

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2012

“Life shouldn’t be all work and no plays.” <http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## Footlights to Discuss James Joyce’s *The Dead* on November 19

Join Footlights on **Monday, November 19**, at **Alfio’s**, when we meet to discuss James Joyce’s *The Dead* – the musical adaptation of his famous 1916 short story. This new work opened on Broadway on January 11, 2000, thus becoming the first musical of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It won rave reviews from critics.

Quotidian Theatre begins its 15<sup>th</sup> season with an ambitious production of *The Dead*, a play with music which the *New York Times* called “a reason to celebrate.” It will be the first musical this theater has ever staged. Dates are from November 16 through December 16. See <http://www.quotidiantheatre.org/>

The story: It is January 6, 1904 in Dublin and the elderly Morkan sisters are having their annual Feast of the Epiphany holiday party with dinner, dancing, and entertainment. Snow is falling; guests arrive in horse-drawn carriages; nephew Gabriel Conroy and his wife Gretta are there and Gretta is deeply affected by one of the songs because it reminds her painfully of a long-ago romance with a young man who died when he was just 17.

*The Dead* is included in Joyce’s collection *The Dubliners* and is considered to be perhaps the best of all his short stories. John Huston filmed *The Dead* in 1987, with his daughter Anjelica starring as Gretta. Read the story on-line or get a copy of *The Dubliners* from your local library. The script is available at [www.samuelfrench.com/p/2165/james-joyces-the-dead](http://www.samuelfrench.com/p/2165/james-joyces-the-dead) for \$8.95. The musical follows the original story closely.

**James Joyce** is perhaps best known for his notorious *Ulysses* which was banned in this country, but he wrote several other books, many short stories, a play, and dozens of newspaper articles. Although he lived most of his life in France, Italy, and Switzerland, all his stories are set in Dublin. He had a gift for language, invented words (*quark* is one of them) and was long employed by Berlitz to teach English. He taught himself basic Norwegian so he could write a fan letter to Ibsen. Joyce is now considered one of the most influential writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. You may remember that *Ulysses* was actually printed and

published in France, and some of the original confusion with the text was simply due to the French typesetters who understood no English. Sylvia Beach, who owned the iconic Shakespeare and Company bookstore in Paris, was the driving force behind the publication of what she considered a masterpiece, and the book which made James Joyce famous. Her memoir *Shakespeare and Company* has fascinating details, as well as stories about Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and many others who wandered in and out of her shop in those days.

We have invited members of the local James Joyce Society to join us for this meeting. Mary Ann Wren will moderate the discussion.

Speakers will include **Jack Sbarbori** and **Stephanie Mumford**, who co-founded Bethesda’s Quotidian Theatre Company in 1998. Jack will direct *The Dead*. The part of *Gretta* will be performed and sung by **Janice Hall**, whom we remember with pleasure from when she appeared many times with The Washington Opera.

Quotidian Theatre (‘quotidian’ is Latin for ‘daily’) specializes in plays about the everyday life of our fellow humans. Chekhov, Horton Foote, Conor McPherson – these are some of the playwrights the theater chooses again and again to stage. If you are not familiar with it, Quotidian is located in the Writer’s Center, 4508 Walsh Street in Bethesda, a short walk south from the Bethesda metro station. There is a large public parking lot across the street from the Center.

We will meet for our November 19 dinner-discussion at Alfio’s Trattoria, located on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Avenue in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The restaurant is just two blocks from the Friendship Heights metro stop on the red line. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free at Alfio’s if you drive. Dinner is at 6:30 and the discussion begins at 7:30 and usually ends around 9. Cost for dinner is just \$13, and that includes tax and tip, and for which you get salad, bread, choice among six entrees, ice cream, and coffee or tea. Cash or check, no credit cards please. We appreciate a \$5 contribution to Footlights. Beer, wine, and cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only if you wish.

Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin at 301-986-1768 or [Phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:Phylbo@verizon.net). If you have to cancel, please let Phyllis know by noon on November 19, so that we will have an accurate count for the restaurant. We may have to pay for no-shows.

Footlights will see *The Dead* at Quotidian Theatre at 2 p.m., Sunday, November 25. Our tickets are \$15 – same price as Goldstar, but without the extra handling fee. Send your check to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852. To reserve, contact Robin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) or 240-669-6300.

Footlights will take a break in December. We'll be back in January. Look for our next newsletter with details.

### About Footlights

To learn more about Footlights, visit our website: <http://www.footlightsdc.org>. To subscribe to our e-list, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>, or e-mail [footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

### Calendar

- **Monday, November 19**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **James Joyce's *The Dead*** – a musical adaptation by **Richard Nelson** and **Shaun Davey**. Our guests are **Jack Sbarbori** and **Stephanie Mumford**, co-founders of Quotidian Theatre. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis, 301-986-1768 or [Phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:Phylbo@verizon.net). Mary Ann Wren will moderate.
- **Sunday, November 25**, 2 p.m., performance of **James Joyce's *The Dead*** at Quotidian Theatre, 4508 Walsh, St., Bethesda, MD. With post-show discussion. Tickets are \$15. Send your checks, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852. Reserve with Robin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) or 240-669-6300.

Robin Larkin *for* **FOOTLIGHTS**  
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