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

The American Century Theater presents *Gore Vidal's Visit to a Small Planet*

Gore Vidal's seminal play *Visit to a Small Planet*, which originally opened on Broadway in 1957, is a comedy with keen and witty observations about American and human foibles. Originally a live television drama, the comic satire lampoons the Cold War and humanity's self-destructive preoccupation with world domination. It was subsequently made into a forgettable film and later brought back to the stage, serving then as the precursor to such television hits as *My Favorite Martian*, *Mork and Mindy*, and *3rd Rock from the Sun*.

In an ill-conceived solo alien invasion, the extraterrestrial Kreton lands his space ship in the middle of a suburban rose garden—the Speldings' home in Manassas, VA. Dressed in Civil War regalia and eager to join the Battle of Bull Run, Kreton soon realizes his time machine is off by a hundred years. But he doesn't return to his planet of intellectual, mind-reading superiors: he decides to take over the world.

Artistic Director Jack Marshall notes that *Visit* has been on TACT's list for a long time. "When we produced Vidal's *The Best Man* in our second full season, he wrote me from Italy to say that he hoped, given our mission, that we would take on *Visit to a Small Planet*, Marshall says.

"The plays that began as original television dramas have always been an important part of TACT's repertoire—after all, we began with *12 Angry Men*. This year—when Kreton's interest in the Civil War will be complemented by the reenactment of the Battle of Manassas during the run of the show—seems the perfect opportunity to grant Gore Vidal's wish."

Rip Claassen, longtime TACT artistic associate, will direct, with Genie Baskir as Producer. The production stars Bruce Alan Rauscher as Kreton, with John Tweel as General Tom Powers. The Spelding family includes Steve Lebens as Roger, Kelly Cronenberg as Reba, and Megan Graves as Ellen. Noah Bird is Conrad, Brendan Haley is the Aide, and Delton 4 is

played by Tamra Lynn Testerman. The Technician roles are filled by Kecia A. Campbell and Peter Louis Johnson.

Set design is by Noel Greer, costumes are by Rosalie Ferris and Cecelia Albert, lighting design is by Micah Stromberg, sound design is by Ed Moser, and Cecilia Albert is props designer. The show's stage manager is Charles Dragonette and G.W. Glover is assistant stage manager.

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Performance Information

EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance Saturday, July 9 at 8 pm in Gunston Theatre II, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

Visit to a Small Planet opens **Friday, July 8** and runs through **Saturday, August 6, 2011** with a **pay-what-you-can preview** on Thursday, July 7, and a **pay-what-you-can performance** on July 13, both at 8 pm.

Show times are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 8 pm and Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm. TACT will also host a **post show talk-back** on Thursday, July 14. 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://www.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 the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Resources, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and many generous donors.

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