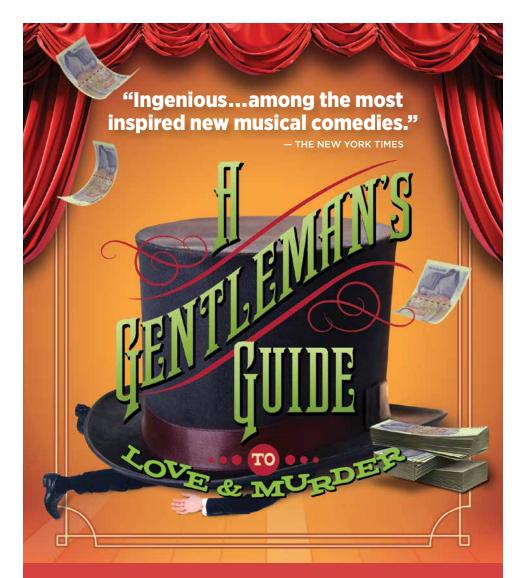


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WELCOME!



Welcome to the San Diego Premiere of Birthday Candles!

I hope you find as much joy in this extraordinary glimpse of a remarkable, yet beautifully ordinary life as I do. Under David Ellenstein's thoughtful and nuanced direction, with a cast who bring their characters to life with joy and authenticity, and the inspired work of our talented design team, this

production is one that I believe will truly nourish your soul. It's an honor to share it with you, our cherished audience.

Next up is the final production of our current season—the delightfully witty *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder.* And then, we're thrilled to launch our 44th season!

From the hilarious pen of Paul Slade Smith and the world-premiere comedy *Beside Myself*, to Tony Award-winner John Rubinstein starring as "Ike" in *Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground;* from the intense world-premiere drama *Louisa Gillis*, to the heartwarming family comedy *Beau Jest;* from the world-premiere comic adaptation of Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*, to the soaring melodies of Frank Loesser's *The Most Happy Fella;* and concluding with a modern adaptation of the classic romp *Scapin* — our upcoming season promises seven extraordinary theatrical journeys.

We warmly invite you to become part of our extended theatre family by subscribing and enjoying the many benefits that come with your support.

I am deeply proud of the exceptional quality of our productions and the vital role we play in the vibrant arts community of San Diego. Thank you for being here. We truly couldn't do it without you.

Now, please enjoy the San Diego Premiere of Birthday Candles.

With sincere regards,

Denise Young

Director of Development

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



How fleeting is a lifetime? How quickly does it pass?

What makes a life extraordinary — the milestones we celebrate, the tragedies we endure, or the small, quiet moments in between?

In *Birthday Candles*, Noah Haidle explores the life of Ernestine Ashworth — a journey that is both deeply personal and profoundly universal. Her life is full: at times vibrant, at times ordinary, but always meaningful. With humor and heart, the play moves through decades in just 90 minutes, reminding us of the beauty found in the everyday.

When I first read this play, it made me laugh, it made me cry, and it stayed with me long after I turned the final page. It felt like a natural choice for us at North Coast Rep — a story about time, love, and the rituals that define our lives.

Of course, even the most beautifully written play needs an extraordinary cast and creative team to bring it to life. I'm deeply grateful to this talented company — actors, designers, and crew — who have poured their hearts into this production. It has been a true joy to collaborate with them in creating an experience that we hope feels both lasting and life-affirming.

Thank you for joining us in this celebration of the ordinary made extraordinary.

Warmest regards,

Sain Ellenses

David Ellenstein Artistic Director

NORTH COAST REPERTORY THEATRE

David Ellenstein, Artistic Director Bill Kerlin, Managing Director

PRESENTS

BIRTHDAY CANDLES

BY **NOAH HAIDLE**DIRECTED BY **DAVID ELLENSTEIN**

CAST (alphabetical order)

STAGE MANAGER Phil Gold*
SET DESIGN Marty Burnett
LIGHT DESIGN Matthew Novotny
COSTUME DESIGN Danita Lee
SOUND DESIGN Ian Scot
PROPS DESIGN Michael Wogulis
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT Victoria Hua

	: '
Matthew Grondin*	BILLY/JOHN
Katie Karel*	ALICE/MADELINE/ERNIE.
Martin Kildare*	MATT/WILLIAM
James Newcomb*	KENNETH
Emelie O'Hara*	JOAN/ALEX/BETH
Margot White*	ERNESTINE ASHWORTH .

TIME: Now and in the past
PLACE: A kitchen in Grand Rapids, Michigan

BIRTHDAY CANDLES will be performed with no intermission.

THIS PRODUCTION HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF **Shirley Estes**



Season 43 has been made possible by the generosity of The Step Family Foundation



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Originally produced on Broadway in 2022 by Roundabout Theatre Company.

BIRTHDAY CANDLES was originally commissioned and produced by Detroit Public Theatre, Detroit MI. Producing Artistic Directors: Courtney Burkett, Sarah Clare Corporandy and Sarah Winkler Developed as part of Chautauqua Theater Company's New Play Workshop series, 2017, underwritten by the Roe Green Foundation.





^{*}The actor or stage manager appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States | Actors' Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence, www.actorsequity.org

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PROFILES



NOAH HAIDLE (Playwright) is an award-winning playwright whose work has been seen on six continents. For the 2017-2018 season, he was the writer-in-residence at the National Theater of Mannheim, Germany, a position first held by Friedrich Schiller in 1785. A graduate of Princeton and Juilliard, Noah lives with his perfect wife Kelsey, their heaven-sent son Butch, a dog, a bunny, and a blue lobster named Suzanne.



DAVID ELLENSTEIN (Director) See Artistic Director bio.



MATTHEW GRONDIN* (Billy/John) Matt is delighted to be making his North Coast Rep debut! Credits include District Merchants, Tales of a 4th Grade Nothing (SouthCoast Rep) Arsenic and Old Lace (La Mirada Theatre), Native Son (Kirk Douglas Theatre), The City of Conversation, Women of Jeopardy, Good People (Ensemble Theatre Company) Moon for the Misbegotten (Rubicon Theatre) Stupid F*cking Bird, Bad Jews (Stage West) The Thanksgiving Play (Dezart Performs), Friends Like These (NY Fringe), The Cripple of Inishmaan, Native Son (Antaeus Theatre – where he

is a Company Member). Readings/Workshops include: Pasadena Playhouse, The Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Rep,EST/LA, Sacred Fools.

THIS ARTIST SPONSORED BY DIANA GLIMM



KATIE KAREL* (Alice/Madeline/Ernie) is so happy to be returning to North Coast Rep, her theatrical home. Off Broadway: Lucky Duck, National Tour: Menopause the Musical 2; with North Coast Rep: Pippin, Always...Patsy Cline, Last of the Red Hot Lovers, and Sherlock Holmes & The Great Nome Gold Rush, and Laguna Playhouse: Tartuffe, The Remarkable Mr. Holmes. Selected Regional: Skylight, Indecent, The Humans, Chesapeake, You Can't Take It with You, Valhalla, Heathers, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, Into the Woods, The Addams Family, Sunday in The Park With George, Sweeney

Todd, 1776, In Trousers, a few Hairsprays and a couple more Patsy Clines. Her thanks to everyone at North Coast Repertory, and to the cast and creative team. Love to Gary. Karel is passionate about her mentorship with LLS, Imerman Angels, and Friend for Life Cancer Support Network as a survivor. Connect with Katie at www.katiekarel.com

THIS ARTIST SPONSORED BY DR. DAVID TANSEY & KATHLEEN ROCHE TANSEY

PROFILES



MARTIN KILDARE* (Matt/William) Broadway credits include Scar in The Lion King, A Raisin in the Sun, Timon of Athens, The Government Inspector, and The Herbal Bed. Also, as Bill in the North American tour of Mamma Mia! Off-Broadway appearances include Pride's Crossing, Honor and the River, Candida, Labor Day, and Three More Sleepless Nights. For North Coast Rep, Bloomsday and Human Error. Recently, The Remarkable Mr. Holmes and Love Among The Ruins at the Laguna Playhouse. Other LA area theaters include Mark Taper Forum, Musical Theatre West, South

Coast Rep, A Noise Within, La Mirada and 3D Theatricals. Nationally, over a dozen major regional companies, including a combined ten seasons with the California, Alabama and Utah Shakespeare Festivals. Film/TV: "Joker 2," "Palm Springs," "Clipped," "Superstore," "NCIS," "Desperate Housewives," "Law and Order" and many others. He studied at Stanford University, the American Conservatory Theatre, Theatre des Amandiers, in Paris, and Shakespeare's Globe in London.

THIS ARTIST SPONSORED BY HARV KAUFFMAN



JAMES NEWCOMB* (Kenneth) The Old Globe: Twelfth Night, Coriolanus, and Much Ado About Nothing. San Diego Rep: Honky, Zoot Suit, Brooklyn Boy, and The Illusion. North Coast Rep: The Homecoming, Christmas Carol las told by one man who cares — Streamed), How the Other Half Loves. Cygnet Theatre: Roy Cohn in Angels in America (Craig Noel award). Other Theatre: Oregon Shakespeare Festival (14 Seasons), Denver Center Theatre (9 Seasons), The Public Theatre, B.A.M. Utah Shakespeare Theatre, Shakespeare & Company (founding member), The Goodman,

Chicago Shakespeare, Berkeley Rep. South Coast Rep, Portland Center Stage, Missouri Rep, Arizona Theatre Co., and Geva Theatre. Representative Roles include: Oxford Society Award for Richard III (0.S.F.)

THIS ARTIST SPONSORED BY JILL HALL



EMELIE O'HARA* (Joan/Alex/Beth) Regional Theatre credits include: Henry VI Parts 2 & 3, Macbeth (Utah Shakespeare Festival); Midsummer Nights Dream (Colorado Music Festival); Romeo & Juliet (Redhouse Arts Center); Hamlet, Comedy of Errors, Henry VI Parts 2 & 3, Edward III, Cymbeline, Troilus and Cressida (Colorado Shakespeare Festival); Little Women, Midsummer Night's Dream (Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival); Sense and Sensibility and The Electric Baby (Arvada Center for the Performing Arts), Becket (Drive Theatre); Love's Labour's Lost (Courage

Theatre]; Macbeth (Sierra Repertory Theatre); Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Merlin (Theatricum Botanicum); The Lady M Project (Local Theatre Co.); and Private Lives (Adobe Theatre). Film credits include: "Don't Blink," "Stained Glass Windows." TV credits include: Starz, USA, Lifetime. International: Kerry Tribe's Critical Mass, London. Training: Moscow Art Theatre, Gaiety School of Acting.

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MARGOT WHITE* (Ernestine Ashworth) Margot is thrilled to return to North Coast Rep, where she just received a Craig Noel Award for her portrayal of Beatrice in A View From the Bridge. Other favorite credits include: Broadway: Farinelli & the King (Belasco); Love, Love, Love (Roundabout); Constellations (MTC), Aaron Sorkin's The Farnsworth Invention (Music Box); Off-Broadway & Regional: The Refugees, (Gulfshore Playhouse/World Premiere); Dirty Dancing (International Tour); The Traveling Lady (E.S.T, Dir Horton Foote); Pericles (Red Bull); Unspeakable

(Harlem's Apollo); Sweat (Pioneer Theatre); Talley's Folly (The McCarter w/ Richard Schiff), Curious Incident. (CTRep), for which she received the CT Critics Circle Featured Actress Award. TV/Film/Podcast: "FBI," "Bull," "Unforgettable," "L&O," "L&O: Criminal Intent," "Blue Bloods," "Limetown," "Ask for Jane." In addition to her acting career, she's the founder & creator of Sweets of Adversity, a baking company specializing in creative concessions for special events, along with catering the edible props for shows On and Off-Broadway. More at margotwhite.com & sweetsofadversity.com. To Forever, John.

THIS ARTIST SPONSORED BY PATTY MOISES

PHIL GOLD* (Stage Manager) is pleased to return to North Coast Rep with *Birthday Candles* after last summer's production of *Camelot*. Tours: *Sisterella* (European) and *Soul Doctor* (San Diego run). Off Broadway: *Miss America's Ugly Daughter*. Recent regional credits include: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, The Little Mermaid, Little Shop of Horrors, Million Dollar Quartet, Richard III, Love Among the Ruins, The Wizard of Oz, <i>Joseph..., The Realistic Joneses*, and the world premieres of *Dark of the Moon: A New Musical* and *All Things Equal*.



MARISA KIKIS (Understudy) is absolutely thrilled to support the immensely talented cast and crew of *Birthday Candles*. As North Coast Rep's Engagement & Individual Giving Manager, she has the distinct pleasure of getting to know and love all of you — the patrons and donors who make productions like this one possible! Theatre: *Plaza Suite, The Odd Couple, Lysistrata* and *Top Girls*. TV: "Katy Keene," "FBI," "Shades of Blue," "Younger" and a smattering of national commercials. BFA: NYU Tisch School of the Arts (Atlantic Theater Company). Thank you to David for this

beautiful opportunity. Everything is for Alex and Sky!

DESIGNERS

MARTY BURNETT (Set Design) Resident Designer at North Coast Rep since 1992. Scenic designed more than 250 productions at the theatre. Resident Designer at Coronado Playhouse 1981-84 and Fiesta Dinner Theater 1984-87. Co-owner Props and Drops 1987-91, Designing for Union Plaza, Hacienda and Sahara Hotels and Casinos, Las Vegas;

PROFILES

Harrah's, South Lake Tahoe and Claridge Hotel, Atlantic City; Drury Lane Theater, Chicago. At Laguna Playhouse designed Chapatti, Alexandro, and transfer designed *Murder on the Links, The Angel Next Door, Tartuffe,* and *Camelot* from North Coast Rep. Marty has a B.A. from Creighton University, Omaha, NE.

MATTHEW NOVOTNY (Light Design) is pleased to be designing another show for North Coast Rep, where he has designed close to 40 shows over the past seven years. Matthew is currently the Lighting Designer in Residence for San Diego Musical Theatre as well as North Coast Rep, and his work can be seen at a wide variety of theatres across San Diego. Matthew holds a B.A. in Technical Theatre from San Diego State and a master's degree in Lighting Design from Boston University. Matthew is married to his beautiful wife Amanda, with five AMAZING children: Ragan, Harper, Heston, Maddex, and Harrison.

DANITA LEE (Costume Design, she/her/hers) is delighted to work with North Coast Rep again on this piece! Favorite projects include *In the Heights* (Music Theatre Wichita), *Handbagged* and *The Madres* (MOXIE), *Water by the Spoonful* and *The Hot Wing King* (Cygnet). ACD credits with Old Globe Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, and North Coast Rep. She holds an MFA in Costume Design from SDSU. Thanks to the incredible team and wonderful cast! And to Michael J., the Lee & Woo families, SW, DVW and HRW—you are magic! danitalee.com

IAN SCOT (Sound Design) is a composer and sound designer specializing in the development of new works and installations. His music and designs have been heard at Playwrights Horizons, Roundabout Theatre, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Yale University Art Gallery, Actors Shakespeare Project, Dorset Theatre Festival, Ars Nova, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Ian has made an extensive career as an A1 for productions with Audible Theatre, The New Group, Signature Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Tuacahn Amphitheater, Classic Stage Company, Theatre for the New City, Berkshire Theatre Festival, and others. Ian received his MFA in Sound Design from Yale School of Drama.

MICHAEL WOGULIS (Props Design) is a multi-disciplinary artist based in San Diego, who works in scenic, projections, and props design for theatre. Props design credits include: Little Women: The Musical (Moxie Theatre), Our Dear Dead Drug Lord (Moxie Theatre). Scenic design credits: The Prom (San Diego Musical Theatre), Gruesome Playground Injuries (Loud Fridge Theatre Group), Once on this Island (Oceanside Theatre Company), Miracle on 34th Street (New Village Arts), The Thanksgiving Play (New Village Arts), Clyde's (Moxie Theatre), The Glass Menagerie (Diversionary Theatre). Projection design credits: Once on this Island (Oceanside Theatre Company), La Havana Madrid (New Village Arts), Cleopatra (Moxie Theatre). Other credits: La Lucha (scenic artisan, WOW Festival/Optika Moderna), Here There Are Blueberries (assistant scenic resident, La Jolla Playhouse). Michael is a double alumnus of UC San Diego, having earned both a BA and an MFA in scenic design from the university. michaelwogulis.com



VICTORIA HUA (Production Assistant) has worked in various shows over 5 years in production and stage management positions. She is currently working in the San Diego and North County area. Previous productions include: *The Little Fellow* (Cygnet); *On Her Shoulders We Stand* (TuYo); *Beehive — The 60's Musical* (New Village Arts); *Tartuffe* (North Coast Rep); *Camelot* (North Coast Rep); *The Heart Sellers* (North Coast Rep).

CREW

CLARENCE LIGHTFOOT

THANK YOU

James Ellenstein

BIRTHDAY CANDLES is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

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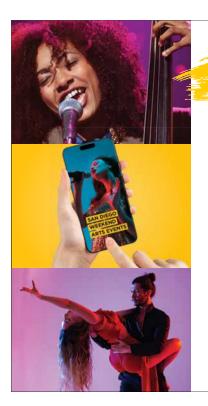
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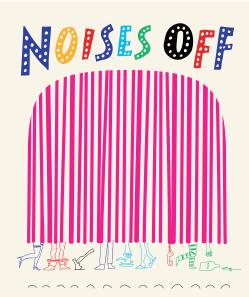
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Questions? Contact Denise Young:

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NORTH COAST REPERTORY THEATRE

North Coast Repertory Theatre, under the artistic leadership of David Ellenstein since 2003, is a professional Equity theatre currently celebrating its 43rd Season. North Coast Rep has received critical acclaim from media and audiences alike and has evolved into one of the area's leading performing arts organizations. North Coast Rep prides itself on employing the majority of its actors from Actors' Equity Association for its high quality, award-winning productions, and staging works by established and emerging playwrights. Throughout its history, North Coast Rep has created a platform where artist and audience thrive through the intimacy of live theatre, recognizing the power of theatre to challenge complacency, revitalize the imagination, nurture the unexpected, and embrace the variety and diversity in our lives.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Theatre Address 987 Lomas Santa Fe Dr. Suite D Solana Beach, CA 92075

Box Office

Hours are Monday-Sunday Noon to 4 p.m. Performance days Noon to curtain. 858.481.1055 Fax 858.481.1527

Group Sales 858-481-2155 ext. 202

Administrative Office 977 Lomas Santa Fe Dr. Suite E Solana Beach, CA 92075 Hours are: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 858.481.2155 Fax 858.481.0530

Website

northcoastrep.org

Restrooms

Accessible restrooms are located in our cafe and additional restrooms are located upstairs in the courtyard area.

Parking

There is plenty of safe, free parking directly in front of the theatre and additional parking is available behind the theatre.

Late Arrivals

Late arrivals will be seated at the discretion of the house manager. Latecomers may be asked to wait until intermission to be seated or reschedule. We encourage our patrons to plan ahead as weather and traffic may delay your arrival.

Show Content & Age Restrictions

North Coast Rep does not offer advisories about subject matter, as sensitivities vary from person to person. If you have any questions about content. age-appropriateness or stage effects (such as strobe lights or theatrical fog) that might have a bearing on patron comfort, please contact the box office at (858) 481-1055. All patrons must have a ticket regardless of age. No children under 6 years of age will be admitted to main stage productions, NORTH COAST REP IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS.

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DAVID ELLENSTEIN

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Born into a theatrical family, David has worked in theatres across the country. Before joining North Coast Rep in 2003, he served as Artistic Director for the Los Angeles Repertory Company and the Arizona Jewish Theatre Company (AJTC). He currently serves as Artistic Director of North Coast Rep and the Artistic Director of Laguna Playhouse. A veteran of over 250 theatrical productions, directorial favorites include:

North Coast Rep - A View from the Bridge, Sense of Decency, The Angel Next Door, Eleanor, The Cherry Orchard, Annabella in July, The Remarkable Mister Holmes (also co-author), The Homecoming, Ben Butler, Dr. Glas, Becoming Dr. Ruth, Einstein Comes Through, Trying, An Iliad. A Christmas Carol, Same Time, Next Year, The Outsider, All in the Timing, Holmes & Watson, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, The Father, This Random World, Travels with My Aunt, The Illusion, Hedda Gabler (World Premiere Translation), Way Downriver: William Faulkner's 'Old Man' (West Coast Premiere). Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Great Nome Gold Rush (World Premiere), Side by Side by Sondheim, Chapter Two, Freud's Last Session (San Diego Premiere), Faded Glory (World Premiere), Mandate Memories (World Premiere), Becoming Cuba (World Premiere), Time Stands Still, Words By: Ira Gershwin and the Great American Songbook (World Premiere), Two by Pinter: The Lover and The Dumb Waiter, HENRY IV Part 1, Heroes, My Name is Asher Lev, The Drawer Boy, Becky's New Car, Ghosts, The Tempest, Talley's Folly, Over the Tavern, Old Wicked Songs, The Dresser, Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris, Madagascar, A Shayna Maidel, The Honky-Tonk Angels, Rashomon, A Moon for the Misbegotten, Tuesdays with Morrie, Collected Stories, Halpern and Johnson, Romeo and Juliet, Amy's View, Einstein Comes Through (also co-author); The Chosen, A Life in the Theatre, Story Theatre, and Charley's Aunt. Coconut Grove Playhouse - Sonia Flew starring Lucie Arnaz; Halpern and Johnson starring Hal Linden and Brian Murray. Papermill Playhouse - The Chosen starring Theodore Bikel and John Lloyd Young. 59E59 - His Royal Hipness Lord Buckley. Park Square & Colony Theatre - Words By. Portland Stage - Halpern and Johnson. Renaissance Theatre - Long Day's Journey Into Night. Actor's Theatre of Phoenix - Rabbit Hole. Alabama Shakespeare Festival - The Glass Menagerie, Rocket City (World Premiere) and Honky-Tonk Angels. Laguna Playhouse -Chapatti, Alexandros (World Premiere). Southwest Shakespeare Company - Cyrano de Bergerac. AJTC - Awake and Sing. Meadow Brook Theatre - A Christmas Carol. Portland Rep - Conversations with My Father and Gaslamp Quarter Theatre - A Shayna Maidel.

Winner of numerous theatre awards, including the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award for "2018 Director of the Year."

Favorite roles as an actor include Andrey Botvinnik in A Walk in the Woods, Max Prince in Laughter on the 23rd Floor, Matt in Talley's Folly at North Coast Rep, title roles in Hamlet at Los Angeles Theatre Center and Los Angeles Repertory Company; Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof at Moonlight Stage; Richard III at California Shakespeare Festival; Einstein in Picasso at the Lapin Agile at Laguna Playhouse; Calisto in The Illusion at the Arizona Theatre Company; Jonathan in Sight Unseen at North Coast Rep and Portland Repertory Theatre.

Film and television credits include over three dozen roles including "Star Trek IV," "The Practice," "Foul Play," "Christine Cromwell," "Renegade," "Eight is Enough" and "General Hospital." David has also been guest faculty for numerous universities including California State Northridge, Cal Arts, and Shakespeare workshops privately. David lives with his beautiful wife Denise and their amazing sons Jamie and Will.

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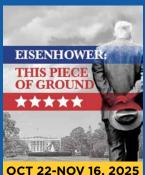
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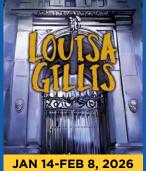
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