

from the FOOTLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2006

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* on February 15 at Casa Fiesta

On **Wednesday, February 15** the subject of Footlights' dinner-discussion is *Death and the King's Horseman* by **Wole Soyinka**. We meet at **Casa Fiesta** for dinner at 6:30 p.m.; the discussion begins at 7:30. Call Mark Gruenberg, 202-898-4825 or press_associates@yahoo.com to reserve.

Jerry Stilkind, our moderator, describes the play: This has English that we are not accustomed to hearing. We could make it more familiar by calling it Shakespearean heightened language but that would be too simple. Soyinka seems to feel he needs this language to express the proper way of moving from this world to one unseen but known to exist. Not simply the proper way for an individual but for one who has a privileged position in this world and, therefore, the responsibility of moving on in such a way as to maintain the stability of life here and there.

And then the words have to flow from bodies that may be moving, consciously or not, to the drumming in the ritual of passing from here to there. Is it possible to stage such a thing? Can a director, actors and scene, costume and lighting designers of an inventive but smaller theater with a limited budget put the language, music and movement together into an integrated whole? We, like the theater people themselves, will find out.

We can see further than most audiences into the huge creative process taking place at the Washington Shakespeare Company in Arlington because we will hear the director of the play and the artistic director of the theater tell us about it, answer questions we may have, then we will go see the play, and, finally, talk with the cast afterwards.

Soyinka wrote this play in 1975 and based it somewhat on an incident in 1946 in Oyo, a Yoruba city in Nigeria, then ruled by the British. In the citation for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986, the Swedish Academy stated he was "one of the finest poetical playwrights that have written in English."

Our guests will be **John Vreeke**, director of WSC's production of *Death and the King's Horseman*, and **Christopher Henley**, one of the founders of WSC and its artistic director since 1996.

We'll see *Death and the King's Horseman* at WSC (Clark Street Playhouse), on **Sunday, February 19, at 2 p.m.** Tickets are \$15. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852.

***The Sins of Sor Juana* by Karen Zacarías on Monday, April 3 at Alfio's**

If ever there lived a woman in nun's cloth, who defied authority and lived a life of free thinking, that was Mexican poet Sor Juana. A genius and pioneer for educating women, Sor Juana was a 17th century poet, an illegitimate child and a recognized prodigy, who risked her life during the Inquisition, by beguiling, out-arguing and outwitting the mediocre minds over her. Her passion to collect books and write poetry prevailed. She reinvented poetry to express her exuberant love of life on earth and affirm herself as an alive individual, until she was forced to stop. Imagine Emily Dickinson transcending the limitations of the 17th century. Centuries ahead of her time, Sor Juana came to represent a woman's rights to education, intellectual pursuits, and secular writing. The miracle is that her poetry and brilliant essays have survived.

Los Pecados De Sor Juana (The Sins of Sor Juana), explores two turning points in this woman's life. **Karen Zacarías'** play has won the 2000 Helen Hayes Award, the Charles MacArthur Prize for Outstanding New Play, and the Hispanic Playwrights Project, South Coast Repertory Theatre.

Join us for Footlights' dinner-discussion with Washington D.C. based playwright **Karen Zacarías**, the production director **Abel López**, and GALA's Managing Director **Rebecca Medrano**, hosted by Rosalind Lacy MacLennan, on **Monday, April 3**, at **Alfio's**. The play is available in English but performed at the GALA Hispanic Theatre in Spanish with (beautifully clear) English surtitles. We will see *The Sins of Sor Juana* at GALA early in May.

August Wilson's *Radio Golf* on April 19 at Casa Fiesta

Radio Golf is the last play in the late August Wilson's cycle of 10 dramas about African American life, each set in a decade of the 20th century. Wilson died in October at age 60. Beatrice Rouse will moderate a panel to discuss the play and Wilson's legacy. We will meet at Casa Fiesta on **Thursday, April 19**. Our guests will be **Eric Ruffin**, head of Howard University's directing program; **Sandra Shannon**, author of many books and articles on Wilson; and **Otis Ramsey-Zoë**, literary manager at CENTERSTAGE, where *Radio Golf* will be staged from March 24 to April 30.

We will see *Radio Golf* at CENTERSTAGE on Sunday, April 23 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$41.

Robin Larkin *for* FOOTLIGHTS
5403 Nibud Court
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Who's Who on the Footlights Board?

Mark Gruenberg, President
John Glynn, Secretary
Robin Larkin, Treasurer – theater trip coordinator,
newsletter editor
Charlotte Baer
Phyllis Bodin – restaurant site coordinator
Rosalind Lacy MacLennan
Beatrice Rouse – bookstores, copies of plays
Mary Jean (MJ) Schmelzer – web and list coordinator
Jerry Stilkind

The Footlights Board of Directors, with the help of many member volunteers keeps Footlights on. We always appreciate assistance from our members. Specifically, we

welcome:

- suggestions for suitable restaurants to hold our meetings
- help with check-in at meetings
- help with the newsletter
- volunteer to moderate a discussion
- find speakers
- read plays for potential discussions
- arrange theater trips
- arrange pre- or post-theater group meals

Member News Footlights is sad to report that Gilda Morse, longtime member of Footlights, died on January 24, 2006. Our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends.

Calendar

- Wednesday, February 15, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Death and the King's Horseman* at Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave, NW. Buffet is \$14, including tax and tip.
- Sunday, February 19, 2 p.m., see *Death and the King's Horseman* at Washington Shakespeare Company, Clark St Playhouse, 601 S. Clark St., Crystal City (Arlington). Tickets: \$15
- Monday, April 3, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *The Sins of Sor Juana* at Alfio's, Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Ave, Chevy Chase, MD. \$12 dinner includes tax and tip.
- Wednesday, April 19, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Radio Golf* at Casa Fiesta.
- Sunday, April 23, 2 p.m., performance of *Radio Golf* at CENTERSTAGE, 700 N Calvert St, Baltimore. Tickets: \$41
- May - date tbd, performance of *The Sins of Sor Juana* at GALA Theatre-Tivoli, 3333 14th Street, NW

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

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.