



***Theater you can afford to see—  
plays you can't afford to miss!***

## **NEWS** for immediate release February 2013

**Contact** Emily Morrison, 703-998-4555 (TACT office), 323-363-4404 (c)  
**E-mail** [pr@americancentury.org](mailto:pr@americancentury.org) and [emilylovemorrison@me.com](mailto:emilylovemorrison@me.com)  
**Press photos** <http://www.americancentury.org/photos/voodoo/>

### **The American Century Theater presents *Voodoo Macbeth***

Written by William Shakespeare and adapted by Orson Welles  
Directed by Kathleen Akerley

The American Century Theater will present Orson Welles' adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the sensational ***Voodoo Macbeth***, March 22 – April 13 at Gunston Theatre II in Arlington.

The Federal Theatre Project's production of ***Voodoo Macbeth*** in 1936 is legendary for its cast of African-American actors. A marginalized group heretofore seen in primarily dancing and singing roles, the play challenged audiences to acknowledge and appreciate their clear talent and ability. Set in Haiti, Shakespeare's themes of witchcraft and the occult were replaced by the island's practices of voodoo.

Evoking Orson Welles' reimagining of *Macbeth* created a unique challenge for The American Century Theater, which has mounted versions of Welles' iconic stage productions throughout its seventeen-year history with notable success. No fewer than five TACT productions have been inspired by Welles' concepts and direction, including the Helen Hayes nominated *Moby Dick Rehearsed* and the agitprop labor musical, *The Cradle Will Rock*. Artistic Director Jack Marshall explains:

"Unlike the other Welles shows, *Voodoo Macbeth* cannot be true to his vision if we stick closely to his staging and casting ideas. Welles believed that theater should be exciting, surprising, and original. All-black casts were not unheard-of in 1936, but casting black actors in roles traditionally played by whites was; his Haiti concept was audacious in 1936, but would hold few surprises today. I decided to take Orson's script, with his cuts and commentary, and entrust it to Kathleen Akerley, the local director who most embodies Welles' fearless pursuit of dynamic theater, with his willingness to break rules and expectations to keep the stage what it was meant to be: vivid, challenging, and controversial. I asked her to be true to the spirit and intention of Welles' script,

and to ignore, if she chose to, the specific choices made by him in the 1936 production. I firmly believe this is the correct way to allow our audiences to experience the roller-coaster ride that was an adventurous evening in the directorial hands of Orson Welles.”

Akerley accepted the challenge. Her battalion of Christian marines is stationed in Scotland, circa 2033 A.D., where, after eleven years of fighting, foreign culture has seeped into their day-to-day practices of faith and war. Shakespeare’s chaos ensues as Macbeth’s exposure to indigenous spiritual practices and his own desires manifest in unexpected ways.

Akerley’s cast includes Frank Britton as Banquo, Joseph Carlson as Macbeth, Keegan Cassady, Evan Crump, Matt Dewberry as Lady Macbeth, Cyle Durkee, Chris Dwyer, James Finley, Nick Hagy, Will Hayes as Hecate, James Miller, Ryan Sellers, and Theodore M. Snead.

Kathleen Akerley directed TACT’s 2012 production of *On the Waterfront* and the 2011 production of *Beyond the Horizon*. She is the Artistic Director of Longacre Lea, where she wrote and directed the 2011 world premiere of *Something Past in Front of the Light*, as well as directing *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*. Other local credits include WSC Avant Bard’s *The Tooth of Crime*, *Everything Between Us* and *The Small Things* (Solas Nua), *The Graduate* (Keegan Theatre), and *shksprprjct* (Catalyst Theatre).

**Voodoo Macbeth’s** Assistant Directors are Annalisa Dias-Mandoly and Tyler Herman. Technical Director is Michael P. deBlois, Dean Leong is the Assistant Set Designer and Frank DiSalvo Jr. is the Sound Designer. Jason Aufdem-Brinke is the Lighting Designer and Laura Aspen is the Assistant Costume Designer. Casey Kaleba is Fight Choreographer. Lindsey E. Moore is the Stage Manager.

###

## Performance Information

**EDITORS: The press is invited to the show’s performance Saturday, March 23** at 8 pm in Gunston Theatre II, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

**Voodoo Macbeth** opens **Friday, March 22** and runs through **Saturday, April 13, 2013** with a pay-what-you-can preview on Thursday, March 21 and a pay-what-you-can performance on Wednesday, March 27. TACT will also host a post show talk-back on Thursday, March 28.

**Show times** are Thursday through Saturday evenings at 8 pm and Saturday/Sunday matinees at 2:30 pm. No matinee on Saturday, March 23. There is no performance on Sunday, March 31. Tickets can be ordered online at [americancentury.org](http://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 [americancentury.org/directions](http://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. This program is supported in part by the Arlington County Cultural Affairs Division and the Arlington Commission for the Arts, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and many generous donors.