

Reminder: On **May 7, 4 p.m.**, Footlights sees *The Sins of Sor Juana*, performed in Spanish, with English surtitles, at GALA Theatre, 3333 14th St, NW. Tickets are \$20.

The Elephant Man by Bernard Pomerance

"Sometimes I think my head is so big because it is full of dreams."
— Merrick in *The Elephant Man*

"Women and nervous persons fly in terror from the sight of him, and that he is debarred from seeking to earn a livelihood in any ordinary way, yet he is superior in intelligence, can read and write, is quiet, gentle, not to say even refined in his mind."

— An excerpt taken from Carr Gomm's letter to the Times Newspaper on December, 1886

On **Thursday, May 18**, Footlights will discuss our May play, the 1979 Tony award-winning drama, *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance. The story of Joseph Merrick, who lived in England during the late 19th century, has been the subject of both theater and film acclaimed accounts, and even an opera. Terribly deformed, Merrick is taken under the care of Dr. Frederick Treves, who educates him and introduces him to society, but he can never realize his dream of being a man like any other. Even today research continues to identify the genetic disorder(s) which caused his condition. It is now thought that he suffered from Proteus Syndrome, an extremely rare condition that was only identified in 1979 and that causes abnormal growth of the bones, skin and head.

Footlights is delighted to welcome back our friend and member of Footlights' Advisory Board, **Jim Petosa**, Artistic Director of Olney Theatre Center, and Director of the upcoming Olney production of *The Elephant Man* as our guest speaker. Jim directed *The Elephant Man* for Catalyst Theater in 2004, a well reviewed production that Potomac Stages called "a finely tuned, highly atmospheric presentation that takes as its central feature a line from the play about its central character being equally highly polished 'like a mirror that reflects each of us.'" Original Catalyst cast members Scott Fortier, Valerie Leonard and James Konicek will appear in the Olney production, which runs from May 24-June 18, 2006.

Footlights member Jerry Stilkind will moderate our May 18 discussion. We meet at **Casa Fiesta**, 4910 Wisconsin Ave, NW (202-244-8888), one block south of Fessenden St. on Wisconsin Ave. and two and a half blocks south of the Jenifer St. exit from the Friendship Heights Metro stop. Street parking is available.

Come for dinner at 6:30 p.m. The discussion begins at 7:30 and ends no later than 9:30 p.m. Buffet is \$14, including tax and tip. Contact Mark Gruenberg to reserve, 202-898-4825 or press_associates@yahoo.com. If you later find you must cancel, please let Mark know.

You will enjoy the discussion even if you have not read the play, but we strongly encourage you to read it first. Backstage Books has ordered copies for Footlights. Backstage Books (202-544-5744) is located at 545 8th St. SE, Washington, DC; Eastern Market metro stop. Copies are also available at the library and wherever books are sold.

See The Elephant Man at Olney Theatre

We'll see *The Elephant Man* on **Saturday, May 27, at 2 p.m.** Tickets for Footlights are only **\$19.50** and include a post show discussion. To reserve your place, send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852. Our deadline is May 18, also the date of our dinner-discussion meeting. Olney Theatre Center (301-924-3400) is located at 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, in Olney, Maryland. We'll help arrange carpools.

Picasso's Closet by Ariel Dorfman

Our June play for discussion is a world premiere by **Ariel Dorfman**, noted for his *Death and the Maiden*. Theater J's description: "Dorfman's biography of Pablo Picasso's time in Vichy, France posits a radical reinterpretation: What if Picasso didn't die in 1973 but was murdered by the Germans in 1944? And what if it wasn't Picasso's body that was murdered, but rather his soul, more insidiously, that was mortally threatened? Such are the moral stakes faced by the century's most illustrious artist while living under German occupation."

We meet on **Monday, June 12, at 6:30 p.m. at Alfio's** in the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Ave, Chevy Chase, MD (301-657-9133), two blocks from the Friendship Heights Metro. Charlotte Baer and Diane Carroad will moderate. Our special guests are **John Dillon**, director, and **Saxon Palmer**, actor, from Theater J's upcoming production of *Picasso's Closet*.

Draft copies of *Picasso's Closet* will be available for sale at the May 18 discussion.

We will see *Picasso's Closet* on **Sunday, June 25, 3 p.m. at Theater J**. Tickets are \$35 or \$32 (seniors) and include a post show appearance by playwright Ariel Dorfman himself! Send your payment for tickets now to Robin.

About Footlights

To get Footlights updates on-line, send any message—even blank—to join@footlightsdc.org. Subscribers can post to our on-line list by sending brief messages to list@footlightsdc.org. Visit our website at www.footlightsdc.org for updates. Address inquiries to Mark Gruenberg at 202-898-4825 or press_associates@yahoo.com.

Please support Footlights, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization. Send your tax-deductible contributions to Footlights, c/o Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852.

Calendar

- Sunday, May 7, 4 p.m., performance of *The Sins of Sor Juana* at GALA Theatre, 3333 14th Street, NW. Tickets:\$20
- Thursday, May 18, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance. Casa Fiesta
- Saturday, May 27, 2 p.m., performance of *The Elephant Man* at Olney Theatre. Tickets: \$19.50 (**new price!**)
- Monday, June 12, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Picasso's Closet* by Ariel Dorfman. Alfio's
- Sunday, June 25, 3 p.m., performance of *Picasso's Closet* at Theater J, including post-show discussion with Ariel Dorfman. Tickets: \$35 adult; \$32 senior

Dinner-discussion reservations: Mark Gruenberg, 202-898-4825 or press_associates@yahoo.com

Theater tickets: Robin Larkin, 301-897-9314 or robinlarkin@comcast.net. Make check payable to **Footlights**. Send to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
5403 Nibud Court
Rockville, MD 20852

Footlights Greatest Hits

Usually our plays for discussion are being produced locally around the time of our discussion so that we can see them, but not always. Two plays from Footlights past discussions will be performed in the Washington, DC, area soon.

- *The Children's Hour* by Lillian Hellman, at Washington Shakespeare Company, June 1-July 2, 2006, discussed in September 1997.
- *On the Verge or the Geography of Yearning* by Eric Overmyer, at Arena Stage, May 5-June 11, 2006, discussed in December 1999.

For a complete list of plays discussed at Footlights, visit <http://www.footlightsdc.org/PastPlays.htm>.