



# The Marriage of Figaro

By Pierre Beaumarchais

Adapted by Bernard Sahlins

Directed by Susannah Wood

John Hinkel Park, July 2-17 2016

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

**ABOUT THE PLAY:** The second in a trilogy about Figaro and Count Almaviva, Beaumarchais' comedy bases its plot on an ancient custom, *le droit du seigneur* ("the lord's right"), by which the noble owner of the manor could sleep with any bride of his choice on her wedding night. At the beginning of the play, the Count—bored with his life of privilege—is infatuated with Figaro's fiancée, Susanna, and wants to restore the old custom. The madness of the day ensues as Figaro and the rest of the characters try to foil the Count's plan. King Louis XVI initially refused to allow the play's production, after hearing it in a private reading. Beaumarchais then changed some of the text and moved the action's location to Spain. When it was finally shown to the public in 1784, the play was enormously popular, and was adapted by da Ponte for Mozart's famous opera.

"The Marriage of Figaro" is often said to have foreshadowed the French Revolution (1789) because of its satire of the aristocracy. (The revolutionary leader, George Danton, was quoted as saying that the play "killed off the nobility.") Beaumarchais goes beyond typical farce by writing realistic peasant characters equal or superior to their noble masters in every way but inherited wealth. Known in his personal life for his biting wit, Beaumarchais also pokes subtle fun at the legal system, politics, the English language, marriage and farce itself (again, an orphan?).

**THIS PRODUCTION:** I love the Sahlins' translation for its contemporary language. During an election year, when we have become cynical about politicians' promises and angry about corruption and economic injustice, "The Marriage of Figaro" offers a dark subtext to a fun play in the park. In his introduction, Sahlins points out that Beaumarchais wanted actors to use a realistic approach to comedy. As a result, a few scenes seem more like modern theater, moving back and forth from farce to drama. I've given the production more of a Spanish flavor than French by changing character names slightly, adding echoes of Spanish music, and choreographing dance with Spanish folk dance movements. ~~~ I wanted to direct this play because I met my husband many years ago while singing Susanna to his Figaro in the Mozart opera. Working with Actors Ensemble's production team and this cast has been a joy, whether in spite of, or because of, having to produce theater "on a dime." I hope all of us can receive from these performances the gifts that community theater gives: laughter, sadness, realization, and seeds of change.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:** Jerome Solberg, Kyle McReddie, Joanne Sterricker (The Sanctuary Rehearsal Space), Shawl Anderson Dance Studio, Michael Cohen, Helen Slomowitz, Bob Gudmundsson, and all those who brought food to rehearsals!

## **About Actors Ensemble of Berkeley**

Actors Ensemble (**AEB**) has been around the block (and just around the corner from you) since 1957, making us the longest-running stage company in Berkeley. Since 1965 we have performed primarily at Live Oak Theatre in North Berkeley. Recently we have also taken the opportunity to bring the magic of theatre to John Hinkel Park, the site of many wonderful performances from the forerunner of Cal Shakes, Shotgun Players, Women's Will, and others over the years. We hope you enjoy the show.

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!

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### **Board of Directors**

Michael R. Cohen, Robert Estes, Bob Gudmundsson, Martha Luehrmann, Norah Foster, William Martinelli, Emmy Pierce, Vicki Siegel, Jerome Solberg, Jeff Trescott, Susannah Wood.

**Act I is approximately 75 minutes long:  
15 minute intermission  
Act II is approximately 30 minutes long**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:** Sue Ferrera, Pam Boland, Eric Brenman and the rest of the folks at City of Berkeley Parks and Rec, Joanne Sterricker, S.F. Shakespeare Festival, Inferno Theatre, Hanson and Fitch, and Haulaway Storage

***The Marriage of Figaro, or La Folle Journée  
(The Mad Day)***

***By Pierre Augustin de Beaumarchais (1778),  
Translated/Adapted by Bernard Sahlins***

***Cast in Order of Appearance***

<i>Figaro</i> , Castle Steward	David Andres Mejia
<i>Susanna</i> , Countess' Maid	Crystal Brown
<i>Count Almaviva</i>	Patrick Glenn
<i>Countess Rosina</i>	Lisa Wang
<i>Marcellina</i> , housekeeper	Karen Caronna
<i>Bartolo</i> , doctor	Joseph O'Loughlin
<i>Cherubino</i> , Count's page	Jacob Williams
July 16 <sup>th</sup> only:	Linda Girón
<i>Antonio</i> , gardener	Terry Haley
<i>Basilia</i> , music teacher	Erika Bakse
<i>Fanchetta</i> , Antonio's daughter	Claire Houghton-Renoe
<i>Doublehand</i> , law clerk	Lee-Ron
<i>Judge Brid'oison</i>	Jerome Solberg
<i>Grippe-Soleil</i>	Brandon Erich Dellis
Castle Cooks, Maids, Valets	Brandon Dellis, Linda Girón, Lee-Ron, Summer McManus, Jane Schoenfeld,

***Production Crew***

Director	Susannah Wood
Producer	Jerome Solberg
Technical Director, hot dog chef	Bob Gudmundsson
Stage Manager	Summer McManus
Set Design	Gunnar Ellam
Costumes	Helen Slomowitz
Set Construction	Bob Gudmundsson, Jerome Solberg, Gunnar Ellam, Brandon Dellis, Victoria Siegel, Lisa Sullivan (also blue tape guru)
Choreography	Susannah Wood
Props	The Company
Chorus Music	Composed & played by Linda Girón
Combat Coach	Kyle McReddie
Additional Music	Jesse Cook (Frontiers)

Graphic Design

National Geographic  
Destination Spain

Gunnar Ellam,  
Jerome Solberg,  
Rob Dario (postcard)

Program

Jerome Solberg,  
Susannah Wood

### ACT ONE

Scene One: Count Almaviva's Castle, Seville, Spain

Scene Two: Countess Rosina's Room

### ACT TWO

The Trial in the Castle Hall

### INTERMISSION

### ACT THREE

Scene One: The Wedding in the Castle Hall

Scene Two: The Meeting in the Garden

## Cast and Crew Biographies

*In Alphabetical Order*

**Erika Bakse** (Basilia) is excited to join Actors Ensemble of Berkeley yet again. Previous credits with AEB include Sis in *Panhandle* and Carla in *Relatively Speaking*. She also recently appeared as Charlotte in *The Real Thing* at the Masquer's Playhouse and as Diane in *Pleiades* with No Nude Men Productions. As always, all her love to Reg.

**Crystal Brown** (Susanna) is thrilled to be working with Actors Ensemble of Berkeley. Favorite stage credits include *Nonsense* (Altarena Playhouse), *Happily Whatever After* (Berubian Theater), *Scenes from the Iliad* (Accidental Festival), and *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* (Royal Opera House). Crystal studied music theater at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and specializes in devised theater. She enjoys teaching the theater arts and is a member of the Teaching Artist Guild.

**Karen Caronna** (Marcellina) is pleased to again perform in John Hinkle Park. Recent endeavors include The SF Olympians Festival (Cheryl in *High Tide*) and *Borderline* (Rose). Many thanks to this marvelous cast and to Susannah for her witty direction.

**Brandon Dellis** (Grippe-Soleil) is an "actor" from Grass Valley, CA.

**Gunnar Ellam** (Set Design), long time Bay Area architect and native of Estonia, is happy to work with Actors Ensemble on another play's staging.

**Patrick Glenn** (Count Almaviva) is happy as a bug in a rug to be working with AEB for the manyith time, including productions of *Panhandle* and *Fortinbras*. He has trained and performed in the Bay Area, New York, Los Angeles, and Boston. He also has a law degree, for all the good it does him (i.e. none). If anyone has any coffee on them, he'd love to have it.

**Linda Maria Girón** (Castle Crew, Cherubino July 16<sup>th</sup>) is thrilled to join Actors Ensemble of Berkeley, following her appearances in UC Berkeley TDPS' *Chavez Ravine* (Richard Neutra, Nicky III, Ensemble) and BareStage's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Cecily Cardew). Her past theatrical credits include: Viola in *Twelfth Night: A Rock Musical* with the Santa Clarita LA SummerFest in Rivendale and Little Sally in *Urinetown: The Musical* at College of the Canyons where she received her AA in Theatre Performance. Currently she is pursuing a BA in Theater and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley and staging a workshop for an original play in Spring 2017. Thank you to the entire company for an wonderful experience. Lastly, infinite thank you's to her mom, dad, family and friends for all the love and support they have always provided.

**Bob Gudmundsson** (Technical Direction) has been with Actors Ensemble since 1988, where he has worked on countless productions. He sends his love to Bird.

**Terry Haley** (Antonio) grew up in Fair Oaks, CA, got a theater MFA at UC Davis, and wrote sitcoms in Los Angeles (he's Terry Maloney Haley on IMDB). Here in the Bay Area, he has written, directed, and performed in short plays at Left Coast Theater Co. in San Francisco. He lives here in Berkeley and was proud to perform in *What Do Women Want; The Marriage of Sir Gawain* with AEB earlier this year. Terry lives with his husband, their son, and their dog, two of whom are quite well-groomed.

**Claire Houghton-Renoe** (Fanchetta) was born and raised in the Bay Area, where she will be attending high school in the fall. She has always loved live theater, and has studied at the Berkeley Rep and the American Conservatory Theater, as well as performing at the Dickens Fair in San Francisco. She is so glad to get the chance to work with Actors Ensemble of Berkeley.

**Lee-Ron** (Doublehand/Castle Crew) is making his debut with AEB. Recent credits include *A Few Good Men* (Broadway West Theatre Company), the world premiere of *Valley of the Heart* (San Jose Stage Company), *M. Butterfly* (City Lights Theater Company), and *Romeo and Jules* (Left Coast Theatre Company). Lee-Ron trained at Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York and American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. [www.lee-ron.com](http://www.lee-ron.com)

Though **David Andres Mejia** (Figaro) graduated from UC Berkeley with a B.A. in English Literature, his studies have recently taken him across the Channel to revolutionary-era France. He was working on a historical novel and play inspired by the period when auditions for *The Marriage of Figaro* were announced. Whether it was the work of fate or coincidence, he would like to thank Susannah Wood for offering him such an exciting role, Karina McLoughlin for being an amazing acting coach and friend, and his family for their constant love and support.

**Summer McManus** (Stage Manager/Castle Crew) grew up in the Philippines and has just moved to California to start her journey through college as a dual major in Theater and Nursing. She has been performing in the Philippines for years. Recent roles have been Morticia in *The Addams Family* and Frenchy in *Grease*. She is very grateful for this opportunity. Special thanks to Jerome and Susannah.

**Joseph O'Loughlin** (Bartolo) is happy to be returning to AEB, where he was previously seen in *Heartbreak House* and *Panhandle*. He has also performed in numerous staged readings for AEB often playing multiple roles in each production. He was last seen in the Epic Immersive production of *Age of Resurrection*.

**Jane Schoenfield** (Lady's Maid/Castle Crew) is a retired French teacher and university administrator who's performed with Stagebridge, the Berkeley Library's Playreaders and the WCCAE Actors Studio Dinner Theater. She's currently a member of Stagebridge's French cabaret, formerly known as Cabaret Crème, and is excited to be part of "Figaro's" ensemble.

**Helen Slomowitz** (Costumer) has been costuming in the theatre world for many decades and lucky enough to have worked with Actors Ensemble on many fun shows! She is currently living her dream learning all she can about film in the bay area from amazing talents who inspire her deeply! Thank you to all the cast & Susannah for their patience & incredibleness!

**Jerome Solberg** (Judge Brid'oison) has been in and around Actors Ensemble and helping to keep it going since 2005. Much thanks to Susanna for her enthusiastic and artful directing and leadership.

**Lisa Wang** (Countess Rosina) is delighted to return to the stage with AEB and this fantastic cast and crew. In addition to scripted theatre, Lisa is active in improvised theatre, and is a member of *The Five Deadly Improvisers*, who have performed in festivals across the country. More at [fivedeadly.com](http://fivedeadly.com). Lots of love to all her family and friends who have come out to support her shows and community theatre!

**Jacob Williams** (Cherubino) is a Dominican-American sixteen year old Actor who is thrilled to be working in his first AEB production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. In the past Jacob Williams has starred in roles such as *The President* at the YMCA's Volunteer Banquet as a dramatic-monologist and as Romeo in the African-American Shakespeare Company's production of *Romeo on Juliet*. Enjoy the show!!

**Susannah Wood** (Director) recently played leading roles with Wily West Productions, Chanticleers, Pinole Players and Actors Ensemble. She has directed *George is Dead* for Actors Ensemble, *West Side Story* for Arts in Schools (Truckee, CA), *Cat in a Cell* for SF Theater Festival, and 15 productions with Opera Piccola. Today's play is close to her heart: she met her husband, Paul Tavernier, when singing the role of Susanna with his Figaro in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*.

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