presents

CAMBODIAN ROCK BAND

by Lauren Yee

featuring songs by Dengue Fever

Directed by
Chay Yew

Music Director
Matthew MacNelly

Takeshi Kata
Se Hyun Oh
SCENIC DESIGN

Sara Ryung Clement
COSTUME DESIGN

David Weiner
LIGHTING DESIGN

Mikhail Fiksel
SOUND DESIGN

Andy Knight
DRAMATURG

Joshua Marchesi
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Joanne DeNaut, CSA
CASTING

Bryan Sommer
STAGE MANAGER

Carolyn & Bill Klein
Honorary Producer

Samuel & Tammy Tang
Honorary Producer

CAMBODIAN ROCK BAND was commissioned by South Coast Repertory as part of SCR’s CrossRoads Initiative, with funding from the Time Warner Foundation.

This play is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award.

Developed with support from The Ground Floor at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkeley, CA.
CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In order of appearance)

Duch ................................................................. Daisuke Tsuji
Chum ........................................................................ Joe Ngo
Neary/Sothea .......................................................... Brooke Ishibashi
Ted/Leng ................................................................ Raymond Lee
Rom/Journalist .......................................................... Abraham Kim
Pou/S-21 Guard ............................................................ Jane Lui

SETTING

LENGTH
Approximately two hours and 15 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Stage Manager .................................................. Kathleen Barrett
Fight Choreographer ....................................................... Ken Merckx
Associate Costume Designer .......................................... Kathryn Poppen
Assistant to the Set Designers .......................................... Natalie Nagar
Stage Management Intern ............................................... Amber Goebel
Video Installation and Programming .............................. Lilly Bartenstein
Light Board Operator ..................................................... Sean Deuel
Sound Board Operator .................................................... James Busker
A2 ............................................................................. Rachel Deering
Automation Operator ..................................................... Ben Morrow
Deck Crew .................................................................... Sam Maytubby
Dresser ........................................................................ Anna de la Cour
Wig and Makeup Technician .......................................... Alissa Goetz
Hair Stylist ..................................................................... Shelley Mosley
Additional Costume Staff ............................................. Alexis Riggs
Language Coach ............................................................. Tina Tao Lim

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Di Glazer, Celine Glasman James, May Adrales, Joshua Kabien Brody, Vicbet Chum, Ritby Hanb, Benjamin Kamine, Kristin Leabeey, Josb Mills, Yana Morgulis and Bob Dylan and Special R

All Dengue Fever songs administered by Ellipsis Music Corp. (ASCAP) and Pentagon Lipservices (BMI) on behalf of
CHIOM CHIMNEY • 1 ARMED CRAB PUB • FOOLISH MORTAL PUB • NOON KEY MUSIC • S W O P SONGS • TROLL UNDER THE BRIDGE
Dengue Fever music and information are available from http://denguefevermusic.com

“The Times They Are A-Changin’” Written by Bob Dylan

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Please refrain from unwrapping candy or making other noises that may disturb surrounding patrons.
Videotaping and/or recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.
Electronic devices should be turned off or set to non-audible mode during the performance. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.

Photos may be taken before and after the show, and during intermission, but not during the performance.
Show your appreciation for the play and scenic designer: #CambodianRockBand @_miyasama_ @se.hyunob
I n 1953, after 90 years as a French protectorate, Cambodia won its independence and the Southeast Asian country became the Kingdom of Cambodia. In 1955, general elections were held. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who had abdicated as king in pursuit of a political career, and his newly established party, Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community), triumphed; the Sangkum party won every seat in Parliament and the Prince was appointed prime minister. The Sihanouk era had begun.

The Prince envisioned postcolonial Cambodia as a modern nation. He sought to improve the country's infrastructure and to foster a strong national identity, which often meant harsh punishment for far-left dissidents. To Sihanouk, modernity also required cultural relevance and the arts and entertainment boomed in Cambodia during the 1950s and '60s. But the country's music enjoyed a particular renaissance—for it was during this era that rock and roll came to Cambodia.

Even before the arrival of rock and roll, Cambodia's popular music had incorporated foreign influences. While the country was still a protectorate, folk musicians integrated Western instruments into their ensembles and Latin beats into their songs. By the 1960s, the youth in urban Cambodia were hooked on yé-yé music, French pop named after the common refrain “yeah, yeah.” Then, as the United States' military presence in neighboring Vietnam increased, English-language rock and roll became popular.

Throughout the 1960s and early '70s, Cambodian musicians recorded Khmer-language covers of foreign songs. But as a whole, Cambodia's rock was far more than a mere imitation of the Western form. Artists composed and recorded original songs that addressed national concerns and challenged contemporary attitudes; and both covers and original pieces combined Western-inspired melodies with a distinctively Cambodian sound. The music’s unique identity was also embodied in its greatest stars. Singers such as Ros Serey Sothea and Sinn Sisamouth appealed to a wide audience with a modern sound that was complemented by traditional looks and performance styles. Other artists, such as Pen Ran and Liv Tek, epitomized the term “rock star” with their unrestrained, raucous performances.

By 1969, Cambodia was on the brink of a new political era. While Sihanouk ruthlessly contended with the country's far-left communist revolutionaries—whom he nicknamed the “Khmer Rouge”—he lost the support of urban Cambodians, who disapproved of his government's corruption. Finally, in March 1970, while Sihanouk was in France, General Lon Nol and Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, both high-ranking government officials, orchestrated a coup with the unspoken permission of the United States. The Kingdom of Cambodia was now the Khmer Republic.

During the five years that followed, Cambodia was ensnared in a civil war as the U.S.-backed Lon Nol government fought the tenacious Khmer Rouge. But in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, the music persevered. The sounds of rock and roll would not be quieted—not by the U.S. bombs dropped on eastern Cambodia in the name of the Vietnam War, nor the rampant corruption within Lon Nol's government, nor the growing number of Khmer Rouge guerilla fighters.

Then, on April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge breached Phnom Penh, and the music finally stopped. The war was over and the victors swiftly instituted their vision for a new society. Over the next four years, approximately two million Cambodians would be exterminated by the Khmer Rouge, including 90% of the country's musicians.

But miraculously, many of their recordings survived.

Photo: Baksey Cham Krong, considered by many to be Cambodia’s first rock and roll band. Albums, top to bottom: the cover of a 45 rmp with Sinn Sisamouth and Ros Serey Sothea ballads; the cover of a Pen Ran record.
is delighted to return to her hometown for her SCR debut. Hailing from three generations of a musical family (Grandmother Mary Kageyama Nomura was coined “The Songbird of Manzanar” during Japanese internment there), Ishibashi is proud to share a story that transcends harrowing times through the power of music. Her credits include work at The Public Theater, New York City Center, La MaMa, Ars Nova, HERE Arts, Women’s Project Theater, Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company, Vineyard Theatre, National Asian-American Theater Company, Soho Rep, The Foundry Theatre, Lark Play Development Center and the National Asian Artists Project. Her upcoming credits include a musical project inspired by the life of Pat Suzuki and the pilot presentation of The Sisters Ishibashi. She holds a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. She is a proud member of Fair Wage Onstage, a Grassroots movement of Actors’ Equity Association members separate from—but working alongside and in support of—the union to fight for higher wages and stronger contracts. FairWageOnstage.com

returns to SCR after taking part in the Cambodian Rock Band workshop and Pacific Playwright Festival reading, participating both as a musician (drummer) and as an actor. Kim is an acclaimed drummer and music producer, based in Los Angeles. He has toured domestically and internationally as a drummer for artists like Dan AKA Dan and Magnetic North & Taiyo Na and recently completed a 63-city tour across the U.S. and Canada with renowned indie rock band, Run River North. He is currently gigging locally with his band, Former Faces. As an actor, Kim’s credits include playing Son in LA Riots, a play written and directed by John Daniels (Cafe Fais Do Do, 2009). You may have seen him playing a “tough guy” hanging out in the LA Metro in a commercial for YouTube Music last year. Instagram: @abekimdrummerla

is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and recording artist originally from Hong Kong. Her most recent work includes original compositions and music direction for LA Times Critic’s Choice The Secret in the Wings (Coeurage Theatre Company). Her album Goodnight Company was nominated for Best Recording at the San Diego Music Awards. Her work has earned 4.4-million views on her YouTube channel, Luieland, and brought her music to Europe, Australia, Japan and across the U.S. She has been featured in Virgin America In-Flight Entertainment, Uppercase Magazine and Make: magazine. In 2012, she began acting and doing voiceover work. Lui is deeply grateful to be a part of the Cambodian Rock Band family. She is currently working on her fourth album under the project name Surrija. She earned a BMus from San Diego State University’s School of Music, magna cum laude. Surrija.com/JaneLui.com
Joe Ngo
Chum

is beyond elated to be a part of Cambodian Rock Band. His credits include Lauren Yee’s King of the Yees (ACT Theatre, Seattle), White Snake (Baltimore Center Stage), Henry IV: Part One (Seattle Shakespeare Ensemble) and Hamlet: Abridged as an actor/teaching artist with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival School Visit program. As a solo performer/writer, his piece Words, Words was recently produced as a part of Leviathan Labs’ Living Room Series and BarnArts Collective’s BarnFest in New York City. He is a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona and the MFA acting program at the University of Washington. He wishes to express his immense gratitude for being able to share this play with his family and friends, especially his parents, who survived the Khmer Rouge. Joe-Ngo.com

Daisuke Tsuji
Duck

is mad with joy to make his SCR debut. Most recently, he appeared in With Love and a Major Organ at The Theatre @ Boston Court, As You Like It at Antaeus Theatre Company and as William Shakespeare in the world premiere of Imogen Says Nothing at Yale Repertory Theatre. His other theatre credits include the title role in The Orphan of Zhao at American Conservatory Theater and La Jolla Playhouse; American Night at Kirk Douglas Theatre; and, as a company member of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, he performed in 10 productions including the Fool in King Lear. His television credits include recurring roles in IFC’s “Brockmire” and Amazon’s “The Man in the High Castle.” As a clown, he has worked with Cirque du Soleil in Dralion. Currently, he is working on a video game, “Ghost of Tsushima,” as the main character. He is a proud UCLA alumnus. daisuketsuji.com

Playwright, Director and Designers

Lauren Yee (Playwright) has written King of the Yees, which premiered last season at the Goodman Theatre (Chicago) and Center Theatre Group (LA), followed by productions at ACT Theatre and Canada’s National Arts Centre. Her current and upcoming productions include The Great Leap at Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle Repertory Theatre and Atlantic Theatre Company; King of the Yees (San Francisco Playhouse and Baltimore Center Stage); and The Song of Summer (Trinity Repertory Company). Her other plays include Ching Chong Chinaman (Pan Asian, Mu Performing Arts), The Hatmaker’s Wife (Playwrights Realm, Moxie Theatre, PlayPenn), Hookman (Encore Theatre, Company One), In a Word (San Francisco Playhouse, Cleveland Public Theatre, Strawdog Theatre) and Samsara (Victory Gardens Theatre, Chance Theater). Her work is published by Samuel French. Her recent honors include the Kesselring Prize, Francesca Primus Prize, an upcoming Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University and the top two plays on the 2017 Kilroys List (Cambodian Rock Band and The Great Leap). She is a finalist for the American Theatre Critics Association/Harold Steinberg Award and the Edward M. Kennedy Prize. Yee is a member of the Ma-Yi Writers’ Lab and alumna playwright of Playwrights Realm. She has current commissions from Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center/LCT3, Mixed Blood Theatre, Portland Center Stage and Trinity Repertory. She earned a BA from Yale University and an MFA from the University of California, San Diego. laurenyee.com

Chay Yew (Director) has New York credits that include The Public Theater (Oedipus el Rey, Durango, Ameriville, Low), Playwrights Horizons (Cool Dip in a Barren Sabaran Crick), New York Theatre Workshop (The Architecture of Loss), Rattlestick Playwrights Theater (Draw the Circle), The Playwrights Realm (My Madiana Comes), Ensemble Studio Theatre (Where Did We Sit on the Bus?), National Asian American Theatre Company (The House of Bernarda Alba) and Ma Yi Theatre (Last of the Suns). His regional credits include works at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, Goodman Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Denver Center Theater, Huntington Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, PlayMakers Repertory, Empty Space Theatre, Portland Center Stage, East West Players and Singapore Repertory Theatre. His opera credits include the world premieres of Osvaldo Golijov and David Henry Hwang’s Ainadamar (co-production with Tanglewood Music Center, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and LA Philharmonic) and Rob Zuidam’s Rage D’Amors (Tanglewood). He is a recipient of the Obie Award and Drama-Logue Award for Direction. He is artistic director of Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago.

Matthew MacNelly (Music Director) is an actor, musician, director and producer who resides in Los Angeles. He’s thrilled to be back at SCR developing this unique play. MacNelly has been playing guitar and writ-
Takeshi Kata (Scenic Design) returns to SCR after designing A Doll’s House, Part 2 and Office Hour. His recent New York credits include Office Hour (The Public Theatre), The Profane (Playwrights Horizons), Man From Nebraska (Second Stage Theater); Gloria and Outside People (Vineyard Theatre); Forever (New York Theatre Workshop); and Darren Brown: Secret, Through a Glass Darkly (Atlantic Theatre Company). Regionally, Kata has worked at Alley Theatre, American Players Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Dallas Theater Center, Ford’s Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage, Kirk Douglas Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, The Old Globe, Skylight Opera, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Yale Repertory Theatre. Kata has won an Obie Award and has been nominated for Drama Desk and Barrymore awards. He is an assistant professor at the USC School of Theatre.

Se Hyun Oh (Scenic Design) returns to SCR after designing A Doll’s House, Part 2 and Yoga Play last season. His recent scenic design credits include Underneath the Lintel (Geffen Playhouse); The Hothouse, Hedda Gabler (Antaeus Theatre); Allegiance the Musical (Japanese American Cultural & Community Center); Building the Wall (Fountain Theatre); Exit Strategy (LA LGBT Center); Grey Nomad (Australian Theatre Company); Two Kids that Blow Shit Up (Artists At Play); BED (Echo Theatre Company). His associate design credits include Office Hour (Public Theatre); Constellations (Geffen Playhouse); The Imaginary Invalid (The Old Globe); Another Sun the Musical (Hyundai Theatre Group). He holds an MFA in scenic design from Northwestern University. sehyunoh.com

Sara Ryung Clement (Costume Design) returns to SCR where her past projects include costumes for A Doll’s House, Part 2; 4,000 Miles; Completeness; and Becky Shaw; sets and costumes for How the World Began; and the set design for Absurd Person Singular. Her upcoming projects include the world premieres of Kemp Powers’ Little Black Shadows and Idris Goodwin’s The Way the Mountain Moved. Her work has been seen off-Broadway at Second Stage Uptown and regionally at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Geffen Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse POP Tour, Mixed Blood Theatre, TheatreWorks, Baltimore Center Stage, The Theatre @ Boston Court, Perseverance Theatre, East West Players, Cornerstone Theatre Company, A Noise Within, Yale Repertory Theatre, Native Voices at the Autry and others. She is on the set design faculty at UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Clement was awarded the Donald and Zorica Oenslager Fellowship in Design and earned a MFA at Yale School of Drama and an AB from Princeton University. sararyungclement.com

David Weiner (Lighting Design) returns to SCR after designing Smokefall. His work on Broadway includes The Price, Stephen King’s Misery, Romeo and Juliet, Dead Accounts, Grace, Godspell, The Normal Heart, Reasons to Be Pretty, Butley, The Real Thing, Dinner at Eight and Betrayal. His off-Broadway work includes designs at Manhattan Theatre Club, Second Stage Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, MCC Theater, The Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Theatre for a New Audience, Vineyard Theatre and Atlantic Theater Company. Weiner has worked regionally at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Center Theatre Group, Guthrie Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, McCarter Theatre, Huntington Theatre, American Repertory Theater, Williamstown Theatre Festival, American Conservatory Theater, New York Stage & Film and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. His opera and music credits include Pictures Reframed (Lincoln Center), Die Vogel, Der Zerbochene Krug and Der Zwerg (Los Angeles Opera). His theme park work includes the first live stage production of Frozen at The Hyperion Theater in Disney’s California Adventure Park. Weiner has been awarded three Lucille Lortel Awards (Guards at the Taj, Through a Glass Darkly and Rodney’s Wife), an LA Ovation Award (Venice), a Drama Desk nomination (Small Fire) and seven American Theater Wing Hewes Design Award nominations. DavidWeinerDesign.com

Mikhail Fiksel (Sound Design) is a designer, composer, musician and DJ based in New York City and Chicago. His recent theatre credits include The Wolves by Sarah DeLappe (Studio Theatre, Goodman Theatre); The Treasurer by Max Posner and A Life by Adam Bock (Lucille Lortel Award, Drama Desk Award nomination; Playwrights Horizons); Tiger Style by Mike Lew (La Jolla Playhouse); Learning Curve by Albany Park Theatre Project and Third Rail Projects; The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window by Lorraine Hansberry and 2666 by Robert Falls and Seth Bockley (Goodman Theatre); and Fulfillment by Thomas Bradshaw (Drama Desk nomination; The Flea). His other credits include projects with Manhattan Theatre Club, 2nd Stage Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory, Dallas Theatre Center, The Old Globe, Geffen Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Victory Gardens, Writers Theatre and TimeLine Theatre Company. His film projects include original scores for The Wise Kids, Alien Brides...
Marc Masterson (Artistic Director) has expanded SCR’s community and artistic initiatives and produced dozens of world premieres including A Doll’s House, Part 2 by Lucas Hnath, Vietgone by Qui Nguyen, Mr. Wolf by Rajiv Joseph and Office Hour by Julia Cho. In recent years, SCR productions have transferred to some of the leading theatres in the country including Manhattan Theatre Club, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and The Goodman Theatre. His recent directing credits include Shakespeare in Love, All the Way, Going to a Place where you Already Are, Zealot, Death of a Salesman, Eurydice and Elemeno Pea at SCR; Hand to God at the Alliance Theatre; Byhalia, Mississippi by Evan and Glitch. He is a recipient of two Lucille Lortel Awards, multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards and the Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award; he is a proud member of Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association and United Scenic Artists. mikhailfiksel.com

Andy Knight (Dramaturg) is South Coast Repertory’s associate literary director and festival coordinator for the Pacific Playwrights Festival. At SCR, his dramaturg credits include the world premieres of Qui Nguyen's Vietgone, Catherine Trieschmann’s Theatre for Young Audiences play, OZ 2.5 and the West Coast premiere of Karen Zacarias’ Destiny of Desire. His other recent credits include the world premiere of Carla Ching’s The Two Kids That Blow Sh*t Up with Artists at Play. In addition to working as a dramaturg, he assists on SCR’s CrossRoads Initiative, a program that brings playwrights into the Orange County community as a way to inspire their new plays.

Bryan Sommer (Stage Manager) returns for his second time at South Coast Repertory. He first worked at SCR on the workshop of Tales of a 4th Grade Nothing (2017) and he’s thrilled to be a part of the Cambodian Rock Band company. His other select regional theatre credits include Shakespeare in Love, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, The Odd Couple, King Lear and Les Miserables at Utah Shakespeare Festival; Porgy and Bess at Ensemble Theatre Company of Santa Barbara; and Honor Killing, Elf: The Musical, Other Desert Cities and Deathtrap at Pioneer Theatre Company in his native home of Salt Lake City. When he can’t be found in the regional theatre, he can be found sailing the seas on cruise ships, stage-managing for Norwegian Creative Studios on cruise lines such as Regent Seven Seas and Oceania. Sommer is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

Kathleen Barrett (Assistant Stage Manager) is happy to return to South Coast Repertory where her previous credits include work on A Doll’s House, Part 2; Flora & Ulysses; Office Hour; The Tempest; The Stinky Cheese Man; Five Mile Lake; The Light in the Piazza; and Ivy + Bean: The Musical. In addition, she has spent the last four summers working with the SCR Summer Players on their productions of Into the Woods, Beauty and the Beast, Mary Poppins and Peter Pan. Her other recent credits include King Charles III (Pasadena Playhouse); The Crucible, Pass Over, The Fundamentals, Constellations, East of Eden, The Herd, Airline Highway (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); Cinderella at the Theater of Potatoes (The Hypocrites); Hand to God (Victory Gardens Theater); Far from Heaven (Porchlight Music Theatre); and Gotta Dance (Broadway in Chicago). Barrett holds a BA from Kalamazoo College in Michigan.

Bill and Carolyn Klein (Honorary Producers) are longtime supporters of SCR with a particular interest in imaginative new work. The Kleins have been generous SCR donors and subscribers since the early 1990s, as well as First Nights subscribers, Gala patrons and Platinum Circle members since 2000. With their support of Cambodian Rock Band, this is the couple’s fourth time as Individual Honorary Producers, having previously underwritten The Fantasticks in 2012, tokyo fish story in 2015 and Moby Dick last season. In 2016, Bill and Carolyn served, along with five other couples, as Honorary Producers of the Pacific Playwrights Festival. Bill has been a member of SCR’s Board of Trustees since 2010 and serves on the Finance Committee. Bill and Carolyn sum up their involvement with “We are happy to support this work and help SCR bring important stories to life on its stages for our community.”

Samuel and Tammy Tang (Honorary Producers) are pleased to take a third turn as Individual Honorary Producers. Samuel is Vice President, Development, on the SCR Board of Trustees and also chairs the Board’s Major Gifts Committee. The Tangs are fully engaged in the life of the theatre as Honorary Producers of the Pacific Playwrights Festival, First Nights subscribers on both stages and Gala underwriters. Previously, the couple helped underwrite tokyo fish story and last season’s District Merchants. Describing the experience of being Honorary Producers for this new play, the couple says, “Cambodian Rock Band transports you to a place where theatre and rock music merge, synthesize and explode into an unforgettable adventure.”

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MARTIN BENSON (Founding Artistic Director), co-founder of SCR, has directed nearly one-fourth of SCR’s productions. In 2008, he and David Emmes received the Margo Jones Award for their lifetime commitment to theatre excellence and fostering the art and craft of American playwriting. They also accepted SCR’s 1988 Tony Award for Outstanding Resident Professional Theatre and won the 1995 Theatre LA Ovation Award for Lifetime Achievement. Benson has received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Distinguished Achievement in Directing an unparalleled seven times for George Bernard Shaw’s Major Barbara, Misalliance and Heartbreak House; John Millington Synge’s Playboy of the Western World; Arthur Miller’s The Crucible; Sally Nemeth’s Holy Days; and the world premiere of Margaret Edson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning Wit, which he also directed at Seattle Repertory Theatre and Houston’s Alley Theatre. He has directed American classics such as A Streetcar Named Desire and has distinguished himself in staging contemporary work including the critically acclaimed California premiere of William Nicholson’s Shadowlands. He directed revivals of Beth Henley’s Abundance and Horton Foote’s The Trip to Bountiful; and Samuel D. Hunter’s The Whale and Rest (world premiere); The Whipping Man by Matthew Lopez; and The Roommate by Jen Silverman (west coast premiere). Benson received his BA in theatre from San Francisco State University.

PAULA TOMEI (Managing Director) is responsible for the overall administration of SCR. She has been managing director since 1994 and a member of SCR’s staff since 1979. She is a past president of the board of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for theatre. In addition, she served as treasurer of TCG, vice president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and as a member of the LORT Negotiating Committee for industry-wide union agreements. She represents SCR at national conferences of TCG and LORT and served as a theatre panelist and site visitor for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the California Arts Council. Her teaching background includes a graduate class in non profit management at the California Arts Council. Her teaching background includes a graduate class in non profit management at UC Irvine (UCI) and as a guest lecturer in the graduate school of business at Stanford. She was appointed by the chancellor to UCI’s Community Arts Council, serves on the Dean’s Leadership Society Executive Committee for the School of Social Sciences at UCI and is a member of the College of Arts Dean’s Task Force for California State University and his PhD from USC.

DAVID EMMES (Founding Artistic Director) is co-founder of South Coast Repertory. He received the Margo Jones Award for his lifetime commitment to theatre excellence and fostering the art of American playwriting. In addition, he has received numerous awards for productions he has directed during his SCR career. He directed the world premieres of Amy Freed’s Safe in Hell, The Beard of Avon and Freedomland; Thomas Babe’s Great Day in the Morning; Keith Reddin’s Rum and Coke and But Not for Me; and Neal Bell’s Cold Sweat; the American premieres of Terry Johnson’s Unsuitable for Adults; and Joe Penhall’s Dumb Show; and the Southland premiere of Top Girls (at SCR and the Westwood Playhouse). Other productions he has directed include Red, New England, Arcadia, The Importance of Being Earnest, Woman in Mind and You Never Can Tell, which he restaged for the Singapore Festival of Arts. He has served as a theatre panelist and onsite evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a panelist for the California Arts Council. After attending Orange Coast College, he received his BA and MA from San Francisco State University and his PhD from USC.