



POTUS

OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE
SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE



by
Selina Fillinger

directed by
Jillian Armenante

SEPTEMBER 7 - 29, 2024



presents

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SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE

by Selina Fillinger

directed by Jillian Armenante

September 7-29, 2024

ANNE ALLGOOD*~

HARRIET

CARLY COREY*

DUSTY

GIN HAMMOND*

MARGARET

JOSEPHINE KEEFE*

JEAN

CASSI Q KOHL*

BERNADETTE

ANNETTE TOUTONGHI*

STEPHANIE

AYO TUSHINDE

CHRIS

SARAH HARTLETT*

UNDERSTUDY

MORGAN ROBERTS

UNDERSTUDY

ANJELICA McMILLAN*

UNDERSTUDY

JILLIAN ARMENANTE*

DIRECTOR

JULIA HAYES WELCH

SCENIC DESIGNER

MELANIE BURGESS

COSTUME DESIGNER

CONNIE YUN~

LIGHTING DESIGNER

JOHN GROMADA

SOUND DESIGNER

JORDAN ROSIN

INTIMACY DIRECTOR

EVA GIL

ASSISTANT INTIMACY DIRECTOR

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PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

HAZEL ARMENANTE

ACTING INTERN

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~ACT Core Company member

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PATRON INFORMATION

DURING THE SHOW

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

FOOD AND DRINK

Bar service and concessions are available in the lobby. Pre-ordering for intermission is available for most shows. No outside food or drink is allowed.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is not allowed in any part of the building or within 25 feet of the entrance.

FIREARMS POLICY

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

LOST AND FOUND

Please contact the Box Office at boxoffice@acttheatre.org or call 206.292.7676. For Box Office hours, visit acttheatre.org/visit/box-office.

ACCESSIBILITY

ACT offers the Figaro MobiTxt® Closed Captioning System for audience members who are Deaf or hard of hearing. This system is offered at all performances in most of our theatres. ACT is also equipped with the Williams Sound® Audio Equipment, which amplifies stage sounds with the aid of headsets and also provides sound for our Audio Description performances. Both devices can be reserved at the time of ticket purchase and/or requested upon arrival to the theatre at the Accessibility table (please ask staff for assistance).

Large Print Programs are available and can be picked up at our Accessibility table.

Audio Description and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation is offered at the following performance of *POTUS*: Saturday, September 14, 2024 at 2:00pm.

ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE CONTACT INFORMATION

700 Union Street, Seattle, WA 98101

Phone: 206.292.7676

acttheatre.org

LEAVE THEM LAUGHING

BY (FORMER) ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOHN LANGS

We don't do crystal balls, but as we curate seasons for ACT Contemporary Theatre, we do contemplate the future. Moving into the 2024/25 Season, we had one programming priority that stood head and shoulders above the rest. **We wanted to meet the start of our season with a sense of humor.** We wanted to allow for that unique physiological catharsis that only comes from the belly laugh. We wanted to exorcise the demons of the past and face those to come with communal joy.

Early last year, as we thought about our lineup of productions for this season, the election was on our mind. The question we circled was "what will the audience need from their theatre as they are being inundated with the 24-hour political news cycle, and how can it live up to the challenge we set for ourselves?" Then we read *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive*, and our question was answered with a resounding and collective certainty.

Selina Fillinger has created a play that reflects the absurdism of our current political discourse and does so with a biting sense of humor that truly meets this moment. **Sometimes, a playwright with their finger on the pulse crafts a work of art, and the world around it changes, allowing the play to be appreciated in a whole new light.** So, when the political calculus of the election dramatically shifted, the resonance of Selina's play grew into something wholly different.

We are thrilled to welcome director Jillian Armentate back to Seattle. I was lucky enough to see her directing talent on full display in two of the most original comedies I have had the pleasure of witnessing at the beloved Circle X Theatre of Los Angeles where we both plied our craft in the early aughts. When this play was selected, hiring Jillian as a director was one of the easiest and most fun decisions I have ever made from the chair of Artistic Director. It was also bittersweet as this season is the last in my 12-year tenure at ACT Contemporary Theatre.

In fact, I am writing this letter from my new gig in North Carolina, where I have signed on to be the Dean of School of Drama at the University of the North Carolina School of The Arts. As I have stated before, this new job is the only one that could lure me away from our beloved ACT Contemporary Theatre. As it happens, right now I am sitting at my desk in my new office. The view is not as nice as my old digs, where I could look out and wave to you all through the windows over Seventh and Union, but above my desk here sit the headshots



of 120 students who represent the next generation of American theatre. Young and hopeful.

Recently, I messaged a picture of them to a friend. In the text I stated, "They are all waiting to be stars." She wrote back "Yes, but you must make them actors." She was so right. **I deeply believe what the world needs is great artists.** Actors who can tell the stories, who will tell the truth to your teeth, and as my dear friend Anne Allgood would say, "actors who will eat all your sins." So, for me, the next chapter will be bringing what I have learned, whatever experience and knowledge I have gained, to the next generation of artists here at the school where I learned my craft and where my artist journey started.

Here in this final Artistic Director's letter, I want to thank you for all the experiences, good and bad, that we have had together at ACT. As an artist and artistic director working in Seattle for the last 20 years, the greatest satisfaction has been to speak with this community year after year from our stages. Our collaborations that reach fruition in productions carry our call. Your presence, laughter tears and applause has been the nurturing response. It's been a wonderful dialogue. I hope to be remembered in your hearts through "the work," but this, I know, is a difficult request.

To recognize an artist's body of work is difficult. We work for the moment, carving in ephemera. Our contributions are often hard to detect, like glaciers cutting canyons that, years later, only the inquisitive geologist might investigate and know the impact of. But truly—who has the time for that?!

Our lives are short, and theatre happens in the now. Right in front of you it carves your heart, tickles your funny bone, and awakes your faith. So, here is a more reasonable parting wish. **I hope this play make you laugh your ass off.** I hope you tell your friends you saw an incredible show at ACT Contemporary Theatre. It has been the honor of a lifetime to be in dialogue with you. Seattle, you have been a wonderful partner.

In community,

A LETTER FROM *POTUS* DIRECTOR JILLIAN ARMENANTE



Hey you guys...I'm freaking out.

This toxic political climate is so unnerving. Theatre has been a salve for political unrest since its inception. From the Commedia dell'arte troops traveling from town to town criticizing the King, to the revolt of Hrotsvithae when theatre was banned in the Middle Ages to the economically devastated post-WWI Brechtian times...it is no different now.

True theatre has always thrived in times of political upheaval. It flourishes in the cracks of a fractured society, forcing us to confront uncomfortable truths and, occasionally, to laugh at the ridiculousness of it all.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I just need to feel my heart pound in a room filled with a bunch of strangers. In the dark, seated together, our hearts eventually beat as one and we become a collective, symbiotic ensemble of survivors of this unprecedented time in history. We need to gather. We need to witness. Hold me, I'm frightened.

Theatre, my friends, is the beating heart of our cultural soul, the ever-persistent mirror reflecting our society's triumphs, follies, and deeply entrenched absurdities. Yet, here we stand, witnessing a world where political discourse has been reduced to soundbites and tweets, where the line between reality and satire has become so blurred that even the keenest observers struggle to distinguish between the two. Hold my beer.

You have turned off your television, put down your iPhones, hired a babysitter, paid for parking and braved the mean streets of downtown Seattle to allow yourselves to be challenged, provoked, and transformed by this story—a place where the nuances of the human condition are laid bare, where we confront our shared humanity. Achievement unlocked!

Thank you for joining us. Thank you for trusting us.

Welcome to our production of *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive* by Selina Fillinger. We are thrilled to bring this political farce to the stage. While the situations in *POTUS* are exaggerated for comedic effect, there's an underlying truth that resonates with our current political climate. Seriously, you can't make this shit up. It's theatre of the absurd, with real-world consequences.

POTUS reminds us that behind every public figure is a team of dedicated individuals working tirelessly to manage crises, both big and small, in a world that reflects the opulence and tension of the White House. Behind every political decision, there are real human lives affected, bringing us back to the core of what truly matters.

POTUS is a celebration of resilience and humor. **In the midst of political turmoil and personal scandal, laughter becomes a survival mechanism.** Throw in a few swear words and boom, comedy gold.

Let that laughter be recognized for its power to enact change. Let's use theatre not as an escape, but as a call to action. Let's show the world that in the face of political insanity, we can still find our way back to sanity through the transformative power of theatre.

In this time of great division, we need theatre's ability to foster empathy, to ignite conversations and to imagine better futures. In the words of Bertolt Brecht, "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it." Let's pick up that hammer and get to work.

Welcome to the world of *POTUS*—where anything that can go wrong, will go wrong, and it's all hilariously right.

ACT has renewed our commitment to our mission, values, culture, and the creation of New Works. We are publishing them here to invite conversation and hold ourselves accountable.

OUR MISSION

ACT is a contemporary theatre where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACT Contemporary Theatre acknowledges that the land on which this theatre stands is part of the ancestral homelands of the **Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, and Tulalip** peoples along the waterways of the **Salish Sea**. We honor the **29 federally recognized sovereign nations** within the state of Washington as well as the many other unrecognized peoples in this area.

As we gather and strive to share stories of our world with joy and clarity, **we honor with gratitude the original stewards and storytellers of these lands — past, present, and future.** We value the immense contributions, sacrifices and **resilience of Indigenous People here**, and fully **acknowledge** the profound multi-generational impact that colonization has had on Native people everywhere, including ongoing disparities, racism, and political and social **INVISIBILITY**. **To heal, we need truth and understanding that everyone actively participates in, together.**

Please consider taking action to support Indigenous communities. Support Native-owned businesses, Native artists, and Native causes. Donate your time, energy, and money to support Native people, and contact your local elected representatives. This land acknowledgement is one small act in recognizing the importance of continuing to care for the land and our important relationship with the original people of this place we all call home who are still here. We are all in relationship to each other.

WE BELIEVE

ACT STATEMENT OF VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

ACT believes in the power of theatre to change lives. For too long, the lives of our institution has focused on have been predominantly white and able-bodied. We acknowledge that ACT has worked inside biased systems that have continued to center only a small group of our global community. We want our art to be joyful and our work to have a spirit of adventure, so we commit to building thoughtful guardrails to bolster an environment where we can all be brave and buoyant together.

Developed by the Staff, Core Company, and Trustees of ACT Contemporary Theatre, this statement of values and commitments was created to ensure the well-being of artists, collaborators, board members, and staff to engage in the spirit of an ever-improving process.

OUR VALUES

We are people-led and art-centered.

We believe in creating a safe space in which to do dangerous work.

We depend on each other for clear, honest, and responsible communication.

We believe that the building of excellent art is risky and joyful, and takes time.

We strive to ensure that artistic trust is baked into the way we work.



Learn more about Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging.

NW2 NEW WORKS NORTHWEST

SECOND ANNUAL FESTIVAL

October 30–November 3, 2024

All performances in ACT's Bullitt Cabaret

20 NEW WORKS.
5 DAYS.
20 SEATTLE
PLAYWRIGHTS.

SOLO ACT – A MONOLOGUE SLAM
OCTOBER 30 @ 7PM

REFUGEE RHAPSODY BY YUSSEF EL GUINDI
NOVEMBER 1 @ 7PM

UHURU BY GLORIA MAJULE
NOVEMBER 2 @ 4PM

LEGACIES: A GHOST STORY BY AMONTAINE AURORE
NOVEMBER 2 @ 7PM

UNDERWATER WEATHER BY HOLLY ARSENAULT
NOVEMBER 3 @ 4PM

HOME BY NAGHMEH SAMINI
NOVEMBER 3 @ 7PM

All performances are Pay-What-You-Choose.



**SPACE IS LIMITED—
GRAB YOUR TICKETS TODAY!**



SAVE THE DATE

**MONDAY,
OCTOBER 28**

ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE
700 UNION STREET

Dinner Celebrating New Works Northwest Festival & Honoring John Langs



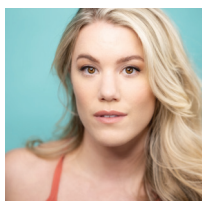
Individual tickets start at \$250. Tables start at \$2,500. Contact Kristine Haroldson, Stewardship & Events Coordinator, at kristine.haroldson@acttheatre.org to purchase tickets.

WHO'S WHO IN POTUS



**ANNE
ALLGOOD*~**
(she/her)
HARRIET

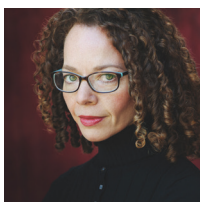
Anne Allgood has appeared on ACT's stages in over 16 productions (notably *Sweat*, *The Women*, *Old Times*, *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*, *Mary Stewart*, *Das Barbecü!*, *The Crucible*, *Rock 'n Roll*, *Tribes*, *Miss Witherspoon*, *Sugar Daddies*, *Mr. Burns* (a post-electric play), *Vincent in Brixton*, *The Clean House*, *Eurydice*, and many readings and workshops, as well as 8 seasons in *A Christmas Carol*. Additionally, her credits encompass Broadway, National Tours, regional theatres coast-to-coast, opera, television and film, and starring roles at every major theatre in Seattle. She is a Core Company member here at ACT and is honored to serve on the Curation Committee and the Inclusivity Working Group. Next up: *Blithe Spirit* at Seattle Rep. DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!



**CARLY
COREY***
DUSTY/
FIGHT CAPTAIN

Carly grew up in Spokane, WA, and discovered her passion for performance early on. After being scouted at a musical theatre camp, she was cast in her first professional show at age 8. Carly studied music, acting, and vocal performance at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. She has performed with major theatres across the Pacific Northwest and is making her ACT Contemporary Theatre debut! Selected credits include Clara in *The Light in The Piazza* (Showtunes); Arista/Ariel U/S in *The Little Mermaid*; Val/Maggie U/S in *A Chorus Line* (The 5th Avenue Theatre); Grace in *Cinderella*; Eliza U/S Ensemble in *My Fair Lady*; Illona U/S in *She Loves Me* (Village Theatre); Elle

Woods in *Legally Blonde* (Seattle Musical Theatre); and Mary U/S, Ensemble in *Mary Poppins* (CDA Summer Theatre). As a vocalist, Carly has performed with the Rainier Symphony and is a member of the internationally acclaimed chorus The Esoterics. She also writes, arranges, and performs with her harmony group, Blush Fox Trio.



**GIN
HAMMOND***
(she/her)
MARGARET

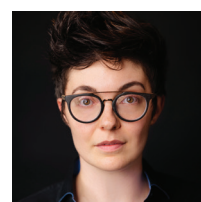
Gin Hammond received her MFA in acting from the American Repertory Theatre Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University / Moscow Art Theatre School and is chuffed to work with such a stellar cast and production team. Her new play, *Living IncogNegro*, will be released as a feature film in 2025. Her book, *Returning the Bones*, is a National Indies Excellence Finalist and a Gold Winning INDIES Book of the Year winner.



**JOSEPHINE
KEEFE***
(she/her/
they)
JEAN

Josephine Keefe is a Nez Perce Native theatre artist residing in the Pacific Northwest with her family. She is elated to return to ACT and work on this hilarious political farce in the role of Jean. Josephine holds a MFA in Performance from UCLA School of Theatre, Film, and Television, and her BFA from The Theatre School, DePaul. Select theatre credits include: *Romeo & Juliet* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); *A Christmas Carol* (ACT); *Where the Summit Meets the Stars* (Native Voices at the Autry); *Sovereignty* (Harlequin Productions); *The Psychic Life of Savages* (LATC); and *Twelfth Night* (Modern Theatre).

She received the award for Best Performance by an Actress from the 2018 Kaleidoscope Regional Theatre Festival with her performance of Agnes White in *Bug* (Civic Theatre), and was last seen on the big screen in the romantic comedy *Home Sweet Home* as Shelby. Josephine thanks her partner and kiddos for their unwavering love and support!



**CASSI Q
KOHL***
(she/her)
BERNADETTE

Cassi graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in vocal performance and moved east, where she originated a role in the Off-Broadway production of *Soul Doctor* (New York Theater Workshop) and joined the original cast of *Motherhood the Musical* (GFour Productions). She later traveled as a Mainstage performer with Disney Cruise Line and performed in the national tour of *Martha Speaks*. Favorite local credits include: Flotsam in *The Little Mermaid* (The 5th Avenue Theatre); Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella* (Village Theatre); Alison in *Fun Home* (Harlequin Productions); and Grace Banker in *The Hello Girls* (Taproot Theatre Company). Endless love to her sweet fiancée, Amanda, for always setting out her favorite breakfast! Follow Cassi's Instagram to see her adventures in being a carpenter by day and an actor by night: @ThunderDyke



**ANNETTE
TOUTONGHI***
(she/her)
STEPHANIE

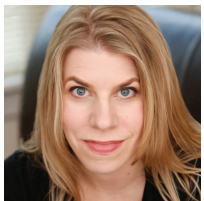
Annette Toutonghi is delighted to be returning to ACT Contemporary Theatre. Over the years, she's also worked with Seattle Rep, Intiman Theatre, On the Boards, Seattle Children's Theatre, and most of the other theatres in

the Seattle area. Some favorite shows include *The Women, You Can't Take It With You, Afternoon of the Elves, The Bunner Sisters*, and *The Rich Grandeur of Boxing*. Past credits also include the films *Thin Skin, Brand Upon the Brain, Lane 1974, The Paper Tigers*, and *Little Potato Dreams of America* as well as HBO's *Three Busy Debras*. Voice over credits include the title character from the award-winning *Freddi Fish* series. Annette is a proud Arab American.



**AYO
TUSHINDE**
(they/she)
CHRIS

Ayo is honored to share the stage with the amazing actors in the cast of *POTUS*. They are most interested in telling stories through a lens of intersectionality, continuing to inspire vital change in our ever-shifting society. Favorite credits include the roles of Antipholus in *The Comedy of Errors* and Laertes in *Hamlet* at Seattle Shakespeare Company. They have enjoyed working with many other local theatres including Cafe Nordo, Seattle Rep, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Public Theater, and The Seagull Project.



**SARAH
HARTLETT***
(she/her)
U/S HARRIET/
JEAN/

BERNADETTE

Previously at ACT: *Middletown* and *A Christmas Carol*. Recent credits include: *Romeo and Juliet* (Seattle Shakespeare); *King John* (Actors Theater of Louisville/upstart crowd); *The Tempest* (Wooden O); *What The Constitution Means To Me* (u/s, Seattle Rep); *Richard III* and *Bring Down The House* (upstart crowd/ Seattle Shakespeare Company); *Gloria: A Life, Frost/Nixon, The Birds*,

and *Memorandum* (Strawberry Theatre Workshop); *The Events* (Intiman Theatre); and *Frog and Toad, The Hundred Dresses*, and *Bunnicula* (Seattle Children's Theater). Regional credits: Chautauqua Insititute, NY; Tantrum Theater, Ohio. Internationally: Centre de Danse, Paris, France. Seattle Gregory Award: Outstanding Lead Performance for *Richard III*, and nomination for Outstanding Supporting Performance in *Frost/ Nixon*. Sarah is a teaching artist and intimacy director at Cornish College of the Arts.



**ANJELICA
McMILLAN***
(she/her)
U/S CHRIS/
MARGARET

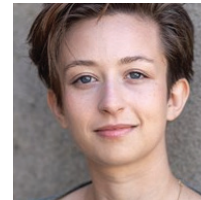
Anjelica McMillan is thrilled to make her ACT debut! Some of her favorite credits include *Behold the Dreamers* (Neni) at Book-it Repertory Theatre, *This Girl Laughs...* (Narrator) at ArtsWest, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* (Joey) at Seattle Children's Theatre, and *Anansi and the Half-ling* (Oya/Ensemble) at Annex Theatre. A native Northwest girlie, Anjelica holds a BFA from Pacific Lutheran University and now lives with her partner, two wild toddlers, and two entitled cats. She'd like to thank Spencer for tucking their kids in every night during performances—I love you, babe.



**MORGAN
ROBERTS**
(she/her)
U/S DUSTY/
STEPHANIE

Morgan is absolutely delighted to be part of this timely and hysterical production. Originally hailing from Seattle, she spent the past three years honing her craft in New York City and is thrilled to be back in the Pacific Northwest. Morgan trained at The Stella Adler Studio of Acting in NYC and earned her BFA in Musical

Theater from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. Her recent credits include performing with Detention!, the House Improv Team, at The Armory in NYC, appearing in Village Theatre's Festival of New Musicals, and playing Eleven in *The Stranger Things Experience*. In addition to her acting career, Morgan produces a national concert series: *Play Me Off!*, recently performing Off-Broadway in NYC (@playmeoffmusic). Follow her journey on Instagram: @morganclaireroberts



**SELINA
FILLINGER**
AUTHOR

Selina Fillinger is an award-

winning, internationally produced writer and performer. Her feminist farce, *POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive*, garnered three Tony nominations and made Fillinger, at 28, one of the youngest female playwrights ever produced on Broadway. Other plays include *Baby, Under the Sill, The Collapse, Something Clean, Faceless*, and *The Armor Plays: Cinched/Strapped*. Her work has been developed at Roundabout Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Williamstown Theatre, Old Globe Theatre, and Alley Theatre, among others. She is currently commissioned at Roundabout and South Coast Repertory. She has developed TV with AMC, Freeform, Hunting Lane, and Hulu, and a feature with Chernin/Netflix. She wrote for the third season of Apple TV's *The Morning Show*. Fillinger was named to the 2024 *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for Hollywood/Entertainment.



**JILLIAN
ARMENANTE**
DIRECTOR

Directing credits include Jeffrey Hatcher's *The Turn*

of the Screw at Oldcastle Theatre, the Iraqi premiere of Heather Raffo's

WHO'S WHO IN POTUS

Nine Parts of Desire, the West Coast premiere of Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud to Present...* at the Matrix Theatre as well as the World Premiere of Jeff Goode's *Love Loves a Pornographer* at Circle X. She produced, directed & co-wrote Laura Comstock's *Bag-Punching Dog* and *In Flagrante Gothicto* at Circle X. Armenante produced/directed the feature comedy *Stuck* with Heather Matarazzo, Joel McHale and *The List* by Kelleen Conway Blanchard, starring Saffron Burrows. She executive produced/directed the original series *Kittens in a Cage* based on the play by Kelleen Conway Blanchard. Acting: film- *Vice*, *The Dark Night Rises*, *Bad Teacher*, and *Girl, Interrupted*. TV- *Physical*, *Sex Lives of College Girls*, *Better Call Saul*, *Shameless*, *West Wing*, and *Judging Amy*. Theatre- *Cider House Rules* at the Seattle Rep, Mark Taper, and Atlantic Theatre. Jillian spent the formative years 1986-95 trodding the boards in Seattle, which she considers her artistic birthplace and is very happy to be back.

MELANIE TAYLOR BURGESS COSTUME DESIGNER

Melanie Taylor Burgess is a Seattle costume designer. Occasionally she is taken elsewhere: The Guthrie, Cincinnati Playhouse, Idaho theatre for Youth, Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Hawaii Opera and Ohio's Tantrum Theatre, but the largest portion of her work is generated here in the Seattle area. She has designed over 165 productions for Seattle Rep, The 5th Avenue Theatre, ACT, Intiman Theatre, Village Theatre, Seattle Opera, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Theatre Company, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, ArtsWest, Taproot Theatre and sadly, a few theatres that don't exist anymore. She is also honored to be on the faculty for Cornish College of The Arts. Melanie is the 2-time recipient of the Gregory Award for Outstanding Costume Design,

including *Urinetown* for ACT Theatre/ The 5th Ave Theatre.

LARCYN BURNETT (they/them) PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Larcyn Burnett is a queer freelance stage manager and they are happy to be back at ACT. Recent credits include: *Spring Awakening*, *White Christmas*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Wonder Boy: A Radio Play*, and *Afterwords* (The 5th Avenue Theatre); *A Case for the Existence of God* (ACT); and *The Book of Will* (Santa Cruz Shakespeare). They hold a BFA in Performance Production with a Stage Management concentration from Cornish College of the Arts. They'd like to thank YOU for supporting live theatre within the local Seattle arts community.

JOHN GROMADA (he/him) SOUND DESIGNER

ACT: *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *God of Vengeance*, *The Crucible*, *Quills*, and more. NY: 40+ Broadway productions as composer/sound designer, including *Birthday Candles*, *All My Sons*, *Torch Song*, *The Elephant Man*, *Trip to Bountiful* (Tony nomination), *The Best Man* (Drama Desk Award), *Clybourne Park*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Proof*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *A Few Good Men*. Off-Broadway credits include *Brooklyn Laundry*, *A Sherlock Carol*, *Drinking in America*, *The Cake*, *Old Hats*, *Orphans' Home Cycle* (Drama Desk Award, Henry Hewes Award), *Shipwrecked!* (Lucille Lortel Award), *The Skriker* (Drama Desk Award), *Machinal* (OBIE). Film and television credits include scores for Chazz Palminteri's *A Bronx Tale*, and the Emmy nominated *Trip to Bountiful* with Cicely Tyson. Other awards and honors include an NEA Opera/Music Theatre Fellowship, Connecticut Critics Circle Awards, Eddy Awards, and grants from the NJ State Council on the Arts and Meet the

Composer. Proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829 and ASCAP. johngromada.net

JAMIE J. KRANZ* (she/her) STAGE MANAGER

Jamie is a Seattle-based stage manager and is delighted to be working with ACT for the first time. Locally, Jamie has worked with The 5th Avenue Theater, Seattle Opera, Seattle Rep, and Village Theater. Regional credits include productions with Guthrie Theater, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Everyman Theatre, Mountain Playhouse, Children's Theatre Company, Park Square Theatre, Mixed Blood Theater, The Jungle Theater, Goodspeed Musicals, and Maine State Music Theater. Jamie received her MFA from Columbia University and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

THORN MICHAELS (she/her) ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Thorn Michaels has designed and assisted for The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Opera, Village Theatre, Seattle Rep, Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT, Santa Fe Playhouse, Kentucky Opera, Lincoln Center, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, San Francisco Opera, New York City Ballet, and others. She was the 2016 Gilbert Hemsley intern and holds an MFA in Lighting Design from the University of Washington. She is a faculty member at Cornish College of the Arts, where she teaches Lighting Design. For more about her work, please visit thornmichaels.com.

JORDAN ROSIN* (they/them+) INTIMACY DIRECTOR

Jordan Rosin is a gender-fluid/trans non-binary parent, artist, educator, and community member who works

as an actor, director, movement/intimacy director, and physical theatre artist. Recent intimacy for ACT includes *A Christmas Carol* (2023). Other recent local intimacy credits include *Born with Teeth* (ArtsWest); *Love/Sick* (Overlake); *Unstoppable, A Queer Dancical* (Dare to Dance); and *14/48*. Jordan has trained with the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute, Nicole Brewer's Antiracist Theatre, Amplify RJ, Equity Literacy Institute, Theatrical Intimacy Education, and Theatre of the Oppressed NYC. BFA, Syracuse University. MFA, Dell'Arte International. Jordan's direction and choreography have been seen in 8 different countries across Europe and North America in projects like *Butoh Medea*. Current: NEFA National Theatre Project awardee for The Ume Group's *Passing*, starting development this November in NYC. Proud member, Actors Equity and PNW Theatrical Intimacy Professionals Collective, Associate Member of SDC. www.jordanrosin.net / IG: @jrosinmoves

ELIZABETH STASIO

(she/her)

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Liz is a Seattle-local stage manager and theatre artist. She is so pleased to return to ACT after last year's *The Lehman Trilogy*. Stage management and backstage credits include work with Seattle Children's Theatre (*Luchadora*, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, *The Lamp is the Moon*); Seattle Rep (*As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Mr. Dickens and His Carol*, *The Tempest*); Seattle Shakespeare Company (*Drum & Colours*, *Twelfth Night*); The 5th Avenue Theatre (*Afterwords*); *14/48* Projects, and others.

JULIA HAYES WELCH

(she/her)

SCENIC DESIGNER

Julia Hayes Welch is always pleased to be working with ACT, where she previously designed *The Lehman Trilogy*, *Pass Over*, *Skylight*, *Alex*

and *Aris*, and *Bad Apples*. Her work has been seen locally at Seattle Children's Theatre, The 5th Avenue Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Village Theatre, Seattle Public Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It Repertory, Seattle Opera, Washington Ensemble Theatre, ArtsWest, Onward Ho! Productions, Rebel Kat Production, Café Nordo, Civic Rep, House of Verlaine, and Handwritten Productions. Regionally she has designed for Kentucky Opera and Theatreworks UCCS. She is a recipient of the Gregory Award: People's Choice for Outstanding Designer for her work during the 2017-2018 season. She holds an MFA from the University of Washington and is a member of USA 829. Much love to W, M & AJ. jhwelchdesigns.com

CONNIE YUN~

(she/her)

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Connie Yun is pleased to return to ACT where she last designed *STEW* and *A Case for the Existence of God*. Recent PNW area designs include *The Marriage of Figaro* for Portland Opera, *Samson and Delilah* for Seattle Opera, and world premiere of *The Boy Who Kissed the Sky* for Seattle Children's Theatre. Other recent designs include *Salome* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Des Moines Metro Opera, *Maria de Buenos Aires* for Florentine Opera, and *Madame Butterfly* for Opera Philadelphia. Her designs have also been seen at Seattle Rep, 5th Avenue Theatre, Merrimack Rep, Alliance Theatre, Tacoma Opera, OrpheusPDX, Hawaii Opera, Madison Opera, Kentucky Opera, New Orleans Opera, and Palm Beach Opera. Upcoming engagements include *The Barber of Seville* for Madison Opera and *Blithe Spirit* for Seattle Rep. Connie is an ACT Core Company member, member of United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, and mentor with the ETC Fred Foster Student Mentorship Program. www.connieyun.com

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.

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Head Draper
Chandler Eichele
Stage Operations Swing Technician
Nick Farwell
Stage Operations Supervisor
Melissa Gomez
First Hand / Swing Dresser
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Lead Scenic Carpenter
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Production Office Manager
Cat Kerr
Prop Shop Manager
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Caitlin McCown
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Head Stage Carpenter
A G Quinn
Lead Scenic Carpenter
Jeff Scott
Scenic Charge Artist
Logan Thomas
Head Electrician
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Costume Shop Manager

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Segio Vivas
Scenic Carpenter
Tristan Hanson
Props Artisan

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Connie Yun

ARTIST UNDER COMMISSION

Andrew Lee Creech

So much is made possible by the
generosity of our community:

2023/24 SEASON **BY THE NUMBERS**

53,000+

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
THROUGH OUR DOORS

172

TOTAL
PERFORMANCES
IN OUR SEASON



3,079

TEENS, ADULTS, AND
EDUCATORS SERVED
THROUGH ACT EDUCATION
& ENGAGEMENT
PROGRAMS

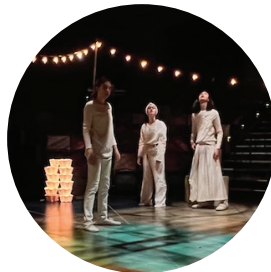
1,090

PERFORMERS, DESIGNERS,
STAFF MEMBERS, AND
VOLUNTEERS WHO
BROUGHT THE SEASON
TO LIFE



47

LOCAL PLAYWRIGHTS,
ACTORS, AND THEATRE
ARTISTS INVOLVED IN
OUR INAUGURAL NEW
WORKS NORTHWEST
FESTIVAL



16

DAYS OF RECORD-
SETTING GIVING
DURING GIVEBIG
2024

1

NEW ROOF!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

*The Lehman Trilogy, A Case for the Existence of God, STEW,
and A Christmas Carol photos by Rosemary Dai Ross
Young Core Company photos by Jeremy Jackson*



2024/25 SEASON

All the joy.
All the drama.
All Seattle.
All ACT.

By Katie Forgette
Directed by Julie Beckman
October 12 - 27, 2024

MRS. LOMAN IS LEAVING



THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Written & Composed by Jason Robert Brown
Directed by Shermona Mitchell
February 8 - March 16, 2025
A Co-Production with The 5th Avenue Theatre

By Andrew Lee Creech
Directed by Tyrone Phillips
April 26 - May 11, 2025

GOLDEN



AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

By Henrik Ibsen
Directed by John Langs
June 7 - 22 2025

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE UP TO **20%!**

Packages start at \$149 for 4 shows -
or choose your own 3-play package!



acttheatre.org
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NOTES FROM THE ACT COLLECTIVE

We asked donors, subscribers, and education & engagement program participants about their history with ACT – and are so inspired by your responses!

WHAT MOTIVATED YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH ACT?

"Commitment to seeing ACT remain a **cultural foundation** of our community."
- Wallingford couple, donors and attendees since 2011

"**All the joy** you have given me over the years."
- 10+ year subscriber and 20+ year attendee from Ballard

"Your enthusiasm to **try new avenues**"
- Seward Park resident, donor and subscriber since 1991

"I love to see **young people like me** working together to tell stories, not only through our play and acting, but also through our set."
- Teen in the Young Core Company, 2024

"Young actors being given the opportunity to work in a professional setting and to **stretch their theatrical understanding and ability.**"
- Young Core Company family from Queen Anne, 2022

"It feels brilliant to have found **a little bit of a home.**"
- 2024 engagement program participant from Greenwood

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT ACT?

WHY DO YOU GIVE TO ACT?

"**Continued support** for an important arts organization that my husband and I highly value!!!"
- Laurelhurst resident, donating and attending since 2003

"Loved last season and excited about upcoming season! **Glad to be back** after pandemic absence."
- First-time donor from Hillman City, 5+ years subscriber

"Been a subscriber for many years! The **arts are very important** in our community!"
- 22+ year attendee from Everett

Community generosity is vital to our success, as ticket sales cover less than 50% of what it takes to produce ACT plays and programs. Please consider making a gift today. Scan the QR code to easily donate online or visit give.acttheatre.org/24-25. Thank you for your support!





Christmas Carol

Seattle's favorite holiday tradition returns
for its 49th year!

November 29 – December 27



"Comic genius"
- *The Atlantic*

The Dina Martínez
Christmas Show
with Chris Jeffries, musical director



December 6 – 24

ACT IMPACT: **YOUNG CORE COMPANY**

In this mockumentary series, two teens set out to save the American theatre. Will they fulfill their mission? Or die trying? Fish Harrison and Hersh Powers inaugurated the positions of ACT Young Core Company Representatives. This past year, they led youth engagement efforts on a variety of fronts; their biggest project was a hilarious, absurd, deeply heartfelt mockumentary. With the participation and support of ACT staff and talented young artists from around the region, this is a brilliant piece of storytelling that deserves to be seen by all those who love ACT, youth theatre, and short films!



"I was impressed with how students meaningfully and ambitiously tackled intense themes, supported each other inside and outside of the rehearsal room, and developed their own creative voice. I feel so confident in the artists coming out of ACT Theatre; their poise, talent, and ambition inspire me every day. As young people hoping to make change, powerful art, and exciting programming, we need to lead with confidence, decisiveness, support, and inclusivity. I truly believe that ACT is a place that fosters artistic excellence, human connection, accessibility, and passion in a way unparalleled by many other organizations." -Hersh

"The purpose of youth leadership in a theatre is to bring in other young artists and foster an environment filled with opportunity and community. In a contemporary theatre, there are often few spaces truly for teens. Through the inclusion of teen leaders, ACT has been able to foster a strong community of young artists." -Fish

WATCH THEATRE: DEAD OR ALIVE?!



BRING YOUR STUDENTS TO ACT!

ENGAGE THE STAGE

student matinees

MRS. LOMAN IS LEAVING

Tuesday, October 22 at 11:00am

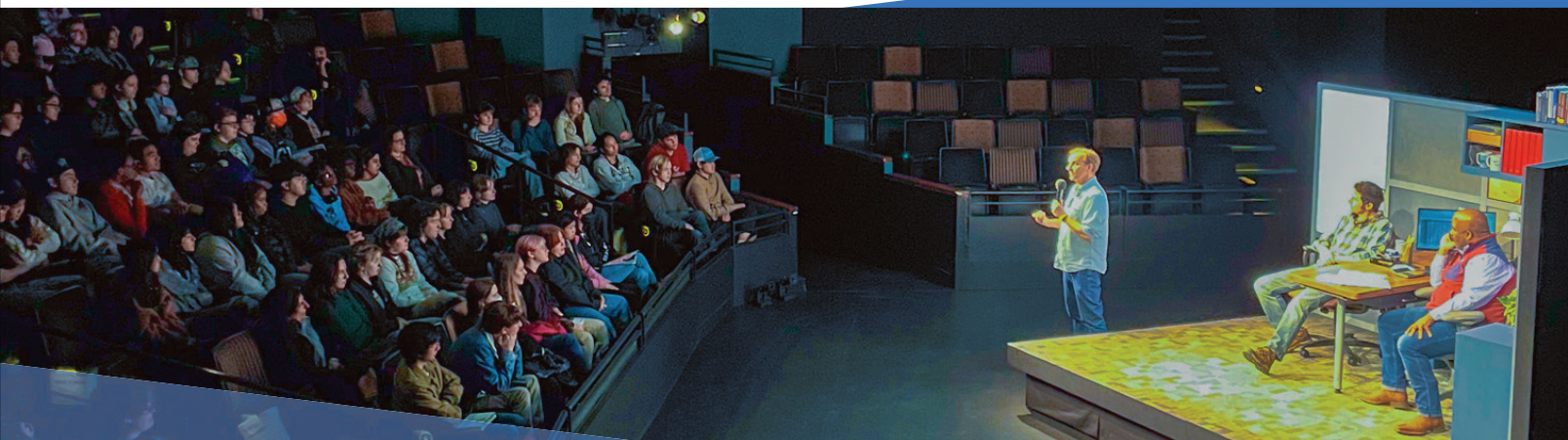
Meet the artists and get an inside look at the production of this world premiere play! This 90-minute program begins with a conversation with the artists about what it means to work on a world premiere, how they approach their craft, and their own backstage stories. The matinee continues with a fully-produced selection from *Mrs. Loman is Leaving*, and culminates in a Q&A with students. Recommended for 6-12th grade and college classrooms.

Christmas Carol

student matinees

December 4, 5, and 11 at 11:00am

Seattle's favorite holiday tradition returns for its 49th year! Gather with your students for Charles Dickens' timeless tale of hope and redemption. On a snowy Christmas Eve, the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is spirited away by three ghosts for a transformative journey through his past, present, and future. Experience this glorious story of compassion and joy with your students this holiday season at ACT Contemporary Theatre.



Tickets: \$12- 15 per student + free chaperone ticket for every 10 students.

**MORE
INFO:**



PARTNER CIRCLES

ACT is proud to produce adventurous contemporary theatre and invites you to see the magic behind the curtain. When you make a gift of \$100 or more, you enjoy **season-long benefits as a member of ACT's Partner Circles.**

TECH TALKS

Supporting Players+

An insider's look at the technical wizardry that brings our productions to life.

DRESS REHEARSALS

Ensemble Players+

Be among the first to experience a brand-new production at a private Dress Rehearsal.

NEW WORKS RECEPTIONS

Activists Circle+

Light bites and bubbles during the 2nd Annual New Works Northwest Festival.

As your support deepens, so do your benefits. Pre-show toasts with ACT leadership, backstage tours, ticket discounts, parking passes, and so much more are all available. Tech Talk invites start with just a \$100 donation.

Ready to step into the spotlight? Scan the QR code to easily donate online or visit give.acttheatre.org/24-25. If you'd prefer to make your gift via mail, donation envelopes are available in the lobby.



THANK YOU!

As ACT opens its 59th season, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for you – our dedicated, inspired, and consistently curious ACT donors. The stories you see on our stages this season are only made possible through the generosity of our community. You are vital to our success!



ACT gratefully recognizes all donors of \$1+ in alphabetical order.

View a complete list of donors who have given in the last 12 months:



We are incredibly grateful to our Institutional Partners who power audacious theatre and bold New Works.

View a complete list of Institutional Partners and learn more:



Thank you to the volunteers who have donated their time and talents.

View a complete list of volunteers and learn how to get involved:



**DON'T MISS THIS WORLD
PREMIERE COMEDY!**

MRS. LOMAN IS LEAVING

by Katie Forgette
directed by Julie Beckman
October 12 – 27



**TICKETS
ON SALE
NOW**



Photo by Rosemary Dai Ross

A FAREWELL TO JOHN LANGS

Outgoing Artistic Director John Langs, who began his tenure with ACT in 2013 as Associate Artistic Director and took over as Artistic Director in 2016, sat down with Core Company Member Anne Allgood to discuss his time at ACT, from fondest memories to most difficult moments.

John Langs: I was lucky enough that my tenure straddled the pandemic (no one has ever said that). But I think that, you know, we were just looking back at 2019, the year we did *Romeo and Juliet* and *Dracula* in the same year. We really came out of that year—it was a terrific year, I felt like, for the art and finances for ACT Contemporary Theatre.

There were two trajectories in my tenure: leading up to the pandemic, which was marked by an enormous amount of activity—we had the ACT Lab and the ACT Pass, and that one amazing April where we programmed all four theatres at the same time and really taught ourselves what the theatre could be and do. Anne and I were working on a production of *Sweat*, and ACT felt like it was really cooking, and all of sudden, the world stopped. And that's where the second tenure of ACT Theatre began for me. Do you remember that, Anne?

Anne Allgood: Oh my goodness, yes. When you came on, I felt like everything changed, from the staffing roster to the color of the paint on the walls. It was like ACT was becoming this streamlined, souped-up Batmobile. It had been this fantastic classic car, and then it just got faster—pedal to the metal, efficient, let's go, let's build, let's grow.

And then the pandemic happened...the second half of

your tenure, I think about what you said about carrying the coals of the campfire. That we had had this wonderful, roaring, raging bonfire that everyone was gathered around, and listening to great stories and toasting marshmallows and toasting each other and it was a party. But then the fire got dang near put out, and we had to carry the coals, and blow on them to keep them alive, until the time when we could build the cozy campfire again, and then build it back up.

Those were dark days, but I felt like in all the little Zoom rooms, and little places where we gathered in corners—we started talking about how we survive and who are we in this new world, and how do we communicate that to the world?

JL: I feel like as dramatic as the shutdown was, what came after was almost more defining. I loved the pre-pandemic ACT Theatre—it is where the mission statement of artistic ambition and civic engagement unite. That artistic ambition was burning so, so bright—but it was hot to the touch. We were stretching and exploring, but we weren't doing a lot of thinking

and reflecting. The industry of American theatre will take everything you have to give it, and it won't always say thank you.

AA: And it will never say you've done enough. Never.

JL: I remember right before the shutdown, Carey Perloff, former Artistic Director of American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.), came to my office. She had just written a book about her time at A.C.T. in San Francisco. I said to her, "I have your book, I'm gonna read it, but what is the big message about being an Artistic Director during that time?" She said, "the thing I've learned is that being an Artistic Director feels like you are failing all the time." I looked at her, and she didn't say it with regret, or any kind of sadness, or irony, it was just a simple fact. And I was so appreciative to have heard that.

Really, the pandemic was a reckoning for us—we got to reflect



John Langs and Core Company member Claudine Mboligikpelani Nako in the *Sweat* rehearsal room (2022); photo by Truman Buffett.



Anne Allgood in *Sweat*; photo by Truman Buffett.

on our community, the institution, and the institution of theatre as a whole. We got to reflect on voices that had been omitted from the canon and overlooked as we were serving this nonstop machine. It was the beginning of something—it was a cozy crucible. How do you remember those meetings, Anne?

AA: The shutdown was such a reckoning because we were all in the same boat. I've always been interested in how we as artmakers can serve not just our established audience but our community. We are part of community—we are in community. People in the community were hurting and confused and in shock and in grief and had so many more questions than answers and needed solace and needed to get together again, and we were not able to get together to do that.

When we were able to come back with *Sweat*, that was the biggest gratitude I think I've ever felt, to do a piece of theatre.

JL: It was. We rehearsed *Sweat* up to tech, and we waited 2.5 years to get back to it. We carried those coals all across that time.

This is what I'm most proud of—our community and the way we spoke to each other in that time. We daylighted a lot of hard truths about ourselves as a theatre company, about how we worked together, about representation, about flattening the hierarchy, about a new way forward. We pulled the ACT car into the garage, ripped off the roof, and worked on it for about a year. We started to really appreciate each other's voices, we started writing a lot more, the Core Company started creating their own unique way of communicating and expressing themselves, we had 14 different Zoom readings by

local playwrights, which was really the precursor to what hopefully will be one of the last legacies, New Works Northwest (ACT's new play festival). We proved to ourselves that we were both an ethical and creative force that wasn't going to be stopped. And then we came back to welcome a lot of people who weren't a part of that, and rebuild and let all these people into those conversations—that was its own journey.

And that really, more than anything, marked me as the leader I was pre-pandemic, to the leader that I am still trying to be post-pandemic. Carey Perloff came in and dropped off this jewel, and then the Core Company helped turn that little grain of sand into a pearl I'm still trying to polish.

AA: What Carey said about failing—that really resonated with me. I quote you all the time—"we

learn by effing up.” What is learning to walk but falling in a forward direction. You’re learning how to walk and overcoming gravity, and overcoming inertia, and getting somewhere.

JL: I also think I learned to manage my own fear. What I didn’t expect about this tenure—well, I guess about the world in general—fear is just the blocker. It is absolutely, 100% the blocker of all creativity. How to sit with your fear, and other people’s fear, and not be reactive, and understand that it’s true in the moment that it’s happening, but doesn’t have to be true in the next moment.

AA: And it doesn’t have to be a game-ender: a motto that I have used in my life a lot is “feel the fear and do it anyways.” Courageous people are not people who don’t feel fear—they’re people who are terrified but keep going anyways. And what were we all but terrified? Or, at least uncertain. But what is there to do but keep at it—“get after it” as you always say.

JL: I always wanted to write that on the wall of the rehearsal room. “Get after it” is always how I come back from a break. I think there’s always a little bit more to explore.

AA: I wanna know what was your funniest moment as an Artistic Director.

JL: Embarrassingly, as an AD, sometimes your day is so booked that you end up starting a meeting that is absolutely not the meeting you’re in. You walk in, and you’re certain that you understand because you looked at your schedule three times, that you’re in a meeting about next year’s season planning, and people are like, “this is a meeting about the bathrooms.”

And then you try to make an excuse, walk it back, whatever your coping tactic is. I just die laughing at myself. You think, “God, you took that meeting, you were so ready—for the wrong meeting.” It’s happened to me more than I would like to admit. How about you, Anne? We’ve gotten to work a lot together—that’s one of the joys of this, the shorthand that you get with great actors. What has been your most hilarious moment?

AA: There are so many. When you brought in Anne Washburn (playwright of *Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play*), every day was another strange trust exercise, or improv, or something—one of the actors in that workshop seriously thought we were being punked.

JL: It was such a strange workshop that people thought there was a secret camera somewhere—that this was a gameshow.

AA: It just goes to show that what we do runs the gamut and we’re going to do whatever it takes—let’s get after it.

JL: I’m just continually proud that we headed to that apotheosis that we all saw: a core company developing work with its own local writers, and putting it on our stages. I just hope it continues.

AA: I agree. It’s a luxury to be able to build and take risks together in that spirit of trust and joy and play. It keeps us resilient and young and keeps our imaginations firing. The point is that we share that with the people sitting in the seats who need it. We gather round the fire and tell stories and play. And that to me, is sparking the incredible potential that we have now in this merger with Seattle Shakespeare—to tell classics in new ways, that hold the classics

up for interrogation, but also put them in conversation with ways they are resonant and relevant now. So we can hold classics up to a contemporary lens and light and say, “these are classics for a reason.” Maybe we take that engine apart—we took ACT’s engine apart in the garage, maybe we take *The Crucible* apart. Or Shakespeare.

JL: 100%. I’m giddy with delight about this potential merger. What it will do for one company to be able to offer classical experiences back-to-back with fierce contemporary experiences—not just the dialogue between them, but to know that a theatre can stretch its performers, designers, directors, in these massive directions. I’m now working in a theatre program at The University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and the depth of the work of the actor is in pitting yourself against the greatest works that humanity has seen. When you can do these great human works, your instrument is stretched. The instrument of the theatre company that’s coming will, I think, be dynamic, and rich, and have better contemporary plays and better classical plays.

AA: And our building is perfect for that! It is a classic, gorgeous, historic facade—it has resonance and history. But inside, we have done all manner of things to it—we have shifted space, and cut through space, and built up space, and changed it around in ways that push against those old walls. So we have a dynamic space to do this work in as well. You’re welcome, downtown Seattle.

JL: You’re welcome Seattle, come get it!