



JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE / DECEMBER 8 - 23, 2006

# South Coast Repertory

David Emmes  
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Martin Benson  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

presents

## LA POSADA MÁGICA

written and directed by Octavio Solis

music by Marcos Loya

Christopher Acebo  
SCENIC DESIGN

Shigeru Yaji  
COSTUME DESIGN

Lonnie Rafael Alcaraz  
LIGHTING DESIGN

Marcos Loya  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Linda Kostalik  
CHOREOGRAPHER

David Leavenworth  
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Jamie A. Tucker\*  
STAGE MANAGER

Pam and Jim Muzzy  
HONORARY PRODUCERS



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CORPORATE PRODUCER

*The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has provided major support for the commissioning, workshop and production of La Posada Mágica through its New Works for Young Audiences Program.*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Horacio .....	<i>Miguel Najera*</i>
Eli/Bones/Lauro .....	<i>Kevin Sifuentes*</i>
Gracie .....	<i>Tiffany Ellen Solano*</i>
Mom/Mariluz .....	<i>Erica Ortega*</i>
Papi/Jose Cruz .....	<i>Danny Bolero*</i>
Refugio/Buzzard .....	<i>Sol Castillo*</i>
Consuelo/Widow .....	<i>Denise Blasor*</i>
Caridad/Widow .....	<i>Teresa Velarde*</i>
Musicians/Ensemble .....	<i>Marcos Loya, Lorenzo Martinez</i>

## SETTING

*Christmas Eve. The present.*

## LENGTH

*Approximately two hours, including one 15-minute intermission.*

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Casting Director .....	<i>Joanne DeNaut</i>
Production Assistant .....	<i>Mia Osherow</i>
Costume Design Assistant .....	<i>Merilee Ford</i>
Assistant to the Lighting Designer .....	<i>Motoko Tamura</i>
Stage Management Intern .....	<i>Tiffany Hamilton</i>
Dresser .....	<i>Kelly Marshall</i>
Additional Costume Staff .....	<i>Catherine Esera</i>
Deck Crew .....	<i>Mark Johnson</i>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Las Amigas de la Cultura, Sylvia Krenzien, Teri Rocco and Alice Rumbaugh  
for the special exhibit in the Julianne Argyros lobby.*

*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.*

*The use of cameras and recorders in the theatre is prohibited.  
Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.*

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



# The Gift of Grace

**W**hen I was commissioned to write a family Christmas play for South Coast Repertory, I had no idea there would be deep synchronicities with my own life. I simply thought I would write another play for another theatre and that would be that. But while my talented collaborators (director José Cruz González and composer Marcos Loya) and I toiled away on our first draft of *Posada* at the Sundance Theatre Lab in Utah, I received a call from my wife Jeanne that she was pregnant with our daughter, and that changed everything.

The play suddenly revealed to me the essential universal sanctity of life, the glowing sense of hope and love that babies always suggest for the world. But the confluence of this play with my wife's news also transformed the holiday of Christmas for me. The adoration bestowed on the infant Jesus spoke

Graciela, or Gracie, for short. This stunned me because I had just settled on that name for my protagonist. How could she have known? She hadn't read the play, nor had I spoken of it to her. And yet here now, our daughter was not only coming into our house, she was filling our play. It seemed fitting.

Gracie was born on September



more deeply and directly to my new status as a father. The Nativity became a metaphor for the profound responsibility we all owe to the fragile innocent children we dare to bring into this brutal world.

Later that spring, as I continued to write *Posada* and Jeanne pored over all the books of baby names, she told me that she wanted to name our baby girl

**Gracie has been played by three actresses since its premiere in 1994: Ruth Livier (1994), left; Crissy Guerrero (1995-1998), top; and Tiffany Ellen Solano (1999-2006), with Mauricio Mendoza as Papi and Crissy Guerrero as Mom in 2002.**

24, 1994, and the play itself was delivered three months later. We brought her for one of the first performances, and to this day, I can't help but feel that the wide brown eyes of the infant Graciela have shone their grace on *La Posada Mágica*.

—Octavio Solis

# The Historical Procession of Las Posadas

**T**he familiar story of Joseph and Mary's long-ago search for lodgings is related every year at Christmas-time in churches and homes the world over. But in many Latin countries, it actually comes to life again each December, reenacted for nine consecutive nights in the festive ritual of *Las Posadas*, which means inns, or lodgings.

The idea of commemorating the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem can be traced to St. Ignatius Loyola, in the 16th Century. He suggested a Christmas novena, special prayers to be said on nine successive days. In 1850, St. John of the Cross made a religious pageant out of the proceedings, and seven years later the nine-day remembrance was introduced to the Indians in Mexico by Spanish missionaries.

Solemn and deeply religious in feeling at first, the observances soon became imbued with a spirit of fun and, eventually, left the church and began to be celebrated in people's homes. The posadas have become community affairs with friends, relatives and neighbors sharing in the festivities and visiting a different house each evening.

The posada begins with a procession that sets off as soon as it gets dark. Often a child dressed as an angel goes first, followed by two more children carrying figures of Mary and Joseph on a small litter adorned with twigs. After more boys and girls come the lead figures, then come the grown-ups and last of

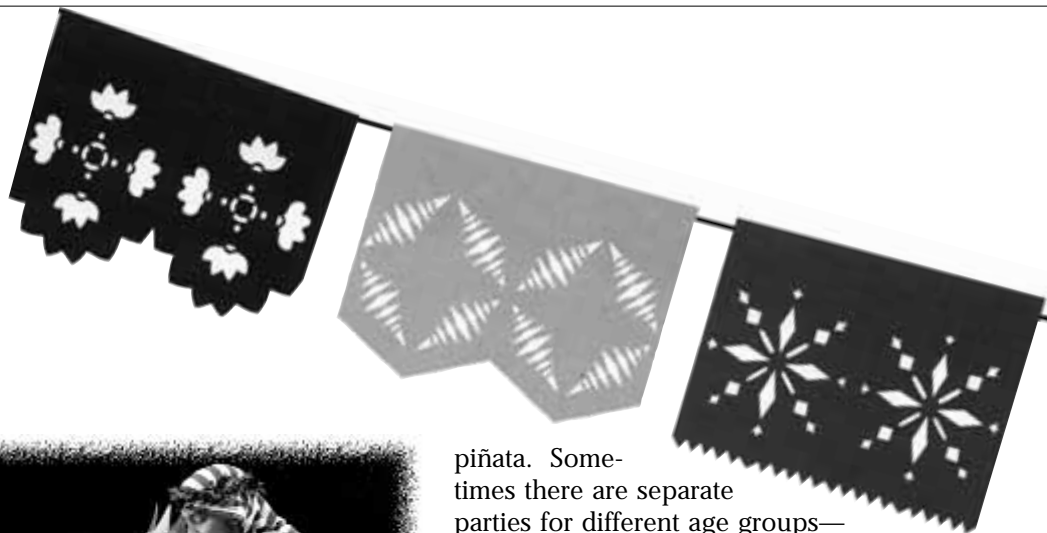


The 2004 cast of 'La Posada Mágica' featured from left: Crissy Guerrero, Mauricio Mendoza, Denise Blasor, Sol Castillo, Carla Jimenez, Tiffany Ellen Solano, Miguel Najera, Kevin Sifuentes, Lorenzo Martinez and Marcos Loya.

all the musicians. Singing or chanting special posada songs, they all walk slowly along, each person carrying a lighted candle. When the procession reaches the house chosen for that evening, it divides into two groups, one representing the holy pilgrims, the other the innkeepers.

The pilgrims line up behind the angel and the children bearing the figures of the Holy Family, and they file through the house until they arrive at a closed door, behind which the innkeepers have stationed themselves. The pilgrims knock on the door and call out in song, asking for shelter. A chorus of voices on the other side asks: "Who knocks at my door so late in the night?"

The pilgrims respond. "In the name of Heaven I beg you for lodging—my beloved wife can no longer travel, and she is weary." But the response is a stony,



piñata. Sometimes there are separate parties for different age groups—one for teenagers and another for the younger children. In Mexico City, especially, so many posadas are held that active partygoers can manage to attend four or five in one evening... and the festivities often go on until dawn.

Over time, posadas have been tailored by their respective communities, so that a remarkable variety of posada styles can be found

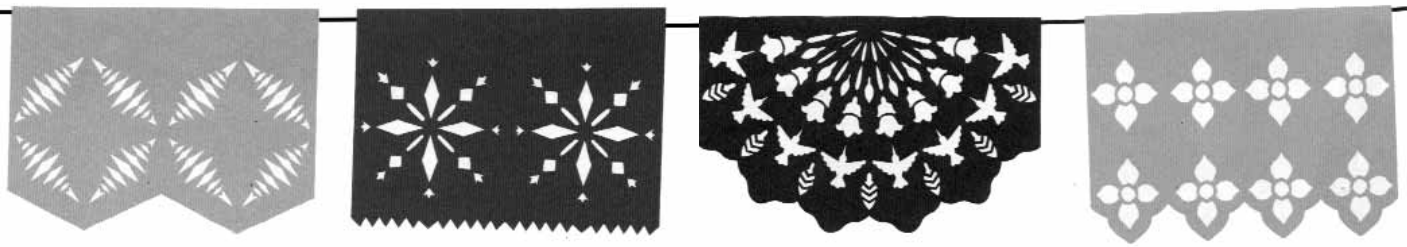
throughout  
Mexico  
and the  
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hardhearted refusal. "This is no inn. Go away!" After repeated requests for shelter, the pilgrims explain who they are and that Mary will soon give birth to the Son of God. The innkeepers relent and welcome the exhausted travelers: "Enter, Holy pilgrims. Come into our humble dwelling and into our hearts. The night is one of joy, for here beneath our roof we shelter the Mother of God."

Everyone enters the room and kneels in prayer, after which the party moves out to the patio for fireworks and fun. Small baskets of sweets, called *colaciones*, are offered along with sandwiches, cookies and a fruited punch. And then it's time for the most exciting moment of all, the breaking of the fancifully decorated candy and nut-filled



**Denise Blasor, Carla Jimenez, Crissy Guerrero and Mauricio Mendoza, above and Marcos Loya and Lorenzo Martinez, at right.**



# The Magic of the Celebration

## The Christmas Candle

"It begins with one simple candle—  
so full of golden light"

— *La Posada Mágica*

**A**fter Gracie reluctantly joins her church's posada, she sets about trying to extinguish not only the candle that has been lit in her honor, but all those that represent the other members of her group. With each flame she blows out, another character disappears until Gracie is left lost and alone.

The tradition of candles at Christmastime began in medieval Europe, where a very large Christmas candle was burned until the Twelfth Night in remembrance of the arrival of the Wise Men to Bethlehem. In Victorian times, candles represented good will toward those less fortunate. They were placed in windows from December 25 to January 6 to welcome any passersby needing shelter and food.

Some people believe that flames from burning candles frighten away evil spirits during the darkest days of the year. In Norway, candles that burn out on Christmas Eve are thought to bring bad luck for the family. Another ancient tradition suggests that placing a candle in the window symbolically lights the way of the Holy Family as it provides a welcome for friends, neighbors and holiday guests.



## Poinsettias

**A** favorite flower for the posada celebration is the poinsettia, with its beautiful red star shape. The legend of the poinsettia relates the story of a girl named Maria and her little brother Pablo. They were very poor but always looked forward to the Christmas festival each year, when a large Nativity scene was set up in the village church and the days leading up to Christmas were filled with *posadas*. But the two children were saddened because they had no money to buy presents. They especially wished to give something to the church, but they had nothing.

One Christmas Eve, Maria and Pablo set out for church to attend Midnight Mass. On their way they picked some weeds growing along the roadside to present as their gift to the church. They were mercilessly teased by the other children when they arrived with their humble offering, but Maria and Pablo knew they had given everything they had. As they began to place the weeds around the Nativity scene, the green top leaves turned into bright red petals. Soon the manger was surrounded by the bright red, star-shaped flowers and everyone in the church believed they were witnessing a true Christmas miracle. Since that day, these beautiful flowers that bloom during the Christmas season have been known as *Flores de Noche Buena* or "Flowers of the Holy Night."

*Nochebuena*, the Mexican name of the flower English-speakers call poinsettia, was discovered in Taxco and the valleys surrounding Cuernavaca. Known by the Aztecs in their native Nahuatl language as *cuetlaxochitl*, it is believed that they brought the plant from the tropical climate of Cuernavaca to their Aztec highlands for

cultivation in special nurseries. Prized for the curative properties of the milk that dripped from the leaves, stems and flowers when cut, the plant also produced pigment from the red leaves used to dye cotton fibers.

The poinsettia plant was brought from Mexico to America by Dr. Joel Roberto Poinsett (1770-1851), who served as U.S. ambassador to Mexico following that country's independence from Spain. Poinsett fell in love with the *nochebuena* plant when he first saw it adorning the churches of Taxco in 1823. He sent specimens back to the States to decorate his mansion in South Carolina one Christmas, and upon his return home several years later, he was astonished to find the entire town of Charleston growing the festive red flower.

## Papel Picado

Paper cutting has been a folk art ever since paper was invented in 105 A.D. by Ts'ai Lun, an official in the court of Ho Ti, emperor of Cathay. The humble nature of its origins and the anonymity of its practice has caused paper cutting to be ignored as an art form, though artists, artisans and collectors are becoming increasingly aware of this valuable folk heritage.

In Mexico, the technique is called *papel picado*, which means "pierced paper." After the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, *papel de China* (tissue paper) was introduced and became the material of choice for Christian holiday decorations. Paperwork was apparently among the imports that poured in from the Orient via the annual Pacific treasure fleet that traveled between the Far East and Acapulco, laden with such exotic goods as silver, ivory, spices and porcelain. Once the craft arrived in Mexico,

it became the basis for many important and widespread folk art forms.

In Mexico, the art of paper-cutting goes back to pre-Columbian times, when bark paper (made by

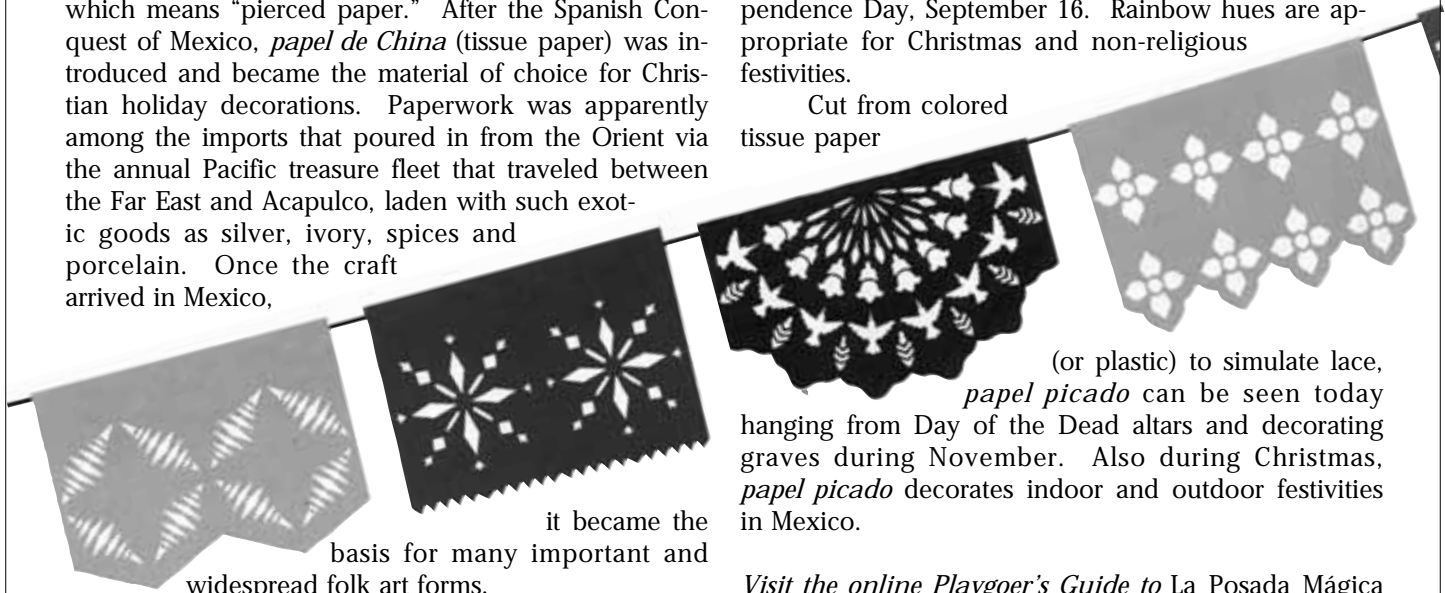
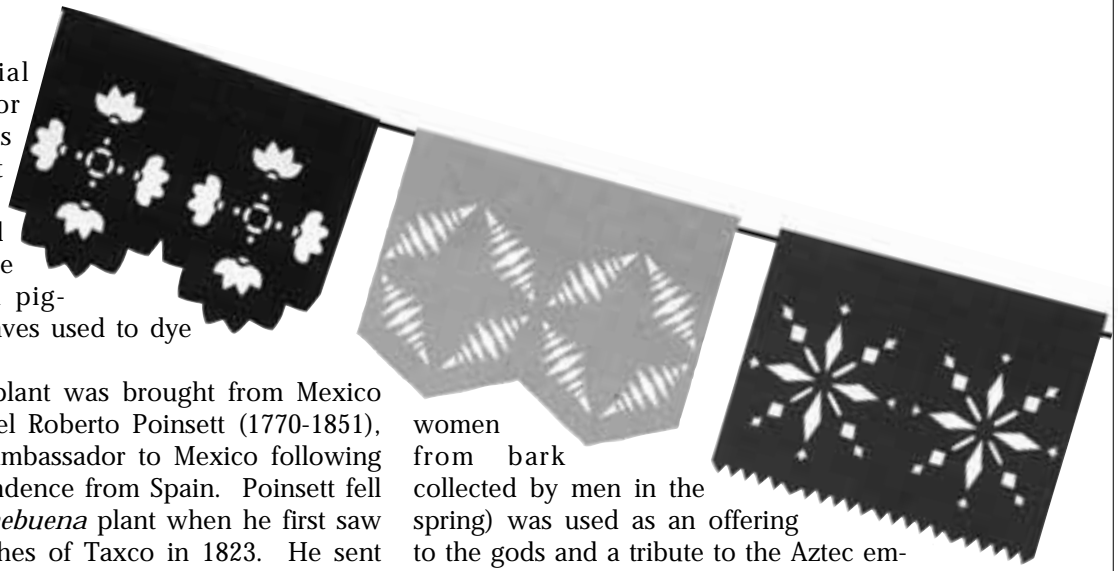
women from bark collected by men in the spring) was used as an offering to the gods and a tribute to the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma II. On certain holidays, it decorated the idols in temples and palaces, and priests embodying the gods and the cosmos wore elaborate costumes of colored paper. Cutouts of dark paper were made to represent evil spirits, while white paper represented good spirits and was used by healers and witches in their rituals.

Color schemes selected for *papel picado* are frequently linked with specific festivities. Sky blue or pink and white are commonly chosen for celebrations in honor of the Virgin Mary, yellow and white for patron saints. Vibrant pink, orange and purple are the key tones employed for *ofrendas* (offerings) associated with *El Día de los Muertos*, or the Day of the Dead. Shades of purple are also widely used at Easter. The colors of the Mexican flag—red, white and green—are set aside for venerating the nation's patroness, *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, as well as for commemorating Independence Day, September 16. Rainbow hues are appropriate for Christmas and non-religious festivities.

Cut from colored tissue paper

(or plastic) to simulate lace, *papel picado* can be seen today hanging from Day of the Dead altars and decorating graves during November. Also during Christmas, *papel picado* decorates indoor and outdoor festivities in Mexico.

Visit the online *Playgoer's Guide to La Posada Mágica* at [www.scr.org](http://www.scr.org) to read more about these and other Mexican holiday traditions.



# Sing Along with the Posada

## *'Vamos A Pie'*

Vamos a pie caminando  
Caminando, caminando  
Una posada Buscando  
Buscando para El.

Velas prendidas alumbran  
La noche más santa de Dios  
Este camino termina  
En oración.

Vamos con fe caminando  
Caminando, caminando  
Los angeles saben cuando  
Saben cuando llegará.

A la posada más linda  
Llena de luz y amor  
En esta noche veremos  
Al Redentor.

Vamos a pie caminando  
Caminando, caminando  
Una posada buscando  
Buscando buscando.

## *'Este Canto Mio'*

Este canto mío canto con pasión  
Por el Niño Dios quien es mi salvación  
Si mi voz al cielo no alcanza  
Es porque le falta esperanza

Gloria gloria gloria al Señor  
Escuchame y hazme el favor  
Quiero ver el Rey de la humanidad  
En la Noche Buena de la Navidad.

Mucho gusto siento en mi corazón  
Cada vez que canto, santa es mi canción  
Ya se acerca el momento de  
El Nacimiento de la Nueva Fe.

Gloria gloria gloria al Señor  
Escuchame y hazme el favor  
Quiero ver el Rey de la humanidad  
En la Noche Buena de la Navidad.

## *'We go on foot'*

We go on foot  
Walking, walking  
Searching for a posada  
Searching for Him

Burning candles shine on  
God's holiest night  
This path ends  
With a prayer

We walk along in faith  
Walking, walking  
The angels know when  
They know when He will arrive

To the most beautiful posada  
Filled with light and love  
On this night we will see  
The savior

We go on foot  
Walking, walking  
Searching for a posada  
Searching, searching

## *'My Song'*

I sing my song with passion  
For baby Jesus, my salvation  
If my voice won't reach heaven  
It is because it lacks hope

Glory, glory, glory to the Lord  
Listen to me, do me a favor  
I want to see the King of humanity  
On Christmas' holy night

I feel pleasure in my heart  
Every time I sing, holy is my song  
The moment is near  
The birth of a new faith

Glory, glory, glory to the Lord  
Listen to me, do me a favor  
I want to see the King of humanity  
On Christmas' holy night

Words by Octavio Solis; music by Marcos Loya  
Translation by Santiago Uceda





DENISE BLASOR  
*Consuelo/Widow*



DANNY BOLERO  
*Papi/Jose Cruz*



SOL CASTILLO  
*Refugio/Buzzard*

## Artist Biographies

**\*DENISE BLASOR** (*Consuelo/Widow*) returns to SCR for her eleventh appearance in *La Posada Mágica*. This year she performed in the world premiere of *Los Muertos* by Timothy McNeil, directed by David Fofi, at Elephant Theatre. She appeared in *Electricidad* by Luis Alfaro, directed by Lisa Peterson at Mark Taper Forum and *Ten Tiny Love Stories* by Rodrigo Garcia. She has performed at Los Angeles Theatre Center (LATC) as the Bride in *Blood Wedding*, directed by Margarita Galban, as Yerma in *Yerma* and as Martirio in *The House of Bernarda Alba* with Carmen Zapata. She played Jenny in *The Threepenny Opera*, directed by Angelina Reaux, and was part of Ron Sossi's Odyssey Theatre Ensemble adaptation of *Faust*. She was Artistic Director of Los Angeles Diversified Theater Company, where she per-

formed and adapted *The Three Sisters*, designed and appeared in the Ovation Award-nominated production of *He Who Gets Slapped* with Bud Cort and performed and produced the original musical production of *Caderas*. Other stage credits include leading roles in the world premieres of *The House of the Spirits* at LATC; *Cervantes' Interludes* at Stages, directed by Florinel Fatulescu and *Made in Lanus*, directed by Lillian Garrett at The Old Globe. She played Juana in *The False Chronicle of Juana La Loca* at Festival Cervantino in Mexico and has performed in Europe and Puerto Rico. Film credits include *The Disappearance of Garcia Lorca* with Andy Garcia; *Univers'l*, directed by Ana Nicholas; *Noriega: God's Favorite* with Bob Hoskins, directed by Roger Spottiswoode and *Happy Feet* with Robin Williams.

**\*DANNY BOLERO** (*Papi/Jose Cruz*) is happy to return to SCR and his *La Posada* family. He recently completed work on the film *The Hitcher*, with Sean Bean and Sofia Bush due out in theaters in February. He was also recently honored with the B. Iden Payne Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Musical for his work as Cesar Chavez in Ed Begley Jr's *Cesar and Ruben*. On Broadway he appeared in the 1993 revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* starring Michael Damian (cast album) and in the first national tour with Sam Harris. Other theatre credits include *Players* under the direction of the late Margo Albert, *Man of La Mancha* (tour) with Robert Goulet, *Bark* at Coast Playhouse, *The Fantasticks* (El Gallo) at Arizona Theatre Company, *Selena* (Abraham) at Doolittle Theater, *Lalo* at Mark



MARCOS LOYA  
*Musician/Ensemble*



LORENZO MARTINEZ  
*Musician/Ensemble*



MIGUEL NAJERA  
*Horacio*

Taper Forum, *The World Goes Round* at Rubicon Theatre Company (Robby Nomination), *Paloma* at Casa Sousa, *Pacific Overtures* (Manjiro), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (John Jasper, Inland Empire Award), *Beggars Holiday* with the late, great Carl Anderson, and Guido in *Nine* and Che in *Evita*, for both of which he received the Los Angeles Drama-Logue Award. He recently returned from New York where he was part of a new musical workshop of *Zorro the Musical* with music by the Gypsy Kings, scheduled for London's West End in 2007. Television appearances include "The Mulletts" (recurring), "Beverly Hills, 90210," "Ally McBeal," "Los Alvarez" (pilot) and "Malcolm in the Middle." He is graduate of the American Center for Music Theater and a founding member of Plaza de La Raza. Mr. Bolero is currently appearing in a movie theater near you, as the MOVIE-TICKETS.com spokesman. As always this is for my ANGELS on my shoulder.

\***SOL CASTILLO** (*Refugio/ Buzard*) returns to SCR for his seventh season in *La Posada Mágica*.

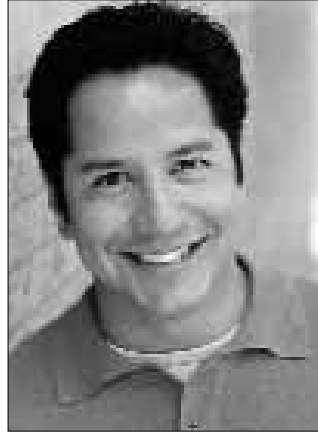
ca. He was also seen at SCR in the world premiere of *The Hollow Lands*, the Theatre for Young Audiences productions of *The Adventures of Pør Quinly* and *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* and the Pacific Playwrights Festival workshops of *Sea of Tranquility* and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*. At San Diego Repertory Theatre he appeared in *Zoot Suit*, *The Imaginary Invalid* and *Barrio Hollywood*. Other theatre credits include the national tour of *Veteranos: A Tribute*, *West Side Story*, *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Talking to Yellow Roses*. Mr. Castillo was seen in Showtime's "Resurrection Blvd." and Valor Production's *Who's James Cagney?* Mr. Castillo dedicates his performance to his lovely wife, terrific daughter, and gives his thanks to them and the audience. Mr. Castillo is a proud member of Actors' Equity.

**MARCOS LOYA** (*Composer/Musical Director/Ensemble*) is an accomplished musician and composer and a master of acoustic guitar. He is also adept on *requinto*, *jarrana*, *cuatro*, 12-string, mandolin, electric guitar and various indigenous folk in-

struments. Currently, he is a Visiting Artist and Adjunct Instructor at California State University, Dominguez Hills. He teaches a Multicultural Performing Arts course and a course on Chicana/o Latina/o music. Recently, he scored *Looking Back*, Severo Perez' documentary on renowned, visual artist Carmen Lomas Garza. In 1996 he composed the score for the "American Playhouse" film adaptation of Tomas Rivera's *and the earth did not swallow him (y no se lo trago la tierra)*. Mr. Loya's debut CD, *Love is the Reason*, garnered an Independent Contemporary Jazz Album of the Year nomination. His music is featured in the films *Deep Cover*, *The Waterdance*, *A Million to Juan*, *Old Gringo*, *Vibes*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Born in East LA*, *Hold Me*, *Kiss Me*, *Thrill Me* and *Kiss Me a Killer* (for which he received a nomination for the Independent Spirit Award) as well as Director Robert Rodriguez' *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*. He scored and/or composed music for several plays, including the Los Angeles Theatre Center productions of *La Victima*, *August 29* (Drama Logue Award, Best Original Music),



ERICA ORTEGA  
*Mariluz/Mom*



KEVIN SIFUENTES  
*Eli/Bones/Lauro*



TIFFANY ELLEN SOLANO  
*Gracie*

*Stone Wedding* (Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award nomination) and most recently the Southwestern tour of *Veteranos: A Legacy of Valor*. His television work includes the musical scores for the PBS productions “Dreams of Flying,” “Elders,” “Between Friends” and “Los Pinateros.” His music can be heard in the “Mangas” episode of the PBS series “Foto Novela” for which he also composed the theme. He served as musical director for Univision’s long-running “El Show de Paul Rodriguez,” the Buenavista/Disney “Navidad en las Americas” special, the ABC special “Latin Nights” and NBC’s “Vida Awards.” Mr. Loya has performed and/or toured with a variety of performers including Placido Domingo, Linda Ronstadt (with the Houston Symphony Orchestra), Celia Cruz, Tito Puente, Lalo Guerrero, Chick Corea, Chaka Khan, Hugh Masekela, Phillip Bailey, Stephen Stills, Vicki Carr, Luis Enrique and Jose Feliciano. With Madonna, he recorded “La Isla Bonita” and appeared in the video. He can be seen performing solo, with his acoustic ensemble Trio Los Cinco, or with the Marcos Loya

Latin Jazz Band. He dedicates his performance to his mother, Bertha Loya, and the memory of his father, Arthur Loya, whose courage and love remain a constant source of inspiration.

**LORENZO MARTINEZ** (*Musician/Ensemble*) was raised with the rich, culturally diverse music of Los Angeles and has traveled and performed throughout the Southwest. He represented Chicano music in Paris with Lalo Guerrero and Flaco Jimenez. His education includes Music Theory and Instrumental Studies at Cerritos College and UCLA’s Ethno Musicology program with emphasis in Mariachi music. His vast musical experience includes Tex-Mex, *conjuntos*, *orquesta* styles, mariachi, zydeco, jump blues, jazz, *jarocho*, *huasteco*, *nueva cancion*, *trio romantico*, early California and Chicano movimiento music. Other groups Mr. Martinez has performed with include Hermanos Baca and Lil Joe y La Familia. He was part of the Mariachi concert *Las Tres Voces de Oro*, backing Lucha Villa, Lola Beltran and Miguel Aceves Mejia. He performed with the UCLA Mariachi under the direction of

Nati Cano of Los Comperos, and in the Universal film *Who Will Sing the Songs* starring Freddie Fender and Vicki Carr. He performed and recorded with Los Perros del Pueblo Nuevo and Trio Los Cinco with Marcos Loya, Mundo Armijo and Ray Islas. The group performed *Dia de Los Muertos* and *La Virgen del Tepeyac* by Luis Valdez at the Japan Theatre, the opening ceremony of Luis Valdez’ *Bandido* at Mark Taper Forum and with Culture Clash in *La Carpa* at Mark Taper Forum. He toured with The Four Brown Hats theatre production of *Veteranos: A Legacy of Valor* between 2002 and 2004. This year he performed for the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan with Los Tex Maniacs, a Texas based band. He performed through these countries for nine different military bases. It was a life changing experience to remember forever.

**\*MIGUEL NAJERA** (*Horacio*). “I always look forward to doing *La Posada Mágica*. This will be my fifth year and hopefully I’ll be Horacio for many years to come.” A multi-talented artist, Mr. Najera is a writer and director as well as



TERESA VELARDE  
*Caridad/Widow*

an actor. Currently he is working on a feature film project with partners Yareli Arizmendi and Sergio Arau (*A Day Without a Mexican*). He has also written and will shoot a series of short films in the coming months. Last year his documentary, *Dancing on the Edge*, won the Outstanding Documentary Award in Canada. Founder of an independent film company, Ce Acatl Productions, he wrote and directed CAP's award-winning short film *Libertad*, which screened to critical acclaim on WGBH Boston as part of its Latino film series. His acting career in the industry has spanned over 30 years in film, television and theatre. Recent television credits include "The Shield," "CSI," "24," "Lincoln Heights" and "Alias" among others. Mr. Najera has an MFA in Film, Theatre, and Television Directing from the California Institute of the Arts, received his BA in Drama from San Francisco State University and attended the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco.

**\*ERICA ORTEGA** (*Mariluz/Mom*) appeared at SCR previously in *Scrappers*. Theatre credits in-

clude *The Three Sisters* at LATC, *People Like Me* at Playwrights' Arena, *He Who Gets Slapped* at Hudson Theatre, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *A Touch of the Poet* at Latino Classical Repertory, *This Land* at California Youth Theatre, *The Old Matador* at Arizona Theatre Company, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Cross in the Mirror* and *Fuenteovejuna* at the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, as well as touring productions with Will & Co. and Blue Palm. In addition, Ms. Ortega was a cast member and assistant production manager for Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Programs for nine years. Film and television credits include *Panic*, "The Division," "Strong Medicine," "Air America," "Babylon 5," "The Pretender" and "Chicago Hope."

**\*KEVIN SIFUENTES** (*Eli/Bones/Lauro*) returns to SCR for his fifth season of *La Posada Mágica*. He also appeared last season in SCR's Theatre for Young Audiences production of *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. His stage credits include work with Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles Theatre Center, San Jose Repertory Theatre, About Productions and Cornerstone Theater Company. Earlier this year he completed the tour in the critically acclaimed show *By The Hand Of The Father* which has traveled throughout the U.S. and Canada. His acting career also includes numerous projects in film, television and national commercials. Currently, Mr. Sifuentes is working on his first short film as director, writer and producer. He gives special thanks to his wife, family and friends for their love, support, and daily funny anecdotes. He is a proud member of Actors' Equity.

**\*TIFFANY ELLEN SOLANO** (*Gracie*) just completed performing in a comedic spoof of "American Idol" called "Dead Idol Live" which ran at Knotts Scary Farm's Halloween Haunt. Though she enjoyed portraying Paula Abdul in the show, she is pleased to be returning to her dramatic roots for this production at SCR. This will be the eighth year she has brought to life Octavio Solis' beautiful character, a role that garnered her prestigious Young Artist's Award for "Most Outstanding Young Performer in Live Theatre." *La Posada Mágica* is very dear to her heart and she is thrilled to be reuniting with the talented cast and crew whom she genuinely loves and considers family. Ms. Solano has spent most of her life on stage, beginning in musical theatre, and later performing in straight plays and Shakespeare. She portrayed Ginya in *Nine Armenians* at Mark Taper Forum and Denver Center Theatre, played Miranda in *The Tempest* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center and received critical acclaim for her depiction of Anne in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Other performances include lead roles in *David and Lisa*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *West Side Story*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Under the Gaslight*. Most recently, she has also been seen performing at Disney's California Adventure 2000-seat Hyperion Theatre as Jasmine in *Aladdin — A Musical Spectacular*. Though her heart is truly in the theatre, she also enjoys film and music work. She is a proud member of Actors' Equity, SAG, AFTRA and AGVA. Film credits include commercials, television guest spots, industrials, interactive videos and independent films. Ms. Solano dedicates her performances in loving memory of her beloved grandmother and personal angel Mary Ellen Quinn-Visznecki.

**\*TERESA VELARDE** (*Caridad/Widow*) returns to *La Posada Mágica*, where she originated the roles of Mom and Mariluz. She also appeared in SCR's *Man of the Flesh* and has participated in many of SCR's Hispanic Playwrights Project readings. Ms. Velarde understudied the role of Eponine in *Les Miserables* at the Shubert Theatre in Los Angeles. Some of her other theatrical credits include leading roles in *Latins Anonymous* at San Diego Repertory Theatre; *B.C. Historia*, produced by the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; the award-winning *A Piece of My Heart* at International City Theatre; and multiple roles in *Happy Birthday, Angel*, an anti-gang play produced by SCR. Some of her starring television credits include "General Hospital," "Hotel Malibu," "Days of Our Lives," "Down the Shore," "Sunset Beach," "Empty Nest," "Beverly Hills, 90210," "The Bad Land," "Brother's Keeper," "Malcolm in the Middle" and "The Practice." Ms. Velarde has also appeared in films including *The Addict*, *Choose Me*, *The People Under the Stairs* and *Outbreak*. She has leading roles in *My Indian Summer*, a CBS After School Special and *Mi Casa Es Su Casa*, an award-winning film produced by AFI. She is also a licensed therapist who works with adolescents and adults. She has two handsome sons, Justin and Lucas, and has been married to drummer David Page for 21 years. She wishes to thank her family and friends and wishes everyone a blessed holiday season. Feliz Navidad!

**PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR  
& DESIGNERS**

**OCTAVIO SOLIS** (*Playwright/Di-*

*rector*) is a playwright and director living in San Francisco. His works *Man of the Flesh*, *Prospect*, *El Paso Blue*, *Santos & Santos*, *La Posada Mágica*, *El Otro*, *Dreamlandia*, *Bethlehem*, *Gibraltar*, *The Seven Visions of Encarnacion* and *The Ballad of Pancho and Lucy* have been mounted at theatres nationwide. *Shiner*, his collaborative project with Erik Ehn, was mounted by Undermain Theatre in Dallas. His most recent project is *Marfa Lights*, a new play written for West Texas State A&M in Canyon, Texas. Solis has received an NEA Playwriting Fellowship, two playwriting grants from The Kennedy Center, the Will Glickman Playwright Award, the 1998 TCG/NEA Theatre Artists in Residence Grant, the 1998 McKnight Fellowship grant from The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis and the 2000-2001 National Theatre Artists Residency Grant. His DV feature film *Prospect* has screened at the Film Arts Festival in San Francisco. Solis is a member of the Dramatists Guild and an alum of New Dramatists.

**MARCOS LOYA** (*Composer/Musical Director*) See biography on page P-11.

**CHRISTOPHER ACEBO** (*Scenic Design*) designed *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* last season; the world premieres of *The Beard of Avon*, *Hold Please* and *California Scenarios*; the West Coast premiere of *The Countess*; and the annual production of *La Posada Mágica* at SCR. Recent productions include the world premieres of *The Clean House* at Yale Repertory Theatre and the current production at Lincoln Center Theater, *Electricidad* at The Goodman Theatre and *Water*

*and Power*, *Living Out* and *Chavez Ravine* at Mark Taper Forum. Other regional design work includes productions for Guthrie Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Goodman Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, The Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis and Portland Center Stage, among others. Mr. Acebo is an ensemble member of Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles. He received his MFA in design at the University of California, San Diego and is a past recipient of the NEA/TCG fellowship for designers.

**SHIGERU YAJI** (*Costume Design*) has designed costumes for over 50 SCR productions including most recently *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*, *Habeas Corpus*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Lovers and Executioners* and the annual production of *La Posada Mágica*. His other recent work has been seen at Lincoln Center Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cornerstone Theater Company and San Jose Repertory Theatre, as well as at Nashville Ballet. He is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, including six Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards and a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award, as well as an Emmy Award nomination for Cathy Rigby's *Peter Pan*. Mr. Yaji is a member of the United Scenic Artists Local 829 and the UC Irvine Drama Department faculty.

**LONNIE RAFAEL ALCARAZ** (*Lighting Design*) is an Associate Professor at UC Irvine and a professional lighting designer. He has designed at various regional theatre houses, such as

**PAM AND JIM MUZZY** (*Honorary Producers*) are one of SCR's most enthusiastic couples, and this season they are helping brighten the holidays as underwriters of *La Posada Mágica, the Magical Journey*. Strong supporters of adventurous theatre, the Muzzys have twice underwritten world premieres at South Coast Repertory, the 2005 production of *Princess Marjorie* and last season's *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler*. They are major donors to the Next Stage Campaign, Platinum Circle members and subscribers to both stages as well as the Theatre for Young Audiences series. That's enthusiasm!

**TARGET** (*Corporate Producer*) has held out a corporate hand to SCR once again by underwriting the holiday production *La Posada Mágica, the Magical Journey*. Target's partnership with SCR and Orange County children goes back to 1986 and includes underwriting of the Young Conservatory Players, The Target Tour of original plays to underserved schools, 'A Dickens of A Day' holiday fundraiser, Festival Latino and the Theatre Discovery Project. Last season, the company made a generous grant to establish the "Target Family Performances" of selected Theatre for Young Audiences and *La Posada Mágica* performances for families at significantly reduced prices. "At Target, we are making a real difference every day through our community partnerships with organizations like SCR," said Laysha Ward, Vice President, Community Relations, Target. "The Target Family Performances give families a great opportunity to experience theatrical entertainment at an affordable cost."

SCR, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Sierra Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Laguna Playhouse, Alabama Shakespeare Festival and Utah Shakespearean Festival. In addition to his twelve seasons with *La Posada Mágica*, shows at SCR include *Blue Door, Man from Nebraska, Bunnacula, The Hoboken Chicken Emergency, Play Strindberg, Dimly Perceived Threats to the System, Sidney Bechet Killed a Man* (for which he received a *Drama-Logue Award*), *BAFO, Later Life* and *Three Viewings*. He designed Culture Clash's *The Birds* at both SCR and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, along with their national touring show, *Radio Mambo*, which has been seen in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Arizona, New York, Seattle and Washington, DC. Recent design experience includes *Lethe, I Ask You, Farewell to Manzanar* and *Waking Up In Lost Hills* with Cornerstone Theater Company; and Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2006 summer season of shows: *Hamlet, The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Antony & Cleopatra*. He was also a designer for Universal Studios, Japan, where he designed the live shows *Terminator 2 in 3D*, and *Monster Make-up*, the attractions *Jurassic Park the Ride* and *Snoopy Studios*, along with exterior architectural facades throughout the park. He is a member of the United Scenic Artist/IATSE - Local 829.

**LINDA KOSTALIK** (*Choreographer*) is a retired Professor from the Theatre Arts and Dance Department at Cal State Los Angeles and has worked extensively with the award-winning Los Angeles County High School of the Arts as choreographer for the Musical Theatre Ensemble. Her career as dancer, choreographer and educator spans 40 years. She contin-

ues to choreograph productions for professional theatres such as SCR, Playwrights Horizons, The Goodman Theatre, International City Theatre and others. "Professor K" has directed Grammy nominee Bobby Rodriguez in *A Latin Jazz Christmas Show* and is currently working on the musical review *The Tribute* with Crissy Guerrero and Dave Foley. She continues work in videography and design. As always, it is a pleasure to be back with the SCR family. Happy Holidays!

**\*JAMIE A. TUCKER** (*Stage Manager*) completed his MFA in Dance, specializing in Stage Management, at UCI in 1994. He has stage managed *Nothing Sacred, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Bunnacula, Hitchcock Blonde, The Real Thing*, six seasons of *La Posada Mágica, A View from the Bridge, Lovers and Executioners, Intimate Exchanges, Relatively Speaking* and the West Coast premieres of *Anna in the Tropics, The Carpetbagger's Children, The Clean House* and *The Retreat from Moscow*. He also stage managed the world premieres of Richard Greenberg's *The Violet Hour*, Rolin Jones' *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* and Noah Haidle's *Mr. Marmalade*. He worked as SCR's stage manager for the Second Stage productions of *The Dazzle, True West, Play Strindberg*, the world premiere of *But Not for Me* and the Pacific Playwrights Festival workshop production of *Landlocked*. He has worked as assistant stage manager on the Mainstage productions of *A Naked Girl on the Appian Way, New England, Our Town* and *Arcadia* and the Second Stage productions of *BAFO* and *Three Days of Rain*. Mr. Tucker has worked at Long Beach Civic Light Opera on *No, No, Nanette, Can-Can, A Chorus*

*Line, The King and I* and *Man of La Mancha*. If you can't find him in the theatre, he is likely to be on the diamond or riding his bike down PCH.

**DAVID EMMES** (*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.

**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 *Ah, 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.



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