

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2008

"Life shouldn't be all work and no plays."

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## Conor McPherson Redux: *Dublin Carol*

Footlights returns to playwright Conor McPherson for our November play discussion. Last year we discussed *Shining City* and, some years ago, *The Weir*. *Shining City* prompted the London Telegraph to describe McPherson as "the finest dramatist of his generation."

We meet on Tuesday, November 18, 6:30 p.m. at Alfio's Restaurant for our dinner-discussion of McPherson's *Dublin Carol* (2000). *Dublin Carol* takes place on Christmas Eve in Dublin. Assistant funeral director John Plunkett is no Scrooge, but he has a lot to consider about his past, present, and future. His alcohol-clouded life has caused great damage to himself and those close to him. Conor McPherson describes Plunkett's last chance with the same compassion and unsentimental clarity seen in *The Weir*, *Shining City*, and *The Seafarer*.

Our guests will be Jack Sbarbori, Artistic Director of Quotidian Theatre Company and the director of the upcoming Quotidian production of *Dublin Carol*. The cast members will join him: John Decker who will play the role of John, Laura Russell who will play Mary, and Michael Avolio who will play Mark. We are very pleased to welcome Jack back after memorable discussions with him of Horton Foote's *The Carpetbagger's Children* last season, and Foote's adaptation of William Faulkner's *Tomorrow* in 2006.

To reserve a place, contact Mark Gruenberg, at [press\\_associates@yahoo.com](mailto:press_associates@yahoo.com) or 202-898-4825. Please arrive at Alfio's by 6:30 p.m. for dinner. The cost is \$12 for a choice of 5 entrees, plus salad, bread, beverage and ice cream, and includes tax and tip. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. and ends at 9-9:30 p.m. You may come for the discussion only, if you wish. There will be extra chairs. (Note: If you must cancel your dinner reservation, please let Mark know by noon on Tuesday, November 18, so we have an accurate count of reservations.)

Alfio's is located on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD, 20815 (Phone: 301-657-9133) two blocks from the Friendship Heights Metro; from its

Western/Military Rd. exit, look for Chico's across Wisconsin. When you find it you have found Willard Avenue. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free at Alfio's.

## See *Dublin Carol*

On Sunday, December 7, at 2 p.m. we will see *Dublin Carol* at Quotidian Theatre. Performances are held in the comfortable, small theatre space inside the Writers' Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda MD 20815. There is free weekend parking in the public lot off Walsh St. By Metro, it is a 10 minute walk from the Bethesda Red Line stop.

Tickets for Footlights are \$10. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

## Footlights in December

From an interview: Conor McPherson attended University College Dublin, where he studied philosophy and English. "I thought they would probably be easy," he says. He didn't expect the degree to change his life. Philosophy taught him "that what you have to accept is that you don't know anything, that you're ignorant, which is a very liberating place to be." English, meanwhile, introduced him to the plays of David Mamet. "The day I read *Glengarry Glen Ross*, that was it," he says. "I knew exactly what I was going to do." Beginning with Mamet parodies, he began to write and produce his own plays, and never stopped.

So it is fitting that we segue from the works of Conor McPherson to our December play selection – *Glengarry Glen Ross* – David Mamet's 1984 Pulitzer Prize winning masterpiece. Infused with David Mamet's trademark rhythms and language, *Glengarry Glen Ross* explores the cutthroat world of selling and its ruthless inhabitants. Mamet pits five real estate salesmen in a ferocious battle for their lives as they ricochet from the exhilaration of success to the degradation of failure.

Our guests will be Mark Rhea, Artistic Director of Keegan Theatre, who will be appearing in Keegan's

production of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and other cast members. [A side note: Jeremy Skidmore, our September speaker for *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, is directing this production of *Glengarry Glen Ross*.]

We meet on Tuesday, December 9, 6:30 p.m. at Ireland's Four Courts, 2051 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201 (703) 525-3600. Directions by Metro: Take orange line to Courthouse Stop (towards Vienna), take the Strayer University/Clarendon Blvd. exit from Metro and you will find the Four Courts on the right side across the street.

We will see Keegan Theatre's *Glengarry Glen Ross* on Sunday, December 14, 3 p.m. at the Church Street

Theater, 1742 Church St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

## **A Special Evening with Ted van Griethuysen**

For those who were able to join us, what a special evening it was! Ted Van Griethuysen most generously shared his thoughts on life in the theatre, roles he has played, poetry, personal philosophy and many more topics. Footlights will donate our net proceeds after expenses to The Actors Fund ([www.actorsfund.org](http://www.actorsfund.org)), Ted's choice.

## **Calendar**

- Tuesday, November 18, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of Conor McPherson's *Dublin Carol* with Jack Sbarbori and Quotidian Theatre cast members. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD (301-657-9133). Dinner: \$12, includes tax and tip. Suggested donation to Footlights: \$5. Reserve with Mark at [press\\_associates@yahoo.com](mailto:press_associates@yahoo.com) or 202-898-4825.
- Sunday, December 7, 2 p.m., performance of *Dublin Carol* at Quotidian Theatre, performing at: The Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda MD 20815-6006. Tickets are \$10. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- Tuesday, December 9, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* at Ireland's Four Courts 2051 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201 (703-525-3600)
- Sunday, December 14, 3 p.m., performance of *Glengarry Glen Ross* at Keegan Theatre, Church St. Theater, 1742 Church St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Robin Larkin *for* FOOTLIGHTS  
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