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Michael R Cohen
michael@aeofberkeley.org



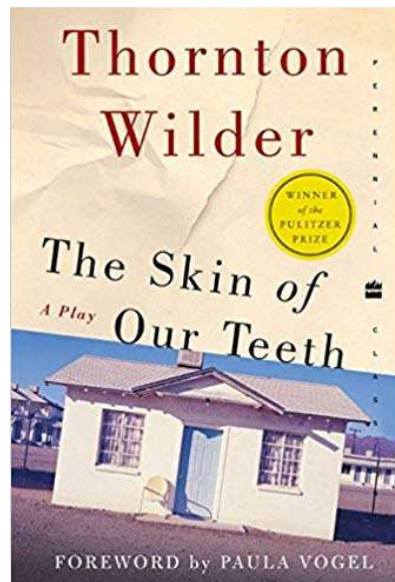
TEMPLE BETH
HILLEL OF
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ACTORS
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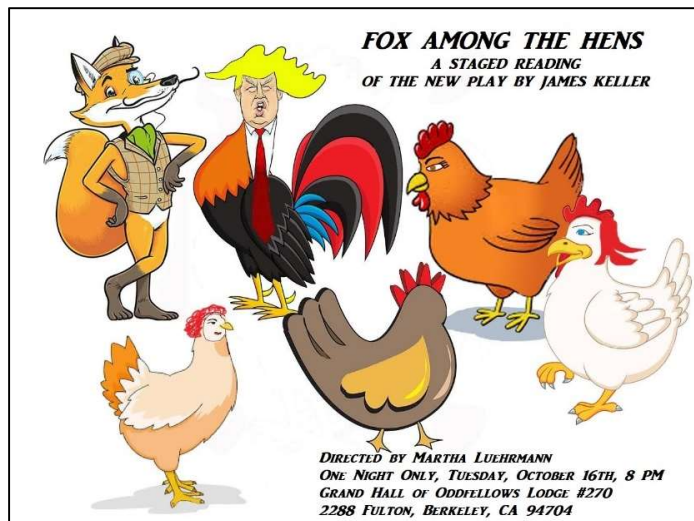
MULTI-FAITH
ACTION
COALITION



The Skin of our Teeth by Thornton Wilder
Directed by Michael R. Cohen,

opening January 4th, 19 at Live Oak Theatre

Auditions October 7th and 8th – write auditions@aeofberkeley.org





AE thanks **University Cleaners**
1319 University Ave
Berkeley, 94702 (510) 548-1053

A PROUD MEMBER OF
theatre
BAY AREA

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley & Mountain View Cemetery
present
A Staged Reading of
**An Afternoon
With Julia**
An Adaptation of
ARCHES, BALANCE AND LIGHT
by **Mary Spletter**
Directed by Michael R Cohen

September 29 & 30 at 2:00PM
Admission is Free
and
Open to the Public

Optional 15-minute Docent Walk or
Individual Drive to Julia Morgan's
Final Resting Place Follows the
Reading

 Friends of  MOUNTAIN VIEW
CEMETERY

**5000 Piedmont Ave, Oakland,
CA 94611**

Produced by special arrangement with Art Age Productions

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

My play, *Arches, Balance and Light*, presented here shortened and revised as *An Afternoon with Julia*, started like many plays—as a simple love story. The major difference was that the object of my affection was a building. To be specific, it was the Berkeley City Club that I loved. It was one of over 700 building designed by famed architect Julia Morgan.

I didn't hold back on the emotions or time that I invested in my love. I became a voting member of the City Club, swam routinely in its beautiful pool, and was elected vice president of its historic preservation group. I gave tours, became a docent and turned a dingy smoking room into a very active history center that told the life and accomplishments of Julia Morgan. Unlike many relationships, my love of the City Club continued for decades. This was no superficial "love 'em and leave 'em" affair. When I retired, I enrolled in a playwriting class.

There was no question as to the topic of my first play. My only goals: Humanize Julia and don't write a documentary. I combined history and fiction to bring my building and character alive.

Most people will associate the play with award-winning director Jay Manley. Indeed it was a wonderful opportunity to work with Jay, whose amazing attention to detail is obvious whether he is leading a group to Times Square or directing a new Mountain Play in Marin. Others who left their mark on the play: Gary Graves, who taught my first playwriting class at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Carol Wolf, who made playwriting fascinating using the internet, and John Wilk, star teacher and director at CCSF. Robert and Leslie Currier discussed the work with me during their annual trips to the Ashland Shakespeare Festival. And Anthony Clarvoe shared his talents and writing skills with lucky students at Stagebridge.

I started out thinking playwriting would be a magnificent profession because I could make all of the decisions. I found out that playwriting was one of the most collaborative projects I have ever undertaken.

Mary Spletter
September, 2018



Sara Renaur-Reid (Marguerite) is delighted to be joining the cast of *An Afternoon with Julia*! She originally hails from Louisville, Kentucky, where she earned her B.A. In Theatre Arts many moons ago. She more recently obtained a Masters in Drama Therapy from California Institute of Integral Studies and now works as a school-based therapist using drama and

creative arts as healing modalities. She has worked with a variety of companies throughout the Bay Area and the Midwestern United States. Favorites roles include Katherine in *The Speakeasy* (Boxcar Theatre), Jen in *The Last Unicorns* (Bindlestiff Studios), Candi McAllister in *Zanna Don't*, and Tanya in *Bare: A Pop Opera* (both with Pandora Production in Louisville, KY). She is currently continuing her performance training at Studio A.C.T. in San Francisco. Many thanks to Jake for keeping her sane and grounded when she is all over the place!

About Julia Morgan (shortened from her Britannica biography)

Julia Morgan was born in San Francisco on January 20, 1872 and grew up in nearby Oakland. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in engineering in 1894 and then studied architecture privately under Bernard Maybeck, who encouraged her aspirations. Morgan went to Paris in 1896 and in 1898 became the first woman to be enrolled in the architecture section of the École des Beaux-Arts, from which she graduated in 1902. Returning to California, she became the first woman in the state to be granted an architect's license.

Morgan then commenced 40 years of architectural work, opening her own architectural office in 1904. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake provided her with the opportunity to design hundreds of homes, churches, and other buildings in the Bay area. After World War I she began work in earnest for William Randolph Hearst, who in 1919 commissioned her to build a country house that came to be known as Hearst Castle at San Simeon, California. Morgan was involved with the building project at San Simeon for 28 years. She made it into one of the most lavish and ostentatious private residences in the world.

Morgan was an eclectic architect who worked in a variety of styles. She was notable for her meticulous craftsmanship, her creation of fine interior spaces, and her ability to deliver outstanding buildings within a tight budget.



Ed Pieczenik (Cedric) is a character actor who began acting at the University of Michigan in Mamet plays such as Cecil in *Noon*, Indian in *Indian Wants the Bronx* and Alan Mitchell in *Mail Order Mistress*. he also performed in the dance ensemble for musicals such as *Can Can*, *Cabaret*, and *Fiddler on the Roof* in which he was also cast as Nachum the Beggar. In the Bay area, Ed performed in Leshner Center productions such as Herr Mueller in *We Drew the Sky* and Frank in *The Setting Sun*. Ed has created the role of Nelson Wheeler in the Santa Clara

Players' *Helen on Wheels* for which he won an audience selected best actor award for the 2017-18 season at the SC Players. Ed also has done films, commercials and training videos when he has been cast in those. Ed speaks French and has performed in French farces at the Alliance Francaise in Berkeley and San Francisco.



Robin Schild (Victor) has been acting around the bay area since he was a teenager at Berkeley high school. He acted with actors ensemble in the late seventies and is happy to return. He is also very happy to revive the role "Victor" which he played in the full length production of *Arches Balance and Light* at the ross valley players several years ago.

About Actors Ensemble of Berkeley

Actors Ensemble (**AEB**) has been around the block (and just around the corner from you) since 1957, making us the longest-running stage company in Berkeley. Since 1965 we have performed primarily at Live Oak Theatre in North Berkeley. Recently we have also taken the opportunity to bring the magic of theatre to John Hinkel Park, the site of many wonderful performances from the forerunner of Cal Shakes, Shotgun Players, Women's Will, and others over the years. Now we are presenting a special show at Mountain View Cemetery, followed by a staged reading of "Fox Among the Hens" at Oddfellows Hall in Berkeley, "The Skin of Our Teeth" back at Live Oak Theatre in January. We hope you enjoy the show – come back and see us again!

As Berkeley's only true community theatre company, we depend on our volunteers to bring their energy and creative vision to each play we produce. If you would like to volunteer in our theatre, give us a call or send us an email! We'd love for you to play a part in our next show!

Actors Ensemble of Berkeley
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Check out www.AEofBerkeley.Org and subscribe to our email list for

- Staged Readings
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An Afternoon with Julia
An adaptation of
Arches, Balance, and Light
both by Mary Spletter

Cast

Gigi Benson.....*Julia Morgan*
Linda Maria Girón.....*Young Julia*
Ed Pieczenik.....*Cedric*
Sara Renauer-Reid.....*Marguerite*
Robin Schild.....*Victor*

Staff

Director*Michael R. Cohen*
Producer & Publicity & Program.....*Jerome Solberg*

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Krystie Ly and the rest of the folks at Mountain View Cemetery

About Mountain View Cemetery

The historic Cemetery master plan was designed by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted — the architect of New York City's Central Park, Capitol Grounds in Washington D.C., Stanford University, and Yosemite Park (he minimized the intrusion of man on Yosemite's natural wonders) — Mountain View Cemetery was intended to express a harmony between man and the natural setting.

Park-like cemeteries, such as Mountain View Cemetery, were brought into being by various cultural forces of the 19th century. Cultural and religious shifts in sensibility, as well as 19th-century English and American romantics helped encourage the idea that a park-like cemetery represented the peace of nature, to which man's soul returns.

Olmsted believed that the straight line of man's industry and the curved shape of nature's oak branch could once again peacefully co-exist. Olmsted's design was completed and accepted by the distinguished board of trustees in 1863, and construction began. In the lower and more level portion of Mountain View Cemetery, near its entrance gates, Olmsted designed a straight avenue lined by trees. On the slopes of six hills skirting this avenue, he constructed curved lanes and paths like tributaries flowing down from the hills to make possible a gradual ascent and descent, like the twisting roads of the park cemeteries set in England.

Cast and Crew Biographies

In Alphabetical Order



Gigi Benson (Julia Morgan) An ardent Arts advocate, Gigi's been blessed in the Bay Area with a bevy of great theatre roles, including *Sally/Wait Until Dark*, *Gillian/Bell, Book & Candle*, *Belinda/Flavia(Noises Off)*, *Ida Horowitz(Farragut North)*, *Blanche DuBoise (Street Car Named Desire)*, numerous Shakespeare heroines, and *Sandra (Beautiful Thing)* for which she won Bay Area Reporter's Best Actress Award 2009). Marketing, writing, directing and producing creative projects, alongside commercial film and TV stints (*13 Reasons Why*), keep her inspired & humbled.

Michael R. Cohen (Director) has directed *An Enemy of the People*, *Twelfth Night*, *Panhandle*, *The Talking Cure*, and *Fortinbras* for **AE** and is board president. He also co-chairs the Ross Alternative Works (RAW) committee and is a board member at large for the Ross Valley Players. For 25 years he served as Director of Performing Arts at Rosemead High School - a public high school east of Los Angeles. An AEA member, he was assistant stage manager for the Barn Theater in Augusta, Michigan, and stage manager for the Ensemble Studio Theater and the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts in Los Angeles. This coming January he will direct Thornton Wilder's ***The Skin of Our Teeth*** for Actors Ensemble (and he encourages you to audition!)



Linda Maria Girón (Young Julia) is thrilled to join **AE** once more to reprise the role of the great Julia Morgan. Recent credits include NCTC's *The Mystery of Love and Sex* (Charlotte), Utopia Theatre Project's *Seeds* (Emma), BATCO's *La Posarela* (María), Faultline's *How To Be A White Man* (Jennifer), and **AE's Twelfth Night: An Acoustic Rock Musical** (Feste/Musical Director). Linda has performed in numerous shows at UC Berkeley, most notably *Chavez Ravine* (Richard Neutra/Nikki III/the band), *Joe Goode's Re-Entry: The Process of*

Resilience (Navy Veteran) and BareStage's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Cecily). A rising playwright, Linda is a proud recipient of the Roselyn Eisner Prize for Acting and Playwriting and the TDPS Social Justice Award for her play *Memoria del Silencio en el País de la Eterna Primavera*. Infinite thank you's Michael, **AE**, to her mom, dad, family and friends for their continued love and support.

www.lindamgiron.com