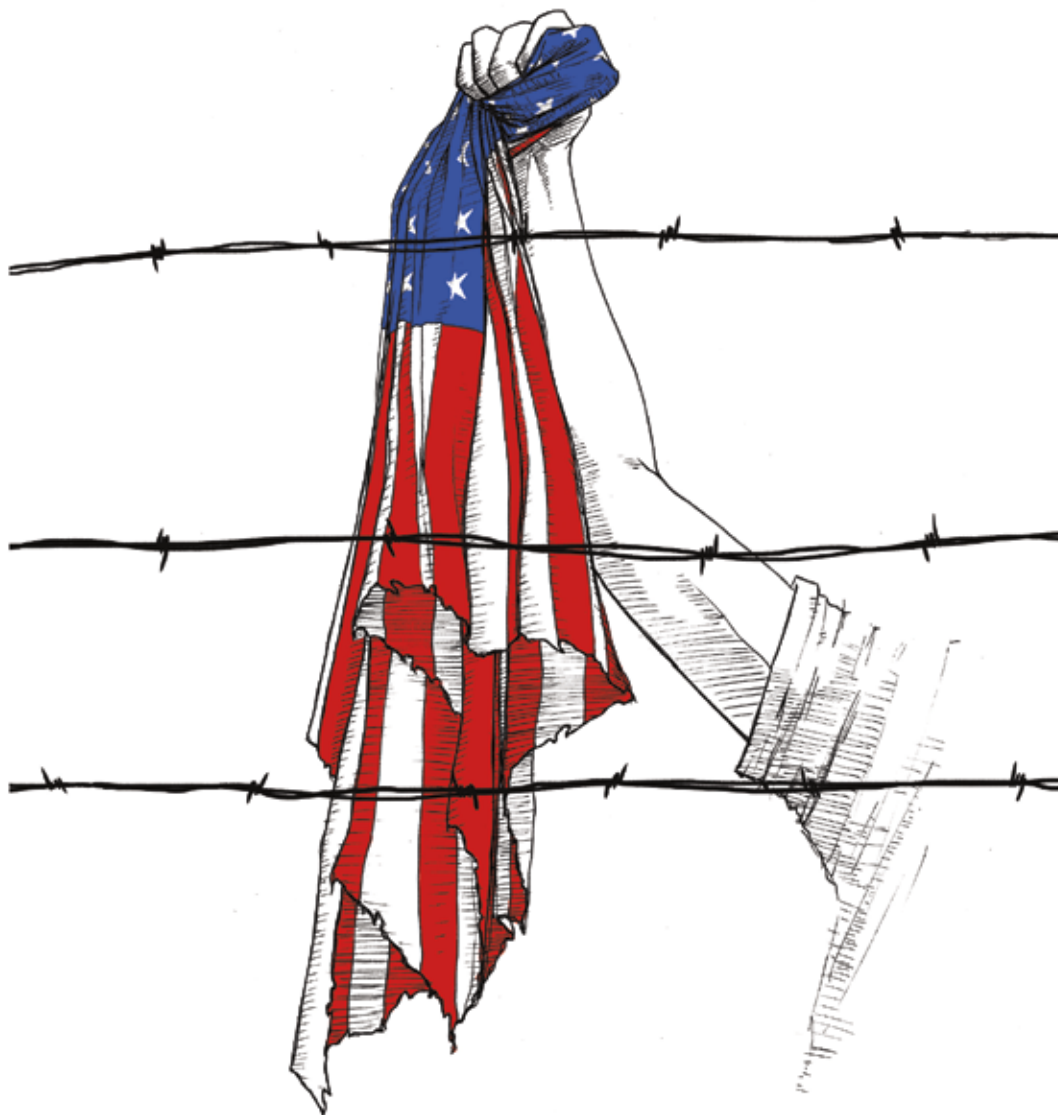


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HOLD These TRUTHS

By Jeanne Sakata
Directed by Jessica Kubzansky



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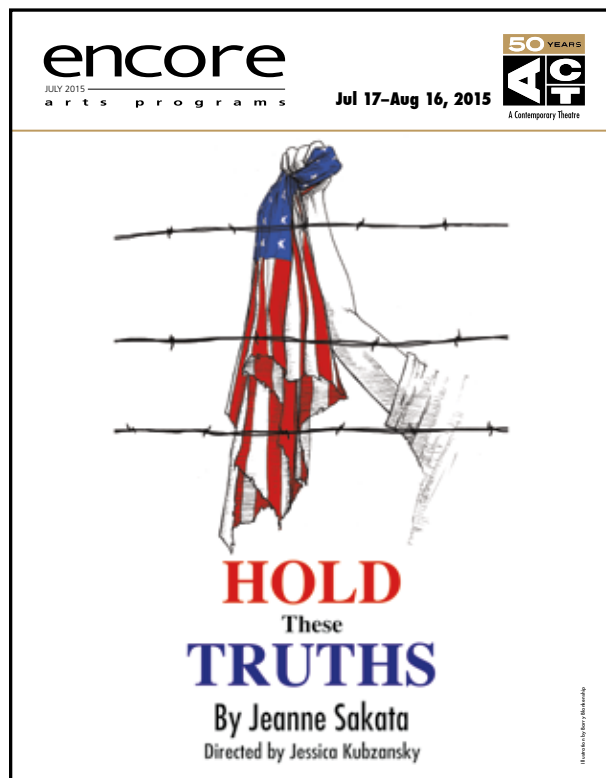
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"...And one man in his life plays many parts...."

BY MARGARET LAYNE, ACT DIRECTOR OF CASTING

Whether you're on the stage or in the audience, the one-person show is a theatrical experience like no other.

For the lone actor it's a challenge that's both thrilling and terrifying, to hold an audience's attention with nothing but the power of the story, the magic of their craft, and the sheer force of their own performing personality. Scenery and costumes are usually minimal, and there are no fellow actors to build energy with, to buoy you up if you're feeling tired, or lend a hand if a line is forgotten. A friendly stage manager might help out with a prompt, but only in the direst emergency. Basically you're on your own.

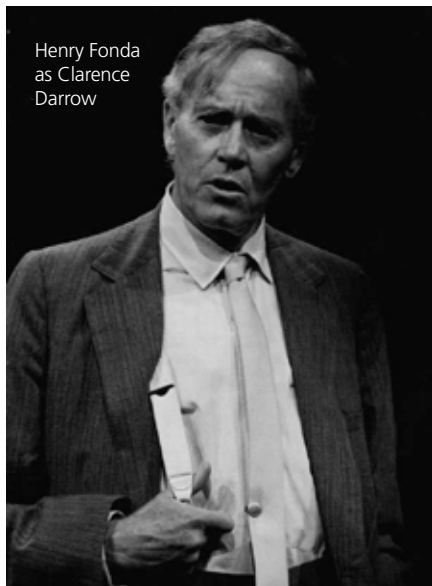
From an audience, the solo performance asks for an unusually personal engagement with the performer: we're not only observers, but also confidants, guests, sometimes even scene partners. Because we're there listening, the story needs to be told; because of our imaginative and emotional energy, the artist is

lifted up and motivated to perform; because of our presence, they're reassured that they are not, in fact, alone. Perhaps more than any other kind of play, the solo show is an act of mutual creation between actor and audience, shaping itself like a hologram in the electric space between the stage and the house.

So it's interesting that solo shows aren't actually connected to the theatre at all in an evolutionary sense, but grafted on from a different kind of performance altogether, and one which developed as an *alternative* to what we think of as "theatrical." In the mid-to late 19th century, theatrical entertainments like melodrama and music hall were considered vulgar amusements, created and performed by persons of doubtful moral character for the uneducated masses. Promoters seeking a more affluent class of audience began recruiting notable authors and public figures like Thoreau, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Edgar Allen Poe to tour with "platform performances," booked in



Hal Holbrook as
Mark Twain



Henry Fonda
as Clarence
Darrow

respectable non-theatrical venues, in which they would give readings or recitations from literature or their own work, or relate their adventures abroad—performances both entertaining *and* edifying.

The eventual cross-pollination of platform readings and theatre performance was driven by two writers who discovered their presentations were more effective if they included an element of theatricality. Charles Dickens, who as a young man had aspired to be an actor and remained a devoted amateur player all his life, had always used performance as part of his writer's process, often leaping up from his desk to stalk around the room and talk to himself in the voices of the characters he was creating, so it's not surprising that when he began giving readings from his work in 1853—starting with *A Christmas Carol*—that his presentation style shifted almost immediately from polite recitation into full-on theatrical interpretations: an early iteration of the one-person show.

Capitalizing on the success of the *Carol* readings, Dickens expanded his repertoire with other set pieces from his novels, revising the original texts into “scripts” for performance. Though not physically imposing, he had a flexible, resonant voice and considerable flair, and, beyond his undoubted acting gifts, an ability to enthrall an audience through pure charisma that we would describe now as “star quality.” His portrayal of Nancy's murder from *Oliver Twist* was so vivid that women in the audience would cover

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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Dorothea Lange photo, War Relocation Authority 1942 - 1945

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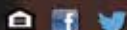
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GOING SOLO

A Production History of One-Person Shows at ACT

BY MARGARET LAYNE,
ACT DIRECTOR OF CASTING

1981

BILLY BISHOP GOES TO WAR

by JOHN GREY and ERIC PETERSEN

One of the most famous and widely produced plays in Canadian theatre, this play dramatized the life of World War I Canadian fighter pilot Billy Bishop.

1991

WILLI: AN EVENING OF WILDERNESS AND SPIRIT written

and performed by

JOHN PIELMEIER

Breaking all previous box office records at ACT, Pielmeier portrayed renowned Northwest mountaineer and wilderness philosopher Willi

Unsoeld recounting three of his most harrowing climbs.



1996

MY ONE GOOD NERVE written and performed by RUBY DEE

The award-winning actress shared an evening of poetry, short story, and personal anecdote reflecting on everything from marriage and parenting to American racial politics.

1998

ENTER THE ACTRESS compiled and performed by CLAIRE BLOOM

An exploration in anecdote and monologue of the changing role of women in theatre history from the Elizabethans to the present.

1999

THE SYRINGA TREE written and performed by PAMELA GIEN

The world premiere of Gien's acclaimed, award-winning solo piece based on her turbulent childhood in South Africa during apartheid.

A PALE AND LOVELY PLACE written and performed by KEVIN JOYCE

Three demonic figures, all played by the author, pitched an unsettling deal to the audience through story and song in this second incarnation of Joyce's impressionistic Faustian cabaret exploring the conscious and unconscious capacity of human beings for evil.

2000

THE 2.5 MINUTE RIDE written and performed by LISA KRON

In three entwined narratives—her pilgrimage to Auschwitz with her aging father, her family's annual visit to an Ohio amusement park, and

her brother's marriage to his Internet bride—Kron delivered a unique meditation on how we experience the hilarious, disquieting roller-coaster ride of being human.

THE BELLE OF AMHERST by WILLIAM LUCE
American theatre legend Julie Harris visited ACT for a special engagement in one of the great solo performances of all time, based on the letters, poems, and notes of 19th century poet Emily Dickinson.

THE FEVER by WALLACE SHAWN
John Procaccino played a nameless, tormented narrator struggling with his first-world guilt and rising social conscience during a dark night of the soul in a third-world hotel room.



VIA DOLOROSA by DAVID HARE
David Pichette played the British playwright, recounting his three visits to Israel as a skeptical Western outsider gathering material for a potential play, and discovering the passionate contradictions and complications of the Arab-Israeli stalemate.

ST NICHOLAS by CONOR MCPHERSON
Former ACT Artistic Director Jeff Steitzer directed Laurence Ballard as a cynical Irish theatre critic who becomes fascinated with a beautiful actress and finds himself involved with a coven of vampires in contemporary London.

2002
FULLY COMMITTED by BECKY MODE
Chronicling one frenetic day in the life of an actor in his "civilian" job as reservationist for New York's trendiest and most expensive eatery, it played 200 performances in The Bullitt Cabaret and showcased three different comic powerhouses in succession: R. Hamilton Wright, David Scully, and Daniel J. Chercover.

2003
THE SYRINGA TREE by PAMELA GIEN
Gien's beautiful memory play returned to where it began, this time as part of ACT's Mainstage season, with Gin Hammond and Eva Kaminsky alternating in the solo role.

2005
THE UGLY AMERICAN written and performed by MIKE DAISEY
Monologist and theatre-maker Daisey recalled the professional and personal impact of his experiences as a young actor studying theatre in London.



2007
FIRST CLASS by DAVID WAGONER
Kurt Beattie directed and John Aylward dazzled as famed poet Theodore Roethke in a world premiere by UW professor emeritus

and poet Wagoner that made the audience into "students" for one unforgettable class.

2009
RUNT OF THE LITTER written and performed by BO EASON
The former Houston Oilers safety headlined his own semiauto-biographical play about an underdog's determined pursuit of NFL stardom and the complex violence of professional sports.



THE BREAKS: A MIXTAPE FOR STAGE conceived, written & performed by MARK BAMUTHI JOSEPH
Accompanied by a turntablist and a beat boxer/percussionist, poet Joseph led ACT audiences on a powerful multimedia theatrical journey through the living history of the hip-hop generation.

2010
THE LADY WITH ALL THE ANSWERS by DAVID RAMBO
Julie Briskman portrayed Ann Landers in this warmhearted portrait of the funny, frank, and influential advice columnist—and dished out a little advice of her own in audience talk-backs after the show!




2012
UNCLE HO TO UNCLE SAM written by TRIEU TRAN with ROBERT EGAN, performed by TRIEU TRAN
In a powerful story of personal survival and a commentary on America's military involvement in Southeast Asia, Tran shared the indelible true story of his family's flight to North America after the fall of South Vietnam and his struggle to find his identity while making an honorable peace with his harrowing past.



2015
HOLD THESE TRUTHS by JEANNE SAKATA
Ryun Yu plays University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi, who defied the government's 1942 Executive Order to intern all people of Japanese descent in the Western United States and spent the rest of his life trying to reconcile his loyalty to America with its betrayal of his ancestry.

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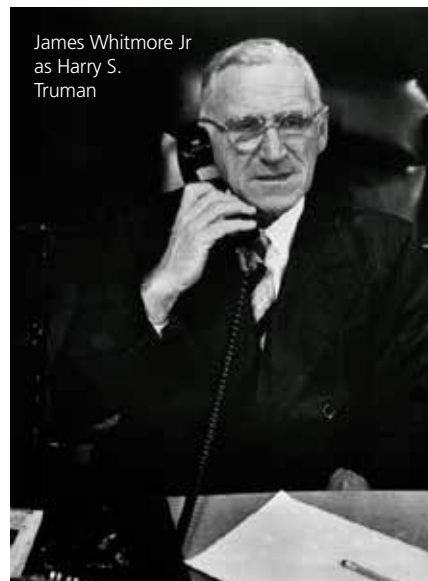
their faces in horror as if they were actually seeing it happen. He *loved* performing, and gave himself to it with such intensity that finally his health collapsed. "I shall tear myself to pieces," he was often heard to declare before striding eagerly onto the stage, and so, in the end, he did, though not in the way he'd intended.

Dickens toured America with his readings in 1867, and the great American man of letters Mark Twain launched his own platform career the following year. In contemporary terms, Twain was more a Personality than an Actor, but he too quickly saw the value of creating "performance versions" of his work, and soon compiled a vast repertoire of anecdote and commentary that could be tailored to location, current event, and the character of the audience. In contrast to Dickens' flamboyant versatility, Twain's rapport with his audiences was more conversational, like spending the evening in the company of an intelligent, humorous, and pleasantly prickly uncle. Like Dickens, Twain was initially invigorated by his public readings: "Lecturing is gymnastics, chest-expander, medicine, mind healer, blues destroyer, all in one," he wrote in 1895, after playing 23 performances in 22 cities. "I am twice as well as I was when I started out. I have gained 9 pounds in 28 days, and expect to weigh 600 before January. I haven't had a blue day in all the 28." But one year and 100 performances later, he had worn himself out physically and begun to question the impact such commercialization might be having on his art and his reputation: "I am demeaning myself," he said to a friend late in the tour. "I am allowing myself to be a mere buffoon. It's ghastly. I can't endure it any longer." And that was that. The toll of a solo show on

even a trained professional actor remains a heavy one, and today most still play limited runs, or on truncated weekly schedules, to preserve the health of the performer.

With the rise of popular operetta, which introduced a more socially acceptable note of capital-C culture into stage performance, and subsequently musical comedy, which brought spectacle into fashion, the platform performance fell out of favor until the mid 1950s, when it was revitalized by the young Welsh actor/writer Emlyn Williams—appropriately with a solo performance as Charles Dickens giving one of his readings. "It started out

as a stunt," Williams recalled. "I did a ten-minute reading from *Bleak House*. I'd never been on stage by myself, and I was petrified. But it went over well, and I decided to get to work preparing a whole evening and see if I could come out alive. It turned out to be much easier than I thought. Less trying than Shakespeare, really. When you're Hamlet or Richard



James Whitmore Jr.
 as Harry S.
 Truman

III or Iago,...[e]ven when you're not on stage you're wiping blood off your sleeve or wondering whether you've got the letter you're supposed to deliver to Othello."

Williams as Dickens was a huge success, and he played it throughout his career, later adding two other solo turns as Dylan Thomas and the author H.H. Munro (Saki).

Meanwhile, a young American actor was also having trouble getting work and wondering what he could do to bring in some money. "I was in New York, I couldn't get a job," Hal Holbrook remembered in 2013. "We [had] a baby and \$200 in the bank. Somebody said, 'Why don't you do a solo?' I said, 'You mean go out alone on stage? My God, I'd be frightened to death.'" Terror is by far the most common reaction among actors to the idea of a one-person

Kurt Beattie
Artistic Director

Carlo Scandiuzzi
Executive Director

ACT – A Contemporary Theatre presents

HOLD These TRUTHS

By Jeanne Sakata

Directed by Jessica Kubzansky

Beginning Jul 17, 2015 • Opening Night Jul 23, 2015

CAST

Ryun Yu* Gordon Hirabayashi

CREATIVE TEAM

Jessica Kubzansky	Director
Ben Zamora	Scenic and Lighting Designer
Brendan Patrick Hogan	Sound Designer
John Zalewski	Original Sound Designer
Michael B. Paul*	Stage Manager
Victoria Thompson	Production Assistant

Running Time: This performance runs approximately 90 minutes. There will be no intermission.

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

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Kurt Beattie

WELCOME to ACT

The relatively brief history of the United States bursts with moments of national courage and pride: the images of American firefighters rushing into the slowly collapsing twin towers of the World Trade Center, the altruism of American participation in organizations like Doctors Without Borders, or The American Red Cross ministering to the homeless and traumatized victims of natural disasters and war around the world. This is the way many Americans like to see themselves and their role in the global community. America strives to be a bellwether, set apart from the atrocities and degradations suffered by citizens in other, less democratic lands. Even with the fact and legacy of slavery in our national narrative, the foundations and principles upon which this country was forged continue to demand a higher standard of ethics and conduct. America is “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

And so the burden of those moments when our nation has not upheld that vision of integrity and travelled the moral high road is particularly galling to us. The fearful response of the United States to the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, when more than 100,000 Japanese people—over 70% of whom were American citizens—were forced from their homes and put in concentration camps on American soil, weighs most heavily on our sense of ourselves. For those of us inhabiting the Pacific Northwest, and for Washingtonians in particular, the history of this shameful chapter is keenly felt, as many of our fellow citizens, neighbors, and friends, were rounded up and temporarily incarcerated in this state before being moved on to larger camps around the country. The true story of Gordon Hirabayashi, so beautifully rendered by Jeanne Sakata in *Hold These Truths*, unfolds here, where Mr. Hirabayashi, an idealistic second-generation, or *Nisei*, Japanese-American University of Washington student, experienced his world turned upside down. His extraordinary and redemptive struggle to assert his rights as a citizen of the United States, and his belief in our Constitution as the arbiter of justice, reinforces for us all the values upon which we were founded, and upon which we strive to stand.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Beattie".

Kurt Beattie, Artistic Director

COMING SOON TO ACT



World Premiere Bloomsday

By Steven Dietz

Directed by Kurt Beattie

Can an old love be rekindled,
a time in life reclaimed,
a new course set?



Sep 11–Oct 11

endangered species project

Endangered Species Project Aug 10, Sep 14

Explore the great plays you seldom see. This summer features George Bernard Shaw's *Getting Married*, followed by Sidney Kingsley's *Dead End* in September.



The Construction Zone Aug 25

Caution—plays under construction! Join ACT and Live Girls! Theater for their third reading in 2015 of exciting new work before one of the selections for the series comes to the stage in the 2016 ACTLab season. August features Lauren Yee's *King of the Yees*.



The Love Markets Aug 15

A special one-night concert with The Love Markets, the acclaimed Weimar Berlin-inspired cabaret band. Lift your glass and enter the world of your dreams. "Irresistible... Intoxicating theatricality... A deliciously dark carnival." —*Seattle Magazine*



Sound Sep 9–Oct 4

Sound by Don Nguyen navigates the waters off of Martha's Vineyard and the impassioned dispute between a fiercely protective Deaf father and his hearing ex-wife over the use of cochlear implants to restore their daughter's hearing.



Icicle Creek New Play Festival Aug 18–19

Now in its 9th season, the nationally-renowned Icicle Creek New Play Festival will bring two brand new plays to ACT in August. This year, the Festival invites you to be the first in the world to hear plays by Jenny Connell Davis and Eric Coble.



The Great Soul of Russia Sep 30

The Seagull Project returns with *The Wood Demon*—the last of Chekhov's plays to have a clear hero—offering a rare opportunity for a glimpse at this seldom produced comedy.



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A Note from Director Jessica Kubzansky

I am constantly
struck by the
difference
between
the absolute
convictions of
my own noble
soul, and the
frailty of my
human fear...

I have had the privilege of meeting this play of Jeanne Sakata's in a very early stage of development, and was blessed to get to develop and direct it to the world premiere production and beyond. It has been an extraordinary gift.

Not only because Jeanne Sakata (the playwright) is herself an extraordinary light and spirit, and Ryun Yu (the actor who created the role) is a beautiful man and a hugely gifted actor with enormous passion and integrity, but because, as I worked on this play, which is in some ways a love story between a man and his Constitution, I slowly began to realize that for the first time in my life, I was encountering a hero. A true hero. An American hero.

Before Gordon Hirabayashi came into my awareness, my understanding of the word *hero* was different. A hero was someone who rescued people from burning buildings, or did something physically dangerous that saved people, or defied death for the greater good. It seemed a *louder* kind of word, one I associated with noisier, showier deeds.

But in meeting Gordon (and Jeanne's gift to the world is that she makes you feel that you do indeed get to meet Gordon), I suddenly discovered that he is the embodiment of a real hero. One who has the courage of his own convictions in dangerous times. One who quietly defies things he knows to be wrong, who stands for what he believes in against the wisdom of even those who love him and are terrified for him. One who speaks out even when it is perhaps more prudent and certainly safer to be silent. And one who, even after incredible, unbelievable disappointment (when the profoundness of his convictions seem to have led him astray), does not become embittered, but goes on to lead a brilliantly productive life until vindication finally arrives.

In my own life, I am constantly struck by the difference between the absolute convictions of my own noble soul, and the frailty of my human fear when faced with actual hard things. Gordon Hirabayashi lived his beliefs in the face of enormous challenge and adversity, and did so with humility and grace. He is a shining example of the kind of hero I aspire to be in everyday life. If every day we can all strive to be a little more like Gordon, we will enrich humanity and imbue it with more common good.

I am humbled, awed, and grateful for the opportunity to share this towering American hero with you. Thank you.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERNMENT

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, public outrage and hysteria turned toward Japanese people—both foreign-born and citizens—living in the United States. The west coast had a long history of anti-Asian agitation, culminating in the denial of citizenship (naturalization) to Asians upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1922 (*Ozawa v. U.S.*) and the 1924 Immigration Act, which barred Asian immigration.

War with Japan quickly reawakened feelings of suspicion and fear. Newspaper headlines and columnists began to warn of saboteurs and fifth-column activity. Congressmen jumped on the anti-Japanese bandwagon and began spouting warnings of imminent danger from Japanese Americans:

I know the Hawaiian Islands. I know the Pacific coast where these Japanese reside. Even though they may be the third or fourth generation of Japanese, we cannot trust them. I know that those areas are teeming with Japanese spies and fifth columnists. Once a Jap always a Jap. You cannot change him. You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear....I say it is of vital importance that we get rid of every Japanese whether in Hawaii or on the mainland. They violate



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND EVACUEES WALKING TO TRAIN, WATCHED BY CROWD ON OVERPASS. COURTESY OF MOHAI, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER COLLECTION.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

every sacred promise, every canon of honor and decency. This was evidenced in their diplomacy and in their bombing of Hawaii....!¹

A report commissioned by Congress just after the Pearl Harbor attack largely dismissed these rumors and contended that the vast majority of Japanese Americans were loyal, but it did nothing to stop the mounting public hysteria and government and military reactionism. The 1946 Munson Report found that the Nisei—second-generation Japanese American citizens—were:

...universally estimated from 90 to 98 percent loyal to the United States if the Japanese educated element of the Kibei is excluded. The Nisei are pathetically eager to show this loyalty. They are not Japanese in culture. They are foreigners to Japan. Though American citizens they are not accepted by Americans, largely because they look differently and can be easily recognized. The Japanese American Citizens League should be encouraged, while an eye is kept open, to see that [Tokyo] does not get its finger in this pie—which it has in a few cases attempted to do. The

loyal Nisei hardly knows where to turn. Some gesture of protection or wholehearted acceptance of this group would go a long way to swinging them away from any last romantic hankering after old Japan...²

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the military to exclude any person from designated military areas.

I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander

deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order.³

This order gave the military free rein to designate military areas and to remove any persons considered a danger. On March 2, 1942, Lt. General John L. DeWitt, West Coast commander of the U.S. Army, issued Public Proclamation No. 1 which designated the entire west coast a restricted military area. The Army issued the first Civilian Exclusion Order for Japanese people on Bainbridge Island on March 24, 1942. Though theoretically Executive Order 9066 could be used to remove German and Italian Americans, only the Japanese

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

1. Congressman Rankin of Mississippi, *Congressional Record - House*, 77th Congress, 2nd Sess. Vol. 88, pt. 1, pg. 1419. Feb. 18, 1942.

2. Munson, Curtis B. "Report on Japanese on the West Coast of the United States," *Hearings*, 79th Congress, 1st sess., Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1946.

3. Executive Order 9066. February 19, 1942.

"A good end cannot purify evil means; nor must we ever do evil, so that good may come of it."

~ WILLIAM PENN, 1644–1718



TAGGED FOR EVACUATION, SALINAS, CALIFORNIA, MAY 1942. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ARCHIVES. PHOTO BY RUSSELL LEE.

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

community was forced to undergo mass evacuation and imprisonment.

By June 1942, more than 110,000 Japanese people—more than 70% of them American citizens—had been forced from their homes into temporary assembly centers. These assembly centers, such as Camp Harmony, were ramshackle affairs built at racetracks and fairgrounds. From the assembly centers, Japanese families were moved to ten concentration camps scattered in the more inhospitable desert regions of the west.

After the war, many Japanese Americans returned to the west coast. In 1952, the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act finally allowed Issei, or first generation Japanese Americans, naturalization. In 1976, on the 34th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, President Gerald Ford declared the evacuation a “national mistake.” And in 1988, HR 442 was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, providing reparations for surviving internees. Beginning in 1990, \$20,000 in redress payments were sent to all eligible Japanese Americans.

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THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Founded in the 1650s in England, at the end of the Protestant Reformation, the Quakers are a religious society with Christian roots. Formally titled the Society of Friends or the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers believed that the divine could be found in every human. This belief (radical, in its time) led the Friends to become the first organization in history to ban slaveholding. Quakers are also characteristically pacifistic, as they abhor any act that threatens or destroys human life.

As part of the Protestant Reformation movement, the Quakers rejected the idea that humans needed intermediaries to facilitate communication with God or the Divine. They rejected the trappings of the Catholic Church, its ritualized masses and sacraments, its ordained and paid clergy, and even the central authority of the Bible. For Quakers, the Bible is but one of several important and inspirational spiritual texts. In this way, the Quakers in the 17th century can be seen as perhaps the fullest embodiment of Reformation ideals.

No religion is a monolith—and a quintessential characteristic of the Quaker faith is tolerance. Therefore, as differences of opinion arose over spiritual practice over the past three hundred years, the Friends have splintered into various subgroups—all of whom are still called Quakers. In the United States, the four main branches of the Quaker faith are the Liberal Friends, the Conservative Friends, the Pastoral Friends, and the Evangelical Friends.

The Liberal Friends are the most commonly depicted of the Quakers. Instead of seeking spiritual guidance from a religious official, Liberal Friends look inward for what they call the “Inner Light,” or “Christ Within,” to provide moral guidance. Liberal Friends gather communally for meetings at steeple-houses or meeting-houses. Seating is arranged to emphasize the equality of all who are present. Together, they practice silent meditation, until the Inner Light inspires a member to speak. This is called “unprogrammed” worship. Conservative Friends are invested in preserving the Quaker religion as it was practiced in the mid-19th century. Like the Liberal Friends, the Conservatives practice unprogrammed worship, and may also practice “plainness” of speech and dress. They may also recognize the spiritual authority of Christ, in addition to the Christ Within.

Pastoral Friends practice what is called “programmed” worship—that is, worship led by a pastor figure. This branch of the Quakers recognizes the authority of Christ and emphasizes the authority of Christian scripture. Like the Pastoral Friends, the Evangelical Friends recognize the authority of Christian scripture, and are more likely to refer to their worship as “church” service rather than a “meeting.”



GORDON KIYOSHI HIRABAYASHI

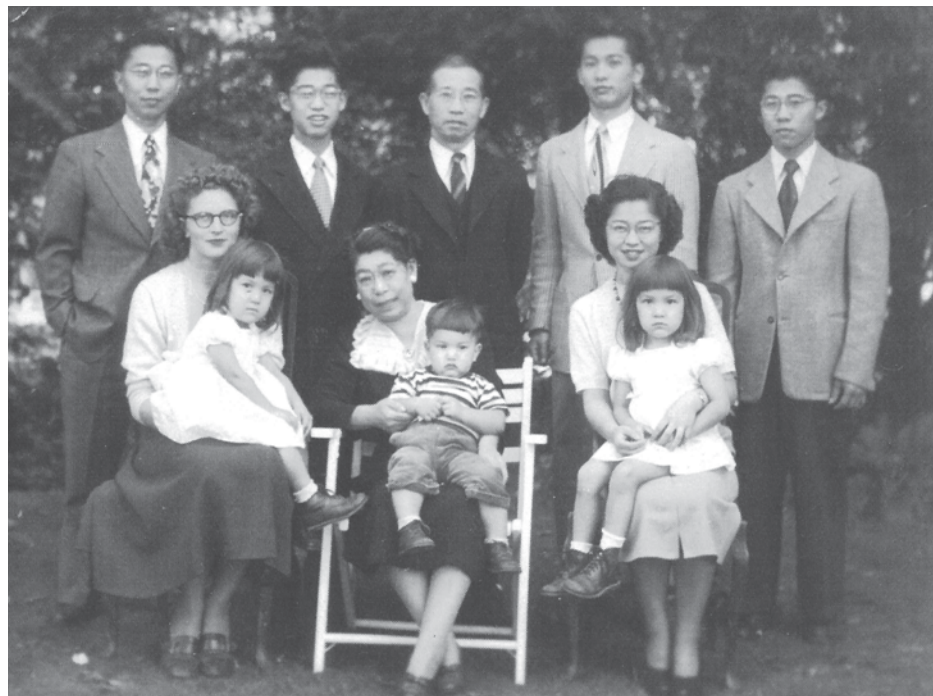
(1918-2012)

"It was a vindication of all the effort people had put in for the rights of citizens during crisis periods."

~ GORDON HIRABAYASHI



COURTESY OF JEANNE SAKATA



COURTESY OF ESTHER FURUGORI

Gordon Hirabayashi was an American sociologist best known for his resistance to the Japanese-American internment during World War II. He was one of only three people to openly defy it. In 1942, he turned himself in to the FBI, and after being convicted for curfew violation, he was sentenced to 90 days in prison. The verdict was appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943). The court unanimously ruled against him. Hirabayashi later spent a year in federal prison. He contended that a questionnaire sent to Japanese Americans demanding renunciation of allegiance to the Japanese emperor was discriminatory and refused to be inducted into the U.S. armed forces.

After the war, Hirabayashi went on to earn his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Washington. He taught in Beirut, Cairo, and at the University of Alberta, where he served as chair of the sociology department until 1975, and continued to teach until his retirement in 1983. In 1987, the U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit overturned Hirabayashi's 1943 conviction, after documents were uncovered that clearly showed evidence of government misconduct in 1942—evidence that the government knew there was no military reason for the exclusion order, and withheld that information from the U.S. Supreme Court.

"It was quite a strong victory—so strong that the other side did not appeal," says Hirabayashi. "It was a vindication of all the effort people had put in for the rights of citizens during crisis periods."

In 2012, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Hirabayashi for his principled stand against Japanese-American internment.

BE LIKE THE CACTUS

BY KIMII NAGATA

Let not harsh tongues, that wag
in vain,
Discourage you. In spite of
pain,
Be like the cactus, which through
rain,
And storm, and thunder, can
remain.

Kimii Nagata published this poem in 1945, as part of an anthology of poetry written by children interned in Gila River War Relocation Center in Rivers, Arizona.

"To end war and violence means having a better world, but that is impossible unless the people in it grow better. No relationship is finer than the people who compose it. Those who are endeavoring to abolish war, therefore, must themselves strive hard to become better people by living better lives."

~ RICHARD GREGG, 1885–1974

BARRACKS HOME

BY TOYO SUYEMOTO KAWAKAMI

This is our barracks, squatting on the ground,
 Tar papered shacks, partitioned into rooms
 By sheetrock walls, transmitting every sound
 Of neighbor's gossip or the sweep of brooms
 The open door welcomes the refugees,
 And now at least there is no need to roam
 Afar: here space enlarges memories
 Beyond the bounds of camp and this new home.
 The floor is carpeted with dust, wind-borne
 Dry alkalai, patterned with insect feet,
 What peace can such a place as this impart?
 We can but sense, bewildered and forlorn,
 That time, disrupted by the war from neat
 Routines, must now adjust within the heart.

Librarian, poet, and memoirist Toyo Suyemoto Kawakami was interned in Topaz at the Central Utah Relocation Center for three years. This poem was written during her internment from 1942 to 1945.

Who's Who in *Hold These Truths*



Ryun Yu (*Gordon Hirabayashi*) Ryun Yu is the first Korean-American to train at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, and has the first theatre

degree ever awarded by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His parents still speak to him. He just finished playing Mark in the film adaptation of David Henry Hwang's *Bondage*. This is Ryun's second film collaboration with David Henry Hwang—he played Hwang in *Yellow Face*, which was the first adaptation of a major play for YouTube. Other film credits include *The Last Tour* (which he is also directing), *Only the Brave*, *The Brothers Solomon*, and *The Mikado Project*. His television appearances include *The Whole Truth*, *Bones*, *Good Luck Charlie*, and *The Unit*. He played George in the Los Angeles premiere of Julia Cho's *The Language Archive* and David in the world premiere of Lloyd Suh's *American Hwangap* at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco. In Los Angeles, he has played Ivan in *Art* at East West Players, Gene in *Sea Change* at the Gay and Lesbian Center (Maddy Award, Ovation Award nomination), and all of the characters in *Dawn's Light* at East West Players. He also performed in the west coast premiere of Richard Greenberg's Tony Award-winning *Take Me Out* at the Geffen Playhouse. He is honored to be in this production, a major step in a long journey with playwright Jeanne Sakata and director Jessica Kubzansky. This one is dedicated to his wife Nicole, who is, quite simply, the best.



Jeanne Sakata (*Playwright*) Jeanne is honored that her solo play, *Hold These Truths*, will be performed as part of ACT's 50th Anniversary Mainstage

Season, following four sold-out performances last summer in ACTLab. Its Los Angeles premiere took place at East West Players in 2007, and was co-presented by the UCLA Department of Asian American Studies, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, and the Japanese American National Museum. *Hold These Truths* was also performed with Silk Road Rising in Millennium Park. Its New York Off-Broadway premiere took place at Epic Theatre Ensemble in 2012 (2013 Drama Desk Nomination, Outstanding Solo Performance), with subsequent performances at Honolulu Theatre for Youth co-presented with Daniel Dae

Kim, and PlayMakers Repertory Company. Jeanne is also a renowned actress who has performed with The Public Theatre, Lincoln Center Theater, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, La Jolla Playhouse, Intiman Theatre, ACT, and American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. Jeanne is a recipient of the LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in Chay Yew's *Red* at East West Players. The Jeanne Sakata Collection has been established in the Library of Congress Playwrights Archive, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection in Washington DC.

Jessica Kubzansky (Director) is the Co-Artistic Director of The Theatre @ Boston Court in Pasadena and an award-winning national director. She developed and directed the world premiere of Jeanne Sakata's *Hold These Truths* at East West Players, and subsequently for many others, including *Silk Road* in Chicago. New works include the New York premiere of Sheila Callaghan's *Everything You Touch* (The Cherry Lane), world premieres of EYT, Michael Elyanow's *The Children*, Jordan Harrison's *Futura*, Laura Schellhardt's *Courting Vampires*, Salamone/McIntyre's *Gulls*, Mickey Birnbaum's *Bleed Rail*, Carlos Murillo's *Unfinished American Highwayscape*, Van Itallie's *Light*, Cody Henderson's *Cold/Tender* (all at Theatre @ Boston Court), Julie Hébert's *Tree* (Ensemble Studio Theatre/Los Angeles) Bob Clyman's *Tranced* (Laguna Playhouse), Bryan Davidson's *War Music* (Geffen Playhouse), Tom Jacobson's *The Orange Grove*, and Salamone/McIntyre's *Moscow* (Playwrights' Arena/Chekhov Now). Other recent work includes *Pygmalion* (Pasadena Playhouse), *Rll*, a three-person *Richard II* (Theatre @ Boston Court), James Still's *I Love to Eat* (Portland Center Stage), *The 39 Steps* (La Mirada), and *Macbeth* (Anteaues). Jessica has worked with many great playwrights, including Aditi Kapil, Luis Alfaro, Christina Anderson, Bill Cain, Julia Cho, Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig, Zayd Dohrn, Michael Hollinger, Peter Sinn Nachtrieb, Diana Son, Ken Urban, and David Wiener. Kubzansky received the LA Drama Critics' Circle Award for Sustained Excellence in Theatre.

Ben Zamora (Scenic and Lighting Designer) Ben is a Seattle-based artist and lighting designer. He received an M.F.A. in lighting design from the University of Washington and a B.A. in theatre from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Recently, Ben has created large-scale light installations for The Park Avenue Armory, Art Basel/Design Miami,

the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, Frye Art Museum, and the Suyama Space, among many others. Ben's designs have been seen internationally, including at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, Royal Festival Hall and The Barbican Center in London, the Mariinsky Theatre in Russia, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, Stockholm's Baltic Sea Festival, the Helsinki Festival, the Berliner Festspiele, the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland, Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, DeDoelen in The Netherlands, and Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Salle Pleyel in France. Previously at ACT, Ben designed *Middletown*, *The Pitmen Painters*, and *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*.

Brendan Patrick Hogan (Sound Designer) Brendan has designed over 50 mainstage and limited-run productions on ACT stages, including a number of world premieres. In addition to his work at ACT, other designs and compositions have been heard at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Arizona Theatre Company, Artist's Repertory Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Wellfleet Harbor Actor's Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Washington Ensemble Theatre, and Amnesty International.

Michael B. Paul (Stage Manager) is pleased to celebrate ACT's 50th Anniversary with this production of *Hold These Truths*. Past shows with ACT: *First Date* (with The 5th Avenue Theatre), *First Class*, *Miss Golden Dreams*, *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof*, and *In The Penal Colony*. He has also celebrated the 10th anniversary with the Alaska Repertory Theatre; the 20th with the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta; the 40th with the Seattle Children's Theatre and the 20th, 30th, 40th, and 50th anniversary seasons with the Seattle Repertory Theatre. He began his Seattle theatrical career at the Skid Road Theatre with *The Me Nobody Knows* and *Grease*.



Kurt Beattie (Artistic Director) has been creating theater for Puget Sound audiences for over 40 years as an actor, playwright, and director. His productions

at ACT include *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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This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

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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.

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

Address & Website

ACT is located at
700 Union Street, Seattle, WA 98101.
Ticket Office Phone: 206.292.7676.
Administrative Office Phone: 206.292.7660.
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Website: www.acttheatre.org.

Theatre Rental

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Spotlight on **SUSAN TRAPNELL**

BY BECKY WITMER, ACT GENERAL MANAGER

Susan Trapnell was Managing Director of ACT for 22 years, in two stints between 1982 and 2007. She moved to Seattle in 1976 from Washington, D.C. and worked with The Bill Evans Dance Company from 1977 to 1981. In 1982 she applied for the position of Development Director at ACT, only to find after two interviews that she was actually being considered for a different job, when Greg Falls said, “Oh, didn’t I tell you, Louise is leaving so we’re looking for an Administrative Director.” Trapnell thinks she wouldn’t have applied if she had known in advance—but she got the offer, said yes, and the rest is part of ACT’s legacy.

At that time, Greg Falls was Producing Artistic Director and Phil Schermer was Production Manager, also overseeing finances. “We were a perfect match. Greg had the vision for the art and Phil had a genius mind to know how to make it happen. Phil never could think inside the box; he had the best brain of anyone I’ve ever worked with. I was the communicator who could shape the vision for the board and staff.”

Looking back at ACT in the 1980s, Trapnell credits Greg Falls with building a strong patron base for ACT and encouraging a collaborative spirit among Seattle theatres. She recalls the core values of the theatre as: respect for everyone involved, from vendor to volunteer; a sense of humor and perspective within; and a willingness to be bold. “Greg was very careful to build a consistent season for subscribers. Not just a show-by-show selection, but a season that kept the audiences engaged, gave artists some challenges, gave audiences some challenges. And he communicated with them. Falls originally envisioned ACT like a summer stock company, bringing play titles to ACT that were recently on to the stages in New York, and having the talent pool of students from UW in Seattle to create and perform them. The audiences grew every year, and he built a loyal base of curious theatregoers.”

Trapnell credits the staff and board for being bold, self-critical, and also building credibility in the community. From the Ticket Office Manager to a long line of dedicated Board Presidents, there was a unity in the direction of the company that kept it growing.

It grew to the point that moving out of the original space in Lower Queen Anne was necessary. ACT committed to raising \$5 million to move downtown to 2nd and Pike in a new building. At that point, the Theatre was only raising a few hundred thousand dollars annually for operations and ACT’s Board was not confident with a higher number. However, ACT ultimately raised \$35 million and overcame a myriad of challenges, including bankruptcy of the downtown development project which was to include ACT.

After the developer’s project fell through, Trapnell and ACT’s Board of Directors were

committed to finding another solution. Jim Ellis, head of the Convention Center, invited ACT and Seattle Housing Resources Group to tour the Eagles building, which the Convention Center owned at the time. “Phil and I went to see the building with the express purpose of saying we had and that it was clearly not a possible home for ACT. There was no electricity. We walked through the building with big flashlights. There were bird droppings and holes in walls. But we were amazed at the volume of the space—you can’t tell that from outside. The possibilities started to open up as we walked through it.”

Trapnell considers the process of moving ACT to the Eagles building one of the most rewarding and significant moments in her career, from working with the Board to exceed fundraising goals, to partnering with Phil Schermer to imagine the possibilities of the building. There were also surprises like when then Artistic Director Jeff Steitzer (Falls’ successor) and Phil Schermer suggested that the Eagles Ballroom space be converted to an arena theatre rather than a traditional proscenium stage. Now it’s hard to imagine the space any other way.

“Our feasibility study said we could raise \$1 million in 1989 (circa). We ended up raising over \$35 million. No organization knows what it’s capable of doing until it just focuses on what it needs and figures it out. When you decide you’re going to do something, you just do it. You don’t place odds on it. We were the first organization to receive \$1 million from the state and that grant became the basis for Building for the Arts, a state program still operating today. ACT had built strong relationships in the community and had a board that was driven to succeed. I get a lot of the credit for the effort, but no manager can be stronger than the board with whom we work. I had a great board beside me, or behind me, or ahead of me—whichever was called for.” ACT Board leadership featured a series of strong problem-solvers during Trapnell’s tenure, including presidential posts held by Buster Alvord, Phil Condit, Jane Mulholland, Doug Norberg, Kathie Raff, David Skinner, and George Willoughby.

ACT moved into the Historic Landmark Eagles Auditorium and produced its first show in The Falls Theatre in 1996. The building project won the coveted Urban Land Institute’s annual award for excellence in creative reuse. Nineteen years later, ACT’s historic home is celebrating its 90th year, where attendance exceeds 150,000 patrons annually.

Susan Trapnell moved on to the Seattle Arts Commission in 1999 and then to The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis for a brief period before returning to ACT from 2003-2007, when the theatre needed her experienced guidance. She is now a leading national arts consultant and serves on the board of Town Hall. She will always be a treasured member of the ACT family and the Seattle arts community.

Susan Trapnell is one of the most talented and successful arts administrators I have ever worked with.

Dynamic, highly intelligent, visionary, and aesthetically sophisticated, she has had an extraordinary impact on ACT and the Seattle arts scene since she arrived on these shores almost 40 years ago.

A font of wisdom and humanity, a true friend to anyone trying to foster an enlightened and cultural world, she’s one of the most treasured collaborators I’ve had a pleasure of making theatre with over the years.

—**KURT BEATTIE**

HOME ALONE

One-Person Shows in The Bullitt Cabaret

BY MARGARET LAYNE, ACT DIRECTOR OF CASTING

Although solo productions have played to great effect in all of ACT's performance spaces, The Bullitt Cabaret has proven to be particularly well-suited to the genre. Of the 19 one-person shows ACT has produced since moving into the Eagles Building, almost half have been housed in the Bullitt. Its' relatively small scale enhances the immediacy of the encounter between actor and audience, who are sometimes close enough to touch, and the room's dusty jewel-tones, elegant double-staircase and gallery, draperies and smoky mirrors, remove it slightly from the world of a traditional performance venue and create an atmosphere for an encounter that feels both intensely private and completely personal, however the show is configured and designed.

In 2000, inspired by legendary actress Julie Harris in her iconic solo performance as Emily Dickinson in The Belle of Amherst in ACT's Falls Theatre, then-Artistic Director Gordon Edelstein dreamed up a special summer season of one-man shows. The Summer Solo Festival featured three plays running four weeks each and showcasing three of Seattle's finest actors—none of whom had ever done a one-man show before, although they had been performing together on various Seattle stages for years. To watch them in action was like watching a great basketball team: they knew each other's timing, anticipated each other's moves, and generally ran the plays with an effortless grace that amounted to its own kind of poetry. They defined the art of ensemble acting.

That summer, Laurence Ballard, David Pichette, and John Procaccino each took the stage alone for the first time in their careers. Procaccino was up first as the anguished protagonist of Wallace Shawn's The Fever, an affluent man holed up alone in a third-world hotel room wrestling passionately with his feelings of guilt about his privileged existence. Pichette followed as British playwright David Hare in Via Dolorosa, Hare's autobiographical monologue (which he originally performed) about an odyssey through the Middle East that began as a cultural/political embassy and became a deeply personal journey through deeply conflicted territory. Ballard brought the series to a close in Conor McPherson's eerily entertaining St Nicholas, playing an acerbic theatre critic whose obsession with a mysterious actress drew him into a group of unsettling strangers with whom he feels strangely at home.

At the time, we asked "the lonely guys" what they were feeling as they began to think about performing on their own.

"About 15 years ago," Procaccino recalled, "[director] Burke Walker called me and said, 'Hey, do you want to do a play about mountain climbing?' It was called K2, and it's about two guys stuck on top of a mountain, and one of them decides to climb down for help, and then he falls. So he sent me the script, and I read it, and I thought this'll be cool, and probably they'll get some kind of stunt guy to do the climbing and falling. And then we got into rehearsal and it hit me: this isn't the movies. There is no stunt guy. I'm the stunt guy. And I'm afraid of heights. So when Gordon called and asked if I'd be interested in doing

The Fever, I said 'Sure, that sounds good.' And probably they'll get some kind of stunt guy to memorize the 40 pages. And then I sat down to start memorizing and realized, there is no other guy. I'm the guy. I have to do the climbing and the falling."

"Apart from the sheer, masochistic, mindless terror and thrill of navigating the performance tightrope solo," said Ballard, "the appeal of performing a one-person show also lies in the subject matter. Rule one of the theatre: if you're going to coerce people to come into a room, turn down the lights, and tell them a story, it helps if one has an interesting tale to tell—in this case, of a boozy theatre critic involved with vampires. And of course there's the appeal

of working with [director] Jeff Steitzer, who's been a colleague, friend, and collaborative partner for over 20 years."

Over and above the inherent demands of performing alone, and having to master multiple dialects to play the many people David Hare met on his cultural pilgrimage, Pichette faced the additional challenge of playing the actual playwright of his play. "It's an actual person talking about an actual trip. So the first problem you face is that you're clearly *not* David Hare, and so already you're removed from the relationship between the character and the text. Also, Hare isn't an actor, so how do you convincingly and artistically portray someone who's not an actor—how good is he at playing all these different people—or is that even a consideration you should have? I've come round to the opposite view to the one I originally had, which was that I didn't want to approach this as if I were 'doing' David Hare. Now I feel I want to read everything I can by and about him, and listen to his recording of the play, because the voice, the way people speak, tells you so much about them. I'm not interested in doing a David Hare imitation—not that anyone would *know*, no one's going to walk out saying, 'I must say, that's that best David Hare I've ever seen'—but I do want to get a better idea of who this person *is*. I'm not creating a character out of whole cloth, which is what I would normally do."

"I don't find the prospect especially scary," he concluded, "but I expect it's going to be sort of odd and wearisome, to realize you've been talking for 45 minutes and no one else has come on yet...and *no one's going to*. And one of the main things that attracted me to theatre was the camaraderie—the hijinks in the green room and having drinks afterwards. It's odd to think about being by myself in the dressing room with the Brahms sextets. This is going to be the world's dullest opening party."



Laurence Ballard on
The Bullitt Stairs

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Subscriber Spotlight **GOLDIE SILVERMAN**

BY EMILY PENICK,
ACT ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE

Goldie Silverman has been a proud ACT subscriber since 1965. A prolific writer and newly elected member of the ACT Board of Trustees, Goldie has spent years writing non-fiction, remedial readers, cookbooks, camping, and backpacking books. Her first novel *Show Me Your Face* came out earlier this year. Goldie's husband Donald is a retired physician, who founded the Rehabilitation Department at Providence Hospital. Goldie and Don were in the audience on ACT's opening night in 1965.

In her first year as a subscriber, Goldie was hooked: "The very first play, *Oh, Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You In the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad* made an impression because I had thought that we would never have an opportunity to see the exciting new plays opening in New York. Same for *Tiny Alice*, which was presented in the second season.

"When we discovered the ACTPass, we were enthralled! We go to the theatre twice a week some weeks. We jokingly say to each other 'that's too often,' but then we can't decide what to pass up—ESP? The Construction Zone? Extras like *The Lady With All the Answers* or *The Great Soul of Russia*? Hard choices."

Goldie and Don can still repeat certain lines from their last 50 years of play-going at ACT: "*The Fantasticks*—I can still hum in my head the song about my garden (presented in 1967, 1979) and 'Feed me Seymour' from *The Little Shop of Horrors* (1986 and 2014), as well as moments from *Amadeus* in 1984, 'Too many notes' and *The Pinter Festival* in 2012."

A favorite ACT memory: "In 1980 Eve Roberts asked my husband to help as a resource for *WINGS*, a play about a woman who had a stroke. During the play, the hospital operator called for 'Dr. Silverman.'"



Henry

IRMA VEP,
THE LAST BREATH

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Michelle Handelman. Irma Vep, The Last Breath [production still: Laure Leber]. 2013. 4-channel video installation (color, sound); 37:00 minutes. Courtesy of the artist

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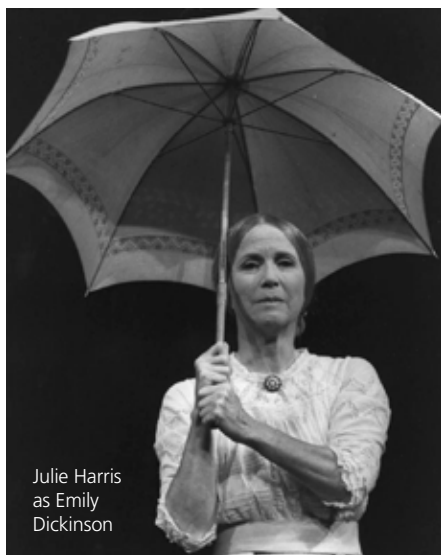
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show, and often remains a factor even after they begin performing it. But, in the spirit of facing what scares you most, he did it anyway, and in the 60 years since, *Mark Twain Tonight* has remained one of the most famous and beloved solo performances of all time. Now 90 years old, Holbrook continues to play special engagements and has been Mark Twain for almost as long as Twain was, amassing such a deep reservoir of material over the decades that he often goes on stage and riffs *ex tempore*, in



Julie Harris
as Emily
Dickinson

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the voice and words of his character, on whatever circumstances and the news of the day suggest.

Inspired by these twin successes, and by the appeal of being in complete control of the event—ego, it must be acknowledged, is part of the attraction of the solo performance—beginning in the 1970s performers of all kinds took on the challenge of facing the audience alone, mostly in biographical pieces drawn from the lives of literary and historical figures, tying them in a tangential way to the “edifying” platform performances of the 19th century: Henry Fonda as Clarence Darrow; James Whitmore Jr as Will Rogers, Harry Truman, and Teddy Roosevelt; Julie Harris as Mary Todd Lincoln, Emily Dickinson, and Isak Dinesen; Pat Carroll as Gertrude Stein; Alec McCowen as Rudyard Kipling; Robert Morse as Truman Capote; and Judith Ivey as Ann Landers, to name only a few.

But as the 1980s got under way, one-person plays began to shift their focus from the lives of celebrated others to the lives of the author/actors themselves, using personal experiences to explore universal emotional themes and contemporary events. Pamela Gien’s *The Syringa Tree* (ACT, 1999) and Lisa Kron’s *The 2.5 Minute Ride* (ACT, 2000) fall into this category, along with Mark

Bamuthi Joseph’s *the breaks* (ACT, 2009), and Trieu Tran’s *Uncle Ho To Uncle Sam* (ACT, 2012). Others evolved with a more journalistic or “documentarian” intent, like Anna Deveare Smith’s *Fires In The Mirror* and *Twilight Los Angeles: 1992*, in which the author/actor weaves together a variety of real-life narratives from other sources into a multi-character examination of a moment in history. Monologist Mike Daisey (*21 Dog Years*, *The Ugly American*, *How Theatre Failed America*) brings the form back

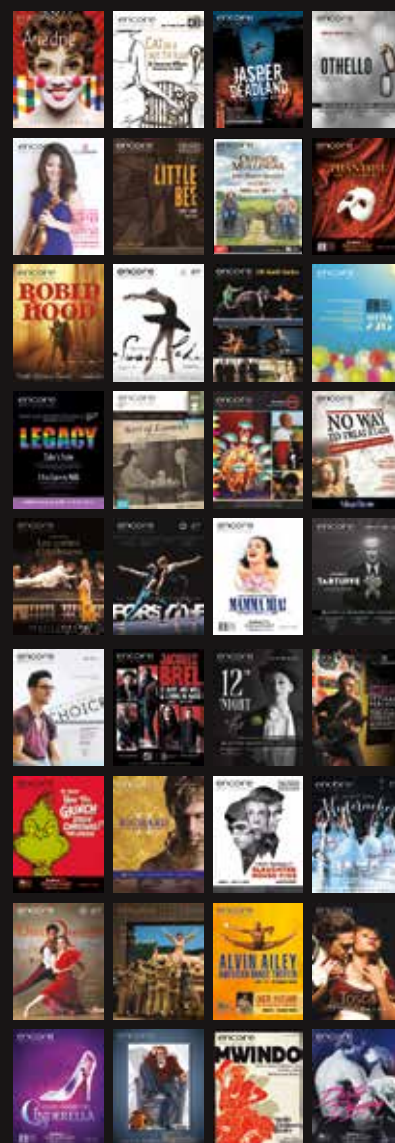
almost full circle to its genesis in platform performance: like Mark Twain, he appears as himself and presents a partly planned, partly extemporized narrative combining personal anecdote with social observation to create conversation about contemporary culture and events. Jeanne Sakata’s *Hold These Truths* embraces elements from across the spectrum of solo performance: a dramatic real-life narrative shaped by a playwright, with a single real-life character who is a participant in American history, played by a single actor, who also portrays a variety of other figures in the life of the central individual.

Whatever form they take, solo shows deliver an intense theatrical experience that’s unique to them, a high-wire, high-stakes game that rides on an actor’s versatility, skill, and charisma, and an audience’s willingness to invest in an extraordinarily personal way with both the artist and the art.

“In a solo play,” said Julie Harris in a 2000 interview, “you have to say ‘You’re going to listen to me.’ It’s the quality of a show-off...You want to slip into this [other] consciousness so that you make the person that you’re trying to be come alive, and that’s sort of an act of faith. And you don’t want it to be false. My soul prays for it to be correct, to be truthful, so it is a sort of prayer inside me. To be true to that.”



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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.



Kurt Beattie in rehearsal for *Ramayana*.

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.

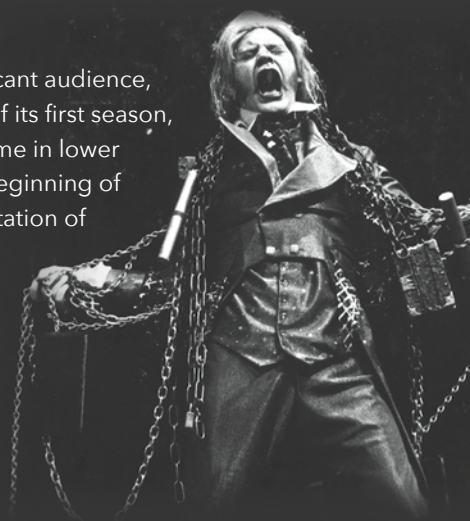
1996/1997: ACT stages its final performance in its Lower Queen Anne home: *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* by Neil Simon, and transitions into the downtown location. ACT opens the doors at its new multiplex style home in the former Eagles' auditorium in the heart of downtown Seattle, launching the new space 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.

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*.

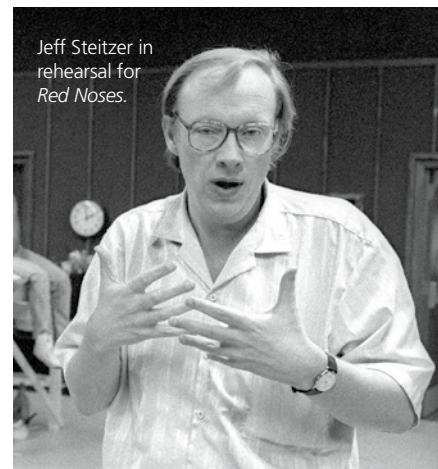
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1980s

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.



Jeff Steitzer in rehearsal for *Red Noses*.

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2000s

Turmoil and rebirth marked the early 2000s at ACT, taking a brief hiatus during a financial crisis in 2003, and then coming back with clarity and precision to close out the decade. 2007 saw the beginning of the Central Heating Lab (now ACTLab), which has since become an integral part of the ACT experience.

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 50th 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 Langs as it moves into the future.

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



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