



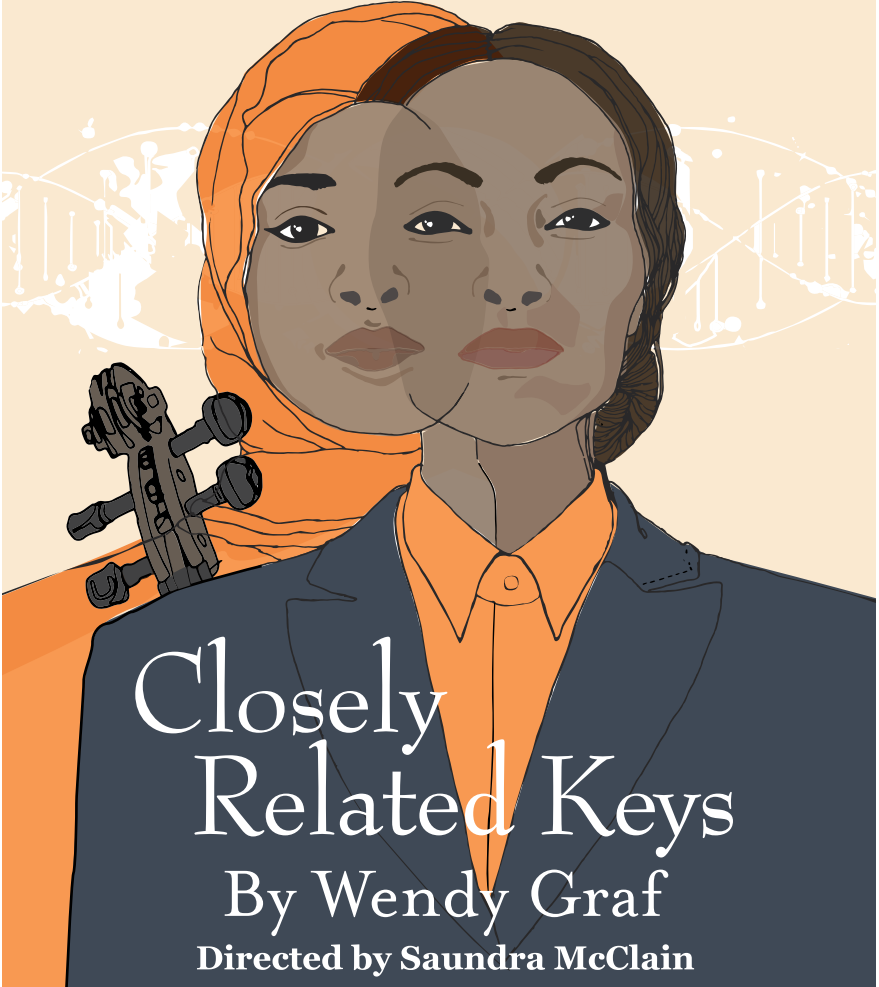
INTERNATIONAL CITY THEATRE

Your Award-Winning Professional Regional Theatre

caryn desai, Artistic Director/Producer

Winner Best World Premiere Play

A family drama "that taps into our shared national consciousness of a world changed forever on September 11, 2001" – Stage Scene LA



Closely Related Keys

By Wendy Graf
Directed by Sandra McClain

36th Anniversary Season

2021 SEASON HONORARY PRODUCER:

The Ackerman Family/Evalyn M. Bauer Foundation

Honorary Producer:



Beverly O'Neill Theater
330 E. Seaside Way
Info: 562-436-4610
Website: InternationalCityTheatre.org

Previews: Aug 25 & 26
Opening Night: Aug 27
Performances through Sept 12
Thurs-Sat and Previews at 8 p.m.
Sundays at 2 p.m.



*A Note from the
Artistic Director/Producer, caryn desai*

Greetings!

We are back! Welcome to our first live, in-person show post-shutdown. All of us, the board, the staff and our artists celebrate a return to what we are here to do – to share stories that help us better understand ourselves, our world, and our shared humanity! Thank you for joining us today. Your presence, your participation, and your support help keep professional theatre alive and viable for this region.

As we mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11, this play is especially relevant and resonates with current challenges when different cultures collide. It's natural to pass judgment and objectify those who are different because we haven't taken the time to appreciate or know their struggles, their values, or their humanity – regardless of which side you are on. Theatre is a perfect art form to bring us together to understand and to open hearts and minds. Thank you for sharing this journey today.

Although it seems our idea of "normal" will take a bit more time, I choose to focus on what we can do as we look ahead. We are excited to share our final show of 2021, *Blues in the Night*, which we are planning now in association with Ebony Repertory Theatre. It opens in October with the music of Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and others.

It's also the time of year when we are announcing our upcoming 37th Anniversary season for 2022! We hope to count on your continuing support for a lineup of music, laughter, and thoughtful stories.

Thank you so very much for sharing time with us today. We love seeing you here!

THEATRE STAFF

Artistic Director/Producer: caryn desai
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 Development Associate: Cynthia Gellis
 Marketing Associate: Francie Ghose
 Accounting: Ketan R. Sheth, An Accountancy Corporation
 Publicist: Lucy Pollak
 Program Designer: Denis Nigos
 Graphic Designer: Tressa Reddy
 Summer Intern: Riva Brody

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International City Theatre
presents

Closely Related Keys
by Wendy Graf

PRODUCTION

Artistic Director/Producer: caryn desai
Director: Sandra McClain
Scenic Designer: Stephanie Kerley Schwartz
Lighting Designer: Donny Jackson
Resident Costume Designer: Kim DeShazo
Sound Designer: Dave Mickey
Resident Property Designers: Patty and Gordon Briles
Assistant Director: Tommy Statler
Production Stage Manager: John Freeland, Jr. *
Assistant Stage Manager: Jamiela Williams
Resident Casting Directors: Michael Donovan, CSA
 Richie Ferris, CSA
Wardrobe Crew: LaVonna Miller
Master Electrician: Daniel Moorefield
Photographer: Andrew Hofstetter

CAST

Oscar Best: Charlie
Sydney A. Mason*: Julia
Mehnaz Mohammadi: Neyla
Nick Molari: Ron
Adrian Mohamad Tafesh: Tariq

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

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

Place: Julia's Manhattan Apartment, New York

Time: 2010 - before the ten-year anniversary of 9/11 and before the capture of Osama Bin Laden

Running Time: Approx. 105 minutes. NO INTERMISSION

As a courtesy to the actors onstage and your fellow audience members, please turn off your cell phone, beeper or any electronic device that might make noise during the performance. Also, if you use your cell phone during intermission, please ensure that your phone is turned off before you re-enter the auditorium. Thank you for your cooperation!

Wendy Graf (Playwright) Wendy Graf is an award-winning playwright whose plays have been produced nationally and internationally. Recent plays include *Exit Wounds* (Gold Medallion winner, Moss Hart and Kitty Carlisle New Play Initiative; *Unemployed Elephants — A Love Story* (Stage Raw Recommended/Top Ten, multiple “Critic’s Picks,” StageSceneLA award for outstanding two-hander); *Please Don’t Ask About Becket*; *All American Girl* (Stage Raw Award nomination/Playwriting, StageSceneLA award/ Outstanding solo performance production, Bitter Lemons Ten Best of 2015); *Closely Related Keys* (StageSceneLA Best World Premiere Plays of 2013-14/ Best Production/Intimate Theater; NAACP win/nominations); *No Word in Guyanese for Me* (GLAAD Award for outstanding L.A. theater; Helen Hayes Award-recommended); *Behind the Gates*; *Lessons* (L.A. production directed by Gordon Davidson); *Leipzig* (LADCC Award nomination/Writing, Backstage Garland Award/ Playwriting, Dorothy Silver finalist). Her newest, *Wednesday’s Child*, opens in Tampa, FL on September 2. Her short play, *The Cross and the Saber*, was commissioned by Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble’s BIPOC Voting Plays series, now developing the full length version. Visit her at wendygraf.com

I am thrilled and excited that *Closely Related Keys* marks the return to live theater, both for ICT and for me. We were all devastated when the production, originally scheduled for August of 2020, was cancelled due to Covid. However, as things often happen in the theater, *Closely Related Keys* is more relevant today than ever. It not only mirrors the current situation in Afghanistan but what is still going on in our country today, as well. It reminds us, on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, how living in a climate of racial, religious, moral and political polarization divides us, seeing anyone different from ourselves as The Other, and therefore, threatening. Every human being experiences love, loss and pain despite national ties and cultural identities. Like closely related keys, we share many common tones. It is my hope that this new, updated production of *Closely Related Keys* will encourage us to grapple with our own beliefs and stereotypes and serve as an inspiration and opportunity to bridge the gap between cultures.

Sandra McClain (Director) with over 45 years professional experience in all levels of the Theatre discipline, Ms. McClain is a two time Ovation Award nominee and LA Drama Critics Award for Best Actor and has performed in numerous films, with several recurring and guest starring roles. She has performed at such notable theatres as Kennedy Center, The Shakespeare Theatre in D.C., Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Alliance Theatre, Alley Theatre, Philadelphia Drama Guild, Two River Theatre, Musical Theatre West, Syracuse Stage, McCarter Theatre, A.R.T., Spoleto Festival, New York Shakespeare Theatre, 2nd Stage, N.E.C., New Federal Theatre, Classic Theatre Company, Hudson Guild, Billie Holiday Theatre, Coconut Grove, A Noise Within, Antaeus Theatre Company. Last season, she directed *Dancing Lessons* at Ensemble Theatre Company in Santa Barbara, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* at Pomona College and *The Colored Museum* at Cal Lutheran University. *Bee-luther-hatchee* at CSU-Fullerton, *Oh Freedom* at Main St. Theatre and *Bee-Luther-Hatchee* at Sierra

Madre Playhouse, *Breath and Imagination* at Virginia Stage and the Colony Theatre. Other directorial credits: *Prayerville*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *The Fantasticks*, *In the Continuum*, *Spunk*, *Electra*, *The Women of Plums*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Antigone*, *Dark of the Moon*, *A Modest Proposal*, *Harriet's Return*, *Flyin' West*, *What I Learned in Paris*, *The Colored Museum* and *For Colored* Currently, she is finishing her MFA at CSU Fullerton.



Oscar Best (Charlie) started his stage career with the famed Dance Theater of Harlem. He worked in the fitness industry until 2007 when Dick Van Dyke saw him in a one act play. Van Dyke went on to put him in his show at the time, *Murder 101*. Oscar then became a member of The Malibu Playhouse where he played in *The Wild Party*, *Victor/Victoria*, *Art*, *A Soldier's Play*, and *Blood Knot* (awarded NAACP Best Lead Actor). Oscar is also a lifetime member of the Actor's Studio. Oscar would like to thank the *Closely Related Keys* staff for the fabulous opportunity.



Sydney A. Mason (Julia) guided by a deep-seeded creative vision, Sydney works as a visual artist, multi-instrumental musician, and actor. Sydney's performance experience began at the age of 10 in her hometown of Fresno, California, where she entertained audiences throughout Northern California on a litany of classical, contemporary, and musical theatre stages. After graduating from UCLA's School of Theatre, Film and Television, Sydney continues to pursue her passions as a Los Angeles based artist; her credits include *Twelfth Night* (Viola), *Ajax in Iraq* (Connie Mangus), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hippolyta), *Lysistrata Unbound* (Sechita, The Courtesan), *Fefu and Her Friends* (Emma) and *Safe Harbor* (Jaz/Christine/Davis). Film & TV credits include short films *Giving Back* (lead), *Bruise* (lead), *FUNemployed* pilot (lead) and *No Place* (lead, writer and producer). Whether engaging classical or contemporary theatre, improv, musicianship, writing, directing or producing, Sydney is dedicated to tapping into the transformative potential of the arts, and harnessing its power to change herself and her world.



Mehrnaz Mohammadi (Neyla) is an actor and writer born and raised in Iran. Some of her theatre credits include *Intersections* (Guthrie Theatre), *Antigone X* (Scene Dock), *Suppliant Women* (Rogue Machine/Getty Villa), *Sand Moon* (Son of Semele) and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Antaeus Theatre). Mehrnaz's on-camera work includes *Stuck in Development* and *The Peck Situation* (Winner of Best Acting at Show Low Film Festival). Her most recent work is a recurring co-star role in the upcoming Netflix limited series, *From Scratch*. She received her BFA in Theatre Performance from Concordia University in Montreal and MFA in Acting from University of Southern California. She's traveled all over the world to get here, learning along the way that "Wherever you go, you take yourself with you." If you are looking for her, she can be found under a tree philosophizing about life. www.mehrnaz.org



Nick Molari (Ron) is a California boy through and through who has enjoyed living in Los Angeles for 13 years and is graduate of UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television. When not performing on stage, he can be seen on screen at various film festivals including Sundance, and streaming online through Amazon Prime. His hobbies include playing bass guitar and being really snobby about doughnuts. Theater:

Titus Andronicus, *Measure for Measure* (Foolish Productions), *Bash* (3 seat productions), *Secret in the Wings* (Coerage Theater Company), *Reasons to be Pretty/Happy* (The Collective), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear*, *Merlin* (Theatricum Botanicum), *Ruddigore* (Sierra Madre Playhouse) Film: *The Nowhere Inn* (IFC Films), *Ranchlands* (FilmProjects.org), *Journey to Royal* (Misty Falls Motion Picture), *Murderbook* (Investigation Discovery), *Mark and Eve* (1020 Films), *Somewhere East*.



Adrian Mohamad Tafesh (Tariq) is an Arab-American actor born in Washington D.C. and raised in Virginia. He grew up in a multi-generational immigrant household. He first got involved in theater as a sophomore in high school and has not looked back since. He attended James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where he minored in theater, and then went on to get an MFA in Acting at the University of Washington in Seattle. Fresh off of his studies Adrian has recently starred

in *Girls Are Strong Here*, a short film which has been circulating through virtual film festivals, and is absolutely thrilled to now be making his California theatrical debut!

Stephanie Kerley Schwartz (Scenic Designer) Previously at ICT she designed the scenery for the musical *Closer Than Ever*. Before the pandemic she designed the scenery for *The Lion in Winter* at Laguna Playhouse, and at Ford's Theatre (DC) she designed the scenery for *Twelve Angry Men* both directed by Sheldon Epps. She is Resident Designer at Rogue Machine Theatre where she designed the world premiere of *One Night in Miami*. For A Noise Within: *Gem of the Ocean* and *A Raisin in the Sun*, both directed by Gregory Daniel. Scenery for the epic *Magellanica* at Artist's Repertory Theatre in Portland Oregon, directed by Dámaso Rodriguez. At Pasadena Playhouse she designed *Twelve Angry Men* (Sheldon Epps) and *Pygmalion* (Jessica Kubzansky). CTG- Kirk Douglas Theatre: *Good Grief* (scenery). CTG/ The Mark Taper Forum she designed costumes for *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and Randy Newman's *Harps and Angels*. Other theatres include The Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, East West Players, Boston Court Pasadena, The Fountain, The Skylight, and many others. She has received multiple awards and nominations, including the 2017 LADCC Kinetic Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theatrical Design. www.kerleydesign.com

Donny Jackson (Lighting Designer) is an award-winning freelance Lighting Designer based in Los Angeles. Work highlights include: the New York premiere of *Four Clowns* (La Mama Experimental Theatre), *When God Looked Away*, starring Al Pacino and Judith Light (Macha Theatre), the West Coast premiere of *In the Heights* (Casa 0101 Theatre), *Phenomenal*, written and directed by Macy Gray

(Ramon Cortines Performing Arts), the KJAZZ Concert (Wallis Annenberg Center for Performing Arts), *Arrival & Departure*-BroadwayWorld Award (Fountain Theatre) and *Transition*-NAACP Award (Lounge Theatre). He has also had his design work for *Into the Woods* featured on TV during ABC's "Encore!". Recent projects include, *The Christians* (Actors Co-op), *Life Could Be a Dream* (ICT Long Beach) and *Hair* (Long Beach Playhouse). He is currently a member of Design Action, and serves as the Head of Technical Theatre & Design at Cypress College. He holds an MFA in Lighting Design from the UCLA School of Theatre, where he trained under Tony-winning lighting designer, Neil Jampolis. www.DonnyJackson.com

Kim DeShazo (Resident Costume Designer) is Costume Instructor for Theatre and Dance at El Camino College as well as resident costume designer for ICT. Other theatres that have showcased her skills include Pasadena Dance Theatre, LA Opera, Long Beach Opera, Shakespeare Festival/LA, the Gary Marshall Theatre, Odyssey Theatre, and Theatricum Botanicum. College collaborations include designing for Chapman University, Cal State Dominguez Hills, College of the Canyons, LBCC, and Mt. San Antonio College. Her work has been seen at industrial shows for Nike, Adidas, Skechers, Cherokee and Diesel clothing. Commercials include AFLAC, Target, Disney, McDonald's, and Mattel. TV credits range from *The Real*, *The Price is Right*, and an *Ozzy Osbourne's Variety Show*, to work for the Academy Awards, Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel.

Dave Mickey (Sound Designer) has designed sound, video, interactive, and lighting for theatre productions at Off-Broadway's Theatre Row, 59E59 NYC, Virginia Stage Company, ICT, The Colony, The Rubicon, Laguna Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Chance Theatre, the Blank Theatre, and Syzygy theatre. Mr. Mickey is a Co-Host of THE CUE podcast about show control. He won the 2014 NAACP Best Sound Design for *Breath & Imagination* and the Robert E. Cohen Sound Achievement Award, a national award in sound design sponsored by USITT, three Editor Choice Awards from the Maker Faire, Honorable Mentions for the Garland Awards, Outstanding Achievements by StageSceneLA.com and nominations for the LA Weekly Theater Awards. Mr. Mickey holds an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and is the Chair of the department of Theatre and Dance at CSUF.

Patty and Gordon Briles (Resident Property Designers) have joined their artistic skills as Prop Designers for ICT. Gordon's 3D work in ceramics and fine arts, and Patty's work in theatre, design and illustration have enabled them to collaborate on both property and set dressing. With the assistance of their son, Christopher, it has been an ongoing family production. Their work has included award-winning designs and Ovation nominations as producers as well as designers for theatre and Emmy nominations for TV. Their theatre work has been seen at The Ford Theatre, John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, the Odyssey, the Edgemar and The Matrix. Patty works with young artists at El Camino College.

caryn desai (Artistic Director/Producer) is an award-winning director with awards and nominations from LA Drama Critics Circle, LA Weekly, Drama-Logue,

Robby, Ovation and NAACP for her productions. Recent directing: *'ART'*, *Daisy, Beast on the Moon*, *Cardboard Piano*, *Uncanny Valley*, and *Doubt*. Selected credits: *Other Desert Cities*, *Red*, *God of Carnage*, *Backwards in High Heels*, *Dinah Was* (most L.A. Ovation award nominations) *"Master Harold" ... and the boys*, *A Shayna Maidel*, *Shakuntala* (also adapted by her), *Rashomon*, *Our Town*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Contradictions* (her original work), *Antigone*, and *Oedipus*. Selected musicals: *Raisin* (LADCC "Best Production"), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Once on This Island*, and *Tapestry*. caryn is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. She has an MFA in directing from UC Irvine, a BA from CSU, Long Beach in acting and directing, an AA from LBCC in theatre, and a certificate from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London. She has certificates in Arts Administration, Marketing and Fundraising. With a full Fellowship, she completed an Executive Program at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business as one of 50 arts leaders in the nation selected for the initial program. Additionally, she completed an Executive Coaching Program through the Hudson Institute, Santa Barbara. She has served on grant panels for the county and city and as a speaker/panelist for the SRO Theatre Conference at USC on Best Practices, the Technical Theatre Conference about the role of a director, and more. She represented ICT as a National Participant for the Listening Post Project with Johns Hopkins University and was named "Enterprising Woman in the Arts" in Long Beach. caryn was honored with the "We Can Do It" Award from the Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Foundation and nominated as an Amazing Woman in the Arts. She taught college for more than 25 years and most recently taught Nonprofit Arts Management at California State University, Fullerton. She served as a Dramaturgical Responder for the graduate playwriting students at USC and served as Vice Chair for the LA Producers League for Large Theatres. In 2016 she was keynote speaker at the Disneyland Hotel for INTIX. That same year she accepted the L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Season and was recognized as a 2016 Community Hero by the African American History & Culture Foundation. She received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Long Beach City College and in 2018 was named Distinguished Alumna from the College of the Arts at California State University, Long Beach. Most recently caryn is honored to be added to the Long Beach City College Hall of Fame.

John Freeland, Jr. (Production Stage Manager) Selected productions in the United States and Europe include: International City Theatre productions of *A Splintered Soul*; *Daddy Long Legs*; *Home*; Diane Rodriguez's *The Sweetheart Deal*; *Jazzantiqua Dance & Music Ensemble*; *Edinburgh Festival Fringe*; *International Theatre Festival of the Blind and Visually Impaired (Croatia)*; *Lula Washington Dance Theatre (tour)*; *Riverfront Jazz Festival (Dallas, TX)*; *Kids In The Spotlight Screening and Awards*. Select acting credits include: *A Musical Tribute To Fats Waller*; *Three Sisters*; *A Soldier's Play*; *Shoot (Croatia)*; *The Father (Stockholm, Sweden)*. T.V: *Shooters Stance* (web series); *The Steve Harvey Show*; *Mad About You*. Film: *Last Night*; *Cadillac Dreams*; *The Nation*. Directing credits include: *Riot/Rebellion*; *Shoot (Croatia)*; *Krip Hop Nation-Where Are My Cripple Homies At*; *Bananas: The Day in the Life of Josephine Baker* written and performed by Sloan

Robinson. Mr. Freeland has worked with incarcerated youth, middle schools and high schools, assisting youth in writing their plays for performance. He attended Wesleyan University in his hometown of Middletown, CT.

Lucy Pollak (Publicist) has been providing publicity services to the Los Angeles performing arts community for three decades – and her very first client was ICT, with which she has proudly continued to work to this day! Prior to that, she was production manager/staff producer at the Odyssey Theatre, where she co-produced over 100 productions with artistic director Ron Sossi. She is the recipient of a LA Drama Critic’s Circle Award (*Master Class*), an L.A. Weekly Award (*Mary Barnes*), four Drama-Logue Awards (*Mary Barnes*, *Idioglossia*, *Accidental Death of An Anarchist*, *It’s A Girl!*), and a Women in Theatre Recognition Award. She has served on the boards of directors of the Los Angeles Theatre Alliance, Women in Theatre.

Michael Donovan Casting (Casting Directors) has cast over 100 shows here at ICT. Michael Donovan is the recipient of 9 Artios awards, presented by the Casting Society of America for Outstanding Achievement in casting. Richie Ferris has 3 Artios awards. The company’s credits include shows produced at the Ahmanson Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, the Hollywood Bowl, Pasadena Playhouse, Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Geffen Playhouse, the Getty Villa, the Soraya, Laguna Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, the Garry Marshall Theatre, Ebony Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Symphony, Arizona Theatre Company, Arkansas Rep, Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Rep, the Totem Pole Playhouse, and the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Other credits include numerous films, TV shows and commercials. Michael is President of the Board for the Foundation for New American Musicals, and serves on the Board for Camp Bravo.

Shashin Desai (Founding Artistic Director/Producer) led ICT throughout its first 25 seasons, guiding over 120 productions to its stage and winning over 200 awards for himself and the theatre while running the company in the black for 22 out of 25 years. After ICT’s Silver Jubilee Season, in March 2011, Shashin stepped down passing the baton to the new generation of leadership. Since 2011, the same skills he used to visualize stories on stage with trained actors, physical compositions, and use of color and light are the same skills he is now applying to his singular focus - Photography, devoting his time to an art book project, ASIA CONNECTIONS: FACES AND PLACES. To that end, the past years have involved extensive travel to India, Thailand, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Turkey, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Japan, Sri Lanka, Morocco, and South Africa. According to him, “Many more countries to travel, many more moments to capture.” The journey continues. To see his captivating work please go to his website and share your thoughts: www.shashindesaiconnections.com
Instagram: @shashindesai

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Daphne Ching-Jackson
Gary & Joan Einstein
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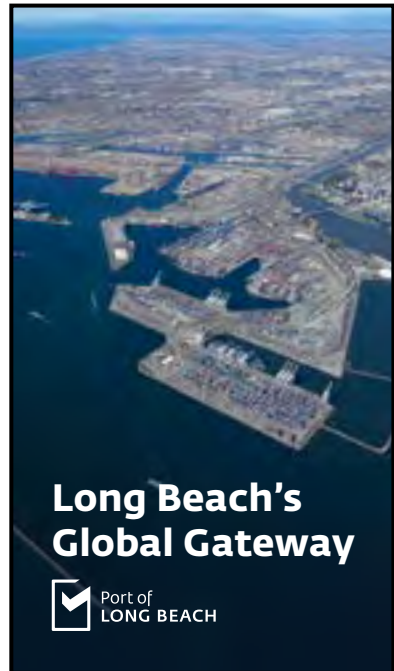
Supporting Role

Virginia Agnelli	Timothy & Josefa Curtin
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Stephen Alkus, Ph.D.	Diana Cutler
Patti Allen	Don & Barbi Darnauer
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Penny & John Biroc	Gail Frank
Pamela A. Bleich	Mark Gallon & Zoilan Montemayor
Ricky & Spike Bragg	Sandi Goldstein & Richard Norene
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Marlene Brown	Susan & Michael Gray
Christopher & Claudia Ward	Carol Greenberg
Chris Brown & Tanya Finney	Norma & Gary Greene
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Rozanne & Jim Churchill	Debra Hilliard
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Kenneth Clark	Gary & Lynda Hoyt

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 Derek & Mary Ann Kendall
 Hans Kohnlein
 Arthur Kraft
 Charles La Franchi
 Dr. Geraldine S. Landes
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 Joseph & Margo Lazzari
 In Honor of Margaret Leake
 Jerome H. Leff
 Joanne & Jerry Levy
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 Don Llewellyn & Carol Norcross
 Joyce Lott
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