

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

APRIL 2019

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## April 16: Dinner-Discussion of Ken Ludwig's *A Comedy of Tenors*

Please join us on **Tuesday, April 16**, 6:30 pm, at **Alfio's** as we welcome back **Jason King Jones**, Senior Associate Artistic Director, Olney Theatre, to discuss ***A Comedy of Tenors*** (2015) with us. He will direct Olney's production which runs April 10 - May 12.

What if you were playwright **Ken Ludwig** and attended a revival of your wildly popular comedy *Lend Me a Tenor* (1986)? You fondly remember your characters, and even though it has been some years, you think what fun it would be to revisit them. But what about the plot? And then, you think about the cultural phenomenon known as The Three Tenors. And so, ***A Comedy of Tenors*** is born.

Ken Ludwig is the DC-based Olivier Award-winning playwright of *Lend Me a Tenor*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, and many others. He says that although both "*Tenor*" plays share the same characters, *Comedy* is not really a sequel to his earlier *Lend Me a Tenor*, that it is more of a companion piece that stands on its own. (Footlights discussed *Lend Me a Tenor*, also produced at Olney, in 2005.) Ludwig describes the creative process at <https://www.americantheatre.org/2015/09/10/ken-ludwig-lend-me-a-tenor-sequel-comedy-of-tenors/>.

*A Comedy of Tenors* is set in a Parisian hotel room in 1936. Saunders, the former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, and the current producer of a very ambitious concert featuring three of the world's top tenors, wants everything to be perfect before the famous Tito Merelli and his wife Maria arrive. With the help of his former assistant, Max, now not only Saunders's son-in-law but also one of the three tenors set to perform that evening, Saunders wants everything to be perfect and to keep everyone happy.

But since *A Comedy of Tenors* is a farce, things start going wrong quickly. Women's undergarments are strewn about. The third tenor has to quit the show just hours before curtain. And Tito and Maria's adult daughter, Mimi, is dating Tito's musical rival, the much younger Carlo Nunzi. Making matters worse,

Tito thinks that it's Maria who is in love with Carlo.

Like all good farces, *Comedy of Tenors* includes elements of mistaken identity, romance, tasteful sexiness and witty verbal exchanges. But, as one reviewer pointed out, we don't go to farces because we're looking for a plot that's inventive or shocking. We don't go to learn more about the human condition or to appreciate some searing cultural commentary. We go to laugh.

Our April 16 dinner-discussion meets at Alfio's, located at 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 begins at 7:30 and ends by 9.

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and the discussion is \$30. 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](mailto: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.

We have the *Tenors* script available for those reserving for the dinner-discussion. Make your reservation with Phyllis and then contact Robin Larkin ([robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net)) for an e-copy.

## Next Up: *Sooner/Later* by Allyson Currin – Dinner-Discussion on Wednesday, May 8

In *Sooner/Later*, a regional premiere by Washington's own **Allyson Currin**, single mom Nora finally gets the courage to re-enter the dating scene. Her teenage

daughter tries to help but has reservations about the string of guys Nora meets (and misses) at a coffee shop. In the midst of the social mishaps and hijinks, an interesting fellow watches nearby and finds his way into the mix. When coincidence mixes with longing sprinkled with bits of a metaphysical twist, the results can be hilarious and captivating, which is how this new work has been described.

Part of the locally grown Mosaic Theater Company, *Sooner/Later* premiered at the Cincinnati Playhouse where Blake Robison is artistic director, and has been nurtured at Mosaic as an inaugural offering of the Trish Vradenburg Play Commission. Part of the nurturing includes having **Caleen Sinnette Jennings** as a dramaturg. Caleen's *Queens Girls* plays will be

showcasing in repertory in Baltimore, and she will be joining Allyson as our guest. Debbie Jackson moderates.

Come join this fun discussion Wednesday, May 8 at Alfio's. Information about script availability and discount ticket options will be provided later.

### ***About Footlights***

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### ***Calendar:***

- **Sunday, April 14**, 2pm, matinee performance of ***Ghost-Writer*** at Quotidian Theatre Company (The Writer's Center in Bethesda). Playwright **Michael Hollinger** will join a postshow discussion. Footlights tickets are \$20. Reserve at [qtcboxoffice@gmail.com](mailto:qtcboxoffice@gmail.com) or 301-816-1023.
- **Tuesday, April 16**, 6:30 pm, dinner-discussion of ***A Comedy of Tenors*** by **Ken Ludwig**. Guest: **Jason King Jones**, Olney Theatre Center Senior Associate Artistic Director. Robin Larkin moderates. At **Alfio's**, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768. Performances at Olney Theatre run from April 10 - May 12.
- **Wednesday, May 8**, 6:30 pm, dinner-discussion of ***Sooner/Later*** by **Allyson Currin**. Guests: Playwright **Allyson Currin** and dramaturg **Caleen Sinnette Jennings**. Debbie Jackson moderates. At **Alfio's**. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768. Performances at Mosaic run from May 16 - June 16.

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