

from the FOOTLIGHTS

AUGUST 2013

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

August 7: Footlights to discuss Steven Dietz's *Rancho Mirage* with Director Jason Loewith

"I wrote Rancho Mirage as a dark comedy about the hidden parts of our friendships and the lies we tell to maintain our fictions with each other. I suppose it's also a play about seeing the end or edge of our dreams . . . and being left – good or bad – with the life that remains."

— Playwright Steven Dietz

Rancho Mirage is described as "a bitingly funny black comedy about what happens when the fictions that hold our lives together are exposed. In Steven Dietz's sharp and surprising sojourn into the psyche of 2013 America - where affluence is perhaps our greatest mirage - three couples, long-time friends, find themselves at a dinner party where everyone finally decides to tell the truth."

Steven Dietz is one of America's most widely-produced and published contemporary playwrights. His thirty-plus plays have been produced at regional theaters across the US, as well as Off-Broadway. Recent plays include the widely-produced thriller, *Yankee Tavern*, which was produced at CATF; the Steinberg Award finalist, *Becky's New Car*; the Pulitzer-nominated *Last of the Boys* (produced by Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago); and the Edgar Award-winning *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (Round House produced). MetroStage recently produced his *Lonely Planet* (PEN-USA Award for Drama). Mr. Dietz's work as a director has been seen at many of America's leading regional theaters. He divides his time between Seattle and Austin, where he is a professor at the University of Texas.

Footlights is delighted to welcome our guest speaker, **Jason Loewith**, Olney Theatre Center's new Artistic Director as of February 2013. He has been a producer, director, playwright and dramaturg in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and now Washington, DC. As a playwright, he won Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle, and Jeff Awards for Best New Musical for *Adding Machine: A Musical*, which he co-wrote with composer Joshua Schmidt. He produced the world premiere at Chicago's Next Theatre Company (Next) in 2007, where he served as Artistic Director from 2002-2008. That production went on to a six-month run Off-Broadway in 2008, winning four OBIE Awards for direction, design and performance.

Since moving to Washington in 2009, Jason has directed new plays for Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, DC's Studio Theatre, and Baltimore's Everyman and CENTERSTAGE. During that time, he served as Executive Director of the

National New Play Network (NNPN), the country's alliance of theaters that champions the development, production, and continued life of new plays. With NNPN he supervised dozens of Rolling World Premieres across the country by writers like Luis Alfaro, Steven Dietz, Quiara Hudes, and Theresa Rebeck.

Rancho Mirage begins its National New Play Network (NNPN) Rolling World Premiere at Olney and continues at former Olney Artistic Director Jim Petosa's theatre, New Rep (Watertown, MA), followed by productions at Phoenix Theatre (Indianapolis) and Curious Theatre (Denver) for a total of four separate productions of this work.

Footlights dinner-discussion of *Rancho Mirage* will take place **Wednesday, August 7** at Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments in Friendship Heights, a short walk from the north entrance of the Friendship Heights Metro station. 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 ends at 9. Robin Larkin will moderate our discussion.

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and the discussion is \$20. You will get a salad, bread, choice among six entrees, spaghetti, green beans, ice cream, and tea or coffee. The salad bar may be substituted instead of an entree if you prefer. Cash or check – no credit cards, please. Beer, wine, and cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only for \$5.

Make your reservations with Phyllis Bodin, 301-986-1768 or phylbo@verizon.net. Reservations and cancellations will be accepted until noon of the day of the discussion.

Read *Rancho Mirage*. For those reserving for the dinner-discussion, electronic copies of the draft script are available. Copyright restrictions apply. Contact Robin Larkin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300.

See *Rancho Mirage*. Olney Theatre Center is producing *Rancho Mirage* September 26 – October 20. Footlights will see the 2 p.m. matinee performance on **Saturday, September 28** with postshow discussion included. Olney Theatre Center is located on Maryland Route 108 (Olney-Sandy Spring Road) in Olney, Maryland, one and one-half miles east of Georgia Avenue (Route 97) and two miles west of New Hampshire Avenue (Route 650).

Our tickets are \$27.50. Send your check to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

September 16: Tennessee Williams' *The Two-Character Play*

Footlights is pleased to welcome **Richard Henrich**, Artistic Director of Spooky Action Theater, to discuss *The Two-Character Play* with us. Spooky Action will be producing this late-career Tennessee Williams play in the Fall 2013. The characters in this play, Felice and Clare – brother and sister – are two actors on tour. They find themselves deserted by their acting troupe in a decrepit “state theatre in an unknown state.” Faced (perhaps) by an audience expecting a performance, they enact *The Two-Character Play* - an illusion within an illusion. Williams called this “my most beautiful play since Streetcar.”

We'll meet at Alfio's on **Monday, September 16**. Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.

October 28: Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*

Quotidian Theatre is producing the O'Neill classic October

25 – November 24.

In a shabby New York barroom and hotel in 1912, the down-and-out await their salvation; the charismatic salesman Hickey is due for a visit, and he usually provides good cheer, dirty jokes, and free drinks. When Hickey arrives this time, however, he's a changed man, and he brings with him a sobering truth that his old friends don't want to hear. O'Neill's ambitious ensemble piece wrestles with the necessity of pipe dreams – the lies we tell ourselves to make it through each day.

We welcome Michael Avolio, director of the production, and Bill Largess, artistic advisor. Actors Steve LaRocque and Frank Britton will join us as well.

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.

Calendar

- **Wednesday, August 7**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Rancho Mirage* by **Steven Dietz**. **Jason Loewith**, Artistic Director at Olney Theatre, is our guest. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Dinner including discussion is \$20; discussion only is \$5. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. For an electronic copy of the play, contact Robin Larkin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300.
- **Monday, September 16**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *The Two-Character Play* by **Tennessee Williams**. **Richard Henrich**, Artistic Director at Spooky Action Theater, is our guest. At Alfio's. Reserve with Phyllis.
- **Saturday, September 28**, 2 p.m., performance of *Rancho Mirage* at Olney Theatre Center, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd, Olney, MD. Tickets are \$27.50; includes postshow discussion. Reserve with Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300. Send your check to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- **Monday, October 28**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *The Iceman Cometh* by **Eugene O'Neill**. **Michael Avolio**, **Bill Largess**, **Steve LaRocque** and **Frank Britton** are our guests. Alfio's. Reserve with Phyllis.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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