

**2003!**  
**A Year to**  
**Remember!**

**ACT THEATRE PRESENTS**

# THE SYRONGA TREE

WRITTEN BY

**Pamela  
Gien**

DIRECTED BY

**Larry  
Moss**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**Kurt  
Beattie**





2003!  
A Year to  
Remember!

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2003

ACT THEATRE PRESENTS

# THE SYRONGA TREE

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WRITTEN BY  
Pamela  
Gien

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
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Beattie



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Welcome to  
ACT Theatre's  
39th season!

This production is dedicated to the people who believe that theatre is magic. And to the playwrights, directors, actors, artisans, and technicians who create the magic. Our thanks are extended to the donors whose love for ACT Theatre has allowed us to make great theatre again in 2003. Great theatre requires two basic elements — an actor and an audience. Whether you are a subscriber or a single ticket buyer, thank you. There would be no theatre — no magic — without you. Thank you for a Year to Remember.



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

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ACT Theatre is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the American Arts Alliance, Theatre Puget Sound, and is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group. ACT is also a member of the Downtown Seattle Association. This theatre operates under an agreement between LORT and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. Directors and choreographers at ACT are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, an independent national labor union. The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.

This production is sponsored by:

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Because the arts can't flourish on imagination alone

ACT Theatre

by special arrangement  
with Matt Salinger,

presents the TheatreWorks  
production of

# THE SYRINGA TREE

BY Pamela Gien

STARRING Gin Hammond AND Eva Kaminsky

DIRECTED BY Larry Moss

SCENIC DESIGN  
Kenneth Foy

LIGHTING DESIGN  
Steven B.  
Mannshardt

SOUND DESIGN  
Tony Suraci

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
Frederic H. Orner

CASTING DIRECTOR  
Jen Rudin

First performed at A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle  
Gordon Edelstein, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

November  
1 - 23, 2003  
PREVIEW  
October 31

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A large print version of  
the Program is available  
from the house staff.

## The Company

### Cast

Elizabeth  
**Gin Hammond**  
**Eva Kaminsky**

Gin Hammond and Eva Kaminsky will alternate playing the role of Elizabeth.

### Production Team

Director  
Scenic Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Sound Designer  
Casting Director  
Producer  
Production Stage Manager

**Larry Moss**  
**Kenneth Foy**  
**Steven B. Mannshardt**  
**Tony Suraci**  
**Jen Rudin**  
**Matt Salinger**  
**Fredric H. Orner**

Audience members are reminded to please silence all electronic devices such as cell phones, watch alarms, and pagers prior to the performance.

## The Actors



**Gin Hammond (Elizabeth)** is a graduate of the American Repertory Theatre Institute at Harvard University/Moscow Art Theatre School. She performed *The Syringa Tree* at the Long Wharf Theatre, TheatreWorks, the Pasadena Playhouse and the Canon Theatre in Beverly Hills. Other regional performances include *Big White Fog* (Guthrie Theater), *The Bacchae* (A.R.T.), *Life's a Dream* (Berkshire Theatre Festival), and *Polk County* (Arena Stage), which was voted one of the top ten plays of 2002 by the New York Times and nominated for seven Helen Hayes Awards. Ms. Hammond is a grant recipient of the Ford Mellon Foundation.



**Eva Kaminsky (Elizabeth)** has performed *The Syringa Tree* at the Long Wharf Theatre, TheatreWorks, the Canon Theatre, and Pasadena Playhouse. Regionally she has appeared in *Collected Stories* (Northern Stage Company), *A Small Family Business*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* (Cleveland Play House), *A Christmas Carol* in 2000 and 2001 (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), *Communicating Doors* (Charlotte Repertory Theatre), *Karla* (Stamford Theatre Works), the world premiere of *At Wit's End* (Florida Stage), *Dracula*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Arkansas Repertory Theatre), and *Sylvia* (New Repertory Theatre). Other credits include The Huntington Theatre, American Stage Festival, and three seasons at Hope Summer Repertory Theatre. In New York she has worked with New York Stage and Film, The Blue Heron, and Pulse Theatre Ensemble. She is a graduate of Boston University School for the Arts.

## Production Team

**Larry Moss (Director)** taught in New York at Julliard and Circle in the Square, where he was musical director for eight years. Moss moved to Los Angeles and founded The Larry Moss Studio, which has been in operation for twelve years. It was there he directed and developed *The Syringa Tree*, which had its world premiere at ACT Theatre in Seattle (Bullitt Theatre – 1999). It opened in New York in September 2000, and won the Obie Award for Best Play of 2001, the Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance. Moss also directed the TV version of *The Syringa Tree*, which is currently airing on Trio Arts Channel. Moss developed and directed Bo Eason's one-man show *Runt of the Litter*, which opened in New York at Manhattan Class Company in January 2002, and has been bought by Castle Rock to be made into a major motion picture. In addition, Moss coached Helen Hunt in *As Good As It Gets* (Academy Award), Hilary Swank in *Boys Don't Cry* (Academy Award), Michael Clarke Duncan in *The Green Mile* (Academy Award nomination), and Hank Azaria in *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Emmy Award). Moss directed the award winning short film, *Dos Corazones*, and is scheduled to direct *The Lily Field* by Pamela Gien, to be produced by Matt Salinger. Moss is Artistic Director of the new Edgemar Center for the Arts, a two theater complex designed by Frank Gehry in Santa Monica, where *Sugar*, by Daisy White, a new one-person play exploring the life of an international call girl, premieres in March 2004. This season he has coached Toby Maguire in Gary Ross's *Seabiscuit* and Leonardo DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese's *Aviator*. His new book on acting, *The Intent to Live*, will be published by Bantam Dell this year.

**Kenneth Foy (Scenic Design)** designed the Broadway productions of *Candida*, *Macbeth*, *Oh, Kay!*, *Annie*, *An Evening with Jerry Herman*, *Gypsy* (Tony Award) and *Dame Edna: The Royal Tour*. He designed the Houston Grand Opera's acclaimed multi-media production of *Carmen*, as well as *A Little Night Music*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Pagliacci*, the Pulitzer Award-winning documentary *Moment of Impact* and *Porgy and Bess*, which most recently played Milan's venerable *La Scala*. He designed the Goodspeed productions of *Can-Can*, *Oh, Kay!*, *Pal Joey*, *Galileo*, and *Red, Hot and Blue* and the Berkshire Theatre Festival production of *Say Yes!* He has provided sets for the American Opera Center's *Xerxes* and productions at Julliard, Manhattan Theatre Club, Wolf Trap, Long Wharf, Hartford Stage, Old Globe Theatre, and Chicago's Lyric Opera. Mr. Foy also designed a production of *Annie* in London's West End.

**Steven B. Mannshardt (Lighting Design)** designed the lighting for *The Syringa Tree* at TheatreWorks in Mountain View, California, as well as the touring productions at the Pasadena Playhouse, The Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, the Canon Theater in Beverly Hills and the Du Maurier Theater in Toronto. As Production Manager and Resident Lighting Designer at TheatreWorks for the past ten years, he has designed over 30 productions for the company and has won a dozen local awards for his design work. In the past 20 years, Mr. Mannshardt has worked for numerous theater, dance and opera companies throughout California. He has also taught lighting design at Santa Rosa Junior College for the past eleven years and has appeared as a guest lecturer at many colleges and schools in the San Francisco Bay area.

**Tony Suraci (Sound Design)** Mr. Suraci has worked in post-production on films such as *Lost Highway* for David Lynch and *Austin Powers* for Mike Myers. He has won awards for his sound design on dramatic TV shows. Mr. Suraci has found it a great honor to be doing the sound design for *The Syringa Tree*.

Thanks to Actors' Equity Association for their generosity and BRAVO! on their 90th Anniversary.



## Production Team, cont.

**Jen Rudin (Casting Director)** was the resident casting director for Ensemble Studio Theatre and cast EST's 25th Annual Marathon of One Act Plays working with such noted artists as Horton Foote, Romulus Linney, Harris Yulin and Rosie Perez, as well as the premiere of Richard Kramer's new play, *Theatre District*, at Steppenwolf in Chicago. She has cast for New York Stage and Film, HB Playwright's Foundation and the Young Playwright's Festival. Ms. Rudin was casting director for the film *Virgin*, starring Robin Wright Penn and casting associate on Chris Rock's *Head of State* (Dreamworks), *Kill the Poor* (John Malkovich, executive producer), *Road* (starring Martha Plimpton), and *Garmento* (Hollywood Film Festival 2001), among others. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in history and women's studies and has completed three Boston to New York AIDS bicycle rides. She recently joined Disney as the casting director of Walt Disney Feature Animation. Much love to Pamela, Eva, Gin, Matt and Larry!

**Matt Salinger (Producer, General Manager for National Tour)** has been with *The Syringa Tree* since 1996. He brought the play to Seattle's ACT Theatre in 1999, to New York in 2000-2001 and to London's Royal National Theatre in early 2002. He produced a film version of the New York production (starring Pamela Gien), which has aired on the Trio cable network, and is helping to develop *The Syringa Tree* as a feature film. After a decade as a successful actor, he created New Moon Productions in 1994, and has now produced nine films, all independent, all outside the studio system: *Fortunes of War*; *Mojave Moon* with Angelina Jolie, Danny Aiello, Anne Archer, and Alfred Molina; *Little City*; Jay Craven's *Stranger in the Kingdom*; a send-up of life in Hollywood called *Hacks*, starring Stephen Rea, Lisa Kudrow, and Tom Arnold; *Meeting Daddy*; Stacy Title's modern day Hamlet story, *Let the Devil Wear Black*; *Four Dogs Playing Poker*; and his biggest budget film to date, *Plan B*, starring Dianne Keaton, Paul Sorvino, and Natasha Lyonne. He is working on a German co-production to be set entirely in Africa of Mark Lee's *Rebel Armies Deep into Chad* (adapted from his play), and he is working with the creators of *Hoop Dreams* and Jazz writer Ben Sidran on an as yet untitled film set amidst the waning days of the American Jazz age. Next up for Matt will be an astonishing new film also written by Pamela Gien, *The Lily Field*. Working with Pamela and Larry (and now with Gin and Eva) has been the best kind of work, demanding and entirely joyful! Matt served as president of the Board of the Malibu Stage Company in 1995 and 1996, and is on the Board of The North Country School/Camp Treetops.

**Fredric H. Orner (Production Stage Manager)** has stage managed Broadway productions of *Private Lives*, *Waiting in the Wings*, *If You Ever Leave Me...I'm Going With You*, *The Capeman*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, *City of Angels*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Our Country's Good*. He has stage managed the national tours of *Cats*, *City of Angels*, and *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*. Other credits include the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Hamlet* with Kevin Kline, *The Tenth Man* for Lincoln Center Theater and *The Syringa Tree* at The Royal National Theatre in London.

**TheatreWorks** was founded in 1970 in Palo Alto, California. Under the direction of Founding Artistic Director Robert Kelley and Managing Director Randy Adams the company has produced a mix of classics, contemporary shows and new works. In its 33 year history, it has presented 100 regional premieres including *Side Show*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, *Floyd Collins*, *Spinning into Butter*, *Old Money*, and *Passion* and 44 world premieres including *Everything's Ducky* by Bill Russell and *Henry Kreiger* and *Josephine* starring Della Reese. During the 2000-2001 season TheatreWorks won 41 Dean Goodman Choice Awards as well as nine Bay Area Critics Circle Awards, more than any other company in the San Francisco bay area, including five for their revival of *Pacific Overtures*. The company's production of *Everything's Ducky* won the Will Glickman Playwriting Award as the Bay Area's best new play of 2000.

## The Playwright



**Pamela Gien (Playwright)** As both writer and performer of *The Syringa Tree*, Pamela Gien won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, a Drama League Honor, a nomination for the John Gassner Playwriting Award and the Obie for both Performance and Best Play of 2001. The production was filmed for television, and was recently aired on Trio Arts Channel. She is completing the screenplay, and Random House has commissioned her to write it as a novel. *The Syringa Tree* had its world premiere in The Bullitt at ACT Theatre in Seattle in 1999. Ms. Gien has also written her second screenplay for the upcoming film, *The Lily Field*. As a principal member of the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, she played Sonya in the premiere of David Mamet's adaptation of *Uncle Vanya*, Anabella in 'Tis Pity She's A Whore, Estrella in *Life's A Dream*, Gabriella in *Sweettable at the Richelieu*, Marianna in *The Miser*, Angela in *The King Stag*, and Stella/Ann in *The End of the World with Symposium to Follow*. She played Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* for The Public Theatre's New York Shakespeare Festival, Alicia in *Piano* by Anna Deavere Smith, and Hannah Jelkes in *The Night of the Iguana* at the LATC, for which she won a Drama-Logue Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Theatre. She has performed in the New Works Festival at The Mark Taper Forum, The Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville and at South Coast Repertory. Her TV appearances include guest-starring roles in *Tales From the Crypt*, *Reasonable Doubts*, *Hunter*, *Secret Lives*, and *Into Thin Air*. Her film credits include *Men Seeking Women* and *The Last Supper*. Pamela deeply thanks Larry Moss and Matt Salinger for their courage, skill and love, and both Gin and Eva for their artistry. *The Syringa Tree* is dedicated to her parents.

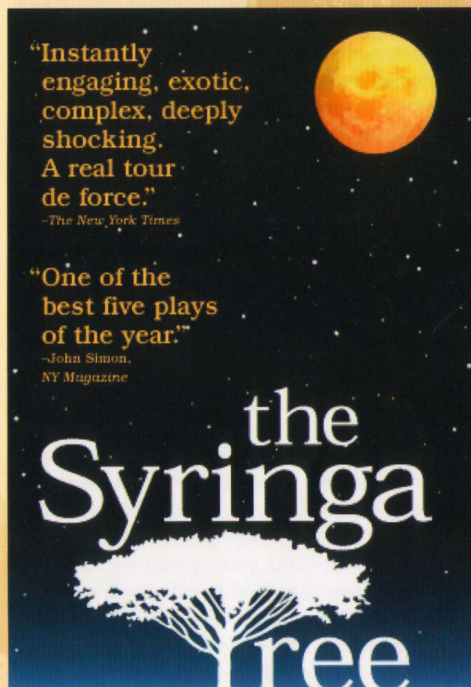
### I never imagined I'd write *The Syringa Tree*...

and I never imagined I'd write about South Africa, the paradise lost into which I was born. I offer this play as a journey into a place, and into my own heart, that secret sorrowful place I called home until I began to write. The first unexpected words that went onto the page opened a well of joy, grief and remembrance so powerful that I now cannot imagine the energy it took to suppress this world within so fiercely, and for so long, to keep it at bay in my thoughts, and to run to the furthest corners of the earth to remove myself from it. Of course it followed me wherever I went. I carried it within me, finding my responses confused and angry. I never wanted to discuss it. I had no answers. I was never a politically active person. I didn't understand how to change or fix it. And in the unexpected creation of this piece, I have come to allow myself to feel the depth of love I had for that earth, and the people I knew and loved there. The *Syringa Tree* has brought me home, despite myself. It has called me to be the best of myself as a person, and as an artist.

I marvel at the events that have brought me to this place. I was born in Emmarentia, a suburb of Johannesburg, in the early days of the official implementation of apartheid. The Nationalist government, architects of this policy, had come into power about ten years earlier. The early days of my childhood were spent under British Colonial Rule, and although South Africa gained its independence when I was about five, ties to Britain and the Commonwealth were as strong and enduring to English speaking South Africans as the ties of the Afrikaans speaking people were to their own culture and language. Mingled through this complex, divided social fabric were Blacks of many different tribal origins comprising the overwhelming majority, and among others, Indians, Asians, Portuguese, Lebanese and a large Jewish community, many settled from Russian Jews escaping Tsarist rule. And those designated by the government as Coloureds, of mixed race, who fell between the cracks of society and became known as "God's forgotten".



# SYRINGA TREE TAPES!

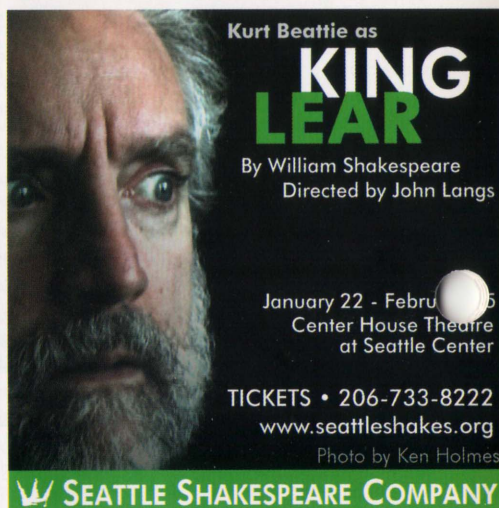
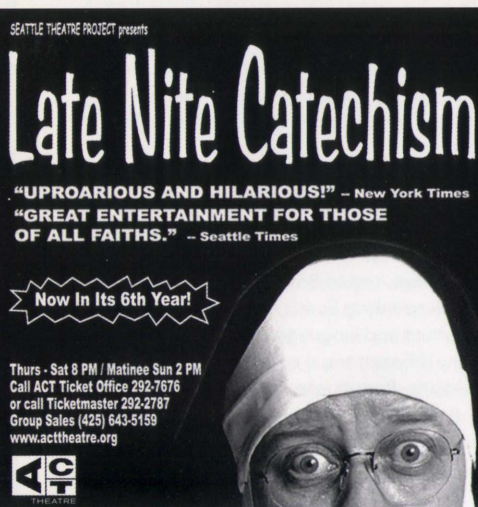


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 BE FOUND ON OUR WEB SITE AT:

[www.syringatree.com](http://www.syringatree.com)



## "I never imagined I'd write..." (continued)

The changeover from British rule was signaled to me as a child mainly in the fact that I was now no longer measured in feet and inches but in mysterious things called centimeters, and the sixpence and 'tiffies' I so prized in my grubby pocket were replaced with new, shiny bigger money called rands and cents. But the people around me remained the same, even though the Queen had moved on! I was cared for by nannies who loved me with gentleness I can still feel against my skin, while designated by law to be separate from their own children. Black children would never be granted a "pass" to be in a white area, particularly at night, and would live in the desolate townships and homelands, cared for by the aging parents of those working in the cities. I never felt their resentment, and yet I look back now at what must have been an unfathomable longing for their own children. I made no judgement on it then. I was a child. I lived in it. It was my home.

Thirty years later, in a class taught by my director, Larry Moss, I unsuspectingly did as he asked when he said "Turn to the person next to you and tell them a story." Without warning, the image of an attack on my grandparents' farm, Clova, came roaring into my mind. I had not thought about it for decades. We never discussed it. Clova was lost to us and I was never taken back to what had been the simple but idyllic place of my childhood holidays. I quickly tried to think of something else to tell, when Larry said to the class, "Don't censor whatever it is that came into your minds. Tell that story. It will choose you." I tried to make sense of the murky images, and began to mouth the words. The second part of the exercise was to stage the story we had just told. I think I was the first trembling person to bring the work back, and I stood there as though I had an earthquake in my body. I felt terribly vulnerable dealing with my own life. At the end of it, Larry said "You have to write this." And so I began the rather astounding task of writing about my life.

I had no idea at first what I was writing. I wrote with fear, grief, and shame. But I wrote also with love, joy and a well of remembrance. At first I wrote autobiographically. And then I began to love the freedom of combining those events with the poetry of language and imagery. It developed as a more fictional story deeply invested with aspects of my life. The coming together of it is the mystery. I wrote it, never imagining the journey I was embarking on.

Several weeks later, when it was done, we began rehearsal. I thought at the first reading we would invite twenty-six other actors to join us, or at least a few to double! And Larry said "No, you're going to do it yourself." At my shocked protests, he told me to be quiet and say the lines, and thus began our work.

And then Matt Salinger came, with an early invited audience, also expecting to see a company of actors! He has worked voluntarily and tirelessly since that day. Both he and Larry stand at my side. They have graced my life with their courage, and their generosity.

Carried in this story are my deepest feelings about a hauntingly beautiful place caught in unforgivable sorrow. Nobody won. And it's a story filled with joy and wishes. Some might come true.

© Pamela Gien, January 2002

**I am deeply honored to have The Syringa Tree invited back to Seattle, the city that gave us our first home on what has been an extraordinary journey, and we return with love and gratitude.**

PAMELA GIEN



## Executive Staff



**Kurt Beattie (Artistic Director)** joined ACT in 2001 as associate artistic director and was appointed Artistic Director in April of 2003. He directed the recent critically acclaimed ACT production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* and will direct the upcoming *A Christmas Carol* for the second year in a row. Other director credits at ACT include last season's *Fuddy Meers* and *Fully Committed*, as well as *Via Dolorosa* during ACT's 2000 Bullitt season. Elsewhere he has directed *Things Being What They Are* and *Art* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre and productions at The Empty Space, Intiman, and the University of Washington. Nationally he

has directed at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and at The Alley Theatre in Houston. As an actor he has appeared in leading and major roles at ACT (most recently as Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*), the Seattle Rep, Intiman, and The Empty Space, as well as many regional theatres throughout the country. This winter Kurt will play the title role in Seattle Shakespeare Company's production of *King Lear*. Also a playwright, he is currently working on a commission for the Seattle Children's Theatre.



**Susan Trapnell (Managing Director)** was appointed Managing Director, for the second time, in April of this year. She served in the same position from 1982-2000. In the intervening 3 years, Susan spent two years as Executive Director of the Seattle Arts Commission (now the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs) and Managing Director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. She is delighted to be back in Seattle and back at ACT. Susan holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in French from the University of North Carolina, and has lived in Lyons, France, Guelma, Algeria and Vienna, Austria. She moved to Seattle in 1976 to work with

the Bill Evans Dance Company, first as Director of Education programs and then as Managing Director. She has served as President of the Washington State Arts Alliance, Vice Chair of the King County Arts Commission and on the Board of the Downtown Seattle Association. She is currently a member of the Advisory Board of Arts Space, the Board of Town Hall, and is a Trustee of the Kreielsheimer Remainder Trust.

# TAKE NOTE!

The

# 2004

season, ACT's 40th,  
will soon be announced!



Look for detailed information in early November. The 2004 season will begin late spring/early summer and run through early autumn. Artistic Director Kurt Beattie is carefully choosing plays that will amuse, challenge, inform and affect you. Plays for you. Plays for today.

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At Getty Images, we are committed to sharing our passion for creativity with the arts community in the cities where we live and work. Our association with ACT is something of which we are immensely proud and honored. Since 1965, ACT Theatre has been committed to producing an eclectic mix of contemporary dramatic and comedic stories that come to life. ACT, like Getty Images, is committed to producing visual gems that are relevant, delightful, entertaining and inspirational. As such, we have much in common.

As a strong supporter of ACT Theatre, Getty Images is pleased to share with all ACT patrons images from our extensive collections in the Getty Images Gallery. We hope that they delight and inspire ideas and conversations about creativity and the power of imagery — our common visual language.

- Jonathan Klein, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF GETTY IMAGES

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