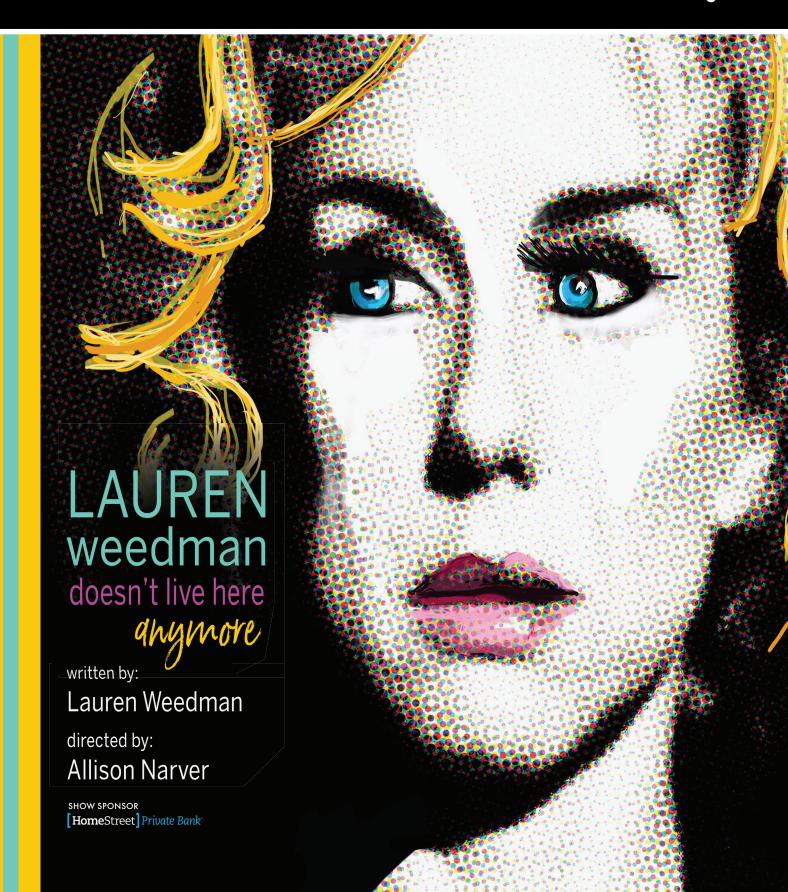
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encore STAGES SUMMER 2018

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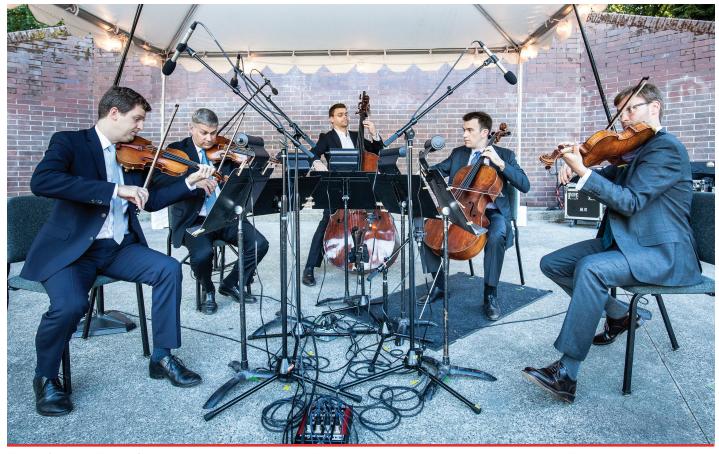








Arts al Fresco



From left: James Ehnes, Stephen Rose, Jordan Anderson, Edward Arron, and Jonathan Vinocour. Photo by Tom Mark Photography.

Shakespeare, chamber music, puppetry...no matter your preference, there's a way to soak up the arts *and* the sun this summer. Danielle Mohlman previews Seattle's arts al fresco.

Living in Seattle means living for the summer. Between hiking, biking and visits to the city's incredible beaches and lakes, it's easy to fill every evening and weekend with glorious outdoor activities. But while you're solidifying your summer schedule, don't forget to make room for the arts. Several intrepid Seattle arts organizations program their summers around the great outdoors, taking advantage of public spaces to bring art to the entire city. The Seattle Art Museum programs a biweekly concert and arts series at the Olympic Sculpture Park in Belltown, aptly named Summer at SAM. GreenStage produces the Seattle Outdoor Theater Festival at Volunteer Park in Capitol Hill each summer, a festival that boasts sixteen performances on three stages across

the park. And the Seattle Art Fair takes over the CenturyLink Field Event
Center every August, attracting local and national art aficionados alike. I had the opportunity to speak with the artists behind three of our city's most anticipated outdoor performances:
Wooden O's productions of King Lear and The Merry Wives of Windsor, Seattle Chamber Music Society's Chamber Music in the Park and Common Area Maintenance's inaugural puppetry production. Don't forget the sunscreen!

George Mount, artistic director of Seattle Shakespeare Company, started







Concertgoers get into it. Photo by Tom Mark Photography.

Wooden O twenty-five years ago as a way to reconnect with his Pacific Northwest roots. The Mercer Island native noticed that the island's annual summer festival, Mostly Music in the Park, was *entirely* music in the park. Eager to bring outdoor performance to his hometown, Mount solicited the Arts Council of Mercer Island for a grant to perform Shakespeare at the Luther Burbank Park Amphitheatre—just three nights of Much Ado About Nothing to justify the "mostly" in the festival's title. Twenty-five years later, Wooden O has expanded its scope to include parks across the Puget Sound region. But one thing remains the same all these years later: the festival opens and closes at Mercer Island's Luther Burbank Park Amphitheatre.

I had the opportunity to speak with George Mount about the significance of Wooden O's twenty-five year anniversary and his role as director of this summer's *King Lear*.

"We've never done it outside," Mount said of Shakespeare's tragedy. "It's a monster of a play and an audacious choice to present in the summer under two hours. But Wooden O was pretty much started as an audacious endeavor."

Mount pointed out that *King Lear*'s cynicism makes it the perfect play for 2018.

"So many of the people act out of venal self-interest and casual disregard of others around them," Mount said. "I worry about that behavior when I look at our politics, our consumerism, digital isolation, tribal isolation and ideological insulation."

Actor Vanessa Miller's Wooden O connection is longer than the festival's history. Miller attended Mercer Island High School with George Mount and when he asked her to return to Washington to play Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the decision was simple.

"I really think that free theatre is important," Miller said. "When I was



a kid, I remember seeing some park shows produced by Empty Space. Watching those shows changed my life, inspired me to follow a path into theatre. It only takes one beautiful summer evening in front of a happy crowd of people eating picnic dinners, laughing or listening to the beautiful poetry, to get hooked for life."

She loves the community aspect of Wooden O and the way the actors truly connect with the audience. And she's always aware that she could be part of an audience member's first Shakespeare experience.

"Our job as actors is to be very specific with the language and the relationships," Miller said. "If we know what we're saying, and we act with intention, then it clicks for the audience too. If we, as actors, are bluffing it, or generalizing, then it's really hard for the audience. Plus, Wooden O shows are very physical and lively. It's not an academic experience."







A lovely evening out. Photo by Tom Mark Photography.

Reginald Andre Jackson made his Wooden O debut eighteen years ago and says that there's nothing like performing Shakespeare outdoors. He loves seeing audience members reclined on a blanket, enjoying a bottle of wine and a cheese plate or sending their kids off to play as they enjoy the performance.

"Every now and again, nature will come in and lift the play in unexpected ways," Jackson said. "We took *Macbeth* to Walla Walla. One night during dusk, bats began to swoop and circle in a feeding frenzy near the trees that surround the stage. Wooden O has hired some pretty great designers. But nature—she is queen."

George Mount left me with some words of advice for audience members who are hesitant to give Shakespeare a try.

"Wooden O was founded on the conviction that Shakespeare's plays are popular entertainment," Mount said. "That's been a driving force in how we approach the plays. Shakespeare's plays entertain the whole person. The language challenges the brain. The romance lifts the heart. The pathos hits the gut."

Mount added that even if a play isn't to

an audience member's liking, they still spent two hours in a gorgeous Seattle park, with a picnic dinner, surrounded by friends and family. Who could ask for a more perfect evening?



King Lear and The Merry Wives of Windsor run July 12 to August 12 in parks throughout the Puget Sound region. Visit seattleshakespeare.org for more information.

On a walk through Capitol Hill's gorgeous Volunteer Park one summer, James Ehnes, director of the Seattle Chamber Music Society (SCMS), and his wife Kate, came across a small stage perfectly sized for a chamber orchestra. She suggested that Ehnes program a summer concert in the space and Chamber Music in the Park was born.

"Bringing this music, for free, into Seattle parks has been a wonderful way to spread this beautiful music to listeners from all over the city who

"People can enjoy the weather and maybe a picnic while they listen to us play."

might not have the chance to hear us downtown at Benaroya Hall," Ehnes said. "It's tremendously gratifying to see all the families and young people that attend these events in the parks."

Last summer, SCMS introduced a community play-along component to Chamber Music in the Park, inviting string players from the Puget Sound region to play alongside SCMS musicians.

"Everyone had a really fantastic time," Ehnes said, "and it was very meaningful and moving to see so many cross-sections of Seattle represented in the group—people of different genders, ethnicities, ages and backgrounds, all sharing in the joy of music."

Violinist Amy Schwartz Moretti loves performing in any venue, but whenever she performs outdoors she feels a deep connection with the world and the lives around her.

"One of my favorite memories of a Volunteer Park concert was during a performance of the Dvorak Viola Sextet," she shared. "I had a moment when I wasn't playing for a few measures where I was so taken by the beauty of the scenery and music-making. I saw an airplane flying over carrying people to their various destinations, heard children laughing and dancing, and just had a general sense of all being right with the world."

Violinist Erin Keefe also loves performing at Volunteer Park because the setting is more casual than the orchestra's Benaroya Hall performances.

"The nice thing about it is that parents can bring their children without worrying about upsetting anyone if they get a little restless," Keefe said. "People can enjoy the weather and maybe a picnic while they listen to us play. It's very fun for the performers and it's something I look forward to every summer."



Chamber Music in the Park is on Saturday, July 28 at Volunteer Park. Visit seattlechambermusic.org for more information, including information on how to register for the community play-along.

When Alexander Mostov joined Common Area Maintenance (CAM), a community gallery and generative studio in Belltown, he was looking for an inspiring workspace where he could interact with fellow creatives. In the years since, CAM has provided much more than that community. It's become a space where Mostov, an artist who works primarily in two-dimensional gouache and computer illustration, can challenge his work and experiment with new forms. Which is how he came up with the idea to produce a puppet show that audience members can view from the sidewalk.

The puppetry performance will be the first of its kind in this space, but one that has the potential to become an annual summer tradition.

"I saw a traditional puppet show while I was studying abroad in Barcelona and was totally inspired," Mostov shared. "I love magic realism and the idea of injecting fantasy into one's everyday life. There's something about puppetry that lends itself to that everyday fantasy."

When I asked him what he was looking forward to the most about this collaborative art form, Mostov shared



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that he's excited about merging his own visual style with the aesthetics of artists who work in other mediums. For example, how will an artist who works primarily in sound enhance the script?

When Mostov and I spoke in the spring, he was in the process of assembling a team and writing the script, in collaboration with two other CAM artists.

"We're playing with the idea of adapting a whimsical picture book script I wrote last year," Mostov said. "We're planning on adding adultlevel humor, political references and sarcasm."

Sounds like we're in for a treat.



Common Area *Maintenance's puppetry* performance will run May through June at their space in Belltown. Visit facebook. com/commonartspace for more information.

So, pack a picnic and a wide-brimmed hat. Because whether you're a puppetry fan, a Shakespeare fiend or an orchestra aficionado, there's a performance for everyone this summer in Seattle. ■

Danielle Mohlman is a nationally produced feminist playwright based in Seattle. Her play Nexus is among the 2015 Honorable Mentions on The Kilroys list. She is an alumnus of the inaugural class of Playwrights' Arena at Arena Stage and a member of the 2018 Umbrella Project Writers Group.



CenturyLink Field Event Center seattleartfair.com





ACT – A Contemporary Theatre presents



By Lauren Weedman

Directed by Allison Narver

Beginning July 20, 2018 • Opening Night July 26, 2018

CAST

Written and performed by Lauren Weedman

BAND

Ben London Guitarist Chris Monroe Drummer

CREATIVE TEAM

Allison Narver Director

Matthew Smucker Scenic Designer
Allison Heryer Costume Designer

Andrew D. Smith Lighting Designer
Robertson Witmer Sound Designer

Alyssa Keene Dialect Coach

Lily McLeod Assistant Lighting Designer

Ruth Eitemiller* Stage Manager

Liza Vaughn Production Assistant

Ahna Demaro Kenan Fellow

Running Time: This performance runs approximately 75 minutes. There will be no intermission.

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

 $The \ video \ and/or \ audio \ recording \ of \ this \ performance \ by \ any \ means \ what so ever \ are \ strictly \ prohibited.$

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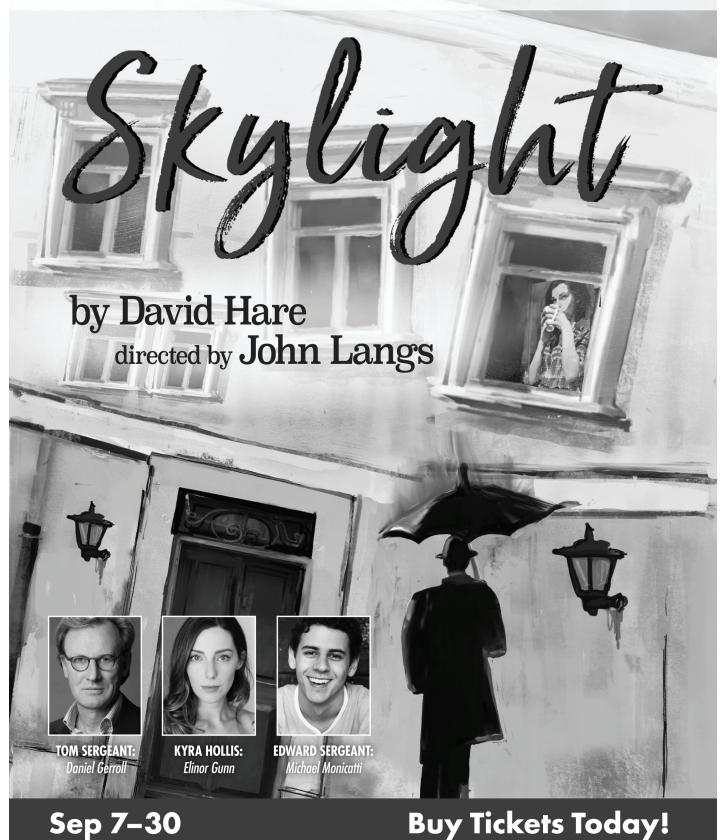
Kathy Alvord Gerlich, Eulalie M. & Gian-Carlo Scandiuzzi, True-Brown Foundation

Closed Captioning devices are available at all performances and ASL will be available on August 3 (8:00pm). Please purchase designated CC seats and ASL tickets by calling 206.292.7676, emailing service@acttheatre.org, or visiting us in person. To read more about accessibility and the Figaro MobiTxt* Closed Captioning System, visit acttheatre.org.

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.

POWER, POLITICS, AND PASSION: A DINNER BETWEEN EX-LOVERS



Closed Captioning devices available for all performances.

A-2

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John Langs PHOTO BY TRUMAN BUFFET

WELCOME to ACT

ACT Theatre is proud and thrilled to bring Lauren Weedman back to Seattle. As many of you know, before Lauren answered the call of Los Angeles, she got her start as a writer and performer here on

our local stages and also on the Seattle-based sketch comedy TV show, Almost Live. So when the opportunity opened up to produce Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore at ACT and bring her home to the Northwest, we jumped at it!

One of the first shows I directed in Seattle was in 2006 at the Empty Space Theatre, then under

the artistic direction of Allison Narver. It was around that time that I was fortunate to see *Bust*, written and performed by Lauren and directed by Allison, a hugely entertaining and eye-opening piece based on Lauren's experiences as a volunteer advocate for female inmates in the Los Angeles County Jail. The combination in their collaborative process of creative risk-taking and the utter trust that makes those risks possible had a huge impact on me, and what you're about to see is the latest step in the evolution of that flourishing and inspiring artistic partnership.

As we began to narrow down the plays we would present this year and develop the theme of this season, "The Space In-Between," it struck me that even within ourselves, there are conflicting identities and ideologies that are at war with one another, as

well as a vague but persistent awareness that there are other lives we might have led if Fate's coin-toss had landed differently. One of the creative leaps that Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore takes

> is to imagine how those separate identities and other possible selves might actually manifest themselves physically in our lives – possibly bringing their own band!

As I've gotten to know Lauren from her work in film and television. I've become a dedicated fan of everything that she does. Her work is not only deeply personal, it is also

form-breaking, both immediately

recognizable and utterly unexpected. Like all great comic artists, she's able to orchestrate heartbreak and hilarity in a vibrant way that reminds us how closely related they are, and that in life's toughest moments it's our sense of the absurd that often gets us through. Thank you for being here for this glorious, highenergy ride through the crazy-inventive, wildly funny, and thoroughly unbuttoned-down mind of Lauren Weedman.

John Langs

"The combination of

creative risk-taking

and utter trust in

their collaborative

process made a

huge impact

on me."

Artistic Director



A Note from Managing Director BECKY WITMER

Welcome to ACT Theatre!

Thank you for joining us for the 2018 Season.

I'm especially excited to welcome you this summer as we launch our new "front door" refresh of our physical and digital spaces. One of the questions I am asked most frequently is, "how will you attract new people to the theatre?". I believe having a welcoming, open, modern entryway is one step in that direction. Our building is both a historic landmark jewel and a home to contemporary art and ideas. At ACT we hope you feel welcome, invited, and intrigued by all that is inside. The Ticket Office and Scandiuzzi Lobby renovation took place over just 18 days between the closing of Ride the Cyclone and first preview of Until the Flood. I want to thank our Board Facility Chair, Shanna Waite, for her leadership and project management, our amazing partners at Graham Baba Architects,

and the ACT scenic studios staff who brought the vision to life in our very own shops. The upgrade to our facility is made possible in part by The Sunderland Foundation and 4Culture. This July we also launch our new website, where you can more easily navigate all of the performances and events at ACT, learn more about the artists and programs, and purchase your tickets in a new updated shopping cart. And all on your smart phone... finally!

We make these updates in honor of YOU, our audiences today and in the future! I hope you have a great experience at the theatre today and that you feel at home here.

recly Witmer

Cheers,

Becky Witmer

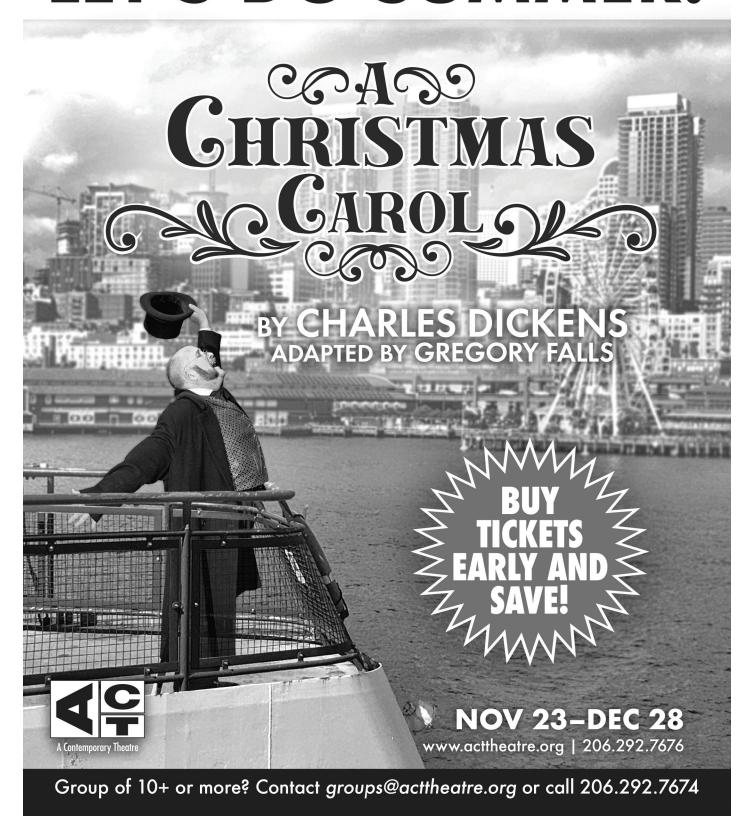
BOLD NEW WORK BEGINS AT ACT



The upcoming ACTONE Festival, in partnership with One Coast Collaboration, will create an opportunity for playwrights, actors and directors to spend a week working together on four new plays. Patrons are invited to attend a panel discussion about the future of American theatre and the creative process with the playwrights and directors. This year's ACTONE Festival will focus on plays by Philip Dawkins, Mara Nelson Greenberg, Martyna Majok, and Wayne Rawley & Martin Lowe.

Sunday, August 26 at 7:30 pm • Tickets \$10 www.acttheatre.org/actonefestival

CHRISTMAS IS COMING, BUT FIRST LET'S DO SUMMER!



Get to Know the Women Behind the Show

An Interview with LAUREN WEEDMAN AND ALLISON NARVER

BY SUMAYA MULLA-CARRILLO, ACT'S MARKETING INTERN

The two of you have worked together for a long time now – how has your partnership changed over the years and how do you keep things fresh?

Allison Narver: Snuggling in front of the fire, date nights and long walks on the beach (Sorry, I couldn't help it – I'm obnoxious that way).

"I love working with Lauren because I forget that I'm only directing one person and not a room full of people."

Lauren Weedman:

Well... we keep things fresh by parting our hair on different sides and speaking in accents. And showering.

AN: SORRY! Now I'll do it for reals — it's kind of impossible to not keep things fresh when working with Lauren. Developing stories with her is one of the most intoxicating experiences I've ever had — she's tenacious and always

hungry to make new things. She's very brave and is becoming more and more willing to make herself vulnerable onstage. It's amazing to watch her work with audiences — it's such a reciprocal relationship in which energy grows between the audience and Lauren.

What is particularly satisfying about working on solo shows?

LW: Like so much in life the thing that's amazing about it is what is awful about it. I have nobody to blame. I can try to blame the sleeping old man in the front row or my Thai dinner but ultimately it is up to me to make the theater experience one I'd like to have if I were in the audience and one I'd like to have as an actor. Also the shows can evolve as I do. There's a lot of re-writing that happens that makes everybody nuts but I'm constantly finding new levels to things.

AN: I find that I develop a really intimate relationship with the actor when working on solo performances. The actor's scene partner is always the audience, so often in new work, the actor and I will have no idea what we've made. We need the audience to complete our story. I love working with Lauren because I forget that I'm only directing one person and not a room full of people. Her characters are so clearly drawn that I have given her the same kind of notes that I would typically give to a larger cast.

How does it feel to be back at ACT? Do you have any standout memories from other times you've been here?

AN: I love working at ACT; the audiences are so smart and game for adventure. The staff is amazing. The Production department is so passionate, detailed and committed to the art they make.

LW: My memories of ACT (and for all Seattle theatre to be honest) are all so idyllic. The time period I lived in Seattle, before the Hollywood bizarreness and the divorces and the child, was an incredible period of my

life. My friends here and the city itself has become my "back in the good old days". The shows I saw at ACT, in particular, *The Syringa Tree*, were life changing. Just walking into the box office area made me emotional. But that could have been a hormonal imbalance.

What do you enjoy about presenting work in Seattle?

LW: The thing I most enjoy about presenting work in Seattle is that I'M IN SEATTLE... that's an annoying answer. Audiences come to see theater for theater's sake. I refer to Seattle as my hometown when I only lived there for five years. I love the collaborators. The musicians, the designers, the producers. There is an artistry and a drive to make it the best they can that I've not experienced in a lot of cities outside of New York City.

AN: I feel like I have a relationship with Seattle audiences. I'm a hometown director and have worked here for many years. I grew up with Seattle audiences, so I feel close to them.

What's your favorite thing to do in Seattle?

AN: I like going to used bookstores and sailing (that's a kind of boring middle-aged answer, I know).

LW: Eat. Drink Coffee at Verite. Visit my friends and complain about the weather and LA. Recently I've

"The thing I most enjoy about presenting work in Seattle is that I'M IN SEATTLE...There is an artistry and a drive to make it the best they can that I've not experienced in a lot of cities outside of New York City."



Allison Narver and Lauren Weedman

enjoyed walking around shaking my fist at all the new buildings —"why back in my day that was a run-down hotel!!!"

If the two of you are together on a Friday night, what would you most likely be doing?

LW: You know that we're not a couple right? Though that would be an amazing couple, not to brag. We would be watching trashy TV and then quickly changing it to a Feminist documentary when anyone passed by and drinking a martini as we talked about how we've stopped drinking martinis.

AN: We enjoy martinis and making each other laugh...don't we honey?

What would you like to tell audience members about Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore?

LW: No animals or children are harmed during the production. And I am so happy to be sharing it and to be back home.

Who's Who in Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore



Lauren Weedman (Writer and Performer) is an award-winning comedic actress, playwright and author. Her first show, Homecoming, began as

a 15-minute performance art piece at Seattle's On the Boards and went on to an Off-Broadway production in New York City, back in 2001. Bust, about her work in the Los Angeles county jail, received a MacDowell Fellowship for playwriting by the Alpert Awards, as well as several "best of the arts" across the nation. She has written and performed more than 10 solo plays, including Homecoming, Amsterdam, If Ornaments Had Lips, Huu, Rash, Wreckage, Bust, No ... You Shut Up, and most recently, The People's Republic of Portland at The Armory. Her television credits include Arrested Development, The Daily Show, Horny Patty on HBO's Hung, and Doris on HBO's Looking. Her most recent films are The Little Hours starring John C. Reilly and Wilson with Woody Harrelson. Weedman is the author of two books of comedic essays. A Woman Trapped in a Woman's Body: (Tales from a Life of Cringe) and Miss Fortune: Fresh Perspectives on Having it All From Someone Who is Not Okay. She lives in a rent-controlled apartment in Santa Monica with her 8-year-old son, Leo.

Ben London (*Guitarist*) is a Seattle based musician/songwriter with an extensive major and independent label discography that includes records by Alcohol Funnycar, St. Bushmills Choir, Sanford Arms, Selene Vigil and STAG. London's songs have been featured in numerous film and television projects. London is an active music/media professional working for organizations including Experience Music Project, The Grammys, and Hewlett Packard. London was the inaugural chair of the Seattle Music Commission and has served on both The Vera Project and KEXP advisory boards.

Chris Monroe (*Drummer*) is thrilled to be back at ACT! He was here most recently with *Ride the Cyclone*, a co-production with The 5th Avenue Theatre. A regular in the orchestra pits around the city, he also keeps busy with various bands and other music groups including the Weimar influenced band, The Love Markets! Love to Tyler, Ellie, Mom and V!

Allison Narver (*Director*) Allison Narver's work has been seen at theatres across the country, including productions at Seattle Repertory Theatre, ACT Theatre, Seattle

Children's Theatre, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, New Century Theatre, The Yale Repertory Theatre, Studio Theatre in DC, Pittsburgh City Theatre, Portland Center Stage, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival; in New York; New York Theater Workshop, The New Victory Theater, The Public Theater, The Cherry Lane Theater and The Women's Project, among others. Allison was the Resident Director for *The Lion* King (Director, Julie Taymor) both in London and on Broadway in New York. Allison is the former Artistic Director of The Empty Space Theatre, Annex Theatre and The Yale Cabaret. Seattle productions include: The Mystery of Love and Sex, Female of The Species, Eurydice, The Clean House and Christmas Carol (ACT Theatre); 7 Brides for Seven Brothers: Man of La Mancha (5th Avenue Theatre); Sherlock Holmes and The American; Problem; Dear Elizabeth; The Hound of The Baskervilles; BOEING, BOEING!; 'Or; Three Tall Women; Memory House; Bad Dates (The Seattle Repertory Theatre); Robin Hood; 100 Dresses; Dick Whittington and His Cat (Seattle Children's' Theater); Seattle Shakespeare Company: The Government Inspector (Seattle Shakespeare Company); New Century Theater; Orange Flower Water (New Century Theater); Romeo and Juliet (Intiman Theatre); Little Women (Book-It Repertory Theatre); Valley of The Dolls; Vera Wilde; 1984 and Bust (The Empty Space Theatre).

Matthew Smucker (Scenic Designer) is pleased to return to ACT, where previous designs include The Crucible; 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 Man of La Mancha; Elf; Oklahoma!; Candide (The 5th Avenue Theatre); Dry Powder; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf; Or; Circle Mirror Transformation; Speech & Debate; Three Tall Women; Memory House; Living Out (Seattle Repertory Theatre); Beatrice and Benedict (Seattle Opera); 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.

Alison Heryer (Costume Designer) is a costume designer for theater, film, and print. Her credits include productions at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, 59E59 Theaters, La MaMa, The New Victory Theater, Portland Center Stage, Portland Opera, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, ZACH Theatre, The Hypocrites, and Redmoon Theater. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, World Stage Design, and The Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Recent awards include the Portland Drammy Award for Costume Design, the Austin Critics Table Award for Costume Design, and the ArtsKC Inspiration Grant. Herver is a member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829. She lives in Portland, Oregon where she is the Assistant Professor of Costume & Textiles in the School of Art + Design at Portland State University.

Andrew D. Smith (Lighting Designer) Andrew is a Seattle-based Lighting Designer, most recently lighting Tribes at ACT. His work has been seen at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, New Century Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Azeotrope, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, Seattle Public Theatre, Theater Off Jackson, ArtsWest, On The Boards, Velocity Dance Center and Broadway Performance Hall. National work includes Cornerstone Theatre Company, Flint Youth Theatre, Horizon Theater Company, Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, Roust Theater, and Cardinal Stage Company. Andrew holds a BA from Duke University and an MFA from the University of Washington, where he currently teaches.

Robertson Witmer (Sound Designer) Rob's previous shows at ACT include The Wolves; The Mystery of Love and Sex; and Daisy.
Other recent credits include Timon of Athens; Bring Down the House (Seattle Shakespeare Company); Ironbound; Hand to God (Seattle Public Theater). His sound designs have also

Who's Who in Lauren Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore

been heard at Seattle Rep, Intiman, New Century Theatre Company, Spectrum Dance Theater, and Teatro ZinZanni. Rob occasionally plays music onstage in such productions as Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play (ACT); A Doctor in Spite of Himself (Intiman Theatre, Yale Rep); Fiddler on the Roof (Village Theatre); and Go, Dog. Go! (Seattle Children's Theater). Rob plays with several bands, including The Love Markets, "Awesome" and the Toucans steel drum band. Rob is a member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829.

Ruth Eitemiller (Stage Manager) has enjoyed spending the last ten years working with ACT on a variety of shows, including Christmas Carol (3 years), The Crucible, Alex & Aris, Bloomsday, Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike, Other Desert Cities, Sugar Daddies, and Das Barbecü. Her recent credits include The Picture of Dorian Gray with Book-It Repertory, Patti and the Kid with Frank Boyd & Libby King, and NextFest 2018 with The 5th Avenue Theatre. Around Seattle she has worked with Book-It Repertory, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Children's Theatre, The Seagull Project, and others. Ruth was a company member and production manager with New Century Theatre Company, where she helped create such shows as Mary's Wedding, The Trial, and The Adding Machine.

Lily McLeod (Assistant Lighting Designer) is so happy to be working at ACT this season, where she has assisted on numerous shows over the last three years. She is a Seattle-based lighting designer/assistant with a B.A. from Seattle University, a former intern of Seattle Repertory Theatre, and a past FAIR Assistant at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Recent design credits include Guards at the Taj and Measure For Measure (ACT); Pilgrims (Forward Flux); and Happy Happy (Macha Theatreworks).



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, and a founding co-chair of the Cultural Resource Collective. She is a graduate of the Leadership Tomorrow program. She is on the board of League of Resident

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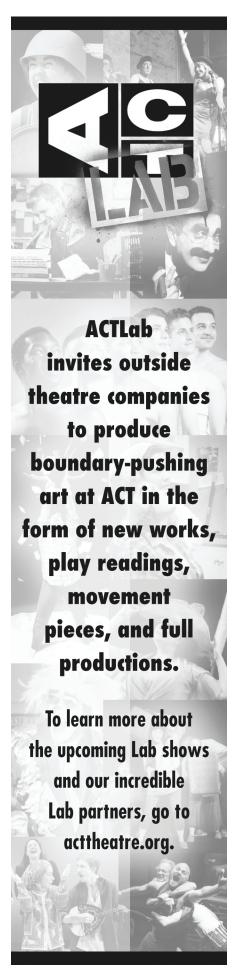


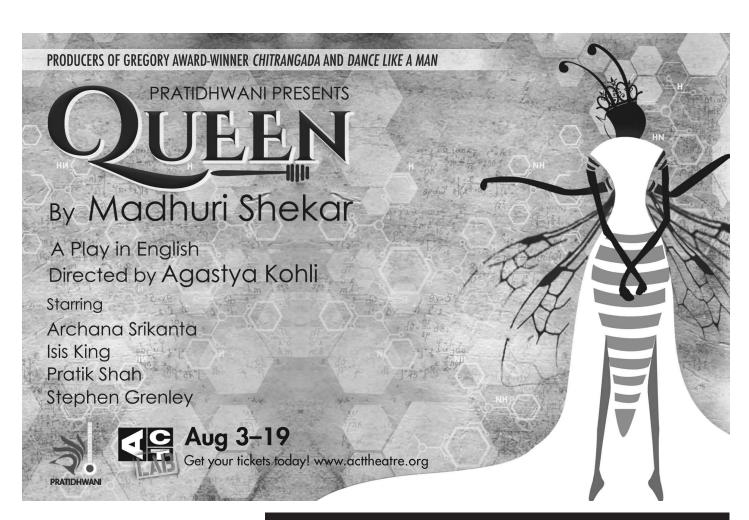






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SO MUCH is changing in Seattle; it's no secret that technology and business are booming. Living and operating in a region experiencing constant advancement, it's necessary to incorporate innovative changes in our Theatre--innovation that goes beyond what is presented on stage.

ACCESSIBILITY is at the core of ACT's mission and we are proud of the state of the art closed-captioning system we installed in 2017. This system makes it possible for our Deaf and hard of hearing audience members to fully enjoy every ACT production with ease and clarity. In 2017 alone, closed captioning was offered at 127 performances and utilized by over 260 patrons.

OUR INNOVATIVE EFFORTS to improve your theatre-going experience continue. You undoubtedly noticed a few changes. First impressions matter and the ticket office and Scandiuzzi Lobby are your first stops on the way to see great theatre. ACT's home hasn't been renovated in over 20 years and we decided it's high time our spaces reflect the contemporary art you love to see on our stages.

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FOR THIS PRODUCTION

John Small **Followspot**

Dialogue 🗀

Encore Stages in conversation



Photo from Teh Internet is Serious Business at Washington Ensemble Theatre. Photo courtesy of John Carpenter Photography.

As a fourth generation Seattelite, Rachel Guyer-Mafune lives with the Pacific Northwest in her DNA. She's a 2016 graduate of Cornish College of the Arts and a member of ACT's 2018 Core Company. And like any great actor, she considers her artistic identity a work in progress. She's committed to expanding her capabilities, learning from and listening to her theatre peers and finding inspiration in everything. We had the opportunity to speak with her about her recent performance in Sarah DeLappe's *The Wolves*, her commitment to new work and her passion for this city.

The Wolves seems to be gaining momentum with every regional production. What attracted you to Sarah DeLappe's script? How has working with this ensemble at ACT informed the way you rehearse and collaborate?

I played soccer as a child and was a teenager not too long ago, so this script resonated with me front to back. The characters are intelligent, strong as hell and defy reductive female stereotypes in theatre. I was so excited for the audience to get a glimpse of what

it means to be a teenage girl today. Everyone working on *The Wolves* truly became a pack, and the trustful bond we created was an imperative step to becoming a team.

Looking at this past season—
especially *Teh Internet is Serious Business* at WET, *Howl's Moving Castle* at Book-It and *The Wolves* at
ACT—it's clear you're attracted to new
plays and Seattle premieres. Are there
any favorite playwrights you're hoping
to see on Seattle stages one day?

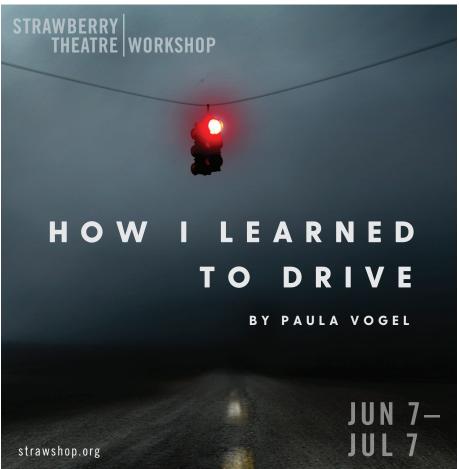


Rachel Guyer-Mafune.

Photo by Dawn Schaefer.

I'm super amped for WET's next season, which includes new plays written by female playwrights. Joining WET as a company member last year has motivated me to read new plays and discover playwrights I might not otherwise know about. Having a theatre family to discuss new works with is awesome. I'm also really excited about ACT's first playwright in the Core Company, Yussef El Guindi. He's had plays produced at ACT and all over the





country and he's one talented dude. It's been a blast reading his work with other Core Company members.

You were recently named to ACT's 2018 Core Company. Could you talk to me about what it means to be part of this company of artists?

Joining ACT has made me realize that my artistic path is not one I have to navigate alone. Knowing I'm surrounded by folks who believe in my work and have confidence in my ability to grow as an actor—it's incredible. I am one lucky gal. John Langs, the artistic director, absolutely adores actors and he's committed to providing us with a space to bloom and creatively flourish. I'm beyond proud to represent ACT as an artistic ambassador this year.

What excites you most about being an artist in Seattle? How do you hope to grow and challenge the theatre community here?

Being part Japanese American and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I'm hungry for more characters like me. I mean, how dope would it be to see an unapologetically brazen, mixed, pansexual woman onstage right now? I'm currently working on using my voice to express our need for diverse, inclusive and relevant theatre. I'm learning how to take my space, while giving the mic to others who need to be heard first.

Are there any musicians, dancers or theatre artists that you're especially excited about next season?

I'm looking forward to continuously watching new artists and work I've never seen before. I want to see more shows and make connections with folks who are dedicated to telling honest, unvarnished stories onstage and off. It's going to be an amazing year to find inspiration in this community.

Danielle Mohlman

Dialogue 🔎

Encore Stages in conversation



James Asher (Gamal) and Kunal Prasad (Mohsen) in the 2016 Golden Thread Productions staging of *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian. *Photo by David Allen Studio, courtesy Golden Thread Productions*.

Encore Stages talks with playwright Yussef El Guindi on the immigrant—and American—experience.

If you're an avid theatre-goer in Seattle, chances are you've seen a Yussef El Guindi play. This prolific playwright has become an artistic staple here in Seattle, a city he has called home since 1994. (Upon reflection, he shared that he's lived in Seattle longer than he's lived anywhere else—even England, where he was raised after his family emigrated from Egypt.) We had the opportunity to speak with him about his writing, being a theatre artist in Seattle and ACT's 2018 Core Company.

Many of your plays examine the immigrant experience through a

theatrical lens. Is there something that you wish Seattle residents better understood about immigration in America?

It's not easy. Immigrating is sort of akin to walking a wobbly, wooden bridge over a precipice in a deep fog—a bridge that appears to be disappearing behind you and whose intact structure up ahead is not assured. And even if you "make it across" and achieve citizenship, world events and political shenanigans might occur that might suddenly imperil your standing as an immigrant.





Yussef El Guindi. *Photo by Ann-Margaret Johnson/Sassafras Photos*.

Different racial and immigrant groups at different times will frequently get slandered in the headlines. I think it's a phenomenon among immigrant groups, and more broadly, different racial groups within the United States, to hold their collective breaths every time there is some horrendous act of violence that makes the news. We all secretly pray it isn't someone from our "tribe." When a white person commits a horrific act of violence, I don't get the sense among European Americans that they feel they have to carry the burden of that crime. The crime is not foisted on them as a

collective group. There is no sense of guilt or worry that this might in some way impact their standing in society.

But for certain immigrant groups and people of color, that worry is real. You feel pressured to publicly disavow any connection or feeling for the individual who perpetrated that crime. If the perpetrator is an Arab or Muslim, the mainstream press won't speak of that individual as troubled or suffering from mental health issues. Instead, they're terrorists, monsters, and live outside the pale where everything good and civilized apparently lives.

At such times, you feel you're back on that bridge over that precipice. And the bridge feels even more wobbly than usual.

How has our country's current political climate impacted your writing?

The United States has been "Trumpland" for some time: a place where an alarming degree of xenophobia and racism are the norm. I've been in "crisis mode" when crafting plays for some time now. And when responding to current political events, I have to tread carefully. Mainly because,



Shanga Parker (Musa) and Carol Roscoe (Sheri) in the 2011 ACT world premiere of *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World*, directed by Anita Montgomery. *Photo by Chris Bennion, courtesy of A Contemporary Theatre (ACT).*

with rare exceptions, the turnaround between completing a first draft and a full production can range from two to three years, sometimes longer. Whatever political crisis that triggered the play may be old news by the time your piece is staged. You have to sift through the news event, or zeitgeist of that moment, to find what resonates on a more universal level-and that might transcend the particular political moment that triggered the play. Which means breaking things down into very personal, human matters—locating your protagonists, with all their personal issues, within the social and political web in which they operate and understanding that what makes us human are also the political structures that prop us up as social creatures.

That's the goal anyway: to turn something very specific, local and political into a more universal exploration of our status as citizens and humans just trying to survive.

As for my home country of Egypt, after the revolution in 2011 I wrote several plays in response. One of them, *The Mummy and The Revolution*, I wrote too soon—feeling much too hopeful for a future that didn't come to pass. The other two plays, *Threesome* and *The Tyrant*, I took a different tack. I know these plays are still expressive of both past and present circumstances. The shock waves from the revolution and its aftermath continue to ripple through me and will probably impact my writing in some way for some time to come.

You've worked with a number of local theatre companies in the production and development of your plays. Do you have a favorite theatre company to collaborate with? Why?

I'm very thankful to all the theatre companies who have extended their hand out to me. Most theatres are very squeamish when it comes to putting on plays by and about Muslim and MENA (Middle Eastern, North African)



William Dao (Nasser), Mujahid Abdul-Rashid (Kevin), and James Asher (Ahmed) in the 2011 West Coast premiere of *Language Rooms*, directed by Evren Odcikin, a coproduction between Golden Thread Productions and Asian American Theater Company. *Photo by David Allen Studio*, *courtesy Golden Thread Productions*.

writers. They're not quite sure where these stories and people fit in the received narratives of the day. For all the talk of diversity, most theatres lack a truly global vision that encompasses the full array of voices from around the world. Not to mention an inability to see beyond the limited diversity schemata that determines who is and is not heard from.

So, I really appreciate those adventurous local theatres that have reached out to me, like West of Lenin, Theater Schmeater, 18th & Union, and ACT. ACT in particular has shown a keen interest in my work. To have a theatre of this size give me a platform for my plays has been very important in my development as a writer.

You were recently named to ACT's 2018 Core Company. Could you talk to me about what it means to be part of this company of artists?

I joke with colleagues that as theatre people we are door-to-door salesmen

and women—itinerant individuals knocking on numerous doors, trying to get theatres to invite us in. And how humiliating it is, when more often than not, those doors are either shut on us or our knocks are ignored altogether. So, for ACT to invite me in to be part of their 2018 Core Company is huge. As for how that plays out in the future, we'll see. We're all sort of making up this position as we go along. As John Langs, the artistic director, likes to put it, I get to be the first pancake. But psychologically, for me, the promise of having a home where I might get to exercise my talents, where my plays may have a good chance of being staged, to have a place where I can try out new material with exceptionally good actors, well, that's just a lovely position for a playwright to be in.

What excites you most about being an artist in Seattle? How do you hope to grow and challenge the theatre community here?

What's interesting to me is the degree to which I have been shaped



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as a playwright by Seattle theatre audiences. There are personal and cultural influences of course that will always infuse the heart of everything I write, and to which I am both grateful for, and to which I am a prisoner of-to the degree that we are all shaped and imprisoned by the particulars of our individual pasts. But as a playwright, having spent now twenty-four years in Seattle seeing many plays at different theatres, I realize I have not only been learning from the plays I watch, but from the reactions by the Seattle audiences to those plays. Without realizing it, my plays are being influenced by those audience reactions. I have some appreciation of what might and might not stir a Seattle audience. There are, of course, no guarantees that what you write will be to their liking. But I think any playwright who spends a long enough time in one city will invariably start unconsciously adjusting their work for the audiences they've attended plays with. Sort of like knowing what jokes and stories will fly at a family gathering.

But that is very much countered by my non-Seattle subject matter. And that's the challenge for me. To write about peoples and conflicts that people here don't necessarily relate to. To humanize individuals and situations that too often get flattened in the press. People do like to see themselves up on stage in some way. My job is to bridge the gap between the non-Seattle folk I portray and the Seattle audiences who, hopefully, come to see my work. (Thank you to all those who do attend!)

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

I do have a play of mine called *Hostages*, written almost thirty years ago (!), that's going to be done at 18th & Union in October, directed by David Gassner. I'm curious to see how it stands up after all these years. Come see it if you can. ■ *Danielle Mohlman*



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!

- Book-It Repertory Theatre presents *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, June 6–July 1. Oscar Wilde wrote the novel, originally serialized in 1890 in which literary magazine?
 - a) Scribner's Magazine
 - b) Lippincott's Monthly Magazine
 - c) Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern
 - d) Harper's Magazine
- 2) Until the Flood, a play that focuses on the social unrest following the fatal police shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, will play at ACT June 8–July 8. The playwright, Dael Orlandersmith, was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. For which play was she nominated?
 - a) The Gimmick
 - b) Beauty's Daughter
 - c) Yellowman
 - d) Forever
- 3) ACT Theatre presents the one-woman show *Lauren*Weedman Doesn't Live Here Anymore, July 20-August 12.

 Now a resident of Los Angeles, playwright and performer

 Lauren Weedman lived in Seattle for several years, where
 she was a regular contributor to which Seattle-produced
 radio show?
 - a) Rewind
 - b) Too Beautiful to Live
 - c) Robin and Maynard
 - d) BI Shea

Bonus Question

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

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



Oscar Wilde. Photo by Napoleon Sarony.

- 4) Playing July 11–August 18 at Taproot Theatre is *Sweet Land*, in which a German woman immigrates sight-unseen to marry a Norwegian farmer in post-WWI Minnesota. Seattle's own Scandinavian neighborhood is Ballard. In what year was Ballard annexed to Seattle?
 - a) 1905
 - b) 1896
 - c) 1907
 - d) 1911
- 5) July 12–August 12, Seattle Shakespeare Company will run Wooden O, a series of free outdoor Shakespeare performances. This year they will perform *King Lear* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Who played King Lear in the 2008 motion picture directed by Trevor Nunn?
 - a) Patrick Stewart
 - b) Ralph Fiennes
 - c) Ian McKellen
 - d) Michael Caine



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