



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: January 25, 2021

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE FOUNDATION

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-028
Business Name: American Conservatory Theatre Foundation
Business Address: 415 Geary Street and 1127 Market Street
District: Districts 3 and 6
Applicant: Eric Brizee, Operations Manager
Nomination Letter Date: December 9, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation is a nonprofit organization, founded by William Ball in 1966, and is the governing body of the American Conservatory Theater (“A.C.T.”), which opened its doors at 415 Geary Street in 1967. A.C.T. is a Tony Award-winning theater and training institution whose work is energized and informed by a profound commitment to developing the next generation of theater artists. A.C.T. is both a theater company and acting school, which includes two theaters (the flagship location at 415 Geary Street called the “Geary Theater,” and the “Strand Theater” at 1127 Market Street), as well as the Conservatory which offers educational opportunities for adult and young actors. The Geary Theater at 415 Geary Street was built in 1911, purchased by A.C.T. in 1967, and has served as the flagship theater ever since. In the heart of Union Square, it seats 1,019 people. A.C.T.’s Conservatory serves 3,000 students every year. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, Benjamin Bratt, and Anika Noni Rose are among the Conservatory’s distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, A.C.T. is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America’s actor training programs, while serving as a creative engine for local talent.

Some of A.C.T.’s programs to engage the community includes Bike Night (valet bike parking to encourage mass transit / non-automobile commuting); Drinks & Drama to encourage socialization in a theatrical context; Prologues to educate audience members prior to a show; Theater on the Couch, which encourages audience members to share their views on a show; Pride Night, to encourage the LGBTQ community to participate in the live theater experience; and other socialization and educational experiences. A.C.T. partners with local high schools to introduce the city’s students to the experience of live theater, both as artists and as audience members. A.C.T. brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 12,000 Bay Area school students each year through ACTsmart programs, while providing A.C.T.’s diverse community with entertaining access to the creative process. A.C.T. is one of the first theaters in the nation to offer low-cost performance tickets to school groups and has brought the power of live theater to hundreds of thousands of students and educators.

From 1989 to 1994, the Geary Theater building was severely compromised by the Loma Prieta Earthquake and the A.C.T. was not able to use the space. Despite this setback, A.C.T. was able to continue their operations and full performance schedule for these five years by using other local venues to host their shows. More recently, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, A.C.T. closed the Administrative Offices (30 Grant Avenue) and the Costume Shop Theater (1117 Market Street) and cited reduced sales and inactivity.

Legacy Business Program

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City Hall Room 140
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CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, American Conservatory Theatre Foundation has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

415 Geary Street from 1967 to Present (53 years)
30 Grant Avenue from 1993 to 2020 (27 years)
1117-111 Market Street from 1998 to 2020 (22 years)
1127 Market Street from 2015 to Present (5 years)

CRITERION 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, American Conservatory Theatre Foundation has contributed to the history and identity of the Union Square neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the performing arts.
- Both properties have Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because of their Historic Resource Statuses (see above) and locations within eligible historic districts.

415 Geary Street is an Article 10 landmark (#82 – "Geary Theater") and is a contributor to the Article 11 Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District with a resource code of "Category I – Significant Building, No Alterations." The property has also been surveyed numerous times (1975, 1976, 1978, and 1988), and determined to be individually eligible for the California Register and National Register.

1127 Market Street also has a Historic Resource status code of "A" (Historic Resource Present) through a Planning Department Historic Resource Evaluation Response which identified the property as individually eligible for the California Register and eligible for the National Register as a contributor to the Market Street Theater and Loft District. The Market Street property is also located within the SoMa Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District. The owners submitted an application to have the Market Street location considered for Article 10 local Landmark status, however, it has been inactive for several years.

- The American Conservatory Theater has been referenced in numerous trade publications, media, and historical documents throughout California since it was founded in 1967, including: American Theatre, Bay Area Reporter, Broadway World San Francisco, The Daily Californian, The Mercury News, Patch, NPR, The San Diego Union-Tribune, The San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Santa Cruz Sentinel, SF Weekly, SFist, and Theater Mania among many others. A.C.T. has also been featured in a 50th anniversary book on the company's history written by Michael Paller.

CRITERION 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

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Yes, American Conservatory Theatre Foundation is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that American Conservatory Theatre Foundation qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- A.C.T.'s mission to serve the entire population of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area.
- Instituting and supporting their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program to address issues around underserved and under-represented communities.
- A.C.T.'s "Rules of Engagement" that seek to create community within each theatrical experience.
- Bringing theatrical and cultural expression to San Francisco and Bay Area audiences and performers through their traditional theater at 415 Geary Street, and through their new and experimental theater works at 1127 Market Street.
- Continue their philanthropic, collaborative, and educational programs for local residents.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Theater.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include American Conservatory Theatre Foundation currently located at 415 Geary Street and 1127 Market Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

January 25, 2021

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE FOUNDATION

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Business Address: 415 Geary Street and 1127 Market Street
District: Districts 3 and 6
Applicant: Eric Brizee, Operations Manager
Nomination Letter Date: December 9, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for American Conservatory Theatre Foundation, currently located at 415 Geary Street and 1127 Market Street.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 25, 2021, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes American Conservatory Theatre Foundation in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at American Conservatory Theatre Foundation.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- A.C.T.'s mission to serve the entire population of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area.
- Instituting and supporting their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program to address issues around underserved and under-represented communities.
- A.C.T.'s "Rules of Engagement" that seek to create community within each theatrical experience.
- Bringing theatrical and cultural expression to San Francisco and Bay Area audiences and performers through their traditional theater at 415 Geary Street, and through their new and experimental theater works at 1127 Market Street.
- Continue their philanthropic, collaborative, and educational programs for local residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain American Conservatory Theatre Foundation on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Theater.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on January 25, 2021.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-028
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District: Districts 3 and 6
Applicant: Eric Brizee, Operations Manager
Nomination Date: December 9, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
 X Yes No

415 Geary Street from 1967 to Present (53 years)
30 Grant Avenue from 1993 to 2020 (27 years)
1117-111 Market Street from 1998 to 2020 (22 years)
1127 Market Street from 2015 to Present (5 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
 X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?
 X Yes No

NOTES: Note the spellings of "Theatre" in "American Conservatory Theatre Foundation" and "Theater" in "American Conservatory Theater," "Geary Theater," and "Strand Theater."

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: December 9, 2020

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

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MATT HANEY

December 9th, 2020

Regina Dick-Endrizzi, Director
San Francisco Small Business Commission
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi,

I am proud to nominate the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation at 1127 Market St & 415 Geary St for the Legacy Business Program.

Since its debut season in 1967 the American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) has produced over 350 works and entertained more than 7 million audience members. The Conservatory itself serves 3,000 students a year, and can count esteemed figures such as Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, Benjamin Bratt, Darren Criss, and Anika Noni Rose amongst its former students.

Additionally, both its Market St and Geary St locations are significant historic resources that greatly contribute to San Francisco's standing as a leader in the arts.

Please contact Eric Brizee at 415-439-2370 / ebrizee@act-sf.org to inform them of their nomination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt Haney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Haney".

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:	
American Conservatory Theatre Foundation	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
Jennifer Bielstein, Executive Director	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
415 Geary Street San Francisco, CA 94102	415-439-2370
	EMAIL ADDRESS:
	ebrizee@act-sf.org
MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address	
	MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	
www.act-sf.org	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
ACTSanFrancisco	
TWITTER NAME:	
@ACTSanFrancisco	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
Eric Brizee	415-439-2370
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
Operations Manager	ebrizee@act-sf.org
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
0370778	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	
A369827	

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
Geary Theater 415 Geary Street	94102	JANUARY 1967
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1967 TO PRESENT	

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
Strand Theater 1127 Market Street	94103	Start: 2015
		End: to present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
Costume Shop / Costume Shop Theater 1117-111 Market Street	94103	Start: 1998
		End: to 8/31/20

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
Administrative Offices 30 Grant Avenue	94108	Start: 1993
		End: 8/31/20

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Eric Brizee

2/26/20

Eric Brizee

Digitally signed by Eric Brizee
DN: cn=Eric Brizee, o=American Conservatory
Theater, ou=Facilities & Operations Manager,
email=erbrizee@act-sf.org, c=US
Date: 2020.02.26 12:24:05 -08'00'

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE FOUNDATION
AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation (the "Foundation") was founded by William Ball on October 31, 1966. The Foundation is the governing body of the American Conservatory Theater ("A.C.T."), which opened its first San Francisco season in 1967. Since then, A.C.T. has produced more than 350 works and entertained more than seven million audience members.

The founder's vision was for American Conservatory Theater to be both a theater company and an acting school, so A.C.T. includes both theaters and the Conservatory. The Conservatory has expanded in scope over the years to include a three-year *Master of Fine Arts Program*; continuing education for adult actors (*Studio A.C.T.*); the *San Francisco Semester*, which allows current university level actors to spend a semester off campus in the A.C.T. training program; the *Young Conservatory*, which is training for young actors; and the *Summer Training Congress*, the intensive training program, which was the first educational program offered by A.C.T.

COVID RELATED UPDATE: A.C.T. revenue was reduced by \$14 million as a result of the 2020 pandemic. Two of seven productions in the 2020/21 season closed prematurely and three other productions were cancelled. 77% of staff was laid off. The Costume Shop complex was permanently closed August 31, 2020. The administration offices and studios at 30 Grant Street were also closed as of that date, with programming, classes, and administration moved and/or consolidated into available space at the Geary and Strand Theaters.

THEATERS

A.C.T. operates/operated the following:

The Geary Theater at 415 Geary Street was built in 1911, purchased by A.C.T. in 1967, and has served as the flagship theater ever since. In the heart of Union Square, it seats 1,019 people. The Geary Theater is a Beaux-Arts design building listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 27, 1975, and was designated an official San Francisco Landmark on July 11, 1976. The Geary Theater was compromised by the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. A.C.T. continued to produce its season for the next five years using other local venues, and moved back into the fully renovated theater for the 1995-96 season.

COVID-RELATED UPDATE: Administration and programming and some equipment, files and archive storage have been consolidated into available space at the Geary Theater as of September 1, 2020, due to the closure of 30 Grant Street studios and offices.

The Strand Theater at 1127 Market Street was originally built in 1917 and served as repertory movie house under several different managements until the mid-1990s. In 2015, A.C.T. purchased the building, completely renovated the space, and opened the theater with 283 seats in the main Toni Rembe Theater and 100 seats in the upstairs "black box" theater, **The Rueff Room**. The Strand Theater is specifically designed as a venue for experimental and new works, and has a mission to bring theater, arts, and culture to the Mid-Market corridor.

COVID-RELATED UPDATE: All additional space to be found at the Strand now holds equipment and supplies that were previously held at 30 Grant Street and/or the Costume Shop Theater.

The Costume Shop Theater at 1119 Market Street is a small theater specifically designed to offer an affordable and accessible performing space for local artists. In 1998, A.C.T. relocated its costume department and costume rentals operation to 1117 Market Street. The Costume Shop houses the workshop for designing and creating costumes, as well as storing a vast inventory of costumes available for A.C.T. productions, as well as rental by other theater companies and the general public. Next door in the same building, A.C.T. opened the Costume Shop Theater, a 50-seat black box theater catering to smaller productions and offering theater rentals to smaller, local theater groups.

COVID-RELATED UPDATE: The Costume Shop and Costume Shop Theater were permanently closed as of August 31, 2020, due to the financial impact of the 2020 pandemic. The costume collection (built up over the course of 50 years) was reduced by 2/3 and moved to off-site storage. The 50-seat black box theater is now permanently dark.

THE CONSERVATORY

A.C.T.'s Conservatory serves 3,000 students every year. It was the first actor training program in the United States not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a Master of Fine Arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, Benjamin Bratt, and Anika Noni Rose are among the Conservatory's distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.

A.C.T. is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. A.C.T. has the approval of the State of California Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education to enroll veterans and other eligible persons for G.I. benefits.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

In 1989, the Geary Theater was severely compromised by the Loma Prieta Earthquake, but managed for the next five years to produce a full season of plays using other local venues. A.C.T. returned to the renovated and retrofitted Geary Theater for the 1995-96 season.

As a result of the financial impact of the 2020 pandemic on productions and programming, A.C.T. closed the administration offices and studios at 30 Grant Street; closed the Costume Shop and Costume Shop Theater, and consolidated administration and programming to the Geary and Strand Theaters effective September 1, 2020.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a governing Board of Directors.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

Not applicable.

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the organization verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Geary Theater was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 27, 1975, and was designated an official San Francisco Landmark on July 11, 1976. The Strand Theater was bought and reconstructed as part of the city's overall community development plan to bring arts and culture to the Mid-Market corridor. The historic resource status of both buildings is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

A.C.T. is one of San Francisco's prominent producers of live theater. The Geary Theater at 415 Geary is an anchor of the Union Square Theater district. It is a recognizable, architecturally and culturally significant structure. The Strand Theater complex at 1127 Market Street is a beacon of culture in the Mid-Market corridor and is dedicated to new and experimental theater.

Central to A.C.T.'s mission is the development of a lively and thought-provoking dialogue with the community. *Words on Plays*, A.C.T.'s in-depth performance guide series, is designed to enhance the theatergoing experience, offering the audience a variety of ways to learn about

the plays, productions, and people who make theater happen on A.C.T.'s stages. Each entertaining and informative issue of *Words on Plays* contains a synopsis, advance program notes, study questions, and additional background information about the historical and cultural context of the play.

Other programs to engage the community in each of the mainstage productions include ***Bike Night*** (valet bike parking to encourage mass transit / non-automobile commuting); ***Drinks & Drama*** to encourage socialization in a theatrical context; ***Prologues*** to educate audience members prior to a show; ***Theater on the Couch***, which encourages audience members to share their views on a show; ***Pride Night***, to encourage the LGBTQ community to participate in the live theater experience; and other socialization and educational experiences.

b. Is the business associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

William Ball Ball's mid-1970s productions of William Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, starring Marc Singer, and Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, starring Peter Donat and Marsha Mason, were presented by A.C.T. and televised by PBS, and are available on video.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

American Conservatory Theater has been referenced in numerous trade publications, media, and historical documents throughout California since it was founded, including American Theatre, Bay Area Reporter, Broadway World San Francisco, The Daily Californian, The Mercury News, Patch, NPR, The San Diego Union-Tribune, The San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Santa Cruz Sentinel, SF Weekly, SFist, and TheaterMania among many others. A.C.T. has also been featured in a 50th anniversary book on the company's history written by Michael Paller.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

A.C.T.'s original 27 member acting company featured René Auberjonois, Peter Donat, Richard Dysart, Michael Learned, Ruth Kobart, Paul Shenar, Charles Siebert, Ken Ruta, and Kitty Winn among others.

Among the many notable alumni of the MFA program are Denzel Washington, Annette Bening, Princess Sarah Culberson, Benjamin Bratt, Carlos Bernard, Wynn Harmon, Elizabeth Banks, Anna Belknap, Dileep Rao, Harry Hamlin, Anna Deavere Smith, Omar Metwally, Steven W. Bailey, and Anika Noni Rose.

Studio A.C.T., Summer Training Congress, and Young Conservatory alumni include Nicolas Cage, Teri Hatcher, Delroy Lindo, Danny Glover, David Denman, Tom O'Brien, Milo Ventimiglia, Winona Ryder, Zendaya, Amy Irving, Camryn Manheim, Chelsea Peretti, Rozzi Crane, Adam Jacobs, Brie Larson, Darren Criss, and Chris Pine.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

A.C.T. partners with local high schools to introduce the city's students to the experience of live theater, both as artists and as audience members. A.C.T. brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 12,000 Bay Area school students each year through ACTsmart programs, while providing A.C.T.'s diverse community with entertaining access to the creative process. A.C.T. is one of the first theaters in the nation to offer low-cost performance tickets to school groups and has brought the power of live theater to hundreds of thousands of students and educators since their arrival in San Francisco in 1967.

PARTNERSHIPS: ACTsmart Partnership Program offers tickets to performances (mainstage, second stage, Conservatory, and Will on Wheels), play-specific pre- and post- show ACTsmart workshops, and their nationally acclaimed *Words on Plays* in-depth study guides—all at no cost—to students and partner teachers at Bay Area schools (including all San Francisco public high schools) with large populations of socioeconomically disadvantaged students who otherwise would have little exposure to the arts.

A.C.T. has partnered with the following Bay Area schools: Ruth Asawa School of the Arts (SOTA) Balboa High School, Bessie Carmichael Filipino Education Center, Ralph Bunche High School, De Marillac Academy, Downtown High School, Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, Gateway High School, Hilltop Special Services Center, Abraham Lincoln High School, Lowell High School, Thurgood Marshall High School, Mission High School, Mt. Eden High School, Oakland School for the Arts, Oakland Technical Senior High School, John O'Connell High School, Archbishop Riordan High School, San Francisco Flex Academy, SIATech Treasure Island, Tenderloin Community School, Tennyson High School, Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School, George Washington High School, Ida B. Wells High School, and Youth Treatment & Education Center.

With A.C.T.'s recent expansion into the Central Market neighborhood with the Costume Shop and Strand theaters, they have extended their ACTsmart partnerships to include community-based organizations that serve the neighborhood: All Stars Project Inc., Destiny Arts Center, Canon Kip Senior Center, Center City Collaborative, Chinese Education Center, Girls Inc., Girls Leadership Institute, The Handful Players, Hospitality House, Lauren's House for Positive Change, La Voz Latina, Oasis for Girls, On the Town! Cultural Adventures for Girls, Tenderloin Boys & Girls Club, Tenderloin Economic Development Project, Tenderloin Housing Clinic, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, Tenderloin Youth Leadership Program, Vietnamese Youth Development Center, WritersCorps, Youth Treatment and Education Center.

COMMUNITY SPACE SHARING: Thanks to grants from the San Francisco Neighborhood Arts Collaborative and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, A.C.T. has been able to provide free performance space, production support, and mentorship in their Costume Shop Theater (and soon in The Strand) to emerging artists and companies that cannot afford the high cost of renting in downtown San Francisco. Partners to date have included Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Magic Theatre, Campo Santo, Theatre Rhino, Bay Area Playwrights Foundation, Encore Theatre, Playground, Volti San Francisco, The Garage, Intersection for the Arts, SF Recovery Theatre, Singers of the Street (S.O.S., a community choir for people affected by homelessness), Teatro Pachuco, and Ixalt Hula Theater, among others.

CREATIVE IMPACT: A.C.T. is proud to be a founding member of an alliance of more than two dozen Bay Area arts and education organizations dedicated to strengthening, enriching, and improving the social fabric of the community through arts education. The members of this coalition promote shared values through their work in education. In addition to hosting annual celebrations of National Arts in Education Week each September, Creative Impact has created an online calendar designed as the go-to place to find out about arts education activities in the Bay Area throughout the year.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Each year, A.C.T. grants numerous scholarships to local young students of need who wish to pursue their theatrical training at a more advanced level, many of whom first discover their passion for theater in A.C.T.'s school and community residency programs.

STUDENT MATINEES: A.C.T.'s SMAT program—one of the oldest such programs in the United States—brings the highest-quality productions to students, at affordable prices. Students at these specified matinees are offered a host of ancillary educational experiences to augment the performance.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

A.C.T. strives to serve the entire population of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area and has instituted an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program to address issues around under-served and under-represented communities, as well as "Rules of Engagement" that seek to create community within the theatrical experience:

- **All and any laughter is welcome.** Laughter from many that can make a whole room shake. Laughter that is a beacon of any one person's connection to the story told. And laughter that betrays nerves as a story builds tension. Please laugh and let others around you laugh. It is why we have come together.
- **We encourage all response.** You, the audience, are part of the storytelling equation. Feel free to express yourself and let those around you express themselves. We are building a community with each performance.
- **Theater is alive and precious in that aliveness.** The stories are honed and rehearsed and told with—not just to—you, the audience. If you miss a phrase or two, please know that the show will take care of you. It'll come round again to catch you up and pull you forward. You can trust in the craft, so you can enjoy yourselves.
- **We ask that you turn off your cellphones.** This is out of respect for us all coming together to be part of a story told in this space and in living time.
- **We ask that you save taking photos or video to before and after the performance and during intermission.** We love seeing posts on social media: our programs held high among friends, floating before the set or curtain or lobby spaces. Please share the fun.
- **We encourage you all to be together in these spaces.** Give each other room, but also say hello as you pass on the way to your seats, or at intermission standing in a line, or as you walk out after into your city.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building?

The Geary Theater is a beaux arts design building listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 27, 1975, and was designated an official San Francisco Landmark on July 11, 1976. The Strand Theater complex was designed and reconstructed specifically to bring theater and cultural expression to the Mid-Market Corridor, and to provide a home for new and experimental theater works.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If the Foundation were to shut down and A.C.T. were to close, thousands of students would lose theatrical training opportunities; thousands of actors would lose stage opportunities; thousands of patrons would lose the opportunity to see new, cutting edge theatrical productions; and San Francisco and the theater community would lose three principal venues.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation is the governing body of the American Conservatory Theater, a Tony Award-winning theater and training institution whose work is energized and informed by a profound commitment to developing the next generation of theater artists. A.C.T. is the largest theater company in the San Francisco Bay Area and employs more than 800 people each season, from teachers and artists to technicians and administrative staff. During the past four decades, more than 300 A.C.T. productions have been seen by close to 7 million playgoers in the company's magnificent Beaux Arts-style theater located in the heart of San Francisco's Union Square theater district.

A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theaters and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theaters, Theatre Bay Area, Union Square Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau. The directors employed by A.C.T. at the American Conservatory Theater are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

American Conservatory Theater nurtures the art of live theater through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its Conservatory, and an ongoing engagement with its community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director **Pam MacKinnon** and Executive Director **Jennifer Bielstein**, A.C.T. embraces its responsibility to conserve, renew, and reinvent the rich theatrical traditions that are their collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and new communities. A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of A.C.T.'s creative work.

Today, A.C.T. is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking productions of classical works and bold explorations of contemporary playwriting. Since the reopening of The Geary Theater in 1996, A.C.T. has enjoyed a remarkable period of audience expansion and renewed financial

stability. The company continues to produce challenging theater in the rich context of symposia, audience discussions, and community interaction.

The conservatory, led by **Melissa Smith**, was the first actor training program in the United States not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a master of fine arts degree. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, Benjamin Bratt, and Anika Noni Rose are among the Conservatory's distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience, the A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Theater is a living art. A.C.T. has evolved and grown over the years, preserving traditional theatrical practices and tenants, while exploring and embracing new methodologies, new technologies, and new visions. Each season, A.C.T. produces eight mainstage productions that offer both traditional performances and new, challenging works.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Physically, the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation has been the custodian of the Geary Theater and has preserved its historical grandeur for over 50 of its 100-year-plus history at great expense. The reconstruction of the Strand Theater preserved the facade of the building while building it out from the inside with state-of-the-art technology and fixtures.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates that the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation has overseen a theater company and an acting school for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.



Columbia THEATRE

J. Chas. Green Co. Columbia THEATRE 3 WEEKS MONDAY FEB. 7 MATINEES WEDNESDAYS SATURDAYS

COLUMBIA THEATRE
THREE WEEKS MONDAY FEB. 7
STARTING
MR. MANTPELL
IN THEATRE ADVERTISING
"SOUND OF MUSIC" "STRENGTH"
"THE LIFE OF JOHN BULL" "THE LIFE OF JOHN BULL"
"THE MOUNTAIN OF MOUNTAIN" "THE MOUNTAIN OF MOUNTAIN"
"THE LIFE OF JOHN BULL" "THE LIFE OF JOHN BULL"
"THE MOUNTAIN OF MOUNTAIN" "THE MOUNTAIN OF MOUNTAIN"
"THE LIFE OF JOHN BULL" "THE LIFE OF JOHN BULL"

MR. WM. A. BRADY
OF
MR. MANTPELL
SHAKSPERE
L. E. A. R. SHILOK
"WALKER" SHILOK
"WALKER" SHILOK
"WALKER" SHILOK

NATIONAL
"THE BONGENERIC"
"THE BONGENERIC"
Cyrus Noble









COMEDY

GEARY

TRAGEDY

WHORE
A.C.T.

NOW PLAYING
AT A.C.T.
DEFYING GRAVITY
CLASSIC
A STANFORD THEATRE PRODUCTION
A.C.T.

NOW PLAYING
AT A.C.T.
DEFYING GRAVITY
CLASSIC
A STANFORD THEATRE PRODUCTION
A.C.T.

WHORE
A.C.T.

NO PARKING
ANY TIME





NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE: California
 COUNTY: San Francisco
 FOR NPS USE ONLY
 ENTRY DATE: MAY 27 1975

(Type all entries in complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

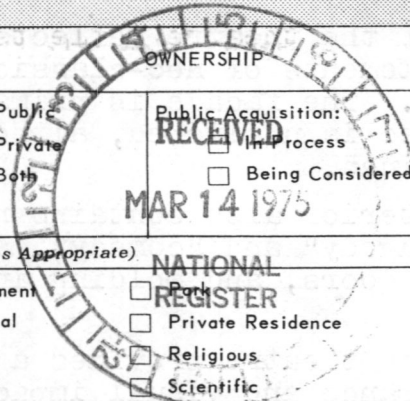
COMMON: GEARY THEATRE
 AND/OR HISTORIC: Columbia Theatre

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 415 Geary Street
 CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Fifth California
 STATE: California 94102 CODE: 06 COUNTY: San Francisco CODE: 075

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Crocker National Bank (as trustee of the Mary E. Cryan Trust)
 STREET AND NUMBER: 1 Montgomery Street
 CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco STATE: California 94104 CODE: 06

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Recorder's Office, San Francisco City Hall
 STREET AND NUMBER: Polk Street at McAllister Street
 CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco STATE: California 94102 CODE: 06

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: "San Francisco Theatre: W.P.A. Research Project #10677"
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1940 Federal State County Local
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: San Francisco Public Library, Main Branch
 STREET AND NUMBER: Larkin at McAllister Streets
 CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco STATE: California 94102 CODE: 06

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: California
 COUNTY: San Francisco
 ENTRY NUMBER: MAY 27 1975
 DATE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The theatre was constructed in the years 1908-1910. Photographs document that the exterior appearance of the building has not changed. Neither photographs nor written statements have been located which describe the interior as it appeared in 1910; however, since the interior appearance today is completely faithful to the style of theatre design prevalent in 1910, and the materials used are of that era, there is general agreement that the interior, as well as the exterior, has not changed (except for carefully-installed extra lighting positions, discussed below in the narrative).

The theatre seating capacity totals 1,456, including 573 seats on the orchestra floor, 484 in the first balcony and 399 in the second balcony.

The exterior of the theatre reflects the late Victorian tradition and blends elements of neo-classicism with evidences of a baroque influence. The facade is primarily of brick. The wrought iron marquee is unaltered, although some glass pendants have not remained.

The theatre exterior also contains noteworthy adornments, such as the "tragedy" and "comedy" masks above the two principal entrance doors, and molding in the form of bucolic imagery.

The lobby of the theatre provides a graceful bridge between exterior appearance and visual impact of the auditorium space. The neo-classic influence is seen again in the decorative pilasters. Natural wood highlights both the lobby and the walls of the house.

Inside the theatre at the orchestra level, the impact of the auditorium is arresting. At once visible are the three seating levels, the decorative proscenium with its carved false perspective, the charmingly wrought detail on the exterior of the proscenium boxes, and the shallow ceiling chandelier enhanced by painted radiations of a sunburst effect.

The proscenium opening is 36-feet wide and variable in height, due to the opportunities for flexible positioning of the vertical-rise curtain.

The orchestra and balcony boxes are located on either side of the proscenium at each level of seating.

Inspection of the balcony foyers and especially the balcony seating areas reveals a blended continuation of the orchestra seating perspective, with the added appointment of wall carvings of cherubim at play and theatrical symbols which are ageless--the lute, the harp, the mask and the tokens of Bacchus.

Seating throughout the theatre is unusually fine, providing excellent acoustical balance with visual perception [see continuation on Form 10-300a]

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE California	
COUNTY San Francisco	
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	MAY 27 1975

(Number all entries)

[#7] [Description continued, page two]

except for the rear of the second balcony. In this rarely-used seating location the traffic noises from Geary Street compete for attention with the words spoken on stage.

The advancements in lighting technology for the stage which have occurred since 1910 have made the existing positions inadequate for modern lighting equipment. Happily, the added positions for instruments were thoughtfully installed and can be removed without damage to the theatre building.

The original design did not include sufficient dressing room areas. An annex building was attached to the Geary Theatre with three floors of dressing room space and costume construction facilities. The year(s) of the subsequent construction of the annex is not documented.

An uncommonly large basement and under-stage area makes possible the storage of inactive scenery and property pieces, and can be used as a "green room" for actors.

After 65 years the appearance of the Geary Theatre -- both interior and exterior -- remains faithful to its historical period, and stands as a very fine example of theatre design philosophy and theatre architecture as these existed in the early years of the 20th Century.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1906-1910 (post-earthquake reconstruction)**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake precipitated a crisis without precedent in the history of the American theatre. San Francisco -- renowned for the variety and the frequency of its cultural events, "the only city in the United States, outside of New York, where a high-salaried player could be assured a long and lucrative run"¹ -- suddenly and devastatingly lost all eight of its downtown theatres in the fiery holocaust which followed the April 18 quake.

Fortunately, culture-conscious citizens considered the replacement of these performing spaces as an important part of reconstruction activities. During the years 1906-1911, eight new theatres were built in downtown San Francisco. Each represented the very latest achievements in theatre design and technology, as well as luxurious elegance and comfort for audiences. The illustrious theatre tradition of the city resumed almost immediately.

Half a century later, however, San Francisco theatres were again in crisis. This time, the danger came not from an Act of God but from acts of men. As Herb Caen wrote in 1957:

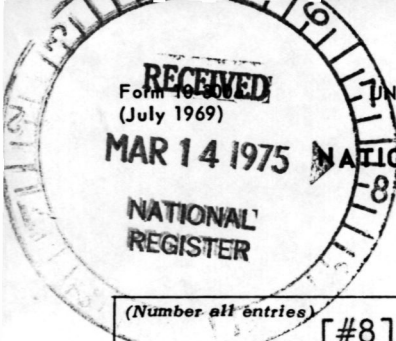
San Francisco's "theatre belt," which once boasted eight first-rate houses running simultaneously, has shrunk considerably of late, owing to the impact of television and movies and the diminished number of travelling companies. The "belt" now contains three theatres, and is perhaps more accurately described as a "garter."²

The three theatres referred to by Caen were the Alcazar, the Curran and the Geary. The Alcazar was torn down in 1962 to make room for a parking lot. The Curran, built after the Geary but still standing, is now operated on merely a four-wall rental basis for out-of-town touring musicals, with no particular regard to history or heritage.

Of the eight theatres built during the years of earthquake reconstruction, only the Geary has remained in continual year-round operation as a professional theatre, faithfully and reverently maintained for its historical

[continued on Form 10-300a]

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	MAY 27 1975

(Number all entries)

[#8] [Statement of Significance continued, page two]

accuracy as well as its excellence as a performing space.

On January 10, 1910, Father and the Boys with William Crane opened the theatre, then known as the Columbia. It replaced the quake-destroyed "first" Columbia which had been located three blocks away (on Powell between Ellis and Eddy), and was under the same management.

The "first" Columbia (built in 1892 as the Stockwell and renamed in 1895) had been home to the famous company of Augustin Daly, which contained such major stars as Otis Skinner, Ada Rehan and John Drew, as well as a principal road house for the major productions of the Klaw-Erlanger theatrical syndicate.

Upon opening in 1910 the Columbia Theatre continued in the tradition of its namesake by presenting outstanding companies and stars of international reputation, including Sarah Bernhardt, Nazimova and Isadora Duncan. By 1917 the Columbia was the only San Francisco theatre offering legitimate drama.

Following management changes between 1924 and 1928, when the theatre briefly became the Wilkes and then the Lurie, it opened under its present-day name, the Geary. This occurred on February 6, 1928, with Pauline Fredericks in her starring vehicle, The Scarlet Woman. (For a two week period, between December 25, 1924 and January 7, 1925, the Geary name was used during the engagement of Olga Petrovna in Hurricane, then abandoned again until 1928).

The chronicle of legendary performances on the Geary Theatre stage grew more illustrious with each passing year. The best-known include George Arliss (in The Merchant of Venice, 1928), the Stratford-Upon-Avon Festival Company (1928), Edward G. Robinson (1928), Basil Rathbone (1928), Frederic March (1928), the epic stage version of The Birth of a Nation (1930), Ethel Barrymore (1931, 1939 and 1943), Menasha Skulkin and the Yiddish Theatre (1932), Ina Claire (1935), Maurice Evans (Hamlet and Richard II, 1940), Paul Muni (1940), Alexander Woolcott (The Man Who Came to Dinner, 1940), Ethel Waters (1941), Boris Karloff (Arsenic and Old Lace, 1942), Paul Robeson and Jose Ferrer (Othello, 1945), Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne (1945 and 1948), Katherine Cornell (The Barrets of Wimpole Street, 1947), Cornelia Otis Skinner (Lady Windermere's Fan, 1948) and Dame Judith Anderson (Medea, 1948, and Hamlet, 1970).

Its superb acoustical quality caused the Geary to be sought after for musical performances, which included grand opera, comic opera, operetta, musical drama and chamber music concerts. A survey conducted in 1938 of most favored houses for opera in San Francisco between 1850 and 1938 found the Geary

[continued on Form 10-300a, page 3]

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California	
COUNTY	
San Francisco	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 27 1975

NATIONAL
REGISTER

(Number all entries)

[#8] [Statement of Significance continued, page three]

ranked sixth, even though it had been in existence only some 30% of this time and was primarily a non-musical house.

Geary Theatre audiences have also enjoyed a variety of other forms of the performing arts, including such diverse themes as magic (Blackstone in 1947, Dante in 1948), marionettes and classical dancers.

Since 1967 the Geary has been the performing home of the nation's most highly acclaimed resident professional repertory theatre company, the American Conservatory Theatre. It is fitting that the Geary became the stage upon which this company built its international reputation, continuing an unbroken tradition of 65 years of theatrical excellence within the distinguished building.

By comparison to the age of theatres in other parts of the country, the Geary may seem young. Viewed in the perspective of San Francisco's unique history, however, the Geary is the oldest existing downtown theatre in the city, with a heritage so entwined with the growth of the American theatre in the 20th Century that its architectural and theatrical significance is worthy of attention from present and future generations.

Although the Geary was constructed before acoustics became a science applied to theatre design, by sheer accident the building possesses the correct acoustical properties for excellent audibility without the use of microphones. This fortunate fact makes the Geary one of the very few early 20th Century houses anywhere which has not required interior alterations to improve upon poor acoustics. Intact, the Geary is still acoustically superior to those theatres which have been modified or built more recently, in the opinion of theatre directors, architect, musical directors and others who have performed in the Geary Theatre. Thus, the Geary is of significant interest to theatre architects as well as theatre-goers.

¹Gladys Hansen, ed., San Francisco: The Bay and Cities. (New York: Hastings House, new revised edition, c. 1973), p. 136.

²Herb Caen, Guide to San Francisco (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday and Company, 1957), p. 189.

Note: The Geary Theatre was designed by the noted San Francisco architectural firm of Bliss and Faville.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

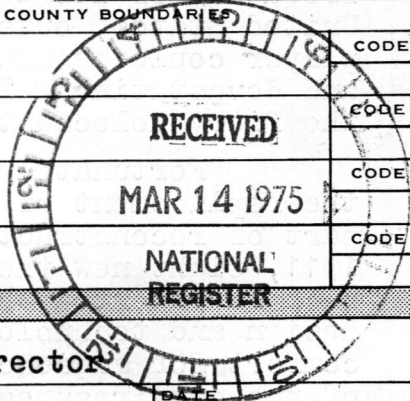
San Francisco Theatre: W.P.A. Research Project #10677, Volumes I - XVII, San Francisco Public Library
 Samuel Stark Theatre Collection, Stanford University Library
Edmund M. Gagey's The San Francisco Stage: A History (Greenwood Publishing, 1950)
 California Historical Society Quarterly, 25:235 and 33:46
 Also numerous passing references in guidebooks and memoirs.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "	North	° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				West
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: $\frac{1}{2}$ acre			37 - 47 - 13	122 - 24 - 33		
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES						
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:			CODE	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:			CODE	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:			CODE	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:			CODE	

UTM
19/552030
4182120
HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Margaret Opsata, Associate Development Director

ORGANIZATION:
American Conservatory Theatre Foundation

DATE:
08-15-74

STREET AND NUMBER:
450 Geary Street

CITY OR TOWN:
San Francisco

STATE:
California 94102

CODE:
06

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: JAN 2 1975

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/27/75

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5-27-75



AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

THE STRAND

MONSTRESS



PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 3CS

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 5 *Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 3702046, 1127 Market St

P1. Other Identifier The Strand

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County: San Francisco

and P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: _____

Date: _____

*c. Address: 1127 Market Street

City: San Francisco

Zip: _____

d. UTM: (Give more than one of large and/or linear resources) Zone _____; _____mE/ _____mN

e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number: 3702046

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

1127 Market Street is a four-story, vaguely T-plan, reinforced concrete, Edwardian style, commercial building that is clad with horizontally scored stucco and topped by a flat roof. The building occupies most of its 8,250 square foot lot on the southeast side of Market Street between 7th and 8th streets. The primary facade faces northwest onto Market Street and the first story is boarded up with plywood. A plywood door is located on the left side of the first story and a illuminated and neon theater marquee reading "Strand" is located on the left side of the facade between the first and second stories. The second story is fenestrated with three windows; a two-lite, fixed, wood-sash window at the center flanked by three-part, wood-sash windows that have narrow double-casement sashes on their outer sides. The lites in some portions of these windows appear to have been replaced with aluminum-sash windows with fixed and sliding portions. The windows on the second story are surrounded by wide bands of ornate foliate molding and the story is framed by reeded, garland and dentiled moldings. The second and third stories are separated by a modillioned intermediate cornice. The third story features three banks of four, six-lite, wood-sash double-casement windows. The fourth story features the same fenestration although the windows are shorter. The corners of the third and fourth stories are trimmed with spiral molding. The facade terminates in a wavy reeded frieze and a projecting cornice supported by long shaped modillions. (continued)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) HP7. 3+ story commercial building [HP10]

P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects)

*P5b. Photo (view, date, accession #
View of northwest facade.
103_3941.JPG 3/7/2011

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources
 Historic Prehistoric Both
1917, Assessor's Office

*P7. Owner and Address:
1127 Market St Llc
P O Box 2602
Seattle Wa
98111

*P8. Recorded by
Tim Kelley Consulting
2912 Diamond St. #330
San Francisco, CA 94131

*P9. Date Recorded:
3/7/2011

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive



*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")

- *Attachments
- BSOR
 - Photograph Record
 - Sketch Map
 - Archaeological Record
 - NONE
 - Location Map
 - Continuation Sheet
 - Other...
 - Artifact Record
 - District Record
 - Linear Feature Record

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 4 of 5 *NRHP Status Code 3CS
*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 3702046, 1127 Market St

B1. Historic Name Sun Theater, Strand Theater

B2. Common Name Strand Theater

B3. Original Use Theater B4. Present Use: Vacant

*B5. Architectural Style _____

*B6. Construction History
Constructed 1917. Marquee changed, post-1920, ca. 1960.

*B7. Moved? **No** **Yes** Date? _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features None.

B9a. Architect E M Frasier

*B10. Significance: Theme Popular Entertainment; Area: _____
Captivating the Middle Class

Period of Significance 1880-1963 Property Type Commercial Applicable Criteria A, C

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

1127 Market Street was designed by architect E.M. Frasier, best known for Los Angeles' Knickerbocker Hotel, and constructed in 1917. It originally opened as The Jewel Theater, on of many links in the Grauman theater chain. It became the Sun Theater and then the College Theater in 1920, the Francesca in 1921, and then the Strand in 1928. The theater was operated by the West Side Theater Company from 1940 to 1977, showing triple-features and hosting nightly bingo games. It was purchased by theater proprietor Mike Thomas in 1977. He also owned and operated the Warfield, the Crest, and the Embassy theaters around this time. The Strand was remodeled and its reputation cleaned up. For a time it was a popular venue for revival cinema and was known for its midnight showings of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." The Strand Theater closed in 1994 and reopened as an adult theater that operated until 2003, when it was shut down due to illegal activities taking place on the premises. It remains vacant today.

(continued)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP7. 3+ story commercial building [HP10]

*B12. References:

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

B13. Remarks

*B14. Evaluator Tim Kelley Consulting

*Date of Evaluation 3/7/2011

(This space reserved for official comments)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 2 of 5

Resource Name or # (Assigned by Recorder) 3702046, 1127 Market St

*Recorded by: Tim Kelley Consulting

Date 3/7/2011

Continuation Update

P3a: Description (continued)

The northeast facade is visible and clad with brick veneer. It is unfenestrated and featureless, but illustrates that the majority of the building is only two stories high. The roofline slopes and steps up toward the front of the building to accommodate the third and fourth stories, the latter being little more than a low attic. The southwest and southeast facades abut neighboring buildings and are not visible. The building appears to be in fair condition.

B10: Significance (continued)

1127 Market Street retains integrity. Its original plan, massing, facade organization, materials and ornamentation are intact. The original and unusual fenestration is generally intact, having only been altered on the second story, though within the confines of the original openings. The first story has been boarded up concealing the current state of the storefront. The theater marquee appears to be a modified version of the ca. 1960 marquee. In general the building's original appearance is discernible. It retains enough integrity to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a contributor to the Market Street Theatre and Loft District if the boundaries of the district are expanded.

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/performance/article/At-50-ACT-keeps-the-startup-in-the-institution-10986623.php#photo-12505911>

San Francisco Chronicle

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT // PERFORMANCE

At 50, ACT keeps the startup in the institution

Lily Janiak
March 10, 2017



The original Strand Theater sign was restored and hangs in the lobby at the new American Conservatory Theater which officially opens on May 14 on Market Street in San Francisco, Thursday, April 30, 2015. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle.

As American Conservatory Theater marks its 50th anniversary this year, it's tempting to view the Bay Area's Tony-winning flagship theater as an institution and an inevitability.

Certainly, only a juggernaut could pull off the fanfare with which ACT is (rightly) observing this occasion: a new book, written by Michael Paller, on the company's history; a star-studded 50th anniversary annual gala; a separate birthday party that's free and open to the public — all on top of a theatrical season that includes Khaled Hosseini and Annie Baker, Peter Brook and Robert Lepage.

Yet for all the grand festivities, and for the grandeur of the organization itself, it's instructive to remember the many, many times over its 50 years that ACT could easily have failed — and its challenges going forward.

In an interview at ACT's offices, longtime Artistic Director Carey Perloff cites as major concerns the likely defunding of the National Endowment for the Arts, the jeopardy of San Francisco's federal funding due to its status as a sanctuary city, as well as the difficulty of fundraising from the tech sector, whose focus on efficiency and speed hasn't found a home in theater philanthropy

"Our ambitions are big right now because of the nature of the political environment," she says. "It's like we've got to do the big things that matter. We can't dally around and sit on the edge of the pool, because there might not be a pool."



ACT's artistic director talks about what makes the theater company unique. This year it celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Video: ljaniak@sfchronicle.com / San Francisco Chronicle

The potential to fail, Perloff, 58, says, was written into the company's staggeringly enterprising beginnings under founding Artistic Director Bill Ball — beginnings that still distinguish the company at a time when many theater companies' missions and seasons look alike.

"Any normal organization starts small," Perloff says. "ACT? Totally the opposite. It started with this hugely ambitious idea, which is vigorous repertoire, with a standing acting company of at least 40 people on permanent contract doing 15 plays in rotating rep, or however many it was, in 1,000 seats. Go!"

Actor Ken Ruta, who's been with the company since the beginning, recalls one actor, Jay Doyle, who "was famous for being in two plays the same night." He'd play one part in at ACT production at Marines' Memorial Theatre, then "he'd run down the hill" to appear in a final scene at the Geary. He also remembers that, since they didn't have understudies but did have a whole repertoire of shows ready to go at any given moment, if an actor got sick, ACT would "put in another show," and audiences with tickets to one performance would see a different one instead.

"You never knew if you'd have the next season!" says actor and director Joy Carlin, whose first show with the company was "The Importance of Being Earnest" in the 1969-70 season. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, she adds, "you didn't know what was going on the next day until the night before."

From his deep research into the company's history for "A Five-Act Play: 50 Years of ACT," Paller says, "It's amazing it didn't go under on more than one occasion. Often the company would wonder if they would be able to cash their checks." Ball was a visionary, with an unsurpassed ability to create theatrical spectacle, but "he believed every financial decision was an artistic decision, and vice versa." The board was almost powerless, and the company had little infrastructure to support Ball's ideals.

At one point, recalls former producing director Jim Haire, Ball, who died in 1991 at age 60, said something like, "If the community can't afford to support this theater, we will give them the kind of shows they can afford," which led to a run of two-character plays, against which "audiences rebelled."

Ed Hastings' 1986-92 run as artistic director gradually helped shore up the company's finances, only to have them devastated again when the Loma Prieta earthquake severely damaged the Geary Theater in 1989, forcing ACT to become nomadic for seven years.

Perloff's appointment has brought much stability to a company that, when she arrived in 1992, was still run "like a startup," she says.



The audience find their seats for the *A Thousand Splendid Suns* at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater in San Francisco, Calif. Tuesday, February 21, 2017. Photo: Mason Trinca, Special to The Chronicle.

But even if ACT employees no longer worry about whether their next paychecks will come, Perloff says the company does not hew to the big nonprofit stereotype of a “hierarchical, bureaucratic, highly structured” institution. “This place has never felt that way, partly because it’s a school. The building is mostly full of twentysomethings studying the self in all that that entails.”

It’s an ongoing challenge, Paller and Perloff say, to remind even longtime ACT patrons that the company runs one of the top master’s of fine arts programs in the country, alongside Juilliard, Yale and New York University. ACT is the only freestanding institution — i.e., not a university — that offers an acting MFA program, which is very costly; the Obama administration recently forced Harvard’s acting MFA program to suspend admissions because its tuition was so out of proportion with what its graduates could hope to earn.

Yet, ACT has held on to Ball’s vision of a company and a conservatory that run in tandem with and enrich one another. The conservatory, Haire points out, “is our middle name.”

The school’s benefits are no less vital for being intangible. “The energy of the place, that comes from young people,” says Paller. For Gregory Wallace, who was a member of ACT’s core acting company from 1999 to 2011 and who now teaches at Yale School of Drama, the

school ensured that the company didn't simply reproduce "a time capsule of what the classics were 40 or 50 years ago." There has to be, he says, "a conscious and purposeful connection to actors evolving and developing a craft, and pushing the envelope to the craft. ... Otherwise it becomes the deadening of theater — stultifying, paralyzing."

Despite what Perloff calls an "enormous decline in American theater of classical work," she has tried to buck that trend in ACT's programming — another quality that distinguishes it from its peers. At this historical moment, she says, "this is what we should be doing — these big meaty plays about complicated issues" — those of the Greeks and Shakespeare, Harold Pinter, Susan Glaspell and Samuel Beckett.

All this thinking, Perloff says, "does come when you're looking at 50 years. I never knew Bill Ball, but what I do know is the guy was fearless. He may have been crazy sometimes, but he was fearless, and ambitious, for the essence of theater, not for what's going to make the most money or what's going to have a commercial life, but what is the nature of the art form and what's going to keep it alive."

That, she adds, is "worth fighting for."



A.C.T. Artistic Director, Carey Perloff, photographed at the A.C.T.'s Geary Theater in San Francisco, Calif. Tuesday, February 21, 2017. Photo: Mason Trinca, Special to The Chronicle.



American Conservatory Theater photographed in San Francisco, Calif. Tuesday, February 21, 2017. Photo: Mason Trinca, Special to The Chronicle.



The audience find their seats for the *A Thousand Splendid Suns* at A.C.T.'s Geary Theater in San Francisco, Calif. Tuesday, February 21, 2017. Photo: Mason Trinca, Special to The Chronicle.



ACT's Strand Theater. Photo: Denys Baker.



The Geary Theater in the early 1900s.

A Five-Act Play: 50 Years of ACT By Michael Paller (Chronicle Books; 224 pages; \$50)

50th Anniversary Gala: Featuring Annette Bening, Judy Kaye, BD Wong, Casey Lee Hurt, among many others. 5 p.m. Thursday, April 27. Individual tickets \$1,500-\$5,000. Tables \$15,000-\$50,000. ACT's Strand Theater, 1127 Market St., and ACT's Costume Shop, 1119 Market St., S.F. (415) 439-2470. www.act-sf.org/gala

Birthday Party: Open house birthday party featuring behind-the-scenes tours, limited-edition Humphrey Slocombe ice cream flavor, performances and readings. Saturday, March 18. Free and open to the public. ACT's Geary Theater, 415 Geary St., S.F. www.act-sf.org/home/box_office/special_events/50years.html

"John": Written by Annie Baker. Directed by Ken Rus Schmoll. Through April 23. \$20-\$105. ACT's Strand Theater, 1127 Market St., S.F.

"Needles and Opium": Written and directed by Robert Lepage. \$20-\$105. Produced by Ex Machina. March 30-April 23, ACT's Geary Theater, 415 Geary St., S.F.

"Battlefield": Adapted and directed by Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne. April 26-May 21. ACT's Geary Theater, 415 Geary St., S.F.

(415) 749-2228. www.act-sf.org

Moments in ACT's 50-year history

1. The Strand Theater marquee, 1950
2. Ken Ruta starring as Oscar Wilde
3. American Conservatory Theater, 1988
4. The Strand Theater, 2015
5. Bill Ball in 1967
6. Current ACT Artistic Director Carey Perloff
7. Vintage seats amid rubble at the Strand theater
8. The Geary Theater after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake

9. The Geary Theater stage, 2017

10. Joy Carlin in "The Time of Your Life," 1971



William Ball of the American Conservatory Theatre. Photo dated 1967. Handout Photo ran 06/13/1994.

*Lily Janiak is The San Francisco Chronicle's theater critic.
Email: ljaniak@sfchronicle.com Twitter: [@LilyJaniak](https://twitter.com/LilyJaniak)*

Lily Janiak joined the San Francisco Chronicle as theater critic in May 2016. Previously, her writing appeared in Theatre Bay Area, American Theatre, SF Weekly, the Village Voice and HowlRound. She holds a BA in theater studies from Yale and an MA in drama from San Francisco State.

<https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/movies-tv/annette-bening-s-f-state-and-act-alum-cant-wait-to-get-back-into-the-theater>



Annette Bening, S.F. State and ACT alum, can't wait to 'get back into the theater,

Jessica Zack November 17, 2020

In numerous interviews and award acceptance speeches over the course of her extraordinary acting career, four-time Oscar nominee Annette Bening has made a point of publicly mentioning how meaningful, both personally and professionally, the years she spent at American Conservatory Theater were as a young actress in the 1980s.

Bening studied at ACT's conservatory fresh out of San Francisco State University and then spent three frenetic, wildly creative years in ACT's core company, performing back-to-back plays in repertory on the Geary Theater stage.

When she reflects back on that formative ACT start — before her breakout 1990 role as a hustler in “The Grifters,” before her marriage to Warren Beatty (whom she met filming “Bugsy” in 1991), before having four children and learning to balance family life and fame — Bening speaks of her deep gratitude for those early San Francisco experiences that helped her become the versatile, adventurous actress she is today.

Bening is scheduled to be in virtual conversation Friday, Nov. 20, with ACT Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon, as the first speaker in the theater's new series of in-depth discussions with theater icons.

Bening, 62, recently spoke at length with The Chronicle by phone from her home in Los Angeles about first falling in love with the magic of the theater, staying open to creative risk, and why having “strong female characters” is a misguided goal for the industry she adores.

Q: You've been involved in get-out-the-vote efforts, and we're talking just days after the election results were reported. How are you feeling?

A: I'm ecstatic. There's a huge amount of work to do, obviously, but I'm so relieved and happy. So many people around the country worked so hard to get out the vote. We built new kinds of coalitions by doing so much of this virtually. I did a phone bank in Omaha, a real battleground, the day before the election, and it was so gratifying seeing all these people who really care and were willing to give their time. The LGBTQ community all over the country really got activated. If there's one thing that Trump did, he activated a lot of people.



Annette Bening as Titania and Ray Reinhardt as Nick Bottom in ACT's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."
Photo: Larry Merkle, The Chronicle.



Warren Beatty stars in the title role of "Bugsy," the charismatic gangster who dreamed of creating a gambling kingdom and was inspired by the beautiful starlet Virginia Hill (Annette Bening) to build the Hotel Flamingo, the first luxury casino in Las Vegas. Photo: Tri-Star Pictures 1991.

Q: How have you and your family been weathering the pandemic? Do you have kids back home, or is it an empty nest?

A: My kids are all out, and everyone is safe and healthy, so I feel very fortunate. And my parents are still well. I'm going to see them next week. They're in San Diego, 94 and 91. They celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary during the pandemic, if you can believe that!

Q: Reflecting on your career path, you've said before: "I didn't choose acting, it chose me." What did you mean?

A: My ninth-grade teacher from Pershing Junior High in San Diego took us to the Old Globe to see "The Merchant of Venice" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and I really loved it. I loved the feeling of being alive in the room with the actors speaking and seeing the sweat on their faces. I remember the sound of their voices, the whole ambiance.

Little did I know that “Two Gentlemen” was directed by Allen Fletcher, one of the formative forces at ACT (the company’s first conservatory director). In his production, all of the props were played by people, so if there was a painting in a room, it was a person standing there holding up a frame. I loved all the theatricality.

From then on, I kind of stumbled my way along, following my interests until I was at San Francisco State and I began to think, “I really want to do this. I want to be a classical theater actress.”

Q: As an acting student at ACT in your 20s, were there any especially powerful lessons you learned early on that have stuck with you?

A: Part of the training from the very beginning was about teaching you to follow your impulses, to do what your instinct tells you to do. Of course, that was also woven into everything else they were teaching us about how to build a character. You learned to think about the person’s entire life, and also about what happened right before you walked into the room: Do I have a headache? Am I elated? Exhausted? You can use all these suggestions to help yourself in the scene, along with following your impulses.

Every director I’ve ever worked with appreciates it when you come in and start doing what feels right for you, trying things and giving them something to work with, instead of sitting passively and waiting.

Q: Does that apply to movie work as well?

A: Absolutely. The other really important thing was about listening. I was admonished very early on after a scene that I wasn’t really listening or taking anything from my partner. And they were right. It was such a gift to have learned that.

When I go see (plays or movies), instead of always watching the person talking, I also like to watch the person listening and taking in what’s going on.

Q: Have you always been comfortable taking artistic risks? You’ve been involved in some very successful projects, but I imagine others, especially smaller indie films, were a leap of faith and you couldn’t have known on the page if it would work out. Do you go with a gut feeling?

A: I guess you can call it comfort with risk, but I think I’m sort of flattering myself by saying that. What I do is read things very carefully. You only get one first read, and that’s very important because that’s the only time you don’t know what’s going to happen. That’s the feeling you’re then trying to re-create for your audience.



Annette Bening as Raina Petkoff and Byron Jennings as Captain Bluntschli in ACT's 1983 "Arms and the Man." Photo: Larry Merkle, The Chronicle.



Annette Bening as Laurel in ACT's production of Enid Bagnold's "The Chalk Garden." Photo: Larry Merkle, The Chronicle.



Annette Bening, John Cusack and Angelica Huston in "The Grifters." Photo: Miramax 1990.

Q: Do you think you're drawn to playing women with certain traits? There's a mix of steely strength, subdued anger and also fragility in some of your characters dating back to "The Grifters," and more recently in your incredible performances in "The Kids Are All Right" and "20th Century Women."

A: I guess there are certain things I try not to examine too much. I think one of the reasons writing for women has gotten better is because it acknowledges that women are flawed. It's important to have more than strong female characters. It's important to have nuance, because every woman who's strong goes in the corner and cries sometimes, and every person who's a mess has their heroic moments. The contradictions in people are what make us interesting, so getting into that always interests me.

Q: Is it more daunting playing an actual person, such as Sen. Dianne Feinstein in "The Report," than a fictional one?

A: Yes. ... I wanted to do enough to suggest *her* so that I could just disappear, and you could believe it was her and focus on the story and the events she was such a key part of.

Q: Do you have a preference between overtly political movies that try to raise awareness around issues and imaginative ones that are untethered to any political realities?

A: A great story's a great story. I felt really fortunate that ("The Report" director) Scott Burns asked me to be a part of making an important political movie that had guts to it and real heart, but I also believe in just delightful entertainment. I love a purely great escape.

As an avid audience member, I know that if something's really good, I'm changed by it. It's like being told a secret you thought only you knew, or being woken up in the most delightful way.



Annette Bening plays California Sen. Dianne Feinstein in the political drama "The Report." Photo: Atsushi Nishijima.

Q: I can hear your enthusiasm. Sounds like you still have the feeling that you're part of a pretty magical endeavor.

A: It is magical in the best way. Theater has this wonderful combination of great intellectual rigor and incredible emotional depth, and movies are extraordinary for taking us into another world that we'd never be able to visit if not in this filmmaker's hands. It's an incredible gift, and I love it.

I'm really feeling the lack of not having that in my life. I can't wait until we get back into the theater when we can be sitting close, smushed in together, and enjoying movies, theater or music, dance, ballet, symphony, opera, whatever it is. We're all missing that.

It's going to take a while, and we're really going to need to support our arts institutions, especially the nonprofit arts sector across this country, which has really been suffering.

Virtually Speaking: Annette Bening in conversation with ACT Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon. Live stream 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20. Available on demand Dec. 3-June 30. \$10. For access details, go to www.act-sf.org.

Jessica Zack Jessica Zack is a Bay Area freelance writer



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 6, 2021

Filing Date: December 9, 2020
Case No.: 2020-0011535LBR
Business Name: American Conservatory Theatre (“A.C.T.”) Foundation
Business Address: 415 Geary Street (Primary Address)
Zoning: C-3-G (DOWNTOWN- GENERAL) Zoning District
80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0316/001A
Applicant: Eric Brizee
415 Geary St
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Katherine Wilborn - 628-652-7355
Katherine.Wilborn@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation (the “Foundation”) is a nonprofit organization, founded by William Ball in 1966, and is the governing body of the American Conservatory Theater (“A.C.T.”), which opened its doors at 415 Geary Street in 1967. The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation is a Tony Award-winning theater and training institution whose work is energized and informed by a profound commitment to developing the next generation of theater artists. The A.C.T. is both a theater company and acting school, which includes two theaters (the flagship location at 415 Geary Street, called the “Geary Theater,” and the “Strand Theater” at 1127 Market Street), as well as the Conservatory which offers educational opportunities for adult and young actors. The Geary Theater at 415 Geary Street was built in 1911, purchased by A.C.T. in 1967, and has served as the flagship theater ever since. In the heart of Union Square, it seats 1,019 people. A.C.T.’s Conservatory serves 3,000 students every year. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, Benjamin Bratt, and Anika Noni Rose are among the Conservatory’s distinguished former students. With its commitment to excellence in actor training and to the relationship between training, performance, and audience. A.C.T. is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting

body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. The A.C.T. Master of Fine Arts Program has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, while serving as a creative engine for local talent as well.

From 1989 to 1994, the Geary Theater building was severely compromised by the Loma Prieta Earthquake and the A.C.T. was not able to use the space. However, despite this setback, the A.C.T. was able to continue their operations and full performance schedule for these five year, by using other local venues to host their shows. Therefore, there has never been a gap in their operations or cultural offerings to the community. Some of A.C.T.'s programs to engage the community includes *Bike Night* (valet bike parking to encourage mass transit / non-automobile commuting); *Drinks & Drama* to encourage socialization in a theatrical context; *Prologues* to educate audience members prior to a show; *Theater on the Couch*, which encourages audience members to share their views on a show; *Pride Night*, to encourage the LGBTQ community to participate in the live theater experience; and other socialization and educational experiences. A.C.T. partners with local high schools to introduce the city's students to the experience of live theater, both as artists and as audience members. A.C.T. brings the benefits of theater-based arts education to more than 12,000 Bay Area school students each year through *ACTsmart* programs, while providing A.C.T.'s diverse community with entertaining access to the creative process. A.C.T. is one of the first theaters in the nation to offer low-cost performance tickets to school groups and has brought the power of live theater to hundreds of thousands of students and educators since their arrival in San Francisco in 1967.

Until recently, the American Conservatory Theatre Foundation had four locations to serve their efforts. They recently closed the Administrative Offices (30 Grant Avenue, 1993-2020) and the Costume Shop Theater (1117Market Street, 1998 – 2020) and cited reduced sales and inactivity due to COVID-19.

The business's primary and original location, the Geary Theater, at 415 Geary Street is Article 10 Landmark No. 82 and is a Category I Significant, Unaltered contributing building in the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Article 11 Conservation District, on the south side of Geary Street between Taylor and Page Street. It is within the C-3-G (Downtown, General) Zoning District, a 80-130-F Height and Bulk District, the Union Square Community Benefit District, and the Downtown Area Plan. The business's secondary location, the Strand Theater, at 1127 Market Street is in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the southeast side of Market Street between 7th and 8th streets in the South of Market neighborhood. It is within the C-3-G Downtown-General Zoning District and a 120-X Height and Bulk District; a Market Street Special Sign District; the Downtown Planning Areas; the Central Market Community Benefit District; and the SoMa Pilipinas – Filipino Cultural Heritage District. 1127 Market Street was included in the Foundation for San Francisco Architectural Heritage Survey (1978), where it was identified as having "Contextual Importance."

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1967.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. American Conservatory Theatre Foundation qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. American Conservatory Theatre Foundation has operated continuously in San Francisco for 53 years.
- b. American Conservatory Theatre Foundation has contributed to the history and identity of the Union Square neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. American Conservatory Theatre Foundation is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the performing arts.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. 415 Geary Street is an Article 10 landmark (#82 – “Geary Theater”) and is a contributor to the Article 11 Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District with a resource code of “Category I – Significant Building, No Alterations.” The property has also been surveyed numerous times (1975, 1976, 1978, and 1988), and determined to be individually eligible for the California Register and National Register.

1127 Market Street also has a Historic Resource status code of “A” (Historic Resource Present) through a Planning Department Historic Resource Evaluation Response which identified the property as individually eligible for the California Register and eligible for the National Register as a contributor to the Market Street Theater and Loft District. The Market Street property is also located within the SoMa Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District. The owners submitted an application to have the Market Street location considered for Article 10 local Landmark status, however, it has been inactive for several years.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

Yes, both properties have Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of “A” (Historic Resource Present) because of their Historic Resource Statuses (see above) and locations within eligible historic districts.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. The American Conservatory Theater has been referenced in numerous trade publications, media, and historical documents throughout California since it was founded in 1967, including: American Theatre, Bay Area Reporter, Broadway World San Francisco, The Daily Californian, The Mercury News, Patch, NPR, The San Diego Union-Tribune, The San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Santa Cruz Sentinel, SF Weekly, SFist, and Theater Mania among many others. A.C.T. has also been featured in a 50th anniversary book on the company’s history written by Michael Paller.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 415 Geary Street, Geary Theater (1967 – Present)
- 1127 Market Street, Strand Theater (2015 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 30 Grant Avenue, Administrative Offices (1993 – 2020)
- 1117 Market Street, Costume Shop Theater (1998 – 2020)

Recommended by Applicant

- A.C.T.'s mission to serve the entire population of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area
- Instituting and supporting their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program to address issues around under-served and under-represented communities
- A.C.T.'s "Rules of Engagement" that seek to create community within each theatrical experience.
- Bringing theatrical and cultural expression to San Francisco and Bay Area audiences and performers through their traditional theater at 415 Geary, and through their new and experimental theater works at 1127 Market Street.
- Continue their philanthropic, collaborative, and educational programs for local residents.

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 6, 2021

Case No.: 2020-0011535LBR
Business Name: American Conservatory Theatre ("A.C.T.") Foundation
Business Address: 415 Geary Street (Primary Address)
Zoning: C-3-G (DOWNTOWN- GENERAL) Zoning District
80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0316/001A
Applicant: Eric Brizee
415 Geary Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Matt Haney
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Katherine Wilborn - 628-652-7355
Katherine.Wilborn@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE FOUNDATION CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 415 GEARY STREET (PRIMARY ADDRESS), BLOCK/LOT 0316/001A; 1127 MARKET STREET (SECONDARY ADDRESS), BLOCK/LOT 3702/046.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 6, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for The American Conservatory Theatre Foundation.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 415 Geary Street, Geary Theater (1967 – Present)
- 1127 Market Street, Strand Theater (2015 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 30 Grant Avenue, Administrative Offices (1993 – 2020)
- 1117 Market Street, Costume Shop Theater (1998 – 2020)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- A.C.T.'s mission to serve the entire population of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area
- Instituting and supporting their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion program to address issues around under-served and under-represented communities
- A.C.T.'s "Rules of Engagement" that seek to create community within each theatrical experience.
- Bringing theatrical and cultural expression to San Francisco and Bay Area audiences and performers through their traditional theater at 415 Geary, and through their new and experimental theater works at 1127 Market Street.
- Continue their philanthropic, collaborative, and educational programs for local residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business January 6, 2021.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

Resolution No. ###
January 6, 2021

CASE NO. 2020-00
415 GEARY ST

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: