

Dear Court Theatre Family,

Three years ago, Charles Newell celebrated his 20th year as Artistic Director of Court Theatre. In celebration of this milestone, the Board of Trustees plotted a unique gift—first class airfare, a flat in London for a week, and funds to ensure that he and his wife Kate could attend as much theatre as they desired. Thrilled by this honor, Charlie reached out to Tom Stoppard, whose plays Charlie has directed over the years. Mr. Stoppard arranged for Charlie to see his newest work, *The Hard Problem*, in its world premiere run at the National Theatre in Great Britain. Charlie returned to Court Theatre with an intent to bring this work to you, our audience.

Court Theatre has produced more of Tom Stoppard's plays than any other contemporary playwright's work. *The Hard Problem* marks the ninth time Stoppard's work has appeared on our stage, and the sixth time Charlie has directed one of his plays, including his direction of *Rock 'n' Roll* at Goodman Theatre. It is clear what makes Stoppard such a great fit for Court's audience: he is a writer who asks complicated questions with both a sense of humor and crafty theatricality. Court's audience demands intellectual engagement of our theatrical offerings, and *The Hard Problem* is no exception.

The term the "hard problem" was coined by philosopher David Chalmers to describe the challenge of accounting for and explaining consciousness in scientific terms. For Chalmers, consciousness is "the most mysterious phenomenon in the universe": it is the basis of all human experience, yet it appears to be inexplicable in terms of observable brain mechanisms. As Chalmers writes, "we know consciousness far more intimately than we know the rest of the world, but we understand the rest of the world far better than we understand consciousness."

Stoppard has brought to life a vibrant cast of characters who all are exploring the mystery of consciousness and the question of what it means to be human. Court Theatre is so pleased to have Chaon Cross (*Proof* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*), Kate Fry (*Electra*), Emjoy Gavino (*The Greek Cycle*), and Celeste Cooper (*Blues for an Alabama Sky*) back to light up our stage.

As we all lumber through winter, we hope that *The Hard Problem* will engage you and offer the promise of spring.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "SJA".

Stephen J. Albert, *Executive Director*



**CHARLES NEWELL**  
Marilyn F. Vitale  
Artistic Director

**STEPHEN J. ALBERT**  
Executive Director

Court Theatre's 2016/17 Season is sponsored by **Barbara and Richard Franke**.

# The **HARD** **PROBLEM**

BY **TOM STOPPARD**  
DIRECTED BY **CHARLES NEWELL**  
MARILYN F. VITALE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

*Scenic Design by John Culbert U.S.A.*

*Costume Design by Nan Cibula-Jenkins U.S.A.* Cree Rankin, *Casting*

*Lighting Design by Keith Parham U.S.A.* Nora Titone, *Production Dramaturg*

*Sound Design by Andre Pluess U.S.A.* Amanda Weener-Frederick, \* *Production Stage Manager*

*Dialect Design by Eva Breneman* Cara Parrish, \* *Assistant Stage Manager*

Setting: Various locations in the United Kingdom during the first decade of the 21st century.

Presented without intermission.

Sponsored by



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**Michael Charles Litt**

*The Hard Problem* by Tom Stoppard, © Tom Stoppard, 2015

*Designers and Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO, CLC.*  
\*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## CAST

*Hilary* ..... Chaon Cross\*  
*Spike* ..... Jürgen Hooper\*  
*Amal* ..... Owais Ahmed  
*Leo* ..... Brian McCaskill\*  
*Julia* ..... Celeste M. Cooper  
*Ursula* ..... Kate Fry\*  
*Jerry* ..... Nathan Hosner\*  
*Cathy* ..... Sophie Thatcher  
*Bo* ..... Enjoy Gavino\*

Understudies: Leea Ayers, Nicholas Bailey, Kristina Loy

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

## PRODUCTION STAFF

*Fight Choreographer* ..... Sam Hubbard  
*Assistant Director/Research Assistant* ..... Skye Robinson Hillis  
*Assistant to Dialect Designer* ..... Vahishta Vafadari  
*Scenic Design Assistant* ..... Noelle Thomas  
*Scenic Artist* ..... Scott Gerwitz U.S.A.  
*Props Assistant* ..... Tony Cooper  
*Carpenters* ..... Tony Cooper, Andrew Halvorsen, Andrew Hildner, Dylan Jost, Jared Miller, Theron Seckington, Christopher Walls  
*Costume Shop Assistant* ..... Stephanie Cluggish  
*Stitcher* ..... Alex Rutherford  
*Wardrobe Supervisor* ..... Jody Schmidt  
*Wardrobe Crew* ..... Alex Rutherford  
*Assistant Master Electrician* ..... Rafael Grimes  
*Electricians* ..... Shelbi Arndt, Billy Borst, Chris Cvikota, Danielle Davis, Billy Murphy, Heather Sparling, Jonah White  
*Video Creator* ..... Mike Tutaj  
*Floor Manager* ..... Jaclynn Joslin

*Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO, CLC.*

Court Theatre performs in the intimate Abelson Auditorium, made possible through a gift from Hope and Lester Abelson.

*Cover photo of Chaon Cross by Joe Mazza.*

*Please turn off all phones, pagers, and chiming watches. Photographs and video recording are strictly prohibited.*

Court 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. Productions are made possible, in part, by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. Court Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American Theatre, the League of Resident Theatres, the Illinois Humanities Council, Arts Alliance Illinois, and the League of Chicago Theatres.



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## From the Desk of TOM STOPPARD

*by Tom Stoppard*

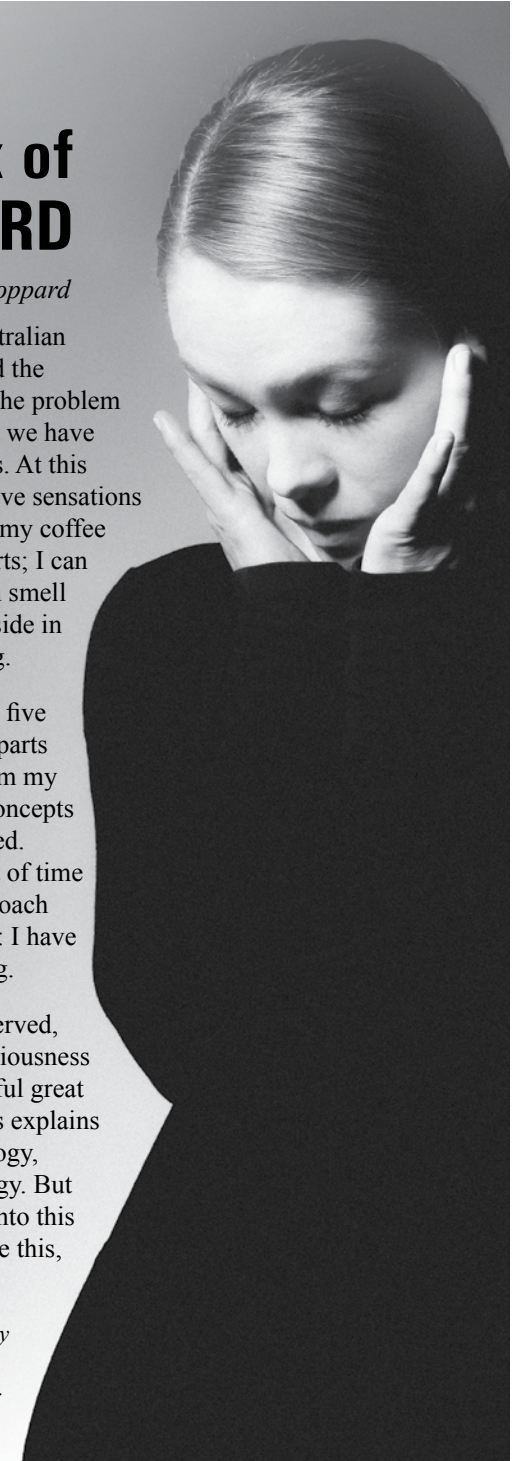
*The Hard Problem* is what the Australian philosopher David Chalmers called the mystery of consciousness; that is, the problem of explaining the phenomenon that we have subjective First Person experiences. At this moment, I am conscious of these five sensations among many others: I can see that my coffee is in a mug decorated with red hearts; I can taste that I have sweetened it; I can smell woodsmoke; I can hear voices outside in the garden; and I can touch my dog.

These five sensations I owe to “the five senses” which are associated with parts of the body. But there is more. From my coffee mug alone I also have the concepts of decoration, red, and heart-shaped. Simultaneously, I have the concept of time (I have a deadline) and of self-reproach (I’ve missed it). And another thing: I have no dog! I can imagine petting a dog.

In a 2014 TED talk, Chalmers observed, “I want a scientific theory of consciousness that works. We’ve got this wonderful great chain of explanation where physics explains chemistry, chemistry explains biology, biology explains parts of psychology. But consciousness doesn’t seem to fit into this picture. Faced with an anomaly like this, radical ideas may be needed.” ■

*Excerpt from a program article written by Tom Stoppard for the National Theatre’s production of The Hard Problem in 2015.*

*Photo of Chaon Cross by Joe Mazza.*



# Q&A TOM STOPPARD

**Do you think science will ever find the magic key to consciousness?**

If the key is a matter of “science,” then undoubtedly the mystery will one day be explained scientifically—as most scientists expect.

**We understand you originally set out to write two plays, one investigating consciousness and one exploring the 2008 financial crisis. What inspired you to join those stories together?**

I was interested in both subjects for a long time and thought there must be a play in either one before I began to see that behavioural psychology was a place where there might be a little overlap. The subject is really the possibility of altruism, which, to Hilary, would entail something that couldn’t be captured by reductionism.

**Can you imagine a world where altruism doesn’t exist? In other words, what would happen if human nature really was purely egoistic, as Spike imagines it to be?**

I think most scientists believe that “a world where altruism doesn’t exist” is indeed the world we live in, in that so-called altruistic behaviour is in all cases egoistic, i.e. behaviour evolved at the gene level to be ultimately self-serving, not selfless. Whether the root of altruistic behaviour is mind or body—or whether or not mind is body—has no bearing on the consequences of the behaviour. It has bearing on the question of what it means to be human.

**Do you identify with Hilary?**

I don’t identify with her but I can empathise with her more easily than with Spike. ■



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# THE HARD PROBLEM: WHERE LIFE AND ART INTERSECT

by Nora Titone, *Resident Dramaturg*

For much of his life, Tom Stoppard knew relatively little about his family's origins and the events of his early childhood. The established details of his biography began when he was eight years old, in 1946, the year he moved from India to England with his Czechoslovakian mother, Martha, a Catholic. Martha recently had married a British Army officer, Major Kenneth Stoppard. She brought two sons from a previous marriage to this new union, eager for her children to start life in a new country.

Martha Stoppard kept silent about her experiences prior to 1946, hoping her reticence would help young Tom adapt more quickly to the customs and manners of his adopted nation. As she later explained, "I decided the only thing to make it possible to live and truly settle down was to draw a blind over my past life."

Five decades passed. Tom Stoppard became the world-renowned artist we know today—the playwright and human rights activist, the recipient of multiple Tony Awards, an Academy Award and countless other literary honors, as well as the Order of the British Empire.

It was at the height of his career that Stoppard began to unlock the hidden history of his childhood. Through a series of revelations in the mid-1990s—the result of interviews with long-lost Czech relatives and his own process of historical investigation—he was able to piece together the missing chapters of his life story.

Stoppard discovered that he had been a child refugee of war; that he and both of his parents were Jewish; and that most of his family, including all four of his grandparents and three of his aunts, were among the 80,000 Czechoslovakian Jews who perished at Auschwitz, Theresienstadt, and other Nazi concentration camps in the Holocaust.

In a widely-read 1999 autobiographical essay, "On Turning Out to Be Jewish," the playwright shared these details with the public. His memoir inspired us to think more deeply about the questions of identity that pervade *The Hard Problem*, and consider how the pursuit of self-knowledge illuminates not only who we are as individuals, but also what it means to be human.



Tom Stoppard was born Tomas Straussler in 1937 in Zlin, Czechoslovakia, a manufacturing city that was the world headquarters of the Bata Shoe Company. Tomas' father, Dr. Eugen Straussler was a doctor at the hospital the Bata Company operated for its 30,000 factory workers in Zlin. Tomas' mother, Martha Beck Straussler, was secretary to a Bata manager. The Strausslers were among many Jewish people employed at the Catholic-owned business.

When the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in 1939, Bata executives acted quickly to evacuate their Jewish employees to safety. The company owned shoe factories around the world, and was able to reassign Jewish workers to operations in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Far East, where, it was hoped, they would be out of danger. Dr. Straussler, his wife Martha, and their toddler sons, Peter and Tomas, were sent to a Bata Shoe factory in the British Colony of Singapore.

When the Strausslers arrived in Singapore in May 1939, they fell in love with the landscape, the heat and the exotic food. Dr. Straussler took a job at the local Bata hospital, providing medical care for the company's predominantly Chinese, Malaysian and Indian factory workers.

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese aerial bombardment of Singapore brought the Strausslers' interlude of safety and security to an end. War planes attacked the city for weeks, destroying neighborhoods, setting buildings ablaze and filling the sky with fire.

The night of January 30, 1942, as bombs continued to fall and the city burned, Eugen Straussler drove his wife and sons to the waterfront and placed them on a refugee ship with thousands of other evacuees. Dr. Straussler remained behind. The wards of his hospital were crowded with civilians injured and wounded in the bombing, including women and children.

The vessel carrying Martha Straussler and her sons was "bombed just about everywhere" on its voyage out from Singapore, Stoppard learned later. After two weeks evading Japanese warplanes at sea, the family landed safely in Bombay. When the mother and her children disembarked, they had no possessions other than their identity papers. All of their luggage was lost on the voyage from Singapore.

CONTINUED ON P 10



The Strausslers made their way to Darjeeling, the ancient Buddhist city perched amid tea plantations in the foothills of the Himalayas. Martha found work managing a Bata shoe store. Tomas enrolled in a school for international students run by American missionaries; the hall where the children gathered for lessons was called “Arcadia.” In time, the Czech Consulate sent word that Eugen Straussler was missing, presumed dead, in the chaos following the fall of Singapore. Martha met and married British Army officer Kenneth Stoppard in Darjeeling. The marriage conferred on her son Tom a new passport, a new name and a new country to call home. It was as Tom Stoppard that eight-year-old Tomas Straussler made his final journey, in 1946, from India to England, a refugee no longer.

In 1998, Stoppard learned that his father had remained at his post in Singapore’s Bata hospital until the city fell. On February 12, 1942, the day the Allies evacuated all troops and medical staff from the city, Dr. Straussler boarded the last convoy of British ships out of Singapore. A day out from the harbor, his vessel took a direct hit from a Japanese bomber and sank with no survivors.

Stoppard once called himself “a skeptic who takes pleasure in dramatizing both sides of any situation,” confessing, “I enjoy the double perspective. I am the kind of playwright who embarks on an endless leapfrog down the great moral issues. I put a position, I rebut it, then I refute it, then I refute the rebuttal, and then I rebut the refutation. I do this forever. Endlessly.”

In *The Hard Problem*, Stoppard turns the searchlight of his intellect on our efforts to understand consciousness, human nature and the wellsprings of goodness. He asks, are we altruists or egoists? What is empathy? Why would one person choose to sacrifice himself for another? Is it ever possible for us to explain our behavior in scientific terms?

To experience *The Hard Problem* is to weigh our personal responses to these questions; it is also to share the joy and pain Hilary finds in her ambitious search for self-understanding. Her emotional journey as she explores the essence of human nature is very much our own. ■

Source material: Ira Nadel. *Tom Stoppard: A Life*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002; Tom Stoppard, “On Turning Out to Be Jewish,” *Talk Magazine*, September 1999.

[www.kirkland.com](http://www.kirkland.com)

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*The Hard Problem*

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## Charles Newell on Directing Stoppard by Shelby Krick

**This is the sixth piece written by Tom Stoppard that you've directed.**

**What keeps bringing you back to his work?**

It's the challenge of a writer who's so wickedly smart and so devilishly witty that keeps me coming back to Stoppard, and I embrace the work to find the heart in his text. I know it's there; it's always a thrill to hear audiences respond to his wit and intellect, but most importantly get completely emotionally caught up in it.

*The Hard Problem* contains so many fascinating and complicated philosophical, economic, and scientific theories that can take a lifetime to truly comprehend. But it's not simply to get the audience to understand these—which I see as the “what” of the play—but how might our work as theatre artists reveal the human behavior—or the “how” of the play—which helps the audience connect to the play through their empathy for the individual characters. If they connect to that “how,” they'll have a much greater ability to feel like they're understanding the complicated “what.”

Audiences often leave Stoppard's plays feeling really smart. But could they necessarily explain the concepts in the plays to someone else? As Hilary says in the play, “I understood it when she explained it, but not so I could explain it to anybody else.”

**What are some of those things you've discovered through the time you've spent with *The Hard Problem*?**

Court's production of *Proof* in 2015 similarly put the main character Catherine on stage through the entirety of the play, even when she isn't written into the script—according to playwright David Auburn, our production was unlike any he had seen before. This directorial decision allowed the audience to connect most viscerally to Catherine as she explored the emotions of the play. We're hoping we have learned from *Proof* how to do something similar with *The Hard Problem*. If we can connect the audience to Hilary's journey—through the same actress, Chaon Cross—we have the greatest opportunity of having the play land emotionally while still celebrating its dazzling intellect.

**What has been your favorite Stoppard production, and why?**

The one we're working on now, of course! But the most helpful in preparing for *The Hard Problem*, and therefore the one I've been thinking about the most, is *The Invention of Love*. Guy Adkins and Paxton Whitehead each played poet A. E. Housman at different points in his life; these two actors together on stage made the experience joyous. In retrospect, the pleasure I found in discovering [Housman's] poetry that I didn't know at all, and even initially felt distant from, has given me optimism about *The Hard Problem*, which also has subjects that initially felt foreign to me but have become more familiar through a similar process of discovery. ■

Court's production of Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love*.  
L-R: Guy Adkins, Bruch Reed, and Martin Yurik (Michael Brosilow, 2000).





## Do You Identify with Hilary?

Court Theatre has unique and valuable resources as the resident professional theatre of the University of Chicago. We have the privilege of calling on world-renowned scholars to deepen our understanding of the plays we produce. Considering the intellectual complexity of this play, *The Hard Problem* artistic team was extremely grateful to work with faculty members that bring a diverse range of expertise to the rehearsal process. We took a moment to ask these scholars about whether or not they identify with the play's protagonist, Hilary.

### Jason Bridges, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy

Yes, I do identify with Hilary. She's unsatisfied with easy scientific explanations of human nature, and I think she's right to be. There's no denying that human beings are part of the natural world. We're products of evolution, just like every other living thing. Mechanical and chemical and electrical processes course within us. We're made out of the elements. But none of this implies that the biological or physical sciences will ever be in a position to tell us the "true nature" of consciousness, or morality, or meaning. Hilary, I think, realizes this.

On the other hand, I don't think, as Hilary sometimes seems to, that we can appeal to God to explain these things, either. Our understanding of consciousness comes from being conscious, and from sharing that consciousness with others. Our understanding of meaning comes from making meaning, through talk and action. Neither God nor science can decide for us what we are to value in our lives, or how we are to live. These decisions, unavoidably, are our own to make. This is a message, I think, of the moral crises Hilary faces in the play, and of her way of resolving them, a way that is wholly her own.

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### **Peggy Mason, Professor, Department of Neurobiology**

I don't identify with Hilary at all. She's tortured by giving up a baby and I think that has driven her religiosity. I really don't like her praying—it grates on me. I also can't identify with her choice in Spike, who is as obnoxious as it gets. She's self-effacing, and her approach is very different from how I like to take up space in the world. I also don't identify with Hilary's intellectual style. She seems to want a certain answer—probably because she wants to assuage her guilt over giving up a baby. I don't like scientists, male or female, who act as though they have a pony in the race. Students often say to me “we're trying to prove,” and I interrupt them immediately to remind them that we are “testing whether,” and that any answer is great. Scientists who think they know the answer before they do an “experiment” are not doing an experiment (which is an experience where the answer is unknown) and are not true scientists in my book. No polemics in science.

The things I do have in common with Hilary are that we have two X chromosomes, and we have chosen to pursue science as a career. For me, being a female scientist is not a big enough commonality to drive me to identify with a person.

### **Leslie M. Kay, Professor, Department of Psychology, Institute for Mind and Biology**

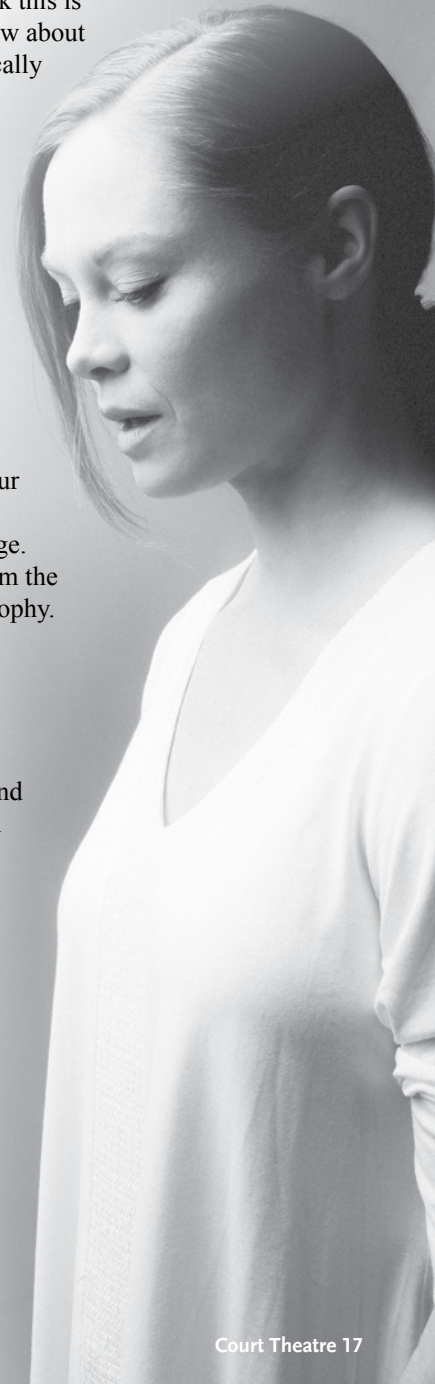
There are a few superficial similarities between myself and Hilary, the most obvious being that I am a female scientist in a traditionally male-dominated field. The real similarities lie in the questions we both ask regarding what we do or can know. I've arrived where I am by a similar set of experience, but in the opposite order. I started in Philosophy and Mathematics, did my PhD in Neuroscience (Biophysics) and ended up in a Psychology department. My research is firmly based in the neural mechanisms of sensory perception, and we do record lots of neuron and make hypotheses about how brains work, just like the members of the Krohl Institute. On the surface, I might appear to be the anti-Hilary. However, my research questions address the question of what we can know about thought and the world on an almost daily basis.

We have shown that at the most fundamental level, neural representations of the outside world do not objectively represent that world. They represent primarily the meaning of that world to the individual and the present context in which an individual answers a question as simple as “what odor is this?” So, I identify with Hilary's frustration in the face of popular theories and experiments that try to make causal claims from data that are more flash than substance. I share her frustration with the idea that if we just record enough

neurons and make detailed enough models we will ultimately be able to create a human mind in a computer. I think this is perhaps demonstrably untrue, given what we know about how fluctuating goals and situations can dramatically change the way a brain works at even the very lowest levels. I also share her concern about preserving truth and belief that science is ultimately about the truth; no matter how much we might want something to be true, if the evidence says it isn't, then it isn't. I disagree with her ultimate choice in how to explain the unknowable. I prefer to accept that some things are unknowable, and I rest easy in the belief that we have the ability to point to explanations using tools of complex systems and emergent phenomena. But these differences are really window dressing; at the heart of the matter and our similarities are the questions and commitment to rigorous inquiry as the only path to real knowledge. Despite popular opinion, that rigor comes not from the practice of experimental science, but from philosophy.

### **David Finkelstein, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy**

In college, I was—like Hilary—surrounded by, and influenced by, people who thought that every real phenomenon could, in principle, be understood scientifically. Like her, I was disturbed by evolutionary accounts of “altruism” that seemed to reveal that our concern for others' well-being is really just a maximizing strategy arrived at by “selfish” genes. Like her, I was both struck and comforted by the fact that although consciousness is undeniably real, it doesn't seem to be scientifically explicable. Like her, I worked in psychology labs—before I recognized that the questions that most concerned me weren't scientific questions at all. Having realized this, I decided to pursue philosophy rather than cognitive science. So yes, in a number of ways, I do identify with Hilary. I wish her luck. ■



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DIRECTED BY **KIMBERLY SENIOR**



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## Jon Will and the Betty Lou Smith Fund at The Chicago Community Trust

Betty Lou and James Victor Smith, both longtime residents of Chicago, understood and appreciated the importance of education. Now, Jon Will, the executor of Betty Lou Smith's estate, honors her legacy by continuing her support for arts education. As an alumnus of the Hyde Park Academy High School, Jon is passionate about providing support for additional education programs in local public schools. "The arts are a huge part of education," he says, "It is imperative that school children continue to be exposed to the arts through opportunities like these." Court Theatre is grateful for the Betty Lou Smith Fund's support of education and community engagement initiatives, which will help increase the impact and reach of the arts on the South Side of Chicago.

Court's body of work extends far beyond the stage. For over a decade, Court's Artists-in-the-Schools program has served a range of South Side public high schools, from Kenwood Academy in Hyde Park to Wendell Phillips Academy in Bronzeville. The program allows students, educators, and artists to explore fresh perspectives on classic theatre through artist residencies, student matinees, and performance workshops. With the support of patrons and donors like you, Court solidifies its commitment to bridging communities and fostering dialogues through compelling theatrical performances.

The Betty Lou Smith Fund is a major supporter of Court's education programs. Most recently, it instituted a generous two-to-one matching program for all increased or new donations to Court's education and community engagement programs. As part of a sustained effort, this generosity will continue for four years, enabling Court to reach even more students and community members. Court's donor base has risen to the occasion, with an unprecedented number of increased or new gifts made this season to meet the challenge. Your generosity has made the difference! Thank you for your support of these meaningful programs.

Thanks to the support of the Betty Lou Smith Fund and donors like you, Court's Artists-in-the-Schools program is able to implement and enhance drama programs by bringing professional artists into local schools for mentorship and development. Court's student matinee series enables students from partner schools to gain a deeper appreciation for classic theater, offering pre- and post-performance discussions in addition to providing supplemental educational materials for teachers. Since inception, these programs have grown substantially. Currently, Court serves more than 4,000 students each year. The Betty Lou Smith Fund has played an important role in ensuring that these educational programs will continue to develop and flourish. ■



Jon Will and Mary Gugenheim at the opening night celebration of Court Theatre's *Electra*.



**OWAIS AHMED** (*Amal*) is grateful to make his Court debut. He is a Chicago native and proud ensemble member of Definition Theatre Co. Theatre credits include: *The Invisible Hand* (Milwaukee Rep), *Orange* (Mixed Blood Theatre), *The Qualms* (Steppenwolf), *Heartland* (PlayPenn), *Blood & Gifts* (TimeLine), *The Reckoning of Kit* (First Floor Theater), and *Red Handed Otter* (A Red Orchid). Other theatre credits: *Anon(ymous)*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Passion Play*. Film/TV credits: *Batman V. Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, *Age of Ice*, and *Empire*. Owais is with Gray Talent.



**CELESTE M. COOPER** (*Julia*) is so excited to jump into another show with Court Theatre! Most recently, she played Delia in *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. Some theatre credits include: *Measure for Measure* (Goodman); *Stick Fly* (Windy City Playhouse/BTAA nominated for Best Featured Actress), *Never the Sinner* (Victory Gardens), *Ruined* (Eclipse), *Animal Farm* (understudy, Steppenwolf); *The Hammer Trinity* (House/Adrienne Arsht in Miami), *The Mecca Tales* (Chicago Dramatists); *How We Got On* (Citadel), *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Eclipse), and her original one woman shows, *Fight 4 Your Life* and *The Incredible Cece* (MPAACT, Stage 773). Celeste is a recipient of the Most Promising Actress Award from the Black Theater Alliance for her portrayal of Josephine in *Ruined*, which led her to becoming an ensemble member and casting associate with Eclipse Theatre Company. TV/Film credits: a recurring role as the Medical Examiner on *Chicago PD* (NBC), Spike Lee's *Chiraq*, *Sense8* (Netflix), and various others. Celeste has a B.A. in Speech Communications and Theatre from Tennessee State University and an MFA in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. She is thankful for Papa God, family, friends like family, and the lovelies at Paonessa Talent Agency.



**CHAON CROSS** (*Hilary*) Chicago credits: *Life Sucks*, *Brothers Karamazov* (Lookingglass Theatre); *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Proof* (Joseph Jefferson Nomination), *Uncle Vanya*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Scapin*, *The Romance Cycle*, and *Phèdre* (Court); *Cyrano* (Court and Redmoon Theater); *As You Like It*, *Private Lives*, *Cymbeline*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Chicago Shakespeare); *The Wheel* and *The Cherry Orchard* (Steppenwolf); *Macbeth* (Lyric Opera); and *Grace* (Northlight Theatre). Regional credits include *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater) and *Pride & Prejudice* (Cleveland Play House). TV credits: *The Exorcist* (FOX), *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Boss* (Starz), and *Detroit 1-8-7* (ABC). Film: *My Dog Skip* (Warner Bros).



**KATE FRY** (*Ursula*) returns to Court Theatre, where she has performed in over a dozen productions including *Electra*, *The Romance Cycle*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Caroline, or Change*. Other Chicago area credits include work with Writers Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and Victory Gardens, as well as

work with Theatre at the Center, Marriott Theatre, Apple Tree Theatre, and Candlelight Playhouse. Elsewhere, she has worked at McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, NJ, Center Theatre Group in LA, Repertory Theatre of St Louis, and Lincoln Center. She is the recipient of three Joseph Jefferson awards, an After Dark award, Chicago Magazine's actress of the year, and the Sarah Siddons award for Chicago's leading lady. Fry is married to actor/teacher Timothy Edward Kane. They have two sons.



**EMJOY GAVINO** (*Bo*) is thrilled to be back at Court, where she was last seen as Chrysothemis in *Electra*. Representative Chicago credits include *The Hypocrites*, *Second City* (national tour), *Northlight*, *Steppenwolf*, *Victory Gardens*, *Remy Bumpo*, *Paramount*, *Broadway Playhouse*, *Lookingglass*, *The Neo-Futurists*, and *Goodman*. Regional credits include *Repertory Actors Theatre*, *Book-It Repertory*, *ACT*, and *Village Theatre*. Film/TV: *The Exorcist*, *Mob Doctor*, *Chicago Fire*, *Empire*, and *Chicago Med*. Emjoy is the casting director of Gift Theatre, a company member with Barrel of Monkeys, and is the founder and producer of The Chicago Inclusion Project. Special thanks to Chad, Stewart Talent, Wolfpack 2010, and Mariano's. Visit [emjoygavino.com](http://emjoygavino.com) for updates.



**JÜRGEN HOOPER** (*Spike*) makes his Court Theatre debut. Broadway: *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. Chicago: *Life & Limb*, *Huck Finn* (Steppenwolf) *Rabbit Hole* (Goodman), *The Comedy of Errors*, *Amadeus*, *Short Shakespeare! Romeo & Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare), *Isaac's Eye*, *The Chosen* (Writer's Theatre), *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (American Theatre Company), *Paradise Lost* (TimeLine Theatre), *What's Wrong With Angry?* (Circle Theatre, Non-Equity Jeff Award Best Principle Actor - Play). Regional: *The Mousetrap*, *The Game's Afoot* (Indiana Rep) *The Game's Afoot* (New Theatre), *Wanamaker's Pursuit* (Arden Theatre Co.), *The Cherry Orchard* (Milwaukee Rep). TV/ Film: *Chicago Med*, *Crisis*, *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Suits* (USA) and the film *Game Day*. Jürgen is married to actress Blair Robertson.



**NATHAN HOSNER** (*Jerry*) is delighted to make his Court Theatre debut. Chicago credits include productions with Writers Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Paramount Theatre, About Face Theatre, First Folio Theatre, Shaw Chicago, and The Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Other credits include: *Peter and the Starcatcher* (first national tour), and productions with American Players Theatre, The New Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, The BoarsHead Theater, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Door Shakespeare, and the Madison Repertory New Play Festival. Nathan is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London.





**BRIAN MCCASKILL** (*Leo*) is making his Court Theatre debut. Previous credits include Windy City Playhouse, Lyric Opera, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Shattered Globe, TimeLine, and Raven Theatre. He has received one Jeff Award, four Jeff Award nominations, and two After Dark Awards. Film and television credits include *Chicago P.D.*, *Crisis*, *Prison Break*, and numerous commercials. Special thanks to Charlie, Cree, and Stewart Talent. Very special thanks to Teri and Jackson.



**SOPHIE THATCHER** (*Cathy*) makes her Court Theatre debut. Credits include *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Writers Theatre), *Oliver!* (Drury Lane Theatre), *The Secret Garden* (Light Opera Works), and work with Theatre at the Center and Provision Theater. Television credits include *Chicago P.D.* (NBC), a recurring role on *The Exorcist* (Fox), and commercials

for the Illinois Office of Tourism. Thanks to Stewart Talent, CESD, and Doreen at Anonymous Content.



**TOM STOPPARD** (*Playwright*) began his career in England in 1954 as a journalist, soon moving to London in 1960 to start work as a playwright. Plays: *The Hard Problem*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, *After Magritte*, *Jumpers*, *Travesties*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (with André Previn), *Dirty Linen*, *New-Found-Land*, *Dogg's Hamlet*, *Cahoot's Macbeth*, *Night*

and Day, *The Real Thing*, *Hapgood*, *Arcadia*, *Indian Ink*, *The Invention of Love*, *The Coast of Utopia*, *Rock 'n' Roll*, and *The Hard Problem*. Adaptations: *On the Razzle* (Nestroy), and *Rough Crossing* (Molnar). Tom's most recent work for TV was *Parades End*; for radio, *Darkside* (with Pink Floyd); and for film, *Anna Karenina*. His film *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* won the Venice Film Festival Prix d'Or, and *Shakespeare in Love* won an Academy Award.



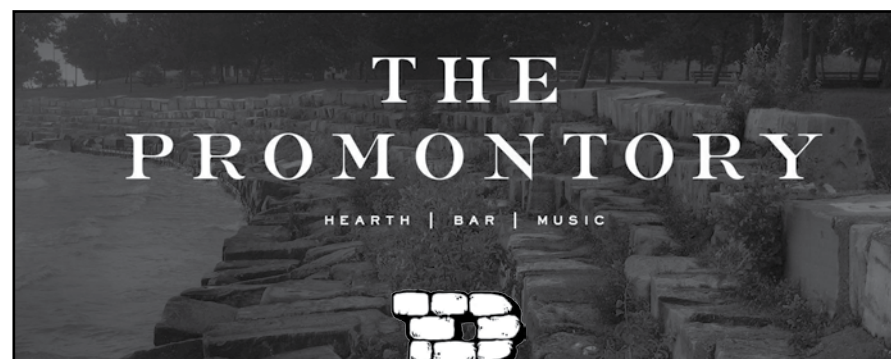
**CHARLES NEWELL** (*Director/Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director*) was awarded the SDCF Zelda Fichandler Award, "which recognizes an outstanding director or choreographer who is transforming the regional arts landscape through singular creativity and artistry in theatre." Charlie has been Artistic Director of Court Theatre since 1994, where he has

directed over 50 productions. He made his Chicago directorial debut in 1993 with *The Triumph of Love*, which won the Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Production. Charlie's productions of *Man of La Mancha* and *Caroline, or Change* have also won Best Production Jeffs. Other directorial highlights at Court include *Man in the Ring*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*; *Satchmo at the Waldorf*; *Agamemnon*; *The Secret Garden*; *Iphigenia in Aulis*; *The Misanthrope*; *Tartuffe*; *Proof*; *Angels in America*; *An Iliad*; *Porgy and Bess*; *Three Tall Women*; *Titus Andronicus*; *Arcadia*; *Uncle Vanya*; *Raisin*; *The Glass Menagerie*; *Travesties*; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; *The Invention of Love*; and *Hamlet*. Charlie has also directed at Goodman Theatre (*Rock 'n' Roll*), Guthrie Theater (*The History Cycle*, *Cymbeline*), Arena Stage, John Houseman's The Acting Company

(Staff Repertory Director), the California and Alabama Shakespeare Festivals, Juilliard, and New York University. He has served on the Board of TCG, as well as on several panels for the NEA. Opera directing credits include Marc Blitzstein's *Regina* (Lyric Opera), *Rigoletto* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis), *Don Giovanni* and *The Jewel Box* (Chicago Opera Theater), and *Carousel* (Glimmerglass). Charlie was the recipient of the 1992 TCG Alan Schneider Director Award, and has been nominated for 16 Joseph Jefferson Director Awards, winning four times. In 2012, Charlie was honored by the League of Chicago Theatres with its Artistic Achievement Award.

**JOHN CULBERT** (*Scenic Designer*) designed scenery or lighting for Court Theatre's productions of *Man in the Ring*, *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, *Agamemnon*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Invisible Man*, and *Porgy and Bess*; Goodman Theatre's *Two Trains Running*; Chicago Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*; TimeLine Theatre's *Chimerica*; Northlight Theatre's *Faceless*; Writers Theatre's *Arcadia*; and Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Regina*. He also designed Lookingglass Theatre's *Argonautika*, Goodman Theatre's *Buzzer*, and Glimmerglass Opera Festival's *Carousel*. He has designed productions for the Singapore Repertory, Opera National du Rhin, Berkeley Rep, McCarter Theatre, and the Shakespeare Theatre. He serves as the dean of The Theatre School at DePaul University.

**NAN CIBULA-JENKINS** (*Costume Designer*) has designed costumes for theatre, film, television, opera, and dance. At Court Theatre, she designed *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Angels in America*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *The Piano*, among others. At Steppenwolf Theatre, she designed costumes for *The Christians*, *The Herd*, *The Way West*, *Clybourne Park*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *American Buffalo*,



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## PROFILES

**Glengarry Glen Ross**, *Top Dog Underdog*, *The Dresser*, among many others. Other recent Chicago credits include *Pericles* at Chicago Shakespeare and *Detroit '67* at Northlight. Regional credits include Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory, McCarter Theatre, Kansas City Repertory, Alliance Theatre, Hartford Stage Company, Dallas Theatre Center, the Alley in Houston, American Repertory Theatre, Public Theatre, ACT Seattle, Manhattan Theatre Club, and The Kennedy Center. On Broadway, she designed the recent revival of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and she was the original costume designer for the American premier of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* and the original Broadway production of *Speed the Plow*. Ms. Cibula-Jenkins is a recipient of the Michael Merritt Award for Design and Collaboration, the Hollywood Dramalogue Critics Award and a Joseph Jefferson Award for Costume Design. She is professor emeritus at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

**KEITH PARHAM** (*Lighting Designer*) Court credits include: *An Iliad*, *Angels in America*, *Proof*, *The Misanthrope*, *Tartuffe*, *M. Butterfly*, *The Good Book*, *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Man in the Ring*, and *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. Broadway: *Thérèse Raquin* (Roundabout Theatre Company). Off-Broadway: *Man from Nebraska* (2econd Stage); *The Purple Lights of Joppa Illinois* (Atlantic Theatre Company); *Between Riverside and Crazy* (2econd Stage Theatre/Atlantic Theater Company); *The Model Apartment* (Primary Stages); *Tribes*, *Mistakes Were Made*, and *Red Light Winter* (Barrow Street Theatre); *Stop the Virgens* (Karen O at St. Ann's Warehouse/Sydney Opera House); *Ivanov*, *Three Sisters* (CSC); *A Minister's Wife* (Lincoln Center Theatre); *Adding Machine* (Minetta Lane). International: *Homebody/Kabul* (National Theatre of Belgrade, Serbia). Regional: TUTA, Goodman, Steppenwolf, The Mark Taper Forum, and Arena Stage, among others. Awards: Obie, Lortel.

**ANDRE PLUESS** (*Sound Designer*) returns to Court Theatre where previous credits include *Electra*, *Man in the Ring*, *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, *Agamemnon*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *An Iliad*, *Travesties*, *Cyrano*, *The Romance Cycle*, and *Mary Stuart*, among others. Broadway credits: *Metamorphoses*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *33 Variations*, and *The Clean House* (Lincoln Center Theater). Regional: *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare Theatre D.C.); *Legacy of Light* (Arena Stage); *Ghostwritten* (Goodman Theatre); *Palomino* (Center Theatre Group); *Equivocation* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Merchant of Venice* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Marcus* (American Conservatory Theatre); *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (California Shakespeare Festival). Mr. Pluess is an Artistic Associate at Lookingglass Theatre Company and the California Shakespeare Festival, resident designer at Victory Gardens Theater, and teaches Sound Design at Northwestern University.

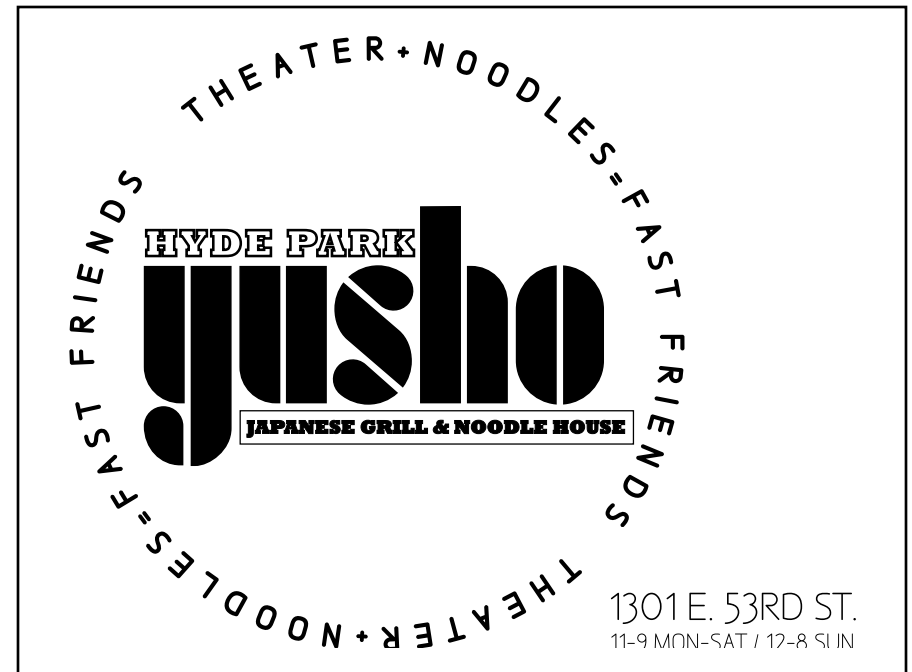
**EVA BRENEMAN** (*Dialect Designer*) Court credits: *One Man Two Guvnors*, *The Good Book*, *M. Butterfly*, *Skylight*, *Angels in America*, *The First Breeze of Summer*, and *Carousel*. Chicago: *Chimerica* (TimeLine); *Arcadia* (Writers); *Blood Wedding* (Lookingglass); *2666* (Goodman); *A Splintered Soul* (Chicago Commercial Collective); *In the Heat of the Night* (Shattered Globe); *The Compass* (Steppenwolf); and *Tug of War* (Chicago Shakespeare). Regional: *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Island* (American Repertory Theatre); *Love's Labour's Lost* (Actor's Theatre of Louisville); *Around The World In 80 Days* (Centerstage/Kansas City Repertory), and *Mamma Mia!*

## PROFILES

(National Tour/Las Vegas). Eva is an associate artist at TimeLine Theatre Company and a production affiliate of Lookingglass Theatre Company.

**NORA TITONE** (*Resident Dramaturg*) is the author of the 19th-century theater history *My Thoughts Be Bloody: The Bitter Rivalry of Edwin and John Wilkes Booth* (Simon & Schuster, 2010). As a dramaturg and historical researcher, Titone has collaborated with a range of artists and scholars including playwright Anna Deavere Smith and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. She also contributed to projects at Arena Stage and DreamWorks Studios. Titone studied history at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley, and is represented by ICM Partners.

**SKYE ROBINSON HILLIS** (*Assistant Director/Research Assistant*) is a Chicago-based playwright/director/dramaturg who is thrilled to be working with Court for the first time. Previous Chicagoland credits include *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman); *The Mutilated*, *Strandline*, *Mud Blue Sky*, *The Aliens*, and *The Butcher of Baraboo* (A Red Orchid); *Jake's Women* (Spartan Theatre Company); *Goldfish* (Route 66); *Fallen Angels*, *The Clean House*, *Our Class*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Creditors* (Remy Bumppo); *The Coward*, *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, and *Pygmalion* (Stage Left); *Homecoming 1972* (Chicago Dramatists); *Distance* (Strawdog); *Ecstasy* (Cole Theatre); *Three Sisters*, *Late: A Cowboy Song*, and *Number of People* (Piven Theatre). As a playwright, she is a Princess Grace Award semi-finalist and her work has been seen at the New Works Lab at Stratford, the Ashland New Plays Festival, Route 66, A Red Orchid, Piven, The Artistic Home, First Floor and more. She is a proud graduate of Columbia College's Directing program.





## PROFILES

**AMANDA WEENER-FREDERICK** (*Production Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be spending her fourth season with Court Theatre. Amanda previously stage managed *Water by the Spoonful*; *M. Butterfly*; *Native Son*; *Iphigenia in Aulis*; *Waiting for Godot*; *The Good Book*; *The Secret Garden*; *Gem of the Ocean*; *Agamemnon*; *Satchmo at the Waldorf*; *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; *One Man, Two Guvnors*; *Man in the Ring*; *Electra*, and most recently, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. Since moving to Chicago, Amanda has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre Company and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Before that, Amanda spent eight seasons with Milwaukee Repertory Theater and seven summers with Great River Shakespeare Festival in Winona, Minnesota. Amanda is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

**CARA PARRISH** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be returning to Court for *The Hard Problem*. She was the assistant stage manager for Court's productions of *Electra* and *Gem of the Ocean*. Cara's other Chicago credits include *Douglass* (American Vicarious); *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Men of Soul*, *Sounds So Sweet*, *The Trial of Moses* 'Fleetwood' Walker, *At Last: A Tribute to Etta James*, *The Marvelous Marvelettes* (Black Ensemble Theater); *The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights*, *Port Authority*, *Yellow Moon*, *The Letters*, *The Blonde*, *the Brunette*, and *the Vengeful Redhead*, and *The Caretaker* (Writers Theatre). Her national credits include Detroit Music Hall, The Fabulous Palm Springs Folies, Chamber Theatre Productions, and The Hippodrome State Theatre. Cara would like to thank her family and friends for all of their love and support.



**STEPHEN J. ALBERT** (*Executive Director*) is a founding partner in Albert Hall & Associates, LLC, a leading arts consulting firm. He has led some of America's most prestigious theatres, including the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group, Alley Theatre, and Hartford Stage Company. Albert began his career with the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group in Los

Angeles where he worked in senior management positions for over a decade, rising to Managing Director. He went on to become Executive Director of Houston's Alley Theatre where he led a turnaround that stabilized the organization, enabling the Alley to return to national standing, and drove a capital campaign that secured the organization's future. At Hartford Stage, his partnership with Mark Lamos resulted in some of the theatre's most successful seasons and reinforced Hartford Stage's position at the forefront of the regional theatre movement. During his tenure in Hartford, Mr. Albert led the initiative to create a 25,000 square foot, state-of-the-art production center, securing the donation of the facility and the funding for its renovation. Albert has served as president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and as a board member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG). He has written and produced a variety of productions for television, is an ACE award nominee, and has been an associate producer of numerous acclaimed Broadway productions. He is a Senior Fellow with the American Leadership Forum, a graduate of the University of Southern California, and holds an MBA from the UCLA Graduate School of Management. Stephen is on the Board of the Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce and the St. Thomas the Apostle Finance Committee.

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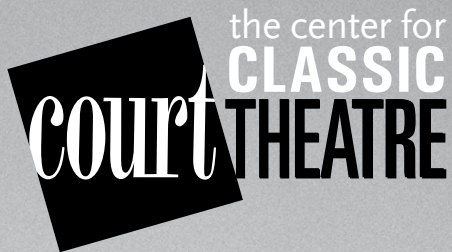
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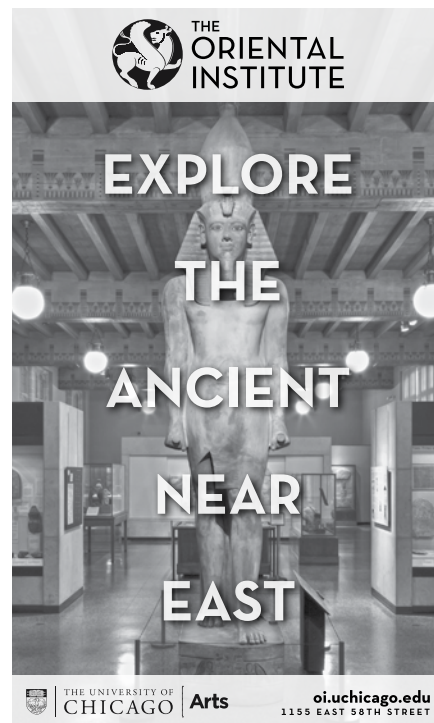
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