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OCTOBER 2017



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The Crucible

BY ARTHUR MILLER

DIRECTED BY JOHN LANGS

Photo by Dawn Schaefer

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Ciara Caya
Customer Service Representative &
Administrative Assistant

Corporate Office
425 North 85th Street Seattle, WA 98103
p 206.443.0445 f 206.443.1246
adsales@encoremediagroup.com
800.308.2898 x105
www.encoremediagroup.com

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encore STAGES

FALL 2017

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Encore Stages is an Encore Arts Program that features stories about our local arts community side-by-side with information about performances. Encore Arts Programs are publications of Encore Media Group. We also publish City Arts, the monthly arts & culture magazine, and specialty publications, including the Official Seattle Pride Guide and the SIFF Guide and Catalog. Learn more at encoremediagroup.com

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“The Play’s the Thing”

Is Theatre our Ideal Empathy Workout?



New Century Theatre Company's production of *Festen*, 2016. From left: Conner Neddersen, MJ Sieber. Photo by John Ulman.

Maia Kinney-Petrucha examines the theoretical and applied science of creating empathy through theatre.

The first time I cried at the theatre, I was eleven. It was a local production of *West Side Story*, and after being unimpressed by the film, I wasn't expecting much. But when I saw the tears on Maria's face as she held Tony's lifeless body, I was right there with her. I had never been in love. I had never lost someone I loved. I was not a Puerto Rican immigrant from the 1950s. I was sure the actress didn't have the same history as the character, but there she was, embodying Maria's pain. And there I was, feeling my heart wrench along with everyone else's in the room, and understanding a mix of emotions I had never encountered. It was education. It was connection. It was power.

Hundreds of plays later, I found myself studying the science behind performance. Why is the experience so significant? I approached this question from both a cognitive scientific and an artistic perspective. My work consisted of theoretical and applied research, beginning with the creation of a 2016 documentary theatre production entitled *The Stories We Are*.

The show was devised at Hampshire College by seven ensemble members who were asked to explore personal storytelling through a variety of performance mediums. There were two remarkable results: the actors' evolution toward kindness and respect

for one another, and the audience's heightened emotional reactions. Seeing people tell real stories on stage elicited strong responses from the audience, and I hypothesized that there is something about theatre in particular that transforms the way we consider humanity. After surviving millennia, theatre remains one of the most desirable modes of storytelling. Beyond the joy of entertainment, there is something we gain at the neural level by engaging with theatre, something that defines our need for performing arts.

After seeing *The Stories We Are*, a colleague expressed to me what she gets out of going to the theatre: "I like [having] an emotional upwelling. I forget my life and I pay attention to what's happening, and then I can feel things based on my interpretation of what people are feeling."

This sensation is called empathy, an ability we have to recognize and then take on another person's emotion in the present moment. We don't witness theatre, or work as theatremakers, without experiencing empathy. Our main task is to feel what another is feeling. It is the key to our involvement in a story, how we process emotional plot, predict behavior, and understand a character's mental state. Performers achieve this with training. Audiences have empathy thrust upon them. In both cases, we exercise empathy.

This isn't news. Empathy is one of theatre's biggest attractions. Why bother going to see a show that doesn't make you laugh, cry, or your heart race? What is invaluable to understand, however, is that through its activation in theatre, our empathy can grow. While crucial to our social cognition, it isn't something we often operate consciously, making it a harder skill to reinforce. Still, because empathy is both something we are born with and a skill, it can progress through experience, or be diminished without.

Simon Baron-Cohen, professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge and Fellow at

Trinity College, Cambridge, developed a chart from his 2011 empathy research called, "The Empathy Bell Curve." It suggests that everyone has different levels of empathy, but we all fall somewhere on a spectrum. What if where we sit on that curve shifts throughout our lives?

Just as we must use any of our abilities to retain and strengthen them, we must do the same for our empathy. Unfortunately, we aren't prompted to experience empathy very deeply in daily life, and when we do there are contingencies. We empathize more easily with people we identify with and form personal relationships to. For instance, it's impossible to empathize all at once with the thousands of victims of hate crimes every year in the US. However, we can empathize with the family of Matthew Shepard, whose murder in 1998 became a spark of national outrage against homophobia and still resonates today with productions of the documentary play *The Laramie Project*. In stories, emotions are not only bolder and appear in quicker succession, but by pigeonholing a larger issue and reaching us on a personal level, they can access and test the limits of our empathy.

In that sense, observing and participating in storytelling is like working out at the gym. The practice of perspective taking expands our minds. Theatre may just be the best empathy gym of them all.

Jessica Blank and Eric Jenson's play *The Exonerated* was a compilation of interviews they conducted with six criminals on death row, each of whom eventually suffered their way to freedom after proving their innocence. The authors spoke with audiences before and after the show, and found that the majority empathized with the people in the stories far more after seeing the play than when they only had a description of their conviction. In *The Stories We Are*, we introduced an interactive lobby display for the audience comprising of activities where they could share personal stories. These activities were available before and

We don't witness theatre, or work as theatremakers, without experiencing empathy.

after the show, but every night audiences were much more willing to share after watching the actors perform. Our empathy motivates us to copy others in the moment.

In a 2012 study, researchers Thalia Goldstein and Ellen Winner assessed empathy levels in elementary and high school students who had received one year of either acting, or other arts training. They found that those who had studied acting for the year, and not another type of art, showed the most significant growth in empathy scores.

As children, pretend play guides our acquisition of empathy while our minds develop. We use role-playing as children to form these social capacities. Despite pretend play being less socially acceptable as we get older, we've found other ways of imbedding it into our culture, including theatre. Whether on stage or in the audience, we are absorbed in an act of putting ourselves in another's shoes. This consistent desire for pretend implies a recurring need to enhance empathy into adulthood. Theatre is a tool, adapted from the basics of pretend play, which can increase our social skillset at any age.

Theatre activates a number of mental capabilities, many of which are members of what is called, "The Empathy Circuit," a phrase developed by Baron-Cohen to describe the vast mechanism in charge of the many ingredients that make up empathy.



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(Left to right): Lisa Caspari and Alice Schneider share a tender moment in the author's documentary theatre production, *The Stories We Are*. Photo by Amy Deyerle-Smith.

Researchers have discovered that when one is recounting a story, the parts of the brain associated with the experience of living the story are in use. The amygdala, responsible for emotional comprehension and learning, and the insular cortex, which helps us recall and relate to moments we are talking about, are also at work. It is likely, then, that actors, who generally aren't telling stories that happened to themselves, still access these same structures in order to express another's persona.

When we watch another person engage in a type of emotional or physical behavior, something called the "Mirror Neuron System" is in action. These neurons fire not just when witnessing physical behavior, but through auditory description as well. They explain how audiences both feel and learn during a play. When an emotion is physically expressed, as so often is the case in theatre, a viewer's instinct is to respond in kind. It is why we may feel the instinct to smile when watching someone laugh, or cringe when someone gets hurt. While the way audience members and theatre makers empathize is different, the same empathy circuit is activated, drilled, and fortified in both.

The very structure of theatre is crafted to spark our empathy. Two components in particular distinguish it from other narrative forms: all action happens in real time, and the world of the story and its viewers exist in the same space.

Why bother going to see a show that doesn't make you laugh, cry, or your heart race?

These dual factors are essential to understanding why theatre is exemplary for empathy development. Humans not only empathize better with those they have a close relationship to, but also those in close proximity. As audience members, we are not just watching and listening from afar. Just the physical exchange between performer and audience heightens emotions. Actors can feel what an audience is feeling as much as the other way around. In both roles, we are far closer to the world of the story than if we were reading it in a book, watching it as a film, or studying it as a painting.

The closeness of theatre can also help us counter preexisting biases. As performers, we must learn a different perspective, one that could be entirely new to us. The process of imagining, then becoming, is pure empathy. Trying to see through new eyes presents us with new possibilities. The audiences' route to empathy is less taxing, but just as profound. We are free to experience emotion without fear that our feelings, or presence, will change a play's outcome. This separation from the story gives room to practice feeling strongly without threat of consequence.

Ultimately, theatre can be considered a "transitional space," a term coined by psychologist D. W. Winnicott, defined as a place where experiences happen between worlds. In that space, we can process both the world of reality, and the world of the play. This is quintessential for empathy practice because, while we understand that the emotional threat is not real, we can still apply the feelings to social experiences outside the theatre, augmenting our understanding and acceptance of the "other."

Embracing a more comprehensive understanding of the process can help theatre take a much bigger role in empathy education and training for a variety of fields such as medicine, psychology, and teaching. It can also be applied to treatment programs for individuals with empathy deficit disorders such as psychopathy and certain autism-spectrum disorders. Chiefly, though, understanding exactly how theatre changes us can lead to the creation of more productions that maximize unbiased empathy and faces us, as individuals and as a society, in the direction of untold, unheard, and misunderstood tales. ■ MAIA KINNEY-PETRUCHA

This piece is an excerpt of "The Play's the Thing: Is Theatre our Ideal Empathy Workout?" by Maia Kinney-Petrucha and was originally published on HowlRound (howlround.com/the-play-s-the-thing-is-theatre-our-ideal-empathy-workout), a knowledge commons by and for the theatre community, on September 5, 2017.

John Langs
Artistic Director

Becky Witmer
Managing Director

ACT – A Contemporary Theatre presents

The Crucible

BY ARTHUR MILLER
DIRECTED BY JOHN LANGS

Beginning October 13, 2017 • Opening Night October 19, 2017

CAST

Mrs. Ann Putnam/Martha Corey/Sarah Good/Music Coach	Anne Allgood*
Deputy Governor Danforth	Kurt Beattie*
Rev. John Hale	Avery Clark*
Abigail Williams	Sylvie Davidson*
Elizabeth Proctor	Khanh Doan*
Giles Corey	William Hall Jr.*
Betty Parris	Emilie Hanson*
Francis Nurse	David Klein
Tituba	Shermona Mitchell
Mercy Lewis	Hannah Mootz
Mary Warren/Dance Captain	Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako*
Rebecca Nurse	Marianne Owen*
Thomas Putnam/John Willard	Michael Patten*
Rev. Samuel Parris	MJ Sieber*
John Proctor	Paul Morgan Stetler*
Ezekiel Cheever	Ray Tagavilla

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	John Langs
Scenic Designer	Matthew Smucker
Costume Designer	Deb Trout
Lighting Designer	Geoff Korf
Sound Designer	Sharath Patel
Stage Manager	Ruth Eitemiller
Choreographer	Amy O'Neal
Safety Consultant	Cathan Bordin
Assistant Lighting Designer	Kenrick Fischer
Assistant Stage Manager	Victoria Thompson
Assistant to the Costume Designer	K.D. Schill
Kenan Directing Fellow	Emmet Temple
Kenyon Directing Intern	Clara Mooney

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

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

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

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A-1



A Note from Managing Director **BECKY WITMER**

Thank you for joining us for *The Crucible*.

While ACT does not have an “off-season” or a “dark” period (the ACTLab and holiday shows keep us running all year long), we still commemorate each year with a planned and curated season of plays for the Mainstage. It is hard to believe that with *The Crucible* we wrap up the 52nd Season of ACT.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who makes ACT’s Mainstage Season possible. We have several hundred unsung heroes of ACT Theatre, whom without their support, we could not come close to accomplishing what we do onstage and off each year.

Our volunteers. Did you know that the person who took your ticket is a volunteer? And the person who read your ticket and directed you to your exact seat is also a volunteer? I assure you, it is no easy task in our unique venues. And the person who schedules *all* of the ushers and ticket takers for every single Mainstage show at ACT is also a volunteer! Christine Jew has been managing ACT’s mainstage volunteer ushering program for over 20 years. And we have volunteers who help stuff and address envelopes for annual subscription mailers and fundraising appeals. This year, our Volunteer of the Year award went to one of our most dedicated

members who ushers, helps with administrative work, and even offers to help with handy services: Kenton Bolte.

The not-for-profit theatre’s business model was built on the foundation that volunteers would contribute their time and energy to make operations possible. This has not changed in the more than 50 years that regional theatres have been functioning in the US. Last but not least, ACT’s Board of Trustees are volunteers. They serve on committees to support ACT’s finances, governance, audience development, fundraising, facility, and IT needs. There is no end to the positive impact that volunteers have on ACT and we are truly grateful for the support.

If you see a friendly person wearing a Volunteer Badge at this performance, feel free to say, “Thanks for volunteering!” And thank you to our audiences for joining us this Season. I hope we’ll see you next year for another exciting lineup of plays.

Warmly,

Becky Witmer



John Langs

PHOTO BY TRUMAN BUFFET

WELCOME to ACT

Last year I heard Newt Gingrich state on a Sunday talk show that the government should re-open the House Un-American Activities Committee to investigate Muslim organizations and individuals suspected of ties to Islamic terrorists. The original HUAC, created in 1938 to investigate those suspected of ties to the Communist Party, tore the country apart in the 1950s as with its sanction and encouragement neighbor turned on neighbor, often for personal vengeance or gain. Betrayal became a virtue, its motivations left unquestioned and unexamined - moral authority rested firmly with the accuser.

Written in 1953 in response to the atmosphere of paranoia and hysteria surrounding HUAC's activities, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* initially received cautious reviews ranging from non-committal to mediocre; only Brooks Atkinson of the powerful New York Times leaned definitively positive and led with an oblique suggestion that the play had a certain resonance with current events, before carefully back-pedaling to a discussion of its historical setting. (Media wariness about being seen to validate the play's contemporary significance was justified: careers were already being ruined by the power of the blacklist.)

But in the years since, it has become an acknowledged American classic and one of Miller's most frequently produced plays, an enduring act of resistance that continually reasserts its relevance as history circles back on itself. "It is only a slight exaggeration to say that... *The Crucible* starts getting produced wherever a political coup appears imminent, or a dictatorial regime has just been over-thrown," Miller wrote in *The New Yorker* in 1996. "From Argentina to Chile to Greece, Czechoslovakia, China, and a dozen other places, the play seems to present the same primeval structure of human sacrifice to the furies of fanaticism and paranoia that goes on repeating itself forever as though imbedded in the brain of social man."

It's not only beautifully crafted as a work of theatre, but also so intimately engaged with the souls of its characters and so deeply grounded in the understanding of essential human

nature that while the context around it may change, we always see ourselves reflected in it. It's impossible to turn away from the story of Salem, because it's our story too. We're all subject to fear, greed, jealousy, lust, revenge, and there will always be those who are prepared to exploit and manipulate those weaknesses to serve their own ends, whether personal, religious, social, or political. It will always be easier to follow the prevailing winds rather than stand against them, even if in our hearts we know better. But John Proctor's struggle to do just that - to stand finally on the rock of his own integrity and profound sense of what's morally right - also celebrates the imperative importance for our society and for our selves of following our conscience and raising our individual voices despite the cost. ("It's still the only day in my life I'm ashamed of," the actor Sterling Hayden said later of naming names to HUAC. "I was never able to think of myself the same way again after that.")

Our approach to this production was to commit ourselves to connecting the play as specifically as possible to our own time and to delivering its power simply. We entered rehearsals as artist-explorers, feeding ourselves with history and headlines, investigating the given circumstances, creating a world that would both stand for the claustrophobic Puritan setting of the story and at the same time remove any barriers that might distance our audience from experiencing its full impact and confronting what it means to us *right now*. We are so excited to show you the result, which continues to breathe and evolve from night to night, and to share our ongoing new discoveries about this enduring classic with you.

John Langs

Artistic Director

COMING SOON TO ACT



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BY CHARLES DICKENS
ADAPTED BY GREGORY FALLS
DIRECTED BY EMILY PENICK

Photo by Dawn Schneider



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Why I Wrote *The Crucible*: An Artist's Answer to Politics

BY ARTHUR MILLER

In 1957 Miller was famously convicted

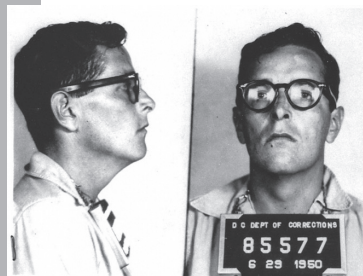
for contempt of Congress in front of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee because he refused to provide names of suspected (or imagined) communists to the committee. The conviction was eventually overturned. The following are excerpts from Miller's essay, "Why I Wrote *The Crucible*," published in *The New Yorker* on October 21, 1996.



Miller Testifying to House Subcommittee, June 21, 1956.
(Bettmann/Corbis)



Joseph McCarthy and Roy Cohn, 1954. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.
(New York Times/George Tames)



*Blacklisted member of the 'Hollywood Ten' Ring Lardner Jr. spent time in federal prison for refusing to answer when the House Un-American Activities Committee asked if he was a member of the Communist Party. Seen here in a Bureau of Prisons mug shot, Lardner had ceased using a pseudonym by the time he wrote the screenplay for M*A*S*H in 1970.*

Fear doesn't travel well; just as it can warp judgment, its absence can diminish memory's truth. What terrifies one generation is likely to bring only a puzzled smile to the next. I remember how in 1964, only twenty years after the war, Harold Clurman, the director of *Incident at Vichy*, showed the cast a film of a Hitler speech, hoping to give them a sense of the Nazi period in which my play took place. They watched as Hitler, facing a vast stadium full of adoring people, went up on his toes in ecstasy, hands clasped under his chin, a sublimely self-gratified grin on his face, his body swiveling rather cutely, and they giggled at his overacting. Likewise, films of Senator Joseph McCarthy are rather unsettling – if you remember the fear he once spread. Buzzing his truculent sidewalk brawler's snarl through the hairs in his nose, squinting through his cat's eyes and sneering like a villain, he comes across now as nearly comical, a self-aware performer keeping a straight face as he does his juicy threat-shtick.

The Crucible was an act of desperation. Much of my desperation branched out from the blow struck on the mind by the rise of European Fascism and the brutal anti-Semitism it had brought to power. But by 1950, when I began to think of writing about the hunt for Reds in America, I was motivated in some great part by the paralysis that had set in among many who, despite their discomfort with the inquisitors' violations of civil rights, were fearful, and with good reason, of being identified as covert Communists if they should protest too strongly.

The Red hunt, led by the House Committee on Un-American Activities and by McCarthy, was becoming the dominating fixation of the American psyche.... The more I read into the Salem panic, the more it touched off corresponding ages of common experiences in the fifties: the old friend of a blacklisted person crossing the street to avoid being seen talking to him; the overnight conversions of former leftists into born-again patriots; and so on. Apparently, certain processes are universal. When Gentiles in Hitler's Germany, for example, saw their Jewish neighbors being trucked off, or RS in Soviet Ukraine saw the Kulaks sing before their eyes, the common reaction, even among those unsympathetic to Nazism or Communism, was quite naturally to turn away in fear of being identified with the condemned. As I learned from non-Jewish refugees, however there was often a despairing pity mixed with "Well, they must have done something." Few of us can easily surrender our belief that society must somehow make sense. The thought that the state has lost its mind and is punishing so many innocent people is intolerable. And so the evidence has to be internally denied.

I am not sure what *The Crucible* is telling people now, but I know that its paranoid center is still pumping out the same darkly attractive warning that it did in the fifties. But below its concerns with justice the play evokes a lethal brew of illicit sexuality, fear of the supernatural, and political manipulation, a combination not unfamiliar these days. [It] may well unearth still other connections to those buried public terrors that Salem first announced on this continent.

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A Q&A with Core Company Members

Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako & Anne Allgood

BY MARKETING & PR ASSISTANT CATI THELEN



Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako



Anne Allgood

Have you ever been in *The Crucible* before?

Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako: Yes! I performed the role of Tituba as a returning guest alumna in a production at the University of Wyoming. Though she has less overall stage time, it was emotionally exhausting to put myself through the journey of her loss, betrayal, and abuse each night.

Anne Allgood: NEVER! I have never even SEEN a stage production of it (though I did see a not-very-good movie a long time ago, and also I streamed a brilliant live stage performance recently).

How are you getting ready for your roles in *The Crucible*?

CMN: I sent myself on vacation to Europe for a few weeks before plunging into Salem's turmoil. It was rainy and grey for most of my trip. I visited some historical sites to connect with the past, and I spent a while in an old cemetery to connect with the feeling of lurking spirits. It was really interesting.

I've also been thinking a lot about the power of my word. 17th century Salem didn't have Google, or fact checkers, or CSI. Parents didn't have Facebook to see time stamps of where their children actually were when they missed Sunday dinner. "Decent" (however narrowly defined) people were taken at their word. A white lie could really mean someone's death. Thinking about my word as truly powerful has added a new level of responsibility to how I use it.

AA: I have been geeking out on research, reading and viewing everything I can get my hands on - about the Salem witch trials specifically, and more generally about the time period - the roles of women and children, religious life, agriculture, even one really interesting book about how *very dark* the night was back before industrialization, and the dangerous qualities people ascribed to "night air," etc. Especially when a play is based on real events (as in *Mary Stuart* also!), I tend to immerse in research about the time period, and biographies... but then I let all of that continue to simmer on a back burner and dig into the script.

What are you excited most about being part of this production?

CMN: I'm most excited to see how this piece will resonate in 2017. We currently live in a world of paranoia. We feel

that we can't trust most sources so instead of doing the hard work to discover the truth, we often cling to the narrative that vindicates our personal beliefs - keeping us safe and condemning others. In dire circumstances, it's very easy to cast suspicion on the most vulnerable target nearby to preserve one's own livelihood. Neighbors are ready and willing to point fingers at each other and tear apart their own communities, letting fear drive us to violence. I hope that the echoes of what disaster looms in the aftermath of paranoia might encourage people as they walk out of the theatre to use the power of their word to lift others rather than take them down.

AA: I'm excited about making this story leap off the stage and surround you and all of us; about its recurring timeliness, and most of all, I think, about its terror. I'm excited about working in an ensemble to forge and codify a community of real people who fall into mass hysteria - and to not let any of us - audiences included - off the hook!

Being an ACT Core Company member, what have been some highlights over the past season? What have you learned from the experience of being an ACT Core Company member?

CMN: I've really enjoyed the many lively discussions we have as Core Company members about art-making in Seattle and beyond. We come from vastly different backgrounds personally and professionally, and it has been so fascinating to learn how differently we approach our work. It's really exciting to swap ideas! We also support each other's different endeavors like cooking, woodworking, travel, etc. It's easy in this industry to usually "talk shop" with other artists, but I love getting to know people's passions outside of theatre.

AA: I have LOVED being a Core Company member this year! I have long and gratefully thought of ACT as my 'artistic home,' and it's been so gratifying this season to work, play, make art, make friends, strengthen bonds, and be an ambassador for ACT under that imprimatur. I have loved being part of vigorous conversations about how to move forward consciously as Art Makers - how to address issues of inclusion and diversity, both onstage and off; how to be an aggressive voice for truth in a time of upheaval; and how to serve our community.

* ACT Core Company members are generously supported by Gary and Parul Houlihan.

Who's Who in *The Crucible*



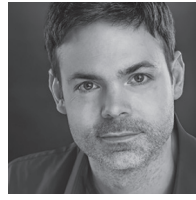
Anne Allgood (*Mrs. Ann Putnam/Martha Corey/Sarah Good/Music Coach*) is overjoyed to be spending this season with ACT as a Core Company member. She

has appeared previously at ACT in over a dozen roles, notably the title roles in *Mary Stuart* and *Miss Witherspoon*, and most recently in *Tribes* earlier this year. On Broadway, Anne appeared in *The Most Happy Fella*, *Carousel*, *The Sound of Music*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Imaginary Friends*. She has toured the U.S. and Europe in *Parade*, *Evita*, *Floyd Collins*, *South Pacific*, and *Urinetown*; and has appeared at regional theatres coast to coast. In Seattle, Anne has appeared in over a dozen starring roles at The 5th Avenue Theatre, and at Seattle Repertory Theatre (*Bad Dates*, *You Can't Take it Without You*, *The Constant Wife*, *Boeing, Boeing*, and *Luna Gale*), Intiman (*Cymbeline*, *Angels in America*, and *Wedding Band*), Village Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, and others. She thanks you for being here!



Kurt Beattie (*Deputy Governor Danforth*) has been creating theatre for Puget Sound audiences for over 40 years as an actor, playwright, and director.

His productions at ACT include *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, 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.



Avery Clark (*Rev. John Hale*) is thrilled to be making his Seattle debut with ACT. Select New York and regional credits include *Arcadia* and the original cast of *Coronado* (written by

Dennis Lehane, *Invisible City*); *Measure for Measure*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Straight White Men*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Moment* (Studio Theatre); *Romeo & Juliet*, *Cymbeline*, *Count of Monte Cristo* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Hamlet*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Orlando Shakespeare Theatre); *Hamlet*, *The 39 Steps*, *Henry V* (Arkansas Rep); *Christmas Carol* (Cincinnati Playhouse); *Journey's End* (Alley Theatre); *The Heidi Chronicles* (St. Louis Rep); *The Pillowman* (Astoria Performing Arts); *The Shape of Things* (Premiere Stages); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival); and *Rabbit Hole* and *The 39 Steps* (Theatre Squared). His television includes *Guiding Light* and *American Genius*.



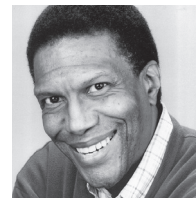
Sylvie Davidson (*Abigail Williams*) happily returns to ACT, where she has been seen in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *A Christmas Carol*. A

graduate of Knox College, she was most recently seen in Seattle as Candice in Book-It Repertory Theatre's adaptation of T. Geronimo Johnson's novel *Welcome to Braggsville*. Other local credits include *Pump Boys and Dinettes* (Village Theatre); *Getting Near to Baby* (Seattle Children's Theatre); *Tails of Wasps* (New Century Theatre Company); and *Emma*, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, *Great Expectations*, *Night Flight*, and *Highest Tide* (Book-It Repertory Theater). Regional credits include *Lonesome Traveler*, a folk music musical, at 59E59 Theaters in NYC, the U.S. Premiere of *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* at the Rubicon Theatre in Ventura, CA and the world premiere of *Troubadour* at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, GA. A singer/songwriter, as well as an actor, Sylvie divides her time between Seattle and Nashville. She and her husband and co-writer, Trevor, are in the midst of recording their first album. www.trevorandsylvie.com



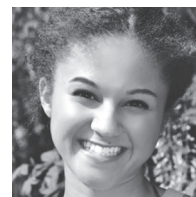
Khanh Doan (*Elizabeth Proctor*) has appeared in *King of the Yees*, *Ramayana* and *A Christmas Carol* (ACT); *A Tale for the Time Being* (Book-It Repertory Theatre);

Jesus Christ Superstar (Village Theatre); *Miss Saigon*, *Baseball Saved Us* educational tour (The 5th Ave Theatre); *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* (Wooden O); and in numerous productions at Seattle Children's Theatre over the last decade, including *Sleeping Beauty*, *Peter Pan*, and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. In Portland, she has appeared in *Redwood Curtain* (Profile Theatre); *You For Me For You* (Portland Playhouse); and most recently *The Talented Ones*, a new play by Yussef El Guindi at Artist Repertory Theatre. She is very grateful to be a 2017 ACT Core Company Member.



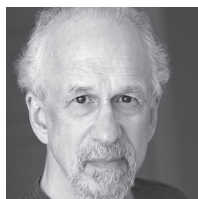
William Hall Jr. (*Giles Corey*) is proud to return to ACT and has previously been seen in *Wine in the Wilderness* and *Fathers and Sons*. Over the past 35 years,

he has been a veteran on many Seattle theater stages including *Fences*, *Gem of the Ocean* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, *Mwindo*, and *Birdie Blue* (Seattle Children's Theatre), and *Sorry* (Thalia's Umbrella). Other credits include: *Death of a Salesman* (Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute), *A Lesson from Aloes*, *The Whipping Man* (Taproot Theatre). Regional works include *The Alliance in Atlanta*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *The Booth*, *I'm Not Rappaport* (Syracuse Stage), *The Boys Next Door*, *Two Trains Running*, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Penumbra Theatre Company).



Emilie Hanson (*Betty Parris*) is a senior at Bellarmine Preparatory School and is excited to be making her debut at ACT in *The Crucible*. She was last seen in

ArtsWest's production of *Sweeney Todd* (Johanna) and has also appeared in The 5th Avenue Theatre's Rising Star production of *The Pajama Game* (Gladys). She has also performed in *The Wiz* and *The Addams Family* at Tacoma Musical Playhouse. She would like to thank her family and friends for their constant love and support!



David S. Klein (*Francis Nurse*) has been a working theater artist for 47 years, performing in over 150 professional productions, as well as directing and teaching. Before moving to Seattle

in 1985, he ran a touring children's theater in rural New England for three years and performed at international avant-garde festivals in Baltimore and in Wroclaw, Poland. He has helped start five theaters, both here and in Boston, and is now a member of Theater 9/12, Tales of the Alchemists Theatre and Fern Shakespeare Company. He has been seen this year at ACT in the Young Playwrights series, at GhostLight Theatricals in *Battle of the Bards*, in *Macbeth* with the Fern and in *Comedy of Errors* with Greenstage. His next show is in January with Washington Ensemble Theatre, *Straight White Men*.



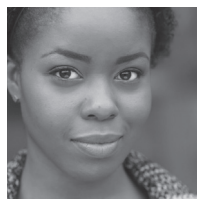
Shermona Mitchell (*Tituba*) is a local actor, director and teaching artist. Originally from Kentucky, Shermona moved to Seattle to attend Cornish College of the Arts where she

earned her BFA in Theater. She has been seen locally working with Sound Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Live Girls! Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Anything Is Possible Theatre, Seattle Musical Theatre, 14/48: The World's Quickest Theater Festival, Theater Schmeater, The Collision Project, Copious Love, Seattle Public Theatre, STAGErigh and most recently with Pony World Theatre. Shermona is the 2016 Gregory Award recipient for Best Supporting Actress.



Hannah Mootz (*Mercy Lewis*) Hannah is so happy to be back at ACT where she was last seen in *The Cherry Orchard* as Dunyasha with her company The

Seagull Project. She has also performed in *Luna Gale*, *Bo-Nita*, (Seattle Repertory Theatre), *The Big Meal*, *Tails of Wasps*, and *The Trial* (New Century Theatre Company), *The Children's Hour* (Intiman), *Slowgirl* (Seattle Public Theatre), *As You Like It* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), *Comedy of Errors*, *Othello* (Wooden O) and *Sprawl* (Washington Ensemble Theatre). She holds her B.F.A. in acting from Cornish College of the Arts, and is currently working on a documentary about social media. Catch Hannah next in *Hand to God* at Seattle Public Theatre.



Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako (*Mary Warren/ Dance Captain*) is a member of the 2017 ACT Core Company. She is the two-time recipient of the Gregory Award

for Outstanding Lead Actress for her work in *My Heart is the Drum* (2016) and *Little Bee* (2015). Other Seattle theatre credits include *A Raisin in the Sun* (Seattle Rep), *Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play* (ACT), and *Hair* (ArtsWest). Claudine also works regularly in film and television. She plays lead character Sherry O'Neil in the highly anticipated new Netflix original series *Everything Sucks!*, premiering in Spring 2018. She made her feature film debut this year in *Outside In*, starring Jay Duplass and Edie Falco. Nako is a proud member of Actors Equity Association & SAG-AFTRA.



Marianne Owen (*Rebecca Nurse*) last appeared at ACT in *Christmas Carol*, *Bloomsday*, *Middletown*, and many more shows over the

past 31 years in Seattle. She was most recently seen in *A Secret Garden* at The 5th Avenue Theatre and has worked at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Empty Space Theatre, Village Theatre and Intiman. A founding member of the American Repertory Theatre Company, she has also worked at N.Y. Public Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Playwrights' Horizons, Guthrie Theatre, Goodman Theatre, the George St. Playhouse, and toured nationally in *The Real Thing* (directed by Mike Nichols). She earned an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama and is also a weaver and fiber artist.



Michael Patten (*Thomas Putnam/John Willard*) is a journeyman actor based in the Pacific Northwest.

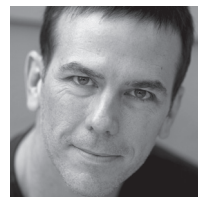
Previously with ACT: *In the Next Room*, *Pinter Fortnightly*. In Seattle, he has worked with New Century Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Opera, Intiman, among others. Regional credits include *All the Way and The Great Society* (Directed by Bill Rauch Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Seattle Rep); *The Odyssey* (Directed by Mary Zimmerman McCarter Theatre/Seattle Rep), Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Interplayers, Tacoma Actors Guild. Michael is a

proud member of Actors' Equity Association and SAG-AFTRA.



MJ Sieber (*Rev. Samuel Parris*) was previously seen at ACT Theatre as Dev in *Stupid Fucking Bird*. Other shows at ACT include *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and *A*

Christmas Carol. Previous stage credits include roles at Seattle Repertory Theatre (*Dry Powder*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Photograph 51*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Twelfth Night*), Seattle Shakespeare Company (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Winter's Tale*), Intiman Theatre (*Native Son*), and Strawberry Theatre Workshop (*The Elephant Man*, *Gutenberg the Musical*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*). He is a Founding Member and Associate Artistic Director with New Century Theatre Company and appeared on stage in *The Adding Machine*, *O Lovely Glowworm*, *The Trial*, and *Festen*, and directed the West Coast premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Flick*. He also creates the video trailers for ACT. Most recently he played Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* with Wooden O playing opposite his real life local treasure Keiko Green.



Paul Morgan Stetler (*John Proctor*) is the creator and curator of *Letters Aloud*, a literary reading series that tours all over the country, and a co-founder (and

former Co-Artistic Director) of Seattle's multi-award winning New Century Theatre Company, where he last appeared in the world premiere of Stephanie Timm's *Tails Of Wasps*. A well-known Seattle actor for almost 20 years, Paul retired from acting full-time in 2010 so that he could better support his family. Many thanks to friend and collaborator, John Langs, wife (and collaborator) Stephanie Timm and their two kids, Hayes and Sylvie Stetler, for their encouragement and support to take this rare opportunity to get back on the stage to tell this increasingly relevant story.



Ray Tagavilla (*Ezekiel Cheever*) is a graduate of the University of Washington Drama Program. He is the recipient of the 2012 and 2014 Gregory

Award for Best Supporting Actor and 2016 Outstanding Actor. Some of his theater credits include: *Porcelain*, Theatre Off Jackson (formerly NWAAT), *Our Country's Good*, *Money and Run Series* and *Trojan Women*

Who's Who in *The Crucible*

(Theater Schmeater), *Richard II* (Seattle Shakespeare), *Sex in Seattle* Series and *Cowboy Vs Samurai* (SIS Productions); *An American Book of the Dead*, *Clubfoot* (Annex Theater), *Soft Rock Kid* (ACT/Central Heating Lab), *The Mistakes Madeline Made* (Washington Ensemble Theatre), *Elephant's Graveyard* and *Zastrozzi: The Master of Discipline* (Balagan Theater), *Spidermann* (Jose Bold), *Of Mice and Men* (Seattle Repertory Theatre), *Sauced*, *To Savor Tomorrow*, *Smoked* (Café Nordo), *A Lie of the Mind* (Kollektor), *White Hot* (West of Lenin), *Jesus Hopped the A Train* (Azeotrope), *Ramayana*, *Middletown*, *Seattle Vice* (ACT Theatre), *A Small Fire* and *Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Sound Theater Company), *Four Dogs and a Bone* (Theater Schmeater) *Christmas is Burning* (Café Nordo) and most recently was seen in *King of the Yees* at ACT.

Geoff Korf (*Lighting Designer*) Most recently, Geoff designed the lighting for Cornerstone Theater's world premiere production of *The Magic Fruit* in Los Angeles. Last season in Seattle, he designed Nike Imoru's *Ode*, and the acclaimed Seattle Shakespeare Company production of *Bringing Down the House*. This is Geoff's tenth collaboration with director John Langs in as many years. Previous productions with John have included *Mr. Burns* and *7 Ways to Get There* at ACT, *The Adding Machine* and *The Trial* for New Century Theatre, *Hamlet* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), and *The Shaggs* at Playwrights Horizons in New York. Geoff teaches lighting design at the University of Washington. He is a graduate of California State University, Chico and the Yale School of Drama.

Amy O'Neal (*Choreographer*) Amy O'Neal is a dancer, choreographer, movement director, and dance educator. She is physically multilingual and equally participates in street and club dance culture and contemporary dance. A sought-after artist and teacher for the past eighteen years, Amy works nationally and internationally choreographing and performing for stage, dance films, live music shows, music videos, and commercials and teaches at studios, colleges, and universities. Her work has been funded by Creative Capital, National Dance Project, and the National Dance Project among others. From 2015-2017 she toured her eighth acclaimed evening-length dance show, *Opposing Forces*, to 9 US cities, screened the first documentary about the show at 6 dance film festivals, and will premiere the second documentary in late 2017. She is a long-time collaborator of musician/composer/Late Late Show with James Cordon band-leader, Reggie Watts and was awarded

the first Distinguished Alumni Award from Cornish College of the Arts in 2014. Amy was a regular teaching artist at Velocity Dance Center for fifteen years. Regular presenters of her work in Seattle are On the Boards, Velocity Dance Center, and Seattle Theater Group. Along with Dani Tirrell, she is the co-producer of Seattle House Dance Project a new annual multi-day event celebrating House dance culture. She recently relocated to Los Angeles after 20 years in Seattle.

Sharath Patel (*Sound Designer*) was raised between Appalachia and India while spending the following years studying across Europe and New England, eventually spending nearly a decade as a lead sound designer in New York City. Recent design highlights include *The Royale* (ACT); *As You Like It* (CalShakes-Oakland); *Free Outgoing* (East West Players-Los Angeles); *Grand Concourse* (Artists Rep-Portland). Regional/International credits include designs in New York City, D.C., Boston, Norfolk, Raleigh, Aspen, India, France, England, Germany, and Romania. Sharath recently completed a year-long Visiting Assistant Professorship at Reed College and co-led the Light and Sound Training Program in Vietnam. He has previously served as a lead designer, guest artist, instructor, or lecturer at Yale, Fordham, Columbia, Willamette, Ohio, Portland State, and Butler Universities. Sharath is a member of the Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association (TSDCA) and is an Arts Envoy for the U.S. Department of State. He holds a M.F.A. in Sound Design from the Yale School of Drama and currently is a Resident Artist at Artists Repertory Theatre. www.sharathpatel.com

Matthew Smucker (*Scenic Designer*) is pleased to return to ACT, where previous designs include *The Legend of Georgia McBride*; *The Mystery of Love and Sex*; *Mr. Burns*; *The Invisible Hand*; *Sugar Daddies*; *Rapture Blister Burn*; *Grey Gardens*; *Ramayana*; *First Date*; *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*; *Vanities*; *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*; *Yankee Tavern*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Rock 'n' Roll*; *Below the Belt*; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; *Eurydice*; *The Clean House*; *The Women*; and *The Pillowman* among others. Smucker's work has appeared at The 5th Avenue Theatre (*Man of La Mancha*; *Elf*; *Oklahoma!*; *Candide*), Seattle Repertory Theatre (*Dry Powder*; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*; *Or*; *Circle Mirror Transformation*; *Speech & Debate*; *Three Tall Women*, *Memory House*, *Living Out*), Intiman, Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theatre, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, New Century Theatre Company, Annex Theatre,

Arizona Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, Artist's Repertory Theatre; San Jose Rep, Kansas City Rep, Houston's Theatre Under the Stars, Paper Mill Playhouse, and Minneapolis Children's Theatre Company. Smucker received the 2011 Gregory Award for Outstanding Scenic Design, a 2012 Seattle Magazine Spotlight Award, and appeared on The Stranger's 2015 Genius Awards short list. Smucker is an associate professor at Cornish College of the Arts, received his M.F.A. from the UW School of Drama, and is a proud member of United Scenic Artists.

Deb Trout (*Costume Designer*) recent work at ACT includes *Mr. Burns –a Post Electric Play*. She is currently looking ahead to another exciting project with John Langs at Seattle Opera on *Beatrice and Benedict*. Recent work includes Seattle Repertory Theatre's *Well*, *Sherlock Holmes and the American Problem*, and *Hound of the Baskervilles*; Seattle Children's Theatre's *Fire Station 7*; Alice Gosti's durational piece *How to Become a Partisan* at St. Mark's Cathedral; and Portland Center Stage's *Cyrano* with Seattle's Jane Jones. Other theatres include: Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Alley Theatre (Houston), Alliance Theatre (Atlanta), Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center Theatre Company, Intiman Theatre, Children's Theatre Company (Minneapolis), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Perseverance Theatre (Juneau), Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Syracuse Stage, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Ms. Trout co-founded the New York millinery company Mackey and Trout, holds an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama, is a member of United Scenic Artists, and teaches design at the University of Washington.

Ruth Eitemiller (*Stage Manager*) is happy to continue a long tradition of working with John Langs and with the wonderful production team at ACT. Past ACT credits include *A Christmas Carol* (gearing up for her 4th year on the team), *Alex & Aris*, *Bloomsday*, *Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike*, *Sugar Daddies*, *One Slight Hitch*, and *Das Barbecü*. Around town Ruth has worked with Book-It Repertory Theatre (*Frankenstein*, *Anna Karenina*, *Sense & Sensibility*), Seattle Children's Theatre (*The Wizard of Oz*, *A Single Shard*, *Lyle the Crocodile*), The Seagull Project, Icicle Creek Theatre Festival, and others. She is a proud member of New Century Theatre Company, and has acted as Production Manager and Stage Manager for many of their productions. Thanks to Mom and Dad for the support!



John Langs (*Artistic Director*) John has been delighted to serve ACT as Artistic Director since 2016, and previously as Associate Artistic Director for three years. Before ACT, John's

freelance career 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 the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. 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 Three Sisters* (The Seagull Project), and *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company). As a dedicated fan of original work, John has shepherded over a dozen projects to their premieres.



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 cochair 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 graduate of the Leadership Tomorrow program.

ACT operates under agreements with the following:



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.

2nd Annual Legacy Society Luncheon

Join us Thursday, Nov 16 for our 2nd Annual Legacy Society Luncheon to honor our planned giving donors.

The Legacy Society is an extraordinary group of individuals who have provided a gift for ACT through either their estate or a structured planned gift. ACT is pleased to honor these individuals and is grateful for the opportunity to serve as a steward for these unique legacies. As a small token of our gratitude, we will acknowledge our Legacy Society members at our 2nd Annual Legacy Society Luncheon in November. RSVPs are required.

If you have included ACT in your estate plans but are not a member of the Legacy Society, please let us know so we can extend an invitation to you to become part of this very special group. We would like to thank you for your generosity, and include you in this and other Legacy Society events. Call Clare Hausmann Weiand at 206.292.7660 x1002.

PATRON INFORMATION

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

ACT offers the Figaro MobiTxt® Closed Captioning System for audience members who are Deaf/ Hard of Hearing (HH). This system is offered at multiple performances for each production. Devices can be requested upon arrival at the theatre. ACT is also equipped with the Williams Sound® Audio Equipment,

which amplifies stage sounds with the aid of headsets (ask staff for assistance). ASL interpreted performances for the Mainstage Season are offered at least once per play (check the website or contact the Ticket Office for ASL dates). Wheelchair seating is also available.

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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.
Fax: 206.292.7670.
Website: www.acttheatre.org.

Theatre Rental

For information regarding booking, contact events@acttheatre.org.

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Shara Lyon. Image courtesy of interviewee.

Shaya Lyon and the Live Music Project

We sent Encore Stages contributing writer Jonathan Shipley to meet Shaya Lyon, founder and executive director of the Live Music Project. The Live Music Project (LMP) is an organization that connects people with live classical music, strengthening communities, celebrating listener agency, and amplifying local resources. They talked about LMP's successes, classical music today, and what's coming up in the Seattle classical music scene.

What is Live Music Project?

At the core of our work is a comprehensive performance calendar that has been described by one concert-goer as “the overture to the concert experience.” Since we launched it in Seattle in 2014, the calendar has included more than 1,300 ensembles, series, presenters, and individual performers. Later this year we will expand our calendar platform to support communities nationwide.

What else are you excited about in regards to LMP?

I'm excited about our Spontaneous Free Tickets program. SFT offers a limited number of free concert tickets to its subscribers: students, families, and the elderly, for whom ticket prices are often cost-prohibitive; traditional classical audiences cautiously curious about hearing newer ensembles or compositions; and others who leverage the program to explore events in unfamiliar neighborhoods or venues. The tickets are donated by classical music organizations.

How did you get involved in LMP?

I love this question. It takes me back to falling in love with the Brahms double concerto. A few years ago, I came across a video of David Oistrakh and Mstislav Rostropovich performing the Brahms

double. I was enthralled. As I scoured the internet for the next performance of the Brahms double in New York City, where I was living at the time, it turned out to be more difficult that I'd expected to find concert listings based on that particular piece of music. I moved to Seattle. With knowledge of the vast array of orchestral ensembles that are so special to this region, and some time in the technology industry, it struck me that tech might be

able to bridge the information discovery gap for concert-goers.

What is the state of classical music these days?

I think the experience of classical music is shifting. The industry once thrived on subscriptions and is now having a more spontaneous approach. It might be difficult for you to imagine, this evening, what will make you feel alive on



Photo courtesy of Live Music Project.

Our building is closed for renovation, but our programs are more open than ever.

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a given Friday night next April – but you probably have an idea right now what would make you feel alive and complete today. If the trend is toward scanning a list of upcoming concerts and deciding on a whim which concert space will make us feel what we need to feel *right now*, I see LMP's comprehensive listings as one way to fill that role.

Are you a classical musician?

When I was nine, a piano appeared in our house. My babysitter taught me the first bars of Moonlight Sonata by ear, and I'd play it over and over again in the dark of night. I loved that.

Who are your favorite composers?

That's a trick question, right?

What are you excited about on the Seattle calendar in the next few months?

So much! The Seattle Symphony and Everett Philharmonic are both performing Elgar's Enigma Variations. Early Music Guild is premiering a work for electric theorbo – sort of a cross between a lute and an electric guitar. Thalia Symphony Orchestra will bring us Vaughan Williams.

What are some ways locals can listen to contemporary classical music?

How to narrow it down – Seattle is teeming with new music. The Seattle Modern Orchestra is solely devoted to the music of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Wayward Music Series at the Good Shepherd Center presents works by living composers frequently. Seattle Symphony's [untitled] series is rich with contemporary works. KING FM's Second Inversion is dedicated to contemporary classical music.

How can someone help LMP?

We'd love your help. Whether it's submitting your organization's events to our calendar, hosting an event-a-thon, writing code for our new nationwide calendar platform, making a donation, or partnering as a sponsor, community participation makes the world go 'round. Your readers can learn more at livemusicproject.org. ■ JONATHAN SHIPLEY

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Dialogue

A Conversation with Simone Hamilton



Simone Hamilton. *Courtesy of the interviewee.*



Rehearsal photo of *The Odyssey* at Seattle Repertory Theatre. *Photo by Kina Ackerman.*

Simone Hamilton is the Artistic Engagement Coordinator at Seattle Repertory Theatre. She identifies as a producer and curator of spaces, aiming to bring audiences closer to the art on stage. She's a Washington native and calls both Seattle and Whidbey Island her home. Encore Stages contributor Danielle Mohlman spoke with her just before tech week for the Public Works production of *The Odyssey*. In addition to the core cast of professional actors, over 100 performers flooded the stage in this musical adaptation of Homer's poem – performers from the King County Boys and Girls Club, the Ballard NW Senior Center, the Jubilee Women's Center, and beyond.

Public Works was an incredible theatrical endeavor that involved the entire community — professional and amateur performers alike. How did Seattle Rep decide to get involved with this nationwide theatrical experiment?

Our initial inspiration for bringing Public Works to Seattle began when our Artistic Director, Braden Abraham, saw Lear deBessonet's production of *A Winter's Tale* at The Public Theatre in 2014. He said it was like seeing the whole city onstage. In 2014, Braden and Marya Sea Kaminski, our Associate Artistic Director, started imagining what an incredible experience it would be for our stage and our audience to produce our own Public Works. Marya hired me in 2016 and together we began building this dream into a reality. Public Works became a way for us to examine and evolve our processes institution-wide and truly collaborate with our community. That process has inspired us forward and motivated us to keep going.

What was the most exciting part of working on the Public Works production of *The Odyssey*?

It's so hard to just name one! One thing that has presented itself throughout

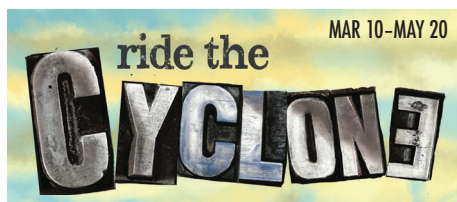
the entire life of this program – from workshops to the rehearsal process to the final production – is hard earned joy, collective imagination, and true equity. Together we are all learning and have become more than just an ensemble. We are a community that takes care of each other just as a family would. It's exciting to see how these values permeate people's lives as we all become more civically engaged with our communities, even outside the walls of the theatre.

If you could pick any play in the world to transform into a Public Works-style production, what would you choose and why?

If I had to choose from an existing play, I'd choose *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The story is a childhood favorite and the themes within the story around collaborative leadership, acceptance, resistance, courage, and community really resonate with me. But realistically, I'd like for us to explore commissioning our own Public Works-style production that reflects the stories of the Pacific Northwest. I envision a story full of epic adventure, momentous bravery, and conscious reflection with characters that

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are reflective of us all – including those who came before us and those who are here with us today.

What are your hopes for the future of Public Works in Seattle?

I hope the future of Public Works Seattle includes sustainable growth and deepened engagement. I hope that as a theatre, Seattle Rep can continue to show up for our community in ways we haven't before. In the future, I see the values of the program becoming contagious and continuing to reach beyond the confines of theatre and Seattle. Theatre is a powerful tool for change and we like to think of Public Works as a movement rather than a moment. We are actively making the change we wish to see in our community, our country, and our world by not only identifying, but actualizing our individual and collective truths under these magical and imaginary circumstances.

Are there any musicians, dancers, or theatre artists that you're especially excited about this season? Who are you excited to see?

I'm really excited about the regional performers that make cameo appearances in *The Odyssey* and seeing more from all of them this year. We've been collaborating with dancers, musicians, vocalists, and visual artists from around the region who offer a wide range of artistic talents – from the high energy Seattle Seahawks Drumline to the incredibly dynamic dance troupe Purple Lemonade and the drop dead gorgeous drag queen Topsy Rose Lee. The cameo groups are the crème filling of *The Odyssey*. This show wouldn't be possible without them.

Do you have any plugs? How can folks find more about you and your work?

No plugs for myself, but check out Public Works Seattle and our community partners: Centerstone, the Jubilee Women's Center, the Ballard NW Senior Center/Sound Generations, Path with Art, and the King County Boys and Girls Club. ■ DANIELLE MOHLMAN

SEATTLE PREMIERE

The Nance

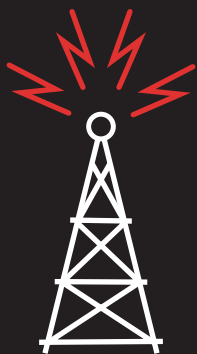
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Intermission Brain Transmission

Are you waiting for the curtain to rise? Or, perhaps, you've just returned to your seat before the second act and have a few minutes to spare? Treat your brain to this scintillating trivia quiz!

Email us the answer to the last question and have a chance to win tickets to a show!

1. Book-It Repertory Theatre's *Howl's Moving Castle: The Musical* is based on the beloved animated film directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Which of the following Studio Ghibli films was not directed by him?

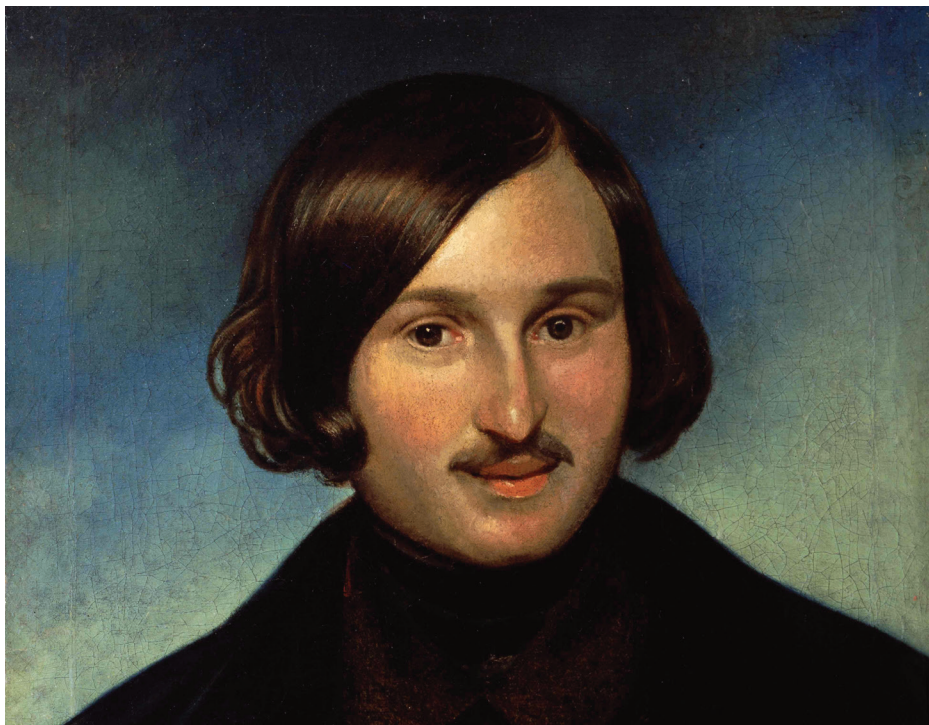
- a) *Ponyo*
- b) *Spirited Away*
- c) *Kiki's Delivery Service*
- d) *Grave of the Fireflies*

2. *The Government Inspector*, a comedy of errors set in a remote Russian town rife with corruption, was written by Nikolai Gogol, supposedly in response to an anecdote told to him by which author?

- a) Fyodor Dostoyevsky
- b) Alexander Pushkin
- c) Anton Chekov
- d) Leo Tolstoy

3. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is now playing at ACT Theatre. The play is based on recorded testimony from the Salem witch trials. In what year did these occur?

- a) 1692
- b) 1688
- c) 1701
- d) 1674



Ukrainian-born Russian author Nikolai Gogol. *Painting by Fyodor Antonovich Moller, 1841*

4. Italian composer and pianist Ludovico Einaudi is playing at the Moore Theatre in early October. His grandfather was the Italian president between 1948 – 1955. What was his grandfather's first name?

- a) Luigi
- b) Luciano
- c) Emilio
- d) Giulio

5. Also in early October, Bandaloop will perform at the Meany Center. This dance troupe combines modern dance with aerial acrobatics. Which landmark have they not yet danced on?

- a) The Space Needle
- b) Tianmen Mountain in China
- c) El Capitan in Yosemite
- d) Mt. Constitution

Bonus Question

What was the last arts performance you attended that you liked best and why?

Email your response to production@encoremidiagroup.com with Trivia Quiz in the subject line.

ANSWERS 1) D – *Grave of the Fireflies*. Released in 1988, this moving tragedy was directed by Isao Takahata. 2) B – Alexander Pushkin. Author of *One Night*, Pushkin died in 1837 from injuries sustained in a duel to defend the honor of his sister. 3) A – 1692. Between February 1692 and May 1693, a group of people, mostly young women, were accused of witchcraft in Salem Village, Massachusetts. 4) A – Luigi. Luigi Einaudi served as the second President of the Italian Republic after the fall of fascism, succeeding Enrico De Nicola. 5) D – Mt. Constitution. Located on Orcas Island, Washington State, Mt. Constitution is the second-highest mountain on an island in the contiguous 48 U.S. States.

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