



The American Century Theater

For Immediate Release

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American Century Theater Performs Classic Adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* via Free Teleconference “Radio Drama” on December 16th

The American Century Theater will revive the “Theater of the Imagination” of old time radio drama when its all-star cast of 21 area actors presents a special one hour adaptation of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol” free of charge to any one in the U.S. who call a special 800-number at 8 PM (E.S.T.) on Sunday evening, December 16.

“This special performance serves many purposes,” says Jack Marshall, the artistic director of the Arlington, Virginia-based company that specializes in reviving important dramatic works of the past.

“It recreates a holiday tradition in the Golden Age of radio drama, when Campbell’s Soup presented an annual live broadcast of *A Christmas Carol* starring Lionel Barrymore as Scrooge, to millions of families across the country on Christmas Eve. The performance is a wonderful showcase of the vocal talents of our professional acting company, and gives many actors a chance to perform this great piece.”

“And most of all, this is our gift to theater-goers in Arlington, the Greater Washington area, and the nation.” Marshall is directing the performance. “This is a special opportunity for shut-ins and people with limited mobility to experience a live holiday drama. And it also re-creates the time when families would gather by a radio on a cold winter night,”

“Except,” says Marshall, “they’ll be gathering around a speakerphone!”

The unique presentation method was pioneered last year, when TACT used modern teleconferencing technology to recreate live radio drama in a 30 minute presentation of seven short plays that formed part of the *365 Days/365 Plays* project. The actors use their telephones as microphones, and sound designer Keith Bell mixes in sound effects and music live. "The effect really is exactly the same as old radio," says Bell, who is the true star of the show.

Anyone wishing to hear the broadcast will only have to call the **Toll-free audience access number 1-866-212-0875**, followed by the **Passcode 4930306** (entered by pressing # on the phone dial.) before 8 PM (E.S.T.) on Sunday, December 16.

The entire performance will be approximately an hour long. Listeners can hear the show using their receiver or headsets, but using a speaker phone will allow families and groups to listen together. There will be no charge to the listening audience for *A Christmas Carol*.

The acting company assembled for the production reads like a *Who's Who* of American Century Theater shows through the years, with representatives from the casts of 44 productions. It is led by Capital Steps member **Andy Clemence**, who played the lead in TACT's concert version of *One Touch of Venus*, as Scrooge. Joining him will be **David Elias, Mary McGowan, Richard Rohan, Bruce Alan Rauscher, Amy Quiggins, John Tweel, Nan Savard, Glenn White, Bruce Follmer, John Tremain May, Lauren May, Esther Covington, Joe Cronin, Kathryn Fuller, Alice Fuller, Michael Replogle, Tracy Krulik, Paul McLane, Tom Dillickrath, and Mary Millben.**

"The radio theater format gives us an opportunity to get live theater into the homes of people who may not be able to travel, during a time of year that can be very stressful" explained TACT Executive Producer Rhonda Hill. "We are bringing live theater directly into homes. And generations who have only heard their grandparents speak of the magic of radio will finally get to experience it first hand."

The company is encouraging everyone to alert friends and family across the country to the production, and to encourage call-in listeners from every state. "There will be something special in knowing that so many others are

listening too,” says Marshall. “Our company is dedicated to keeping live theater a community-wide activity with shared experiences and ideas. This is just one more way to tie us all together.”

“A Christmas Carol” is being produced with the help of a special grant from Arlington County’s Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.

The American Century Theater is a 501 (c)(3) professional nonprofit theater company dedicated to producing great, important and neglected 20th Century American plays and playwrights. TACT is funded in part by Arlington County through the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources and the Arlington Commission for the Arts; the Virginia Commissioner for the Arts and numerous foundations and many generous donors.

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