

50
YEARS

A.C.T.
AMERICAN
CONSERVATORY
THEATER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press photos and kits: act-sf.org/press

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER ANNOUNCES COMPLETE LINEUP FOR THE 2017–18 SEASON

Newly announced productions include William Shakespeare’s *HAMLET*, starring Obie Award winner John Douglas Thompson in the title role and joined by stage and screen star Carl Lumbly; Bess Wohl’s critically acclaimed comedy *SMALL MOUTH SOUNDS*; Simon Stephens’s hit play *HEISENBERG*; and the world-premiere musical *A WALK ON THE MOON*, based on the 1999 movie of the same name

They join three previously announced productions—Harold Pinter’s classic drama *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY*; Qui Nguyen’s new hit comedy *VIETGONE*; and Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks’s *FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS (PARTS 1, 2 & 3)*

2017–18 season marks A.C.T. Artistic Director Carey Perloff’s 25th—and final—year

SAN FRANCISCO (April 28, 2017)—American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Artistic Director Carey Perloff announced today the final four productions that will comprise the lineup of the company’s 2017–18 subscription season. The 2017–18 season marks the 25th anniversary of Perloff’s arrival at A.C.T.; the longtime artistic director recently announced she would depart following the 2017–18 season.

Joining the three previously announced productions—Harold Pinter’s classic drama *The Birthday Party*, Qui Nguyen’s irreverent new comedy *Vietgone*, and Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks’s *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*, an epic American take on the *Odyssey* set against the backdrop of the Civil War—are William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, starring Obie Award winner John Douglas Thompson in the title role and joined by stage and screen star Carl Lumbly; Bess Wohl’s critically acclaimed comedy *Small Mouth Sounds*; Simon Stephens’s hit play *Heisenberg*; and the world-premiere musical *A Walk on the Moon*, based on the 1999 movie of the same name.

Full-season (7-play) subscriptions will be available in mid-May for **\$91–\$679** and offer incredible savings, unparalleled access, exclusive benefits, and personalized customer service. At this time, only current full-season A.C.T. subscribers can renew their subscriptions for the 2017–18 season. To receive priority notice when packages become available to new subscribers, patrons can join A.C.T.’s e-club at act-sf.org/eclub or call the A.C.T. Subscriptions Office at 415.749.2250.

“From *Hamlet* and *Small Mouth Sounds* to *Heisenberg* and *A Walk on the Moon*, this is a season of plays in which larger-than-life characters—filled with longing and appetite—suddenly strive to try something new,” says Perloff. “This being my 25th anniversary at A.C.T., it is the perfect moment to contemplate the future and to celebrate our favorite collaborators. I am especially thrilled to launch the season with the astonishing John Douglas Thompson in *Hamlet*, a project I have longed to tackle for some time. The fierce solitude and psychic confusion of a man robbed of his father and then of everyone he trusts in a toxic world gone hopelessly wrong is a heartbreaking and important story for our time. This season, filled with favorite actors—including Thompson, Marco Barricelli, Carl Lumbly, Scott Wentworth, and Judith Ivey—exciting new directors, visionary designers, and great music will stretch us in wonderful ways and fill our multiple spaces with joy and celebration.”

The 2017–18 season kicks off with Williams Shakespeare’s tragic masterpiece ***Hamlet* (September 20–October 15, 2017)**, starring Obie Award winner **John Douglas Thompson** in the title role, and joined by stage and screen star **Carl Lumbly**. Two seasons ago, Thompson dazzled Geary audiences in the virtuoso one-man show *Satchmo at the Waldorf*. Now, to kick off A.C.T.’s 2017–18 season, Thompson comes back to San Francisco to take on for the first time one of Shakespeare’s most complex and heartbreaking characters. In the story of a man who wakes up to find his world upended and his closest friends unworthy of trust, Shakespeare shows us how quickly change can happen—how an orderly kingdom ruled by a loving king can, in one stroke, become unrecognizable. *Hamlet* will be A.C.T.’s first Shakespeare production since *The Tempest* reopened the Geary in 1996. Performances of *Hamlet* will take place at A.C.T.’s Geary Theater. (Press night will be held on Wednesday, September 27, 2017).

Next, A.C.T. will present Bess Wohl’s fresh, perceptive comedy ***Small Mouth Sounds* (October 11–December 10, 2017)**. On a weeklong silent retreat in the woods, six wildly disparate souls looking for answers find that staying quiet doesn’t necessarily bring the inner-peace. An acclaimed new comedy from Drama Desk Award–winning playwright Bess Wohl, *Small Mouth Sounds* is a wickedly sharp look at mindfulness and the wellness industry. Under the eye of an unseen guru, these six have gathered to get away from it all. But as they listen to their leader’s ruminations (and try to hook up while struggling to meditate without snacks), they learn that silence

can indeed be golden. It can also be funny, frustrating, erotic, comforting, and profoundly passive-aggressive. Performances of *Small Mouth Sounds* will take place at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater. (Press nights will be held on Thursday, October 26 and Friday, October 27, 2017).

This winter, A.C.T. is happy to welcome back the Bay Area's favorite holiday tradition, ***A Christmas Carol* (December 1–24, 2017)**, after another successful run last season. Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and deliciously spooky ghosts, this version of *A Christmas Carol*, adapted by Paul Walsh and Carey Perloff, stays true to the heart of Dickens's timeless story of redemption and brings a playful sensibility to his rich language. *A Christmas Carol*—now in its 40th year—is a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become a holiday tradition for families around the Bay Area. Performances of *A Christmas Carol* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. (Press night will be held on Friday, December 8, 2017).

Ring in 2018, A.C.T. returns to the world of Harold Pinter for its first staging of his classic drama ***The Birthday Party* (January 10–February 4, 2018)**, featuring A.C.T. favorite **Marco Barricelli**, Tony Award winner **Judith Ivey**, and Stratford Festival star **Scott Wentworth**. In an undisturbed English seaside town, the inhabitants of a ramshackle boarding house react to the arrival of two unsettling strangers. Where do the mysterious Goldberg and McCann come from? Who sent them? And why do they keep asking about the sole boarder, piano player Stanley? As the party guests, including flighty Lula and flirty landlady Meg, gather for Stanley's birthday, the desperate pianist is forced to confront a surreal interrogation. Seething with mystery, danger, and sudden humor, this is signature Pinter, a play of "tantalizing theatricality" (*The New York Times*). Performances of *The Birthday Party* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. (Press night will be held on Wednesday, January 17, 2018).

Next, A.C.T. will present Qui Nguyen's irreverent road-trip comedy ***Vietgone* (February 21–April 22, 2018)**. A hit off Broadway and at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, *Vietgone* is a modern twist on the classic story of boy meets girl. In this irreverent new comedy, three young Vietnamese immigrants leave a war-torn country for an eye-opening journey across the bewildering and foreign landscape of 1970s America. A vibrant mash-up of pop culture references, audacious dialogue, and an action-packed road trip that instantaneously moves from hilarity to heart-wrenching drama, *Vietgone* played to sold-out houses at 2016's Oregon Shakespeare Festival and New York's Manhattan Theatre Club. This sexy, sassy, freewheeling ride, backed by its hip-hop and Motown rhythms, will roll into The Strand spring 2018 in an all-new production. Performances of *Vietgone* will take place at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater. (Press nights will be held on Thursday, March 8 and Friday, March 9, 2018).

In spring 2018, A.C.T. will present Simon Stephens's hit play ***Heisenberg* (March 14–April 8, 2018)**. In a bustling London train station, free-spirited American Georgie unexpectedly kisses mid-70s British butcher Alex, and sets his world reeling. When she turns up in his shop a few days later, he is suspicious. Is she really attracted to him or is there a longer con game in the cards? As Alex is drawn into Georgie's anarchic world, his conventional life becomes chaotic, uncertain, and undeniably richer. In this "vibrant and emotionally charged" (*The New York Times*) new play, Tony Award-winning playwright Simon Stephens (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) crafts a comedy that rethinks the polar magnetism of opposites attracting, as well as the conventions of modern-day playwriting. With its perfect collision of strangers and strangeness, *Heisenberg* was an electric hit on Broadway from one of theater's most original voices. Performances of *Heisenberg* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. (Press night will be held on Wednesday, March 21, 2018).

Hailed as "masterpiece," by *New York* magazine, A.C.T. will next present ***Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* (April 25–May 20, 2018)**, Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks's (*Topdog/Underdog*) explosively powerful and lyrical new play set against the backdrop of the Civil War. In this epic take on the *Odyssey*, Southern slave Hero faces a terrible choice: to earn his freedom by fighting for the Confederacy alongside his master or to stay home with the woman and family he loves but remain a slave. This poignant and music-infused journey mixes contemporary wit, folk ballads, and classical traditions to tell a timeless story of freedom, heroism, and belonging. By turns comic and heartbreaking, *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* is a mythic journey through the American soul from one of our most accomplished contemporary playwrights. Performances of *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. (Press night will be held on Wednesday, May 2, 2018).

Closing out the 2017–18 season, A.C.T. will present the world-premiere musical ***A Walk on the Moon* (June 5–July 1, 2018)**, based on the 1999 movie of the same name. In the final summer of the 60s, America is aching for change. In the cities, crowds are protesting the Vietnam War. In the skies, Apollo 11 is speeding towards man's first encounter with the moon. And at a Catskills resort near Woodstock, housewife Pearl Kantrowitz is busy balancing her rebellious teenage daughter, her overworked television repairman husband, and keeping her head in the daily *mah-jongg* game. But a chance meeting with a free-spirited traveling salesman awakens a newfound spirit of exploration and sexuality—and the realization of lost opportunities. Based on the award-winning film, this stunning new musical weds the landscape of Borscht Belt comedy, the radical spirit of sixties revolution, and the passion of two breathtaking love stories into a soaring and original rock and roll score. Performances of *A Walk on the Moon* will take place at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater. (Press night will be held on Wednesday, June 13, 2018).

Subscribers save as much as **50% off single-ticket prices**. Students and educators are eligible to save up to half-price on subscriptions, and senior discounts are available for certain series. To make subscriptions more affordable, A.C.T. also offers all subscribers an **extended payment plan** that allows payment in two easy installments. A.C.T.'s competitive subscriber benefits include **free ticket exchanges** up to the day of your scheduled performance, **guaranteed best seating**, **ticket insurance**, access to **convenient prepaid parking** one block away from the theater, **discounts for neighborhood restaurants**, and the opportunity to subscribe to **Words on Plays**, A.C.T.'s in-depth theater guide for each show. To renew a current A.C.T. subscription, please call **415.749.2250** or log on to www.act-sf.org/renew.

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COMPLETE 2017–18 SEASON

HAMLET

September 20–October 15, 2017

Press night: Wednesday, September 27, 2017

by William Shakespeare

Starring John Douglas Thompson

Directed by Carey Perloff

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater

John Douglas Thompson is “our greatest classical actor”—*The New Yorker*

John Douglas Thompson returns to The Geary to take on one of theater's most iconic roles: Hamlet. Two seasons ago, Thompson dazzled Geary audiences in the virtuoso one-man show *Satchmo at the Waldorf*. Now, to kick off the 2017–18 season, Thompson comes back to San Francisco to take on for the first time one of Shakespeare's most complex and heartbreaking characters. In the story of a man who wakes up to find his world upended and his closest friends unworthy of trust, Shakespeare shows us how quickly change can happen—how an orderly kingdom ruled by a loving king can, in one stroke, become unrecognizable. Featuring stage and screen star **Carl Lumbly**, *Hamlet* marks A.C.T.'s first Shakespeare production since *The Tempest* reopened the Geary in 1996.

SMALL MOUTH SOUNDS

October 11–December 10, 2017

Press nights: Thursday, October 26 and Friday, October 27, 2017

by Bess Wohl

Directed by Rachel Chavkin

A.C.T.'s Strand Theater

2016 Critic's Pick!—*The New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, *New York magazine*

“Wit, compassion, and sparkle . . . the sound of silence onstage has rarely made such sweet music!”
The New York Times

“As poignant as it is uproarious”—*The Guardian*

“A play unlike any other”—*The Huffington Post*

On a weeklong silent retreat in the woods, six wildly disparate souls looking for answers find that staying quiet doesn't necessarily bring inner peace. The acclaimed new comedy from Drama Desk Award-winning playwright Bess Wohl, *Small Mouth Sounds* is a wickedly sharp look at reflection and self-discovery. Under the eye of an unseen guru, these six have gathered to get away from it all. But as they listen to their leader's ruminations (and try to hook up while struggling to meditate without snacks), they learn that silence can indeed be golden. It can also be funny, frustrating, erotic, comforting, and profoundly passive-aggressive.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

December 1–24, 2017

Press night: Friday, December 8, 2017

by Charles Dickens

Adapted by Paul Walsh and Carey Perloff

Directed by Dominique Lozano

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater

"The best *Christmas Carol* ever . . . a guaranteed good time!"—*KCBS AM & FM's Jan Wahl*

This winter, A.C.T. is happy to welcome back the Bay Area's favorite holiday tradition, *A Christmas Carol*, after another successful run last season. Featuring a lively cast of dozens, delightful music, gorgeous costumes, and deliciously spooky ghosts, this version of *A Christmas Carol*, adapted by Paul Walsh and Carey Perloff, stays true to the heart of Dickens's timeless story of redemption and brings a playful sensibility to his rich language. *A Christmas Carol*—now in its 40th year—is a cornerstone of the A.C.T. repertory and has become a holiday tradition for families around the Bay Area.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

January 10–February 4, 2018

Press night: January 17, 2018

by Harold Pinter

Featuring Marco Barricelli, Judith Ivey, and Scott Wentworth

Directed by Carey Perloff

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater

"Delicious, impalpable and hair-raising"—*The Sunday Times*

"Terrifying and funny . . . an extraordinary play"

The New York Times

A.C.T. returns to the world of Harold Pinter for our first staging of his classic drama *The Birthday Party*, featuring A.C.T. favorite Marco Barricelli, Tony Award winner Judith Ivey, and Stratford Festival star Scott Wentworth. In an undisturbed English seaside town, the inhabitants of a ramshackle boarding house react to the arrival of two unsettling strangers. Where do the mysterious Goldberg and McCann come from? Who sent them? And why do they keep asking about the sole boarder, piano player Stanley? As the party guests, including flighty Lula and flirty landlady Meg, gather for Stanley's birthday, the desperate pianist is forced to confront a surreal interrogation. Seething with mystery, danger, and sudden humor, this is signature Pinter, a play of "tantalizing theatricality" (*The New York Times*).

VIETGONE

February 21–April 22, 2018

Press nights: Thursday, March 8 and Friday, March 9, 2018

by Qui Nguyen

Directed by Jaime Castañeda

A.C.T.'s Strand Theater

"Hip, high-wire theatricality . . . sultry sexiness . . . quirky playfulness" — *The Seattle Times*

"Inventive . . . Subversively comic" — *The New York Times*

A hit off Broadway and at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, *Vietgone* is a modern twist on the classic story of boy meets girl. In this irreverent new comedy, three young Vietnamese immigrants leave a war-torn country for an eye-opening journey across the bewildering and foreign landscape of 1970s America. A vibrant mash-up of pop culture references, audacious dialogue, and an action-packed road trip that instantaneously moves from hilarity to heart-wrenching drama, *Vietgone* played to sold-out houses at 2016's Oregon Shakespeare Festival and New York's Manhattan Theatre Club. This sexy, sassy, freewheeling ride, backed by its hip-hop and Motown rhythms, will roll into The Strand in spring 2018 in an all-new production.

HEISENBERG

March 14–April 8, 2018

Press night: Wednesday, March 21, 2018

by Simon Stephens

Directed by Hal Brooks

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater

"Wondrously stealthy . . . resonates in your mind long after its over." — *The New York Times*

"Insightful, unforgettable" — *Entertainment Weekly*

In a bustling London train station, free-spirited American Georgie unexpectedly kisses mid-70s British butcher Alex, and sets his world reeling. When she turns up in his shop a few days later, he is suspicious. Is she really attracted to him, or is there a longer con game in the cards? As Alex is drawn into Georgie's anarchic world, his conventional life becomes chaotic, uncertain, and undeniably richer. In this "vibrant and emotionally charged" (*The New York Times*) new play, Tony Award-winning playwright Simon Stephens (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) crafts a comedy that rethinks the polar magnetism of opposites attracting, as well as the conventions of modern-day playwriting. With its perfect collision of strangers and strangeness, *Heisenberg* was an electric hit on Broadway from one of theater's most original voices.

FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS (PARTS 1, 2 & 3)

April 25–May 20, 2018

Press night: Wednesday, May 2, 2018

by Suzan-Lori Parks

Directed by Liz Diamond

A coproduction with Yale Repertory Theatre

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater

"Extraordinary . . . epic . . . endlessly stimulating" — *The New York Times*

"Thrilling . . . a masterpiece" — *New York magazine*

From Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks (*Topdog/Underdog*) comes an explosively powerful and lyrical new play set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. In this epic take on the *Odyssey*, Southern slave Hero faces a terrible choice: to earn his freedom by fighting for the Confederacy alongside his master or to stay home with the woman and family he loves but remain a slave. This poignant and music-infused journey mixes contemporary wit, folk ballads, and classical traditions to tell a timeless story of freedom, heroism, and belonging. By turns comic and heartbreaking, *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* is a mythic journey through the American soul from one of our most accomplished contemporary playwrights.

A WALK ON THE MOON

June 5–July 1, 2018

Press night: Wednesday, June 13, 2018

A World-Premiere Musical

Music and Lyrics by Paul Scott Goodman

Book and Additional Lyrics by Pamela Gray

Directed by Sheryl Kaller

A.C.T.'s Geary Theater

In the final summer of the 60s, America is aching for change. In the cities, crowds are protesting the Vietnam War. In the skies, Apollo 11 is speeding towards man's first encounter with the moon. And at a Catskills resort near Woodstock, housewife Pearl Kantrowitz is busy balancing her rebellious teenage daughter, her overworked television repairman husband, and keeping her head in the daily *mah-jongg* game. But a chance meeting with a free-spirited traveling salesman awakens a newfound spirit of exploration and sexuality—and the realization of lost opportunities. Based on the award-winning film, this stunning new musical weds the landscape of Borscht Belt comedy, the radical spirit of sixties revolution, and the passion of two breathtaking love stories into a soaring and original rock and roll score.