

from the FOOTLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2014

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

February 3: Dinner-discussion of George Bernard Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah*

“You see things; you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say ‘Why not?’”
– George Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*

Footlights is pleased to welcome back Washington Stage Guild’s co-founder and Producing Artistic Director **Bill Largess** to our **Monday, February 3** dinner-discussion of George Bernard Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah* at Alfio’s.

Back to Methuselah: a Metabiological Pentateuch consists of a preface and a series of five plays. Shaw examines the human life-span in a series of comic episodes that take us from the Garden of Eden to “as far as thought can reach” in the distant future. It is one of the first works of science fiction ever put on stage. Starting with Adam, Eve and The Serpent in the Garden of Eden, the rollicking *Back to Methuselah* speeds through several thousands of years of human history – past, present (1920) and future..

Washington Stage Guild is producing *Back to Methuselah* in several installments over a multi-year cycle, culminating with Stage Guild’s 30th anniversary. The first installment consists of *In The Beginning* and *The Gospel Of The Brothers Barnabas*.

In The Beginning: The Garden of Eden 4004BC concerns Adam and Eve’s first contact with the Serpent, who teaches them about birth, death, fear, hope and uncertainty. In *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas, Hampstead, London 1920* a couple of biologists are discussing the possibility of being able to live for 300 years. They state that it is possible, not by taking drugs, but merely by having the wish. While countless science fiction novelists glibly deal with immortality as if it were just a fine way to live, Shaw explores the psychological consequences. What sort of mind would it take, if you decided to live for, say 300 years? Would you have the strength for such a life? Could you live with yourself for that long?

We will meet at Alfio’s on Monday, February 3. Bill Largess is directing Stage Guild’s upcoming production, which plays February 20 through March 16. Bill was our guest speaker three years ago when we talked about G.K.Chesterton’s *Magic*. Dorothy Marschak will moderate our discussion.

Alfio’s Trattoria is located at 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 reservations with Phyllis Bodin, phyibo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. 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 it. Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah* is available in libraries, online or in bookstores (check first). The text is in public domain. Amazon’s Kindle edition, for example, is free. Among online sites are gutenberg.org and online-literature.com.

See it. Footlights will see *Back to Methuselah* on **Sunday, March 16, 2:30 p.m.** at the Washington Stage Guild. Performances are at The Undercroft Theatre which is in the ground (street) level of the Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church at 900 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. For directions, see stageguild.org/plan-your-visit/. Tickets are \$20 and include a post-show discussion. Reserve with Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300. Send your check to Footlights, c/o Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

Footlights Sees *The Young Lady from Tacna*

We will see *The Young Lady from Tacna (La señorita de Tacna)* by Nobel Prize for Literature-winning Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa at GALA Hispanic Theater on **Sunday, February 9, 2 p.m.** Directed by José Carrasquillo – last month’s wonderful Footlights guest speaker – the production is performed in Spanish with English surtitles and will run February 6 through March 9, 2014. GALA is located at 3333 14th Street, NW, DC.

Discounted parking is available at the Giant Food garage on Park Road, NW with GALA validation.

Tickets are \$20 and include a post-show discussion with José Carrasquillo and others. Reserve with Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300. Send your check to Footlights, c/o Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

Oh, Dad, Poor Dad in March

Footlights turns its attention to farce in March, discussing *Oh, Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad* by Arthur Kopit. First performed while Kopit was still at Harvard, it is considered Theatre of the Absurd style and a parody of that style. It moved to Off-Broadway in 1962.

The farcical and fanciful treatment of an overly-protective, domineering mother and her neurotic son is as apropos today as it was 50 years ago. Most commentators called the play an engaging spoof.

American Century Theater specializes in reviving American classics. Tyler Herman will direct for TACT. The play runs March 21 until April 12 at The Gunston Theatre II in Arlington.

Details of the date and location of our March dinner-discussion will be announced shortly.

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

- **Monday, February 3**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *Back to Methuselah* by **George Bernard Shaw**. Washington Stage Guild's Artistic Director **Bill Largess** 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.
- **Sunday, February 9**, 2 p.m. performance of *The Young Lady from Tacna* (in Spanish with English surtitles) by **Mario Vargas Llosa** at GALA Hispanic Theatre, 3333 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC. Tickets are \$20 and include a post-show discussion. Reserve with Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300. Send your check to Footlights, c/o Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- **Sunday, March 16**, 2:30 p.m. performance of *Back to Methuselah* by **George Bernard Shaw** at Washington Stage Guild, Undercroft Theatre (ground level) of the Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, 900 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. Tickets are \$20 and include a post-show discussion. Reserve with Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300. Send your check to Footlights, c/o Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

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