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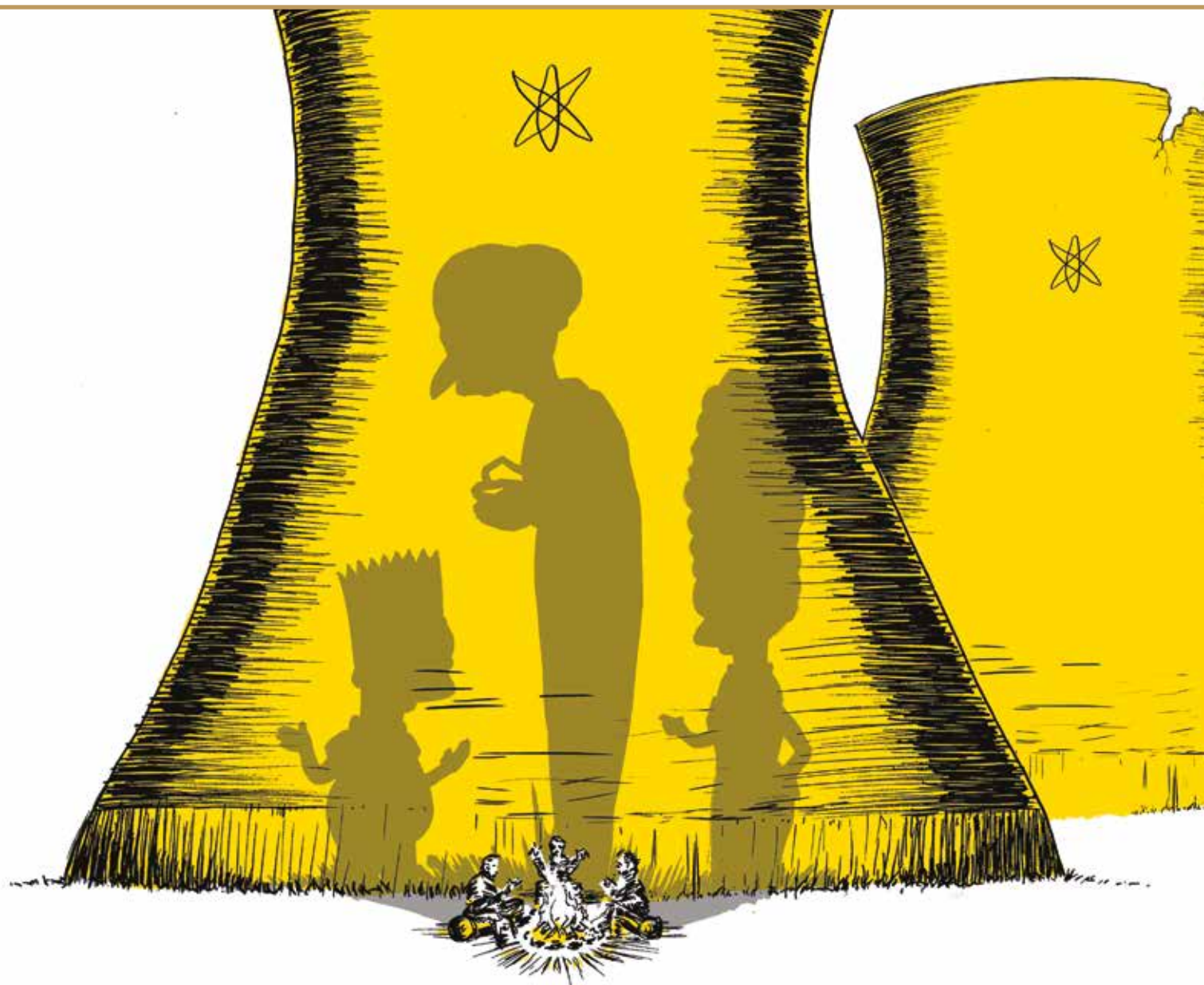
OCTOBER 2015

a r t s p r o g r a m s

Oct 16–Nov 15, 2015



A Contemporary Theatre



## Mr. Burns, a post-electric play

By Anne Washburn  
Score by Michael Friedman  
Lyrics by Anne Washburn  
Directed by John Langs



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# THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY: NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT IN THE USA

BY ANITA MONTGOMERY, ACT'S LITERARY MANAGER

The existence and process of new play development is hardly a new one in the long history of the theatre. William Shakespeare, once an emerging writing talent, had his plays developed in 16th century England by the companies with whom he worked as a playwright and actor. The plays of Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov were developed by the Moscow Art Theatre in the 19th century, and in the same century in Germany, Bertholt Brecht formed his own company, the Berliner Ensemble, and relied heavily on its members to refine and promote his epic theatre style. But in the United States, a focus on new work for the theatre is a relatively recent phenomenon. It is also an evolving, highly mercurial, and somewhat controversial one, with varying degrees of commitment, sustainability, and success across the vast and varied landscape of contemporary theatres,

not to mention for playwrights who struggle to sustain livelihoods and find avenues of production for their work within them.

And just exactly *what* is new play development? In extremely broad terms, it is an endeavor involving a playwright working with the support of a group of theatre artists on a new piece of writing for the theatre, trying to move it forward and into a production, onstage, in front of an audience. The *what* of new play development is infinitely more consistent and straightforward than the *how*, which is as various and multifaceted as the theatrical art form and its practitioners.

The attention placed in the American theatre on the promotion and support of new plays began in earnest in the early 20th century, and has really only firmly taken root over the last 50 years. This growth can be attributed in large part to a couple of

seismic historic shifts in theatrical production and practice: first, a pronounced trending away from the actor-manager-driven entertainments of the 19th century to a more ensemble-based, socially conscious theatrical style at the turn of the century; and second, the influence of an innovative professor of English Literature at Harvard University named George Pierce Baker, who included a history of drama as part of his curriculum and began offering a course in playwriting to Radcliffe students in 1903. By 1913 the class, which had opened up to Harvard students and required them to write a series of one-act plays and one three-act play, had morphed into a workshop that involved participation by members of the larger, off-campus community. By pulling an audience into the support (and often, the productions) of his students' work, George Pierce Baker



PHOTO BY SEBASTIEN SCANDIUZZI

Ramayana fight workshop

succeeded in educating not only his students, but also his audience in how to receive and engage with new work. His groundbreaking program is widely considered a major building block in the evolution of American new play development and the beginning of the training of theatre artists in American higher education.

The established theatrical style pre-1900 revolved around melodrama, a highly popular genre with clear demarcations of right and wrong: thrilling adventures heavily reliant on spectacle, in which heroes were rewarded and villains punished. They were frequently adaptations of novels, mostly European, and meant to showcase big stars like James O'Neill, the famous father of playwright Eugene O'Neill, who played the title role in *The Count of Monte Cristo* for years and established his name and his fortune on Broadway. These large, populist entertainments dominated the theatre of the late 1800s, and are still very much in evidence in the large Broadway musical offerings of today. But as the pressures and concerns of a changing world and an impending war seeped into public consciousness, a new form of theatrical expression, with an emphasis on economic and social issues, began to search for and find a home. And for the first time, the voices of playwrights began to be included in the creative engines of this more experimental and confrontational emerging form.

The teens and twenties saw extraordinary growth in what started as the Little Theatre movement, with smaller, more experimental companies within and outside of New York springing up and including playwrights in their artistic mix, forming a particular aesthetic and making original work together. Two of the most famous of these were the Provincetown Players and the Group Theatre. Both companies devoted themselves to the work of American playwrights and afforded creative homes, valuable resources, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6




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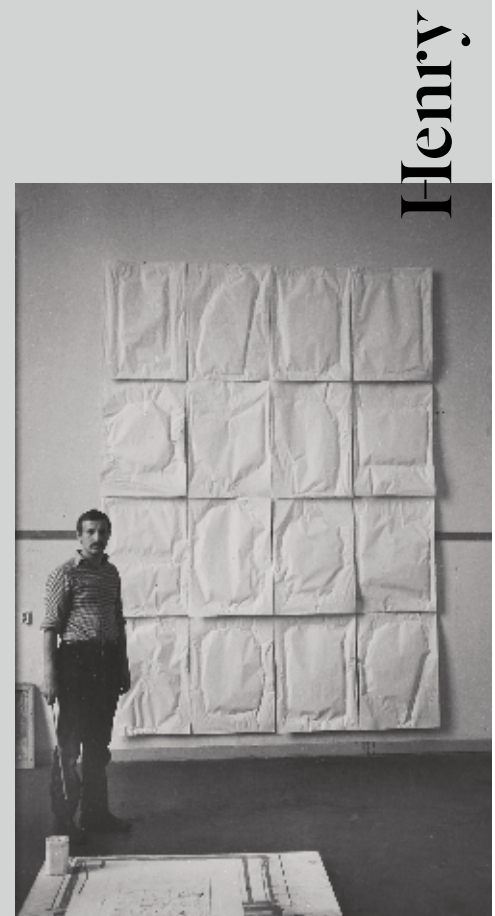
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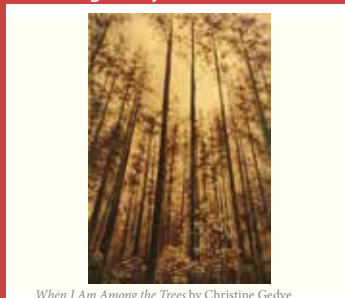
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Franz Erhard Walther, 16 Luftschlüsse (Large Paper Work: 16 Air Enclosures), 1962. Photo: Hartmut Seidel. Courtesy of The Franz Erhard Walther Foundation.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

critical first productions to playwrights whose work and careers went on to become the backbone of the American theatre. For Eugene O'Neill, widely considered America's first great dramatist, the Provincetown Players, founded in the summer of 1915 by a group of artists, were instrumental in launching and sustaining his career. Even after O'Neill had achieved success on Broadway, he returned to the Players and continued to have his productions mounted at what he considered his home theatre. In 1934 the New York City-based Group Theatre, whose focus on socially relevant new plays was at the core of its mission, produced a play by a young actor in their company, Clifford Odets, called *Waiting For Lefty*, dramatizing the struggles of the American working class. The show was an immediate sensation, and established Odets as a major new voice. These two important dramatists, and the support they received from their visionary collaborator theatres, paved the way for the aspiring playwrights-become-legends who followed in their footsteps: Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Edward Albee. These acknowledged heavyweights of the American theatre gained traction in this new and fecund environment, honed their craft, found receptive audiences, and exploded onto the Broadway stage in the 1940s and '50s, ushering in what is now referred to as the Golden Age of American theatre. This was a shining moment for new plays on the "Great White Way," elevating the status of the form and recognizing the playwright as an integral part of making great theatre.

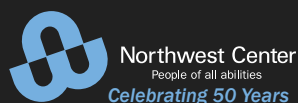
Broadway has become unrecognizable from the days when the straight play dominated its stages. Though it has always been considered the high bar for American theatre artists, from playwrights to directors to actors, Broadway is no longer a welcoming environment for new plays. In fact, very few new plays find a home on Broadway stages today, due in large part to the prohibitive cost of putting them up. There is no room for "failure," which on Broadway means less critical than commercial failure, and there is certainly no interest or investment in the exploration and cultivation of new work. Partly in reaction to this inhospitable financial climate, and out of the continued



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immersion of theatre artists in the Little Theatre movement and away from the pressure of the commercial theatre, the non-profit or regional theatre emerged and has become the undisputed home of new play development. Though the “Dream of the Commercial Transfer,” a phrase used by Douglas Anderson in his insightful article in the 1988 *Drama Review*, “The Dream Machine: Thirty Years of New Play Development in America,” is still alive and well, most if not all of the work of professional new play development now



Actor Trieu Tran and Director Robert Egan in rehearsal for *Uncle Ho to Uncle Sam*

PHOTO BY CHRIS BENNION

exists in the not-for-profit theatre. The rise of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) in the U.S., with their focus on new play development, began in the late 1950s with large grants from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, establishing some of the first big non-profit theatre companies inside and outside of New York City: Lincoln Center Theater, Washington DC’s Arena Stage, and The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, to name a few. By the late 1970s half of all professional theatres around the country were non-profit. Though the missions of several of these theatres did not include the development of new plays, about three quarters of them did and still do offer some kind of programming and support for new work.

This support manifests in a variety of ways and through several different models. Many theatres commission playwrights, providing a sum of money to write a play. Though a commission does not always result in a production, it does provide a meaningful connection between the playwright and

the commissioning theatre, access to an artistic staff and institutional resources, and often results in readings, a workshop, the all-important first production, and a lasting relationship between writer and producer.

Residencies have become another source of valuable advocacy and assistance for playwrights. Rather than offering a playwright a production as the end goal, a residency can offer valuable time and space for playwrights to do their work outside of the pressure of production. A residency can take the form of an invitation to join the staff of a theatre company for a period of time, becoming involved in its day-to-day operations and receiving administrative and artistic support, or it can provide housing, living expenses and access to a work-space, often in the company of other playwrights and other theatre artists, for a concentrated period of time. There are several well-known and highly-thought-of organizations providing valuable services in support of playwrights and their work. New Dramatists and The Lark New Play Development

Center in New York, and the Minneapolis-based Playwrights Center are three that provide a multitude of short- and long-term residencies for early-, mid-, and established career playwrights. These residencies come with access to artistic teams trained in new play dramaturgy and devoted to placing the specific needs of playwrights and their work front and center.

Festivals of new work featuring a lineup of world premieres are also an immensely popular form of new play and playwright-centric programming. Plays given first productions or staged readings for audiences, including theatre professionals from around the country invited by the host theatre, are a great source of connectivity between playwrights, producers of new work, and theatre artists of all disciplines. New play festivals usually take place over a long weekend or two in a convivial atmosphere, providing meals and numerous opportunities for theatre artists to come together and share information about the work they are doing. The Actors Theatre of



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PHOTO BY TRUMAN BUFFETT

# A NEW ERA FOR ACT: WELCOME, JOHN LANGS

## INCOMING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BY BECKY WITMER, ACT'S GENERAL MANAGER

John Langs has worked as a freelance director in Seattle since 2004 with Seattle Shakespeare Company's *King Lear*. His *Lear* was none other than our own Kurt Beattie—and so began the creative partnership that would bring Langs to the helm of ACT Theatre 12 years later. John joined the ACT staff as Associate Artistic Director in 2013 and takes over as Artistic Director this coming January, following Kurt's retirement.

John first directed at ACT in 2008 when he staged *The Adding Machine* with New Century Theatre Company in ACTLab (then Central Heating Lab). That show established him as a highly sought after director and collaborator in Seattle. He has since staged *The Trial* and *Mary's Wedding* with NCTC; numerous productions with Seattle Shakespeare including *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *Othello*; and *Our Town* with Seattle University.

He began directing on the ACT Mainstage in 2012 with The Pinter Festival (*The Dumb Waiter* and *Celebration*), followed in later seasons by *Middletown*, *Bethany*, and approaching four consecutive turns directing *A Christmas Carol*. For ACTLab, he's directed *The Seagull* and *The Three Sisters* with The Seagull Project, as well as the recent world premiere of *Seven Ways To Get There*.

John's 20-year freelance career has afforded him the opportunity to work with many great artists at prestigious theatre companies across the country. He's directed in New York at Playwrights Horizons and Ensemble Studio Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, The Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, Circle X in Los Angeles, The Resident Ensemble Players in Delaware, and American Players Theatre in Wisconsin.

"I'm so happy to call Seattle home and to land at this remarkable theatre. ACT stands out as a beacon of creativity and collaboration—aligned with the innovative reputation Seattle is known for," says Langs. "I have deep admiration and gratitude for Kurt Beattie. I look forward to building on the established relationships ACT

holds, creating new ones, and engaging in conversation with the tremendous audiences that participate in the exploration of process, performance, and ideas."

As John moves into the role of Artistic Director, he is clearly defining his objectives. The Mainstage Season will feature plays that reflect the current conversation in our city and the world, stories that entertain, and also "legacy plays" that highlight important figures and events throughout history. You may see Shakespeare. You may see a musical. You will definitely see world premieres and epic stories.

ACTLab is where experimentation really takes hold and where John plans to increase ACT's focus on new play development. ACTLab's newly refined mission is to nurture groundbreaking creative process and product. New plays, unique collaborations, community engagement, and bold ideas are what ACTLab is about.

In looking at casting and actor training, John is committing to a diverse (age, race, experience) company of actors to participate annually in ACT's Mainstage or ACTLab productions. This commitment to create a small Core Company will guarantee at least three show contracts per year for actors, offer on the job professional training for young artists, create greater diversity throughout the season, and provide an opportunity for the artists to grow and build their craft through a year-long creative work environment. ACT will also reaffirm partnerships with local universities to help foster the development of new work and to provide opportunities for students.

John is incredibly excited about programming his first mainstage season. "I've been in a conversation with ACT audiences for several years now and the plays we've selected for 2016 reflect where that conversation is going next. It is an exciting time to launch this season as we are going into an election year, after our milestone 50th anniversary, and during a time when Seattle is changing. There is a lot to talk about! Meet me in the lobby and tell me what you think."

### FUN FACTS ABOUT JOHN LANGS

**HOMETOWN:**  
Palo Alto, CA

**KIDS:**  
Son, age 5, Captain, named after my grandfather.

**FIRST THEATRE EXPERIENCE:**  
My grandmother made me learn and perform, "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" in her living room. We had straw hats and canes.

**NEIGHBORHOOD YOU LIVE IN:**  
Lower Queen Anne

**FAVORITE SEATTLE RESTAURANT:**  
Lecoshio

**NW EXPERIENCE YOU MOST LOOK FORWARD TO:**  
Riding a ferry. I hear the San Juan Islands are amazing.

**FAVORITE MUSICAL/PLAY:**  
*Enrico IV* by Pirandello

**PIE vs CAKE:**  
Pie. No, cake. No ... pie. Both.

**UMBRELLA OR RAINCOAT:**  
I'm with Rihanna.

**SONG YOU SING AROUND THE OFFICE:**  
"Everything is Awesome" from *The Lego Movie*. I have a 5 year old.



Kurt Beattie  
Artistic Director

Carlo Scandiuzzi  
Executive Director

ACT – A Contemporary Theatre presents

# Mr. Burns, a post-electric play

By Anne Washburn  
Score by Michael Friedman  
Lyrics by Anne Washburn  
Directed by John Langs

Beginning October 16, 2015 • Opening Night October 22, 2015

## CAST

Anne Allgood*	Jenny/Marge
Christine Marie Brown*	Maria/Lisa
Andrew Lee Creech	Sam/Scratchy
Erik Gratton*	Matt/Homer
Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako*	Colleen/Itchy
Bhama Roget*	Quincy/Bart
Adam Standley	Gibson/Mr. Burns
Robertson Witmer	Musician/Actor

## CREATIVE TEAM

John Langs	Director
Matthew Smucker	Scenic Designer
Deb Trout	Costume Designer
Geoff Korf	Lighting Designer
Dominic CodyKramers	Sound Designer
Casey James	Music Director
Crystal Dawn Munkers	Choreographer
Emily Penick	Associate Director
Frank Honts	Dramaturg
Jeffrey K. Hanson*	Stage Manager
David Hartig	Production Assistant
Wiley Basho Gorn	Kenan Directing Fellow
Connor Zaft	Directing/Dramaturgy Intern
Marcella Barbeau	Assistant Lighting Designer
Robert Macdougall	Fight Coach

Running Time: This performance runs approximately two hours and 15 minutes. There will be one intermission, between Acts 2 and 3.

Time: Act 1: very near future Act 2: Seven years after that Act 3: 75 years after that

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

*Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

Playwrights Horizons, Inc. produced the New York City premiere of the play off-Broadway in 2013.

Originally produced in June, 2012 by Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Washington, DC, Howard Shalwitz, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Herrmann, Managing Director.

*Mr. Burns* was Commissioned by The Civilians, New York, NY Steven Cosson, Artistic Director

For the language of the remembering of *The Simpsons'* episode "Cape Feare" the author would like to credit the Civilians actors involved in the initial workshop: Quincy Tyler Bernstine, Maria Dizzia, Gibson Frazier, Matt Maher, Jennifer Morris, Colleen Werthmann, and Sam Breslin Wright.

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Kurt Beattie

# WELCOME to ACT

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the last Mainstage production of ACT's 50th Anniversary Season! Over the course of the season, we've looked back to a great American classic produced by ACT in 1965, its first year of existence, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, in honor of our distinguished past and the great body of work created by Tennessee Williams. We've produced world premiere plays by Yussef El Guindi and Steven Dietz, representative of our commitment to exciting contemporary playwrights—and, it should be noted, local writers, *Seattle's* writers. We've brought a vibrant new work to Seattle by Anne Washburn, *Mr. Burns*, which has stunned national theatre audiences with its vision of our future. In fact, *Mr. Burns* was helped to its highly successful debut production in New York with a workshop by our colleagues at Seattle Repertory Theatre, so one can think of our production as a total community effort! Similarly, our production of *Mr. Burns* also projects the future in that it is directed by John Langs, who will begin his tenure as ACT's new artistic director in 2016, and will inaugurate what I'm sure will be a great new era of theatre-making at ACT.

All of this season's plays were chosen to have a thematic relationship to one another, to give you a sense of everything ACT has been, is now, and strives to be: a dynamic theatre center devoted to the exploration of the art form, a 50-year continuity representative of our

belief in and love of our community, and a collection of achievements and aspirations that have guided ACT since our beginning. We think our job is to be a cultural and artistic engine that exists for everyone, artists and audiences alike, and to reach in all directions, historically and societally, to engage through the art form of theatre in the richest conversations we can create about how we all live, and what our civilization means. And, of course, to make artistic work of the highest standard.

The artists, patrons, staff members, and supporters who have made ACT what it is since it began literally number in the millions. I wish I could name them all. In toto, they are one of the most positive reminders to me of what makes life worth living: intellectual enlightenment, art, pleasure, spiritual fulfillment, fellow feeling, and consciousness. All of which means, if you don't get too high-falutin' about it, just a very good time, even if the message is sometimes dark and disturbing. Thanks to you all for your presence, for all these renewing beginnings and endings, your being here and elsewhere, your story in this story. Long may you and ACT wave.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Beattie". The script is fluid and cursive.

Kurt Beattie  
Artistic Director

# COMING SOON TO ACT



## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens  
Adapted by Gregory A. Falls  
Directed by John Langs

Nov 27–Dec 30

Photo by Chris Bennion



### The Great Soul of Russia Oct 21, Nov 18

The Seagull Project explores how various Russian artistic roads begin and end with Chekhov. October features "The Seventh Siege", followed by "The Little Trilogy" in November.



### Exploring the Work of Quiara Alegria Hudes Nov 11

Enjoy a reading in Spanish from a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright. *Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue* traces the legacy of war through three generations of a Puerto Rican family.



### A Glimmer of Hope or Skin or Light Oct 30–Nov 14

Glimmer is a dance-theatre-cabaret-glam-rock musical full of uncommon encounters, raucous spectacle, and virtuosic dancing, choreographed and directed by KT Niehoff.



### Ham for the Holidays: Who's Afraid of Virginia Ham? Dec 3–20

Merry. Mirthful. Mad. Ham returns with zany, gender-bending holiday sketch hijinks. Devilish social satire, loony musical parodies, and more wigs than Dolly Parton.



### Endangered Species Project Nov 9, Dec 14

Explore the great plays you seldom see. November features Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, followed by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse's *Life With Father* in December.



### Sandbox Radio LIVE! Dec 28

Seattle's locally grown radio theatre returns to ACT with your favorite local writers, actors, and musicians reimagining theatre for radio—recorded LIVE! December's theme is "The Big One".



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PHOTO BY TRUMAN BUFFETT

# A Note from Director JOHN LANGS

A confession: although I am not a religious person, I spend a lot of time in rehearsals in a prayerful state. I am praying that the theatrical machine we build to deliver the story will be blessed often by a “spirit.” This “spirit,” for lack of a better term, will travel through the specific work of actor, director, and designer, to meet up with you, our audience, in a meaningful way. This process is full of metaphors. “We just build the machine for God to come through.” Or, “We build the bottle, Zeus provides the lightning.” As director, I am trying to find a way to allow something bigger than all of us to happen when we gather around the proverbial campfire.

In the past three years, in my position as Associate Artistic Director, I have had the chance to read hundreds of scripts. Never in my life have I encountered one that comes anywhere near what you are about to see. Anne Washburn’s imagination, in collaboration with devising theatre troupe The Civilians, has captured lightning in a bottle. *Mr. Burns* has become the most produced American play of the 2014–2015 season.

This popularity speaks to the wildly creative spirit that has been encouraged from every director, actor, and collaborator who takes on this script. Stories like *Mr. Burns* are an invitation for theatre artists and audiences alike to tap into our universal human need to tell a very particular kind of story—the story of its own demise and resurrection. In Biblical times it was a great flood and a series of plagues. In our modern times we have seen stories of nuclear holocaust, climate catastrophe, towering infernos, and more recently, the zombie apocalypse.

Humanity has nurtured these stories, loved and needed them. They point toward hope that we can come together to survive and rebuild in the face of disaster.

Some of these stories have become the cornerstones of western culture. How a story grows in mythic authority is one of the central questions of *Mr. Burns*. Anne Washburn posits that collective human need can actually incubate a story over time.

Stories are handed down, generation to generation, like that parlor game of “telephone”. Facts are embellished. Events are enshrined. The narrative takes on power. This play makes me wonder about the origins of *The Ramayana*, *The Iliad*, and the Bible. How were these stories told the very first time, and who were the great storytellers that delivered them with the kind of power that embedded them in our collective consciousness?

Is it possible that a strange little interlude of a cartoon, used as transition material on a Tracy Ullman variety show, could encode itself in the collective psyche and become an enduring inspirational epic? In the theatre, anything is possible.

A friend once said to me that an artist is just a craftsperson on a really good day. I would say then that Anne Washburn, Michael Friedman, and The Civilians had a “very good day.”

Here at ACT, we believe in the bold and the daring, in taking risks and shaking things up. We have gone after this material with a tribe of excellent craftspeople, hoping that together around this campfire, with you, we will have a good day.



# Survival of the Fittest Stories

Excerpts from an Interview with Playwright Anne Washburn

BY NIRMALA NATARAJ

**You've said that *Mr. Burns* emerged from an idea that had been knocking around in your head for years: you wanted to take a pop-culture narrative and see what it meant and how it changed after the fall of civilization.**

I recently realized that the idea partially stemmed from September 11, 2001. I was in New York then. We were convinced that the city would come under some other attack, so we were thinking about things in a very drastic way. As I was pondering the end of civilization, I imagined that in the midst of a catastrophe, people would tell stories if they had any down time. I was interested in which stories would be told, how they would be told, what media makes the transition from the visual to the spoken, and how these stories mutate. We are used to telling stories about things we've seen and books we've read, and in the context of an apocalypse, people would be most interested in something everyone would have in common, so that's where the idea of basing the play on a TV show came from.

**You used found dialogue in writing *Mr. Burns* when you developed it with *The Civilians* back in 2011. What was that like?**

We got together and asked actors to come up with any *Simpsons* episode they could recount. "Cape Feare" was the one they had the best memory of. Matt Maher muscled his way through it with them, and Maria Dizzia and Jenny Morris chipped in. Then we had a second telling, and a third one at which there were a couple of actors who hadn't previously been in the room. From these three iterations, I made a master version of the play and edited it a lot and did tiny bits of rewriting, but basically, all the material in the first act that has to do with the actors telling the episode came directly from spoken English. We are trained as writers in written English, but this is limiting. Even if you are an exact observer, you can only kind of come up with believable dialogue between two people, but to re-create a group-think process without actually hearing people talk it out is really hard.

**The choice of *The Simpsons* seems appropriate. It's an animated show set in a world that is always going to endure no matter what happens.**

It is a good thing to have hit upon, consciously or not. Because the characters are eternal and because it's a cartoon, you have such a wide range of stories to choose from. And the characters are archetypal. Bart Simpson is a trickster, similar to mythical characters like Coyote or Kokopelli. He always gets into trouble and always ends up surviving. His heart is in the right place, but he's pure mayhem. And Homer is the idiot, the holy fool. Because the play takes place right after the apocalypse and *The Simpsons* is about a family, I thought the survivors would care more; the questions of what your bonds are, who your community is, become really relevant.

**What do you think makes the "Cape Feare" episode so memorable?**

When I tell people I wrote a play about it, many who are familiar with the show say, "I know that one. It's my favorite!" Jon Vitti, the head writer of *The Simpsons* for a few

seasons, was one of several people who left after season five. I remember him saying that “Cape Feare” was the last episode that particular group of writers was responsible for. It was a rule in *The Simpsons* that you could never have just one primary reference point, which is why the show always had multiple references in a single episode; if people didn’t understand a particular reference, they could swiftly find another one they *did* get. “Cape Feare” is a unique case. Although there are six million other references in the episode, “Cape Feare” follows the 1991 film *Cape Fear* almost from beginning to end. So people retain it because it contains an intact story.

Although *Cape Fear* is not really an old story, it pivots on an extremely old fear: being powerless. It’s a nightmare a lot of people have – you call for help, nobody can help you, and the menacing thing is coming your way. There’s something very punitive and raw and awful about the 1962 film and 1991 remake, but the *Simpsons* episode is much scarier. Even though it’s a cartoon, the focus is on the child, and the child who is being targeted is someone nobody pays attention to. It makes the story even darker, which is also part of its appeal.

### **What was the weirdest piece of information you came across in your research for the play?**

I don’t think any of it seemed weird or strange, unfortunately. I was surprised to find out how many nuclear power plants we have in the United States. I was startled to discover that all of our policies on nuclear regulation are being enforced in the absence of emergency plans or crisis management. People proceed as though they’re always going to have an unbroken chain of civic control for thousands of years, and it’s not like that’s ever happened or is even possible.

### ***Mr. Burns* doesn’t feel like the typical post-apocalyptic story; the details of the disaster are palpable but they’re in the**

### **background. The activities and obsessions of the characters are pretty different from those you might see on a television show like *The Walking Dead*, for example.**

Maybe so, but at the same time, the stakes are enormous. The characters are not just people sitting around and putting on a play in their leisure time. At first their storytelling is casual, but you have to understand: if audiences don’t enjoy their show, the characters don’t eat. I also think we assume the characters are doing a lot of surviving, but we’ve all seen the movies and the TV shows, and we know what that survival-oriented post-apocalyptic world looks like, so I didn’t feel the need to repeat that here.

### **I’m curious about the role of commercials and song mash-ups in the play. Their addition feels like the characters’ attempt to find some semblance of normalcy.**

In *Mr. Burns*, the commercials and song mash-ups might serve to create a kind of painful nostalgia, but they also provide the kind of reassurance kids get when they hear a family story over and over again, and they freak out if you change any details. The people in this world need storytelling to not be creative. They want to recreate their old world as exactly as possible in their entertainment. However, because I think humans always need to express their anxieties, the commercials and the megamix of songs become the areas where, under the guise of “we used to have commercials and they looked like this,” or “we used to have song compilations and they looked like this,” the creative urge reaches out of the shock of trauma. It’s the beginning of recovery and healing.

### **By the time we get to the end, there is a complete stylistic shift. What was going through your mind when you decided to have this grand third act?**

Even before I knew the story would revolve around *The Simpsons*, I wanted a three-act

structure: the first act would take place roughly around now, the second act would take place seven years in the future, and the third act would be a fully fledged theatrical gesture far into the future. I was also thinking a lot about Greek drama because it was created by a society that was still in deep trauma over the fall of Athenian democracy, which was the height of civilization at that time. Until you get to the forms that are common now, all the drama of ancient Greece and the Old World includes music and dance, which are super satisfying when they are combined. The degree to which contemporary drama is performed without music is something I find curious. In the future of *Mr. Burns*, the characters don’t come from theatrical backgrounds. They aren’t familiar with today’s conventions, so in some ways, they have no reason *not* to make the most exciting plays they can.

### **How do you think the “Cape Feare” story would evolve if we found ourselves 175 years into the future?**

It all depends on the civilization around it. The story could mutate into a beautiful meditation, or it could be grand and crude and propagandistic, depending on who’s in power. But, surely, it would be more detailed, and it would be much more removed from the original concept of *The Simpsons*. It might even be blasphemous to say it was originally a cartoon! You’d want it to take on reverential proportions in order for it to have historical buy-in. It’s similar to how we’d like to believe that if something is important now, it must have a grand and glorious origin.

### ***Mr. Burns* is a memory narrative that creates the future from the detritus of the past.**

Yes, the current day is always being shaped by the past. We always talk about “the good old days.” We tend to have these firm narratives about the past, but they are selective at best, and often, albeit innocently, completely false.

*Nirmala Nataraj is a freelance writer in the San Francisco Bay Area and Publications Manager for the American Conservatory Theater.*

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*To read the complete interview, visit [www.act-sf.org](http://www.act-sf.org)*



## Central Characters

**HOMER SIMPSON:** the patriarch of the family, who works—as much as Homer ever works—as the Nuclear Safety Inspector at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant. Homer is bumbling, lazy, clumsy, incompetent, and often enraged by Bart, but also fiercely loyal to his family. He thinks with his stomach and acts on impulse, loves donuts, and has been described as “creatively brilliant in his stupidity”. D’oh!

**MARGE SIMPSON:** the matriarch of the family, patient and grounded, who puts up with the chaos around her and brings the voice of morality and reason. Marge is most of all a homemaker and mother, though in search of excitement she sometimes takes up jobs on the side. She is a moral force in the community, and a loving though often long-suffering parent.

**BART SIMPSON:** the oldest child of the family, popular, mischievous, rebellious, and with a healthy disrespect for authority, Bart is consistently in trouble and is proud of his underachievement at school. He has an often-turbulent relationship with his parents and a sibling rivalry with Lisa, but underneath his troublemaking exterior shows signs of integrity and heart in many situations. He is a big fan of Krusty the Clown and *The Itchy & Scratchy Show*, which he watches with Lisa.

**LISA SIMPSON:** vegetarian, feminist, Buddhist, environmentalist, and politically liberal, Lisa can often be found fighting for various causes. She plays the baritone saxophone, and is the most intelligent member of the Simpson family, joining the Springfield Mensa chapter.

**MAGGIE SIMPSON:** the baby of the family, Maggie is nearly always seen sucking on her red pacifier, and

often trips over her clothes. She does not speak (with a few notable exceptions), but has shown indications of high intelligence and dexterity.

**MR. BURNS:** Homer’s boss, the evil owner of the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant. Mr. Burns is generally disliked throughout Springfield, as his primary objective is to accumulate wealth and power, at the expense of everything else—he has no concern for his employees’ safety and can’t recall most of their names. Mr. Burns is the richest and oldest citizen of Springfield, and his absurdly advanced age is the cause of many anachronistic jokes and outdated mannerisms.

**SIDESHOW BOB:** (real name Dr. Robert Underdunk Terwilliger, PhD) originally an abused sidekick on Krusty the Clown’s TV show, Sideshow Bob attempted to frame his boss for murder, was caught by Bart, and sent to prison. Now Sideshow Bob is an evil genius and criminal mastermind who makes frequent murderous and destructive plans, including many attempts to kill Bart, the Simpson family, or Krusty. In a running reference to Wile E. Coyote, those plans are continuously foiled by less intellectual people. (Stepping on rakes is another running gag, used so often now that writers and fans simply call it “the rake joke”.)

**ITCHY & SCRATCHY:** Itchy is a sadistic, anthropomorphic blue mouse; Scratchy, an anthropomorphic black cat. *The Itchy & Scratchy Show* is usually presented as 15–60 second cartoon segments on Krusty the Clown’s TV show, often parodies of famous cartoons or films. Itchy is nearly always the victor in their violent battles, and the cartoons are always full of absurd amounts of gratuitous violence.

## Supporting Characters

**KRUSTY THE CLOWN:** *The Krusty the Clown Show* airs on TV in Springfield; Krusty is a hard-drinking entertainment world veteran, who is often assisted by Bart in various crises but will invariably forget who Bart is the next time around (possibly due to the large amount of drugs Krusty uses). Krusty’s character design is meant to look like Homer in clown makeup, the implication being that Bart worships a man who is actually his father in disguise.

**MOE SZYSLAK:** the owner and bartender of Moe’s Tavern, Moe is often engaged in illegal or black market activities, and is often the target of prank calls from Bart.

**NED FLANDERS:** The Simpsons’ genuine, well-meaning, friendly neighbor with a perfect family, Ned is an evangelical Christian and a well-respected member of the Springfield community. Homer has a love-hate relationship with Ned Flanders.

**TROY MCCLURE:** a movie-star has-been, Troy often hosts educational videos, infomercials, and other films seen on Springfield’s televisions. “Hi, I’m Troy McClure; you may remember me from...”

**MS. KRABAPPEL:** Bart’s fourth-grade teacher at Springfield Elementary, a cranky and jaded teacher who chain-smokes during school hours.

**PRINCIPAL SKINNER:** Principal of Springfield Elementary School and a man of strict discipline (from a military

background). He is full of real concern for the education of his students, and is constantly fighting for better resources and to keep control over the school.

**WILLIE THE GROUNDSKEEPER:** groundskeeper at Springfield Elementary; gruff, rude, and intensely proud of his Scottish heritage.

**APU:** Apu Nahasapeemapetilon is a naturalized citizen from the fictional Ramatpur, has a PhD in computer science, and is proprietor of the Kwik-E-Mart convenience store. “Thank you, come again!”

**CHIEF WIGGUM:** the chief of police in Springfield, usually depicted as incompetent and irresponsible on the job.

**MAYOR QUIMBY:** the longtime mayor of Springfield, a slick career politician with the motto “corruptus in extremis.”

**NELSON MUNTZ:** a fourth-grader at Springfield Elementary and the biggest bully in town. (With the possible exception of Mr. Burns.)

**MILHOUSE VAN HOUTEN:** Bart’s best friend, loyal and smart but gullible; a target for bullies like Nelson.

**MARTIN PRINCE, JR.:** a fourth-grader at Springfield Elementary, Lisa’s rival for top of the class, and one of Nelson’s favorite targets for bullying.



## Who's Who in *Mr. Burns*



**Anne Allgood** (*Jenny/Marge*) happily returns home to ACT! Among numerous appearances here: *Mary Stuart, The Price, The Clean House, Vincent in Brixton, The Prisoner of Second*

*Avenue, The Women, Eurydice, Miss Witherspoon, Ramayana, Das Barbecü!, Old Times, and A Christmas Carol* (thrice). She's starred on Broadway in *Carousel, The Most Happy Fella, Beauty and the Beast, The Sound of Music, and Imaginary Friends*. Regional credits include: *Other Desert Cities, Company, Jane Eyre*, and many others. In Seattle: *Cymbeline, Angels in America* (Intiman Theatre); *Bad Dates, The Constant Wife, You Can't Take it With You, Boeing, Boeing* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Cabaret* (Village Theatre); Seattle Children's Theatre; and others. For The 5th Avenue Theatre, she has appeared in leading roles in over a dozen productions, and coming up this Christmas: *The Sound of Music*. Enjoy!



**Christine Marie Brown** (*Maria/Lisa*) is thrilled to return to ACT after playing Susan in *The Pitmen Painters* in 2012. A former New Yorker, Christine has appeared on and off Broadway and

nationally at the Old Globe, The Guthrie, Baltimore Center Stage, Shakespeare & Company, South Coast Repertory Theatre, and many others. Elsewhere in Seattle, her work has been seen at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Village Theatre, 14/48 Festival, Theatre Anonymous, SOAP Fest, Engaged Theatre Program, Sandbox Radio LIVE!, and Endangered Species Project (ESP). As a member of the faculty at Freehold Theatre Lab, she teaches Intro to Acting, Auditioning, and Scene Study. She holds an M.F.A. from the Old Globe and is a member of ESP, the Sandbox Artists' Collective, AEA, and SAG-AFTRA.



**Andrew Lee Creech** (*Sam/Scratchy*) is ecstatic to be making his official ACT debut in *Mr. Burns*! A casual-to-serious *Simpsons* enthusiast, Andrew is a homegrown actor, writer, and hip-hop artist whose

work has been showcased throughout Seattle and Texas. Past Credits: *Passing Strange* (Sidecountry Theatre, ACT); *Trouble in Mind* (Intiman Theatre); *Girl, You Know It's True* (Theatre Off Jackson, Gypsy Rose Lee Award Nomination). Up next: *Buzzer* (West of Lenin, ACT). Thanks to V for holding me up when my feet get tired. Love to my family for undying support. Shout out to Andy at Kinko's—you always got my back!



**Erik Gratton** (*Matt/Homer*) moved to Seattle from Los Angeles nearly four years ago. Excited to debut at ACT with this production, he began his recent cartoon run playing Shrek for Coeur d'Alene

Summer Theatre this August. Before that, he enjoyed a sold-out run as Billy Pilgrim in a world premiere version of *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Book-It Repertory Theatre). With Village Theatre, he's recently worked on *Mary Poppins* and performed the title roles in *The Foreigner* and *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes*. Among other favorite projects across the country are the one-actor show *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol* and some of Shakespeare's best, including *Hamlet, Rosalind, and Jacques*. He also played a beaver on *Grimm* and is the co-host of "The Lazy Muses Podcast."



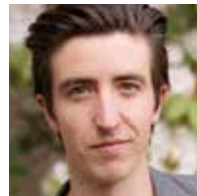
**Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako** (*Colleen/Itchy*) makes her ACT debut in *Mr. Burns*. Recent credits include the title role in the premiere stage adaptation of Chris

Cleave's novel *Little Bee* (Book-It Repertory Theatre) and *Camae in The Mountaintop* (Snowy Range Summer Theatre). Favorite musical roles include Heidi in *[title of show]* (Balagan), Cathy in *The Last Five Years* (SRST), and Janet in *The Rocky Horror Show* (Seattle Musical Theatre). She has performed in various regional and international venues, including work as a lead singer/dancer and vocal captain for Carnival Cruise Lines' Playlist Productions. In addition to the stage, Nako works in film and television and can be seen in multiple national commercials. Nako is a freelance youth theatre director and a passionate advocate for arts education. In spring 2016 she will play the lead role of Efuia in Village Theatre's world premiere musical production of *My Heart is the Drum*.



**Bhama Roget** (*Quincy/Bart*) has been acting in Seattle since 1999, and has performed in several productions at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company,

and the dearly departed Empty Space Theatre. As a standup comedian and improviser, she has performed at the Hollywood Improv, Mbar, Largo, and El Cid in Los Angeles, and is a 15-year member of the celebrated Bainbridge Island improv group, The Edge. She has been seen on television in ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* and TNT's *Leverage*, as well as on the hit web shows *Cookus Interruptus* and *Wrecked*, for which she won the 2013 Indie Series Award for Best Lead Actress in a Comedy. This is Bhama's first time on stage at ACT.



**Adam Standley** (*Gibson/Mr. Burns*) is honored to make his ACT debut in such a radical play. This collaboration is full of huge talents that he's humbled to work with.

In Seattle, Adam has worked at Intiman Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Opera, and Washington Ensemble Theatre. As a founding member of the new works ensemble, The Satori Group, his work there comprises the majority of the pride in his life. His wife and puppy take up the rest. Recent Satori Group acting credits include *reWilding, Making of a Monster, and Winky*; directing credits include *Tragedy: a tragedy* and *Making of a Monster*. Recent regional credits include Prior in *Angels in America: Part 1 and 2*; Lyle Webb in *John Baxter is a Switch Hitter*; State Trooper/et al in Jane Nichols' idiotic *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay*; Joe/et al in *Stu For Silverton*; and Eddie in the beautiful *Trouble In Mind*.



**Robertson Witmer** (*Musician/Actor*) is a Seattle native, where he works as a freelance musician and sound designer. Recent credits include *Seven Ways to Get There, The Three*

*Sisters* (ACTLab); *Venus in Fur* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Comedy of Errors, Tartuffe* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); *The Flick* (New Century Theatre Company); and *The Return of Chaos* (Teatro ZinZanni). His onstage appearances include *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* (Intiman Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre); *Fiddler on the Roof* (Village Theatre), and *West* (On the Boards). In 2013, Rob received the Gregory Award for Outstanding Sound Design.



**Anne Washburn's** (*Playwright*) recent plays include *10 out of 12* (Soho Rep), *Mr. Burns* (Woolly Mammoth, Playwrights Horizons), *Devil At Noon* (A.T.L. Humana Festival), *The*

*Small* (Clubbed Thumb), transadaptations of Euripides' *Iphigenia In Aulis* (Classic Stage Company), *Orestes* (Folger), and *The Internationalist* (13P; Vineyard Theater). Honors include a Guggenheim, a PEN/Laura Pels award, a Whiting, a NYFA fellowship, Susan Smith Blackburn finalist, and several MacDowell and Yaddo residencies. Her play *Antlia Pneumatica* will premiere at Playwrights Horizons in the spring of 2016.





**John Langs** (*Director*) Incoming Artistic Director of ACT, John's 16-year freelance career has afforded him the opportunity to work with many great artists at prestigious theatre

companies across the country. He has directed productions in New York at Playwrights Horizons and Ensemble Studio Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, Circle X Theatre in Los Angeles, The Resident Ensemble Players in Delaware, New Century Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company. John received his directing degree from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Over the course of his career, he has enjoyed directing a wide variety of productions. Some of his favorites include *King Lear* with Kurt Beattie in the leading role, *The Shaggs Philosophy of the World* (L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Original Musical, Backstage Garland Award for Best Direction, nominated for Lucile Lortel and Drama Desk awards celebrating excellence Off Broadway), and *Brothers Karamazov* (seven LADCC Awards including Best Production of the Year and Best Direction). John received the first annual Seattle Gregory Award honoring excellence in direction for *The Adding Machine*. Last year, Seattle audiences were able to catch John's directing work in NCTC's production of *Mary's Wedding* and The Seagull Project's production of *The Three Sisters*. As a dedicated fan of original work, John has shepherded over a dozen projects to their premiere productions, and is thrilled to lead ACT into its 51st season.

**Matthew Smucker** (*Scenic Designer*) is pleased to return to ACT, where previous designs include *Sugar Daddies*; *Rapture Blister Burn*; *Grey Gardens*; *Ramayana*; *First Date*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *Vanities*; *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*; *Yankee Tavern*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Rock 'n' Roll*; *Below the Belt*; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; *Eurydice*; *The Clean House*; *The Women*; and *The Pillowman*. Smucker's regional credits include *Elf*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Candide* (The 5th Avenue Theatre); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Or, Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Speech & Debate*, and *Three Tall Women* (Seattle Repertory Theatre). He has worked for Intiman Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, San Jose Rep, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Houston's Theatre Under the Stars, and Minneapolis Children's Theatre Company. Smucker received the 2011 Gregory Award for Outstanding Scenic Design, a 2012 *Seattle Magazine* Spotlight Award, and appeared on *The Stranger's* 2011 Genius Awards short list. Smucker teaches at Cornish College of the Arts and received his M.F.A. from the University of Washington School of Drama.

**Deb Trout** (*Costume Designer*) is a Northwest designer. This past season's work includes *American Dream* (Seattle Opera), Alice Gosti's durational piece

*How to Become a Partisan* (St. Mark's Cathedral), *Cyrano* (Portland Center Stage) with Seattle's Jane Jones, *Seven Ways to Get There* (ACTLab), and *In the Garden of Rikki Tiki Tavi* (Seattle Children's Theatre). Other theatres include: Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Alley Theatre (Houston), Alliance Theatre (Atlanta), Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, Children's Theatre Company (Minneapolis), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Perseverance Theatre (Juneau), Seattle Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Syracuse Stage, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Ms. Trout co-founded the New York millinery company Mackey and Trout, holds an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama, and teaches design at the University of Washington.

**Geoff Korf** (*Lighting Designer*) is an associate artist of New Century Theatre in Seattle and a member of the ensemble of Cornerstone Theater in Los Angeles. He serves as the Head of Design at the University of Washington's School of Drama. He is a graduate of California State University, Chico and the Yale School of Drama.

**Dominic CodyKramers** (*Sound Designer*) is a faculty instructor in Seattle University's Performing Arts and Art Leadership Department, and continues to design locally. Earlier this year, he created the soundscape for *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* (ACT), and will be designing *Buzzer* (ACTLab) in January. His work has also been heard at Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Beckett Fest, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, West of Lenin, upstart crowd, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, Madcap Melodrama, and the Flying Karamazov Brothers. Other west coast design credits include Universal Studios Hollywood Theme Park, PCPA TheatreFest, Pasadena Playhouse, San Luis Obispo Little Theatre, Santa Clarita Repertory East Playhouse, Hudson Theatre, and Oregon Cabaret Theatre. Dominic earned an M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts and a B.A. from UNC-Asheville, his hometown. He is a proud member of United Scenic Artists USA-829.

**Jeffrey K. Hanson** (*Stage Manager*) Now in his 26th season at ACT, Hanson has stage managed more than 70 shows including *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Sugar Daddies*; *The Pinter Festival*; *The Pitmen Painters*; *Double Indemnity*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *Becky's New Car*; *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*; *Das Barbecü*; *The Women*; *Stuff Happens*; *The Pillowman*; *Mourning Becomes Electra*; *A Skull in Connemara*; *Quills*; *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*; *The Gospel at Colonus*; *Halcyon Days*; *The Revengers' Comedies*; and *Lloyd's Prayer*. At The 5th Avenue Theatre, he has been production stage manager for *Grease*; *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*; *A Chorus Line*; *Oklahoma!*; *Candide*; *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*; *Hello Dolly!*; and *Mame*. He has stage managed *Metamorphoses*, and *The Cider House Rules, Parts One and Two* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); and for Seattle Children's Theatre, Intiman Theatre, and Arizona Theatre Company.

**Casey James** (*Music Director*) is an award-winning songwriter/composer with many gold and platinum

records. He has written hits for Elton John: "Are You Ready for Love", "Mama Can't Buy You Love"; the Freemasons: "Love on my Mind"; J-Lo; the Spinners; Johnny Mathis; Dee Dee Bridgewater; the O'Jays; Lou Rawls; the Temptations; and many more. West coast rap artists sample his tracks (Young Gunz, Lil' Cease, Notorious B.I.G., Method Man, and others). He has received numerous commissions, notably "Spirals" for celebrated Canadian dancer Margie Gillis, award-winning "Euphoric #1" for Puget Sound Flute Quartet, and "Breakwater" for Felix Skoronek. He has written musicals and opera, notably: "Big Boss" and "Mirabelle" (commissioned by the International Children's Festival). He is an adjunct at Cornish College and Seattle University and teaches privately.

**Crystal Dawn Munkers** (*Choreographer*) North-west choreography: *Boeing, Boeing and Hound of the Baskervilles* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *No Way to Treat a Lady*, *West Side Story*, *Peter Pan*, *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes*, and *Watt?!* (Village Theatre); *Dick Whittington and His Cat* (Seattle Children's Theatre); *Passing Strange* (Sidecountry Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *As You Like It* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); *Gypsy* and *CHICAGO* (Seattle Musical Theatre). Director/Choreographer credits: *Just Fosse* (Carnival Cruise Lines), *A Chorus Line* (Seattle Musical Theatre), *Forever Plaid* (Bellevue Civic, Tacoma Actors' Guild, Second Story Repertory), and the film *Her Heart*.

**Frank Honts** (*Dramaturg*) is honored to make his ACT debut with *Mr. Burns*. Dramaturgy credits: *Henry IV Parts One and Two*, *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Amelia* (Renaissance Theatreworks); *Good People*, *In the Next Room* (Forward Theater Company). Recent directing projects: *Affluence*, *Rep Lab* (Milwaukee Repertory), *9 Circles* (Midwest premiere), and *Speech & Debate*. As an assistant director, Frank has worked at the Goodman Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory, California Shakespeare Theater, and American Players Theatre. For three seasons, Frank was artistic associate at Forward Theater Company (Madison, Wisconsin). Education: A.B., history, Brown University.

**Emily Penick** (*Associate Director*) is the Artistic Associate at ACT, Artistic Director of RED STAGE, and a local director and choreographer. Favorite directing credits include *The Other Woman* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *The Rose Tattoo* (Ohio University), and *The Secret Rapture* (Bucknell University). Favorite associate directing credits include: *Bethany* (ACT), *The Seagull* (American Players Theater), *An Iliad*, and *Ragtime* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater). Recent choreography credits include fight choreography for *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), associate and movement direction for *Mary's Wedding* (New Century Theatre Company), and choreography for *Don Nordo Del Midwest* (Café Nordo). Upcoming directing and choreography projects include *R&J* (Seattle Immersive Theatre), *Worse Than Tigers* (RED STAGE, ACTLab), and *9 to 5* (Centerstage Theatre). Emily earned her M.F.A. in directing from Ohio University.



## Who's Who in *Mr. Burns*



**Kurt Beattie** (*Artistic Director*) has been creating theatre for Puget Sound audiences for over 40 years as an actor, playwright, and director. His productions at ACT include *Bloomsday*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha*

and *Spike*; *Grey Gardens*; *Ramayana* (with Sheila Daniels); *The Pitmen Painters*; *Double Indemnity*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*; *Rock 'n' Roll*; *Becky's New Car*; *Intimate Exchanges*; *First Class*; *The Pillowman*; *Mitzi's Abortion*; *The Underpants*; *Bach at Leipzig*; *Vincent in Brixton*; *Black Coffee*; *Alki*; *Moon for the Misbegotten*; *Fuddy Meers*; *Fully Committed*; *Via Dolorosa*; and the holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*. Elsewhere he has directed at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Empty Space Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, University of Washington, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Alley Theatre in Houston, and Ojai Playwrights Festival. As an actor, he has appeared in leading and major roles at ACT (most recently as Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*), Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Empty Space Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, as well as many regional theatres throughout the country. Beattie is a recipient of the Theatre Puget Sound Gregory A. Falls Sustained Achievement Award, and the Outstanding Achievement in the Arts Award from ArtsFund.



**Carlo Scandiuzzi** (*Executive Director*) is a founder of Agate Films and Clear Pictures, producing such films as *Prototype*, *Dark Drive*, *Outpatient*, and *The Flats*, and Indieflix, a distribution company. In 1979, Scandiuzzi

started Modern Productions, 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, he collaborated with many Seattle performance artists such as Norman Durkee, Alan Lande, and Jesse Bernstein. He also acted in various films including *Bugsy*, *The Public Eye*, *Another You*, *Casanova's Kiss*, and *Killing Zoe*. He graduated from the Ecole Supérieure D'Art Dramatique of Geneva. Carlo currently serves as a member of the Seattle Arts Commission.

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### Emergency Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency, please wait for an announcement for further instructions. Ushers will be available for assistance.

### Emergency Number

The theatre's emergency number in the Union lobby is 206.292.7667. Leave your exact seat location with your emergency contact in case they need to reach you.

### Smoking Policy

Smoking is NOT allowed in any part of the theatre or within 25 feet of the entrance.

### Firearms Policy

No firearms of any kind are allowed in any part of the theatre.

### Food

Food is not allowed in the theatre. Tuxedos & Tennis Shoes is the exclusive caterer of ACT.

### Accessibility

Wheelchair seating is available. The theatre is equipped with the Williams Sound® Listening System for the hard of hearing; headsets are available from the house manager for use, free of charge, with a valid ID and subject to availability. ACT offers American

Sign Language interpreted and audio-described performances. For more information, email [service@acttheatre.org](mailto:service@acttheatre.org).

### Lost & Found

Call 206.292.7676 between 12:00pm and 6:00pm, Tues–Sun.

### Address & Website

ACT is located at  
700 Union Street, Seattle, WA 98101.  
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For information regarding booking, contact [events@acttheatre.org](mailto:events@acttheatre.org).

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Groups of 10 or more can save.  
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<sup>†</sup> Denotes staff member has worked at ACT for 10 years or more

Louisville's Humana Festival is one of the earliest and most famous of these, inviting audiences every spring to witness the birth of a slate of world-premiere plays and making Louisville a destination for theatregoers and practitioners. South Coast Repertory Theatre's Pacific Playwrights Festival, and Denver Center Theatre Company's New Play Summit are two other important generators of new play support and production in the regional theatre.

Workshops and staged readings of new plays are a ubiquitous part of all new play development programs and can be immensely useful to a playwright and a theatre company invested in the work. There is, however, an all too common syndrome many writers complain of, articulated beautifully by one of ACT's favorite and most produced playwrights, Steven Dietz, in his 1987 article in *American Theatre Magazine*, "Workshopped To Death." A play may get stuck in the reading/workshop loop, meaning that it receives multiple staged readings at multiple theatres, but does not move forward to a full production. And for all playwrights there is no better way of discovering the potential of a new play than a full production.

At ACT, the production of contemporary work has always been a core value. Greg Falls founded this theatre company in 1965 with a vision centered on bringing new, socially conscious and exciting theatre to an adventurous Seattle audience. Since our doors opened 50 years ago, ACT has placed significant energy toward the development of new work and investment in the next generation of writers for the theatre. Having commissioned more than 40 plays and presented over 35 world premieres, created programming in support of new work, and invited an audience to engage with the work at many levels of development, the vision of Greg Falls continues to thrive. ACT's New Play Development initiatives most recently include participation in the National New Play Network, which we joined last year, and which involves us in a collaborative effort to provide "rolling world premieres," meaning a series of first productions, for new plays among member theatres around the country. The following list of new play development

programs at ACT provides a snapshot of our ongoing efforts to engage with playwrights, and to participate in and support the challenging and extraordinarily fulfilling work of bringing new plays to the American theatre. It is indeed an incredible journey.

**The New Play Award** Now in its 10th year and sponsored by a generous multi-year grant from Gian-Carlo and Eulalie M. Scanduzzi, the New Play Award provides between one and three playwrights a cash award, housing, airfare, and a ten-day, fully supported workshop culminating in two readings at ACT. Four of the six plays we have chosen for this award have gone on to professional productions at reputable houses.

**New Works For The American Stage** ACT's commissioning program supports and celebrates the creation of new work, while heightening the engagement between ACT, playwrights, and patrons. Launched in 2005 with *Becky's New Car* by Steven Dietz, which premiered at ACT in 2008, NWS commissions provide a substantial financial award for the playwright and have, to date, supported nine plays in development.

**Hedgebrook Women Playwrights Festival** Each May ACT invites a playwright to participate in this two-week writing residency at the Hedgebrook retreat on Whidbey Island. ACT provides an on-staff dramaturg and hosts public readings at the end of the residency.

**Ice Creek New Play Festival** ACT participates in solicitation and selection of new work, casting, direction, and dramaturgy in this late-summer festival and has assisted in the launch of seven new plays, including *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* by Yussef El Guindi, which premiered at ACT in 2010; and *Bloomsday* by Steven Dietz, which premiered at ACT this season.

**The Construction Zone** A quarterly reading series with an emphasis on bringing playwrights to Seattle for workshops focused on their developing scripts. Fifteen-hour workshops culminate in a reading and post-play discussion in ACTLab.

**The Playwrights Circle** A new bi-monthly initiative launched at ACT in 2015 brings playwrights and invited collaborators to the table to hear unrehearsed first-time readings of new plays in an informal setting.

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## Festen

New Century Theatre Company presents its biggest production yet. Based on the Danish film *The Celebration*, this powerhouse drama is full of dark secrets and is set in a family-run hotel. Tony Award-nominee Wilson Milam directs.

OCTOBER 28 – NOVEMBER 21  
12th Avenue Arts  
[wearencctc.org](http://wearencctc.org)



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## WIN IT! La Revue De Cuisine

Music of Remembrance partners with Whim Whim choreographer Olivier Wevers to create a new dance set to Bohoslav Martin's delightful jazz ballet *La Revue de Cuisine*.

NOVEMBER 8

**Enter to win two tickets!**

[ENCOREARTSSEATTLE.COM/WIN-IT](http://ENCOREARTSSEATTLE.COM/WIN-IT)  
[musicofremembrance.org](http://musicofremembrance.org)



## Seattle Children's Theatre

From professional productions to a robust drama school, SCT provides experiences for all ages. This year includes titles for the whole family, from beloved classics to exciting new works by talented writers. Check out what this season has to offer.

Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Center  
[sct.org](http://sct.org)



## Bellevue Arts Museum

Counter-Couture: Fashioning Identity in the American Counterculture celebrates the handmade fashion and style of the 1960s and 1970s. Often referred to as the hippie movement, the Counterculture of the era swept away the conformism of the previous decade and professed an alternative lifestyle whose effects still resonate today.

SEPTEMBER 4 – JANUARY 10  
Bellevue Arts Museum  
[bellevuearts.org](http://bellevuearts.org)



## WIN IT! Dracula at Taproot Theatre

Taproot's brand new adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, directed by Nathan Jeffrey, takes you on a chilling adventure following the unlikely allies that join forces to defeat an ancient villain.

SEPTEMBER 25 – OCTOBER 24

**Enter to win two tickets!**

[ENCOREARTSSEATTLE.COM/WIN-IT](http://ENCOREARTSSEATTLE.COM/WIN-IT)  
[taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org)



# Artistic Profile

# MARGARET LAYNE

BY NICKY DAVIS, ACT LITERARY INTERN



Margaret Layne has been at ACT for twenty years and has worked with five (going on six) artistic directors. I had the pleasure of sitting down with her to talk about how she got into casting and how she got started at ACT.

A native New Yorker, Margaret's love of the arts started early, when her artistically minded parents began taking her to ballet, concerts, and theatre. Her first musical was *Fiddler on The Roof*, but what she remembers most vividly is her first straight play: Mary Chase's *Harvey*, with Jimmy Stewart and Helen Hayes. In the play, Jimmy Stewart's character has an imaginary friend: a giant, invisible, white rabbit. "I distinctly remember watching Jimmy Stewart and thinking, 'How is he doing that? How is he making me see a giant invisible white rabbit?'" From that moment, Margaret was hooked on theatre and the magic of actors.

At Yale, Margaret studied English literature, but also acted in shows, was head usher at Yale Repertory Theatre, and wrote theatre criticism for the *Yale Daily News*. Everyone, including Margaret, thought she would become a writer, but by serendipity her first job out of college was at The Dramatists' Guild in New York, and from there she went on to work at Roundabout Theatre Company, where she got the education in theatre management that she carries with her to this day. Hired as assistant to then-Managing Director Todd Haimes, Margaret worked with him for five years and credits him with teaching her the importance of treating artists and colleagues with respect, honesty, compassion, and integrity. "Those things I learned from him I hope I've managed to carry with me and continue here," she says. After Roundabout, Margaret spent two years as Assistant to Robert Brustein at the American Repertory Theatre (ART) at Harvard, where she had an eye-opening experience working amidst a more avant-garde theatrical sensibility and an array of brilliant auteur directors. ("One of them was always quitting, and Bob would have to go to their house and coax them to come back and finish directing the show.")

After ART she returned to New York with no clear idea of what to do next, and bounced between a handful of jobs including the Metropolitan Opera and bartending in Broadway theatres. (She can still pour a perfect shot.) During a three-year stint at Scholastic, Inc., Margaret started receiving postcards from friends who had moved to Seattle, describing it as not only beautiful, but a place where someone could really make a sustainable living in the arts. Having never been west of Ohio, she came to scope out the city and its theatre scene for herself, and immediately knew that she wanted to work at ACT. Seeing productions at the Queen Anne location, she was drawn by the same sense of community she'd felt at Roundabout and ART. "It sounds soppy, but you could feel the love in those shows, how much *love* everyone had for the work and for each other."

With the help of her godfather, Margaret moved west in 1994, and with an introduction from an old friend to then ACT Board President David Skinner, she landed a job as part-time assistant to Artistic Director Peggy Shannon. "It was several steps back from my previous positions, frankly, but I thought, just let me get in the door and then I'll figure out what needs doing and do that," she remembers. At that time, ACT didn't have an official casting director; auditions were organized by the assistant production manager. Margaret started helping with scheduling, gradually taking on more and more of the responsibility, until eventually actors began contacting her directly. "In a way I feel like they *chose* me, they knew it was a good fit before I did. I'd always had a lot of interaction with actors in my other jobs, and I'd always loved their company and had a rapport with them, but I had no idea how to be a casting director, I made it up as I went along. And after I'd been doing it for about a year and a half, I got the official title," she says.

Over the years Margaret has developed her own casting style and describes her job as "part matchmaker, part psychologist, and part mom," with a focus on treating actors with kindness, respect, and warmth, and it's clear listening to her how deeply she cares for this acting community and how much she delights in seeing them succeed. When I asked what her favorite parts of her job are, she immediately had two answers.

"The *second* greatest thing that happens is when you bring in an actor the director hasn't seen before, or barely seen before, and they deliver exactly the way you hope, and afterwards the director turns to you and says something like, 'Where the hell did you find that person? Let's call them back.' Because then I know I'm doing my job well all around—for the director, the show, the theatre, but also for the actor, because I'm working for them, too, trying to find them the right opportunity to shine. But the *greatest* thing is when an actor who has auditioned for you many times but somehow never quite closed the deal comes in one day and for some reason suddenly everything connects. Maybe it's the language, maybe it's the character or the story, maybe it's just finally cosmically their moment, but this time it all comes together and you see them, right in front of you, step up into themselves, into their potential, and become more of the artist they can be. It's like watching the sails of a ship fill with wind, and they're flying. That's the best."

# WORLD PREMIERES AT ACT

**2015**

*Bloomsday* by Steven Dietz

**2013**

*Assisted Living* by Katie Forgetting

**2012**

*First Date: A New Musical* Book by Austin Winsberg, Music & Lyrics by Alan Zachary & Michael Weiner

*Uncle Ho to Uncle Sam* by Trieu Tran and Robert Egan

*Ramayana* by Yussef El Guindi and Stephanie Timm, with the Affiliate Artist Working Group



**2011**

*Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* by Yussef El Guindi

*Double*

*Indemnity* Adapted by David Pichette and R. Hamilton Wright, Based on the book by James M. Cain, Co-Produced with San Jose Repertory Theatre

**2008**

*Fathers and Sons* by Michael Bradford (World Premiere by The Hansberry Project)

*Becky's New Car* by Steven Dietz

**2007**

*First Class* by David Wagoner

**2006**

*Mitzi's Abortion* by Elizabeth Heffron

**2005**

*The Ugly American* by Mike Daisey

**2004**

*Alki* by Eric Overmyer

**2002**

*The Education of Randy Newman* by Randy Newman, Michael Roth & Jerry Patch

PHOTOS BY CHRIS BENNION

**2001**

*Polish Joke* by David Ives

**2000**

*God of Vengeance* by Donald Margulies

*In the Penal Colony* by Philip Glass

**1999**

*Temporary Help* by David Wiltse

**1998**

*Scent of the Roses* by Lisette Lecat Ross

*The Summer Moon* by John Olive

**1997**

*Going to St. Ives* by Lee Blessing

**1996**

*Cheap\** by Tom Topor

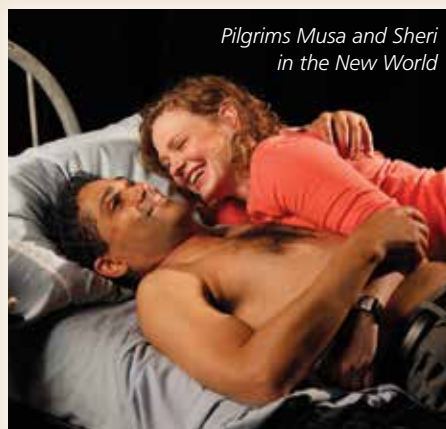
\*First performance in Kreielsheimer Place, downtown Seattle

*My One Good Nerve* by Ruby Dee

**1995**

*Handing Down the Names* by Steven Dietz

*The Language of Flowers* by Edit Villarreal



**1994**

*Gray's Anatomy* by Jim Leonard, Jr.

*Voices in the Dark* by John Pielmeier

**1993**

*The Red and the Black* by Jon Klein



*Agnes Smedley: Our American Friend* by Doris Baizley

**1992**

*Trust* by Steven Dietz

**1991**

*Tears of Rage* by Doris Baizley

*Willi: An Evening of Wilderness and Spirit* by John Pielmeier

*Halcyon Days* by Steven Dietz

**1990**

*A Normal Life* by Erik Brogger

**1989**

*Happenstance* by Steven Dietz and Eric Bain Peltoniemi

**1988**

*God's Country* by Steven Dietz

**1984**

*Thirteen* by Lynda Myles

**1980**

*Catholics* by Brian Moore

**1978**

*Ballymurphy* by Michael Neville

**1975**

*Quiet Caravans* by Barry Dinerman

**1972**

*Echoes* by N. Richard Nash

**1969**

*Crabdance* by Beverley Simons

# ACT History 50 YEARS NOW ONLINE

**ACT'S ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE, EMILY PENICK**, SAT DOWN WITH THE DEDICATED TECH GENIUS BEHIND ACT'S NEW HISTORICAL WEBSITE, **ACT BOARD MEMBER BILL KUHN**...

**EP:** *What inspired you to spearhead this website project?*

**BK:** I'm a nerd, basically. I'm data-oriented, and I used to be a huge movie fan. I spend time on IMDB looking at who did what, and who directed whom, and so-on, so that was an inspiration. We were at a board meeting about two years ago, discussing how ACT was coming up on its 50th Anniversary, and I wondered, "Does anyone know what we've done?" It was a huge question in my mind, because one of both its blessings and curses is that theatre is so ephemeral. I just wanted to have a way to celebrate both the actors that do all their work, and all the people on the production teams.

**EP:** *Please tell us a little bit about the man behind the awesome new historical website.*

**BK:** I'm on the board of trustees, and this is my fourth year. I've been in Seattle since 1977, and I've been coming to ACT for about fifteen years now. I got a Masters in Computer Science from the University of Washington in 1981, and lived my whole professional career in technology. I was chief architect of Getty Images from 1999 to 2006. I always wanted to keep my hands dirty, so I've programmed through my entire life, and still program now. I'm not a zillionaire, so this is a way that I can give back to the theatre that isn't necessarily monetary but has value.

**EP:** *How long did it take?*

**BK:** There are a lot of different angles to it. How long did it take me to program it? Probably less than a month of full-time work. I programmed it, and then a wonderful professional web designer that I'd worked with before, Krista Fleming, came in. I can make it all work and say "This is what the pages look like ..." (and they all look hideous) but Krista comes in and she puts the gloss on it that makes it look beautiful.

The other part is getting all the data for it. The website has a copy of every single program of every Mainstage production that ACT has done, through its 50 years. When I started collecting the data over a year ago, ACT's General Manager Becky

Witmer opened up the ACT archives to me and we started pawing around in there. There's also a reasonable representation of early ACT programs at the University of Washington. UW is very open to people accessing their archives, which turned out to be the missing piece of the puzzle. And with that wonderful resource, we could be 100% complete. The support of the UW Library system is what closed the door on it. And I also have to say my wife, Patricia Daniels, is very good at proofing all of my data. While we have scans of all the programs, all of the data present is actually hand entered, so her proofing was a vital step in the process.

**EP:** *You've personally relived the history of ACT by making this website. What, in your vast research, did you find was most surprising?*

**BK:** It's an amazing community that Greg Falls built. I never met him, but I've met his lovely widow. What he was able to produce was a community. If you look in some of the old programs, on opening night, there was a little slip of paper put in the program that said "Everyone, please join us after the show for a light supper and chat." Can you imagine that? It's absolutely amazing. He had an incredible sense of vision, and I'm sure it wasn't easy, particularly in some of those early years. But he kept it going, and that's what we all have as a city to celebrate now. It's a great thing.

**EP:** *Any fun facts you learned about ACT's history that you'd like to share?*

**BK:** I was surprised to see that Samuel L. Jackson did a show here with the Negro Ensemble Company. I looked up his bio after seeing this, because I didn't know he'd ever done stage work. He did it for a very short time, and we were lucky to have him. Also TV's Patrick Duffy, who starred in *Dallas*. Ruby Dee did a one-woman show

here. And people I really enjoy, like Judd Hirsch and Kevin Tighe, performed here as well. Seeing them on stage is amazing. Then there's our wonderful local actors like Bob Wright, whom I think everyone knows has done a ton of shows. Well, look at the website and see how many he's done. Marianne Owen appeared in her 25th show at ACT in *Bloomsday* this year. A tremendous commitment to the craft. And then there are the Seattle-born people



Explore 50 years of ACT's Mainstage productions at

[www.ACTTHEATREHISTORY.org](http://www.ACTTHEATREHISTORY.org)

who have gone on to have pretty incredible careers, like John Aylward. How many shows was he in here before he appeared on so many television shows? He's well recognized nation-wide, and we were lucky to have him back for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

**EP:** *What's next?*

**BK:** Three things are next. I am wrapping up assimilating all the data for a similar project for *A Christmas Carol*. Another side thing is getting the ACT archives a little more cleaned up and organized. And finally, I've written an android app that has all the information from the historical website, so you don't have to be online to access it. I'm hoping to get this into the android stores as a free download for people. You can see exactly how many plays each actor did, and other fun facts. ACT has such an incredible commitment to Seattle and the arts, and it's fun to have the data about it at your fingertips. There are precious few cultural institutions in the city of Seattle today that have been around for fifty years. You can pretty much count those on one hand, and I'm very proud to be associated with ACT as one of those.



# THROUGH THE DECADES

## 1960s

The '60s saw the birth of ACT. Beginning as just an experiment during the summer season, over the course of the decade Gregory A. Falls' brainchild bloomed into an established home for bold contemporary theatre in Seattle.

**1965:** ACT's first season, a summer season run by Greg Falls as a new Seattle theatre experiment. ACT becomes incorporated as a non-profit organization with a board of directors.

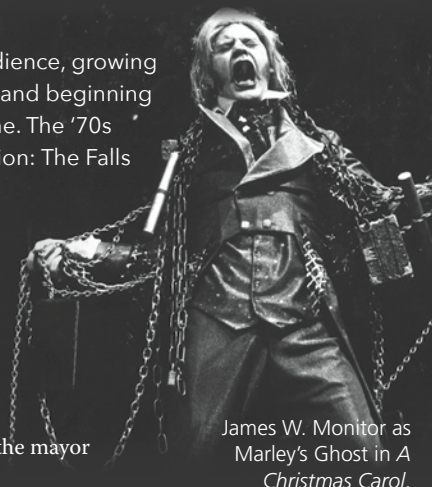
**1966:** ACT expands to a seven-show season running from June to September.

## 1970s

ACT in the '70s was building a significant audience, growing to nearly ten times the size of its first season, and beginning to outgrow its first home in lower Queen Anne. The '70s also saw the beginning of a major ACT tradition: The Falls adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

**1976:** ACT begins a beloved holiday tradition with its first production of *A Christmas Carol*, as adapted by Greg Falls. The theatre's regular season also expands, now running from June all the way through Thanksgiving and giving each play a full 24-performance run.

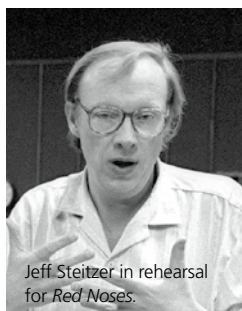
**1978:** On opening night of *Henry IV: Part One*, the mayor declares it to be ACT Theatre Day in Seattle.



James W. Monitor as Marley's Ghost in *A Christmas Carol*.

© CHRIS BENNION

## 1980s



Jeff Steitzer in rehearsal for *Red Noses*.

The '80s was a decade of transition for ACT, with the retirement of Greg Falls after 23 years, handing over the reins to Jeff Steitzer. Additionally, the '80s was the theatre's final decade in Lower Queen Anne.

**1982:** ACT is now considered to be one of the six major cultural institutions in Seattle, alongside the Seattle Symphony, Seattle Opera, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Seattle Art Museum.

**1988:** Falls retires from his 23-year run as Artistic Director, to be replaced by ACT Resident Director, Jeff Steitzer. Steitzer turns the

theatre's focus toward the production of new works by English and American playwrights.

## 1990s

The '90s at ACT saw three different artistic directors (from Steitzer to Shannon to Edelstein) and two different theatre spaces. The theatre moved into the heart of downtown in the middle of this decade, making the '90s a period of resettling and reimagining the possibilities for Seattle's contemporary theatre.

**1994/1995:** Peggy Shannon takes over the reins as Artistic Director at ACT.

**1996/1997:** ACT stages its final performance in its Lower Queen Anne home: *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* by Neil Simon, and transitions into the downtown location. ACT opens the doors at its new multiplex style home in the former Eagles' auditorium in the heart of downtown Seattle, launching the new space mid-season with Tom Topor's *Cheap*. ACT and the Seattle theatre community suffer a major loss when Greg Falls passes away at age 75.

## 2000s

Artistic Director Kurt Beattie streamlined the season to six Mainstage shows and *A Christmas Carol*. Beattie and Executive Director Carlo Scandiuzzi instituted the Central Heating Lab (now ACTLab) in 2007, creating a multiplex of live performance under one roof.

**2002:** Edelstein leaves ACT in the hands of his Associate Artistic Director, Kurt Beattie.

**2007:** Kurt Beattie and ACT's Executive Director Carlo Scandiuzzi open the doors of the Central Heating Lab, an experiment designed to foster new work and fill up the five theatre spaces available in ACT's new building.

## 2010s

ACT continues to grow and change, increasing and strengthening its presence as a home for bold, provocative voices in theatre, and challenging audiences with works both old and new. In 2015, ACT celebrates its 50th anniversary and its 40th year of *A Christmas Carol*.

**2011:** ACT begins a musical co-production relationship with The 5th Avenue Theatre.

**2015:** ACT celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, opening the season with a throwback from its very first season in 1965, Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Kurt Beattie ends his 12-year run as Artistic Director at the end of another season of great theatre, leaving ACT in the hands of Associate Artistic Director John Langa as it moves into the future.



Joshua Carter in *Little Shop of Horrors* ©TRACY MARTIN

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