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Contact Emily Morrison
703-998-4555 (TACT Office) or 323-363-4404 (mobile)
E-mail pr@americancentury.org and emilylovemorrison@me.com
Press photos <http://www.americancentury.org/photos/ido> (*available after 7/18*)

The American Century Theater presents the classic musical *I Do! I Do!* for a post-DOMA America

The American Century Theater's new and reimagined production of the Harvey Schmidt-Tom Jones musical *I Do! I Do!* will open July 19 and run through August 17 at Gunston Performing Arts Center's Theatre Two in Arlington.

Conceived by Artistic Director Jack Marshall as an *I Do! I Do!* that embodies the original goal of the authors while bringing the show into the 21st century, TACT's production is perfectly timed to build upon the cultural consensus highlighted by this week's landmark Supreme Court decision striking down DOMA, the federal law outlawing same-sex marriages. In the production directed by Marshall and TACT Resident Musical Director Tom Fuller, the decades-long marriage of one couple, referred to in the score as "Him" and "Her," is represented in three forms by four actors. Audiences will see familiar marital benchmarks and crises as Schmidt and Jones' "Michael and Agnes" seamlessly morph from a traditional heterosexual couple to same-sex versions, all telling the story of a single, epic union from different perspectives.

Marshall explains his decision to use the theatrical device of having more than one actor play the same character in such a traditional, sixties-era musical. "Like *The Fourposter*, the play that inspired the musical, *I Do! I Do!* is really about marriage: what it means, what it takes, the challenges, and the compromises. I realized, as we began the production, that to tell the story of marriage in 2013 and leave out same-sex couples robbed the show of the universality that it was originally intended to have. I wondered if the show's couple could portray the complete spectrum of loving unions we have in America today, and when I examined the text, I found that virtually nothing had to change, musically or lyrically, from what Schmidt and Jones had written. Marriage is marriage, and love is love. But it is fascinating to see these ancient and traditional moments married couples know well seen through the prism of same-sex marriages, as well as the traditional kind. I think this approach makes *I Do! I Do!* more entertaining, and also more true to its theme."

Marshall and Fuller, whose most recent collaboration was last season's acclaimed *Marathon '33*, have assembled an outstanding foursome to play the various versions of "Him" and "Her" (including "Him and Him" and "Her and Her"). The cast is led by TACT regular Steve Lebens— who has been featured in the company's productions of *Marathon '33*, *Stage Door*, *J.B.*, *Hellzapoppin'*, and *An American Century Christmas*—and Esther Covington, who impressed critics and audiences alike as the star of TACT's one-woman portrait of singer-comedienne Fanny Brice. They are joined by TACT newcomer Chad Fornwalt, who recently appeared in The Keegan Theatre's *The Full Monty* and has been a frequent performer at Toby's Dinner Theatre, and Mary Beth Luckenbaugh, who shone as *Marathon '33*'s tap-dancing spitfire, "Rita Marimba."

Technical and artistic team includes Assistant Director Quinn Anderson, Stage Manager Lindsey E. Moore, Lighting Designer David Walden, Costume Designer Rip Claassen, Sound Designer Ed Moser, Set Designer Patrick Lord, and Props Designer Joshua Rosenblum.

"This was always a charming show that had its charms gradually overwhelmed by its dated feel and tone," says Marshall, who is obviously excited about the production. "Simply changing the casting to reflect all marriages today, not just the oldest kind, makes all that charm seem fresh again."

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Performance Information

EDITORS: The press is invited to the Saturday, July 20, 8 pm performance in Gunston Theatre Two, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

I Do! I Do! opens **Friday, July 19** and runs through **Saturday, August 17, 2013**, with a **Pay-What-You-Can preview** on Thursday, July 18 at 8 pm, and a **Pay-What-You-Can performance** on Wednesday, July 24 at 8 pm. There is a **post-show talk-back** on Thursday, July 25.

Regular show times are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 8 pm with Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm (no matinee Saturday, July 20). 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.