



## **NEWS** for immediate release June 30, 2009

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## **The American Century Theater Performs Edward Albee's *Seascape*, a Pulitzer Prize-Winning Comedy-Drama, July 30-August 22.**

[EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance on Friday, July 31 at 8 pm.]

Edward Albee is generally regarded as America's greatest living playwright. He is also one of its bravest and most versatile, and none of his plays proves this more than the 1975 drama *Seascape*, presented by The American Century Theater, July 30 through August 22, at the Theater II, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington. A pay-what-you can preview is offered on Wednesday, July 29 at 7:30 pm prior to the July 30 opening.

Part domestic drama, part satire, part science fiction and part philosophy debate, *Seascape* tells the story of Nancy and Charlie, a troubled American couple facing tensions in their relationship as they contemplate retirement. Their visit to an East Coast beach is enlivened by the appearance of another couple, Leslie and Sarah, who join them in wide-ranging discussions of trust, communications, human progress, evolution, empathy and more.

The perspective of Leslie and Sarah is especially interesting, because they are large, scaly, humanoid sea-lizards, highly-evolved and considering a life-altering move from the ocean to the land.

Funny, whimsical, complex, and challenging, the play defies conventional labels, and creates an evening of constant surprises, not the least of which is that it shows its famously acerbic and pessimistic playwright in an upbeat and playful mood.

"*Seascape*," says Artistic Director Jack Marshall, "is one of Albee's best and most honored, but too seldom produced, like all of our shows. Best of all, there's really no other play like it, by Albee or anyone else."

### **ABOUT SEASCAPE at The American Century Theater**

"We were overdue for an Albee play," says Marshall. "We hadn't produced one since *A Delicate Balance* in 1998 [winning the company its first Helen Hayes Award, for the supporting performance of Rena Cherry Brown.] and *Seascape* was the inspired choice of Associate Artistic Director Steven Scott Mazzola."

Director for *Edward Albee's Seascape* is **Steven Scott Mazzola**, who has guided a company production for nine consecutive seasons. Among his memorable achievements have been the sublime comic gem, *The Second Man*, the enigmatic and beautiful *Hotel Universe*, his ambitious showcase of women playwrights from the '20's and '30's, *Drama Under the Influence*, and last season's moving Tennessee Williams drama, *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale*. For *Seascape*, Mazzola has recruited his trademark mixture of seasoned TACT veterans and exciting newcomers.

Nancy and Charlie, the human couple, are played by **Annie Houston** and **Craig Miller**. Houston, a much-honored actress who has been a stand-out at many area theaters, returns to TACT for the first time since her much-praised work in Mazzola's *The Autumn Garden*. Miller, new to TACT audiences, is reprising the role of Charlie, for which he earned critical raves in a Maryland production of *Edward Albee's Seascape*.

**Brian Crane** plays Leslie, the male sea-creature, adding to an impressive list of TACT credits that include *Happy Birthday Wanda June*, *Life With Father*, *Hellzapoppin*, and many more. **Mundy Spears** makes her TACT debut as the distaff monster; she has been seen locally with the Washington Shakespeare Theater, Spooky Action, and Adventure Theater.

**Producer Karen Currie's** impressive staff includes **set designer Hanna H. J. Crowell**, **lighting designer Andrew Griffin**, **costume designer Melanie Clark**, frequent TACT **sound designer Matt Otto**, and **props designer Suzanne Maloney**. The **technical director is Norman Lee**, and **Zachary Ford is stage manager**.

"Audiences should prepare to experience a different Edward Albee in his *Seascape* from the one they might expect after the verbal combat of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and the grim revelations of *A Delicate Balance*," says Marshall. "This is Albee in a reflective and inquiring mood, but still full of fascinating ideas, mordant humor and plenty of shocks up his sleeve."

#### **SEASCAPE PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**[EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance on Friday, July 31 at 8 pm.]**

*Edward Albee's Seascape* runs Wed., July 29 through Sat., August 22, 2009 at Theater II, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 S. Lang Street, Arlington, Virginia 22206.

The production **opens Thursday, July 30 at 7:30 pm**. Performances July 31 through August 22 are Wed. through Sat. evenings at 8 pm, with weekend matinees on Saturdays and Sunday at 2:30 PM on August 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, and 22. Pay-what-you-can performances are offered on **Wednesdays: July 29 at 7:30 pm, and August 5, 12 and 19 at 8 pm**.

**Tickets and information are available at [www.AmericanCentury.org](http://www.AmericanCentury.org) or by calling the theater at 703-998-4555.**

The American Century Theater is a 501(c)(3) professional nonprofit theater company dedicated to producing significant 20<sup>th</sup> Century American plays and musicals at risk of being forgotten. TACT is funded in part by the Arlington County Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, numerous foundations and many generous donors.