

from the FOOTLIGHTS

APRIL 2017

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Celebrity, Opera and Theatre: Footlights discusses Master Class on Tuesday, April 25

Can plays take liberties with historical characters? Footlights members have frequently discussed history, pseudo history and alternate history. This year alone we looked at *King Charles III*, which occurs in the near future, and *Angels in America* taking place in the recent past.

But a famous, some would say infamous, performer could be in another category. Maria Callas, at the center of **Terrence McNally's** play *Master Class*, may be depicted as a superb teacher or instead, may be shown as narcissistic, someone completely focused on herself. She certainly appears larger than life – but should we admire her?

The play is based on a series of real master classes that Callas gave at Juilliard, late in her career. While teaching, she obsesses about her life with Onassis and her great triumphs at La Scala. Is the playwright taking us on a flight of fantasy? McNally himself says yes, he is, when he reminds us that the play is fiction. And yet when he shows the young divas-to-be, desperate to improve their technique, he may be showing mere reality.

In this age of celebrity where daily headlines depict leaders who obsess about their own greatness, is this play an exaggeration? It certainly is relevant for today, both as compelling theatre and for its insight.

Terrence McNally's career has spanned several decades. He has written many plays and opera librettos, including *Dead Man Walking*, recently presented at the Kennedy Center, although their publicity did not mention his name.

Footlights will welcome two guest speakers for our discussion: director, **Nick Olcott**, perfectly chosen, since he is both an experienced theatre director in the Washington area and has long-time associations with the Maryland Opera Studio and many opera companies; and **Carolyn Griffin**, Producing Artistic Director of MetroStage, which is presenting *Master Class* from May 4 - June 11.

Our April 25 dinner-discussion is 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, but valet parking is available at Alfio's. Dinner is at 6:30, the discussion at 7:30 and ends no later than 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, please – no credit cards. Wine, beer, cocktails are available from the bar. You may come at 7:20 for the discussion only for just \$5.

Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. Reservations and/or cancellations will be accepted until noon on the day of the dinner-discussion. If you must cancel, please let Phyllis 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.

Read Master Class. We encourage you to read the play before our discussion. Our discussion may include spoilers. Copies may be found in local libraries or bookstores. You may order from the usual online sources – Amazon, or Dramatists Play Service, etc.

See Master Class. Footlights will attend the **Saturday, May 13**, 3 p.m. matinee at Metro Stage. Use the code **Footlights** when you call the theatre (703) 548-9044. Cost \$35 (regular \$60) and no handling fee. There will be a talk back.

MetroStage is located in the north end of Old Town Alexandria on the river's edge at 1201 N. Royal Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. There is free parking available in their lot on 3rd Street, as well as ample unrestricted parking on the surrounding streets.

Still Playing

Forum Theatre's well-received #NastyWomenRep continues for another week-- **What Every Girl Should Know** by Monica Byrne, and **Dry Land** by Ruby Rae Spiegel. Footlights discussed these plays in February.

Forum Theatre is in residence at the Silver Spring Black Box Theatre (formerly Round House Theatre Silver

Spring), 8641 Colesville Road, Silver Spring. The schedule of performances is found at <https://forum-theatre.org>.

Mosaic Theater's ***Blood Knot*** by Athol Fugard (our March discussion play) is on through April 30. Mosaic (Atlas, 1333 H St NE) is offering Footlights a 50% discount on tickets. Use code FOOTLIGHTS -- in person, online or by phone. See MosaicTheater.org for information. Many performances have postshow discussions.

Healing Wishes . . .

to longtime Footlights friend **Joel Markowitz** as he battles illness. As he has been for many years, Joel is a fierce champion and supporter of theatre in the DC area.

Joel is publisher, editor, reviewer, and columnist at DC Metro Theater Arts -- <http://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/>

We are rooting for you, Joel!

About Footlights

To subscribe to our e-list, go to groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join, or email any message to footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To learn more about Footlights, see www.footlightsdc.org.

Email copies of the monthly newsletter are sent to the Footlights list and are also available at www.footlightsdc.org.

Calendar:

- **Tuesday, April 25**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Terrence McNally's *Master Class*** with director **Nick Olcott** and MetroStage Producing Artistic Director **Carolyn Griffin**. Charlotte Baer moderates. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **Saturday, May 13**, 3 p.m., matinee performance of ***Master Class*** at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Use code **Footlights** when you call the theatre (703) 548-9044. Cost \$35 (regular \$60) and no handling fee. There will be a talk back.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L-07
Rockville, MD 20852