



DIVIDING THE ESTATE



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DIVIDING THE ESTATE at the Old Globe Theatre

Are Family Jackals the Worst?

By [Welton Jones](http://www.sandiego.com/writers/welton-jones) • Fri, Jan 20th, 2012

I thought we might be finally done with those tragic Old-South epics of the Civil War legacy. The dilapidated plantations, once-proud families, the ruined gallantry, the uncomfortable racial hangovers – but I guess not. The late Horton Foote reported from rural south Texas that it was still working itself out in 1985.

The Old Globe Theatre has a production of Foote's *DIVIDING THE ESTATE*, an American gothic rumination on the theme that picks through the leftovers of Lillian Hellman, Tennessee Williams and "Gone With the Wind" and finds Sartre's "No Exit," the one about the three damned souls trapped forever in a room without egress.

If the characters were written more vividly, they might arouse pity at least, if not wonder. But they're such a pallid bunch of inbred losers that one squirms with impatient disgust.

This Gordon family is hanging on to what's left of the family estate in the (fictional, thank goodness) town of Harrison, Texas. None of the blood relations has ever held a job, not in the three generations represented. If it weren't for the weak vitality brought in by outside mates, the whole lot would have been long ago scattered to the winds.

They exist by sucking out the last of the profits from the land and quarreling in the fashion of King Lear's daughters over who gets how much when the estate is finally split forever and, by the way, can we make that soon?

Foote writes in placid small-town gentility with a frosting of regional patois, endowing none of his characters with anything like eloquence or romance or ethics. They're either melancholy at the way life has turned out or sick with desperate greed. There's not a one of them that isn't stapled to some stereotype.

Since there are 13 of them, director Michael Wilson hasn't much choice but to arrange them in a semi-circle and have everyone sit still when others are speaking. This he does with such stolid skill that the show seems a series of brief monologues.

Elizabeth Ashley, a lioness of the American theatre, and Penny Fuller, still remembered for her Globe Juliet decades ago, are in there somewhere, bringing polished skills to the family matriarch and her anxious eldest daughter. Two of Foote's own children – Horton Jr. and Hallie – play the daughter's siblings with eerie poise. Please reassure me that this play isn't autobiographical?

The most vivid of the imported outsiders is James DeMarse as a flabby, aging hustler going broke in Houston real estate. Roger Robinson as an ancient black retainer has the best chance at making a vivid impression but sacrifices it in an attempt to retain some dignity. Most of the others are just set dressing except for Devon Abner, supposedly the sane one, and Kelly McAndrew as his decidedly outsider fiancé. No sparks in either case.

There's a big problem with Jeff Cowie's handsome, accurate set. Much of the action takes place at a dinner table which he has

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Horton Foote Jr, Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller & Elizabeth Ashley

Henry DiRocco photo

placed upstage in an alcove from which the flow of passion is virtually impossible. There is a nice, spacious feeling to the downstage living room but nothing much happens there except around the edges.

David C. Woolard's costumes seem about right but Rui Rita's lighting comes from nowhere. There are many windows but the glow remains static, like an undertaker's parlor. John Gromada's "original music" – some generic country-western fluff that would be snooted by these people and an odd variation on "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean – is a low-grade irritation.

The biggest laugh in the show comes toward the end, at a suggestion of a radical solution to deteriorating circumstances. However the rest of the play is devoted to a hesitant consideration of that solution. Like the theme of outside blood bringing new energy, this radical idea does perk things up a bit. (There's even a faint echo of Scarlet O'Hara just before her intermission.) But it's not enough to stir much interest in this listless family endgame.

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The Details

Category	Arts (http://www.sandiego.com/arts-and-theatre)
Dates	7 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Feb. 12, 2012.
Organization	The Old Globe Theatre
Phone	619 234-5623
Production Type	Play (http://www.sandiego.com/related/production-type/play)
Region	Balboa Park (http://www.sandiego.com/related/region/balboa-park)
Ticket Prices	\$29 up
URL	www.theoldglobe.org
Venue	Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

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THEATER REVIEW

TENSION, HUMOR IS RIGHT ON THE MONEY

Globe's staging of 'Dividing the Estate' rich with talent from the Broadway cast

JAMES HEBERT • U-T

Nothing binds a family together quite like the strife that tears them apart.

That's the case, anyway, for the Gordons, the tin-horn dynasty of dissipated Texans who inhabit Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate."

The late Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright's final work is a closely observed, gently witty chronicle of the feuding Gordons' slow implosion. The family's more grasping members believe they're aristocrats-in-waiting who are due a financial windfall. But in the Old Globe Theatre's assured and appealing production, it's clear they're more like dry leaves tumbling toward the maw of a prairie tornado.

Director Michael Wilson's deftly paced Globe production returns much of his cast from the play's 2008-09 Broadway premiere. That includes the matchless Broadway icon Elizabeth Ashley as Stella, the put-upon matriarch of this faded family and the one who holds the keys to the presumed fortune that some yearn to get their mitts on.

The coveter-in-chief is daughter Mary Jo, portrayed by the playwright's own daughter, Hallie Foote, who earned a Tony nomination for the role on Broadway.

Stalking around the Gordon homestead's fussy digs indignantly, her elbows punching the air like a pair of lunging and hungry hawks, Foote captures with comic brio a volatile mix of entitlement and desperation.

'Dividing the Estate'

The Old Globe Theatre

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays (no matinee Feb. 11); 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays; plus 2 p.m. Feb. 8. Through Feb. 12.

Where: 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$29 and up

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"I think we're having our birthright stolen right before our very eyes," she warns her family — glad-handing schemer Bob (amusingly angst-y James DeMarse) and coddled daughters Em-

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From left, Kelly McAndrew, Keiana Richard, Devon Abner and Roger Robinson in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe. HENRY DIROCCO

ily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance), uppity city people who've been living way beyond their means (not to mention the estate's).

Few of these people are much acquainted with working for a living, and that includes Stella's son Lewis — played by another of the playwright's children, Horton Foote Jr., in his first stage appearance in some 17 years. The actor's stoical, exquisitely hangdog face and clipped speech embody the resigned outlook of this worse-for-the-wear character, a sometime drunk.

His sister Lucille (nicely pensive and protective Penny Fuller) is the sensible one, still living at the family house with the aptly named Son (a quietly dignified Devon Abner), who serves as the estate's paid caretaker;

the fact nobody calls him anything but Son is a sign of his dutiful role. He's engaged to the open-minded local schoolteacher Pauline, played by Kelly McAndrew in a key of spirited, well-meaning cluelessness that gets plenty of laughs.

Integral to the Gordon universe, and yet kept in an outer orbit, are the household staff: The proud 92-year-old Doug (funny and poignant Roger Robinson), along with the warm, seen-it-all Mildred (Pat Bowie) and fragile young Cathleen (Keiana Richard).

And adding a dash of last-minute intrigue (and giving a glimpse of the Gordons' humbled future): Bree Welch as the fresh-faced Irene, Lewis' fast-food-clerk girlfriend.

She serves as a totem of upheaval in a family deeply

mired in the past — a notion reflected in Jeff Cowie's elegant but museum-like sets (lit with a kind of enforced, sunny cheer by Rui Rita).

At one point, the Gordons manage to put aside their squabbling long enough for the spontaneous singing of the hymn "In Heavenly Love Abiding." But that proves a rare moment of harmony. More telling is the moment when Lucille, tired of the incessant chatter about finances and the estate, pleads, "Let's change the subject."

The silence says it all: In this house, only money talks.

jim.hebert@utsandiego.com

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Play review: 'Estate' is on the money

Globe staging of the late Horton Foote's final work captures bittersweet wit

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Jenny Dare Paulin, Nicole Lowrance, Hallie Foote and James DeMarse (left to right) in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at the Old Globe Theatre. — Henry DiRocco



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"I think we're having our birthright stolen right before our very eyes," she warns her family — including glad-handing husband and schemer Bob (an amusingly angst-y James DeMarse) and coddled daughters Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance), uppity city people who've been living way beyond their means (not to mention the estate's).

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Old Globe Theatre

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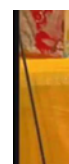
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Play review: 'Estate' is on the money

Globe staging of the late Horton Foote's final work captures bittersweet wit

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Jenny Dare Paulin, Nicole Lowrance, Hallie Foote and James DeMarse (left to right) in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at the Old Globe Theatre. — Henry DiRocco



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THEATER REVIEWS



HENRY DiRocco

CLASHING FAMILY MEMBERS are portrayed by Horton Foote Jr., left, Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley.

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Horton Foote's taut but delightful family drama 'Dividing the Estate' echoes America's tensions. Deft acting deepens this Old Globe presentation.

CHARLES McNULTY THEATER CRITIC >>> FROM SANDIEGO >>> Nothing draws out the worst in a family quite like conflicts over an inheritance. Land, money and, oh, God, jewelry, have a way of reviving old rivalries and resurrecting long-buried grudges.

Horton Foote, an America dramatist who was a master of revealing all sorts of tragic goings-on lurking under the calm domestic surface, lays bare the self-seeking ferocity of otherwise loving brothers and sisters in his superb drama "Dividing the Estate." This quietly furious work, being presented at the Old Globe with many of the same actors from Michael Wilson's critically acclaimed 2008 Broadway production, is not just an acute psychological study, it's a deeply perceptive sociological one as well.

The British would call this a state-of-the-nation play. And indeed, with all the talk of foreclosures, layoffs and the depredations of big business, you'd have reason to think it came hot off the press, but it was first performed in 1989. "Dividing the Estate" takes place in the playwright's fictionalized hometown of Harrison, Texas, in the late 1980s during a recession in the oil industry. Foote, who died in 2009, had made revisions to the script for its New York premiere, but one of the eye-opening aspects of the play is the way it provides historical depth to our current crises. Yes, 20-odd years ago we were fretting, just as we are today, over how America is becoming a service economy and falling behind more industrious Asian countries as sloth, greed and superficiality [See 'Estate,' D8]

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'Estate' is rich in zingy humor

['Estate,' from D1]
threaten to accelerate the pace of decline.

What makes Foote's critique sting is the casualness of his manner and his sly satiric humor. The playwright gets us to listen to what we might be inclined to tune out by interesting us first and foremost in his characters. Indeed, the play behaves almost like a novel in the way it's so colorfully populated and sumptuously furnished. The proscenium picture could hardly be crisper. Jeff Cowie's tastefully appointed main house set, with its graceful antiques arrayed on an antique carpet like an artful floral arrangement, almost blurs the line between realism and reality itself.

This impressive household, headed by Stella Gordon, a Southern matriarch in her 80s played with doddering grande-dame seniority by Elizabeth Ashley, is clinging to the vestiges of a world that no longer exists. The property, once surrounded by gracious homes, now faces a highway. Burger joints dot the town, and a nearby plastic factory owned by Vietnamese newcomers serves as a symbol of the changes that have recently been afoot.

These are tough economic times. Lucille (Penny Fuller) and Son (Devon Abner), Stella's daughter and grandson, look after the house and farm with the help of a few African American servants, the oldest being Doug (Roger Robinson), a trembling 92-year-old who recalls the devoted Firs from Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard." Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.), Lucille's alcoholic

'Dividing the Estate'

Where: The Old Globe, Balboa Park, San Diego

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. (Call for exceptions.) Ends Feb. 12.

Price: Tickets start at \$29

Contact: (619) 234-5623 or www.theoldglobe.org

Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes

brother who also lives at the house, takes frequent loans from the estate, something that Son insists the family can no longer afford.

One solution to the financial woes would be to divide the estate. This is the plan that Lucille and Lewis' prodigal sister, Mary Jo (Hallie Foote), espouses when she arrives for a visit with her husband, Bob (James DeMarse), and daughters Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance). Mary Jo also has run up a sizable debt against her share of the estate, and now that her husband's real estate business has virtually collapsed, she needs the money to keep up the Houston lifestyle she and her materialistic daughters have unwisely grown accustomed to.

Stella, however, won't consider splitting up the family's homestead any more than the matriarch of Chekhov's masterpiece will hear of selling the cherry or-

[See 'Estate,' D9]

Poised at a great divide

['Estate,' from D8]
chard. For her, this isn't simply acreage — it's lineage and memory (selective memory, but that's another story). Let Bob blather all he wants about balance sheets. Stella doesn't care a whit about the inheritance tax her children will have to pay after her death, a position that only intensifies Mary Jo's wrath.

This production, safely under the directorial command of Wilson, one of the most esteemed interpreters of Foote's work, is a family affair. Two of Foote's children are in the cast, the brilliantly hilarious Hallie as Mary Jo, who stomps around the house with balled fists and a backlog of rage, and Horton Jr., who has returned to the stage as a way of paying homage to his deceased father in the role of Lewis, a character he doesn't quite make the most of, but the sentiment behind the casting is nonetheless touching.

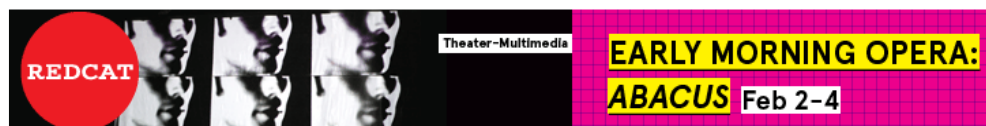
The delectable staginess of Ashley and the bull-in-a-china-shop rowdiness of DeMarse are nicely balanced by the understated qualities brought by Fuller and Abner (Hallie Foote's real-life husband), who never appear to be acting, only living. All told, it's a well-knit ensemble, which is the necessary condition for success with Foote's work, always a gift to actors no matter the size of the part or the scale of the theatricality.

"Dividing the Estate" has dire news to tell about the country and its citizens, but because it's bursting with never-changing human nature, the bleakness is transformed into delight.

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ENTERTAINMENT



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Theater review: 'Dividing the Estate' at the Old Globe

January 23, 2012 | 6:30 am



Nothing draws out the worst in a family quite like conflicts over an inheritance. Land, money and, oh, God, jewelry, have a way of reviving old rivalries and resurrecting long-buried grudges.

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The British would call this a state-of-the-nation play. And indeed, with all the talk of foreclosures, layoffs and the depredations of big business, you'd have reason to think it came hot off the press, but it was first performed in 1989. "Dividing the Estate" takes place in the playwright's fictionalized hometown of Harrison, Texas, in the late 1980s during a recession in the oil industry. Foote, who died in 2009, had made revisions to the script for its New York premiere, but one of the eye-opening aspects of the play is the way it provides historical depth to our current crises. Yes, 20-odd years ago we were fretting, just as we are today, over how America is becoming a service economy and falling behind more industrious Asian countries as sloth, greed and superficiality threaten to accelerate the pace of decline.

What makes Foote's critique sting is the casualness of his manner and his sly satiric humor. The playwright gets us to listen to what we might be inclined to tune out by interesting us first and foremost in his characters. Indeed, the play behaves almost like a novel in the way it's so colorfully populated and sumptuously furnished. The proscenium picture could hardly be crisper. Jeff Cowie's tastefully appointed main house set, with its graceful antiques arrayed on an antique carpet like an artful floral arrangement, almost blurs the line between realism and reality itself.

This impressive household, headed by Stella Gordon, a Southern matriarch in her 80s played with doddering grande-dame seniority by Elizabeth Ashley, is clinging to the vestiges of a world that no longer exists. The property, once surrounded by gracious homes, now faces a highway. Burger joints dot the town, and a nearby plastic factory owned by Vietnamese newcomers serves as a symbol of the changes that have recently been afoot.

These are tough economic times. Lucille (Penny Fuller) and Son (Devon Abner), Stella's daughter and grandson, look after the house and farm with the help of a few African American servants, the oldest being Doug (Roger Robinson), a trembling 92-year-old who recalls the devoted Firs from Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard."

Orchard.” Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.), Lucille’s alcoholic brother who also lives at the house, takes frequent loans from the estate, something that Son insists the family can no longer afford.

One solution to the financial woes would be to divide the estate. This is the plan that Lucille and Lewis’ prodigal sister, Mary Jo (Hallie Foote), espouses when she arrives for a visit with her husband, Bob (James DeMarse), and daughters, Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance). Mary Jo also has run up a sizable debt against her share of the estate, and now that her husband’s real estate business has virtually collapsed, she desperately needs the money to keep up the Houston lifestyle she and her materialistic daughters have unwisely grown accustomed to.

Stella, however, won’t consider splitting up the family’s homestead any more than the matriarch of Chekhov’s masterpiece will hear of selling the cherry orchard. For her, this isn’t simply acreage — it’s lineage and memory (selective memory, but that’s another story). Let Bob blather all he wants about balance sheets. Stella doesn’t care a whit about the inheritance tax her children will have to pay after her death, a position that only intensifies Mary Jo’s wrath.

This production, safely under the directorial command of Wilson, one of the most esteemed interpreters of Foote’s work, is a family affair. Two of Foote’s children are in the cast, the brilliantly hilarious Hallie as Mary Jo, who stomps around the house with balled fists and a backlog of rage, and Horton Jr., who has returned to the stage as a way of paying homage to his deceased father in the role of Lewis, a character he doesn’t quite make the most of, but the sentiment behind the casting is nonetheless touching.

The delectable staginess of Ashley and the bull-in-a-china-shop rowdiness of DeMarse are nicely balanced by the understated qualities brought by Fuller and Abner (Hallie Foote’s real-life husband), who never appear to be acting, only living. All told, it’s a well-knit ensemble, which is the necessary condition for success with Foote’s work, always a gift to actors no matter the size of the part or the scale of the theatricality.

“Dividing the Estate” has dire news to tell about the country and its citizens, but because it’s bursting with never-changing human nature, the bleakness is transformed into delight.

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-- Charles McNulty

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“Dividing the Estate,” the Old Globe, Balboa Park, San Diego. 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays, 2 and 8 Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. (Call for exceptions.) Ends Feb. 12 Tickets start at \$29. (619) 234-5623 or www.theoldglobe.org Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes.

Photos: Upper: (from left) Horton Foote Jr., Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley. Lower: Hallie Foote (with James DeMarse and Jenny Dare Paulin). Credit: Henry DiRocco.



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THEATER REVIEW

Globe's 'Estate' amusing but uneven

By PAM KRAGEN

pkragen@ncimes.com

If not for the program telling you that Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" is set in 1987 Texas, the family comedy-drama could just as well take place today in Anywhere USA.

It's the story of a wealthy family brought low by a recession, the death of its patriarch, an impending property tax bill and greedy infighting between the children over their share of the estate. Heiress Stella Gordon wants to hold together the property for as long as she lives, but two of her three adult children are pressuring her to sell so they can have their share before she dies.

What's really facing dissolution here isn't just a house and land, but the

family itself, which has splintered into warring, jealous factions, each of which believes that money can solve their problems. Meanwhile, the mercurial Stella controls the purse strings and enjoys the power she exerts over her children.

Eldest daughter Lucille and her adult child, Son, live with Stella (Lucille as her caretaker and Son as her business manager) and they live in hope that Stella will leave them the house in her will.

Fiftysomething middle child Lewis is a ne'er-do-well drinker and gambler who borrows regularly from the estate, most recently to pay off the angry father of the high school-age girl he's now courting.

And youngest child Mary Jo and her real estate agent

"Dividing the Estate"

WHEN: 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Feb. 12

WHERE: The Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

TICKETS: \$29 and up

INFO: 619-234-5623
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husband, Bob, live an affluent life with their two spoiled daughters Emily and Sissie, but the wolf is at the door. The real estate bust has hit Bob's business hard and Mary Jo has arrived once again to beg her mother for another advance on her inheritance.

The family and estate

seem poised to collapse until an unexpected twist brings the family closer together than Stella could have ever dreamed.

Director Michael Wilson has staged this production in several cities since 2007, and it comes to the Globe with much of the original Broadway cast. Some elements of the production shine with a luster born from repeated polishing, but the Globe's production feels curiously static and sluggish.

It's not the fault of the 1987 play, which has good bones for a crackling production. The late Foote is a proven master at dialogue, humor and family dynamics ("Tender Mercies," "A Trip to Bountiful," to name a few), and several of the actors in this production truly live their roles. But one casting choice keeps the show from rising to the heights that it could, and Wilson's direction keeps most of the actors seated for long talky stretches on Jeff Cowie's vast set.

One big problem with the show is Horton Foote Jr., the playwright's son, who joins the Globe's "Dividing" cast as Lewis after 17 years away

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A scene from The Old Globe production of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," running through Feb. 12
Photo courtesy of Henry DiRocco

from the stage. On opening night, his line delivery was flat, he didn't probe the comic (or tragic) elements of his character and his slow timing seemed to throw the rest of the cast off.

On the other hand, Broadway grand dame Elizabeth Ashley is witty, dry and aloof as Stella, and Hallie Foote — the daughter and foremost interpreter of Foote's work — is wonderfully desperate as the miserable Mary Jo (a role for which she received a Tony nomination in 2009).

Also fine are the understated and authentic Penny Fuller and Devon Abner as Lucille and Son. When scene-stealing Roger Robinson's Doug (the family's 92-year-old servant) dies unexpectedly in the first act,

the play is worse off without his comic presence.

James DeMarse is boorishly direct as Mary Jo's husband Bob. Kelly McAndrew offers terrific support as Son's fiancée, Pauline, a well-meaning school-teacher whose sweetness, work ethic and selflessness stand in stark contrast to the self-absorbed Gordon family. And Jenny Dare Paulin is nicely snide as Emily, Mary Jo's spoiled eldest daughter who can't be bothered with the suffering of others.

"Dividing the Estate" marks Foote's premiere at the 76-year-old Globe, a long-overdue honor for the playwright. Let's hope his work can be seen here again some day but in a more cohesive production.

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THEATER REVIEW: Globe's 'Estate' is amusing but uneven

By PAM KRAGEN pkragen@nctimes.com North County Times | Posted: Sunday, January 22, 2012 2:49 pm | No Comments Posted

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Henry DiRocco

Devon Abner, Elizabeth Ashley, Penny Fuller, Kelly McAndrew, James DeMarse, Hallie Foote, Jenny Dare Paulin, Roger Robinson, Nicole Lowrance and Horton Foote Jr. in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Jan. 14 - Feb. 12, 2012. Photo by Henry DiRocco.

"Dividing the Estate"

When: 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Feb. 12

Where: The Old Globe, Balboa Park, San Diego

Tickets: \$29 and up

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Web: theoldglobe.org

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What's really facing dissolution here isn't just a house and land but the family itself, which has splintered into warring, jealous factions who all believe that money can solve their problems. Meanwhile, the mercurial Stella controls the purse strings and enjoys the power she exerts over her children.

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And youngest child Mary Jo and her real estate agent husband, Bob, live an affluent life with their two spoiled daughters Emily and Sissie, but the wolf is at the door. The real estate bust has hit Bob's business hard and Mary Jo has arrived once again to beg her mother for another advance on her inheritance.

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One big problem with the show is Horton Foote Jr., the playwright's son, who joins the Globe's "Dividing" cast as Lewis after 17 years away from the stage. On opening night, his line delivery was flat, he didn't probe the comic (or tragic) elements of his character and his slow timing seemed to throw

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"Dividing the Estate" marks Foote's premiere at the 76-year-old Globe, a long-overdue honor for the playwright. Let's hope his work can be seen here again some day but in a more cohesive production.

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THEATER LISTINGS



PHOTOGRAPH BY HENRY DIROCCO

Dividing the Estate

It's 1987. Stella Gordon, aging matriarch, wants to keep her estate intact. But her children, like King Lear's, want to tear the land, and tradition, apart. Horton Foote, a wonderful writer, has subtly inscribed a social history into what looks like a conventional how-to-slice-the-family-pie comedy-drama. The Old Globe's production, however, is all surface. And can't find a tone to accommodate the drama and the histrionics. The actors perform as if in isolation. Even their reaction times vary. As anticipated, Elizabeth Ashley gives a bravura performance as Stella (having Ashley in San Diego is the sole recommendation for the production, but it's a compelling one). The rest of the cast ranges from over-the-top to bland. Jeff Cowie's richly detailed set, lit too brightly, is so wide that the actors at each end must make a toll call.

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**Pat Bowie as Mildred and Keiana Richàrd as Cathleen in the
Old Globe's Dividing the Estate**

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Dividing the Estate at the Old Globe

By Jeff Smith | Posted January 21, 2012, 12:53 p.m.

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There's more to Horton Foote's play than meets the eye. It's 1987. Stella Gordon, an aging matriarch, wants to keep her estate in Harrison, Texas, intact after she dies. But her children - like King Lear's, like the grabby family in *Osage County*, and like the lion cubs in winter currently at North Coast Rep - want to tear the land, and tradition, apart.

Their stately manse, on ten acres, is an anachronism amid declining real estate values and double-digit unemployment. Even people who appear successful, like daughter Mary Jo's family, aren't.

Things fall apart in sections. Foote gradually introduces succeeding generations: Stella, her three children, and then their children (the servants mirror this three-tier pattern). The arrival of a new character changes the ways we see the others. Concern for preservation gives way to degrees of greed, and finally to a profoundly selfish teenage daughter shouting "who cares?"

Few members of the Gordon clan have ever worked. They receive monthly stipends. Two have borrowed six-digit amounts from the estate already. By play's end, all masks are down. And Stella, from beyond the grave, may have found a way to keep the estate intact.

Foote, a wonderful writer whose other works include *A Trip to Bountiful* and screenplays for *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Tender Mercies*, has inscribed a subtle social history into what looks like, on the surface, a conventional how-to-slice-the-family-pie comedy-drama.

The Old Globe's production, however, is all surface. And can't settle on a consistent tone.

This is a puzzle, since most of the cast have performed the play before, even on Broadway. And Michael Wilson received a Tony nomination for directing it on the Great White Way.

The actors perform as if in isolation. Most settle for types with little specificity. Even their reaction times vary.

To quote a *Reader* headline Bill Owens wrote years ago, the play is "Southern Fried Chekhov." But the cast can't settle on a consistent skillet.

As anticipated, Elizabeth Ashley gives a bravura performance as Stella. A titan in decline, she will not go "gentle" into that good night. The director, however, has her sit a tad off center-stage, and keeps her there, which makes for a static picture.

Penny Fuller fares well as Lucille, the oldest and most chipper of the siblings. Hallie Foote's Mary Jo, who explodes into histrionics, would be a laugh riot if so many of the other cast members - especially Horton Foote, Jr., and Devon Abner - weren't so bland. She has stiletto-sharp timing and has Mary Jo down to a T. But in this toned-down setting she comes off as over-the-top.

On Jeff Cowie's richly-detailed set, lit too brightly by Rui Rita, everything in the family home looks brand new. And the downstage living room is so wide that in many of the scenes actors at each end must make, it seems, a toll call.

SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

Dividing the Estate

Old Globe

The late Horton Foote loved the characters he put in his plays. He wanted them to be human with all that implies, grace, foolishness, the works. Even if we don't like them we can tell that he's there for them.

Which is pretty much the case in *Dividing the Estate*, Mr. Foote's last work, which is making its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe.



**Horton Foote, Jr., Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller
and Elizabeth Ashley**

The Gordons are fools. They are affected by "trust-fund-itis," that not-so-rare disease that turns otherwise productive people into layabouts with money. Only they never set up trust funds or took care to protect themselves legally, so the money is running out.

That's about the story. Oh, there are more than a few other details, but really, that's about it. The time is 1987, and that's important to know, because there's a recession on, people are out of work, homes are being foreclosed, and smaller towns are drying up as their residents move to cities in hopes of finding work. People who are used to staying at home are looking for jobs to help make ends meet. In other words, economic transformation is leading to social transformation.

Dividing the Estate was produced on Broadway in 2008, and while Mr. Foote was an extremely prolific playwright (60 plays in a 60-year career, including *The Trip to Bountiful* and his Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Young Man from Atlanta*) the time in which the play is set may well be coincidental (an earlier version debuted in 1989). The 2007 recession, which can't help but resonate with contemporary audiences, unfortunately makes the characters onstage seem more foolish than might have otherwise been the case.

The Old Globe has imported much of the Broadway production, and you're not going to be disappointed in its quality. Jeff Cowie's set includes an alcove in the far reaches of the large living room where family members can (and do) go to escape the hubbub, as well as a dining area where a funny and confrontational family meal occurs (though not nearly as confrontational nor as funny as a similar scene in the Old Globe's recent production of *August: Osage County*). David C. Woolard's costumes are dead on, and Rui Rita's lighting sensitively brings the scenes to life. John Gromada's original music and sound design are also used in this production.

Michael Wilson directed the large cast with care, and it would be hard to find a more qualified bunch to play these roles. Elizabeth Ashley, in a lovely, layered, performance as Stella, the family's matriarch, deftly navigates being dominating without being domineering.

Stella remembers many things, conveniently forgets some things (this is Texas, after all, a small town outside Houston, but of course Rick Perry wasn't on the scene yet, let alone running for president), and makes sure that no one gets out of line.

The cast also features two of Mr. Foote's children, Hallie and Horton, Jr., who play family members most affected by their malaise (Mary Jo is a profligate spender; Lewis is a drunk). Penny Fuller as Lucille, the eldest sibling, takes her role as the responsible one seriously, while putting Devin Gordon, her son (who has the very Texas name of Son), into an eternal no-win situation as the underpaid manager of the family's holdings.

Mary Jo's husband Bob (James DeMarse) and daughters Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance) are also on hand, but all of them are pretty one-note characters: Bob frets about the lack of legal protections for the estate, while Emily and Sissie look bored and roll their eyes a lot (did young people roll their eyes in 1987?). Son's fiancée Pauline (Kelly McAndrew), a perky school teacher who hilariously doesn't fit in at all, spends a lot of her time at the house, and Lewis' mysterious 19-year-old girlfriend (a very-19 Bree Welch) makes a late appearance.

The household's staff includes three African Americans Doug (the fine Roger Robinson), who is 92 and has lived with the family for virtually his entire life, Mildred (Pat Bowie) and her granddaughter Cathleen (Keiana Richàrd), who is attending college and who represents the "new" reality that will emerge from the changing social mores.

There is a chart of family relationships in the program that is very helpful in sorting out the connections.

Despite expert work from all concerned, *Dividing the Estate* is not Mr. Foote's best script. The second act drags in the name of comedy, and the audience tires of the same plot points being made over and over. When it comes time for family members to confront each other, the result is humorous but not satisfying. Mr. Foote seems to be saying that, while hell may be defined as the necessity of living with our families, somehow we'll all find a way to make it work. His optimism is admirable but it is completely at odds with his play.

Dividing the Estate plays through February 12, 2012, at the Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in San Diego's Balboa Park. Tickets (\$29 - \$87) are available by calling the Old Globe box office at (619) 23-GLOBE or online at www.oldglobe.org.

The Old Globe presents *Dividing the Estate* by Horton Foote. Directed by Michael Wilson with Jeff Cowie (Scenic Design), David C. Woolard (Costume Design), Rui Rita (Lighting Design), John Gromada (Original Music and Sound Design), Stephanie Klapper (New York Casting Director) and Marisa Levy (Stage Manager).

The cast includes Elizabeth Ashley, Penny Fuller, Hallie Foote, Horton Foote, Jr., Devon Abner, Pat Bowie, James DeMarse, Nicole Lowrance, Kelly McAndrew, Jenny Dare Paulin, Keiana Richàrd, Roger Robinson, and Bree Welch.

Photo: Henry DiRocco

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Entertainment :: Theatre

Dividing the Estate

by Rodney Rodriguez

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Penny Fuller (Lucille), Hallie Foote (Mary Jo), Horton Foote Jr. (Lewis Gordon), Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) and Roger Robinson (Doug) appear in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" (Source: Henry DiRocco)

There are few things that matter more in the South than family, food, faith, and football and every one of these is touched upon in Horton Foote's **"Dividing the Estate,"** now playing at the Old Globe. Authentically Southern and unmistakably Texan, Foote's final piece follows the dysfunction of a family forced together as money and greed tear their lives apart.

Set in 1987 in a fictional east Texas town, the show follows the Gordon family, led by Stella Gordon (role originated and played by theater legend Elizabeth Ashley), as they confront their difficult pasts and decide what to do with a withering estate.

Penny Fuller plays Lucille, the complacent older daughter watching her family fall apart. Fuller and Ashley reprise their roles from the original Broadway production. Two of Foote's real-life children portray the antagonistic middle children, the alcoholic Lewis

(Horton Foote Jr.) and the pillaging Mary Jo (Hallie Foote). The youngest Gordon, Son (Devon Abner), is forced to play ringmaster and peacekeeper dodging wit and vitriol from his older siblings.

The cast is well-rounded with a wonderful ensemble featuring pure and truthful performances by Pat Bowie as Mildred, one of the Gordon's servants, and James DeMarse as Mary Jo's husband, Bob. Bowie's lines were delivered with eloquence and authenticity, her presence both strong and subdued. DeMarse's performance was brilliant, articulately portraying a man as desperate for money as he is desperate to be liked.

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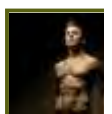
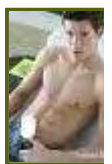
Foote's writing works to bring the audience square into the living room of a struggling family in a tiny Texas town and accomplishes it well with droll dialogue and uniquely Texan colloquialisms.

From the first moment one enters the theater, it becomes obvious that the attention to detail

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Jo's husband, Bob.

extends beyond dialog and right onto the stage itself. Jeff Cowie's scenic design was remarkable from the extensive crown molding to the wainscoting, the fine finishes, and rich color.

Rui Rita's lighting provided both drama and warmth as large streaks of light poured in from that big Texas sky. It was easy to forget that I was the fourth wall. At times I felt like part of the family.

Michael Wilson, who is no stranger to the extensive work of Foote, takes the reins again of the production he directed on Broadway and carefully navigated it to the west coast. His vision and careful hand helped orchestrate a whirlwind of comedy and drama that left me frustrated and angry at a family divided, and loving every minute of it.

"Dividing the Estate" runs through February 12 at the Old Globe Theater, 1363 Old Globe Way San Diego, CA. Out at the Globe, an evening for LGBT theater lovers, will be held on Thursday, Feb. 9. For an additional \$20, Out at the Globe participants can enjoy a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and door prizes before the performance. For info or tickets call 619-232-GLOBE or visit www.TheOldGlobe.org

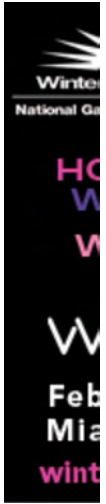
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THEATER

Foote's family feud at the Old Globe

With all its family feudin' and unapologetic displays of spite, greed and self-interest, Horton Foote's final play, *Dividing the Estate*, might as well be a reality-TV show. It'd no doubt be a raging hit on Fox or the CW. Personifying the old adage that familiarity breeds contempt, the Gordon clan of fictitious Harrison, Texas (circa 1987), is populated by feisty, pronouncement-wielding Grandma Stella (Elizabeth Ashley), the family matriarch and keeper of the presumed valuable estate; sour-mouthed daughter Mary Jo (Hallie Foote, the late playwright's daughter); harried daughter Lucille (Penny Fuller); and boozin', gamblin' son Lewis (Horton Foote, Jr.). They're split on the notion of dividing the estate Stella clings to in her diminishing days. Of course, there's a lot of peripheral and unsolicited advice from in-laws like Mary Jo's good-old-boy husband Bob (James DeMarse) and the well-meaning schoolteacher Pauline (Kelly McAndrew), who's engaged to the widowed Lucille's son, who's

called, uh, Son (Devon Abner).

The Old Globe's West Coast premiere of the 1989 Foote play, staged on a sumptuous ground-floor-mansion set, becomes rather claustrophobic, mostly when there's too much dead space between laughs. Possibly that was Foote's, and even director Michael Wilson's, intention: to make the audience as uneasy in this household as are so many of its inhabitants, Mary Jo in particular. Except for Stella, deliciously played by the veteran Ashley, and for 92-year-old majordomo Doug (Roger Robinson, at once funny and poignant), the denizens of this home register low on likeability. Some of the familial sparring is entertaining, but a dinner scene near the end of Act 1 feels overlong and static. No matter the subject or tenor of the at-table conversation, it's just not that exciting to watch characters, some of them with their backs to us, eating supper.

Ashley's Stella so commands attention—her fellow characters'

and ours—that she's missed every moment she's not on stage. This woman could look J.R. Ewing in the eye and not blink. She needs a worthy adversary in *Dividing the Estate*, and none of her brood is substantially up to the task.

Dividing the Estate runs through Feb. 12 at the Old Globe Theatre. \$29 and up. oldglobe.org

—David L. Coddon

Write to davidc@sdcitybeat.com and editor@sdcitybeat.com.

HENRY DIROCCO



HALLIE FOOTE (LEFT)
AND ELIZABETH ASHLEY

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Wednesday, Jan 25, 2012

It's a Foote's family feud at the Old Globe

'Dividing the Estate' tops our coverage of plays in local production

By [David L. Coddon](#)

Hallie Foote (left) and Elizabeth Ashley - Photo by Henry DiRocco

With all its family feudin' and unapologetic displays of spite, greed and self-interest, Horton Foote's final play, *Dividing the Estate*, might as well be a reality-TV show. It'd no doubt be a raging hit on Fox or the CW. Personifying the old adage that familiarity breeds contempt, the Gordon clan of fictitious Harrison, Texas (circa 1987), is populated by feisty, pronouncement-wielding Grandma Stella (Elizabeth Ashley), the family matriarch and keeper of the presumed valuable estate; sour-mouthed daughter Mary Jo (Hallie Foote, the late playwright's daughter); harried daughter Lucille

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Ashley's Stella so commands attention—her fellow characters' and ours—that she's missed every moment she's not on stage. This woman could look J.R. Ewing in the eye and not blink. She needs a worthy adversary in *Dividing the Estate*, and none of her brood is substantially up to the task.

Dividing the Estate runs through Feb. 12 at the Old Globe Theatre. \$29 and up. Write to davidc@sdcitybeat.com and editor@sdcitybeat.com

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THEATER REVIEW: The Old Globe stages Horton Foote's "Dividing The Estate"

JEAN LOWERISON - SDGLN THEATER CRITIC
January 25th, 2012

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A confession: I find family squabbles about the distribution of wealth and possessions about as fascinating as watching paint dry.

Horton Foote's last play, "Dividing The Estate," falls into that category.

Best known for his Oscar-winning screenplays for "To Kill A Mockingbird" and "Tender Mercies" and his fine script for the play "A Trip To Bountiful," Foote is practically an unknown quantity on San Diego stages.

The Old Globe, which has never produced one of his plays, offers the West Coast premiere of "Dividing The Estate" through Feb. 12, directed by Michael Wilson.

It's 1987 in small-town Harrison, Texas, and 80-something matriarch Stella Gordon (Elizabeth Ashley) is trying to fend off frequent pleas from two of her three children to sell the property and distribute the proceeds pronto.

Harrison, a former farming community, has over the years has been losing farms, open spaces and population to freeways and fast-food restaurants.

But place still has symbolic value for Stella, who lives on the family's 10-acre property with daughter Lucille (Penny Fuller), grandson Son (Devon Abner), who acts as administrator, and their three black servants: 92-year-old Doug (Roger Robinson), Mildred (Pat Bowie) and Cathleen (Keiana Richard).

It's money that interests son Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.) and married daughter Mary Jo (the playwright's daughter, Hallie Foote), tired of having to ask Son for handouts from their inheritance. Lewis, unable to hold a job, is among other things a gambler with a drinking habit. Mary Jo, a nervous, screechy harriidan who lives in Houston with husband Bob (James DeMarse) and their two spoiled-brat daughters Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance), likes to live beyond her means.

It's a quarrelsome family, not to mention greedy and small-minded, none of them apparently capable of getting what they want. Perhaps it's because nearly all of them suffer from entitlement syndrome.

Stella, Lucille and Son are the only ones who seem happy with the situation as is. Son has, in fact, brought his new girlfriend, high school teacher Pauline (Kelly McAndrew) to meet the family.

[ENLARGE](#)

Photo credit: Henry DiRocco

From left, Horton Foote Jr. as Lewis, Hallie Foote as Mary Jo, Penny Fuller as Lucille and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella.

You hope some of them will at least stop kvetching long enough to exchange pleasantries with the guest, but singlemindedness wins out, and Pauline’s attempts to change the subject from family gossip and money fall on deaf ears.

This play bills itself as a comedy, but plays more like a sitcom, full of repetitive and boring arguments, outsized (and stereotypical) characters who in some cases are grossly overplayed, and ending in a “resolution” you’d expect from a TV show.

I suppose one could argue that everyone knows some of these characters. Perhaps, but not many would want to spend an evening with them. I found myself wondering why poor Pauline didn’t flee.

But if you’ve ever wondered what we might have gotten had Chekhov decided to write “The Cherry Orchard” as a sitcom, “Dividing The Estate” will give you a good idea.

The details

“Dividing The Estate” plays through Feb. 12 at The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 pm; Thursday through Saturday at 8 pm; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm.

For tickets, call (619) 234-5623 or visit [HERE](#).

To read more reviews by SDGLN Theater Critic Jean Lowerison, click [HERE](#).

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Page 1 of 2

Cast finds laughs in greedy, grubbing heirs 'Dividing the Estate'



Let's Review BY DIANA SAENGER

Sibling rivalries rarely reach fever pitch more than when learning what they will inherit from their next of kin. That's the theme of Horton Foote's 2009 Tony Award-winning Best Play, "Dividing the Estate," making its West Coast premiere at The Old Globe Theatre.

The more Horton's rich characters tussle over their estate, the more the humor in the circumstances is elevated. Superbly directed by Michael Wilson, "Dividing the Estate" does a great job of presenting a sobering reality to all who see it, but also in tickling their funny bones.

Gazing at the impressive set designed by Jeff Cowie before the play begins reveals the lavish Gordon home of matriarch Stella (Elizabeth Ashley). In the stunning residence that even Scarlett O'Hara would be proud to descend the stairs in every item from the chairs to the chandeliers tells the story of this family about to fight over the estate.

If you go

- **What:**
'Dividing the Estate'
- **When:** Now to Feb. 12
- **Where:** The Old Globe
Theatre, Balboa Park
- **Tickets:** From \$29
- **Box Office:**
(619) 23-GLOBE
- **Web:** TheOldGlobe.org

Some want it divided before Stella dies.

Lewis Gordon sets off the angst in this story when he bursts into the room obviously a little inebriated. In a loud voice he demands money from his brother, Son, (Devon Abner) who is the

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Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) and Roger Robinson (Doug) in 'Dividing the Estate.' HENRY DIROCCO

estate's executor. Throughout the play Son is the mild-mannered peacemaker to a point, but it's Lewis' almost insufferable antics that irate Stella and his sister Lucille (Penny Fuller) to no end. Lewis is a standout in his portrayal and why wouldn't he be, he's Horton Foot, Jr., the son of the playwright, making his return to the stage after 17 years.

He's joined by his sister, Hallie Foote, who received a Tony Award as Best Actress in the 2009 Broadway production of "Dividing the Estate." She plays Mary Jo, Lewis' sister who is manipulated by her strong-willed, but obviously unsuccessful, Realtor husband Bob (James

DeMorse). The couple is ecstatic thinking they will get a huge sum from the estate when Stella finally passes, but Bob becomes a run-away locomotive, full-steam filling the air, when that may not happen.

From the first words Stella speaks, it's apparent Ashley will provide the powerhouse performance that glues these characters together. That's not a surprise since her awards and her stage, film and TV credits fill nearly a full page in the program.

Robinson ("Joe Turner's Come and Gone") plays the 92-year-old butler whose hands shake so badly his co-workers insist he is unable to serve the big family din-

ner. But Stella overrides their concern. Robinson is brilliant in this role, heightening the humor in Horton's well-written character.

Other cast members layer the hilarity in their roles in situations many audience members have or will experience. The perky Kelly McAndrew plays Son's fiancée, Pauline, who irritates Stella every time she spouts some new statistic from her teacher-mind. Fuller is the perfect foil for Lewis, as a timid but earnest daughter, sister and mother to Son, who just wants everyone to get along. Mary Jo and Bob's daughters, Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance), are spitting images of today's spoiled Hollywood teens.

Irene (Bree Welch) brings much levity to her short entrance into the Gordon home, and Keiana Richard plays a feisty kitchen worker alongside her boss, Mildred, wonderfully portrayed by Pat Bowie. With a voice and zany personality of a Wanda Sykes Hall, Bowie steals every scene she's in.



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Audience finds laughs in greedy, grubbing heirs Dividing the Estate at The Old Globe

By Diana Saenger

Let's Review!

Sibling rivalries rarely reach fever pitch more than when learning what they will inherit from their next of kin. That's the theme of Horton Foote's 2009 Tony Award-nominated Best Play, "Dividing the Estate," making its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe Theatre. The more Horton's rich characters tussle over their estate, the more the humor in the circumstances is elevated. Superbly directed by Michael Wilson, "Dividing the Estate" does a great job of presenting a sobering reality to all who see it, but also in tickling their funny bones.



Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) and Roger Robinson (Doug) in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's 'Dividing the Estate,' now at The Old Globe Theatre. Henry DiRocco.

Gazing at the impressive set designed by Jeff Cowie before the play begins reveals the lavish Gordon home of matriarch Stella (Elizabeth Ashley). In the stunning residence that even Scarlett O'Hara would be proud to descend the stairs in every item from the chairs to the chandeliers tells the story of this family about to fight over the estate. Some want it divided before Stella dies.

Lewis Gordon sets off the angst in this story when he bursts into the room obviously a little inebriated. In a loud voice he demands money from his brother, Son, (Devon Abner) who is the estate's executor. Throughout the play Son is the mild-mannered peacemaker to a point, but it's Lewis' almost insufferable antics that irate Stella and his sister Lucille (Penny Fuller) to no end. Lewis is a standout in his portrayal and why wouldn't he be, he's Horton Foote, Jr., the son of the playwright, making his return to the stage after 17 years.

He's joined by his sister, Hallie Foote, who was nominated for Featured Actress, in the 2009 Broadway production of "Dividing the Estate." She plays Mary Jo, Lewis' sister who is manipulated by her strong-willed, but obviously unsuccessful, realtor husband Bob (James DeMarse). The couple is ecstatic thinking they will get a huge sum from the estate when

Stella finally passes, but Bob becomes a run-away locomotive, full-steam filling the air, when that may not happen.

From the first words Stella speaks, it's apparent Ashley will provide the powerhouse performance that glues these characters together. That's not a surprise since her awards and her stage, film and TV credits fill nearly a full page in the program. Stella's emotions swing like a clock pendulum. One moment she's mad at Lewis, the next telling Son to give him more money. Sometimes she shows more favor to her beloved servant Doug (Roger Robinson), than her children.

Robinson ("Joe Turner's Come and Gone") plays the 92-year-old butler whose hands shake so badly that his co-workers insist he is unable to serve the big family dinner. But Stella overrides their concern. Robinson is brilliant in this role, heightening the humor in Horton's well-written character.



Horton Foote Jr. (Lewis Gordon), Hallie Foote (Mary Jo), Penny Fuller (Lucille) and Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) are family members squabbling over their inheritance in 'Dividing the Estate,' directed by Michael Wilson.

Other cast members layer the hilarity in their roles in situations many audience members have or will experience. The perky Kelly McAndrew plays Son's fiancée, Pauline, who irritates Stella every time she spouts some new statistic from her teacher-mind. Fuller is the perfect foil for Lewis, as a timid but earnest daughter, sister and mother to Son, who just wants everyone to get along. Mary Jo and Bob's daughters, Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance), are spitting images of today's spoiled Hollywood teens.

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If you go

What: "Dividing the Estate"

When: Now to Feb. 12

Where: The Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: From \$29

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Regan Linton as Laura Wingfield
Photo: Jim Carmody

Two years ago I heard **Kyle Donnelly** talk of accepting a wheelchair traveler into the MFA program. A risky challenge all around, yet Donnelly extolled the talent and determination of her new MFA actor, **Regan Linton**, whom readers may have seen in UCSD productions of *The Storm*, *The Threepenny Opera* and *Small Prophecies*. To showcase Linton's extraordinary talents, Donnelly cast her as Laura Wingfield in a workshop production that includes three third-year MFA actors: **Gabriel Lawrence** as The Gentleman Caller, **Mark Christine** as Tom, and **Taylor Shurte** as Amanda.

Because the production is a workshop, this is not a review. However, if you want to check out Ms. Linton, now's the time. There are three more performances at the Mandell Weiss Forum, 8 pm Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Tickets and information: <http://www-theatre.ucsd.edu/>



Gabriel Lawrence as the Gentleman Caller
and Regan Linton as Laura
Photo: Jim Carmody

By contrast, the exceptionally large

Everything about The Old Globe's production of **Horton Foote's** *Dividing the Estate* is large – the humor, the southern stereotypes, the company, and **Jeff Cowie's** amazing wall-to-wall antebellum home. Director **Michael Wilson**, Cowie and designers **David C. Woolard** (costumes), **Rui Rita** (lighting) and **John Gromada** (original music and sound design) recreate the Broadway production of 2008-09, in which several of the current company's actors also appeared, including Foote's to-the-manner-born daughter and frequent interpreter, **Hallie Foote**.

Cowie's home presents the front door, the parlor and the dining room, plus an intimation of the world beyond in fictional Harrison, Texas, 1987. For instance, we feel the little house in the backyard, inhabited by 92-year-old family retainer Doug (**Roger Robinson**), still serving despite extreme tremors. Doug has lived there and served the Gordon family since he was 5 years old. We imagine the kitchen beyond the pantry glimpsed through the swinging door as Doug goes to and fro with young Cathleen (**Keiana Richàrd**), who's "trying to take his job away from him," and the middle-aged Mildred (**Pat Bowie**), setting the table for meals.



Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon and Roger Robinson as Doug in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Jan. 14 - Feb. 12, 2012. Photo by Henry DiRocco.

Eighty-two-year-old family matriarch Stella Gordon (**Elizabeth Ashley**) presides here, along with her daughter Lucille (**Penny Fuller**) and Lucille's alcoholic brother Lewis (**Horton Foote, Jr.**). Lucille's middle-aged son, merely called Son (**Devon Abner**), competently handles estate matters and has done so since college.

Having arranged to ambush Stella in the hope of avoiding inheritance taxes, the avaricious third sibling, Mary Jo (**Hallie Foote**), arrives with her realtor husband Bob (**James DeMarse**). In tow are their insipid, self-centered adult daughters, the divorced Emily (blond and busty **Jenny Dare Paulin**) and the engaged Sissie (**Nicole Lawrance**), who's expecting a big wedding to result from the imminent settling of the estate. The estate consists mostly of property and has little cash flow to support the siblings, two of whom – Lewis and Mary Jo – have borrowed heavily against their potential inheritance. Currently Lewis is demanding an additional huge chunk of change.



The company of *Dividing the Estate*
Photo by Henry DiRocco

Potential income might be earned by granting oil leases to offset the impending tax bill. Stella is against oil leases and against division of the property prior to her death. She watches agitatedly as her children argue loudly and vehemently over the estate she and Son have so carefully preserved thus far. The house itself is one of the few remaining neighborhood architectural relics. She does not want it sold, and besides, the current real estate market is depressed. One wonders as the play unfolds just how much or how little cash will be realized by Stella's grasping, privileged offspring, none of whom has worked a day in their lives.

Two additional characters stand by, awestruck over the goings-on: Son's sensible, socio-politically aware fiancée, Pauline (**Kelly McAndrew**), and Lewis's friend, the teenage Irene (**Bree Welch**). They are both witness to and interested in the family madness.


Anyone who's spent time there knows these small town southerners and how they operate. A genteel gloss covers the sharp edges and darker realities and motivations. These are the women who get their hair done at Truvy's beauty shop in *Steel Magnolias*. Though Foote's observations are hysterically funny and his characters deadly accurate, they are not as finely drawn or as profound as those of Tracey Letts' *August: Osage County*.

The company of seasoned pros is fine and so is the lavish production. The play itself requires patience, but the rewards are great.

Four Burgoos. Plays Tuesdays-Sundays through February 12 at the Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, www.theoldglobe.org or (619) 23-GLOBE.

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Old Globe Theatre Mounts Horton Foote Comedy About Avarice

Added by **max** on January 24, 2012.

Saved under **Culture, Entertainment, Jack Lyons, Literature, News, Photos**



By Jack Lyons Theatre and Film Critic

There's something about southern families and their last wills and testaments that just fascinate Americans.

Not to go picking on our southern brethren, but southern playwrights themselves love to write plays about the "the family", most of them rife with over-the-top characters and situations, and the inevitable "reading of the will", and let's not forget the role of Religion.

Tracy Letts explored and excoriated a dysfunctional Oklahoma extended family in "August: Osage County" (winning a Pulitzer and a Tony in the process). Almost half of Tennessee Williams' plays revolve around men and women of the South who come to grips with family legacies, and the inevitable reading of the Will, and the money to be fought over by the relatives. Lillian Hellman's "The Little Foxes", the 1939 ground-breaking drama of greed and avarice set in Alabama, is a prime example. When it comes to satire, bordering on farce concerning money, Del Shores has his southern Texas families solidly in his cross-hairs with "Daddy's Dyin', Whose Got the Will" and "Sordid Lives" as prima facie evidence.

Horton Foote a Texas born, two-time Academy Award winning screenwriter ("To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Tender Mercies" was a playwright of more than fifty plays, including a Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for the play "The Young Man from Atlanta". This time, San Diego's Old Globe Theatre and Foote take on The Gordon Family of Harrison Texas, in his last play "Dividing the Estate" (he died in 2009), an over-the-top comedy/farce, directed by Michael Wilson, and starring Foote's real-life children Hallie Foote, as Mary Jo and Horton Foote, Jr. as Lewis Gordon. He claimed the story was not a Roman-a-clef take on the Foote family tree, but don't writers always say that?

The story has very few surprises in this tale of self-obsessed, avaricious relatives who eagerly wait for the Will to be read in order to see how much money they're going to get from Mama's estate once she moves on. Elizabeth Ashley as family Matriarch, Stella Gordon, along with Hallie Foote as Mary Jo, Horton Foote, Jr. as Lewis Gordon, Penny Fuller as Lucille, briskly move the creaky and predictable plot along, with help from the rest of the cast. It's all about materialistic daughters, scheming husbands who marry into the family, and a couple of shallow vapid granddaughters thrown into the mix for good measure. Thank goodness it's played as a comedy/farce. There isn't anyone to root for as they are all either too dumb or naïve, save one, Devon Abner, as Son. Abner, plays the level-headed administrator of the family estate and the executor of the family Will, and, boy, does he have his hands full with this lot. It's a bit of a guessing game as to whether he can keep the various interested parties in line and within the law.

Director Michael Wilson imported most the Old Globe cast from his Broadway production of "Dividing the Estate", as well as its creative team of: Jeff Cowie, David C. Woolard, and Rui Rita, as Scenic Designer, Costume Designer, and Lighting Designer respectively. You won't get a headache trying to figure out the storyline, but you will laugh a great deal at the on-stage shenanigans and performances of this outsized Texas family.

"Dividing the Estate" performs on the main stage, Darlene and Donald Shiley Theatre through February 12, 2012. For ticket information go online at www.theoldglobe.org or call 619-234-5623.

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Even with addition of two Footes, play is no great feat

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By Carol Davis



Carol Davis

SAN DIEGO—When it comes to dividing up the family estate between brothers and sisters, any amount of civility goes unnoticed in playwright Horton Foote's last comedy/drama. In *Dividing the Estate* the three adult Gordon siblings (Lucille, Lewis, called Brother and Mary Jo) who assemble at their childhood home, for a supposed dinner gathering headed by matriarch Stella Gordon (the beautiful Elizabeth Ashley), can bear witness to this. The subject is not dinner; it

is the best-known family secret about money from the family estate and who gets what share of it.

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Let us hope and pray the good folks in *Dividing The Estate* are more fictional than real-life relatives of the Foote family, although it could be argued that every family has its share of greed when the thought of a huge inheritance is at stake.

Here in the fictitious town of Harrison, Texas, 1987 we meet up with the Gordon family. Their sprawling mansion (Jeff Cowie's set covers the entire stage) has all the accoutrements of old Southern wealth yet is more worn than pristine. Living at home are the eldest daughter, Lucille (a wonderful Penny Fuller) and her grown son, Son (Devon Abner in a very somber performance) who was pulled from his last year in college to run the estate after the death of his father.

Lewis Gordon, (Horton Foote, Jr. was sort of out of it on opening night) the only son is an off again/on again drunk and gambler, who over the years has borrowed against his inheritance the tidy sum of two hundred thousand dollars. He also lives in the mansion and is after his uncle to advance him yet another ten thousand dollars to fix another mess he got himself in that involved a very young woman who works at the town's hamburger joint. And, Oh, did I mention that the siblings all get an allowance from the estate?

What comes through loud and clear is that the estate like the landed gentry of the past has seen its day. Its purpose of feeding the clan has gone the way of the horse and buggy although Stella thinks it can be done again. Bob, the real estate mogul, hustler and Mary Jo's husband still wants to drill for oil hoping their fortune can be resurrected and bring in the money they all think they deserve, but even that last-ditch effort may be too little too late and...Stella is dead set against it.

But like every family dynamic, everyone has a say and a right to change his or her mind. This family, however has only one thought in mind and that is money, so no matter how many times the balance between selling and drilling goes back and forth, they are all stuck on their own flat feet. No one in the cast can rise above the lackluster script and there seems no place for it to go.

Even with the combination of Foote's daughter Hallie (she received a Tony nomination for her role as Mary Jo in the Broadway production) and son Horton Foote, Jr. that appeared to be an attraction and handsome addition to the play and a tribute to the late playwright, the production came up short. Now let's add the seasoned, witty and lovely Elizabeth Ashley and, based on reviews from the Broadway production (it comes to us almost fully intact from The Booth Theatre production including director Michael Wilson), one might conclude that it would be an entertaining star-studded evening of theatre. But conclusions can be false and the folks in *Dividing The Estate* are as annoying and irritating in their antics as ants at a picnic and even less interesting.

Notwithstanding there were some fine performances on opening night. No one can deny Elizabeth Ashley her place as the matriarch completely in charge of her estate and family. She is a fresh and genteel yet witty and fierce force with which to be reckoned. James DeMarse's Bob is just fine as the almost ignored son-in-law and husband to the hyper, over the top Hallie's Mary Jo. Penny Fuller is another blast from the past whose timing and steadfastness gives the play an anchor and Kelly McAndrew's Pauline, Son's fiancée gives some much needed outsider perspective.

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richer for the experience.

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Dates: through Feb. 12th

Organization: Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

Production Type: Comedy

Where: 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Ticket Prices: start at \$29.00

Web: theoldglobe.org

Venue: Conrad Prebys Theatre

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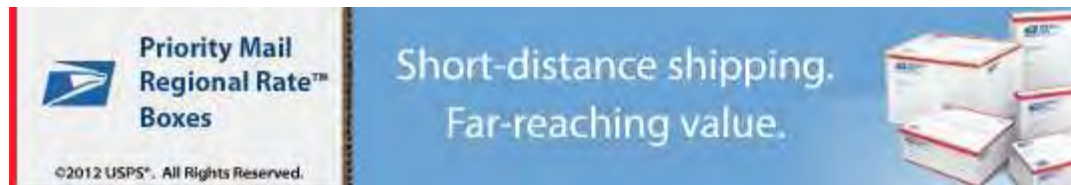
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“Dividing the Estate”: Horton Foote’s Family drama of no consequence



Carol Davis, San Diego Theater Examiner

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Horton Foote, Jr. Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley in Horton Foote's *Dividing The Estate* at The Old Globe Theatre

Credits: Henry DiRocco

Rating for Dividing the Estate:

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Hallie Foote

Old Globe. Elizabeth Ashley



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[Read full bio](#)

By **Carol Davis**

San Diego Theater Examiner

Carol Davis is a regular contributor to sdjewishworld.com. Before that she wrote for The San Diego Jewish Times for more than 20 years. Carol has...

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SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

Dividing the Estate

Old Globe

The late Horton Foote loved the characters he put in his plays. He wanted them to be human with all that implies, grace, foolishness, the works. Even if we don't like them we can tell that he's there for them.

Which is pretty much the case in *Dividing the Estate*, Mr. Foote's last work, which is making its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe.



**Horton Foote, Jr., Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller
and Elizabeth Ashley**

The Gordons are fools. They are affected by "trust-fund-itis," that not-so-rare disease that turns otherwise productive people into layabouts with money. Only they never set up trust funds or took care to protect themselves legally, so the money is running out.

That's about the story. Oh, there are more than a few other details, but really, that's about it. The time is 1987, and that's important to know, because there's a recession on, people are out of work, homes are being foreclosed, and smaller towns are drying up as their residents move to cities in hopes of finding work. People who are used to staying at home are looking for jobs to help make ends meet. In other words, economic transformation is leading to social transformation.

Dividing the Estate was produced on Broadway in 2008, and while Mr. Foote was an extremely prolific playwright (60 plays in a 60-year career, including *The Trip to Bountiful* and his Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Young Man from Atlanta*) the time in which the play is set may well be coincidental (an earlier version debuted in 1989). The 2007 recession, which can't help but resonate with contemporary audiences, unfortunately makes the characters onstage seem more foolish than might have otherwise been the case.

The Old Globe has imported much of the Broadway production, and you're not going to be disappointed in its quality. Jeff Cowie's set includes an alcove in the far reaches of the large living room where family members can (and do) go to escape the hubbub, as well as a dining area where a funny and confrontational family meal occurs (though not nearly as confrontational nor as funny as a similar scene in the Old Globe's recent production of *August: Osage County*). David C. Woolard's costumes are dead on, and Rui Rita's lighting sensitively brings the scenes to life. John Gromada's original music and sound design are also used in this production.

Michael Wilson directed the large cast with care, and it would be hard to find a more qualified bunch to play these roles. Elizabeth Ashley, in a lovely, layered, performance as Stella, the family's matriarch, deftly navigates being dominating without being domineering. Stella remembers many things, conveniently forgets some things (this is Texas, after all, a small town outside Houston, but of course Rick Perry wasn't on the scene yet, let alone running for president), and makes sure that no one gets out of line.

The cast also features two of Mr. Foote's children, Hallie and Horton, Jr., who play family members most affected by their malaise (Mary Jo is a profligate spender; Lewis is a drunk). Penny Fuller as Lucille, the eldest sibling, takes her role as the responsible one seriously, while putting Devin Gordon, her son (who has the very Texas name of Son), into an eternal no-win situation as the underpaid manager of the family's holdings.

Mary Jo's husband Bob (James DeMarse) and daughters Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance) are also on hand, but all of them are pretty one-note characters: Bob frets about the lack of legal protections for the estate, while Emily and Sissie look bored and roll their eyes a lot (did young people roll their eyes in 1987?). Son's fiancée Pauline (Kelly McAndrew), a perky school teacher who hilariously doesn't fit in at all, spends a lot of her time at the house, and Lewis' mysterious 19-year-old girlfriend (a very-19 Bree Welch) makes a late appearance.

The household's staff includes three African Americans Doug (the fine Roger Robinson), who is 92 and has lived with the family for virtually his entire life, Mildred (Pat Bowie) and her granddaughter Cathleen (Keiana Richard), who is attending college and who represents the "new" reality that will emerge from the changing social mores.

There is a chart of family relationships in the program that is very helpful in sorting out the connections.

Despite expert work from all concerned, *Dividing the Estate* is not Mr. Foote's best script. The second act drags in the name of comedy, and the audience tires of the same plot points being made over and over. When it comes time for family members to confront each other, the result is humorous but not satisfying. Mr. Foote seems to be saying that, while hell may be defined as the necessity of living with our families, somehow we'll all find a way to make it work. His optimism is admirable but it is completely at odds with his play.

Dividing the Estate plays through February 12, 2012, at the Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in San Diego's Balboa Park. Tickets (\$29 - \$87) are available by calling the Old Globe box office at (619) 23-GLOBE or online at www.oldglobe.org.

The Old Globe presents *Dividing the Estate* by Horton Foote. Directed by Michael Wilson with Jeff Cowie (Scenic Design), David C. Woolard (Costume Design), Rui Rita (Lighting Design), John Gromada (Original Music and Sound Design), Stephanie Klapper (New York Casting Director) and Marisa Levy (Stage Manager).

The cast includes Elizabeth Ashley, Penny Fuller, Hallie Foote, Horton Foote, Jr., Devon Abner, Pat Bowie, James DeMarse, Nicole Lowrance, Kelly McAndrew, Jenny Dare Paulin, Keiana Richard, Roger Robinson, and Bree Welch.

Photo: Henry DiRocco

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Arguing, in fact, is what the Gordons do best, and the state of the estate is their favorite topic. If the dialogue were reduced to a tweet it would read: "We must divide the estate. We won't divide the estate."

The "we will not divide" faction is led by matriarch Stella Gordon, ably played by [Elizabeth Ashley](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0039051/) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0039051/>). She is joined in this firm opinion by her daughter Lucille (Penny Fuller) and Lucille's son, who is simply called Son (Devon Abner).

On the opposite side are Stella's other children, Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.), Mary Jo (Hollie Foote) and her husband, Bob (James DeMarse). Lewis is a drinker, gambler and jobless, which means he must borrow heavily against his share of the estate. Mary Jo and Bob must also borrow to finance their extravagant lifestyle and spoiled daughters, Emily and Sissie (Jenny Dare Paulin and Nicole Lowrence). Mary Jo flies around the house in near-hysterics, while Bob devises various gambits to convince Stella to do the "right" thing.

So why won't Stella divide the estate? That's not entirely clear, though it may have something to do with her sentimental attachment to the past. There is a lot of discussion of the past, as you'd expect from fading aristocrats. In any case, the factions go round and round, thrusting and parrying, less intent on resolving the issue than continuing the argument.

The cast is rounded out by the servants: Doug (Roger Robinson), Mildred (Pat Bowie) and Cathleen (Keiana Richard). Robinson shines as the cantankerous 92-year-old, who refuses to retire and sparks many of Stella's memories. (Kudos to the Old Globe for providing a family tree in the program to sort through all these relationships.)

Through it all, Son does whatever his mother and grandmother tell him to do. Abner does a nice job as the only subtle character in the menagerie. However, the casting is a bit jarring, as Son appears to be older than his uncle Lewis. Son's girlfriend, Pauline (Kelly McAndrew), is a welcome addition as she awkwardly tries to fit in.

All the action takes place in the living room/dining room of the Gordon house, magnificently rendered by Jeff Cowie. Wilson's direction is quick and to the point and the chemistry between the large cast is good.

Overall, the production seems hampered by the one-note story. And though there are amusing moments, especially Mary Jo's histrionics, they don't quite balance the repetitive narrative.

Josh Baxt

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Dividing is delightful



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CUAUHTÉMOC KISH : **THEATER REVIEW**

Horton Foote's classic brings family together

Dysfunctional clan delightfully entertains



(l to r) Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley in "Dividing the Estate."
(Photo by Henry DiRocco)



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Although a comedy, the underlying theme in the play is that a long-lived and comforting way of life is coming to an end. Indeed, two funerals are held in the second act alone. Times have changed: cotton is not in demand and some neighbors are selling off their long-held parcels of land while others are leasing rights to oil companies in an effort to survive an economic downturn.

"Dividing The Estate" features Elizabeth Ashley reprising her Broadway role of Stella, the matriarch of the Gordon family holding ever so tightly to the shrinking purse strings of the family estate. Stella spends most of her day fighting off suggestions that the estate be divided and distributed to her children so they can utilize an inheritance immediately. Ashley does fine work with the lengthy dialogue; dialogue that carries with it a mannered musicality that informs and, at the same time, confuses the audience about her extended family tree.

Ashley is not the only one reprising her role in this production. Hallie Foote, as Mary Jo, is also returning to her role as Stella's dutiful daughter and mother of Son, played by Devon Adner. Hallie has played the part of Mary Jo on numerous occasions and, as Horton Foote's daughter, is considered the foremost interpreter of her father's plays. Her brother, Horton Foote Jr., has also returned, playing Lewis after a 17-year absence from the stage.

There are twists and turns in this production taking the audience on a tittering journey of subtle, continuous laughs. Along the way, long-time servant Doug, played by Roger Robinson, entertains with his stories from the past. Penny Fuller's Lucille, one of Stella's two daughters, does her best to keep the peace in the family, but is often thwarted in her efforts by the constantly

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Dividing the Estate

The Old Globe

Through February 12

Tues & Wed 7 p.m.

Thursday and Friday 8 p.m.

Saturday 2 & 8 p.m.

Sunday 2 & 7 p.m.

(619) 234-5623

TheOldGlobe.org

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Michael Wilson directs his large cast well and keeps an even pace, balancing resentment and contentment along the way. He keeps the satire sharp, giving up space for slapstick, tragedy and well-sung hymns.

This dysfunctional Texas clan will delightfully entertain most audience members. The pressing of hands and the solemn hugging easily and skillfully give way to quarrels and greed; all the more to solicit laughter and lamentation along the way. It's just another family after all, doing their best to survive. In the end, they want the American dream of home ownership: nothing more, nothing less. ▽

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Horton Foote's classic brings family together

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Dysfunctional clan delightfully entertains

By Cuauhtémoc Kish | Theater Reporter



(l to r) Horton Foote Jr., Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley in "Dividing the Estate," directed by Michael Wilson at The Old

Globe. (Photo by Henry
DiRocco)

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“Dividing the Estate” – The Old Globe, “The Mousetrap” - Moonlight Stage Productions & “Brooklyn Boy” – Scripps Ranch Theatre

As Tolstoy put it, “Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” So, family dysfunction looks different in every play, whether it’s a comedy, mystery or drama, whether it deals with inheritance battles, filial disconnection, or cold-blooded murder. And don’t these theatrical works always make YOUR family look a whole lot better?

Greed, class, entitlement and uncertainty drive the action in “Dividing the Estate,” the final creation of the esteemed late playwright Horton Foote. It’s all about, well, dividing the estate, a phrase that surfaces about 100 times in the comic drama. Set in Texas in 1987, in the midst of a financial downturn, the play introduces us to the disgruntled Gordons: the octogenarian matriarch, her three offspring and their children, and a trio of African American servants. As the Old South erodes, the family implodes.

In 2009, the piece was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play. Most of the cast remains the same in this Old Globe production, in which two of Foote’s children appear. And yet, there’s just no there there. The storyline is musty, the characters are two-dimensional and stereotypical. And at the end of the first act, after two deaths, it’s really hard to care what happens next. Michael Wilson’s staging feels static, and his cast of 13 both over- and underacts. Despite all the hype, the evening proved underwhelming.

Less high-profile but more satisfying theater experiences are available at our smaller companies.

Up in Vista, Moonlight Stage is offering a nimble production of the longest-running play in theater history: Agatha Christie’s “The Mousetrap,” still going strong in London’s West End after 60 years and 25,000 performances. Under the direction of Jason Heil, the cast is delightful, even if we don’t quite feel the claustrophobic terror of another impending murder in Monkswell Manor, a guest house where eight people, including a killer, are trapped during a blizzard. Turns out they’re not quite strangers, and there are some fraught family ties. The characterizations are the key here, and trying to figure out whodunit is a challenge and a treat. Audiences, as always, are sworn to secrecy. Great fun!

More deep and thought-provoking is Donald Margulies' comic drama, "Brooklyn Boy," having a fine outing at Scripps Ranch Theatre. The set may be intrusive, the young movie actor too earnest, but these are quibbles. Ruff Yeager helms a solid cast that persuasively conveys the story of a newly acclaimed writer who can't seem to satisfy his competitive wife or his demeaning father. He may be a professional success, but he's a familial failure. Perhaps the cast plays more for laughs than dramatic depth, but you're free to do your own analysis.

Families present so much food for contemplation and introspection.

"The Mousetrap" runs through February 5 at Moonlight Stage Productions in Vista.

"Dividing the Estate" plays through February 12 in the Old Globe Theatre.

"Brooklyn Boy" continues through February 19 at Scripps Ranch Theatre, on the campus of Alliant University.

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"The Elephant Man" at OnStage Playhouse

Ever since Adam and Eve plucked fig leaves for coverage, people have been obsessed with their appearance. But what if you were so ugly, so disfigured, that you literally had to walk around with a bag over your head?

Such was the sorry plight of Joseph Merrick, who lived for 27 wretched years in the Victorian era. He suffered from a congenital, incurable affliction that still remains unidentified, but it left him with an extremely oversized head and skin described like "brown cauliflower." One arm dangled uselessly. He couldn't lie flat or he'd suffocate – which is ultimately how he died, possibly intentionally.

Merrick spent a good part of his life on display, with folks paying a few pence at a freak show to gawk at "The Elephant Man." In 1977, American playwright Bernard Pomerance wrote a drama by that name, which won a Tony Awards for Best Play when it opened on Broadway two years later.

It's a touching story of one sad life, but it's also something of a minimally plotted morality play – showing the best and worst of humans in confronting ugliness, loneliness and isolation, dignity and compassion, and exploitation of the less fortunate for their own interests.

The primary relationships are between Merrick and his ambitious young physician, Dr. Treves, who brings Merrick into the London Hospital to live, but keeps him confined by space and a series of arbitrary rules. There's also the beautiful actress, Mrs. Kendal, who's able to see beyond mere appearance to the



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Theater Review

'Dividing the Estate' at The Old Globe: satiric view of the American family

By PAT LAUNER

The holidays gave us plenty of family time – and more than likely, some of the ... shall we say, vexation that comes along with it. So it's always comforting to watch a family that's even more dysfunctional than yours. It doesn't matter if you're royalty or Just Plain Folks, when it comes to money, power and passing the torch, the battles will get bloody.

"Dividing the Estate" at The Old Globe

Life and death also take center stage in "Dividing the Estate," the final play by Oscar-winning screenwriter and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Horton Foote (he died in 2009, at age 92).

The Gordons are malcontents in a fading Southern dynasty dominated by Stella, the octogenarian matriarch. It's 1987, in the fictional town of Harrison, Texas. A recession, plunging real estate values and an unexpected tax bill have catapulted the family into the turmoil of an uncertain future. Stella's less-than-savory spawn — predatory Mary Jo, complacent Lucille and alcoholic Lewis — engage in spirited debate about whether they should split the family holdings while their mother is still alive, in order to ensure themselves financial independence.

The Broadway production was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play in 2008. Most of the original cast, including theater legend Elizabeth Ashley, will be here for the West coast premiere at the Old Globe, under the direction of Michael Wilson, who's helming the piece for the third time.

"I've never tired of exploring this play," says Wilson. "It's so layered and wonderfully rich. I think it's one of Horton's finest, and among the favorite projects I've done in my career."

Wilson worked with Foote for years, and became "like an adopted family

member." Not only is he bringing along the playwright's daughter, Hallie Foote, who was nominated for a Tony for her portrayal of Mary Jo, but her brother, Horton Foote Jr., will be making a return to the stage after 17 years, to play her brother Lewis at the Globe.

"The play is all about the importance of family," says Wilson. "The difficulties of being in a family with a stern parent who insists on maintaining order and discipline, even with adult children. We all know that, even after we become adults with our own families, when we get back with our family of origin, we quickly revert back to being children."

"All these 'children' try to play on Mama's sympathies. They dynamics and power shift constantly. There's an enormous amount of humor. And it's also quite poignant. It's about how fleeting our time is with one another. Part of the message is: Be careful not to divide yourself from your family, and the very fabric of what makes you what you are."

"It's a keenly observed, shrewdly drawn, often satiric view of American family life at the end of the 20th century. With people struggling so much in our current economy, the play is especially resonant and truthful and urgent."

"Dividing the Estate" plays in the Old Globe Theatre through Feb. 12. (619) 234-5623.

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Hallie Foote (left) as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in 'Dividing the Estate.' Photo by Jann Whaley.



Hallie Foote (left) as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in 'Dividing the Estate.' Photo by Jann Whaley.



Horton Foot Jr. appears as Lewis Gordon and Hallie Foote as Mary Jo in their father's final play, 'Dividing the Estate,' at The Old Globe. Photo by Henry DiRocco.

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Regional Theater Review: DIVIDING THE ESTATE (Old Globe Theatre in San Diego)

by Tony Frankel on [February 4, 2012](#)

in Theater-Regional



THE FEATS OF THE FOOTES

America is preoccupied with an unstable economy, tax increases, oil profiteering, cash deficiencies, and the plummeting worth of real estate. Yet history does indeed repeat itself, for these were the same issues facing Americans in the Reagan years, and *Dividing the Estate*, which takes place in 1987 Texas, will reverberate with familiarity to modern audiences. Horton Foote's entertainingly mild 1989 drawing room comedy isn't particularly insightful or ambitious, but it has an appealing, Chekhovian nature that wins us over with its all-too-human characters and diverting commentary about a world that is slipping away.



Classic themes of materialism, alcoholism, and classism abound when full-blooded Southern matriarch Stella (Elizabeth Ashley) has her three children over for dinner. The oldest is widowed Lucille (Penny Fuller), who lives with Stella on her plantation-like estate. Lucille helps out with household duties while her son (Devon Abner) – named Son (in typical Foote fashion), handles Stella's affairs.

It's easy to see how the 1980s gave birth to slackers, as Lucille's two younger siblings epitomize those who are wholly dependent on the family fortune: Gambling womanizer Lewis (Horton Foote, Jr.) keeps drunkenly asking for advances in his allowance while Mary Jo (Hallie Foote) complains that her share of the loot isn't nearly enough to support her materialistic lifestyle, and that of her husband Bob (James DeMarse) and their two pampered daughters, Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance).



It is before and during dinner that the banter crumbles into a combative discourse between the avaricious siblings and the implacable matron. No one, it seems, is willing to give up the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed. This includes the 92 year-old African-American servant Doug (Roger Robinson) who refuses to stop serving dinner even though he has violent shakes. Above all, Stella is unwilling to discuss either how the estate will be divided or the possibility of oil-leasing on her land. Without revealing too much plot, suffice it to say that an unexpected occurrence puts the quarrelling on hold, but later bolsters the children's demands to divide the estate.

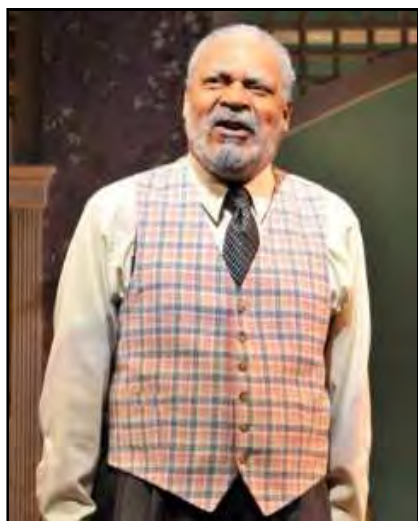


This slight but amusing play – it's essentially plot-free – will especially resonate with those who come from a Southern background. The characters retain graciousness even as they take delicious turns rubbernecking at each other's lives and deliberating over lineage and its inherent mythology. Other spectators will wish that the dialogue had tastier morsels of venomous, Hellman-esque Southern behavior or the cancerous secrets of Tennessee Williams' gothic families. But Horton Foote wrote with gentility – a charming politeness reserved for gentlemen and ladies ("yes ma'am" simply teems in his works), so you will see no *August: Osage County*-like in-your-face, dysfunctional fireworks going on here.



The proceedings feel both antiquated and somehow familiar, and since the story lacks impetus, there is a threat of boredom hanging on the script like Spanish Moss. The laughs are mainly mild because what appears to be a black comedy on the surface lacks the gallows humor necessary for true guffaws, even as the dominant theme is death itself. (Also, some of the acting seemed inconsequential and lacked spice.) Thankfully, director Michael Wilson and a few of the actors liven up the gentility by creating distinctive characters out of ones that – truth be told – don't seem particularly remarkable on paper.

The standouts are Ms. Foote, who brings rib-tickling physical antics to the whiny and demanding daughter Mary Jo, and Mr. DeMarse, who adroitly vacillates from an agreeable hangdog husband to pushy interloper son-in-law Bob. It is Mr. Robinson who truly steals the show as the servant Doug as he trembles with pride when he sees his world coming to an end.



Although *Dividing the Estate* was first produced in 1989, this is being billed as Horton Foote's final play. This is because the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright re-tooled the script for an off-Broadway production, which ran for a month in 2007. That production, which moved to Broadway and closed after a two month run, ended in 2009, exactly two months before Mr. Foote's death at the age of 93. The show now playing at the Old Globe is the Broadway transplant, with much of the original cast and design team intact. Included in the transfer is the luminous Ms. Ashley, who is repeating her role of Stella; she may be a bit too youthful for the part, but she certainly has the flavor of a Southern matriarch (her interpretation of Williams plays are legendary). Also on board from New York are the brilliant lighting by Rui Rita, which shifts in tone and hue as the evening progresses, and the magnificent, plush set of Jeff Cowie.



I can't call the show exciting. Indeed, it seems clear why it took 20 years for this play to hit Broadway, and why it did not have a long run – it's almost *too* subdued and old-fashioned – but it contains all of the elements that made Foote a classic American playwright. Just as with his *The Trip to Bountiful*, Foote brought decorum to the stage, along with a wistful understanding of a vanishing world, the bittersweet yearning of memory, a twinkling empathy for his fellow man, and, above all, a gracious humor that accompanied his keen understanding of human nature. The reasons to see *Dividing the Estate* are the qualities of Horton Foote himself.

photos by Henry DiRocco

Dividing the Estate

Old Globe Theatre in San Diego

scheduled to end on February 12

for tickets, visit <http://www.theoldglobe.org>

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STEVEN STANLEY'S STAGESCENELA.COM: SPOTLIGHTING THE BEST IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

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WOW!

The late, great Horton Foote returned to the small-town Texas he knew so well—in comedic mode this time round—in his *Dividing The Estate*, Tony-nominated as Best Play of 2009 and now playing at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre with two-thirds of its New York cast intact, including Foote's daughter Hallie in the role that scored her a Tony nomination.



Though *Dividing The Estate* is set in 1987 (two years before its original staging), the Gordon family's squabbles over the fate of their once proud Texas estate have been made all the more relevant in recent years by a national economic crisis that mirrors the Gordons' personal one. Whatever the year, just about everyone who's ever worried about money can relate.

Like the bunch of Oklahoma rascallions Tracy Letts brought together under one roof in August: *Osage County*, which Old Globes ticket-holders got to savor last Spring, their neighbors to the South generate sparks aplenty, though perhaps of a slightly more gentle (and genteel) note.

Matriarch Stella (Elizabeth Ashley) certainly has her hands full with a family as cantankerous as her spawn. Daughter Lucille (Penny Fuller) and Lucille's son Son (Devon Abner) have no desire to divide the estate, given that they live with Stella, draw salaries that allow them to live comfortably, and would prefer to leave well enough alone. Lucille's



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brother Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.) and sister Mary Jo (Hallie Foote), are another matter entirely. Both have borrowed hundreds of thousands of dollars from estate manager Son, and in fact much of Act One has a drunken Lewis browbeating his nephew for another ten thousand to pay off gambling debts. Naturally Lewis, Mary Jo, and Mary Jo's husband Bob (James DeMarse), want to cash in the estate as soon as possible, and one of Mary Jo and Bob's daughters Emily (Jenny Dare Paulin) and Sissie (Nicole Lowrance) is planning a pricey wedding with the money their folks hope to pocket. As might be expected, Grandma Stella will have no talk of dividing the estate, though with offspring as greedy and self-centered as those she gave birth to, any hope of keeping them quiet is a vain one at best.

Completing the cast of characters are Son's schoolteacher fiancée Pauline (Kelly McAndrew), the outsider who sees things with a more balanced perspective; African American servants Doug (Roger Robinson), Mildred (Pat Bowie), and Cathleen (Keiana Richard), who have more than the usual household duties to contend with *chez* the Gordons; and Irene (Bree Welch), Lewis's girlfriend, making an eleventh-hour appearance to spice up the already tangy mix.



With an ensemble as all-around sensational as the one assembled on the Old Globe stage under Broadway director Michael Wilson's pitch-perfect baton, it hardly seems seemly to play favorites, but note must be made of the divine Miss Ashley's formidable Stella, the hilarious Miss Foote's tantrum-throwing Mary Jo (the Tony Nominating Committee got that one right), and the venerable Mr. Robinson's powerful, touching turn as Doug. If any nits are to be picked, it's a few instances of age-inappropriate (and thereby confusing) casting. (Ashley would have had to give birth to Fuller at age one, and Abner appears at the very least the same age as Foote Jr., though he is supposed to be nearly three decades younger.)

As for the characters themselves, despite their human failings (or perhaps because of them), there are no villains (or heroes either, for that matter) in *Dividing The Estate*, just very real folk with whom we enjoy spending a couple of hours, though as the saying goes, we probably wouldn't want to live there.

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WOW!



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 Los Angeles' most
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We might, however, want to move into the gorgeous Texas home that scenic designer Jeff Cowie has created for the Gordons, particularly as lit with a golden glow by lighting designer Rui Rita. Both Cowie and Rita designed the play's Broadway production, as did costume designer David C. Woolard, who has created some fine '80s fashions with a Lone Star State flair, and sound designer, whose effects and original music add greatly to the production's effectiveness. Stephanie Klapper is New York Casting Director. Marisa Levy is stage manager.

It's been quite a Horton Foote year for Southern California theatergoers (and yours truly at StageSceneLA), with productions of Foote's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Young Man From Atlanta*, *The Traveling Lady*, and *The Trip To Bountiful* all earning raves from this reviewer. *Dividing The Estate* makes it clear that Foote wrote funny as well as he wrote dramatic. It is well worth a trip down San Diego way to catch the family fireworks.

Old Globe Theatre, Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through February 12. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:00. Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00, Saturdays at 2:00 and 8:00. Sundays at 2:00 and 7:00. Also Wednesday February 8 at 1:00. No Saturday matinee performance on February 11. Reservations: 619 234-5623
www.oldglobe.org

—Steven Stanley
 January 29, 2012
 Photos: Henry DiRocco

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Strong performances, great script help 'Dividing the Estate'

(This is an early look at a review that will appear in the Feb. 9 issues of our newspapers.)

By Elizabeth Marie Himchak

Horton Foote's play "Dividing the Estate" could be very depressing due to its subject matter.



Siblings, from left, Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.), Mary Jo (Hallie Foote) and Lucille (Penny Fuller) have differing views on what their mother, Stella Gordon (Elizabeth Ashley) should do with their inheritance in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at The Old Globe through Feb. 12. Photo by Henry DiRocco

Instead, the 2009 Tony nominee for Best Play that is making its West Coast premiere at The Old Globe through Feb. 12 is entertaining while thought provoking. This is due to a witty script and outstanding performances by a cast that understands and skillfully portrays the humor among tragedy, joy with anger.

Audience members are also likely to leave with the thought that it might be wise to review their estate plans.

"Dividing the Estate" is the Pulitzer Prize-winning Foote's final play, set in a Texas town that focuses on Stella Gordon, her three grown children and three grandchildren who have differing views on what the 82-year-old family matriarch should do with their large house and struggling land holdings. It exposes their self-serving motivations, greed and family loyalties that could easily be part of any real family.

Though set in 1987, the issues and family drama is timeless and as pertinent today as decades earlier.

The Globe's production reunites three of the 2008 Broadway play's actors who originated their roles — three-time Tony nominee Elizabeth Ashley as Stella, Hallie Foote as daughter Mary Jo (she received a Tony nomination for this role) and two-time Tony nominee Penny Fuller as daughter Lucille.

After a 17-year absence from the stage, Horton Foote Jr. (as son Gordon), joins the cast and his sister Hallie to bring this production of their late father's play to life, making it a real-life family affair.

Ashley and Tony nominee Roger Robinson, cast as Doug — the Gordon's 92-year-old servant, are stellar in

their portrayals of older characters. Robinson's voice and physical actions that include a constant shaking seem real and both easily slip between awareness and forgetfulness while speaking to their fellow actors.

Other notable performances include that of Penny Fuller who early in the first scene expresses the exasperation of communicating with a mother with memory problems and later greedy siblings. Horton Foote Jr. is convincing as the 58-year-old family drunk who demands \$10,000 from the estate because he has to pay off his 19-year-old girlfriend's father who wants to kill him. Hallie Foote skillfully and humorously expresses her desperation to get her cut of the estate prior to her mother's passing while husband, Bob, (played by James DeMarse) is fantastic as he relentlessly argues about the importance of avoiding inheritance taxes.

Besides being well acted and directed, another noteworthy aspect of the Globe's production is its set that shows many rooms of the Gordon's stately home. But it is not just the furnishings that stand out, but little things like "sunlight" coming through the windows and traffic sounds that make one feel like they really are in the home.

Matinee and evening performances are at The Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park through Feb. 12. Tickets start at \$29, with discounts available. Purchase at the box office, 1363 Old Globe Way; by phone at 619-234-5623 or online at www.TheOldGlobe.org. Free and \$10 valet parking are available.

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Dividing the Estate



(from left) Horton Foote Jr. as Lewis Gordon, Hallie Foote as Mary Jo, Penny Fuller as Lucille and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Jan. 14 - Feb. 12, 2012. (Photo by Henry DiRocco)

"DIVIDING THE ESTATE"

When: Through Feb. 26, 2012
Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park
Tickets: Start at \$29
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(Below) Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon and Roger Robinson as Doug in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Jan. 14 - Feb. 12, 2012. (Photo by Henry DiRocco)

By Patricia Morris Buckley
SDUN Theater Critic

Revive one of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Horton Foote's last plays, one that was nominated for the 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, a great idea in theory. After all, Foote is best known for such plays as "A Trip to Bountiful" and winning Oscars for adapting "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Tender Mercies" for the movies. Add in the actress who won a Tony for it as





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While there are moments that reverberate in our consciousness, there are just as many where the plot is far too predictable.

"Dividing the Estate" follows the Gordon family's matriarch, Stella. Stella is adamant that the family's large estate will not be broken up, even though her three children have differing opinions on the matter. Son Lewis is a drunk who keeps taking "loans" from the estate. Daughter Mary Jo has taken even more loans and we gradually learn that she and her family are close to bankruptcy.

Meanwhile, older daughter Lucille lives with and takes care of her now elderly mother, while her son (named "Son") manages the estate. Son's first wife ran off and then died, so now he's courting a highly optimistic school teacher who gets a first hand view of this extremely greedy and dysfunctional family.

Most of the play is the family arguing about the estate. There's very little humor or subplots. And the ending is rather sad, as the family's financial expectations take a huge hit, so that everything they've lived for is gone.

One of the production's redeeming features is the great Elizabeth Ashley as Stella, in the role she played on Broadway. Ashley has a long list of theater, film and TV credits, including playing Aunt Mimi on HBO's "Treme" and a regular on "Evening Shade," for which she received an Emmy nomination.

Hallie Foote, who has a well-established career as an actress, received a Tony Award nomination for the role of Mary Jo. She provides the few moments of comic relief in the play and for that the audience can be highly grateful.

Another character is Doug, the long-time servant of the family.

While Roger Robinson (who won a Tony Award for "Gone") makes him endearing and real, the part has tinges of stereotype.

The production design is the real star of the show. Jeff Cowie's living room set is a feast of architectural and period detail, although his furniture groupings are unrealistic. Rui Rita's lighting design nicely places the sense of time passing. David C. Woolard's costumes tell us much about where the characters fit in the 1987 story.

Director Michael Wilson's pacing allows for the humor to breathe and the family dynamics to build nicely. An interesting choice is not giving the actors mics, a rarity today.

Family arguments are rarely entertaining in real life with your own kin. Watching someone else's battles over money they feel entitled to, in a time when people are out of work, seems petty. The idea of this production had a lot of promise, but that promise never really comes together. ♦

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Dividing the Estate

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By Patricia Morris Buckley | SDUN Theater Critic

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(named “Son”) manages the estate. Son’s first wife ran off and then died, so now he’s courting a highly optimistic school teacher who gets a first hand view of this extremely greedy and dysfunctional family.

Most of the play is the family arguing about the estate. There’s very little humor or subplots. And the ending is rather sad, as the family’s financial expectations take a huge hit, so that everything they’ve lived for is gone.

One of the production’s redeeming features is the great Elizabeth Ashley as Stella, in the role she played on Broadway. Ashley has a long list of theater, film and TV credits, including playing Aunt Mimi on HBO’s “Treme” and a regular on “Evening Shade,” for which she received an Emmy nomination.

Hallie Foote, who has a well-established career as an actress, received a Tony Award nomination for the role of Mary Jo. She provides the few moments of comic relief in the play and for that the audience can be highly grateful.

Another character is Doug, the long-time servant of the family. While Roger Robinson (who won a Tony Award for “Gone”) makes him endearing and real, the part has tinges of stereotype.

The production design is the real star of the show. Jeff Cowie’s living room set is a feast of architectural and period detail, although his furniture groupings are unrealistic. Rui Rita’s lighting design nicely places the sense of time passing. David C. Woolard’s costumes tell us much about where the characters fit in the 1987 story.

Director Michael Wilson’s pacing allows for the humor to breathe and the family dynamics to build nicely. An interesting choice is not giving the actors mics, a rarity today.

Family arguments are rarely entertaining in real life with your own kin. Watching someone else’s battles over money they feel entitled to, in a time when people are out of work, seems petty. The idea of this production had a lot of promise, but that promise never really comes together.

“Dividing the Estate”

When: Through Feb. 26

Where: Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: Start at \$29

Info: (619) 23-GLOBE

Web: www.TheOldGlobe.org

Long Division

January 30, 2012



Hallie Foote and Elizabeth Ashley Photo: Henry DiRocco 2012

It was a particularly good weekend to be in San Diego. Not just because of [San Diego Opera's very good production of *Salome*](#), but also because I got to see The Old Globe's excellent production of [Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*](#), which is running through February 12. The play comes largely intact with the ensemble cast that helped Mr. Foote get another Tony nomination for best new play in 2009. The cast features two of his own children, Hallie Foote as Mary Jo and Horton Foote, Jr. as Mary Jo's ne'er-do-well older brother Lewis. Of course, Foote's family most likely has nothing on the Gordons of Harrison, TX, circa 1987 as depicted in the play. The three adult Gordon children, Lewis, Mary Jo, and Lucille have all gathered at their family's palatial if somewhat sputtering estate for a dinner at which perennial discussions of money and the fate of the family's land in the not so distant future are again rehearsed. The family matriarch, Stella Gordon, played by the simply incandescent Elizabeth Ashley, seems to change her mind nearly minute to minute about what she wants for the remainder of her life and afterwards. She's also a soft touch enamored with her memories of the past, and easily persuaded into bad decisions by her children over the objections of the estate's caretakers Lucille and her own child, referred to as Son, who are striving to keep everything financially afloat.

But money stressors are all around as Mary Jo's husband and children find themselves in increasingly deep water in Houston while Lewis finds himself ever in debt through some combination of gambling and alcohol. Foote takes a darkly comic view of these events and it isn't long before the thin ice everyone is skating on opens up cavernous cracks as death starts to call for more than one member of the extended family. All of this is reminiscent of Tracey Letts' landmark *August: Osage County* but with a far more restrained and subtle tack toward family dynamics. The Gordons may raise their voice, but things never descend into outright violence. Of course, Foote has thrown in more than a dash of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* here as well as the crumbling and inevitable economic realities loom large in the minds of the audience if not the Gordons themselves who are unable to wake long enough to save themselves from either their own greed or from wallowing in a bygone dream of themselves. The critique of the American dream is still front and center for Foote, if not always as brutally scathing as it is in *August*.

But the hint of nostalgic melancholy gives *Dividing the Estate* its unique sensibility. It is always a very funny play, but the expansive and beautiful homestead set can do little to disguise the socially claustrophobic family relationships playing out within its walls. Michael Wilson's direction makes room for everyone in this large ensemble to shine but Ms. Foote and Ms. Ashley are given particularly juicy bits and understandably draw more attention. So while the show may not be a revolution in theater, it does promise for a very fun and hopefully hugely successful run in San Diego. See it before you lose the chance to.

Labels: [Old Globe Theater](#)

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AT THE OLD GLOBE

Performances, script help 'Dividing the Estate'

BY ELIZABETH MARIE HIMCHAK

Horton Foote's play "Dividing the Estate" could be very depressing due to its subject matter.

Instead, the 2009 Tony nominee for Best Play that is making its West Coast premiere at The Old Globe through Feb. 12 is entertaining while thought provoking. This is due to a witty script and out-

standing performances by a cast that understands and skillfully

portrays the humor among tragedy, joy with anger.

Audience members are also likely to leave with the thought that it might be wise to review their estate plans.

"Dividing the Estate" is the Pulitzer Prize-winning Foote's final play, set in a Texas town that focuses on Stella Gordon, her three grown children and three grandchildren who have differing views on what the 82-year-old family matriarch should do with their large house and struggling land holdings. It exposes their self-serving motivations, greed and family loyalties that could easily be part of any real family.

Though set in 1987, the issues and family drama is timeless and as pertinent today as decades earlier.

The Globe's production reunites three of the 2008 Broadway play's actors who originated their roles — three-time Tony nominee Elizabeth Ashley as Stella, Hallie Foote as daughter Mary Jo (she received a Tony nomination for this role) and two-time Tony nominee Penny Fuller as daughter Lucille.

After a 17-year absence from the stage, Horton Foote Jr. (as son Gordon), joins the cast and his sister Hallie to bring this production of their late father's play to life, making it a real-life



Siblings, from left, Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.), Mary Jo (Hallie Foote) and Lucille (Penny Fuller) have differing views on what their mother, Stella Gordon (Elizabeth Ashley) should do with their inheritance in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at The Old Globe through Feb. 12.

Photo by Henry DiRocco

family affair.

Ashley and Tony nominee Roger Robinson, cast as Doug — the Gordon's 92-year-old servant, are stellar in their portrayals of older characters. Robinson's voice and physical actions that include a constant shaking seem real and both easily slip between awareness and forgetfulness while speaking to their fellow actors.

Other notable performances include that of Penny Fuller who early in the first scene expresses the exasperation of communicating with a mother with memory problems and later greedy siblings. Horton Foote Jr. is convincing as the 58-year-old family drunk who demands \$10,000 from the estate because he has to pay off his 19-year-old girlfriend's father who wants to kill him. Hallie Foote skillfully and humorously

expresses her desperation to get her cut of the estate prior to her mother's passing while husband, Bob, (played by James DeMarse) is fantastic as he relentlessly argues about the importance of avoiding inheritance taxes.

Besides being well acted and directed, another noteworthy aspect of the Globe's production is its set that shows many rooms of the Gordon's stately home. But it is not just the furnishings that stand out, but little things like "sunlight" coming through the windows and traffic sounds that make one feel like they really are in the home.

Matinee and evening performances are at The Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park through Feb. 12. Tickets start at \$29, with discounts available. Purchase at the box office, 1363 Old Globe Way; by phone at 619-234-5623 or online at www.TheOldGlobe.org. Free and \$10 valet parking are available.

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Finally, Eric (Cris O'Bryon) and dad Manny (Paul Bourque) reconcile the past; better late than never.

Things get interesting when Eric's book is optioned, thanks to headstrong producer Melanie Fine (a hilarious Wendy Waddell) and heartthrob Tyler Shaw (Adam Daniel), who can't seem to base his sense of character on anything other than his hairstyle. Tyler, who's been cast as Eric's character, fuels a battle of wits that yields Eric's deep regret over Manny's aloofness—from there, Ira's gentle persistence guides Eric back to reality, with all its joy and sadness.

Eric's distaste for Brooklyn; Ira's (unfounded) suspicion that Eric's gone Hollywood; Nina's laments over what she considers her failures as a fellow writer; hottie Alison (Charlene Koepf) and her surprising strength of character: Margulies writes them all with thought and flare. He's created an especially deep character arc for Eric, and Cris O'Bryon responds very well. His Eric is at once confident and naïve, torn between hard-won fame and the personal emptiness that fueled it. Paul Bourque has Manny's one-dimensional brusqueness down pat, even in the post-death father-son scene at the end.

Yeager is a very patient director who knows a thing or two about using sets as character tools. The fact that he designed this set likely colors the latter, although I still don't know why he chose all those lamps as the predominant accouterments. Meanwhile, Debbie Sullivan's costumes reflect a good eye for color, and the rest of the tech supports Yeager's vision. This *Brooklyn Boy* has its slogs, but, like Eric, it reconciles them in the end.

This review is based on the performance of Jan. 22. Brooklyn Boy runs through Feb. 19 at the Legler Benbough Theatre on the campus of Alliant International University, 10455 Pomerado Road in Scripps Ranch. \$10-\$25. 858-578-7728, scrippsranchtheatre.org



Bad words

***Dividing the Estate* features death; that's exactly what the audience gets**



Family retainer Doug (Roger Robinson, right) can't quite decipher Stella Gordon's (Elizabeth Ashley) yammerings, and it's not because he's 92 years old. (Photos by Henry DiRocco)

The gaping scene design was the first clue. It makes the actors shout across the room and walk about a mile and a half to meet up; the walls and anterooms engorge on rarely or never-used items and decorative pieces that don't carry beyond the first row. Forget all the talk about an all-purpose stadium downtown—this set is so vast that you could hold a Super Bowl and an NCAA Final Four basketball tourney on it and still have room for the Democratic and Republican national conventions.

Except that *Dividing the Estate*, The Old Globe Theatre's latest entry, isn't a Super Bowl or a Final Four. It's a completely uninteresting piece about an ogreish clan faced with a big-time shortage of cash and the upshot from a shifting economy—two topics that

should inspire at least an ironic snort from today's audiences even as the play is set in 1987. But playwright Horton Foote's characteristic gentility gets in the way of all the potential for a down-home family squabble, and the references to money and the future get lost in the sugar-coat. *Dividing the Estate* never reconciles its potential for comic relief, swallowing the clan's feisty nature as surely as the set swallows the performers.

Foote, who wrote some 60 plays and won a Pulitzer prize and two Academy Awards before he died in 2009 at 92, was a keen student of human nature and resilience in the face of personal difficulty—here, he's created a central figure in the person of Stella Gordon, eightysomething matriarch of her prominent Harrison, Texas family, who's still sharp enough to take in the dismal scene. Her idyllic little burg is citifying before her eyes, with her cash-poor neighbors short-selling their land and leaving

fast-food eateries in their wake along the highways that lead out of town. She tightens her viselike grip on her estate and her family, her defense against her own anticipation of death and Harrison's demise.

The problem for Stella is that her children aren't getting any younger either. Some want the fiscal freedom the spoils of their estate will promise while there's still time to enjoy them, while others are happy with life as usual. One by one they weigh in, with light bitchiness and one-liners coloring the family conversation. By play's end, everybody's exhausted amid gambling, drinking and foreclosure problems; Stella's dead; and Harrison is still falling apart.

And through it all, the Gordon family is stymied by the inertia in its own speeches. "They were lazy and no good, but they came from lovely families"; "Good Lord, probate! It's always something!"; "Why was he cleanin' his gun on his weddin' night?": The dialogue is ironical enough, but the circumstances around it never inform the characters, only the situations. We need people to create the dialogue's effect; Foote offers only words.

Son (Devon Abner), who manages the estate, and Lucille (Penny Fuller), who looks after the house, are fairly interesting characters amid their dutiful natures, and Abner and Fuller act out accordingly. Family retainer Doug (Roger Robinson), is 92 and is thus intriguing by himself, and Elizabeth Ashley's Stella is as self-absorbed a matriarch as you'll find. Indeed, the Gordons are certainly in a lather over past hurts and the prospects of their implosion; why not Foote, their creator?

Helmer Michael Wilson does what he can with the static material, and Foote's children Horton Jr. and Hallie clearly know how to take his direction. But that's assuming you can pick them out within Jeff Cowie's chasmic set. Its bulk seriously detracts from this piece's production values, which are even less apparent amid Foote's authorship.

This review is based on the opening-night performance of Jan. 19. Dividing the Estate runs through Feb. 12 at The Old Globe Theatre mainstage, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29 and up. 619-23-GLOBE, theoldglobe.org

--Martin Jones Westlin



Mildred (Pat Bowie, left) and Cathleen (Keiana Richard) are bummed at the loss of their jobs as Harrison, Texas feels the pinch.

ion serves up a reasonable *Request* (trust us)

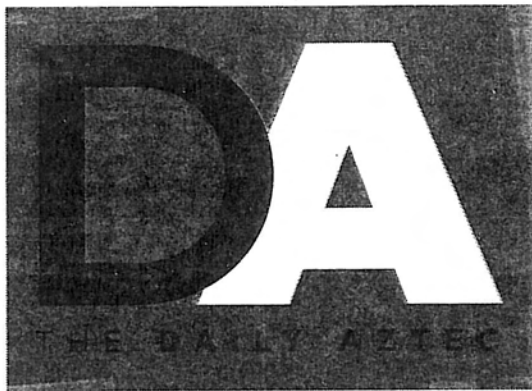


Doesn't Miss Rasch (Linda Libby) know that smoking and insomnia are bad for her health? (Google image)

Sonia Jacobs, a real-life successful Los Angeles yoga instructor, survived 11 years on a Florida Death Row amid two murders she was found not to have committed—but surely, upon her release, a part of her would morph into Miss Rasch, sole character in ion theatre company's current *Request Programme*. I draw the comparison because Linda Libby, who so chillingly played Jacobs in Lynx Performance Theatre's *The Exonerated* in 2006, also takes a turn at Rasch in this ion reprise, just as she did when ion was housed in Mission Valley a few years ago.

Rasch, you see, has no dialogue throughout the show—and amid Jacobs' monumental tortures, who could blame her for following Jacobs' lead?

The fleshy, middle-aged Rasch also can't get to sleep, even as she painstakingly attends to her duties at home after a hard day at work. Something's definitely missing amid her restlessness—or, rather, maybe there's too much swirling about her brain, and perhaps it's fueled by the announcer's voice as she listens to her favorite radio show. That's for you to find out as Libby displays the emotional gamut. Rasch, like Jacobs, has a wealth of reserve throughout that spectrum.



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ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

'Dividing' decisively good



COURTESY OF HENRY DIROCCO

David Dixon
staff writer

Spending time with an extended family is a relatable experience for almost everyone. It can be awkward because people are often so far removed from each other that it is hard to find common interests and values. The late Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Horton Foote, plays on these uneasy relationships for big laughs in his play "Dividing the Estate."

The year is 1987 and Stella Gordon (Elizabeth Ashley) is an elderly mother of three grown children: Lucille (Penny Fuller), Lewis (Horton Foote Jr.) and Mary Jo (Hallie Foote). The offspring all try to encourage Stella to divide her property before she passes away. The problem is the matriarch has no interest in doing so, knowing her kids mostly want the estate for selfish reasons.

The plot sounds like an intimate tragedy full of angry and disturbing dialogue. Leave it to director Michael Wilson as well as Horton Foote to make "Dividing the Estate" a comedy that finds the humor in confrontations. Even a person aggressively pushing a swinging door out of rage can be hilarious, because it feels so accurately realistic to the absurdness of life.

Retaining most of the cast from the Tony-nominated Broadway production, including two of the playwright's children, "Dividing the Estate"

features the kind of ensemble that gives quite a few memorable performances. Ashley is superb as the parent who is really the center of the show. Her effortless characterization is believable and her hysterically gruff attitude might have some audience members thinking about their own parents or grandparents.

Ashley does not play Stella as some kind of cliché senior citizen. Instead, Stella's intentions behind avoiding talk of the estate make sense and her friendship with the equally cranky servant Doug (Roger Robinson) brings

makes her very entertaining to watch by letting her bottled-up fury run wild.

The only flaw with the production is the ending of Act I, which is slightly predictable. Be forewarned, there is a spoiler coming. By the time a character passes away in "Dividing the Estate," the moment comes with very little shock, because there is an abundance of foreshadowing minutes before this happens. However, this plot "twist" takes very little away from the experience and Act II makes up for this by maintaining the humor from

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out a gentle side of her. Stella is as strong in these moving moments as she is in the hysterical ones.

Hallie Foote earned a Tony nomination for her work as Mary Jo, the younger and more selfish daughter. She is a force of explosive power; especially in a big scene that reveals the real reason for wanting her share of the estate. It is hard to completely sympathize with Mary Jo, but Hallie Foote

prior events and concluding with a delightfully ironic climax.

With "Dividing the Estate," The Old Globe Theatre has started 2012 on a high note. It is another reminder of how stagecraft can be full of keen insight while still being consistently gut-busting.

Tickets and information about "Dividing the Estate" can be found at theoldglobe.org.

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'Dividing' decisively good

By [David Dixon](#),

Posted on 25 January 2012.



Courtesy of Henry Dirocco

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“Dividing the Estate” at The Old Globe



Photo Credit: Photo courtesy of www.oldglobe.org

The Gordon family tries its best to enjoy a hilariously tense dinner.

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February 8, 2012

Angela Zhang, Arts Editor / Managing Editor

Horton Foote’s “Dividing the Estate” was an all-too-honest portrayal of the moral conflicts and changing ways of an American family. Matriarch grandma Stella invites her extended family over to her large Texan estate for a dinner, but the seemingly run-of-the-mill event is torn apart by the childish squabble over the matter of dividing Stella’s estate and guaranteeing financial independence for her three children.

Though the play was set and premiered in the 1980s, several sharp social statements still hold true today. Take, for instance, Stella’s two granddaughters who cry over not having expensive country club weddings, and retreat from the dinner table to talk to their boyfriends on the phone. Or perhaps Stella’s businessman son-in-law, who panics for just about the entire play worrying about what money they might’ve earned if they had divided sooner.

The humor came one punch line after another, from old genteel grandma sass to obviously liberal outbursts from a schoolteacher in a conservative mansion. Yet at the end of the play, I walked out feeling conflicted about what had happened. I trust that the actors at the Old Globe held true to what Foote might’ve imagined while writing the script; each character presented a social conceit, whether it was Stella and her old-time charm, or her bourgeoisie, nouveau riche daughter struggling to mold herself into a glamourized society. Perhaps above anything else, I took away a sense of vulnerability, a critiquing but forgiving eye on the human race and what it’s become—selfish, and maybe even a little jaded, but still able to find a bittersweet satisfaction in the small comforts of family.

“Dividing the Estate” runs at The Old Globe theater in Balboa until Feb. 12.

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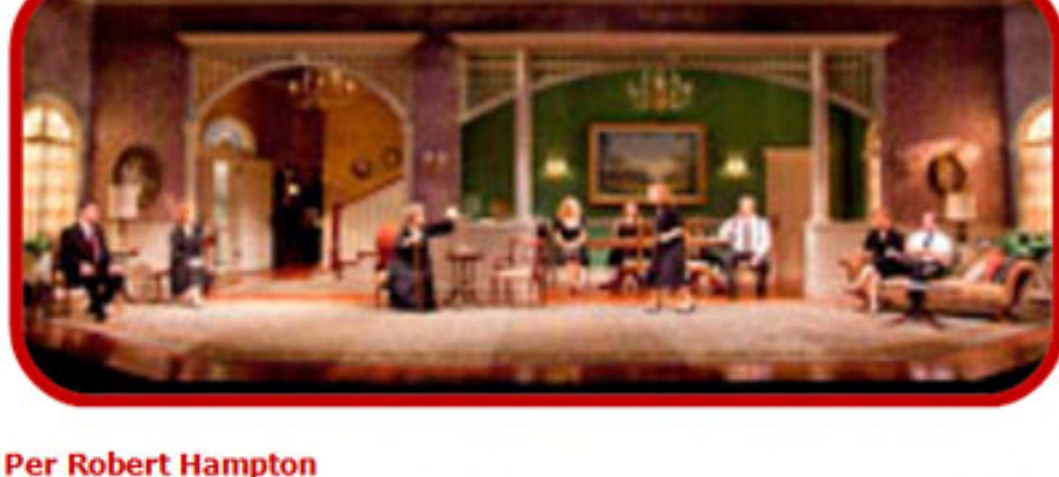


Cast of - DIVIDING THE ESTATE

[Play REVIEW Commentary \(as Seen 1/17/12\)](#)

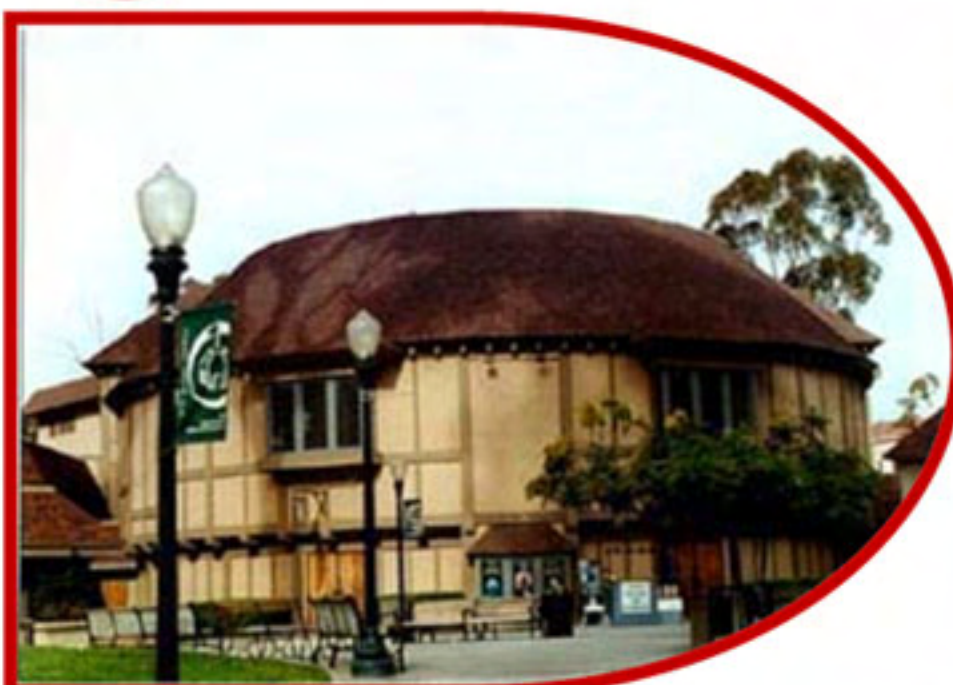
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Horton Foote's DIVIDING THE ESTATE



Per Robert Hampton

As directed by **Michael Wilson** - **DIVIDING THE ESTATE** - a play by **Horton Foote** - is being presented at the **Old Globe's** SHILEY Main Stage in Balboa Park ... through February 12th. Author **Foote** - a Pulitzer Prize Award-winning writer - wrote the memorable "*The Trip To Bountiful*" - along with numerous other works.



ZERO IN ON:
DIVIDING THE ESTATE
SD Old Globe Theatre
Where: SHILEY Main Stage
Performances: 1/14-2/12
www.sdoldglobe.org

With original music and sound design by **John Gromada**, and costume designs by **David C. Woolard** -



the spectacular set - which consists of a living room, dining room, and entry hall of an antebellum mansion - is a central part of the semi-comedy/drama - in terms of establishing motives of behavior for the eight family members who populate the story - plus it is a strong visual - as the set is a star in its own right. The beautiful interior arches, color, period wallpaper and antique furniture are something to behold. *Kudos* to set designer **Jeff Cowie** - and **Rui Rita** is responsible for the beautiful lighting.

This story of a family - its struggles, financially and emotionally - amid a changing way of life - is blazingly brought to life - by head of the family ... dowager STELLA GORDON - portrayed by **Elizabeth Ashley**. She is ably supported by a gifted group of players - which includes some of playwright **Foote's** own family members ... his son **Horton Foote Jr.** plays LEWIS - this character is the alcoholic son of STELLA. **Foote's** daughter, **Halle Foote** - plays one of STELLA's daughters, MARY JO.



The story is set in Harrison, Texas mid 1980's. STELLA is determined to keep the family plantation in one piece. She does not want it sold during her lifetime - or even afterward. Certain family members have taken draws against the estate - others want the place sold now - to help with their present finances. There is a good deal of bickering that takes place. Heated discussions and pleas are made. *(This arguing may be a familiar story to anyone negotiating a family estate amounting to any consequence).*

An interesting sub-plot - is the relationship of the family retainers (*African American*) and their relations to their employers. They seem to be part of the family - yet not entirely ... though *love* is apparent on both sides of the family and those employed by them. Some touching scenes occur - when elderly DOUG (**Roger Robinson**) the major-domo - cannot serve dinner successfully due to his own shaking condition ... his hands tremble wildly. He felt he was being '*conjured*' by a younger staff member CATHLEEN (**Keiana Richard**), while another staff member is the cook, MILDRED - played by **Pat Bowie**. She adds balance and some common sense to the place.

Other family members were STELLA's daughter, LUCILLE - portrayed by **Penny Fuller** - who is nicely cast as a lady of quality. She - like many southerners of the old guard-landed class - is more willing than the others - to roll up her sleeves and go to work if necessary. She will even prepare the meals - to Cook MILDRED's disbelief - should the staff be let go. STELLA's other daughter MARY JO - and her husband BOB (**James DeMarse**) have two beautifully



groomed daughters. The daughters add color and comic relief with their eye rolling in disbelief at all the fussing. They are EMILY (**Jenny Dare Paulin**) and SISSIE (**Nicole Lowrance**) ... Mother, MARY JO - is more pro active - she wants the estate sold now - so she and her daughters may enjoy a more comfortable life. The word '*entitlement*' often comes to mind ... with MARY JO's character.

Grandson to STELLA - "SON" (**Devon Abner**) - as he is known in the family - is a stalwart, grounded individual, somewhat dry in speech and manner. *Manly* - yes - he is a take hold, responsible type. Running the plantation at a profit however - is a noggin-scratcher for SON ... he just can't seem to get that margin where it needs to be - what with a decline in the economy. SON is hoping to secure a leasehold for oil drilling rights - which would just pay the taxes. The whole thing (*plantation*) seems to be crumbling - with potential loss of homestead land - and relatives grasping what they can ... until someone offers a solution ... they can ALL MOVE IN TOGETHER ! *Gasp!* You can well imagine the response.



Other characters - are girlfriends to LEWIS ... BREE - played by **Irene Ratliff** and PAULINE - played by **Kelly Mc Andrew**. SON is courting PAULINE - who is a giggler type - and trying to smooth things over ... *oh well* - that just is not going to work! An interesting, curious evening - capturing a human situation; family feuds with screaming aplenty ... should bring back *memories* for many an audience member.



Penny Fuller, Halle Forte, Horton Foote
& Elisabeth Ashley with Roger Robinson



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CINEMATIC MECHANIC

[DIVIDING THE ESTATE \(OLD GLOBE\): 75% – BITTERSWEET](#)

[Colin Mitchell](#) | Jan 23, 2012 | [Comments 0](#) |



Jenny Dare Paulin, Nicole Lowrance, Hallie Foote and James DeMarse (left to right) in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at the Old Globe Theatre. Credit: Henry DiRocco

BITTERSWEET

The Old Globe's production, however, is all surface. And can't settle on a consistent tone.

[Jeff Smith – San Diego Reader](#)

SWEET

"Dividing the Estate" has dire news to tell about the country and its citizens, but because it's bursting with never-changing human nature, the bleakness is transformed into delight.

[Charles McNulty – LA Times](#)

SWEET

The late, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright's final work is a closely observed, gently witty chronicle of the feuding Gordons' slow implosion. The family's more grasping members believe they're aristocrats-in-waiting who are due a financial windfall. But in the Old Globe Theatre's assured and appealing production, it's clear they're more like dry leaves tumbling toward the maw of a prairie tornado.

[James Hebert – San Diego Union-Tribune](#)

BITTERSWEET

Director Michael Wilson has staged this production in several cities since 2007, and it comes to the Globe with much of the original Broadway cast. Some elements of the production shine with a luster borne from repeated polishing, but the Globe's production feels curiously static and sluggish.

[Pam Kragen – North County Times](#)

BITTER

But it's not enough to stir much interest in this listless family endgame.

[Welton Jones – SanDiego.com](#)

SWEET

The company of seasoned pros is fine and so is the lavish production. The play itself requires patience, but the rewards are great.

[Charlene Baldrige – Charlene and Brenda in the Blogosphere](#)

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

[The Old Globe](#)

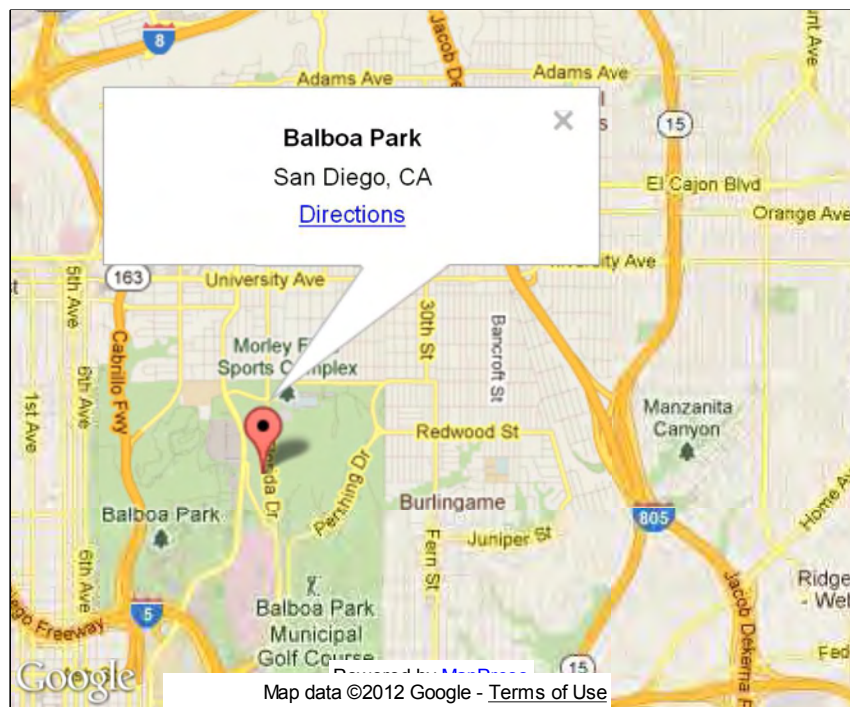
Balboa Park, San Diego

7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays, 2 and 8 Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays

(Call for exceptions.) Ends Feb. 12, 2012

Tickets: start at \$29; (619) 234-5623

Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes




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About the Author: COLIN MITCHELL: Actor/Writer/Director/Producer, award-winning playwright and screenwriter, Broadway veteran, Marvel comics scribe, Van Morrison disciple, Zen-Catholic, a proud U.S. citizen conceived in Scotland and born in Frankfurt, Germany, currently living in Los Angeles and doing his best to piss off as many people as possible.

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A family affair

In 'Dividing the Estate,'
Horton Foote's relatives bring the
playwright's characters to life



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'DIVIDING THE ESTATE' • Children dedicated to keeping Foote's work alive

JAMES HEBERT • U-T

At the center of the comedy "Dividing the Estate" is a feuding family named the Gordons. But at the Old Globe Theatre, the Tony Award-nominated play is as much about a different set of Texans: the family Foote.

"My husband, Devon Abner, is playing my nephew," Hallie Foote, who portrays the scheming daughter Mary Jo, notes with a laugh.

"It's funny: My brother is playing my brother, and my husband's playing my nephew. That's where it gets a little crazy — trying to remember who's playing what."

Actually, that's not the half of the intricate, potentially confounding connections among cast, characters and narrative in "Dividing the Estate," now in previews at the Balboa Park theater. The work was the last one completed by a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright who also happens to have been Hallie's father: Horton Foote.

Although he still might be best-known for penning the Oscar-winning screenplay of the film "To Kill a Mockingbird," Horton Foote was a prolific playwright who patterned many of his lyrical and layered works after his own extended family and the people he knew growing up in Wharton, Texas.

Foote, who died at age 92 in 2009, lived long enough to see "Dividing the Estate" premiere on Broadway; that production's cast, like the Globe's, featured Hallie Foote, Abner, Penny Fuller and the Broadway icon Elizabeth Ashley as the Gordon family matriarch, Stella.

SEE 'DIVIDING THE ESTATE' • E5

FROM E1

But the Globe staging (a co-production with Houston's Alley Theatre) also brings in Horton Foote Jr., an actor turned New York restaurant owner who is returning to the stage for the first time in nearly two decades.

Although some of the senior Foote's plays — "The Trip to Bountiful" and the Pulitzer-winning "The Young Man From Atlanta" among them — are revived occasionally at regional theaters, they seldom have been seen in San Diego (the last major staging locally was of "Bounty" at Lamb's Players Theatre in 1991). The Globe, in fact, has never staged a work by Foote.

That makes Hallie Foote, who lives just up the road in Pacific Palisades, eager to introduce the Gordons and their story to West Coast audiences.

"More than anything, I'm curious to see what Southern California thinks of this crazy family," she says. "A lot of my father's plays are deeply funny, but not as overtly funny as this play. (Yet it has) elements that are also very serious. It's more about the human condition, which can be very funny and very sad."

"Dividing the Estate"

Old Globe Theatre

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Where: 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$29 and up

Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: theoldglobe.org

Hallie Foote (left) as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate." at the Old Globe. JANN WHALEY



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A playwright's legacy

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One complication: Stella is still very much alive, making the prospect of divvying up her estate a delicate and complicated one.

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Hallie in particular has become a protector of and advocate for her father's work, and for making sure his name stays alive in American theater.

"Do I think he's as recognized as he should be? No," she acknowledges. "But I think my siblings would agree, it's kind of a priority for us," noting that the family is planning to start a foundation devoted to Foote's work. "I want to kind of further his legacy and really cement it."

Wilson, who directed Foote's epic "The Orphans' Home Cycle" in New York two years ago (and was until recently the artistic director of Hartford Stage), believes that Foote's "place in American theater is only now being recognized. For

"Mockingbird," he earned another one for "Tender Mercies.")

In Dad's footsteps

When Foote's children also became interested in show business — the kind of dicey career path that not all parents have the stomach to encourage — "our father was always really supportive of our endeavors," Horton Foote Jr. recalls. "He wasn't really concerned about the business side. He didn't even like to be in Hollywood; he loathed it," he says.

The younger Foote admits of his own showbiz experience, "I banged my head against the wall in Hollywood for years." He had largely dropped out of acting by the mid-1990s, when he became co-owner of the Tavern on Jane restaurant in lower Manhattan.

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Foote admits. "You have moments when you put these things on the back burner, but they tend to fester a bit."

Foote knew that he wanted to appear in one of his father's plays at least once more, and the Globe production seemed "the right time and the right place."

Though it won't be the first time Horton Jr. and Hallie have worked together, both seem eager to step onstage (and into their dad's characters) once again.

And given the production's history of success in shuttling from Broadway to Texas to San Diego, they may get another chance or two to do so (although no post-Globe plans for "Dividing the Estate" have been announced).

"I love touring with this play," Hallie says. "So if they can figure out another place to go, I'll go."

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Foote files

"Dividing the Estate" playwright Horton Foote was a startlingly prolific writer whose work spanned theater, television and film over the course of nearly 70 years. Some career milestones:

- **"Wharton Dance" (1940):** This one-act work, Foote's first play, was written at the urging of the choreographer Agnes de Mille. It invoked the real name of his Texas hometown; later plays would fictionalize the place as Harrison.

- **"The Trip to Bountiful" (1953):** Foote's story of an elderly woman who wants to return to her hometown began as a teleplay and has had many incarnations on stage and screen, including a 1985 big-screen version.

- **"To Kill a Mockingbird" (1962):** Foote won his first Oscar for adapting Harper Lee's novel into a screenplay.

- **"Tender Mercies" (1983):** This original screenplay, for the Robert Duvall movie about a troubled country singer, won Foote his second Oscar.

- **"The Young Man From Atlanta":** Foote won the 1995 Pulitzer Prize in Drama for this quiet play about a 1950s family coming to grips with great loss.

- **"The Orphans' Home Cycle" (2009-2010):** This nine-play epic, composed of previously written works centered on a character inspired by Foote's father, premiered after the playwright's death in 2009; it was brought to fruition by daughter Hallie Foote and director Michael Wilson.

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From left: Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon, Penny Fuller as Lucille and Roger Robinson as Doug in the Old Globe's production of "Dividing the Estate," directed by Michael Wilson. The play runs through Feb. 12. JANN WHALEY

Thursday, Jan. 12th 2012



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At heart of Globe play, inextricable kinship

Horton Foote's 'Estate,' a story about family, stars two of his children

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Hallie Foote (left) and Pat Bowie in the Old Globe Theatre's production of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate." — Jann Whaley





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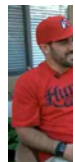
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Foote knew that he wanted to appear in one of his father's plays at least once more, and the Globe production seemed "the right time and the right place."

Though it won't be the first time Horton Jr. and Hallie have worked together, both seem eager to step onstage (and into their dad's characters) once again.

And given the production's history of success in shuttling from Broadway to Texas to San Diego, they may get another chance or two to do so (although no post-Globe plans for "Dividing the Estate" have been announced).

"I love touring with this play," Hallie says. "So if they can figure out another place to go, I'll go."

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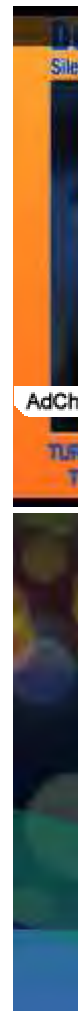
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Foote notes: Tracing a playwright's career

The late writer behind Globe comedy 'Estate' had a vast tally of credits, awards

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Horton Foote won his first Academy Award for writing the screen adaptation of Harper Lee's novel "To Kill a Mockingbird." The 1962 movie starred Mary Badham as young Scout and Gregory Peck as her father, Atticus. — AP photo



Written by
**James
Hebert**

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Horton Foote dies at 92

At heart of Globe play,
inextricable kinship

With previews for Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" poised to get under way Saturday at the Old Globe, here's a look at some of the startlingly prolific playwright's career milestones:

- "Wharton Dance" (1940): This one-act work, Foote's first play, was written at the urging of the choreographer Agnes de Mille. It invoked the real name of his Texas hometown; later plays would fictionalize the place as Harrison.
- "The Trip to Bountiful" (1953): Foote's story of an elderly woman who wants to return to her hometown began as a teleplay and has had many incarnations on stage and screen, including a 1985 big-screen version.
- "To Kill a Mockingbird" (1962): Foote won his first Oscar for adapting Harper Lee's novel into a screenplay.
- "Tender Mercies" (1983): This original screenplay, for the Robert Duvall movie about a troubled country singer, won Foote his second Oscar.
- "The Young Man From Atlanta" (1995): Foote won the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for this quiet play about a 1950s family coming to grips with great loss.
- "The Orphans' Home Cycle" (2009-2010): This nine-play epic, composed of previously written works centered on a character inspired by Foote's father, premiered just after the playwright's death in 2009. It was brought to fruition by daughter Hallie Foote and director Michael Wilson.

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THEATER FEATURE

Children shepherd Foote's overdue Globe debut in 'Estate'

By PAM KRAGEN
pkragen@nctimes.com

When Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" opens tonight at the Old Globe Theatre, it will mark the late playwright's debut at the



Horton Foote

76-year-old San Diego theater. That's the sort of milestone his daughter, onstage muse and longtime collaborator Hallie Foote is working to end.

Since the 92-year-old Foote's death in March 2009, Hallie Foote has worked tirelessly to ensure her father's name is counted among the pantheon of top 20th-century American playwrights.

"He's a universal writer who taps into a universal

"Dividing the Estate"

WHEN: 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through Feb. 12

WHERE: The Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego

TICKETS: \$29 and up

INFO: 619-234-5623; theoldglobe.org

sensibility," Hallie Foote said of her father. "There's a way that people can relate to the characters he creates ... It's about the human condition. It taps into people's foibles, makes them deeply funny and deeply human. His plays are timeless."

Sharing her goal of spreading the Foote message is "Dividing the Estate" director Michael Wilson, who worked closely with

Foote during the last 12 years of his life, culminating in the 2009 off-Broadway premiere of Foote's nine-play magnum opus, "The Orphan's Home Cycle."

"I think his time is coming," Wilson said of the Foote revival. "It was beginning to happen while he was still alive. He finally felt the embrace that eluded him for so long."

Wilson directed both the Broadway and off-Broadway premieres of "Dividing the Estate" in 2007, and has since staged it at Connecticut's Hartford Stage (where he was artistic director until last year), at Houston's Alley Theatre, and now in San Diego. For each production, Wilson has reunited most of the show's original cast, which for the San Diego staging includes Broadway grand dame Elizabeth Ashley, Hallie

See 'Estate,' 24



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The cast of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at the Old Globe Theatre. Photo courtesy of Henry DiRocco



Hallie Foote as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Theatre.
Photo courtesy of Jann Whaley



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'Estate'

Continued from Page 23

Foote and her husband, Devon Abner.

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While the siblings in the play are eager to sell the estate for personal gain, Hallie Foote and her siblings are working to ensure the preservation of her father's estate. She has launched a foundation in his name, is planning to turn Foote's beloved home in Wharton, Texas, into a playwrights retreat, and is pushing to get Foote's plays produced in as many theaters as possible.

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In "Dividing the Estate," Hallie Foote stars as Stella's greedy youngest daughter, Mary Jo, a role she's reprising for the fifth time under Wilson's direction. The Pacific Palisades resident has spent most of the past 26 years creating roles in her father's plays, and said she believes Wilson is the best directorial interpreter of his work.

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Children shepherd Foote's overdue Globe debut in 'Estate'

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Children shepherd Foote's overdue Globe debut in 'Estate'

By PAM KRAGEN pkragen@nctimes.com North County Times | Posted: Tuesday, January 17, 2012 10:00 am | No Comments Posted

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Henry DiRocco

Horton Foote Jr. and Hallie Foote with director Michael Wilson, who directs their late father Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at the Old Globe Theatre. Photo courtesy of Henry DiRocco



-



"Dividing the Estate"

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THEATER

Divided? Not these kids

Horton Foote's two older children bring their father's 'Dividing the Estate' to the Old Globe while making plans to ensure his legacy.

MIKE BOEHM

Audiences who see Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," opening Thursday at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, will experience two hours of a family's comically desperate, talons-baring tussle over whether and how to cash out a 5,000-acre homestead in southeast Texas that's been passed down from generation to generation.

But behind the scenes, the story line is just the opposite. There, the agenda is a family's unified, concord-filled effort to keep a theatrical legacy intact, celebrate it and carry it forward.

Horton Foote's two older children, Hallie and Horton Jr., are among the onstage combatants in San Diego, playing siblings Lewis and Mary Jo — he a bibulous ne'er-do-well and she a marvel of instinctive, unadulterated self-interest, traits that in the right hands can be hilarious. Her 2009 Tony Award nomination in the part would suggest that's the case.

Hallie's husband, Devon Abner, plays Lewis and Mary Jo's nephew, who stays relatively calm and sensible amid a storm whose gathered forces also include Broadway stalwarts Elizabeth Ashley and Penny Fuller as the family's matriarch and elder sister. The director, Michael Wilson, has been personally and professionally close to the Footes since 1991, making him "almost an adopted member of the ... family," according to "Horton Foote, America's Storyteller," Wilborn Hampton's 2009 biography of the playwright.

Working until his death three years ago, just shy of his 93rd birthday, Foote wrote more than 60 plays, including "The Trip to Bountiful" and the 1995 Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Young Man From Atlanta." Known for his gracious manner, he also wrote extensively for film and television, including Oscar-winning scripts for the 1962 adaptation of Harper Lee's novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" and his original 1983 story, "Tender Mercies."

Since the late 1970s, Hallie Foote, 61, has been the fulcrum of many a cast of her father's plays (Lillian Gish, Geraldine Page, Robert Duvall and Jean Stapleton are other notables who've starred in shows from his 70-year oeuvre).

Horton Jr., 59, got in on the act in the early 1980s. Before switching to the restaurant business in 1995, when he opened Tavern on Jane, a folksy neighborhood spot in New York's Greenwich Village, he played opposite Hallie in three films, a television movie and three stage productions of their father's work, and a staging of "God's Pictures" by their playwright youngest sibling, Daisy Foote.

A 'grateful' son

The San Diego incarnation of "Dividing the Estate" extends an informal tour that began off-Broadway in 2007, then continued through 2009 on Broadway and at Hartford Stage, the Connecticut company then run by Wilson. Last fall it resumed with more or less the same cast at Houston's Alley Theatre. When Horton Jr. learned that the role of Lewis had opened up in San Diego, he put in a bid for his first part in more than 16 years.

A sudden onset of tears constricted his voice as he tried to convey what it means to be able to reinhabit the small-town world his father created and, through that, to walk with him again after his death.

"I'm having a great time, and I'm just so grateful I get this chance to do this one more time," he whispered.

Hallie, sitting beside her brother during their lunch break from rehearsals, jumped in with sisterly solicitude, telling a story to illustrate how crying on happy occasions is a family-wide trait. At Daisy's wedding, her role was to read

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DON BARTLETT Los Angeles Times

HALLIE FOOTE and Horton Foote Jr., who play battling siblings in their father's play, are united in their devotion to his works.

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CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

HORTON FOOTE, on the Broadway set of "Dividing the Estate" in 2008, wrote more than 60 plays as well as the Oscar-winning scripts for "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Tender Mercies."

something her father had written for the ceremony. The elder Foote assured her, "If you get too emotional, just tap me on the shoulder and I'll read it." So I got up and started to cry, and I looked at him, and he went, "You're on your own," and he started sobbing."

Like playwright August Wilson and novelists such as William Faulkner and John Updike, Foote repeatedly re-created the place where he grew up — Wharton, Texas, which he renamed Harrison in his plays. Often, the stories are based on true family lore; he modeled the characters in "Dividing the Estate" after his grandmother and aunts and uncles. After a commercially fallow period from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, when he and wife, Lillian, were raising their four children in a small town in New Hampshire, Foote began a comeback with "The Orphans' Home Cycle," a sequence of nine plays that includes a retelling of his parents' romance.

Coming late to acting

Hallie didn't take up acting until she was in her mid-20s, after a stab at public relations in Boston. Her father helped her find teachers in Los Angeles, and while watching her perform in one of his plays in 1977 at a small L.A. theater, he realized his daughter was precisely the actress he needed to play his mother as a young woman.

Horton Jr. says without sheepishness that he followed in his sis-

ter's footsteps. He had worked his way up selling men's clothing in Boston and Beverly Hills but had a change of heart and wound up at the Loft Studio, the same school where Hallie had studied (and where he says his fellow students included Sean Penn, Nicolas Cage, Eric Stoltz, Anjelica Huston and Michelle Pfeiffer).

The other Foote siblings live in New York state. Daisy typically sets her plays in small-town New Hampshire and is married to Tim Guinee, a busy television actor. Walter is an attorney who wrote and directed a well-received 1999 independent feature film, "The Tavern," inspired by his brother's adventures as a restaurateur. Walter has sired the next Foote generation, two teenagers whose athletic and scholastic prowess Aunt Hallie and Uncle Horton like to trumpet.

Along with their theatrical instincts, the Foote siblings say, they inherited a certain diffidence about self-promotion that is not ideal in the world of show business. "You've really got to fight and scratch and claw, and to be honest, I probably didn't fight and scratch and claw as much as I should have," Horton said. "That's never been my strong suit."

"That's the thing," chimed in Hallie (who is Barbara Hallie to her family but dropped Barbara from her stage name early on because it made people assume that Hallie was her last name). "We weren't raised by a careerist."

Hallie's acting honors include a 1993 Obie Award and the Tony nomination for "Dividing the Estate," a turn Ben Brantley of the New York Times praised as "true comic genius."

She needs prodding

Now that her father, who lived with Hallie and her husband in Pacific Palisades during his last four-plus years, is gone, she hasn't discerned any particular inner drive to branch out and win comparable acclaim in other acting milieus.

"I'm the worst, I'm just the worst," when it comes to projecting herself onto casting directors' radar, she said, adding with a laugh that she recently bestrode the megaplexes with a part in the horror film "Paranormal Activity 3."

"I've always said if I don't get to do anything else except my father's stuff, that's fine with me. For an actor it's very exciting, because there are so many layers to it. It's never been a problem for me."

"I'm going to push her a little," vowed her brother, who for his own part doesn't see his turn in "Dividing the Estate" as a prelude to a renewed acting career. "She's so talented, and she really should be working."

Whatever happens, tending the creative estate they've inherited will remain a priority. Hallie is spearheading a nascent nonprofit foundation, tentatively called the Horton Foote Legacy, that aims to draw attention to his plays and pre-

serve the home in Wharton where he was raised and returned throughout his life. She envisions launching an artist-in-residence program there, with grant recipients coming to soak up the vibe and write.

Director Wilson says he also plans to keep pushing Foote's legacy forward. The plays typically unfold in a subtler and lower-keyed register than those of contemporaries such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. Foote is most often likened to Anton Chekhov, whose "The Cherry Orchard" and "Uncle Vanya" have direct echoes in certain elements of "Dividing the Estate." But the rehearsal sequence in which an outraged, tantrum-throwing Hallie leaped in the air, then shook her pompom-less fists over her head, like the high school cheerleader she once was, bore witness that her dad could write high-octane stuff when he wanted to.

Wilson notes that, despite Foote's stature, this is just the fourth major production of one of his plays in Southern California. Martin Benson of South Coast Repertory became a convert about 10 years ago and directed the three others at the Costa Mesa theater. The three leading stage companies in Los Angeles remain virgins to the Foote oeuvre — including the Pasadena Playhouse, where the playwright got his start in the theater as a teenage acting student during the early 1930s, skipping lunches during his first semester so he could afford private voice lessons aimed at expunging his Texas accent.

Wilson says there are prospects of taking "Dividing the Estate" to London; his grail is to find producers for Foote's last, most epic work: his condensation of the nine full-length plays of "The Orphans' Home Cycle" into three evenings designed to be programmed together and performed by 22 actors, as they were in runs in Hartford and New York in fall 2009.

Unlike the estate that's in danger of being liquidated in the current play, Wilson believes Foote's theatrical acreage will appreciate in value and esteem as time goes on.

"The inherent American stories at the heart of Horton's plays are timeless," he said. "It's something [theater companies] will be able to go back to the well for."

Hallie Foote is confident that even if she continues to stick mainly to roles her father wrote, she's in no danger of running short of work. "I'm very committed to [his] legacy, which I think is just going to increase."

mike.boehm@latimes.com

Los Angeles Times | ENTERTAINMENT



Culture Monster

ALL THE ARTS, ALL THE TIME

Horton Foote's children carry on his work, acting at Old Gl

January 14, 2012 | 12:00 pm



Families coming to strife over how to divvy up the land that makes up their legacy is as old a dramatic subject in "Dividing the State" is considerably more funny.

The comedy's West Coast premiere at The Old Globe theater in San Diego deals with a legacy in more ways than his 93rd birthday, Foote left behind a theatrical oeuvre of more than 60 plays, plus Oscar-winning screenplay *Mercies*." Now Hallie Foote and Horton Foote Jr., his eldest daughter and son, are uniting to carry his work forward.

[Read here](#) about how they'll be battling onstage as sibling rivals for the sake of doing just the opposite as their parents.

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-- Mike Boehm

Photo: Hallie Foote and Horton Foote Jr. Credit: Don Bartletti/Los Angeles Times

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Horton Foote's children keep his plays alive

The playwright's two older children bring their father's 'Dividing the Estate' to the Old Globe while making plans to ensure his legacy.



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Hallie Foote and her brother Horton Foote Jr. during rehearsal of "Dividing the Estate," at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego. (Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times)



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By Mike Boehm, Los Angeles Times

January 15, 2012

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Culture Monster: The L.A. Times arts blog

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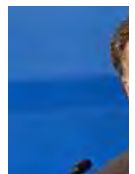
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(Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times)

By Mike Boehm, Los Angeles Times

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'Dividing the Estate' is sure to become an American classic

BY DIANA SAENGER

Pulitzer Prize and Academy Award-winning writer Horton Foote has entertained more than five generations with his profound ability to connect with an audience. The magic continues as Foote's "Dividing the Estate," which earned a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, makes its West Coast premiere at The Old Globe through Feb. 12.

Co-produced by the Alley Theatre, the play is directed by Michael Wilson, who directed it at the Lincoln Center Theater where it drew raves from critics.

"Dividing the Estate" unfolds with humor and drama as it peeks inside a family of socialites. Several generations have gathered at the Texas home of their octogenarian matriarch Stella (Elizabeth Ashley). They are there to sort out her estate before she dies because Stella has specific requests she wants to make sure are followed out.

Naturally, there are those who object, and how that plays out — along with the

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Kelly McAndrew plays outsider Pauline. COURTESY

arrival of outsider and Son's fiancée Pauline (Kelly McAndrew) — is an intriguing tale to behold.

McAndrew (The Globe's "August: Osage County," "Alive and Well," "Sight Unseen," and Broadway's "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof") said she was pleased to land her audition as Pauline. Although she hadn't seen the play when she read the script, she was hooked.

"You can read a play and know it's good, but it's not very often you can feel how it will run or how funny and moving it is," she said. "I was laughing out loud

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Pauline is a schoolteacher who comes from a family of lesser means than Son's family. Although he runs the estate, Pauline faces scrutiny from his mother Lucile (Penny Fuller) and Grandmother Stella.

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about is each other ... so it's kind of where does the round peg fit into the square hole."

The inclusion of Foote's own children, Horton Foote Jr. (Lewis Gordon) and Hallie Foote (Mary Jo), appearing in this play is an added value.

Other cast members include: Pat Bowie (Mildred), James DeMarse (Bob), Hallie

Foote (Mary Jo), Nicole Lowrance (Sissie), Jenny Dare Paulin (Emily), Keiana Richard (Cathleen), Roger Robinson (Doug) and Bree Welch (Irene Ratliff).

McAndrew said audiences will be awed by Jeff Cowie's beautiful set design and everyone will find someone in "Dividing the Estate" they can relate to.



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Courtesy photo

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‘Dividing the Estate’ sure to become an American classic

BY DIANA SAENGER

Pulitzer Prize and Academy Award-winning writer Horton Foote has entertained more than five generations with his profound ability to connect with an audience. The magic continues as Foote's "Dividing the Estate," which earned a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, makes its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe through Feb. 12. Co-produced by the Alley Theatre, the play is directed by Michael Wilson, who directed it at the Lincoln Center Theater where it drew raves from critics.

"Dividing the Estate" unfolds with humor and drama as it peeks inside a family of socialites. Several generations have gathered at the Texas home of their octogenarian matriarch Stella (Elizabeth Ashley). They are there to sort out her estate before she dies because Stella has specific requests she wants to make sure are followed out. Naturally, there are those who object, and how that plays out -- along with the arrival of outsider and Son's fiancée Pauline (Kelly McAndrew) -- is an intriguing tale to behold.



Kelly McAndrew plays outsider Pauline

If you go

What: "Dividing the Estate"

When: Jan. 14–Feb. 12

Where: The Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: From \$29

Box Office: (619) 23-GLOBE

Web: TheOldGlobe.org

McAndrew (The Globe "August: Osage County," "Alive and Well," "Sight Unseen," and Broadway "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof") said she was pleased to land her audition as Pauline. Al-

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(Right) Hallie Foote (Mary Jo) and Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) star in Horton Foote's Tony Award-nominated 'Dividing the Estate' at The Old Globe Theatre through Feb. 12.

PHOTO: JANN WHALEY





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Page 1 of 1

**Tony Award-
winning play
comes to the
Old Globe.
See page B11.**



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If you go

What: "Dividing the Estate"

When: Jan. 14-Feb. 12

Where: The Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: From \$29

Box Office: (619) 23-GLOBE

Web: TheOldGlobe.org

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Article Size: 53 sq inch
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(Right) Hallie Foote (Mary Jo) and Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) star in Horton Foote's Tony Award-nominated "Dividing the Estate" at The Old Globe Theatre through Feb. 12.

PHOTO: JANN WHALEY

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Bird Rock home tour set for Jan. 28

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Tickets are \$25 and will be sold the day of the event only starting at 11 a.m. at Bird Rock Coffee Roasters, 5627 La Jolla Blvd.

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For information, call Bird Rock Coffee Roasters at (858) 551-1707.

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BY DIANA SAENGER

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If you go

What: "Dividing the Estate"

When: Jan. 14-Feb. 12

Where: The Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: From \$29

Box Office: (619) 23-GLOBE

Web: TheOldGlobe.org

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PHOTO: JANN WHALEY

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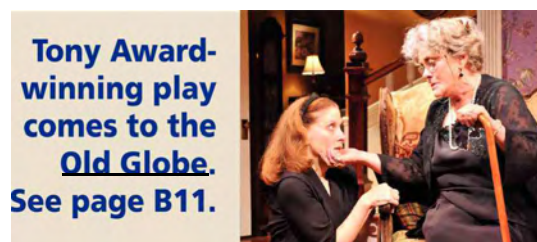


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'Dividing the Estate' sure to become an American classic

BY DIANA SAENGER

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If you go

What: "Dividing the Estate"

When: Jan. 14-Feb. 12

Where: The Globe Theatre, Balboa Park

Tickets: From \$29

Box Office: (619) 23-GLOBE

Web: TheOldGlobe.org

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(Right) Hallie Foote (Mary Jo) and Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon) star in Horton Foote's Tony Award-nominated **'Dividing the Estate'** at The **Old Globe** Theatre through Feb. 12.

PHOTO: JANN WHALEY

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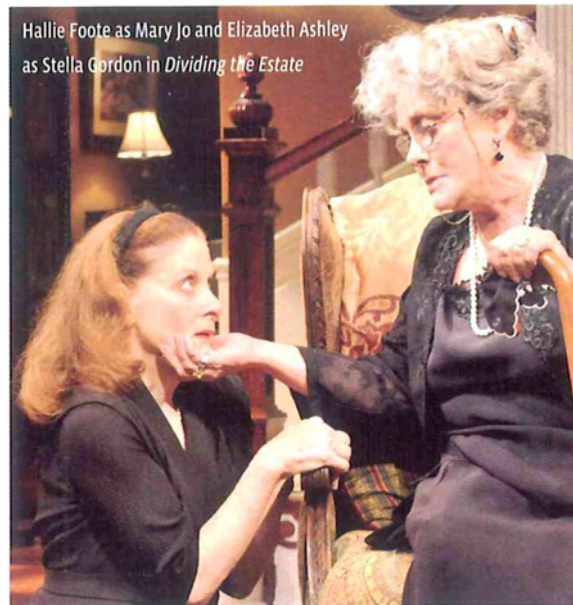
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**Tony Award-
winning play
comes to the
Old Globe.
See page B11.**



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Dividing The Estate

The great Elizabeth Ashley is performing in playwright Horton Foote's comedy *Dividing the Estate* in the Old Globe Theatre this month. The larger-than-life talent and persona of Ashley, for whom the descriptor "great" is appropriate and earned, has helped her rack up a litany of stage, film, and TV credits since her Broadway debut in 1959. She has a coveted Tony Award, she's a major presence on stage, and she's seemingly fearless. So, watching her in Foote's tale about a family living in Texas in the late 1980s should be energizing. The story focuses on a family ruled by an octogenarian matriarch, Stella (Ashley), who must deal with her greedy family, one so absorbed with the mission of preserving its fortune that it considers dividing the estate before mama's death. Ashley reprises this role, which she played on Broadway in 2009. She is joined on stage by Tony nominee Penny Fuller, also reprising her role of Lucille from the same Broadway production.

Dividing the Estate was the final play written by the prolific Foote, recipient of the Pulitzer Prize and two Academy Awards, as well as the National Medal of arts. He penned TV dramas during the Golden Age of Television and authored many plays, among them the memorable *The Trip to Bountiful*. Hallie Foote, the playwright's daughter, repeats the role of Mary Jo, which she portrayed in the original Broadway production and for which she received a Tony Award nomination. Horton Foote, Jr. also appears in the show, returning to the stage after an almost 20-year absence. Previews start January 14 and the production officially opens January 19, closing February 12. (619/234-5623, www.theoldglobe.org) DARLENE G. DAVIES



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12/29/11

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DARLENE G. DAVIES

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Dividing The Estate's Roger Robinson Makes Vital, Vivid, Memorable Characters



By Barbara Smith

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Infusing life into a character and making him real is a craft to which all good actors aspire. Roger Robinson, who is featured in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," now showing in its West Coast debut at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, is just such an actor. The award-winning professional has carved out a special niche in the world of acting, creating memorable roles in a career that has spanned stage, television and film for over forty years.

The actor took time last week to share some of his insights gleaned from a varied and rewarding career. Despite having a cold and being in the midst of previews before Thursday's opening night, Robinson was generous in sharing a conversation about Doug, the character he plays in the production, family, and the blessings of a career that he loves.

Sinking businesses, foreclosures, crops gone bad—this is the Texas of "Dividing the Estate." Robinson's character Doug is a 92-year old retainer for the Gordon family in this depressed setting. He has worked for the family since age 5 when his father was killed by a bull. The man who owned the sprawling estate brought Doug's mother to live in a house behind the estate house, where she cooked for the family until she died. With no siblings, the Gordons are the only family he has ever known.

Doug is confidante to 87-year-old Miss Stella (brilliantly portrayed by Elizabeth Ashley), the matriarch of the family, who is being hounded by her three children, now that their financial fortunes have turned, to divide up the estate. Greed, family, death are all placed under the microscope in this entertaining Tony 2009 Tony-nominated play.

Robinson turned in a gem of a performance last week, finely nuanced with humor, pathos and authenticity. The actor speaks eloquently about the character of Doug and how he drew from his mother, who lived to be 100 years old, and other elders in his family to find the wellspring of Doug's spirit. "The faulty memory, the querulousness, the forgetfulness—this character reminds me of my mother in her declining years," he reflects. "Dividing the Estate" is Horton Foote's final play and, says Robinson, "I think he was examining himself a lot too." For the actor, the play is an observant take on what it takes to get old and what happens when approaching one's final days. "That was really intriguing to me as an actor, having witnessed my mother so vividly before her transition and what she was dealing with. The loss of memory, living in the past, talking about things that happened to her when she was a little girl. This character does that. It was a challenge to make that real and do it with compassion and understanding." We see this as Doug insists on serving the family meal. His stature is tall but teetering, his hands eager but trembling; he is short tempered at not being able to complete tasks which were once part of his every day routine. His temperament is nonetheless feisty and spirited as he engages in heated exchanges with Mildred (Pat Bowie) and Cathleen (Keiana Richard), the household help. We laugh in spite of ourselves as they angrily accuse each other of "conjuring" and other misdeeds.

The play's stellar cast, under the able direction of Michael Wilson, has made the production a joyful experience for Robinson. With Horton Foote Jr. (Lewis Gordon) and Tony nominee Hallie Foote (Mary Jo Gordon), both children of the late playwright, the play becomes a family affair both onstage and off.

Robinson's longevity in a business where careers can be fleeting is impressive. His numerous Broadway credits include "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," for which he won a Tony Award in 2009. You've seen him on popular TV series including "ER," "Friends," "Law and Order," and going way back to a recurring role on the detective series "Kojak." Films include "Willie Dynamite" and "Meteor."

The actor credits the late Lloyd Richards, noted Dean of the Yale School of Drama and head of the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, for much of the success he has achieved as an actor. Richards mentored Robinson in New York in the early 60's and later connected the young actor with August Wilson, under whose tutelage Robinson won the Tony for "Joe Turner's Come and Gone." For Robinson, Richards' stature cannot be overstated; his original production of Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" in 1959 and his introduction of August Wilson to Broadway in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" were groundbreaking events that

changed the face of theatre forever. "There's never been a black man in that position of power in American theatre," says Robinson. "Almost every Black actor who is prominent today--James Earl Jones, Lou Gossett, Billy Dee Williams, Cicily Tyson--all of those people came through Lloyd Richards."

Asked which of the venues—stage, film or television—is his favorite, he chuckles and says, "Whichever one I'm working on," but adds that stage is special because he enjoys the energy of the live audience. On stage, he says, "You can't just go out there and get by with looks and charm. Stage demands that you go out there and develop a character and know stagecraft." Of Doug, Robinson says, "The character is quite memorable, and hopefully I will have lifted him off the page and made him vital and vivid to people."

The topic of family is never far from Robinson's conversation. He speaks with pride of his Seattle roots where his family has lived since 1887 when it was part of the Oregon Territory. Even though he makes his home in New York for professional reasons, his ties to his siblings and other relatives there are strong. When you ask the actor about memorable moments, he is as likely to relate a personal family story as he is to describe a prominent moment in acting. Case in point: when Robinson won the Tony in 2009, he arranged tickets for his cousin, Theodore Spearman, the first Black Superior Court Judge in Kitsap County, Washington, to see the play. "He was over the moon," says Robinson at seeing his cousin on Broadway. "He talked about it forever." The moment is ever more poignant now as Spearman died in January of this year. "It's a great memory to have forever."

Asked to ascribe a deep meaning to the play, Robinson says simply, "It's a play. It's funny. It's sad. It's like life." And if you want an evening's entertainment that will make you laugh, cry, and think about family and your place in the world a bit more, check out Roger Robinson and a premier cast in "Dividing the Estate."

"Dividing the Estate" plays through February 12. Tickets can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org or by phone at 619-23GLOBE.

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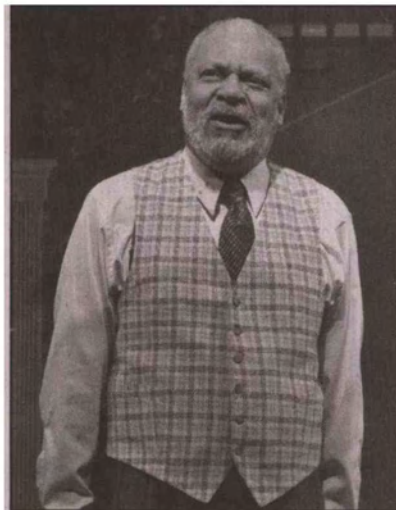
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Roger Robinson Infuses Life and Makes Vital, Vivid, Memorable Characters

By Barbara Smith
Contributing Writer

Infusing life into a character and making him real is a craft to which all good actors aspire. Roger Robinson, who is featured in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," now showing in its West Coast debut at the Old Globe Theatre, is just such an actor. The award-winning professional has carved out a niche in the world of acting, creating memorable roles in a career that has spanned stage, television and film for over forty years.

The actor took time last week



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Robinson

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Doug is confidante to octogenarian Miss Stella (brilliantly portrayed by Elizabeth Ashley), the matriarch of the family, who is being hounded by her three unchildren, now that their financial fortunes have turned, to divide up the estate. Greed, family, death are all placed under the microscope in this entertaining 2009 Tony-nominated play.

Robinson turned in a gem of a performance Friday night, finely nuanced with humor, pathos and authenticity. The actor speaks eloquently about the character of Doug and how he drew from his mother, who lived to be 100 years old, and other elders in his family to find the wellspring of Doug's spirit. "The faulty memory, the querulousness, the forgetfulness—this character reminds me of my mother in her declining years," he reflects. "Dividing the Estate" is Horton Foote's final play and, says Robinson, "I think he was examining himself a lot too." For the actor, the play

is an observant take on what it takes to get old and what happens when approaching one's final days. "That was really intriguing to me as an actor, having witnessed my mother so vividly before her transition and what she was dealing with. The loss of memory, living in the past, talking about things that happened to her when she was a little girl. This character does that. It was a challenge to make that real and do it with compassion and understanding."

We see this as Doug insists on serving the family meal. His stature is tall but teetering, his hands eager but trembling; he is short tempered at not being able to complete tasks which were once part of his every day routine. He is nonetheless feisty and spirited as he engages in heated exchanges with Mildred (Pat Bowie) and Cathleen (Kiana Richard), the household help. We laugh in spite of ourselves as they angrily accuse each other of "conjuring" and other misdeeds.

The play's stellar cast, under the able direction of Michael Wilson, has made the production a joyful experience for Robinson. With Horton Foote Jr. (Lewis Gordon) and Tony nominee Hallie Foote (Mary Jo Gordon), who delivers some of Foote's best lines with consummate timing, both children of the late playwright, the play becomes a family affair both on stage and off.

Robinson's longevity in a business where careers can be fleeting is impressive. His numerous Broadway credits include "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," for which he won a Tony in 2009. You've seen him on popular TV series including "ER," "Friends," "Law and Order," and "back-in-the-day" detective series "Kojak." Films include "Willie Dynamite" and "Meteor."

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Asked to ascribe a deep meaning to the play, Robinson says simply, "It's a play. It's funny. It's sad. It's like life." And if you want an evening's entertainment that will make you laugh, cry, and think about family and your place in the world a bit more, "Dividing the Estate" is the play to see.

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Entertainment

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Onstage this Month: *Family Feuds*

By Pat Launer



The holidays gave us plenty of family time – and more than likely, some of the...shall we say, vexation that comes along with it. So it's always comforting to watch a family that's even more dysfunctional than yours. It doesn't matter if you're royalty or Just Plain Folks, when it comes to money, power and passing the torch, the battles will get bloody – whether it's the 12th century ("The Lion in Winter") or the 20th ("Dividing the Estate").

"Dividing the Estate" at The Old Globe

Life and death also take center stage in "Dividing the Estate," the final play by Oscar-winning screenwriter and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Horton Foote (he died in 2009 at age 92).

The Gordons are malcontents in a fading Southern dynasty dominated by Stella, the octogenarian matriarch. It's 1987, in the fictional town of Harrison, Texas. A recession, plunging real estate values and an unexpected tax bill have catapulted the family into

the turmoil of an uncertain future. Stella's less-than-savory spawn — predatory Mary Jo, complacent Lucille and alcoholic Lewis — engage in spirited debate about whether they should split the family holdings while their mother is still alive, in order to ensure themselves financial independence.

The Broadway production was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play in

2008. Most of the original cast, including theater legend Elizabeth Ashley, will be here for the West Coast premiere at the Old Globe, under the direction of Michael Wilson, who's helming the piece for the third time.

"I've never tired of exploring this play," says Wilson. "It's so layered and wonderfully rich. I think it's one of Horton's finest, and among the favorite projects I've done in my career."

"The play is all about the importance of family," says Wilson. "The difficulties of being in a family with a stern parent who insists on maintaining order and discipline, even with adult children. We all know that, even after we become adults with our own families, when we get back with our family of origin, we quickly revert back to being children."

"The Lion in Winter" runs through Jan. 29 at North Coast Repertory Theatre in Solana Beach. (858) 481-1055. theoldglobe.org.

"Dividing the Estate" plays in the Old Globe Theatre through Feb. 12. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.



Hallie Foote (left) as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in 'Dividing the Estate'. Photo by Jann Whaley.

Bach Collegium San Diego (BCSD) presents its first ever dance collaboration on February 3 and 4, 2012, with a program featuring all-new choreography by Yolande Snaith, Head of Dance Theatre at the University of California, San Diego.

"J.S. Bach: The Art of Fugue" features contemporary dance set to Baroque music by the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach, with five dancers bringing to life the human passions of joy, temptation, grief, and hope expressed in selections from Bach's Art of Fugue and Cantata arias. The guest director is acclaimed chamber musician and conductor Rodolfo Richter, leader of Britain's Academy of Ancient Music. Joining solo alto Angela Young Smucker on stage will be eight musicians and five dancers.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m., Friday, February 3, and Saturday, February 4, 2012, at UCSD's Theatre and Dance Department. Performances will be preceded by an informal discussion on the music, beginning promptly at 6.45p.m. ID required). For more information and to purchase tickets please visit the BCSD website.

Diversionsary Theatre

"Next Fall," by Geoffrey Nuffts, directed by James Vasquez, featuring Matt McGrath, Stewart Calhoun, Tony Houck, John Whitley, Jacque Wilke, and Shana Wride runs from February 16 through March 25, 2012. "Next Fall" is a witty and intelligent play about faith, devotion and unconventional love.

Luke believes in God. Adam believes in everything else. "Next Fall" portrays the ups and downs of this unlikely couple's five-year relationship with sharp humor and unflinching honesty. When an accident changes everything, Adam must turn to Luke's family and friends for support... and answers.

Performances are at Diversionsary Theatre 4545 Park Blvd. San Diego CA 92116. Previews Feb. 16 and 17. Official opening night is Saturday, February 18. Ticket prices are \$31.00-\$33, Previews (Feb. 16 & 17) \$20.00.

2

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"**Dividing the Estate**," by Horton Foote and directed by Michael Wilson, runs through February 12. Nominated for a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, "Dividing the Estate" is Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote's knowing comedy about family, money and greed. Living in present day Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella, the family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their family fortune begins to diminish. Stella's children debate whether or not they should divide the estate while their mother is still alive in order to ensure themselves financial independence.

"**An Enemy of the People**," Arthur Miller's adaptation of Henrick Ibsen's play, is directed by Christy Yael and Sean Cox, and runs through February 19.

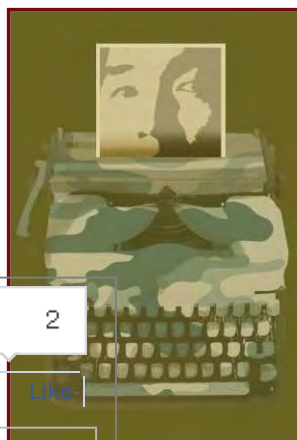
Prosperity seems to be looming on the horizon for a seacoast town in Maine. A health spa created from the local springs prompts hopes of major economic growth. There is hardly cause for concern that visitors to the community have been getting sick. But then Dr. Stockmann discovers that the town's water is poisoned and reports it to the authorities. Instead of being hailed as a hero, Stockmann's good deed has the potential to ruin the town's financial security, and he is labeled an enemy of the people. Prosperity vs. Honesty: a passionate choice.

Perhaps the greatest playwright of the 19th century, Henrik Ibsen wrote of his outrage at a society that refuses to recognize the truth. This adaptation by Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Arthur Miller presents the powerful study of an honest man being persecuted because of his insistence on telling that truth. The inspiration for the Academy Award winning film "JAWS," Ibsen's play is a penetrating exploration of what happens when the truth comes up against the will of the majority.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

PHOTO EDITORS: Digital images of The Old Globe's productions are available at www.TheOldGlobe.org/pressroom.

Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company



2

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"How I Got That Story," a play by Amlin Gray and directed by Seema Sueko, will run February 23 through 28. Hailed as "one of the most original and powerful plays ever to be done off-Broadway," this production will reunite actors Brian Bielawski and Greg Watanabe from Mo'olelo's 2010 production of "Yellow Face."

First produced at Milwaukee Repertory Theater in 1979, "How I Got That Story" is a two-man "nightmare comedy" about an eager newspaper reporter from Dubuque who travels to a country called "Ambo-land, a fictional representation of Vietnam, to cover the war. His convictions of truth in journalism and his perceptions of objectivity are challenged as he ping pongs from his bureau chief to interactions with protesters, guerrillas, government officials, American soldiers, prostitutes, photo journalists and orphans. Serving as a microcosm of the United States' involvement in foreign wars, the reporter is deeply transformed and lost by the end of the play. The play explores the human impact of war and the role of the media.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.moolelo.net, or by phone at (619) 342-7395.

The 10th Avenue Theatre is located at 930 10th Avenue in downtown San Diego. For information and tickets, visit www.moolelo.net, or call 619-342-7395.

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(from left) Horton Foote Jr. as Lewis Gordon, Hallie Foote as Mary Jo, Penny Fuller as Lucille and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Jan. 14 - Feb. 12, 2012. Photo by Henry DiRocco.

Old Globe - Conrad Prebys Theatre Center

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Horton Foote's children make plans to ensure his legacy

By **Mike Boehm** 20 January 2012
Los Angeles Times (MCT)

SAN DIEGO — Audiences who see Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate," opening Thursday at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, will experience two hours of a family's comically desperate, talons-baring tussle over whether and how to cash out a 5,000-acre homestead in southeast Texas that's been passed down from generation to generation.

But behind the scenes, the story line is just the opposite. There, the agenda is a family's unified, concord-filled effort to keep a theatrical legacy intact, celebrate it and carry it forward.

Horton Foote's two older children, Hallie and Horton Jr., are among the onstage combatants in San Diego, playing siblings Lewis and Mary Jo — he a bibulous ne'er-do-well and she a marvel of instinctive, unadulterated self-interest, traits that in the right hands can be hilarious. Her 2009 Tony Award nomination in the part would suggest that's the case.

Hallie's husband, Devon Abner, plays Lewis and Mary Jo's nephew, who stays relatively calm and sensible amid a storm whose gathered forces also include Broadway stalwarts Elizabeth Ashley and Penny Fuller as the family's matriarch and elder sister. The director, Michael Wilson, has been personally and professionally close to the Footes since 1991, making him "almost an adopted member of the ... family," according to "Horton Foote, America's Storyteller," Wilborn Hampton's 2009 biography of the playwright.

Working until his death three years ago, just shy of his 93rd birthday, Foote wrote more than 60 plays, including "The Trip to Bountiful" and the 1995 Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Young Man From Atlanta." Known for his gracious manner, he also wrote extensively for film and television, including

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Oscar-winning scripts for the 1962 adaptation of Harper Lee's novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" and his original 1983 story, "Tender Mercies."

Since the late 1970s, Hallie Foote, 61, has been the fulcrum of many a cast of her father's plays (Lillian Gish, Geraldine Page, Robert Duvall and Jean Stapleton are other notables who've starred in shows from his 70-year oeuvre).

Horton Jr., 59, got in on the act in the early 1980s. Before switching to the restaurant business in 1995, when he opened Tavern on Jane, a folksy neighborhood spot in New York's Greenwich Village, he played opposite Hallie in three films, a television movie and three stage productions of their father's work, and a staging of "God's Pictures" by their playwright youngest sibling, Daisy Foote.

The San Diego incarnation of "Dividing the Estate" extends an informal tour that began off-Broadway in 2007, then continued through 2009 on Broadway and at Hartford Stage, the Connecticut company then run by Wilson. Last fall it resumed with more or less the same cast at Houston's Alley Theatre. When Horton Jr. learned that the role of Lewis had opened up in San Diego, he put in a bid for his first part in more than 16 years.

A sudden onset of tears constricted his voice as he tried to convey what it means to be able to reinhabit the small-town world his father created and, through that, to walk with him again after his death.

"I'm having a great time, and I'm just so grateful I get this chance to do this one more time," he whispered.

Hallie, sitting beside her brother during their lunch break from rehearsals, jumped in with sisterly solicitude, telling a story to illustrate how crying on happy occasions is a family-wide trait. At Daisy's wedding, her role was to read something her father had written for the ceremony. The elder Foote assured her, "'If you get too emotional, just tap me on the shoulder and I'll read it.' So I got up and started to cry, and I looked at him, and he went, 'You're on your own,' and he started sobbing."

Like playwright August Wilson and novelists such as William Faulkner and John Updike, Foote repeatedly re-created the place where he grew up — Wharton, Texas, which he renamed Harrison in his plays. Often, the stories are based on true family lore; he modeled the characters in "Dividing the Estate" after his grandmother and aunts and uncles. After a commercially fallow period from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, when he and wife, Lillian, were raising their four children in a small town in New Hampshire, Foote began a comeback with "The Orphans' Home Cycle," a sequence of nine plays that includes a retelling of his parents' romance.

Hallie didn't take up acting until she was in her mid-20s, after a stab at public relations in Boston. Her father helped her find teachers in Los Angeles, and while watching her perform in one of his plays in 1977 at a small L.A. theater, he realized his daughter was precisely the actress he needed to play his mother as a young woman.

Horton Jr. says without sheepishness that he followed in his sister's footsteps. He had worked his way up selling men's clothing in Boston and Beverly Hills but had a change of heart and wound up at the Loft Studio, the same school where Hallie had studied (and where he says his fellow students included Sean Penn, Nicolas Cage, Eric Stoltz, Anjelica Huston and Michelle Pfeiffer).

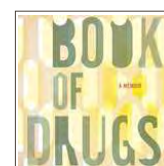
The other Foote siblings live in New York state. Daisy typically sets her plays in small-town New Hampshire and is married to Tim Guinee, a busy television actor. Walter is an attorney who wrote and directed a well-received 1999 independent feature film, "The Tavern," inspired by his brother's adventures as a restaurateur. Walter has sired the next Foote generation, two teenagers whose athletic and scholastic prowess Aunt Hallie and Uncle Horton like to trumpet.

Along with their theatrical instincts, the Foote siblings say, they inherited a certain diffidence about self-promotion that is not ideal in the world of show business. "You've really got to fight and scratch and claw, and to be honest, I probably didn't fight and scratch and claw as much as I should have," Horton said. "That's never been my strong suit."

"That's the thing," chimed in Hallie (who is Barbara Hallie to her family but dropped Barbara from her stage name early on because it made people assume that Hallie was her last name). "We weren't raised by a careerist."

Hallie's acting honors include a 1993 Obie Award and the Tony nomination for "Dividing the Estate," a

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turn Ben Brantley of the New York Times praised as "true comic genius."

Now that her father, who lived with Hallie and her husband in Pacific Palisades during his last four-plus years, is gone, she hasn't discerned any particular inner drive to branch out and win comparable acclaim in other acting milieus.

"I'm the worst, I'm just the worst," when it comes to projecting herself onto casting directors' radar, she said, adding with a laugh that she recently bestrode the megaplexes with a part in the horror film "Paranormal Activity 3."

"I've always said if I don't get to do anything else except my father's stuff, that's fine with me. For an actor it's very exciting, because there are so many layers to it. It's never been a problem for me."

"I'm going to push her a little," vowed her brother, who for his own part doesn't see his turn in "Dividing the Estate" as a prelude to a renewed acting career. "She's so talented, and she really should be working."

Whatever happens, tending the creative estate they've inherited will remain a priority. Hallie is spearheading a nascent nonprofit foundation, tentatively called the Horton Foote Legacy, that aims to draw attention to his plays and preserve the home in Wharton where he was raised and returned throughout his life. She envisions launching an artist-in-residence program there, with grant recipients coming to soak up the vibe and write.

Director Wilson says he also plans to keep pushing Foote's legacy forward. The plays typically unfold in a subtler and lower-keyed register than those of contemporaries such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. Foote is most often likened to Anton Chekhov, whose "The Cherry Orchard" and "Uncle Vanya" have direct echoes in certain elements of "Dividing the Estate." But the rehearsal sequence in which an outraged, tantrum-throwing Hallie leaped in the air, then shook her pompom-less fists over her head, like the high school cheerleader she once was, bore witness that her dad could write high-octane stuff when he wanted to.

Wilson notes that, despite Foote's stature, this is just the fourth major production of one of his plays in Southern California. Martin Benson of South Coast Repertory became a convert about 10 years ago and directed the three others at the Costa Mesa theater. The three leading stage companies in Los Angeles remain virgins to the Foote oeuvre — including the Pasadena Playhouse, where the playwright got his start in the theater as a teenage acting student during the early 1930s, skipping lunches during his first semester so he could afford private voice lessons aimed at expunging his Texas accent.

Wilson says there are prospects of taking "Dividing the Estate" to London; his grail is to find producers for Foote's last, most epic work: his condensation of the nine full-length plays of "The Orphans' Home Cycle" into three evenings designed to be programmed together and performed by 22 actors, as they were in runs in Hartford and New York in fall 2009.

Unlike the estate that's in danger of being liquidated in the current play, Wilson believes Foote's theatrical acreage will appreciate in value and esteem as time goes on.

"The inherent American stories at the heart of Horton's plays are timeless," he said. "It's something (theater companies) will be able to go back to the well for."

Hallie Foote is confident that even if she continues to stick mainly to roles her father wrote, she's in no danger of running short of work. "I'm very committed to (his) legacy, which I think is just going to increase."

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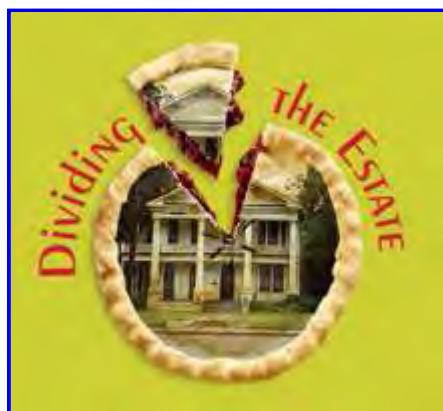
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Dividing the Estate at The Old Globe -



Dividing the Estate is a play by Horton Foote. Set in the fictional town of Harrison, Texas, in 1987, it focuses on the Gordons, a clan of malcontents ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella that must prepare for an uncertain future when plunging real estate values and an unexpected tax bill have a negative impact on the family fortune. Stella's children – predatory Mary Jo, complacent Lucille, and alcoholic Lewis – engage in a debate about whether or not they should divide the estate while their mother is still alive in order to ensure themselves financial independence.

The play premiered at the McCarter Theatre in New Jersey in 1989. Presented by the Lincoln Center Theater Company and Primary Stages Theater, it opened on September 27, 2007 at the off-Broadway 59East59Street Theatre, where it ran until October 27. Directed by Michael Wilson, the cast included Elizabeth Ashley as Stella, Hallie Foote as Mary Jo, Penny Fuller as Lucille, and Gerald McRaney as Lewis.

In his review in the *New York Times*, Ben Brantley called the play “deeply funny” and stated, “Mr. Foote’s authorial gaze is focused with satiric sharpness while retaining its elegiac sense of life’s transience.” David Rooney of *Variety* thought it was “distinctly old-fashioned . . . with an air of familiarity” but added, “Spend

time with Foote's richly human characters and concerns about the play's dustiness quickly fade. The Chekhovian intrusion of past upon present, the melancholy acknowledgement of a world in decline, the gentle but tart humor, the clear-eyed compassion tinged with despair – these qualities remind us why the 91-year-old playwright remains such a distinctively expressive voice in contemporary American drama.”

Horton Foote won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play and the Obie Award for Playwriting.

The production transferred to Broadway for a limited engagement with its original cast intact. It began previews at the Booth Theatre on October 23, 2008, officially opened on November 20, and closed on January 4, 2009.

Joe Dziemianowicz of the *New York Daily News* said the play “goes for laughs and succeeds, and at the same time comments on more sweeping notions of avarice, entitlement and carpetbagging karma. It’s not as profound or ambitious as Broadway’s other multigenerational melee, *August: Osage County*, but Foote’s fine play does go down easy.” In *USA Today*, Elysa Gardner observed, “The folks we meet in *Estate* . . . can be immensely irritating, but they’re not, well, bad people – or, truth be told, terribly interesting ones.”

if you go – *Dividing the Estate* at The Old Globe. Saturday, January 14 – Sunday, February 12. Times Vary – 619. 234.5623 / theoldglobe.org

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Original Broadway Cast Members Will Revisit *Dividing the Estate* at the Alley Theatre

By [Adam Hetrick](#)

05 Oct 2011

Members of the original Broadway cast of *Dividing the Estate*, including Tony Award winner Elizabeth Ashley and Tony Award nominees Hallie Foote and Penny Fuller, will reunite for the Alley Theatre production of Horton Foote's Texas-set family drama, which will begin performances Oct. 7 on the Hubbard Stage.

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Longtime Foote collaborator Michael Wilson, who staged the world-premiere of *Dividing the Estate* Off-Broadway in 2007 and the subsequent Tony-nominated 2008 Broadway run, will helm the Houston engagement, which will open Oct. 12 and continue through Oct. 30. It is presented in association with San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, where it will arrive in early 2012.

"I'm very excited to be doing *Dividing the Estate* at the Alley," said late playwright Foote's daughter, Hallie, in a statement. "Having a play produced there was always kind of like going home for my father. Houston is close to Wharton where my father grew up and was always a very familiar and comforting part of the world to him."

Ashley (*Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, *August: Osage County*) will reprise her performance as family matriarch Stella Gordon, with Foote (*Orphans' Home Cycle*) as Mary Jo, Fuller (*Cabaret*, *The Dinner Party*) as Lucille, and original cast members Pat Bowie as Mildred, James DeMarse as Bob, Maggie Lacey as Pauline, Nicole Lowrance as Sissie, Jenny Dare Paulin as Emily, Keiana Richard as Cathleen and Devon Abner as Son.

New to the cast for the Houston bow are Tony Award winner Roger Robinson (*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Seven Guitars*) as Doug, Ellen Dyer as Irene



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Ratliff and Alley veteran James Black as Lewis Gordon.

The Alley production will also reflect the work of the original Broadway creative team, with sets by Jeff Cowie, costumes by David C. Woolard, lighting by Rui Rita and original music and sound by John Gromada.

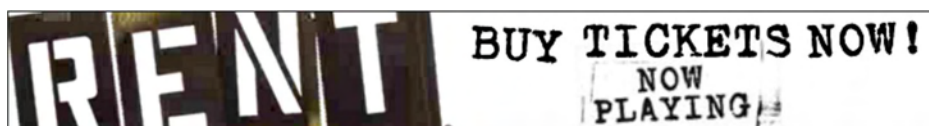
Dividing the Estate, according to the Alley, is a "sharp satire about a Southern dynasty in crisis. At odds over the fate of their dwindling inheritance, several generations of the well-to-do Gordon family must confront their disreputable past as they grapple with an uncertain future. Will they face possible ruin and indignity together or take their chances and go their separate ways?"

A Pulitzer Prize winner for *The Young Man from Atlanta*, Foote's plays include *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *The Traveling Lady*, *The Chase*, *The Last of the Thorntons* and *Talking Pictures*, among others. The 92-year-old Foote had been in Hartford, CT, where he was putting the finishing touches on his final work *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, when he died in March 2009. *The Orphans' Home Cycle* premiered at Hartford Stage prior to its Off-Broadway arrival in the fall of 2009.

Tickets are available by visiting [AlleyTheatre](#). The Alley Theatre is located at 615 Texas Avenue in Houston, TX.

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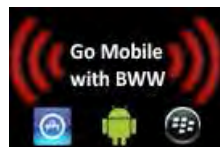


Photo Flash: The Old Globe Presents DIVIDING THE ESTATE



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[The Old Globe](#) today announced the cast and creative team for the West Coast Premiere of *Dividing the Estate*, the final play by Pulitzer Prize winner [Horton Foote](#). Directed by [Michael Wilson](#), *Dividing the Estate* will run Jan. 14 - Feb. 12, 2012 in the [Old Globe Theatre](#), part of the Globe's [Conrad Prebys](#) Theatre Center. Preview performances run Jan. 14 - Jan. 18. Opening night is Thursday, Jan. 19 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are currently available by subscription only. Tickets can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

Nominated for a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, *Dividing the Estate* is Pulitzer Prize winner [Horton Foote](#)'s knowing comedy about family, money and greed. Living in Texas in the late 1980s, octogenarian matriarch Stella rules a family that must confront its past as it prepares for an uncertain future when the family fortune begins to diminish. Stella's children debate whether or not they should divide the estate while their mother is still alive in order to ensure themselves financial independence. Director [Michael Wilson](#), considered the foremost interpreter of Foote's work, reunites with members of *Dividing the Estate*'s Broadway cast and creative team to remount this modern classic.

[Horton Foote Jr.](#) joins [Hallie Foote](#) to make this production of their father's final play a family affair. [Hallie Foote](#) will appear as Mary Jo, for which she received a Tony Award nomination in the original Broadway production, and her brother, [Horton Foote Jr.](#), will return to the stage after an almost 20 year absence in the role of [Lewis Gordon](#). Theater legend [Elizabeth Ashley](#) will appear as [Stella Gordon](#), the domineering matriarch of a fading Southern dynasty, a role she originated on Broadway. [Penny Fuller](#), a Tony Award nominee for *Applause* and *The Dinner Party*, will reprise the role of Lucille that she also created for the Broadway production. *Dividing the Estate* is a co-production with [Alley Theatre](#).

The cast of *Dividing the Estate* also includes [Devon Abner](#) (Son), [Pat Bowie](#) (Mildred), [James Demarse](#) (Bob), [Maggie Lacey](#) (Pauline), [Nicole Lowrance](#) (Sissie), [Jenny Dare Paulin](#) (Emily), Keiana Richard (Cathleen), [Roger Robinson](#) (Doug) and [Bree Welch](#) (Irene Ratliff).

The creative team includes [Jeff Cowie](#) (Scenic Design), [David C. Woolard](#) (Costume Design), [Rui Rita](#) (Lighting Design), [John Gromada](#) (Original Music and Sound Design), [Stephanie Klapper](#) (New York Casting Director) and [Marisa Levy](#) (Stage Manager).

Playwright [Horton Foote](#) was an American playwright and screenwriter perhaps best known for his Academy Award-winning screenplays for the 1962 film *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the 1983 film *Tender Mercies* and his notable live television dramas during the Golden Age of Television. He had his first play, *Texas Town*, produced Off Broadway in 1941. His other plays include *The Last of the Thorntons*, *The Chase*, *The Traveling Lady*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Night Seasons*, *Tomorrow*, *The Habitation of Dragons*, *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, *Roots in a Parched Ground*, *Convicts*, *Lily Dale*, *The Widow Claire*, *Courtship*, *Laura Dennis*, *Vernon Early*, *The Roads to Home*, *The Carpetbagger's Children* and *The Day Emily Married*. He received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1995 for his play *The Young Man From Atlanta*. His final play, *Dividing the Estate*, was produced on Broadway in 2008 and received a Tony Award nomination for Best Play. Foote was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998, was the inaugural recipient of the Austin Film Festival's Distinguished Screenwriter Award and was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2000. Foote died on March 4, 2009.

Director [Michael Wilson](#) was Associate Director at the [Alley Theatre](#) from 1990 to 1998 and has directed more than 20 productions, including [Elizabeth Egloff](#)'s *Ether Dome* and [Horton Foote](#)'s *The Carpetbagger's Children* and *The Trip to Bountiful*. For his premiere staging of Foote's three-part, nine-hour *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, he received a 2010 Drama Desk Award, as well as the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Direction of a Play. On Broadway, he has directed Foote's *Dividing the Estate* (Tony Award nomination, Best Play), [Matthew Barber](#)'s *Enchanted April* (Tony Award nomination, Best Play) and [John Van Druten](#)'s *Old Acquaintance* (Roundabout Theatre Company). His Off Broadway credits include the premieres of [Jane Anderson](#)'s *Defying Gravity*, [Eve Ensler](#)'s *Necessary Targets*, Foote's *The*

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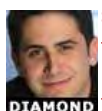
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▶ Carpetbagger's Children ([Lincoln Center Theater](#)), [Tina Howe](#)'s Chasing Manet ([Primary Stages](#)), [Christopher Shinn](#)'s Picked ([Vineyard Theatre](#)) and What Didn't Happen ([Playwrights Horizons](#)), as well as revivals of [Tennessee Williams](#)' The Red Devil Battery Sign ([WPA Theatre](#)) and The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore (Roundabout). His resident theatre credits also include [American Repertory Theater](#), [Goodman Theatre](#), Guthrie Theater, [Long Wharf Theatre](#), among others; and Hartford Stage, where he served as Artistic Director from 1998 to 2011. Wilson graduated a Morehead scholar in 1987 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he trained with his long-time collaborator, Alley Artistic Director [Gregory Boyd](#).

TICKETS to Dividing the Estate can be purchased online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Tickets are currently available by subscription only. Performances at the [Old Globe Theatre](#) begin on Jan. 14 and continue through Feb. 12. Ticket prices start at \$29. Performance times: Previews: Saturday, Jan. 14 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 15 at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 17 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, Jan. 18 at 7:00 p.m. Regular Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m. and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. There is a 2:00 p.m. matinee on Wednesday, Feb. 8 and no matinee performance on Saturday, Feb. 11. Discounts are available for full-time students, patrons 29 years of age and under, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

Associated events taking place during the run of Dividing the Estate include:

INSIGHTS SEMINAR: Dividing the Estate
Tuesday, Jan. 17 at 6:00 p.m. FREE
Insight Seminars are informal presentations of ideas and insights to enhance the theater-going experience. The seminars feature a panel selected from the artistic company of each production and take place in the theater where the production is performed. Reception, 6:30 p.m. Seminar, 7:00 p.m. Admission is free and reservations are not required.

POST-SHOW FORUMS: Dividing the Estate
Tuesdays, Jan. 24 and 31 and Wednesday, Feb. 8. FREE
Discuss the play with members of the Dividing the Estate cast and crew at post-show discussions led by the Globe's creative staff after the performances.

OUT AT THE GLOBE: Thursday, Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m. \$20
An evening for gay and lesbian theater lovers and the whole LGBT community, Out at the Globe includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and door prizes. \$20 per person. RSVP at (619) 23-GLOBE. (Tickets to Dividing the Estate are sold separately.)

THANK GLOBE IT'S FRIDAY: Fridays, Jan. 20 and 27 at 6:30 p.m. \$20
Kick off the weekend with the Globe's Friday pre-show bash. TGIF includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and desserts. \$20 per person. RSVP at (619) 23-GLOBE. (Tickets to Dividing the Estate are sold separately.)

LOCATION: [The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For additional parking information visit www.BalboaPark.org.

The Tony Award-winning Old Globe is one of the country's leading professional regional theaters and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 75 years. Under the direction of Executive Producer [Louis G. Spisto](#), [The Old Globe](#) produces a year-round season of 15 productions of classic, contemporary and new works on its three Balboa Park stages: the 600-seat [Old Globe Theatre](#) and the 250-seat Sheryl and [Harvey White](#) Theatre, which are both part of [The Old Globe](#)'s [Conrad Prebys](#) Theatre Center, and the 605-seat outdoor Lowell Davies [Festival Theatre](#), home of its internationally renowned Shakespeare Festival. More than 250,000 people attend Globe productions annually and participate in the theater's education and community programs. Numerous world premieres such as The Full Monty, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, A Catered Affair, and the annual holiday musical, [Dr. Seuss](#)' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, have been developed at [The Old Globe](#) and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs on Broadway and at regional theaters across the country.

Photo by Jann Whaley.

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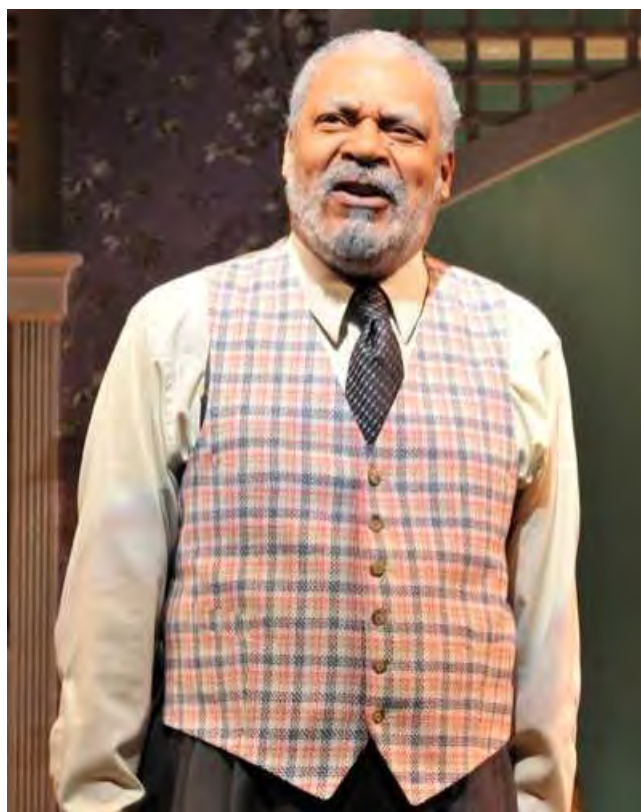
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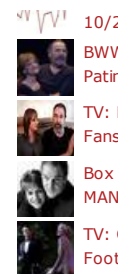
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Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr. to Co-Star in Old Globe's *Dividing the Estate*

By: **Dan Bacalzo** · Oct 28, 2011 · San Diego

Siblings Hallie Foote and Horton Foote Jr. will co-star in the Old Globe Theatre's production of their late father Horton Foote's play, *Dividing the Estate*, to run January 14-February 12, with an opening on January 19. Michael Wilson will direct the play.

Set in Texas in the late 1980s, the satirical play focuses on an octogenarian matriarch and her children, who must confront its past as it prepares for an uncertain future when the family fortune begins to diminish.

Hallie Foote will appear as Mary Jo, for which she received a Tony Award nomination in the original Broadway production, and Horton Foote Jr., will return to the stage after an almost 20 year absence in the role of Lewis Gordon.

The cast will also feature Devon Abner (Son), Elizabeth Ashley (Stella Gordon), Pat Bowie (Mildred), James DeMarse (Bob), Penny Fuller (Lucille), Maggie Lacey (Pauline), Nicole Lowrance (Sissie), Jenny Dare Paulin (Emily), Keiana Richard (Cathleen), Roger Robinson (Doug), and Bree Welch (Irene Ratliff).

The creative team will include Jeff Cowie (scenic design), David C. Woolard (costume design), Rui Rita (lighting design), and John Gromada (original music and sound design).

For tickets and more information, [click here](#).



Hallie Foote in *Dividing the Estate*
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Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley and
Penny Fuller in the House**The Old Globe in San Diego, CA, has confirmed casting for its production of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, which reunites members of the Broadway cast, including Elizabeth Ashley, Hallie Foote and Penny Fuller.**MAN AND BOY FRANK LANGELLA IS****Video**

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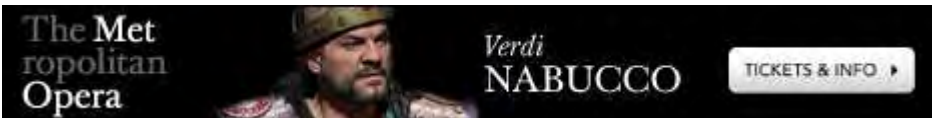
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Old Globe's *Dividing the Estate* Has Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley and Penny Fuller in the House

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

28 Oct 2011



Hallie Foote
Photo by Jann Whaley

Lewis Gordon.

Longtime Foote collaborator Michael Wilson, who staged *Dividing the Estate* Off-Broadway in 2007 and the subsequent Tony-nominated 2008 Broadway run, again directs.

The Old Globe in San Diego, CA, has confirmed casting for its Jan. 14-Feb. 12, 2012, production of Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, which reunites members of the Broadway cast, including Tony Award winner Elizabeth Ashley, Tony nominee Hallie Foote and Penny Fuller.

The trio that starred in the world premiere of the late playwright's Texas-set family drama reunited this fall at Houston's Alley Theatre (where it closes Oct. 30). They are California-bound after the holidays for the Old Globe leg of this co-production.

New in San Diego will be Horton Foote Jr., who returns to the stage after an almost 20-year absence in the role of

Tony winner Ashley (*Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, *August: Osage County*) reprises her performance as family matriarch Stella Gordon, with Tony nominee Hallie Foote (*Orphans' Home Cycle*) as Mary Jo, Tony nominee Fuller (*Cabaret*, *The Dinner Party*) as Lucille, and Pat Bowie as Mildred, James DeMarse as

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Bob, Maggie Lacey as Pauline, Nicole Lowrance as Sissie, Jenny Dare Paulin as Emily, Keiana Richard as Cathleen, Devon Abner as Son, Roger Robinson as Doug and Bree Welch as Irene Ratliff and Horton Foote Jr. as Lewis.

The production also reflects the work of the original Broadway creative team, with sets by Jeff Cowie, costumes by David C. Woolard, lighting by Rui Rita and original music and sound by John Gromada.

A Pulitzer Prize winner for *The Young Man from Atlanta*, Foote's plays include *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *The Traveling Lady*, *The Chase*, *The Last of the Thorntons* and *Talking Pictures*, among others. The 92-year-old Foote had

been in Hartford, CT, where he was putting the finishing touches on his final work *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, when he died in March 2009. *The Orphans' Home Cycle* premiered at Hartford Stage prior to its Off-Broadway arrival in the fall of 2009.

Opening night in the Old Globe Theatre, part of the Globe's Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, is Jan. 19, 2012.

For more information, visit www.TheOldGlobe.org or call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

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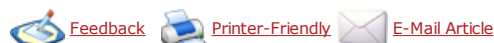
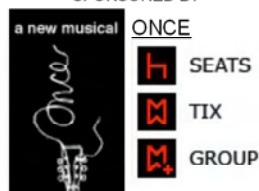
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Photo Flash: Dividing the Estate Plays Old Globe Theater

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Broadway Off-Bway Help, Pick Me a Show
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DIVIDING THE ESTATE by [Horton Foote](#) and directed by [Michael Wilson](#) will run Jan. 14 – Feb. 12, 2012 at [The Old Globe](#).

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TICKETS: Ticket prices start at \$29.

Living in present day Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella, a family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their family fortune begins to diminish.

CREATIVE TEAM: [Horton Foote](#) (Playwright), [Michael Wilson](#) (Director), [Jeff Cowie](#) (Scenic Design), [David C. Woolard](#) (Costume Design), [Rui Rita](#) (Lighting Design), [John Gromada](#) (Original Music and Sound Design), [Stephanie Klapper](#) (New York Casting Director) and [Marisa Levy](#) (Stage Manager).

CAST: [Devon Abner](#) (Son), [Elizabeth Ashley](#) (Stella Gordon), [Pat Bowie](#) (Mildred), [James Demarse](#) (Bob), [Hallie Foote](#) (Mary Jo), [Horton Foote, Jr.](#) ([Lewis Gordon](#)), [Penny Fuller](#) (Lucille), [Nicole Lowrance](#) (Sissie), [Kelly McAndrew](#) (Pauline), [Jenny Dare Paulin](#) (Emily), [Keiana Richard](#) (Cathleen), [Roger Robinson](#) (Doug) and [Bree Welch](#) (Irene Ratliff).

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Tuesday, Jan. 17 at 6:00 p.m.

Seminar series features a panel of artists from the current show. Reception at 6:30 p.m. FREE

POST-SHOW FORUMS

Tuesdays, Jan. 24 and 31 and Wednesday, Feb. 8

Discuss the play with members of the cast following the performance. FREE

OUT AT THE GLOBE

Thursday, Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m. \$20

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THANK GLOBE IT'S FRIDAY

Fridays, Jan. 20 and 27 at 6:30 p.m. \$20

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BOX OFFICE WINDOW HOURS: Noon to final curtain Tuesday through Sunday. [American Express](#), Discover, MasterCard and VISA accepted. (619) 23-GLOBE [234-5623]

LOCATION: [The Old Globe](#) is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. Free parking is available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For parking information visit [www.BalboaPark.org](#).

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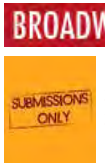
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The cast of [Horton Foote's](#) *Dividing the Estate*: (back row, from left) [Roger Robinson](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [James Demarse](#), [Penny Fuller](#), [Horton Foote Jr.](#), [Pat Bowie](#), [Devon Abner](#) and [Kelly McAndrew](#); (front row) [Jenny Dare Paulin](#), [Elizabeth Ashley](#), [Nicole Lowrance](#) and [Keiana Richard](#).

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(from left) [Penny Fuller](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [Horton Foote Jr.](#), [Elizabeth Ashley](#) and [Roger Robinson](#)

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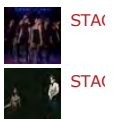
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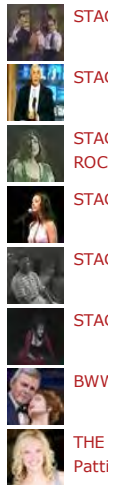
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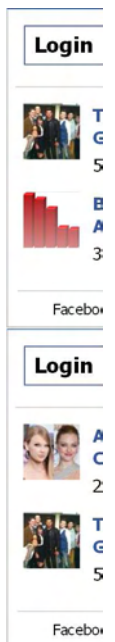
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[Horton Foote Jr.](#) and [Hallie Foote](#) with director [Michael Wilson](#).



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Hallie Foote
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Dividing the Estate, With Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley, Regroups at Old Globe Jan. 14

Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, which reunites members of the 2008-09 Broadway cast, including Elizabeth Ashley, Tony nominee Hallie Foote and Penny Fuller, begins a run Jan. 14 at The Old Globe in San Diego, CA.

World Premiere of Theresa Rebeck's Ohio-Set *Dead Accounts* Begins in Cincinnati Jan. 14



The world premiere of Theresa Rebeck's comedy *Dead Accounts*, about a prodigal son who returns home to Cincinnati, begins performances Jan. 14 at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.



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THE LEADING MEN: Pop Star Nick Jonas Returns to Theatre Roots for Broadway's *How to Succeed*



Teen heartthrob Nick Jonas is preparing to star as the new Finch in Broadway's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, but he's no Broadway novice. He talked to Playbill in between rehearsals.

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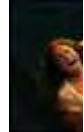
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Dividing the Estate, With Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley, Regroups at Old Globe Jan. 14

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

14 Jan 2012



Hallie Foote and Elizabeth Ashley
Photo by Jann Whaley
opens Jan. 19.

Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, which reunites members of the 2008-09 Broadway cast, including Elizabeth Ashley, Tony nominee Hallie Foote and Penny Fuller, begins a run Jan. 14 at The Old Globe in San Diego, CA. Performances of the 1980s-set drama about a Texas family play to Feb. 12.

The trio that starred in the 2008 Broadway world premiere of the late playwright's play reunited last fall at Houston's Alley Theatre (where the run ended Oct. 30, 2011). The Old Globe leg of this 2011-12 co-production officially

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28 Oct 2011 -- [Old Globe's *Dividing the Estate* Has Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley and Penny Fuller in the House](#)

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New in San Diego are Horton Foote Jr., who returns to the stage after an almost 20-year absence, in the role of Lewis Gordon.

Longtime Foote collaborator Michael Wilson, who staged *Dividing the Estate* Off-Broadway in 2007 and the subsequent Tony-nominated 2008 Broadway run, again directs.

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The play focuses on the Gordons of Harrison, TX, who have enjoyed years of leisure, wealth and privilege. But the family fortune suddenly seems uncertain in light of unexpected taxes and plunging property values. Siblings begin to squabble over inheritance from their still-living matriarch.

Tony winner Ashley (*Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, *August:*

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Osage County) reprises her performance as family matriarch Stella Gordon, with Tony nominee Hallie Foote (*Orphans' Home Cycle*) as Mary Jo, Tony nominee Fuller (*Cabaret*, *The Dinner Party*) as Lucille, and Pat Bowie as Mildred, James DeMarse as Bob, Kelly McAndrew (replacing Maggie Lacey) as Pauline, Nicole Lowrance as Sissie, Jenny Dare Paulin as Emily, Keiana Richard as Cathleen, Devon Abner as Son, Roger Robinson as Doug and Bree Welch as Irene Ratliff and Horton Foote Jr. as Lewis.

The production also reflects the work of the original Broadway creative team, with sets by Jeff Cowie, costumes by David C. Woolard, lighting by Rui Rita and original music and sound by John Gromada.

A Pulitzer Prize winner for *The Young Man from Atlanta*, Foote's plays include *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *The Traveling Lady*, *The Chase*, *The Last of the Thorntons* and *Talking Pictures*, among others. The 92-year-old Foote had been in Hartford, CT, where he was putting the finishing touches on his final work *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, when he died in March 2009. *The Orphans' Home Cycle* premiered at Hartford Stage prior to its Off-Broadway arrival in the fall of 2009.

For more information, visit www.TheOldGlobe.org or call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



Elizabeth Ashley, Penny Fuller and Roger Robinson
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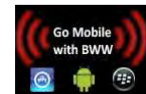
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[The Old Globe](#) is presenting DIVIDING THE ESTATE by [Horton Foote](#) and directed by [Michael Wilson](#) through Feb. 12, 2012 at the Sheryl and [Harvey White](#) Theatre, [Conrad Prebys](#) Theatre Cent SYNOPSIS: Living in present day Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella, a family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their family fortune begins to

CREATIVE TEAM: [Horton Foote](#) (Playwright), [Michael Wilson](#) (Director), [Jeff Cowie](#) (Scenic Design), [David C. Woolard](#) (Costume Design), [Rui Rita](#) (Lighting Design), [John Gromada](#) (Original Mus

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LOCATION: The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. Free parking is available throughout the park. Valet parking is also available (\$10). For parking information

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(from left) [Horton Foote Jr.](#), [Penny Fuller](#), [Elizabeth Ashley](#), [Jenny Dare Paulin](#), [Nicole Lowrance](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [James Demarse](#), [Kelly McAndrew](#) and [Devon Abner](#)



(from left) [Horton Foote Jr.](#), [James Demarse](#), [Kelly McAndrew](#) and [Devon Abner](#)

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[Hallie Foote](#) (with [James Demarse](#) and [Jenny Dare Paulin](#))



(from left) [Horton Foote Jr.](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [Penny Fuller](#) and [Elizabeth Ashley](#)



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(from left) [Penny Fuller](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [Bree Welch](#), [Horton Foote Jr.](#) and [Jenny Dare Paulin](#)



(from left) [Jenny Dare Paulin](#), [Nicole Lowrance](#), [Hallie Foote](#) and [James Demarse](#)



(from left) [Hallie Foote](#) and [Elizabeth Ashley](#)



(from left) [Devon Abner](#), [Elizabeth Ashley](#), [Penny Fuller](#), [Kelly McAndrew](#), [James Demarse](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [Jenny Dare Paulin](#), [Roger Robinson](#), [Nicole Lowrance](#) and [Horton](#)



(from left) [Horton Foote Jr.](#), [Hallie Foote](#), [Penny Fuller](#) and [Elizabeth Ashley](#)

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Andrew Keenan-Bolger and Jeremy Jordan
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Casting Announced for Broadway's Newsies

Disney Theatrical Productions announced casting for the Broadway production of the new musical *Newsies* Jan. 19. Previews will begin March 15 at the Nederlander for a strictly limited 101 performance engagement through June 10.

Peter and the Starcatcher Will Land On Broadway at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre in March

Peter and the Starcatcher, the prequel to the tale of Peter Pan that debuted in a wildly imaginative staging Off-Broadway last season, will begin Broadway performances March 28 at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre.

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Dividing the Estate, With Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley, Opens at Old Globe

By [Kenneth Jones](#)
19 Jan 2012



Hallie Foote
Photo by Henry DiRocco

Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*, which reunites members of the 2008-09 Broadway cast, including Elizabeth Ashley, Tony nominee Hallie Foote and Penny Fuller, opens Jan. 19 following previews from Jan. 14 at The Old Globe in San Diego, CA. Performances of the 1980s-set drama about a Texas family play to Feb. 12.

The trio that starred in the 2008 Broadway world premiere of the late playwright's play reunited last fall for this 2011-12 co-production that began at Houston's Alley Theatre (where the run ended Oct. 30, 2011).

New in San Diego are Horton Foote Jr., who returns to the stage after an almost 20-year absence, in the role of Lewis

Gordon.

Longtime Foote collaborator Michael Wilson, who staged *Dividing the Estate* Off-Broadway in 2007 and the subsequent Tony-nominated 2008 Broadway run, again directs.

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The play focuses on the Gordons of Harrison, TX, who have enjoyed years of leisure, wealth and privilege. But the family fortune suddenly seems uncertain in light of unexpected taxes and plunging property values. Siblings begin to squabble over inheritance from their still-living matriarch.

RELATED ARTICLES:

14 Jan 2012 -- *Dividing the Estate, With Hallie Foote, Horton Foote Jr., Elizabeth Ashley, Regroups at Old Globe Jan. 14*

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Tony winner Ashley (*Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, *August: Osage County*) reprises her performance as family matriarch Stella Gordon, with Tony nominee Hallie Foote (*Orphans' Home Cycle*) as Mary Jo, Tony nominee Fuller (*Cabaret*, *The Dinner Party*) as Lucille, and Pat Bowie as Mildred, James DeMarse as Bob, Kelly McAndrew (replacing Maggie Lacey) as Pauline, Nicole Lowrance as Sissie, Jenny Dare Paulin as Emily, Keiana Richard as Cathleen, Devon Abner as Son, Roger Robinson as Doug and Bree Welch as Irene Ratliff and Horton Foote Jr. as Lewis.

The production also reflects the work of the original Broadway creative team, with sets by Jeff Cowie, costumes by David C. Woolard, lighting by Rui Rita and original music and sound by John Gromada.

A Pulitzer Prize winner for *The Young Man from Atlanta*, Foote's plays include *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *The Traveling Lady*, *The Chase*, *The Last of the Thorntons* and *Talking Pictures*, among others. The 92-year-old Foote had been in Hartford, CT, where he was putting the finishing touches on his final work *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, when he died in March 2009. *The Orphans' Home Cycle* premiered at Hartford Stage prior to its Off-Broadway arrival in the fall of 2009.

For more information, visit www.TheOldGlobe.org or call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



Horton Foote Jr., Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley
photo by Henry DiRocco



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Globe announces actors for three shows

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Andrew Mueller stars as Young Ben, Jenni Barber as Young Molly, Michelle Duffy as Molly and Jason Daniele as Ben (left to right) in "Some Lovers" at the Globe. — Henry DiRocco



Written by
James Hebert

5:58 p.m., Nov. 4, 2011

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Take a week off in this theater town and you risk coming back to face a skyscraper of paperwork made up of nothing but casting announcements. The Old Globe alone has unveiled the acting lineups for three shows over the past week or so. So, catching up on the highlights, as well as some other theater news:

- Horton Foote Jr. and Hallie Foote both have been cast in the Globe's "Dividing the Estate," the final play by their late father, Horton Foote. Director Michael Wilson's production, which begins previews Jan. 14, also will feature Tony Award-winner Elizabeth Ashley and Tony nominee Penny Fuller.

- Over at the White Theatre, the Globe's arena-style space, the

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The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way



"Dividing the Estate" plays at The Old Globe Jan. 14 through Feb. 12. Photo courtesy of The Old Globe

- Jan. 14 through Feb. 12, The Old Globe presents Horton Foote's comedy, **"Dividing the Estate,"** in which the children of a Texas matriarch debate whether to divide their mother's estate in advance of her death.

- Jan. 21 through Feb. 26, The Old Globe presents the world premiere of Jonathan Caren's **"The Recommendation,"** in which the friendship of two young men is severely tested. Plays Tuesdays through Sundays in the Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre, suggested for mature audiences.

Old Globe Theatre and Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre, Conrad Prebys Center for the Performing Arts, www.theold-globe.org or (619) 23-GLOBE.

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(Highly Recommended)

'Clybourne Park,' Jan 11 - Feb 26, Taper
(Highly Recommended) →

'Dividing the Estate,' Jan 14 - Feb 12, Old Globe (Not-To-Be-Missed)

NOV 28 Posted by **Staff**

Horton Foote's 1989 play *Dividing the Estate* comes to The Old Globe Theatre.

Why It's Not To Be Missed: This will be the West Coast premiere of Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote's little known classic of the American stage. The production, which got breathless reviews from NY critics, stars Elizabeth Ashley in the role she originated on Broadway and the playwright's children, Horton Foote Jr. and Hallie Foote.



Scene from 'Dividing the Estate.'

All performances at [The Old Globe](#)

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Performed by arrangement with The Metropolitan Opera, Performed in English with English surtitles *The Magic Flute* will be playing at the Sydney Opera House to March 23, 2011, at the Arts Centre Melbourne from April 21 to May 12, and at QPAC in Brisbane from May 26 to June 8.

DIVIDING THE ESTATE by Horton Foote. Director Michael Wilson, considered the foremost interpreter of Foote's work, reunites with members of *Dividing the Estate*'s Broadway cast and creative team to remount this modern classic.

Horton Foote Jr. joins Hallie Foote to make this production of their father's final play a family affair.

Hallie Foote will appear as Mary Jo, for which she received a Tony Award nomination in the original Broadway production, and her brother, Horton Foote Jr., will return to the stage after an almost 20 year absence in the role of Lewis Gordon. Theater legend Elizabeth Ashley will appear as Stella Gordon, the domineering matriarch of a fading Southern dynasty, a role she originated on Broadway. Penny Fuller, a Tony Award nominee will reprise the role of Lucille that she also created for the Broadway production.



(from left) Hallie Foote as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate*. Photo by Jann Whaley

Dividing the Estate is Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote's knowing comedy about family, money and greed. Living in Texas in the late 1980s, octogenarian matriarch Stella rules a family that must confront its past as it prepares for an uncertain future when the family fortune begins to diminish. Stella's children debate whether or not they should divide the estate while their mother is still alive in order to ensure themselves financial independence.

The cast of *Dividing the Estate* also includes Devon Abner (Son), Pat Bowie (Mildred), James DeMarse (Bob), Nicole Lowrance (Sissie), Kelly McAndrew (Pauline), Jenny Dare Paulin (Emily), Keiana Richard (Cathleen), Roger Robinson (Doug) and Bree Welch (Irene Ratliff). The creative team: sets by Jeff Cowie, costumes by David C. Woolard, lighting by Rui Rita and original music and sound by John Gromada.

A co-production with Alley Theatre, *Dividing the Estate* will officially open Thursday, January 19 running through February 12, 2012 in the Old Globe Theatre, part of the Globe's Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, San Diego, CA.

Post show forums will take place Tuesdays, January 24 and 31 and Wednesday, February 8 when the audience can discuss the play with members of the cast following the performance.

Client Name: Old Globe Theatre
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Hallie Foote as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in *Dividing the Estate*

saturday, jan. 14

Dividing the Estate

Nominated for a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, the Broadway production of Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote's knowing comedy is having its West Coast premiere at The Old Globe! Living in Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella the family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their fortune begins to diminish.

Old Globe Theatre, Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park, 8 p.m., tickets from \$29, 619-234-5623, theoldglobe.org.

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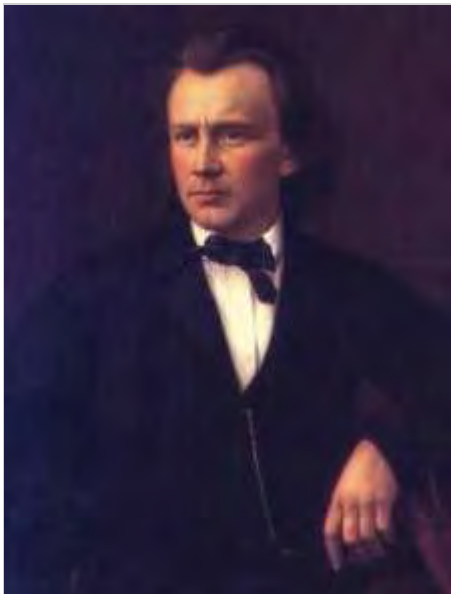
Hallie Foote as Mary Jo and Elizabeth Ashley as Stella Gordon in *Dividing the Estate*

thursday, jan. 12

Brahms and Schumann: A love in common

Johannes Brahms opened his *Third Symphony* with three notes, which stood for “Free but Happy!” It had been a long road for the 50-year-old bachelor. Long gone were the days of his conflicted love for Clara Schumann. But Clara was never far from his thoughts. He sent this symphony as a gift to her, and when she played it, she said it seemed like one great beat of his heart!

Copley Symphony Hall, 750 B Street in San Diego, 7:30 p.m., tickets \$20, 619-235-0804, sandiegosymphony.org.



Johannes Brahms

friday, jan. 13

Legally Blonde – The Musical

When Elle Woods' boyfriend dumps her, she puts down the credit card, hits the books and sets out to go where no Delta Nu has gone before: Harvard Law. Along the way, Elle proves that being true to yourself never goes out of style.

Joan B. Kroc Theatre, 6845 University Ave. in San Diego, 7 p.m., tickets from \$15, 619-670-1627, yatsandiego.org.



saturday, jan. 14

Dividing the Estate

Nominated for a 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, the Broadway production of Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote's knowing comedy is having its West Coast premiere at The Old Globe! Living in Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella the family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their fortune begins to diminish.

Old Globe Theatre, Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park, 8 p.m., tickets from \$29, 619-234-5623, theoldglobe.org.



sunday, jan. 15

San Diego Restaurant Week

Experience cuisine that delights your palate and defines the art of dining in **San Diego**. Held twice annually, this beloved culinary tradition features discounted menus from more than 180 of **San Diego's** best restaurants that will offer

three-course prix fixe menus for just \$20, \$30 or \$40 per person from Sunday, Jan. 15 through Friday, Jan. 20.

For more information and a list of participating restaurants go to sandiegorestaurantweek.com.



DIVIDING THE ESTATE

Ah money or the love of it and greed, a source material that is a never ending fodder for stage, screen, television or written material. *Dividing the Estate*, the Pulitzer prize-winning final play written by Horton Foote explores these topics and is about to hit the stage at The Old Globe Theatre running from **Saturday, January 14 through Tuesday, February 14**.

A tale about a Texas family faced with a decision on how to divide the family fortune—that their aging mother tightly controls—the very nest they want to pull apart. Her children, predatory Mary Jo, complacent Lucille and alcoholic Lewis discuss the division of the estate as it shrinks before their very eyes. Partially due to the crashing real estate market and partially because of an unexpected tax bill, which threatens what they see as their financial independence. This production features the legendary Elizabeth Ashley as the matriarch Stella, Penny Fuller as Lucille and in a fascinating twist, also stars Foote's children, Horton Jr. as Lewis Gordon and Hallie as Mary Jo Gordon. For tickets and information call 619.231.1941 or go to theoldglobe.org



CATS

We all know that the nine lives of cats are a fallacy—but in the case of this junkyard clouder—who knew they would have so many more? The original Broadway production opened in 1982 at the Winter Garden Theatre in N.Y.C. and continued for 18 years for 7485 performances until 2000. Then in October of 1991 it became the longest continuously running touring show in American theatre history. Five continents, 26 countries, over eight and a half million audience members and almost 30 years later, *CATS* is still America's most loved family musical. Returning to the San Diego Civic Theatre **Tuesday, January 10 through Sunday, January 15**, this unique and popular Broadway show based on T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, is sure to have you rolling on your back begging to have your tummy tickled. Now is time to celebrate with the whole family the magic, the mystery, the wonder of *CATS*. For tickets and information, call 619.570.1100 or go to broadwaysd.com.

A BEHANDING IN SPOKANE

You might not think it based on its title, but *A Behanding in Spokane* is a hilarious black comedy about a man on a quest—albeit an odd one—to find his century-long missing left hand.

I know, I know it sounds gruesome and not funny at all, but add in two love-bird con artists out to make a few hundred bucks, that just happen to have a hand to sell, with an overly curious hotel clerk with an aversion to gunfire, and the rest is up for grabs. The show originally premiered at the Schoenfeld Theatre on Broadway in New York and starred the wonderfully quirky Christopher Walken and was award-winning Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's first play set in the United States. The dark comedy is being done by the Cygnet Theatre group and will be performed **Thursday, January 19 through Sunday, February 19** at The Old Town Theatre, 4040 Twigg Street. Violence, strong language. For tickets and information call 619.337.1525 or go to cygnettheatre.com.

AMERICAN NIGHT: THE BALLAD OF JUAN JOSÉ

Culture Clash, founded in 1984 by Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas and Herbert Siguenza, returns to the La Jolla Playhouse with *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José*—a turbulent journey across pivotal moments in America's history.

Juan José while madly cramming for his U.S. citizenship exam falls asleep and begins a centuries-spanning, 93-minute whirlwind tour of events that define mixed ethnic and cultural identity in the U.S. Events such as the signing of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (in which the defeated Mexico yielded about one-third of its territory to the U.S.) and a modern tea party rally. He crosses paths with Ralph Lazo, a Mexican Irish American Angeleno teenager who chose to accompany his friends to the World War II Japanese internment camp at Manzanar; we meet Viola Pettus, an African American Texas nurse who ministered to all, regardless of ethnicity or social stature, during the 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic and Sheriff Joe Arpaio, the controversial Arizona lawman who has been in the eye of the current immigration-debate whirlwind. The show runs **Friday, January 27 through Sunday, February 26** at the La Jolla Playhouse's Potiker Theatre, 2910 La Jolla Village Drive. For tickets and information call 858.550.1025 or go to lajollaplayhouse.org.



inthewings

stage

FAMILY DRAMAS RULE in January's post-holiday haze: The Old Globe's *Dividing the Estate* (Jan. 14-Feb. 19) finds Stella's children arguing over her assets while she's still alive, while North Coast Rep revives *A Lion in Winter* (Jan. 4-29), James Goldman's work of historical fiction about the gamesmanship between King Henry II, his wife Eleanor and their three sons. Also opening: The world premiere of *The Recommendation*, about college kids transitioning to the real world (Jan. 21-Feb. 26 at the Old Globe);

Cygnets' darkly comic *A Behanding in Spokane* (Jan. 19-Feb. 19); S.D. Rep's ode to Pete Seeger, *A Hammer, A Bell, and a Song to Sing* (Jan. 7-Feb. 5), and Culture Clash's *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José* at La Jolla Playhouse (Jan. 27-Feb. 26).



Dividing the Estate



From Tony Curtis: *Driven to Stardom* at SDJFF

film

THE FILM BUFFS responsible for programming the 22nd annual **San Diego Jewish Film Festival** pored over some 300 submissions to arrive at the 46 films that will screen at next month's event. Among the highlights: *Mary Lou*, a Glee-like musical about a high school boy who falls in with a drag queen performance group in Tel Aviv; *Within the Whirlwind*, a drama based on the memoirs of imprisoned Russian journalist Eugenia Ginzburg (played by Emily Watson), plus documentaries about Phil Spector, violinist Jascha Heifetz (*God's Fiddler*) and Tony Curtis (*Driven to Stardom*). Don't miss *Jews in Toon*, a program featuring classic Jewish episodes of animated TV series such as *Family Guy* and *South Park*, featuring an appearance by *Simpsons* writer-producer Mike Reiss. **Feb. 9-19, various venues citywide, 858.362.1330**



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CUAUHTÉMOC KISH : THEATER SCENE

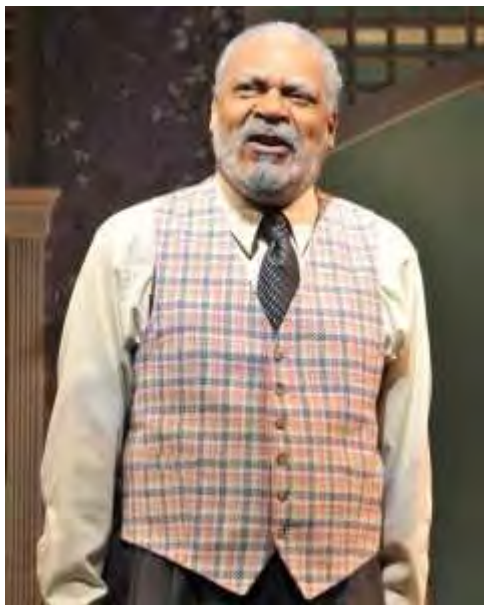
The Old Globe Theatre will offer two shows in January. The first up will be Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" (Jan 19 - Feb 12), while the second to be launched will be Jonathan Caren's "The

Recommendation" (Jan 26 - Feb 26). Foote's comedy was Tony nominated and will be directed by Michael Wilson, considered the foremost interpreter of the playwright's work. The play is about family, money, power and greed. Caren's play, staged at the White Theatre, has Aaron and Iskinder exploring life, and their unique differences, in a dorm. It's privilege against the middle-class, where both discover the meaning of friendship and where loyalty has its limits. Tickets can be ordered via the website at TheOldGlobe.org or by calling 619-23.GLOBE.

calling the box office at 619-600-5020 or by visiting them at iontheatre.com.

New Village Arts (NVA) will honor its commitment to bringing new works of art to the San Diego community with two weeks of premiere plays. The New Play Festival 2012 features work from NVA's celebrated Ensemble. The first weekend (Jan 13-13) will feature Carly Dellinger and Amanda Morrow in Rob Novak's "L.A." (Lost Apollonia) and the second weekend (Jan 20-22) will feature Dana Fares and Durwood Murray in Karen Li's "M." For more information visit them at newvillagearts.org or order your tickets at 760-433-3245.

Cygnnet Theatre Company will present Martin McDonagh's "A Behanding In Spokane" (Jan 19 – Feb 19). This one is a hilarious black comedy and marks this play as a southern California premiere. It's McDonagh's first American-set play, and he has a man searching for his missing hand with the usual con artists decorating the play. Visit them at cygnettheatre.com or ring them up for tickets at 619-337-1525.



Roger Robinson as Doug in Horton Foote's Dividing the Estate, directed by Michael Wilson, at The Old Globe Jan. 14 - Feb. 19, 2012 (Photo by Jann Whaley)

La Jolla Playhouse will begin the newest year with Richard Montoya's "American Night: The Ballad of Juan José" (January 27 – Feb 26). This one was written especially for Culture Clash. As Juan José feverishly studies for his U. S. citizenship exam, he becomes ensnared in a tumultuous journey through pivotal moments of American history. This play is an irreverent comedy about our shared

past set against our trans-border landscape. Tickets can be purchased on line at lajollaplayhouse.org or at 858-550-1010.

Moxie Theatre will bring back Candye Kane for a two-week reprise of her autobiographical show, “The Toughest Girl Alive” (Jan 5-15). Following this production, fresh from a visit to the New York Fringe Festival, Moxie will produce the classic “A Raisin In The Sun” (Jan 27 – March 4). Lorraine Hansberry’s play is a drama about the power of dreams and tells the story of a family living and struggling in Chicago in the 1950s. Get your tickets online at moxietheatre.com or by dialing them up at 858-598-7620.

Broadway San Diego will deliver Jerry Seinfeld for a one-night only performance on January 7. After Jerry makes us laugh, they’ll offer “Cats” (Jan 10-15). In 1997 this show became the longest running musical on Broadway, ending its 18-year-run on Sept. 10, 2000, with 7,485 performances. The show is based on T. S. Eliot’s *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*, and with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, “Cats” won seven Tony Awards in 1983. If you want to be included amongst the eight-plus million audience members who have seen this show, call them for tickets at 619-570-1100 or visit them at sandiegotheatres.org.

The Old Globe Theatre will offer two shows in January. The first up will be Pulitzer Prize winner Horton Foote’s “Dividing the Estate” (Jan 19 – Feb 12), while the second to be launched will be Jonathan Caren’s “The Recommendation” (Jan 26 – Feb 26). Foote’s comedy was Tony nominated and will be directed by Michael Wilson, considered the foremost interpreter of the playwright’s work. The play is about family, money, power and greed. Caren’s play, staged at the White Theatre, has Aaron and Iskinder exploring life, and their unique differences, in a dorm. It’s privilege against the middle-class, where both discover the meaning of friendship and where loyalty has its limits. Tickets can be ordered via the website at TheOldGlobe.org or by calling 619-23.GLOBE.





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**DIANE
BELL**

Planning ahead: Judy Zimmerman of El Cajon recently met with a service counselor at Greenwood Memorial Park, where her family has a plot. To thank staffer Sean Renfroe for his time, she offered him and his wife tickets to The Old Globe's current show. Turns out, the play has the perfect plot: "Dividing the Estate."

Arrest me: It wasn't the smartest vehicle paint job. Photographer Jim Grant captured a van in Ocean Beach. On its roof were the huge numbers: "420" — a universally recognized invitation to smoke pot.

Thursday, Jan. 19th 2012



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Diane Bell

A week after attacked, Mathis at work

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Written by
Diane Bell

4:18 p.m., Jan. 18, 2012

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Also of interest

Author events Nov. 6-12

'Winter's Bone' a big
winner among S.D. film
critics

Former S.D. City Councilman Harry Mathis was back in his Metropolitan Transit System office Wednesday, just a week after being pistol whipped in a home invasion robbery.

"I am doing fine," Mathis reports via email, "Still have some medical issues, but nothing serious enough to keep me from returning to work. As chairman of the MTS board, he plans to preside over today's session and to attend Friday's SANDAG Transportation Committee meeting.

Mathis, his wife, Mary, and a family friend were robbed, and their University City home ransacked, by three masked men late Jan. 11 after Mathis returned from the mayor's "State of the City" reception.



Harry Mathis — David Brooks

Most

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Top S.D. city aides get big raises

Comments (2)

Be relevant, **Complete terms** » birthday.
respectful, honest, discreet and responsible.

“Our experience is the worst nightmare of any residents in the supposed security of their homes,” Mathis noted. “It will probably change our lives.”

However, the retired Navy Captain added that it also had an uplifting effect. “The outpouring of concern and support for us from so many people has been overwhelming and heartwarming. I can’t begin to express the gratitude Mary and I feel ...”

Mathis, who declined to discuss robbery details with the investigation under way, said his wife is in Florida at a reunion for her mother’s 96th

birthday.

His own 79th birthday was the day after the attack. Mathis said it was a surprisingly happy one “because, by the grace of God, we lived to see it, and Mary was not injured. She and I will be celebrating our 50th anniversary this June.”

Planning ahead: Judy Zimmerman, of El Cajon, recently met with a service counselor at Greenwood Memorial Park where her family has a plot. To thank staffer Sean Renfroe for his time, she offered him and his wife tickets to The Old Globe’s current show. Turns out, the play has the perfect plot: “Dividing the Estate.”

Arrest me: It wasn’t the smartest vehicle paint job. Photographer Jim Grant captured a van in Ocean Beach. On its roof were the huge numbers: “420” — a universally recognized invitation to smoke pot.

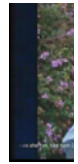
Grand giveaway: It was Christmas in January for 12 local charities as the all-volunteer Las Patronas group handed out \$363,000 in major grants Wednesday from its annual Jewel Ball proceeds. Another \$300,000 will be distributed during the year.

Ranging from \$21,000 to \$36,000, the grants will finance such projects as a wheelchair van for Arc of San Diego, theater lighting for La Jolla Playhouse, 33 VHF radios for the S.D. Fire Rescue Foundation, a telecommunications system for the YWCA’s domestic abuse program and a forklift for S.D. Food Bank’s warehouse.

Grants also will go toward: X-ray digitizing gear for Mountain Health and Community Services, classroom renovations at The Riford Center, outreach equipment for UCSD’s Shiley Eye Center, a digital sound system for S. D. Junior Theatre, dental chairs for Family Health Centers of S.D. and mobile vital sign monitors for Scripps Mercy Hospital Chula Vista.

The REINS Therapeutic Horsemanship Program is getting \$30,000 to purchase a tractor and loader for its horse facility where a 12-year-old girl with spina bifida recently had her first horseback ride. In awe, she said, “So this is what it feels like to walk.”

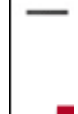
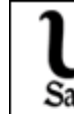
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Hartford Stage's "Divine Rivalry" Lives Again -- in California



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Peter Strauss

By FRANK RIZZO
Hartford Courant

4:20 p.m. EST, November 9, 2011

There's life in the "Divine"

"**Divine Rivalry**," that is, which received its world premiere earlier this year at [Hartford Stage](#).

The **Michael Kramer** play (which starred **Peter Strauss** in Hartford, will have another production in July at the **Old Globe Playhouse** in San Diego. **Michael Wilson**, former artistic director at Hartford Stage, again directs the work.

No further information on the casting.

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Wolson also directs **Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate"** at the Old Globe, a play he staged on Broadway and at Hartford Stage. The San Diego show, a co-production with Houston's **Alley Theatre**, runs Jan. 14 to Feb. 12.



STAGE



Posted: Tuesday, January 17, 2012 2:35 pm | Updated: 2:39 pm, Tue Jan 17, 2012.

By [Kelly Bennett](#)

The [mural revamping effort in Barrio Logan's Chicano Park](#) continues to catch attention. And the characters painting there are often as colorful as the famous murals themselves.

Like Felipe Adame, who's repainting the ceiling of the park's "kiosko" bandstand from a wheelchair decades after the first time he painted it. Adame was attacked in the 1990s while painting a mural in Mexico City and his injuries led to rheumatoid arthritis, according to a KPBS television piece this week.

But he's not feeling sorry for himself. It's easier to wheel around than to stand and paint, he told KPBS. "[I can still see and I can still paint](#). Thank God for that."

We featured the [revitalization effort](#) last week with interviews, photos and video if you missed it.

Artist Todd Stands helped add new paint to one of the 18 murals getting revamped. Stands says [he considered it humbling to paint](#) amid "such a great collection of history" and to be included "in the impressive roster of artists that have worked there." (Agitprop blog)



You're reading the Arts Report, our weekly compilation of the region's arts and culture news.

In the Family

- Two of famous playwright Horton Foote's children [are currently performing](#) in The Old Globe's production of his play, "Dividing the Estate." Onstage, the characters portray a family's "talons-baring tussle" over thousands of acres in Texas. "But behind the scenes," writes the L.A. Times, "the [story line is just the opposite](#). There, the agenda is a family's unified, concord-filled effort to keep a theatrical legacy intact, celebrate it and carry it forward." (U-T San Diego and LAT)

- Several La Jolla galleries synchronized their watches this weekend and [opened their doors for new exhibits](#) on the same Saturday night. The team-up from Joseph Bellows, R.B. Stevenson, Quint Contemporary and Scott White Contemporary art galleries [drew a crowd](#). (CityBeat and U-T)

Were you there? What'd you think of the cooperative effort? [Leave us a note](#).

- Lots of [local theater luminaries](#) are working with La Jolla Playhouse for its upcoming "Car Plays" — mobile pieces of theater that play out in motor vehicles. (U-T)

- Local musician A.J. Croce, son of the late Jim Croce, performed [a tribute concert](#) to his dad's legacy as a singer, songwriter and guitarist. He's planning a tribute tour this summer. (U-T)

Happening Here

- This week's events include symphonic samba, a reprise of a provocative modern dance performance and a dark comedy opening about [a man searching for his missing hand](#). (North County Times)

- Need legal help? A program at the Thomas Jefferson School of Law aims to [give free legal help to artists](#) and art organizations.

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Enjoy an evening at the Old Globe & benefit local youth

The Kiwanis Club of Tierrasanta invites you to an evening at the Old Globe Theatre, a fundraiser to benefit the youth of our community.

On Saturday, February 11th at 8 pm, join with Kiwanis members and other local residents to see "Dividing the Estate," a 2009 Tony nominated play written by Horton Foote and directed by Michael Wilson.

This west coast premiere is a comedy about family, money, power and greed. The cost of each ticket is \$68.

All the money raised through Patriots Day, Oktoberfest and other fundraisers throughout the year go back to the youth in our community through the schools, sports and youth programs.

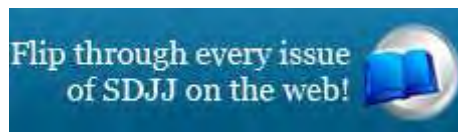
Tickets may be ordered at TierraMesa Veterinary Clinic at 9353 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. or by calling 858-268-0044 or Deborah Foley at 858-268-7218.

Tickets are limited so hurry. All tickets must be ordered and paid for by January 26th.

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What's Going On: Entertainment, Short and Sweet

by Eileen Sondak | [February 2012](#), [Popular Stories from SDJJ](#) | [Post your comment »](#)

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By Eileen Sondak

February is the shortest month of the year, but thanks to the local arts community, it's not short on entertainment. The eclectic mix includes music, opera, theater, dance and a cornucopia of museum exhibitions and hands-on activities. The return of the Jewish Film Festival, a recital by Itzhak Perlman and a theatrically rich opera based on "Moby-Dick" are among the highlights of the busy February slate.

The San Diego Opera's tantalizing production of "Salome" will complete its run Feb. 5. If you can still snare a

seat for this blood-thirsty and eerily erotic opera, don't miss it. The world premiere co-production of the literary masterpiece "Moby-Dick" will follow "Salome" at the Civic Theatre Feb. 18-26, with Ben Heppner as Ahab and Morgan Smith as Starbuck.

"Moby-Dick" has already been performed to standing ovations, and the opera seems destined to carve a strong niche in the operatic world, thanks to its highly theatrical effects and aching beautiful score. Maestro Karen Keltner will preside over the pit, and Robert Brill designed the stunning nautical sets for this emotionally charged tale of obsession.

The Old Globe's production of Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" will complete its stay in San Diego Feb. 19. This black comedy about family, money and greed takes place in present day Texas, when a family reunites to consider whether to divide their estate. Michael Wilson directed this West Coast premiere.

"The Recommendation" plays on at the Globe's White Theatre through Feb. 26. The story revolves around a chance encounter with an accused felon that puts the longtime friendship of two college roommates at risk. This world premiere was written by Jonathan Caren and directed by Jonathan Munby.

The San Diego Symphony has a very special offering set for Feb. 18. Itzhak Perlman will be on stage for one thrilling recital. Music aficionados will want to catch this performance by the world-famous violin virtuoso. The Symphony's Chamber Music Series will bring Johannes Moser and Orion Weiss together to perform "Dvorak and More" Feb. 28. They will perform (with members of the orchestra) a program that features Dvorak's Piano Trio No. 4 (Dumky).

Valentine's Day weekend will bring Maestro Marvin Hamlisch to the podium at Symphony Hall for "A Valentine's Romance with Broadway's Best" (Feb. 10-11). Jennifer Holliday and Hugh Panaro will sing your favorite Valentine's Day songs.

Moscow Festival Ballet will bring its romantic ballets to Symphony Hall as well. "Sleeping Beauty" will be danced Feb. 14, followed Feb. 15 by "Swan Lake." If you like the power and spectacle of ancient Japanese drumming, "Tao — Taiko Drummers of Japan" is coming this way with its throbbing percussions Feb. 17.

Orchestra Nova will deliver "Favorite Opera Moments" at Jacobs Qualcomm (Feb. 11) and Sherwood Auditorium (Feb. 13).

North Coast Repertory Theatre will unveil "Visiting Mister Green" Feb. 15. Starring Robert Grossman, this bittersweet play about family loneliness and friendship is laced with humor and has already snared numerous awards throughout the world. The company will showcase this highly acclaimed play until March 11.

San Diego Repertory Theatre will present "In the Wake," a politically charged tale set in the early years of the 21st century. Penned by the award-winning playwright Lisa Kron, the play will open Feb. 11, under the direction of Delicia Turner Sonnenberg. You can see "In the Wake," with its opinionated characters and clever dialogue, through March 4 at the Rep's Lyceum Space.

Cygnets Theatre's "A Behanding in Spokane" remains on the boards in the troupe's Old Town Theatre through Feb. 19. This play, directed by Lisa Berger, takes audiences on a hilarious roller coaster ride of emotions. But it also comes with a warning for violence and strong language.

The Lamb's Players Theatre will revive an American classic Feb. 3. The musical comedy gem "Guys and Dolls" will dominate the Lamb's Coronado home until March 18.

"Mix-Tape," the Lamb's long-running musical, is keeping its '80s-style music alive at the Horton Grand Theatre through Feb. 26.



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NEWS INDEX

Gloria Steinem at Columbia Feb. 7

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Billy Masters
by Billy Masters
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'Wrapture' at Willis
Tower



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**Obama
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A POLITICAL MARRIAGE



**A new book by
Tracy Baim**

with
Chuck Colbert
Lisa Keen
Karen Ocamb
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Michelangelo
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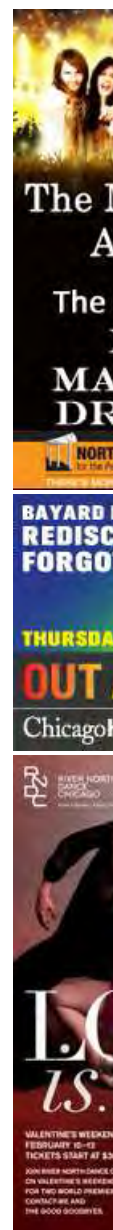
According to Billy, Julia Roberts (above) got one over on Ellen Barkin.

"For me, it is a choice. I understand that for many people it's not, but for me, it's a choice, and you don't get to define my gayness for me."—Cynthia Nixon explains that she's been attracted to both men and women. I'm not exactly sure where her "betrothed" fits in.

Prior to heading off to Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., I zipped down to San Diego to see *Dividing the Estate* at the Old Globe Theatre, starring Elizabeth Ashley and Penny Fuller. I've only seen Penny in a few things but am always struck by how authentic she is. As to La Ashley, I have traveled far and wide to see her tackle many roles and, as far as I'm concerned, there are few who can hold a candle to her incandescent talent. Playwright David Dillon will roll his eyes when I say that one of my favorite stories to tell at parties is about being backstage with Liz after a performance of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. So the next time you see me at a party, feel free to ask.

I first met Thomas Jane when he was appearing in *"The Glass Menagerie"* at the Laguna Playhouse. Now, a dozen years later, the 42-year-old actor says he's sick and tired of having to dress younger to feel relevant: "I'm as sharp as I've ever been, I'm wiser than I've ever been, I'm physically in great health—but now I'm being passed over because I'm in my f*cking 40s, by society as a whole." That's a lot of complaining by someone who's hung.

But it does lead to a fascinating question—what would you give up to have the perfect body? In a recent UK study, half of the gay men polled revealed that they would be willing to give up a year

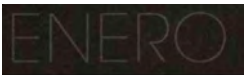




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JANUARY THEATRE OPENINGS

January 14 – February 12

What: ***Dividing the Estate***

Where: **The Old Globe Theatre
in the Conrad Prebys
Theatre Center**

1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego

How: 619-23-GLOBE
theoldglobe.org



The Old Globe Theatre



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Calendar

Jan/Feb 2012

Top Ten

Dividing the Estate

1 Broadway invades S.D. again when Horton Foote's Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy makes its West Coast debut at The Old Globe. Nominated for a Tony Award in 2009, the rambunctious play pokes fun at the effects of money, power and greed when a family struggles to divide its fortunes.

Jan. 14-Feb. 12. *The Old Globe*, 619.234.5623, theoldglobe.org

THEATER

The **Poway Unified School District** presents **“Hairspray,”** Friday, Jan. 6 – Sunday, Jan. 8 at the Poway Center for the Performing Arts. Directed by Westview High School senior Meagan Pitcher, the show includes students from many of the middle and high schools in the Poway School District as both cast and crew. Showtimes are 7 p.m. Friday, 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. For ticket information call the box office at 858-748-0505.

The **California Youth Conservatory Theatre** presents the Broadway hit musical **“Spring Awakening,”** running Saturday, Jan. 7 – Sunday, Jan. 15 at the Welk Resort Theater, 8860 Lawrence Welk Drive, Escondido. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12 – Friday, Jan. 13, 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 7 and Sunday, Jan. 8 and 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15. Tickets are \$30.50 or \$45.50 to include the pre-show buffet. “Spring Awakening” contains mature themes, sexual situations and strong language. For more information and tickets, call 760-749-3000 or visit www.welktheatersandiego.com or www.cyctheatre.com.

The **Welk Theater** presents **“How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying,”** opening Thursday, Jan. 19 – Sunday, Feb. 26 at the Welk Resort Theater, 8860 Lawrence Welk Drive, Escondido. Showtimes are 1 p.m. Wednesdays, 1 and 6 p.m. Thursdays, 1 p.m. Saturdays and 6:30 p.m. Sundays. Ticket prices available online at www.welktheatersandiego.com or by calling 760-749-3000.

The **Old Globe** presents **“Dividing the Estate,”** running Saturday, Jan. 14 – Sunday, Feb. 12 at the Old Globe Theatre and **“The Recommendation,”** running Saturday, Jan. 21 – Thursday, Feb. 26 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. Ticket prices start at \$29. For tickets and more information, 619-234-5623.

Actors’ Conservatory Theatre (ACT- San Diego) presents **“Once Upon a Mattress,”** a hilarious musical story of romance in a fantasy kingdom, Friday, Jan. 27 – Saturday, Feb. 4 at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre, 6611 University Avenue, San Diego. For showtimes and to purchase tickets, call 858-777-9899 or visit www.actsandiego.org.

San Diego REpertory Theatre (San Diego REP) presents **“A Hammer, a Bell and a Song to Sing,”** opening Saturday, Jan. 14 and running through Sunday, Jan. 29 at the Lyceum Stage. Based on the values embodied by Pete Seeger, the show features spoken word and scenes inspired by the words from past U.S. Presidents and founding fathers, poets such as Allen Ginsberg and Henry David Thoreau, activists like Cesar Chavez and Dr. Martin Luther King, and many more Americans who have marched and fought for justice, freedom, and change in American history. Previews begin Saturday, Jan. 7. Tickets range from \$32 to \$51 (student discount \$18). Discounts for groups, seniors and military also available. For tickets and more information, call 619-544-1000 or visit www.sdrep.org.

The **Scripps Ranch Theatre** presents **“Brooklyn Boy,”** an inspirational comedy-drama about going home again, back to family and friends and one’s old neighborhood, opening Saturday, Jan. 21 and running through Sunday, Feb. 19. Tickets are \$25 general admission, \$22 students, seniors and active military. For reservations please call the theater box office at 858-578-7728.

Scripps Ranch Theatre is located on the campus of Alliant International University, Avenue of Nations, off Pomerado Rd.

Broadway San Diego presents **“CATS”** Tuesday, Jan. 10 – Sunday, Jan. 15 at the San Diego Civic Theatre, San Diego Civic Theatre, 3rd and B Street, Downtown San Diego. Showtimes are 7 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 2 p.m. ASL matinee Saturday, and 1 and 6 p.m. Sunday. Tickets start at \$20. For more information, call 619-570-1100 or 800-982-ARTS, or visit www.broadwaysd.com.

Tickets are also on sale for Broadway San Diego’s upcoming productions of **“Rock of Ages,”** running March 27 – April 1, **“The Addams Family,”** running May 29 – June 3, and **“Memphis,”** running July 24 – 29. Visit www.broadwaysd.com for more details.

The **San Diego Center for Jewish Culture** presents comedienne **Judy Gold** live 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14 at the David and Dorothea Garfield Theatre, 4126 Executive Drive, La Jolla. Tickets range from \$23 – \$27 and can be purchased by calling the JCC Box Office at 858-362-1348 or visiting the website at tickets.lfjcc.org.

Tickets for the 2011-2012 season at the **Poway Center for the Performing Arts** are on sale on the center’s website, www.powayarts.org, by calling 858-748-0505 or at the box office, 15498 Espola Road, noon to 5 p.m. Fridays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

PowPAC, Poway’s Community Theatre, is offering a number of varied **volunteer opportunities** for its award-winning theater. For more information, contact Maxine Brunton at 858-679-0640, or call the theater box office and leave your name and telephone number at 858-679-8085.

ART

The **North County Society of Fine Arts** is a local nonprofit group devoted to bringing the visual arts to public attention and fostering art education.

Members’ artwork currently displayed includes **Lori Chase** and **Margaret North** at the Poway library, 13137 Poway Road, **Sharon Ford** at the Bernardo Heights Community Center, 16051 Bernardo Heights Parkway and **Pat Dispenziere** at Luc’s Bistro, 12642 Poway Road.

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Wednesday, Jan 11, 2012

A family's fit to be tied in North Coast Rep's 'The Lion of Winter'

James Goldman's play about King Henry II tops our coverage of plays in local production



Mark Pinter (seated) heads the cast of North Coast Rep's *The Lion in Winter* - Photo courtesy of North Coast Repertory Theatre

King Lear thought he had ungrateful children. At least among his three daughters, one of them (Cordelia) was loving and devoted. No such luck in the case of King Henry II, whose three sons elevate selfishness, childishness and nastiness to the level of high art.

North Coast Rep's 30th-anniversary production of James Goldman's *The Lion in Winter* (first staged in NCR's inaugural season in 1982) is a bit of high art itself. It's a lyrical historical drama with generous dollops of biting wit and glib commentary, applicable well beyond the 12th-century setting, about power,

ambition and family. To a more visceral degree, the war of words and gesticulations between

explosive Henry (Mark Pinter) and brainy Eleanor (Kandis Chappell) is nearly as flammable as George and Martha's in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, but with Christmas wine instead of booze. Chappell and the stentorian-voiced Pinter are well-matched combatants in this production directed by Andrew Barnicle, and the embers of Eleanor and Henry's expiring love flicker just believably enough from beginning to satisfying end.

The ostensible chief conflict of *The Lion in Winter* is how uneasy lies the head of Henry, which wears the crown of England. That crown is coveted by sons Richard (Richard Baird, brooding), Geoffrey (Jason Maddy, scheming) and John (Kyle Roche, tantruming). Then there's Henry's young mistress (Alexandra Grossi) and the matter of his remaining spousal ties to Eleanor, whom he has imprisoned. It's all very scratched and tangled in a barbed-wire heap of envy, resentment, sibling rivalry and even oedipal complexity. You may need a scorecard to keep track of all the in-castle machinations, so it's best to savor *The Lion in Winter* for its athletic language, for Pinter's rafters-rattling rants and for the three sons' one-note but entertaining demeanors.

Scenic designer Marty Burnett contributes a cold but regal set, and the chanting musical interludes further the illusion of a troubled Christmastime in the High Middle Ages.

Freud would have had a field day in Henry II's household. Pity he was born seven centuries too late.

The Lion in Winter runs through Jan. 29 at North Coast Repertory Theatre in Solana Beach. \$32-\$49.

Write to davidc@sdcitybeat.com and editor@sdcitybeat.com.

Opening

Dividing the Estate: Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Horton Foote's family comedy set in a fictitious Texas town. Previews begin Jan. 14 at Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park. \$29 and up. theoldglobe.org

The Elephant Man: The life of John Merrick is retold in the venerable play by Bernard Pomerance. Opens Jan. 13 at OnStage Playhouse in Chula Vista. \$14-\$16. onstageplayhouse.org

The Facts of Life: The Lost Episode: The '80s sitcom gets a twisted take via the mind of Jamie Morris. Opens Jan. 15 at Diversionary Theatre, University Heights. \$20-\$29. diversionary.org

L.A. (Lost Apollonia): The New Play Festival opens with this work by emerging playwright Rob Novak. Opens Jan. 13 at New Village Arts Theatre in Carlsbad. \$15. newvillagearts.org

Pinkalicious The Musical: A fanciful work produced by North Coast Rep's Professional Theatre for Young Audiences. Opens Jan. 11 at North Coast Repertory Theatre in Solana Beach. \$12-

Related content

[Enough's enough](#)
[Madcap gets a workout at North Coast Rep's Lend Me a Tenor](#)
[Total recall](#)

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[The Lion in Winter](#)
[North Coast Rep](#)



brought to you by



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Page 1 of 1

Jan

24 **"Dividing the Estate,"** 7 p.m., Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way, (619) 234-5623, www.theoldglobe.org, \$29-\$81

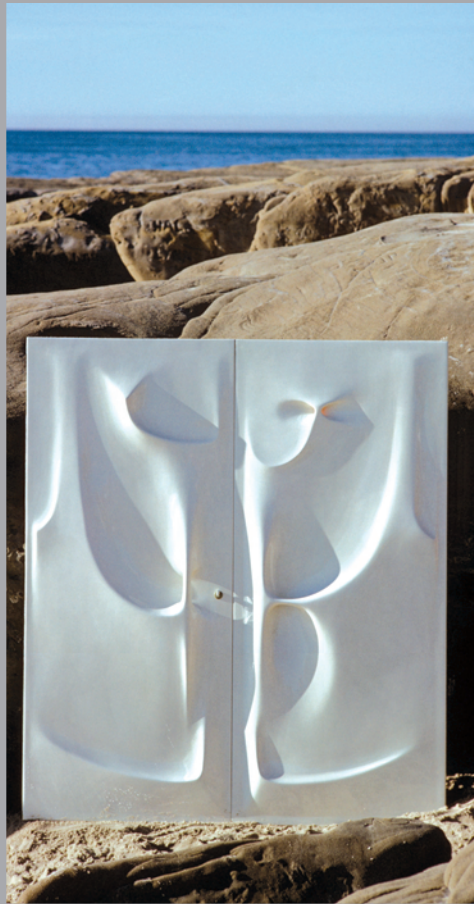


FEB. 1 **"The Recommendation,"** 7 p.m., Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way, runs Jan. 14-Feb. 19, (619) 234-5623, www.oldglobe.org, \$29-\$61



CALENDAR

Orange County/San Diego/Inland Empire
JANUARY 2012



THURSDAY, JANUARY 12 **SAN DIEGO'S CRAFT REVOLUTION**

This original exhibition documents a fascinating, inspiring and overlooked chapter of San Diego's recent past: the important contribution of San Diego craftsmen from the postwar period beginning in the 1940s up through the 1970s. San Diego's Craft Revolution – From Post-War Modern to California Design will explore the progression from sleek modernism to unconventional handmade objects of use such as furniture, doors, jewelry and ceramics. Over 60 artists will be featured in the show, including Rhoda Lopez, Jack Hopkins, Kay Whitcomb and James Hubbell. Mingei International Museum, 1439 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through April 15. \$8. (619) 239-0003. mingei.org.

whales on their roundtrip migration from the Bering Sea to Baja's breeding grounds. Get an up-close look at these amazing animals and learn about gray whale baleen, barnacles and prey from aquarium naturalists. Tours leave daily from San Diego Bay. \$30-\$40. Through April 15. Birch Aquarium at Scripps (858) 534-7336. aquarium.ucsd.edu. Flagship Cruises & Events at (619) 234-4111. flagshipsd.com

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

THE ELEPHANT MAN

Based on the true story of John Merrick, a grotesquely deformed Victorian sideshow attraction, this compelling and heartbreaking drama explores the depths of human emotion by asking what makes a man a man. OnStage Playhouse, 291 Third Ave., Chula Vista. Through Feb. 4. \$14-\$16. (619) 422-7787. onstageplayhouse.org.

TOO MANY COOKS

It's 1932 in Niagra Falls, Canada, and the rum-running business is at its peak. In the aftermath of Wall Street's crash, Irving Bublallowe and his daughter Honey have risked everything to open a restaurant. When their star--the renowned singing chef Francois LaPlouffe--fails to appear, the grand opening is placed in jeopardy. Unity Fellowship Hall, 140 N. Buena Vista St., Hemet. Weekends through Jan 21. \$40. (951) 252-4232. playwithyourfoodproductions.com.

INTIMATE MIRACLES

Close-up and sleight-of-hand magic show starring Sebastian. Red Spade Theater, 2539B Congress St., San Diego. Also Jan. 20, 27. \$25. (619) 865-2973. redspadetheater.com.

CHAUTAUQUA!

The National Theater of the United States of America's creates a "big-top" experience as it mixes music, dance, debates, scientific experiments, circus arts, vaudeville and feats of strength that were the hallmark of the circuit. The ensemble illuminates the dynamic culture of each city and venue it visits, so no two productions are alike. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Samueli Theater, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. Through Jan. 15. \$25-\$20. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

A LITTLE PRINCESS

When young Sara Crewe attends a boarding school in America, she soon clashes with the heartless headmistress. Despite efforts to stifle her creativity and sense of self-worth, Sara believes that every girl's a princess. But that belief is soon put to the test when she receives dreadful news about her father. Now she must learn the lesson that no one is ever truly alone. Lifehouse Theater, 1135 N. Church St., Redlands. \$15-\$19. Weekends through Feb. 12. (909) 335-3037 ext. 21. lifehousetheater.com.

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

Living in present day Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella, a family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their family fortune begins to diminish. The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Feb. 12. \$29-plus. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

TCHAIKOVSKY'S FIFTH REVEALED

Featuring sumptuous tone and melodic mastery, Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony culminates in a triumphant final movement. Although the composer claimed the work a failure, time has been more kind. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. \$25-\$91. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

CLASSICS AT THE MERC

Old Town Temecula Community Theater, The Merc, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$11. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

MONDAY, JANUARY 16

FAMILY FOSSIL DAY

Meet a real paleontologist and learn how to look for fossils in your own backyard. San Diego Natural History Museum, 1788 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through March 17. \$14-\$16. (619) 255-0210. sdnat.org.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17



CATS

What began as a musical about cats after Andrew Lloyd Webber picked up a book of poems in an airport bookshop has become one of the longest running shows in Broadway's history. The musical features 20 of Webber's timeless melodies, including "Memory." Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Renée and Henry Segerstrom Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. Through Jan. 22. \$20-\$80. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

LONESOME TRAVELER: A JOURNEY DOWN THE RIVERS AND STREAMS OF AMERICAN FOLK

Experience the music that made history and the history that made music in this concert that traverses the backwoods of Appalachia to the nightclubs of New York and San Francisco from the mid 1920s to the mid 1960s. The Laguna Playhouse, Moulton Theatre, 606 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. Through Feb. 5. \$55-\$70. (949) 497-2787. lagunaplayhouse.com.

PALM SPRINGS FOLLIES: HOT! HOT! HOT!

Singer Maureen McGovern known for "The Morning After," theme song from "The Poseidon Adventure" joins the cast. Palm Springs' year-round sunshine provides a backdrop for an endless summer. This year's theme, "Hot! Hot! Hot!" is a celebration of the never-ending summer vacation. The Follies are renown for performing the music and dance of the '40s, '50s and '60s with a cast ranging in age from 56 to 81. Plaza Theatre, 128 South

Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs. McGovern performs through March 10. Follies run through May 20. \$50-\$93. (760) 327-0225. psfollies.com.

CATS

Based on T.S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats," and with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, "Cats" won seven 1983 Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, Best Lighting and Best Costumes. San Diego Civic Theatre, Third and B St., 1100 Third Ave., downtown San Diego. Through Jan. 15. \$48-\$128. (619) 570-1100. broadwaysd.com.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

A HAMMER, A BELL, AND A SONG TO SING: THE MUSIC OF PETE SEEGER

From the 1950s to today, Pete Seeger's music has been part of a lifelong quest for reverence understanding, and hope. This new musical features the songs and words of the legendary singer, songwriter and activist. The Lyceum Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, San Diego. Through Feb. 5. \$29-\$53. (619) 544-1000. sdrep.org.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12

WHALE WATCHING CRUISES

Sail with aquarium naturalists to locate gray



brought to you by



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Page 1 of 1

PLAYBILL

Critic's Choice

"Dividing the Estate": The late Horton Foote's final work is a closely observed, gently witty chronicle of a Texas family's slow implosion over a dwindling inheritance. Director Michael Wilson's strong cast includes the matchless Broadway icon Elizabeth Ashley as the put-upon matriarch, joined by two of Foote's own children: Hallie and Horton Jr. (James Hebert) Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Feb. 19. (619) 234-5623, theoldglobe.org. Starting at \$29.

"The Recommendation": Newcomer Jonathan Caren's rousing world-premiere play is a provocative and at times brutally honest examination of how we calculate (or fail to) our social debt to others. Director Jonathan Munby's sharp staging (and cast) brings out the zip and wit in Caren's tale of friendship, racial and class divides, nepotism and the unpredictable consequences of paying it forward. (Hebert) Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre, 1362 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. Through Feb. 29. (619) 234-5623, theoldglobe.org. Starting at \$29.



From left: Horton Foote Jr., Hallie Foote, Penny Fuller and Elizabeth Ashley in Horton Foote's "Dividing the Estate" at the Old Globe. HENRY DIROCCO



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Page 1 of 1

La Jolla's Best Bets For Events



Dividing the Estate

The comedy that
“finds laughs in greedy,
grubbing heirs”
continues through
Sunday, Feb. 12, at **The
Old Globe Theatre**,
Balboa Park. It's the
West Coast premiere of
Horton Foote's 2009
Tony Award-nominated
Best Play and stars
Elizabeth Ashley;
reprising the role of the
matriarch she played on
Broadway. Tickets from
\$29. (619) 234-5623.
theoldglobe.org

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SPOTLIGHT

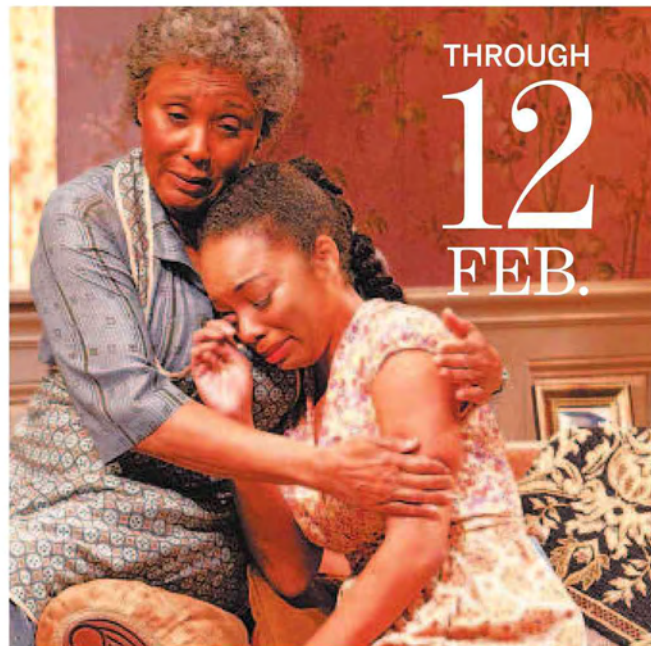
“Dividing the Estate”

The Old Globe Theatre

7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays (no matinee Feb. 11); 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays; plus 2 p.m. Wednesday. 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. \$29 and up. (619) 234-5623 or theoldglobe.org

The late, Pulitzer Prize-winning Horton Foote wasn't the kind of playwright to whack his audience over the head with bare-it-all dialogue, and in “Dividing the Estate” it's the unvoiced tensions and resentments that tend to speak the loudest. As well as Foote's gentle wit, drawn out skillfully at the Globe by the acting of (among others) Broadway icon Elizabeth Ashley and two of the playwright's own children, Hallie and Horton Jr.

JAMES HEBERT • U-T





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Calendar

February 2-8

Your Week

AND WELCOME TO IT



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8: DIVIDING THE ESTATE AT THE OLD GLOBE

Wednesday | 8

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

It's 1987, and aging matriarch Stella Gordon wants to keep her estate intact. But her children, like King Lear's, want to tear apart both land and tradition. The *Reader's* Jeff Smith says, "Elizabeth Ashley gives a bravura performance as Stella."

WHEN: 7 p.m. (and through Sunday, check for times)

WHERE: Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. 619-234-5623; theoldglobe.org

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

1



2



KARAOKE NIGHT AT CHEERS

Every Monday & Tuesday at
10 p.m. with DJ Suzee
cheerssandiego.com

3

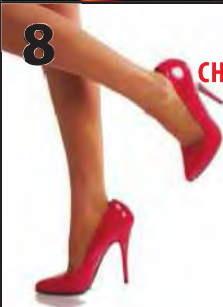
NEW YEAR, NEW YOU SPECIAL: 90 MIN. FULL BODY MASSAGE FOR ONLY \$60

All month long at Karma Relaxation Spa
karmarelaxation.com

4



8



BABYCAKES PRESENTS: CHURCH ON SUNDAYS

Every Sunday at 3 p.m.
babycakessandiego.com

SUNDAYS ARE LADIES NIGHT

BOURBON STREET
bourbonstreetsd.com

9

MUSICAL MONDAYS AT MARTINIS ABOVE FOURTH

Mondays from 6 p.m. to close
martinisaabovefourth.com



10

BROADWAY SAN DIEGO PRESENTS CATS

January 10 – 15 at San Diego Civic Theatre
broadwaysd.com



11

EDEN'S ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

PAPER PARTY FEATURING
THE PERRY TWINS
9 p.m. at Eden San Diego
edensandiego.com



15

BIG MIKE'S 55TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

BENEFITING AN OTTOMYKID.COM
4 p.m. – 7 p.m. at The Caliph Lounge

DAVID GARRETT IN CONCERT

7 p.m. at the Balboa Theatre
sandiegotheatres.org



16

SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT WEEK

January 15–20
sandiegorestaurantweek.com



17

THE OLD GLOBE PRESENTS DIVIDING THE ESTATE

January 14–February 12
theoldglobe.org



18

COLLEGE NIGHT AT FLICKS

WITH \$2 WELLS
Every Tuesday
from 9 p.m. to close
sdflicks.com



22

THE ELEPHANT MAN

January 13 to February 4 at OnStage Playhouse
onstageplayhouse.org



\$1 MIMOSAS & \$2 BLOODY MARYS

WITH BARTENDER SEAN
Every Sunday at Cheers
cheerssandiego.com

23

THE BATHHOUSE SHOW

A FULL FACIAL OF COMEDY
Hosted by "The Queen of Queens"

SHAWN PELOFSKY

8 p.m. at Bourbon Street
bourbonstreetsd.com



24

FARMERS INSURANCE OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

AT THE TORREY PINES GOLF COURSE
January 23–29
farmersinsuranceopen.com



25

BITCHY BINGO HOSTED BY KIKI & FIFI

Wednesdays
at Lips San Diego
lipssd.com



29

BABY'S BRUNCH AT BABYCAKES

Every Saturday & Sunday
from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
babycakessandiego.com



30

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS AMERICAN NIGHT: THE BALLAD OF JUAN JOSÉ

January 27–February 26
lajollaplayhouse.com



31

SALOME

PRESENTED BY SAN DIEGO OPERA
January 28–February 5
at San Diego Civic Theatre
sdopera.com





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■ THEATRE, BROADWAY & DANCE

The Old Globe

Dividing the Estate, through February 12

The Recommendation, through February 26

oldglobe.org

CALENDAR

Orange County/San Diego/Inland Empire
FEBRUARY 2012



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10 **ART & ARTIFACTS**

This exhibit features original works of art from the San Bernardino County Museum's collection along with artifacts from the history division's collections. Works by John Edward Svenson, Ben Rabe, Jeff Owens, Terry Thornsley, John W. Hilton, Brad Diddams, Boris Deustch, John Moyer and Ramón G. Contreras are included in the exhibit. Artifacts relate to regional culture: water, school, fashion, ranching, farming, missions and exploring the natural world. San Bernardino County Museum, Fisk Gallery, 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands. Through March 15. \$6-\$8. (909) 307-2669. sbcountymuseum.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

ROBERTA FLACK

Songstress Roberta Flack brings her intoxicating romantic ballads including "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," "Killing Me Softly With His Song," "Feel Like Making Love" and "Tonight I Celebrate My Love." Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. Also Feb. 11. \$25-\$185. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

PALM SPRINGS FOLLIES: HOT! HOT! HOT!

Singer Maureen McGovern known for "The Morning After," theme song from "The Poseidon Adventure" joins the cast. Palm Springs' year-round sunshine provides a backdrop for an endless summer. This year's theme, "Hot! Hot! Hot!," is a celebration of the never-ending summer vacation. The Follies are famous for performing the music and dance of the '40s, '50s and '60s with a cast ranging in age from 56 to 81. Plaza Theatre, 128 South Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs. McGovern performs through March 10. Follies run through May 20. \$50-\$93. (760) 327-0225. psfollies.com.

DIVIDING THE ESTATE

Living in present day Texas and ruled by octogenarian matriarch Stella, a family must confront their past as they prepare for an uncertain future when their family fortune begins to diminish. The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Feb. 12. \$29-plus. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

A LITTLE PRINCESS

When young Sara Crewe attends a boarding school in America, she soon clashes with the heartless headmistress. Despite efforts to stifle her creativity and sense of self-worth, Sara believes that every girl's a princess. But that belief is soon put to the test when she receives dreadful news about her father. Now she must learn the lesson that no one is ever truly alone. Lifehouse Theater, 1135 N. Church St., Redlands. \$15-\$19. Weekends through Feb. 12. (909) 335-3037 ext. 21. lifehousetheater.com.

GUY & RALNA

Enjoy a trip down memory lane with the fantastic singing duo of Guy & Ralna of "The Lawrence Welk Show." Be prepared to relive fond memories, delightful singing and meet the artists after the show. Welk Resorts Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Dates vary through Feb. 11. \$65-\$80. (888) 802-7469. welktheatre.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

The hilarious Broadway musical about a young ambitious man trying to break in and get ahead in the business world. This stage and movie musical has wonderful, wacky characters and toe tapping music. Welk Resorts Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Wed.-Sun. through Feb. 26. \$44-\$73. (888) 802-7469. welktheatre.com.



THE RECOMMENDATION

Aaron is smart, charming and over-privileged. Iskinder, his new college roommate, comes from a middle-class immigrant family and is under-connected. Aaron takes Iskinder under his wing, sharing his world of favors and fortune. But the safe haven of college only lasts so long. After a chance encounter with an accused felon sets off a chain of events that puts Aaron's life at risk, the two men are forced to rethink the meaning of friendship. The Old Globe, Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Feb. 26. \$29-plus. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

AMERICAN NIGHT: THE BALLAD OF JUAN JOSE.

As Juan José feverishly studies for his U.S. citizenship exam, he becomes ensnared in a tumultuous, whirlwind journey through pivotal moments in American history. La Jolla Playhouse, UCSD Campus, Potiker Theatre, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla. Tues.-Sun. through Feb. 26. \$46-plus. (858) 550-1010. lajollaplayhouse.org.

IN THE WAKE

It's Thanksgiving of 2000 and the presidential election still has not been decided. Ellen, a hyper-intelligent and politically obsessed freelance writer, insists that her friends don't realize how bad the situation really is. Ellen, on the other hand, is 100 percent sure about everything—herself, her politics, her friends and lovers. The Lyceum Theatre Lyceum Space, 79 Horton Plaza, San Diego. Through March 4. \$45-\$51. (619) 544-1000. sdrep.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

PUPPY LOVE RUN/WALK

The three-point-one mile course is fun for people and pets alike. The event also features a "Furry Valentine Costume Contest" and the Wagging Wellness Village with vendors, food and entertainment. \$35. (858) 756-4117 x339. animalcenter.org.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH CRYSTAL GAYLE

Gayle has been a favorite with audiences since attaining national prominence in the '70s. Known for her signature song "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue," she has released more than 20 number one hits and has been honored by the Grammy Awards, the Country Music Association, the Academy of Country Music and the American Music Awards. Poway Center for the Performing Arts Foundation, 15498 Espola Rd., Poway. \$55-\$65. (858) 748-0505. powayarts.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

DINNER-DANCE

The Widow or Widowers Club (WOW) of San Diego hosts a dinner/dance at the El Cajon Elks Lodge on Washington Ave., El Cajon. First and third Wednesdays. \$13. (619) 461-7652 wowsd.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

WHALE WATCHING CRUISES

Sail with aquarium naturalists to locate gray whales on their roundtrip migration from the Bering Sea to Baja's breeding grounds. Get an up-close look at these amazing animals and learn about gray whale baleen, barnacles and prey from aquarium naturalists Tours leave daily from San Diego Bay. \$30-\$40. Through April 15. Birch Aquarium at Scripps (858) 534-7336. aquarium.ucsd.edu. Flagship Cruises & Events at (619) 234-4111. flagshippsd.com.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

The final collaboration between Rogers and Hammerstein is the true story of the Von Trapp Family. Plummer Auditorium, 201 E. Chapman Ave., Fullerton. Thurs.-Sun. through Feb. 26. \$22-\$56. (714) 589-2770. 3dtshows.com.

ANDREA MARTIN

Andrea Martin offers an evening of outrageous comedy and song. Broadway tunes are rounded out with Martin's famous SCTV characters and tales of her life, career and Hollywood friends. Featuring musical accompanist Seth Rudetsky. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Samueli Theater, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. Through Feb. 19. \$72. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

JAZZ AT THE MERC

Eric Reed with Mary Stallings. Old Town Temecula Community Theater, The Merc, 42051 Main St., Temecula. \$15. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.



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"Dividing the Estate" 『ディバイディング ジェステイト』

財産相続を巡る家族の争い／H・フート作のブロードウェイ喜劇



Photo by Jann Whaley

📍 & 📅 1987年のテキサス州。資産家のゴードン一家は80歳代の女家長ステラが支配していた。彼女は年を取った3人の子供たちに一握りの財産しか渡していない。ルシール、マリー・ジョー、そしてアルコール中毒のルイスはそんな母親の待遇に不満を抱えていた。不動産価格の暴落、予想外の税金支払いなどが重なり、未来に不安を感じた3人は…。

📍 THE GLOBE THEATRES (Old Globe Theatre), 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park / ☎ 619-239-2255(T)。期間—2/12(日)迄。上演—火・水曜：7pm、木・金曜：8pm、土曜：2pm & 8pm、日曜：2pm & 7pm。チケット—\$29～\$85。http://www.oldglobe.orgocpac.org

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“Dividing the Estate” 『ディバイディング ジ エステイト』

財産相続をめぐる家族の醜い争い／H・フート作のブロードウェイ喜劇

③ 1987年。テキサス州ハリソン。資産家のゴードン一家は80歳代の女家長ステラが支配していた。彼女は年を取った3人の子供たちに一握りの財産しか渡していない。ルシール、マリー・ジョー、そしてアルコール中毒のルイスはそんな母親の待遇に不満を抱えていた。やがて、不動産価格の暴落、予想外の税金支払いなどが重なり、未来に不安を感じた3人は母親が生きている間に財産を分割し、それぞれが経済的に独立すべきという議論を持ち出すのだが…。



Dividing the Estate / Photo by Jann Whaley

④ テキサス出身の劇作家・脚本家ホートン・フートによるコメディドラマ。1989年にニュージャージー州で初演を迎え、2007年にオフブロードウェイ、2008年にはブロードウェイでも幕を明けた。外国批評家サークル賞やオビー賞を受賞したほか、トミー賞作品賞にもノミネートされた。フートは『アラバマ物語』や『テンダー・マーシー』でアカデミー脚本賞を受賞、1995年には“The Young Man From Atlanta”でピューリッツァー賞を獲得している。2009年に92歳で他界。

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