

from the FOOTLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2006

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Tomorrow on December 7

On **Thursday, December 7**, Footlights will meet to discuss **William Faulkner's** story, *Tomorrow*, as adapted for the stage by **Horton Foote**. *Tomorrow* tells a simple tale of gentle people, and offers an enlightening portrait of compassion and unconditional love. It's the story of a Mississippi dirt farmer, Stonewall Jackson Fentry, who takes in an abandoned pregnant woman, suffering from a life-threatening illness, marries her and raises her child whose fate is determined by a heartbreaking claim of familial custody. The story begins with the killing of a young ne'er do well and the ensuing trial. Both the prosecution and defense expect an easy acquittal but Fentry is the lone jury member who holds out for a guilty verdict so that a mistrial results.

Tomorrow was first published in 1940 in *The Saturday Evening Post* and later in a collection of Faulkner stories, *Knight's Gambit*. Horton Foote first adapted *Tomorrow* for television's Playhouse 90 in 1960. Although the play is faithful to Faulkner's story, most of the details of Fentry's life with the woman and all of the dialogue were created by Foote. This success prompted a theatrical production of the work. The play opened in 1968 with a little-known actor named Robert Duvall playing the lead. Two film producers in the audience on opening night decided to make a film using Foote's screenplay and Robert Duvall. Despite a limited distribution, the film was a critical success. *Tomorrow* was recently released on DVD, with an extensive interview with Foote and Duvall, who claims that the role of Fentry is his very favorite.

Horton Foote's play *Tomorrow* can be obtained today at Backstage Books, 545 8th St. SE, Washington, DC (Eastern Market metro stop). Call Backstage Books first (202-544-5744) to pick up a copy of the play; if reserving a copy, please be sure to pick it up.

Quotidian Theatre Company (www.quotidiantheatre.org), performing at The Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh Street in Bethesda, is currently producing *Tomorrow*, to excellent reviews. (See Footlighter Debbie Minter Jackson's review-<http://dctheatrereviews.com/review/2006/11/19/tomorrow/>) Remaining performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. with an added Saturday matinee on December 9 at 2 p.m. through December 10. Regular tickets are \$20 at the door (\$5 discount for Senior/Students). To make reservations contact quotidiantheatre@comcast.net or 301-816-1023. Footlights saw *Tomorrow* on November 18.

Jack Sbarbori, co-founder, with Stephanie Mumford, of Quotidian Theatre Company, and director of *Tomorrow*, will be our guest speaker on December 7. Several cast members are expected to attend, as well. John Glynn 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. Please note: If you find you must cancel your reservation, please call (do not e-mail) Mark before noon on December 7, otherwise you are responsible for the cost of your dinner. We will have chairs for people who want to come for the discussion only.

Noises Off in January

"I suppose the things that I've had most difficulties with have been plays, *Noises Off*, *Copenhagen* and *Democracy*. I had a great struggle with each of them and had to write many, many drafts. It's very compact, the plays, the plays are very short, I mean even the longest play is very short compared with a novel, you can't hang around, you have to get going."— so says **Michael Frayn**, award winning author of many plays, novels, essays and screenplays. Those three plays are perhaps his most famous. Footlights has discussed and seen *Copenhagen* (February 2002). Later this season, we will discuss *Democracy*. But to start the new year off on a hilarious note, we will enjoy Michael Frayn's farce masterpiece. *Noises Off* presents the story of a hapless English acting troupe who are touring a production of a farce called *Nothing On*. Expect lots of doors slamming, sexual dalliances, confusions, and, of course, plates of sardines. The encompassing story about the acting troupe is every bit as convoluted. The questions about the actors—who's in love with whom, who doesn't know what, why is everyone angry—are every bit as deep (and irrelevant) as the questions about the characters they portray.

We will meet on **Monday, January 8**, 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. 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. We will start taking reservations on December 7 at the end of our discussion.

Go See *Noises Off*

We will see *Noises Off* on **Tuesday, January 23**, at **7:30 p.m.** at Arena Stage (Kreeger), 1101 Sixth Street, SW. Tickets are \$40.25 - a 30% discount. Send your check, payable to "Footlights" to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852. We must receive payment by January 8 (also the date of our meeting). Contact Robin at robinlarkin@comcast.net or 301-897-9314.

Footlights News

We congratulate our own Footlights Board member, Mary Jean (MJ) Schmelzer on her recent marriage to Paul Hoekstra. Much happiness to you both!

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

- Thursday, December 7, 6:30 p.m., dinner discussion of *Tomorrow* at **Casa Fiesta**, 4910 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC (202-244-8888). Dinner: \$14, includes tax and tip. Suggested donation to Footlights: \$5.
- Monday, January 8, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Noises Off* at Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD (301-657-9133). Dinner: \$12, includes tax and tip. Suggested donation to Footlights: \$5.
- Tuesday, January 23, 7:30 p.m., performance of *Noises Off* at Arena Stage (Kreeger), 1101 Sixth Street, SW. Tickets are \$40.25. Deadline for payment: January 8.

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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