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plays you can't afford to miss!***

## **NEWS** for immediate release March 12 2011

**Contact** Emily Morrison, 703-892-0801 (o), 323-363-4404 (c)  
**E-mail** [pr@americancentury.org](mailto:pr@americancentury.org) and [emilylovemorrison@me.com](mailto:emilylovemorrison@me.com)  
**Press photos** <http://www.americancentury.org/photos/stage>

### **The American Century Theater presents Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman's *Stage Door***

Dynamic writing duo Edna Ferber (author of *Show Boat*) and George S. Kaufman (coauthor of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *You Can't Take It with You*, and other hit comedies) brought high comedy and laughter to American audiences in the 1930s with their witty, stylish hits *Stage Door*, *The Royal Family*, and *Dinner at Eight*. *Stage Door* was a huge Broadway success in 1936 at the Music Box Theater (staged by Kaufman) and was made into a star-studded Hollywood movie featuring a young Katharine Hepburn. The play, however, is rarely done in modern times because of the large cast. A magnificent vehicle for theatre actresses, *Stage Door* is the kind of seldom-produced classic comedy that The American Century Theater was created to produce—and will be presenting in April of 2011.

*Stage Door* chronicles the hopes, ambitions, romances and misfortunes of aspiring New York stage actresses living in Mrs. Orcutt's Footlights boarding house. Ever hopeful, the girls pound the pavements by day looking for their big break and may return home downhearted or over-the-moon. Hollywood is seen as both a dream-come-true and a cop-out, and a decision to "go Hollywood" becomes a conversational pivot point of integrity and artistry in the play.

"*Stage Door* was on the list of plays we compiled when we were first envisioning a professional company dedicated to producing 20<sup>th</sup>-century stage masterpieces," says TACT artistic director Jack Marshall. "It fits our mission in so many ways—a great play that other companies hesitate to produce because of its requirements, a play that was overshadowed by a movie that didn't do it justice, and a major work of important 20<sup>th</sup>-century writers. And it also gives today's audiences a fascinating glimpse of what the life of an aspiring actress was like during the Depression."

Directing this production in classic 1930s style is **Marie Sproul**, a TACT discovery who has been directing in Maryland, including a recent production of another large-cast Kaufmann comedy. Producer **Eleanor Gomberg** has served TACT in many capacities, most recently

producing the company's 12th-season hit, *Hellzapoppin'*.

The cast of 23 includes Kate Volpe as stagestuck Terry, Nicholas Hanson as film producer Kingsley, and Allison Leigh Corke as Hollywood-bound Jean. Returning to TACT are Jane Petkofsky as Mrs. Orcutt, Steve Lebens as Aldoph Gretzl, and Leigh Anna Fry as Linda. Newcomers to TACT include Heather Benjamin, Sherry Berg, Katie Culligan, Carina Czipoth, Elizabeth Darby, Joshua Dick, Ashley Faye Dillard, Rebecca Ellis, Jacqui Farkas, Ty Hallmark, Michael Hammond, K. Clare Johnson, Shannon Listol, Emily Morrison, Bradley Foster Smith, Jennifer Speerstra, and Rachel Spicknall.

Set design is by Sarah Kendrick, costumes, by Christiane Marcus, and the lighting design, is by Dave Walden (designer for TACT's productions of *The Cradle Will Rock* and *Moby Dick Rehearsed*). Zoe Jackson is the sound designer, and Rebecca Christy (who has handled props and producer roles for TACT) and Avery Burns are properties designers. The show's stage manager is Lindsey Moore.

It was written in *Three Comedies* (Applause Books, 1999) that Kaufman and Ferber "inebriated America during the Prohibition Twenties, then made everyone forget the Depression in the Thirties via gales of sophisticated laughter." And *The Wall Street Journal's Edwin Wilson* wrote of their work: "A world of style and flair and grand gesture . . . indisputable magic."

Join us for the magic waiting behind the stage door!

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### **Performance Information**

**EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance Saturday, April 9** at 8 pm in Gunston Theatre II, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

**Stage Door** opens **Friday, April 8** and runs through **Saturday, May 7, 2011** with **pay-what-you-can previews** on Wednesday, April 6, and Thursday, April 7, and a **pay-what-you-can performance** on April 13—all at 8 pm.

**Show times** are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 8 pm and Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm. **There is no performance on Sunday April 24.** TACT will also host a **post show talk-back** on Thursday, April 14. Tickets can be ordered online at [www.americancentury.org](http://www.americancentury.org) or by calling 703-998-4555.

### **Directions**

The American Century Theater performs at Theater II 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 <http://www.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 the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Resources, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and many generous donors.

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