

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

OCTOBER 2010

“Life shouldn’t be all work and no plays.”

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## October 6: Footlights to Discuss *Scorched* by Wajdi Mouawad

Our play for discussion on Wednesday, October 6 will be **Wajdi Mouawad’s** *Scorched*. Our speakers will be Forum Theatre’s co-founder and Artistic Director **Michael Dove** and Forum Company Member **Alexander Strain**.

*Scorched*, considered to be Mouawad’s finest work, is the story of a dying mother’s final wishes, and the journey her children make to the war-torn Middle East to try to unravel the mystery. Translated from the French by Linda Gaboriau, this play has been performed all over the world – although this will be only its third production in the United States. The film adaptation (*Incendies*) is currently at the Toronto Film Festival.

Wajdi Mouawad was born in Beirut, Lebanon, spent much of his childhood in Paris, France, and most of his adulthood in Montreal, Canada. He is a Canadian citizen, a playwright, actor, film director, and novelist. He writes from his own experiences about war and loss and exile. At age six, in a Beirut suburb, he watched as Christian militiamen machine-gunned a bus carrying 27 Palestinians – revenge for the murder of a Christian at a nearby church. All 27 died. The civil war had begun. His family fled to France. The war continued, an endless cycle of violence, until the origins of the conflict had been forgotten. *Scorched* has been called “one of the finest modernizations of Greek tragedy” – as the two children undertake their journey: one to deliver an envelope to the father they had thought was long dead and the other to deliver an envelope to a brother they never knew they had. Only when their tasks are completed will all the secrets be revealed, and a headstone be placed on their mother’s grave. Although war is never far away, this is a play about family. And even though it is fiction, it draws on real-life characters the playwright knew.

*Scorched* will be performed by Forum Theatre, at Round House Theatre’s Silver Spring venue. Forum – then called Forum Theatre & Dance – was started in 2003 by four friends who hoped to use their backgrounds in film, dance, music, and the visual arts as well as drama to create a new kind of theatrical experience. They chose D.C. because they saw it as an emerging and major theater community.

Their productions have been a ‘moveable feast’ for local theatergoers: from the Arena space on 14th Street, to the

Millennium Stage at Kennedy Center, to the Church Street Theater for Jason Lott in Dayan’s *Upshot*, to Caryl Churchill’s *Skriker* at the Warehouse, for Kate Debelack and Alexander Strain in Havel’s *Memorandum* at the H Street Playhouse, followed by Nigel Reed in Anouilh’s *Antigone*, then DeLillo’s *Valparaiso*, and the amazing *Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, and *Marat/Sade*. Last season Karl Miller and Alexander Strain appeared in the thrilling and multiple award-winning two-part *Angels in America* at Round House in Silver Spring, where Forum is now the resident company.

Our speaker **Michael Dove** is one of the co-founders of the theater group. He is a Virginian, a James Madison University grad who switched from art to theater in college. His art background made him a natural for set design and costumes, but he found directing was his real passion and that is his focus now. As Artistic Director he shapes the programming and mission of the company, and his is the final word on the plays Forum will present during the season. He says they work as a group to try and pick three plays each season which have a common theme, and they start with 40 or 50 plays in September so that by the following spring they have a clear idea of which three they will present starting in the fall. He has directed many times now for Forum and also has worked at Solas Nua, Folger, and several other local theaters, as well as the 2008 Source festival. He leaves on October 10 for North Carolina to direct *A View From the Bridge* for the Cape Fear Regional Theatre.

**Alexander Strain**, Forum Company Member, who recently was Footlights’ guest for our memorable discussion of *New Jerusalem*, and is appearing in *Scorched*, joins us again.

Please join us for a Footlights dinner-discussion of *Scorched* on Wednesday, October 6 at 6:30 p.m. at Alfio’s Trattoria, located on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments at 4515 Willard Avenue in Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815 (phone 301-657-9133) - two blocks from the Friendship Heights metro station. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free at Alfio’s. The cost for dinner is only \$13, for salad, bread, choice among six entrees, ice cream, and coffee or tea, and the price includes tax and tip. We appreciate a \$5 contribution to Footlights. Wine, beer, and cocktails are available from the bar.

Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. The program starts at 7:30 and ends no later than 9:30 p.m. You may come for the

discussion only if you wish. Phyllis Bodin is taking reservations. Contact her at Phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. If you have to cancel, please let Phyllis know by noon on October 6, so we will have an accurate count for the restaurant.

Mary Ann Wren will moderate our discussion.

### Reading *Scorched*

*Scorched* may be ordered from Playwrights Canada Press ([www.playwrightscanada.com/plays/scorched.html](http://www.playwrightscanada.com/plays/scorched.html)). Call Melissa at 1-416-703-0013 and mention "Footlights" to get 10% off the full price of \$18.95 per copy.

### In November: Clifford Odets' *Golden Boy*

*Golden Boy* was playwright **Clifford Odets'** most successful theatrical production. First published in 1937 in the United States, the play was a dramatic departure from Odets' previous plays-social dramas that had propelled the playwright to instant stardom. Unlike these early plays, *Golden Boy* focused more on personal issues. Odets has stated in interviews that he wrote the play as a deliberate attempt to create a hit. Critics have noted that the struggle that Joe Bonaparte, Odets's protagonist, faces in *Golden Boy* mirrors the struggle that Odets himself faced.

While Odets was torn between Hollywood and the New York theatre scene, Joe is torn between the high-pressure,

### Calendar

- Wednesday, October 6, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Scorched* by **Wajdi Mouawad**. Our guest speakers are **Michael Dove** and **Alexander Strain**. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD, 20815. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- November date, dinner-discussion of *Golden Boy* by **Clifford Odets**. Look for details in our next newsletter or on-line.

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

big-money business of boxing and his dream of becoming a violinist. Joe's dilemma is complicated when he finds somebody who is willing to sponsor him as a boxer and risks injuring his hands – a fatal blow to his career as a violinist. *Golden Boy* spawned a movie and a musical. The movie featured William Holden in his first starring role.

Keegan Theatre will produce *Golden Boy*. **Lee Mikeska Gardner**, a member of Footlights' Advisory Board, will direct, and will be our guest speaker, date to be announced.

### About Footlights

For more information about Footlights, check our website: [www.footlightsdc.org](http://www.footlightsdc.org). To subscribe to our e-list and monthly newsletter, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>, or send any message to [footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

You may also phone Robin Larkin at 240 669-6300 or e-mail her at [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) and she will add your name to the mailing list. If you prefer a paper copy of the newsletter rather than receiving it on-line, let Robin know your address. Or if you would prefer just to get the e-mail copy, let Robin know.