



Actors Ensemble presents

True West

written by
SAM SHEPARD
directed by
PAUL SHEPARD

January 19 - February 17, 2007
Live Oak Park Theatre
1301 Shattuck Ave.

ACTORS ENSEMBLE OF BERKELEY has been around the block (and just around the corner from you) since 1957, making us the longest running stage company in Berkeley. We began with seven UC Berkeley alumni from the World War II era. Their love of acting gave birth to a tradition that began with four plays in 1957, which were initially performed in a neighbor's basement. In 1965, AE began performing at the Live Oak Theatre — and has ever since.

Our mission is to enrich, entertain and improve our community through fascinating theatrical works. With social consciousness and an ensemble approach, we provide area residents with opportunities to attend, participate in and be helped through theatre. Our shows will be affordable, our opportunities enjoyable, and our community impact felt year-round.

As Berkeley's only true community theatre company, we depend on our volunteers to bring their energy and creative vision to each play we produce.

If you would like to volunteer in our theatre, give us a call or send us an email! We'd love for you to play a part in our next show!

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley is proud to present to you the first play of our 50th season, Sam Shepard's *True West*.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Eric Carlson, David Cohen, Margaret Gudmundsson, Bob Gudmundsson, William Martinelli, Jodi Maxwell, Rose Anne Raphael, Jerome Solberg, Stanley Spenger, David Stein, Kim Stewart, Wendy Welch

THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS: Thomas W. Edwards, Howard and Cindi Goldberg, George W. Goth, Ken and Corinee Gustafest, Earl Karn, Annette and Jeremy Lys, Alex and Kate Pope, Roger and Lise Schrag, Bernard and Sally Sklar, Tom Vargo

TRUE WEST sponsored in part by a gift from
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THANK YOU Rich Leeds for the beautiful design for
AE of Berkeley's 50th Anniversary Souvenir Program.
www.bigwigdesign.com

Sam Shepard's
TRUE WEST
Directed by Paul Shepard

CAST

in order of appearance

Lee Benjamin Grubb
Austin Jay Kiecolt-Wahl
Saul Kimmer John Hurst
Mom Maureen Coyne

STAFF

Stage Manager Alan Barkan
Assistant Stage Manager Jose Garcia
Production Manager Jerome Solberg
Set Design Paul Shepard
Backdrop Artist Shu Ping Guan
Light Design Bob Gudmundsson
Props Shu Ping Guan, Paul Shepard
Lights Jose Garcia
Original Music Score Kevin Fletcher Tweedy
Sound Alan Barkan
House Manager David Cohen
Box Office Bill Martinelli, Margaret Gudmundsson
Photographer Frederick Chang
Publicity Paul Shepard, David Stein
Set Crew Eric Carlson, Jose Garcia, Ben Grubb, Bob Gudmundsson,
John Hurst, Jerome Solberg, Jay Kiecolt-Wahl

There will be one ten minute intermission

TRUE WEST is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

SAM SHEPARD skyrocketed to fame in the '60's as an avante-garde off-off Broadway playwright. In 1975 he became (and still is) a resident playwright at San Francisco 's Magic Theater, creating such masterpieces as *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child* (Pulitzer Prize, 1979), *True West*, and *Fool for Love*. He wrote *Paris, Texas* which won Best Picture, Cannes Film Festival, 1984. His film acting credits include *The Right Stuff* (Oscar nomination), *Resurrection*, *Days of Heaven*, and *Frances*.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

best read after the play

I had never seen or read *True West* until last summer when I was contemplating asking Actors Ensemble if I could direct this season. My gut reaction to the play was negative. I thought it was too gratuitously violent, both psychologically and physically. I don't like most Martin Scorsese films for the same reason. Then I wondered if the reading had impacted me so much, maybe I should examine what power it had over me. I realized the psychological sadism was an influence of plays of Harold Pinter, a writer I much admire. The bizarre humor of *True West* is rooted in so much pain – I grew up in an alcoholic household as did Sam Shepard, and it affects me today as it does him. So I accepted the invitation of the play to look at my shadow side. On a cultural level, Shepard uses the play's title to suggest that our romanticized ideas of the Old West, of rugged male individualism and isolationism, have created chaos in our individual and collective American psyches. Also there exists the delusion we can achieve happiness by having the right things, "...the wife, and kiddies...the house, the car, the whole slam...", as Lee puts it. The feminist movement highlighted the plight of the woman in American culture, and Sam Shepard in *True West* dramatizes the less discussed but no less real spiritual angst of the American male.

SPECIAL THANKS

ReStore, a Building Supplies Recycling Center
Masquers Playhouse — John Hull and Rob Bradshaw
California Office Machines
Dan Mitchell
Marilyn Stanley

CAST AND CREW

ALAN BARKAN (Stage Manager) attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and American Mime Theatre School in New York. He was the assistant stage manager at Mineola Theatre and tech directory for the Westbury Music Fair, both on Long Island. Alan was artist-in-residence for The Goddard Summer Repertory Theater and a teaching fellow in theatre at Goddard College in Vermont. He performed in *The Knack*, *Three Penny Opera*, *The Laundry*, *Criminals*, *Fantastics*, *Dylan* and a number of children's theater productions. He directed *Precious Moments from the Family Album to Provide You with Comfort in the Long Years to Come* and co-directed *Dylan*. True West is Alan Barkan's return to theater after 33 years.

BEN GRUBB (Lee) is making his first appearance in the Bay Area in *True West*. Other notable work includes *Carpenter in Blue Collar Work* at the Chicago Festival of the Arts, Prospero in *The Tempest*, Billy in *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, and Paul in *Pants Off* at the Present Company in New York. A graduate from Oberlin College's theater program, Ben lives in Oakland and would like to thank Josh Robinson and Abby Enscoe for their support.

FREDERICK CHANG'S (Photographer) photographic career began in a small campus darkroom, where he diligently printed his documentary "Berkeley" through the late hours of the night. As a senior at school, Fred won first place in the university-wide Lyon Prize Photography Competition. Since then, "Berkeley" has been chosen by renowned curators, such as those of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the SFMOMA Artist Gallery, for exhibition at galleries and museums throughout the country, including most recently the Palm Springs Art Museum. Besides photography, Fred enjoys making robots that traverse intricate mazes at lightning-speeds and is always on the look-out for the perfectly resonant audio amplifier to highlight his well-selected music collection.

JAY KIECOLT-WAHL (Austin) was born in Evanston, Illinois and graduated from Northwestern University, where he studied theatre and mathematics, before moving to the Bay Area over two years ago. In Chicago, he has performed at Shattered Globe Theatre, Bailiwick Repertory, American Theatre Company (formerly American Blues Theatre), and Steppenwolf. Jay is currently studying acting with Andrew Utter in San Francisco. This is for his brother.

JOSE GARCIA (Assistant Stage Manager) is a native of the Bay Area and grew up in Berkeley. This is his first time working in a production at Actors Ensemble. He previously appeared as an Officer/Jailer in *The Comedy of Errors* at the Orinda Starlight Theatre.

Actors Ensemble Celebrates

JOHN HURST (Saul) is a member of the Marin Actors workshop, where he recently enacted the role of the fool in *King Lear*. In addition to this role he has worked with the San Francisco mime troupe as a summer intern, enacted the role of Neil at the Belrose Theater and has acted with a variety of theater companies in Boston, Massachusetts. A long time admirer of Sam Shepard's work, he is delighted to enact the role of Saul Kimmer and look forward to doing more of the author's works. When not working on a theatrical project, Mr. Hurst can be found counseling individuals with severe mental illness. He acknowledges being a political junkie and has been known to attend baseball games during his days off.

KEVIN FLETCHER TWEEDY (Composer) collaborated with Paul Shepard on various projects at U.C. including music for *Merry Wives of Windsor* and Henry Fielding's *Tom Thumb*. Originally a music major in college, Kevin switched to computing, founding a software company which went public in 2000. Kevin now works solely in composing, arranging, performing and producing music for film, television, theatre and commercials. Kevin's music is available online at outlets such as iTunes and on CDs from www.kevintweedy.net.

MAUREEN COYNE (Mom) is a former member of the One Act Theatre of San Francisco, where she has worked with many theatres in the Bay Area. Last spring, she played Costanza, the Italian servant, in *Enchanted April* at the Douglas Morrisson Theatre in Hayward. This past summer, she was Elizabeth, the memoir writer, in *The Act of Dining* at the Dragon Theatre in Palo Alto. Recent credits with AE include Edna in *A Delicate Balance*; Monica, the secretary, in *Present Laughter*; and just last fall, Miss Tesman in *Hedda Gabler*.

PAUL SHEPARD (Director) worked as an Educational TV Producer/Director at Cal, where he received a Ph.D. in Dramatic Art, and directed over two hundred video productions, including a dozen Shakespearean plays. His work has been broadcast on cable and been distributed internationally. He was awarded the Chancellor's Distinguished Service Award. Additionally, he has directed thirty stage plays, and performed in both regional theatre and an NPR satire group, *World In Your Face*.

SHU PING GUAN (Backdrop Artist, Props) works as a production artist and freelance designer. She studied architecture, but doesn't plan on being an architect. Her previous work with Actors Ensemble was in last fall's production of *Hedda Gabler*, where she assisted in props, set, and costumes.



ACTORS ENSEMBLE 2007 SEASON

True West

by Sam Shepard

Directed by Paul Shepard

January 19–February 17

A Dream Play

by August Strindberg

Directed and Adapted by David Stein

June 9–July 1

Free Outdoors at the Berkeley Art Center

Lysistrata

by Ellen McLaughlin

Inspired by Aristophane

Directed by Noona Nolan

April 14–May 12

All in the Timing

by David Ives

Directed by Jon Wai-Keung Lowe

July 13–August 11

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

by Tom Stoppard

Directed by Stanley Spenger

October 19–November 20

LYSISTRATA

By Ellen McLaughlin
(Based on Aristophane's)
Directed by Noona Nolan
April 13 through May 12, 2007

COMING
IN APRIL

Part of the 2002 worldwide *Lysistrata* Project, Ellen McLaughlin's humorous interpretation of the Aristophane's classic, *Lysistrata*, tells the story of women from opposing Greek states who unite to end a war by refusing to sleep with their husbands. Powerless in their society, the women take the only tactic available to them—they withhold sex.

Ellen McLaughlin's plays, including *Infinity's House*, *Iphigenia and Other Daughters*, *Tongue of a Bird*, *The Trojan Women*, *Helen*, *The Persians* and *Oedipus*, have received numerous national and international productions. McLaughlin is also an actor most well known for having originated the part of the Angel in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, appearing in every U.S. production from its earliest workshops through its Broadway run.

"Ellen McLaughlin is a dramatist of courage, intelligence, wit and lyricism."
—Tony Kushner