

The American Century Theater's *Treadwell: Bright and Dark* Opens May 27, 2010



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NEWS for immediate release:

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Press photos at <http://www.americancentury.org/photos/sophie>

Have You Met Sophie? World Premiere of The American Century Theater's *Treadwell: Bright and Dark* Opens May 27, 2010

The American Century Theater (TACT) is proud to announce the World Premiere of *Treadwell: Bright and Dark*, a one-woman play about the famed 20th century journalist and playwright Sophie Treadwell. Helen Hayes–nominated playwright **Allyson Currin** and acclaimed Washington actress **Melissa Flaim** have taken on the challenge of telling the tale of this inspiring but troubled woman.

“Throughout her long life (1885–1970), and often in her plays and novels, she wrestled with a question that still bedevils women today: How can a woman in America fulfill all of the roles expected of her without losing herself?” says TACT Artistic Director Jack Marshall.

Sophie Treadwell was a tenacious, prodigiously talented artist who pushed the limits for women in many facets of the professional world. Her daring career included triumphs on Broadway, such as her classic play *Machinal*; in journalism, with her exclusive interview with Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa; and, in artists' rights, with a bold lawsuit against John Barrymore over his theft of one of her plays. Yet despite ground-breaking accomplishments, Treadwell battled insecurities and doubts throughout her life. *Treadwell: Bright and Dark* explores the outer courage and wit and the inner conflict and frustration that colored this American heroine's compelling life.

“This play really epitomizes why our company started its ‘Reflections’ series,” says Marshall, who initially suggested that playwright Currin consider a drama about Sophie Treadwell's life. “Ortega y Gasset said, ‘Culture is what remains after we've forgotten everything we've read.’ Reflections plays fulfill a key part of our mission: making certain that important figures in

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America's history—individuals whose lives and ideas should still be able to inspire us—don't vanish from our culture. I had never heard of Treadwell until I read her brilliant *Machinal*. When I researched her life to write the audience guide for the 2004 TACT production of that play, it amazed me that a woman so remarkable, with so much to teach us, could be unknown to most Americans. *Treadwell: Bright and Dark* is our effort to make sure Sophie Treadwell is remembered. Everyone should have a chance to meet Sophie."

Allyson Currin (playwright) has been nominated twice for the Helen Hayes Awards' Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play (*Church of the Open Mind, Amstel in Tel Aviv*), received the Mary Goldwater Award for excellence as a playwright, and has won top honors in several new-play festivals. Her new play *The Dancing Princesses* (with composer/lyricist Christopher Youstra) premiered at Imagination Stage this spring. Her play *Unleashed! The Secret Lives of White House Pets* was commissioned by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the White House Historical Association, premiered last year at the Kennedy Center, and is slated for national tour. Also an actor, Currin has performed on many area stages, including Arena Stage, Olney Theatre Center, Signature Theatre, Washington Stage Guild, Theater J, Studio Theatre, Round House Theatre, and Washington Shakespeare Company.

Melissa Flaim (Sophie Treadwell) is an actor, teacher, and vocal coach who lives and works in Washington DC. She previously performed in Allyson Currin's *Learning Curves* (Washington Shakespeare Company) and *Amstel in Tel Aviv* (Source Theatre), making this Flaim's third Allyson Currin premiere. Other performances in Washington include: Hallie in *Bad Dates* at Olney Theatre Center; Jacqueline in *Wintertime* at Roundhouse Theatre; Gregg Henry's production of *Two Headed* and *The Triumph of Love* at Washington Shakespeare Company; Kyle Donnelly's production of *A Month in the Country* at Arena Stage; and *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both for the Travelling Shakespeare Company at the Folger Library. Flaim teaches Voice and Speech, as well as Acting, at The Catholic University of America. She earned her Master of Fine Arts in Acting and Directing from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

The director is **Stephen Jarrett**, who directed TACT's acclaimed 2008 production of *Cops*. TACT Producing Director **Sherri L. Perper** has assembled a team of designers ready to create the mindscape of Sophie Treadwell: **Ryan Wineinger** (Scenic Design) and **Paola Rodriguez** (Lighting Design) (both of whom will be collaborating with TACT with the support of the Kennedy Center/Kenan Fund Performing Artists-in-Residence Program, a project of the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts), **Rip Claassen** (Costume Design), **Edward Moser** (Sound Design), and **Anndi Daleske** (Props Design, Master Carpenter). **Erin Shannahan** (Dramaturge) and **David Olmsted** (Stage Manager) complete the production staff.

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Performance Information

Press night

The press is invited to the show's performance Friday, May 28 at 8 pm.

Show dates

Treadwell: Bright and Dark runs Thursday, May 27, 2010–Saturday, June 19, 2010, for a total of 19 performances.

Preview performance (pay what you can): Wednesday, May 26 at 8 pm

Opening night performance and reception: Thursday, May 27 at 8 pm

Additional pay-what-you-can performances: Wednesdays, June 2 and June 9 at 8 pm

Post show talk-back (discussion with actor and director): Thursday, June 3 at 8 pm

Show times

Thursday–Saturday evenings at 8 pm; Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm (no performances May 29 or 30)

Location

All performances are at **Theatre on the Run, 3700 South Four Mile Run Drive**, Arlington VA 22206. *Please note this change from TACT's usual performance location.*

Tickets

Prices range from \$26–32.

Discounts are available for seniors (65+), students, active duty military, and groups. Children under 18 are admitted free with a (full price) adult (space permitting, limit 5). Tickets can be ordered online at www.americancentury.org or by calling 703.998.4555.

More information and reservations

Call 703.998.4555, email office@americancentury.org, or visit www.AmericanCentury.org.

Directions

Visit <http://americancentury.org/directions>

Theatre on the Run is about 10 minutes from downtown DC and 5 minutes from Shirlington Village. Street **parking** is available.

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 funded in part by Arlington County through the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources and the Arlington Commission for the Arts; the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts; and many generous donors.

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