

**ACTORS'
THEATRE**



2025



JAN 17 - FEB 16

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OUR 2025 SEASON



MAR 21-APR 13

Steel MAGNOLIAS

By Robert Harling
Directed by Peter Gelblum

MAY 16-JUN 8

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT




OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

Based on the novel by Mark Haddon
Adapted by Simon Stephens
Directed by Simon Hayward

SEP 19-OCT 19

The Addams Family



A NEW MUSICAL
COMEDY

Book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice
Music and Lyrics by Andrew Lippa
Based on Characters Created by Charles Addams
Directed by Daria E. Troxell

NOV 21-DEC 14



A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Stephen Phillipps

NEW WORKS WEEKEND

AUG 15-17

Produced by Ian Dyer



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Santa Cruz County Actors' Theatre
presents



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Ryn Smith

Sound Design

Colin Thiel

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Lyndsey Gould

Deck Crew

Carson Falco

Tuesday Michaelson

Scott Tell

Set Design

Suzanne Schrag

Stage Manager

Ryn Smith

Board Operator

Hazel Termini

Box Office / Office Manager

Sandra Bieser

Video Promo

Ward Willats

The photographing, videotaping, or other video or audio recording
of this production is strictly prohibited.

Sponsored in part by:



PART 1 – ACT I

The Nearest Far Away Place

by Aleks Merilo

Directed by Cathy D. Warner

Setting: A highway leading to the Colorado border

Jennifer Honka Young Woman

Michael LaMere Man

Speed Dating

by Curt Strickland

Directed by Kathie Kratochvil

Setting: The conference room at a Holiday Inn

Linda Gunther Sara

Paul Sampson Jesse

The Bargain

by Terry Amara Boero

Directed by Kathryn Adkins

Setting: Three universes

Projection photo by Alexander Andrews on Unsplash

Molly Craft Lyndsay

Bernadette Glenn Irma

Geneffa Jahan Everilda

Giver of Beauty

by Randy Warren

Directed by Karin Babbitt

Assistant Director: Janet Norton

Setting: South Pullu, India, in the Greater Himalayas

Gurjeet Bagri Kumar

Eve Schewe Sreedha

Ward Willats Harry

PART 1 – ACT II

Fire Escape

by Sache (Steven) J. Satta

Directed by Brian Spencer

Setting: The hall of an apartment building in Hell's Kitchen, NYC

Projection photo by Wes Hicks on Unsplash

Alexander Ballout Nick

Dylan Burns Richard

Mathew Chipman Eddie

Closing Time

by Ellen Abrams

Directed by Marcus Cato

Setting: The family car

Projection photos by Waldemar and Luke Stackpoole on Unsplash

Kalea Jenkins Sophie

Lucille Nye Sophie (1/19, 1/25, 1/31, 2/8, 2/14 @ 8 pm)

Eve Schewe Penny

Balloon Release

by Keith Whalen

Directed by Simon Hayward

Setting: The kitchen of small farmhouse

Projection photo adapted from Nahid Hatami on Unsplash

Chloe Mae Dana

Andy Waddell Keller

Grouchy

by Matthew Moore

Directed by Jim Schultz

Setting: A park

Projection photo by Mike Benna on Unsplash

Mathew Chipman Rob

Jennifer Honka Peyton

Geneffa Jahan Nikki

Lucille Nye Celeste

PART 2 – ACT I

Aileen

by Barbara Anderson

Directed by Brad Rodes

Setting: An interview room at a police station

Projections created by Lars Fabiunke

Geneffa Jahan Voice of Aileen

David Leach Detective Murphy

Ezekiel Tidmore Jerome

Avondina Wills Detective Robinson

Duels and Détentes

by Marguerite Arbogast

Directed by Scott Kravitz

Setting: A clearing in a deep forest

Projection photo by Aron Visuals on Unsplash

Manirose Bobisuthi Luna

Melanie Camras Soarele

Star Hagen-Esquerra Ruth

The Use of Children

by Jeffrey Davis

Directed by Steven Capasso

Setting: A ballet studio

Projection photo by Kazuo Ota on Unsplash

Sibri Khalsa Regina

Susy Parker Beth

The Wakers

by Guy R. Newsham

Directed by Christopher Peak

Assistant Director: Jen Wagner

Setting: A bedroom

Tom Boyle Man 1

David Leach Man 2

PART 2 – ACT II

The Scorpion Dance

by Jon Haller

Directed by Andrew Davids

Setting: A rehearsal studio in the not-too-distant future

Projection photo by Leon Pauleikhoff on Unsplash

Rebecca Clark Zadie

Avondina Wills Evan

Exit Strategy

by Jim Larson

Directed by Sally Bookman

Setting: A modest apartment

Projection photo by Dongki Koh on Unsplash

Tom Boyle Dad

Denise Keplinger Theresa

Susy Parker Daughter

Happy Anniversary

by Rich Rubin

Directed by Evan Hunt

Setting: A park

Projection photo by Amanda Belec on Unsplash

Meg Herz Harlor Dorothy

Brad Roades Colin

Facing the Demon

by Jennifer Alexander

Directed by Miguel Reyna

Setting: A therapy office in Santa Cruz, California

Projection photo by Paul Schafer on Unsplash

Helene Simkin Jara Jean

Isaac Ludington Demon

Ezekiel Tidmore Andy

FROM ACTORS' THEATRE

Welcome back to 8 Tens @ 8 Short Play Festival! At the start of each year, as holiday activity slows down, our intrepid company of (this season's) actors, directors, and designers put their collective pedal to the floor and prepare a creative buffet for local theatre lovers to feast on.

This year's plays demonstrate various aspects of connection and care for one another. Is this reflective of the current state of the world? I don't know, but I've noticed this feeling extends across the production. My deepest appreciation and thanks to everyone involved. Enjoy the Festival!

--Buff McKinley, 8 Tens @ 8 Co-Artistic Director

Theater-going takes extra effort these days and we are so pleased that you are here. This year's Festival was produced via hundreds of hours of volunteer efforts by creative, talented, and committed folks who wish to bring quality theater experiences to the Santa Cruz County community.

Here are some behind the scenes numbers for the 2025 Festival:

- Over 300 plays by playwrights across the country were submitted to our annual 10-Minute Play Contest, now the longest-running short play festival in the world.
- Our reading committee chose 24 top-ranking favorites; 16 to be produced in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival and 8 runners up to be featured in our Best of the Rest staged readings coming up in March 2025.
- Sixteen local directors were chosen to work with the playwrights, select their cast, and bring these works to life on the Actors' Theatre stage in two separate shows.
- This year's Festival scheduling allows for viewing both the Part 1 and Part 2 shows over a weekend, or even in one day with our matinee options.

We appreciate your support of Actors' Theatre by attending our performances and encourage you to consider further involvement in our endeavors. Check the website santacruzactorstheatre.org for upcoming workshops, auditions, and opportunities to volunteer. You can even rent our performance space for your own group. Consider making a donation to help sustain our productions (the DONATE button is located on our website). And, of course, continue to come to our shows and tell your friends about Santa Cruz Actors' Theatre. Enjoy the show!

--Anita Natale, 8 Tens @ 8 Co-Artistic Director

8 TENS 2025

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Sophia Alexander-Sidhom
Susy Fleisher-Parker
Linda Gunther
Denise Keplinger
Owen Morgan
Lisa Rosato
Jonathan Carter Schall
Ward Willats

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Karin Babbitt (Secretary)	Anita Natale
Lillian Bogovich	Bill Peters
Gail Borkowski	Miguel Reyna
Marcus Cato (Treasurer)	Suzanne Schrag (President)
Hannah Eckstein	Brian Spencer (VP)
Gerry Gerringer	Suzanne Sturn
Evan Hunt	Cathy Warner
Denise Keplinger	



In Memorium

To all our theatre friends whom we have lost and whom we
celebrate with our continued work:

You are always with us in spirit and in our hearts.

BONNIE RONZIO

BARBARA BURKHART

ERIC CONLY

LILE CRUSE

SUZANNE DUVALL

WENDY EDMONDS

MICHAEL GRIGGS

PATRICIA GRUBE

LISA HADLEY

ELEANOR HUNTER

AMANDA JAMES

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THE ACTORS



Gurjeet Bagri (*Giver of Beauty*) will be performing for the first time in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. Originally from London, where he took part in a number of small theatre productions as well as short festival films, he moved to California almost 5 years ago and more recently to Santa Cruz this year. His most recent performance was in *Who Killed Simon Braggart* at the 418 Project in Santa Cruz.



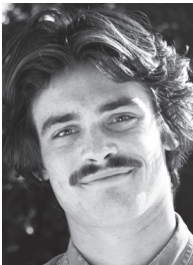
Alexander Ballout (*Fire Escape*) is proud to be making his debut performance at the Santa Cruz Actors' Theatre and his second-ever theater performance, the first being *You Betta Ask Somebody Too* in Oakland. Alexander loves to act in film but his love for the arts also leads him to take on the theater. He started doing film and theater in 2024 and he has since acted in several short films, collaborating with independent filmmakers all over the Bay Area. He cherishes his time in the theater and looks forward to do more theater acting in the future!



Manirose Bobisuthi (*Duels and Détentes*) is delighted to be returning to the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival for another year. She has been enjoying a strong return to the Santa Cruz theater community since 2023. Appearing most recently in Mountain Community Theater's *The Odd Couple* (Renée), and for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival in *Two Mothers* (Chantal, 2024) and *The Most Precious Thing* (Jacqueline, 2023). Manirose would like to thank her husband, kids and friends for their overwhelming support and love. Theater is magic, enjoy the show!



Tom Boyle (*The Wakers, Exit Strategy*) is returning to the stage after a 20 year hiatus. A recent transplant to the west coast, Tom performed in a supporting role as Murray the cop in Mountain Community Theater's production of *Oscar and Felix (Male Version)*. Tom is excited to be part of this year's 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. He feels it is a wonderful format, great legacy, incredible scripts, and talented ensemble. His hope is to continue to rediscover the joy that theater brought to his earlier life during 30 years of community theater.



Dylan Burns (*Fire Escape*) has been performing his whole life. At four months old, his mother, who dabbled in acting herself, thrust him into the world of screen acting. Growing up just an hour north of LA, his childhood consisted of driving to auditions for film, television or commercial roles whenever his manager or agent gave him the call. But by his senior year of high school, he decided to try a different route, enrolling in the Film Program at UCSC to try his hand on the other side of the camera. But he could never escape performance,

constantly volunteering himself to act in fellow student's short films, and after graduation with honors in the program and on the Deans List, decided to jump back into the world of acting. Making his stage debut, the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival is an exciting opportunity for Dylan to explore the craft of acting and learn new approaches to a skill he's practiced his whole life.



Melanie Camras (*Duels and Détentes*) is pleased as punch to be in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival for the first time! She studied, taught and performed across North America (mostly with children's theatres) before moving to Santa Cruz in 2014, and currently teaches private voice/ piano lessons locally. You may have seen her in other shows at Actors' Theatre, Cabrillo, Mountain Community Theater, Christian Youth Theatre, All About Theatre, and/or elsewhere. Gratitude to everyone who has affected her life, especially her fabulous castmates, crew, director, teachers, students, and loved ones (not necessarily in that order).



Mathew Chipman (*Fire Escape, Grouchy*) has been doing theater in Santa Cruz for almost two years now and couldn't be happier with the theater community he gets to be a part of on and off stage.



Rebecca Haley Clark (*The Scorpion Dance*) is thrilled to be treading the boards at the Actors' Theatre! She has directed in many places including New York, Brazil, and the UK. She holds an MFA in Directing from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and a BA from Columbia University in Drama and Comparative Ethnic Studies. She received a Fulbright grant to study Shakespeare and race in Rio de Janeiro and is currently the Director of Education for Santa Cruz Shakespeare where she will be directing *Master Harold...and the Boys* later this year. www.rebeccahaleyclark.com



Molly Craft (*The Bargain*) is thrilled to be making her 8 Tens @ 8 Festival debut this year with so many amazingly talented people. If you would like to see more of her work, she will be co-directing local theatre group Midsummer Ensemble's Summer 2025 production. When she is not theatre making, Molly enjoys crafting, concert going, and having opinions about ice cream.



Bernadette Glenn (*The Bargain*) has enjoyed attending several 8 Tens @ 8 Festivals, but this is her first on-stage appearance. She is thrilled and terrified - and delighted to be a part of this generous and creative community.



Linda S. Gunther (*Speed Dating*) has been performing in local theater in the Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley areas for more than 20 years, and has studied acting with the British American Drama Academy at Oxford University. This is her second season with 8 Tens @ 8. Linda's artistic focus over the last few years has been on writing. Her published works include over 65 short stories featured in various literary journals across the world. After writing six published suspense novels, including *Death is a Great Disguiser* (a Santa Cruz Murder Mystery), Linda's memoir titled *A Bronx Girl* (growing up in the Bronx in the 1960s and 70s) was most recently released in 2023. Linda's belief: "Acting in theater heightens my ability to stay authentic in my writing, and vice versa. There's a symbiotic relationship between the two art forms. I love them both."



Star Hagen-Esquerra (*Duels and Détentes*) (they/them) is a multidimensional artist, puppeteer, performer, and drag artist specializing in game design, interactive media, fine arts, puppetry, animation, storytelling, props and visual effects. Their art centers upholding traditional storytelling with an emphasis on fantasy and horror as modes of reflecting reality. You can find them performing at the Puppetry Institute's "Middlelof," and at drag shows across the bay like the Monster Show SF.



Meg Herz Harlor (*Happy Anniversary*) has been active in local theatre since 1974. She has been in over 80 productions from 1974 to 2009 as well as having directed, written, produced and done backstage work. She is thrilled to be back on stage. The last full length play she was in was *Clean House* at Actors' Theatre in 2009. She has been teaching Laughter Yoga for the last 7 years.



Jennifer Honka (*The Nearest Far Away Place, Grouchy*) is doing her first show with Actors' Theatre. She studied Drama Performance at the University of Washington, where she performed in *Working* (Charlie) and *The Blind Spot* (Hal). Her stage work in Seattle included *Richard III* (Lady Anne) and *Café Danté* (Audrey) with REBATEnsemble and *The Interview* with Kings Players.



Geneffa Jahan (*The Bargain, Grouchy*) is overjoyed to return to the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival after a 20-year hiatus from the stage. Her last stage performance was in 8 Tens @ 8 at this very theater where she discovered she was pregnant with her first-born--now an actor as well!



Kalea Jenkins (*Closing Time*) is a senior at SLVHS and has done many shows there such as *Beauty and the Beast* and *Legally Blond*. She enjoys theatre over anything else. She is happy you are here and hopes you enjoy all the plays.



Helene Simkin Jara (*Facing the Demon*) received her BA in Theatre Arts from UCLA in 1969. She has performed in Los Angeles, NYC, and at The Western Stage in Salinas, Carl Cherry Center for the Arts in Carmel, Scotts Valley Performing Arts, Pisces Moon, SEE Theatre, and Cabrillo College. She is also a frequent collaborator with Actors' Theatre, having directed eight 8 Tens @ 8 shows, as well as acting in five Best of the Rest shows and ten 8 Tens @ 8 shows. In September 2020, Helene was featured in *Side x Side*, a Zoomed play reading of three short plays by Jory Post, presented by 36 North Playwright's Collective. In addition to performing, Helene is an award-winning author. Her stories, poems and plays have been published, often winning various awards. Learn more at helenesimkinjara.com.



Denise Keplinger (*Exit Strategy*) has a BA in comparative drama from Stanford University, and taught high school and then middle school for 30 years. She wrote curriculum on the side for an online learning company and was a guest of the French government for a summer to teach and develop pedagogical methods using theater techniques to further educational goals for teaching the French language. She's one of a handful of teachers who taught both theater arts and second language acquisition using each to inform the other. Her most successful ongoing acting role is playing Mary Anning, a 19th-Century paleontologist who presents her fossil finds for the edification of fine Victorians at Dickens Faire and the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco.



Sibri Khalsa (*The Use of Children*) is thrilled to be in her debut performance with the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. She most recently performed as Scuttle in All About Theatre's production of *The Little Mermaid*, previously performing in more than a dozen other musicals. Outside of theatre, Sibri loves dancing, cross-country running, and hanging out with her friends.



Michael LaMere (*The Nearest Far Away Place*) is performing in his fifth play in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival and acting onstage for the first time in four years. He has, however, acted online as Colonel Mustard in *Clue*, and in *Masque of the Red Death*. Other favorite roles include Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, John Barrymore in *I Hate Hamlet*, and Lancelot in *Spamalot*.



David Leach (*The Wakers, Aileen*) is excited to be back for the third time in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. In last year's fest, he played in *Geronimo!* and *The Visit*. You may also have seen him in shows with Mountain Community Theater, including *The Humans* (Erik), *The Cherry Orchard* (Gaev), *Rapture, Blister, Burn* (Don), *Sordid Lives* (Brother Boy), and *Julius Caesar* (JC) among others. He also provided his producing, writing, and acting talents to support MCT in kicking

off their Ghost Light Theater video productions. He trained with the British American Theatre Conservatory and has a BA in Acting from Arizona State University. Hope you love the show.



Isaac Ludington (*Facing the Demon*) is a founding member of Santa Cruz theatre troupe Midsummer Ensemble, and with them he has performed as Macduff in *Macbeth* and Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other favorite credits include Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (WEST Ensemble), Oscar Wilde in *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* (WEST Ensemble), Montfleury in *Cyrano de Bergerac* (GayInnocentHeartless Theatrics) and young Sam Weller in *Talking to Myself* for last year's 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. Outside of acting, he enjoys writing, making short films, and playing music with his band Chamberlains of the Plague.



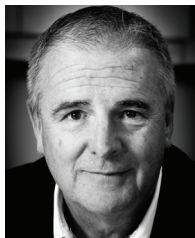
Chloe Mae (*Balloon Release*) is so excited to be partaking in her first year of the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival! She has been learning and studying acting since a very young age and all throughout her educational years. Although in her most recent years since graduating high school, she has been taking acting on in a much more serious sense as she has found it ignites a deep sense of drive for her. Some of her most recent past work includes Molly in *A Home for Christmas*, Julie in *End of the World*, and she is also currently in the production of *Cabaret* being produced by Renegade Theater as pre-show cast.



Lucille Nye (*Grouchy, Closing Time*) has been doing theatre for six years and is excited to be doing community theatre for the first time. She has really enjoyed getting to do her scene and hopes you enjoy it as much as she does!



Susy Parker (*The Use of Children, Exit Strategy*) is very happy to be performing in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival for the second year in a row. She started acting at age 8, when her mother told her she was "too dramatic" and put her in acting classes as a way to channel it. She's been acting ever since, most recently in MCT's *Miracle on 34th Street* and *The Odd Couple, Female Version*. She has also acted in films, including Robert Kirkendall's *Escape from Jury Duty*, and the feature film *TWENTY*, directed by Hilary Davidson.



Brad Rodes (*Happy Anniversary*) is delighted to be part of the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival at Actors' Theatre. Brad won the Mimi Steinberg playwrighting award at Brandeis University where he studied writing and directing with Martin Halpern, David Wheeler, Michael Murray, Edward Albee, Jayne Anne Phillips, Geoffrey Wolff, and others. He has had his plays produced off Broadway and in Boston and is a partner in the Whitefire Theater in Sherman Oaks California. His day job is as a provider of learning and information tools to Academic Libraries



working for ProQuest. Locally, Brad has worked with All About Theatre, where he directed *Billy Elliot*, *Batboy*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Addams Family*, and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. In addition, this last summer he directed the *Storytellers* for NextStage.

Paul Sampson (*Speed Dating*) last appeared in Elf Empire's *Hummus and Homicide* after a twenty year absence from the stage. He has played roles in *The Philadelphia Story*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Foreigner*, and *Harvey* at Mountain Community Theater. Paul enjoys participating in Saturday Shakespeare Club readings.

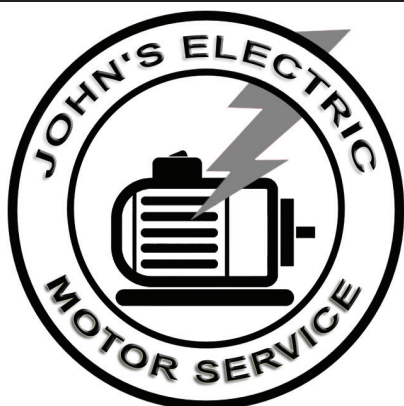


Eva Schewe (*Giver of Beauty, Closing Time*) currently teaches History at Kirby School. As a child, she performed in various community and school productions in Santa Cruz County including Little People's Theater and Santa Cruz High School. Last year, she performed in *Best of the Rest* and had such a blast that she decided to audition for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. This is her first time on stage in fifteen years, and she is thrilled to get to act again with such talented scene partners.



Ezekiel Tidmore (*Aileen, Facing the Demon*) is an educator deeply committed to fostering community and exploring abolitionist principles. He has thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with this talented group to bring these plays to life and is grateful for the opportunity to connect and create through theatre.

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Andy Waddell (*Balloon Release*) is a retired English teacher who generally wastes most of his time but does sometimes manage to scratch out a few pages of fiction, including a novel (*Hard Rain*) he published last year. He ended a four-decade hiatus from acting when he appeared in last year's 8 Tens @ 8 Festival in the plays *The Hill* and *Talking to Myself*. He had so much fun that he's giving it another go this year.



Ward Willats (*Giver of Beauty*) is delighted to be returning for his fifth year with the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. Most recently, Ward performed the (short-lived!) title role in the 418 Project's queer/noir/whodunnit/comedy *Who Killed Simon Braggart*. Ward holds a BA in Theater Arts from UCSC, has performed locally since 1981, and runs a YouTube channel at youtube.com/WardCo. He extends his gratitude to the generous and sophisticated Santa Cruz audience that makes this very special festival possible.



Avondina Wills (*Aileen, The Scorpion Dance*) is very excited to be back in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. He appreciates and thanks all of you for coming out and supporting the arts.

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Submissions are accepted year-round but must meet the summer deadline of June 30 to be considered for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival the following January. We accept up to 300 submissions each cycle. See our website for details: www.santacruzactorstheatre.com



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THE DIRECTORS



Kathryn Adkins (*Director, The Bargain*) is a music and theater specialist, educator. She performed with Opera Theater of St. Louis, played leading ladies for Cabrillo Stage and South Bay theater groups, and soloed with Santa Cruz music organizations, including the Santa Cruz Symphony. She taught acting and directed musicals for the Cabrillo College theatre department until retirement in 2020. She is co-founder and current VP of Programs for NextStage Productions, a nonprofit company bringing performance opportunities, education and improved health through the performing arts to mature adults. Opportunities include: Musical Reviews, Open Mic, Storytelling, Readers Theater and Drumming for People Living with Parkinsons. Learn more at nextstagesantacruz.org.



Karin Babbitt (*Director, Giver of Beauty*) is a standup comic based in Santa Cruz. Seen at The Comedy Store in Hollywood for a decade, and a finalist in the San Francisco International Comedy Competition, she appeared on nightclub stages around the country. She's done standup on TV and acted in films. She was a screenwriter on a few bad sitcoms. Locally, she taught high school and college. Theatrically, she enjoyed performing as the Wicked Witch of the West in Cabrillo Stage's production of *The Wizard of Oz* and played Vi in *August Osage County* at Mountain Community Theatre (and is a Spamalot Alum! Woot!). Currently, Karin teaches Advanced Stand Up Comedy at the San Francisco Comedy College. As member of The Actors Theatre Board of Directors, Karin has performed and directed a number of plays in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival over the years and is delighted to be doing so again.



Sally Bookman (*Director, Exit Strategy*) feels truly honored to be invited to direct her second 8 Tens @ 8 play for the 2025 season, having acted in previous performances with the Festival. On behalf of NextStage Productions, Sally has directed 25 short and two long plays on zoom, with over fifty actors. After the pandemic, she directed short comedy plays performing live in community centers, libraries, and retirement housing facilities. On stage she has performed in *Nice Work if You Can Get It*, *Three Penny Opera*, and a *Short Play Festival* (Cabrillo College), *Wizard of Oz* (Pacific Rep), *Lend Me a Tenor* (Mountain Community Theater), as well as musical revues with the Choraliers and NextStage Productions. Her favorite role was playing Chris in the 2023 production of *Calendar Girls* with Mountain Community Theater. Thank you to Susy Fleisher-Parker, Tom Boyle and Denise Keplinger, my brilliant cast in this production, and thank you, our audience, for supporting live theater!



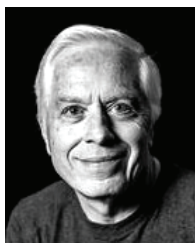
Steven Capasso (*Director, The Use of Children*) is an actor, improviser, playwright, and director. He has performed with the Actors' Theatre 8 Tens @ 8 Festival since 2008, as well as with Mountain Community Theater and Cabrillo College. Last year he directed "On the Road to Tikrit" for the 8 Tens Festival. Favorite roles include Morty (*Nobody's Hero*, 8 Tens Reboot, 2022) Cheswick (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, MCT, 2022) Stan (*SWEAT*, Cabrillo College, 2020), Kit Carson (*The Time of Your Life*, Cabrillo College, 2019), Sawyer (*Miracle on 34th Street*, MCT, 2024) and Lendell (*Almost Maine*, Cabrillo College, 2021). In 2017, Steve performed his solo show *You Always Remember* at the United Solo Theatre Festival in NYC. He is a member of 36 North, a playwright's collective.



Marcus Cato (*Director, Closing Time*) has acted and directed in the annual 8 Tens @ 8 Festival since 2011. He has acted for many local theater companies including Jewel Theatre, Santa Cruz Shakespeare and its previous incarnation Shakespeare Santa Cruz. He was a company member, actor and director for ten years with the former Bear Republic Theatre. As an arts administrator, he enjoyed a career of over 35 years in Santa Cruz, working with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Tandy Beal & Company, and the Bear Republic Theatre. Marcus studied theater at the University of Illinois and the California Institute of the Arts.



Andrew Davids (*Director, The Scorpion Dance*) is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in New York City. He recently appeared as Luke in the premiere production of John Chandler's *Lucky Time* here at Actors' Theatre. Since 2012, Andrew has performed around Santa Cruz in many acclaimed Jewel Theatre productions including *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Explorers Club*, *The Lion In Winter*, and Kate Hawley's *Under Ben Bulben*. Andrew was in MCT's productions of *The Last Noel*, *The Mystery Plays*, and *Julius Caesar*. Local personal highlights include performing in SEETheatre's *The Nether* and directing and performing in several 8 Tens @ 8 Festivals with Santa Cruz Actors' Theatre.



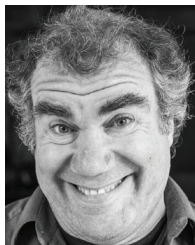
Simon Hayward (*Director, Balloon Release*) is delighted to be directing for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival for the first time. His theatrical career started when studying at Oxford University in England, including directing *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Pirandello) and *A Doll's House* (Ibsen), but was cut short by the need to earn a living. While a career in the tech industry provided much drama, and opportunities to perform on stage, he is grateful that Mountain Community Theater and now Actors' Theater gave him the chance to return to true theater. He directed *The Odd Couple* (Female Version) for MCT in 2024 and will be part of the 2025 season. Check it out at mctshows.org.



Evan Hunt (*Director, Happy Anniversary*) is an actor, director and playwright living in Santa Cruz. Originally from San Francisco, he's been participating in the 8 Tens @ 8 and Best of the Rest Festivals since 1996. He currently serves on the board of directors at Actors' Theatre, which feels like a second home to him.



Kathie Kratochvil (*Director, Speed Dating*) has been acting, directing, producing, and designing theatre productions for Santa Cruz County audiences for over 40 years, and is currently serving as a board member of Actors' Theatre. She is thrilled to be back directing for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival again this year. She wishes you all a life filled with curiosity and creativity, and encourages you to make your spirit sing! Special thanks to Larry, Kulani, Shannon, Tara, Paul and Linda for your support and encouragement.



Scott Kravitz (*Director, Duels and Détentes*) is thrilled to have been invited to direct for this year's 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. The most recent productions which Scott has directed would include *Frozen Jr* and *Moana Jr* at SLV Middle School. Scott would like to extend gratitude and praise to the actors he has been so fortunate to work with in *Duels And Détentes*.



Buff McKinley (*Co-Artistic Coordinator*) is marking her 18th straight year participating in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival. She has worked in a variety of technical roles with some of the best local theater companies, including Actors' Theatre, Soaring Dragon Endeavors, Mountain Community Theater, SEE Theatre, VanAntwerp Theater Company, LPRT, Blue Wolf Productions, and Evergreen Theater. During lockdown, she shared "stage crew" duties with a cohort in Abu Dhabi for ZoomTheater's international production of *& Juliet*. Upcoming projects include *Steel Magnolias* at MCT and something special TBD next fall guaranteed to send shivers down your spine!



Anita Natale (*Co-Artistic Coordinator*) is a performer, director, and educator whose favorite roles on this stage include a pregnant dodo bird, tap dancing nun, and "Wild Mary" (the gal to avoid while seafaring). With various performances as mothers, wives, neighbors, a teacher, psychologist, doctor, and police officer, she has been involved with Santa Cruz Actors' Theatre for more than twenty years.



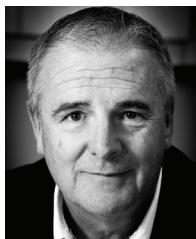
Janet Norton (*Assistant Director, Giver of Beauty*) is a long-standing patron of local community theater and has always wanted to work with actors behind the scenes. While her background and experience is not in theater arts, she looks forward to doing more.



Christopher Peak (*Director, The Wakers*) is excited to be Directing in the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival after stepping away from the theater 20 years ago. Previous engagements include Sacramento Theater Company, Seattle Rep, Intiman, Berliner Ensemble, Trevis and co., touring nationally with his new-vaud comedy trio X,Y&Z, working with Arden Shakespeare on *Romeo and Juliet*, being artistic director of his LA-based theater company, Howling Peak, touring his one-man shows, and clowning around whenever possible.



Miguel Reyna (*Director, Facing the Demon*) Is excited to be directing another year of 8 Tens @ 8. He's been a part of this Festival since 2010, both acting and directing. He has been acting and directing theater for the past 40 years and will likely never stop. His past 20 years happened here in Santa Cruz County. You may have recently seen him as Kevin Rosario in *In The Heights* for Cabrillo Stage. Most recently, he directed *The Thin Place* by Lucas Hnath at Actors' Theatre and *The Humans* by Stephen Karam for Mountain Community Theater. Prior, he directed *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Mystery Plays*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *The House Of Yes*, all for MCT. He has also co-produced, directed and adapted multiple episodes of *The Twilight Zone* to stage for DNA Presents and MCT. He would like to dedicate this piece to his friend Jocelyn McMahon-Babalis.



Brad Rodes (*Director, Aileen*) won the Mimi Steinberg playwriting award at Brandeis University where he studied writing and directing with Martin Halpern, David Wheeler, Michael Murray, Edward Albee, Jayne Anne Phillips, Geoffrey Wolff, and others. He has had his plays produced off Broadway and in Boston and is a partner in the Whitefire Theater in Sherman Oaks California. Locally Brad has worked with All About Theatre where he directed *Billy Elliot*, *Batboy*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Addams Family* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. Brad also directs The Storytellers Projects for Next Stage. He appeared in 8 Tens @ 8 in 2024 in *Geronimo*, and has appeared at Mountain Community Theater in *Becky's New Car* as Steve and as Mr. Macy in the recent production of *Miracle on 34th Street*.



Jim Schultz (*Director, Grouchy*) After appearing in Bellarmine's annual variety show at the San Jose Civic Auditorium in 1966, Jim received a scholarship to the American National Theater Academy in Los Angeles. He soon dropped out thinking that theater was too competitive and high pressure for him. It wasn't until 40 years later, when the now-retired carpenter was asked to play a small role as a large cricket, that he ever considered theater again. His next role was that of a dodo bird, then he took on playing a human. But after taking a directing class at Cabrillo College, taught by Wilma Chandler, he found his true joy. *Grouchy* is the ninth short play he's

directed for the Actors' Theatre and the first with a young cast. It has been his greatest experience yet. Each cast member has immersed themselves into their characters and made this a grand experience.



Brian Spencer (*Director, Fire Escape*) has directed several plays for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival and has had several of his own plays produced. His full-length play *Runner* was presented as the first reading for Actors' Theatre's Playwright's Arena for New Works. He has directed full-length stagings of *Copenhagen*, *Freud's Last Session*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *A Number*, *Shakespeare's R&J*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* to name a few. Brian holds a Masters Degree in Theater Arts (Playwriting) from San Jose State University.



Jen Wagner (*Assistant Director, The Wakers*) has worked at West Valley College since 2001, teaching English, training tutors, and running campus tutoring services. She also taught gymnastics, art, cooking, and more to kids ages one and up from 1994-2001. Her passions include theater, reading, writing, and most related to the "arts," though she hasn't been onstage in decades. Backstage, she's been on and coordinated the make-up crew with Little People's Repertory Theater in Ben Lomond since 2015. *The Wakers* is her directorial debut.



Cathy D. Warner (*Director, The Nearest Far Away Place*) is a theatre artist, choreographer, and educator, who has had the great pleasure of running the Theatre and Dance programs at Harbor High for 37 years, where she was Artistic Director and Producer for over 100 productions. She loves sharing her deep passion for theatre and all aspects of performance. Favorite directing experiences include co-directing Best of the Rest, several seasons of directing for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival, and Lampshade Theatre's Production of *Going to St. Ives*. She is a retired teacher who is absolutely delighted to be directing for the 8 Tens @ 8 Festival for her sixth time.

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THE WINNING PLAYWRIGHTS - 2025

Ellen Abrams – *Closing Time*

Ellen's play *Eleanor and Alice: Conversations Between Two Remarkable Roosevelts* has been fully produced twice off Broadway by Urban Stages theatre in NYC, in the fall of 2022 and the spring of 2023. Many of her short plays have been produced around the country, including one that was turned into an opera, and two of her plays were part of by Barrington Stage's 10x10 Festival. Two of her short plays have been published by Smith & Kraus, one full-length has been published by Next Stage Press, and a TYA play has been published by Big Dog Press. She is a member of the Actors Studio Playwrights and Directors Unit.

Jennifer Alexander – *Facing the Demon*

Jennifer is a local psychotherapist and actor. She has a minor in theater and 48 years of acting experience. Currently, she teaches improvisational theater and movement to children. One of her greatest joys was workshopping the script for *Facing the Demon* with other actors with whom she does improvisational theater, and weaving their creative magic into the piece.

Barbara Anderson – *Aileen*

Barbara is thrilled to again be part of the 8 Tens @ 8 Short Play Festival. She writes plays, short fiction and books including *Letters from the Way* about one of her long-distance walks. Her short plays have been performed throughout the United States, Mexico, Great Britain and Europe. Her full-length play *Fugitive Colors* was a finalist in Ashland and produced in NYC. During the pandemic she created a YouTube channel for her online plays: barbaraanderson.org. She is seeking a production of her multigenerational ecology play *The Pond Trilogy*.

Marguerite Arbogast – *Duels and Détentes*

Marguerite (she/her) is an actor and playwright based in Minneapolis. She was mostly recently seen in *On Tidy Endings* at Theatre in the Round, and just finished assistant directing a workshop of the original musical *The Elephant*. She holds a B.A in Performance Creation from the University of Minnesota, in addition to training with Interlochen Arts Academy and Shakespeare and Company.

Terry Amara Boero – *The Bargain*

Terry is interested in writing plays about life in these United States. She is a member of the TheatreWorks Core Writers Group. Currently she is working on a comedy about dementia, *Betty Davis Had It Right*. She has an MFA in playwriting from San Francisco State University and taught playwriting, theatre management and acting there. You can find out more about her on www.terryamaraboero.weebly.com

Jeffrey Davis – *The Use of Children*

Jeffrey's plays have been produced in New York, Bend, Oregon, Ventura, California and Los Angeles. His full-length play, *The Children's Table* was produced at the Court Theatre in Los Angeles with Monica Horan of "Everybody Loves Raymond." His play, *Speed Dating 101* was published by JAC Publishing, Boston. Among his television credits are "Love Boat,"

“House Calls” with Lynn Redgrave, “Give Me a Break,” “Diff ’rent Strokes,” Night Court,” “America’s Funniest People” as well as documentaries for Discovery, Time Life and A&E. He holds an MFA from the University of Iowa Writer’s Workshop and is a Professor of Film and TV Writing at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

John Haller – *The Scorpion Dance*

John is a writer from Carbondale, Illinois. While working on “30 Rock,” he won the Writer’s Guild Award for Outstanding Writing in New Media. He was a writer/producer for all nine seasons of Fox/ABC’s “Last Man Standing” and was the head writer/lyricist for Kobe Bryant’s narrative kids podcast series “The Punies.” He is currently developing an autobiographical comedy for CBS Studios called “Token White Friends.” He lives in Los Angeles with his much more successful wife and his three ridiculous children.

Jim Larson – *Exit Strategy*

Jim is a playwright living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His full-length play, *A Memory Play*, was produced by the Hansberry-Sands Theatre Company in Milwaukee. Two short plays, *Mom and Aunt Sofie See My Play* and *Come Back to Me, Walter Cronkite*, were produced by the Village Playhouse in Milwaukee.

Matthew Moore – *Grouchy*

Matthew is a playwright and poet from New England. Their plays have been produced at Village Playwrights, Two Oceans Theater, Theater Southwest, and Durango Arts.

Guy R. Newsham – *The Wakers*

Guy spent a career working on making buildings more energy efficient and sustainable. He has acted on community theatre stages for decades, and started writing for the stage in earnest seven years ago. His plays have been successful in multiple competitions and festivals, leading to more than 70 productions in five countries. He is a member of the Playwrights Guild of Canada, and the New Play Exchange. In 2021 he won Canada’s National One Act Playwriting Competition.

Rich Rubin – *Happy Anniversary*

Rich’s plays have been staged throughout the United States, as well as in Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Mexico. His full-length drama *Picasso in Paris* was the recipient of the Julie Harris Playwright Award, and his full-length comedy-drama *Kafka’s Joke* was a finalist for the Woodward International Playwriting Prize. www.richrubinplaywright.com

Sache (Steven) J. Satta – *Fire Escape*

Sache (they/he) is Director of the MFA Theatre program at Towson University, and a member of the Dramatist’s Guild where he was a finalist for 2024 national fellowship. Their plays have been performed across the United States. *The Thousandth Crane* took the Audience Favorite award at ArtFactory’s 2023 10-minute play festival, *Clifton Manor: Where Dreams Come True!* was selected for Weathervane Playhouse’s Eileen Moushey Short Play Festival 2024, and *Floating Down to Camelot* was chosen for The Acorn’s Spectacular Tournament of Playwright 2023. Their one-act play *Hooked* performed at Think Pink! - gay play festival curated by Pink Pen Theatre in Baltimore. *Winter’s Roost: A ten minute interlude in verse*

was a finalist for the Short Play Festival at the Red Bull Theatre in NYC. Their full-length play with music – *Lily, Arthur* – was chosen for the 2024 Baltimore Playwright’s Festival. Most recently Sache is represented in Short + Sweet Hollywood by his short play *The Thrill*, which was the Judge’s Choice in the LGBTQ+ Division to move into the Finals of the competition. www.stevenjsatta.com

Curt Strickland – *Speed Dating*


Curt is a playwright who recently received a masters degree in playwriting from Lesley University’s graduate program. Inspired by August Wilson, Curt is finishing up his fifth play in a ten play opus on America, each play set in a different decade. Besides his political and cultural essays (website: <https://curtsview.com>), Curt is a landscape photographer, and a former owner at Great American Art, one of the largest commercial art corporations in the nation: <https://greatamericanart.com>. Curt believes that Art should serve to heal, inspire, provoke, challenge and to offer hope – but most of all to connect, to remind us of our common humanity. Curt believes in the power of art. He believes a society and a culture is as healthy as its artists can flourish. He believes in the power of words to ignite change, to inspire, to connect, to heal, and as a tool to “fight the power.” In 2020, Curt received a double lung transplant, an event that had profound effects on both his writing and his life. This experience is the basis of a new play, *Double Lung*, that he is currently developing.

Randy Warren – *Giver of Beauty*

A onetime Bay Area resident, Randy now lives on a mountain lake in southern Mexico. Formerly a member of the Playwrights Center of San Francisco. His 10-minute play *Borderline* has had three productions since 2022, winning a Best Play Award. He also has directed Off-Off-Broadway and at San Francisco’s Theatre Rhinoceros. Randy also has one truly minor Broadway credit, mentioned here only to inflate the resume. As a stand-up comedian, Randy has performed in America, Paris, and Mexico, where he was Will Durst’s opening act. A veteran of three crossings of the Himalayas, Randy did in fact visit the police station that is the setting of this play.

Keith Whalen – *Balloon Release*

Keith’s plays have been produced across the country and internationally. His play *White Angel* won Best Play in Theatre Odyssey’s Ten-Minute Play Festival, and his play *Youth for Dark* won Best Play in the Tales from the Brookside Festival and was a semifinalist in the 46th Annual Samuel French Off Off Broadway Short Play Festival. His play *Exophilia* was an Official Selection of the short play division of the 2023 Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival. Keith is a proud member of The Dramatists Guild.



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