

from the FOOTLIGHTS

OCTOBER 2013

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

October 28: Footlights to Discuss Eugene O’Neill’s *The Iceman Cometh*

Eugene O’Neill: One of America’s greatest playwrights, in the tradition of Ibsen, Chekhov, and Strindberg, or one of the most overrated, whose plays are all too long and too tedious? Join Footlights on October 28 for dinner and a discussion and share your thoughts!

Eugene Gladstone O’Neill was born in New York City in 1888, in a room in a Times Square hotel (now a Starbucks), the son of an Irish immigrant actor. He attended private schools with limited academic success, and spent one year at Princeton but was expelled for – possibly – tossing a beer bottle through the window of the then-college professor Woodrow Wilson. Wilson went on to become President of the United States while O’Neill spent several years at sea, an experience which later served as background for several plays, among them *Beyond the Horizon* which Footlights discussed in December 2010. He suffered from alcoholism and depression, attempted suicide, and was a derelict on the waterfronts of Buenos Aires, Liverpool, and New York City. He ended up in a sanitarium with tuberculosis and it was there that he began to write plays, which became a life’s work. He wrote 30 long plays and 20 shorter ones, won four Pulitzer Prizes for drama, and is the only American playwright ever to win a Nobel Prize for Literature. He married and divorced several times and eventually disowned both sons for various reasons and also his daughter Oona (for marrying Charlie Chaplin). He died in 1953 in a hotel room in Boston.

The Iceman Cometh (1939 - first performed in 1946) is set in a shabby bar-hotel in New York City in 1912, where the ‘regulars’ eagerly await the twice yearly visit from traveling salesman Theodore ‘Hickey’ Hickman, who always comes with good dirty jokes and money to buy drinks for everyone. This time, however, he arrives with big plans to free his friends from both alcohol and their ‘pipe dreams’ only to find that life without illusions may be no life at all. Jason Robards, James Earl Jones, and, more recently, Kevin Spacey have all had major theatrical success with the play. Lee Marvin starred in the 1947 film.

Quotidian Theatre Company will present *The Iceman Cometh* from October 25-November 24. Footlights is happy to welcome four speakers from the production to our discussion: Director **Michael Avolio**, Artistic Advisor **Bill Largess**, and actors **Steve LaRocque** and **Frank Britton**. Mary Ann Wren will moderate our discussion.

We will meet on **Monday, October 28**, at Alfio’s Trattoria, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland, on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments, a short walk from the north entrance of the Friendship Heights metro stop on the red line. Street parking is limited if you drive, but valet parking is free at Alfio’s. Dinner is at 6:30; the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends at 9.

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and discussion is \$20. Dinner is a green salad, choice among six entrées, and spaghetti, green beans, bread and butter, ice cream, and tea or coffee. Alfio’s salad bar may be substituted for the entrée if you wish. Cash or check – no credit cards, please. Wine, beer, and cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only, for just \$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. If you must cancel please let Phyllis know as soon as possible since this is a seated dinner and the restaurant needs an accurate count for the place settings.

Read *The Iceman Cometh*. Find copies in local libraries or bookstores, or order from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc. Or see <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks04/0400021h.html>.

See *The Iceman Cometh* with Footlights at 2 p.m., Sunday, November 17, with post-show discussion included. Tickets are \$15. Reserve with Robin, 240-669-6300 or robinlarkin@comcast.net, and send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 20852, or bring it to the October 28 dinner-discussion.

Quotidian Theatre performs at the Writers Center, 4508 Walsh Street, in Bethesda, just off Wisconsin Avenue and a few blocks south of the Bethesda metro stop. There is a public parking lot across the street from the Center (parking is free on Sunday) and there are many restaurants close by.

In November: Dinner-discussion of *Our Suburb* by Darrah Cloud

We welcome back **Ari Roth**, Artistic Director of Theater J, for our discussion of Darrah Cloud’s *Our Suburb* - an adaptation of Thornton Wilder’s classic drama, *Our Town*. (Footlights discussed *Our Town* November 1997.) Mark Gruenberg will moderate our discussion.

Note: Date of the dinner-discussion is not confirmed yet. Watch Footlights e-mail for news, or check www.footlightsdc.org.

An interfaith teen romance plays out against the backdrop of 1977 Skokie, Illinois, when Nazis marched on the suburb in this modern take on *Our Town*. Theater J will produce the world premiere of *Our Suburb*, December 19 - January 12. Tony Award winning actress and Broadway director Judith Ivey will direct.

About Footlights

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

Calendar

- **Sunday, October 20**, 3 p.m. performance of Tennessee Williams's *Two Character Play* at Spooky Action Theater, 1810-16th Street 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.
- **Monday, October 28**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *The Iceman Cometh* by Eugene O'Neill, with four guest speakers. 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.
- **Sunday, November 17**, 2 p.m. performance of *The Iceman Cometh* at Quotidian Theatre, The Writers Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, MD. Tickets are \$15 and include the post-show 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.
- **November** (date to be determined), dinner-discussion of *Our Suburb* by Darrah Cloud. Ari Roth is our guest speaker.
- **Monday, December 2**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *The Apple Family Plays* by Richard Nelson. Our guests are Serge Seiden, director of the two plays, and actor Ted van Griethuysen. Reserve with Phyllis.
- **Saturday, December 7**, 2 p.m. performance of *That Hopey Changey Thing* at Studio Theatre, 1501 14th St, NW, DC. Tickets are \$35 and include a postshow discussion. Reserve with and send checks to Robin.

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