

# ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE

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## GATZ

Friday–Sunday, November 14–16, 2008

Left to right: Lauren Allan, Scott Shepherd, and Annie McNamara  
Photo by Gene Pittman



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# ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE—GATZ



Left to right: Scott Shepherd, Susie Sokol,  
Tory Vazquez, and Jim Fletcher  
Photo by Gene Pittman

*Nick*, Scott Shepherd  
*Jim*, Jim Fletcher  
*Lucille*, Kate Scelsa  
*Jordan*, Susie Sokol  
*Daisy*, Tory Vazquez  
*Tom*, Gary Wilmes  
*Chester*, Vin Knight  
*George*, Aaron Landsman  
*Catherine*, Annie McNamara  
*Michaelis*, Ben Williams  
*Myrtle*, Laurena Allan  
*Ewing*, Mike Iveson  
*Henry C. Gatz*, Ross Fletcher

John Collins, *Director*  
Steve Bodow, *Associate director*  
Louisa Thompson, *Set designer*  
Mark Barton, *Lighting designer*  
Ben Williams, *Sound designer*  
Colleen Werthmann, *Costume designer*  
Ariana Smart Truman, *Company and  
stage manager*  
B. D. White, *Production manager*  
Sarah C. Hughes, *Assistant company and  
stage manager*

## *Approximate running times*

PART I—2 hours and one 10-minute  
intermission

PART II—1 hour, 10 minutes

Dinner break—1 hour, 15 minutes

PART III—1 hour, 25 minutes and one  
10-minute intermission

PART IV—1 hour, 25 minutes

*Gatz* is presented by the MCA in partnership with the Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) and commissioned in part by the MCA with support by the National Performance Network Creation Fund. Major contributors of the National Performance Network are the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Performances by Elevator Repair Service (ERS) are made possible in part with public funds from The New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. *Gatz* is also supported with funds from The Edward T. Cone Foundation; The Greenwall Foundation; The Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York; The JPMorgan Chase Fund for Small Theatres; Altria Group, Inc.; The Mental Insight Foundation; and Off-Broadway Angels.

Backstage hospitality is generously provided by Whole Foods Market.



James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name. One morning in the low-rent office of a mysterious small business, one employee finds a ragged old copy of *The Great Gatsby* in the clutter of his desk and starts to read it out loud. And doesn't stop. At first his coworkers hardly seem to notice, but then weird coincidences start happening in the office, one after another, until it's no longer clear whether he's reading the book or the book is doing something to him. *Gatz* by Elevator Repair Service is a verbatim reading of the entire book, accomplished by the staff of a small office in the midst of their increasingly bewildering business operations.

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## ARTISTS UP CLOSE

To increase appreciation of *Gatz*, the MCA in partnership with the Chicago Humanities Festival organized these intimate opportunities for audience members to engage with the artists.

### **Saturday, November 1**

As part of the Chicago Humanities Festival, the Great Books Foundation hosted a stimulating discussion of F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Great Gatsby*.

### **Saturday, November 1**

The Great American Novel, Revisited

The MCA and CHF convened a panel focusing on the origin of the great American novel as a national cultural conscience and its pursuit as a national pastime. The panel included John Collins, founder and artistic director of Elevator Repair Service;

Wendy Steiner, Penn literary scholar; Nicholas Delbanco, author and professor of English at the University of Michigan; Morris Dickstein, professor of English at the City University of New York; Kenneth Warren, professor of American and African American literature at the University of Chicago; and moderator Bill Savage, senior lecturer and literary culturist at Northwestern University.

### **Tuesday, November 11**

Starting Your Own . . .

At this roundtable, ERS founder John Collins discussed how to flip the conventional business model into a unique, process-led model that can provide ensembles with the independence needed to create original work. Joining Collins to discuss alternative business models in Chicago were Meghan Strell of Local Infinities Visual Theatre, Mickle Maher of Theater Oobleck, and Sean Graney of The Hypocrites.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **Laurena Allan**

has performed extensively in downtown New York. She has also performed internationally as Wife in Richard Maxwell's *House*. Allan is the creator of Laurena's Pancake Party and currently resides in Seattle, Washington.

## **Mark Barton**

has designed lighting for Elevator Repair Service's *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)* as well as for the Off-Broadway productions *Paradise Park*, *All the Wrong Reasons*, *Church*, *No Child . . .*, and *Thom Pain (based on nothing)*. In New York Barton has worked with New York Theater Workshop, Signature Theatre Company, Young Jean Lee's Theater Company, Target Margin Theatre, Salt Theater, New Georges, Clubbed Thumb, P.S. 122, HERE, Edge Theater, and Talking Band. Regionally, he has worked with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, LA Center Theater Group, Syracuse Stage, A.R.T., Lookingglass Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Southern Rep Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, and Hangar Theater. He has also designed lighting for the operas *The Magic Flute*, *Albert Herring*, *L'Ormino*, *Postcard from Morocco*, and *Ainadamar* at the Curtis Opera Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## **Steve Bodow**

is a founding member of Elevator Repair Service. He codirected the company's productions from 1994 to 2005, including *Cab Legs*, *Total Fictional Lie*, and *Room Tone*. He is the head writer for *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, for which he has won four Emmys and a Peabody Award, and was a writer of the show's best-selling *America: The Book*. His journalism has appeared in the *New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Wired*, and many other publications.

## **John Collins**

founded Elevator Repair Service in 1991 and has directed or codirected all of the company's shows for the past 17 years. Additionally, he has designed sound and lighting for ERS as well as other companies, and from 1993 to 2006 he designed sound for The Wooster Group. Collins was raised in Georgia and holds a bachelor's degree from Yale University.

## **Ross Fletcher, MD**

is the Chief of Staff at Washington, D.C.'s VA Medical Center. *Gatz* is his first show with Elevator Repair Service.

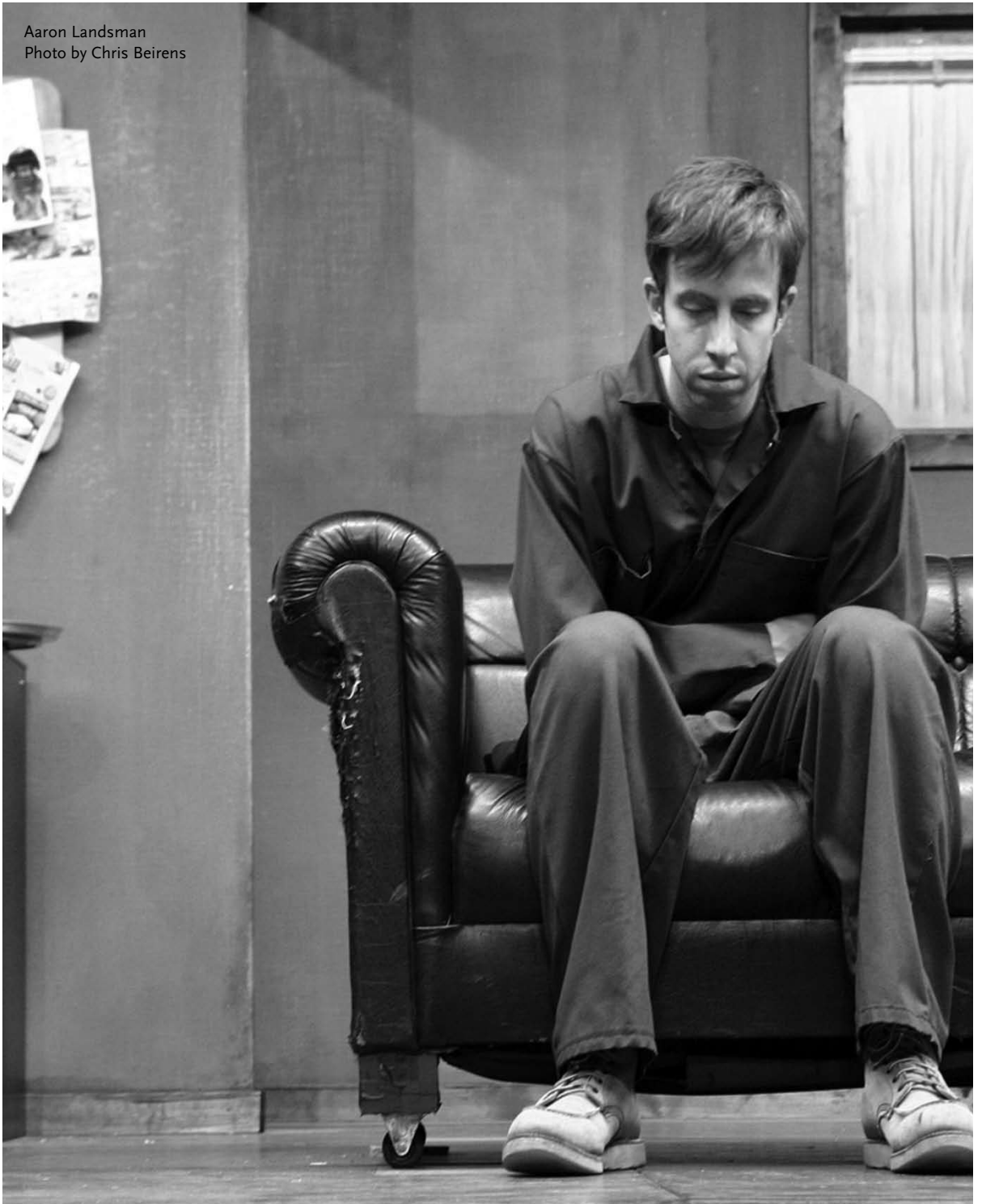
## **Jim Fletcher**

is a longtime member of the New York City Players with Richard Maxwell. He has also worked with The Wooster Group, Theatre of a Two-Headed Calf, and Real People Theatre.

## **Sarah C. Hughes**

joined Elevator Repair Service in 2007 and works full time for the company. She is a resident artist with the New York/Washington, D.C.-based theater company Odyssey Productions and has assisted on the Off-Broadway productions *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)* by Elevator Repair Service, *The Misanthrope* by New York Theatre Workshop, and The Classic Theater of Harlem's *Godot in New Orleans* and *365 Days/365 Plays*. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

Aaron Landsman  
Photo by Chris Beirens



**Mike Iveson**

has performed in Elevator Repair Service's *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)* and in productions by Sarah Michelson, Dancenoise, Richard Maxwell, Sibyl Kempson, Charles Atlas, Dance Kumikokimoto, the Alien Comic, Yvonne Meier, Mike Taylor, and Aaron Landsman as well as alongside interplanetary performance-art legend Lucy Sexton in *The Lucy Show*. He was born in Jersey City, New Jersey.

**Vin Knight**

has performed in Elevator Repair Service's *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)* and *No Great Society* as well as the New York productions *The Butcherhouse Chronicles*; *Ted Kaczynski Killed People With Bombs* as part of the Summer Play Festival; *Go-Go Kitty, Go!*, named Outstanding Play for 2005 at the New York Fringe Festival; *Design Your Kitchen* and *US Drag* by Clubbed Thumb; and more than two dozen productions with the Adobe Theatre Company. He has appeared in the films *Robot Stories*, *Love God*, and *Dumped! The Musical*.

**Aaron Landsman**

started performing with Elevator Repair Service in 2004 for *Gatz*. He has performed in the Off-Broadway productions *Cowboys & Indians* at Soho Repertory Theatre as well as *The Florida Project*, *Flesh Food*, and *Cakewalk* at P.S. 122. He has written and performed in the plays *Open House*, commissioned by Foundry Theatre; *What You've Done*, commissioned by DiverseWorks as a National Performance Network Creative Fund Project; *Desk* for the company Chashama; *Love Story* for the FuseBox Festival; and *Wreckage* for P.S. 122. He is a native of Minnesota and has lived in New York since 1987.

**Annie McNamara**

has been a member of Elevator Repair Service since 2004 and also performs as Mother in its production *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)*. She has performed in Brooke Berman's *A Perfect Couple*, directed by Maria Mileaf; Jenny Schwartz's *God's Ear*, directed by Anne Kauffman; Sheila Callaghan's *Crumble*; Kate Ryan's *Design Your Kitchen*; and Gina Gionfriddo's *US Drag*. She has a master's degree in English from Brown University and studied acting with Maggie Flanigan.

**Kate Scelsa**

has been a member of Elevator Repair Service since 2002 and has performed in its productions *Show of Shows* and *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)*. She is a founding member of the theater company The Entire Group and recently finished writing her first young adult novel. She has performed in the Off-Broadway productions *Can I Help You?* by Chashama and *Say Uncle!* by SoHo Playhouse. Regionally, she has performed in the productions *Kick the Can*, *Macbeth*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Behind the Scenes* at Luna Stage in Montclair, New Jersey.

**Scott Shepherd**

has performed in the Elevator Repair Service productions *No Great Society*, *Total Fictional Lie*, *Cab Legs*, *Shut Up I Tell You*, and *McGurk*. For The Wooster Group, he has performed in *La Didone*; *There is Still Time*; *Brother*; *Hamlet*; *The Emperor Jones*; the Obie and Bessie Award-winning *Poor Theater*; *Brace Up!*; *To You, the Birdie!*; *North Atlantic*; and *The Hairy Ape*. Shepherd was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1968 and has a bachelor's degree in English from Brown University.

### **Susie Sokol**

teaches second grade at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn, New York. She has performed in all of the productions by Elevator Repair Service since 1993.

### **Louisa Thompson**

has designed sets for the New York productions *Manic Flight Reaction* by Playwright's Horizons; *Fat Pig* and *The Distance from Here* by MCC Theatre; *The Roaring Gidle* by The Foundry Theatre Company; *Suitcase*, [sic] (winner of an Obie and a Hewes Award), *Molly's Dream*, and *The Year of the Baby* by Soho Repertory Theatre; *Tulpa* by Target Margin Theatre; *Max and Ruby*, *Walk Two Moons*, *First in Flight*, and *Just So Stories* by Theatreworks/USA; and *Arabian Night*, *Tex Arcana Waltz*, and *No. 11 Blue and White* by The Play Company. She has designed sets for the regional productions of The McCarter Theatre, The Papermill Playhouse, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, La Jolla Playhouse, The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Actor's Express, Geva Theatre, Triad Stage, The Empty Space Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, The Juilliard School, and Bard College. Thompson has a master of fine arts degree from the Yale School of Drama and is an associate professor at Hunter College of the City University of New York.

### **Ariana Smart Truman**

has worked with Elevator Repair Service since 2003, producing theater as well as events such as fundraisers. She has also worked with the companies Radiohole, Collapsible Giraffe, The Wooster Group, Soho Repertory Theatre, and HERE. She has performed in Elevator Repair Service's *Show of Shows* and served as company and stage manager for its production *No Great Society*. Off-Broadway, Truman

was the producer of *Pastoralia* for P.S. 122 and stage manager for The Wooster Group's New York, US, and European tours of *North Atlantic*.

### **Tory Vazquez**

has been a member of Elevator Repair Service since 1996 and has performed in their productions *Total Fictional Lie* and *Cab Legs*. She has performed in the productions *Pullman*, WA at P.S. 122; *Caveman* at Soho Repertory Theatre; *The Voices* at Riverside Studios; *Wrench* at WTF; *Songs and Monologues* at Mousonturm, Frankfurt; *Mean Rich White Ladies* at Ontological Theater; and *Pre-Paradise Sorry Now* at NADA. She has written and directed *Wrestling Ladies* and *The Florida Project* for P.S. 122 and *Isabel* for Dixon Place. She has appeared in the film *Nuovomundo* and on the television show *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*.

### **Colleen Werthmann**

is a founding member of Elevator Repair Service and has performed and designed costumes for its productions *Marx Bros.*, *Spine Check*, *McGurk*, *Language Instruction*, and *Total Fictional Lie*. Additionally, she has designed costumes for its productions *Cab Legs*, *Shut Up I Tell You*, *Room Tone*, *No Great Society*, and *The Sound and the Fury (April Seventh, 1928)* as well as for the productions *Songs . . .* by Young Jean Lee and *131* by Kathy Profeta. She has performed in the productions *Gone Missing* at the Barrow Street Theater, *Miss Witherspoon* at Playwrights Horizons, and *Mistakes Madeline Made* at Naked Angels/Yale Repertory Theatre. She has appeared in the television productions *The Sopranos*, *Sex @ the City*, *Law & Order*, and the film *The Pink Panther*. She is a staff writer for 23/6 (236.com).



Left to right: Kate Scelsa, Jim Fletcher (on couch), and Scott Shepherd  
Photo by Chris Beirens

### **B. D. White**

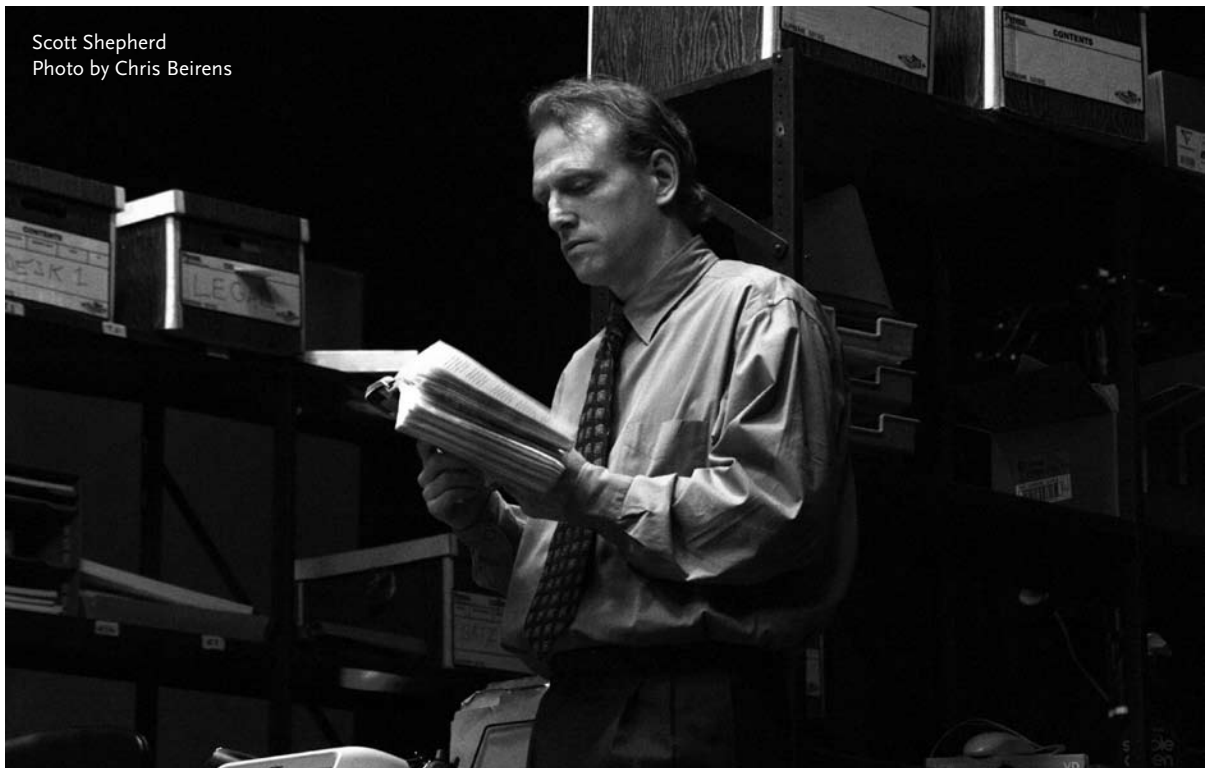
has worked as production manager for Manhattan Class Company's *Some Girl(s)*, *Frozen*, *Fat Pig*, *Runt of the Litter*, *A Letter From Ethel Kennedy*, *The Mercy Seat*, *Scattergood*, *Intrigue With Faye*, *Bright Ideas*, *The Distance From Here*, *What of the Night*, *Colder Than Here*, *Nixon's Nixon*, and *The Wooden Brecks*. His other Off-Broadway credits include *Temporary Help*, *Cheat*, *Hard Feelings*, *Aloha Las Vegas*, *Birth of the Boom*, *The Strange Case of Mary Todd Lincoln*, *Bitter Lemon*, *Nuyorican Stories*, *Night of the Assassins*, *St. Lucy's Eyes*, *Leaving Queens*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *Sophie Tottie and Bell*, *Songs of Paradise*, *Buicks*, and *Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Koran*. He has toured with the hip-hop dance musical *Jam on the Groove* and with The Core Ensemble.

### **Ben Williams**

started working with Elevator Repair Service in 2004 after interning for The Wooster Group and has assisted in the production *No Great Society*. He is a freelance technician and studied theater in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Brno, Czech Republic.

### **Gary Wilmes**

has performed in the Off-Broadway productions *Red Light Winter* by Adam Rapp; *Henry IV Part I*, *Boxing 2000*, and *House* by Richard Maxwell; *Brace Up!* by The Wooster Group; and *Bad Boy Nietzsche* and *Hotel Fuck* by Richard Foreman. He has appeared in the film *A Mighty Heart* by Michael Winterbottom as well as the television productions *Numbezs* and *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*.



### **Elevator Repair Service**

#### **Board of Directors**

Steve Bodow, John Collins, Elizabeth Derbes,  
Aaron Landsman, Zoe E. Rotter, Anne Stringfield,  
Tory Vazquez, and Toby Young

Elevator Repair Service  
138 S. Oxford St. #2D  
Brooklyn, New York 11217  
[www.elevator.org](http://www.elevator.org)  
[info@elevator.org](mailto:info@elevator.org)

### **The Chicago Humanities Festival**

creates opportunities for people of all ages to support, enjoy, and explore the humanities. It accomplishes this by creating an annual Festival of the Humanities and by presenting programs throughout the year that encourage the study and enjoyment of the humanities. The 19th annual festival this year consisted of 120 events at 30 venues citywide and featured concerts, theater performances, exhibitions, discussions, lectures, and films. For more information, visit [www.chfestival.org](http://www.chfestival.org).