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The American Century Theater Presents Eugene O'Neill's First Great Drama, Pulitzer Prize-Winning *Beyond the Horizon*

Eugene O'Neill was America's greatest playwright, and his remarkable output of daring, challenging and emotionally devastating works could almost sustain The American Century Theater's mission of presenting under-produced 20th Century stage masterpieces all by itself. The Arlington-based regional theater will be launching 2011 with its fifth O'Neill production, 1920's *Beyond the Horizon*.

For this important production, TACT has enlisted the talents of Kathleen Akerley, long recognized as one of the D.C. area's most innovative and exacting directors.

Beyond the Horizon won O'Neill his first Pulitzer Prize, and is considered by many authorities to represent the turning point in American theater, when the sentimentality of melodrama was eclipsed by more nuanced, realistic and psychologically complex plots and characters. Leading the way, naturally, was Eugene O'Neill, who wove a classic tale of a star-crossed love triangle touching on universal themes that will resonate with every audience member, young and old.

Director Akerley last worked with TACT as an actress, in the Philip Barry fantasy *Hotel Universe*, directed by Steven Scott Mazzola. For *Beyond the Horizon* their roles are switched, with Akerley directing and Mazzola producing the show. The American Century Theater is thrilled to have Akerley finally tackling this play, a project she suggested to the company years ago. She is the artistic director of her own area theater company, the acclaimed Longacre Lea, and has directed shows for Solas Nua, Forum Theatre, Theater Alliance, Rorschach Theatre, Washington Shakespeare Company, and Catalyst Theatre, among others.

As is her style, Akerley's approach to the show will embody respect for the original intent of the author enhanced by her own creative insight. Helping her create a *Beyond the Horizon* for the 21st Century is an able cast: **Felipe Cabezas, Joe Cronin, Joshua Drew, Ashley DeMain, Jane Petkofsky, Amy Quiggins, Eli Sibley, and Chuck Young.**

Producer Mazzola, who has always brought a strong design sense to his own shows, has assembled an outstanding design team. The set design is by **Elizabeth Jenkins McFadden**, the costumes by **Jennifer Tardiff**, and the lighting design by **Marianne Meadows**. **Neil McFadden** is the sound designer, and **Arthur Brill** is responsible for props. Puppeteers **Eric Brooks** and **Don Becker** also have a key role to play; you will have to see the production to find out what.

The scenic painter is **Beau Hamilton**, and the technical team will be coordinated by Technical Director **Jim Alexander**. The show's stage manager is **Lisa Blythe**.

"Eugene O'Neill may be our favorite American playwright to produce," says TACT artistic director Jack Marshall. "Whether it is a well-known play or one less frequently performed, we always begin the project with confidence that there is genius in the script. And there always is: O'Neill never lets us down."

Performance Information—

EDITORS: The press is invited to the show's performance Saturday, January 15, 2011 at 8 pm in Gunston Theatre II, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington.

Beyond the Horizon opens **Friday, January 14**, and runs through **Saturday, February 12, 2011** with a **pay-what-you-can preview on Thursday, January 13**, and a **pay-what-you-can performance on Wednesday, January 19, all 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, January 15.) **TACT will also host a post show talk-back on Thursday, January 20.** 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 and the National Endowment for the Arts, and many generous donors.

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