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Press photos <http://www.americancentury.org/photos/marathon>

The American Century Theater presents
Marathon '33
By June Havoc

The American Century Theater will present June Havoc's ***Marathon '33***, July 27 – August 25, 2012 at Gunston Theatre II in Arlington. TACT Artistic Director Jack Marshall is the show's director, and Tom Fuller is the musical director.

Marathon '33 defies easy categorization. A large cast docudrama with music, vaudeville comedy and nearly continuous dance; it recreates the forgotten phenomenon of the Depression era dance marathons, which were brutal pre-cursors of today's TV reality shows. It was written by Hollywood star June Havoc, "Baby June" of the musical "Gypsy" and the younger sister of Gypsy Rose Lee, and is closely based on real events and people described in her autobiography.

It was first performed as an experimental production in 1963, and seldom attempted since because of its size and set scope. Set during the autumn of 1933, the large cast production places the audience in the roles of the sadistic spectators of the marathons, who paid to see which young couple would be the last still moving after up to 4000 hours of nearly nonstop dancing. Like June Havoc, the desperate contestants literally danced for their lives, in the hope of winning a small cash prize.

American Century Theater is placing the marathon in Arlington, Virginia, converting Gunston's Theater Two into an authentic marathon arena. Thirty actors and dancers join an onstage 6-piece band, which will play dance numbers from the period and accompany songs and comic routines by the contestants who often performed for the crowd in return for thrown coins.

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“This joins *Lady in the Dark* and *The Andersonville Trial* as the most difficult and ambitious productions we’ve ever attempted,” says Marshall, who learned about *Marathon ’33* while reading Havoc’s obituary in 2010. “It has as many songs as a musical, classic tunes from the Thirties, but this show is much more: a true story of the coming of age of a Hollywood actress, a disturbing reminder of what desperation will do to people, and how someone will always find ways to make a buck off of society’s pain, and most of all a fascinating recreation of an American cultural phenomenon that was so weird, scary, and cruel that we have been trying to forget that it ever happened. And in the middle of it all, the inspiring story of young, courageous competitors, trying to survive...played by one of the most amazing casts TACT has ever assembled.”

“I can’t remember the last time I was so excited about a show,” he adds.

Additionally, the company has partnered with community organizations to begin a dialogue about the Great Depression and the socioeconomic times we live in, bringing together drama students from Yorktown High School and older Arlingtonians from the Goodwin House and Culpepper Garden retirement communities. The American Century Theater received a \$2,500 Community Enhancement Grant from the Arlington Community Foundation to help underwrite *Marathon ’33* and its outreach programs, the largest such grant awarded by ACF to an arts group this year.

Producer Rebecca Christy is producing her first show with longtime collaborator Marshall since her production of *The Andersonville Trial* earned TACT a Helen Hayes nomination for Outstanding Local Production. **Jack Marshall** is the founding Artistic Director of The American Century Theater. Among the many TACT productions he has directed are *The Cradle Will Rock* (Helen Hayes nomination for Best Direction), *Lady in the Dark*, the original production of *Danny and Sylvia*, and the acclaimed *Moby Dick Rehearsed*. **Tom Fuller**, the Musical Director, has been the musical director for American Century Theater productions such as *Lady in the Dark*, *Danny & Sylvia*, *If Only In My Dreams*, *Hollywood Pinafore*, *Hellzapoppin’*, and *One Night with Fanny Brice*.

The cast of *Marathon ’33* is led by TACT newcomer **Jennifer Richter** in the role of June Havoc, and Helen Hayes nominated **Bruce Alan Rauscher**, memorable as the space man in the recent *A Visit To A Small Planet*. Other TACT standouts of past shows include **Bill Karukas**, “Ole Olsen” in *Hellzapoppin’*, and **Craig Miller**, most recently the father in *Little Murders*. The ensemble cast includes Terrence Bennett, Mary Beth Luckenbaugh, Dan Corey, Deborah Critzer, Carrie Daniel, Colin Davies, Ann DeMichel, Frank Britton, Elizabeth Hallacy, Paul Hogan, John Klenk, Steve Lebens, Chanukah Jane Lilburne, Rachel Loose, Noah Mitchel, Jared Murray, Carolyn Myers, Jamie Ogden, Alex Perez, Jane Petkofsky, Aviva Pressman, Robert Priego, Josh Rosenblum, Karin Rosnizeck, Emily Thompson and Alex Witherow.

Kathryn Fuller is the Assistant Director. **Lindsey E. Moore** is the Stage Manager. **Sherry Chriss** is the Choreographer. **Michael P. deBlois** is the Set Designer, **Ed Moser** is the Sound Designer and **Dave Walden** is the Lighting Designer. **Rip Claassen** is the Costume Designer and **Eleanor Gomberg** is the Props Designer. The musical arrangements are by **Loren Platzman**.

Performance Information

EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance Saturday, July 28 at 8 pm in Gunston Theatre II, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

Marathon '33 opens **Friday, July 27** and runs through **Saturday, August 25, 2012** with a **pay-what-you-can preview** on Thursday, July 26, and a **pay-what-you-can performance** on Wednesday, August 1. There is a **post-show talk-back** on Thursday, August 2.

Show times are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 8 pm and Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm. No matinee on Saturday, July 28. Tickets can be ordered online at americancentury.org or by calling 703-998-4555.

Directions

The American Century Theater performs at Theatre 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 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.