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### **Comedy, O'Neill, Fanny Brice, and Backstage Backbiting Enliven American Century Theater's 2010–2011 Season**

The new theatrical season of Arlington's American Century Theater celebrates a Broadway masterpiece by a giant of TV's Golden Age, the first Pulitzer Prize-winning tragedy by America's greatest tragedian, a return to the stage by the funniest Ziegfeld Girl, a grand comic classic by Ferber and Kaufman, and a science fiction social satire.

Opening the season is Paddy Chayefsky's *The Tenth Man* (1959), a unique romantic comedy by the Emmy and Academy Award-winning writer of the screenplays for *Marty* and *Network*. The story revolves around a Jewish exorcism of a young woman, and famous cynic Chayefsky spins a parable about the power of faith and love, getting laughs all the while.

*The Tenth Man* takes possession of Gunston Theatre Two **September 17–October 16, 2010.**

Next up is a **"Reflections" Series Washington Premiere** of a new one-woman musical by New York playwright and producer Chip Deffaa, who specializes in bringing back to life the stage's most flamboyant personalities. This time Deffaa is resurrecting Fanny Brice, and in the fast-moving *One Night with Fanny Brice* the legendary singer-comedienne, most famously portrayed by Barbra Streisand in *Funny Girl*, tells jokes, evaluates her career, dishes about the quirky people in her life, and most of all, sings over twenty of her signature songs, like "My Man," "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," and "Second Hand Rose." "Fanny Brice wasn't Streisand," says Artistic Director Jack Marshall. "She was very different from the image most people associate with her, if they remember her at all. Chip's show gives audiences a chance to meet, for one memorable night, the real Fanny, and like the lucky audiences who saw her in the '20s and '30s, they'll love the experience."

*Fanny* will be reliving the grand old days of vaudeville and the Follies **November 5–27, 2010.**

**[Note: *One Night with Fanny Brice* will have its performances at the Rosslyn Spectrum Theatre in Arlington.]**

Then comes *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), Eugene O'Neill's romantic tragedy that is considered a turning point in the development of American drama. Critics pronounced it the first great play of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and despite the passage of time, this spare, beautiful, achingly emotional story of an ill-starred love triangle must be seen by anyone who loves theater. *Beyond the Horizon* marks the American Century Theater directing debut of **Kathleen Akerley**, one of the DC area's most original and acclaimed directors.

*Beyond the Horizon* runs **January 14–February 12, 2011** in Gunston Theatre Two.

Spring brings the biggest show of the year, the type of large-cast, seldom-produced classic comedy The American Century Theater was created to produce. It is *Stage Door* (1936), an epic collaboration by novelist Edna Ferber (*Show Boat*) and master wit George S. Kaufman (*You Can't*

*Take It with You*) that chronicles the hopes, ambitions, romances, and misfortunes of sixteen young women in Mrs. Orcutt's boarding house for aspiring New York actresses. The many comedy scenes contrast with touching stories of a talentless actress and a fading star. The star-studded 1937 Hollywood version abandoned most of the Ferber–Kaufman script. TACT, as usual, will give audiences a chance to see the real thing.

***Stage Door* opens its doors *April 8* and runs through *May 7, 2011*.**

Completing the ambitious season is Gore Vidal's *Visit to a Small Planet* (1956). Vidal wrote his comic satire (originally a live television drama) to lampoon the Cold War and humanity's self-destructive preoccupation with world domination. In an ill-conceived solo alien invasion, the extra-terrestrial Kreton lands his space ship in the middle of a suburban rose garden and innocently announces his intention to conquer the world. Vidal's play is a comedy with keen and witty observations about American and human foibles, and the playwright was bitterly disappointed when Hollywood turned it into a Jerry Lewis movie. It is remarkable, and a little discouraging, how relevant the comedy seems today, but it is still as funny as ever.

***Visit to a Small Planet* invades the Gunston Theatre Two stage *July 8–August 6, 2011*.**

#### **2010-2011 Season Performance Information:**

The 2010–2011 American Century Theater season is a year-long adventure encountering spacemen, demons, lovers, ambitious actresses, and vaudeville memories. The schedule—

**September 17–October 16, 2010—*The Tenth Man* by Paddy Chayefsky**

**November 5–27, 2010—*One Night with Fanny Brice*. Book by Chip Deffaa, songs by many**

**January 14–February 12, 2011—*Beyond the Horizon* by Eugene O'Neill**

**April 8–May 7, 2011—*Stage Door* by Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman**

**July 8–August 6, 2011—*Visit to a Small Planet* by Gore Vidal**

The American Century Theater performs at **Theatre II, Gunston Arts Center**, 2700 S. Lang Street, Arlington, Virginia. This season, *One Night With Fanny Brice* will be performed at the **Rosslyn Spectrum Theatre**, 1611 North Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia. Subscription season packages are available. Friday or Saturday evening ticket subscriptions are \$150 each (\$175 value). Thursday evening or weekend matinee subscriptions are \$130 each (\$150 value).

More information is available at [www.AmericanCentury.org](http://www.AmericanCentury.org), by email at [info@americancentury.org](mailto:info@americancentury.org), or by calling the theater at 703-998-4555. Special rates for active duty military, seniors, students, and groups are available. *Children under 18 are admitted free with an adult paying full price (space permitting, limit 5).*

The American Century Theater is a 501(c)(3) professional nonprofit theater company dedicated to producing significant 20<sup>th</sup> century American plays and musicals at risk of being forgotten. TACT is supported in part by Arlington County through the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, and the Arlington Commission for the Arts, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and many generous donors.

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