so many
times together,” jokes Wallace.

In addition to their role in season planning and performing
in two to three shows a season, company actors are intimately
involved with A.C.T.’s Master of Fine Arts Program as teachers
and mentors. Their participation in the training process benefits
not only the students but also the company members themselves.
Augesen explains, “You actually have to articulate something that
before was only visceral or an intuitive feeling. You’ve never had to
put it into words; you just had to do it. It’s challenging to figure out
exactly what to say to students that resonates.” Wallace explains
how the presence of the students—who, by their third year, are
acting alongside the company in full-scale productions and new-
play development—in rehearsal and performance is a constant
reminder of the quality of work the A.C.T. stage requires: “We
give them a standard when we teach, and then we have to live
up to it. The moments when I fail to do that in front of them are
really humbling. We’re all in it together and the learning process
doesn’t stop, and that’s what you get reminded of when you work
with your own students onstage: we spend our lives trying to get
better, to learn more, to do it a little more effectively the next time.
That’s what’s getting passed on to them.”

A.C.T. ALUMNI AT A GLANCE

Morgan Spector ’06 assumed the role of Rodolpho in the new
Broadway production of Arthur Miller’s A View from the Bridge
with Scarlett Johansson and Liev Schreiber. He replaces
Santino Fontana, who sustained an onstage injury in the show.
Spector, Fontana’s understudy, began playing the role January 7,
to rave reviews. See Dileep Rao ’98 in 3D: he plays Dr. Max Patel
in the blockbuster Avatar. He also recently starred in Sam Raimi’s
Drag Me to Hell and is currently working on Christopher Nolan’s newest film, Inception.

Anna Belknap ’98 recently filmed her 100th
episode as Detective Lindsay Monroe on
CSI: NY. And Erik Heger ’04 has blood on
his conscience as he stars in the title role of
Macbeth at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis.

MEET CHRISTINA LORENN ELMORE
A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM CLASS OF 2012

In each program of the A.C.T. mainstage season, we are pleased
to introduce you to one of A.C.T.’s remarkable first-year M.F.A. 8
students. In this issue, meet Christina Lorenn Elmore.

NICKNAME Tina.

BIRTHPLACE Los Angeles, CA.

HOMETOWN Los Angeles, by way
of Sacramento.

FIRST THEATER EXPERIENCE Sunday
morning service at my childhood
Baptist church. A true worship
experience, but always highly
theatrical.

FAVORITE THEATER EXPERIENCE Playing Marianne in Tartuffe
at Sacramento Theatre Company. It
was the first time I was the only nonprofessional in a professional
production. The actors showed me what it looked like to be an
ensemble member and that it was possible to do this as a “real
job.”

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE, I WOULD WANT TO PLAY Stella in A Streetcar
Named Desire.

MY STORY I have always been a performer. At age 5, I started
writing (on the spot) epic songs and stories; I never stopped
annoying my family. After trying sports, ballet, and violin, the
only thing I didn’t quit was theater. I decided in high school that
this would be my career, but I also knew that I wanted a liberal
arts education and decided to go to Harvard and concentrate
on African American studies, hoping to receive my formal actor
training in graduate school. I am so excited to be back home in
California and training at this level.

RANDOM FACT I still sleep with my baby blanket. Every night.


SPECIAL SKILLS Conversational Spanish. I can make a mean lemon
pound cake.

HOBBIES Going to the movies, singing, sudoku, party games.

RECOMMENDATIONS TV: Samantha Who, Curb Your Enthusiasm.
Music: Janelle Monae, Israel Houghton and New Breed.
Andrew Hurteau is an actor, a teacher, and an arts administrator. What is remarkable is that he is often asked to play all three roles at A.C.T. on a given day. He has long been a Bay Area favorite, both onstage and in the classroom, and in 2007 he became the head of Studio A.C.T., A.C.T.’s evening and weekend actor-training program for adults. If you were lucky, you last saw Hurteau on the A.C.T. mainstage during this season’s run of David Mamet’s November, when, as an understudy, he went onstage in five different performances, playing three different characters, including two appearances as the loquacious president of the United States.

When Hurteau moved to the Bay Area in 1989, after earning an undergraduate degree in theater from St. Lawrence University, he took a course in the A.C.T. Academy (the precursor to Studio A.C.T.). After also taking part in A.C.T.’s Summer Training Congress, he entered the Advanced Training Program (now known as the Master of Fine Arts Program). Hurteau remembers his experiences in all three programs as defined by the quality of training he received. “When I took my first class in the Academy, I thought, ‘I have never heard anything like this.’ They had an approach of taking away any notion of being an actor, and instead focused you on being a person. Every time you hit the stage, it’s your job to be a person, because you must be a person in order for the audience to identify with you.” After earning his M.F.A. from A.C.T. in 1993, he stayed in the Bay Area rather than giving in to the industry’s ever-present pressure to move to New York or Los Angeles; over the past 15 years he has acted consistently at venues including Berkeley Rep, the Magic, Aurora Theatre, Word for Word, Marin Theatre Company, and the SF Playhouse, to name a few. He has also taught in every session of Studio A.C.T., four sessions a year, each year since 1994 (except for the spring session of 1996, when he went to Europe with his wife).

Over the years, Hurteau has built a reputation as one of the Bay Area’s most beloved teachers, in no small part because he has continued his own acting career: “I made a pact with myself that I never wanted to teach acting unless I was still acting, because the reason why the classes I took at A.C.T. were amazing was because I was learning from working professionals. In college, I had some teachers who hadn’t acted professionally, in some cases, ever. That is no way to learn how to act. Education does not equal training. You cannot educate actors, you have to train them. Otherwise it’s like learning tae kwon do from a book.”

When asked what teaching inspirations he gleaned from last fall’s experience understudying for November, Hurteau explains: “I train what I do. When you are an understudy, every night is opening night—with no previews. Everyone who has ever been onstage at all has had the actor’s nightmare, which is, you go onstage with next to no rehearsal and you barely know your lines. That’s understudying. But at A.C.T., you are part of a community, and as part of that community you don’t ever want to let people down. There was a moment in the third act when I was playing President Smith that I realized I didn’t know what line came next. In a nanosecond, René [Augesen, who played speechwriter Clarice Bernstein] realized what was going on and how to save it, and Anthony Fusco [as chief of staff Archer Brown] heard from offstage that slightest of pauses and came onstage three lines early to do whatever he could to save the situation. I thought, ‘This is the real deal. This is how you take care of each other.’ The audience never knew that anything had happened. René and Anthony were always there, and that’s what you bring back to an acting class. Acting is about dramatic storytelling, and story is about what happens between people. It is never about the character I have decided I am or the character you’ve decided you are. None of that ultimately matters. What matters is the interaction between the two of us, and the relationship and situation that put us there.”
In March, A.C.T. audiences will have the opportunity to witness the Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2010 tackle O Lovely Glowworm, or Scenes of Great Beauty, a beautifully visceral play by award-winning playwright Glen Berger (coauthor of the upcoming Broadway musical Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark). Set in a small corner of Ireland circa 1918 and suffused with music from World War I, Glowworm weaves a fantastical narrative of love-struck soldiers, mermaids, unicorns, a hapless inventor attempting to devise a flush toilet, and a self-reflective goat. In the existential journey of the play’s unconventional hero to discover the truth about his identity and the fate of the world around him, Berger abandons traditional structure to take us on a twisting, lyrical ride through a patchwork of mystical, impossible, and heartbreaking memories and delusions.

“Glen is a deeply poetically voiced American author,” says Glowworm director Alex Harvey, a recent recipient of the Drama League’s New Directors/New Works fellowship. “I’m very attracted to the leap of faith that is required to get from one moment in Glowworm to the next. That leap of the imagination engages us. I think people behave poetically every day, which is why when you see a ‘naturalistic’ play it’s sometimes so mapped out that it feels less real.”

The innovation and riskiness of the script was initially what attracted Conservatory Director Melissa Smith to the play. “I was thrilled by the playwright’s freewheeling theatrical imagination,” Smith explains. “This play manages to touch on the meaning of life itself while humming a whimsical tune. I thought: How does he do that? And how on earth will this play come to life on the stage?”

“It is lyrical language,” Harvey agrees, “but at the core you connect to the story, which is really about the birth of the fractured 20th century. We will be creating that achingly powerful story. There’s a very deep emotional journey here.” He is thrilled to be working with A.C.T.’s third-year students to deliver Glowworm’s stunning visuals and rich language. “I think the tendency of M.F.A. programs is to stick to the classics, and all the things that conventional pedagogy tells us are important in theater education, but there really is something important about diving into more experimental work on an educational level. Actors in M.F.A. programs tend to be very open and very experimental and exploratory, which is great. A.C.T.’s students will say yes to anything; they’ll dive into anything.”
On January 9, 2010, A.C.T. friends and family celebrated the 100th birthday of our historic home, the American Conservatory Theater. More than 3,000 people from all over the Bay Area took part in the festivities, exploring the building from top to bottom, enjoying up-close demonstrations of theatrical craft, and generally having a fabulous time. Hope you can join us next time!
From free parties to in-depth discussions with the artists, A.C.T. offers the following events for all—at no additional cost:

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

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

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

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

**BECOME an A.C.T. DONOR**
By contributing to A.C.T., you also receive invitations to the following exclusive donor perks:

- **TOURS and TECH REHEARSALS**
- **DESIGN PRESENTATIONS**

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

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

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

To support A.C.T. and receive invitations to donor events, please contact Liv Nilssen at lnilssen@act-sf.org or 415.439.2450.

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**February**

10–20 **Hotel Paradiso**
A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2011
Hastings Studio Theater

23 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Prologue**
Featuring director John Doyle. 5:30 p.m.

24 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Opening Night Dinner**
Featuring director John Doyle. 5:30 p.m.

**March**

2 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Audience Exchange**
After the 7 p.m. performance

3 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Out with A.C.T.**

4–20 **O Lovely Glowworm, or Scenes of Great Beauty**
A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2010
Zeum Theater

6 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Saturday Salon**

7 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Audience Exchange**
After the 2 p.m. performance

10 **The Caucasian Chalk Circle Audience Exchange**
After the 2 p.m. performance

30 **Vigil Prologue**
Featuring playwright/director Morris Panych. 5:30 p.m.

31 **Vigil Opening Night Dinner**
Featuring playwright/director Morris Panych. 5:30 p.m.

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Due to the spontaneous nature of live theater, all times are subject to change.

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**ACT-SF.ORG/INTERACT**

**ACT-SF.ORG/DONORLEVELS**
RENÉ AUGENSEN*  
(Ensemble), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, made her A.C.T. debut in The Misanthrope; she has since appeared in 21 productions, most recently A Christmas Carol, November, Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo, War Music, Brainpeople, ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, and Rock ‘n Roll. New York credits include Spinning into Butter (Lincoln Center Theater), Macbeth (with Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, The Public Theater), It’s My Party . . . (with F. Murray Abraham and Joyce Van Patten, ArcLight Theatre), and Overruled (Drama League). Regional theater credits include Mary Stuart (dir. Carey Perloff, The Huntington Theatre Company); several productions, including the world premieres of The Beard of Avon and The Hallow Lands, at South Coast Repertory; and productions at the Great Lakes Theater Festival, Baltimore’s centerstage, the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Stage West. Film and television credits include The Battle Studies, Law & Order, Guiding Light, Another World, and Hallmark Hall of Fame’s Saint Maybe. Augesen is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

NICK CHILDRESS*  
(Ensemble) recently appeared in A.C.T.’s A Christmas Carol. Other credits include California Shakespeare Theater’s production of Romeo and Juliet and A.C.T. M.F.A. Program productions of The Critic, Macbeth, Winter Under the Table, Hamlet, Clothes for a Summer Hotel, The Diviners, and The Flattering Word. Other regional credits include Beauty and the Beast, The Hairy Ape, and Blue Eyes.

MANOEL FELCIANO*  
(Ensemble), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has appeared at A.C.T. in Albee’s At Home at the Zoo, and Rock ‘n Roll. For his portrayal of Tobias Ragg in Sweeny Todd on Broadway (directed by John Doyle), he was nominated for the Tony Award and won the Broadway.com Audience Award and Broadwayworld.com Choice Award for Favorite Featured Actor. Other Broadway credits include Brooklyn, Jesus Christ Superstar, and Cabaret. Off-Broadway credits include Trumpey, Stockhead Peter, and Much Ado About Nothing. Regional theater credits include Ragtime (The Kennedy Center), Three Sisters (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and Sunday in the Park with George (Reprise Theatre Company). Film and television credits include Uncertainty, Trauma, The Unusuals, Life on Mars, One Life to Live, and All My Children. He has appeared in concert in The World of Nick Adams (San Francisco Symphony) and the world premiere of Nathaniel Stookey’s Zipperz (Oakland East Bay Symphony). Felciano is also a singer-songwriter; Moonshot, his debut album of originals, is available in the lobby. Born and raised in San Francisco, he holds a B.A. from Yale University and an M.F.A. from New York University.

Black Hair at the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, New York. He has a B.A. in performance from Christopher Newport University.

ROD GNAPP*  
(Ensemble) is a graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program and a longtime veteran of Bay Area stages. He has appeared at A.C.T. in Rock ‘n Roll, ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Curse of the Starving Class, The Government Inspector, The Rainmaker, Happy End, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Time of Your Life, and others. He was recently seen in the Magic Theatre production of Territories, Marin Theatre Company’s production of Frozen, and in TheatreWorks’s production of The Elephant Man. Film credits include the principal bad guy in the independent feature Valley of the Heart’s Delight and the mechanic in Pixar’s live-action short Calendar Conflation.

ANTHONY FUSCO*  

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States
†Member of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program class of 2010
CAROLINE HEWITT† (Ensemble) most recently appeared as Martha Cratchit in A.C.T.’s 2009 production of A Christmas Carol. Recent credits also include The Winter’s Tale (Perdita) and Arcadia (Chloë) at the Chautauqua Theater Company and A.C.T. M.F.A. Program productions of Her Naked Skin (Eve Douglas), Macbeth (Lady Macbeth), Winter Under the Table (Florence), Hamlet (Ophelia), Clothes for a Summer Hotel (Sara Murphy), and The Diviners (Jenny-Mae). Other credits include The Forest War with the Shotgun Players, Note to Sixth–Grade Self with Word for Word Performing Arts Company, The Grapes of Wrath at the Theater at Monmouth, and As You Like It (Rosalind) at Vassar College. She graduated from Vassar College with a B.A. in French.

OMOZÉ IDEHENRE† (Ensemble) most recently appeared on the A.C.T. mainstage in A Christmas Carol. Other credits include A.C.T. M.F.A. Program productions of Sweet Charity, The Critic, The Increased Difficulty of Concentration, Macbeth, The Mutilated, and Blues for an Alabama Sky. Idehenre earned her B.F.A. from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, where she appeared in such productions as Our Lady of 121st Street, Macbeth, Death and the King’s Horseman, and Home. She is a recipient of the Polly McKibben Award, an A.C.T. scholarship fund supported by Maureen McKibben.

GREGORY WALLACE* (Ensemble), an A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, has been seen at A.C.T. in 28 productions, including A Christmas Carol, Rich and Famous, ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Travesties, The Rivals, Gem of the Ocean, Waiting for Godot, The Dazzle, Blithe Spirit, Celebration and The Room, Lilies, or The Revival of a Romantic Drama, “Master Harold”…and the boys, Tartuffe, Insurrection: Holding History, and Angels in America (Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award). Other theater credits include Our Country’s Good (Broadway), A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire (New York Theatre Workshop), As You Like It (The Public Theater), Much Ado about Nothing (Alliance Theatre), The Screens (Guthrie
Who’s Who

Jack Willis*

Ensemble

has appeared in more than 200 productions throughout the United States, including recent performances at A.C.T. in A Christmas Carol, War Music, Philistines, Rock ‘n’ Roll, ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Curse of the Starving Class, Blood Knot, The Rainmaker, Hedda Gabler, A Christmas Carol, The Little Foxes, Happy End, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and The Black Rider. An A.C.T. associate artist and core acting company member, he has been a company member at Arena Stage, American Repertory Theatre, Trinity Repertory Company, and the Dallas Theater Center. On Broadway, Willis has appeared in Julius Caesar, The Crucible, ‘Art’, and The Old Neighborhood. Off-Broadway credits include The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, World of Mirth, The Iphigenia Cycle, and Valhalla. Film and television credits include TheTalented Mr. Ripley, The Cradle Will Rock, The Out-of-Towners, Love Hurts, I Come in Peace, Problem Child, Law & Order, Ed, and Dallas. Willis was a Lunt-Fontanne Fellow in the inaugural year of the fellowship at Ten Chimneys Foundation and is a co-founder of Aruba Repertory.

Delia MacDougall*

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

Nicholas Pelczar*

(Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T. in War Music, Rock ‘n’ Roll, and A Christmas Carol. Other Bay Area credits include boom at Marin Theatre Company; Hamlet and As You Like It at Pacific Repertory Theatre; A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; Marius and Dublin Carol at Aurora Theatre Company; Daniel Handler’s 4 Adverbs at Word for Word Performing Arts Company; and the The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, Othello, All’s Well That Ends Well, and The Importance of Being Earnest at California Shakespeare Theater. He is a recent...
Who’s Who

graduate of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program. In addition to A.C.T. Pelczar has trained at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, Prima del Teatro in San Miniato (Italy), and Michael Howard Studios in New York. He is a graduate of the University of Virginia.

HOWARD SWAIN* (Understudy) has appeared at A.C.T in Curse of the Starving Class, The Time of Your Life, The Seagull, The Learned Ladies, Taking Steps, A Lie of the Mind, The Doctor's Dilemma, Marco's Millions, King Lear, Feathers, Saint Joan, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, and One Night of the Scarecrow. In addition to A.C.T. Pelczar has trained at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Prima del Teatro in San Miniato (Italy), and Michael Howard Studios in New York. He is a graduate of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program.

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Luc Tuyman’s is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Weiner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Generous support is provided by Bruce and Martha Atwater. Additional support is provided by Carla Emri and Rich Silverstein; Flanders House, the new cultural forum for Flanders (Belgium) in the United States; and SFMOMA’s Collectors Forum.

Luc Tuyman’s, The Secretary of State, 2005; Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York, promised gift of David and Monica Zwirner; courtesy David Zwirner, New York; © Luc Tuyman.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle 27
programs and has directed many projects with the Young Conservatory and M.F.A. Program. Young Conservatory projects include the American premiere of After Juliet, the world premieres of Sarah Daniel's Dust and Constance Congdon's Nightingales, a coproduction with the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Zürich of Paul Steinmann's Only Victory, and the West Coast premieres of Jeffrey Hatcher's Korczak's Children and Wendy MacLeod's School Girl Figure. Directing work with the M.F.A. Program includes Caught with Her Pants Down, Richard III, and numerous graduating class showcases, as well as the M.F.A. Program/Young Conservatory coproduction of Amy Herzog's The Wendy Play. This spring she will direct a new musical by Craig Slaight celebrating the music of Rufus Wainwright. Acting credits include work with such theaters as California Shakespeare Theater, where she is an artistic associate, A.C.T., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, San Jose Stage Company, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Lozano has also taught throughout the Bay Area at such institutions as Saint Mary's College, UC Davis, California Shakespeare Theater, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

NATHANIEL STOOKEY’s Composer compositions have been commissioned and performed by many of the world's great orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra at The Kennedy Center, the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Manchester’s Hallé Orchestra. Recent vocal-theatrical collaborations include The Composer Is Dead with Lemony Snicket, Into the Bright Lights with Frederica von Stade, and Zipperz with poet Dan Harder, playwright Eisa Davis, and A.C.T. core acting company member Manoel Felciano. In addition to music for conventional ensembles, Stookey has continued to attract new audiences with compositions that challenge the established boundaries of classical music. Junkestra, for an orchestra of objects scavenged at the San Francisco Dump, drew thousands of listeners to warehouses and public squares. It will be performed by the San Francisco Symphony on May 9, 2010. Stookey also contributed original music for string quintet to The Mars Volta's 2009 Grammy Award–winning album, The Bedlam in Goliath.

JANE COX (Lighting Design) is a lighting designer based in New York. She designed Gem of the Ocean for A.C.T. in 2007. With John Doyle, she has designed lighting for Road Show at The Public Theater and for Three Sisters at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. New York theater includes designs on Broadway and for Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theatre Company, and New York Theatre Workshop, among many others. Cox also designs for the Guthrie Theater, McCarter Theatre Center, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and The Minnesota Opera. She has long-term collaborations with choreographers Doug Varone and Monica Bill Barnes. Cox grew up in Dublin, Ireland, and received her M.F.A. from New York University in 1998. She is an adjunct faculty member at Princeton University and Vassar College.

CLIFF CARUTHERS (Sound Designer) has created soundscapes and music for more than a hundred Bay Area productions. He is an artistic associate of...
MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005. He began his professional career as a play reader and script consultant for The Cutting Ball, Dead Man’s Cell Phone and Bug for SF Playhouse, Anna Bella Eema and Drip for Crowded Fire, and The Creature for Black Box Theatre. He is also cocurator of the San Francisco Tape Music Center and technical director of the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival (SFEMF). He has performed his electronic music at the Prague Quadrennial, 964 Natoma, Deep Wireless, Noise Pancakes, SFEMF, the San Francisco Tape Music Festival (SFTMF), and the Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS).

MERYL LIND SHAW (Casting Director) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff as casting director in 1993. She has cast roles for Magic Theatre, The Huntington Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the San Francisco productions of White Christmas, Jimney, and Picasso at the Lapin Agile. Before joining A.C.T. as casting director, she stage-managed more than 60 productions in theaters throughout the Bay Area, including A.C.T.’s Creditors and Bon Appétit! She was resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for twelve years and production stage manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. She has served on the Bay Area advisory committee of Actors’ Equity Association, the negotiating committee for the LORT contract (1992 and 1993), and the board of trustees of the California Shakespeare Festival. She has taught or guest lectured at A.C.T., Rutgers University, Carnegie Mellon University, Santa Clara University, St. Mary’s College, and San Francisco’s Academy of Art University, among others.

ELISA GUTHERTZ* (Stage Manager) has worked as a stage manager for A.C.T. since 1992, most recently on November. She has also stage-managed The Mystery of Irma Vep, Suddenly Last Summer, Rhinoceros, Big Love, Civil Sex, Collected Stories, and Cloud Tectonics at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include The Good Body at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, Big Love at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and The Vagina Monologues at the Alcazar Theatre.

DANIELLE CALLAGHAN’s (Assistant Stage Manager) previous A.C.T. credits include Souvenir, Rock ‘n’ Roll, A Christmas Carol, Speed-the-Plow, Sweeney Todd, The Imaginary Invalid, Blackbird, and Death in Venice. Other favorite shows include Mauritius with Magic Theatre; My Buddy Bill and All My Sons with the Geffen Playhouse; Albert Herring, Don Pasquale, and The Rape of Lucretia with San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program; and Cost fan tutta and Lorca, Child of the Moon with the UCLA Department of Music.

STEPHANIE SCHLIEMANN* (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked on November, Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo, War Music, Blood Knot, The Circle, and A Christmas Carol at A.C.T. Other local stage-managing credits include Flower Drum Song, Guys and Dolls, The King and I, Gypsy, and The Wizard of Oz at American Musical Theatre of San Jose; Orson’s Shadow at Marin Theatre Company; Le Nezze de Figaro and The Caucasian Chalk Circle.
**Who’s Who**

*Magic Flute* at Opera San Jose; and *Hannah and Martin, Bad Dates,* and *Tuesdays with Morrie,* among others, at San Jose Repertory Theatre. She has also worked with TheatreWorks, Teatro Zinzanni, and the San Francisco School of Circus Art. She has been a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association since 2005.

**MRS. ALBERT J. (BETTE) MOORMAN (Executive Producer)** is an avid theatergoer whose late husband served as a trustee of A.C.T. for more than 20 years, including a term as vice president. The balcony level of the American Conservatory Theater is named in honor of the Moormans to recognize their generous support of the capital campaign to rebuild the theater after its destruction in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Originally from Minnesota, Moorman has lived in Atherton, California, for the last 25 years. She is a strong advocate of A.C.T.’s core acting company and chose to produce *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* to honor the five company members performing in it.

**TONI REMBE AND ARTHUR ROCK (Executive Producers)** were instrumental in the campaign to rebuild the American Conservatory Theater after the 1989 earthquake. Past chair of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, Rembe is president of the van Lohen Sels/RembeRock Foundation and a former partner at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. Rock was one of America’s first venture capitalists, playing a key role in launching Fairchild Semiconductor, Teledyne, Intel, Apple, and many other high-tech companies. He is a tremendous supporter of Bay Area cultural and education organizations. Rembe and Rock were the principal donors to Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Hall, housing the UCSF Center for Brain Development, and cofounded the Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock Center for Corporate Governance at Stanford University.

**What It Means To Co-Chair A.C.T.’s Crystal Ball**

Ask trustees Lesley Clement and Carlie Wilmans what excites them most about being part of the A.C.T. family, and they’ll say, “The students!” Each year, more than 2,500 theater artists benefit from A.C.T.’s acclaimed actor training programs.

This year, Clement and Wilmans offer their combined talent and financial support as co-chairs of A.C.T.’s 2010 season gala, the *Crystal Ball.* Held on Sunday, April 18, 2010, the *Crystal Ball* directly benefits the students and actor-training programs of the conservatory, so vital to the future of American theater. Clement and Wilmans explain why co-chairing the *Crystal Ball* is so personally meaningful:

I love literature and theater, and the work onstage at A.C.T. is fine literature played out before your eyes. The incredible artists and people who support them—all of whom I am honored to work with—from Carey Perloff to the conservatory students and staff, are amazing professionals working to preserve this art form. I’m co-chairing A.C.T.’s season gala because it is the singular fundraising event for the conservatory. Our M.F.A. program is arguably the best in the nation. Hearing our students raising their joyful voices in song at the gala is just magic! You won’t want it to end and you’ll leave wishing you had invited your dearest family and friends.

—Lesley Clement

Seeing such tremendous talent blossom and grow through training in A.C.T.’s conservatory is very rewarding. The artistic development of the kids in the Young Conservatory is especially gratifying because these young people are the talent and the arts audiences of the next generation. My passion is training, and I am thrilled to co-chair this season’s gala knowing all proceeds benefit the conservatory. Lesley and I promise the event is going to be an incredibly special evening. We’re building on the energy of the 100th anniversary of our gorgeous theater, and we’re excited to share the *Crystal Ball* with you!

—Carlie Wilmans

An A.C.T. subscriber and donor since 1989, Clement joined the board of trustees in 2004. In addition to co-chairing the *Crystal Ball,* Clement is board secretary and chairs the Development Committee, as well as the Executive Director Search Committee. Clement is an attorney specializing in elder abuse. She and her husband, architect Doron Dreksler, are proud to support the art created under Carey Perloff’s direction and the education of artists by Melissa Smith, Craig Slaight, and the conservatory faculty.

After seeing *The Black Rider* in 2005, Wilmans joined A.C.T.’s board and—as director of the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, which is committed to supporting arts in the Bay Area—devotes her time to chairing the Conservatory Committee, co-chairing the *Crystal Ball,* and serving on the Next Generation Campaign Committee. With bachelor’s and master’s degrees in art history, she is a founder of the 500 Capp Street Foundation and serves on the boards of several other arts organizations, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and California College of the Arts.

Reserve your seats for the *Crystal Ball* online at act-sf.org/CrystalBall. For information about the annual season gala, contact Luz Perez, A.C.T. Special Events Manager, at lperez@act-sf.org or 415.439.2470.

*lperez@act-sf.org or 415.439.2470.*
CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director) is celebrating her 18th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed José Rivera’s Boleros for the Disenchanted, Tom Stoppard’s Rock ’n’ Roll, and John Ford’s ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda’s After the War (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of A Christmas Carol; the American premieres of Tom Stoppard’s The Invention of Love and Indian Ink and Harley Granville-Barker’s The Devil’s Disciple on Maxim Gorky’s commissioned translations/adaptations of Celebration and Love of Tom Stoppard’s Christmas Carol; and his own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of the War of the Worlds. Perloff has collaborated as a director on new plays by many notable contemporary writers, including Gotanda, Robert O’Hara, and Lucy Caldwell. She most recently directed a major production of Phèdre (translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and is currently developing a new dance-theater piece, The Tosa Project, with choreographer Val Caniparoli for A.C.T. and the new Elektra for the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound’s Elektra, the American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s opera The Cave at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

A recipient of France’s Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence, Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

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

MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T., in addition to serving as the master acting teacher of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T. in 1995, Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting for six years. She has worked with people of all ages in venues around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. Also a professional actor, she has performed in numerous off-off Broadway plays and at regional theaters, including A.C.T. In 2004 she toured London and Birmingham (U.K.) in Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s production of Continental Divide. Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.
American Conservatory Theater
Annual Season Gala

Crystal Ball

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Co-chairs Lesley Clement and Carlie Wilmans

Sunday, April 18, 2010

Forum
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Special guests include Academy Award winner Olympia Dukakis (Steel Magnolias, A.C.T.’s Hecuba) and beloved Bay Area veteran actor Marco Barricelli. The spectacular evening will unite the Bay Area’s community leaders, philanthropists, and special artists—come celebrate the future of American theater!

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A.C.T.’s administrative and conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108, 415.834.3200. On the Web: act-sf.org.

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Visit us at 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the theater, one block west of Union Square. Hours are 12–8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 12–6 p.m. Sunday. During nonperformance weeks, business hours are 12–6 p.m. Tuesday–Friday. Call 415.749.2ACT and use American Express, Visa, or MasterCard. Or fax your ticket request with credit card information to 415.749.2291. Tickets are also available 24 hours/day on our website at act-sf.org. All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy ticket exchange privileges and lost-ticket insurance. Packages are available by calling 415.749.2250. Half-price student and educator packages are also available. A.C.T. gift certificates can be purchased in any amount online, by phone or fax, or in person.

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

A.C.T. Merchandise
A.C.T.–branded merchandise, as well as books, scripts, and Words on Plays, are on sale in the main lobby, at the Ticket Services office, and online.

Refreshments
Full bar service, sweets, and savory items are available one hour before the performance in Fred’s Columbia Room on the lower level and the Sky Bar on the third level. You can avoid the long lines at intermission by preordering food and beverages in the lower- and third-level bars. Bar drinks are now permitted in the auditorium.

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

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

Emergencies
Leave your seat location with those who may need to reach you and have them call 415.439.2396 in an emergency.

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

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

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

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

Wheelchair seating is available on all levels of the theater. Please call 415.749.2ACT in advance to notify the house staff of any special needs.

AFFILIATIONS
A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. A.C.T. is a participant in the National Theatre Artist Residency Program, administered by Theatre Communications Group and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Inc., an independent national labor union.

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

A.C.T. is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

A.C.T. is supported in part by a grant from the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

American Conservatory Theater Exits

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**American Conservatory Theater Exits**
Cartier came to fame as the “king of jewelers” during the Belle Époque for his beautifully made diamond and platinum jewelry. Marking Cartier’s 100 years in the U.S., this spectacular array of over 200 objects concentrates on pieces owned by Americans including jewelry from celebrities such as Elizabeth Taylor and Princess Grace of Monaco.

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Enjoy French-inspired dishes all day in the Café. See website for sample menu.

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