

from the FOOTLIGHTS

JUNE 2015

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

June 15: Dinner-Discussion of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* – Keegan Theatre Reopens

Big Daddy, Maggie the cat, Brick, brother Gooper and his five no-neck kids – they all sound as familiar as members of our own extended family. *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* is one of the world's most performed plays, certainly one of the best **Tennessee Williams** ever wrote, said to be his own favorite, and the first play the Keegan Theatre ever presented. To start their 18th season, and celebrate their reopening after major renovations to the Church Street space, Keegan will once again stage this play. Footlights is pleased to invite co-founder **Susan Marie Rhea** and members of the cast to join us on June 15 for our dinner-discussion. Mark and Susan Marie Rhea were Keegan's original Brick and Maggie, and will co-direct this time. Mary Ann Wren will moderate the discussion.

The play won a Pulitzer Prize in 1955 and has been produced endlessly since then. Big Daddy has been played by everyone from Burl Ives (in the 1958 Elizabeth Taylor-Paul Newman movie) to James Earl Jones and Laurence Olivier. It is the story of one single evening, a birthday party for Big Daddy, with all the anger, greed, sexual frustration, grief, and humor a great playwright could mix in with a celebration.

Like most local theater groups, Keegan has performed in many spaces, from the Warehouse in downtown D.C., to the Clark Street Playhouse out in that Arlington corn field, to Gunston Arts, and Theater on the Run, to the Old Town Theater in Alexandria, and back to Church Street in 2009 – but they now have a permanent home since they bought the old Church Street building in 2013. Renovations – including real bathrooms - are happening, and are promised to be all ready for the grand reopening on June 27. Because of the reopening, Keegan will not tour Ireland this year, as they have done 14 times (the latest was with their brilliant *A Few Good Men*) but they have announced a full 2015-16 season for us to enjoy right here.

Susan Marie says she is a local girl – born and raised in Maryland – and Mark is from a tiny town in Texas (population "around 75 people"). Both majored in theater in college, and met playing in *Taming of the*

Shrew – but it was at Keegan, in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 2001, that romance blossomed – so co-directing that play for the start of the 18th season, and in a theater they now own, will be special indeed.

Every - well, almost every - local library and bookstore has a copy of the play, and the text is on-line, so please read (or re-read) *Cat* before the discussion.

We will meet at Alfio's Trattoria, 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 try 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 entrees, 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, please – no credit cards. Wine, beer, cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only for just \$5.

Make reservations with Mary Ann Wren, at wjwren@erols.com or 301-770-4572. Reservations and/or cancellations will be accepted until noon on June 15. If you must cancel, please let Mary Ann know as soon as possible since the restaurant needs a complete count. (This is a seated, table service, dinner, not a buffet. We may be charged for no-shows and expect you to cover our cost.)

July 20: Dinner-Discussion of *Twelve Angry Men*

After 20 years of presenting American plays with historical significance, The American Century Theater (TACT) is closing its doors. **Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men*** - the jury for a homicide trial - will bring down the curtain. Originally written in 1954 for television, this play has been filmed several times (Henry Fonda and Lee J. Cobb in 1957, George C. Scott and Jack Lemmon in 1997), staged endlessly, adapted,

re-written several times. We have invited TACT's founding artistic director and Footlights favorite **Jack Marshall** to come tell us why he chose it for both their first and now their final production. Robin Larkin will moderate the discussion.

We'll meet at Alfio's. Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, at phylbo@verizon.net or 301 986-1768.

About Footlights

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

Calendar – Discussions:

- **Monday, June 15**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*** by **Tennessee Williams**. Guest: Keegan Theater co-founder **Susan Rhea**. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Dinner including discussion is \$20; discussion only is \$5. Reserve with Mary Ann Wren, wjwren@erols.com or 301-770-4572.
- **Monday, July 20**, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of ***Twelve Angry Men*** by **Reginald Rose**. Guest: American Century Theater Artistic Director **Jack Marshall**. 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.

Calendar – See Plays We've Discussed:

- **Sunday, June 14, 2 p.m.** – ***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 Larkin (robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300), 5800 Nicholson Ln, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- **Sunday, July 12, 3 p.m.** – ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*** at **Keegan Theatre**, 1742 Church St NW, Washington, DC. Tickets are \$26. Send your check to Robin.
- **Sunday, August 2, 2:30 p.m.** – ***Twelve Angry Men*** at **The American Century Theater**, performing at the Gunston Theater II, 2700 S Lang St, Arlington, VA. Tickets are \$15. Reserve with Robin.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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