

ACT
CELEBRATING
40
YEARS
OF CONTEMPORARY
THEATRE

ACT THEATRE PRESENTS

Bach at Leipzig

The Ugly American

Born Yesterday

The Night of the Iguana

Vincent *in Brixton*

BY Nicholas Wright

DIRECTED BY Kurt Beattie

Flight



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005



If you have subscribed to ACT but haven't donated, let us tell you what your gift can do.

We thank you for the commitment you make to us each year with a subscription. We couldn't do any of this without you. Your early support of our season tells us the shows can go on — we can secure the rights to the best plays in contemporary theatre, and work to line up the incredibly talented artists and artisans that will bring those shows to life. Ticket sales, however, make up only 60% of our production costs.

When you make a donation to ACT, you bring those talented artists and artisans inside the theatre and put them to work. Contributions from our patrons give us the flexibility we need to stage shows with larger casts and more spectacular costume or scenic needs. Contributions allow us to continue to hire the master actors you have come to expect on our stages. With your help, the show doesn't just go on — it shines.

Give today, and make ACT shine.

For more information, please contact Nick Barnett at nbarnett@acttheatre.org or 206-292-7660, ext. 1331.

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ON THE WEB AT acttheatre.org
A Contemporary Theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



Welcome to ACT Theatre's 41ST Season – A Season to Embrace!



We're glad you could join us for *Vincent in Brixton*! With Charlayne Woodard's *Flight* coming up next, we are quickly approaching the end of the 2005 Mainstage Season. It is flying by, and plans for the 2006 season are well underway.

Next season's plays are being announced this month, and it's not too early to renew your commitment to ACT by reserving a 2006 season subscription! Thanks to you, we are looking forward to another exciting season of new plays and contemporary classics directed, designed and acted by your favorite Seattle artists.

Enjoy the show, and we'll see you back at ACT soon.

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Kurt Beattie
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Susan Trapnell
MANAGING DIRECTOR

ACT THEATRE PRESENTS

Vincent in Brixton

BY

Nicholas Wright

DIRECTED BY

Kurt Beattie

Sept. 2 – Oct. 2, 2005

OPENING NIGHT

Sept. 8, 2005



The Nesholm
Family
Foundation



Produced by Lincoln Center Theater in 2003, New York City

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

ACT Theatre is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the American Arts Alliance and 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.

October 14 - November 13

Joyous.
Inspiring.
A celebration!

FLIGHT

BY
CHARLAYNE
WOODARD

DIRECTED BY
VALERIE
CURTIS-NEWTON



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

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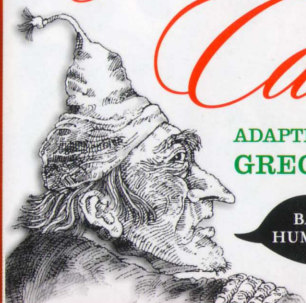
November 25 - December 24

Seattle's Favorite
Holiday Tradition!

CHARLES
DICKENS'

A Christmas Carol

ADAPTED BY
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BAH!
HUMBUG!

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FOR
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OCTOBER 14 - NOVEMBER 13:

Flight

BY CHARLAYNE WOODARD

NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 24:

**Charles Dickens'
A Christmas Carol**

ADAPTED BY GREGORY A. FALLS

ONGOING:

**Rob Becker's
Defending the Caveman**

ONGOING:

Late Nite Catechism

BY VICKI QUADE & MARIPAT DONOVAN

ONGOING:

Menopause The Musical

BY JEANIE LINDERS

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THE COMPANY

CAST (in alphabetical order)

Anne Allgood*	Ursula Loyer
Devlin Borra*	Sam Plowman
Emily Cedergreen*	Eugenie Loyer
Renata Friedman*	Anna van Gogh
Shawn Telford*	Vincent van Gogh

PRODUCTION TEAM

Kurt Beattie	Director
Scott Weldin	Scenic Designer
Melanie Taylor Burgess	Costume Designer
Mark Paulsen	Lighting Designer
Stephen LeGrand	Sound Designer
Liza Comtois	Dramaturg
Ellen Boyle	Dialect Coach
Anne Kearson*	Stage Manager
Jennifer Yaros	Assistant Lighting Designer
Nora Menkin	Production Assistant

*Denotes membership in Actors' Equity Association, the professional union for actors and stage managers in the United States.

THERE WILL BE ONE
INTERMISSION

The scene is 87 Hackford Road,
Brixton, South London

TIME: 1873-1876

SCENE 1: Winter
SCENE 2: Spring
SCENE 3: Summer
SCENE 4: Autumn

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

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and the use of recording
devices are strictly prohibited.

Please do not walk on
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or after the show.

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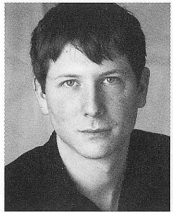
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THE ACTORS



Anne Allgood (Ursula Loyer) appeared on Broadway in *Carousel*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Most Happy Fella*, *Imaginary Friends* and *Beauty and the Beast*. She has toured the U.S. in *Urinetown*, *Floyd Collins*, *Parade*, *Evita*, and more. Seattle credits include *Bad Dates* and *The Constant Wife* (Seattle Rep), *A Christmas Carol* (ACT), *Cymbeline* (Intiman), *Gypsy* (5th Avenue), and several shows at Seattle Children's Theatre. Regionally, she has appeared in *Candide*, *Jane Eyre*, *Tintypes*, *A Little Night Music* and *Das Barbecül*, to name a few, in theatres such as the Guthrie, La Jolla, Old Globe, Asolo and Goodman. She dedicates this performance to her mother, who hung a Van Gogh print in their living room, and who told her, "You can paint the sky any color you like."



Devlin Borra (Sam Plowman) is excited to be working with ACT. He has previously appeared at ACT in a reading of *God's Rubble*. Most recently, he has been seen in the Seattle International Film Festival in *Mosca Amor* and the award-winning short *Commercial*. He studied and ruffled feathers at Freehold Studio/Theatre Lab, Northwest Actors Studio, Seattle Central, Cornish College of the Arts, and CWU. He would like to dedicate his performance to his friends, Vincent van Gogh, unacknowledged artists everywhere, and to Nanika Elizabeth Lee.



Emily Cedergreen (Eugenie Loyer) is delighted to return to ACT, where she has recently appeared as Abby Drake in *Fiction* and Barbara Amory in *Black Coffee*. Seattle audiences may also have seen Emily at the Seattle Children's Theatre, where she played Lucy in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Other Seattle credits include Chess in *Sunrise* (2003 Seattle Fringe Festival) and Jessica in *This is Our Youth*. In 2003, Emily received her BA in drama from the University of Washington. She gives thanks to Andy and to family and friends for their support.



Renata Friedman (Anna van Gogh) Renata's New York credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena/Tom Snout) at the New Victory Theater, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Ms. Prism) Off-Broadway, and a national tour of both productions with the Aquila Theatre Company. She has also appeared in *The Iliad* (Chryses) with the Lincoln Center Institute and was featured on television in *Do Not Go Gentle* for the BBC. Renata is a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

THE ACTORS



Shawn Telford (Vincent van Gogh) is a graduate of the University of Washington Professional Actor Training Program and is making his ACT debut. Recent credits include Wilson in the Seattle Children's Theatre adaptation of *The Red Badge of Courage*, Rosencrantz in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and Haroun in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Shawn has written and produced his own solo work for audiences in Seattle and New York. He has also appeared in the Seattle Fringe Festival and was a member of the Apprentice Company at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Film credits include *8 minutes to love*; *Bullets, Blood and a Fistful of Cash*; *Professional Courtesy* and the TV series, *The Fugitive*. Shawn dedicates his performance in *Vincent in Brixton* to BJ and Gid.

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PRODUCTION TEAM

Nicholas Wright (Playwright) was Literary Manager of the Royal National Theatre in London from 1984-1989, and subsequently an associate director until 1998; he was also the first director of the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs. He is the author of numerous plays, including *Cressida* (Almeida/West End), *Mrs. Klein* (National/West End) and *The Desert Air* (Royal Shakespeare Company); his many adaptations include Wedekind's *Lulu* (Almeida King's Cross, London; and Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.), Pirandello's *Naked* (Almeida/West End), Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* (NT, directed by Richard Eyre), and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (also NT). He and Richard Eyre collaborated on the book *Changing Stages*, a personal view of the British theatre in the twentieth century, upon which Eyre's BBC TV series was based.

Kurt Beattie (Director) joined ACT in 2001 as Associate Artistic Director and was appointed Artistic Director in April of 2003. Earlier this season Kurt directed *Bach at Leipzig*. In 2004 Kurt directed *Black Coffee* by Agatha Christie, the world premiere of Eric Overmyer's *Alki*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Other director credits at ACT include *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *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 Theatre, 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*), Seattle Rep, Intiman and Empty Space, as well as many regional theatres throughout the country.

Scott Weldin (Scenic Designer) has now designed 29 shows at ACT including *Alki*, *Fiction*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Fully Committed*, *Handing Down the Names*, *Lonely Planet*, *Eleemosynary*, *Hapgood*, *Tales from Hollywood* and *Red Noses*. His extensive local credits include *Bad Dates*, *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 20 shows at The Empty Space. Elsewhere he has designed scenery for the Alley Theatre in Houston, Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Arizona Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Childsplay Theatre in Arizona, Denver Center Theatre Company, People's Light & 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.

Melanie Taylor Burgess (Costume Designer) This is Melanie's first costume design for ACT. Locally, she has designed for Seattle Repertory Theatre, The Empty Space, Village Theatre, TAG, Seattle Shakespeare Company and Seattle Opera (design coordinator). She has also designed 21 productions for Seattle Children's Theatre, including *The Red Badge of Courage*, *The Big Friendly Giant*, *The Outsiders* and *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Additionally, she has designed for Idaho Theatre for Youth and Honolulu Theatre for Youth. Melanie is resident designer for Seattle University and Lakeside School, where she has designed over 50 productions. She received the Seattle Times Footlight Award for best costume design of 1995 for the Seattle Children's Theatre production of *Pinocchio*, and again in 2003 for the Empty Space production of *Ming the Rude*.

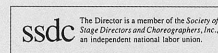
PRODUCTION TEAM

Rick Paulsen (Lighting Designer) is delighted to be returning to ACT, where his lighting was first seen in *Angels Fall* in 1983. Since then, Rick has lit dozens of shows at ACT; some favorites include *Tales from Hollywood*, *The Jail Diary of Albee Sachs*, *Happenstance*, *The Nina Variations*, *Woman in Mind*, *A Walk in the Woods*, *Red Noses*, *Keely and Du*, *Handing Down the Names*, *The Odd Couple*, *Lonely Planet* and last season's *Fiction*. Rick's work has appeared all around the Seattle area and across the nation. Some recent work of note includes *Macbeth* at Arizona Theatre Company, *The Chosen* at Seattle Repertory Theatre, and *The Secret Garden*, *The Red Badge of Courage* and *A Year with Frog and Toad* at Seattle Children's Theatre. He is, most importantly, devoted to his wife Roberta and Paige, his thirteen year-old daughter.

Stephen LeGrand (Sound Designer) Stephen's music and sound designs have been heard in theatres throughout the country including The Public Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Huntington Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Mark Taper Forum and La Jolla Playhouse. He served as a resident designer at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco for 11 years before relocating to Seattle. Locally his recent designs have been heard in *Three Sisters* and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* at Intiman Theatre, and *Noises Off* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at Seattle Repertory Theatre. Other shows along the way have included *Lulu*, *Golden Child*, *Hecuba*, *Twilight Los Angeles*, *The Ballad of Yachiyo*, *Anna in the Tropics* and *A Skull in Connemara*.

Anne Kearson (Stage Manager) is pleased to be a part of ACT's 2005 season, her 8th. Earlier this year she stage managed *Born Yesterday*. Last season she stage managed *Good Boys* and *Enchanted April*. Other favorites from past seasons include Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, *The Education of Randy Newman*, *Big Love*, *Side Man* and *Violet*. Locally she has worked at The 5th Avenue Theatre, most recently stage managing *Miss Saigon*, as well as at Seattle Repertory Theatre and Tacoma Actors Guild. Other regional credits include five seasons with South Coast Repertory, five seasons with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and two seasons with the Utah Shakespearean Festival. Anne's great passions are her husband, Brian, her three children, Rebecca, Max, and Olivia Rose, and her 38-foot sailboat, Aleeska. Anne is proud to be the third generation of Kearsons in the entertainment industry.

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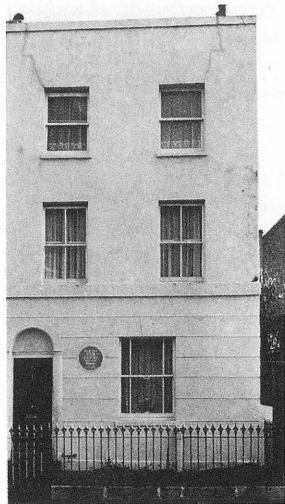




Vincent at age 18

"We do not feel that we are dying, but we do feel the truth that we are of small account, and that we are paying a hard price to be a link in the chain of artists, in health, in youth, in liberty, none of which we enjoy, any more than the cab-driving horse that hauls a coachful of people out to enjoy the spring."

VINCENT VAN GOGH



The Loyer house today

Like most literate people in the 19th century, Van Gogh maintained a voluminous correspondence with family, friends and fellow artists, but unlike many of his painter contemporaries he was unusually articulate and forthright about the challenges of both his life and his craft. "The great masters of letter writing as an art have probably been more concerned with entertaining their friends than disclosing their innermost thoughts and feelings," wrote W.H. Auden. "Their epistolary style is characterized by speed, high spirits, wit and fantasy. Van Gogh's letters are not art in this sense, but human documents; what makes them great letters is the absolute self-honesty and nobility of the writer... Few painters read books and fewer can express in words what they are up to. Van Gogh is a notable exception: he read voraciously and with understanding, he had considerable literary talent of his own, and he loved to talk about what he was doing and why."

To his brother, Theo, Ramsgate, 1876

... I also saw the sea last Sunday night. Everything was dark and gray, but in the horizon the day began to dawn. It was still very early, but a lark was already singing. So were the nightingales in the gardens near the sea. In the distance shone the light from the lighthouse, the guard ship, etc. From the window of my room that same night I looked on the roofs of the houses that can be seen from there and on the tops of the elm trees, dark against the night sky. Over those roofs, one single star, but a beautifully large, friendly one. And I thought of you all and of my own past years and of our home, and in me arose the words and the emotion: "Keep me from being a son that maketh ashamed; give me Thy blessing, not because I deserve it, but for my mother's sake. Thou art love, cover all things. Without Thy continued blessings we succeed in nothing."

To Theo, Nuenen, 1883

I feel what Father and Mother think of me instinctively (I do not say intelligently). They feel the same dread of taking me into the house as they would about taking a big, rough dog. He would run into the room with wet paws — and he is so rough. He will be in everybody's way. And he barks so loud. In short, he is a foul beast. All right — but the beast has a human history, and though only a dog, he has a human soul, and a very sensitive one, that makes him feel what people think of him, which an ordinary dog cannot do.

To Theo, Arles, September 1888

In the end, we shall have had enough of cynicism, skepticism and humbug, and will want to live — more musically. How will this come about, and what will we discover? It would be nice to be able to prophesy, but it is even better to be forewarned, instead of seeing absolutely nothing in the future other than the disasters that are bound to strike the modern world and civilization like so many thunderbolts, through revolution, or war, or the bankruptcy of worm-eaten states.

If we study Japanese art, we discover a man who is undeniably wise, philosophical and intelligent, who spends his time — doing what? Studying the distance from the earth and the moon? No! Studying the politics of Bismarck? No! He studies ... a single blade of grass. But this blade of grass leads him to draw all the plants — then the seasons, the grand spectacle of landscapes, finally animals, then the human figure. That is how he spends his life, and life is too short to do everything.

Van Gogh materials compiled for the program by Anita Montgomery, Literary Associate & Education/Outreach Director, and Margaret Layne, Artistic Associate & Casting Director.

INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT



The Starry Night, 1889

BBC cultural commentator Nicola Barranger interviews Nicholas Wright about *VINCENT IN BRIXTON*. Interview transcript by permission of Nicola Barranger, Bright Sounds, London.

WRIGHT: Originally I was just very, very intrigued by the fact that [Van Gogh] lived here. It's one of those odd facts. It's very hard to assimilate because it's so much the opposite of what you'd expect. We think of Vincent so much as the painter of sunny skies and sunflowers and vivid Mediterranean colors. You don't connect him with the world of sooty streets and bicycle clips and clanking milk bottles, and I found that very intriguing. That was just my way in, my starting point. It's not what I've dwelt on, it's what got me going in the first place.

"One may have a blazing hearth in one's soul and yet no one ever came to sit by it. Passers-by see only a wisp of smoke from the chimney and continue on their way."

VINCENT VAN GOGH

NB: But this is factual. Vincent really did live in Brixton, didn't he?

WRIGHT: Oh yes, yes he did, from 1873 to 1876, from the age of twenty. He was working for the family firm, an art dealer firm which had a branch in Covent Garden. It was based in The Hague. And he'd been working in The Hague. He worked very respectably, bought a top hat, had a suit, went for long walks all the time, went to church every Sunday. His English was very good; he read everything by Dickens, everything by Shakespeare. He loved George Eliot, Mrs. Gaskell. He never went to the theatre, as far as I know. In fact I'm sure he never went to the theatre, because he would have said so in his letters to his younger brother Theo, which is how we know about most of it.

"When I have a terrible need of — shall I say the word — religion, then I go out and paint the stars."

VINCENT VAN GOGH

INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT

NB: He comes across in your play as very gawky, very tactless.

WRIGHT: Well, he was always very tactless, he was a country boy — brought up in a small country parish — not at all sophisticated in any way. He didn't have, to start with, any visionary sense that you associate with him. And he didn't have any particular desire to paint or draw. If you read his letters, you can see that he was enormously talented but you could as well believe that he was going to be a very famous writer.

NB: There is a very strong suggestion in your play that if he hadn't come to Brixton, hadn't stayed with Mrs. Loyer and her other tenants, that he may not have become a painter at all.

RIGHT: Well, who knows if things were really like I've dramatized them. But I think it's true that if he hadn't stayed in England, if he hadn't had the experience of working-class life in London, of British politics, of the very English idea which came from Ruskin and William Morris of art having social significance and being at its greatest in scenes from working life, I think it's very possible his work would have taken a different turn, yes. Also, he learned Shakespeare — Dickens was also very important for him. He was very influenced by illustrations of Dickens and the scenes of hardship, of poverty and working life that he found in Dickens. All those things were things that he got in London.

NB: I was wondering how many picture references I was picking out — the chair, the boots, the poppies, Arles. Was that intentional?

WRIGHT: Completely intentional. It doesn't matter if nobody gets them, it really makes no difference to your enjoyment of the play. But if you do pick up references, there are one or two others. I think it's a bit of a plus, a bit of an interest.



A Pair of Shoes, 1886

NB: Is there also a suggestion that here in Brixton, Vincent's artistic awakening coincides with his sexual awakening?

WRIGHT: It is certainly there, and that's just something I believe — that sexual awakening is essential to artistic awakening. I think the two almost go together. When a young person falls in love and particularly falls sexually in love, that's the moment when the whole human race seems to be transformed and you look at things in a different way. I think it's very hard to have the true artist's visionary experience of the world without having gone through that sexual, loving experience.

To hear more of Nicola Barranger's conversations with contemporary British theatre artists, visit her website at www.brightsounds.co.uk.

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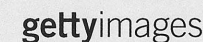
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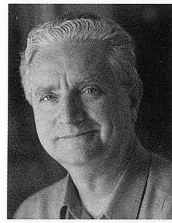
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Kurt Beattie (Artistic Director) joined ACT in 2001 as Associate Artistic Director and was appointed Artistic Director in April of 2003. Kurt has been creating theatre for Puget Sound audiences for more than 30 years as both actor and director. During ACT's 2005 season Kurt directed *Bach at Leipzig* and *Vincent in Brixton*, and will direct ACT's 30th annual production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. In 2004 he directed ACT productions of *Black Coffee*, *Alki* and *A Christmas Carol*. Previously at ACT he has directed *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *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 Seattle Repertory Theatre and productions at Empty Space, Intiman and the University of Washington. Nationally he has directed at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and 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*), Seattle Rep, Intiman and Empty Space, as well as many regional theatres throughout the country. The Richard Hugo House has commissioned Kurt to write a solo show about William Butler Yeats, and later in the fall he will also direct an evening of Yeats' work at Town Hall. Kurt is the co-recipient (with Susan Trapnell) of the 2004 Theatre Puget Sound Gregory A. Falls Sustained Achievement Award.



Susan Trapnell (Managing Director) was appointed Managing Director 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 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 currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of Theatre Communications Group, the Advisory Board of Arts Space, the Board of Town Hall, and is a Trustee of the Kreielsheimer Remainder Trust. Susan is the co-recipient (with Kurt Beattie) of the 2004 Theatre Puget Sound Gregory A. Falls Sustained Achievement Award.

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ACT Theatre gratefully acknowledges the following for their contributions to this production and season:

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