



MONSTRESS

Two One-Act Plays



September 2015
Volume 14, No. 2

encore
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Rising from the rubble of the catastrophic earthquake and fires of 1906 and immediately hailed as the "perfect playhouse," the beautiful, historic Geary Theater has been our home since the beginning. When the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake ripped a gaping hole in the ceiling, destroying the proscenium arch and dumping tons of debris on the first six rows of orchestra seats, the San Francisco community rallied to raise a record-breaking \$30 million to rebuild it. The theater reopened in 1996 with a production of *The Tempest* directed by Perloff, who took over after A.C.T.'s second artistic director, gentleman artist Ed Hastings, retired in 1992.

Perloff's 23-season tenure has been marked by groundbreaking productions of classical works and new translations creatively colliding with exceptional contemporary theater; cross-disciplinary performances and international collaborations; and "locavore" theater—theater made by, for, and about the San Francisco area. Her fierce commitment to audience engagement ushered in a new era of InterACT events and dramaturgical publications, inviting everyone to explore what goes on behind the scenes.

A.C.T.'s 46-year-old Conservatory, led by Melissa Smith, is at the center of our work. Our three-year, fully accredited Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, and our intensive Summer Training Congress attracts enthusiasts from around the world. Other programs include the world-famous Young Conservatory for students ages 8 to 19, led by 25-year veteran Craig Slight, and Studio A.C.T., our expansive course of study for adults. Our alumni often grace our mainstage and perform around the Bay Area, as well as stages and screens across the country.

A.C.T. also brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 10,000 Bay Area school students each year. Central to our ACTsmart education programs, run by Director of Education & Community Programs Elizabeth Brodersen, is the longstanding Student Matinee (SMAT) program, which has brought tens of thousands of young people to A.C.T. performances since 1968. We also provide touring Will on Wheels Shakespeare productions, teaching-artist residencies, in-school workshops, and in-depth study materials to Bay Area schools and community-based organizations.

With our increased presence in the Central Market neighborhood marked by the opening of The Costume Shop theater, the renovation of The Strand Theater across from UN Plaza, and the launch of our mobile Stage Coach initiative, A.C.T. is poised to continue its leadership role in securing the future of theater for San Francisco and the nation.

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American Conservatory Theater was founded in 1965 by William Ball.
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COVER PHOTOS: TOP: Actors Melissa Locsin (left) and Melody Butiu in A.C.T.'s 2015 production of *Presenting... the Monstress!*, by Sean San José. Photo by Kevin Berne. BOTTOM: Actors Ogie Zulueta (left) and Jomar Tagatac in A.C.T.'s 2015 production of *Remember the I-Hotel*, by Philip Kan Gotanda. Photo by Kevin Berne.

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Ah, Wilderness!

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Oct 14, 7 PM

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PROLOGUE

Oct 20, 5:30 PM

Go deeper with a fascinating preshow discussion and Q&A with *Ah, Wilderness!* director Casey Stangl. Can't make this event? Listen to our podcasts! Visit act-sf.org/interact for details.

THEATER ON THE COUCH*

Oct 23, 8 PM

Take part in a lively discussion in our lower-level lounge with Dr. Mason Turner, chief of psychiatry at San Francisco's Kaiser Permanente Medical Center.

AUDIENCE EXCHANGE*

Oct 27, 7 PM; Nov 1 & 4, 2 PM

Join us for an exciting Q&A with the cast following the show.

OUT WITH A.C.T.*

Oct 28, 8 PM

Mix and mingle at this hosted postshow LGBT party.

WENTE VINEYARD WINE SERIES

Nov 3, 7 PM

Meet fellow theatergoers at this hosted wine-tasting event.

PLAYTIME

Nov 7, 12:45 PM

Get hands-on with theater at this interactive preshow workshop.

To learn more and order tickets for InterACT events, visit act-sf.org/interact.

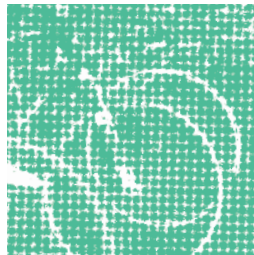
*Events take place immediately following the performance.



VOLUNTEER!

A.C.T. volunteers provide an invaluable service with their time, enthusiasm, and love of theater. Opportunities include helping out in our performing-arts library and ushering in our theaters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: ACT-SF.ORG/VOLUNTEER



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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Welcome to *Monstress*. As part of our San Francisco Stories initiative, I am always on the lookout for Bay Area tales that lend themselves to theatrical adaptation, so I was delighted when I came across Lysley Tenorio's collection of short stories entitled *Monstress*. What caught my eye initially was the story "Save the I-Hotel." I knew that the eviction of elderly Filipinos from the International Hotel in 1977 was a seminal event in San Francisco's history and in the rise of Asian American activism across America, and I was moved to read Lysley's tender imagining of the relationship between two of the hotel's tenants. Lysley flashes back to the 1930s, when the men first meet in a dance hall, and traces a complex friendship that felt ripe for the stage. Once I read "Save the I-Hotel," I returned to the title story, "Monstress," a hilarious and poignant account of a director from Manila who dreams of making it big in Hollywood. I contacted Lysley to ask him if he was interested in theatrical adaptations of his stories, and the *Monstress* project was launched—just in time for the opening of our new Strand Theater, which is adjacent to Sixth Street, a hub of Filipino culture in San Francisco.

As a part of New Strands, A.C.T.'s recently created new-play development and commissioning program, we reached out to some of our favorite artists and offered them the opportunity to select one of Tenorio's short stories to adapt for the stage. By a happy coincidence, the first two playwrights I contacted—local artists Philip Kan Gotanda and Sean San José—told me that, given the choice, the two stories that had initially drawn me to *Monstress* were the ones they wanted to adapt. We then realized that their two plays could share the same cast and set and would be perfect to present as one evening of theater in The Strand. In addition to Sean's and Philip's plays, please join us on October 18 at 7 p.m. for a presentation of Colman Domingo's adaptation of "The Brothers," another remarkable tale from Lysley's collection.

Over the past six months, we have collaborated with a remarkable group of artists to realize these stories for the stage. We have set the whole evening in an old Filipino dance hall (designed by Nina Ball), reminiscent of the San Francisco

social clubs where workers met, danced, bonded, and tried to forget the harshness of their lives as new immigrants to America. Within that gathering space, many worlds will be conjured and imagined. We've benefited enormously from the input of members of the Filipino community, such as Manilatown Heritage Foundation's Tony Robles, whose uncle, poet and community activist Al Robles, was instrumental in the political fight to stop the demolition of the I-Hotel, and Alleluia Panis, artistic director of Kularts, who came to many readings, invited us to be part of community cultural celebrations, and helped us contextualize the pieces. Students and teachers at Bessie Carmichael Elementary School/Filipino Education Center and the Galing Bata after-school program have delighted us with their joy in making theater with us and performing on our stages. We are deeply grateful to the many people who shared their ideas and hopes with us. We look forward to continuing collaboration with the community as the run of *Monstress* unfolds and beyond.

Turning prose into theater is a process we are currently engaged with in many ways at A.C.T.: concurrent with *Monstress*, we are developing a stage version by Ursula Rani Sarma of Khaled Hosseini's splendid Afghan novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and we have been working with novelist Colm Tóibín on a new play based on Henry James's *The Aspern Papers*. The Strand Theater gives us a new platform on which to develop these and other projects as part of New Strands, which will culminate next January in a celebration and presentation of many new projects in varying stages of development. We have never had the right venue in which to engage our audience in the process of making new work, so this is a milestone for A.C.T. We very much hope you will join us.

Finally, it is with great sorrow that we mourn the loss of our beloved colleague and A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director, Mark Rucker, who died on August 25. Mark's passion and devotion to live theater and to actor training was legendary, and we will miss him terribly. Our best gift to the spirit of Mark is to make as much beautiful work as possible in his honor.

Yours,
Carey Perloff
Artistic Director



A.C.T. AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

CAREY PERLOFF, *Artistic Director*

PRESENTS

MONSTRESS

A DOUBLE BILL FEATURING ONE-ACT PLAYS BASED
ON TWO STORIES BY LYSLEY TENORIO

REMEMBER THE I-HOTEL, BY PHILIP KAN GOTANDA

PLACE SAN FRANCISCO TIME AUGUST 4, 1977, AND THE 1930S

PRESENTING . . . THE MONSTRESS!, BY SEAN SAN JOSÉ

PLACE MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES; AND THE BAY AREA TIME THE 1970S

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR **SEAN SAN JOSÉ**

DIRECTED BY **CAREY PERLOFF**

SCENIC DESIGN BY **NINA BALL**
COSTUME DESIGN BY **LYDIA TANJI**
LIGHTING DESIGN BY **ROBERT HAND**
SOUND DESIGN BY **JAKE RODRIGUEZ**
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR **STEPHEN BUESCHER**
MUSIC CONSULTANT **DANIEL FEYER**
CASTING BY **JANET FOSTER, CSA**
DRAMATURG **MICHAEL PALLER**
ASSISTANT DIRECTORS &
OUTREACH **NICOLE MEÑEZ
AND KEN SAVAGE**

CAST

TALA/ENSEMBLE **RINABETH APOSTOL***
REVA/SINGER **MELODY BUTIU***
GAZ GAZMAN/ENSEMBLE **NICK GABRIEL***
ENSEMBLE/UNDERSTUDY **MELISSA LOCSIN***
CHECKERS/ENSEMBLE **SEAN SAN JOSÉ***
MATA/FORTUNADO **JOMAR TAGATAC***
ENSEMBLE/ALTHEA **KELSEY VENTER***
(THROUGH OCTOBER 18)
DANIELLE FRIMER*
(BEGINNING OCTOBER 19)

DALA/VICENTE **OGIE ZULUETA***

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PATRICK RUSSELL*

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STAGE MANAGER **ELISA GUTHERTZ***
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER **CHRISTINA HOGAN***
STAGE MANAGEMENT **HAL DAY**
FELLOW

A.C.T. dedicates our 2015-16 season to the loving memory of our beloved colleague and Associate Artistic Director, Mark Rucker, who contributed immeasurably to the life of A.C.T.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

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The Ways That We're in Sync"

AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHTS
SEAN SAN JOSÉ AND PHILIP KAN GOTANDA,
AND AUTHOR LYSLEY TENORIO

BY | MICHAEL PALLER



Left to right: Sean San José, Lysley Tenorio, and
Philip Kan Gotanda. Photo by Ryan Montgomery, 2015.

The tales that populate *Monstress* (2012), by Lysley Tenorio, are as diverse as they are quirky, alternatively—and sometimes simultaneously—hilarious and heartbreaking. When A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff read these unique short stories, she knew that, somehow, she had to help these vibrant explorations of Filipino American life find their way to the stage.

A.C.T. reached out to some of our favorite artists and offered them the opportunity to select one of Tenorio's stories to adapt for the stage. One of these artists was Philip Kan Gotanda, who chose to adapt Tenorio's story "Save the I-Hotel," which he has renamed *Remember the I-Hotel*. Sean San José chose to adapt the title story from Tenorio's collection (he renamed it *Presenting . . . the Monstress!*).

We sat down with Tenorio, Gotanda, and San José to talk about writing, Filipinos, and the never-ending chase for the ever-elusive American dream. Here's an excerpt from that conversation.

Philip and Sean, rather than asking you to adapt a specific story, Carey gave you Lysley's book and asked you to choose one you wanted to work on. Philip, you chose "Save the I-Hotel." Why?

PHILIP KAN GOTANDA I immediately responded to these two older Filipino American gentlemen. I grew up in Stockton in the '50s and '60s with many Filipino Americans as neighbors. Manilatown and Japantown were right next to each other. The older Filipino American men, the *manongs*, held a special place in my imagination.

Sean, you chose the title story of the collection, "Monstress." Why was that?

SEAN SAN JOSÉ It's the first story in the book. I was taken by the whole collection, but that first piece really imprinted itself on me. It's emblematic of what the collection does: it's a beautiful mixture of the personal, the fantastic, the cultural, and the political—but it's really told through the eyes of the personal. And the fact that Lysley made it so fun . . . I think it was irresistible in that way.

Lysley, you've said that your stories are emotionally and chronologically autobiographical. What's it been like to see these two stories, "Monstress" and "Save the I-Hotel," transformed into a very different medium with different demands?

LYSLEY TENORIO I didn't feel possessive about them. I thought, "Okay, this is the source material, do with it what you will. Hopefully you'll keep the plot, you'll keep the characters," but how they'd be envisioned for the stage I knew was out of my hands. I think that's been part of the thrill.

In the last staged reading I saw [in April], there was material that Philip added that I had tried incorporating into the story when I was writing, but I just couldn't figure out how to do it. For example, the references to Speedy Dado, the boxer. Speedy Dado was actually mentioned in one of my earlier drafts. Whatever Philip's been adding feels like it belongs, so it's been cool to see the ways that we're in sync. It's remarkable, those things that feel so integral and authentic to the story that he's actually brought in himself.

Relatively late in the writing process, Sean decided to change the American setting of "Monstress." In the short story, it's set just outside Hollywood; in his adaptation, it's set outside San Francisco. How did you feel about that, Lysley?

TENORIO I was fine with it. Maybe I should be a little more adamant about certain things [*laughter*], but I thought it was for the purpose of storytelling, and for creating a cohesiveness for the whole show. In a way, it serves the story even better because now Gaz is not a Hollywood loser—he's not even in L.A. He's not even in Southern California. He's outside San Francisco. What hope [as a filmmaker] does he possibly have? He's misled Checkers and Reva even more in Sean's version, so I'm fine with it.

In interviews, you've talked about your need to resist the temptation to represent Filipino culture, Filipino people, anything beyond the specific individuals that you write about. Why is this issue of identity so front and center in art, and sometimes so fraught, these days?

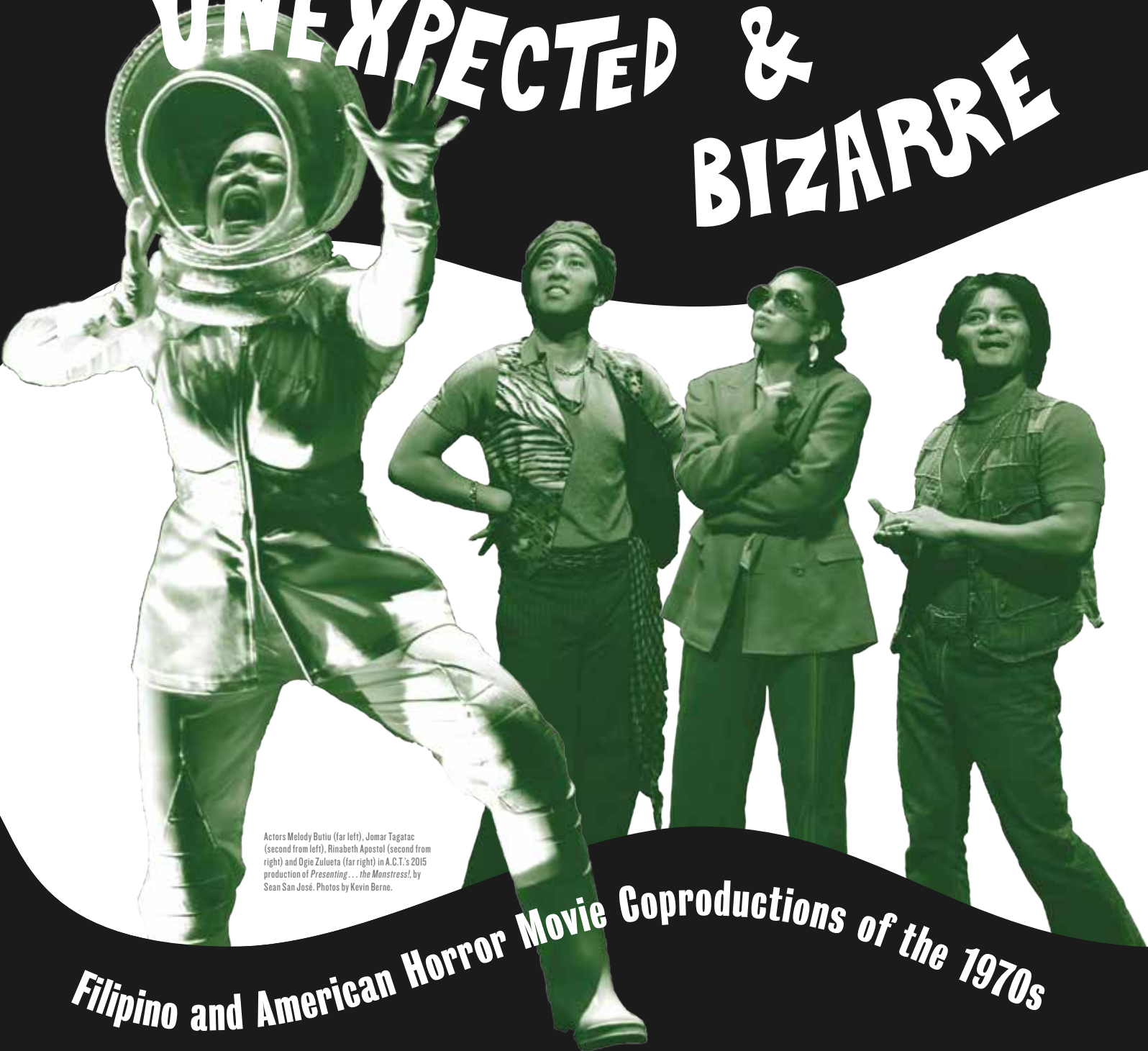
TENORIO In some particular cases, it's because some groups are so underrepresented that when there is an opportunity to see an experience that reflects their own lives or to which they have some kind of factual or emotional connection, they do tend to want to be possessive of it or to make sure that it's done responsibly. I can respect those feelings and those concerns, but at the end of the day, if it's art, then it's not sociology. It's not anthropology. Of course, certain themes might resonate politically, as well. . . . I tried to explore the potential of the material to its fullest possibilities, and I didn't think about an audience. I didn't think about any particular communities, certainly not at the time I was drafting. I was just thinking, "What material am I dealing with here, and how can I use it to its fullest potential in ways that are respectful and creative and, hopefully, emotionally meaningful?"

WORDS ON PLAYS

Want to know more about *Monstress*? *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s renowned performance guide series, offers inside into the plays, playwrights, and productions of the subscription season with revealing interviews and in-depth articles.

ACT-SF.ORG/WORDSONPLAYS

INTERSECTIONS, UNEXPECTED & BIZARRE



Actors Melody Butiu (far left), Jomar Tagatac (second from left), Rinabeth Apostol (second from right) and Ogie Zulueta (far right) in A.C.T.'s 2015 production of *Presenting...the Monstress!* by Sean San José. Photos by Kevin Berne.

Filipino and American Horror Movie Coproductions of the 1970s

BY | SHANNON STOCKWELL

THROUGHOUT THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, the Filipino film industry flourished. The Philippines gained independence from the United States in 1946, and a newfound nationalistic pride, along with some extremely talented actors and directors, ushered in what has been hailed as the Golden Age of Filipino cinema.

But the golden age was not to last. By the late 1950s, labor unrest in the major film studios and heavy taxes resulted in cheapened and slowed production, which led to lower-quality movies. Films coming from the United States and Europe, which tended to have larger budgets and were subject to less censorship, proved to be heavy competition.

Filipino filmmakers still found ways to keep working in the jobs they loved, however. Some joined Americans to make international coproductions, which tended to be low-budget horror films intended for the drive-in circuit in America. Filmmaker Eddie Romero was one of the first Filipinos to do this, teaming up with fellow countryman Gerardo de Leon and American actor John Ashley to make a series of horror movies. Romero recalled:

I began to dream about making some modest films, using some American acting talent, for American distribution. My hope was that even if I would be obliged to continue trafficking in stereotype [sic] product, at least there would be more time and money to work with, a great opportunity offered thereby to polish what skills I had. Perhaps I was still a willing victim of old colonialist myths, and secretly longed to be part of the mainstream of American culture, to be in fact American.

In addition to these coproductions, sometimes the rights to a horror movie made entirely by Filipinos would be purchased by an American studio and either dubbed into English or spliced into a movie made in the United States; using existing monster footage from the Philippines was sometimes cheaper than creating the special effects themselves. One of these spliced movies is *Horror of the Blood Monsters*, directed by Al Adamson and released in 1970. This movie includes footage from several different Filipino films, but primarily took scenes from *Tagani* (1965), directed by Rolf Bayer.

Horror of the Blood Monsters inspired author Lysley Tenorio to write the short story “Monstress.” He says, “[The movie is] a cut-and-paste job barely held together by a nonsensical plot. This movie, and the way it was made, resonated with so much of what I’m obsessed

with as a writer and a person—those unexpected and sometimes bizarre intersections between Philippine and American culture.”

Some Filipino cineastes felt that these coproductions somehow diluted the “Filipino-ness” of the indigenous film industry. One such critic, who wrote under the pseudonym “Snooper” for *Literary Song-Movie Magazine*, said, “The 10,000 people or so directly dependent on the industry have very little choice. They will work for anyone under the guise of Art, or any such pretexts, if pretexts they must have. . . . Yes, there will be movies, but I doubt whether [they] would be the kind we can call our own.” But filmmakers were nonetheless enticed by both the opportunity to continue working in the industry they loved and the potential for international exposure.

“My hope was that even if I would be obliged to continue trafficking in stereotype [sic] product, at least there would be more time and money to work with, a great opportunity offered thereby to polish what skills I had.”

Eddie Romero, filmmaker

Since the early 1970s, Filipino cinema has taken many different forms. Today, film critics hold out hope that the digital revolution will democratize the process of filmmaking and put it into the hands of new and fresh talent. To celebrate the many innovative movies coming from the archipelago, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts has held an annual festival of New Filipino Cinema. The most recent festival, which took place in June 2015, presented a wide array of films, from romantic comedies to documentaries to subversive dramas. “Though not as well known as it deserves to be,” reads the mission statement of the festival, “the independent cinema of the Philippines is remarkably vibrant and creative. Like the country itself, which is made up of thousands of little islands, each with its own culture, dialect, and people, this showcase provides a snapshot of the huge range of talent in Filipino cinema today.”

A HOME ON KEARNY STREET

A HISTORY OF SAN FRANCISCO'S INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

BY | SHANNON STOCKWELL



After the United States acquired the Philippines as a colony in 1898, Filipinos could immigrate to America with relative ease (at least, compared to people coming from other Asian countries). But when they arrived in U.S. cities, these newcomers found themselves in a hostile environment. San Francisco was no exception. In the first decades of the twentieth century, housing in the city was heavily segregated, and because Filipinos were categorized as Asian, they were only allowed to reside among the other large Asian population in the city—the Chinese in Chinatown. Over time, Filipino San Franciscans began to form a neighborhood of their own along Kearny Street. This community would come to be called Manilatown.

In Manilatown in the 1920s and '30s, several residential hotels housed a migrant population of Filipinos who worked on farms and in canneries and fisheries during the summer and came to the city to find work in the winter. Their summer work was hard, however, and many chose to stay in the city after spending a winter there. The rooms in the International Hotel, located at 848 Kearny Street, were more spacious and better lit than those of the other residential hotels in the area, making it a sought-after location.

In these years, most Manilatown residents were young Filipino bachelors. They had come to America with the intention of saving enough money to return to the islands, start a family, and live in comfort, but they faced heavy discrimination from employers and many couldn't make enough money to return to the Philippines at all. Meanwhile, antimiscegenation laws prevented them from marrying white women. Forced by law and by circumstance to live without families, these young men formed a close community with each other. Within the borders of Manilatown, they had much of what they needed—restaurants, pool halls, barbershops, grocery stores, housing, and friends.

During the 1950s and '60s, however, San Francisco's financial district began to expand, and residences were torn down to make way for high-rise corporate offices that would transform the skyline. Manilatown was one of the many casualties. By 1968, all that remained of it was the block surrounding the International Hotel.

In December 1968, 182 people lived in the hotel's 184 rooms. Many of these tenants were elderly, low-income Filipino men who had moved into the hotel as permanent residents and never married. They rented rooms for \$50 a month. The hotel was owned by Milton Meyer and Company. In late 1968, it announced plans to demolish the building and erect a multilevel parking lot in its place. The plans were met with protests led by students from surrounding colleges and the tenants. The students admired the tenants' courage and called them *manongs*, a term of respect for older male family members in Ilocano (a provincial language of the Philippines).

Due to the public outcry, Milton Meyer and Company eventually backed down and signed a three-year lease agreement with the tenants and the various organizations that supported them. In order to protect the tenants from future eviction attempts, the International Hotel Tenants Association (IHTA) was formed. At this point, the number of tenants living in the I-Hotel began to dwindle; those who had the means found housing elsewhere. The tenants who stayed were those who had nowhere else to go.

Milton Meyer and Company continued to propose plans for the site, but it grew tired of continued pushback from residents and activists. In 1973 it sold the building to the Four Seas Investment Corporation, based in Thailand. Four Seas applied for a demolition permit, and in 1976, a trial ruled in favor of Four Seas and ordered the sheriff to post eviction notices. This was followed by many legal battles that delayed the eviction for several months, but finally, at 3 a.m. on August 4, 1977, around 400 police in riot gear pushed through a 3,000-person barricade surrounding the hotel and evicted the 50 or so tenants still living there.

After the eviction, the *manongs* scattered throughout San Francisco, winding up in other residential hotels that were much more expensive and farther away from their community. Emil de Guzman, the leader of the IHTA, said, "A lot of the *manongs* didn't really live much longer. It's like their hearts were broken."

The I-Hotel was demolished in 1981, but Mayor Dianne Feinstein and the City Planning Commission required that any development on the site include affordable housing for senior citizens. Four Seas became frustrated with having their proposals for the site rejected, and eventually gave up in the early '90s. In 2003, construction began on a residential project for low-income senior citizens. The new I-Hotel was completed in August 2005, and residents of many ethnicities moved in a few months later.

Today, the new I-Hotel still stands. The building houses Manilatown Heritage Foundation, dedicated to preserving the history of the I-Hotel and the Filipino community that once occupied those ten blocks of Kearny Street. The foundation is active in opposing the evictions of longtime residents of San



Francisco neighborhoods. The foundation's director, poet Tony Robles, is vocal in mourning the way the cultural fabric of San Francisco continues to change as a result of gentrification and displacement. He writes, "San Francisco, your eyes are empty, your houses are empty, your canvas is bare of poems. Your mirrors and windows are missing reflection. Your flowers are drained of color. Your eyes hold no murals, your skin is scrubbed raw. Your canvas contains no art. Your poems are eviction notices." Even in the face of displacement, Manilatown Heritage Foundation and other organizations like it are proof that communities are working to maintain their culture and ensure that San Francisco will always be a place for everyone.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL AND THE ANTI-EVICTION STRUGGLE OF THE 1970S.

READ Estella Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007)

WATCH *The Fall of the I-Hotel*, directed by Curtis Choy, 1983 (Chonk Moonhunter Productions, 2005)

VISIT manilatown-heritage-foundation.org

OPPOSITE PAGE: Actors Jomar Tagatac (left) and Ogie Zulueta in A.C.T.'s 2015 production of *Remember the I-Hotel*, by Philip Kan Gotanda. Photo by Kevin Berne.
ABOVE: Protest poster supporting the tenants of the International Hotel, by Racheal Romero and the San Francisco Poster Brigade, 1977. Courtesy Library of Congress.

WHO'S WHO

in MONSTRESS



RINABETH APOSTOL*

(Tala/Ensemble) makes her A.C.T. debut with *Monstress*. She originated principal roles in the world

premieres of *The Cable Car Nymphomaniac* (FOGG Theatre Company), Lauren Gunderson's *Fire Work* (TheatreFIRST), *The Kite Runner* (San Jose Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company), *FIRST* (Aluminous), and *Imelda: A New Musical* (East West Players). Her regional credits include *Othello* (Marin Theatre Company), *Aliens with Extraordinary Skills* (B Street Theatre), *Of Mice and Men* (San Jose Rep on Tour), *Avenue Q* (San Jose Stage Company), *Falsettoland* (StirFry Theatre), and *Red* (TheatreWorks), as well as work with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Playwrights Foundation, Crowded Fire Theater, NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, and The Groundlings (Los Angeles). Select film and television work includes *Lit*, *Quitters*, *Her Path Home*, recurring roles on Whoopi Goldberg's *Just For Kicks* (Nickelodeon), *Girltrash!* with Margaret Cho (Showtime), *Give Me Grace*, and others. She will be appearing next in *Dogeaters* at Magic Theatre in early 2016. Apostol is a company member of PlayGround and Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company and a member of SAG-AFTRA.



MELODY BUTIU*

(Reva/Singer) makes her A.C.T. debut with *Monstress*. Hailing from Los Angeles, she recently

returned from New York, where she made her Broadway debut in *Doctor Zhivago*. She also played Estrella in David Byrne's *Here Lies Love* at The Public Theater (Lucille Lortel Award nomination for Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical). Her other theater credits include *The Land of Smiles* (Thailand), *Helen* (Getty Villa), *A Little Night Music* (East West Players), *Calligraphy* (Playwrights' Arena), *Nightmare Alley* (Geffen Playhouse), *Shipwrecked!* (South Coast Repertory/Geffen Playhouse/Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Long Story Short* (San Diego Repertory Theatre), *The Long Season* (Perseverance Theatre), *36 Views* (Geva Theatre Center/Portland Center Stage/The Laguna Playhouse), *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (South Coast Repertory/Actors Theatre of Phoenix), *A Perfect Wedding* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), and *Dogeaters* (La Jolla Playhouse). Butiu's film and television credits include *Untold*, *Blood Ransom*, *Gotham*, *NCIS*, *Harry's Law*, *Melissa & Joey*, *True Blood*, *No Ordinary Family*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Modern Family*, and more.



DANIELLE FRIMER*

(Ensemble/Althea) is a recent graduate of the A.C.T. M.F.A. Program. Her roles on the A.C.T. Geary stage include Nell in

Indian Ink, Teresa in *Napoli!*, Annabelle in *A Christmas Carol*, the understudy for Shaina Taub in *Old Hats*, and the understudy for Anne/Petra/Mrs. Nordstrom in *A Little Night Music*. Other credits include Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Victoria/Edward in *Cloud 9* (A.C.T. M.F.A. Program); the Princess in *Love's*

Labour's Lost (Post5 Theatre); Olivia in *Twelfth Night* (Portland Actors Ensemble); *The Fox on the Fairway*, *Shrek The Musical*, and *The Pirates of Penzance* (SRJC Summer Repertory Theatre); *Wallenberg* (White Plains Performing Arts Center); *Stop the Virgins*, directed by Adam Rapp (St. Ann's Warehouse); and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare Santa Cruz). Frimer also holds a B.A. from Yale University, where she was the recipient of the Branford Arts Prize.



NICK GABRIEL*

(Gaz Gazman/Ensemble) is a Sadler Award-winning graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, the director of

Studio A.C.T. and A.C.T.'s American Musical Theater Conservatory, and a principal actor in the resident company at A.C.T., where he has appeared in *Scorched*; *Endgame* (opposite Bill Irwin); *Arcadia*; *Napoli!*; *The Orphan of Zhao*; *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*; and *Once in a Lifetime*. Gabriel has also played principal roles in major productions at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Brooklyn Lyceum, Capital Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, The Town Hall in New York City, South Coast Repertory, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, La Jolla Playhouse, Saratoga Shakespeare Company, and the Guthrie Theater. He created the role of Warren in the West Coast premiere of *Ordinary Days*, directed by Ethan McSweeney, was a principal singer in the world premiere of *A Celebration of Leonard Bernstein*, and played the soldier in *The Soldier's Tale* featuring Elvis Costello and Malcolm McDowell with the San Francisco Symphony. He received his B.F.A. in musical theater from the University of Michigan and is a Ten Chimneys Foundation Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States



**MELISSA
LOCSIN***

**(Ensemble/
Understudy)** has
appeared onstage
with St. Louis Black
Repertory, St. Louis
Shakespeare, San

Jose Stage Company, Asian American
Theater Company, and Ferocious Lotus,
as well as in staged readings with A.C.T.
and Magic Theatre. She has also toured
with San Jose Repertory Theatre, St.
Louis Black Repertory, and The Red
Ladder Theatre Company. She is a
member of Asian American Actor's
Collective and the Multicultural Artist
Leadership Initiative. Her recent
independent film credits include the
award-winning *East Side Sushi*, directed
by Anthony Lucero, and the upcoming
film *Remember Me* (2016), starring Rita
Moreno, written and directed by Steve
Goldbloom. Locsin teaches Meisner
Technique, improvisation, and on-
camera technique at Bay Area Acting
Studio.



**SEAN SAN
JOSÉ*** (Checkers/
Ensemble,
Playwright,
Associate Director)

is a cofounder of
Campo Santo
Theatre Company,

which will be in residence at A.C.T. and
will premiere its own new piece at The
Strand next summer. In addition to
original plays and performance pieces,
San José has created original theater
pieces from the prose of Jimmy
Santiago Baca, Junot Díaz, Dave Eggers,
Denis Johnson, Greg Sarris, Ntozake
Shange, Vendela Vida, and others. The
next Campo Santo piece is *Nogales*,
with Richard Montoya and Joan Osato.
This is San José's first time performing
at A.C.T.

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JOMAR TAGATAC*'s
(Mata/Fortunado)
most recent credits include Clarín in *Life Is a Dream* (California Shakespeare

Theater), *The Best of Playground Festival 2015*, and *Every Five Minutes* (Magic Theatre). Other credits include *Jesus in India* and *The Happy Ones*, directed by Jonathan Moscone (Magic Theatre), and *Rights of Passage* (New Conservatory Theatre Center). He has also been in workshops for A.C.T., Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, TheatreWorks, and Playwrights Foundation. Tagatac earned a B.A. in theater from San Diego State University and an M.F.A. from A.C.T. Tagatac is a teaching artist for New Conservatory Theatre Center and a hip-hop instructor around the Bay Area.



KELSEY VENTER*
(Ensemble/Althea)

most recently understudied A.C.T.'s inaugural production at The Strand, *Love and Information*. Other A.C.T. credits include *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (coproduction with the Guthrie Theater); *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*; and *A Christmas Carol*. Other regional credits include three seasons of *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* at The Old Globe; *Les Misérables*, *The 39 Steps*, *Trying*, and *Guys and Dolls* at Lamb's Players Theatre; *I Love You Because* at North Coast Repertory Theatre; *Timepiece* at The Active Theater; *Oliver!* at Woodminster Amphitheatre; *She Loves Me* and *Boeing-Boeing* at Center REPeritory Company; and *The Threepenny Opera* and *A Seagull in the Hamptons* with Shotgun Players. Venter is one of the Guinness World Record holders for Longest Marathon Theatre Performance with Lamb's Players

Theatre. She earned her B.A. in theater from San Diego State University and her M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.



OGIE ZULUETA*'s
(Dala/Vicente) Bay

Area theater credits include *After the War* (understudy) and *The New Americans* (First Look Workshop Series) at A.C.T.; *The Hundred Flowers Project* and *The Late Wedding* at Crowded Fire Theater; *Lu Shen, the Mad* at Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company; and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival with Playwrights Foundation. His regional and other credits include *Bay and the Spectacles of Doom* at La Jolla Playhouse; *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at South Coast Repertory; *The Architecture of Loss*, *L.A. Stories*, and *900 miles from Iraq* at the Mark Taper Forum; *Pera Palas* at Antaeus Theatre Company/Boston Court Performing Arts Center; *Hamlet* at Singapore Repertory Theatre; *The Tempest* at East West Players; *As Vishnu Dreams* at Cornerstone Theater Company/East West Players; *Sleepwalk* and *Gumsimao* at Playwrights' Arena; *Othello* at Nevada Shakespeare in the Park; *Romeo and Juliet* at Deaf West Theatre; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at East LA Classic Theatre; *Three Sisters* at Sledgehammer Theatre; *The Battles of Coxinga* at Nada in New York City; and *Malibu* at Soho Rep. Zulueta's film and television credits include *A Day Without a Mexican*, *Pink as the Day She Was Born*, *How to Make Your First Billion and Save the World*, *My Bad Dad*, *One West Waikiki*, *First Years*, *Two Guys and a Girl*, *L.A. Heat*, and *Models Inc*. He is a member of Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company.



BRITTANY DANIELLE*
(Understudy) was most recently seen as Hope Harcourt in Center REPeritory Company's production of

Anything Goes. Favorite regional credits include *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Sweet Charity*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *She Loves Me*, *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Noises Off*, and *Xanadu* at Center REPeritory Company; *Singin' in the Rain* at Pacific Coast Repertory Theatre; *Nick & Nora* and *Of Thee I Sing* at 42nd Street Moon; and *Xanadu* at WaterTower Theatre in Texas. This is Danielle's first production with A.C.T.



PHILIP ESTRERA*
(Understudy) last appeared on A.C.T.'s Geary stage in recent productions of *The Orphan of Zhao* and *A*

Christmas Carol. He is a recent graduate of the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program, where his credits included roles in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Polaroid Stories*, *Twelfth Night*, *Galileo*, and *Sueño*. In 2012, he was in the New York City premiere of *Bumbershoot* at New York International Fringe Festival. Estrera holds a B.A. in music and English from Rice University and is a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy.



PATRICK RUSSELL*
(Understudy) most recently appeared in the world premiere of *Trouble Cometh* at San Francisco Playhouse. His other

regional credits include *Once in a Lifetime* and *A Christmas Carol* (A.C.T.); *77%*, *Seminar*, and *reasons to be pretty* (San Francisco Playhouse); *A Bright New Boise*, *Wilder Times*, *Body Awareness*, *Trouble in Mind*, and *Awake and Sing!*

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(Aurora Theatre Company); *Old Wicked Songs* (Center REPeratory Company); *The Other Place* (Magic Theatre); *Othello* (Marin Theatre Company); *The Comedy of Errors* (Marin Shakespeare Company); and *Care of Trees* (Shotgun Players). Russell's film credits include the feature film *Being Us*, the animated short *The Etymology of Zero*, the short films *We Were Awesome* and *The Secret Life of a Hotel Room*, and the web series *SanFranLand*. His voice-over work can be heard in numerous radio and internet advertisements. Russell holds a B.F.A. in acting from the University of California, Santa Barbara and an M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T., where he teaches in Studio A.C.T. and the Summer Training Congress.

LYSLEY TENORIO (Author) is the author of the short story collection *Monstress*. His work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Zoetrope: All-Story*, and *Ploughshares*. A former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, he has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Yaddo, and The MacDowell Colony and is the winner of a Pushcart Prize, a Whiting Writers' Award, and, most recently, the Rome Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Born in the Philippines, he lives in San Francisco and is a professor in the English Department and M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing at Saint Mary's College of California.

PHILIP KAN GOTANDA (Playwright) has been a major influence in the broadening of our definition of theater in America. The creator of one of the largest canons of Asian American-themed works, he has been instrumental in bringing stories of Asians in the United States to mainstream American theater, as well as to Europe and Asia. Gotanda holds a law degree from Hastings College of the Law, studied pottery in Japan with the late Hiroshi Seto, and had a Chinglish version of "My Boyfriend's Back" with Joan Chen (*Dim Sum*, directed by Wayne Wang) on the Hong Kong pop charts before it was

removed from the air for inappropriate language. Gotanda is a respected independent filmmaker. His three films—*Life Tastes Good*, *Drinking Tea*, and *The Kiss*—have all been presented at the Sundance Film Festival. Gotanda is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, as well as many other honors and awards. He is a professor with the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at University of California, Berkeley. Gotanda would like to thank Raymond Ocampo for

insights about spectator shoes and frogs, and Michael Giron, his childhood friend, for the use of his name.

NINA BALL's (Scenic Designer) designs have been seen at A.C.T. (*Underneath the Lintel*), California Shakespeare Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Shotgun Players, San Francisco Playhouse, Aurora Theatre Company, Santa Cruz Shakespeare, Center REPeratory Company, and Z Space, among many



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others. Her recent honors include San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for *My Fair Lady* at San Francisco Playhouse and *Metamorphosis* at Aurora Theatre Company; a BroadwayWorld San Francisco Award for *Care of Trees* at Shotgun Players; and an Arty Award for her design of *Eurydice* at Solano College Theatre. Ball is a company member of Shotgun Players and has an M.F.A. in scenic design from San Francisco State University. In addition to theater, Ball works as a production designer in film and television. Upcoming projects include *Tenderly* at Center REPeratory Company and *Little Erik* at Aurora Theatre Company, as well as a feature film called *Pushing Dead*.

LYDIA TANJI (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for *Napoli!*, *Dead Metaphor*, *Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet*, *Round and Round the Garden*, *The Quality of Life*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Brainpeople*, *The Rainmaker*, *After the War*, *Woman in Mind*, and *Let There Be Love* for A.C.T. Other regional theaters with which she has worked include Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, Arena Stage, the Children's Theatre Company, East West Players, California Shakespeare Theater, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Geva Theatre Center, Syracuse Stage, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, and Court Theatre. She has received six San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards and two Drama-Logue Awards. Her film credits include *The Joy Luck Club*, *Hot Summer Winds*, *Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart*, *The Wash*, *Thousand Pieces of Gold*, and *Life Tastes Good*.

ROBERT HAND (Lighting Designer) celebrates his third season with A.C.T. as a design associate. Prior to his work at A.C.T., he spent 11 seasons as the lighting director and resident

lighting designer for Atlanta Ballet, where he designed more than 25 new works, many of which remain in their permanent repertoire. Other design credits include original lighting designs for the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, English National Ballet, North Carolina Theatre, Milwaukee Ballet, Scottish Ballet, *Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues*, and *Scary Movie 5*.

JAKE RODRIGUEZ (Sound Designer) is based out of the San Francisco Bay Area and works at regional theaters around the United States. His most recent credits include *Girlfriend* at the Kirk Douglas Theatre; *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* at A.C.T. and the Guthrie Theater; *X's and O's (A Football Love Story)* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *The Christians* and *brownsville song (b-side for tray)* at Actors Theatre of Louisville; *The Orphan of Zhao* at A.C.T. and La Jolla Playhouse; and *Emotional Creature* at the Pershing Square Signature Center. Rodriguez is the recipient of a 2004 Princess Grace Award.

MICHAEL PALLER (Dramaturg) joined A.C.T. as resident dramaturg and director of humanities in August 2005, and since then has dramaturged more than 50 productions and workshops. He began his professional career as literary manager at Center Repertory Theatre (Cleveland), then worked as a play reader and script consultant for Manhattan Theatre Club, and has since been a dramaturg for George Street Playhouse, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and others. He dramaturged the Russian premiere of Tennessee Williams's *Small Craft Warnings* at the Sovremennik Theater in Moscow. Paller is the author of *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan) and *Williams in an Hour* (Smith & Kraus); he has also written theater and book reviews for the *Washington Post*,

Village Voice, *Newsday*, and *Mirabella* magazine. He recently adapted the text for the San Francisco Symphony's multimedia presentation of *Peer Gynt*. Before his arrival at A.C.T., he taught at Columbia University and the State University of New York at Purchase.

JANET FOSTER, CSA (Casting Director) joined A.C.T. as the casting director in the 2011-12 season. On Broadway she cast *The Light in the Piazza* (Artios Award nomination), *Lennon*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Taking Sides* (co-cast). Off-Broadway credits include *Lucy*, *Brundibar*, *True Love*, *Endpapers*, *The Dying Gaul*, *The Maiden's Prayer*, and *The Trojan Women: A Love Story* at Playwrights Horizons, as well as *Floyd Collins*, *The Monogamist*, *A Cheever Evening*, *Later Life*, and many more. Regionally, she has worked at Intiman Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Yale Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, The Old Globe, Center Stage in Baltimore, Westport Country Playhouse, and the American Repertory Theater. Film, television, and radio credits include *Cosby* (CBS), *Tracey Takes on New York* (HBO), Lewis Black's *The Deal*, *Advice from a Caterpillar*, "The Day That Lehman Died" (BBC World Service and Blackhawk Productions; Peabody, SONY, and Wincott awards), and "'T' is for Tom" (Tom Stoppard radio plays, WNYC and WQXR).

ELISA GUTHERTZ* (Stage Manager) most recently worked on *Love and Information*, *Testament*, *Major Barbara*, *Underneath the Lintel*, and *Arcadia* at A.C.T. Her numerous other productions for A.C.T. include *4000 Miles*, *The Normal Heart*, *The Scottsboro Boys*, *Endgame* and *Play*, *Scorched*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Clybourne Park*, *Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *November*, *Boleros for the Disenchanted*, *Rich and Famous*, *The Rainmaker*, *A Number*, and Eve Ensler's *The Good Body*, among

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

others. She has also stage-managed *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Suddenly*, *Last Summer*, *Rhinoceros*, *Big Love*, *Civil Sex*, *Collected Stories*, and *Cloud Tectonics* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other productions include *The Good Body* at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, *Big Love* at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and *The Vagina Monologues* at the Alcazar Theatre.

CHRISTINA HOGAN* (Assistant Stage Manager) returns to A.C.T. after working on *Love and Information*. Her other theater credits include *Hookman* (Encore Theatre Company); *And I and Silence*, *Hir*, *Arlington*, *Every Five Minutes*, *The Happy Ones*, *Terminus*, *Se Llama Cristina*, and *Any Given Day* (Magic Theatre); *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Verona Project*, and *Pastures of Heaven* (California Shakespeare Theater); *Fuddy Meers* and *Good People* (Marin Theatre Company); and *very still and hard to see* (A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program). Hogan has a B.A. in theater arts from Saint Mary's College of California.

DOUG TILDEN AND TERESA KELLER (Executive Producers) have been executive producers and company sponsors for several A.C.T. offerings in the past. Tilden has more than four decades of experience in international shipping and is actively engaged in international humanitarian issues, international education, and global awareness. He is an amateur archaeologist heavily involved in excavations of Mayan sites in Belize. Keller is cofounder of Round the World with Us, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing youth of different cultures together through service learning. She serves on the advisory council of Children International and plays a leadership role in developing their chapter initiative. Prior to Round the World, Keller was executive director of the 220,000-member Archaeological Institute of America.

JOHN OSTERWEIS AND BARBARA RAVIZZA

(Executive Producers) were executive producers for *Indian Ink* last season. Osterweis is a graduate of Stanford Graduate School of Business and has resided in San Francisco for most of his career. After graduating from Stanford, he was a senior analyst, concentrating on forest products and the paper industry, for several regional brokerage firms and later for E. F. Hutton & Company, Inc. Osterweis was also the director of research for two firms and managed equity portfolios for over ten years. In late 1982, he decided to devote himself full time to his portfolio management activities, and in April 1983, he launched Osterweis Capital Management. For a number of years, he served as a director on the Stanford Alumni Association executive board, a trustee of Bowdoin College, director and vice chairman of Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center, and president of the board of directors for Summer Search. He currently serves as chairman of the San Francisco Ballet Association, director of the San Francisco Free Clinic and the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, president emeritus of the San Francisco Ballet Endowment Foundation, and trustee emeritus of Summer Search and Bowdoin College. Ravizza has lived in the Bay Area for 70 years and has always been interested in the arts. She attended California College of Arts and Crafts in 1959 and studied graphic design and fine arts at San Jose State University. For 25 years, she worked as a designer and illustrator in the publishing industry for John Wiley & Sons, Wadsworth, and Science Research Associates. For the past 20 years, Ravizza has devoted herself full time to drawing and painting; she maintains a studio in San Francisco.

JACK AND SUSY WADSWORTH

(Executive Producers) live in San Francisco. Jack is an advisory director at Morgan Stanley, honorary chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia, and sits on numerous boards. He started Morgan Stanley's technology investment banking practice and venture capital

business, leading the Apple IPO. He later became chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia. Jack recently developed Ceyuan Ventures. Susy sits on the boards of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art and Renaissance Society International. In Hong Kong, she worked at the International Institute of Education, Summerbridge, and the Asia Cultural Council. In Brooklyn, she was a high school teacher, volunteered in the mayor's office, and worked at the League of Women Voters, in addition to raising three children. Jack and Susy lead the W. L. S. Spencer Foundation, which focuses on public school and museum education programs that encourage crosscultural understanding. They have eight grandchildren.



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WEAVING THE ARTISTIC FABRIC OF SAN FRANCISCO

A.C.T.'s New Strands Program

BY | NIRMALA NATARAJ

WITH THE OPENING OF OUR STRAND THEATER, A.C.T.'S efforts to invest in new works and multidisciplinary pieces created by artists we love have become more focused. New Strands, a program that commissions and nurtures new works, was born from these efforts. The projects are embraced by A.C.T.'s many arms, from the Conservatory to our Education & Community Programs, which provide “a variety of ways in which we can develop any given project,” says A.C.T. Director of New Work Beatrice Basso.

Before New Strands was launched in 2012, we were already investigating ways to nurture new projects—especially those that focus on the multifaceted history of San Francisco. From commissioning playwright Philip Kan Gotanda’s *After the War* (set in Japantown in the 1940s) in 2007 to recreating various eras of San Francisco with the 2010 movement piece *The Tosca Project* (centered around the beloved North Beach café), we have always been interested in “exposing our audiences to new plays and exploring new forms of storytelling,” says Basso. “The environment at A.C.T. is rich, multigenerational, and dynamic.”

In the last three years, New Strands has commissioned close to a dozen works, including the two pieces in *Monstress* (which began as four distinct adaptations from the collection of short stories by San Francisco author Lysley Tenorio).

“Although it wasn’t a mandate for playwrights to use the Central Market neighborhood or other areas of San Francisco as a backdrop, many of their works wound up having a connection to the area,” says Basso. The two plays in *Monstress* name-drop familiar streets, neighborhoods, and cities in and around San Francisco, while Colman Domingo’s *The Brother(s)* (another adaptation of one of Tenorio’s short stories) features Polk Street and other areas close to The Strand.

Playwright Christina Anderson, who has worked with the our M.F.A. Program for a number of years, was one of the first people to stand on the stage of The Strand after it was restored. After visiting the site multiple times, she was attracted to the idea of writing a piece inspired by Central Market. The result is *How to Catch Creation*. Anderson recently turned in the second draft, and a reading will be presented at the first New Strands Festival, which will take place at The Strand January 21-24, 2016. The festival, which is free of charge and open to the public, will include a series of readings, classes, and opportunities for artists to collaborate with each other and connect directly to audiences. “It will include a combination of newly completed works, works in progress, and interactive, interdisciplinary experiments,” says Basso. During the festival, various stages of the commissioning process will be revealed. Zaccho Dance Theatre, a site-specific

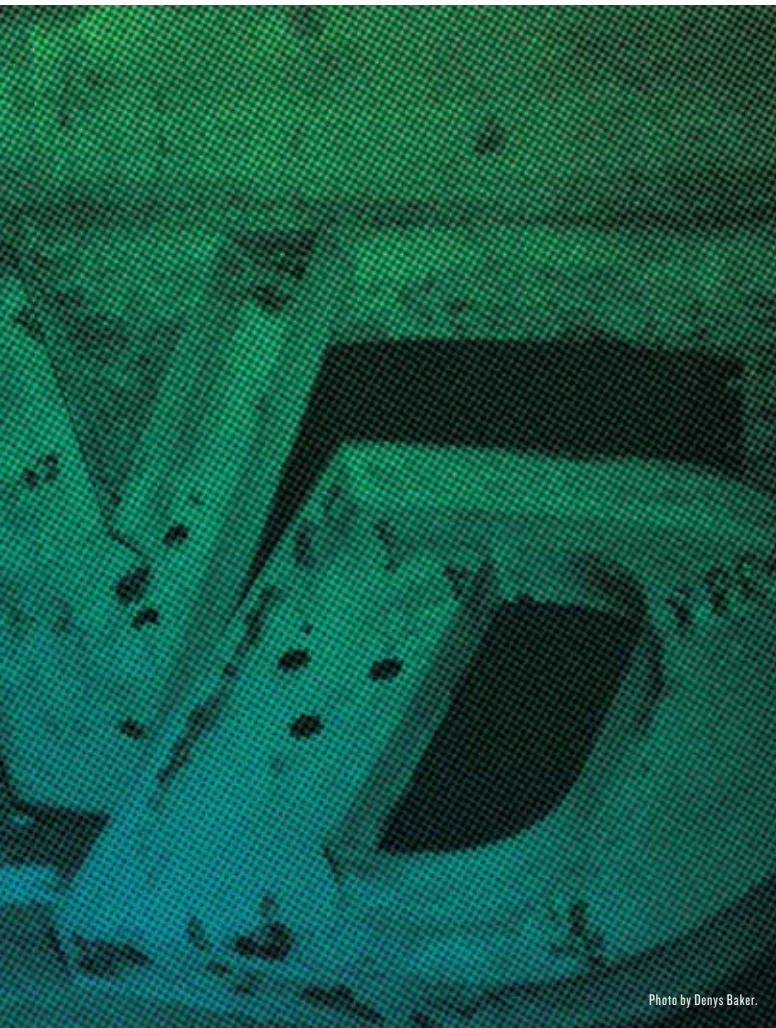


Photo by Denys Baker.

FIRST NEW STRANDS FESTIVAL

Jan 21-24, 2016

The Strand Theater | **FREE**

A COLLISION OF NEW PIECES, WORKS IN PROGRESS, AND EXPERIMENTS BY INNOVATIVE ARTISTS ACROSS DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

From laboratories to readings to conversations to family-friendly presentations to late-night events, the New Strands Festival invites artists and the community to activate The Strand spaces over the course of four days, witnessing, developing, and sharing fresh and contemporary work.



PHOTOS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): Melinda Lopez; Christina Anderson; Christopher Chen; Colman Domingo; Miwa Matreyek; Ursula Rani Sarma; Byron Au Yong (photo by Joe Freeman)

aerial dance company that contributed an original piece to The Strand's LED screen for our spring opening, will begin to create a piece while in residence in January. Their initial presentation will be a stepping stone to the creation of a longer work inspired by the architecture of The Strand.

While New Strands is directed at writers, it also encompasses other disciplines. Projects include an upcoming collaboration among playwright Christopher Chen, composer Byron Au Yong, and animation artist Miwa Matreyek, who are working together to create a San Francisco fable in which poetry, visual art, and music intersect. Matreyek's and Au Yong's solo works will also be featured in the New Strands Festival.

Although each project may be developed over several months or years (including workshop readings and feedback from A.C.T.'s artistic team), an objective of New Strands is to bring the completed works onto one of our mainstages for inclusion in A.C.T.'s seasons.

Basso says, "We hope to support everyone from emerging artists to established playwrights, and to create vibrant new work that goes beyond the confines of traditional theater."



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A TIME FOR GATHERING

This Fall at The Rueff

BY | NIRMALA NATARAJ

TOP: Photo by Amanda Harris/ Orange Photography
BOTTOM: Photo by Billy Cole/ Orange Photography

AMONG THE ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITIES FOSTERED by the opening of our Strand Theater are the imaginative opportunities made possible by the venue's intimate upstairs space, The Rueff. A 1,500-square-foot multiuse room with stunning views of City Hall, The Rueff will be home to an explosion of work from A.C.T., as well as the broader Bay Area community.

This past summer, The Rueff enjoyed its first feature performance—the evocative *Snakes*, a world-premiere coproduction among A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and Education & Community Programs Department and Oakland's Destiny Arts Center, directed by A.C.T. Community Artistic Director Tyrone Davis.

Excitement is continuing to build around a number of upcoming events that will take place in this stunning and dynamic space, from fundraisers to readings to performances by our Master of Fine Arts Program actors. These include our Education & Community Programs Department's intensive residency program at Downtown High School. Students attend weekly acting classes in The Rueff that will culminate in December in performances of original monologues and short plays for their teachers, schoolmates, families, and friends. "The opportunity to welcome young people from the larger community into The Strand Theater emphasizes A.C.T.'s belief that all San Franciscans are stakeholders in A.C.T. and that A.C.T. exists to mirror its community," says Davis.

Our acclaimed M.F.A. Program makes the transition from A.C.T.'s Costume Shop Theater to The Rueff with the performance of its fall play, *The Belle's Stratagem*, by Hannah Crowley, an eighteenth-century romantic comedy of manners whose epic scale will be put to masterful use in

The Rueff. Following on the heels of this performance, The Rueff will be the VIP room during our October 26 fundraiser for the M.F.A. Program, *Spooked at the Strand*, which will include an evening of cocktails, costumes, and cabaret performances—all against a striking backdrop of city lights.

We'll also share The Rueff with a number of artistic partners, including Magic Theatre, which will produce Tanya Barfield's new play, the vibrant love story *Bright Half Life*, at The Strand—a production that is supported by A.C.T.'s Community Space-Sharing Initiative. The Rueff will also be a hub during our New Strands Festival, happening in January 2016.

According to A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, the events that will take place in The Rueff are all a part of our longstanding dream to create "a warm, flexible, accessible space that will be home to a wide variety of artists experimenting in many forms—and that will give audiences a truly intimate and unique theatrical experience."



NEW VOICES TELL THEIR STORIES

Bessie Carmichael Elementary School Takes the Stage at A.C.T.

BY | CECILIA PADILLA

Students from Bessie Carmichael Elementary School perform at the SMAT showing of *Old Hats*. Photo by Ryan Montgomery.

THIS FALL, WE ARE ONCE AGAIN THRILLED TO OPEN

our doors to the talented students of Bessie Carmichael Elementary School. Through a unique partnership that began four years ago, each season A.C.T. invites Bessie Carmichael students to perform original musicals on our stages for young audiences attending student matinee (SMAT) performances of mainstage productions.

Each mini musical is written by San Francisco Unified School District Visual and Performing Arts instructor Peter Sroka, and is inspired by themes explored in an A.C.T. show. To date, Bessie Carmichael students have performed before SMAT performances of *Stuck Elevator*, *1776* (with a musical titled *Voice of the People*), and *Old Hats* (with a musical titled *At A.C.T.*). They were most recently seen in May on The Strand Theater's mainstage, where they performed a medley of their greatest A.C.T. hits as part of our new venue's opening celebration.

Through Sroka's creative lyric writing and musical composition, students explore history and social themes while learning to work together in the collaborative crucible of live theater. This season, we are especially excited to bring Bessie Carmichael fifth graders onto The Strand's stage before a performance of *Monstress*. Comprised of a diverse student body, the school serves a large population of students with Filipino heritage; Bessie Carmichael is home to the Filipino Education Center, the only Filipino bilingual program in a public school system in California. Sroka has composed four songs (written partially in Tagalog) for his students to present. One, titled "My Last Farewell," portrays the life of Filipino revolutionary and artist José Rizal. Another song lists indigenous tribal and cultural groups of the Philippines, while the others dramatize Filipino legends passed down through generations.

Bessie Carmichael Elementary School has become an integral element in the ongoing mission of our Education & Community Programs to cultivate deep, long-term relationships with cultural communities in our neighborhood, and to support arts education in Bay Area public schools. In addition to partnering with Sroka and Bessie Carmichael teachers during the school day, A.C.T. provides ongoing after-school theater classes at Bessie Carmichael in partnership with Galing Bata, a bilingual program that promotes literacy development in English and Filipino, multicultural education, and strong school, family, and community collaboration. We also recently provided a theater workshop for Bessie Carmichael faculty and staff to help foster relational trust and enthusiastic school spirit.

For A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff, The Strand Theater is an important means of supporting community expression. "It's wonderful to watch the torch of art pass from one generation to another," she says. "The Bessie Carmichael students interpret A.C.T.'s work through a vivid youthful lens and bring their own history to the worlds being presented on our stages. For audiences to watch these kids participate so actively in a professional setting is extremely heartening, as it makes us all realize that these ideas and passions live on and that new voices will continue to tell their stories."

“

IT'S WONDERFUL TO WATCH THE TORCH OF ART PASS FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER.

A.C.T. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CAREY PERLOFF

A.C.T. PROFILES



CAREY PERLOFF (A.C.T. Artistic Director) is celebrating her 24th season as artistic director of A.C.T. This fall, she directs *Monstress*, adapted by Philip Kan Gotanda and Sean San José from the short stories by Lysley Tenorio. Last season, she staged the New York premiere of Tom Stoppard's *Indian Ink* at Roundabout

Theatre Company (nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award for Best Revival) before bringing the show to A.C.T. Recent A.C.T. productions also include *Testament*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *Arcadia*, *Elektra* (coproduced by the Getty Villa in Malibu), *Endgame* and *Play*, *Scorched*, *The Homecoming*, *Tosca Café* (cocreated with choreographer Val Caniparoli; toured Canada), and Racine's *Phèdre* in a coproduction with the Stratford Festival. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and championing new writing for the theater, Perloff has also directed for A.C.T. José Rivera's *Boleros for the Disenchanted*; the world premieres of Philip Kan Gotanda's *After the War* (A.C.T. commission) and her own adaptation (with Paul Walsh) of *A Christmas Carol*; the American premieres of Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love* and *Indian Ink*, and Harold Pinter's *Celebration*; A.C.T.-commissioned translations/adaptations of *Hecuba*, *The Misanthrope*, *Enrico IV*, *Mary Stuart*, *Uncle Vanya*, *A Mother*, and *The Voyage Inheritance* (adapted by David Mamet); the world premiere of Leslie Ayvazian's *Singer's Boy*; and major revivals of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Government Inspector*, *Happy End* (including a critically acclaimed cast album recording), *A Doll's House*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Old Times*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Antigone*, *Creditors*, *The Room*, *Home*, *The Tempest*, and Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll*, *Travesties*, *The Real Thing*, and *Night and Day*. Perloff's work for A.C.T. also includes Marie Ndiaye's *Hilda*, the world premieres of Marc Blitzstein's *No for an Answer* and David Lang/Mac Wellman's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, and the West Coast premiere of her own play *The Colossus of Rhodes* (Susan Smith Blackburn Award finalist).



MELISSA SMITH (Conservatory Director, Head of Acting) has served as Conservatory director and head of acting in the Master of Fine Arts Program at A.C.T. since 1995. During that time, she has overseen the expansion of the M.F.A. Program from a two- to a three-year course of study and the further integration of the

M.F.A. Program faculty and student body with A.C.T.'s artistic wing. She has also taught and directed in the M.F.A. Program, Summer Training Congress, and Studio A.C.T. Prior to assuming leadership of the Conservatory, Smith was the director of theater and dance at Princeton University, where she taught

Perloff is also an award-winning playwright. Her play *Kinship* premiered at the Théâtre de Paris last October in a production starring Isabelle Adjani and Niels Schneider and was produced at the Williamstown Theater Festival last summer, starring Cynthia Nixon and directed by Jo Bonney. *Waiting for the Flood* has received workshops at A.C.T., New York Stage and Film, and Roundabout Theatre. *Higher* was developed at New York Stage and Film, won the 2011 Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation Theatre Visions Fund Award, and received its world premiere in February 2012 in San Francisco. *Luminescence Dating* premiered in New York at The Ensemble Studio Theatre, was coproduced by A.C.T. and the Magic Theatre, and is published by Dramatists Play Service. *The Colossus of Rhodes* was workshopped at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, premiered at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theatre, and was produced at A.C.T. in 2003.

Before joining A.C.T., Perloff was artistic director of Classic Stage Company in New York, where she directed the world premiere of Ezra Pound's *Elektra*, the American premiere of Pinter's *Mountain Language*, and many classic works. Under Perloff's leadership, CSC won numerous OBIE Awards, including the 1988 OBIE for artistic excellence. In 1993, she directed the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's opera *The Cave* at the Vienna Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

A recipient of France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the National Corporate Theatre Fund's 2007 Artistic Achievement Award, Perloff received a B.A. Phi Beta Kappa in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford. She was on the faculty of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University for seven years, and teaches and directs in the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program. Perloff is on the board of the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Sarasota, Florida, and is the proud mother of Lexie and Nicholas. Perloff is the author of *Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater* (City Lights, March 2015).

introductory, intermediate, and advanced acting. She has taught acting classes to students of all ages at various colleges, high schools, and studios around the continental United States, at the Mid-Pacific Institute in Hawaii, New York University's La Pietra campus in Florence, and the Teatro di Pisa in San Miniato, Italy. She is featured in *Acting Teachers of America: A Vital Tradition*. Also a professional actor, she has performed regionally at the Hangar Theatre, A.C.T., California Shakespeare Theater, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre; in New York at Primary Stages and Soho Rep; and in England at the Barbican Theatre (London) and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. Smith holds a B.A. from Yale College and an M.F.A. in acting from Yale School of Drama.