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First Class

by David Wagoner

Directed by Kurt Beattie

2007 Season

The Clean House

By Sarah Ruhl
March 30 – April 29

Souvenir

By Stephen Temperley
May 11 – June 10

Stuff Happens

By David Hare
June 22 – July 22

First Class

By David Wagoner
July 27 – August 26

The Mojo and the Sayso

By Aishah Rahman
August 31 – September 30

The Women

By Clare Boothe Luce
October 5 – November 11

Kurt Beattie
Artistic Director

Susan Trapnell
*Executive Director of
Endowment Funding*

ACT Theatre presents

First Class

by David Wagoner

Directed by Kurt Beattie

July 27 – August 26, 2007

Opening Night
August 2, 2007

Seasonal support provided by:



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ACT Theatre

The Shubert
Foundation Inc.

seattle
MAGAZINE

Support for *First Class* provided by:



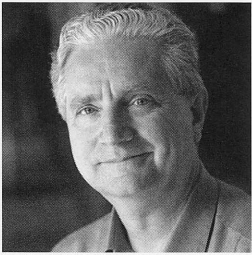
THE WITTER BYNNER
FOUNDATION FOR POETRY

This is the World Premiere of *First Class*.

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

ACT 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.

WELCOME TO ACT



Our fourth play of 2007, *First Class*, gives us a uniquely personal look through the keyhole of theatre into the classroom of the greatest teacher most of us probably never had. Theodore Roethke came to teach at the University of Washington in 1947, and became one of the most lauded poets of his generation, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. The careers he fostered through his teaching include some of the most important American poets of the last thirty years. Now one of those poets, David Wagoner, recreates for us what it was like to be Roethke's

student, and lets us listen in while he struggles to sort out his writing and his life. His character is emblematic of that guide, mentor, shaman, intellect, or what you will—those of you lucky enough to have known such a person—who was able to take you places that were always there, in the world and within yourself, but that you just couldn't see on your own.

I'm fearful that as I march through life I quietly lose the ability to look and see. I find that great art wakes me again and again from that sleep. It helps me to see how I fit in—or not; how I am connected to the processes and motions of water; of insects and plants; of my own body; to the stars themselves. Roethke described his own movement towards this union in one of his most famous poems: "I wake to sleep and take my waking slow./ I feel my fate in what I cannot fear./ I learn by going where I have to go."

This play describes such a journey, and I think finally gives us the gift that we all hope for at the beginning of any class: to have learned something that gives us the sense of our own limitless possibilities, the real mysteries of our own existence, and a way to hear things as we have never heard them before. In this age of wretched, conscribed, and increasingly corrupt language, the play is a tonic, a rediscovery of the primary magic of creative language and living. It's thrilling to be able to give such a play its world premiere.

Kurt Beattie

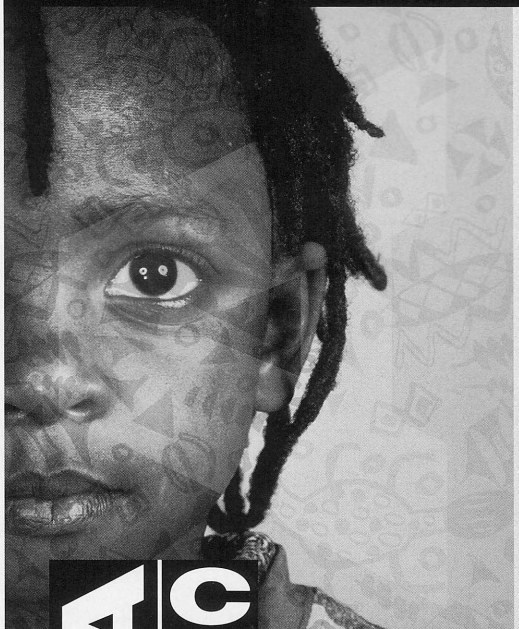
Kurt Beattie
Artistic Director

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This season. Only at ACT — A Contemporary Theatre.

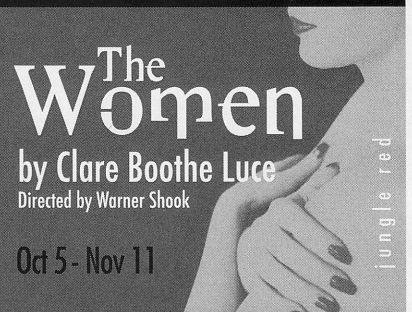
In your life. In our name.
And on our stage.



*the
mojo & the
sayso*

by Aishah Rahman
Directed by Valerie Curtis-Newton

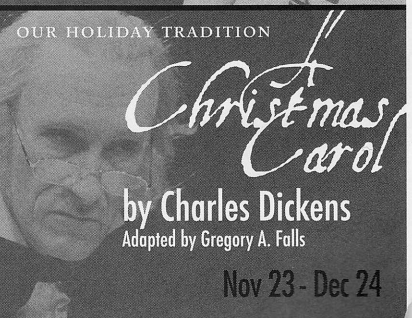
Aug 31 - Sept 30



*The
Women*

by Clare Boothe Luce
Directed by Warner Shook

Oct 5 - Nov 11



OUR HOLIDAY TRADITION

*Christmas
Carol*

by Charles Dickens
Adapted by Gregory A. Falls

Nov 23 - Dec 24



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THE COMPANY

CAST

John Aylward

Theodore Roethke

PRODUCTION TEAM

Kurt Beattie	Director
Carey Wong	Scenic Designer
Deb Trout	Costume Designer
Rick Paulsen	Lighting Designer
Eric Chappelle	Sound Designer
Michael B. Paul	Stage Manager
Jaime Soulé	Production Assistant
Christine Sumption	Assistant Director
Ashley Born	Assistant Lighting Designer

There will be no intermission.

The Actor 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.

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

All forms of photography and the use of recording devices are strictly prohibited.

Please do not walk on the stage before, during or after the show.

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with the following:



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The Director is a member of the Society of
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Introduction to *First Class*

By David Wagoner

I was a student of Theodore Roethke during my senior year at Penn State in 1947. I took two courses from him: a poetry workshop and a seminar on Yeats and Hopkins. He was an extraordinary teacher, as some of his other students have testified, among them James Wright, Richard Hugo, and Carolyn Kizer. I had been writing poems since I was ten and had a trunk full of them when I first encountered Roethke. After two weeks, perhaps less, in his workshop, I said to myself, "If he's right, everything I've ever written is terrible." And fortunately, I decided he was right. Thereafter, like many others before and after me, I tried to follow his precepts and at least some of his examples.

At the time he was relatively unknown as a poet, but that same spring he published his second book, *The Lost Son*, which advanced his standing significantly among his contemporaries. During the following decade he won the Shelley Memorial Award, the National Book Award, and the Pulitzer Prize.

I became his colleague at the University of Washington in 1954, and we were close friends till his death in 1963 at the age of fifty-five. In a book called *Straw for the Fire*, I published excerpts from the 215 spiral notebooks where he wrote fragments of poetry and prose, the latter being what he had just said or might say tomorrow in class or perhaps had said at some party. (He frequently carried a clipboard and wrote down his own remarks, and I confess I did something of the same kind after being with him for an evening.)

His bipolar difficulties were well known on campus because he shared them over the telephone, during his grandiose phases, with the head of the University of Washington Library (whom he despised for his taste in literature), the president of the University, the mayor of Seattle, and on several occasions the governor of the state of Washington. At these times he would assume several powerful roles, among them the head of the Mafia-like Purple Gang of Detroit and a professional boxer. (He shared the latter

alter ego with the English poet John Clare, whom he admired greatly.) He would also call writers all over the country, including Lillian Hellman, Robert Lowell, Richard Wilbur, Stanley Kunitz, and W. H. Auden, and recite poems he thought they might not have noticed before as well as new poems of his own; suggest collaboration on unlikely projects; or forecast visits, most of which would never take place. The head of the English Department in those days was Robert B. Heilman, who helped protect and defend Roethke even during his most outlandish episodes.

However, Roethke never put his students in danger, and as far as I've been able to find out, they never felt afraid of him. The teaching of poetry seemed to make him more orderly, to intensify his gifts as an instructor and critic, and to give him mesmerizing powers of persuasion.

Though he never became an editor himself, he had to a high degree one of the most necessary qualities of a successful one: he was genuinely glad, even joyful, when one of his students wrote a good poem, and he showed no trace of jealousy or rivalry.

Most of the teaching methods of artists in all categories have gone unrecorded. We know very little about what great painters and great composers, for instance, said to their pupils. In *First Class* I've tried to re-create the atmosphere of one of Roethke's poetry workshops, working mostly from my memories of him and a number of examples of the kinds of poems and opinions he admired, some of the near rituals he used both on students and himself, some of his unique spirit, and some of the hectic ways Time and Place would leap over each other for him as if he were in charge of both.

The most charismatic man I've ever met was not Adlai Stevenson, Prince Philip, Billy Graham, Dylan Thomas, or Ted Bundy (all of whom I encountered as a reporter, a fan, or a teacher) but Theodore Roethke, and if I've been able to recapture some of that charisma here, I'll be satisfied.

Though he never became an editor himself, he had to a high degree one of the most necessary qualities of a successful one: he was genuinely glad, even joyful, when one of his students wrote a good poem, and he showed no trace of jealousy or rivalry.

“Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past and Future sees
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word,
That walked among the ancient trees.”

- William Blake



THEODORE ROETHKE; PHOTO BY MARY RANDLETT; UNIV. OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PHCOLL723.1249A.

“Essentially, mythologies are enormous poems that are renditions of insights, giving some sense of the marvel, the miracle and wonder of life. You walk into a forest, and suddenly you are struck by the wonder of this place. A woodpecker flies past: this tells you something about the wonder of the whole world of birds, of nature and so forth. And if you are a poet, you will attempt to render the quality of that experience insofar as it pushes right through to the ultimate mystery of being and life itself.”

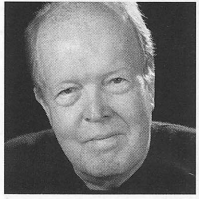
- Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*

“There is a dialogue between the great visionary and the people out of whom he has come. A myth originates from a poetical insight on somebody's part. He has experienced potentials that all of them might have experienced had they been poets.”

- Joseph Campbell, on Black Elk, from *An Open Life*

“In the very darkest continent of the body there is God. And from Him issue the first dark rays of our feeling, wordless, and utterly previous to words: the innermost rays, the first messengers, the primeval, honorable beasts of our being, whose voice echoes wordless and forever wordless down the darkest avenues of the soul, but full of potent speech. Our own inner meaning.”

- D.H. Lawrence



JOHN AYLWARD

(Theodore Roethke)

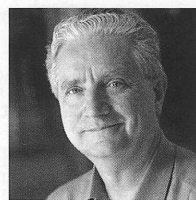
This production of David Wagoner's *First Class* marks a major milestone in my very blessed career. It was

40 years ago this summer when I got my first job as an actor here at ACT. It was also the year I met Kurt Beattie at the UW where I was a member of the "first class" of the Professional Actors Training Program. Kurt's mentor was David Wagoner and David's mentor and colleague was Theodore Roethke. I hope I can do Teddy and "his boys" proud. Some highlights over the years at ACT include *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1969), *Marat-Sade* (1969), *When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?* (1975), *The Time of Your Life* (1976), *King Lear* (1985), *On the Razzle* (1986), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1987), *A Chorus of Disapproval* (1988), *God's Country* (1988), *Man of the Moment* (1994) and *Death of a Salesman* (1998). Other Seattle credits include *Tooth of Crime* and *Ronnie Bwana*, *Jungle Guide* at the Empty Space, where I was a founding member; *Waiting for Godot* at Intiman; and *The Adding Machine* and *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* at the Bathhouse. As a company member at Seattle Rep for 10-plus years, I had the opportunity to play leading roles in *The Miser*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Inspecting Carol*, *House of Blue Leaves*, *A Flea in Her Ear* and *The Real Inspector Hound*, among many others. I've also performed in many other theatres across the US and Canada, including the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland (as *Richard III*), the Dallas Theatre Center (*Loot*), the Manitoba Theatre Centre (*Born Yesterday*), the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park (*Hedda Gabler*), Berkeley Rep, Indianapolis Rep, the Centaur Theatre in Montreal, the Charles Playhouse in Boston, the Old Globe in San Diego, and on Broadway in *The Kentucky Cycle*. In 1996, I was in a play at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles (John Patrick Shanley's *Psychopathia Sexualis*), where a producer from the TV show *ER* saw the

play, and so for the last 11 years I've had a different kind of career. I haven't had time to do much theatre, but I'm glad this worked out. It's good to be home!

DAVID WAGONER (Playwright)

has published 17 books of poetry and 10 novels, one of which, *The Escape Artist*, was adapted into a movie by Francis Ford Coppola. Among his numerous poetry collections, *Collected Poems, 1956-1976* and *In Broken Country* (1979) were both nominated for the National Book Award, and *Good Morning and Good Night* (2005) was nominated for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and the Pulitzer Prize. *Who Shall Be the Sun?* (1978) is a collection of poems based on the folklore, legends, and myths of indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast and Plateau regions. Mr. Wagoner has received an American Academy of Arts and Letters award, the Sherwood Anderson Award, the Fels Prize, the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Eunice Tjetjens Memorial and English-Speaking Union prizes from *Poetry* magazine, and fellowships from the Ford Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. A former Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, he was the editor of *Poetry Northwest* from 1966 until its last issue in 2002. He is professor emeritus of English at the University of Washington. Drawing on his time spent as a colleague of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Theodore Roethke, Mr. Wagoner edited *Straw for the Fire: From the Notebooks of Theodore Roethke, 1943-63*.



KURT BEATTIE

(Director/Artistic

Director)

has been ACT's artistic director since 2003, where he has directed *The Underpants*, *Mitzi's*

Abortion, *The Pillowman*, *Vincent in Brixton*, *Bach at Leipzig*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Black Coffee*, *Alki*, *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*, *Art* and *True West* at Seattle Rep, as well as productions at the Empty Space, Intiman, University of Washington, Milwaukee Rep and Alley Theatre. He has served as a dramaturg and director at Ojai New Play Festival, the New Works Festival at Mark Taper Forum, and South Coast Rep's Pacific Playwrights Festival. This year, he directed three evenings of readings for Town Hall's *Short Stories Live*.

CAREY WONG (Scenic Designer)

has designed *The Underpants*, *A Number*, *Good Boys*, *Going to St. Ives*, *Fish Head Soup* and *Holy Ghosts* at ACT, as well as productions at Seattle Rep, Berkeley Rep, Portland Center Stage, Intiman, Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theatre, Tacoma Actors Guild, Childsplay, Prince Music Theater and Hey City Theater. He has been Resident Designer for Portland Opera, Opera Memphis, and Wildwood Park for the Performing Arts, and has designed for Seattle Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Carolina, Vancouver Opera, the Macao and Beijing Music Festivals, and Nearco Producciones in Spain. Recent and upcoming projects include *Don Giovanni* (Orlando Opera), *The Neverending Story* (SCT), two productions of *The Nutcracker* (Ballet Arizona and Eugene Ballet), and *A Tale of Two Cities* (Childsplay). Carey is a graduate of Yale College and attended the Yale School of Drama.

DEB TROUT (Costume Designer)

Deb's most recent designs for ACT were *A Number* and *Alki*. Other recent credits include *Heartbreak House* (Intiman), *Peter and the Wolf* (Seattle Children's Theatre), *Bus Stop* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), and *Pride and Prejudice* (Portland Center Stage). She has also designed shows at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, Arizona Theatre, Denver Center, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Juneau's

WHO'S WHO

Perseverance Theatre, Seattle Rep and Yale Rep. Deb co-founded the New York-based millinery company Mackey and Trout. She is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, and teaches design at the University of Washington.

RICK PAULSEN (*Lighting Designer*) is delighted to return to ACT, where his lighting was first seen in *Angels Fall* in 1983. Since then, Rick has lit dozens of shows at ACT, most recently *Souvenir*. Other favorites include *A Number*, *Vincent in Brixton*, *Fiction*, *Tales from Hollywood*, *The Jail Diary of Albie 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* and *Lonely Planet*. Rick's work has appeared all around the Seattle area and across the nation. Some recent work of note includes *The Chosen* (Seattle Rep); *Honus and Me*, *Harriett's Halloween Candy*, *Addy's Story* (Seattle Children's Theatre); and *Lost and Foundling* (Childsplay and Geva). He is, most importantly, devoted to his wife Roberta and Paige, his 15-year-old daughter.

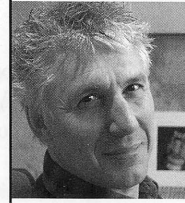
ERIC CHAPPELLE (*Sound Designer*) has designed *The Underpants*, *Bach at Leipzig*, *Fiction*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Omnium-Gatherum*, *Side Man* and *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* at ACT, where he also played violin for *Goblin Market*, fiddled for *Das Barbecü*, and composed music and designed sound for *The Clean House* and *The Crimson Thread*. His other work includes sound designs and compositions for Seattle Children's Theatre, Intiman, Empty Space, Northwest Asian American Theatre, Bathhouse Theatre, Northwest Actors Studio, Belltown Theatre

Center, Kaleidoscope Dance Company and Co-Motion Dance. Recently, he was an onstage musician in *Buddy* at the 5th Avenue Theatre. Eric's *Music for Creative Dance* series of compact discs is used by dance educators internationally.

MICHAEL B. PAUL (*Stage Manager*) has stage managed locally for Seattle Rep, Intiman, the 5th Avenue Theatre and, most recently, Seattle Children's Theatre on Cheryl West's *Addy: An American Girl Story*. At ACT, he stage managed Joyce Carol Oates' *Miss Golden Dreams* and was assistant stage manager for *In the Penal Colony*. Regional credits include work for Alaska Rep, the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C. and Manhattan Theatre Club. Michael has been a member of Actors' Equity for 25 years.

CHRISTINE SUMPTION (*Assistant Director*) is delighted to be working again with Kurt Beattie, her former colleague from the literary department at Seattle Rep, where she was on staff for nine years. She has worked as a dramaturg for Sundance Theatre Lab, and her new play development credits include work with playwrights Tanya Barfield (*Blue Door*), Elizabeth Heffron (*New Patagonia*), Sarah Ruhl (*The Clean House*), Kathleen Tolan (*Memory House*), and Cheryl L. West (*Rejoice!*), among many others. She has directed plays at Seattle Rep, Seattle Children's Theatre, and at DARTS/Company Subaru in Tokyo, where for three years she was resident director. She currently teaches at Seattle University and Cornish College of the Arts.

AN INTRODUCTION:



Gian-Carlo Scandiuzzi,

*Executive
Director of
New Works*

We're thrilled to introduce our new staff member, Gian-Carlo Scandiuzzi, Executive Director of New Works. Mr. Scandiuzzi, in collaboration with Artistic Director Kurt Beattie, is creating a new branch of ACT devoted to the development and cultivation of new work. In Carlo's word's, "The Central Heating Lab is the furnace, the kitchen, the place where art sustains the heat and pressure it needs in order to be transformed into a diamond for all of us to see. It serves as the laboratory, the incubator, the nursery."

Gian-Carlo Scandiuzzi graduated from the Ecole Supérieure D'Art Dramatique of Geneva where he worked in theatre, film and television before moving to the United States in 1978. In 1979, Carlo founded Modern Productions, a music production and promotion company, bringing to Seattle such legendary bands as The Police, Devo, Nina Hagen, Iggy Pop, The Ramones, John Cale, Robert Fripp, James Brown, Muddy Waters, and many more. He performed in several plays at the Empty Space, including *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, *The Return of Pinocchio* and *Dracula*. In the early '80s, Carlo collaborated with many Seattle performance artists, including Norman Durkey, Alan Lande, Jesse Bernstein and Susan Finque. He has also acted in various films, including *Bugsy*, *The Public Eye*, *Indecency*, *Another You*, *Casanova's Kiss* and *Killing Zoe*. Carlo is CEO of Clear Pictures, a production company, and founder of IndieFlix, a film distribution company. He lives in Seattle when not producing movies and enjoys the love and support of his wife Lalie and his children, Sebastien and Nathalie.

THANKS FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

I want to thank Kurt Beattie, John Aylward, Bagley Wright and Robin Seyfried for their invaluable suggestions during the writing and production of this play, and to dedicate my share in it to the memory of Charlene Seyfried.

- David Wagoner

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ACT gratefully recognizes the following corporate, foundation, and government agencies for their generous support of our 2007 programs. Without such tremendous community support, ACT would not be able to offer outstanding contemporary theatre, in-school educational programming, or community based outreach.

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ACT STAFF

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Artistic Director
 Susan Trapnell
Executive Director of Endowment Funding
 Carlo Scandiuizzi
Executive Director of New Works

ARTISTIC

Margaret Layne
Artistic Associate & Casting Director
 Anita Montgomery
Literary Associate & Education Outreach Director
 Nicole Boyer Cochran
Artistic Manager & Executive Assistant
 Valerie Curtis-Newton
Artistic Associate, The Hansberry Project
 Vivian Phillips
Producing Associate, The Hansberry Project
 Vania Bynum
Assistant, The Hansberry Project
 Bill Morrison
Education Assistant
 Adrienne Littleton
Literary Intern

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Flint Dominic
Systems Administrator
 Dave Parmley
Engineer
 Ben Derby
Board Liaison
 Lyam White
Administrative Assistant
 Teddy Heard
Facilities Maintenance

FINANCE

Mary D. Brown
Chief Financial Officer
 Michael Scheinine
Accountant
 Tobi Beauchamp-Loya
Payroll

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Director of Communications
 Michael Allen
Digital Communications
 Rebecca Brinson
Development Coordinator
 Ana Gabriel
Outreach Assistant
 Mary Gleason
Major Gifts
 Jennifer Rice
Media Relations
 Chris Bennion
Photographic Services
 Nichole Mancini-Gerling
Group Sales

AUDIENCE SERVICES

Harley Rees
Director of Audience Services
 Stephen Jackson
Audience Services Manager
 Ryan Rowell
Tessitura Manager
 Robert Hankins
Ticket Manager
 Jim Moran
House Manager
 Chris Olson
Assistant Ticket Manager
 Joli Holbrook
Assistant House Manager
 W.P. Stacy Branum
 Virginia Gabby
 Tiffany Gonzales
 Andrew Hankins
 Genevieve Kolve
 Mayon
 Bill Williams
Audience Services
 Christine Jew
Volunteer Usher Coordinator

PRODUCTION

Joan Toggenburger
Producing Director
 Beth Matthiessen
Production Office Manager
 Gretchen Drew
Production Runner

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Jeffrey K. Hanson
Production Stage Manager
 JR Welden
Stage Manager
 Nora Menkin
Assistant Stage Manager
 Jaime Soule
Production Assistant

COSTUME DEPARTMENTS

Carolyn Keim
Costume Director
 Connie Rinchiuso
Costume Shop Foreman
 Kim Dancy
First Hand/Lead Dresser
 Sally Mellis
Wardrobe Master
 Joyce Degenfelder
Wig Master

SCENIC DEPARTMENTS

Steve Coulter
Technical Director
 Derek Baylor
Assistant Technical Director
 Austin Smart
Master Scenic Carpenter
 Kevin Cuba
 Jeff Manzolli
 Clark Sandford
 Sean Wilkins
 Scenic Carpenters
 Mona Lang
Scenic Charge Artist

Lisa Bellerio
Assistant Charge Artist
 Marne Cohen Vance
Properties Master
 Ken Ewert
Master Properties Artisan
 Thomas Verdos
Lead Properties Artisan

STAGE OPERATIONS

Nick Farwell
Stage Operations Supervisor
 James Nichols
Master Stage Carpenter
 Pam Mulkern
Master Electrician
 Max Langley
Master Sound Engineer

Scenery, stage and costume work is performed by employees represented by I.A.T.S.E. Local Numbers 15, 488 and 887.