

# A.C.T. AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

CAREY PERLOFF, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | ELLEN RICHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Media Contact: Kevin Kopjak, Charles Zukow Associates | 415.296.0677 | [kevink@charleszukow.com](mailto:kevink@charleszukow.com)

Press photos and kits: [act-sf.org/press](http://act-sf.org/press)

## A.C.T. OFFERS SNEAK PEEK AT 2014–15 SEASON

Season includes the exclusive West Coast premieres of two of the most acclaimed new works of the past year, a remounting of one of A.C.T.'s biggest hits in an all-new production and the return of the music of Stephen Sondheim.

The 2014–15 season will also include the inaugural production at A.C.T.'s brand-new, state-of-the-art Strand Theater, located in the revitalized Central Market Street Corridor.

SAN FRANCISCO (January 21, 2014) – American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Artistic Director Carey Perloff announced today four of the seven productions that will comprise the lineup of the company's 48<sup>th</sup> subscription season, including two of the most acclaimed new works of the last year, a remounting of one of A.C.T.'s biggest hits in an all-new production, as well as a sumptuous production of one of Stephen Sondheim's most rapturous and seductive musicals. In addition, the 2014–15 season will include the inaugural production at the brand-new, state-of-the-art Strand Theater, located in the revitalized Central Market Street Corridor. The additional three productions for the 2014–15 season, as well as the complete show order and performance schedule, will be announced at a later date.

"These are plays that explode the notion of storytelling, recreating the past in dazzling fragments of memory, and wrestling with whose version of the truth gets to be told," says Perloff. "The 2014–15 season will be filled with thrilling new work, incredible premieres, and gorgeous music – and it will also include the first production at our new theater, The Strand!"

A.C.T.'s 2014–15 season includes the West Coast debut of the outrageous and enthusiastically acclaimed new comedy *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play*, by Bay Area–born playwright Anne Washburn. Hailed by the *New York Times* as one of the Top Ten Plays of 2013 and "downright brilliant," *Mr. Burns* begins in a dark dystopia where a group of surviving strangers bond by recreating from memory the iconic "Cape Feare" episode of *The Simpsons*. As the story moves decades later, the recollection takes on a life of its own, becoming an almost religious-like fable, elaborately staged for adoring crowds through live theater and opera. The *New York Times* raves, "Anne Washburn's *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* has arrived to leave you dizzy with the scope and dazzle of its ideas."

A marvelously meta tribute to the pop-culture phenomenon *The Simpsons*, *Mr. Burns* is a paean to the power of storytelling, an off-the-wall salute to the resilience of theater, and an ingenious exploration of how we share recollection, memory, and truth. A sold-out hit when it premiered at New York's Playwrights Horizons, *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* was one of the most in-demand tickets of last fall's theater season in New York City.

Says Perloff: "There is something extremely moving about watching a group of people gather after an apocalypse to piece together their lives through whatever they can remember collectively. *Mr. Burns* is a kind of living archaeology of our contemporary American existence, and a hilarious one at that."

This fall, Carey Perloff will direct ***Testament***, Colm Tolbin's fiercely lyrical solo play originally staged at the Dublin Theater Festival in 2011, and retitled for Broadway in 2013 as *The Testament of Mary*. Hailed as "beautiful and daring" by the *New York Times*, this incisive, intelligent, and profoundly challenging work—a 2013 Tony Award nominee for Best New Play—recounts in riveting detail Mary's personal narrative of the last days in the life of her son, Jesus. With pungent wit and wrenching resolve, Mary questions the motives behind the movement to deify her son, as she grieves for the child who has been taken from her by men she regards as fanatics. *Testament* echoes the despair of mothers all over the world who have lost their sons to the fervor of coercive movements greater than themselves. The sensational Canadian leading actor Seana McKenna will play Mary in this powerful, tour-de-force role that is as heartbreaking as it is immediate and vividly alive.

Says Perloff: "Colm Toibin's novels and short stories have always taken my breath away, so the chance to be in a room with language of such beauty and imagination is one I couldn't pass up. Colm will be in San Francisco for rehearsals, so the script will be constantly evolving. And who better than Seana McKenna to bring it to life!"

Continuing its exploration on the power of memory and storytelling, A.C.T. will present an all-new production of Tom Stoppard's great time-travel romance ***Indian Ink***. Directed by Carey Perloff, *Indian Ink*—one of A.C.T.'s most often-requested return productions—will take the stage in early 2015. Stoppard's exquisitely ruminative play tells the story of a contemporary English biographer and a young Indian man, who separately attempt to explore the mysteries of the erotic artwork and poetry left behind by a racy, freethinking English poet from the 1930s and the Indian painter whom she has come to love. Through the passion of the poet's writing and letters, they each discover that she held many more secrets in Jummapur, India, than ever before known or imagined. Full of tender moments, *Indian Ink* is a brilliant study of the after-effects of British colonialism and how two cultures can physically and emotionally clash as they try to navigate their common territories. *Indian Ink* will wash over audiences with what the Indians refer to as "rasa"—the spirit, the juice, and the emotion you feel when you experience a beautiful (and erotic) work of art.

Says Perloff: “Of all Stoppard’s plays, *Indian Ink* is perhaps the most romantic. It holds a personal place in his heart, as he grew up in India during the war. I was lucky enough to direct the American premiere of *Indian Ink* in 1999 and it is a play I have longed to return to ever since. The way Stoppard weaves multiple times frames into a complex international love story is absolutely masterful.”

Stephen Sondheim’s most rapturous and seductive musical, ***A Little Night Music***, will waltz onto the Geary stage in late spring in a sumptuous, all-new production. Filled with Sondheim’s signature wit and some of his most gorgeous melodies—including the beloved and haunting treasure “Send in the Clowns”—this is a bittersweet tale of lost love, scandalous infidelity, and young passions that intertwine over a midsummer’s eve at a country home in 1900s Sweden. The *Wall Street Journal* raves that “no score of Sondheim’s is as buoyant and thoroughgoing an example of musical comedy as *A Little Night Music*.” Staged in our dazzling Geary Theater, this production will truly be an opportunity to ignite your senses and be swept away by mesmerizing theatrical storytelling.

Says Perloff: “*A Little Night Music* is a tale of love and loss through multiple generations. It’s one of the most literate, witty and seductive musicals, and perfect to usher in the long summer nights.”

In addition to announcing four productions from the seven-play subscription season, A.C.T. will welcome the return of the Bay Area’s favorite holiday tradition, the Charles Dickens classic ***A Christmas Carol***. Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and those deliciously spooky ghosts, this version of *Christmas Carol*, adapted by Paul Walsh and Carey Perloff, stays true to the heart of Dickens’s timeless story of redemption and brings a playful sensibility to his rich language. *A Christmas Carol*—which played to sold out houses this past holiday season and now in its 38<sup>th</sup> year—is a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become a holiday tradition for families around the Bay Area.

2014–15 subscribers will have the first opportunity to experience A.C.T.’s brand-new, state-of-the-art Strand Theater with exclusive tours and invitations to a host of exciting events plus guaranteed tickets to the premiere production in 2015. The beautifully renovated, 285-seat theater will allow A.C.T. to take more artistic risks, collaborate with a wide range of new artists, expand education programs in valuable ways, and create intimate theatrical experiences in a versatile and welcoming new space.

Full-season subscriptions (7-play) will be available by phone only through A.C.T.’s Subscriptions Office beginning **Tuesday, January 21**. To order, call 415.749.2250 during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.) Full-season subscriptions offer incredible savings, unparalleled access, exclusive benefits, and personalized customer service. Subscribers save as much as 50% off single-ticket prices. Students and educators are eligible to

save up to half-price on subscriptions, and senior discounts are available for certain series. To make subscriptions more affordable, A.C.T. also offers all subscribers an extended payment plan that allows payment in two easy installments. A.C.T.'s competitive subscriber benefits include free ticket exchanges up to the day of scheduled tickets, guaranteed best seating, ticket insurance, access to convenient prepaid parking one block away from the theater, discounts for neighborhood restaurants, and the opportunity to subscribe to *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s in-depth theater guide for each show. To renew a current A.C.T. subscription, please call 415.749.2250 or visit [www.act-sf.org/renew](http://www.act-sf.org/renew).

# # #