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ACT THEATRE
PRESENTS

ALKI

WRITTEN BY
Eric Overmyer

DIRECTED BY
Kurt Beattie



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BY Matthew Barber

DIRECTED BY Warner Shook

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Welcome to ACT Theatre's 40th Anniversary Season!



When Gregory Falls opened A Contemporary Theatre on June 29, 1965, it was the act of a visionary at a time when visionaries were being on one hand encouraged and on the other quieted; a revolutionary time that called for change and rebirth. ACT was born to examine "plays for today" and to provide a unique and intimate environment in which to intelligently share theatre that made us think and feel — and remind us of who we are as individuals and as a community. Thanks to Greg and Jean and so many others, ACT continues to provide that roadway to enlightenment upon which we are all cast. Here's to 40 more! Enjoy the show.

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KURT BEATTIE
Artistic Director

SUSAN TRAPNELL
Managing Director

ACT THEATRE
PRESENTS

ALKI

BY
ERIC OVERMYER
DIRECTED BY
KURT BEATTIE

JUNE 4-27, 2004

SPONSORED BY

The Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, City of Seattle,
and The Rockefeller Foundation Multi-Arts Production Fund.

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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.

THE COMPANY

CAST (in alphabetical order)

Justin Alley	John Johnson, ensemble
Suzanne Bouchard*	Woman in Green, ensemble
Julie Briskman*	Remedios, ensemble
Deborah Fialkow*	Alberta, ensemble
Mary Jane Gibson*	Sally, ensemble
Ray Gonzales	Preacher Rowe, ensemble
Douglas Moening	Smitty, ensemble
Todd Jefferson Moore*	Bad Otter, ensemble
Marianne Owen*	Hannah Gynt, ensemble
David Pichette*	Mysterious Stranger, ensemble
Hannah Von Spreecken	Ugly Boy, ensemble
Michael Winters*	King of the Haints, ensemble
R. Hamilton Wright*	Peer Gynt

PRODUCTION TEAM

Eric Overmyer	Playwright
Kurt Beattie	Director
Scott Weldin	Scenery Designer and Projection Co-Designer
Martin Christoffel	Projection Co-Designer
Deb Trout	Costume Designer
Geoff Korf	Lighting Designer
Adam Stern	Composer
Dominic CodyKramers	Sound Designer
Jeffrey K. Hanson*	Stage Manager
Wade Madsen	Choreographer
Laura Worthen	Dialect Consultant
Erin B. Davis	Production Assistant
Madeleine Vilches	Production Assistant

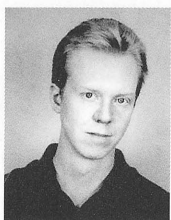
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AUDIENCE MEMBERS
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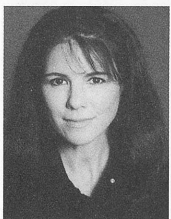
*Denotes membership in Actors'
Equity Association, the profes-
sional union for actors and stage
managers in the United States.

ACT Theatre Congratulates Actors' Equity Association, the professional union of
actors and stage managers in the United States, on their 90th Anniversary. Bravo!

THE ACTORS



Justin Alley (John Johnson, ensemble) grew up in Seattle, attended the University of Washington, and is immensely pleased to be a part of Alki. Other performance experience includes last year's season (*Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Seattle Shakespeare Company, two national tours with Poetry Alive!, some fire-eating and busking in Los Angeles, and *Dracula*, *Making the Call*, and *Othello* at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in Kentucky.



Suzanne Bouchard (Woman in Green, ensemble) most recently appeared as the mysterious Mary L. in the Steppenwolf-Seattle Repertory Theatre production of *The Time of Your Life*. Prior to that, she played Lina Szczepanowska, the redoubtable Polish acrobat, in the SRT's production of *Shaw's Misalliance*. Suzanne has worked in the Seattle area and other regional venues for over twenty years, as well as a U.S. Information Service tour to the Middle East in the late 1980s. Plum roles include: Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Helen/Miriam in *Valley of the Dolls*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Kate in *Other People's Money*, Charlotte in *A Little Night Music* and her sentimental favorite, Karen Knightly in *The Revenger's Comedies*.



Julie Briskman (Remedios, ensemble) returns to ACT where she has appeared as Jane Hopcroft in *Absurd Person Singular*, and Jo/Mae in *Dirty Blonde*. Other Seattle Credits include: Seattle Repertory Theatre – Nancy Robin in *Living Out*, Fanny in *Over The Moon*, Anne Hathaway in *Beard Of Avon*, Sarah Daniels in *Spinning Into Butter*, Celia in *As You Like It*, and Flossie in *Inman*. At Seattle Children's Theater she created the roles of Kate Barlow in *Holes*, and Hattie in *Go Dog Go*, as well as portraying the White Witch in *The Lion The Witch And The Wardrobe*. Julie was a member of the Guthrie Theater acting company for six seasons where her roles included the title role in *Molly Sweeney*, Gwendolen in *The Importance Of Being Earnest*, Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard*, Corrine in *The Triumph Of Love*, and Essie in *You Can't Take It With You*. Other national credits include: Trinity Repertory Company, Portland Center Stage, Arizona Theater Company, The Children's Theater Company of Minneapolis, and The Old Globe. Last Spring, Julie returned to The Guthrie to play Olga in *Three Sisters* directed by Joe Dowling.



Deborah Fialkow (Alberta, ensemble) is pleased to be making her ACT debut. Seattle theatre credits include *The Shakespeare Stealer* and *Johnny Tremain* with the Seattle Children's Theatre and *Terra Nova* at Tacoma Actors Guild. Deborah has also been seen at the Empty Space, ACT's FirstACT series, Open Circle Theatre, theatre simple, Consolidated Works, Annex and Aha! Theatres.

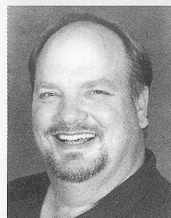
THE ACTORS



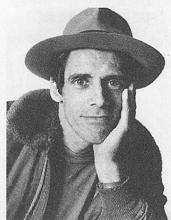
Mary Jane Gibson (Sally, ensemble) grew up in Newfoundland, and arrived in Seattle four years ago. Seattle credits include the recent *Black Coffee* and *A Christmas Carol* at ACT, *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), *Holes* (Seattle Children's Theatre), and *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Theater Schmeater). She wrote and performed in *Anaphylaxis*, which was awarded Artistic Pick of the 2003 Seattle Fringe Festival, and co-wrote and performed in *Burning Cage*, named Artistic Pick of the 2002 festival. Mary Jane was awarded the Fox Foundation Fellowship in 1999, which allowed her to study at the British American Dramatic Academy with John Barton and Fiona Shaw. Love to Scott.



Ray Gonzalez (Preacher Rowe, ensemble) is delighted to make his debut at ACT. Ray grew up in the Pacific Northwest in Vancouver, Washington, and graduated from Cornish College of the Arts in 1997. He has performed locally with Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Bridges International Repertory, Wooden O!, The Intiman, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. In addition to his life in the theatre, he is the proud father of Shelby and Ruby-Rose.



Douglas Moening (Smitty, ensemble) is a Seattle native and has appeared in many area theatre productions throughout the past three decades. Some of his notable roles have been: Owen in *The Foreigner* at Centerstage, Lebecque in *Return to Morality* for Seattle Public Theatre, Darrow in *Never the Sinner* at Driftwood Theatre and Egeon in *Taproot* Theatre Company's *The Comedy of Errors*. Doug sits on the Board of Councilors for SAG/Seattle and has appeared in many commercial, film and television projects; including *I Love You to Death*, *Perfect Specimen* and *The Fugitive*. Doug is also a founding member of STAGES, a theatre company based in Everett. He admits to being both stunned and delighted to be making his ACT Theatre debut.

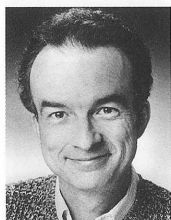


Todd Jefferson Moore (Bad Otter, ensemble) is very pleased to be working again at ACT and with the illustrious Mr. Beattie. Besides being in *A Christmas Carol*, Mr. Moore has been involved in several ACT workshops: *The Professor*, *the Puppet and the Execution*, poet David Wagoner's *A Walk with Thoreau*, and *Cars, Driving, People*. Mr. Moore is currently working with his son, Max Moore, and composer Chris Jeffries on a theatre piece about General Smedley Butler, America's most decorated military officer.

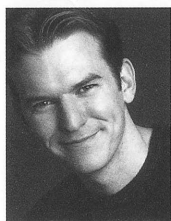
THE ACTORS



Marianne Owen (Hannah Gynt, ensemble) appeared at ACT last season as Suzy in *Omnium-Gatherum* and Marion in *Absurd Person Singular*. She has also appeared in three versions of *A Christmas Carol*, as well as *Grand Magic*, *Sideman*, *Death of a Salesman*, *God's Country*, and *A Chorus of Disapproval*, all at ACT. She was most recently seen in *Tibet through the Red Box* at Seattle Children's Theatre, *Project X* at the Empty Space, *Driving Miss Daisy* at the Village, *Glass Menagerie* and *How I Learned to Drive* at Intiman, and *Copenhagen* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, where she was a company member for nine seasons. A founding member of the American Repertory Theatre, she toured with them in the U.S., Europe and Israel, and in the International Chekhov Festival at the Moscow Art Theatre. Ms. Owen has also worked at the Arizona Theatre Co., Yale Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, the Guthrie Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the New York Shakespeare Festival, Rep. Theatre of St. Louis, Playwrights' Horizons, the Goodman Theatre, and has toured nationally in *The Real Thing* by Tom Stoppard.

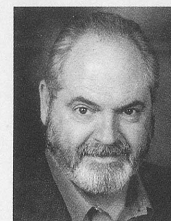


David Pichette (Mysterious Stranger, ensemble) recently appeared at ACT as Hercule Poirot in Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee*, directed by Kurt Beattie. Prior to that he was Ebenezer Scrooge in the 2002 production of *A Christmas Carol*, a reprisal of the role he has performed six times, first in 1982. Other recent performances at ACT include the plays *Grand Magic*, *Communicating Doors*, and his solo performance in David Hare's *Via Dolorosa*. In the last 20 years at ACT some of his favorite roles have been Ziggy in *Side Man*, Abbe de Coulmier in *Quills*, Martin in *Maydays*, Grez in *Red Noses*, Williamson in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, King Charles in *Sunsets and Glories*, and Golutvin in *The Diary of a Scoundrel*. Other local credits include numerous appearances at The Empty Space (most recently as O'Brien in the highly successful 1984), Intiman, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Tacoma Actors Guild, and as Henry Higgins in The 5th Avenue Theatre's production of *My Fair Lady*. David has also worked recently at Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, San Jose Repertory Theatre and at Arizona Theatre Company.

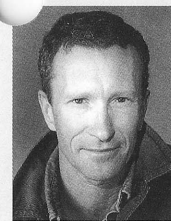


Jonah Von Spreecken (Ugly Boy, ensemble) landed in Seattle about 4 years ago, and is thrilled to now be working at ACT for this production of *Alki*. He recently enjoyed a successful run of *Arcadia* at the Capitol Hill Arts Center as well as working on John Kaufmann's *Line One* with Annex Theatre. In the past few years, he has worked with Book-It for their productions of *Dracula*, *Breathing Lessons*, *Howard's End*, *Ethan Frome* and *Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant*. He has worked at Consolidated Works as Alan Strang in Dan Savage's *Eggus*, and as part of the ensemble in Scot Augustson's shadow puppet show, *Why? Why? Why?* He has also worked with Annex Theatre on *The Velvet Rut* and has been seen in the 14/48 Festival, as well as the Seattle Fringe Festival. Last summer, he completed a successful summer tour with Scot Augustson's play, *Gilgamesh*, 1A to Fringe Festivals in Minneapolis and Vancouver. He is currently planning a tour for this summer of Scot's new play, *Plants and Animals*. Thanks to Mom, Dad, Adam, and everyone else for the continuous flow of support.

THE ACTORS



Michael Winters (King of the Haints, ensemble) has appeared in over twenty productions at ACT, most recently *Absurd Person Singular* and *Dirty Blonde*. Other ACT appearances include *Talley's Folly*, *Man of the Moment*, *Shadowlands* and five plays by Steven Dietz. Michael's most recent stage work outside of Seattle was as *King Lear* in Mark Wing-Davey's staging in January for PlayMakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill, NC. He has also appeared on Broadway in *Wrong Mountain* and in various repertory companies around the country including A.C.T. San Francisco, Denver Center Theatre Co., Arizona Theatre Co., San Jose Repertory and Mark Taper Forum. Locally Michael has also been seen at Seattle Rep and Intiman. He can be seen on TV in a recurring role on *The Gilmore Girls*. He is the grateful recipient of a Fox Fellowship.



R. Hamilton Wright (Peer Gynt) was recently seen at ACT as Captain Hastings in Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee*. Last season he made his debut on the 5th Avenue stage as Hysterium in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. A native of Seattle, in the last twenty-five years he has appeared in over one hundred professional productions at theatres in Seattle and around the country. Some of his favorites include last season's *Absurd Person Singular* as well as *Fuddy Meers*, *The End of the World*, *Chorus of Disapproval* and *Red Noses* at ACT; *Noises Off*, *Inspecting Carol* and *The Beauty Part* at the Seattle Rep; *My Uncle Sam* at the Public Theatre in New York; *Loot* and *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead* at Intiman, and *Scapin*, *Private Eyes* and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* at The Arizona Theatre Company. He just finished the run of *Over the Moon* by Steven Dietz at The Arizona Theatre Company and the Seattle Rep. He will always be remembered by ACT audiences as the original Sam in *Fully Committed*.

ACT OPERATES
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MENTS WITH THE
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The Director is a member of the Society of
Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc.,
an independent national labor union.



PRODUCTION TEAM

Kurt Beattie (Director) was appointed to the Artistic Director position in 2003 after serving as Associate Artistic Director for two years. At ACT, he has directed *Black Coffee*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Fuddy Meers*, *Fully Committed*, *Miss Golden Dreams* and *Via Dolorosa*, and the 2001–2003 productions of *A Christmas Carol*. He has directed locally at Intiman, The Empty Space, the University of Washington, and the Seattle Rep, where he directed *Art*. 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, The Empty Space, and at various regional theatres throughout the country. Last winter Kurt played 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.

Scott Weldin (Scenery Designer and Projection Co-Designer) has designed over 25 shows at ACT including *Dirty Blonde*, *Fully Committed*, *Communicating Doors*, *The Crimson Thread*, *Handing Down the Names*, *Lonely Planet*, *Eleemosynary*, *Hapgood*, *Tales from Hollywood* and *Red Noses*. His extensive local credits include *The O'Conner Girls*, *Over the Moon*, *Spinning into Butter*, *Nixon's Nixon*, *Private Eyes*, and *Feast of Fools* at Seattle Repertory Theatre; *Waiting for Godot*, *Angel Street*, and *Hobson's Choice* at Intiman Theatre; *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* at Seattle Children's Theatre; and over twenty shows at The Empty Space. Elsewhere he has designed scenery for the Alley Theatre in Houston, Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Arizona Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Childsplay Theatre in Arizona, Denver Center Theatre Company, People's Light and Theatre in Pennsylvania, Portland Center Stage, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Missouri Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, George Street Playhouse, The Goodman Theatre in Chicago, off-Broadway at the Westside Arts Theatre in New York, and in Egypt at American University in Cairo.

Martin Christoffel (Projection Co-Designer) has designed locally at Village Theatre, Civic Light Opera, Northwest Actor's Studio, and Annex, to name a few, and nationally at Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts, Cabrillo Stage in California, and points between. For the past seven years he has designed extensively for corporate events and trade shows, working for TPN, and as an art director has created presentations for Washington Mutual Bank, Samsung, and Boeing. He is pleased to participate in this production at ACT.

Deb Trout (Costume Designer) Happy to return to ACT Theatre, Deb previously designed the clothes for *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Wintertime*, *Dinner with Friends*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Arcadia*. Also in Seattle she has designed for The Intiman Theatre, Seattle Children's and Shakespeare Theatre Companies and, most recently, the clothes for Nilo Cruz's new play *The Beauty of the Father* at Seattle Repertory Theatre. Some of her other collaborations include shows at the Manhattan School of Music, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Minneapolis Children's Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Portland Center Stage, Juneau's Perseverance Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, the off-off Broadway scene and Yale Repertory Theatre. Deb co-founded the New York based millinery company Mackey and Trout, is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, and is currently a member of the design faculty at the University of Washington.

PRODUCTION TEAM

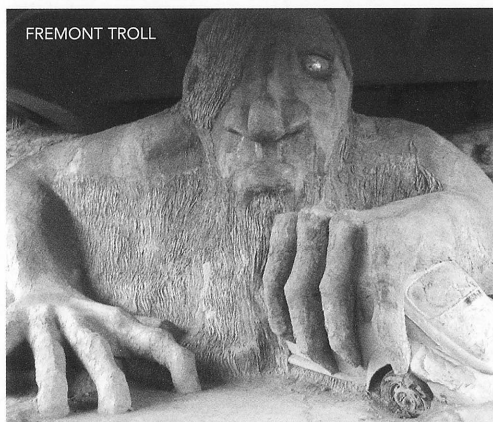
Geoff Korf (Lighting Designer) designed last season's *A Moon for the Misbegotten* and has designed lighting for productions on Broadway and at the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Beach Opera, San Francisco Opera Center, San Diego Rep, The Old Globe, Seattle Rep, The Goodman Theater, Trinity Rep, Yale Rep, The Kennedy Center, The Huntington Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Stage One, and Chicago Children's Theatre. His designs have also appeared at the Geffen Contemporary Museum, LA County Museum of Art, the Getty Center, and the Hammer Museum in Westwood. Geoff is a member of the ensemble of Cornerstone Theater where he has designed more than a dozen productions including *Media/MacBeth/Cinderella*, *An Antigone Story*, and most recently *Center of the Star*. He teaches lighting design at the University of Washington and is a graduate of California State University, Chico, and the Yale School of Drama.

Minic CodyKramers (Sound Designer) At ACT (in alphabetical order): *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *Big Love*, *Black Coffee*, *Communicating Doors*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Fully Committed*, *In the Penal Colony*, Master Sound Engineer (not a play), *Monster*, *Polish Joke*, *Talley's Folly*, *Waiting to be Invited*, *Wintertime*. Additionally (in reverse alphabetical order): Universal Studios Hollywood, Spectrum Dance Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Santa Clarita Repertory Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts, Oregon Cabaret Theatre, Flying Karamazov Brothers, Corridor Theatre Collective. Also (in no particular order): IATSE Local 15, UNC Asheville, MFA California Institute of the Arts, United Scenic Artists 829, USITT Sound Achievement Award. Most importantly (wife): Dayna.

Jeffrey K. Hanson (Stage Manager) stage-managed his first production at ACT, *Lloyd's Prayer*, in 1990. Now in his 15th season, he has stage managed over 35 ACT productions including last season's *Absurd Person Singular*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, as well as *Fully Committed*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Yellowman*, *Fuddy Meers* and *A Christmas Carol* the past four seasons. In 2001 he managed *Grand Magic*, *Big Love*, *Dinner With Friends*, and *Waiting to be Invited*. Other highlights from past seasons at ACT include *A Skull in Connemara*, *Quills*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Halcyon Days*, *The Illusion* and *The Revengers' Comedies*. Outside of ACT, Jeffrey K. has stage managed at Seattle Repertory Theatre on such productions as *Metamorphoses* and *The Cider House Rules*, *Parts I and II*. Other regional credits include productions at Seattle Children's Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, and New Mexico Repertory Theatre.

Wade Madsen (Choreographer) is a Seattle based choreographer and has received choreographic fellowships and grants from the NEA, King County, Artist Trust, Seattle Arts and Washington State Arts commissions, and Bossak/Heilbron foundation. Wade is currently teaching for the twentieth year at Cornish College of the Arts, where he is professor of dance. Wade's company, Wade Madsen and Dancers, has been producing and performing in Seattle since 1979. His new project, *The Element*, will be presented in the summer of 2005.

ALKI: REFLECTIONS



"To have a self, to be a self,
is the greatest concession
made to man, but at the
same time it is eternity's
demand on him.

KIERKEGAARD

"To live is to war with
trolls in heart and soul.
To write is to sit in
judgment on oneself."

HENRIK IBSEN

"The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation-initiation-return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth.

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons to his fellow man.

The ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome, is commonly represented as mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the world. The Lady of the House of Sleep is a familiar figure in a fairy tale and myth. She is the paragon of all paragons of beauty, the reply to all desire, the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero's earthly and unearthly quest. She is mother, sister, mistress, bride. Whatever in the world has lured, whatever has seemed to promise joy, has been premonitory of her existence - in the deep of sleep, if not in the cities and forests of the world. For she is the incarnation of the promise of perfection. Time sealed her away, yet she is dwelling still, like one who sleeps in timelessness. The meeting with the goddess is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love, which is life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity."

FROM "THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES" BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

ALKI: REFLECTIONS

FALL 1855, THE SETTLEMENT CALLED WHATCOM

"Two or three times those first summers, Ada and Rooney paddled out into the bay in the evening, to get out from under the trees. The sky widened above their canoe and soaked them in its colors. From there, from out on the gleaming bay, they could see Mount Baker. Mount Baker was pretty as a picture, Ada used to say, for its glaciers shone almost all night in summer, when snow was the last thing you expected to see anywhere, let alone halfway up the sky. Its snowy peak was always higher than they expected - the conical summit, and a lesser sharp peak nearby, both slicked up in layers of ice that shed more light than the moon. Its glistening tonnage seemed to float loose above the layer of sky, and it gave Ada the willies.

Mount Baker was out of scale the way this whole country was, and if you let yourself think about it - pretty as a picture, and fit for bears. Who could believe the United States would find its way out here?"

FROM "THE LIVING" BY ANNIE DILLARD

"Each wind was the breath of some being that lived far away in the direction from where the wind blows. To each the Indians gave a name; and every sigh, whistle, moan or roar of the wind seemed to them to be the voice of its spirit. Echoes, waterfalls and rapids, the roar of the thunder, the growth of plants, the changed position of stars - all were caused by the spirits living in them. The spirits of nature control nature, the Indians believed, just as the spirits that live in human bodies control human actions."

FROM "INDIAN LEGENDS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST" BY ELLA E. CLARK



COMPILED BY ANITA MONTGOMERY,
Literary Associate and Education Outreach Director

Images of the Fremont Troll used by permission of the artists:
Steve Badanes, Donna Walter, Will Martin, and Ross Whitehead.

“PEER GYNT” ON PUGET SOUND

Nearly two decades before Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt*, Henry Yesler — American mechanic, dreamer, schemer, and inveterate entrepreneur — packed his bags, left wife and kids behind, and headed for the gold fields of California. Before long he journeyed among the pioneer outposts of Oregon, eventually arriving at the very edge of America, where among the dense forests, deep fjords, and rich native cultures of the Puget Sound, he dreamed of a city and made it come true.

From the start, Yesler was different — he arrived alone, was middle-aged and had a plan in mind for the ragtag group of settlers who greeted him. Yesler promised the town a steam-powered sawmill in exchange for a small claim on the Elliott Bay waterfront. The townsmen agreed, and before long Yesler had his mill up and running, buying logs from other settlers and shipping lumber to California, South America, even Australia.

In the 1850s, Yesler's mill was the only real employer in cash-strapped Seattle. Nearly everyone was on the payroll — from native men to future banker Dexter Horton and African American pioneer Bill Grose — even as Yesler himself went into debt to get equipment or make repairs. But he was persistent and persuasive: he convinced the local Masons to build Yesler's Hall, then ran it for his own profit. He managed to acquire more real estate than almost anyone in town but often let it deteriorate. He started a dozen companies — the first water system, gristmill, still more sawmills — but was eventually eclipsed in each endeavor. Yet his magnificent Pioneer Block, built near century's end, still stands as testimony to the great metropolis that his Seattle became.

Yesler started a college, founded the city library, and gave to nearly every cause that sought his support. And when he ran out of money, he simply sold tickets to a Grand Lottery promising the winner the mill itself, but after tickets were sold he changed his mind and kept the cash. Even so, Henry served as King County's first auditor and was elected by his townsmen to be their mayor — twice.

Although he wrote back home to wife Sarah, Yesler lived openly with a native woman and their daughter Julia in the 1850s. Not surprisingly, he worked hard to keep native people inside Seattle, many of whom were in his employ, rather than removing them to reservations across the Sound. Eventually, Sarah joined Henry and his daughter, bringing her own brand of idiosyncrasy — a spiritualist, free thinker and free love advocate who stood distinctly apart from the more conventional norms of Seattle. Together Henry and Sarah built the grandest home in the territory where they hosted visiting dignitaries and held séances to invite back the dearly departed.

After Sarah herself died, eighty-year old Henry married his 24-year-old cousin Minnie, and left her his entire fortune when he died in 1892, angering many town leaders who were hoping for more of his largesse. But Henry Yesler died happy, knowing that he helped transform a town of 30 into a city of 50,000, knowing that his mill put Seattle firmly on the map, knowing that his personal journey ended where *Peer Gynt* and all epics rightly begin — at home in the world of his dreams.

BY LEONARD GARFIELD, Executive Director — MOHAI

For more information on Henry Yesler and the founding of Seattle, visit the Museum of History & Industry.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Eric Overmyer (Playwright) is a native of Seattle. His plays include *Native Speech*, *On The Verge*, *In A Pig's Valise*, *In Perpetuity Throughout The Universe*, *The Heliotrope Bouquet*, and *Dark Rapture*. Local productions: *On The Verge*, Empty Space, directed by Craig Latrell; *In A Pig's Valise*, Pioneer Square Theatre, directed by Nick Flynn; *Dark Rapture*, Empty Space, directed by Kurt Beattie. Special thanks to ACT, Jeff Steitzer and Kurt Beattie.

Peer Gynt has always intrigued me — its epic scale, its deluded, mythologizing, ambitious, self-inventing central character. Of all of Ibsen's plays, it seems to me to be the most “American,” a distant kissin' cousin to Huckleberry Finn, and some years ago I began thinking about doing an American adaptation. My play “Dark Rapture” was being done at The Empty Space, directed by Kurt Beattie, with Bob Wright and David Pichette playing a particularly nasty and funny pair of bad guys, and I mentioned the idea to them, and to Jeff Steitzer, who promptly offered to commission the play for ACT. I accepted, and so it followed to set the play in the Pacific Northwest.



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I finished a draft, Jeff scheduled the play, and we started talking about designers and actors. Jeff was about to start casting — and then he left ACT. And the play was shelved.

In the years that followed I kept working on the play — a reading here and a reading there, including one at the Dallas Theatre Center, thanks to Melissa Cooper and Richard Hamburger. And there was some interest in doing a production in Chicago and elsewhere. But I always thought the place to do it was in Seattle, at ACT. And then when Kurt Beattie became Artistic Director, I called him and reminded him that the play was somewhere in the ACT archives. He dusted it off, read it, and to my delight, agreed to resurrect it. I had three requests, that, if possible, he direct it, that Bob Wright play Peer, and that David Pichette be part of the company. And all three requests came to pass. My heartfelt thanks to Jeff and Kurt, midwives, and to Bob and David and the rest of the company.

So here we are, ten years later, come full circle. *Alki*, as the Indians say. *By and by*. As Huck would say, *Let's light out for the territory*.

ERIC OVERMYER

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EXECUTIVE STAFF



Kurt Beattie (Artistic Director) joined ACT in 2001 as Associate Artistic Director after serving in the same position at Seattle Repertory Theatre. The Board of Directors unanimously approved Kurt's appointment to the ACT Theatre Artistic Director position in April 2003. At ACT, he has directed *Alki*, *Black Coffee*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Fuddy Meers*, *Fully Committed*, *Miss Golden Dreams* and *Via Dolorosa*, and the 2001–2003 productions of *A Christmas Carol*. He has directed locally at Intiman, The Empty Space, the University of Washington, and the Seattle Rep, where he directed *Art*. 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, The Empty Space, and at various regional theatres throughout the country. Last winter Kurt played 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 2003. 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 Mayor's 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.

ACT STAFF

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Artistic Director
Susan Trapnell
Managing Director

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Jeff Steitzer
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