

from the FOOTLIGHTS

SUMMER 2022

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

footlightsdc.org

July 2: Footlights Meets (In Person!) to Discuss Shakespeare in Love with Co-Directors of Keegan Theatre's Production - Ricky Drummond and Douglas Dubois

Please join us for our first post-pandemic in-person gathering on **Saturday, July 2, 2 pm**, at The Elizabeth, 4601 N Park Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. We will discuss *Shakespeare in Love*, adapted by **Lee Hall** from the screenplay by **Marc Norman** and **Tom Stoppard**, making its regional premiere at Keegan Theatre June 18 - July 16.

Shakespeare's first plays in the early 1590s were generally well received by audiences in London, but his first big hit seems to have been a bloody, horror show named *Titus Andronicus*. That theme was popular in theaters at the time. Then, in 1595 came the first of his great plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, the ones celebrated, done again and again down to today. But why and how did he write about two young lovers whose beautifully expressed feelings end up in tragedy because of the bitter rivalries of their parents and an outbreak of the plague?

Tom Stoppard, who electrified the theater world in 1966 with his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, became one of the dominant playwrights in English of the last half century. He took many liberties in answering the questions about *Romeo and Juliet* in the script of a movie he co-wrote in 1998, *Shakespeare in Love*, that won multiple Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

In the movie, a beautiful young woman from a wealthy family loves his plays, disguises herself as a boy to work at odd jobs at the Globe, Shakespeare's theater. She falls in love with him. It takes him longer to realize that there is a young woman rather than a boy illegally working at the theater. As he opens to her, his inability to finish the *Romeo and Juliet* play he had started on and could not complete takes shape, finally, into what we see today. We could call the film a romantic drama, or a romantic tragedy, or a romantic comedy.

We will now see how the playwright, Lee Hall, adapted the film for the stage. His adaptation opened in London in July 2014, receiving rave reviews from critics. It was called "A joyous celebration of theater" in one newspaper,

"Joyous" in another and "A love letter to theatre" in The Guardian.

Ricky Drummond and **Douglas Dubois**, the co-directors of Keegan Theatre's production, will tell us what they are doing with the adaptation. Drummond is a director, actor, playwright, and educator from DC. He holds a Musical Theatre degree from James Madison University. Dubois is a writer, producer and actor/director, who works to empower underrepresented communities. He uses theatre as a tool for advocacy and communication, exploring identity, gender equality, sexuality, black pride and Pan-Africanism.

Our guests say about the play: "The brilliance of *Shakespeare in Love* comes through in its marriage of original Shakespearean text and newly written words which lift the audience to a place of magic. The play subverts the mind and cuts straight to the heart of what matters – Love." and "As we all recover from years of devastation by the COVID-19 pandemic, this play is a timely celebration of the life of William Shakespeare, who, as a child, survived the plague, and, as an adult, stayed in London when others fled for fear of the bubonic plague. We are also reimagining Shakespeare's world, by paying tribute and being cognizant of all communities that must have lived and/or thrived in his time."

Jerry Stilkind will facilitate our discussion.

A first for Footlights: We will meet in the party room at The Elizabeth, 4601 N Park Ave, which is located just up the hill from our usual spots (Alfio's and Meiwah) in the neighborhood and can be accessed from the Friendship Heights Metro. Parking for visitors is available in The Elizabeth garage and also on nearby streets. Please allow time to arrive, find a parking place, check in, and get to the party room. The room will open at 1:40.

To park at The Elizabeth, pull into the circular driveway and come in to the front desk. You must give the receptionist your license tag number and receive an entry code that will allow you access to the visitors garage just to the right of the

driveway. Park and take the elevator to the lobby for directions to the party room.

This is a **free event** to celebrate our first in-person gathering in years! We will start the discussion promptly at 2pm and expect to finish by 3pm, including time for questions. **Masks are required** during the discussion. Following the discussion, light refreshments will be available for those who wish to stay and mingle. Space is limited; reservations are required, and we do urge you to honor your reservation or let us know if you find you cannot make it.

Make reservations with Robin Larkin, robinlarkin@comcast.net, 240-669-6300, now, but no later than **June 30**.

Read the play: You may purchase a copy of the *Shakespeare in Love* script (\$10) from <https://www.concordtheatricals.com/p/56914/shakespeare-in-love>. To revisit the movie, stream on Showtime free with a subscription, or rent (\$4)

on other platforms.

See the play: *Shakespeare in Love* is playing at Keegan through July 16. Following the July 3 matinee, there will be a talkback with members of the cast and creative team. After the matinee on Sunday, July 10, the post-show discussion topic is "The Intersection of Race & Education." For tickets and further information, see <https://keegantheatre.com/portfolio/shakespeare-in-love/>.

About Footlights

To subscribe to our email list send any message to FootlightsDC+subscribe@groups.io. See our website at www.Footlightsdc.org.

Donations to Footlights may be sent to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

See you soon at the Footlights!