

from the FOOTLIGHTS

JANUARY 2010

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Footlights to Discuss *The Rivalry* on January 18

"As a nation we began by declaring 'All men are created equal.' We now practically read it 'All men are created equal except Negroes,'" Abraham Lincoln declares during his famous debates with Stephen A. Douglas in 1858. If that pattern of exclusion continues, "I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty," he states.

"Washington and the fathers of the Revolution well understood the laws and institutions which suit the granite hills of New Hampshire would be totally unfit for the rice plantations of South Carolina," Douglas replies. "I deny the right of Congress to force a slave-holding state upon an unwilling people. I deny the right of Congress to force a free state upon an unwilling people."

A great historian once characterized this contrast by saying: "Before the Civil War, the phrase was 'The United States are...' After, it is 'The United States is...'" These two views over the nature of the United States – equality of all contending against sovereignty of people in their states and territories – were the focus of the great debates between Douglas, the Democratic U.S. Senate incumbent in Illinois, and Lincoln, the Republican challenger. And they are the focus of **Norman Corwin's** play *The Rivalry*, which Footlights will discuss on January 18.

Our very special guest speaker is one of our favorite actors – Helen Hayes award winner **Rick Foucheux** – who will be appearing as Stephen Douglas in Ford's Theatre's upcoming production of *The Rivalry*, and is one of three main characters in the play: Douglas, Lincoln and as narrator, "bridge" and interlocutor, Adele Douglas. The play covers key points in speeches of the two from the seven debates, which transfixed readers across the nation and which made Lincoln a national figure. But it also ranges into the personal relations, often warm, between "Old Abe" – who was then 49 – and "The Little Giant," who was (maybe) 5 feet tall. Lincoln was 6'4".

And it ranges beyond the debates themselves to larger questions of the nature of a representative democracy – and how to keep it united. The play culminates Ford's commemoration of the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth (February 12, 1809).

The Rivalry originally opened in Vancouver, Canada in 1958 and then toured the Eastern United States before opening on Broadway on February 12, 1959, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth.

"For substance and originality, it would be difficult to improve on Norman Corwin's *The Rivalry*, wrote Brooks Atkinson in his review. "In every respect, *The Rivalry* is a stirring piece of work."

Playwright Norman Corwin celebrates his 100th birthday on May 3, 2010. He is still writing for radio, and is writer in residence at the Journalism School at the USC's Annenberg School for Communication. He writes articles for various publications, and is active in various organizations in and around the Los Angeles area.

We'll meet at **Alfio's** on **Monday, January 18**. Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. 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. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free at Alfio's. Note: Red line track work is scheduled between Grosvenor & Medical Center stations on that date.

Phyllis Bodin will take reservations for our dinner-discussion. She may be reached at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. The cost for dinner is only \$13 for a choice among 6 entrees, plus salad, bread, beverage and ice cream, and includes tax and tip. We suggest an additional \$5 contribution to Footlights.

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. If you have to cancel, please let Phyllis know as soon as possible, and definitely by noon on January 18, so we have an accurate count for Alfio's.

Read *The Rivalry*

The Rivalry is out of print. We have photocopies of the script available at cost. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call 240-669-6300 or e-mail robinlarkin@comcast.net, and send your check for \$12, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

See *The Rivalry*

Footlights will see *The Rivalry* at the January 30 Saturday matinee (2:30 p.m.) at Ford's Theatre, 511 Tenth St, NW. A post-show discussion is included. Tickets for seniors (60+) are \$30; discounted group adult tickets are \$47. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

January 6: See *Stick Fly* at Arena Stage

Arena Stage in Crystal City is producing Lydia Diamond's *Stick Fly*, directed by Kenny Leon. Footlights discussed the play with playwright Lydia Diamond herself early in December. We will see *Stick Fly* on **Wednesday, January 6, 7:30 p.m.** at Arena's Crystal City theater - 1800 S. Bell St, Arlington. Tickets are **\$39.50**. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

February 23: Footlights Dinner-Discussion

On Tuesday, February 23, we will meet at Alfio's to discuss a new play, *Everything Between Us* by **David Ireland**, playing Belfast and touring NYC, Buffalo, Boston, Philadelphia and DC (Solas Nua) in March and April 2010.

Calendar

- Wednesday, January 6, 7:30 p.m., Arena Stage @ Crystal City, 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington. Join us to see *Stick Fly* by Lydia Diamond. Tickets are \$39.50. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- Monday, January 18, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *The Rivalry* by Norman Corwin. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD, 20815. **Rick Foucheux** is our guest speaker. Reserve with Phyllis, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- Saturday, January 30, 2:30 p.m., Ford's Theatre, 511 Tenth St, NW. Join us to see *The Rivalry*, with post show discussion. Tickets for seniors (60+) are \$30; discounted group adult tickets are \$47. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- Tuesday, February 23, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Everything Between Us* by David Ireland. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD, 20815. **Kathleen Akerley** is our guest speaker. Reserve with Phyllis, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.

Director **Kathleen Akerley** will be our guest speaker.

About Footlights

For more information about Footlights, check our website, <http://www.footlightsdc.org>. To subscribe to our e-list go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>. Or you may send a blank or any message to footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Footlights is an official 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation. To make a tax-deductible contribution to Footlights, send your check to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852. We rely on your support and contributions to enable us to provide our monthly dinner-discussions, theater trips, and newsletters.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
5800 Nicholson Lane, # L07
Rockville, MD 20852