



43rd Season • 417th Production
JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE / APRIL 22 - MAY 13, 2007

South Coast Repertory

David Emmes
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Martin Benson
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

presents the world premiere of

SYSTEM WONDERLAND

BY David Wiener

Myung Hee Cho
SCENIC AND COSTUME DESIGN

Lap-Chi Chu
LIGHTING DESIGN

Tom Cavnar
SOUND DESIGN

Martin Noyes
FIGHT DIRECTOR

John Glore
DRAMATURG

David Leavenworth
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Erin Nelson*
STAGE MANAGER

DIRECTED BY
David Emmes

Larry and Dee Higby, HONORARY PRODUCERS

System Wonderland was commissioned and developed by South Coast Repertory.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Jerry *Robert Desiderio**
Evelyn *Shannon Cochran**
Aaron *John Sloan**

SETTING

A house on the coast of Los Angeles county.

LENGTH

Approximately two hours with one 15-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Casting *Joanne DeNaut*
Production Assistant *Jennifer Ellen Butler*
Videographer *Victor Mouledoux*
Assistant Videographer *Chip Tompkins*
Stage Management Intern *Emily Krech*
Assistant Lighting Designer *Johnny Bradley*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Film and Video Department of Orange Coast College

*Please refrain from unwrapping candy or making other noises that may disturb surrounding patrons.
The use of cameras and recorders in the theatre is prohibited. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.
Cellular phones, beepers and watch alarms should be turned off or set to non-audible mode during the performance.*

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.



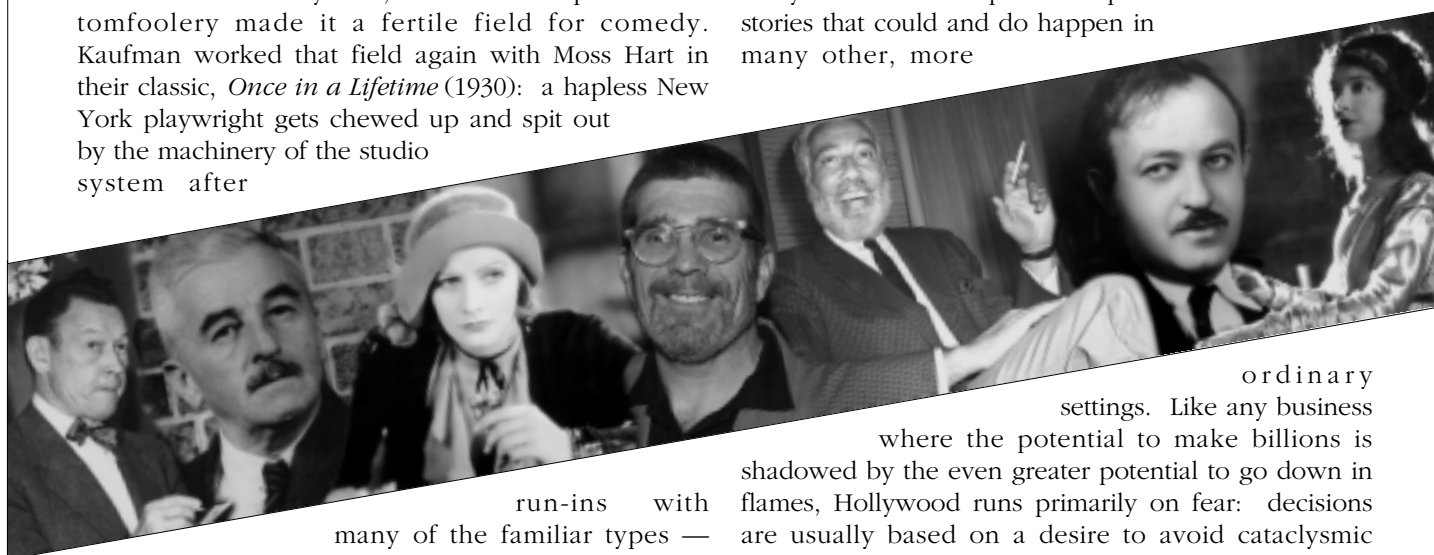
In the Navel of a Fruitfly

BY JOHN GLORE

George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly's *Merton of the Movies* follows its wide-eyed, title character from small-town Illinois to Hollywood, where the movie-crazy Merton aims to become a serious film-maker; but he soon discovers that the battle between art and commerce all too often makes the people who make movies behave badly. Kaufman and Connelly wrote the play in 1922, before the advent of talkies, but even at that early date, Tinseltown's reputation for tomfoolery made it a fertile field for comedy. Kaufman worked that field again with Moss Hart in their classic, *Once in a Lifetime* (1930): a hapless New York playwright gets chewed up and spit out by the machinery of the studio system after

irresistible. The disillusioned playwright's motives — to gain a measure of revenge? to expose the sordid truth behind the glamour and glitz? to turn lemons of bitter experience into the lemonade of high comedy? — don't always yield dramatic gold, however much the result may soothe the writer's bruised ego.

But the best Hollywood plays turn out not to be *about* Hollywood, at bottom. Instead they use the volatile, competitive, high-stakes dynamic of Hollywood to turn up the temperature on human stories that could and do happen in many other, more



run-ins with many of the familiar types — the megalomaniacal producer, the catty gossip columnist, the self-important director — that have become frequent targets in a legion of subsequent Hollywood plays both serious and satirical.

A chat-room for theatre people yields a list of two dozen titles with ease — from *The Big Knife* by Clifford Odets to Sam Shepard's *Angel City* to David Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow* — plays that find deliciously unsavory fodder in Hollywood, in its denizens and the system by which movies are made and careers are launched or destroyed. For any playwright who has had dealings with the Hollywood dream factory, the temptation to throw poison-tipped darts at its venal, back-biting, soul-corroding ways seems almost

ordinary settings. Like any business where the potential to make billions is shadowed by the even greater potential to go down in flames, Hollywood runs primarily on fear: decisions are usually based on a desire to avoid cataclysmic failure. And fear is one of the principal fuels for both comedy and drama. So take a fraught situation — a relationship or set of relationships seething with tension — drop it into the Hollywood pressure-cooker and the human stuff is more apt to boil over in interesting ways.

We can also thank Hollywood for the fact that the people who have swum successfully in its shark-infested waters often have amusing or interesting things to say about their experience. Here's a sampling.



You can take all the sincerity in Hollywood, place it in the navel of a fruit fly and still have room enough for three caraway seeds and a producer's heart.

— Fred Allen



Above, left to right, Fred Allen, William Faulkner, Greta Garbo, David Mamet, Cesar Romero, Ben Hecht and Lillian Gish.

Hollywood is a place where a man can get stabbed in the back while climbing a ladder.

— William Faulkner



If only those who dream about Hollywood knew how difficult it all is.

— Greta Garbo



You know, when I first went into the movies Lionel Barrymore played my grandfather. Later he played my father and finally he played my husband. If he had lived I'm sure I would have played his mother. That's the way it is in

It's said in Hollywood that you should always forgive your enemies — because you never know when you'll have to work with them.

— Lana Turner



Hollywood is loneliness beside the swimming pool.

— Liv Ullmann



If my books had been any worse, I should not have been invited to Hollywood, and if they had been any better, I should not have come.

— Raymond Chandler



Hollywood is like life, you face it with the sum total of your equipment.

— Joan Crawford



Hollywood. The men get younger and the women get older.

— Lillian Gish



The honors Hollywood has for the writer are as dubious as tissue-paper cuff links.

— Ben Hecht



We Americans have always considered Hollywood, at best, a sinkhole of depraved venality. And, of course, it is.

— David Mamet



Well, you know what they say in Hollywood — the most important thing is being sincere, even if you have to fake it.

— Cesar Romero



In Hollywood — in Hollywood, you're as good as your last picture.

— Erich von Stroheim

Hollywood is the backdrop of my family, and I know that the movie business is incredibly cruel as you get older.

— Jamie Lee Curtis



I'm yet another resource-consuming kid in an overpopulated planet, raised to an alarming extent by Hollywood and Madison Avenue, poised with my cynical and alienated peers to take over the world when you're old and weak.

— Bill Watterson (*Calvin and Hobbes*)



Scriptwriting is the toughest part of the whole racket, the least understood and the least noticed.

— Frank Capra



Millions are to be grabbed out here and your only competition is idiots. Don't let this get around.

— Herman Mankiewicz to Ben Hecht

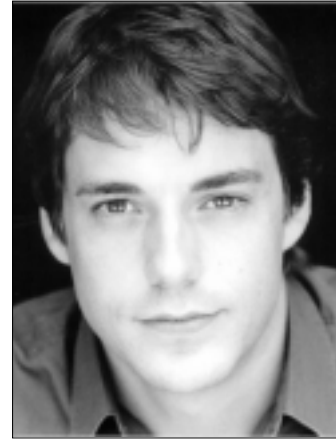
Left to right, Erich von Stroheim, Lana Turner, Liv Ullman, Raymond Chandler, Joan Crawford, Frank Capra and Jamie Lee Curtis



SHANNON COCHRAN
Evelyn



ROBERT DESIDERIO
Jerry



JOHN SLOAN
Aaron

Artist Biographies

***SHANNON COCHRAN** (*Evelyn*) previously appeared at SCR in the Pacific Playwrights Festival reading of *System Wonderland*. Theatre credits include *Private Lives* at Long Wharf Theatre; *Bug* at the Barrow Street Theatre for which she received an Obie and a Theatre World Award; *93 Acres of Barley* at the Taper New Works Festival; *Space* at Mark Taper Forum; *Morning Star*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *Inspecting Carol*, *Your Home in the West* and *Stepping Out* at Steppenwolf Theatre Company; *Bug* at the Gate Theatre, London; *Henry IV*, *What the Butler Saw* and *Happy End* (Joseph Jefferson Award nomination) at the Court Theatre; *Riverview*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Flea in Her Ear* and *Pal Joey* (Joseph Jefferson Award) at The Goodman Theatre; *Other People's Money* at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park;

Sweet Charity, *My Fair Lady* and *Baby* (Joseph Jefferson Award nominations for all three) at Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire; *Three Ways Home* at Victory Gardens Theater; *The Nerd* at the Royal George Theatre; and *The Elephant Man* at Playhouse on the Square. Film credits include *The Substance of Things Hoped For*, *Star Trek: Nemesis*, *The Ring* and *The Babe*. Television appearances include a recurring role on "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine"; guest starring roles on "Grey's Anatomy," "Strong Medicine," "The Office," "Without a Trace," "Law & Order: SVU," "Frasier," "Gilmore Girls," "Touched by an Angel," "Grosse Pointe," "ER" and "NYPD Blue"; and the television movies *Witness Protection*, *Prowler*, *This Just In*, *The Haunting of Seacliff Inn*, *Treasure Island*, *Moment of Rage*, *The Old Forest* and *Measure for Measure*.

***ROBERT DESIDERIO** (*Jerry*) is making his SCR debut. He has appeared in *Down the Road* and *The Disputation* at Tiffany Theatre, *Love Letters* at Coronet Theatre, *Room Service* at Pasadena Playhouse, *Herself as Lust* at Playwrights Horizons, *Chisholm Trail* at Manhattan Theatre Club and *The Indian Wants the Bronx* at the Charles Playhouse, as well as numerous productions at Boston Shakespeare Company and the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival. Film and television credits include *The Princess and the Cabbie*, *Oh God! You Devil*, *Gross Anatomy*, "The Sopranos," "The Jeff Foxworthy Show," "Murder, She Wrote," "Cheers," "Knots Landing," "Heart of the City," "Ryan's Hope" and "One Life to Live." Desiderio also wrote the screenplay for the feature film *Save Me*, which was part of the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

***JOHN SLOAN** (*Aaron*) made his SCR debut as Jamie in *The Retreat from Moscow* and was last seen on stage in The Antaeus Company's production of *Mother Courage and her Children*. His New York theatre credits include *As You Like It* at the 78th Street Theatre Lab, *Twelfth Night* at La MaMa E.T.C., *Miss Lulu Bett* at The Mint Theatre Company, *Maybe Baby, It's You* at SoHo Playhouse, *Anne Frank and Me* at the American Jewish Theatre and *Let's Play Two* at Incite Productions. Mr. Sloan's regional theatre credits include *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Spinning into Butter*, *A Skull in Connemara* and *Amy's View* at Denver Center Theatre Company; *Holiday Memories* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival; *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* at Intiman Theatre; and *The Fantasticks* at the Alma Theatre. His television credits include leading roles in FOX's "Happy Hour" and "The Triangle" for The Sci Fi Channel; recurring roles on ABC's "Commander in Chief" and CBS' "Judging Amy;" and guest starring roles on "Gilmore Girls," "American Dreams," "JAG" and "Tru Calling." His feature film credits include *The OH in OHio* and *Returning Mickey Stern*.

PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR & DESIGNERS

DAVID WIENER (*Playwright*) was born and raised in Irvine, California. His plays include *Guts*, *La Arana*, *Love Song (of the Apocalypse)*, *Blood Orange, in vitro*, *Huera*, *Cassiopeia* and *Baltimore Star*. His work has appeared in the United States and the United Kingdom at theatres including Cherry Lane Theatre, Blue Heron Arts Center, Etcetera Theatre (UK), HB Studios, Atlantic Theater Company, Almeida Theatre (UK), The New Group, A Contemporary Theatre, Hudson Stage and SoHo

Repertory. He is a graduate of Duke University where he won the Reynolds Price Award for Drama. He is also a graduate of Columbia University's MFA Playwriting Program. He has received the Cherry Lane Fellowship, The Rossetti Fellowship, The Lark Theatre Fellowship and commissions from Atlantic Theater Company, South Coast Repertory, SoHo Repertory Theatre and Seattle's A Contemporary Theatre. His plays are published by Dramatists Play Service and Smith & Kraus. Mr. Wiener is a professor of playwriting at Marymount Manhattan College. He lives with his wife in New York City and is currently at work on a new play.

DAVID EMMES (*Director/Producing Artistic Director*) is co-founder of SCR. He has received numerous awards for productions he has directed during his SCR career, including a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for the direction of George Bernard Shaw's *The Philanderer*. 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*; the West Coast premieres of C.P. Taylor's *Good* and Harry Kondoleon's *Christmas on Mars*; and the Southland premiere of *Top Girls* (at SCR and the Westwood Playhouse). Other productions include the West Coast premieres of *Three Viewings* by Jeffrey Hatcher, *The Secret Rapture* by David Hare and *New England* by Richard Nelson; and *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, Ayckbourn's *Woman in Mind* and *You Never Can Tell* by George Bernard

Shaw, 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, on the Executive Committee of the League of Resident Theatres, and 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 in theatre and film from USC.

MYUNG HEE CHO (*Scenic/Costume Design*) has designed for theatre, opera and dance. She is happy to be back at SCR after just designing *The Piano Teacher* and previously designing *Nostalgia* and *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*. Her designs have been seen at Mark Taper Forum/ Kirk Douglas Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, A.C.T./SF, Kennedy Center, Laguna Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, East West Players, Chicago Opera Theater, Long Wharf Theatre, Intiman Theatre, The Public Theater/NYSF, Union Square Theatre, Manhattan Class Company, Vineyard Theatre, Music Theatre Group, 2econd Stage Theatre, New York Stage & Film, New York Theatre Workshop, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Classic Stage Company, CenterStage, The Children's Theatre Company, Disney Creative Entertainments and Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. She has designed the North American tours of *Wit* and *Lackawanna Blues*. She was the recipient of the 1995 Princess Grace Award, and is a lecturer at Cal State Fullerton. Ms. Cho is a graduate of Cooper Union and Yale School of Drama.

LAP-CHI CHU (*Lighting Design*) has designed lighting for theatre, opera and dance throughout the country. Recent regional designs

include Mark Taper Forum, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arena Stage, Hartford Stage, San Jose Repertory, Dallas Theater Center, Portland Center Stage, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Indiana Repertory, Syracuse Stage, Intiman Theatre, Portland Stage Company, Shakespeare&Co., Evidence Room and Ordway Music Theatre. His New York design credits include New York Theatre Workshop, Dance Theater Workshop, PS 122, The Kitchen, Danspace Project and Juilliard Opera. He is the lighting/video designer for Chamecki/Lerner Dance Company (*Costumes by God, Visible Content, Hidden Forms, 1 Mutantes Seras* and *Por Favor, Não Me Deixe*), performed in the United States and Brazil. He has created many designs over the last decade as the resident lighting designer for Lincoln Center's Juilliard Drama. He has received multiple Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for best lighting. Mr. Chu is on the lighting design faculty at California Institute of the Arts.

TOM CAVNAR (*Sound Design*) is in his second season as staff Audio Technician and is designing his seventh production at SCR. This season, he created the sound design for *Bach at Leipzig, Pig Farm, The Prince and the Pauper* and most recently *The Piano Teacher*. He also designed sound for the Summer Players' production of *East of the Sun and West of*

the Moon, as well as the workshop production of *Leitmotif* at the 2006 Pacific Playwrights Festival. His other design credits include *After Juliet* at The Coterie Theatre; *Bright Ideas* at Unicorn Theatre; and numerous productions for the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Department of Theatre. Mr. Cavnar holds an MFA in Theatre Sound Design from UMKC, and a BA in Theatre from Western Michigan University.

***MARTIN NOYES** (*Fight Director*) returns to SCR where he most recently fight directed *Pig Farm, Ridiculous Fraud, Nothing Sacred, Bach at Leipzig*, the American premiere of *Hitchcock Blonde* (he also played the Husband) and *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*. Other recent work includes *King Lear, As You Like It* and *Pygmalion* at Shakespeare Santa Cruz; *I'm not Rappaport* at Little Fish Theatre Company; *Big Love, Cabaret, Hot 'N' Throbbing, A Christmas Story* and *Never in My Lifetime* at The Chance Theater; and *The Grapes of Wrath* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Mr. Noyes received his BFA from Southern Oregon University and his MFA from the University of Alabama, both in Theatre with the emphasis in Acting. He is also a member of the Society of American Fight Directors.

JOHN GLORE (*Dramaturg*) has been SCR's Associate Artistic Di-

LARRY AND DEE HIGBY

(Honorary Producers). Last season, SCR Board President Larry Higby and his wife Dee became first-time Honorary Producers by underwriting *Born Yesterday*. This season they're back to help bring a world premiere to the stage by underwriting *System Wonderland*. The Higbys' support began in 1992 when they joined the SCR family as members of the Platinum Circle of donors. Dee was elected to the Board of Trustees and served two years as President. She also chaired the 30th Season Gala Ball and she and Larry together chaired the 40th Season Gala. Larry joined the Board in 2001 and is currently the President. Prior to that he served two years as Vice President, Development. Dee and Larry hold the distinction of being the first and only couple to both serve as President of the Board during their tenure. Finally, the Higbys were among those who helped make the Folino Theatre Center a reality with their generous contribution to The Next Stage Campaign.

HAMLET
 by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
 directed by DANIEL SULLIVAN
 MAY 25 - JULY 1
 SEGERSTROM STAGE

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rector since 2005 and served as dramaturg on the theatre's productions of Tanya Barfield's *Blue Door*, Terry Johnson's *Hitchcock Blonde* and Beth Henley's *Ridiculous Fraud*, among others. As SCR's literary manager from 1985 to 2000 he provided dramaturgical support for dozens of productions, workshops and readings. From 2000 to 2005 he was resident dramaturg for the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, where projects included Luis Alfaro's *Electricidad*, Culture Clash's *Chavez Ravine*, Lisa Loomer's *Living Out* and Jessica Goldberg's *Sex Parasite*. His ongoing collaboration with Culture Clash also includes a new adaptation of Aristophanes' *The Birds* (co-produced by SCR and Berkeley Repertory Theatre) and *Water & Power* at the Taper. From 1981-84 he was literary manager at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage, and he has also worked as a dramaturg for The Old Globe and Midwest PlayLabs. His own plays have been produced at SCR, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and other theatres across the country. He has taught playwriting and related subjects at Pomona College and UCLA and has contributed articles to such publications as *Theater* and *American Theatre*. He received his MFA degree in dramaturgy from the Yale School of Drama.

***ERIN NELSON** (*Stage Manager*) is delighted to be part of this exciting new work. Other SCR credits include *A Christmas Carol*, *Life is a Dream*, *Bach at Leipzig*, *The Studio*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *A View from the Bridge* and Theatre for Young Audiences productions of *The Stinky Cheese*

Man, The Adventures of Pør Quinly, *Bunnicula*, *The Little Prince*, *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Previous credits include La Jolla Playhouse, The Old Globe, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, National Playwrights Conference and Theatre IV.

MARTIN BENSON (*Artistic Director*), co-founder of SCR with his colleague David Emmes, has directed nearly one third of the plays produced here. He has distinguished himself in the staging of contemporary work, including William Nicholson's *The Retreat from Moscow*, the world premiere of Horton Foote's *Getting Frankie Married — and Afterwards* and the critically acclaimed California premiere of Nicholson's *Shadowlands*. He has won accolades for his direction of five major works by George Bernard Shaw, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle (LADCC) Award-winners *Major Barbara*, *Misalliance* and *Heartbreak House*. Among his numerous world premieres is Margaret Edson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wit*, which he also directed at Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Alley Theatre in Houston. He has directed American classics including *Ab, Wilderness!*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *A Delicate Balance* and *A View from the Bridge*. Mr. Benson has received the LADCC Distinguished Achievement in Directing awards an unparalleled seven times for the three Shaw productions, John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Sally Nemeth's *Holy Days* and *Wit*. He also directed

the film version of *Holy Days* using the original SCR cast. Along with Emmes, he accepted SCR's 1988 Tony® Award for Outstanding Resident Professional Theatre and won the 1995 Theatre LA Ovation Award for Lifetime Achievement. Mr. Benson received his BA in Theatre from San Francisco State University.

PAULA TOMEI (*Managing Director*) is responsible for the overall administration of South Coast Repertory and has been Managing Director since 1994. A member of the SCR staff since 1979, she has served in a number of administrative capacities including Subscriptions Manager, Business Manager and General Manager. She served on the board of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the service organization for theatre, from 1998-2006 and was its President for four years. She has also served as Treasurer of TCG, Vice President of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and has been a member of the LORT Negotiating Committee for industry-wide union agreements. In addition, she represents SCR at national conferences of TCG and LORT; is a theatre panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council (CAC), and site visitor for the CAC; served on the Advisory Committee for the Arts Administration Certificate Program at the University of California, Irvine; and has been a guest lecturer in the graduate school of business at Stanford and the University of California, Irvine. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a degree in Economics and pursued an additional course of study in theatre and dance.



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.



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 Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.