

62nd Season • 559th Production
JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE /OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 16, 2025

# South Coast Repertory

David Ivers
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Suzanne Appel MANAGING DIRECTOR

David Emmes & Martin Benson FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

present

## THE HEART SELLERS

### by Lloyd Suh

Tanya Orellana SCENIC DESIGN Anthony Tran
COSTUME DESIGN

Pablo Santiago

Melanie Chen Cole

The Telsey Office Brian Sutow, CSA Rose Bochner, CSA CASTING Adrian Trujillo Centeno

Darlene Miyakawa
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Directed by Jennifer Chang

Apriem Advisors

Timothy & Marianne Kay/ Argyros Family Foundation Samuel & Tammy Tang
HONORARY PRODUCERS

Production and engagement support provided by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation

The Heart Sellers was commissioned by Milwaukee Repertory Theatre as part of the John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Program, Mark Clements, Artistic Director, Chad Bauman, Executive Director, and received its first public performance on February 7, 2023

The Heart Sellers is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by TRW PLAYS 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036 www.trwplays.com

#### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Luna	Nicole Javier
Jane	Narea Kang

**SETTING:** Luna's apartment, in a mid-sized U.S. city. Early evening, Thanksgiving Day. November 22, 1973.

**LENGTH:** Approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

#### PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Stage Manager	Kyrsten Goodrich
Production Assistants	Christine Antaramian, Gia Battista Figueroa
Casting	Tiffany Little Canfield, CSA; Josh Einsohn, CSA
Assistant Director	Ludmila de Brito
Dialect Coach	Joy Lanceta Coronel
Associate Scenic Designer	Danielle DeLaFuente
	Azra King-Abadi
Costume Design Assistant	Alisha Patel
Guitar Co-Composition	Michael Grieve
	Rebecca Mcclaran
Light Board Operator	Hannah Gates- Ferla
	Jordan Buckelew
Deck Crew	Ben Morrow
Wardrobe Supervisor/Dresser	Jillian Pricco
Wig, Hair, and Makeup Technician	Alex Guerra

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. Smoking, including the use of vaping, is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.







## An Unintended Revolution:

### How the Hart-Celler Act Transformed American Immigration

by Adrian Trujillo Centeno

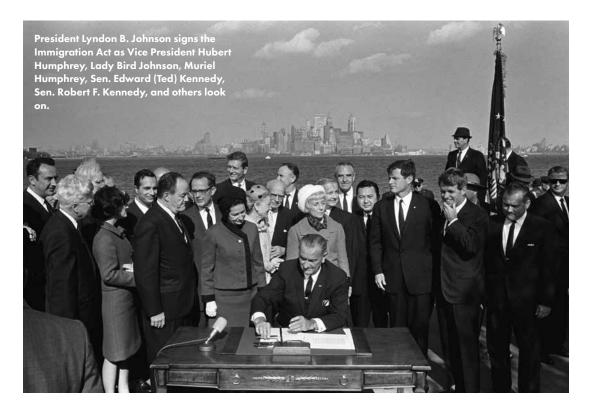
n October 3, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act beneath the Statue of Liberty, confidently declaring it would "not reshape the structure of our daily lives." Known colloquially as "Hart-Celler," coined in acknowledgement of its two Senate sponsors, the Act aimed to eliminate the national origins quota system that had favored Northern and Western Europeans since the 1920s. What Johnson didn't anticipate was how this well-intentioned reform would trigger one of the most dramatic demographic transformations in American history while simultaneously facilitating new forms of discrimination that persist today.

The old quota system had been brutally explicit in its prejudice. Building on the work of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the 1924 National Origins Act broadened and further restricted Asian immigration. Additionally, the Act allocated immigration slots based on the ethnic composition of America in 1890,

ensuring that 70 percent of all permitted immigrants came from just three countries: Britain, Germany and Ireland. The Hart-Celler Act replaced this racial hierarchy with supposedly neutral criteria: family reunification and professional skills.

The results were revolutionary. Between 1960 and 2014, the Asian American population rose from fewer than one million to more than twelve million. Countries previously shut out—the Philippines, South Korea, India, Taiwan—suddenly became major sources of American immigration. But this transformation came with hidden costs that policymakers hadn't fully considered.

An immediate impact was felt in the Western Hemisphere. For the first time in American history, the Hart-Celler Act imposed numerical limits on immigration from Latin America and the Caribbean—120,000 annually, later reduced to 20,000 per country. Previously, Mexicans had moved relatively freely across the border, with their labor actively recruited through organized efforts, such as the Bracero Program. Now they faced caps and queues. The unin-



tended consequence was predictable: unauthorized immigration from Mexico began a steep climb in the 1970s, establishing one step toward the "illegal immigration crisis" that dominates national politics today.

Meanwhile, the Act's emphasis on skilled professionals triggered what one might euphemistically call "brain drain," or the systematic extraction of educated talent from so-called developing nations. The Philippines provides the starkest example, as a majority of employed Filipino RNs choose to work outside the country. Since 1960, over 150,000 Filipino nurses have emigrated to the United States, leaving their homeland chronically short of medical professionals. These weren't isolated individual choices, but systematic flows driven by American immigration policy and institutional recruiting.

Behind these statistics lie the stories of accompanying spous-

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es, predominantly women whose own personal and professional aspirations were sacrificed for their husbands' American dreams. Immigration law reinforced these gender hierarchies. Skilled worker visas were typically granted to the principal applicant, almost always male. At the same time, spouses received dependent status, which prohibited employment. Women who had been professors, doctors and engineers found themselves legally barred from working, their credentials unrecognized, their professional identities erased.

The Hart-Celler Act's legacy remains visible to-day. Family reunification provisions continue to enable immigration from Asia and Latin America, often criticized as "chain migration" by restrictionists who ignore the ways these networks help build

stable communities. The emphasis on skilled migration persists in H-1B visas and other professional programs, which continue to drain talent from nations while American institutions reap the benefits.

Lloyd Suh's *The Heart Sellers* captures this historical moment through the story of two women sharing wine and frozen turkey on Thanksgiving 1973, eight years into the Hart-Celler era. Their conversation reveals the human cost of immigration policy—dreams deferred,

identities
reshaped,
hearts figuratively
sold for
the promise of
American belonging.

fter receiving a master's at RPI [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute], Ellen Liu's boyfriend planned to settle in Taiwan. Then, without consulting her, he obtained a job at General Electric. In 1986 he returned for their wedding, after which they left. Never having flown before, Ellen remembers being fearful during the trip. One of her most vivid memories is placing an order at Wendy's. The clerk asked "what kind of sauce do you want?" She had no idea what the clerk was talking about. She was so embarrassed! Those first weeks, she cried daily. Later, Ellen and her husband divorced; she now lives in Taiwan."

—Dr. Suzanne Model, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 2017

# **Artist Biographies**



NICOLE JAVIER

Luna

(she/her) is elated to return to SCR where she previously appeared in *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* and to now reprise her role as Luna from the world premiere of

The Heart Sellers at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Her select regional credits include The Heart Sellers (Milwaukee Rep & Northern California tour), The Book of Will, Animal Farm, A Christmas Carol, Metamorphoses, All's Well That Ends Well (A Noise Within), The Glass Menagerie (San Francisco Playhouse), Mrs. Christie, tokyo fish story (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley), Rapture, Blister, Burn (Aurora Theatre Company), Edith Can Shoot Things & Hit Them (Crowded Fire Theater) and Diana: The Musical (La Jolla Playhouse). Television credits include "Nemesis" (Netflix) and "Bosch Legacy" (Amazon Freevee). Film credits include Sorority and We're All Gonna Die. Javier is currently a faculty member at Pasadena City College and resident artist at A Noise Within. She earned her MFA in Acting at UC San Diego and a BFA in Theatre Performance at Chapman University. nicolejavier.com, @nicjavi.



NAREA KANG

Jane

(she/her) is proud to make her SCR debut and reprise her role as Jane from the world premiere of *The Heart Sellers* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Her select Off

Broadway/New York credits include *Cymbeline* (National Asian American Theatre Company), *Madonna col Bambino* (Ars Nova and New Ohio Theatre) and *Salty* (Lyra Theater). Select regional credits include *The Heart Sellers* (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley), *The Chinese Lady* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts), *White Pearl* (Studio Theatre) and *The Hard Problem* (American Conservatory Theater). Television credits include "Law & Order: SVU" (NBC) and "Betty" (HBO) and her film credits include

Jules. She earned her MFA in Acting at American Conservatory Theater. @nareakang

#### PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR AND DESIGNERS

**LLOYD SUH** (*Playwright*) is the author of plays including The Far Country (2023 Pulitzer Prize Finalist), The Heart Sellers, The Chinese Lady, Franklinland, Bina's Six Apples, American Hwangap and many others. His work has been produced across the country, including at Atlantic Theater Company, The Public Theater, Alliance Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory and with Ma-Yi Theater Company and Ensemble Studio Theatre among others, and internationally at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and with PCPA at the Guerilla Theatre in Seoul, Korea. Awards include the Steinberg Playwright Award, the Horton Foote Prize, the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, and the Guggenheim Fellowship. He was elected in 2016 to the Dramatists Guild Council, and serves as a Professor of the Practice at Princeton University.

**JENNIFER CHANG** (*Director*). Her select directing credits include A Doll's House, Part 2 (Pasadena Playhouse), Primary Trust (Barrington Stage, BTCA Award Outstanding Direction; and TheaterWorks Hartford, Connecticut Critics Circle Award Outstanding Production), What Became of Us (world premiere, Atlantic Theater Company), The Far Country (West Coast premiere, Berkeley Repertory, 10 SF-BACC nominations), King of the Yees (Signature Theatre DC, Helen Hayes nomination Best Production), On Gold Mountain with LA Opera, The Heart Sellers by Lloyd Suh (world premiere, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Aurora Theatre Company and Capital Stage) and Vietgone (LADCC Award for Best Direction). New play, musical development and residencies: Ojai Playwrights Conference, Berkeley Rep's The Ground Floor, Mercury Store, Geffen Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Pasadena Playhouse, Ashland New Plays Festival, O'Neill Playwrights Conference, New Harmony Project, Center Theatre Group, Sông Collective, Black and Latino Playwrights' Conference, Theater Mu, Chance Theater, Boston Court Pasadena, PlayOn!, Circle X, East West Players and Artists at Play. She

is Head of Acting at UCLA's School of Theater Film and Television. She is a member of SDC, AGMA, SAG-AFTRA and AEA. Drama League New York Fellowship, Classical Directing Fellow at The Old Globe, Zelda Fichandler Award Finalist. BFA, NYU; MFA, UCSD. changinator.com.

TANYA ORELLANA (Scenic Design) designs performance spaces for theatre, opera, and immersive experiences. Select credits include Littleboy/Littleman (Geffen Playhouse); Don't Eat The Mangos (Huntington Theatre Company); What Became of Us (Atlantic Stage 2); the Mexico premiere of Angels in America (National Autonomous University of Mexico); Derecho (La Jolla Playhouse); Mother Road (Berkeley Repertory); As You Like It (Oregon Shakespeare Festival) Fefu and her Friends, Big Data, Private Lives (American Conservatory Theatre); Where Did We Sit on the Bus (Denver Center for the Performing Arts); For The People (Guthrie Theater); Stew, One of the Good Ones (Pasadena Playhouse) and Alma (Kirk Douglas Theatre). Orellana is engaged in a long term collaboration with Virginia Grise; Rasgos Asiáticos—a traveling scenic installation using sound, light and objects to conjure narratives of immigration and migration in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. She earned her MFA at Cal Arts and is a 2016 Princess Grace Fabergé Theatre Award winner. tanyaorellana.com

ANTHONY TRAN (Costume Design) is a Costume Designer for theatre, film, and television. Theatre credits include the world premieres of Vietgone (South Coast Repertory/Manhattan Theatre Club), The Heart Sellers (Milwaukee Rep), A Doll's House, Part 2 (Pasadena Playhouse), Triassic Parq (Chance Theater, Ovation nomination) and La Cage Aux Folles (East West Players, LA Drama Critics Circle Award nomination). For television, he designed the final season of "Star Trek: Discovery" (Paramount+) and "How I Met Your Father" (Hulu). Film costume design work includes Excision (Sundance premiere), Bad Milo! (SXSW premiere) and Magic Camp (Disney+). anthonytran.net

**PABLO SANTIAGO** (*Lighting Design*) is a live performance and digital film lighting designer, originally from Chiapas, Mexico. He is the winner of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Kinetic Lighting Award and the Orange Curtain Review Award for Best Lighting, as well as the Henry Award, Richard Sherwood Award, Stage Raw Awards and multiple Ovation Award nominations. His designs aim to find evocative images that

embody the emotional moment of the show and create images that can spark the imagination of the audience to worlds beyond the stage. Returning to South Coast Repertory for the fourth time, Santiago's resume includes The Kennedy Center, Teatro Municipal São Paulo Brazil, Santa Fe Opera, LA Opera, Opera Omaha, Detroit Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Boston Lyric Opera, Long Beach Opera, Opera Columbus, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Opera Santa Barbara, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Arena Stage DC, BAM-Harvey Theater, Geffen Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, Denver Center, Broad Museum, Kirk Douglas Theatre and Hollywood Bowl.

MELANIE CHEN COLE (Sound Design) (she/her) is a San Diego-based sound designer. SCR credits: The Little Foxes, Appropriate and Where the Mountain Meets the Moon. Regional theatre credits include Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Alley Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cleveland Play House, Dallas Theater Center, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Geffen Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, Huntington Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, McCarter Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Northern Stage, The Old Globe, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Studio Theatre and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Education: MFA in Theatre and Dance from UC San Diego. melaniesound.com, @melaniechencole.

ADRIAN TRUJILLO CENTENO (Dramaturg) (he/ him) is a Los Angeles-based dramaturg who champions contemporary American playwrights. He's developed and supported new works at South Coast Repertory, San Diego Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program and New York Stage & Film, among others. A passionate advocate for emerging voices, Trujillo Centeno has served on grant panels and selection committees for the National Endowment for the Arts, The Public Theater, Signature Theatre, The Playwrights' Center and the Latinx New Play Festival. He is also an affiliate dramaturg with Beehive Dramaturgy Studio in New York City. Trujillo Centeno earned his master's degree from UC Santa Cruz, where he was recently honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award. Previously serving as literary manager at Playwrights Arena and Boston Court Pasadena, he currently holds dual roles as Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies at Cal State Long Beach and Artistic Director of Seven Devils New Play Foundry. Website: Luchaturgy.com

**THE TELSEY OFFICE** (*Casting*) With offices in both New York and Los Angeles, The Telsey Office casts for theatre, film, television and commercials. The Telsey Office is dedicated to creating safe, equitable and anti-racist spaces through collaboration, artistry, heart, accountability and advocacy. Please visit thetelseyoffice.com for our credits.

DARLENE MIYAKAWA (Production Stage Manager) is happy to return to SCR this season! Previous SCR credits include The Staircase; Wish You Were Here; Galilee, 34; A Raisin in the Sun; Coleman '72; Sheepdog and Ella Enchanted. Other companies worked at include Arizona Theatre Company, Barrington Stage, California Symphony, East West Players, Fort Worth Opera, Geffen Playhouse, Getty Villa, Geva Theatre, LA Opera, LA Philharmonic, Long Beach Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Maine, Opera San Antonio, Opera San Jose, Opera Santa Barbara, Piedmont Opera, The Old Globe, Tri-Cities Opera, Watermill Festival and West Edge Opera.

KYRSTEN GOODRICH (Assistant Stage Manager) (she/ her) was born and raised in California where she received her BA in Theatre from CSU Chico in 2016 and her MFA in Stage Management from UC Irvine in 2021. She is focused on implementing anti-racist training and stage intimacy training into all her work and enjoys guest lecturing for Stage Management courses whenever possible. Her credits include The *Incredible Book Eating Boy* (South Coast Repertory); The Inheritance: Part 1 & Part 2, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and others (Geffen Playhouse); The Rocky Horror Show (Cygnet Theatre); Escape to Margaritaville, Steel Magnolias, A Christmas Carol and The Amish Project (Theatre SilCo); The Spongebob Musical, Young Frankenstein, The Who's Tommy, Tuesdays with Morrie, Cabaret, Jesus Christ Superstar and others (Clinton Area Showboat Theatre); and Disney's The Little Mermaid and Chicago (The Lexington Theatre Company). Cheers!

**DAVID IVERS** (Artistic Director) is responsible for the overall artistic operation of the theatre. The 2019-20 season was the first he programmed for SCR and during that season, he directed She Loves Me. In addition, he directed the 2024 production of Joan—both the world premiere at SCR and the 2025 East Coast premiere at Barrington Stage Company—the 2021 Pacific Playwrights Festival reading of Coleman '72 by Charlie Oh and the 2022 reading of Spenser Davis' A Million Tiny Pieces. He spent August 2023 directing

### **Honorary Producers**

Honorary Producers are the unseen heroes behind SCR productions. They underwrite the shows, providing essential financial support. Their generosity, combined with the talent on stage and backstage, creates the world-class theater SCR is known for. **Apriem Advisors** is our 2025-26 Season Producer. Honorary Producers for *The Heart Sellers* include **Timothy & Marianne Kay/ Argyros Family Foundation, Samuel & Tammy** 

Tang. Additional support provided by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation and the Directors Circle. Snap the QR code to read more about them.



Guthrie Theater's production of *The Importance of* Being Earnest. He was last seen onstage at SCR as John in Richard Greenberg's world premiere of *A Shot* Rang Out and as part of his SCR tenure, created the theatre's Outside SCR program in partnership with Mission San Juan Capistrano. Prior to his appointment as Artistic Director, he directed the SCR-Berkeley Repertory Theatre co-production of One Man, Two Guvnors. Before arriving to SCR in his current capacity, Ivers 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. Ivers' early career included serving as associate artistic director of Portland Repertory Theatre and appearing in productions at some of the nation's most prestigious theatres, including Portland Center Stage and the Oregon, Alabama 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.

**SUZANNE APPEL** (*Managing Director*). For more than two decades, Suzanne Appel has pursued a personal mission to bring people together through trans-

formative experiences led by form-challenging artists. Working in partnership with Artistic Director David Ivers and reporting to the Board of Trustees, Appel is responsible for providing strategic leadership for SCR's long-term sustainability and growth. She oversees SCR's business operations, including fund-raising, marketing and community relations. Her accomplishments as Managing Director of Off-Broadway's Vineyard Theatre (2017-2024) include expanding the revenue-generating capacity of the organization, bringing on seven new board members, negotiating a two-production, industry-first producing partnership with Audible (David Cale's Harry Clarke and Ngozi Anyanwu's Good Grief), and transferring four Tony-nominated productions to Broadway. She is perhaps most proud of working with Artistic Director Sarah Stern to keep all Vineyard Theatre full-time staff employed during the COVID pandemic and developing a 2022-26 plan raising all arts worker wages. Appel joined The Vineyard after serving as Director of External Affairs for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Prior to her role at Hubbard Street, she served as Managing Director at Cutting Ball Theater in San Francisco, where she nearly doubled the organization's operating budget and built a two-plus-month operating reserve in four years. She was awarded the Alfred Drake Award from Brooklyn College, an honor given to an accomplished theatre professional who has made significant contributions to the American theatre. Her previous positions include roles with Dance Theater Workshop, Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Wesleyan University. Her volunteer work includes serving on the Board for Arts Orange County and South Coast Metro Alliance. Previously, she served as Chair of the Wesleyan Fund (2020-24). She is a graduate of Wesleyan University, Yale School of Drama and Yale School of Management (MFA/MBA).

MARTIN BENSON (Founding Artistic Director), (Mar. 15, 1937-Nov. 30, 2024) co-founder of SCR, directed nearly one-fifth of SCR's productions, including the 2020 production of Outside Mullingar. 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 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 directed American classics such as A Streetcar Named Desire, and 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.



This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and 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 Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.



The theatre is a member of Arts Orange County, the official local arts agency.