



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Tennessee Williams' Stage Classic, "A Streetcar Named Desire," Will Serve as the Inaugural Production for the Newly-Formed American Coast Theater Company

Tickets Now On Sales for Nine Performances, August 3-18, at the Lyceum Theater

One of Orange County's most highly-respected collegiate theatre arts departments will share its stage with a new professional theater company this summer with the staging of Tennessee Williams' masterpiece, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for nine weekend performances, August 3-18 at the Lyceum Theater on the campus of Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California.

American Coast Theater Company will stage professional theatrical productions in Orange County, using a resident company of actors complemented by outside Equity performers.

"We are committed to producing professional theatre with artistic excellence and high production value but without the nudity and gratuitous language," remarks Susan K. Berkompas (M.F.A), Producing Artistic Director for the new company. "Our goal will be to produce works primarily from the dramatic canon of American classics, as well as to nurture the development of new American playwrights."

Such a modern classic is Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, considered by many to be the finest drama by America's finest post-war playwright. It took Broadway by storm in 1947 with Marlon Brando in the lead role of Stanley, and the production made an indelible impression on American culture. Winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the Critics' Circle Award in 1948, *Streetcar* shows a turbulent confrontation between traditional values in the American South, set against the rough-edged, aggressive materialism of the new world.

NEW PROFESSIONAL THEATRE TROUPE TO DEBUT 2-2-2 ACTC 2007-02 6/12/07

Through the vividly characterized figures of Southern belle, Blanche Dubois, seeking refuge from physical ugliness in decayed gentility, and her brutal brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski, Williams dramatizes his sense of the South's past as still active and often destructive in modern America.

ACTC has selected Karen Lund, the Associate Artistic Director at Taproot Theatre Company in Seattle, Washington, who will serve as guest director for the inaugural production this August.

According to Berkompas, ACTC will be deeply-rooted in the artistic traditions of theater. "We believe in the examination of the human condition as it is revealed through thought-provoking story telling." Berkompas expects ACTC will open up a whole new world of opportunity for Orange County theatre patrons and her students.

"We have been fortunate to have had guest performers work with our Vanguard University student productions throughout the past decade," points out Berkompas. "But this new company will not only allow opportunities for student internships and for Vanguard alumni to work side-by-side with our wonderful company of professional actors, but they will also have added opportunities to work back stage, in the tech booth, and behind the scenes in staging ACTC productions. It will be a wonderful stepping stone for our students and alumni who are pursuing professional careers in theatre."

Berkompas has served as Producing Artistic Director and Department Chair for Vanguard University's award-winning theatre arts department for the past decade and is the recipient of the 2005 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival award for Excellence in Theatre Education and the Daily Pilot's 2004 Woman of the Year. An accomplished performer in her own right, she has also directed dozens of stage productions, including *The Boys Next Door*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Charley's Aunt*. Her theater department at Vanguard has received regional and national recognition by KCACTF, as well as local acclaim.

She will be featured in the role of Blanche Dubois in the ACTC production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Berkompas will be joined on stage by Cameron Dye as the primal, rough-hewn, and brutish brother in-law Stanley Kowalski.

Rounding out the outstanding ensemble cast are Marianne Savell as Stella Kowalski, Paul Eggington as Harold "Mitch" Mitchell, Deborah Marley as Eunice Hubbell, Tim Larson as Steve Hubbell, Carlos

Fernandez as Pablo Gonzales, Cecie McClelland as the Woman/Nurse, Mark Parker as the Doctor, and Sunny Peabody as the Young Man.

NEW PROFESSIONAL THEATRE TROUPE TO DEBUT 3-3-3 ACTC 2007-2 6/12/07

“Tim Larson, Carlos Fernandez, Mark Parker, Cecie McClelland and Sunny Peabody are all alumni of Vanguard’s theatre arts department,” points out Berkompas proudly.

“I see this company as a potential alternative to the arts that patrons across Orange County are currently experiencing,” remarks Berkompas, “ACTC offers intimate theatre (200 seats) which becomes a more visceral experience. Theatre patrons are close enough to the actors to hear their breath and to see the beads of sweat or the tears shed by any character on stage. This completely sweeps the audience into the action and the pathos they feel for the characters becomes a natural by-product of the experience. The other side of the coin is that this kind of intimacy demands dynamic, yet completely truthful acting. The audience knows when an actor is lying on our stage and this cast of *A Streetcar Named Desire* is fully capable of delivering,” states the producing director.

“We , must do the kind of art that we know will speak to the masses, the kind of art that probes, questions, and sheds light upon---the kind of art that demands we all look at our own lives to discover truth and deep reflection.”

“This is why we are doing *Streetcar*,” points out Berkompas. “There is very little hope in these characters’ lives, but if we can all look at them through a magnifying glass, then we can potentially see the darkness in our own hearts and the tragedy and desperation in the lives of others who have become outcasts in society. This is why I love *Streetcar* because it gives us a glimpse of ourselves in every character represented.”

Tickets for all performances are now on sale via the ACTC box office at (714) 619-6424. Ticket prices are \$30 for general admission and \$25 for seniors and groups of 10 or more.

Performances will be presented at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings with a 2 p.m. matinee performance on Saturday afternoons.

ACTC 2007 is sponsored by David McFadzean (Co-Creator and Writer of ABC’s Home Improvement and Rosanne; Producer of Wind Dancer Productions) and The Grove Center for the Arts.

For further information visit the American Coast Theater Company at www.AmericanCoastTheater.org