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

**Paddy Chayefsky's Exorcism Romantic Comedy,
The Tenth Man, Next for Arlington's American Century
Theater, Starting *September 17***

By the time of his untimely death at 57 in 1981, **Paddy Chayefsky** was known as one of the most daring and talented American screen writers. His sharply satiric films—like *Network*, *The Hospital*, and *Altered States*—manage to combine laughs and tender moments of intimacy with his habitually wry and critical view of humanity. But cinema was a late frontier for Chayefsky, ventured into only after the writer had conquered television, with such classics of live TV as the drama *Marty*, and stage, where he had his second Broadway hit in 1959 with an unusual comedy called *The Tenth Man*. Now The American Century Theater is reviving *The Tenth Man* to open the company's 2010–2011 season.

“Our company believes it's important to offer audiences a chance to see the works of all the best American writers in the 20th century who wrote for the stage, and Paddy Chayefsky was certainly one of them,” explains **Jack Marshall**, TACT artistic director. “We started The American Century Theater with a stage performance of *Twelve Angry Men*, which was a teleplay written for live TV by Reginald Rose. Rose and Rod Serling were two of the three iconic writers to emerge from the Golden Age of Television, and Chayefsky was the third. Truth to tell, he was probably the best and most versatile writer of the three.”

The Tenth Man begins when the old men who belong to a decaying orthodox synagogue in New York City decide to hold a Jewish exorcism to banish the demons that have possessed Evelyn Foreman, the granddaughter of one of their members. But Jewish religious law requires a *minyan*, or quorum of ten, for the ritual to work, and the amateur exorcists only number nine. They convince a young man who happens to be passing by to complete their group.

What follows is an unusual romance punctuated by wit and surprises, as well as Chayefsky's commentary on religion and faith. "I've been wanting to direct this play for a long time," says the show's director, **William Aitken**, who recently directed *Stalag 17* for the company. "The theater was considering a different Chayefsky play, and I suggested they switch to this one: I think it's clearly his best." As soon as Aitken knew he had the assignment, he tapped TACT's most versatile young actress, **Kari Ginsburg**, to play Evelyn. Ginsburg, who most recently played the bewitched Hollywood siren in *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter*, eagerly agreed to tackle the difficult role.

At the forefront of *The Tenth Man*, as with every one of his works, is Chayefsky's distinct and unmistakable voice, expressing the unique impressions of humanity by a man who, it was said, regarded "the life of the mind as a participant sport."

Steven Quartell is "the tenth man" and the other half of a strange romance with Ginsburg's possessed young woman. Several standouts from past TACT productions are in the large cast, including **Joe Cronin**, the dyspeptic father of *Life With Father*, among many other roles with the company; **Craig Miller**, the aging husband in *Seascape*; **Bill Gordon**, TACT jack-of-all-trades, whose roles have ranged from a dead Nazi to the POW barracks leader in *Stalag 17*; comic **Ron Sarro**, most recently a vaudevillian in *Babes in Arms*; **Mick Tinder**, who was outstanding in *Native Son* and as the host of *An American Century Christmas*; and **Matthew Meixler**, who played both a prisoner and a Nazi guard in *Stalag 17*. **Jim Callery**, **Paul Danaceau**, **Richard Fiske**, **Brendan Haley**, and **Stephen Rourke** make their American Century Theater debuts to complete the cast.

Aitken's vision will be supported by the artistry of **Jameson Shroyer** (set design and technical director/master carpenter), **Steven Barker** (lighting design), **Anndi Daleske** (properties design), **Rip Claassen** (TACT resident costumer), and **Ian Armstrong** (sound design). **David Olmsted** is the stage manager.

Performance Information—

EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance **Saturday, September 18, at 8 pm.**

The Tenth Man opens **Friday, September 17**, and runs through **Saturday, October 16, 2010** with a **pay-what-you-can performance on Wednesday, September 22, 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, September 18.) **TACT will also host a post show talk-back on Thursday, September 23.** Tickets can be ordered online at www.americancentury.org or by calling 703-998-4555.

Directions—

The American Century Theater performs at Theater 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 <http://americancentury.org/directions.php>.

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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