



58th Season • 537th Production
SEGERSTROM STAGE / FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 19, 2022

South Coast Repertory

David Ivers
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Paula Tomei
MANAGING DIRECTOR

David Emmes & Martin Benson
FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

presents

WHAT I LEARNED IN PARIS

by Pearl Cleage

Vicki Smith
SCENIC DESIGN

Dana Rebecca Woods
COSTUME DESIGN

Don Darnutzer
LIGHTING DESIGN

Jesse Mandapat
SOUND DESIGN

Macelle Mahala
DRAMATURG

Joanne DeNaut, CSA
CASTING

Kathryn Davies
STAGE MANAGER

DIRECTED BY
Lou Bellamy

Michael Ray
HONORARY PRODUCER

Jean & Tim Weiss
HONORARY PRODUCERS

U.S. Bank Foundation
CORPORATE HONORARY PRODUCER

Commissioned by and premiered at the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, GA, Susan V. Booth, Artistic Director
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

John Nelson	<i>James T. Alfred</i>
J.P. Madison	<i>A. Russell Andrews</i>
Lena Jefferson	<i>Celeste M. Cooper</i>
Eve Madison	<i>Erika LaVonn</i>
Ann Madison	<i>Kaye Winks</i>

SETTING

Atlanta, Georgia, 1973; Election night, 2 a.m.

LENGTH

Approximately two hours and 20 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Stage Manager	<i>Julie Ann Renfro</i>
Production Assistants	<i>Lauren Buangan, Gloria Perez</i>
Assistant Director	<i>Lucas Esperanza-Goodman</i>
Costume Design Assistant	<i>Deanna Reis</i>
Assistant Lighting Designer	<i>Jackie Gonzalez</i>
Assistant Sound Designer	<i>Mia Glenn-Schuster</i>
Light Board Operator	<i>Sean Deuel</i>
Sound Board Operator	<i>Cinthia Nava</i>
Deck Crew	<i>Ben Morrow</i>
Wardrobe Supervisor	<i>Kendall Dayton</i>
Dresser	<i>Anna De La Cour</i>
Additional Costume Staff	<i>Whitney Claytor, Anna De La Cour, Tessa Oberle, Jillian Pricco, Sarah Timm</i>

*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.*

*Cellular phones, beepers and watch alarms should be turned off or set to non-audible mode during the performance.
Please refrain from unwrapping candy or making other noises that may disturb surrounding patrons.*

*Photos may be taken before and after the show, and during intermission, but not during the performance itself.
Show your appreciation for the play by using the hashtag #WhatILearnedinParisSCR.
Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.*



Wit, Courage and Wisdom

A Dramaturgical Essay by Macelle Mahala



Maynard Jackson was the first African American to be elected mayor of Atlanta. He served two consecutive terms, from 1974-82, and a third term from 1990-94. He is credited with police reform, modernizing the transit infrastructure of the city, especially the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and the support of Black-owned businesses, whose contracts with the city went from less than one percent before Jackson's election to 35 percent under his leadership. His model of affirmative action in a majority Black city set a precedent for restorative racial and economic justice.

Pearl Cleage, the author of *What I Learned in Paris*, worked on Jackson's first mayoral campaign in 1973 and, after his election, served as his press secretary and director of communications. As such, she was an integral part of the beginning of 50 years of Black leadership in Atlanta and the successful continuation of the civil rights movement's efforts to claim political space and enfranchise Black Southerners. In her memoir, Cleage shares her diary entry from October 17, 1973: "We won!...Strange how we seem to feel the city will change overnight... I already know that working in this campaign has changed my life. The question will be how?"

Election night, Atlanta, 1973 is the opening setting for *What I Learned in Paris*. In this play, Cleage draws from her own history in partial answer to the question posed in her diary. Each of the characters in the play is involved in Jackson's campaign, and like Cleage, they all change and grow in the immediate aftermath of his election. The play illustrates how difficult it is to blaze a new trail, whether that be

Above: Maynard Jackson at his first press conference as Mayor, Atlanta, Georgia, Jan. 8, 1974. (Al Stephenson/Atlanta Journal-Constitution via AP). Right: Playwright Pearl Cleage.



personally or politically. While all the characters are breaking racial barriers, the women in the play are also confronting sexism and the societal strictures placed upon Black women. Cleage writes about this struggle in her diaries as well: "the problem it seems to me is the total submergence of your personality into the life of your man... It is funny how embarrassed you are to admit that sexism even exists." The character Evie seems to have figured it out and serves as a role model to the younger women. I love how Cleage portrays this older woman as the most self-assured, wise and free and therefore the most admired and desired. I also love how the play emphasizes personal happiness and growth, even or maybe especially in the face of the intense pressures and dangers of being civil rights activists and agents of positive social and political change.

The pandemic has made many people re-evaluate what is most important: how do we live a life of purpose, what kinds of working conditions are acceptable, the responsibilities we have for others and for ourselves, the importance and fragility of our own mental health and social connections. Set in a far-off time and place, this play explores some of these same issues in a witty, comedic and thought-provoking way.

Artist Biographies



JAMES T. ALFRED

John Nelson

is an award winning actor who is making his SCR debut. Other stage credits include Broadway national tour of August Wilson's *Jitney*; *Detroit '67*, August Wil-

son's *Jitney*, *Redshirts*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running* and *A Brown Tale* at Penumbra Theater; *Head of Passes* by Academy Award winner Tarell McCraney and *The Glass Menagerie* at Steppenwolf Theatre; *Radio Golf* at Chicago's Court Theatre; *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *The Mountaintop* at the Guthrie Theater; *Fences* at Indiana Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater and Arizona Repertory Theatre; *April 4, 1968* at Indiana Repertory Theatre; *Brothers of the Dust* at Congo Square; *All's Well That Ends Well* at The Public Theater; and *Endgame* at Baltimore Center Stage. Television credits include FOX's "Empire" and "Prison Break"; NBC's "Law & Order: Organized Crime," "Chicago P.D.," "Black List" and "Blind Spot;" CBS' "FBI"; STARZ's "Boss" and "Power Book II: Ghost." He is a graduate of the Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University and holds and MFA from the Moscow Art Theater School in Russia.



A. RUSSELL ANDREWS

J.P. Madison

is the founding member of the award winning, LA-based stage company, StageWalkers. As an actor, he was chosen by August Wilson to originate the roles of Mister

in *King Hedley II* and Youngblood in *Jitney*. With StageWalkers, he's garnered multiple actor/producer honors including NAACP Theatre and LA Ovarions for his work with Wilson's *Piano Lesson*, *Jitney* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, where he received his first NAACP Award for Best Actor. As Youngblood in the London cast of *Jitney*, Andrews, along with Wilson and the ensemble, received the UK's Olivier Award for Best New Play performed at London's Royal Na-

tional Theatre. His film and television credits include Principal Gaines in "Insecure" (HBO), Principal Avery in "Sterling" (HBO), Lifetime's *Searching for Neverland*, TVOne's *Runaway Island*, directed by Dianne Houston, Hanelle Culpepper's *A Single Rose*, "The Punisher," "NCIS: New Orleans," Better Call Saul," "Shameless" and "The Defenders." arussellandrews.com



CELESTE M. COOPER

Lena Jefferson

is excited to make her SCR debut. She is an ensemble member with Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Her Steppenwolf credits include *BLKS*; *Doppelgänger*; *Familiar*; *A Doll's House, Part 2*; and *New York Times* critic's pick *Duchess! Duchess! Duchess!* Additional theatre credits include Pearl Cleage's *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Court Theatre), *Measure for Measure* (Goodman Theatre), *Stick Fly* (Windy City Playhouse), *Ruined* (Eclipse Theatre), *For Colored Girls...* (Kansas City Repertory), *Building The Wall* (Curious Theatre in Denver) and *Mrs. Harrison* (Indiana Repertory). Her TV and film credits include recurring on "Chicago PD," "4400," "Sense8," Spike Lee's *Chirag*, and a leading role in indie feature *Range Runners* currently streaming. Awards: Most Promising Actress (Black Theater Alliance); Best Actress for *Range Runners* (Twister Alley); *NewCity Stage* magazine listed her as "people who really perform for Chicago" in 2020. She has a BA from Tennessee State University and MFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University.



ERIKA LAVONN

Eve Madison

returns after making her SCR debut in *Sheepdog*. She has worked on small and big screens, in soaps and dramas, Hallmark and horror, including "Law & Order: SVU" and *War of the Worlds*. From historical human to a fictional feral, LaVonn has portrayed the likes of

Mary Stuart in *Mary Stuart*, and Marian Anderson in *My Lord, What a Night*, to Nala and Serabi in Broadway's *The Lion King*. She has had the privilege of working overseas and at numerous theatres from coast to coast including those located in Portland, Denver, Dallas, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Louisville, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Delaware, Hartford, Boston, and at The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.. She counts *The Christians* (The Wilma Theater, Syracuse Stage), *What I Learned in Paris* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), *The Mountaintop* (Guthrie Theater, Blumenthal Center, Arizona Theatre Company) amongst her favorites.



KAYE WINKS

Ann Madison

is an actress, writer, and comedian. In Chicago, she performed in The Second City's first all-female sketch comedy revue *She the People: Girlfriends' Guide to Sisters Doing It for Themselves* and co-wrote its follow-up, *She the People: The Resistance Continues*. Winks also performed with The Second City at The Kennedy Center in the holiday satire, *Love, Factually*. Her original play *Hoods* premiered at Goodman Theatre in association with Collaboraction Theatre. She performed her Chicago Reader Recommended solo show *TOKEN* at Theatre Aspen. She trained at the Moscow Art Theatre's Stanislavsky Summer School in association with the American Repertory Theatre and Harvard University as well as with French master clown Philippe Gaulier. Her recent television credits include HBO Max's "South Side" and "Fresh Off the Boat" on ABC. kayewinks.com

PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR AND DESIGNERS

PEARL CLEAGE (*Playwright*) is an Atlanta-based writer whose works include three novels, *What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*, *I Wish I Had A Red Dress* and *Some Things I Never Thought I'd Do*; a dozen plays, including *Flyin' West*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Hospice and Bourbon at the Border*; two books of essays, *Mad at Miles: A Blackwoman's Guide to Truth and Deals With the Devil and Other Reasons to Riot*; and a book of short fiction, *The Brass Bed and Other Stories*. She is also a performance artist, collaborating frequently with her husband, Zaron W. Bur-

nett, Jr., under the title Live at Club Zebra. The two have performed sold out shows at both the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and The National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, Georgia. She is a frequent contributor to anthologies and has been featured recently in *Proverbs for the People*, *Contemporary African American Fiction and in Mending the World, Stories of Family by Contemporary Black Writers*. She is a Contributing Writer to *Essence* magazine, and in 1998, her novel, *What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day* was an Oprah Book Club pick and spent nine weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list.

LOU BELLAMY (*Director*) returns to SCR after directing *Fireflies*. He is the founder and artistic director emeritus of Penumbra Theatre. During his 40-year tenure, Penumbra evolved into one of America's premier theatres dedicated to dramatic exploration of the African American experience. Under his leadership, Penumbra has grown to be the largest theater of its kind in America and has produced more than 45 world premieres including August Wilson's first professional production. Bellamy and Penumbra are proud to have produced more of Wilson's plays than any theatre in the world. Bellamy is an Obie Award-winning director, an accomplished actor and, for 38 years, he served as an associate professor at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Bellamy most recently directed Penumbra's productions of *Pipeline* and *Brothers Paranormal*. His selected directing credits outside of Penumbra include plays at the Logan Square Arts Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Signature Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Guthrie Theater, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Geva Theatre Center, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Gem Theater, Round House and Hartford Stage.

VICKI SMITH (*Scenic Design*) is pleased to return to SCR, having previously designed *Fireflies*. She has designed for Denver Center Theatre Company, Arizona Theatre Company, Penumbra Theatre Company, Children's Theatre Company, Geva Theatre Center, Indiana Repertory Theatre, The Guthrie Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, among others. She received Bay Area Critics Awards for *Kite Runner* and *Execution of Justice*, a *Drama-Logue* award for *Cyrano*, and Colora-

do Theatre and Denver Ovation Awards for *Mariela in the Desert*, *Doubt*, *Plainsong*, *I'm Not Rappaport* and *Pierre*, which was selected for the 2007 Prague Quadrennial Design Exposition. Her work has been shown in two museum exhibitions: *Penumbra Theatre at 40* at the Minnesota History Center and *No Small Parts, the Role of Scale Models in Theater Set Design* at the Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures in Tucson.

DANA REBECCA WOODS (*Costume Design*) theater designs include *Fitney* and *Fences* at SCR; *Intimate Apparel* at Orlando Shakes; *Under Normal Circumstances* and *In the Red and Brown Water* at UC Santa Barbara; *Pipeline* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival and Ensemble Theater Cincinnati; NAACP award nominated *The Color Purple* at the Greenway Court Theater; *Blues in the Night* at San Francisco's Post Street Theater; Laguna Playhouse and the Wallis Annenberg Center; and *Shout Sister Shout*, *Stop Kiss*, *Above the Fold*, *Fences* and others for The Pasadena Playhouse. Film and television design work includes John Sayles' *Go For Sisters*; *The Line (The Mechanic)*; telenovela "Watch Over Me;" and web series "Ethnically Ambiguous." Woods' taught at UCF, UCLA, and is guest speaker at LA Trade Tech College. She is a member of United Scenic Artists; Costume Designers Guild; Motion Picture Costumers and Co-Chair of the CDG Diversity Committee.

DON DARNUTZER (*Lighting Design*) designed *Fireflies* for South Coast Repertory. His most recent lighting and projection design was for *Dead Man Walking* at the Israel Opera (Tel Aviv). He designed the lighting for the Broadway production of *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* and the off-Broadway productions of *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, *The Immigrant* and *Almost Heaven: John Denver's America*. He has designed for Guthrie Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Arizona Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, The Shakespeare Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Cleveland Play House, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Penumbra Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Old Globe, Mark Taper Forum, Alley Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Saint Louis Repertory, Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Palm Beach Opera, Portland Opera, New Orleans Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Atlanta Opera, Central City Opera and Minnesota Opera.

JESSE MANDAPAT (*Sound Design*) is returning for his second SCR design, having previously designed *A Shot Rang Out*. He was nominated in Los Angeles for a 2021 Ovation Award in Sound Design for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Greenway Court Theatre). Off-Broadway designs include *Bundle of Sticks* (INTAR), *Tell Hector I Miss Him* (Atlantic Theatre Company), *Fool For Love* (Theatre for the New City), *Fish Men* (INTAR) and *Locusts Have No King* (INTAR). Los Angeles designs include *West Adams* (Skylight Theatre), *Red Ink* (Playwright's Arena), *Defenders* (The Broadwater), *The Chinese Lady* (Artists At Play), *Be A Good Little Widow* (Odyssey Theater Ensemble), *Exit Strategy* (LA LGBT Center) and *1984* (Greenway Court Theatre). Special projects: *The Castle Rock Live Experience* (San Diego Comic-Con 2018), *The Fantastic Kim Sisters* (East West Players Theatre For Youth) and *What Goes Around* (Kaiser Permanente Educational Theatre). He has a BA in Music from UC San Diego and an MFA in Sound Design from CalArts.

MACELLE MAHALA (*Dramaturg*) writes about the intersection of theatre, race, performance, and social justice. She is the author of *Penumbra: The Premier Stage for African American Drama* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) and *Black Theater, City Life: African American Art Institutions and Urban Cultural Ecologies*, forthcoming in August from Northwestern University Press. The latter includes a chapter on Atlanta starting from the era represented in *What I Learned in Paris*. Her essays, "Asserting Black Subjectivity on the German Stage," (2019) and "Against Order(s): Dictatorship, Absurdism, and the Plays of Sony Labou Tansi," (2016) appear in critical anthologies by Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan. Other writing has been featured in *Theatre Journal*; *Theatre Topics*; *Continuum: The Journal of African Diaspora Drama, Theatre, and Performance*; *Women & Performance*; and *XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics*. She currently serves as Humanities Center Director and Professor of English and Media X at the University of the Pacific.

KATHRYN DAVIES (*Stage Manager*) previously stage-managed *A Shot Rang Out*, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Poor Yella Rednecks*, *Sugar Plum Fairy*, *Orange*, *The Roommate*, *All the Way*, *Future Thinking*, *Red*, *Vietgone*, *The Whipping Man*, *Tartuffe*, *Reunion*, *Trudy and Max in Love*, *The Motherf**ker with the Hat*, *How to Write a New Book for the Bible*, *Sight Unseen*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *In the Next Room or the vibrator play*, *Doctor Cerberus*,

Ordinary Days, Our Mother's Brief Affair and *The Injured Party*—all at SCR. Her favorite credits include *The Wars* at the Grand Theatre; *Dividing the Estate* at Dallas Theater Center; *La Bohème* at Tulsa Opera; *The Mystery of Irma Vep* at The Old Globe; *Les Contes D'Hoffmann* at Hawaii Opera Theatre; *Of Mice and Men* at Neptune Theatre; *The Dresser* at Manitoba Theatre Centre; *Skylight* at Tarragon Theatre; *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Citadel Theatre; and *The Designated Mourner* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Davies also worked as head theatre manager at the Toronto International, Dubai International, AFI, TCM and Los Angeles film festivals.

JULIE ANN RENFRO (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is grateful to return to SCR for *What I Learned In Paris*! Other SCR favorites include *A Christmas Carol*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *The Parisian Woman*, *Of Good Stock*, *The Light Princess* and *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, among many others! Additional credits include LA Opera, Geffen Playhouse, La Mirada Theater, Pasadena Playhouse, Laguna Playhouse, Sydney Independent Theatre Company, Long Beach Shakespeare Company and the 2018 North American Tour of *A Night with Janis Joplin*. Renfro is from Costa Mesa, CA, where she received her BA in theatre arts from Vanguard University and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. LYBNC!

DAVID IVERS (*Artistic Director*) is responsible for the overall artistic operation of the theatre. The 2019-20 season was the first he programmed here, and he directed *She Loves Me* (2020), and the 2021 Pacific Playwrights Festival reading of *Coleman '72* by Charlie Oh. In 2015, he directed the SCR-Berkeley Repertory Theatre co-production of *One Man, Two, Two Guvnors*. Prior to SCR, he was artistic director for Arizona Theatre Company and, before that, served more than 20 years as an actor and director at Utah Shakespeare Festival, with the last six as artistic director. He was a resident artist at Denver Center for the Performing Arts for a decade, acting in and/or directing more than 40 plays and has helmed productions at many of the nation's leading regional theatres including the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and South Coast Repertory. His early career included serving as associate artistic director of Portland Repertory Theatre and appearing in productions at some of the nation's top regional theatres including Portland Center Stage and the Oregon, Alabama

MICHAEL RAY is an Honorary Producer for the fifth time with his sponsorship of *What I Learned In Paris*. He was also one of two Season Producers for the enormously popular inaugural Outside SCR at Mission San Juan Capistrano last summer. Michael's love of the theatre has also inspired him to underwrite *A Shot Rang Out*, *She Loves Me*, *M. Butterfly* and, as a member of Playwrights Circle, *Sheepdog*. He joined the theatre's Board of Trustees in 2018 and currently serves as Vice President of Community Relations, playing an important role not only as an enthusiastic supporter but also as an energetic ambassador for SCR in the community.

JEAN & TIM WEISS with their support of *What I Learned In Paris*, are marking their 24th time serving as Honorary Producers for an SCR production. For more than two decades, Jean and Tim have been among our staunchest supporters and their leadership has inspired many others to become involved at SCR. Tim served for nine years on the Board of Trustees, including two terms as President, and is now an Honorary Trustee. For her part, Jean chaired the theatre's magnificent 45th Anniversary Gala in 2008. Together, they are major donors to the Next Stage and Legacy Campaigns. Commenting on their extraordinary support of SCR, Tim states that "throughout our long involvement, the theatre has never failed to impress, delivering top-notch productions and being a wonderful cultural asset for our community."

U.S. BANK FOUNDATION adds *What I Learned In Paris* to its impressive history of supporting SCR productions, which include, but are not limited to, *American Mariachi*, *Once*, *The Tempest*, *Death of a Salesman*, and the Stephen Sondheim classic, *A Little Night Music*. U.S. Bank has also previously supported Theatre for Young Audiences programming and the 30th anniversary production of *A Christmas Carol*. U.S. Bank believes communities are stronger when they are connected through the arts, cultural opportunities, and safe, accessible recreational play spaces. There is power in play, which is why U.S. Bank invests in community programming that supports access to the arts, arts education and learning through play for children and adults in low- to moderate-income communities. U.S. Bank is fortunate to have Tara Netherton serve on SCR's Board of Trustees since 2020.

and Idaho Shakespeare festivals. He has taught at the University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, Southern Utah University and Southern Oregon University. He earned his BA from Southern Oregon University and his MFA from the University of Minnesota.

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 and 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 and serves on the Dean's Leadership Society Executive Committee for the School of Social Sciences at UCI. She is also on the board of Arts Orange County, the county-wide arts council, and the board of the Nicholas Endowment. She graduated from UCI with a degree in economics and pursued an additional course of study in theatre and dance. In March 2017, she received the Mayor's Award from the City of Costa Mesa for her contributions to the arts community. In 2018, she received the Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Award from Arts Orange County. In 2019, she was awarded UCI's Distinguished Alumna in the School of Social Sciences at the Lauds & Laurels Celebration.

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.

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 to 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.



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The Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers in LORT theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.



The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.