

from the FOOTLIGHTS

AUGUST 2014

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Footlights to Discuss Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love* August 19

"This play is to be performed relentlessly, without a break." And so we enter the world of Eddie and May – engaged in a doomed romance, bound to each other by obsessive desire, co-dependent before that word became fashionable.

We meet them on the edge of the Mojave Desert, at a seedy motel where Eddie the cowboy has caught up with the fleeing May. They alternately embrace and repel each other with equally violent force – a passionate kiss ends with a kick in the groin. We see that Eddie and May love each other, with love's accompanying tensions and power struggles. Plus a little something extra, as we eventually discover in their tortuous outbursts: They're also half-brother and sister, adolescent lovers who discovered too late that they shared a father who led a double life.

Throughout the play, the shadowy specter of their father, the Old Man, remains onstage, conjured up in their fevered visions and interacting with them at key moments – not to provide fatherly advice or comfort, but to demand continuing allegiance and validation for past actions.

Sam Shepard ranks as one of America's most celebrated dramatists. He has written nearly 50 plays. His plays are regularly anthologized, and theatre professors teach Sam Shepard as a canonical American author. Outside of his stage work, he has achieved fame as an actor, writer, and director in the film industry.

Some critics consider *Fool for Love* part of a quintet which includes Shepard's Family Trilogy: *Curse of the Starving Class* (1976), *Buried Child* (1979), and *True West* (1980). The quintet concludes with *Fool for Love* and *A Lie of the Mind* (1985). (Footlights discussed the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Buried Child* in October 1997.)

Focusing, as many of Shepard's plays do, on the dark side of life in the West, *Fool for Love* was first produced at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco in February 1983 before moving to Off-Broadway at the Circle Repertory Theatre in May of that year. Shepard directed these original productions, winning Obie Awards for his writing and directing as well as the award for best new American play. The 1985 film screenplay was written by Shepard, who also played Eddie in it. Robert Altman directed. Frequently revived, the Williamstown Theatre Festival's production of *Fool for Love* just closed to rave reviews.

Round House Theatre will be producing *Fool for Love* in September, with **Ryan Rilette**, Producing Artistic Director, directing. Ryan is beginning his third season at Round House. He was previously the Producing Director at Marin Theatre Company in Mill Valley, CA, President of the National New Play Network, Producing Artistic Director of Southern Rep Theatre in New Orleans, and co-founder and artistic director of Rude Mechanicals Theater in New York. Footlights is thrilled to welcome Ryan to our dinner-discussion on **Tuesday, August 19**. Robin Larkin will moderate our discussion.

We will meet at Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, 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, phylbo@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 the restaurant needs an accurate count.

Read *Fool for Love*. You may find a copy in local libraries or from the usual online sources - Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc. Dramatists Play Service Inc. is the publisher.

See it. *Fool for Love* will play at Round House from September 3 to 27. For information on various audience events, pay-what-you-can performances, postshow discussions, \$10 discount Tuesdays, visit <http://www.roundhousetheatre.org/performances/fool-for-love-2/>.

Next Up September 9: August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*

Footlights will turn to another of **August Wilson's** Pittsburgh Cycle plays – *Seven Guitars* – on **Tuesday, September 9** at Alfio's.

Seven Guitars (1995) focuses on seven African-American characters in the year 1948. The play begins and ends after the funeral of one of the main characters, showing events leading to the funeral in flashbacks. In the backyard of a Pittsburgh tenement, six characters gather to mourn the missing seventh – a blues guitarist with feet of clay who died with fame and celebrity just beyond his reach.

Seven Guitars represents the 1940s entry in Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle, a decade-by-decade anthology of African-American life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during the twentieth century. Wilson would revisit the stories of some of these characters in *King Hedley II*, set in the 1980s.

Our guest will be **Joshua Morgan**, Artistic Director, No

Rules Theatre Company. Jerry Stilkind will moderate our discussion. No Rules will produce *Seven Guitars* at Signature Theatre from September 10 to 28.

Note: Footlights has discussed several of August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle plays, most recently *The Piano Lesson*. Others discussed: *Two Trains Running*, *Fences* and *Radio Golf*.

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@yahogroups.com.

Calendar

- **Tuesday, August 19**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *Fool for Love* by **Sam Shepard**. Round House Theatre Producing Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette** 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.
- **Tuesday, September 9**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *Seven Guitars* by **August Wilson**. Our guest is **Joshua Morgan**, No Rules Theatre Company Artistic Director. At Alfio's. Reserve with Phyllis.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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