

from the FOOTLIGHTS

JUNE 2006

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Picasso's Closet

When **Ariel Dorfman** began writing his play, *Picasso's Closet*, about the Spanish painter's time spent in occupied Paris during World War II, he wasn't thinking about the United States or Iraq. The poet, dramatist and chair of literature and Latin American studies at Duke University has spent most of his life writing about Chile, where he served on the cabinet of the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. In 1973, dictator Augusto Pinochet overthrew that government, tortured and killed Allende, and launched a wave of human-rights atrocities that have echoed in Dorfman's writing ever since. Dorfman felt best able to address the subject of war indirectly, through the story of Picasso and the creation of his famous painting, "Guernica," a work that confronted Nazi atrocities and changed the art world forever.

Dorfman, provocative dramatist, essayist and novelist, whose *Death and the Maiden* Footlights discussed in May, 2000, now has a world premiere of his new play at Theatre J. Set in Nazi-controlled Paris, where Picasso returned to live during World War II, *Picasso's Closet* uses historic characters and settings to illuminate 21st century dilemmas. Is a great artist exempt from taking action—and then able to claim he helped the Resistance? Is it immoral to worry about—and make deals for—friends but not others being rounded up? How do these questions resonate with Ariel Dorfman's life and other plays?

On **Monday, June 12, at 6:30 p.m.** Footlights will discuss these and other issues as well as the process of directing a new, still evolving play. Our guests will be **John Dillon**, director of Theater J's upcoming production of *Picasso's Closet*, and **Saxon Palmer**, actor (Albert Lucht). Footlights members Charlotte Baer and Diane Carroad will moderate our discussion. Copies of the draft script of *Picasso's Closet* are still available. For a copy, ASAP make out your check for \$7 to Beatrice Rouse, PO Box 5443, Rockville, MD 20848. Be sure to include your mailing address.

We meet at **Alfio's**, in the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD, two blocks from the Friendship Heights Metro. \$12 includes dinner and tip. Dinner is at 6:30; the discussion begins at 7:30. You may come for the discussion alone; we will have extra chairs. Make reservations with Mark Gruenberg, 202-898-4825 or press_associates@yahoo.com. (Note: If later you need to cancel, be sure to let Mark know.)

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.

We will see *Picasso's Closet* on **Sunday, June 25, 3 p.m. at Theater J** at the Washington DCJCC, 1529 Sixteenth Street, NW (at Q Street). Tickets are \$35 or \$32 (seniors) and include a post show appearance by playwright Ariel Dorfman himself! Reserve your tickets with Robin, 301-897-9314 or robinlarkin@comcast.net. Make your check payable to **Footlights**. Send to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852. Payment must be made by June 12, also the date of our dinner-discussion. You may pay then.

Another "Picasso"

In July, Footlights contemplates Picasso in an altogether different context as we discuss *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* by **Steve Martin**—yes, that Steve Martin. The story is a fantasy in which Picasso and Einstein and others meet in a bar—the Lapin Agile in the Montmartre section of Paris—before Picasso's and Einstein's larger fame sets in. Steve Martin said in 1996: "It's really about how exciting it is when you're on the verge of something." What they are on the verge of is the 20th century. In addition, the two main characters are both on the verge of a breakthrough—Einstein is just about ready to submit his first paper on relativity for publication and Picasso is ready to enter his Rose Period.

Keegan Theatre will produce *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* from July 20-August 19 at the Gunston Arts Center Theater II, 2700 South Lang Street, Arlington, VA. Keegan's artistic director, Mark Rhea, will take on the title role of Picasso, along side his brother-in-arms, Eric Lucas, as Einstein. Scott D. Pafumi, founding director of the award winning Westfield Theatre, will direct the show.

We will meet on **Sunday, July 16, at 6:00 p.m. at Ireland's Four Courts**, 2051 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA (703-525-3600), located across the street from the Court House Metro (Orange line). We plan a limited menu. Please bring cash to pay for your meal to avoid slowing down the serving and payment process. Note we have allowed extra time for dinner; our discussion will begin at 7:30 p.m., as usual.

Make reservations with Mark, 202-898-4825 or press_associates@yahoo.com, on or after June 12.

MJ Schmelzer will moderate our discussion. Our guest is **Scott Pafumi**, director of the upcoming Keegan Theatre production. We'll see it **Sunday, July 30, matinee**. Mark your calendar!

Remembering Jim Taylor and WAPAVA

The Footlights Board has approved a donation in memory of our friend and former advisory board member, Jim Taylor, to help WAPAVA establish a small theater video fund in order to videotape theater performances by small theaters in the metropolitan DC area. We hope to coordinate a future Footlights discussion meeting and/or attendance at one of these performances. We think the synergism of play reading, discussion, theater going, and videotaping would advance both Footlights and WAPAVA's goals of promoting and supporting excellent theater in the metropolitan DC area. We applaud and support the wonderful work that WAPAVA continues to do in order to maintain a video record of the many fine theater performances in the area.

To make your own donation to support WAPAVA, send your contribution to WAPAVA, PO Box 7582, Arlington, VA 22207.

Footlights Group Tickets

Footlights arranges for group tickets to see local performances of plays we read and discuss at discounted prices. We pick dates, usually matinees, when we can have a post-show discussion with cast, director or other expert on issues related to the play. Ticket prices vary, as do individual theaters' policies on advance deposits and payments required of us. We often must put up money on deposit (and non-refundable) to hold a block of tickets, and make final payment (also non-refundable) several weeks before we actually see a performance. We do not put a surcharge on tickets for you.

Can you get tickets for less? Of course. If you find a cheaper price elsewhere, can you get your money back from Footlights? Not if we have already paid the theater.

Footlights' reputation with the theater community is enhanced by the number of theater-goers we bring with our group. Come join us!

Calendar

- 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
- Sunday, July 16, 6:00 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* by Steve Martin. [Ireland's Four Courts](#)
- Sunday, July 30, performance of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* at [Keegan Theatre](#) (Gunston Arts Center). Ticket price and time TBD.

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.

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