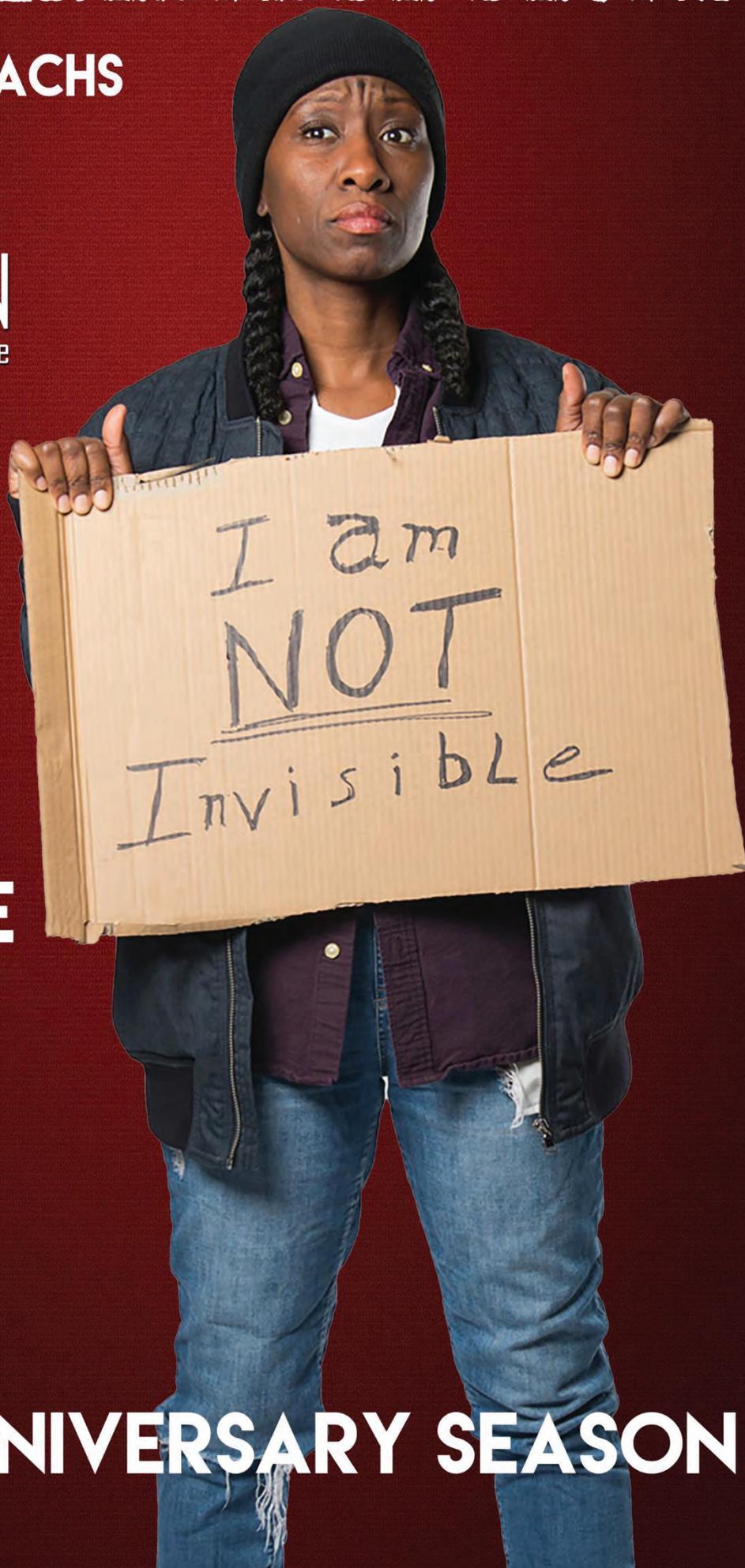


# HUMAN INTEREST STORY

BY STEPHEN SACHS



WORLD  
PREMIERE

30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



## From the Artistic Directors

Here we go! Our first production of our 30th Anniversary season. 30 years ago, when we first entered this theatre and stepped onto its stage, we knew we had found it. A place to call home. Since that April three decades ago, our charming haven on Fountain Avenue has been home to thousands of artists and millions of patrons. Fountain plays are now performed worldwide and seen on TV. Our flamenco concerts are first class. Our outreach programs change lives.

We start 2020 with the world premiere of a new play. *Human Interest Story* could not be more timely. By dramatizing such urgent issues as homelessness, truth in journalism, corruption in politics, and the impact of social media, *Human Interest Story* is a tale torn from our headlines or downloaded right from our news feeds. And asks some fundamental questions of ourselves.

If you're a longtime member of our Fountain Family, we deeply thank you for your loyal friendship. If you're a first-timer, welcome. We hope you like what you see and come back throughout this landmark year as we celebrate 30 years of intimate excellence on Fountain Avenue. Our legacy is noteworthy. And our future looks bigger and brighter than ever.

Onward!

*Deborah Culver*

*Stephen Sachs*

## The Fountain Theatre

The Fountain creates, develops and produces new plays and re-imagined classics expressing the diverse social issues and cultures of Los Angeles and the nation. We give artistic voice to the voiceless; while engaging communities and students through our outreach programs. Diversity and inclusion sit at the heart of our mission, passionately committed to the purpose that the richly varied population of Los Angeles sees itself on our stage. The intimate Fountain Theatre was founded in 1990 by Co-Artistic Directors, Deborah Culver and Stephen Sachs and is now one of the most highly regarded theaters of any size in Los Angeles. Mayor Eric Garcetti honored The Fountain for "creating, developing and producing new plays that have been seen across the nation." The Fountain has won hundreds of awards for theatre excellence. Fountain for Youth is the company's arts education program, providing youth from low-income communities across Los Angeles with the transformative benefits of theater arts-based learning experiences. The Fountain Theatre is also the foremost presenter of flamenco in Los Angeles.



The Fountain Theatre Presents  
The World Premiere of

# HUMAN INTEREST STORY

by Stephen Sachs

starring

**Tanya Alexander Richard Azurdia Aleisha Force**  
**James Harper Matt Kirkwood Rob Nagle Tarina Pouncy**

Set & Video Design  
**Matthew Hill**

Lighting Design  
**Jennifer Edwards**

Original Music & Sound Design  
**Peter Bayne**

Costume Design  
**Shon LeBlanc**

Prop Design  
**Michael Allen Angel**

Production Stage Manager  
**Emily Lehrer\***

Asst. Stage Manager  
**Nura Ferdowsi**

Technical Director  
**Scott Tuomey**

Produced by  
**James Bennett Deborah Culver Simon Levy**

Executive Producer  
**Karen Kondazian**

Producing Underwriters  
**Peter Glenville Foundation David & Mary Jo Volk**  
**Toby & Daniel Bernstein Laurel & Robert Silton Lois Tandy**

Directed by  
**Stephen Sachs**

**CAST** (in alphabetical order)

**Betty Frazier/Jane Doe**

**Tanya Alexander\***

**Hernandez/  
Rick Moran/Ensemble**

**Richard Azurdia\***

**Megan Tunney / Ensemble**

**Aleisha Force\***

**Harold Cain**

**James Harper\***

**Carl Miller/Bowright/Ensemble**

**Matt Kirkwood\***

**Andy Kramer**

**Rob Nagle\***

**Mayor Woods/  
Nakeesha Williams/Ensemble**

**Tarina Pouncy\***

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association  
the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

*Human Interest Story is performed in two  
hours with one intermission*

**Time and Place**  
An American City. Now.



# From Playwright Stephen Sachs



Every morning when I drive to the Fountain he's there. At the foot of the freeway offramp. Looking much older than he probably is. He is thin with sharp elbows, protruding cheekbones, in soiled mismatched clothes. His ragamuffin outfit, uncut hair and shaggy white beard make him look like a sullied Walt Whitman or as if Gabby Hayes were down on his luck.

He holds no cardboard sign. Instead, he dances. Strikes a pose. Plays the fool. Twists his beard in his hands to taunt motorists. Waves to cars as they pass. Most homeless folk plead. He entertains. A penniless whirling dervish. I roll down my car window. Hand him some coins. He chirps, "thank you" and leaps back to business. He is there as I turn off the freeway. Every morning.

Like city traffic congestion, the homeless population in Los Angeles has grown to epic proportions and will only get worse. Labeling it an epidemic is a misnomer. It implies homelessness is something you catch like a plague or contagious disease. Unavoidable. In fact, California has the largest economy in the United States, the sixth largest in the world. LA's economy is the nation's fourth largest. This city, this state and this nation have the money to feed, clothe and house every citizen. Folks are homeless for many reasons, but one thing is clear: they don't have to be.

As a theatre-maker, I feel compelled to ask myself: What can I do as an artist to express what I see in my world?

Two years ago, driving down Hollywood Boulevard one warm afternoon, the classic Frank Capra movie *Meet John Doe* popped into my mind. In the film, Gary Cooper plays a homeless man (then called a "hobo"), who is hired by newspaper writer Barbara Stanwick and transformed into a national celebrity she names John Doe. An idea struck me. What if that story were told today in the fast-moving world of social media with homelessness, fake news and political corruption in our daily news feeds?

*Meet John Doe* was released in May, 1941. The war in Europe was exploding. Nazi Germany had invaded Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. By December, America would declare war on Japan. Hitler and Mussolini would quickly declare war on the US. By year's end, the world would ignite into conflict.

*Meet John Doe* is labelled today as a comedy but Capra's view in the film is somber and ominous. Many of its lessons remain true today. How a greedy and ego-driven capitalist can crush the good of the common man. How quickly mob rule and public opinion can change. And how whoever controls the media, controls the masses. No wonder 1941 was also the release year of *Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles' examination of a power-hungry fictional newspaper magnate.

*Human Interest Story* is about more than homelessness. It's about all of us asking ourselves, in these unruly times, who am I? What do I truly believe? How am I not who I say I am? And, most important, how truth – in our press, in ourselves and our world – sets us free.

— THE 30th ANNUAL LA STAGE ALLIANCE —

# OVATION AWARDS

## WINNER

### **BEST SEASON**

FOUNTAIN THEATRE, Cost of Living,  
Daniel's Husband, Hype Man: A Break Beat Play

### **BEST PRODUCTION OF A PLAY — INTIMATE THEATRE**

COST OF LIVING, Fountain Theatre

### **ACTING ENSEMBLE OF THE PLAY**

COST OF LIVING, Fountain Theatre

### **FEATURED ACTRESS IN A PLAY**

XOCHITL ROMERO, Cost of Living, Fountain Theatre

### **VIDEO/PROJECTION DESIGN — INTIMATE THEATRE**

NICHOLAS SANTIAGO, Cost of Living, Fountain Theatre

### **OVATIONS HONORS RECIPIENTS**

### **MUSIC COMPOSITION FOR A PLAY**

ROMERO MOSLEY,  
Hype Man: A Break Beat Play, Fountain Theatre



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## WHO'S WHO

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**TANYA ALEXANDER\*** (Betty Frazier/Jane Doe) is a high school valedictorian, an alumnus of AMDA-New York and a Summa Cum Laude/Phi Beta Kappa graduate of St. Louis University's theatre program. A diverse actor, stage and street performer, and spoken word artist, her credits include: Off-Broadway: *In Dahomey*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Crimson Landbeats*. Mark Taper Forum: *Nothing But the Truth (u/s)*, *Clybourne Park (u/s)*. San Diego Rep: *Honky*. A Noise Within: *Day of Absence*. National Tour: *The Wiz*. LA Local: *Mono/Poly* (Odyssey Theatre), *Future Sex Inc.* (Lounge Theatre), *SuperNatural: The Play* (Chromolume

Theatre), *When Paul Robeson Quit the Movies* (Stella Adler Theatre), *Here's to Life* (The Complex), *Harlem's Night* (The Mint), *The Laugh Factory*, *The Comedy Union*, *The Poetry Lounge*, *S.W.A.A.M.* Film/TV: *The Shield*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Murder Among Friends*, *Coroner: I Speak for the Dead*, *Onstage in America*, *Bones*, *Lucky Louie*, *Recovery*, *Where Children Play*, *Material Girls*, *Minty*, *Beyond Doubt*, *Humble Pie*. Voiceover: *Tombraider* (video game), *Fire Escape* (Tribeca Film Fest winner for interactive media), *1001 Cuts* (interactive media). Radio/Web: *Amazon*, *Coca Cola*, *Dasani*, *California Tobacco Control Program*, *New Jersey LIFO*, *Committee For Children*, *Meijer*, *Golden Plump*. She has also released two spoken word albums and won the following awards: *Santa Monica Film Fest* (best-supporting actress), *NAACP Theatre Award* (best solo show), *Hollywood Black Film Fest* (best music video), *COLSAC Award* (best choreography). She is also the recipient of the keys to the city of Jennings, MO (her hometown!). Visit [www.TanyaAlexander.net](http://www.TanyaAlexander.net) for more info.



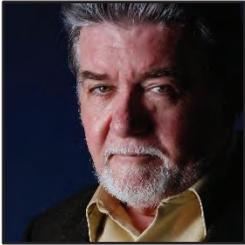
**RICHARD AZURDIA\*** (Hernandez/Rick Moran/Ensemble) is a proud Angeleno, born and raised in L.A. He's excited to be returning to the Fountain! He was last seen at the Fountain in *My Mañana Comes*. Other productions include: *Señor Plummer's Final Fiesta* (Rogue Artists Ensemble), *This Land* (Company of Angels), *Just Like Us* (Denver Center Theatre Co.), *Backyard* (Echo Theater Co.), *Love & Information* (Son of Semele Ensemble), *American Night: The Ballad of Juan Jose* (Denver Center Theatre Co.), *Bill & Joan* (Sacred Fools Theater), *Chinese Massacre [Annotated]* (Circle X Theatre Co.), *Living Out* (Mark Taper Forum), *La Posada Magica*

(Odyssey Theater), *Stranger* (Bootleg Theater) & *Tropical America* (24th Street Theater). He worked on 8 seasons with Independent Shakespeare Co.'s Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors* & many others). He's received nominations from the Ovation Awards, Stage Raw Awards, Colorado Theatre Guild's Henry Awards & Broadway World Awards. Film/TV: *Grace & Frankie*, *Southland*, Hulu's *East Los High* (recurring Guest Star), *Weeds* (recurring), *America 101*, and Lionsgate's acclaimed Spanish film *Ladron Que Roba A Ladron*. He's a recipient of the Andrew W. Mellon Artistic Leaders Fellowship and was named one of L.A. Weekly's 54 Fascinating People of 2015. [www.RichardAzurdia.com](http://www.RichardAzurdia.com).



**ALEISHA FORCE\*** (Megan Tunney/Ensemble) hails from the Great State of Texas, and is new to Los Angeles after 7 years of New York City winters. Favorite theatre: *Antony and Cleopatra* (Cleopatra) at Virginia Shakes, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Maggie) at Barnstormers Theatre, *The Odd Couple* (Florence Unger) at Theatre Workshop of Nantucket, *Normalcy* (Sarah Erlich) at Theatre East, *Tigers Be Still* (Grace) at Dallas Theatre Center, *Fat Pig* (Jeannie) at Dallas Theatre Center, *Our Town* (Mrs. Webb) at The Bob Hope Theatre, *The Skriker* (The Skriker) at Margo Jones Theatre, *Othello* (Emilia) at The Grier Garson, SMU. TV: *In the Cut*, *Crazy Fast*, *Chase*, *Prison*

*Break*, *Why Can't I Sell My House?* Film: *The One Who Brung You*, *Miles Underwater*, *Subconscious*, *Devon's Ghost*, *Parts*, *Hold Your Peace*. Education: MFA Acting, SMU. You've probably seen her in commercials for things like carpet cleaning and furniture stores. She is constantly reminding herself to sit up straight and likes to think she does more yoga than she really does. [www.aleishaforce.com](http://www.aleishaforce.com)



**JAMES HARPER\*** (Harold Cain) At The Fountain: 'FDR' in Bernard Weinraub's *The Accomplices*. Major roles in over 150 plays on Broadway –*The Robber Bridegroom*, *The Time of Your Life*, Ellis Rabb's production of *Edward II*, *West Side Story*; Off Broadway: *Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (opposite Kathy Bates; later: Debra Jo Rupp), *The Cradle Will Rock* (John Houseman, director) *The Johnstown Vindicator* (opposite Patricia Heaton), Gardner McKay's *Sea Marks*, 'Kent' opposite James Earl Jones' *King Lear* (NYSF), others; in LA – *Proof* (La Mirada), *The Trojan Women* (w/Mariette Hartley), *The Architect* (title role), Doris Baizley's *Glass Mountain* (Ojai

Playwrights Conference), David Lindsay ABAIRE's *A Devil Inside* (Echo Theatre Co), *Other People's Money* (Westwood Playhouse), others; and regionally (Old Globe, Long Wharf, The Guthrie, Berkeley Rep, American Shakespeare Festival/Stratford (CT), Baltimore's Centre Stage, Pittsburgh Public, Boston's Huntington, Cincinnati Playhouse in The Park, St. Louis Rep, PAF Playhouse, The Acting Company/4 seasons, others) include *Cyrano de Bergerac & Macbeth* (title roles), and playing famed mountaineer/philosopher Willi Unsoeld in *WILLI – An Evening of Wilderness & Spirit* (1-man show) at Arizona Theatre Company. TV: 150 + guest star/recurring roles on episodics, sitcoms, MOW's, and numerous daytime dramatic serials. Film: 20 + include *The Insider*, *Armageddon*, *Blaze*, *Switch*, *Down Periscope*, *First Born*, & *Last Exit To Brooklyn*. Mr. Harper co-stars with his life partner, Marilyn McIntyre, in the bittersweet, sci-fi comedy short, and hit of the shorts fests, *Into the Unknown*. He voices the villainous Emperor Arcturus Mengsk in the smash-hit video game *StarCraft* and its sequel *StarCraft II*. <http://pro.imdb.com/JameHarper/nm0363878/>



**MATT KIRKWOOD\*** (Carl Miller/Bowright/Ensemble) graduated from Emerson College and has been an actor, director, artistic coordinator and producer in Los Angeles theater for the last 30 years. As an actor, Matt has been on such television shows as *Criminal Minds*, *Castle*, *Boy Meets World*, *Strong Medicine* and *Quantum Leap*. Theatre credits as an actor include: *Moonlight and Magnolias*, *The Chicago Conspiracy Trial* (both at the Odyssey Theatre), *Our Class* (Son of Semele), *The Goat or, who is Sylvia?* (LGBT Center Los Angeles), *The Lighthouse*, *Lady, Unseen* and *White People* (Road Theatre Ensemble), *Metropolitan Prairie*, *The Threepenny Opera* and

*The Transfiguration of Benno Blimpie* (Friends and Arts Theatre Ensemble). Directing credits include: *Coming Attractions*, *The White House Murder Case*, *Mall America*, Theresa Rebeck's *The Family of Mann*, *Wake, This is Our Youth* and *Suicide Incorporated*. As always, I would like to thank my wonderful wife, Nancy and daughters Becca and Hannah for their continued support of my being in this crazy business.



**ROB NAGLE\*** (Andy Kramer) is a proud member of the Antaeus Theatre Company, as well as the Troubadour Theater Company. Recent theater includes: *Apple Season* (Moving Arts), *Sucker Punch* (Coourage Theatre Company), *Julius Weezer* (Troubadour Theater Company), as well as Ovation-nominated performances in *The Judas Kiss* (Boston Court Pasadena) and *The Little Foxes* (Antaeus Theatre Company). He has also worked with Pasadena Playhouse, Road Theatre Company, New World Stages, Skylight Theatre Company, South Coast Repertory, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Rogue Machine Theatre, Portland Center Stage and the

Mark Taper Forum. Film includes: *Blonde*, *The 11th Green*, *Safety*, *To Hell and Gone*, *Bad Samaritan*, *First Love*, *Mother's Day*, *Fishing Naked*, *Boost* and *New Year's Eve*. Television includes: *Dynasty*, *NCIS: New Orleans*, *Little Fires Everywhere*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, *Superior Donuts*, *Modern Family*, *The Librarians* and *Grey's Anatomy*. Education: Northwestern University. Spouse: Heather Allyn. Pug: Houston. [robnagle.com](http://robnagle.com) @nagdoggie



**TARINA POUNCY\*** (Mayor Woods/Nakeesha Williams/Ensemble) is delighted to debut at The Fountain Theatre in *Human Interest Story* – fulfilling her desire to be involved in projects that are socially relevant, classic or unconventional. Previous stage work includes *Vendetta Chrome* (Coeurage Theatre); *Les Blancs* (Rogue Machine Theatre); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Ruskin Group Theatre); and *The Old Settler* (International City Theatre) -- for which she won an NAACP Theatre Award. Film/TV credits include *Roman J. Israel* with Denzel Washington, *Freelander*, a short she co-wrote and directed; *Bless This Mess*, *Veronica Mars*, *Queen Sugar*, *Goliath* and

*Silicon Valley*. Tarina is a member of Collaborative Artists Bloc and is a recurring co-host on *Just Jokes w/ Satarius*, Sundays on pharcydetv.com.

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## CREATIVE TEAM

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**STEPHEN SACHS** (Playwright/Director/Co-Artistic Director) is an award-winning playwright, director, producer and the co-Artistic Director of the Fountain Theatre, which he co-founded with Deborah Culver in 1990. The world premiere of his new play, *Arrival & Departure*, which he directed, enjoyed a 3-month sold-out run at the Fountain. He recently adapted and directed celebrity readings of *Ms. Smith Goes to Washington* and *All the President's Men* at Los Angeles City Hall starring Sam Waterson, Bellamy Young, Bradley Whitford, Joshua Malina and Jeff Perry. His stage adaption of Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Stage Raw Award)

inaugurated Center Theatre Group's Block Party at the Kirk Douglas Theatre and was chosen to represent LA theatre for Grand Park's new Our LA Voices Arts Festival. His play *Bakersfield Mist* (Elliot Norton Award) enjoyed a 3-month run on London's West End starring Kathleen Turner and is now being produced in regional theatres across the country and worldwide. Other plays by Sachs include *Dream Catcher*, *Heart Song*, *Cyrano* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award, Ovation Award nomination), *Miss Julie: Freedom Summer* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award nomination), *Gilgamesh* (Theatre@Boston Court), *Open Window* (Pasadena Playhouse, Media Access Award), *Central Avenue* (PEN USA Literary Award Finalist), *Sweet Nothing in my Ear* (PEN USA Literary Award Finalist), *The Golden Gate*, and *The Baron in the Trees*. He wrote the screenplay for *Sweet Nothing in my Ear* for CBS starring Marlee Matlin and Jeff Daniels. Directing credits include *Arrival & Departure* (World Premiere), *Bakersfield Mist* (World Premiere) *Broomstick* (West Coast Premiere), *My Name is Asher Lev* (LA Premiere), Athol Fugard's *The Blue Iris* (US Premiere), *Completeness* by Itamar Moses, Warren Leight's *Side Man* starring Christine Lahti; a China tour of *Top Secret* (LA Theatre Works), *The Train Driver* by Athol Fugard (US Premiere), Conor McPherson's *Shining City* (LA Premiere), Athol Fugard's *Coming Home* (LA Weekly Award), Athol Fugard's *Victory* (U.S. Premiere, NAACP Award); *Miss Julie: Freedom Summer* (World Premiere), the world premiere of Athol Fugard's *Exits and Entrances* at the Fountain (Ovation Award, LA Drama Critics Circle Award) and at Primary Stages (Off-Broadway), and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, Fugard's *The Road to Mecca* (LA premiere), Arthur Miller's *After the Fall* (Ovation Award), *Sweet Nothing in my Ear* (World Premiere), *Hippolytos* (new translation by Anne Carson) inaugurating the Outdoor Classical Theater at the Getty Villa in Malibu, and many others. Sachs has been nominated for the SDC Zelda Fichandler Award three times, recognizing an outstanding director who is making a unique and exceptional contribution to theatre in their region. Sachs was recently honored with a Certificate of Commendation from Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council for "his visionary contributions to the cultural life of Los Angeles." In 2019, LA City Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell hailed Sachs as "One of the great citizens and artists in our city." [www.stephensachs.com](http://www.stephensachs.com)



**MICHAEL ALLEN ANGEL** (Props Designer) is a graduate of the UCLA department of Theatre, Film, and Television. He has served as Prop Master for the Pasadena Playhouse, The Geffen Playhouse, and the long running interactive theatre experience *Tamara*. He even hired himself to design props for his own short film *Broken Hart*. Some of his favorite shows to prop have been *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo* at The Fountain Theatre, *Last Swallows* for Pandelia's Yellow Canary Co, and *Shooting Star: A revealing New Musical* at The Hudson. Recently, Michael took a break from props to direct *The Beauty, The Banshee & Me* written and

performed by Cathy Lind Hayes at the Whitefire Theatre as well as Neil Koenigsberg's *Wink* at the Zephyr Theatre. Michael is delighted to be working with The Fountain Theatre again and thrilled to be a part of the *Human Interest Story* team.



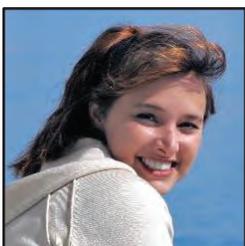
**PETER BAYNE** (Original Music/Sound Designer) Previous credits with the Fountain: *Daniel's Husband, Runaway Home, Arrival & Departure, The Chosen, Dream Catcher, The Painted Rocks of Revolver Creek, Citizen: An American Lyric, Reborning, The Brothers Size, Broomstick, In the Red and Brown Water, The Normal Heart, Blue Iris, Cyrano, On the Spectrum, Bakersfield Mist, Opus, Coming Home, El Nogalar, Shining City*. Selected theatre credits include Center Theatre Group, South Coast Repertory, Boston Court, A Noise Within, The Antaeus Company, The Colony Theatre, The Actors' Gang, Rogue Machine Theatre, Skylight Theatre Company, and the

Elephant Theatre Company. Other regional credits include American Repertory Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, and Shakespeare and Company. Bayne is active as a composer in film and television, he produces leftfield dance music and performs as a multi-instrumentalist.



**SHON LEBLANC, CDG:** (Costume Designer) is a multiple award-winning Costume Designer, with 34 years in the business. A member of the Costume Designers Guild and owner of The Costume House. Shon has designed over 400 shows, in LA and across the US. Recently he designed costumes for the Disney Plus show *Encore* and has designed numerous world and LA premiere shows. Including *Exits and Entrances, I Love Lucy Live On Stage* (including 3 national tours) *The Human Comedy, Summer of Love* and *Murder on the Orient Express* to name a few. Other shows include *Singing In The Rain, The Best Man, All My Sons, A Christmas Story, Show Boat, Camelot,*

*Ain't MisBehavin, Little Women, My Fair Lady, The Man Who Came to Dinner,* and so many more.



**JENNIFER EDWARDS** (Lighting Designer) is so grateful to be a part of the Fountain Theatre's production of *Human Interest Story* with this incredibly talented company of artists. Some favorite lighting designs include: *Matilda* and *Newsies* at Moonlight Amphitheatre, *Mamma Mia!* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (San Diego Critics Circle Nominee) at the Welk Resorts Theatre, *Broomstick* (L.A. Ovation Award Nominee) and *My Manana Comes* (NAACP Theatre Award Winner) at The Fountain Theatre. *Broadway and Beyond* at the Alex Theatre, *Step Up* at the Pasadena Playhouse; *The Full Monty* and *Dreamgirls* at SDMT, *El Grande Circus de Coca*

*Cola* at the Skylight and Colony Theatres. Jennifer is also a proud AEA Stage Manager since 1994. Jennifer is forever grateful to all her theatre families for making the magic that enlightens and inspires. Love to Marc and Mom!



**NURA FERDOWSI** (Asst. Stage Manager) is excited to join the *Human Interest Story* team. She studied technical theatre at Santa Monica College and transferred to UCLA for a BA in Theatre Arts. As a Stage Manager, Nura has worked on many productions including *The Visit* (UCLA), *Helen* (UCLA), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (SMC), and *Sweeney Todd* (SMC). This will be her first production at The Fountain Theatre.



**MATTHEW G HILL** (Set & Video Designer) From stage to screen to the printed page, Matthew G. Hill is a storyteller by trade and by heart. He believes in the power of stories to kindle hope, inspire change, and invite wonder. In this pursuit, Matt works as a designer, director, illustrator, and writer. He is especially interested in creating evocative worlds, the intersection of technology & storytelling, and crafting works that have the power to impact change. Matt is the Artistic Director for Little Cinema, an immersive art collective, as well as the Associate Artistic Director of Rogue Artists Ensemble. He has served as an artist-in-residence at the National Theatre of Croatia, the Getty Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation. His work has been shown in over a dozen countries on three continents. His work has garnered much praise and numerous awards, including a BizBash Award, two Ovation Awards, a StageRaw Award, an LA Weekly Award, and both the Kairos & Chronos Prizes in screenwriting, among others. He has designed over a dozen Silver and Bronze Telly Award-winning campaigns. Recent projects include: co-writing & directing the feature film *Burning at Both Ends* (starring Cary Elwes & Judd Hirsch), scenic designing *Señor Plummer’s Final Fiesta* for Rogue Artists Ensemble (Ovation nominated), video designing *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* at 24th Street Theatre (Ovation nominated), and production designing the feature film *The Past Is Never Dead: The Story of William Faulkner*. To find out more about Matt and to see samples of his work, please visit [LogicINk.net](http://LogicINk.net).



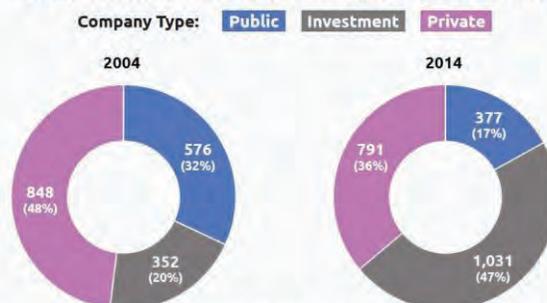
**EMILY LEHRER\*** (Production Stage Manager) is a Los Angeles-based stage manager and theatre artist. Selected credits include (as PSM) *Gem of the Ocean* at A Noise Within; *Dancing Lessons* at ETC Santa Barbara; *The Root Beer Bandits* and *Master Class* at The Garry Marshall Theatre; *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, *Dementia*, and *The Latina Christmas Special* at LATC; *Ms. Smith Goes to Washington* and *All The President’s Men* at Los Angeles City Hall; *Cost of Living*, *Arrival and Departure*, *Building the Wall*, *Bakersfield Mist* at The Fountain Theatre; *The Waterworld Stunt Show* at Universal Studios Hollywood. As ASM: *Monument: Or Four Sisters* at Ojai Playwrights Conference; *Blues in the Night* at The Wallis; *The Sweetheart Deal* at LATC; *Picnic*, *Henry IV: Part I*, and *Wedding Band* at Antaeus; *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Beaux’ Stratagem*, *The Guardsman*, and *Come Back, Little Sheba* at A Noise Within.



**TERRI ROBERTS\*** (Café Manager/Costume Maintenance) wears many hats at The Fountain Theatre, including the care and repair of production costumes, the on-going maintenance of in-house prop and costume stock, and serving Fountain patrons as manager of the charming Fountain Theatre Café (which is now also available to rent for parties, readings, and other small-scale events. Email her at [terri@fountaintheatre.com](mailto:terri@fountaintheatre.com) for details and info.) Terri also works in stage management (production/assistant stage manager on 20 fabulous Fountain shows thus far), and loves every opportunity to also serve as casting assistant, props designer/set dresser and coach for actors. In addition to her work at the Fountain, Terri is also a theatre/entertainment writer. Her works have appeared in *Variety*, *Performances*, *Back Stage West*, *Ross Reports*, *LA Weekly*, *LA Parent*, *The Sondheim Review*, *ShowMag.com*, *TheaterMania.com* and *Examiner.com*. Deep gratitude, as always, to Stephen and Simon. Proudly Pro 99 and a member of Actors’ Equity Association.

“There is nothing more important than a good, safe, secure home.” – Rosalynn Carter

NEWSPAPERS OWNED BY LARGEST 25 COMPANIES: 2004 & 2014



By 2014, investment companies owned almost half of the newspapers owned by the largest 25 companies

SOURCE: UNC Database

## Psychologist's exhibition shows the real face of homelessness in Los Angeles

Something about Stuart Perlman's paintings makes it almost impossible not to stop and look. The vivid portraits of chronically homeless people from the Venice Beach area of Los Angeles feature faces as striking as they are diverse. Exhibiting them in public venues such as cinemas, all accompanied by short sensitively written biographies, it seems to encourage people to linger and learn more.

Perlman, a clinical psychologist who has specialised in trauma for three decades, began painting five years ago after the death of his father prompted him to do something creative. Having come to know some of the long-term homeless people in his local area he knew immediately it was their faces he wanted to capture. What he didn't foresee was that getting to know people more intimately would result in his using portraits – more than 130 so far – to raise awareness of the plight of chronic homelessness generally or that he would become passionately vocal about what has been an entrenched issue for a number of US cities for decades.

"They had the true intensity of life writ large across them," Perlman says of his initial inspiration. "It broke my heart. Their stories were heart-wrenching. So many of these people feel mistreated, unseen and demeaned. We are throwing these people away."

Despite being a trauma specialist, he found it an eye-opener to discover how tough the lives of people living on the streets were. "They are some of the most traumatised people I've ever met and I have never seen that displayed in the political literature or the public domain. They are some of the most interesting, talented people," he adds. "I've met PhDs, stockbrokers, architects ... but they've gone through horrors.

"People who are run over by cars are usually taken to hospitals – these people have in essence been emotionally run over by a car and they need help, and we are discarding them and blaming them. Each of us is one thin experience away from being traumatised and not being able to function."

A lack of understanding of homelessness among the public, quickness to blame people for their predicament and the seeming inability of policymakers to address the problem spurred Perlman to use art to "humanise" people living on the



*Stuart Perlman amid some of his portraits of homeless people in Los Angeles. 'We are throwing these people away,' he said. Photograph: Stuart Perlman*

streets. He began arranging the Faces of Homelessness exhibition in southern California with the help of the local charity United Way of Greater Los Angeles, which curates the events, and he has spent \$40,000 (£25,000) of his own money on the project. If even in a small way raising awareness makes people think differently about homelessness, Perlman believes it is worth the hours he and the charity volunteers who assist him, put in.

Policymakers in cities such as LA and San Francisco where homeless "encampments" are a common sight have made multiple efforts over the years to tackle chronic street homelessness including investing in housing and resettlement. There have been some successes along the way too. According to the national State of Homelessness in America 2014 report, while there are considerable problems, such as a shortage of affordable housing, homelessness overall, as well as chronic street homelessness, has been falling for the past few years.

Steve Berg, vice president of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, says investment from successive federal governments (there could be more funds to come from the Obama administration soon) over the past decade has been "chipping away" at the problem. Berg points in particular to additional efforts to reduce homelessness among war veterans, a group that has traditionally made up a large proportion of the people who end up on the streets many of whom are grappling with serious mental health issues.

For all of this though, the visibility of people living on the streets can be shocking and it makes Perlman's dismay wholly understandable. To witness the extent of the problem, be it people wheeling shopping trolleys stacked with junk or those forced to use bushes as toilets, all you have to do is take a short stroll in Venice Beach or MacArthur Park in LA, or in downtown San Francisco.

As Perlman puts it: "It's a sin upon the soul of our nation, I believe, and our society, that we are allowing people to go through this." If only chronic homelessness was as impossible for society to ignore as it is for the people who encounter Perlman's paintings to turn their heads away.

Used with the artist's permission.  
Originally appeared in The Guardian, Nov. 2014, Mary O'Hara.

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Special Gifts like these are critical to the excellence and sustainability of The Fountain Theatre. For information about leadership gifts, including a legacy gift, please contact Barbara Goodhill, Director of Development @ 323.663.1525 x307 [barbara@fountaintheatre.com](mailto:barbara@fountaintheatre.com)

## Fountain Spotlight

### MARY JO & DAVID VOLK PRODUCING UNDERWRITERS



We are decades-long fans of LA's intimate theatres. Willing to travel throughout SoCal and always looking for that special combination of acting and production vigor that shines in small venues, we find that our experiences range from "superb" to "What were they thinking?" But, always stimulating and worth it. For us, the Fountain Theatre's productions are uniquely consistent in the superb category, in choice of excellent scripts with pinpoint characterizations expressing universal truths. There are no weak spots. Directing, acting, technical production all coalesce in nights of great and enjoyable theatre experiences. The practical and financial challenges inherent in intimate theater production seem to heighten the Fountain's ingenuity and creativity in delivering the essence of the play. We exit a show feeling the need to return with friends to enjoy it again and discuss it together.

In *Human Interest Story*, the Fountain offers a story of homelessness that is "of the moment" because it is in the daily news yet depicts social issues that are universal in both time and place. In her professional career, Mary Jo worked extensively with members of our homeless population and found that homelessness can follow from lifelong issues, or quickly follow an out of the blue injury or illness, or missing paycheck, and that few can escape it without help. Having read the script, we can't wait to see how the Fountain brings this play to us. And to see how the Fountain's production connects with area-wide efforts to reduce homelessness.

Along with its deep involvement in issues of homelessness, the Fountain is continuing its innovative *Walking the Beat* summer internship that brings L A Unified School District students together with L A Police Department officers to create and produce theatre-works reflecting their life experiences. As a former teacher in Washington, D.C., I enjoyed the students' creative first-hand storytelling skills. We look forward to seeing the results of this summer's 9-week program, and the effect on the community as program participants share the experience with others.

## HUMAN INTEREST STORY

### Executive Producer

Karen Kondazian



The Fountain has been my theatrical home for over 25 years and the geniuses who run this place never go for the easy choices. They foster works that seek not just to entertain, but to inspire and enlighten. It's such an honor to help give a home to one such piece by Stephen Sachs. Enjoy *Human Interest Story* and thank you for supporting The Fountain Theatre.

- Karen Kondazian

## Producing Underwriters

**PETER GLENVILLE FOUNDATION** – Dedicated to the advancement of theatrical, film, fine and literary arts, the Peter Glenville Foundation was established to benefit and support these endeavors through grants and operating programs. First and foremost, the Foundation seeks to promote Peter Glenville's legacy and the types of projects that he would hold dear to his heart.



**MARY JO & DAVID VOLK** – "With decades of LA small theatre fandom as background, we find The Fountain Theatre uniquely consistent in realizing the inherent benefits of an intimate space while presenting compelling productions of relevant emotionally forceful plays. In *Human Interest Story*, centered on the city's response to the plight of a single homeless woman, The Fountain again offers a story that is "of the moment" but is universal in both time and place. Can't wait to see how The Fountain brings it to us."

**LOIS TANDY** – "I am thrilled to be supporting the excellent work of Stephen Sachs and The Fountain Theatre. I have been a theatre nut all my life and The Fountain is one of my favorite theaters anywhere."



**LAUREL & ROBERT SILTON** – "The Fountain Theatre consistently provides the community with excellent productions that are relevant, thought provoking, entertaining and important in ways that good theatre should be. We are so proud to be a part of the Fountain Theatre family!"

**TOBY G. AND DANIEL L. BERNSTEIN** – "As LA natives, we have seen a lot of local theatre in venues large and small. None has surpassed plays at the Fountain, experiences which entertained and challenged us, made us laugh and cry. Several of those enriching hours have been thanks to Stephen Sachs. We are glad to expand our role as audience participants for his new play and help with the financial struggle common to all nonprofit theatres so this exceptional one endures."



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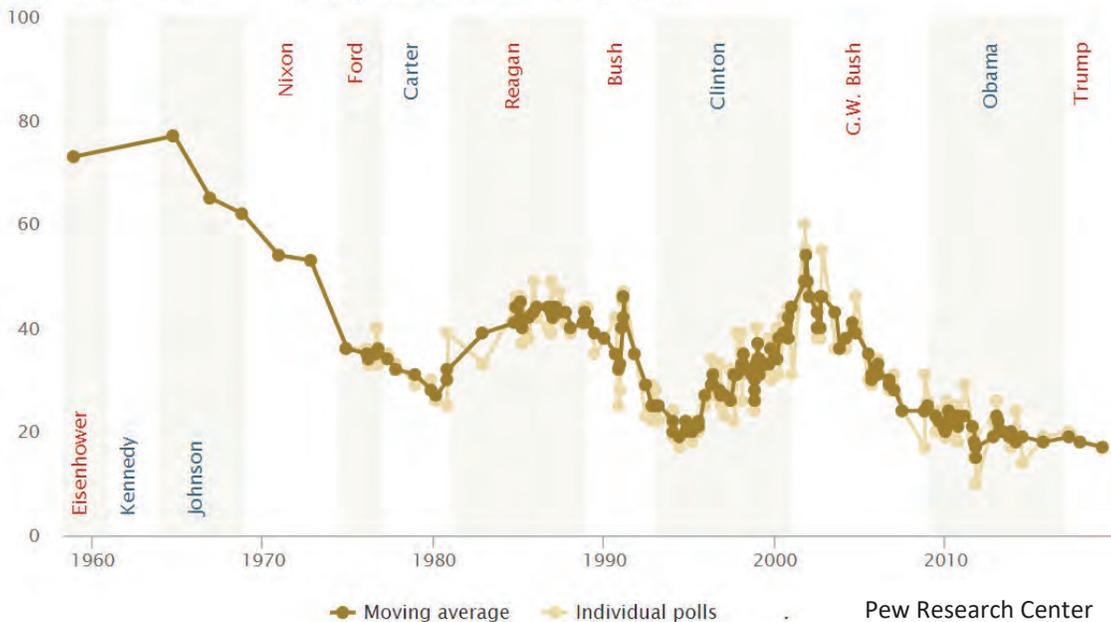
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## FOUNTAIN STAFF

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**JAMES BENNETT** (Producer) joined the Fountain team in 2009 and has smiled and whistled, much to the irritation of everyone else, every day ever since. James enjoys chatting, hobnobbing, and wine sipping with all the theatre's many fine friends, family, and patrons. For work, he can be found running the whole stack of theatre activities, whether that's toiling on a pile of paperwork, coiled into a pretzel in the tech booth, or producing fabulous Flamenco shows. He's enjoyed co-producing the Fountain's Rapid Development Series and is looking forward to many more scrumptious seasons to come. He's compelled to the theatre by its immediacy, its intimacy – the visceral impact of being so close to real humans with real sweat and real spit. In a world that's increasingly disjointed, behind glass, and far away – theatre becomes more powerful than ever. He is a huge *Starcraft* nerd and one day he'll make Masters. Terran fighting! 🎮



**FRANCE-LUCE BENSON** (Community Engagement Coordinator) is thrilled to join The Fountain. Named “Someone to Watch” in 2019 by American Theatre magazine, she is a recipient of a Miranda Foundation grant (*DETAINED*), Alfred P. Sloan Foundation New Play Commission (*DEVIL'S SALT*), and a Princess Grace Award runner up (*BOAT PEOPLE*). Additional honors include: Zoetrope Grand Prize (*CAROLINE'S WEDDING*); Dramatists Guild Fellow 2016-17, Sam French OOB Festival Winner, NNPN Award for Best Play, and three time Kilroy List Honorable Mention. Residencies include Djerassi, the Camargo Foundation in France, and Instituto Sacatar in Bahia, Brazil. Her plays have had productions, workshops, and readings at Crossroads Theatre New Jersey, City Theatre of Miami, The Playwrights Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, City Theatre of Miami, Loyola Marymount University, Global Black Voices in London, and in New York The Lark, The Billy Holiday Theatre, and the Ensemble Studio Theatre where she is a company member. She's been published by Sam French and Routledge Press. She earned an MFA in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University and a BA in Theatre from Florida International University. Teaching appointments include UCLA Extension, St. Johns University, Columbia University, Girl Be Heard, and P.S. Arts/Inside Out in L.A. She is a proud member of The Dramatists Guild, Inc.



**DEBORAH CULVER** (Co-Artistic Director) began her career as a dancer, choreographer and actor in New York's "Downtown" scene. After passing five years in South India where she was involved in the initial development of the international township of Auroville, she created two full-length outdoor dance/theatre pieces celebrating the community. Returning to the US, she became deeply involved in the intimate theatre scene and, in 1990, she and Stephen Sachs co-founded the Fountain Theatre, which is now in its 29th year. The 1995 season included, *The Women of Guernica*, Deborah's flamenco-based adaptation of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, which she also directed. She directed two one-act plays by Tennessee Williams and created and directed three full-evening Dance-Theatre pieces for the Fountain, *Declarations: Love Letters of the Great Romantics*, *The Path of Love*, and directed the dance opera, *The Song of Songs*, with music by Al Carmines. She directed a production of *The Path of Love* in South India, as well as *The Great Secret* by Mira Alfasa. She next directed Yussef El Guindi's *Acts of Desire* at the Fountain to considerable acclaim. In 2006, she directed the delightful *Taxi to Jannah* by Mark Sickman. And, as a producer of Flamenco, her Forever Flamenco series, now in its 18th year, continues to play to enthusiastic crowds. Actors' Equity Association honored Ms. Culver with its Diversity Award, for her dedication to presenting work at the Fountain that is culturally diverse. In 2013, she received special commendations from the City of Los Angeles and the Spanish Consulate for her contributions to the art of Flamenco. Her new theatre/dance work, *Freddy*, had its world premiere in 2017 as a partnership between the Fountain Theatre and LA City College Theatre Academy.



**STEPHANIE DELAROSA** (Totally Rad Accountant) comes to the Fountain Theatre with 18 years of nonprofit accounting experience. Prior to becoming an accountant, she was a classroom teacher working abroad in Cairo, Egypt, and as a Peace Corps volunteer in Lesotho, Southern Africa. She has traveled to 30 countries. She holds a B.A. in Elementary Education from Wichita State University, an M.A. in International Development from New York University and a M.S. in Accountancy from the University of Phoenix, and is currently sitting for the CPA exam. She is committed to upholding high standards of accountability in the nonprofit sector.

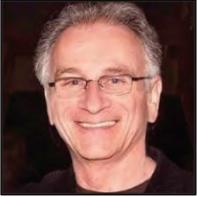


**BARBARA GOODHILL** (Director of Development) is an award-winning marketing and development professional and has been Director of Development at The Fountain Theatre since 2013. Prior advancement positions include Sinai Akiba Academy, Inside Out Community Arts and PS#1 Elementary School. Barbara's wealth of experience, innovative thinking and dedication have resulted in significant growth in The Fountain's donor community and strengthened relationships with the funding community. A passionate believer in the power of live theatre to open hearts and encourage empathy, Barbara is deeply committed to The Fountain, its vision, mission and future goals. "Institutions like The Fountain Theatre are vital to the health of a diverse, compassionate society." Barbara loves the opportunity to meet the many wonderful patrons who form The Fountain Theatre's family and is always thrilled to receive your calls and greet you at the theatre. Barbara received her B.A. from UC Berkeley and her Masters from UCLA.



**RICHARD F. HORTON** (House & Membership Manager) studied theatre at the age of 11, worked professionally at the age of 17 at the Coconut Grove Theatre in Miami, Florida and majored in theatre at the University of Miami. After a management career in the airline and transportation industry, he has returned to his love of theatre at The Fountain in his leadership role as our House and Membership Manager. "I am honored and privileged to work with an amazing talented staff at The Fountain. Most importantly, I share the enthusiasm and love our patrons have for each of our shows – our audiences are truly dedicated to our theatre. As House Manager, I want our audiences to have the best experiences they can have. As our Membership Manager, I am excited to reacquaint our existing patrons with our upcoming shows and introduce our theatre to potential new patrons!"

Email Richard so he can help you with your new or renewal membership: [richard@fountaintheatre.com](mailto:richard@fountaintheatre.com)



**SIMON LEVY** (Producing Director) has been the Producing Director of the Fountain Theatre since 1993. The Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle honored him with the Milton Katselas Award for Lifetime Achievement in Directing and has been twice nominated for the Zelda Fichandler Award in Directing. For Spring 2020, he will direct Steven Levenson's *If I Forget*. In 2019, he directed *Daniel's Husband*, Critic's Choice, LA Times. In 2018, he directed the sold-out run of *The Chosen*, and also *The Immigrant* (Sierra Madre Playhouse). In 2016 he directed the critically acclaimed West Coast premiere of Tennessee Williams' *Baby Doll*. Other recent successes for the Fountain include: the West Coast premieres of *The Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek* and *Reborn* in 2015; *The Normal Heart* in 2013/2014; the world premiere deaf/hearing production of *Cyrano* in 2012; Tennessee Williams' rarely-produced *A House Not Meant to Stand* in 2011; the L.A. premiere of *Opus* by Michael Hollinger in 2010; and the West Coast premiere of Anna Ziegler's *Photograph 51* in 2009, among many others. He has directed over 80 productions (20+ for the Fountain) that have won numerous awards. His stage adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (Finalist for the PEN Literary Award in Drama) inaugurated the new Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and is being produced widely across North America. It is the only stage adaptation authorized by the Fitzgerald Estate, and is published by Dramatists Play Service, along with his adaptations of *Tender is the Night* (winner of the PEN Literary Award in Drama) and *The Last Tycoon*. He has been the lead producer of many productions at the Fountain, including the world premieres of *Building the Wall*, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, *Bakersfield Mist*, and all the Athol Fugard premieres. *What I Heard About Iraq*, which he wrote and directed, was produced worldwide and won the Edinburgh Fringe First Award. Prior to coming to Los Angeles, he lived in San Francisco where he was the General Manager of *Beach Blanket Babylon*, Artistic Director of The One Act Theatre Company, and Executive Director of Theatre Bay Area. He belongs to many theatre, human rights, and political advocacy groups. [www.simonlevy.com](http://www.simonlevy.com)



**SCOTT TUOMEY** (Technical Director) has been Technical Director at the Fountain since its inaugural production of *Winter Crane* in 1990. He has overseen virtually every Fountain production, on and off site, including their numerous flamenco shows, and has appeared here on our stage in *Declarations: Love Letters of the Great Romantics*, and the Fountain's hit productions of *Master Class* and *Joe Turners' Come and Gone*. Scott's talents as actor-singer-guitarist were also seen in the Shakespeare Festival L.A. productions of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* at the Globe Theatre in West Hollywood and in the film *A Day in the Life of Sunny Paradise*.

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From the Tony Award winning book-writer of the hit musical *Dear Evan Hansen*

# IF I FORGET

BY STEVEN LEVENSON

Directed by Simon Levy

A FAMILY AND CULTURE AT WAR WITH ITSELF

LOS ANGELES PREMIERE  
SPRING

UPCOMING 2020 SEASON

LOS ANGELES PREMIERE

"This decade's most eloquent theatrical statement on race in America today." *The New York Times*

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BY BRANDEN JACOBS-JENKINS

"BRILLIANT. EXTRAORDINARY"  
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HISTORY IS NOW.

Directed by Judith Moreland

SUMMER

"The most dazzlingly inventive living dramatist in the English language." *New York Times*

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# Escaped Alone

by Caryl Churchill

Four old friends.  
A summer afternoon in the backyard.  
Tea and catastrophe.

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