

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2013

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## September 16: Footlights to Discuss *The Two-Character Play* by Tennessee Williams

*The Two-Character Play* by Tennessee Williams went through two earlier versions before arriving at the final 1976 version. It is one of his most personal works; Williams spent almost ten years writing and rewriting it. In the 1960s Tennessee Williams underwent rejection by critics and scant support from audiences for his new plays. As early as 1983, academic writers began to recognize that *The Two-Character Play* was significant. In recent years, several revivals of the play met with favorable critical and audience reaction.

The two characters, Felice and Clare, are brother and sister actors on tour who perform a play within a play that reflects a family tragedy, their precarious mental health, and the economic failure of their acting troupe. The reality of their situation is quite stark. Their father murdered their mother and then killed himself in their presence. The weapon is an artifact of the play. Felice and Clare and the characters they play both undergo changes in their emotions and in their mental clarity about the situation that they are facing. They both live in dread of confinement in a state home and it seems they are running out of options to evade this fate.

Wikipedia describes the play as a "marked departure from the naturalism of [Williams] classics." About naturalism Wikipedia defines it as "a literary movement taking place from the 1880s to 1940s that used detailed realism to suggest that social conditions, heredity, and environment had inescapable force in shaping human character." Do Footlights readers of the play agree with the Wikipedia contention?

The play follows what takes place before, during and after a performance of the play within the play. These twists and turns make the play challenging for directors and actors.

Joining us to discuss their upcoming production of the play at Spooky Action Theater will be **Richard Henrich**, the artistic director of the theater and the two actors, **Lee Mikeska Gardner** and **David Bryan Jackson**. Lee is one of our most appreciated guests; most recently she spoke with us as the director of Allyson Currin's *Caesar and Dada*. David spoke with us before in our meeting to discuss Stoppard's *Jumpers*. We have here three stalwarts of the Washington theater scene – each with long résumés. With such talent we should have a great discussion and also look forward to seeing the Spooky

Action production of *The Two-Character Play*.

Footlights dinner-discussion of *The Two-Character Play* will take place **Monday, September 16** 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. John Glynn 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](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net). Reservations and cancellations will be accepted until noon of the day of the discussion.

**Read** *The Two-Character Play*. Find copies at local libraries or order from online bookstores such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.

**See** *The Two-Character Play*. You could head for New York to see an off-Broadway revival with Amanda Plummer and Brad Dourif as the brother-sister two characters (closes September 29). Or join Footlights on **Sunday, October 20** at 3 p.m. to see our guests - Lee Mikeska Gardner and David Bryan Jackson - in the roles at Spooky Action Theater, performing in the lower level of the Universalist National Memorial Church, 1810 16<sup>th</sup> St, NW, Washington, DC.

Visit <https://spookyaction.secure.force.com/ticket> to buy your tickets. Adult tickets for this performance are \$15.50 with the discount code FOOT. A postshow discussion is included. If you do not have internet access, call 202-248-0301 to buy tickets (after September 2).

## Join Footlights to See *Rancho Mirage* at Olney

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. In addition, Footlights ticketholders may attend the Cocktails with *Rancho Mirage* playwright Steven Dietz event at 5 p.m. at no extra charge.

Our tickets are \$27.50. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852. Our deadline, if tickets are still available, is September 18.

### **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@yahoo.com](mailto:footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoo.com).

### **Calendar**

- **Monday, September 16**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *The Two-Character Play* by **Tennessee Williams**. Guests are: **Richard Henrich**, Artistic Director at Spooky Action Theater, **Lee Mikeska Gardner** and **David Bryan Jackson**, cast actors in Spooky's upcoming production. 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](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768.
- **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, and additional conversation with playwright **Steven Dietz**. Reserve with Robin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) or 240-669-6300. Send your check by September 18, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- **Sunday, October 20**, 3 p.m., performance of *The Two-Character Play* by **Tennessee Williams** at Spooky Action Theater, 1810 16<sup>th</sup> St, NW, Washington, DC. Tickets for Footlights are \$15.50 at <https://spookyaction.secure.force.com/ticket>. Select this performance date and time, enter number of adult tickets, enter the discount code FOOT to receive this price. If you do not have internet access, call 202-248-0301 to buy tickets (after September 2).
- **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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