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For Immediate Release

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**Laughter, Suspense, Tragedy and Memories
Mark American Century Theater's 2008-2009 Season**

The 15th theatrical season of Arlington's American Century Theater celebrates two Broadway classics that are in danger of fading from the professional theater repertoire... a controversial, landmark drama first performed by Orson Welles' Mercury Theater... a major work of America's greatest living playwright... and the American pop culture's love affair with the Christmas holidays.

Opening the season is **Ira Levin's *Deathtrap*** (1978), which holds the all-time Broadway record for longest run for a comedy-thriller. The author of *Rosemary's Baby* concocted a sprightly tale of double-crossing, deceit and murder among dueling mystery writers. Directed by Ellen Dempsey and more fun than a barrel of psychics, *Deathtrap* runs from **September 9– October 4, 2008**. "Levin died last year, and we felt it was a good time to salute him," says artistic director Jack Marshall. "He was an under-rated playwright who deserves to be remembered for his witty plays as well as his best-selling novels (like *Rosemary's Baby*), and *Deathtrap* is the best of its genre."

Next up is **Mary Chase's *Harvey*** (1945), probably America's best-loved comedy. Well-known for its film version starring James Stewart, *Harvey* is the tale of a pleasant eccentric and his drinking buddy, a six-foot, invisible rabbit. It's a show for the whole family, and a true American classic (and a Pulitzer Prize winner!) too seldom seen in these cynical times. The production has two runs... **November 25 - December 7, 2008**, and **January 8 - 25, 2009**. It will be directed by Rip Claassen.

Between the two runs of *Harvey*, in the midst of the holiday madness, the company will unveil a new musical revue assembled by Jack Marshall and Thomas D. Fuller, who successfully reassembled *Hellzapoppin* and created TACT's previous holiday revue, the World War II-themed *If Only in My Dreams*. ***An American Century Christmas*** will trace the most memorable dramatic and comic moments from 100 years of Christmas on stage, screen, radio and TV. It runs from **December 10, 2008- January 4, 2009**. Directed by Jack Marshall and Tom Fuller.

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Then Bob Bartlett, who delighted TACT audiences with his sensitive direction of *Ah, Wilderness!*, will tackle *Native Son* (1941) by **Richard Wright and Paul Green**. This violent, politically charged portrayal of the forces that turn a poor black man into a criminal and killer was a legendary production of Orson Welles' Mercury Theater. And it is a signature production of The American Century Theater, a ground-breaking work often written about, but rarely produced. **April 14 – May 9, 2009**

Finally, TACT's most daring and nuanced director, Steven Scott Mazzola (who scored this season with his poetic *Eccentricities of a Nightingale*) will direct **Edward Albee's *Seascape*** (1975), a unique play that answers the intriguing question: if an older couple on a beach holiday encountered a younger couple...of sea monsters ...what would they talk about? It is one of Albee's most acclaimed and entertaining works, running from **July 30 to August 22, 2009**

The American Century Theater performs at Theater II, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 S. Lang Street, Arlington, Virginia 22206. Subscription season packages are available. Friday or Saturday evening ticket subscriptions are \$130 each (\$170 value). Tuesday-Thursday evening, or weekend matinee subscriptions are \$115 each (\$145 value).

For tickets, subscriptions, group sales or information call 703-998-4555, email info@americancentury.org, or visit www.americancentury.org.

The American Century Theater is a 501(c)(3) professional nonprofit theater company dedicated to producing, great, important, and neglected 20th Century American playwrights. TACT is funded in part by the Arlington County Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, numerous foundations and many generous donors.

The 2008-2009 American Century Theater season is a whirlwind trip through time, thought, and across the U.S.A. The schedule;

->September 9-October 4 *Deathtrap* by Ira Levin

->November 25-December 7 AND January 8-January 25, 2009 *Harvey* by Mary Chase.

-> December 10, 2008, to January 4, 2009 *An American Century Christmas: A Holiday Revue*.

-> April 14 – May 9, 2009 *Native Son* by Richard Wright and Paul Green

-> July 30 to August 22, 2009 *Seascape* by Edward Albee

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