

from the FOOTLIGHTS

MARCH 2010

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Footlights to Discuss Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful* on Thursday, March 11

Jack Sbarbori and Stephanie Mumford, co-founders of Quotidian Theatre Company, will be our guest speakers as we explore playwright Horton Foote's most famous work, *The Trip to Bountiful*. Actress Jane Squier Bruns who will play Carrie Watts in Quotidian's upcoming production will join them.

Jack is well known to our members not only as a favorite speaker but also for the excellent work his Quotidian Theatre does, for the exquisite sets he designs for the productions, and of course for those striking Tommy Hilfiger shirts he wears. (He swears this is his only indulgence.)

Here are a few things you may not know about Jack: He and Quotidian co-founder/actress Stephanie Mumford have been married for 23 years; after a brief fling as a Fine Arts Major in college he got a degree in Russian from Columbia University, and has done several modern translations of Chekhov's plays – *Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Cherry Orchard* – which have been performed locally; he became interested in black vocal groups (and especially doo-wop) when he worked in a record shop as a teenager, is now considered an authority on them, and has written articles about, and record liners for, many of these groups; retired from a government job, in his spare time he haunts flea markets and garage sales for authentic items for his sets and is a dedicated e-Bay customer; and although the name Sbarbori sounds Eastern European to some people, his background is pure Italian and the family originally came from the Lombardy region.

Jack says future plays for Quotidian may include Conor McPherson's *The Seafarer*, Athol Fugard's *Master Harold and the Boys*, Brian Friel's *Afterplay*, and a one-act Chekhov play which has never been seen in this area.

Footlights will meet at **Casa Fiesta, Thursday, March 11**, for a buffet dinner and our discussion. Dinner is at 6:30 and discussion begins at 7:30. If you prefer, you may come for the discussion only. Casa Fiesta is at 4910 Wisconsin Avenue, halfway between the Tenleytown and Friendship Heights metro stops on the red line. There is usually plenty of nearby street parking. Dinner will cost \$15, including tax and tip. We suggest an additional \$5 contribution to Footlights.

Phyllis Bodin will take reservations for our dinner-discussion. She may be reached at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. If you have to cancel, please let Phyllis know as soon as possible, and definitely by noon on March 11, so we have an accurate count for the restaurant.

Read *The Trip to Bountiful*

Look for *Bountiful* at your library or order from Backstage Books, 545 8th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003. Phone 202-544-5744 or e-mail backstagebooks@aol.com.

See *The Trip to Bountiful* May 2

On Sunday, May 2 at 2 p.m., we will attend the performance of *The Trip to Bountiful* at Quotidian Theatre Company, at The Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, MD 20815. Tickets are \$12.50 and include a post show discussion. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

In April: Neil LaBute's *Reasons to Be Pretty*

Are we obsessed with physical beauty? Playwright Neil LaBute believes we may be.

In *The Shape of Things*, Holly Twyford turns a nerdy museum security guard into a heartthrob, even as she destroys his life as he knew it. He falls in love with her, but eventually discovers that his make-over actually has been just a thesis project for her MFA degree, which she has now completed, and that she has no personal interest in him whatever.

In *Fat Pig*, plus-sized actress Kate Debelack finds her soul mate but they do not live happily ever after, because he simply cannot handle the constant ribbing he gets from friends and office mates over the size of his lover and best friend. They part, in tears.

Now Studio Theatre brings us the third play in this "beauty trilogy" – *Reasons to Be Pretty*, in which an unlucky guy says his girlfriend's face is "regular-looking" rather than "beautiful" ... and lives to regret his poor choice of words.

Neil LaBute is a playwright (20 plays), screenwriter and director, teacher, and short story writer. He joined the Morman Church while he was in college, but was asked to leave (and did) because of his writings, although he has always insisted he writes from his imagination and not his life, and says none of his characters is based on anyone he knows or has ever known. Although LaBute's plays and movies can be extremely dark and bitter, friends insist he is a nice man in person.

Footlights will meet in April - date and location to be announced - to discuss *Reasons to Be Pretty*. Our guest speaker will be director **David Muse**.

David is the Associate Artistic Director at Shakespeare Theatre, and currently directs *Henry V* which is running in repertory with *Richard II*. He directed the all-male *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as *Julius Caesar*, and *Pericles* for the

Carter Barron Free-for-All. He has also worked at Arena Stage (*Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*), Theatre Alliance (*The Bluest Eye*), and Studio Theatre (*Frozen*) among others.

He is a graduate of Yale University and Yale School of Drama. He says his favorite Shakespeare villain is Iago. Someday he hopes to direct some O'Neill and Beckett plays. Meanwhile, he is dividing his time between Shakespeare Theatre and Studio where he is hard at work on *Reasons to Be Pretty*, which opens at Studio on March 24.

See *Everything Between Us* March 26

Footlights will see David Ireland's *Everything Between Us* **Friday, March 26** at 8 p.m. at Flashpoint, 916 G Street, NW, Washington, DC. Flashpoint is half a block from the Chinatown/Gallery Place Metro stop. A post-show discussion with cast and production team, including the playwright is included. Tickets are \$10. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

Calendar

- Thursday, March 11, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *The Trip to Bountiful* by Horton Foote. At Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20016. **Jack Sbarbori**, **Stephanie Mumford**, and **Jane Squier Bruns** are our guest speakers. Reserve with Phyllis, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- Friday, March 26, 8 p.m., performance of *Everything Between Us*. At Solas Nua, Flashpoint, 916 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001. A post-show discussion is included. Tickets are \$10. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852. (robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300)
- April date (tbd), dinner-discussion of *Reasons to Be Pretty* by Neil LaBute. Director **David Muse** is our guest speaker.
- Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m., free event. A tribute to Horton Foote. At The Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh St, Bethesda, MD 20815.
- Sunday, May 2, 2 p.m., performance of *The Trip to Bountiful*. Tickets are \$12.50. At Quotidian Theatre, The Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh St, Bethesda, MD 20815. Send your check to Robin.

Horton Foote Tribute: April 26, 7:30 p.m.

The Writer's Center and QTC will be joining forces to pay tribute to the late Horton Foote, Quotidian's cornerstone playwright. The program will feature clips and readings of excerpts from Foote's works. This will be a free event.

Horton Foote passed away on March 4, 2009, at the age of 92, in Hartford, Connecticut, where he was hard at work preparing his epic Orphans' Home Cycle for production at Hartford Stage and Manhattan's Signature Theatre next season. QTC is pleased to have had Mr. Foote serve as an Honorary Member of their Board of Directors, and honored to have presented nine of his plays since 1998, including two de facto premieres, through his kind generosity.

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 send any message to footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

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