

from the FOOTLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2007

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Insurrection: Holding History

On **Tuesday, February 13**, we will discuss *Insurrection: Holding History* by **Robert O'Hara**. *Insurrection: Holding History* follows Ron Porter, a young gay African-American graduate student as he travels back to the south of 1831 to participate in Nat Turner's Rebellion, the infamous slave revolt of 1831, the failure of which resulted in even harsher and more restrictive treatment of many slaves. When his 189-year-old ancestor leads his mystical journey through time and history to the moment of crisis, he confronts his own misconceptions and stereotypes as well as his understanding of what it is to be gay and black in our modern world.

Robert O'Hara received his Directing MFA from Columbia University School of the Arts in 1996, where he wrote and directed *Insurrection: Holding History* as his Graduate Thesis. The play premiered at the New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater in November 1996.

Our guest speaker is **Jeremy Skidmore**, artistic director of Theater Alliance where *Insurrection* will be produced. Timothy Douglas, acclaimed director of many of August Wilson's plays, and director of Theatre Alliance's upcoming production of *Insurrection*, lighting designer Dan Covey or set designer Tony Cisek are among possible additional speakers. And our own Debbie Minter Jackson will moderate our discussion.

We'll meet at Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave. NW, DC (202-244-8888). Come at 6:30 p.m. for dinner; the discussion begins at 7:30 p.m. Dinner buffet is \$14, including tax and tip. Make your reservations with Mark Gruenberg at press_associates@yahoo.com or 202-898-4825. You may come for the discussion alone; we will have extra chairs. Please note: If you find you must cancel your reservation, please call (do not e-mail) Mark before noon on February 13, so we can give the restaurant an accurate count.

Insurrection: Holding History may be found at Backstage Books, 545 8th St. SE, Washington, DC (Eastern Market metro stop), but call first (202-544-5744) to pick up a copy of the play; if reserving a copy, please be sure to pick it up.

We will see *Insurrection: Holding History* on **Sunday, March 4, 2 p.m.** at Theater Alliance at the H St. Playhouse, 1365 H Street, NE, Washington, DC. Tickets are \$18. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852. Payment must be received by February 26. We'll arrange carpools.

***Ah, Wilderness!* — March Play**

Footlights meets on **Thursday, March 8** to discuss **Eugene O'Neill's** only comedy, *Ah, Wilderness!* Written in 1932, the play was for O'Neill "the way I would have liked my childhood to have been." It begins on a sunny 4th of July, 1906, when O'Neill was 17. It's about a middle-class family, the Millers, and in particular the story of Richard who is going on 17, just out of high school and looking for his own independence. *Ah, Wilderness!* captures a romantic vision of the spirit of America at that time. O'Neill said it was "a play true to the spirit of the American small-town at the turn of the century."

Our guest on March 8 is **Dina Epshteyn**, Dramaturgy Fellow at Baltimore's CenterStage, and dramaturg for their upcoming production of *Ah, Wilderness!* Footlights' John Glynn will moderate.

We'll meet at Alfio's in the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD (301-657-9133), two blocks from the Friendship Heights Metro. \$12 includes dinner and tip. Dinner is at 6:30; the discussion begins at 7:30. Make reservations with Mark.

Ah, Wilderness! is available at Backstage Books, or in your local library.

We will see *Ah, Wilderness!* on **Sunday, April 1 at 2 p.m.** at CenterStage, 700 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD. Tickets are \$36. A talkback will follow this performance. Send your check to Robin, to arrive by March 19. We will arrange carpools.

For extensive archives on O'Neill, visit www.eOneill.com.

***After Darwin* – A Footlights Greatest Hit**

Usually, Footlights sees the plays we have read and discussed soon after the date of the discussion. In April, 2001, we discussed Timberlake Wertenbaker's *After Darwin*. Now's our chance to see Journeymen Theater's production.

Timberlake Wertenbaker's brain-teasing play addresses the ruling metaphor of our times: the survival of the fittest. Set in two distinct periods, *After Darwin* follows Charles Darwin traveling aboard the 'Beagle' with Robert FitzRoy into uncharted waters off the coast of South America and then, hundreds of years later, Millie, Ian and Tom as they recreate a stage version of Darwin's travels. During their staging, they uncover the polarities both in and between their own lives. *After Darwin* tackles the issue of evolution, and how we live with one another in a world

where, for many, "belief" has been replaced by a void.

We will see it on **Saturday, March 17, 2 p.m.** at the Church Street Theatre, 1742 Church Street, NW, DC. Tickets are \$15. Includes a Footlights postshow discussion.

Support Footlights

To join our e-mail discussion list, send any message to footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoo.com. Or browse to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>. Our website address is <http://www.footlightsdc.org>.

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.

Contributions are welcome at any time. We suggest a \$5 donation at our dinner-discussions, though this is voluntary. Some choose to donate annually rather than by the meeting. It is up to you.

Do you have a "last issue" sticker on this newsletter? It means that we have not seen you at our discussions or at theater events. We ask that you make a contribution to cover the cost of printing and mailing the postal Footlights newsletter.

Get Well!

Two now slightly bionic Footlighters are recovering from knee replacement surgery: Renée Gier and Mary Ann Wren. We wish them both speedy healing and continued good progress.

Calendar

- Tuesday, February 13, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Insurrection: Holding History* at Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC (202-244-8888). Dinner: \$14, includes tax and tip. Suggested donation to Footlights: \$5.
- Sunday, March 4, 2 p.m., performance of *Insurrection: Holding History* at Theater Alliance, H Street Playhouse, 1365 H Street, NE, Washington, DC. Tickets are \$18. Deadline: February 26.
- Thursday, March 8, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Ah, Wilderness!* at Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD (301-657-9133). Dinner: \$12, includes tax and tip. Suggested donation to Footlights: \$5.
- Saturday, March 17, 2 p.m., performance of *After Darwin* at Journeymen Theater Ensemble, Church Street Theatre, 1742 Church Street, NW, DC. Tickets are \$15. Deadline: March 15.
- Sunday, April 1, 2 p.m., performance of *Ah, Wilderness!* at CenterStage, 700 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD. Tickets are \$36. Deadline: March 19.

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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