

from the FOOTLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2020

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

February 15: Luncheon-Discussion of *The 39 Steps*

Please join Footlights on **Saturday, February 15** at **12:30 pm** for our first ever lunchtime discussion, when we meet to talk about *The 39 Steps* from the novel by John Buchan, the movie by Alfred Hitchcock, and adapted for the stage by Patrick Barlow.

In John Buchan's 1915 adventure story, Richard Hannay, a mining engineer, is back in London after years in South Africa, Europe is possibly on the verge of war – and he is bored. Then a frightened neighbor, a Mr. Scudder, after rambling on and on about dire events and evil Germans and plots, and an upcoming assassination, is murdered in Hannay's apartment, and Hannay suddenly is chased by both police (thinking he is the murderer) and the Germans, because of what Scudder might have told him – including the mysterious reference to some very important 39 Steps. Hannay escapes to Scotland, eludes pursuit, and finally solves the puzzle.

Alfred Hitchcock's classic 1935 film changes the plot considerably. Hannay is a Canadian, on vacation in London, and (of course!) he goes to the theater, where it all begins. Two females are added to the story, including Hitchcock's usual cool blonde who unwillingly shares the adventures, and those mysterious 39 Steps have become something else entirely.

There have been at least two other films of the story, and an Orson Welles radio adaptation, and now Constellation Theatre is presenting yet another version: Patrick Barlow's farce, loosely based on both the Buchan original and, especially, the Hitchcock film, with four actors portraying more than 100 characters. After a nine year run in London and a record run for a comedy on Broadway, with glowing reviews and multiple awards, this should be fun to see.

Our speaker, Footlights favorite **Nick Olcott**, is directing the upcoming production for Constellation Theatre. Nick, who teaches, writes, and acts (Did you get to see his star turn as food critic James Beard at Round House?), as well as directing plays and operas locally, nationally, and abroad, and both TV shows and radio broadcasts, will guide us through the maze of adaptations.

Mary Ann Wren will moderate.

We will meet 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. Luncheon is at 12:30, the discussion begins at 1:30 and ends by 3.

The all-inclusive cost for the luncheon-discussion is \$30. Lunch 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 1:20 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 **5 pm on Friday, February 14**. If we are charged for no-shows we expect you to cover our cost.

Read the play: Constellation has kindly shared the script with us. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin for the luncheon-discussion and ask Robin Larkin (robinlarkin@comcast.net) to send you an on-line copy of the play. To obtain a print copy, see <https://www.concordtheatricals.com>.

See the play: Constellation's *The 39 Steps* runs from February 6 to March 8, at the Source, 1835-

14th Street, NW, (202) 204-7741. Use the code FOOTLIGHTS to get \$20 tickets for any performance up to March 1.

A sad note:

Longtime Footlights member Renée Gier has died. Although her mobility was severely limited in recent years, she remained an ardent fan of local theater and helped many a young actor get

a start toward a career. We have no information on plans for a memorial service.

About Footlights

To subscribe to the Footlights e-list, send an e-mail to FootlightsDC+subscribe@groups.io.

Visit our website at www.footlightsdc.org.

Calendar:

- **Saturday, February 8**, 2 pm, performance of Lauren Gunderson's ***Silent Sky*** at Ford's Theatre, 511 10th St NW, DC. Ford's is giving Footlights members a 35% discount for this performance only using the code SKYFOOTLIGHTS. Limit of 4 tickets per order. Cannot be combined with other offers. Not available in dress circle. Here is a direct link to purchase tickets: <https://my.fords.org/single/SYOS.aspx?p=5021>.
- **Saturday, February 15**, 12:30 pm, luncheon-discussion of ***The 39 Steps*** adapted by Patrick Barlow from the novel by John Buchan and movie by Alfred Hitchcock. Guest: **Nick Olcott**. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **February 6 to March 1**, any performance of ***The 39 Steps*** at Constellation (Source), 1835-14th Street, NW, (202) 204-7741. Use the code FOOTLIGHTS to get \$20 tickets.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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