



NEWS for immediate release December 2014

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Press photos <http://www.americancentury.org/photos/crime> (available after 1/8)

The American Century Theater presents Crime and Punishment in America:

***Cops* – by Terry Curtis Fox
Hello Out There – by William Saroyan**

The American Century Theater begins the new year and its final season with two tense one-act plays in an evening that echoes the explosive issues emanating from Ferguson, Missouri, New York, Oakland and beyond. In *Cops* by Terry Curtis Fox, police find themselves in a shoot-out with a young African-American male, and in William Saroyan's classic *Hello Out There*, a wrongly imprisoned young black man tries to find the best of humanity while trying to survive in a small Texas town. Both are encore productions: *Hello Out There* garnered the company's first Helen Hayes nomination in its second season, and *Cops* was among the company's best-received shows, placing the audience in the middle of violent action as only a black box theater can.

Once more proving TACT's argument that older plays can be just as relevant as new ones, current events and issues very much on the nation's mind like gun violence, police procedures, equal justice, race tensions, and more are brought to life by these dramas, each of which gains perspective by its connection to the other. The evening begins with *Cops*, the "Crime" segment of the evening. From a story and dialogue originally roughed out by David Mamet, *Cops* is a real-time portrayal of a bloody hostage showdown between police and a fugitive in a gritty diner. Stephen Jarrett, who directed the first production for TACT, returns with a cast that includes Dan Alexander, Nello DeBlasio, Ann De Michele, Rob Heckart, Chaz Pando, Bruce Alan Rauscher, and Anthony van Eyck.

Cops is followed by the poetic and thoughtful *Hello Out There*, William Saroyan's most produced play. The "Punishment" chapter of the evening, *Hello Out There* is the tale of a lonely, jailed hero and an unlikely romance that evokes both hope and hopelessness. Ellen Dempsey returns to TACT to direct a cast with Bru Ajueyitsi, Ric Andersen, Rachel Caywood, and Madelyn Farris.

"I originally had the idea of combining these shows as a way to pack as many of our company's proudest achievements into our final season as we could, and realized after the fact that they matched up perfectly, mapping a rich and complex exploration into some of the most difficult, and inherently

dramatic, issues facing U.S. society,” says Artistic Director Jack Marshall. “We will have some fascinating post-show discussions following these plays. Each is unforgettable in its own way. Each could support an evening on its own—indeed, *Cops* did the first time around. This will be an emotional roller-coaster, and a challenging and thought-provoking exercise!”

The show’s production manager and sound designer is Ed Moser, with set design by Trena M. Weiss, and lighting design by Peter Caress. The technical team is rounded out by Stage Manager Lindsey E. Moore, costume design by Marilyn Johnson with the assistance of Catherine Casino, properties design by Kevin Laughon, and master carpentry by Michael Salmi.

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Performance Information

EDITORS: Please join us for press night on Saturday, January 10 at 8:00 pm in Gunston Theatre Two, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

Crime and Punishment in America opens Friday, January 9 and runs through Saturday, January 31 with a Pay-What-You-Can performance on Wednesday, January 14 at 8:00 pm.

A talkback will follow the Thursday, January 15 performance. Additional talkbacks will be scheduled. Please follow our website and Facebook page for updates.

Regular show times are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 8 pm with Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm (no matinee Saturday, January 10). Tickets can be ordered online at AmericanCentury.org or by calling 703-998-4555.

Directions

The American Century Theater performs at Theatre Two in the Gunston Arts Center, located at 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington VA 22206. Gunston is roughly ten minutes from downtown Washington DC and minutes from Arlington’s Shirlington Village. Free, ample, well-lit parking is available. For directions, visit americancentury.org/directions

About TACT

The American Century Theater is a 501(c)(3) professional nonprofit theater company dedicated to producing significant 20th-century American plays and musicals at risk of being forgotten. TACT is supported in part by Arlington County through the Arlington Commission for the Arts and Arlington Cultural Affairs, a division of Arlington Economic Development; the Virginia Commission for the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts; and many generous donors.