



presents

THE LEHMAN TRILOGY

By Stefano Massini

Adapted by Ben Power

Directed by John Langs

April 27 – May 19, 2024

CAST

Bradford Farwell* – Mayer Lehman

Robert Pescovitz* – Henry Lehman

Brandon J. Simmons – Emanuel Lehman

UNDERSTUDY

Nehemiah Hooks*

CREATIVE TEAM

John Langs – Director
Julia Hayes Welch – Scenic Designer
An-lin Dauber – Costume Designer
Andrew D. Smith – Lighting Designer
Meghan Roche – Sound Designer
Robertson Witmer – Composer
Mike Tutaj – Projection Designer
Kate Myre – Dialect Coach
Maya Zigler – Dramaturg
Mel Williams – Assistant Lighting Designer

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Ruth Eitemiller* – Stage Manager
Elizabeth Stasio – Production Assistant
Melissa Y. Hamasaki* – Swing Stage Manager

Theatre and Season Partners



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"The Lehman Trilogy" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

The Lehman Trilogy was first presented by the National Theatre and Neal Street Productions Ltd, that jointly commissioned the English adaptation of the original play, Lehman Trilogy, at the Lyttleton Theatre on Thursday 12th July 2018 and transferred to the Piccadilly Theatre, West End.

The National Theatre and Neal Street Productions Ltd presented the US premiere of The Lehman Trilogy on 27th March 2019 at the Park Avenue Armory, New York and first presented the production on Broadway at the Nederlander Theatre on 14th October 2021.



CONTEMPORARY
THEATRE

THE LEHMAN TRILOGY

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PATRON INFORMATION

During the Show

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<https://concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists>

Audience members are cordially reminded to silence all electronic devices.

Please do not walk on the stage before, during, or after the show.

Food and Drink

Bar service and concessions are available in the lobby. Cash and cards accepted. No outside food or drink is allowed.

Group Sales

Groups of 10 or more can save on most productions. For more information, go to acttheatre.org/visit/ discounts.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed in any part of the building or within 25 feet of the entrance.

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No firearms of any kind are allowed in any part of the building.

Lost and Found

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COVID Safety Policy

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Accessibility

ACT offers the Figaro MobiTxt® Closed Captioning System for audience members who are Deaf or hard of hearing. This system is offered at all performances in most of our theatres. ACT is also equipped with the Williams Sound® Audio Equipment, which amplifies stage sounds with the aid of headsets and also provides sound for our Audio Description performances. Both devices can be reserved at the time of ticket purchase and/or requested upon arrival to the theatre at the Accessibility table (please ask staff for assistance).

Large Print Programs are available and can be picked up at our Accessibility table.

Audio Description and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation is offered at the following performances:

The Lehman Trilogy, Saturday, May 11 at 2pm

ACT Contemporary Theatre

Contact Information

700 Union Street, Seattle, WA 98101

Phone: 206.292.7676

acttheatre.org



A Note from the Director and Artistic Director JOHN LANGS

How the Lehmans Changed the World

I walked into a bank in Santa Monica, California. I was there to secure a loan for new car, and this bank had quoted a great rate and assured me with my credit rating the loan would be no problem. Walking through the large glass doors of the bank on the oppressively sunny morning, I was struck with a palpable sense that something was off. People were moving quickly. Whispering to one another—I remember whispering.

You could almost smell worry in the air. The lender I sat down with (who was so California-laid-back just the day before when he talked me through the paperwork) was now visibly shaken.

“We can’t give you the loan,” he said.

“You told me this was a done deal on the phone,” I replied.

Then, he said something so odd that I can still hear the cadences and timbre of his voice all these years later.

“It’s not you, it’s the whole world. We can’t give anyone anything.”

Minutes later, I learned that our economic systems had fallen off a cliff. I was sitting in a bank asking for a loan on September 15th, the day that the venerable Wall Street bank The Lehman Brothers collapsed. On the day the largest bank to ever declare bankruptcy in US history became a symbol of the devastation caused by the global financial crisis, I was in line, like many Americans, to get a loan. And there was nothing to be given.

It was the strangest feeling. One minute, you are living in a world of promise and possibility, and then somewhere a bubble bursts and there is only fear and scarcity.

This play takes the long view of how our country arrived at that moment. What it gave up along the way.

Employing the epic poem tradition dating back to *The Iliad*, *The Lehman Trilogy* is a classic American immigrant story and powerful morality tale.

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“It is stories like this that will help us forge a more responsible lens for the future.”

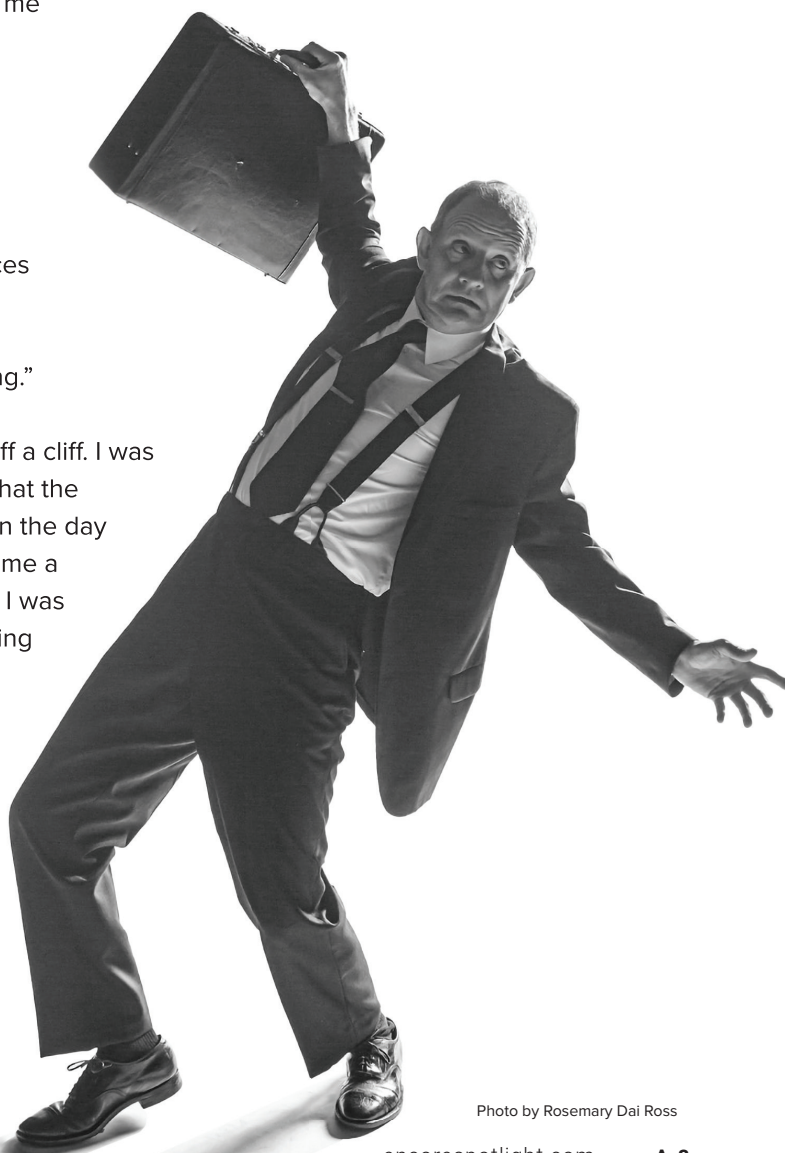


Photo by Rosemary Dai Ross

How the Lehmans Changed the World **continued**

It is a spectacular rendering of how one immigrant family escaping oppression in the home of their birth came to a country of promise. They brought with them faith, grit, ambition, and ingenuity—as so many people from around the world have also carried with them to plant into the fertile soil of the promise called America.

It is also true that as America forged itself it did so by participating in systems that profited off the forced labor of others. Other choices made through generations shaped a system that created modern capitalism, which favors so few with so much, and which, like it or not, we all participate in or are affected by.

Like many great works, this one asks you to hold conflicting ideas uncomfortably close. To see on one hand how, layer-by-layer, immigrants from around the world built up this nation. Aiming to protect themselves and their families, to grow, and to thrive as they strove to become the citizens of the land of possibility they dreamed about. On the other hand, in doing so, they let go of some of what centered them, losing their moorings, losing touch with their purpose, their concrete grounding in what mattered most.

This play is both an articulation of the leaps of genius and ambition that hardworking people from all corners of the world offered to America and a blistering critique of how our collective ambition can collapse with devastating consequences once it becomes untethered from humanity.

In its folds is the idea that if the soul and human purpose of any of our endeavors gets diluted to a point where we serve only to gain, there is no telling how far we can fall.

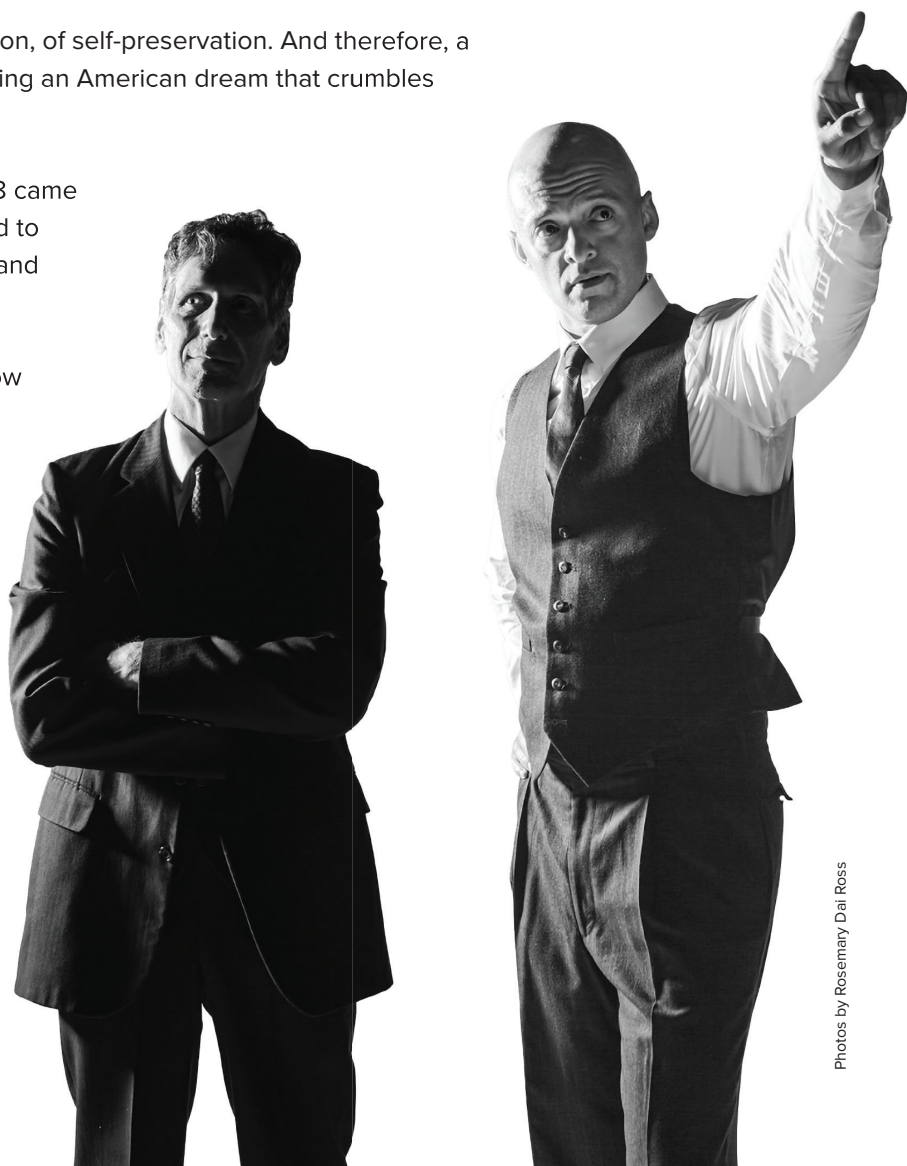
This is an immigrant story. It's a story of assimilation, of self-preservation. And therefore, a uniquely American story. It is also a story of building an American dream that crumbles into a chaotic nightmare for future generations.

The bandage that stemmed the bleeding in 2008 came in the form of a 700 billion dollar bailout. It served to protect the system and the 1%. It left 99% in fear and mistrust. Something broke that day.

We need to remember that what we build and how we layer our great achievements can create environments that can trigger unforeseen and devastating consequences for the future. It is stories like this that give us the long view of the past, teaching us how we arrived at the present. It is stories like this that will help us forge a more responsible lens for the future. What starts as a pure impulse unchecked by generational integrity can become something monstrous. Our stories hold the collective wisdom that we can pass from generation to generation to remember and this story has so much to offer.



John Langs



ACT has renewed our commitment to our mission, values, culture, and the creation of New Works. We are publishing them here to invite conversation and hold ourselves accountable.

OUR MISSION

ACT is a contemporary theatre where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACT Contemporary Theatre acknowledges that the land on which this theatre stands is part of the ancestral homelands of the **Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, and Tulalip** peoples along the waterways of the **Salish Sea**. We honor the **29 federally recognized sovereign nations** within the state of Washington as well as **the many other unrecognized peoples in this area**.

As we gather and strive to share stories of our world with joy and clarity, **we honor with gratitude the original stewards and storytellers of these lands — past, present, and future**. We value the immense contributions, sacrifices and **resilience of Indigenous People** here, and fully **acknowledge** the profound multi-generational impact that colonization has had on Native people everywhere, including ongoing disparities, racism, and political and social **INVISIBILITY**. **To heal, we need truth and understanding that everyone actively participates in, together.**

This land acknowledgment is one small act in recognizing the importance of continuing to care for the land and acknowledge our important relationship with the original people of this place we call home who are still here. **We are all in relationship to each other.**

WE BELIEVE ACT STATEMENT OF VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

ACT believes in the power of theatre to change lives. For too long, the lives of our institution has focused on have been predominantly white and able-bodied. We acknowledge that ACT has worked inside biased systems that have continued to center only a small group of our global community. We want our art to be joyful and our work to have a spirit of adventure, so we commit to building thoughtful guardrails to bolster an environment where we can all be brave and buoyant together.

Developed by the Staff, Core Company, and Trustees of ACT Contemporary Theatre, this statement of values and commitments was created to ensure the well-being of artists, collaborators, board members, and staff to engage in the spirit of an ever-improving process.

OUR VALUES

We are people-led and art-centered.

We believe in creating a safe space in which to do dangerous work.

We depend on each other for clear, honest, and responsible communication.

We believe that the building of excellent art is risky and joyful, and takes time.

We strive to ensure that artistic trust is baked into the way we work.

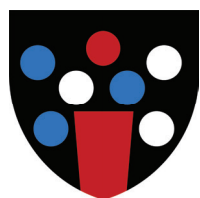


See a PDF of our "We Believe" document.

ACT CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

2024/25 SEASON

All the joy.
All the drama.
All Seattle.
All ACT.



POTUS

OR, BEHIND EVERY GREAT DUMBASS ARE SEVEN WOMEN TRYING TO KEEP HIM ALIVE

By Selena Fillinger

Directed by Jillian Armenante

September 7 - 22, 2024

By Katie Forgette
Directed by Julie Beckman
October 12 - 27, 2024

MRS. LOMAN IS LEAVING



THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Written & Composed by Jason Robert Brown

Directed by Bill Berry

February 8 - March 16, 2025

A Co-Production with The 5th Avenue Theatre

By Andrew Lee Creech
Directed by Tyrone Phillips
April 26 - May 11, 2025

GOLDEN



AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

By Henrik Ibsen

Directed by John Langs

June 7 - 22 2025

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AN INVITATION TO ENGAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOHN LANGS



For our 59th season, ACT Contemporary Theatre (ACT) is pulling out all the stops. All the laughter, all the feels, all the music, and the prickly thoughtful conversations that you have come to expect from us will be on vivid display in our 2024/25 Season.

Led by our ongoing ambition to be *the* home for great writing from the Pacific Northwest, ACT is doubling down on its commitment to new plays. From the second year of our overwhelmingly popular festival **New Works Northwest** (NW²) to producing **two world premieres** by local writers that announced

themselves during 2023's NW² festival - the brilliant, shimmering comedy ***Mrs. Loman is Leaving*** by **Katie Forgette** and the tender poetic American investigation ***Golden*** by **Andrew Lee Creech** - ACT will be revealing compelling stories crafted by our city's culture-makers. We will tear into the season with ***POTUS: Or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive***, an unapparelled farce by **Selena Fillinger** that is almost as absurd as the election season promises to be and a whole lot funnier.

Our co-production with The 5th Avenue Theatre is back, with **Jason Robert Brown's** modern musical love story ***The Last 5 Years***. To close out this historic year we have chosen a classic that has only grown in potency over time: ACT's 2024/25 season will conclude with our disruptive reimagining of **Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People***.

Of course, during the holiday season we are thrilled to offer the traditional warm fuzzies of ***A Christmas Carol*** and ***The Dina Martina Christmas Show***.

We are gearing up for a roller-coaster of a season hand-crafted, local, and each production bespoke just for you. We can't wait to see you in the theatre!

Warmly,


John Langs



Who's Who in *The Lehman Trilogy*

CAST



Bradford Farwell*
Mayer Lehman

Previously at ACT: *A Christmas Carol, Daisy, Worse than*

Tigers, Seven Ways to Get There, Mary Stuart, Jekyll and Hyde. Broadway: *Much Ado About Nothing, The Miser.* Seattle: Seattle Repertory (*Indecent, Charles III, Photograph 51, You Can't Take it With You, The Imaginary Invalid, Twelfth Night, Noises Off, The Great Gatsby*); Intiman (*John Baxter, All My Sons, Grapes of Wrath, Richard III, A Thousand Clowns*); Strawshop (*Breaking the Code*); 5th Avenue (*Guys and Dolls*); and Seattle Shakespeare (*The Rivals, Measure for Measure, Cymbeline, Julius Caesar*). Regional: Nebraska Shakespeare (*Hamlet, Othello, Cymbeline*); American Player's Theatre (*She Stoops, Henry V, The Misanthrope*); and New Century Theatre Company (*Festen, My Name is Asher Lev*). Bradford was a company member at The Stratford Festival in Canada for three years. TV: *Grimm* and *Leverage*. Training: Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Arts, London. Thanks Willa and Poppy for being the best kids and Hazel for being my Clarence.



Robert Pescovitz*
Henry Lehman

Robert Pescovitz has guest starred on many television programs,

most recently the *Law and Order* reboot. Other television credits include *Grimm, Mike and Molly, Cold Case, Without A Trace, Close to Home,* and *Raines*. He also appeared in the feature *Blood in Blood Out*. He has worked in regional theaters across the United States. Most recently appearing in *Indecent* at the Chautauqua Institution. He was also in the acting company of the Old Globe Shakespeare Festival. In addition, he appeared in a national tour of *The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial* for L.A. Theatre Works which was subsequently

broadcast on National Public Radio. He has a BS from Northwestern University and an MFA from The American Conservatory Theatre. He was a founding member of A Noise Within Theater Company and a member of Furious Theater company in Los Angeles. Robert is a recipient of a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Lead Performance.



Brandon J. Simmons
Emanuel Lehman

Brandon J. Simmons is an actor, writer, director, and

producer. At ACT he produced and appeared in three productions with The Seagull Project, a company he co-founded and led in various capacities from 2011 until 2018. He directed *The Thin Place* at ACT in 2021. Brandon has appeared with many Seattle theaters over the years. Favorite roles include a solo *Beowulf* and Lord Henry Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Book-It); Kulygin in *The Three Sisters* (ACT); Konstantin in *The Seagull* at the Ilkhom Theatre in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, (The Seagull Project); Arthur in *Feathers and Teeth* (Washington Ensemble Theatre); Antonio Salieri in *Amadeus*, (Seattle Public Theatre); and Olivia in *Twelfth Night* (Seattle Shakespeare Co./Wooden O). His original scripts have been produced twice at Annex Theatre, the second, *Is She Dead Yet?*, receiving the Gregory Award for Outstanding New Play in 2017.



Nehemiah Hooks*
(he/they)
Understudy

Nehemiah is happy to be back with ACT

after being a part of *The Case for the Existence of God* and *Choir Boy*. Other credits include: *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Hello Dolly!, Miss Step* (Village Theatre), *Disney's The Little Mermaid, The WIZ, And So That Happened..., Disney's Beauty and The Beast* (5th Ave Theatre), *Shout, Sister, Shout!* (Seattle Repertory

Theatre), and many shows on Norwegian Cruise Lines. Love and gratitude to family and friends for their continual support.

CREATIVE TEAM

Peter Chapman
Author

Peter Chapman is author of *The Last of the Imperious Rich: Lehman Brothers, 1844–2008*, a leading reference on the history of the Lehman family.

An-lin Dauber (she/her)
Costume Design

An-lin Dauber is a set and costume designer based in Seattle. Seattle credits include *Metamorphoses, Little Women* (Seattle Rep) and *The Tempest* (Seattle Rep's Public Works). She is a company member of The Feast, where she has designed *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* (Intiman & The Feast); *Champagne + Sodomy: The Life and Crimes of Oscar Wilde; Amen Corner; Marisol; Blood Wedding; The Bar Plays: Small Craft Warnings; The Time of Your Life; A Bright Room Called Day.* Off-Broadway/New York: *Paul Swan is Dead and Gone; What You Are Now* (The Civilians), *Letters That You Will Not Get* (American Opera Project), *H*tlar's Tasters; Great Novel* (New Light Theater); *Salesman...; June is the First Fall* (Yangtze Repertory Company), and *Bulrushers; Passage* (Juilliard). Assistant Professor of Costume Design at the University of Washington. MFA Yale School of Drama. Proud member of USA 829. anlindauber.com.

Ruth Eitemiller* (she/her)
Stage Manager

Recent credits include *Sanctuary City* (Seattle Rep), *Ken Ludwig's Sherwood: The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Village Theatre), *A History of Theatre: About, By, For and Near* (ACT), *Mr. Dickens and His Carol* (Seattle Rep), and *Sweat* (ACT). Around town Ruth has also worked with The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, New Century Theatre Company, and others. She was the recipient of the 2018 Melissa Hines

Backstage Award, and she currently leads the local group SM Collective: smcollectiveseattle.org

Melissa Y. Hamasaki (she/her)

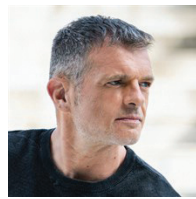
Swing Stage Manager

Melissa Y. Hamasaki is pleased to join the cast and creative team for this production. Favorite credits include *Ramayana*, *The Women* (ACT), *All My Sons* (Intiman), *Uncle Vanya* (The Seagull Project), and *Memphis* (The 5th Avenue Theatre). Locally, she has also worked with the Seattle Rep, Seattle Children's Theatre, the Seattle Opera, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, and the UW School of Drama. Training: Allen Lee Hughes Stage Management Fellow at Arena Stage, Washington, DC; Technical Apprentice, Santa Fe Opera, NM.

John Langs

Director

John Langs has served as ACT Contemporary Theatre's Artistic Director since 2016. He joined ACT in 2013 as Associate Artistic Director. Langs's 16-year freelance career afforded him the opportunity to work with many prestigious theatre companies across the country. He has directed productions at Playwrights Horizons NY, Ensemble Studio Theater NY, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Lookingglass Theater Company in Chicago, Circle X in Los Angeles, The Resident Ensemble, New Century Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company. Langs received his directing degree from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Some of his favorite directing credits include *The Shaggs Philosophy of the World* (Los Angeles Drama Critic Circle Award for Best Original Musical), *Brothers Karamazov* (seven LADCC Awards including Best Production of the year and Best Direction), and directing Kurt Beattie in *King Lear*. Langs received the first annual Seattle Gregory Award honoring excellence in direction for *The Adding Machine*. As a dedicated fan of original work, Langs has shepherded over a dozen projects to their premiere production.



Stefano Massini

Playwright

Stefano Massini is an internationally renowned novelist and playwright,

the first Italian author to receive a Tony Award. He regularly contributes to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, and for several years he has served as artistic consultant at Piccolo Teatro di Milano – Teatro d'Europa. His works, including *The Lehman Trilogy*, have been translated into 30 languages, and his plays have been performed in more theatres around the world than those of any other living Italian writer, produced as far afield as Iran and Korea, and staged by directors such as Luca Ronconi and Sam Mendes.

His most acclaimed works, beyond *The Lehman Trilogy*, include: *Intractable Woman*, a decades-long international success; *Ladies Football Club*, which premiered to wide acclaim in Spain; and *7 Minutes*, hailed by *Le Monde* as a "masterpiece" at the Comédie Française. He has won numerous Italian awards, including the Premio Vittorio Tondelli and the Premio Ubu, as well as the Tony Award, the Drama Guild Award and the Outer Critics Circle Award. *Qualcosa sui Lehman (The Lehman Trilogy)* was among the most acclaimed novels published in Italy in recent years and won the Selezione Campiello Prize, the Super Mondello Prize, the De Sica Prize, the Prix Médicis Essai, and the Prix Meilleur Livre Étranger.

In 2022 he completed his ten-year writing work on the birth of the atomic bomb in a play entitled *Manhattan Project*, already requested in many theatres around the world. His rewrite, based on Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, will debut in 2024.

Kate Myre

Dialect Coach

Kate Myre is a professor at Cornish College of the Arts and has worked nationally as a voiceover artist and dialect coach. She has worked extensively with Pulitzer and Tony award winning playwright and director, Brian Yorkey,

dialect and text coaching the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* as well as *Echoes* (2022) and *The Outer Banks*. In Oslo, Norway she coached the acclaimed production of *The Hamlet Complex* at the Royal Opera House, directed by Alan Oyen. She has coached for The Seattle Rep, The Seattle Children's Theatre, ACT, The Village Theater, Seattle Public Theater, The Immediate Theatre, Theater Schmeater, Jack Straw Foundation, and The Boston Repertory Theatre. Kate coaches actors from all over the world, and is currently working with several Bollywood performers on perfecting their American dialects. She is pleased and grateful to be working with ACT again and would like to thank Sherif Amin, Matthew Erlich, and Zoe Sheilds for their assistance.

Meghan Roche

Sound Designer

Meghan Roche is a Seattle-based sound designer and engineer. Her theatre design work has been heard on stages at a variety of theatres across Seattle (ACTLab, Taproot Theatre Company, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Public Theater, Intiman, Theatre Schmeater, Seattle Shakespeare/Wooden O, West of Lenin, and others) and in Southern California (South Coast Repertory, New Swan Shakespeare Festival, UC Irvine).

She sits on the board of the Theatre Sound Designers and Composers Association (TSDCA) and is a member of USITT. Education: BA in Theatre with Honors - Seattle University, MFA in Sound Design - University of California, Irvine.

Andrew D. Smith

Lighting Designer

Andrew is a Seattle-based lighting designer, and has worked with ACT since 2014, most recently lighting *A Christmas Carol*, *Choir Boy*, and *Dracula* at ACT. National work includes: Arizona Theatre Company (*Native Gardens*), Indiana Repertory Theatre (*The Diary of Anne Frank*), Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Cornerstone Theatre Company, Flint Youth Theatre, Horizon Theater Company, and Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

Who's Who in *The Lehman Trilogy*

* Member of AEA

Seattle work has been seen at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, New Century Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble, Azeotrope, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, Seattle Public Theatre, Theater Off Jackson, ArtsWest, On the Boards, Velocity Dance Center, and Broadway Performance Hall. Andrew holds a BA from Duke University and an MFA from the University of Washington, where he currently teaches.

Elizabeth Stasio (she/her)

Production Assistant

Liz is a Seattle-local stage manager and theatre artist thrilled to be working at ACT for the very first time on this production. Stage management and backstage credits include work with Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Rep (including the Public Works program), Seattle Shakespeare Company, The 5th Avenue Theatre, 14/48 Projects, and others.

Julia Hayes Welch (she/her)

Scenic Designer

Julia Welch is always excited to design with ACT! Selected credits: *Pass Over*, *Skylight*, *Alex and Aris*, *Bad Apples* (ACT); (The 5th Avenue Theatre); *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Seattle Children's Theatre); *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Village Theatre); *HIR*, *Barbecue*, *Bootycandy* (Intiman); *Fire Season*, *Ironbound*, *Grounded* (Seattle Public Theatre); *My Antonia*, *Howl's Moving Castle* (Book-It Repertory Theatre); *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Arms and the Man*, *Government Inspector* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); *Uncle Vanya* (Seagull Project) and *The Revolutionists*, *An Octoroon*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* (ArtsWest). MFA: University of Washington. Much love to W, M & AJ. jhwelchdesigns.com

Robertson Witmer

Composer

Rob is a Seattle based composer and sound designer. Previously at ACT: *Dracula*, *Daisy*, *Romeo + Juliet*. Other recent productions include: *Murder on the Links* (Laguna Playhouse, Austin Playhouse); *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* (Seattle Opera); *Grief* (Spectrum Dance Theater); *The Moors* (Seattle Public Theater); *A Christmas Carol* (Merrimack Repertory Theater), and *Romeo & Juliet* (Seattle Shakespeare Company). His work has also been heard at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Rep, and Teatro ZinZanni. Rob also plays with several bands, including the Toucans, the Love Markets, and "Awesome".

ACT operates under agreements with the following:



This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Special Thanks

AJ Epstein
Hollywood Lights
Indiana Repertory Theatre
Seattle Repertory Theatre
UW School of Drama
Village Theatre

THE LEHMAN TRILOGY

TIMELINE



This content researched and written by co-dramaturg Carol Ann Tan with contributions by co-dramaturg DeRon S. Williams, for TimeLine Theatre Company's Chicago premiere production of *The Lehman Trilogy*, 2023. Courtesy of TimeLine Theatre Company.

The Lehman Trilogy is a sweeping epic that mythologizes the people and the institution of Lehman Brothers. To do this, the play takes some liberties with the historical timeline, including by embellishing the Lehmans' personal involvement in some of the era's landmark innovations. The timeline below highlights a few key examples of the play's poetic license. NOTE: Entries that are indented cite some of the changes in the historical record represented in the play.

Crucially, these changes transform the Lehmans into avatars for the system they lived within, allowing *The Lehman Trilogy* to humanize the machinery driving modern American capitalism itself—and prompting us, as viewers, to imagine the very human cost of pursuing the American Dream.

▶ **September 11, 1844** Heyum Lehmann (later Henry Lehman) emigrates from Rimpfing, Bavaria, to America. Arriving via New York, he makes his way to Montgomery, Alabama, where he opens a store specializing in dry goods—especially cotton.

▶ **1847** Mendel Lehmann (later Emanuel Lehman) emigrates from Rimpfing to America and joins his brother, Henry, in Montgomery.

▶ **July 17, 1850** Maier Lehmann (later Mayer Lehman) emigrates from Rimpfing to America and joins his brothers, Henry and Emanuel, in Montgomery.

▶ **November 17, 1855** Henry dies of yellow fever.

▶ **1858** Lehman Brothers transitions from general merchandise to cotton commodities. Under Emanuel, the company establishes its first branch office in New York, at 119 Liberty Street.

▶ **1858** Mayer Lehman marries Babette Newgass.

▶ **1859** Emanuel Lehman marries Pauline Sondheim.

The play cites Emanuel's marriage as happening one year later, in 1860.

▶ **1861–1865** The Civil War takes place, which greatly impacts the cotton trade. Mayer, who is based in the South, is cut off from Northern manufacturers; Emanuel, who is based in the North, is cut off from the Southern cotton supply. To survive, the company does business with both sides of the war.

▶ **November 9, 1861** Philip Lehman, son of Emanuel and Pauline, is born.

▶ **1862** Facing financial difficulties because of the war, Mayer decides to merge his cotton brokerage with that of John Wesley Durr. Together, they form Lehman, Durr and Company.

▶ **1864** Alabama Governor Thomas H. Watts appoints Mayer Lehman as his agent to send funds to aid its soldiers in federal prisons. The mission does not succeed.

▶ **1867** After the Civil War, Lehman Brothers assists with Alabama's Reconstruction. The firm is designated to be Alabama's fiscal agent, and helps take care of some of the state's financial obligations.

The play credits Mayer as positioning Lehman Brothers to essentially run Alabama's state bank in 1867. This level of involvement is not exactly accurate.

▶ **1868** Mayer joins Emanuel in New York City, taking new offices in Pearl Street—just off Hanover Square, the center of the cotton trade.

▶ **1870** The New York Cotton Exchange is founded by 100 cotton brokers and merchants, including the Lehman brothers.

▶ **1873–1878** The Panic of 1873 takes place. ▶

▶ A financial crisis that causes a depression in the United States and temporarily closes the New York Stock Exchange, the Panic is caused, in part, by the failure of the bank Jay Cooke & Company after it invests heavily in railroads.

▶ **March 28, 1878** Herbert Lehman, son of Mayer and Babette, is born.

▶ **1881** The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) opens in a new building on Wall Street; Solomon Paprinskij begins his tightrope walk in front of the building.

In reality, the NYSE moved into its Broad Street location in 1865. Solomon Paprinskij is entirely fictional; his closest historical counterpart is Philippe Petit, who did a tightrope walk between the Twin Towers in 1974.

▶ **1883** Lehman Brothers joins the New York Coffee Exchange.

The play places this event much earlier, in 1867. However, the historical Coffee Exchange was founded in 1882.

▶ **1884** Philip Lehman marries Carrie Lauer.

The play cites this marriage as happening three years later, in 1887.

Instead, in the play, 1884 is when the Lehmans decide to invest in the Baltimore company United Railways. But the historical United Railways (which was also Baltimore-based) only began operations in 1899.

▶ **1887** Philip Lehman becomes a partner at Lehman Brothers. He is the first chairman of the company's board.

▶ **1887** Lehman Brothers becomes a member of the New York Stock Exchange.

▶ **September 29, 1891** Robert "Bobby" Lehman, son of Philip and Carrie, is born.

In 1891, the play also shows Lehman Brothers—under Philip Lehman's leadership—spearheading an investment in building the Panama Canal. In reality, building the Panama Canal was a U.S. government initiative, and it's unclear whether the Lehmans helped fund it at all.

▶ **June 21, 1897** Mayer Lehman passes away.

▶ **1899** Lehman Brothers begins to pivot to investment banking, beginning with its public offering for the International Steam Pump Company.

▶ **1901–1925** Philip Lehman serves as the head

of Lehman Brothers. Notably, he is one of the first financiers to realize that issuing new stocks could potentially generate high profits.

The play shows Herbert Lehman parting ways with the company to become the Governor of New York as early as 1901. However, at this point, the historical Herbert is still very much involved with the company, and will only take political office beginning in 1928.

▶ **1906** Philip Lehman begins shifting Lehman Brothers from being a commodities house (where the firm buys and sells physical goods on behalf of other businesses) to being a house of issue (where the firm helps other companies make investments, such as stocks and bonds, available for public sale).

▶ **January 10, 1907** Emanuel Lehman passes away.

While a precise date is not given, the play implies that Emanuel passes away in the 1910s.

▶ **1908** Herbert Lehman becomes a partner at Lehman Brothers.

▶ **April 28, 1910** Herbert Lehman marries Edith Louise Altschul.

▶ **1911** Philip Lehman begins a private collection of fine art, storing it at his 7 West 54th Street house. This collection will later be continued by his son Robert "Bobby" Lehman.

▶ **1913** Bobby Lehman graduates from Yale University.

The play shows Bobby Lehman joining the board of Lehman Brothers in the 1910s. However, Bobby will only move into a leadership position in the following decade.

▶ **1917–1919** Herbert Lehman serves in the United States Army during World War I, for which he is awarded the Army Distinguished Service Medal.

▶ **1918** Georgios Petropoulos (later George Peterson) immigrates to the U.S. from southern Greece.

▶ **1923** George Peterson opens a Greek diner named Central Café in Kearney, Nebraska.

▶ **1924** John M. Hancock is the first non-family member to become a partner at Lehman Brothers.

▶ **1925–1969** Robert "Bobby" Lehman takes over the leadership of Lehman Brothers. ▶

TIMELINE CONT.

▶ *The play shows Philip Lehman still leading Lehman Brothers in 1929.*

▶ **December 22, 1925** Lewis “Lew” Glucksman is born into a second-generation Hungarian Jewish family living in New York City.

▶ **June 5, 1926** Peter G. “Pete” Peterson, son of George Peterson, is born in Kearney, Nebraska.

▶ **1927** Monroe C. Gutman and Paul Mazur become the next non-family members to become partners at Lehman Brothers.

▶ **1928** Herbert Lehman becomes chairman of the finance committee of the Democratic Party. In the same year, he is elected Lieutenant Governor of New York, and he resigns from Lehman Brothers upon taking office.

▶ **1929** Lehman Brothers forms its own close-ended investment company, called Lehman Corporation.

The play depicts the Lehman Corporation as a company rebranding. It also takes place 10 years earlier, in 1919.

▶ **May 1929** Bobby Lehman marries his first wife, Ruth S. Lamar. Before Bobby, Ruth had been married to John Williams “Jack” Rumsey.

The play shows Bobby’s courtship with Ruth taking place at the same time as the Wall Street Crash of 1929, but the Crash actually happens later in the year.

▶ **June 1929** Lehman Brothers moves into its new headquarters at 1 William Street, where it will stay until 1980.

▶ **October 24, 1929** The Wall Street Crash of 1929 begins. On this day, known as “Black Thursday,” the stock market crashes catastrophically.

The play shows two additional and fictional events occurring on Black Thursday: First, numerous bankers die by suicide (while suicides increased in the years following 1929, there was no rash of suicides during the Wall Street Crash itself); and second, Solomon Paprinskij falls from his tightrope for the first time in 50 years.

▶ **November 8, 1929** J.J. Riordan, president of the County Trust Company, dies by suicide, shooting himself. He reportedly sustained heavy financial losses during the market crash.

▶ **1931** Bobby Lehman and Ruth S. Lamar divorce.

▶ **1933–1942** Herbert Lehman is elected the 45th Governor of New York.

▶ **1933–1939** In the wake of the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the U.S. government begins implementing regulations against banks.

▶ **1934–1951** Bobby Lehman marries for a second time, to Ruth “Kitty” Meeker.

▶ **March 21, 1947** Philip Lehman dies.

▶ **1949–1957** Herbert Lehman is elected to represent New York in the U.S. Senate.

The play shows Herbert Lehman becoming Senator as early as 1939.

▶ **July 10, 1952** Bobby Lehman marries for a third time, to Lee “Elena” Anz.

▶ **1957** Nearly 300 works of art from Bobby Lehman’s private collection receive a solo exhibit at the Louvre Museum in Paris. At the time, he is the only private American collector to have received this honor.

▶ **1963** Lewis Glucksman joins the staff of Lehman Brothers.

▶ **December 5, 1963** Herbert Lehman passes away.

▶ **1966** Lew Glucksman becomes a partner at Lehman Brothers.

▶ **1969** Richard S. “Dick” Fuld joins the staff at Lehman Brothers.

In the play, Lew Glucksman takes on Dick Fuld as his protégé in 1969. It is historically true that the two shared this relationship, but it’s not clear if it began from the first year that Fuld began working at Lehman Brothers.

▶ **August 9, 1969** Robert “Bobby” Lehman, the last of the Lehmans to head the company, passes away.

▶ **1973–1983** Pete Peterson becomes CEO and Chairman of Lehman Brothers.

▶ **1975** The Metropolitan Museum of Art opens the Robert Lehman Wing to the public. After Bobby’s death, the museum had received almost 3,000 works of art from Bobby’s collection as a donation. According to the museum, it is “one of the most extraordinary private art collections ever assembled in the United States.”

▶ **1977** Lehman Brothers adds new office ▶

▶ spaces at 55 Water Street. This space is used to centralize all of the company's equity and fixed income sales and trading operations.

The play has this expansion take place earlier, alongside Lew Glucksman's arrival at the firm in 1963.

▶ **1977** Lehman Brothers merges with Kuhn Loeb & Co.

▶ **1983** Lew Glucksman becomes co-CEO of Lehman Brothers alongside Pete Peterson.

▶ **1983–1984** Just a few months after the co-CEO positions are announced, Lew Glucksman becomes the sole CEO of Lehman Brothers. Pete Peterson is ousted following conflicts in the pair's working relationship.

▶ **1984** Following financial troubles, Lehman Brothers is acquired by Shearson Division of American Express, and new leadership is put in place.

▶ **1994** American Express spins off Lehman Brothers into Lehman Brothers Holdings, Inc.

▶ **1994–2008** Richard "Dick" Fuld becomes the last CEO of Lehman Brothers.

▶ **2000s** Lehman Brothers begins buying mortgage lenders and heavily invests in financial products that rely on mortgages as collateral.

▶ **September 15, 2008** Hit hard by the subprime mortgage crisis, Lehman Brothers declares bankruptcy.

THE CULTURAL COMPLEXITY OF *THE LEHMAN TRILOGY*

The power of art and story to convey critical wisdom and insights into the human condition is best reflected in the classic "morality tale." Whether through scripture or folklore, the life lessons one generation longs to impart to the next are most impactfully transmitted through narrative, in modes ranging from the visual arts to the stage.

The Lehman Trilogy is one of the most powerful of contemporary morality tales, giving voice to classic cultural archetypes: the courage, resilience, and sacrifice required of the immigrant generation; the costs of assimilation to tradition and faith; and the price paid when avarice and ambition obscure values and ideals. Through the historical record and the expansions of artistic license, the play anchors its message within the arc of the rise and fall of one Jewish family. And while the message is universal in its resonance, its rootedness in a story of Jews, money, and power poses some significant challenges. While eliding most obvious antisemitic tropes, this work will resonate differently for Jewish and non-Jewish audiences.

Many will simply assume that the Lehmans are representative of a Jewish affinity for and facility with finance, without a deeper appreciation of this being a classic antisemitic trope emerging from the constraints put on Jews for centuries, denying them access to other means of support, and forcing them to become the "moneylenders" of lore.

Many Jewish audience members will cringe at yet another seeming depiction of Jewish greed and exploitation, certain that the fact that the Lehmans were a minority amongst a minority will be lost on those whose fundamental assumptions confirm existing bias, something for which the Jewish community is more acutely aware in the current moment of metastasizing hatred and threat.

I hope that theatergoers who share in the experience of this work will appreciate its larger insights into the triumphs and travails that are common to all of us, binding us as striving, struggling, imperfect and heroic sojourners through life. And I also hope that, more broadly, the play will evoke greater awareness of more subtle expressions of antisemitism, and the need to challenge the stereotyping lens that we all must transcend.

Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner

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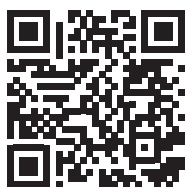
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