

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

APRIL 2015

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## April 28: Dinner-Discussion of *The Letters*

Footlights' April 28 meeting rests on several reputations:

- Footlights itself has a reputation as a catalyst: time and again our discussions bring together stimulating texts, intriguing people of the theatre and provocative ideas.
- MetroStage in Alexandria has a reputation for well-produced, edgy plays during its spring season. Footlights members have enjoyed many of these, including the extraordinary *Ghost Writer* two years ago.
- John Vreeke has a reputation as a powerful, versatile director, working all over the DC region. The recipient of six Helen Hayes nominations for best director, he has directed at Theater J, Forum Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, Round House and MetroStage this season alone.

So, imagine our pleasure at bringing this combination together as we discuss *The Letters* by **John W. Lowell**, presented by MetroStage, directed by John Vreeke and starring Michael Russotto and Susan Lynskey. **John Vreeke** and **Carolyn Griffin**, MetroStage's Producing Artistic Director, will lead our April 28 discussion. Charlotte Baer will moderate.

*The Letters* is a newish play, set in the past. In the Stalinist Soviet Union, in an unnamed bureaucracy, Anna labors as an editor. It turns out that she may be sanitizing the letters of an important composer, editing out the sexual content, to the point where nothing is left. One day she is called into the Director's office. And so it begins.

*The San Francisco Chronicle* calls the play "full of Hitchcockian tension." "The hungry anticipation with which the boss awaits Anna's answers to his non-questions can have you on the edge of your seat."

How can so much ambiguity produce so much dramatic tension? Is this meeting about a promotion? A firing? Even a murder? Will we ever know what is going on?

And, as the audience's attention shifts back and forth between the two people crammed into this bleak office, does the dominance shift also? Who has the upper hand?

From the *Chicago Tribune*: "The trick of this very engrossing piece is that Anna knows nothing more about why she is in this room than do we, and thus we

experience both her unease and her need to find out what's going on without saying the wrong thing."

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. (Note: if you know you must leave before 9, please be sure to sit near the door, so you can exit quietly!)

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](mailto: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 the restaurant needs an accurate count. We may be charged for no-shows and would expect you to cover the cost of your meal.

**Read *The Letters*.** After you sign up with Phyllis for the April 28 discussion at Alfio's, contact Robin Larkin, [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net) or 240-669-6300, if you would like to receive an electronic copy of *The Letters* script. Please do not distribute the script to others. We must respect copyrights.

**May 16: See *The Letters* with Footlights.** MetroStage, located at 1201 North Royal Street, Alexandria, Virginia, will produce *The Letters* May 8 - June 7. Footlights will see it on **Saturday, May 16, 3 p.m.** Tickets are \$45. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

## May 28: Dinner-Discussion of *A Tale of Two Cities*

Save May 28 for our dinner program at Alfio's when we host Synetic Theater Founders **Paata** and **Irina Tsikurishvili**, along with our familiar guest, **Serge Seiden**. Dorothy Marschak will moderate.

In a new collaboration, Serge will be directing a Synetic (talking!) production starring acclaimed actor Alex Mills in a play inside a play called *A Tale of Two Cities*. This is the story of a drag queen, who, finding a baby at his door, calms the child down by enacting the whole of Dickens' novel, playing all the characters himself! Winner of the 1989 Obie award, the *NY Times* described it as "Always fascinating, sometimes funny, and finally moving.."

**Make reservations.** Mary Ann Wren will take reservations for this dinner-discussion. Contact her at [wjwren@erols.com](mailto:wjwren@erols.com) or 301-770-4572.

**Read the play.** *A Tale of Two Cities*, based on the novel by Charles Dickens, and adapted by Everett Quinton, is available from Samuel French, Inc. at

<http://www.samuelfrench.com/p/3819/tale-of-two-cities-a-quinton>. Or phone 1-866-598-8449 to order a copy.

**June 14: See *A Tale of Two Cities* with Footlights.** We'll see the play at Synetic Theater, 1800 S Bell Street, Arlington, Virginia, **2 p.m. Sunday, June 14**. Tickets are \$40. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

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

### Calendar

- **Tuesday, April 28**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *The Letters* by John W. Lowell. Guests: Director **John Vreeke** and MetroStage Producing Artistic Director **Carolyn Griffin**. 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, May 16**, 3 p.m. matinee production of *The Letters* at MetroStage, 1201 North Royal Street, Alexandria, Virginia. Tickets are \$45. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Ln, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- **Thursday, May 28**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *A Tale of Two Cities*, adapted by Everett Quinton. Guests: Synetic Theater Founders **Paata** and **Irina Tsikurishvili**, and director **Serge Seiden**. At Alfio's. Reserve with Mary Ann Wren, [wjwren@erols.com](mailto:wjwren@erols.com) or 301-770-4572.
- **Sunday, June 14**, 2 p.m. matinee production of *A Tale of Two Cities* at Synetic Theater, 1800 S Bell Street, Arlington, Virginia. Tickets are \$40. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**  
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