



2016  
SEASON

Apr 8–May 8, 2016

# STUPID FUCKING BIRD

By Aaron Posner  
Directed by Jessica Kubzansky



Photo by Hayley Young Photography

John Langs  
Artistic Director

Carlo Scandiuzzi  
Executive Director

Becky Witmer  
Managing Director

ACT – A Contemporary Theatre presents

# STUPID FUCKING BIRD

By Aaron Posner  
Directed by Jessica Kubzansky

Beginning April 8, 2016 • Opening Night April 14, 2016

## CAST

Suzanne Bouchard*	Emma
Keiko Green*	Mash
MJ Sieber*	Dev
Jasmine Jean Sim	Nina
Adam Standley*	Con
G. Valmont Thomas*	Sorn
Connor Toms*	Trig

## CREATIVE TEAM

Jessica Kubzansky	Director
Martin Christoffel	Scenic Designer
Heidi Zamora	Costume Designer
Rick Paulsen	Lighting Designer
Robertson Witmer	Sound Designer
Rachael Lincoln	Choreographer
Geoffrey Alm	Fight Choreographer
JR Welden*	Stage Manager
Stephanie Haire	Assistant Director
Marcella Barbeau	Assistant Lighting Designer
Verhanika Willhelm	Production Assistant

Running Time: This performance runs approximately two hours. There will be one intermission.

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

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

Original Music: James Sugg

*Stupid Fucking Bird* was developed and world premiered in  
June 2013 at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Washington, D.C.;  
Howard Shalwitz, Artistic Director and Jeffrey Hermann, Managing Director.

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Audience members are cordially reminded to silence all electronic devices. All forms of photography and the use of recording devices are strictly prohibited. Please do not walk on the stage before, during, or after the show. Patrons wearing Google Glass must power down the device if wearing them in the theatre.

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A-I



John Langs

PHOTO BY ALABASTRO PHOTOGRAPHY

# WELCOME to ACT

It was four years ago that I first experienced the power housed inside the writing of Anton Chekhov. Like many who grew up in the theatre or around it, I had been exposed to Chekhov on a number of occasions. First in acting class, where the work was oh-so-precious that I held it at arm's length. Then as an audience member, where I sat endlessly waiting for something to happen. I came to regard Chekhov as "theatrical spinach." I knew it was good for you, but "Ack!" to the taste. Perhaps a more accurate metaphor would be a child who steals a sip of wine from their parent's glass—overwhelmed by all the flavors and shocked that anyone could drink it willingly, much less enjoy it.

I agreed to direct my first Chekhov play because the thought of it terrified me, and usually when there is that much fear around an opportunity there's a great deal of learning to be had as well.

Fast forward, and I'm sitting in the rehearsal room watching a scene between Trigorin and Nina go terribly off the rails. We have hacked at it from every angle. It's just not working. We are frustrated and feeling defeated. Finally one of the actors says, "Can we just start over? Can we just sit down and talk to each other?" It's hard to describe the moment in a rehearsal room when two actors truly connect. Tennessee Williams may have come close when he said, "Sometimes there is God so quickly." In this moment of grace, I was introduced to the true power of Chekhov's writing. He taps into a vein of humanity that's deep and true. He has ultimate compassion for his characters, but

no mercy when it comes to laying bare their existential, neurotic psychological quirks. And he draws all of this out of the seemingly simplest situations.

It is no wonder that his work continues to be a touchstone and a platform for so many great writers, including the one whose work you are going to see tonight. I had barely finished the script of *Stupid Fucking Bird* when I knew we had to program it. ACT is joyfully participating in the remarkable resurgence of Chekhov around the country and the world. With different commercial productions based on his work being launched this theatrical season and the proliferation of shows like *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, it's worth asking why Chekhov endures 100 years later. I think the answer is a simple one: he sees us for who we truly are, even as we blindly struggle to see ourselves. He records us with all our incredible flaws, and he loves us anyway.

It is a great goal of this theatre to help our community better see itself, and we try to work toward that end in a similar loving spirit. Thank you for sharing the journey.

John Langs

Artistic Director



## A Note from Director JESSICA KUBZANSKY

*"Love, which seems the realest thing, is really nothing at all; a simple grey rock is a thousand times more tangible than love is; and the earth is such a rock, and love only a breeze that dreams over its surface, weightless and traceless, yet love's more mineral, more dense, more veined with gold and corrupted with lead, more bitter and more weighty than the earth's profoundest matter. Love is a sea of desire stretched between shores—only the shores are real, but how much more compelling is the sea. Love is the world's infinite mutability; lies, hatred, murder even are all knit up in it; it is the inevitable blossoming of its opposites, a magnificent rose smelling faintly of blood. A dream which makes the world seem ... an illusion. The art of illusion is the art of love, and the art of love is the blood-red heart of the world."*

—from Tony Kushner's adaptation of Corneille's *The Illusion*

I am writing this at the end of one of the most intense, passionate, painful, beautiful weeks of rehearsal I have ever had. And all because some guy named Aaron Posner, contemplating his complex relationship with Chekhov, decided to write a variation on Chekhov's *The Seagull* called *Stupid Fucking Bird*, and blew the doors open on a master that was for many people like theatre medicine.

In the original *Seagull*, Constantine desperately pursues a new form of theatre, as does his counterpart Conrad in Aaron Posner's variation. And in fact, since time immemorial, passionate theatre artists have been interested in reinventing the art form, both to be new, to "shake up" what is established, but also to be better, to be revitalized and truly alive. And if it succeeds, the new form shocks the possible, it jolts the audience out of the rut of expectations to make something so raw and unexpected that it holds the mirror up to nature with a much more telling light. There is something about *Stupid Fucking Bird* that feels like Aaron Posner has reinvented the form, given us richer, better access to Chekhov, and even more importantly, to the characters who inhabit his world and ours. Aaron has, to quote the play, made a world "so different in feel, it might be realer than real."

I've come to think of this play as a meta-theatrical love story, with all that that implies—both about what is "meta-theatrical" (you'll see) and what is "love" (see Kushner's quote above for the ways in which I mean *love*). But love stories, when they're real, are the most compelling stories we tell, and we seem to need to keep telling them.

So I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am that the *making* of this play has been such an extraordinary and

joyous love story. Somehow, Aaron Posner, standing on Chekhov's profound text, has succeeded in making more three-dimensional than ever the human beings who breathe and sweat and labor upon the stage. I *love* these characters. These flawed, angst-ridden, neglected, seeking, needy, self-absorbed, passionate, yearning *people*. They are me. They are every love I've ever longed for and haven't gotten. They are every crushed dream I've ever experienced as I've watched art fail. They are every time I've ever wondered, "Why go on?" They are in as much pain as I have been, their stakes are so high, their passions are so huge, they have to settle or suffer or conquer in ways that are both terrible and *true*.

But that experience only happens when you have the privilege of working with a glorious design team, a dedicated and invested theatre staff, and great actors of towering talent and huge generosity of spirit, smart, passionate, and giving, endlessly inventive and unafraid of going to the darkest places and owning the ugliest parts of themselves in the service of the story they're telling.

So making this play has taken me, and perhaps all of us privileged enough to rehearse it, to the existential mountaintop. It's a place that I don't think any human being can stand to be for very long, because you see too much, you *know* too much to be able to tolerate that much reality. But while you're there the experience is *realer than real*, and the vividness of the agony we're in is both unbearable and revitalizing because it makes us know we're fully awake and alive.

For all of that, and for the privilege of sharing this experience with *you*, I am awed and grateful.

Thank you.

# COMING SOON TO ACT



**"Packed with humanity...like a chart depicting the sexual and emotional anatomy of us all."**

—The New York Times

## The Mystery of Love & Sex

By Bathsheba Doran  
Directed by Allison Narver

May 27–Jun 26

Show Sponsor



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Photo by Hayley Young Photography



### Worse Than Tigers Mar 23–Apr 17

Olivia and Humphry's quietly failing marriage is ready to eat them alive. Unless the escaped tiger outside their door does first. A world premiere by RED STAGE, Seattle's newest theatre company.



### Bernie's Apt. May 5–28

At once tragic and darkly comedic, Rose Cano offers a modern-day Latin-American exploration of Lorca's classic tale *The House of Bernarda Alba*.



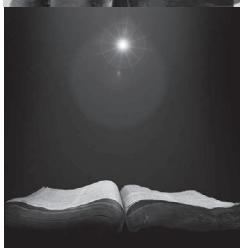
### The Great Soul of Russia Apr 20

Join The Seagull Project and members of Seattle's vibrant artistic community as they explore how various Russian artistic roads, past and present, begin and end with Chekhov.



### Icicle Creek New Play Festival May 17–18

Now in its tenth season, the nationally-renowned festival brings two brand new plays to ACT, including scenes from the World Premiere, *Daisy* and Wendy MacLeod's *Mary's Girl*.



### Endangered Species Project Apr 24, May 16

Explore the great plays you seldom see. Join ESP for its sixth year of 12 book-in-hand presentations, chosen and performed by dozens of Seattle's best and bravest actors!



### Things You Can Do Jul 8–31

A drunken kiss, an icy plunge, and a reckless act of revenge. Live Girls! Theatre presents a fresh take on the issues of global climate change through the personal lens of a family on the verge of a critical meltdown.



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# Meet ACT's Core Company

**A**CT and Artistic Director John Langs are thrilled to announce ACT's first Core Company. Each year, a group of actors will join ACT in a yearlong creative endeavor, performing and contributing as artistic ambassadors for ACT's 2016 season. The Core Company encourages an environment of artistic excellence, while creating a home for local actors to experiment and grow.

"I'm excited to have such a talented group of artists representing ACT,"

## Keiko Green

received her B.F.A. in Theatre from New York University and was seen in *The Comparables* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), and *Amadeus* (Seattle Public Theater). Green will appear in *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

**Kirsten Potter** appeared in *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn*; *One Slight Hitch*; and *Big Love* (ACT); as well as *Photograph 51*; *A View From the Bridge*; and *Or*, (Seattle Repertory Theatre). She has voiced dozens of vixens and evildoers in video games and has received numerous awards for her audiobooks. Potter will appear in *Worse Than Tigers* (RED STAGE and ACTLab), *Daisy*, and *Dangerous Liaisons*.

**Lorenzo Roberts** received his B.F.A. in Acting from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and appeared in *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), as well as *As You Like It* (ACTLab) with ACT's 2015 Kenan Directing Fellow. Roberts will appear *The Mystery of Love & Sex*, *The Royale*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

**Jasmine Jean Sim** graduated from Cornish College of the Arts as well as the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts. She appeared in *The Children's Hour*, *John Baxter is a Switch*

Langs says. "It is the charge of great theatre to push the art form forward."

Each member is looking forward to embarking on this artistic journey, where they will push each other deeper into the craft of acting. "We have a safe space. We

actually get to get down and dirty and give that excitement to the audience," Core Company Member Keiko Green says.

Core Company Members are eager for mentorship and partnership opportunities during the year. "To be around someone

like G. Val or Bob Wright who have done this for decades is really important," Core Company Member Lorenzo Roberts says. "And that's the aspect I'm most excited about—the apprenticeship."



From left: Kirsten Potter, G. Valmont Thomas, R. Hamilton Wright, Connor Toms, Jasmine Jean Sim, Keiko Green, Lorenzo Roberts. | PHOTO BY ALABASTRO PHOTOGRAPHY

*Hitter* (Intiman) and *Dirty* (Washington Ensemble Theatre and ACTLab). Sim will appear in *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

## G. Valmont

**Thomas** was in the acting company of Oregon Shakespeare Festival for 13 seasons and has appeared in *A Christmas Carol* (ACT), *Water by the Spoonful* (West of Lenin), and *The Piano Lesson* (Syracuse Stage and Seattle Repertory Theatre). Thomas will appear in *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *The Royale*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

**Connor Toms** appeared in *The Invisible Hand*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* (ACT); and *Festen* (New Century Theatre Company). He has also worked at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and many more. Toms will appear in *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Daisy*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

**R. Hamilton Wright** has appeared in numerous ACT productions, including *The Revengers' Comedies*, *The Pillowman*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and *A Christmas Carol*. He is a regular actor and director with many of Seattle's theatres, and in recent years, also a playwright. Wright will appear in *Daisy*, *The Royale*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

# TIME MAY CHANGE ME

BY GAVIN REUB, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE SEAGULL PROJECT

## Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*

Chekhov's 19th century masterpiece reveals the passion and pathos of everyday life through an unforgettable cast of characters. On the shore of a magic lake, a family assembles to watch a play. Romantic and artistic conflicts collide, setting the stage for an unlikely comedy, at once tragic and absurd.

"I watch the ripples change their size  
But never leave the stream  
Of warm impermanence and  
So the days float through my eyes  
But still the days seem the same"

—David Bowie

Chekhov's *The Seagull* premiered 120 years ago.

Same year the first Ford vehicle was built. Washington State was ten.

Now we have driver-less cars, and a state so green you can smell the progress.

Chekhov's impact on drama and literature over that span is inarguable, but it's rare for any modern author—especially a non-American—to find his way into the American canon. Not to mention for them to bore so deeply into our psyche, that we seek further depth in our adaptations, extensive translations, and open "inspirations."

What is it about Chekhov? Why are the most popular theatre artists in the world—Annie Baker, Cate Blanchett—breathing new life into his work?

We are on the edge of political upheaval. Our modes of interaction have changed—Snapchats, digital lives, and virtual reality—growing into a frustrated millennial silent scream. People are murdered on sidewalks as systems of power crumble. The very fabric of our structures and form are shifting around us.

It's easy to be a passive observer. To sit behind a screen, and like Irina in *The Three Sisters*, plead into the void for a better life, from the comfort of our keyboards.

Chekhov built a live chamber where our own thoughts of inadequacy, turmoil, and fear echo with such force off the beautiful characters that we can do nothing but feel for their passions and eternal suffering. The clock strikes

down on their heads, pinning them deeper and deeper into the earth. Until they just disappear.

Chekhov's final play, *The Cherry Orchard*, premiered in 1904. The play was a sign of the year to come. By 1905, Russia was in its first major revolution. Workers, the military, and students were all on strike. The Russian peasantry took up the torch, burning down 3,000 manors, amounting to 15% of Russia's estates.

Where are the peasants now?

At the polls, in the streets, on the stage.

Torches in hand, lighting the path toward dynamic change.

"Where's your shame  
You've left us up to our  
necks in it  
Time may change me  
But you can't trace time"

—David Bowie

"Dreams of realities peace  
blow steam in the face of  
the beast  
Sky could fall down, wind  
could cry now, look at me  
mother\*\*\*ker I smile"

—Kendrick Lamar

*The Seagull Project was formed out of a passion for the great works of Anton Chekhov. An ACTLab partner since 2012, The Seagull Project has brought ACT patrons exceptional performances of The Seagull (2013) and The Three Sisters (2015), as well as quarterly readings under the helm "The Great Soul of Russia." Visit [acttheatre.org](http://acttheatre.org) for details on their latest programming.*

# An interview with playwright Aaron Posner

BY JOHN LANGS, ACT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**JL:** Well hello Aaron Posner, how are you? What's going on in your life?

**AP:** Well, I'm in Las Vegas.

**JL:** Wow, what's going on in Vegas?

**AP:** I'm actually working for Cirque du Soleil this week. Consulting on three of their shows, basically doing acting coaching and a little dramaturgy, that kinda thing. How are things there?

**JL:** They're good, man. We are right about to open *Assassins*, so I drop into tech right after this phone call.

**AP:** Wow.

**JL:** I am looking at the wonderful scenic design for your play. I'm such a fan of the tone of your play and how irreverent and sassy it is, that I thought we'd do a sort of irreverent and sassy John-and-Aaron back-and-forth about the nature of your work.

**AP:** You go.

**JL:** So my first question is "What the hell makes you think that you can rewrite a Chekhov play and unleash it on the world the way you have?" Where do you get the chutzpah?

**AP:** [Laughs] Yeah, good question. Well, 30 years of frustration with the state of theatre, I suppose. Too many nights in theatres feeling like I'll never get those couple of hours of my life back. A passionate desire to make theatre that has something more to do with authenticity than ... *fakieositude*. You know, theatre is all lying, right, it's all pretend, but there's a certain kind of integrity to the lying that I'm interested in; some degree of reality and transparency. And of course, you know, not being a genius like Chekhov, or Shakespeare, or Shaw, or any of those guys, I needed to steal something with which to hold my ideas ... so the Chekhovian playground, as it were, of the



Aaron Posner

big questions about love, life, and the quotidian struggles of life, seemed like a really good vessel. On the other hand, I didn't know any of that theoretical shit when I started writing the thing. It really just started as a joke where people were talking about Chekhov and I talked about how much I loved and hated *The Seagull*, and literally as I was walking out of Woolly Mammoth, I said, "I should write my own adaptation of *The Seagull*; I should call it *Stupid Fucking Bird*" and everybody laughed, and that's how the play was born.

**JL:** I think that's fantastic.

**AP:** And then a couple of weeks later, I couldn't sleep one night, and I thought, "I should just do this". I started writing the first scene. I just thought, "How would I write Chekhov's first *I'm in mourning for my life* Masha/Medvedenko scene for *me*, thinking about what I think about in terms of relationships and people?" And then as I continued working on the play I needed to go back and read it, but the last thing I wanted to read was a good version, so I found the most unspeakably horrible translation on the internet that I could possibly find, which was like an old British literal translation that had lines like ... rather than "*why do you always wear black?/I'm in mourning for my life, I'm unhappy*" it would be like "*why is the hue of your clothing so dark? Because of my deep sadness. I am sad about my life.*"

**JL:** Ah, the Brits...

**AP:** Like it was so bad that I knew it wouldn't influence me and I wouldn't actually use any of it, but it reminded me of the scenes.

**JL:** Bone-dry British dramaturgy.

**AP:** [Laughs] Exactly.

**JL:** I'm nostalgic for it. You and I had a wonderful time

one summer in Wisconsin. I have a great picture of our kids, Maisie and Captain, sitting out on the porch. How has life, age, and fatherhood changed your perspective on some of these characters, or on your writing in general?

**AP:** You can feel it most particularly in the stuff about Dev having children at the end of the play. Dev and Mash gain perspective from parenthood. They gain humanity, and acceptance, and a wider view of the world through the addition of children into their lives. Con is horrified at the state of the world and how people continue to behave in such shortsighted, idiotic, insane ways. *Stupid Fucking Bird* was born almost at the same time as Maisie was. So I think it shows up in the play that way. It shows up on some level in the fact that I wrote the play. You know, it seems counterintuitive but of course, get a kid and then you get *more* productive because you *have* to. I needed to provide, and writing this play was a part of that.

**JL:** Ah, that's great.

**AP:** And of course there's just simply that fact that, it makes you think about your life on a larger canvas. So I feel like that perspective is in the play as well and is very much with me, certainly more so since Maisie's been born.

**JL:** Well it certainly sings in those scenes between Con and Mash. I wanna ask you the *Brain Teaser Question*: Which Chekhovian character did you most feel like when you were in your 20s and which one are you now?

**AP:** Obviously I was Con. How could I not be? You know, my middle name is Conrad ...

**JL:** [Laughing] Your secret is out!

**AP:** So there just might be a *little* identification with that young man, and his desire of making a real difference in the world. But the truth is I feel deeply connected to every character in *Stupid Fucking Bird* ... particularly, if truth be told, the men. The women are harder for me and take more research and conversation and ... excavation, or something. But one part of my

younger self was definitely Con. Now I am more Trigorin ... there is a lot of me in that role, too. And a bunch of me in Sorn, too.

**JL:** Sort of like Trigorin with a Sorn rising.

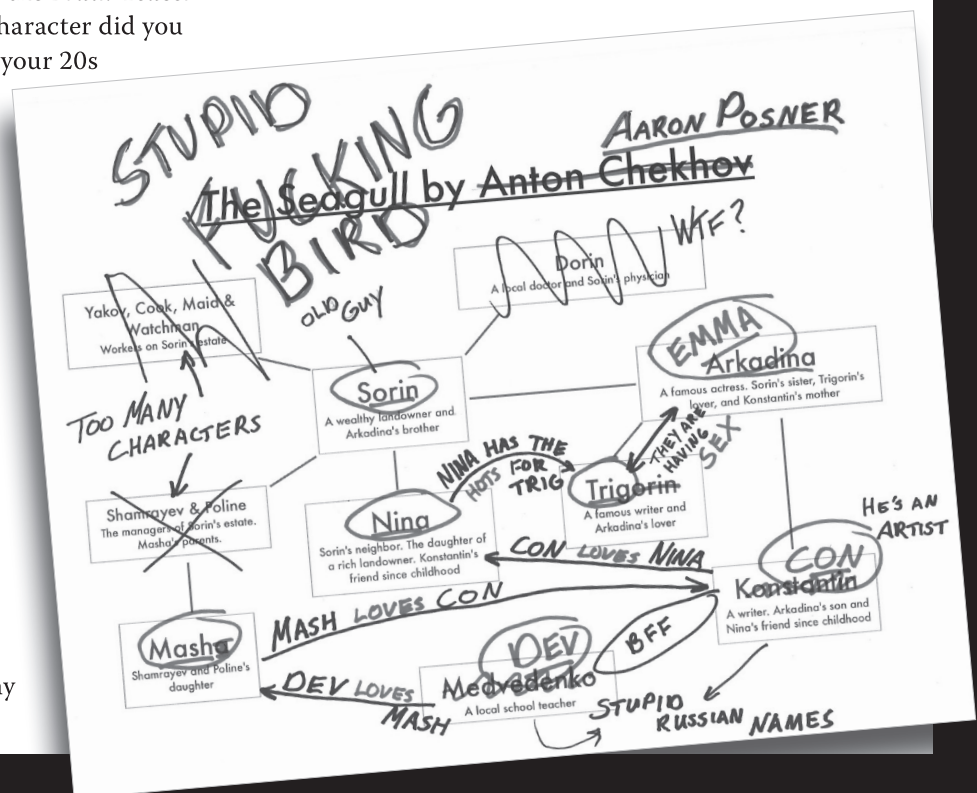
**AP:** [Laughing] Exactly! But then I feel really connected to Dev, too. And Mash!

**JL:** She's got the Posner Sass. So, I wanna ask you about your first preview of *Stupid Fucking Bird*. I'm always interested in the inner workings of a writer on their opening night when they're just about to face the public with a play for the first time. I'm interested in what it felt like to let this one out into the world.

**AP:** Well, this one felt pretty great from the start, I have to say. There's a certain *quality* of laughter that tells you that people are not just laughing because it's "haha funny", but because it's going deeper for them. It's something they think is true. There was a quality of laughter in response to a lot of this show that was very gratifying from the very start, and has been a continual delight and surprise.

**JL:** Well, I cannot wait. You and your play are remarkable, my friend.

*Read more on ACT's blog at [acttheatre.wordpress.com](http://acttheatre.wordpress.com).*



## Who's Who in *Stupid Bird*



**Suzanne Bouchard** (*Emma*) was last seen in *Bethany* (ACT). Her favorite regional credits include Queen Elizabeth I in *Mary Stuart*, B in *Three Tall Women*, Amanda in *The Glass*

*Menagerie*, Elizabeth Bishop in *Dear Elizabeth*, Charlotte in *A Little Night Music*, Catherine in *By the Waters of Babylon*, Amanda in *Private Lives*, and Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. Suzanne was an inaugural Lunt-Fontanne Fellow at Ten Chimneys in Wisconsin.



**Keiko Green** (*Mash*) is a playwright and performer, originally from Georgia. This is her first production with ACT, where she is a Core Company member this year. She

will also be appearing in *Dangerous Liaisons* and *A Christmas Carol*. Recent work in Seattle includes *The Comparables* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), *Water by the Spoonful* (Theatre22), *The Memorandum* (Strawberry Theatre Workshop), and *Amadeus* (Seattle Public Theatre). Keiko is a proud member of the Seattle Repertory Theatre Writers' Group. She and Bret Fetzer co-wrote *Puny Humans*, premiering at Annex Theatre on April 22. She is a performer for Living Voices, bringing the story of Japanese Internment camps to classrooms and theatres nationwide. Keiko serves as Community and Artist Liaison for RED STAGE, producing *Worse Than Tigers*, which runs in ACTLab until April 17. She received her B.F.A. in Theatre from New York University.



**MJ Sieber** (*Dev*) is a founding member of New Century Theatre Company where last year he appeared as Michael in *Festen* and directed the Pulitzer Prize-winning west

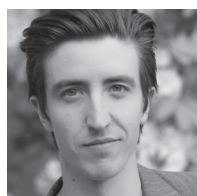
coast premiere of Annie Baker's *The Flick*. Previously at ACT he appeared in *A Christmas Carol*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and four seasons with Icicle Creek New Play Festival. He's also been seen in *Native Son* (Intiman); *Elephant Man*, *Gutenberg! The Musical!* (Strawberry Theatre Workshop); *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Photograph 51* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); and has appeared at Seattle Shakespeare Company and Cafe Nordo. As a filmmaker MJ made the documentaries *Not Working*, about the Great Recession, and *Detroiters*, chronicling the lives of several men recently released from prison.

His short film *The Good Days* won several awards at the 48 Hour Film Project and his feature film *Taste* (co-directed with Hans Altwies) concludes later this year. He is a graduate from Cornish College of the Arts with a degree in Original Work. He is currently working on a three-year project with Jaime Roberts tentatively titled *Furnace heats Penguin*.



**Jasmine Jean Sim** (*Nina*) graduated from the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts (PCPA '13) in California, her home state, and most recently from Cornish College of the

Arts ('15). Recent credits: *Dirty* (ACTLab), *John Baxter is a Switch Hitter* and *The Children's Hour* (Intiman), *A Christmas Carol* (ACT), and most recently *9 To 5* (Seattle Musical Theatre). She can be seen in *Dangerous Liaisons* and *A Christmas Carol* (again) later this year at ACT. Jasmine has a great passion for Shakespeare, dance, and stage combat, and hopes to always continue learning! Jasmine is unendingly grateful to have been given the opportunity to become part of ACT's Core Company and to be challenged in the coming year with her fellow company members! All the love in the world to Mom, Dad, Andie, and Rory.



**Adam Standley** (*Con*) made his ACT debut in *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*. In Seattle, Adam has worked at The 5th Avenue Theatre, Intiman, Seattle Children's

Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, and Seattle Opera. 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. Satori Group credits include *reWilding*, *Making of a Monster*, *Tragedy: a tragedy*, and *Winky*. Regional credits include Bud Frump in *How To Succeed In Business...*, Prior in *Angels in America: Part 1 and 2*, Lyle Webb in *John Baxter is a Switch Hitter*, Leo in *4,000 Miles*, State Trooper/et al in Jane Nichols' idiotic *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay*, and Eddie in the beautiful *Trouble In Mind*.



**G. Valmont Thomas** (*Sorn*) returns to ACT after performing in *A Christmas Carol* (2013, 2015). Previous work at ACT includes another doctor, Sam in *Blues for an Alabama Sky* ('97).

Other recent Seattle appearances include *Water by the Spoonful* (Theatre22), *Master Harold and the Boys* (West of Lenin), and *The Piano Lesson* (Syracuse Stage and Seattle Repertory Theatre). A member of the acting company at The Oregon Shakespeare Festival for 13 seasons, he played the title character in *Macbeth*, Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, and Lincoln in *Topdog/Underdog*. Mr. Thomas has enjoyed creating theatre at ACT, as well as teaching theatre, whether it be at University of Nebraska at Lincoln, or at Freehold Studio.



**Connor Toms** (*Trig*) is thrilled to be joining ACT's Core Company for the 2016 season. Connor was previously seen in Ayad Akhtar's *The Invisible Hand* and Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next*

*Room, or the vibrator play* (ACT). He has also worked at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman, Arizona Theatre Company, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Artists Repertory Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, New Century Theatre Company, New Victory Theater, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and more. Overwhelming love and immense respect to his Dahlia, about to Bloom ...

**Aaron Posner** (*Playwright*) is a freelance director, playwright, and teacher. He was the founding Artistic Director of Philadelphia's Arden Theatre Company, and is an Associate Artist at the Folger Theatre and the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. He has won numerous awards as both a director and playwright including an Outer Circle Critics Award, The John Gassner Award, a Theatre Bay Area Award, a Los Angeles Drama Circle Award, an Elliot Norton Award, three Barrymore Awards, and five Helen Hayes Awards as both director and playwright. His published and produced plays include *Stupid Fucking Bird* (one of the ten most produced plays in America for the 2015/16 season); *Life Sucks* (Or The Present Ridiculous); *My Name Is Asher Lev*; *The Chosen*; *Who Am I This Time?* (And Other Conundrums of Love); *Sometimes A Great Notion*; *A Murder*; *A Mystery & A Marriage*; and many others. Aaron has directed nearly 200 productions at major regional theatres across the country including Actor's Theatre of Louisville, The

## Who's Who in *Stupid Bird*

Alliance, American Players Theatre, The American Repertory Theatre, The Arden Theatre Company, Arena Stage, California Shakespeare Theatre, Folger Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Portland Center Stage, Roundhouse Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Signature Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Studio Theatre, Theatre J, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, and more. Aaron is an Eisenhower Fellow, a graduate of Northwestern University, is from Eugene, Oregon, and lives outside Washington, DC with his wife, actress Erin Weaver, and his amazing daughter, Maisie.

**Jessica Kubzansky** (*Director*) is the Co-Artistic Director of The Theatre @ Boston Court (T@BC) in Pasadena, and an award-winning director working nationally at The Cherry Lane, Rattlestick, ACT, Portland Center Stage, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Silk Road, The Aurora, South Coast Rep, The Geffen Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, and others. Previously at ACT: Jeanne Sakata's *Hold These Truths* with Ryun Yu. Recently: the world premiere of Stefanie Zdravac's *Colony Collapse* (T@BC); Luis Alfaro's *Mojada, A Medea in Los Angeles* (Boston Court at The Getty Villa); *Pygmalion* (Pasadena Playhouse); the New York premiere of Sheila Callaghan's *Everything You Touch* (Rattlestick/True Love at The Cherry Lane); *Rll*, her own three-person *Richard II* (T@BC); plus world premieres of EYT, Michael Elyanow's *The Children*, Jordan Harrison's *Futura*, Laura Schellhardt's *Courting Vampires*, Mickey Birnbaum's *Bleed Rail*, Carlos Murillo's *Unfinished American Highwayscape #9 & 32*, Jean Claude Van Itallie's *Light*, Cody Henderson's *Cold/Tender*, as well as *Camino Real* and *Mother Courage* (T@BC). Elsewhere: James Still's *I Love to Eat* (Portland Center Stage); *Macbeth* (Antaeus), *The 39 Steps* (La Mirada); *Hamlet* with Leo Marks, Jen Haley's *Breadcrumbs* (Theater 150); *Glass Menagerie*, *Toys in the Attic*, *Heartbreak House* (The Colony Theatre). World premieres of Julie Hébert's *Tree* (EST/LA), Bryan Davidson's *War Music* (Geffen Playhouse), Bob Clyman's *Tranced* (Laguna Playhouse), plus Sheila Callaghan's *Kate Crackernuts* (24th Street Theatre), and others. Other Chekhov riffs she has been privileged to direct: world premieres of Salamone/McIntyre's musicals *Gulls* (a riff on *The Seagull* at Boston Court) and *Moscow* (a riff on *Three Sisters* at Playwrights Arena), as well as Tom Jacobson's *The Orange Grove* (a riff on *The Cherry Orchard*, Playwrights' Arena). Kubzansky teaches at UCLA and has received numerous awards, including LA Drama Critics Circle Award for Sustained Excellence in Theatre.

**Martin Christoffel** (*Scenic Designer*) is a local designer, happy to be returning to ACT where previously he designed *An Evening of One Acts*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Lady*

*with All the Answers*, *Assisted Living*, *The Woman in Black*, and contributed projections to *Alki*. Other recent shows include *Passing Strange* (Sidecountry Theatre and ACTLab); *Carousel*, *The Music Man* and *Rent* (The 5th Avenue Theatre), *Sleuth* and *The Odd Couple* (Village Theatre). His work can also be seen at EMP in the *Can't Look Away* horror film exhibit and *Indie Game Revolution*. In addition, Martin designs corporate events internationally.

**Heidi Zamora** (*Costume Designer*) has previously designed costumes for *Orpheus et Eurydice* (Seattle Opera); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *If You Give A Mouse a Cookie*, *Hamlet* (Seattle Children's Theatre); and at Seattle Shakespeare Company, The Empty Space, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Strawberry Theatre Workshop. Heidi is a co-founder, former co-Artistic Director, and former board president of Washington Ensemble Theatre and has designed costumes for 17 of the Ensemble's productions, including *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Crave*, *blablablablabBANG*, and *RoboPop!*, which she also co-directed. Heidi is the Costume Show Manager and Resident Costume Design Coordinator at Seattle Opera. Heidi received her M.F.A. in costume design from the University of Washington in 2002.

**Rick Paulsen** (*Lighting Designer*) is delighted to be returning to ACT, where his lighting was first seen in 1984. Since then, Paulsen has lit more than 60 shows at ACT including *First Class*, *Vincent in Brixton*, *Fiction*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Lonely Planet*, *Becky's New Car*, *Yankee Tavern*, *Double Indemnity*, *One Slight Hitch*, *The Pinter Festival*, *Uncle Ho to Uncle Sam*, *Assisted Living*, and *Sugar Daddies*. Paulsen's work has appeared all around Seattle and across the nation. Some recent work of interest includes *Double Indemnity* (San Jose Repertory Theatre), *Goodnight Moon* (Young Peoples Theatre in Toronto), and *A Year with Frog and Toad* (Childsplay). A proud member of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local USA-829, he serves on the Western Region Board and the National Board of this union. He is, most importantly, devoted to his wife Roberta and daughter Paige.

**Robertson Witmer** (*Sound Designer*) was seen recently onstage at ACT as the musician in *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*. His recent sound design credits include *Seven Ways to Get There*, *The Three Sisters* (ACTLab); *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Mother Courage* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); and *The Flick* (New Century Theatre Company). His onstage appearances include *A Doctor in Spite of Himself* (Intiman, 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. He is a member of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local USA-829.

**Rachael Lincoln** (*Choreographer*) is a choreographer, dancer, and dance filmmaker who, until recently, was based in San Francisco and Berlin. She has performed her work in Germany, Poland, Portugal, Cyprus, Indonesia, Ireland, and throughout the U.S. She has been nominated for two Isadora Duncan Dance Awards and was selected for the Bessie Schonberg choreographic residency at The Yard. In addition to her own work, Rachael has been a member of The Joe Goode Performance Group and the assistant director of Bandaloop. With Leslie Seiders, she is co-founder and director of the duet company Lean-to-Productions. Rachael is now on faculty at the University of Washington.

**JR Welden** (*Stage Manager*) has stage managed *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Invisible Hand*, *Uncle Ho to Uncle Sam*, *Mary Stuart*, *One Slight Hitch*, *Eurydice*, *The Underpants*, and *A Christmas Carol* at ACT. He stage managed 10 seasons at Intiman, working on productions including *The Grapes of Wrath*; *Nickel and Dimed*; and *The Mandrake Root*, with Lynn Redgrave. At Seattle Repertory Theatre, his credits include *Blue Door*, *The Chosen*, and *Pygmalion*.



**John Langs** (*Artistic Director*) John has been delighted to serve as Associate Artistic Director of ACT for three years, and is ACT's Artistic Director in 2016. John's 16-year

freelance career has afforded him the opportunity to work with many prestigious theatre companies across the country. He has directed productions at Playwrights Horizons NY, Ensemble Studio Theater NY, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, Circle X in Los Angeles, The Resident Ensemble, New Century Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company. John received his directing degree from UNCSCA. Some of his favorite directing credits include *The Shaggs Philosophy of the World* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Original Musical), and *Brothers Karamazov* (seven LADCC Awards including Best Production of the year and Best Direction) and directing Kurt Beattie in *King Lear*. John received the first annual Seattle Gregory Award honoring excellence in direction for *The Adding Machine*. Recent Seattle credits include *Mary's Wedding* (NCTC), The Seagull Project's *The Three Sisters*, and *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company). As a dedicated fan of original work, John has shepherded over a dozen projects to their premieres.



**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 Empty Space Theatre 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.



**Becky Witmer**  
(Managing Director) has been with ACT since 2011, serving as the General Manager (2014-2015) and also the Director of Marketing and

Communications (2011-2014). Becky began her career in arts management through marketing and communications. She was the Director of Marketing and Public Relations at Intiman Theatre (2008-2011) and Opera Colorado (2006-2008). She was the Associate Director of Marketing with Central City Opera (2002-2005). Becky is an advisory board member for TeenTix, a founding co-chair of the Cultural Resource Collective, an Arts Business Consultant with Shunpike, and she frequently appears as a guest lecturer for Seattle University's Arts Leadership M.F.A. program. She is a current participant in the Leadership Tomorrow program.

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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  
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# Making Her Way

## *Donor Rose Southall on why ACT is her theatre*

St. James Cathedral, Northwest Harvest, and Seattle University are just a few of the organizations championed by ACT donor Rose Southall and her late husband John Southall. Rose believes passionately in giving back to the community through education, health and human services, and of course, the arts. As a subscriber, ACTPass and Legacy Society member, her ACT story started in 1968, when she saw *Waiting for Godot* at ACT's original home on Queen Anne.

Rose and her late husband, both longtime Boeing employees, were reintroduced to the theatre during its mid-90s move to a new home at Kreielsheimer Place. "There was a promotion for Boeing employees—it was a new opportunity to see theatre and we went," Rose remembers. The Southalls became subscribers and donors the next year.

"It's about giving back to something that's given me something," Rose says on why she's continued to be an Annual Fund donor. Her love of ACT stems from its diversity in programming and the unique format of presentations: "There's a special intimacy to these spaces," she says of The Falls and The Allen Theatres.

**"What we have spent is gone, what we have kept is lost, and what we invest in others is ours forever."**

Rose is a consistent attendee at events such as Behind the Scenes and Tech Talk, but she's not just there for the wine! She loves Tech Talks, our exclusive receptions for



*Executive Director Carlo Scandiuizzi with Rose at the 2015 Golden Celebration Gala.*

PHOTO BY JOHN ULMAN.

donors of \$250 and above where patrons get a sneak peek into technical rehearsal and some behind-the-scenes stories from ACT's production staff.

"You get an initial insight into the show, and [Technical Director] Steve Coulter does a great job of that." There's also a strong sense of community among Tech Talk attendees. She looks forward to seeing and speaking with regulars—the donors and trustees she's come to know over the years.

A Skyline resident, Rose is passionate about opportunities for her own community to further connect with the art on stage. Some of her favorite past events have been movie nights with Artistic Director Emeritus Kurt Beattie, who would have dinner with residents before watching

the movie adaptation of a Mainstage show.

While benefits such as invitations to Tech Talk, Opening Night Dinners, and the Gala are enjoyable perks of giving, Rose's decision to support ACT is about investing in its future. For her, stewardship isn't just about maintaining the status quo—it's about taking theatre to a new level.

Since her husband's passing in 2014, Rose continues to honor his legacy and strikes out on her own, making her way and impacting the world with kindness and grace. There's a quote Rose gives, adapted from AARP founder Ethel Percy Andrus, to sum up her philanthropic philosophy beautifully: "What we have spent is gone, what we have kept is lost, and what we invest in others is ours forever."

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# ACT *A Theatre of New Ideas*

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*Literary and Executive Manager*

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Kurt Beattie  
*Artistic Director Emeritus*

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*Director of Casting*

Angie Kamel  
*Artistic Engagement Manager*

Emily Penick  
*Literary and Artistic Manager*

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*Associate Director of Development*

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*Grants Manager*

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*Development Officer*

Andrew P. Storms  
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Alyssa Byer  
*Production Manager*

Ruth Eitemiller  
*Assistant Production Manager*

Skylar Hansen  
*Production Office Manager*

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Jeffrey K. Hanson<sup>†</sup>  
*Production Stage Manager*

JR Welden, Erin B. Zatloka  
*Stage Managers*

David Hartig  
Tori Thompson  
Emma Pihl  
Verhanika Wilhelm  
*Production Assistants*

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Renita Davenport  
*Costume Shop Foreman*

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*First Hand*

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*Scene Shop Foreman*

Sean Wilkins<sup>†</sup>  
*Master Scenic Carpenter*

Nick Murel  
*Scenic Carpenter*

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*Scenic Charge Artist*

Lisa Bellero<sup>†</sup>  
*Assistant Charge Artist*

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*Master Stage Carpenter*

Pam Mulkern<sup>†</sup>  
*Master Electrician*

Max Langley  
*Master Sound Engineer*

## FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Jennifer Bacon  
*Sound Engineer*

Leicester Landon  
*Production Runner*

Jeff Manzolli  
*Stage Carpenter*

<sup>†</sup> Denotes staff member has worked at ACT for 10 years or more