

from the FOOTLIGHTS

OCTOBER 2019

“Life shouldn’t be all work and no plays.”

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

October 16: Edward Albee’s *Occupant* – A masterful tribute to sculptor Louise Nevelson

“With any luck you turn into whoever you want to be, and with better luck you turn into who you should be. No, you got somebody in you right from the start, and if you are lucky you figure out who it is, and you become it.”

This convoluted philosophy, of identity, articulated by the sculptor Louise Nevelson sums up this enigmatic character study.

Facts are in dispute and words are in question in this late-career masterpiece by multiple Pulitzer Prize-winner Edward Albee (*Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *A Delicate Balance*). Delving into the vast blur between truth and illusion, the playwright investigates the complex process of self-invention, reflecting on how and what artists create.

A little Jewish girl from Russia immigrated to the US and became the renowned sculptor, Louise Nevelson. Unapologetically flamboyant, her life was one marked by intrepid artistic triumphs as well as deep inner turmoil. In Edward Albee’s *Occupant*, both her public accomplishments and private emotional conflicts are thoroughly examined by an unnamed interviewer who questions the posthumous Nevelson with an unabashed scrutiny. From her unique vantage point beyond the grave, Nevelson answers his queries with a clarity born of the distance provided by death. The result is a touching, humorous, and honest tribute to a woman who was a pioneer for free-thinking females everywhere, but also stood strongly on her own as one of the 20th century’s greatest artistic minds.

The play “bows its head in awe and gratitude before the mysterious force of will that allows great artists to be.” – *The New York Times*

Please join us on **Wednesday, October 16** when Footlights meets to discuss Edward Albee’s *Occupant*. We welcome back **Adam Immerwahl**, Artistic Director, Theater J. Also returning, we welcome *Occupant*’s director **Aaron Posner**. Actor

Susan Rome joins us, too. Pat Peyser moderates our discussion.

Our dinner-discussion meets 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. Dinner is at 6:30, the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends by 9.

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and the discussion is \$30. Dinner 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 7:20 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 noon on the day of the dinner-discussion. If we are charged for no-shows we expect you to cover our cost.

Read the play. Edward Albee’s *Occupant* is available from Samuel French Publishers – \$9.95. Copies are available from local libraries. The play is included in *The Collected Plays of Edward Albee 1979-2003 Volume 3*.

See the play. Discounted tickets for any performance are available through Theater J Box Office. Footlights members should use promo code **Lucky18**. This offer is good until the play opens, November 7. Postshow discussions are: cast talk-back after the November 13 7:30pm show; creative team conversation after the 2pm matinee on November 17; and a Sunday symposium with art professionals on Nevelson after the November 24 matinee.

Fences at Ford’s

As noted in our September discussion of August Wilson’s *Jitney* with Dr. Sandra Shannon, Footlights members can save 35% on tickets to the 2pm

matinee of **Fences** on Sunday, October 13 and 10% on all other performances with the code WILSONSOCIETY.

Next Month

We discuss **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** by Simon Stephens, based on the novel by Mark Haddon. Round House is producing it November 20 – December 22. Stay tuned for more information.

Calendar:

- **Wednesday, October 16, 6:30 pm**, dinner-discussion of **Edward Albee's *Occupant***. Guests: **Adam Immerwahl**, Artistic Director, Theater J; **Aaron Posner**, director; and **Susan Rome**, actor. Pat Peyser moderates. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.

In Memoriam

We send condolences to family and friends on the recent passing of **Alan Friedman** and **Lorna Jaffe**, both longtime Footlights members.

About Footlights

To subscribe to the Footlights e-list, go to groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join, or e-mail footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Visit www.footlightsdc.org.

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