

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

JULY 2007

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## Democracy

The most intelligent and gripping new English drama since Frayn's last stage outing with *Copenhagen*. A first-rate spy story and . . . a piece of rare ambition."

—Charles Spencer, *The Daily Telegraph*

"Anyone who mourns the disappearance of leaders with real civility and magnetism—or of topical dramas with the same attributes—will be buoyed by [this] extraordinary play . . . *Democracy* is not another game of Cold War cat-and-mouse. It's really a play about loyalty, one that, in a satisfying way, ends up testing ours."

—Peter Marks, *The Washington Post*

"[*Democracy*] achieves something close to impossible. It fascinates you with the ins and outs, ups and downs, of German politics: not in the Hitler era, not in the chaos of the 1920s, but in the supposedly boring 1970s."

—Benedict Nightingale, *The New York Times*

What was it like when the course of the Cold War was starting to shift? When West Germany was starting to open to the East? And when its chancellor, Willy Brandt, was leading that drive, with the assistance of top aide Günter Guillaume who — unknown to Brandt — was an East German spy?

Michael Frayn's play *Democracy* explores those complex issues of "Ostpolitik," as Brandt called it, and that time. This will be the third Frayn play we've explored — the others being *Copenhagen* and *Noises Off*. Basing his play in factual, but mysterious events much as Frayn did in *Copenhagen*, *Democracy* re-imagines those interactions between Willy Brandt and his devoted personal assistant Günter Guillaume, who is no less devoted to his other role as a spy.

Footlights will explore it, too, with **Jim Petosa**, Olney Theatre Center's artistic director, and director of Olney's upcoming production of *Democracy* (plays July 18-August 12), at our dinner-discussion on **Thursday, July 5**. Jim Petosa is Footlights' most frequent guest speaker. It is always a pleasure to meet with him.

Our dinner-discussion of *Democracy* takes place at **Alfio's**, in the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD (301-657-9133), two blocks from the

Friendship Heights Metro. Dinner is prix fixe at \$12/pp and includes choice of five entrees, salad, bread and butter, non-alcoholic beverages and spumoni ice cream. The \$12 cost includes dinner and tip—cash or check payable to 'Footlights.' A \$5 donation to Footlights is suggested. Dinner is at 6:30; the discussion begins at 7:30. We will have extra chairs if you want to come for the discussion only. Valet or street parking is available.

For dinner discussion reservations, call Mark Gruenberg, 202-898-4825, or e-mail [press\\_associates@yahoo.com](mailto:press_associates@yahoo.com). If you must cancel, call Mark by noon on July 5, so we have an accurate count of dinner reservations.

## Democracy at Olney Theatre Center

Footlights will see *Democracy* at Olney Theatre, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road in Olney, Maryland on **Saturday, July 21 at 2 p.m.** Tickets are \$35 and include a special post-show discussion arranged by the German Embassy. The deadline for payment is July 13. Make your check payable to 'Footlights.' Send to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852. Call or e-mail Robin to say your check is on the way at 240-669-6300 or [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net).

## Reading Democracy

Frayn's *Democracy* can be obtained at Backstage Books (202-544-5744), 545 8th St. SE, Washington, DC (Eastern Market blue line metro stop). There are still some copies available from the latest order. In any event, if you are going to pick up a copy of the play, Call first to make sure books are in stock. Copies of *Democracy* may be available also from your library.

## Support Footlights

To join our e-mail discussion list, send any message to [footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Or browse to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>.

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.

## Next Season at Footlights

What would you like to see and discuss next season? Would you like to lead a discussion of a favorite play? Find speakers? Arrange theater trips? Find restaurants suitable for our dinner-discussions? Edit or produce our newsletter?

Bring your ideas to any of our Footlights Board members—Mark Gruenberg, *President*, John Glynn, *Secretary*, Robin Larkin, *Treasurer*, Charlotte Baer, Phyllis Bodin, Rosalind Lacy MacLennan, Beatrice Rouse and Jerry Stilkind.

We will start Footlights' twelfth season on **Monday, September 17** with a dinner-discussion of *Caligula* by the great French existentialist author **Albert Camus**. *Caligula* tells the famous story of the scandalous Roman emperor to explore questions of conflicts between youth and old age, and between individual freedom and absolute power. Our guest will be **Christopher Henley**, artistic director of the Washington Shakespeare Company. We meet at Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave., NW, DC. (202-244-8888).

We'll see *Caligula* at WSC (Clark St Playhouse), 601 S. Clark St., Crystal City (Arlington), VA (703-418-4808) on Sunday, October 21 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15.

## Calendar

- Thursday, July 5, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Democracy* at Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD.
- Saturday, July 21, 2 p.m., performance of *Democracy* at Olney Theatre Center, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd, Olney MD. Tickets are \$35.
- Monday, September 17, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *Caligula* at Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave., NW, DC.
- Sunday, October 21, 2 p.m., performance of *Caligula* at Washington Shakespeare Company (Clark St Playhouse), 601 S. Clark St, Crystal City, VA. Tickets are \$15.

**Dinner-discussion reservations:** Reserve with Mark Gruenberg, 202-898-4825 or [press\\_associates@yahoo.com](mailto:press_associates@yahoo.com).

**Theater tickets:** Robin Larkin, 240-669-6300 or [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net). Make check payable to 'Footlights.' Send to Robin Larkin, 5403 Nibud Ct, Rockville, MD 20852.

Robin Larkin *for* FOOTLIGHTS  
5403 Nibud Court  
Rockville, MD 20852