The Overcoat
CREATED BY Morris Panych AND Wendy Gorling
ADAPTED FROM "THE OVERCOAT," BY Nikolai Gogol
MUSIC BY Dmitri Shostakovich

Produced by the Canadian Stage Company (CanStage),
Glynis Henderson Productions Ltd., and
The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

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american conservatory theater

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THE HEIGHT OF SAN FRANCISCO LIVING
About A.C.T.

American Conservatory Theater nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and 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 three 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 Zeaux Theater, which now serves as a venue for student productions and exciting new plays. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

The conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, now serves 3,000 students every year. It was the first actor training program in the United States to affiliate with a college or university accredited to award a master of fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Demel 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.
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

A huge and heartfelt welcome to A.C.T.’s 2005–06 season! It is always energizing and somewhat terrifying to think about new beginnings, and one of the fascinating things about making theater is that, no matter how experienced you are, each step in the process of creating a new production always feels as if it is taking place for the very first time. Each first day of rehearsal, each opening night, indeed each live performance is unique unto itself and can never be repeated. The alchemy that happens when a group of artists comes together to tell a story in a new way is always unpredictable, mysterious, and subject to the variables of life itself. So each beginning is a touchstone—a marker of where we are at this precise moment.

At A.C.T. we are always searching for theater that is truly theatrical, theater that doesn’t try to be film or television but that makes up its own rules and celebrates the fact that it occurs in real time in front of an ever-changing live audience. We have chosen to open this season with a piece that truly pushes the boundaries and rejoices in the magical possibilities of telling a story in purely theatrical terms. The Overcoat is a remarkable creation based on Gogol’s short story about a man and his most prized possession: a gorgeous new overcoat made expressly for him. The man’s pride in his miraculous new attire is destroyed by the petty jealousy of those around him, in this classic fable about the plight of the individual in a mechanized world. The magic of this production lies in the fact that it tells Gogol’s tale without a single spoken word. And yet its language is totally clear: it is the language of movement, gesture, expression, rhythm, music, lighting, scenery... and surprise.

For a theater as devoted to the spoken word as A.C.T., The Overcoat may seem a surprising departure. Yet, like last season’s visionary production of The Black Rider, The Overcoat reminds us how many ways there are to express passion, betrayal, joy, and the human need to overcome repression. A blood-red scrim, an enormous, slowly turning wheel, a completely still face with huge unblinking eyes... we read these clues in a visceral way and we understand emotionally exactly where we are going. This remarkable Canadian ensemble’s work on The Overcoat echoes something we are always trying to teach our acting students at A.C.T.: that the human body is a map that can articulate an infinite number of journeys, and that acting is about more than speaking lines; it is about complete physical transformation and engagement.

We hope this dazzling production will delight and energize you, as it has audiences around the world, and usher in a rich and provocative season of theatergoing for you at A.C.T.

Thank you for joining us.

Sincerely,

Carey Perloff
Artistic Director

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE FREE EVENTS AT THE GEARY THEATER

A.C.T. PROLOGUE
a conversation with A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff and CanStage Artistic Producer Martin Bragg
Tuesday, August 30, 5:30-6 p.m.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGES
free post-performance discussions with actors and members of the production team, directly following The Overcoat
Tuesday, September 6 (after the 7 p.m. performance)
Sunday, September 11 (after the 2 p.m. performance)
Wednesday, September 14 (after the 2 p.m. performance)

OUT WITH A.C.T.
a gathering of gay and lesbian theatergoers, immediately following the 8 p.m. performance
Wednesday, September 14

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

Co-Creator/Director
Morris Panich

Co-Creator/Director
Wendy Goering

Scenery by
Ken MacDonald

Costumes by
Nancy Bryant

Lighting by
Alan Brodie

THE CAST

The Man
Peter Anderson
Victoria Adlman
Manon Beaudoin
Matt Bois
Mark Christmann
Judi Cloakey
Diana Coastworth
Monica Dottore
Tracey Ference
Peter Grier
Colin Heath
Ryan Hollyman
Matthew Hunt
Darren Hykes
Cyndy Mason
Allan Morgan
Graham Percy
Ari Phillips
Derek Scott
Sal Scouzari
Courtnay Stevens
Bram Taylor

There will be one 20-minute intermission.

PRODUCERS
David Abel, Executive Producer
Paul Shaw, Producer

ADDITIONAL CREDITS
Jan Hodgson, Stage Manager
Peter Jorkin, Assistant Stage Manager
Cindy Shaw, Assistant Stage Manager
Eric Goldstein, Company Manager
Jim Brett, Production Coordinator/Advance Electrician
Kim Cunis, Head of Wardrobe
Michael McGibbon, Head Carpenter
Douglas Parker, Head Property Master

MUSIC
by Composer Dmitry Shostakovich
Waltz from Jazz Suite no. 1
Allegretto from Piano Concerto no. 1 (1st mvt.)
Lento from Piano Concerto no. 1 (2nd mvt.)
Allegro con brio from Piano Concerto no. 1 (4th mvt.)
Lyric Waltz from Jazz Suite no. 2
Allegro from Piano Concerto no. 2 (3rd mvt.)
Dance from Jazz Suite no. 2
Waltz from Ballet Suite no. 3
Romance from Ballet Suite no. 1
Waltz from Ballet Suite no. 2
Allegro from Piano Concerto no. 2 (1st mvt.)
Waltz from Ballet Suite no. 1 (1st mvt.)
Romance from Ballet Suite no. 2
Allegretto from Symphony for Strings, op. 119a
Allegro from Symphony no. 30
Andante from Piano Concerto no. 2 (2nd mvt.)
Waltz from Jazz Suite no. 2

Music composed by Dmitry Shostakovich is used by permission of G. Schirmer Inc.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Andrew Bennett, Gary Corrin, Loïs Fallis, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Beverly D. MacKern
Produced by the Canadian Stage Company (CanStage), Glynnis Henderson Productions Ltd., and The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts.

Martin Beagg, Artistic Producer • Chip Valls, Chair

CanStage acknowledges the generous support of our Canadian government funders:
Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage through the Trade Routes Program, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Commercial Theatre Development Fund, and the Toronto Arts Council

This project was undertaken with the support of Foreign Affairs Canada/la Trappes des Affaires étrangères du Canada, the support of the Government of Ontario through the Commercial Theatre Development Fund. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Trade Routes Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage for this project.

CanStage gratefully acknowledges Canadian Actors’ Equity Association and The Grouwen company for their generous support of the development of The Grouwen international tour. CanStage is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors’ Equity Association.

The Grouwen was originally produced by The Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company in association with Studio 54/Langley College and by special arrangement with Canadian Actors’ Equity Association.

This production at A.C.T. is made possible in part by

A.C.T. PRODUCERS
J. Sanford Miller

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OPENING NIGHT SPONSOR

8 American Conservatory Theater
The Overcoat

by Composer Dmitri Shostakovich

Waltz from Jazz Suite no. 1
Allegretto from Piano Concerto no. 1 (1st mv.)
Lento from Piano Concerto no. 1 (2nd mv.)
Allegro con brio from Piano Concerto no. 1 (4th mv.)
Lyric Waltz from Jazz Suite no. 2
Allegro from Piano Concerto no. 2 (3rd mv.)
Dance from Jazz Suite no. 2
Waltz from Baller Suite no. 3
Romance from Baller Suite no. 1
Waltz from Baller Suite no. 2
Allegro from Piano Concerto no. 2 (1st mv.)
Waltz from Baller Suite no. 1 (1st mv.)
Romance from Baller Suite no. 2
Allegretto from Symphony for Strings, op. 11a
Allegro from Symphony no. 30
Andante from Piano Concerto no. 2 (2nd mv.)
Waltz from Jazz Suite no. 2

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Martin Braga, Artistic Producer + Chip Vailis, Chair

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This production at A.C.T. is made possible in part by

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J. Sanford Miller

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8 American Conservatory Theater
A PLAY BEYOND WORDS
Interviews with the Creators of The Overcoat

BY JESSICA WERNER

Morris Panych has never been a fan of naturalism onstage—of theatrical attempts to create a perfectly controlled illusion of reality—preferring instead to approach dramatic storytelling with a reverence for live theater's unique abilities to engage and challenge our senses and imaginations. Throughout his more than 20 years as a playwright and director (following a successful stretch as an actor), Panych—easily the most prolific Canadian theater artist of his generation—has created an invigorating and thoroughly adventurous body of work. Described by the Shaw Festival as "the golden bad boy of Vancouver theater for whom nothing theatrical has ever been sacred," Panych has developed since the 1990s an increasingly recognizable aesthetic, as well as a higher international profile, with 18 of his own plays produced across Canada, the United States, and Britain. Many of his original works, like The Overcoat—co-created with Wendy Gorling—are rich in allusion, blur the borders between artistic genres, and are wickedly playful expressions of Panych's enthusiasm for what he calls "the grotesquely wonderful and tellingly fantastic" aspects of human dynamics. "I like surrealism and hypernaturalism onstage," says Panych, "with music and humor and larger-than-life details. I think I am good at taking people outside the reality of the world they live in."

In The Overcoat, Panych and Gorling, a fellow Vancouver actor and mime specialist, have brought to life what many critics and audiences have hailed as both Panych's most theatrically adventurous vision to date, as well as the impressive culmination of this creative duo's pioneering efforts in wordless theater. Together, Gorling and Panych have explored in four successive projects the concept of telling a story theatrically without the use of spoken language—using choreographed movement and music, rather than text. Their first such collaboration was in 1989, when Panych was commissioned to write a new play by Studio 58, the acting school at Vancouver's Langara College. Gorling, the school's mask and mime teacher, joined the project, and together they created their first movement-based production. Nowhere, a physical exploration of the ways people move, and behave, after dark, set to Chopin's music. The show was a great success, and the school then commissioned three more Panych/Gorling ventures: Scenes from a Courtyard, a (wordless) courtroom drama set to the music of Frederic Poulenc; followed by The Company, about workers in a small-town box factory, set to Prokofiev's piano concertos, and closest in style and theme to their next endeavor, The Overcoat, an inventive adaptation of Nikolai Gogol's 1842 short story of the same name, set to Shostakovich's music.

Panych and Gorling have joyfully wreaked havoc with theatrical conventions yet again, creating in The Overcoat an expressionistic, poetic nightmare of one man's yearning for acceptance. As in Gogol's masterful satire, The Overcoat exposes a lonely clerk's foil ed attempt to overcome the restraints of a crushing bureaucracy and his own lonely status with the purchase of a beautifully tailored new overcoat. Without relying on words, Peter Anderson—who plays the central character [The Man] in The Overcoat—vividly expresses Panych's abiding artistic preoccupation with the absurd, even ridiculous, aspects of our shared struggles and imperfections. "Words are wonderful, but, paradoxically, they can be used to cover up and intellectualize things," says Anderson. "Wordlessness can be universal, and can force you to find the most basic emotions."

The Overcoat premiered in Vancouver in 1997 with a cast of 12 students and 10 professional actors, many of whom (including Anderson) have remained with the show as it has since played to audiences across Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and now the United States. Morris Panych and Wendy Gorling spoke with us this summer, as they prepared to mount The Overcoat in San Francisco to open A.C.T.'s 2005-06 season.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MORRIS PANCHY

JESSICA WERNER: NOCTURNE, IN 1989, WAS YOUR FIRST COLLABORATION WITH WENDY GORLING ON A PROJECT WITHOUT SPOKEN LANGUAGE. WHAT INTERESTED YOU IN EXPLORING THEATER WITHOUT WORDS?

MORRIS PANCHY: IT was actually a kind of fortuitous accident. I had agreed to do a project with the [acting] students at Langara College and I had intended to write a play. But the deadline sort of came and went and I still didn't have anything, really, so I made up this idea that I would just do a movement piece to music. Finally I hit on this idea that I would do a [wordless] piece with them in which we would do some cohesive and really clear storytelling with just their bodies, to music. Wendy happened to be working at the school, and she's great with movement and she's a great resource. It was a terrific partnership from the beginning.

YOU'VE SPoken BEFORE IN INTERVIEWS ABOUT THE LIMITATIONS OF WORDS THEMSELVES, AND THAT'S AN INTRIGUING CONTRADICTION COMING FROM A WRITER. BEFORE EMBARRASING THESE MOVEMENT PIECES, WERE YOU ALREADY FEELING LIKE YOU WANTED TO PUSH BEYOND TEXT-BASED PLAYS?

Not just that, but I also already had plays in which some characters don't speak. I have one play [Fleig] in which one character doesn't speak for the entire play. So I was already interested in this notion that one could be on a stage and not say anything. The Overcoat was a little bit different. This was truly an experiment. I was reading Gogol and listening to Shostakovich a lot. I had just finished cutting up his music for another show I'd done, and I was completely crazy about his work. So when it came to putting the piece together, I found that I really wanted to work with Shostakovich music. But this wasn't anything I ever seriously considered would be a legitimate theatrical thing. From the onset, I thought of it as something new I was just exploring with the students. But it became so popular, and so interesting and intriguing to watch, that we just fell deeper into it and finally we weren't experimenting anymore. It had become something that actually worked.

IS THE TRAINING AT STUDIO 58 [THE THEATER SCHOOL AT LANGARA COLLEGE] PARTICULARLY MOVEMENT BASED, OR IS IT JUST PART OF THE CURRICULUM AS IT IS IN A.C.T.'S MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM?

It's just part of the program. I think I was lucky that [the school] had the vision, or the wherewithal, to let us pursue these [wordless plays] with the students and not insist that I use text. That would have compromised the idea completely. Even when we were working on The Overcoat, we still had people in the company say, "Can't we use a few words?" And we'd say, "No, that's not part of the exercise." I mean, of course you could use words, but then the whole thing would become silly. It would have taken away from the meaning of the project, and the audience would think, Why only a few words?

I SUPPOSE THAT WOULD BE LIKE ADDING SOUND TO A SILENT FILM.

Yes, exactly. To me, where silent film fails is when they put all that stuff at the bottom, the spoken words, and then you think, Well, I'd like to figure that out for myself. Part of the fun of watching [The Overcoat] should be that you're making up the dialogue in your head. It's like when you're reading a novel and you make up the look of a place or the sound of people's voices. It's part of what makes it so personal to you, because it's like a dream.

DO YOU THINK IT ASKS AN AUDIENCE TO ENGAGE IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WAY?

In a very different way. I've noticed them leaning forward and really paying attention in a very engaged way. You can't sit back and close your eyes, as you could in some plays.

PHOTO OF PETER ANDERSON BY DAVID COOPER
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In a very different way. I've noticed them leaning forward and really paying attention in a very engaged way. You can't sit back and close your eyes, as you could in some plays.
I'M CURIOUS ABOUT SOMETHING IN YOUR DIRECTOR'S NOTE: “WORKING WITH AN EXISTING TEXT MADE IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME A LITTLE EASIER.”

Normally with these things—if you can say “normally” since Wendy and I have only done three other projects like this together—the idea was that I wanted to take a piece of music and pull out of it a story, and pull out of it action. I wanted to find a sort of my way to say the music and create a physical score that was a story that could be followed. And having entirely to do with the music, so you would be responding to the music in a way that you would if you were dancing. That was a difficult thing to do, but in the end whatever we created came completely and fully out of that music. And the Shostakovich music wasn’t written to underscore anything, so we had to allow ourselves some interpretive quality to the pieces that we did—for instance, if there was a dream sequence, or if something would happen that wasn’t necessarily part of the narrative, but more a kind of thematic element.

WHAT WAS IT ABOUT GOGOL, OR ABOUT THIS STORY IN PARTICULAR, THAT ATTRACTED YOU—as a reader, and also AS A DIRECTOR?

Its absurd nature. This is wonderful material, and it has my favorite combination of pathos and humor. And there is a sad, clownlike figure at the center of it, which is something I love. And a lot of really dark ideas. I love Gogol’s writing because it is uncompromisingly bleak—and funny. Gogol skewers reality, but highlights something very uncompromising about the twisted nature of life itself. And yet it all seems so true and so human. At the center of it there is this tragic-comic figure. He’s pensive and silly and pathetic. And we had this natural fit with the actor Peter Anderson, whom I had known from the [Vancouver theater] community and directed in several plays. Peter is one of my favorite actors, and I knew about his physical background, and I knew from the beginning that he’d be the perfect Man.

GOGOL’S STORY ISN’T NATURALISTIC, YET THE BASIC CHARACTER IS A VERY ORDINARY, VERY REAL GUY, IN A HUMAN DILEMMA THAT FEELS ALTOGETHER REAL.

That’s why we liked the idea of doing this particular story so much. It fits in with a pattern of almost circular unnaturalness. One of the hardest things we had to do, looking back, was auditioning, because we didn’t even know what we were looking for. From the very beginning, with this show, you had to be a believer. The first time we rehearsed this play, when we were just creating it, we had a lot of days when people would just sort of keep their heads down and say, “I don’t think the show’s going to work.” To which the response was, “Well, actually, you’re just going to have more faith than that.” As with a Robert Wilson piece, if you get hung up on thinking, it’s so slow, well, then you’ve lost the point of it. And with this, if you go in thinking, They don’t speak, well, that’s exactly what it is, so if you’re not going to get your head around that, no amount of dazzleography is going to change your mind. And there isn’t really any dazzleography. I think what’s dazzling about it is the sweeping nature of the storytelling, and the way that it moves. It just goes. It’s like a machine itself.

AN INTERVIEW WITH WENDY GORLING

JESSICA WERNER: DO YOU THINK OF THIS PIECE AS A PLAY?

WENDY GORLING: Oh, yes. It’s a play without words. Or, more importantly, it’s a play beyond words. If you think of heightened experiences in your life, sometimes words don’t really capture them, but the movement and the breath and the visual are all that is necessary.

How do you think that eliminating spoken dialogue from the storytelling process affects the actors and the audience?

I think it encourages them both, because they have to go inside the actor’s story much more, and it also means the audience can’t look away from the stage. And, because we have added haunting music and been very specific about which piece of music goes with a particular part of the play, the music is really the third author. Shostakovich’s music is very adept at telling stories, and there are many different layers within the orchestration. We built the play, moment by moment, with the music. So we have built in literally when the lead, Peter Anderson, breathes in and when he breathes out. Or I could say in another way, the music has told us when he breathes in. The music breathes in and out.

What is it like to work from the music first, which is quite different from the conventional process of adding, later in the process, a musical score to a theater production?

It’s a wonderful challenge. All of this started by us taking on the challenge: Let’s do a play without words. Once we had the basic scenario of our adaptation of the short story “The Overcoat,” we sat down in Morris’s kitchen and listened to all our Shostakovich cues. We listened to the Piano Concerto no. 1 with a solo trumpet, and we thought, Ah, the vastness of this music is perfect for the office. Then, we listened to slower music and found that the Jazz Suite no. 1 was perfect for an introduction. That’s when Shostakovich became part of the playwriting team. The music offered us the nuances of the plot.

Peter Anderson has said that, “The impulsive to communicate comes before words.” I imagine you’re also intrigued by this idea of us being human before text and language is overlaid on us.

I think movement is the language of the soul, because it comes from an impulse deep inside, underneath any conscious process of figuring out what is the best word? What is the best adjective to describe this? It’s done impulsively in movement. If I’m at the hospital waiting to find out whether my husband has pulled through a heart operation, I look at the doctor as he’s coming down the corridor, and I look for his movement, for his breath, for physical indicators of his emotional state. And I’m willing to bet I would know the answer before he could say anything because he would move at a different pace if he were coming to tell me that my husband was OK, or that he was in a coma or that he’d died.

Are there any specific influences on your work, or on this piece specifically?

Morris and I really influenced each other. We both love larger-than-life reality onstage. We like finding the physicality of theater, as opposed to having people sit in chairs and argue and contemplate and philosophize. And my training at [l’École Jacques Lecoq] in Paris—I have to use that four-letter word, but I’m at a loss to—yes, it’s much more influenced by mime from the ’60s and ’70s, like Marcel Marceau. It’s instead the physical theater of many styles of theater in our history. My vision of mime is basically anything that imitates life, so my own studies have included mask work, commedia dell’arte, pantomime, clowning, all of which use the body to tell a dramatic story, instead of relying on the voice. For [The Overcoat], we acknowledged the shared interest we had with silent films in the fact that words aren’t always necessary. It’s not that we’re trying to create a whole new language of theater. It’s that we felt words were not needed for an audience to understand exactly what was going on. We always made sure that the story was clear.

One thing people like to say about work like this, without spoken language, is how accessible it is to international audiences, since there’s no need for translation.

Not only is there no language barrier, but this piece is all about human emotion and themes that can be universally understood.

It’s about someone trying to do the best he can, someone ridiculed by other people, who is then given hope that he could finally be accepted, and then his world is tragically obliterated. No matter what nationality you are, or what culture you are in, you understand the human condition. We have all been Peter. And if all of a sudden we’re accepted, we’ve had a good night, a good hair day, whatever, magnificent or trite, whatever it is, we’ve all experienced that too. Peter is in everyone’s character; Peter is playing us.

Photograph by David Cooper

THE MUSIC MOVES THE STORY, AND THE STILLNESS FINDS THE HEART.”

—Wendy Gorling

MORRIS PANICH ON CREATING THE OVERCOAT

This is the fourth movement piece that Wendys and I have choreographed together. What began as a student exercise to find dramatic expression in the body has continued to develop into this theatrical hybrid. Once the main idea is set, we allow, as much as possible, for the music to tell us the direction the story will take. In the past, we have worked without a set story, but here, working with an existing text made it much more difficult, while at the same time, a little easier. With The Overcoat, I was inspired by the Gogol story, which I happened to be reading at the time of the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre commission. The tale is packed with dramatic potential as well as great visual and stylistic possibilities.

The choice of music was easy, and aside from my familiarity with, and love of, Shostakovich, obvious. First, the dramatic, tragic character of the music really fits, but more importantly, the many layers of the orchestration allow for lots of movement interpretation, and there is generally a good strong beat, which means the actors can count it.

Wendy and I enjoy collaborating together because I like the large choreographic patterns and Wendy loves detail. We cross back and forth together quite freely, while trying to allow the actors full participation in the process. In this regard, Peter Anderson and Colin Heath, particularly, have contributed a great deal to the piece, detailing much of their own movement.

We are thrilled at the opportunity to tour this week and showcase the considerable talents of Canadian designers and actors internationally.

"THE MUSIC MOVES THE STORY, AND THE STILLNESS FINDS THE HEART.”

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I'm curious about something in your director's note: "Working with an existing text made it much more difficult, while at the same time a little easier." Normally with these things—if you can say "normally"—since Wendy and I have only done three other projects like this together—the idea was that I wanted to take a piece of music and pull out of it a story, and pull out of it action. I wanted to find a place to use it, a way to say the music and create a physical score that was a story that could be followed. And having entirely to do with the music, so you would be responding to the music in a way that you would if you were dancing. That was a difficult thing to do, but in the end whatever we created came completely and fully out of that music. And the Shostakovich music wasn't written to underscore anything, so we had to allow ourselves some interpretive quality to the pieces that we did—for instance, if there was a dream sequence, or if something would happen that wasn't necessarily part of the narrative, but more of a kind of thematic element.

What was it about Gogol, or about this story in particular, that attracted you—as a reader, and also as a director? Its absurd nature. This is wonderful material, and it has my favorite combination of pathos and humor. And there is a sad, clownlike figure at the center of it, which is something I love. And a lot of really dark ideas. I love Gogol's writing because it is uncompromisingly bleak—and funny. Gogol skewers reality, but highlights something very uncompromising about the twisted nature of life itself. And yet it all seems so true and so human. At the center of it there is this tragic-comic figure. He's pompous and silly and pathetic. And we had this natural fit with the actor Peter Anderson, whom I had known from the [Vancouver theatre] community and directed in several plays. Peter is one of my favorite actors, and I knew about his physical background, and I knew from the beginning that he'd be the perfect Man.

Gogol's story isn't naturalistic, yet the central character is a very ordinary, very real guy, in a human dilemma that feels altogether real. That's why we liked the idea of doing this particular story so much. It fits in with a pattern of almost circumspect unnaturalism. One of the hardest things we had to do, looking back, was auditioning, because we didn't even know what we were looking for. From the very beginning, with this show, you had to be a believer. The first time we rehearsed this play, when we were just creating it, we had a lot of days when people would just sorta stare at their heads and say, "I don't quite get it." To which the response was, "Well, actually, you're just going to have to have more faith than that." As with a Robert Wilson piece, if you get hung up on thinking, it's so slow, well, then you've lost the point of it. And with this, if you go in thinking, They don't speak, well, that's exactly what it is, so if you're not going to get your head around that, no amount of dazzling choreography is going to change your mind. And there isn't really any dazzling choreography. I think what's dazzling about it is the twisting nature of the storytelling, and the way that it moves. It just goes. It's like a machine itself.

An Interview with Wendy Gorling

Jessica Werner: Do you think of this piece as a play? Wendy Gorling: Oh, yes. It's a play without words. Or, more importantly, it's a play beyond words. If you think of heightened experiences in your life, sometimes words don't really capture them, but the movement and the breath and the visual are all that is necessary.

How do you think that eliminating spoken dialogue from the storytelling process affects the actors and the audience? I think it encourages them both, because they have to go inside the actor's story much more, and it also means the audience can't look away from the stage. And, because we have added a haunting music and been very specific about which piece of music goes with a particular part of the play, the music is really the third author. Shostakovich's music is very adept at telling stories, and there are many different layers within the orchestration. We built the play, moment by moment, with the music. So we have built in literally when the lead, Peter Anderson, breathes in and when he breathes out. Or I could say in another way, the music has told us when he breathes in. The music breathes in and breathes out.

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Peter Anderson has said that, "The Impulse to Communicate Comes Before Words," I imagine you're also intrigued by this idea of us being human before text and language is overlaid on us. I think movement is the language of the soul, because it comes from an impulse deep inside, underneath any conscious process of figuring out, What is the best word? What is the best adjective to describe this? It's done impulsively [in movement]. If I'm at the hospital waiting to find out whether my husband has pulled through a heart operation, I look at the doctor as he's coming down the corridor, and I look for his movement, for his breath, for physical indicators of his emotional state. And I'm willing to bet I would know the answer before he could say anything because he would move at a different pace if he were coming to tell me that my husband was OK, or that he was in a coma or that he'd died.

Are there any specific influences on your work, or on this piece specifically? Morris and I really influenced each other. We both love other-than-life reality onstage. We like finding the physicality of theater, as opposed to having people sit in chairs and argue and contemplate and philosophize. And my training [at l'Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris] taught me to use that fourth element, but I'm sure I have—they're as mine. But it's not the North American version of mimes from the '60s and '70s, like Marcel Marceau. It's instead the physical theater of many styles of theater in our history. My vision of mime is basically anything that imitates life, so my own studies have included mask work, commedia dell'arte, pantomime, clowning, all of which use the body to tell a dramatic story, instead of relying on the voice. For [The Overcoat], we acknowledged the shared interest we had with silent films in the fact that words aren't always necessary. It's not that we're trying to create a whole new language of theater. It's that we felt words were not needed for an audience to understand exactly what was going on. We always made sure that the story was clear.

One thing people like to say about work like this, without spoken language, is how accessible it is to international audiences, since there's no need for translation. Not only is there no language barrier, but this piece is all about human emotion and themes that can be universally understood. It's about someone trying to do the best he can, someone ridiculed by other people, who is then given hope that he could be finally accepted, and then his world is tragically obliterated. No matter what nationality you are, or what culture you are in, you understand the human condition. We all have little Peters in us. And if all of a sudden we're accepted, we've had a good night, a good hair day, whatever, magnificent or trite, whatever it is, we've all experienced that too. Peter is in everyone's character; Peter is playing us.
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF NIKOLAI GOGOL

Russian novelist, dramatist, and satirist Nikolai Gogol
Gogol revolutionized the Russian literary tradition,
establishing the prose form as an artistic medium on par
with poetry. A master of colorful characterization and
captivation of the little man, Gogol influenced with his"realism of indiction"
generations of Russian writers, including Fyodor Dostoevsky,
who is credited with saying, "We have all come out from under Gogol's "Overcoat.""
Born April 1, 1809, in the Mirgorod district of Ukraine,
Gogol spent his childhood on his parents' modest country estate.
His father was an educated man and a writer of plays and poems in Ukrainian.
Educated at a boarding school, Gogol moved to St. Petersburg in 1828,
hoping to enter the civil service. He held positions in various government
ministries and even tried his hand at acting. At his own expense, he published
a poem he had written in school, "Here, Kiebelgarten; he was so embarrassed by its
disastrous failure, however, that he bought back all the copies and burned
them and considered emigrating to the United States.
Instead Gogol fled to Germany.
He went out of money he returned to St. Petersburg, where he took a poorly
paid government post. He continued to pursue his writing career, this time
finding greater success publishing short stories
replete with the folk and folklore of Ukraine. "Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka," published in two volumes in 1831 and
1832, was a breakthrough work, demonstrating Gogol's skill at
mixing the fantastic and the macabre while distilling something
essential about the Russian character. He became famous
overnight, admired by such members of the Russian literary elite as
Alessandr Pushkin, Vasily Zhukovsky, Sergey Akakovsky, and
Vissarion Belinsky.
Gogol briefly took a post teaching history at the university in
St. Petersburg, but left the position in 1834 to become a full-time writer.
In 1835, he published two new books, "Mirgorod," four stories
based on provincial Ukrainian life, and "Arabesques," Petersburg essays
and stories, including "Nevsky Prospect" and "The Diary of a
Madman." In 1836 he published a satirical story ("The Coach") in
Pushkin's periodical The Contemporary, which featured Gogol's story
"The Nose" in its third issue. In April 1836 his play "The Inspector
General," a satirical comedy that dramatizes the tale of a young civil
servant who finds himself stranded in a small town and mistaken
for an influential government inspector, was produced by special
order of Czar Nicholas I.
Despite the work's success, the reactionary press and
officialdom condemned the play for its indictment of the corrupt
Russian bureaucracy. Gogol again fled to Europe, exiting himself
from his home and complaining that his work was universally
misunderstood. After traveling through much of western Europe,
he settled in Rome, where he wrote most of his major work,
"Dead Souls." The comic novel, a striking illustration of Russian society
and human vices, charts the progress of a
smooth-talking newcomer as he inserts
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Throughout the 1840s, Gogol became more and more
conservative in his outlook, experiencing a religious
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"Dead Souls" and a four-volume edition of
collected writings, in which previously
unpublished stories, including "The
Overcoat," appeared. "Dead Souls" was
hailed by democratic intellectuals as
a masterpiece permeated with the spirit
of their own liberal aspirations, and,
after Pushkin's death, Gogol became
the leading figure of Russian literature. Believing his God-given
writing talent obligated him to dedicate his life to revealing
Russia the righteous way of living in an evil world, Gogol decided
to continue "Dead Souls" as a "Divine Comedy"-like trilogy.
Gogol remained abroad almost continuously for 12 years,
returning to Russia in 1849, two years after publishing Selected
Passages from Correspondence with Friends. Radicals who had
viewed Gogol's work as shining examples of social criticism were
depressed by this last book, in which he eulogized the autocratic czarist regime,
the conservative official church, and the
patriarchal Russian way of life.
In his later life, Gogol came under the influence of a fanatical
priest who convinced him that his fictional writings were un holy
and sinful. Gogol thereupon burned several of his unpublished
manuscripts, including the remaining parts of "Dead Souls," just ten
days before his death on March 4, 1848.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Dmitri Shostakovich, a Russian of the Soviet period,
was a major presence in twentieth-century music history as a
composer and as a chamber music performer. His music has
influenced composers and chamber music ensembles around the world,
and his work has been recognized with numerous awards and honors.
Shostakovich was born in 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia, to
an affluent and cultured musical family. His father worked for a
chemist, and his mother introduced him to the piano at the age of
nine. Young Dmitri excelled quickly in his music. He
continued his studies from 1922 to his graduation in 1925 at the St. Petersburg
Conservatory, where he became a skilled pianist and composer.
His first major musical achievement, the First Symphony, was
written as his graduation piece.
Shostakovich performed as a concert pianist for several years.
Finding greater success in writing music, however, he began
to limit performances primarily to his own works, and soon
concentrated exclusively on composition. He developed a eclectic
style that was rooted in tonality, yet incorporated abrasive and
avant-garde tendencies. In the years following his graduation, he
continued his cycle of symphonies and wrote his first opera, "The
Nurse," based on a short story by Gogol, which garnered generally
poor reviews. In addition, he scored several silent films and
composed for the ballet.
First performed in 1934, his opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk
District" was immediately successful. In 1936, however,
Shostakovich suffered political censorship in an attack
on "Lady Macbeth," rumored to have been instigated by
Stalin. In an infamous article in "Prosva" entitled "Chaos
Instead of Music," the opera was denounced for both
tone and content, putting the young composer's career on
hold.
That same year, he set aside his Fourth Symphony,
fearing it would spur further criticism. Shostakovich
instead began work on his Fifth Symphony (1937),
which was considered more conventional and accessible
in form and tunefulness. The Fifth Symphony was
received favorably by the Russian state, as well as by
his international admirers, that Shostakovich turned
from composing for the theater, ballet, and opera to
concentrate on symphonies, concertos, and quartets.
From 1938 to 1955, Shostakovich devoted himself to
symphonic music and began his vast cycle of string
quartets. The "Leningrad Symphony" (his Symphony
7), which he began in 1941 in St. Petersburg at the outbreak
of the war with Germany, was adopted as a symbol of Russian
resistance. In 1943, the Russian government evacuated his family
to Moscow, where he was appointed professor of composition at the
conservatory. In 1948 he was denounced by the state yet again
for composing a Ninth Symphony considered frivolous by the
official musical establishment. Most of his works were banned,
he was forced to repeat publicly, and he lost his position at the
conservatory. He took to writing little other than patriotic cantatas,
private music (mainly his outstanding preludes and fugues for
piano), and film scores.
The death of Stalin in 1953 opened the Russian music world
to a less rigid aesthetic. Shostakovich again began composing
symphonies and quartets and joined the Communist Party in 1960.
Later in life, his work reflected the darkness and introspection of ill
health and old age. He died of lung cancer on August 9, 1975.
Although he outwardly appeared to conform to official policy,
passionately released information suggests that Shostakovich may
have in fact been critical of Stalinist dictates, particularly
with regard to music and the arts. The debate continues over
many of his most popular works, including the Fifth and Tenth
symphonies, as to whether their dissonant quotations and motifs
are meant to be interpreted as coded antigovernment messages.
Many scholars argue that the significance of Shostakovich is to
be found in his music, rather than in his life and opinions, and
that to seek political messages in the music detracts from,
rather than enhances, its artistic value.
A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF NIKOLAI GOGOL

Russian novelist, dramatist, and satirist Nikolai Gogol revolutionized the Russian literary tradition, establishing the prose form as an artistic medium on par with poetry. A master of colorful characterization and champion of the little man, Gogol influenced with his "realism of indictment" generations of Russian writers, including Fyodor Dostoevsky, who is credited with saying, "We have all come out from under Gogol's Overcoat.

Born April 1, 1809, in the Mirgorod district of Ukraine, Gogol spent his childhood on his parents' modest county estate. His father was an educated man and a writer of plays and poems in Ukrainian. Educated at a boarding school, Gogol moved to St. Petersburg in 1828, hoping to enter the civil service. He held positions in various government ministries and even tried his hand at acting. At his own expense, he published a poem he had written in school. However, his Overcoat; he was so embarrassed by his disastrous failure, however, that he bought back all the copies and burned them and considered emigrating to the United States.

Instead Gogol fled to Germany. After he ran out of money he returned to St. Petersburg, where he took a poorly paid government post. He continued to pursue his writing career, this time finding greater success publishing short stories replete with the folk and folklore of Ukraine. Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka, published in two volumes in 1831 and 1832, was a breakthrough work, demonstrating Gogol's skill at mixing the fantastic and the macabre while distilling something essential about the Russian character. He became famous overnight, admired by such members of the Russian literary elite as Aleksandr Pushkin, Vasily Zhukovsky, Sergey Akakiev, and Vinograd Belinsky.

Gogol briefly took a post teaching history at the university in St. Petersburg, but left the position in 1834 to become a full-time writer. In 1835, he published two new books, Mirgorod, four stories based on provincial Ukrainian life, and Arzamas, Petersburg essays and stories, including "Nevsky Prospect" and "The Diary of a Madman." In 1836 he published a satirical story ("The Coach") in Pushkin's periodical The Contemporary, which featured Gogol's story "The Nose" in its third issue. In April 1836 his play The Inspector General, a satirical comedy that dramatizes the tale of a young civil servant who finds himself stranded in a small town and mistaken for an influential government inspector, was produced by special order of Czar Nicholas I.

Despite the censors' endorsement, the reactionary press and officialdom condemned the play for its indictment of the corrupt Russian bureaucracy. Gogol again fled to Europe, exiling himself from his home and complaining that his work was universally misunderstood. After traveling through much of western Europe, he settled in Rome, where he wrote most of his major work, Dead Souls. The comic novel, a striking illustration of Russian society and human vices, charts the progress of a smooth-talking newcomer as he inserts himself into a small Russian town, intent on purchasing the souls of the recently departed.

Throughout the 1840s, Gogol became more and more conservative in his outlook, experiencing a religious awakening that drew him further into Orthodox theology. In 1842 he published Dead Souls and a four-volume edition of collected writings, in which previously unpublished stories, including "The Overcoat," appeared. Dead Souls was hailed by democratic intellectuals as a masterpiece permeated with the spirit of their own liberal aspirations, and, after Pushkin's death, Gogol became the leading figure of Russian literature. Believing his God-given writing talent obligated him to dedicate his life to revealing Russia the righteous way of living in an evil world, Gogol decided to continue Dead Souls as a Divine Comedy-like trilogy.

Gogol remained abroad almost continuously for 12 years, returning to Russia in 1849, two years after publishing Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends. Radicals who had viewed Gogol's work as shining examples of social criticism were deeply disappointed by this last book, in which he eulogized the autocratic czarist regime, the conservative official church, and the patriarchal Russian way of life.

In his later life, Gogol came under the influence of a fanatical priest who convinced him that his fictional writings were un holy and sinful. Gogol thereafter burned several of his unpublished manuscripts, including the remaining parts of Dead Souls, just ten days before his death on March 4, 1852.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Dmitri Shostakovich, a Russian of the Soviet period, maintained a significant position in 20th-century music history as a symphonist and as a composer of chamber music. His writing style was sometimes spare in texture but always accessible, couched in an extension of traditional tonal musical language. His success varied with the political climate in Russia, and, since his death in 1975, his works and his life have been the subject of much political and musical controversy.

Shostakovich was born in 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia, to an affluent and cultured musical family. His father worked for a chemist, and his mother introduced him to the piano at the age of nine. Young Dmitri excelled quickly in his music. He continued his studies from 1922 to his graduation in 1925 at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he became a skilled pianist and composer. His first major musical achievement, the First Symphony, was written as his graduation piece.

Shostakovich performed as a concert pianist for several years. Finding greater success in writing music, however, he began to limit performances primarily to his own works, and soon concentrated exclusively on composition. He developed an eclectic style that was rooted in tonality, yet incorporated abrasive and avant-garde tendencies. In the years following his graduation, he continued his cycle of symphonies and wrote his first opera, The Nose, based on a short story by Gogol, which garnered generally poor reviews. In addition, he scored several silent films and composed for the ballet.

First performed in 1934, his opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District was immediately successful. In 1936, however, Shostakovich suffered political censorship in an attack on Lady Macbeth, rumored to have been instigated by Stalin. In an infamous article in Pravda entitled "Chaos Instead of Music," the opera was denounced for both style and content, putting the young composer's career on hold.

That same year, he set aside his Fourth Symphony, fearing it would spur further criticism. Shostakovich instead began work on his Fifth Symphony (1937), which was considered more conventional and accessible in form and tunefulness. The Fifth Symphony was received so favorably by the Russian state, as well as by his international admirers, that Shostakovich turned from composing for the theater, ballet, and opera to concentrate on symphonies, concertos, and quartets. From 1938 to 1955, Shostakovich devoted himself to symphonic music and began his vast cycle of string quartets. The Leningrad Symphony (his Symphony no. 7), which he began in 1941 in St. Petersburg at the outbreak of the war with Germany, was adopted as a symbol of Russian resistance. In 1943, the Russian government evacuated his family to Moscow, where he was appointed professor of composition at the conservatory. In 1948 he was denounced by the state yet again for composing a Ninth Symphony considered frivolous by the official musical establishment. Most of his works were banned; he was forced to repeat publicly, and he lost his position at the conservatory. He took to writing little other than patriotic cantatas, private music (mainly his outstanding preludes and fugues for piano), and film scores.

The death of Stalin in 1953 opened the Russian music world to a less rigid aesthetic. Shostakovich again began composing symphonies and quartets and joined the Communist Party in 1960. Later in life, his work reflected the darkness and introspection of ill health and old age. He died of lung cancer on August 9, 1975.

Although he outwardly appeared to conform to official policy, posthumously released information suggests that Shostakovich may have in fact been critical of Stalin's dictates, particularly with regard to music and the arts. The debate continues over many of his most popular works, including the Fifth and Tenth symphonies, as to whether their dissonant quotations and motifs are meant to be interpreted as coded antigovernment messages. Many scholars argue that the significance of Shostakovich is to be found in his music, rather than in his life and opinions, and that to seek political messages in the music detracts from, rather than enhances, its artistic value.
CAST

PETER ANDERSON
(Than Man) originated the role of the Man in The Overcoat. He has received six Jessie Awards for his work as an actor and playwright in Vancouver, as well as Leo & Gemini nominations for his role in the film version of The Overcoat. He is the author of more than a dozen plays for the Caravan Farm Theatre, including The Crypto, which toured to San Francisco in 1985, and cocreator of The Number 14 (Arts Theatre), Flying Blind (Arts Club/Arts Legs on the Wall), and Bonus (with Jeff Rat). Recent acting credits include Bonus (Leaky Heaven Circus) and The Dresser Boy (Western Canada Theatre). His next appearance will be in Waiting for Godot at Western Canada Theatre. Television and film credits include "Leaving Normal," "The X-Files," and "Da Vinci's Inquest." Anderson is a graduate of the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre and the University of Michigan.

MANON BEAUDOUIN
(Landlady's Old Mom, Tailor's Assistant, Innate, Office Worker) has performed in the national tour and the film version of The Overcoat. She is a co-creator of and performer in Cirque Poule (Victoria, Vancouver, Paris), as well as a core member of the Leaky Heaven Circus, for which she was nominated for two Jessie Awards. She is a co-creator of the Australian/Canadian coproduction of Flying Blind (Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Australia) and has performed in Crazy Boy, The Man from the Capital, and A Night in the Woods (Caravan Farm Theatre). Other credits include A Midsummer Night's Dream (Bard in the Vineyard) and, most recently, Bonus (the Leaky Heaven Circus) in Vancouver with her husband, Colin Heath. Her first play, The Bloody Clean Up or The Lamentable Tale of Marie-Antoinette, opens at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in March 2006.

VICTORIA ADILMAN
(Office Worker, Where, Fabric Worker) has performed in theaters across Canada, including two seasons with the Stratford Festival, The Grand Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Persephone Theatre, CanStage, and Alberta Theatre Projects, as well as at City Centre in New York City. Selected film and television credits include "Kevin Hill," "Connecting Flights," "Missing," "This Is Wonderland," "Train 48," "Blue Murder," "Prom Queen," "Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye," and "Puppets Who Kill." Adilman is a graduate of Toronto's George Brown Theatre School.

MATT BOIS
(Putting, Sausage Shop Runner, Office Boy) was most recently seen in The Georgian Theatre production of That Summer. He also toured Canada and Alaska in the title role of Danny, King of the Basement (Roseneath Theatre). Favorite roles include Colm in The Secret Garden (Theatre New Brunswick), Flute/Thibie in A Midsummer Night's Dream (CanStage), Lauret in Hamlet and Longville in Love's Labor's Lost (Driftwood Theatre), Jimmy in The Rainmaker (Drayton Entertainment), and the title role in Aladdin (Waterloo Stage). Upcoming: U.S. tour of Danny, King of the Basement. Bois is a graduate of the University of Windsor Acting program.

MARK CHRISTMANN
(Tailor, Bartender, Doctor) last appeared at CanStage as the Unicorn in Not Wanted on the Voyage (workshop). For CanStage he also choreographed The Tempest (Dream in High Park) and Tahu for young audiences. He has won two Dora Awards for outstanding direction of The Erotic Arrows of Old Glory and for outstanding performance in The Maribb Sexsuit Project. Christmann is a graduate of l'École Jacques Lecocq in Paris.

JUDI CLOSKY
(News Girl) has performed in numerous theaters across Canada, as well as on film, television, and radio. She has received two Jessie Awards for her work as an actor in Vancouver. Closky is an original cast member of The Overcoat and a graduate of Vancouver's Studio 58 Theatre School.

DIANA COATSWORTH
(Office Worker, Where, Fabric Worker, Nurse, Boss' Wife) includes among her selected credits four...
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VICTORIA ADILMAN (Office Worker, Where, Fabric Worker) has performed in theaters across Canada, including two seasons with the Stratford Festival, The Grand Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Penelope Theatre, CanStage, and Alberta Theatre Projects, as well as at City Center in New York City. Selected film and television credits include "Kevin Hill," "Connecting Planes," "The Last Winter," "This Is Wonderland," "Train 48," "Blue Murder," "Puppet Queen," "Sure Thomas F.B. Eyes," and "Puppets Who Kill." Adilman is a graduate of Toronto's George Brown Theatre School.

MANON BEAUDION (Laundit) Old Mom, Tailor's Assistant, Inmate, Office Worker) has performed in the national tour and the film version of The Overcoat. She is a cofounder and performer in Cirque Poule (Victoria, Vancouver, Paris), as well as a core member of the Leaky Heaven Circus, for which she was nominated for two Jessie Awards. She is a co-creator of the Australian/Canadian coproduction of Flying Blind (Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Australia) and has performed in Cruddy King, The Man from the Capital, and A Night in the Woods (Caravan Farm Theatre). Other credits include A Midsummer Night's Dream (Bard in the Vineyard) and, most recently, Bonobo (the Leaky Heaven Circus) in Vancouver with her husband, Colin Heath. Her first play, The Bloody Clean Up or The Lamentable Tale of Marie-Antoinette, opens at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in March 2006.

MATT BOIS (Inmate, Suspect, Shop Runner, Office Boy) was most recently seen in the Georgain Theatre production of That Summer. He also toured Canada and Alaska in the title role of Danny, King of the Basement (Roseneath Theatre). Favorite roles include Colin in The Secret Garden (Theatre New Brunswick), Flute/Thibio in A Midsummer Night's Dream (CanStage), Lauret in Hamlet and Longville in Love's Labor's Lost (Driftwood Theatre), Jimmy in The Rainmaker (Drayton Entertainment), and the title role in A Midsummer Night's Dream (CanStage). Lauret in Hamlet and Longville in Love's Labor's Lost (Driftwood Theatre), Jimmy in The Rainmaker (Drayton Entertainment), and the title role in A Midsummer Night's Dream (CanStage), Lauret in Hamlet and Longville in Love's Labor's Lost (Driftwood Theatre), Jimmy in The Rainmaker (Drayton Entertainment), and the title role in A Midsummer Night's Dream (CanStage), Lauret in Hamlet and Longville in Love's Labor's Lost (Driftwood Theatre), Jimmy in The Rainmaker (Drayton Entertainment), and the title role in A Midsummer Night's Dream (CanStage), Lauret in Hamlet and Longville in Love's Labor's Lost (Driftwood Theatre), Jimmy in The Rainmaker (Drayton Entertainment), and the title role in A Midsummer Night's

MARK CHRISTMANN (Tailor, Bartender, Doctor) last appeared at CanStage as the Unicorn in Not Wanted on the Voyage (workshop). For CanStage he also choreographed The Tempest (Dream in High Park) and Tabu for young audiences. He has won two Dora Awards for outstanding direction of The Erotic Avory of Old Glory and for outstanding performance in The Martha Serves Project. Christmann is a graduate of l'École Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

JUDI CLOKEY (New Girl) has performed in numerous theaters across Canada, as well as on film, television, and radio. She has received two Jessie Awards for her work as an actor in Vancouver. Clokey is an original cast member of The Overcoat and a graduate of Vancouver's Studio 58 Theatre School.

DIANA COATSWORTH (Office Worker, Where, Fabric Worker, Nurse, Boss's Wife) includes among her selected credits four
Who’s Who

MONICA DOTTOR (Office Worker, Fabric Worker, Where) is an actor, dancer, and choreographer and is co-artistic director of Company Blonde. Recent theatre credits include Chekhov’s Heartache and Chekhov’s Shores (Theatre Smith-Gilmour/Factory Theatre), Holden Gahler (Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts), and The Paris of America (Centaur Theatre). Recent dance credits include Nutcracker (Julia Aylin) and Teady Bastard (Company Blonde). Recent choreography includes Swimming in the Shallow (Theatrefront), The Paris of America (Centaur Theatre), Canival: The Musical (Toolkit), The Guelph Contemporary Dance Festival, and Jesus Christ Superstar. Her film and television credits include “Strump” (Branco) and “G-Spot” (TMN/Movie Central).

PETER GRIER (Architect, Swastik Women, Concubine) is an original member of The Overcoat. Favorite stage credits include The Imaginary Invalid, The Visit, Two Ships Passing, and Amandaeu (Arts Club Theatre), Waiting for Godot, The Bachelor Birthday Bash, Malinche (University of British Columbia), Midfiff (Gateway Theatre), and The Lonely Ranger Family (Vancouver Fringe Festival). Television appearances include “Stargate: Atlantis,” “Jennihah,” “The Outer Limits,” “The New Law,” and “The Chris Isaak Show.” Grier is a two-time Jessie Award winner and a University of British Columbia graduate.

COLIN HEATH (Office Manager, Tailor’s Assistant, Innate) has been with The Overcoat since its creation. He last appeared in San Francisco with le Cirque du Soleil in 1989. He has enjoyed performing alongside his wife, Marion, and their daughters in the Lesley Heaven Circus (most recently in Bondo), at Curran Comic Theatre (for whom he has written two musicals: The Man from the Capital and The Apple Orchards), and in A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Bard in the Vineyard). Heath is a co-creator of Flying Blind (Axis Theatre, Belfly Theatre, Arts Club Theatre, Australia’s Legs on the Wall) and The Number 14 (Axis Theatre), which has been touring the world for more than 13 years. Television performances include “Stargate: SG-1,” “Kung Fu: The Legend Continues,” and the role of Malachi in “Voyage of the Unicorn.” He will soon be appearing in the stage version of The Lord of the Rings in Toronto.

TRACY FERENCZ (Landlady) includes among her selected theatre credits Much Ado about Nothing (Shakespeare in the Rough/Dora

WORLD AWAY, CLOSE TO HOME

RYAN HOLLIDAY (Architect, Sailor, Swastik Women, Innate) has worked extensively with the Centaur Theatre, including three Les Masques Award–winning productions: Blue/Orange, A Moon for the Misbegotten, and The Winter’s Tale. Selected theatre credits include The Mousetrap (Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts), As You Like It (Resurgence Theatre), and Romeo and Juliet (Minak Theatre). Selected film and television credits include Four Minutes (ESPN), “Missing” (Lifetime), “Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye” (PAX), and “The Winning Season” (TNT). Upcoming: The Residue Project (Theatre Passe Muraille). Holliday is a graduate of Concordia University’s Performance program.

MATTHEW HUNT (Swastik Women, Waiters, Bike Guy) recently finished producing and starring in the soon-to-be-released

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COLIN HEATH (Office Manager, Tailor's Assistant, Innkeeper) has been with The Overcoat since its creation. He last appeared in San Francisco with le Cirque du Soleil in 1989. He has enjoyed performing alongside his wife, Marion, and their daughters in the Lesley Heaven Circus (most recently in Bondi), at Caravan Farm Theatre (for whom he has written two musicals: The Man from the Capital and The Apple Orchard), and in A Midsummer-Night’s Dream (Bard in the Vineyard). Heath is a co-creator of Flying Blind (Axis Theatre, Belify Theatre, Arts Club Theatre, Australia’s Legs on the Wall), and The Number 14 (Axis Theatre), which has been touring the world for more than 13 years. Television appearances include "Stargate: SG-1," "Kung Fu: The Legend Continues," and the role of Malachi in "Voyage of the Unicorn." He will soon be appearing in the stage version of The Lord of the Rings in Toronto.

RICH HOLLMAN (Architect, Sailor, Swaatoth Worker, Innkeeper) has worked extensively with the Centaur Theatre, including three Les Masques Award-winning productions: Blue Orange, A Moon for the Misbegotten, and The Winter’s Tale. Selected theater credits include The Mousetrap (Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts), do You Like It (Resurgence Theatre), and Romeo and Juliet (Minnick Theatre). Selected film and television credits include Four Minutes (ESPN), "Missing" (Lifetime), "Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye" (PAX), and "The Winning Season" (TNT). Upcoming: The Redshale Project (Theatre Passe Muraille). Holllman is a graduate of Concordia University’s Performance program.

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The Overcoat
Created by Morris Panych and Wendy Gٹting 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 25-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 Groag MAR 21-APR 23

A Number
by Caryl Churchill Directed by Anna D. Shapiro APR 20-MAY 28

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

A Christmas Carol
by Charles Dickens World Premiere Adaptation by Carey Perloff and Paul Walsh Directed by Carey Perloff NOV 24-DEC 24

Learn more.

Who's Who

ALLAN MORGAN
(Head of the Firm, Police Chief, Irwin) returns to the company of The Overcoat in the roles he originated. A resident of Vancouver, he includes among his favorite credits An Ideal Husband, The Coronation Voyage (National Arts Centre/The Vancouver Playhouse), The Crucible, The History of Things to Come, Romeo and Juliet (The Vancouver Playhouse), The War, Edgar at the Lapin Agile, The Drowning Boy, Sexy Laundry (The Belfry Theatre), A Comedy of Errors, Dizzy Blonde (Arts Club Theatre), Cymbeline, Richard III, As You Like It (Bard on the Beach), Huellas, Toronto Mississippi, Slad (Touchstone Theatre), The Tempest, and King Lear (Studio 58). Morgan has received three Jessie Awards (and seven nominations) for his work in Vancouver. He is a graduate of Studio 58.

CYNDI MASON
(Secretary to the Head of the Firm) has been a part of The Overcoat in all of its incarnations since the first production in 1997. During that time she has also codirected, coproduced, cowritten, and acted in three short films and is currently completing her first feature-length screenplay. Mason directed and co-wrote the children's play Bird's Eye View for the 2003 Hamilton and Toronto Fringe Festivals and directed Joie with the Tics for this year's Toronto Fringe Festival.

GRAHAM PERCY (Fabric Worker) has been a member of the Touchstone ensemble of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and a frequent performer with Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia (seven tours) and the Atlantic Theatre Festival (four seasons). He is currently an associate director of Mermaid Theatre's Institute of Puppetry Arts, Percy has studied movement and clown with Philippe Gaulier and Arnis Eisenberg and is a graduate of Queen's University and lEcole Jacques Lecoq. In Paris, a native of New Brunswick, he makes his home in Halls Harbour, Nova Scotia.

AVI PHILLIPS (Harry, Office Boy, Sweatshop Worker, Wafer) first joined The Overcoat ensemble at the World Stage Festival in Toronto, where he also appeared in the title role of Kafka in Love. He has performed on film, television, and stage, most recently in "The Eleventh Hour" and in Sky Gilbert's "The Secret Life of Haddon Mackenzie. Phillips is currently writing and producing an album of original music.

DEREK SCOTT (Office Janitor, Orderly, Fabric Customer) is taking a break from performing in the title role of the off-Broadway production of Sian's Snos Show (winner of the 2005 Drama Desk Award for unique theatrical experience) to reunite with The Overcoat team. Some theater highlights include performances at Cirque du Soleil, The Stratford Shakespearean Festival, The Neil Simon Theatre (Broadway), The Mayakovsky Theatre (Moscow), Her Majesty's Theatre (London's West End), LOlympia (Paris), and The Just for Laughs Festival (Montreal). Television highlights include appearances on The Comedy Channel, HBO, and a pilot for The Disney Channel, as well as the recurring role of Dr. Q in the television series "Earth: Final Conflict." Scott has also been the subject of two one-hour television documentaries (Canada/Australia).
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(Head of the Firm, Police Chief, Immie) returns to the company of The Overcoat in the role he originated. A resident of Vancouver, he includes among his favorite credits An Ideal Husband, The Importance of Being Earnest (National Arts Centre/West Coast Playhouse), The Crucible, The History of Things to Come, Romeo and Juliet (The Vancouver Playhouse), The Weir, Picasso at the Lapin Agile, The Dresser, Ballyturk, Gayety (The Belfry Theatre), A Comedy of Errors, Dirty Blonde (Arts Club Theatre), Cymbeline, Richard III. As You Like It (Bard on the Beach), Havena, Toronto, London, Utopia (Touchstone Theatre), The Tempest, and King Lear (Studio 58). Morgan has received three Jessie Awards (and seven nominations) for his work in Vancouver. He is a graduate of Studio 58.

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WARNER MORTON
(Avis, Office Boy, Sweatsuit, Runner, Water) first joined The Overcoat ensemble at the World Stage Festival in Toronto, where he also appeared in the title role of Kafka in Love. He has performed on film, television, and stage, most recently in “The Eleventh Hour” and in Sky Gilbert’s The Secret Life of Hadden Mackenzie. Phillips is currently writing and producing an album of original music.

ALAN SCHOMER
(Head of the Firm, Lawyer, Dancer) is a frequent performer with Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia (seven tours) and the Atlantic Theatre Festival (four seasons). He is currently Associate Director of Mermaid Theatre’s Institute of Puppetry Arts. Perley has studied movement and clown with Philippe Gaulier and Avner Eisenberg and is a graduate of Queen’s University and l’Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris. A native of New Brunswick, he makes his home in Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia.

GRAHAM PERCY
(Albert, Fabric Worker) has been a member of the Touchstone ensemble of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and a frequent performer with Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia (seven tours) and the Atlantic Theatre Festival (four seasons). He is currently an associate director of Mermaid Theatre’s Institute of Puppetry Arts. Perley has studied movement and clown with Philippe Gaulier and Avner Eisenberg and is a graduate of Queen’s University and l’Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris. A native of New Brunswick, he makes his home in Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia.
SAL SCOZZARI (Thug, Sweatshop Foreman, Waiter, Party Guest) was last seen in San Francisco in 2000 with the original cast of *Mamma Mia*, in the role of Pepper. Other theater credits include the U.S. national tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and two seasons at the Stratford Festival of Canada. Film credits include the *Saturday Night Live* movies *Superstar* and *The Ladies Man*.

COURTENAY STEVENS (Architect, Sweatshop Worker, Sailor, Innate) has been with The Overcoat since its inception. Between Overcoat assignments he has been busy working across Canada in all forms of theater and media projects. Some theater highlights include: *Romos and Juliet*, Richard III (*The Stratford Festival* of Canada), High Life (Arts Club Theatre), The Number 14 (Axi Theatre), Mary's Wedding, The Game of Love and Chance (Sudbury Theatre Centre), and You Are Here (Equity Co-op), as well as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Macbeth (Bard on the Beach). Film and television highlights include guest-starring roles on "72 Hours," "Big Sound," "So Weird," "Stargate: Atlantis," the slasher flick *Ripper*, a recurring role on "Stargate: SG-1," and the upcoming feature *The Ghostbus*. Stevens teaches film and theater in Vancouver and is a graduate of Studio 58.

BRAHIM TAYLOR (Inmate, Fabric Worker) has been a part of The Overcoat since its creation. Past theater credits include *Trouble at the Port and Strike* (Vancouver Fringe Festival), Jesus Henry (Caravan Farm Theatre), Unity, 1948 (Western Canada Theatre), Ivs: Beyond Cool (Dance Arts), Beside/Bed (Radix Theatre). Television and film credits include *Jeremiah, "Andromeda," "Mysterious Ways," "The Chris Isaak Show," "Cold Squad," and, most recently, the Hallmark movie *The Cole Taylor* is a graduate of Studio 58 in Vancouver.

CREATIVE TEAM

MORRIS PANYCH (Co-Creator/ Director) is probably best known for his work on *The Overcoat*, which he co-created and -directed with Wendy Gorling. He adapted the play and directed it for film. The production has now toured to Britain, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Other work includes several productions for Tarragon Theatre (notably his own plays, including *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl*, winner of Canada's prestigious Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding production and direction, as well as a Governor General's Award for playwriting). Directing credits for CanStage also include *Hysteria, Amalou, Suzanne Todd, Vigil*, and, most recently, *Take Me Out*. In Vancouver, he has directed more than 50 plays, including a celebrated adaptation of *The Imaginary Invalid* and an award-winning production of *She Loves Me* for the Arts Club Theatre. When Panych is not directing plays, he is writing them. So far he has penned more than 20 plays, many of which have gone on past their initial productions to national and international success—most notably *Vigil*, which to date has been translated into ten languages and received highly praised productions in London’s West End (Wydham’s Theatre) and in Paris at Théâtre La Bouyeré. He has also directed television (*"Divo Znac’s Inquest") and opera (Susannah and The Threepenny Opera, both at Vancouver Opera).

WENDY GORLING (Co-Creator/Director), as a director/choreographer, has created physical theater pieces with Morris Panych, as well as movement for such plays as *Equus, The Taming of the Shrew, and Greek* (Jessie Award). As an actress, some of her favorite roles have included *Bittle Spirit*, *The Visit, End of the Earth*, 7 Stories (Jessie Award), and *The Imaginary Invalid*. In the film of *The Overcoat*, she played the landlady. Gorling is a well-known teacher and graduate of l’École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She teaches at Studio 58, where she has trained young professionals for 26 years. She is married to David Cooper, renowned theater and dance photographer, and has a teenage daughter, Emily, who keeps her young and sometimes frantic.

KEN MACDONALD (Scenic Designer) has designed *Art*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, 7 Stories, Hamlet, *The Overcoat*, *Vigil*, and *Haunted and Old Lace*, as well as CanStage productions of *Take Me Out*, *Vigil, Suzanne Todd, Hysteria*, and *The Overcoat*. Recent credits include *Girl in the Goldfish Bowl and Earshot at the Tarragon Theatre and Toronto’s World Leaders: A Festival of Creative Genius*. He is the recipient of two Dora Awards, fifteen Jessie Awards, and a Gemini Award for outstanding production design for *The Overcoat*.

NANCY BRYANT (Costume Designer) began designing 25 years ago for dance companies in Vancouver, which led to work with The National Ballet of Canada, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Les Ballets de Monte Carlo. Costume designs for theater include *The Imaginary Invalid, Hamlet, and Arsenic and Old Lace, Amalou, Suzanne Todd, and The Overcoat* for CanStage; and, most recently, *The Threepenny Opera* for CanStage Opera. Costume design credits for film include *Snow White* and *The Snow Queen for Hallmark, The Overcoat* for CBC; and, most recently, *Earboth for the Sci-Fi Network*. Bryant has received ten Jessie Awards for her costume designs.

ALAN BRODIE (Lighting Designer) includes among his lighting design credits designs for regional theaters across Canada, Vancouver Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and the Shaw Festival (five seasons), as well as associate lighting design on the Canadian international tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*. He has won awards for *The Overcoat*, *Ars, and Marly’s Wedding*. Brodie is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada and an instructor at the University of British Columbia.

JAN HODGSON (Stage Manager) includes among her credits *Brilliant!*. (The Electric Company, San Jose). IOU Land and *Cynocephalus* of the Northwest
SAL SCOZZARI (Thug, Sweatshop Foreman, Waiter, Party Guest) was last seen in San Francisco in 2000 with the original cast of Mamma Mia!, in the role of Pepper. Other theater credits include the U.S. national tour of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and two seasons at the Stratford Festival of Canada. Film credits include the "Saturday Night Live" movies: Superstar and The Ladies Man.

COURTENAY STEVENS (Architect, Sweatshop Worker, Tailor, Innate) has been with The Overcoat since its inception. Between Overcoat assignments he has been busy working across Canada in all forms of theater and media projects. Some theater highlights include: Romeo and Juliet, Richard III (The Stratford Festival of Canada), High Life (Arts Club Theatre), The Number 14 (Axis Theatre), Mary's Wedding, The Game of Love and Chance (Sudbury Theatre Centre), and You Are Here (Equity Co-op), as well as A Midsummer Night's Dream and Much Ado About Nothing (Bard on the Beach). Film and television highlights include guest-starring roles on "72 Hours," "Big Sound," "So Weird," "Stargate: Atlantis," the slasher flick Ripper, a recurring role on "Stargate: SG-1," and the upcoming feature The Ghoulswag. Stevens teaches film and theater in Vancouver and is a graduate of Studio 58.

BRAHIM TAYLOR (Inmate, Fabric Worker) has been a part of The Overcoat since its creation. Past theater credits include Trouble at the Fork and Strike (Vancouver Fringe Festival), Jesus Henry (Caravan Farm Theatre), Unity, 1918 (Western Canada Theatre), Ice Beyond Cool (Dance Arts), Besideled (Radix Theatre). Television and film credits include "Jeremiah," "Andromeda," "Mysteronious Ways," "The Chris Isaak Show," "Cold Squad," and, most recently, the Hallmark movie The Cole Taylor is a graduate of Studio 58 in Vancouver.

CREATIVE TEAM

MORRIS PANYC (Co-Creator/ Director) is probably best known for his work on The Overcoat, which he co-created and -directed with Wendy Gorling. He adapted the play and directed it for film. The production has now toured to Britain, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Other work includes several productions for Tarragon Theatre (notably his own plays, including Girl in the Goldfish Bowl, winner of Canada's prestigious Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding production and direction, as well as a Governor General's Award for playwriting). Directing credits for CanStage also include Hysteria, Amalou, Suzanne Todd, Vigil, and, most recently, Take Me Out. In Vancouver, he has directed more than 50 plays, including a celebrated adaptation of The Imaginary Invalid and an award-winning production of She Loves Me for the Arts Club Theatre. When Panyc is not directing plays, he is writing them. So far he has penned more than 20 plays, many of which have gone on past their initial productions to national and international success—most notably Vigil, which to date has been translated into ten languages and received highly praised productions in London's West End (Wydhams' Theatre) and in Paris at Théatre La Boyerete. He has also directed television ("Du Vine's Innquest") and opera (Susannah and The Threepenny Opera, both at Vancouver Opera).

WENDY GORLING (Co-Creator/ Director), as a director/photographer, has created physical theater pieces with Morris Panyc, as well as movement for such plays as Equals, The Taming of the Shrew, and Greek (Jessei Awards). As an actress, some of her favorite shows have included Blethie Spirit, The Visit, End of the Earth, 7 Stories (Jessei Awards), and The Imaginary Invalid. In the film of The Overcoat, she played the landlady. Gorling is a well-known teacher and graduate of l'Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She teaches at Studio 58, where she has trained young professionals for 26 years. She is married to David Cooper, renowned theater and dance photographer, and has a teenage daughter, Emily, who keeps her young and sometimes frantic.

KEN MACDONALD (Scenic Designer) has designed Art, The Imaginary Invalid, 7 Stories, Hamlet, The Overcoat, Vigil, and Of Mice and Men, as well as CanStage productions of Take Me Out, Vigil, Suzanne Todd, Hysteria, and The Overcoat. Recent credits include Girl in the Goldfish Bowl and Earshot at the Tarragon Theatre and Toronto's World Ladders: A Festival of Creative Genius. He is the recipient of two Dora Awards, fifteen Jessei Awards, and a Gemini Award for outstanding production design for The Overcoat.

NANCY BRYANT (Costume Designer) began designing 25 years ago for dance companies in Vancouver, which led to work with The National Ballet of Canada, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Les Ballets de Monte Carlo. Costume designs for theater include The Imaginary Invalid, Hamlet, and As You Like It and Old Love, Amalou, Suzanne Todd, and The Overcoat for CanStage; and, most recently, The Threepenny Opera for Vancouver Opera. Costume design credits for film include Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs and Snow White for the Oscar-winning production of the Overcoat for CBC; and, most recently, Earshot for the Sci-Fi Network. Bryant has received ten Jessei Awards for her costume designs.

ALAN BRODIE (Lighting Designer) includes among his lighting design credits productions for regional theaters across Canada, Vancouver Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and the Shaw Festival (five seasons), as well as associate lighting design on the Canadian international tour of The Phantom of the Opera. He has won awards for The Overcoat, Art, and Mary's Wedding. Brodie is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada and an instructor at the University of British Columbia.

JAN HODGSON (Stage Manager) includes among her credits Brilliant! (The Electric Company, San Jose), 10U Land and Cyra's of the Northwest
WHO'S WHO

(Caravan Farm Theatre), Triping and Noise Off (Vancouver Playhouse Theatre), Enter/Eat (Hard Rubber Orchestra), and the international tour of The Overcoat. She lives in Vancouver with her 16-year-old daughter.

PETER JOTKUS (Assistant Stage Manager) has been touring internationally with The Overcoat for nearly 20 years. Throughout his lengthy career he has worked extensively in regional theatres across Canada, including the Banff Centre, Stratford Festival, National Arts Centre, and Shaw Festival. Most recently, he was the assistant stage manager for Noise Off at the Vancouver Playhouse and Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and LIVING in Paris for The Arts Club. Jotkus lives in Vancouver and is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada.

CINDY SHAW (Assistant Stage Manager) includes among her recent credits The Music Man, Guys & Dolls (The Vancouver Playhouse), Holes, Dolly! (Royal City Community Theatre), and Hello, Dolly! (York Theatre). The highlight has been the international tour of The Overcoat. Shaw is a graduate of Studio 58.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN (Company Manager), when he's not touring with The Overcoat, manages the Al Green Theatre (Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre) in Toronto. He is also a writer and producer and spent six years with Mirvish Productions (company manager for Les Miserables and Crazy for You). Goldstein coproduced the highly acclaimed fundraiser Chas in Concert, was the associate producer for the Canadian national tour of the Sing-A-Long Sound of Music, and has worked as a consultant with many arts venues in Toronto.

WHO'S WHO

PRODUCERS
THE CANADIAN STAGE COMPANY (CanStage), located in Toronto, is Canada’s largest not-for-profit contemporary theatre company. Led by Artistic Producer Martin Bragg, CanStage is committed to creating and producing the best in Canadian and international contemporary theatre, attracting and developing the best artists and plays in Canada, and promoting its Canadian productions in international markets. CanStage Play Development Department initiates and develops new work through commissions, workshops, one-on-one dramaturgy, and the Play Creation Group. Operating year-round, CanStage produces a ten-play season on four stages in downtown Toronto. At CanStage’s 876-seat Bluma Appel Theatre, the company has produced more than 300 productions, including Ain’t Misbehavin’, Unintosh: The Musical, Cookin’ at the Cookery, The Overcoat, Larry’s Party, Sweeney Todd, Picasso at the Lapin Agile, and Into the Woods. The company’s intimate 245-seat Berkeley Street Downstairs Theatre and 165-seat Berkeley Upstairs Theatre offer six-week subscription engagements and extended runs that have included a 44-week run of Tony Kushner’s Angels in America, an 18-week run of David Mamet’s Oleanna, and the record-breaking world premiere of Adam Perl’s Sunday Father. CanStage produces the annual Dream in High Park, a 23-year tradition of open-air Shakespeare, at its 1,200-seat amphitheatre in Toronto’s High Park.

Martin Bragg, Artistic Producer David Abel, Executive Producer Celia Smith, General Manager Paul Shaw, Producer

GLYNIS HENDERSON PRODUCTIONS LTD. (www.ghpl.co.uk) produces, general managers, and represents a variety of theater, music, and dance productions. The company specializes in introducing unique and exciting new work to an international audience. GHP is the original coproducer of Stomp with the show’s creators Yeo/No Productions and has coproduced Stomp worldwide (with the exception of North America) for 13 years. Stomp has toured to more than 40 countries; in 2004 GHP presented the show on a major tour throughout Europe, Eastern Europe, and China and in 2005 will continue touring in Europe and to Japan in association with Yeo/No Productions. Stomp has also been playing at The Vaults Theatre in London’s West End since September 2002. Among other awards, Stomp has won a Laurence Olivier Award for best choreography and was nominated for a Laurence Olivier Award for best entertainment.

GHP has managed and produced Ennio Marchetto for more than 14 years. Ennio, "the living cartoon," continues to tour worldwide and has performed in more than 50 countries, including seasons in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Barcelona, and Japan and on tour throughout the United Kingdom. This year, Ennio will perform in Germany, the United States, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Paris. He has been nominated for the Drama Desk Award for unique entertainment and the Laurence Olivier Award for best entertainment.

GHP has managed and produced Theatre O since 2000, when 3 dark tales caused a sensation at the Edinburgh Festival. The show toured to Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Sweden, and China, and GHP coproduced a New York-off Broadway season. Theatre O’s The Argument premiered in 2002 and toured the United Kingdom, including the Edinburgh Festival and the Barbican Theatre, and toured to Mexico and the United States. Theatre O toured the United Kingdom with their new play, Astronaut, which opened at the Barbican in April 2005. In the next two years, Theatre O will create two new shows for the Barbican.

GHP coproduced Some Girls Are Bigger Than Others in July with The Lyric Hammersmith (London) and the Dublin Theatre Festival. Some Girls Are Bigger Than Others is a new piece by The Bleeding Theatre, created by Anonynous Society, based on the songs of Morrissey and Marr. Theatre O performed the show, which will play the Dublin Theatre Festival and tour the United Kingdom in October and November.

Glynis Henderson, Director/Producer Michael Brazier, Associate Producer Bradley Staufler, General Manager Rosie Hills, Assistant Producer Sarah-Jane Jones, Assistant Producer Kesh Bennett, Production Administrator Katie Patton, Assistant General Manager and PA to Glynis Henderson

This production of The Overcoat is represented outside of North America by Glynis Henderson Productions Ltd. Please direct all enquiries to: Glynis Henderson Productions Ltd. 69 Charlotte Street London W1T 4PJ United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0)20.7580.9644 Fax: +44 (0)20.7436.1489 E-mail: info@ghpl.co.uk

ON THE ROAD represents The Overcoat in the United States. For information, contact Simma Levine at simma@rffmj.com.

THE BUSHNEll CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, under the leadership of President/CEO David Fay, is Connecticut’s premier performing arts center, hosting more than 450 events yearly, including major Broadway tours, symphony orchestras, family presentations, and local arts and community events. Since 1930, The Bushnell’s national landmark and original Art Deco-style auditorium, Mortensen Hall, has hosted all of the major national touring shows, including Phantom of the Opera, Les Miserables, Mamma Mia!, and many others. The Belding Theater, a state-of-the-art performance space opened in 2001, allows for expanded arts, entertainment, and community offerings. The Bushnell’s commitment to The Overcoat represents a new direction in Bushnell activities to support the development of new theatrical and performing arts projects.

The creators of The Overcoat are represented by: Christopher Banks and Associates 6 Adelaide Street East, Suite 610 Toronto ON M5C 1N6 Canada
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Martin Bragg, Artistic Director
David Abel, Executive Producer
Celia Smith, General Manager
Paul Shaw, Producer

WHO'S WHO

All inquiries regarding The Overcoat for North America should be directed to:
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26 Berkeley Street
Toronto ON M5A 2W3
Canada
Telephone: 416.367.8243
E-mail: dabe@canstage.com
Web: www.canstage.com

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Michael Brazier, Associate Producer
Bradley Stufler, General Manager
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Canada
GALLERY AT THE GEARY

DEBORAH BARLOW: RECENT PAINTINGS

Find yourself with some extra time before a performance or during intermission? Want to expose yourself to more fine art, but don’t make it to art galleries as often as you’d like? Now you need look no further than the Geary Theater itself. A.C.T. invites you to visit the second floor of the theater (just outside the auditorium doors, along the north bank of windows, and by the elevator) to view original artwork by a diverse range of artists in a series of rotating exhibits throughout the 2005-06 season.

Currently on view (through November 13) are mixed-media paintings by Boston artist Deborah Barlow, whose work over the last 25 years has displayed her ongoing fascination with earthly terrains and vistas. Her work is inspired by and closely aligned with natural forms—from the expanse of an open landscape to the minutia of microorganisms—by her approach is nonrepresentational. She creates a complex dimensionality through layers that are built up with a variety of materials such as acrylic, oil, wax, minerals, oil pastel, rice paper, ink, pastels, and powdered pigments. Eventually images emerge that float in the zone between what can be seen and what cannot, between the explicit and the implicit.

Raised in Utah and the Bay Area, Barlow graduated from UC Santa Cruz and then headed east, yet she returns frequently to the deserts of her childhood. She has also developed a deep connection with other ecosystems such as the Celtic coastline of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, the Andes, and the Himalayas.

This is Barlow’s third show at Gallery at the Geary and features her latest works on canvas and panel. Barlow shows her work regularly in California, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. In 2003 she represented the United States in the International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Florence, Italy. She was artist-in-residence at Anam Cara in County Cork, Ireland, and her work has been seen in exhibitions in Ireland and Belgium. Upcoming shows are planned in Massachusetts and New York in 2006.

The artist will be in San Francisco for an opening reception at the Geary on Saturday, October 1, 4:30-7 p.m. Each Gallery at the Geary artwork purchase benefits A.C.T. For more information about Deborah Barlow, please visit www.deborahbarlow.com or contact Kevin Simmers at 415.474.1066 / kcs@creativeoptns@aol.com / www.galleryatthegeary.com.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE OVERCOAT?

Words 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 Words on Plays for each production are available in the lobby and online at www.act-sf.org. Subscriptions to Words on Plays are also available for the entire 2005-06 season. For more information call 415.749.2250.
GALLERY AT THE GEARY

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PROPPING UP THE SHOW

One prop needs to look like it was made in the 1940s and fit inside a jacket pocket. Another must have flashing lights built in. A third is torn and then re-upholstered after every performance. Props—including any and all stage objects seen onstage during a production—are central to scenic design, and are in fact the tangible details that help the world of a play come to believable life on stage. The right prop, from a peu de loup to a cane or love-seat, may even help an actor find his or her character—yet the artistry, creative decision-making, and technical skills of A.C.T.’s props (properties) staff are little understood by most audience members. The distinction between props and scenery can itself be a mystery to even veteran theatergoers.

“This here’s the way I’d explain what props are, and how they are different from scenery,” says Tom Fortune, A.C.T.’s props master for the last three seasons. “If you moved out of your house and packed up your belongings, every single thing you took with you would be considered a prop—from small things in your bedrooms and closets to big things like furniture, appliances, draperies, artwork, all of it. What would be left, the house itself, would be considered (in theatrical terms) the set.”

The A.C.T. props process begins shortly before rehearsals, when a scenic designer has finalized detailed drawings and models of the set for a given production. It’s up to the A.C.T. props department (three staff members, and an intern) at the scene shop to fabricate, choose, or find, every single object that will be onstage. Props people need to have a huge range of abilities,” explains Fortier, “including decorating, painting and faux finishing, woodworking, furniture making and refinishing, metalworking, and cutting, sewing, graphic design, electrical wiring—and you might need to draw on a surprising number of skills on any single job.”

The props department’s diverse skills are drawn upon in unexpected ways throughout the course of an A.C.T. season: one month it’s creating fake period radios (which can withstand being thrown without shattering) for Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing; the next it’s molding and casting life-sized male torsos (which will smash on impact) for Edward Albee’s The Goat, which presented unusual props challenges. In one heated argument between Martin and his wife, Stevie, the script required Stevie to intentionally break one of her sculpted torsos, and a Mayan fridge, implying a (seemingly) valuable painting on an upturned table leg. The A.C.T. Props Department fabricated more than 50 identical torsos, each one cast in plaster from a rubber mold, then painted to look like the sort of object d’art a successful couple like Martin and Stevie might collect.

“You have to be resourceful, and good at learning new things, to do this kind of work,” says A.C.T. Properties Assistant Peggie McGhan. “Someone’s always going to ask you to do something you’ve never done before—make a replica vintage newspaper with a specific headline, reinforce a wooden chair, wire a lamp. It’s an exercise in invention.” To bring to life The Gamers’ outrageous gambling scenes, for example, McGhan helped create plexiglass gaming tables covered in fuchsia felt and lit with perimeter rope, as well as a large standing roulette “wheel of fortune.”

The Overseas showcases a remarkably extensive range of props—more than 250 are used throughout the 90-minute production. With the added feature that every single scenic prop in the show has been mounted on wheels, so that actors (rather than prop or stage hands) can move items on and offstage themselves, keeping the play’s action moving fluidly. “Once the show starts, it’s all about nonstop movement,” says Douglas Palter, head property master for the touring production of The Overseas.

“We didn’t want props to slow down that rhythm, and we knew there was no way the sewing machines and drafting tables could be moved on and off easily, so everything slides on wheels.”

Something of a rapid-response team for the actors and director, props running crew members at the theater (led by Geary Theatre Properties Head Jane Henderson-Shea) then take over, working backstage and in the wings during performances to ensure that every item an actor needs is handed on and off efficiently, then repaired if necessary, and reset before the next performance. “Every single one of The Overseas’s 250 props has to be prepped and on deck backstage every night before the curtain comes up. This is the busiest, the surdiest, and solutions along the way can be endless.”

A.C.T. PROFILES

CAREY PERLOFF (Artistic Director), who is celebrating her 10th season as A.C.T.’s artistic director of A.C.T., most recently directed A.C.T.’s acclaimed productions of David Mamet’s new adaptation of Greenville-Barber’s The Voyeur’s Lookbook, Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing, Constellations Coroge’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream (a Contemporary Production); commissioned adaptation of Chekhov’s Phedre; Moliere’s Tartuffe; Springsteen’s Waiting for Gudie, Stoppard’s Night and Day, and Chekhov’s The Three Sisters. Her production of Maria Nidad’s visionary new work Hilda, coproduced at A.C.T.’s second space (Zeum) with Laura Pels Productions, will travel to Washington D.C.’s Studio Theatre this October and to New York’s 59 E 59th Street Theatre in November. Perloff is currently collaborating with dramatist Paul Walsh on a new adaptation and production of A Christmas Carol to premiere at the Geary Theatre in December 2005. 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 theatre, Perloff was recently selected for A.C.T. the American premieres of Stoppard’s The Intention of Love and Indian Ink and Pinter’s The New Home, a production of A.C.T.-commissioned translations of Hibla, The Misanthrope, Four W, Mary Stuart, and Uncle Vanya. Perloff is a co-founder of the Latino/Latinx theater company Latinscapes (alongside Leslie Ayvazian’s singer Soyl and acclaimed productions of The Threepenny Opera, Old Times, Armita, The River Tayte, Antigon, Caviation, Hibernia, and Tea). Her work at A.C.T. also includes the world premiers of Marc Bitterman’s No for an Answer, David Lang/Mac Decreased’s The Alphabet of a Crossed Field, and the West Coast premiere of her own play The Colours of a Rhinoceros (a finalist in the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Drama). Her new play, Lamincence Dying, was developed under grant from the Ensemble Studio Theatre/Freddie S. Sloan Foundation’s Critical Mass Project, was workshop at last summer at New York Stage and Film, and premiered in New York in January 2006 as A.C.T.’s First Light Festival at the Ensemble Studio Theatre. She has collaborated with many notable contemporary directors, including Philip Kan Gotanda on his new play After the War (an A.C.T. commission) at the Sundance Institute in July 2004 and Robert O’Hara on Antebellum for the 2005 O’Neill Playwrights Conference.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ernst von Dohnanyi’s The American premiere of Pinter’s Mountain Language and The Birthday Party, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards for acting, direction, and design, as well as the 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. Perloff received a B.A. in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the 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 Leslie and Nicholas.

HEATHER KITCHEN (Executive Director), since joining A.C.T. in 1996, has overseen the organization’s infrastructure and oversaw the company’s expansion to include the development and performance of new work and the creation 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, tour, and production management ranging across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Credits include the Stratford Festival, Canadian Stage Company, Charlottetown Festival, Theatre New Brunswick, New West, Theatre Company, and Neptune Theatre in Halifax. As general manager of The Citadel Theatre, Kitchen managed a five-theater performing arts complex and school that annually produced 16 productions, an International Children’s Festival, and a Teen festival as a member of the Edmonton Performing Arts Consortium, Kitchen co-headed the benchmark study Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts in Edmonton, An active community member, Kitchen serves on the boards and executive committees of the Commonwealth Club of California, as well as serving on the Board of Directors of the Children’s Theatre Fund in New York. She is a past member of the San Francisco Leadership Board of the American Express, the American Women’s Board of Big Brothers/Bigs Sisters, and the Peninsula and the Salvation Army Auxiliary in Edmonton and has served three terms as the executive of the League of Resident Theatres. She has also participated on peer review panels for Theatre Communications Group, Canada Council of the Arts, and Forber magazine’s Business and the Arts Awards. The San Francisco Business Times recently named Kitchen one of the 15 most influential women in the Bay Area nonprofit arena.

MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director) oversees the administration of the A.C.T. Conservatory’s Master of Fine Arts Program, Young Conservatory, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T., in addition to serving as the master acting teacher of the M.F.A. Program. Before joining A.C.T., Smith served as director of the program in theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught acting for six years. Originally from a small town in Utah, people of all ages in venues around the country, including teaching in Hawaii and in Florence, Italy. A.C.T. Conservatory, Smith has performed in numerous off-off Broadway plays at and regional theaters, including A.C.T. In 2004 she performed in the Off-Broadway production of a Continental Divide, Smith holds a B.A. in English and theater from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from the Yale School of Drama.

JAMES HAIR (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theater. He also staged the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little and Gorgy (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 Biren’s Little Eyolf (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw’s Arms and the Man (directed by Steve Martin) in 1971. He and his department were awarded Theater Crafts International’s award for excellence in the theatre in 1989, and in 1992 Hair was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theater Critics’ Circle.
PROPPEP UP THE SHOW

Ove prop needs to look like it was made in the 1940s and fit inside a jacket pocket. Another must have flashing lights built in. A third is torn and then re-upholstered after every performance. Props—including any and all stage objects seen onstage during a production—are central to scenic design, and are in fact the tangible details that help the world of a play come to believably life onstage. The right prop, from a pet or lamp to a cane or love seat, may even help an actor find his or her character—yet the artistry, creative decision-making, and technical skills of A.C.T.’sProps (properties) staff are little understood by most audience members. The distinction between props and scenery can itself be a mystery to even veteran theatergoers.

“Here’s the way I like to explain what props are, and how they are different from scenery,” says Tom Fortier, A.C.T.’s props master for the last three seasons. “If you moved out of your house and packed up your belongings, every single thing you took with you would be considered a prop—from small things in your Bedrooms and closets like big things like furniture, appliances, draperies, artwork, all of it. What would be left, the house itself, would be considered (in theatrical terms) the set.”

The A.C.T. props process begins shortly before rehearsals, when a scenic designer has finalized detailed drawings and models of the set for a given production. It’s up to the A.C.T. props department (three staff members, and an intern) at the scene shop to fabricate, or find, every single object that will be onstage. “Props people need to have a huge range of abilities,” explains Fortier, “including decorating, painting and faux finishing, woodworking, furniture making and refinishing, metalworking, molding and casting, sewing, graphic design, electrical wiring—and you might need to draw on a surprising number of those skills on a single job.”

The props department’s diverse skills are drawn upon in unexpected ways throughout the course of an A.C.T. season: one month it’s creating fake period radios (which can withstand being thrown without shattering) for Tom Stoppard’s The Real Thing, the next it’s molding and casting life-sized male torsos (which will smash on impact) for Edward Albee’s The Goat, which presented unusual props challenges. In one heated argument between Martin and his wife, Stevie, the script required Stevie to intentionally break one sculpted torso, two large vases, and a Mayan escро impaling a (seemingly) valuable painting on an upturned table leg. The A.C.T. Props Department fabricated more than 50 identical torsos, each one cast in plaster from a rubber mold, then painted to look like the sort of objet d’art a successful couple like Martin and Stevie might collect.

“You have to be resourceful, and good at learning new things, to do this kind of work,” says A.C.T. Properties Assistant Peggeen McManus. “Someone’s always going to ask you to do something you’ve never done before—make a replica vintage newspaper with a specific headline, reinforce a wooden chair, wire a lamp. It’s an exercise in invention.” To bring to life The Gamblers’ outrageous gambling scenes, for example, McManus helped create Plexiglas gaming tables covered in fuchsia felt and lit with perimeter rope, as well as a large standing roulette “wheel of fortune.”

The Overseas showcases a remarkably extensive range of props—more than 250 are used throughout the 90-minute performance—while the added feature that every single scenic prop in the show has been mounted on wheels, so that actors (rather than prop or stage hands) can move items on and offstage themselves, keeps the play’s action moving fluidly. “Once the show starts, it’s all about notonstage movement,” says Douglas Paterson, head property master for the touring production of The Overseas.

“We didn’t want props to slow down that rhythm, and we knew there was no way the sewing machines and drafting tables could be moved on and off easily, so everything slides on wheels.”

Something of a rapid-response team for the actors and director, props running crew members at the theater (led by Geary Theatre Properties Head Jane Henderson-Shen) then take over, working backstage and in the wings during performances to ensure that every item an actor needs is handed on and off efficiently, then repaired if necessary, and reset before the next performance. “Every single one of The Overseas’s 250 props has to be prepped and on deck backstage every night before the curtain comes up,” says Fortier. “The sourcing, types and solutions along the way can be endless.”

A.C.T. PROFILES

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JAMES HAIER (Producing Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theatre. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little and Gorgy (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 Ileen’s Little Eye/produced by Wandell Marshall), and Shaw’s Arms and the Man. In 1991, Hai er and his department were awarded theater Crafts International’s award for excellence in the theatre in 1989, and in 1992 Hai er was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle.
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