VIGIL
Written and directed by MORRIS PANYCH
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ABOUT A.C.T.

American Conservatory Theater

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

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the Geary Theater in 1967. In the 1970s, A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. During the past four decades, more than 320 A.C.T. productions have been performed to a combined audience of more than seven million people; today, A.C.T.’s performance, education, and outreach programs annually reach more than 230,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1996, A.C.T.’s efforts to develop creative talent for the theater were recognized with the prestigious Jujamcyn Theaters Award. In 2001, to celebrate A.C.T.’s 35th anniversary and Perloff’s 10th season, A.C.T. created a new core company of actors, who have become instrumental in every aspect of its work.

Today A.C.T. is recognized nationally for its groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations of contemporary playwriting. Since the reopening of the Geary Theater (now American Conservatory Theater) in 1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable period of audience expansion and financial stability. In 2001, A.C.T. began producing alternative work at Zeum Theater, which now serves as a venue for student productions and exciting new plays. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

The conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, now serves 3,000 students every year. It was the first actor training program in the United States not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a master of fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, Anika Noni Rose, and Elizabeth Banks are among the conservatory’s distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.
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Dear Friends,

With this production of Vigil, we are delighted to welcome back triple threat Morris Panych, whose multiple talents (as actor/director/playwright) have been put to use in a dauntingly rich series of theatrical successes. We first met Morris during The Overcoat, a memorable piece of physical storytelling that he conceived and directed with fellow Canadian artist Wendy Gorling. Morris has inimitable curiosity about human beings and their strange, often sad, surprising destinies. He writes with mordant humor about those moments in which we find ourselves at the end of our collective ropes, searching for the next step. Vigil is built on such a moment, as a man in a dead-end job connects with a woman who, against all odds, changes his life.

When we read Vigil, we realized it was the perfect way to reunite our favorite theatrical couple, Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis, seen so memorably together at A.C.T. in another Canadian play, Michel Tremblay’s For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again. Between Marco and Olympia there is a trust and a delight that is palpable and freeing: they are willing to try anything and go anywhere in the rehearsal process, knowing that the other one is there as a safety net. We have loved exploring this landmark of contemporary Canadian theater together, watching these two theatrical lions revel in Panych’s wit and compassion; we hope you enjoy their company as much as we have.

While the Vigil creative team has been cooking away in our rehearsal studios over the last few months, the rest of us have been busy imagining A.C.T.’s next season. Every year, the fine art of putting together a season becomes ever more complex, and by late February the offices of most artistic directors seem to resemble the kitchens of overworked chefs trying to create the perfect meal in chaotic and unpredictable conditions. But if a great meal is in part a celebration of the lives of the people around the table, a great year in the theater should also be a reflection of the complexity and surprise of living in the world today. There is no question that, as funding gets tighter, theater has been forced to get smaller and smaller in its scope. Yet this is a moment in which seeing the larger society onstage can be not only thrilling but important: perhaps one of the reasons I have fought for so long to keep classical theater alive on our stage is that the chance to see multiple stories and multiple points of view at work onstage widens our lens and connects us not only to our past but to our larger present and to a shared future. The same can be true of a beautifully imagined contemporary play.

At its heart, live theater is about storytelling; what is constantly evolving is the manner in which we tell those tales. In recent years, it’s become increasingly enthralling to watch the ways in which movement, music, film, simple visual effects, and the live body of the actor can all become part of the “language” of live theater. Both in our M.F.A. Program and on our stage, we keep returning at A.C.T. to the notion of “play” and transformation, from the imaginative vaudevillian quality of Brief Encounter to the highly theatrical Caucasian Chalk Circle staged by John Doyle to the evocative metaphorical barroom of our upcoming Tosca Project. Thus it is fitting that the cornerstone of our 2010–11 season is based on one of the most playful, memorable, moving series of “tales” ever penned: a brand new musical of Armistead Maupin’s TALES OF THE CITY. Creating a theatrical version of Maupin’s Tales has been a dream of ours for many years, and we think we’ve assembled the perfect artistic team to honor and celebrate these delicious stories (originally written as columns for the San Francisco Chronicle) of disparate souls finding family at 28 Barbary Lane. It is only fitting that this world premiere musical, with a book by Jeff Whitty (Avenue Q) and music by the Scissor Sisters’ Jake Shears and John Garden, will begin in the town in which these tales were born, with the collaboration of its beloved author, and we are thrilled that you, our A.C.T. audience, will be the first people in the country to experience it.

“Play” is never more evident than in the work of master clown Bill Irwin, who will open our 2010–11 season by directing and starring in his own riotous adaptation of Molière’s SCAPIN, in a production that Bill envisions as a valentine to his beloved Bay Area, where he honed his exceptional clowning skills as a charter member of the Pickle Family Circus. Scapin, the story of a wildly transformational servant who manages to rescue love from disaster, is perfectly suited to Irwin’s wide-eyed belief in the magical power of physical comedy to transcend so many differences and unite an audience of all ages and backgrounds. Indeed, this will be infectious entertainment for the whole family, a fitting sequel to the extraordinary Fool Moon of many seasons ago.

Equally magical, but in a much darker vein, is the pungent outrageous language of one of modern drama’s greatest
wordsmiths: Harold Pinter. Next season we are proud to celebrate the life of the late great Pinter with a major production of *THE HOMECOMING*, which I will direct, featuring our extraordinary core company and favorite guest actors in roles that seem to be written for them. Holding his own with this modern master is an extraordinary new American talent, young African American writer Tarell Alvin McCraney, whose coming-of-age play *MARCUS; or The Secret of Sweet* is part of a remarkable trilogy called *The Brother/Sister Plays*. We are particularly excited to join forces with two sister theaters across the Bay Area, Magic Theatre and Marin Theatre Company—who will produce the other two plays in the trilogy—to create a citywide introduction to this richly poetic, humorous, compassionate new voice, who tells tales of pre-Katrina Louisiana that are both deeply personal and astonishingly mythic.

Because no season at A.C.T. seems to be complete without the collaboration of visionary international artists, we follow the success of *Brief Encounter*, *Phèdre*, and *The Overcoat* with a breathtakingly original new piece of “fusion theater” created by Vancouver’s provocative Electric Company Theatre: a version of Sartre’s existential comedy *NO EXIT* featuring live film and stunning visual surprises in a nontraditional, hugely theatrical multimedia exploration of the essence of human freedom. For the final show of the season, we have several hot prospects on the fire, and you’ll be the first to know when we’ve made a final selection.

The experience of watching a story unfold in real time with the real passion and sweat of live performers inhabiting the same space as the audience is unforgettable. Nothing about live theater is “canned”: every night, the audience experiences it for the first time. And every night, there is a chance that something will change, shift, fail, surprise; as with a great sports event, the outcome is never entirely predictable. This is the moment for all of us to find new ways to connect to each other, new ways to understand the “bigger stories” of our common humanity, new ways to promote civic dialogue and cultural literacy. With *Round and Round the Garden* and *The Tosca Project* still to come, we are celebrating one of our most imaginative and successful seasons ever, and we look forward to next year with great anticipation and appetite.

Here’s to the future!

Yours,

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director
**U.S. PREMIERE**

**SCAPIN**

by **MOLIÈRE**

Adapted by **BILL IRWIN** and **MARK O’DONNELL**

Master clown and Tony Award winner Bill Irwin returns to A.C.T. with his 21st-century take on Molière’s 17th-century farce.

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**WORLD PREMIERE**

**TALES OF THE CITY**

A NEW MUSICAL

Based on *Armistead Maupin’s Tales of the City* and *More Tales of the City*

Libretto by **JEFF WHITTY**

Music and lyrics by **JAKE SHEARS** and **JOHN GARDEN**

Directed by **JASON MOORE**

The Tony Award–winning creators of *Avenue Q* and the musical minds behind the Grammy-nominated band Scissor Sisters bring theatrical life to Armistead Maupin’s iconic novels about life, love, and sex in our city.

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**WEST COAST PREMIERE**

**MARCUS**

or THE SECRET OF SWEET

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS: PART THREE

by **TARELL ALVIN McCранeY**

Directed by **MARK RUCKER**

One of the great new works of the decade, *Marcus* concludes the Bay Area–wide three-theater presentation of McCraney’s *The Brother/Sister Plays*.

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**NO EXIT**

by **JEAN-PAUL SARTRE**

Adapted from the French by **PAUL BOWLES**

Conceived and directed by **KIM COLLIER**

This acclaimed live cinematic event puts Sartre’s classic in extreme closeup as cameras throughout the theater capture the onstage experiences of three strangers and the mysterious valet who brought them together.

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**THE HOMECOMING**

by **HAROLD PINTER**

Directed by **CAREY PERLOFF**

A.C.T. honors the Nobel Prize–winning playwright with a major revival of this provocative and sexually charged masterpiece.

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR THESE VERY SPECIAL EVENTS

All events take place in the American Conservatory Theater, unless otherwise indicated.

March

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

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

April

1–17 Riot, by Ursula Rani Sarma
A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program and Young Conservatory
Zeum Theater

2 Vigil Theater on the Couch
After the 8 p.m. performance

6 Vigil Audience Exchange
After the 7 p.m. performance

7 Vigil Out with A.C.T.
After the 8 p.m. performance

10 Vigil Saturday Salon
Featuring A.C.T. Associate Artist and Young Conservatory Director Craig Slaight. Noon

11 Prospero Society Annual Brunch
11:30 a.m.

11 Vigil Audience Exchange
After the 2 p.m. performance

14 Vigil Audience Exchange
After the 2 p.m. performance

17 Cocktails with Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis
After the 2 p.m. performance

18 Crystal Ball: A.C.T.'s 2010 Season Gala
Forum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

22 A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program Class of 2010 Showcase
Zeum Theater. 5 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Written and directed by Morris Panych

Scenery and costumes by Ken MacDonald
Lighting by Alan Brodie
Sound by Alessandro Juliani and Meg Roe
Casting by Meryl Lind Shaw
Assistant to the Director Shelley Carter

CAST

Kemp Marco Barricelli
Grace Olympia Dukakis

UNDERSTUDIES
Kemp—Warren David Keith; Grace—Joan Mankin

STAGE MANAGEMENT STAFF
Joseph Smelser, Stage Manager
Danielle Callaghan, Assistant Stage Manager

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Jack Willis, Claire Zawa

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

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The Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver, and Belfry Theatre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada,
co-produced the premiere production of Vigil.

Vigil is staged by arrangement with Pam Winter, Gary Goddard Agency,
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A PLAY FOR ANYWHERE
AND EVERYWHERE
An Interview with *Vigil* Playwright/Director Morris Panych and Designer Ken MacDonald

BY DAN RUBIN

It all began with a postnuclear cabaret in 1982. Morris Panych and Ken MacDonald were living together at the time, and they had collaborated on a musical the summer before: Panych as an actor, MacDonald as the designer. “It was pretty simplistic,” remembers Panych about the show, “and I thought, ‘If this guy can write *this*, I can write a musical.’ Panych was quickly tiring of being an actor and was looking for a change. MacDonald started coming home to find pages of lyrics awaiting him on the piano. He had never composed before, but neither had he designed before he was given his first professional gig. He had been a high school art teacher who was hired on a friend’s recommendation: “Ken can draw things.” So Panych was not at all surprised when his partner composed 18 songs for *Last Call: A Postnuclear Cabaret*. The musical encounter between the two survivors of a nuclear holocaust immediately became a Canadian sensation.

Musicals, however, turned out not to be Panych’s genre of choice, and around this time MacDonald was getting more and more work as a designer. Panych transitioned to writing straight plays. In 1989, he premiered *7 Stories*, which explores what Panych calls “the grotesquely wonderful and relentlessly fantastic aspects of human behavior” through the story of a suicidal man standing on the ledge of an apartment complex. The dark, absurdist comedy was Panych’s break-out success, establishing him as one of the important English Canadian voices of his generation. It was also the origin of a defining characteristic of his work: his collaboration, as both the playwright and director in the room, with MacDonald as the production’s designer. MacDonald designed the award-winning set for *7 Stories*. Since then he has designed the sets for all of Panych’s work; in fact, he has been the designer on all the 50-plus shows Panych has directed.

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Fascinated by existentialism and indebted to the theater of the absurd, Panych has created a body of more than 20 original plays and half a dozen adaptations. His work often explores what it is that makes life worth living in a world increasingly defined by miscommunication, mediocrity, and loneliness. The playwright tempers this heavy pursuit by imagining ridiculous protagonists—often awkward social misfits or comically curmudgeonly everymen—and issuing a relentless infusion of gallows humor and wordplay.

In no play are these tactics better showcased than *Vigil*. With its premiere in 1995, *Vigil* became another immediate Canadian hit and Panych’s most internationally produced play, translated into 19 languages. It has been seen in London’s West End and off Broadway. Although Panych’s work has often played in the United States, Panych and MacDonald had never worked as a creative team in this country before A.C.T.’s invitation to realize *Vigil* for Bay Area audiences. During preliminary rehearsals at A.C.T. last fall, we took advantage of their time in San Francisco to ask them a few questions about the show.

RUBIN: Why, of all your plays, do you think *Vigil* has had the life that it’s had?

PANYCH: I think people understand in their guts what that story is. Looking after an old relative: it’s a big problem right now, and every society has to deal with it in a fundamental way.

MACDONALD: We baby boomers are exactly in those years: All of our parents are dying right now.

PANYCH: There isn’t a single person sitting in this theater who won’t fundamentally understand what a horrible situation that is. This play is like a bloodletting for them.

RUBIN: So it’s cathartic?

MACDONALD: They laugh the whole way through and then they are crying.

PANYCH: It’s like they’re afraid to think those things that we all think: “Why don’t you just die?” It’s not really what you’re thinking, because, of course, you’re not thinking that. But there’s a kind of a delicious sharing of a true feeling, deep in your guts, that there is something very difficult about the situation. [Marco Barricelli’s character] Kemp is confronted head on with this problem. Every time there is a new production in another country, in another language, I think, “Wow, it’s being done in Tokyo?” But, yeah, there are old people in Tokyo and there are young people thinking, “I don’t want to deal with my parents.”

RUBIN: Was that the position you were in when you wrote *Vigil*? Were you dealing with a dying parent?
MACDONALD: My mother.

PANYCH: His mother. Your parents are fine until they can't move. The minute that happens, that illness, if you're the person [who will become the caretaker], you realize, “My life is effectively over in terms of what I thought it would be. The freedoms that I had before, I no longer have.” This person is now going to take up so much time and energy and effort that you have to rethink everything.

We're just so selfish now. We're so concerned about doing our own thing, because we don't live in family groups anymore. We live in weird urban groups, so family is seen as “a problem.” Vigil addresses that. It's a satire, essentially, but the springboard was Ken's mother becoming terribly infirm, to the degree that she couldn't move.

MACDONALD: And when my mum was in the hospital, we heard the nurse saying to this old woman in the bed beside her, “Oh, dear, your nephew isn't going to be able to come and visit you. Sorry to tell you . . . Do you want me to wipe the tears away from your eyes?” She couldn't wipe her own tears away. No one was coming to see her. I think it gave Morris the idea of [a character] writing to a relative saying, “I'm dying. Come and take care of me.”

PANYCH: That scene made me really sick. It was just awful.

MACDONALD: The loneliness of it.

PANYCH: I'm really interested in a certain kind of morality. I think the theater is the best next place for moral teaching, but in a way that's not religious. In 7 Stories, a man jumps from the ledge of a building, but his umbrella goes up and he flies to the building across the street. There's this whole notion: if your life is meaningless, then you create your own meaning, which is incredibly liberating and freeing. Your life no longer belongs to any other idea.

RUBIN: Would you say that is the difference between existentialism and nihilism?

PANYCH: Yes. I'm not a nihilist at all. I believe there is some purpose, but that purpose is internal. I don't think it's a big universal purpose. I think there's a purpose for people to be on the earth, but I think it is to do some good things while they are here. That's the moral lessons of these plays.

RUBIN: How would you describe the style of Vigil?

PANYCH: Vigil is naturalism that explodes onto a large scale. The internal part of Vigil is very naturalistic and then, as it goes out, it becomes more and more absurd. We have to tell the audience that when the lights come up they aren't watching TV. They're not watching a real story. They're watching a fable. They are watching something bigger than life. It's supposed to be like a dream or a strange little book you read. It's supposed to take you somewhere outside yourself.

RUBIN: Is there anything inherently “Canadian” about your work? Where the plays come from? Where the designs come from?

MACDONALD: I don't think so. We got an amazing Canada Council for the Arts grant in 1991—we both got $18,000 to go to Europe to see theater. We went to Europe for four months and we saw 88 plays and it was pretty incredible. We saw them all together and I kept a journal. It's been a reference point for years.

PANYCH: I've always tried hard, when I'm writing plays, not to identify a place.

MACDONALD: Or time.

PANYCH: But especially a place.

MACDONALD: [In Vigil,] I don't want the newspaper that Kemp reads to say “San Francisco” on it. Vigil is taking place now, but you'll see nothing onstage that couldn't have been there since 1956. Same with most of [Morris's] plays: they have almost a classic American mid-century look, but it isn't in Canada, it isn't in the States, and it isn't in Europe. It's just anywhere, everywhere.
A.C.T. WOMEN CELEBRATE V-DAY

As many people were preparing to celebrate Cupid’s holiday last month, the women of A.C.T. were gearing up for a very different kind of V-Day by presenting a reading of Eve Ensler’s groundbreaking *Vagina Monologues*. A series of theatrical vignettes that began as a one-woman show performed by Ensler off-Broadway in 1996, *The Vagina Monologues* has since become an international phenomenon, translated into 45 languages and performed in more than 130 countries, raising awareness about female sexuality and violence against women around the world.

Presented in the American Conservatory Theater’s intimate Garret room in two late-night showings, the event was produced by A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program students Emily Kitchens (class of 2010), Mairin Lee (class of 2010), Ashley Wickett (class of 2011), and Christina Loren Elmore (class of 2012) for the benefit of V-Day (Ensler’s fundraising and awareness organization) and *La Casa de Las Madres*, a San Francisco shelter for women and children. The students recruited women from throughout A.C.T.—including Artistic Director Carey Perloff, A.C.T. Associate Artist René Augesen, Bay Area actor Barbara Oliver, and an array of administrative staff members and other students—to perform the monologues, supported by male students and staff who proudly dubbed themselves “V-Men.” Audiences turned up from all over the Bay Area, contributing a net of almost $2,000 (double their original goal) to both beneficiaries.

The event was the brainchild of Kitchens, who organized V-Day events while an undergrad at the University of Evansville. “The first time in my life I ever felt empowered by being a woman was being a part of this play,” she says. “When I got to A.C.T., I thought: The leaders of this organization are women. We should be celebrating that. It’s so easy to feel helpless in the world, hearing about what’s going on in the Congo, or in the Tenderloin, or anywhere. How can we help? We have a space, we have people who love to do theater, and we have powerful, beautiful women—we can pitch in, a little bit.”

For A.C.T. staff members, many of whom had never performed for an audience, the V-Day event was a chance to come together to support an important cause. “It was incredibly powerful to have women from all corners of the A.C.T. community together,” says A.C.T. Conservatory Coordinator Hannah Cohen. “I felt like there weren’t any boundaries, like student/teacher/administrator, or actor/nonactor. And both nights, there wasn’t even that divide between the audience and the performers. It was just this incredible communal event.” Kitchen adds: “That’s one of the most amazing things to me about *The Vagina Monologues*—it’s not about the performance, per se. Some of the staff were terrified out of their minds, but they got up there and did it! And they were all breathtaking performances. But at its heart, the experience was about giving. It was so unselfish. And very humbling.”

Kitchens and her fellow students worked in consultation with A.C.T. administrative staff across every department, learning as they went the nitty-gritty details of making theater happen. With the support of a recent grant from The James Irvine Foundation, A.C.T. is developing a program to support students in creating their own entrepreneurial performance opportunities throughout the Bay Area, and events like this are important early steps in that process. “This is exactly what we want the students to be doing—producing their own work,” says A.C.T. Administrative Director Thomas Proehl. “I helped them set specific goals, and gave them the understanding that we are behind them, but ultimately, it was up to them to make it happen. They did an incredible job.”

A RIOTOUS URGE TO CREATE

In April the A.C.T. Conservatory presents the world premiere of *Riot*, a new play by award-winning Irish/Indian playwright Ursula Rani Sarma. In a coproduction between our Young Conservatory (YC) and Master of Fine Arts Program, *Riot* will feature M.F.A. Program students from the class of 2010 alongside YC actors, telling a story that explores the relationships of eight young people in a residency clinic for emotionally disturbed teens. Sarma weaves the relationships among the patients, their doctor, and their nurses into a moving portrait of the deep human need for connection, understanding, and freedom.

“Ursula’s voice is fresh and decidedly Irish, with muscle and illuminative language,” says YC Director Craig Slaight. “She has a sharp ear for the concerns of young people and her youthful characters are detailed, complex, and nuanced.”

*Riot* comes to A.C.T. as part of an ongoing collaboration between our YC and the United Kingdom’s Theatre Royal Bath (TRB), who have been co-commissioning new plays from U.K. and U.S. writers for young audiences annually since 2002.
Last summer M.F.A. and YC actors traveled to Bath for a two-week developmental workshop of Riot with Sarma. While there, the A.C.T. students stayed with the families of actors in TRB’s youth theater program; after A.C.T. premieres Riot in San Francisco, the TRB actors will produce the play in Bath. Next year the process will reverse, as TRB actors travel to A.C.T. to workshop a new play by a U.S. writer that will later premiere in Bath.

“Lee Lyford [TRB’s youth theater director] and I were very keen on the sociological benefits of sharing the art form, creating new work that crosses cultures on an international level, and the growth and enlightenment that comes from living with people from a different culture,” says Slaight. “The benefits from this learning base are enormous on so many fronts. We are raising the bar on the quality of work that young people engage with in the theater.”

Riot is the seventh play developed in this unique collaboration, which allows students access to the process of play development on a level rarely seen in young actor training. “The average teen sees plays in finished books, and has no real sense of the writer’s role in the theater,” says Slaight. “I’ve never seen teens more excited than they are when working with a writer on a new play—eyes wide open, with such unconditional reverence for the writer.”

Slaight hopes to continually cultivate that reverence in the upcoming generation of theater makers. “Without new work the theater would die. Re-inventions of the classics have a great place in our collective societal understanding of the human experience. But we must also grapple in the moment with the artists of today. It’s our responsibility to lead the way in offering a place for new work to grow and flourish. In our experience training young actors at A.C.T., it is more than obvious that working on new plays is at the heart of the seminal urge to create.”

ALUMNI AT A GLANCE

Tony Award winner Anika Noni Rose, star of Disney’s hit film The Princess and the Frog, hosted the 41st NAACP Image Awards, which aired on Fox on February 26; she will also headline the Crystal Ball, A.C.T.’s singular season gala, on April 18 in San Francisco. Elizabeth Banks ’98 hosted the Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards portion of the Oscars on February 20. Actor-writer Daniel Beaty ’01 returns to LA’s Geffen Playhouse with his new solo show, Through the Night, March 16–April 4. Christopher Tocco ’09 is in The Satin Slipper, by Paul Claudel, at The Storm Theatre in association with Blackfriars Repertory Theatre in NYC.
The Directors Circle will attend an exclusive reception with actors Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis on April 17, 2010, as a thank you for sponsoring *Vigil* and playing a leading role in the artistic success of A.C.T.

A.C.T. Directors Circle members make annual contributions of $1,500 to $9,999, demonstrating their passion for live theater. By bringing innovative, groundbreaking productions to the Bay Area, producing compelling reinterpretations of classical works, and providing Bay Area students with educational experiences and exposure to live theater, Directors Circle members know they are actively strengthening the future of the theatrical art form.

Each season, Directors Circle members collectively choose a production to sponsor; this year they overwhelmingly elected to support *Vigil* and honor the beloved Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis. To thank them for the critical role the Directors Circle plays at A.C.T., members are offered many opportunities to witness the artistic process and meet the artists behind the production. In addition to the exclusive invitation to meet the cast of *Vigil*, members will be welcomed at a *Technical Rehearsal* in the theater, the *Opening Night Dinner* with playwright and director Morris Panych, and a *Saturday Salon* and luncheon with an A.C.T. artist.

These are among the numerous benefits and privileges Directors Circle members receive throughout the year to ensure they experience each season to the fullest.

For more information about *Cocktails with Marco Barricelli and Olympia Dukakis* and the other benefits of Directors Circle membership, please contact Liv Nilssen, A.C.T. Manager of Individual and Alumni Relations, at 415.439.2450 or linissen@act-sf.org, or visit www.act-sf.org/donorlevels.
Who’s Who in Vigil

MARCO BARRICELLI
(Kemp), artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz, has been an actor, director, and educator since 1982. After eight seasons with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, he became an associate artist at A.C.T., where he directed and taught in the Master of Fine Arts Program. His A.C.T. performance credits include roles in A Moon for the Misbegotten, The Real Thing (Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award), Les Liaisons Dangereuses, The Three Sisters, American Buffalo (Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award), Buried Child, For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, The Beard of Avon, Celebration and The Room, Enrico IV (Dean Goodman Award), Glengarry Glen Ross (Dean Goodman Award), The Invention of Love (Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award; Dean Goodman Award), Long Day’s Journey into Night, Mary Stuart, A Streetcar Named Desire, and The Rose Tattoo (Drama-Logue Award), among others. He has also worked on Broadway and regionally with Long Wharf Theatre, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe, and South Coast Repertory, among others. Television appearances include L.A. Law and a recurring role on the NBC series The Book of Daniel. Teaching acting has also taken him abroad to work with the Accademia Nazionale d’arte Drammatica Silvio D’Amico in Rome and the Prima del Teatro in Italy. He is a Fox Fellow and graduate of The Juilliard School.

HECUBA (1995 and 1998), the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Boy (1997), and Michel Tremblay’s For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again (also with Marco Barricelli, 2002). She has worked on more than 200 productions on and off Broadway and in regional theaters throughout the United States. Her most recent theater credits include The Singing Forest at The Public Theater; an adaptation of The Tempest; Rose, by Martin Sherman, at the National Theatre in London and on Broadway; and Credible Witness, by Timberlake Wertenbaker, at the Royal Court Theatre, London. She received two OBIE Awards for Brecht’s Man Is Man and Christopher Durang’s The Marriage of Bette and Boa. Her many film credits include Moonstruck (Academy Award and Golden Globe Award), Mr. Holland’s Opus, Steel Magnolias, and Away from Her. Television credits include the Tales of the City trilogy (Emmy Award nominations). Dukakis was a founding member of the Whole Theatre, where she was artistic director for 19 years, and has taught acting at Columbia University, in New York University’s graduate program (15 years), and in workshops throughout the United States and Europe. She is married to actor Louis Zorich.

OLYMPIA DUKAKIS (Grace) last appeared at A.C.T. in A Mother (2004); she has also appeared at A.C.T. in the title role of Hecuba (1995 and 1998), the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s Singer’s Boy (1997), and Michel Tremblay’s For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again (also with Marco Barricelli, 2002). She has worked on more than 200 productions on and off Broadway and in regional theaters throughout the United States. Her most recent theater credits include The Singing Forest at The Public Theater; an adaptation of The Tempest; Rose, by Martin Sherman, at the National Theatre in London and on Broadway; and Credible Witness, by Timberlake Wertenbaker, at the Royal Court Theatre, London. She received two OBIE Awards for Brecht’s Man Is Man and Christopher Durang’s The Marriage of Bette and Boa. Her many film credits include Moonstruck (Academy Award and Golden Globe Award), Mr. Holland’s Opus, Steel Magnolias, and Away from Her. Television credits include the Tales of the City trilogy (Emmy Award nominations). Dukakis was a founding member of the Whole Theatre, where she was artistic director for 19 years, and has taught acting at Columbia University, in New York University’s graduate program (15 years), and in workshops throughout the United States and Europe. She is married to actor Louis Zorich.

WARREN DAVID KEITH (Understudy) has been seen at A.C.T. in ’Tis Pity She’s a Whore, Arcadia, Machinal, and Mary Stuart. Other credits include Heartbreak House and Rhinoceros at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; The Winter’s Tale, Much Ado about Nothing, and Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2, at California Shakespeare Theater; Indiscretions, Life

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.
Who’s Who

JOAN MANKIN (Understudy) has been seen at A.C.T. in The Government Inspector, Travesties, The Gamester, The Three Sisters, and Dinner at Eight. She played Anne in the Robert Wilson/Tom Waits collaboration The Black Rider at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. She is an associate artist with California Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, The Ideal Husband, Uncle Vanya, and, most recently, A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Other recent roles include Barbara in boom at Marin Theatre Company, the title role of Sylvia’s Advice on How to Age Gracefully on the Planet Denial at Ashby Stage, Mother in Dead Man’s Cell Phone at SF Playhouse, and Henny in Bosoms and Neglect at Aurora Theatre Company. Film credits include Bee Season, Made in America, and Desert Hearts. She has directed for the Arts Club Theatre Company, the title role of The Imaginary Invalid and an award-winning production of She Loves Me for the Arts Club Theatre Company. 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—notably his own plays, including Vigil, which to date has been translated into 19 languages and received highly praised productions in London’s West End (Wyndham’s Theatre) and in Paris at Théâtre La Bruyère. He has also directed for television (Da Vinci’s Inquest) and opera (Susannah and The Threepenny Opera, both at Vancouver Opera).

MORRIS PANYCH (Playwright/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 The Canadian Stage Company include Hysteria, Amadeus, Sweeney Todd, 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 Company. 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—notably Vigil, which to date has been translated into 19 languages and received highly praised productions in London’s West End (Wyndham’s Theatre) and in Paris at Théâtre La Bruyère. He has also directed for television (Da Vinci’s Inquest) and opera (Susannah and The Threepenny Opera, both at Vancouver Opera).

KEN MACDONALD’s (Scenic and Costume Designer) most recent design credits include Parfumerie with Soulpepper Theatre Company and The Trespassers and Moby Dick for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Other credits include A Little Night Music, Hotel Peccadillo, and Design for Living (Shaw Festival Theatre); The Overcoat (Vancouver Playhouse).
Who’s Who


ALAN BRODIE (Lighting Designer) is a Canadian designer based in Vancouver. A frequent collaborator of Morris Panych and Ken MacDonald, he was responsible for the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle Award–winning lighting design for The Overcoat, which played at A.C.T. in 2005. He has worked for most regional theater companies across Canada, as well as the Shaw Festival Theatre and the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, the Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, Pacific Opera Victoria, and The National Ballet of Canada. He has received six Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards for lighting design (Vancouver), as well as numerous nominations in Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto. Upcoming productions include a new contemporary dance work for Nederlands Dans Theater and The Doctor’s Dilemma and Age of Arousal for the Shaw Festival. Most recently he was part of the lighting design team for the opening ceremonies for the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

MEG ROE and ALESSANDRO JULIANI (Sound Designers) are a Vancouver-based artistic team who began their partnership in 2003. Since then they have had the privilege of working together at theaters across Canada. Recent collaborations include The Madonna Painter (Centaur Theatre Company, Montreal); The Miracle Worker, Vincent in Brixton, and Equus (Playhouse Theatre Company, Vancouver); The Tempest, Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Troilus and Cressida, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Romeo and Juliet (Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, Vancouver); Vigil (Theatre Calgary); Skydive (Realwheels, Vancouver; national

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WHAT YOU DO WITH THE EXTRA HOUR IS UP TO YOU
tour); Metamorphoses (The Citadel Theatre, Edmonton); Life Savers (Ruby Slippers Theatre, Vancouver); The Palace Grand (Electric Company Theatre, Vancouver); Toronto, Mississippi (Theatre Aquarius, Hamilton, Ontario); and Black Comedy (Arts Club Theatre Company, Vancouver). Upcoming, Roe will direct and Juliani will star in Henry V at Bard on the Beach.

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

JOSEPH SMELSER (Stage Manager) has stage-managed Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo, The Government Inspector, The Circle, and The Rivals at A.C.T. He formerly served as resident stage manager at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, production manager for Aurora Theatre Company, and production stage manager for the California Shakespeare Festival. For eight years, Smelser worked at Seattle Repertory Theatre, where he was the production stage manager, staff producer, and associate artistic director for Sharon Ott. He was also the stage manager for the reading of The World of Nick Adams at Davies Symphony Hall, the regional theater tour of Anna Deavere Smith’s Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992, and Piano at the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard University.

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

BARBARA and GERSON BAKAR (Executive Producers) have been involved with A.C.T. for three decades. A New York native and former CEO of I. Magnin and Emporium-Weinstocks, Barbara has served as a trustee of A.C.T. since 1992. Gerson and Barbara have produced numerous A.C.T. plays, including Urinetown, the Musical, Gem of the Ocean, After the War, and Souvenir. Gerson, an award-winning Bay Area developer, currently serves on the board of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Barbara has served as a trustee of A.C.T. since 1992. Gerson and Barbara have produced numerous A.C.T. plays, including Urinetown, the Musical, Gem of the Ocean, After the War, and Souvenir. Gerson, an award-winning Bay Area developer, currently serves on the board of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Barbara also serves as a director and former chair of the UCSF Foundation board and directs the achieve program, offering high school enrichment and scholarships.

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Chaplin's The Gold Rush On-Screen with the San Francisco Symphony

Thu Apr 15  2pm
Fri Apr 16  8pm
Sat Apr 17  2pm

Donato Cabrera conductor
San Francisco Symphony

Chaplin The Gold Rush (1925)
Silent film with live musical accompaniment

Most people know Charlie Chaplin as a comic genius. Few realize he wrote the music for his films. The Gold Rush is the movie for which Chaplin said he would most like to be remembered. In scene after scene—including one in which the Little Hobo transforms a shoe into a feast fit for a king—this 1925 silent film classic virtually defines visual comedy. The San Francisco Symphony plays Chaplin’s original score to accompany a rare screening of The Gold Rush above Davies Symphony Hall’s stage.

Inside Music, an informative talk free to ticketholders, begins one hour prior to concerts.

Please note there is no intermission. Center and Side Terrace seats not available.

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WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT VIGIL?

Pick up Words on Plays, the smart souvenir!

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, artist interviews, and additional information about the cultural context of the play.

Individual issues of Words on Plays for each production are available in the theater lobby and online at act-sf.org. Subscriptions to Words on Plays are also available. For more information, call 415.749.2250.

Who’s Who

BURT and DEEDEE McMurtry (Executive Producers) married soon after graduating from Rice University in Houston and have lived on the San Francisco peninsula most of the 52 years since. They recently produced A.C.T.’s productions of Rock ‘n’ Roll, Happy End, and The Imaginary Invalid. Both Burt and Deedee feel that the theater is an important asset to the people of the Bay Area and are pleased to support it. Deedee has played a pivotal role not only as a member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees, but also as co-chair of the Producers Circle with Frannie Fleishacker, ensuring that A.C.T. has the funds needed to produce inspiring work onstage each year. An electrical engineer by training and a venture capitalist, Burt lent his time as a member of the planning committee for The Next Generation Campaign and is the immediate past chair of the board of trustees of Stanford University.

PATTI and RUSTY RUEFF (Executive Producers) are A.C.T. subscribers who have both loved and actively participated in theater their entire lives, attending various theaters together for the past two decades. After serving on the boards of regional theaters in Dallas, Texas, and Taos, New Mexico, they wanted to get involved in theater in the Bay Area, where they made their permanent home in 1998. Rusty, former CEO of the digital music commerce company SNOCAP and executive vice president of Electronic Arts (EA), joined the A.C.T. Board of Trustees in 2003 and now chairs the Committee on Trustees and Governance. Pattii is a former special events consultant. She chaired A.C.T.’s wildly successful Ruby Jubilee in April 2007 and co-chaired the 2006 and 2008 A.C.T. galas. Pattii is currently in her first term as president of the Hillsborough Auxiliary for the Family Service Agency of San Mateo County.
CARLEY PERLOFF
(Artistic Director) is celebrating her 18th season as artistic director of A.C.T., where she most recently directed José Rivera’s *Bolero for the Disenchanted*, Tom Stoppard’s *Rock ’n’ Roll*, and John Ford’s *Tu Pity She’s a Whore*. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda’s *After the War* (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of *A Christmas Carol*, the American premieres of Tom Stoppard’s *The Invention of Love* and Harold Pinter’s *The Room*, A.C.T.–commissioned translations/adaptations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *A Mother* (based on Maxim Gorky’s *Vasa Zelezneva*); Harley Granville-Barker’s *The Voysey Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian’s *Singer’s Boy*; and major revivals of *The Government Inspector*, Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill’s *Happy End* (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), *A Doll’s House*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Three Sisters*, *Old Times*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Antigone*, *Creditors*, *Home*, *The Tempest*, and Stoppard’s *Travesties*, *The Real Thing*, *Night and Day*, and *Arcadia*. Perloff’s work for A.C.T. also includes Marie Ndiaye’s *Hilda*, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein’s *No for an Answer* and David Lang/Mac Wellman’s *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, and the West Coast premiere of her own play *The Colossus of Rhodes* (Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist). Her play *Luminescence Dating* premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre, was coproduced by A.C.T. and Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. Her play *Waiting for the Flood* has received workshops in A.C.T.’s First Look series and at New York Stage & Film and Roundabout Theatre Company; her latest play, *Higher*, was developed at New York Stage and Film and as part of A.C.T.’s First Look series at Stanford University. Her one-act play *The Morning After* was a finalist for the Heideman Award at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Perloff has collaborated as a director on new plays by many notable contemporary writers, including Gotanda, Robert O’Hara, and Lucy Caldwell. She most recently directed a major production of *Phèdre* (translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker) for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and is currently developing a new dance-theater piece, *The Tosca Project*, with choreographer Val Caniparoli for A.C.T. and a new *Elektra* for the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound’s *Elektra*, the American premiere of Pinter’s *Mountain Language* and *The Birthday Party*, and many classic works. Under Perloff’s leadership, Classic Stage won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot’s opera *The Cave* at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music. A recipient of France’s Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the National Corporate Theatre Fund’s 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. She is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas.

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

For the latest A.C.T. news and behind-the-scenes action, check out our blog at blog.act-sf.org.
MEET BEN KAHRE
A.C.T. M.F.A. PROGRAM CLASS OF 2012

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

NICKNAME Benjer, BK.

BIRTHPLACE Fort Wayne, IN.

HOMETOWN Evansville, IN.

FIRST THEATER EXPERIENCE When I was five, I hid in a box covered in wrapping paper and sang a Christmas carol when they lifted me out during a nativity play.

FAVORITE THEATER EXPERIENCE Seeing the one-person play Underneath the Lintel in London. At the time it blew my mind how one actor could engage me in his story so fully. It still gives me chills.

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE, I WOULD WANT TO PLAY Brick in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

MY STORY My parents have always been very supportive and I owe a lot to them for helping me get where I am today. They knew that I always wanted to pursue further education in acting and encouraged me to make it a reality. The only question was where I wanted to go and if that school had a need for me. Being very interested in physical theater and acrobatics as well as acting, I auditioned for schools that had movement programs that interested me. I decided to come to A.C.T. because of its location in the heart of San Francisco and the constant drive for change in the organization and its community.

RANDOM FACT My birthday is on the Fourth of July. As a kid I thought the fireworks were for me . . . I cried when I learned the truth.

EDUCATION I have a bachelor of science in theater performance from the University of Evansville.

SPECIAL SKILLS Rock climbing, juggling, proficiency in following IKEA instructions, and whip-cracking circus tricks (think Indiana Jones).

HOBBIES Singing, reading, watching great classic movies, and playing football.

Inside A.C.T.

LOOKING BACK ON FIRST LOOK

This past January, A.C.T. core acting company members, faculty, staff, and students came together to workshop seven new plays by established and emerging playwrights. Some of these projects received showings in our intimate Hastings Studio Theater. These no-pressure presentations ranged from a Q & A session with Ping Chong about The Bright Eye of the Moon to a fully realized script-in-hand staging of Christina Anderson’s BlackTop Sky. This is what people had to say:

The Bright Eye of the Moon
Ping Chong developed the first act of his adaptation of Chinese writer Eileen Chang’s haunting story.

“Ping had a chance to hear and see Act I. Both were important, because Ping is interested in rhythms, both verbal and physical. Rhythms contain meaning. Since the visual element is such a large part of his work, seeing the actors in the space helped him further imagine what he wants the world to look like and how the characters move through it.”

—Michael Paller, dramaturg

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—Michael Paller, dramaturg

“I’ve never felt text work within me on this level. At the end of the presentation, I was spent and felt I had completed an epic journey”

—Jon Joseph Gentry, M.F.A. Program class of 2010

Title TBD
Eisa Davis began work on a new play about Isis and Osiris, air travel, and environmentalism.

“The project seemed a bit daunting at first—how do you workshop a play you haven’t written? I’d never brought actors into the process so early. But it was absolutely thrilling to see the students all, without exception, jump headfirst into the world I was beginning to sketch, populating it with their imaginations and experience. I was thoroughly impressed with their professionalism, their sense of play, their attentiveness, their commitment, and joy.”

—Eisa Davis, playwright

BlackTop Sky
Christina Anderson explored the physical world of her play in a script-in-hand reading.

“I needed to see the play to figure out what needed to change or grow. Stephen and the cast created a fully staged reading in only a few days! Because of that process, I have a better sense of the play’s pace and rhythm. I have a stronger faith in the power of the physical narrative.”

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I Dream of Chang and Eng
Philip Kan Gotanda dramatized the lives of the original Siamese twins.

“My biggest concern about the play was to what degree the text played. This is an ambitious palette I’m working with, given the number of characters, variety of geographies, cultures, and eras evoked, and fragmented manner of storytelling. Given access to the company and students . . . I was able to hear the play without its textual largeness being sacrificed. [This allowed for] strong textual work, which included a critical restructuring of scenes. The reading told me much. In particular I was buoyed by how well the play worked. And because of that, it was clearer as to what areas needed rewriting and clarification.”

—Philip Kan Gotanda, playwright

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BlackTop Sky
Christina Anderson explored the physical world of her play in a script-in-hand reading.

“I needed to see the play to figure out what needed to change or grow. Stephen and the cast created a fully staged reading in only a few days! Because of that process, I have a better sense of the play’s pace and rhythm. I have a stronger faith in the power of the physical narrative.”

—Christina Anderson, playwright

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—Christina Anderson, playwright

I Dream of Chang and Eng
Philip Kan Gotanda dramatized the lives of the original Siamese twins.

“My biggest concern about the play was to what degree the text played. This is an ambitious palette I’m working with, given the number of characters, variety of geographies, cultures, and eras evoked, and fragmented manner of storytelling. Given access to the company and students . . . I was able to hear the play without its textual largeness being sacrificed. [This allowed for] strong textual work, which included a critical restructuring of scenes. The reading told me much. In particular I was buoyed by how well the play worked. And because of that, it was clearer as to what areas needed rewriting and clarification.”

—Philip Kan Gotanda, playwright

ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): A.C.T. DRAMATURG MICHAEL PALLER AND DIRECTOR/PLAYWRIGHT PING CHONG; PLAYWRIGHT EISA DAVIS; PLAYWRIGHT PHILIP KAN GトANDA; (L TO R) M.F.A. PROGRAM STUDENTS ALEX UBOKUDOM AND LAKISHA MICHELLE MAY WITH DIRECTOR STEPHEN BUESCHER. PHOTOS BY DAN RUBIN.
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Featuring A.C.T. alumna Anika Noni Rose, Tony award winner and star of Disney’s The Princess & the Frog, performing alongside gifted students of A.C.T.’s conservatory—the next generation of theater artists! The spectacular evening will unite the Bay Area’s community leaders, philanthropists, and guest stars Olympia Dukakis, Marco Baricelli, and members of A.C.T.’s core acting company. Crystal Ball is a benefit event in support of A.C.T.’s conservatory actor training and youth education programs. The following individuals and businesses have made generous commitments to the event, April 18, 2010 at The Forum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. For information about sponsorship and tickets, please contact Luz Perez at 415.439.2470 or visit us online at www.act-sf.org/CrystalBall.

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The following members of the A.C.T. community made gifts in memory of friends, colleagues, and family members during the February 1, 2009—March 1, 2010, period.

Ruth J. Allen in honor of Helen L. Palmer
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J.W. and Deborah Chait in honor of Marilee K. Gardner
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The Very Reverend Alan Jones
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<td>Simon Baker, Sound</td>
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A.C.T. Merchandise
A.C.T.–branded merchandise, as well as books, scripts, and Words on Plays, are on sale in the main lobby, at the Ticket Services office, and online.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A.C.T. is pleased to announce that an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is now available on site.

AFFILIATIONS
A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of Theatre Bay Area, the Union Square Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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

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

The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT theaters are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

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

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

American Conservatory Theater Exits
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