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“Fanny Brice” Returns for an Evening of Songs, Jokes, and Memories in the New One-Woman Musical *One Night with Fanny Brice* at the Rosslyn Spectrum November 5- 27

Fanny Brice was a unique American performer, and undeniably a great one. She conquered burlesque, vaudeville, the Ziegfeld Follies, radio and films, introduced hit songs that are still cabaret classics today, and excelled at sketch comedy and dancing. Yet because her movie appearances were few, the public's memory of Fanny is fading. “This is what The American Century Theater's ‘Reflection Series’ was created for!” says **Jack Marshall**, the company's artistic director. “Our job is to make sure that great artists from the 20th Century are appreciated and remembered. When **Chip Deffaa** told me about his new Fanny Brice one-woman show, I knew it was time to bring Fanny Brice back to life.”

Indeed, bringing her back to life is what Deffaa's show, *One Night with Fanny Brice* does. Mysteriously returned to the stage for “one night” -- actually, a lot of nights -- in front of a curious audience, Fanny, as imagined by Deffaa, tells her story with colorful anecdotes---all true! -- and best of all, Fanny's greatest song hits, which just happen to be some of the best and most beloved melodies from the years between the World Wars. There are more than twenty in the show, including “**I'm Always Chasing Rainbows,**” “**Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?**”, “**Will You Love Me In December As You Do In May?**”, “**Be My Little Baby Bumble Bee,**” “**Rose Of Washington Square,**” “**You Made Me Love You,**” “**Second Hand Rose,**” “**A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody,**” “**After You've Gone,**” and her calling card, “**My Man.**”

The best part of the show, says musical director **Tom Fuller** (who will also accompany Fanny on the piano during performances) is still the charming character of Fanny Brice.

“She was a genuinely lovable person: sensitive, feminine, but tough and resilient. Even if she hadn’t been able to sing a lick, she’s a wonderful personality to spend an evening with. But fortunately, she could sing, and does.”

Ellen Dempsey is the director of *One Night with Fanny Brice*, and has researched Brice’s life thoroughly. She has also had the advantage of communicating with playwright Deffaa, a New York theater historian and playwright with a special appreciation for the great stage performers of the 1920s and 30s. “It’s such an advantage actually having a live playwright to talk with about his intentions and ideas,” Dempsey says. “The American Century Theater seldom has that luxury.”

Dempsey and Fuller searched far and wide for the right actress to play Fanny, and found her in local cabaret singer/actress and comedienne **Esther Covington**, who tap-danced, clowned and sang her way to becoming an audience favorite in TACT’s antic 2007 production of *Hellzapoppin’*. “Esther is perfect for Fanny,” says Dempsey. “She has Fanny’s skills, and like her, she’s essentially a comic actress who can sing and dance. We were lucky to get her.”

D.C. area audiences are lucky too. The show is scheduled for the Spectrum in Rosslyn, which is larger and has better public transportation access than Gunston’s Theater Two, the company’s usual venue.

The set design at the Spectrum will be the creation of **Patrick Lord**, with lighting design by **Steven L. Barker**, sound design by **Darlene Richardson**, and choreography by **Gia Mora**; **Arthur Rodger** is Stage Manager. Co-producer **Rip Claassen** will design Covington’s period costumes. **Rhonda Hill** is the other half of the production team.

Performance Information—

EDITORS: The press is invited to the show’s performance Saturday, November 6, at 8 pm in the Rosslyn Spectrum, 1611 N. Kent Street, Arlington, VA.

One Night with Fanny Brice opens **Friday, November 5**, and runs through **Saturday, November 27, 2010** with **pay-what-you-can previews on Wednesday and Thursday, November 3 and 4**, and a **pay-what-you-can performance on Wednesday, November 10, 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 matinee on Saturday, November 6, and no performance on Thanksgiving, November 25.) **TACT will also host a post show talk-back on Thursday, November 11.** Tickets can be ordered online at www.americancentury.org or by calling 703-998-4555.

Directions—

Please note: All performances are at the Rosslyn Spectrum on 1611 N. Kent Street, Arlington, VA. Directions are available at the American Century Theater website, www.americancentury.org/directions.php.

With the occasional exception like *One Night with Fanny Brice*, the American Century Theater performs at Theater II, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 S. Lang Street, Arlington, Virginia.

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 and the National Endowment for the Arts, and many generous donors.

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