



**NEWS** for immediate release October 15, 2009  
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## The American Century Theater Extends *A Piece of My Heart* at Historic DC Venue November 6–21

*A Piece of My Heart*, **Shirley Lauro's** celebration of women who served and sacrificed in Vietnam, has received an overwhelming emotional response from audiences of all ages and backgrounds during its current run at Arlington's Gunston Arts Center. The American Century Theater is announcing that it will continue the production in the District of Columbia in November, presenting it in the theater space of the historic Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, 900 Massachusetts Avenue NW.

The move allows DC theatergoers to see a critically acclaimed drama and will also introduce them to the award-winning Arlington-based company, crossing the Potomac for its first full production in the District.

"We are bringing *A Piece of My Heart* home, in a sense," says TACT artistic director Jack Marshall, "since the play starts and ends at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The wonderful response the play has received from audiences, including some of the women whose stories are told in the play, tells us this production needs to be made available to as many people as possible. It's an appropriate time to broaden our audience as we begin our 15th season, because our mission is to remind all Americans about the most important plays, playwrights, and events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

"Most of all, we are proud of the production," Marshall says. The production has received praise from veterans who find it evocative, harrowing, realistic, and perceptive. The ensemble work of the six actresses and one actor in the cast has garnered glowing reviews from critics and audiences.

*A Piece of My Heart* is currently running through October 10 at Theatre II, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington. The 1991 play was inspired by a 1986 oral history compiled by **Keith Walker**, in which 26 of the estimated 1,500 American women who went to Southeast Asia in the sixties recount their experiences as nurses, civilian humanitarian workers, and entertainers. It is produced by **Sherri Perper** and directed by **Jason Beagle**, with an ensemble including **Jeri Marshall, Melissa Bailey, Momo Nakamura, Robin Covington, Anne Veal, Melissa Hmelnicky, and Greg Gallagher**. Designers for the production are HannaH Jean Crowell (set), Brian Allard (lighting), Timothy Morse (sound), and Ceci Albert (costumes and properties). Stage managers are Christine Lange and Robert Pierce.

The DC production of *A Piece of My Heart* represents a return to theater for the Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, which played an important role in the early development of DC's theater scene. The church, which dates from 1869, launched the Mount Vernon Players in 1935, a local drama group that was one of the first to welcome racially integrated audiences. Under Managing Director Edward Mangum and Assistant Managing Director Zelda Fichandler, this group evolved into Arena Stage, which was to become one of the leading regional theaters in the District and the nation.

### **Performance Information**

*A Piece of My Heart* by Shirley Lauro will run November 6–21 at the Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, 900 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington DC 20001 (on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> and K Streets NW (across from the Convention Center and Mount Vernon Square). Performances are at **8:00 pm Thursday through Saturday**, with **2:30 pm matinees on Saturdays** and a **special Veterans Day performance at 8 pm Wednesday November 11**. . *TACT will be offering a 50% discount to all veterans and active duty military personnel for these performances.*

***Reviewers Please Note: The press is invited to the performances on Friday, November 6, and Saturday, November 7, at 8:00 pm.***

*A Piece of My Heart* continues its current run at Theater II, Gunston Arts Center, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington, Virginia, through Saturday, October 10, 2009. Performances are Thursday through Saturday evening at 8:00 pm.

More information is available at [www.AmericanCentury.org](http://www.AmericanCentury.org) or by calling the theater at 703-998-4555. Special rates for active duty military, seniors, students, and groups are available.

*The American Century Theater is a 501(c)(3) professional nonprofit theater company dedicated to producing significant 20<sup>th</sup> century American plays and musicals at risk of being forgotten. TACT is funded in part by the Arlington County Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and many generous donors.*

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