

from the FOOTLIGHTS

JUNE 2012

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Discussion of Anthony Shaffer's *Sleuth* on June 11 with Jim Petosa

Join us on **Monday, June 11** when we meet to discuss **Anthony Shaffer's** play *Sleuth* with our friend and most frequent Footlights guest, **Jim Petosa**, who is directing *Sleuth*, his last assignment at Olney Theatre – sadly for us.

Anthony Shaffer (1926-2001) was fascinated by crime and detective stories, games, game-playing, and riddles, as was his good friend Stephen Sondheim (on whom the elder of the two characters in the play is said to be loosely based). *Sleuth* has just two characters – an immensely wealthy, vain, and successful mystery writer, and his next door neighbor (whom he has discovered is his wife's lover). They contrive to keep the audience puzzled, misled, and amused for the duration of this award-winning work. The plot involves a jewel robbery, which is supposed to end in a perfect murder, but which becomes a cat-and-mouse game as the two try to out think each other.

Sleuth ran for eight years on the London stage and was a sensation when it reached Broadway in 1970. It won a Tony for Best Play, became a film in 1972 with Laurence Olivier as the writer and Michael Caine as the lover – screenplay by Shaffer – and then was filmed again in 2007 with Michael Caine as the writer and Jude Law as the lover. This time the screenplay was written by Harold Pinter. (To watch the 1972 film online, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=27bPOV76wcU>.)

Shaffer had already been a successful lawyer, and also an ad executive, when his twin brother Peter, a playwright – *Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Equus*, *Amadeus* – persuaded him to try his hand at writing a play instead of another TV commercial. The result was *Sleuth*. This play has probably been performed somewhere in the world every day since he wrote it. Both brothers have written successful screenplays for films, and they collaborated on several detective novels, under the pen name of 'Peter Anthony.'

Our speaker **Jim Petosa** came to Olney in 1985, when it was essentially still a summer theater. He will leave Olney Theatre Center in August of this year with a new main stage, an intimate theater lab, an outdoor amphitheater for summer performances, housing for visiting artists, a ten-month schedule of plays, and

What do these 13 plays have in common?

Shadowlands by William Nicholson

Beckett by Jean Anouilh

Racing Demon by David Hare

The Road to Mecca by Athol Fugard

Collected Stories by Donald Margulies

The Madwoman of Chailot by Jean Giraudoux

'Art' by Yasmina Reza

Saint Joan by George Bernard Shaw

The Elephant Man by Bernard Pomerance

Democracy by Michael Frayn

Trumpery by Peter Parnell

Opus by Michael Hollinger

Sleuth by Anthony Shaffer

Give up?

Come find out on Monday, June 11.

money in the bank. Jim has been the artistic and educational leader of the Boston University School of Theatre since 2002, and was recently named Artistic Director of New Repertory Theatre in Watertown, Massachusetts. In his years in our area he has been Artist-in-Residence at George Washington University, and Guest Artist at Georgetown, Wolf Trap, and Smithsonian. He has directed plays for Woolly Mammoth, Theatre J, Round House, Studio, Rep Stage, and others. He has served as a faculty member at Catholic University (his alma mater) and been a Visiting Professor at Middlebury College in Vermont.

Jim last spoke to Footlights in June of 2011, when he was directing *Opus* at Olney. He shared stagecraft secrets about such problems as how to make a fake prop violin look so real inside and out that when the stage directions call for the 'priceless' instrument to be smashed on stage the audience will gasp in shock. Which they did!

Make reservations for June 11 with Phyllis Bodin, 301-986-1768 or Phylbo@verizon.net. We'll meet at **Alfio's**. Dinner is at 6:30; the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends by 9 - 9:30. Alfio's Trattoria is located on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. The restaurant is two blocks from the Friendship Heights metro station on the red line. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free.

The cost for dinner is only \$13 for salad, bread, choice among six entrees, ice cream, and coffee or tea, and the price includes tax and tip. Cash or check, no credit cards, please. We appreciate a \$5 contribution to Footlights. Wine, beer, and cocktails are available from the bar. If you have to cancel please let Phyllis know no later than noon on June 11.

Read the play. Copies of *Sleuth* may be found in local libraries, bookstores (call first) or ordered online from amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, dramatists.com, etc.

See the play. Footlights will see *Sleuth* on Saturday, June 16, 2 p.m., at Olney Theatre Center, 2001

Olney-Sandy Spring Rd. Olney, MD 20832. Our tickets are \$30 and include a post show discussion. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L07, Rockville, MD 10852. Let Robin know your check is on the way - 240-669-6300 or robinlarkin@comcast.net.

About Footlights

To learn more about Footlights, visit our website: <http://www.footlightsdc.org>. To subscribe to our e-list, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>, or e-mail footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Calendar

- Monday, June 11, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of Anthony Shaffer's *Sleuth* with director **Jim Petosa**. At **Alfio's**, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, 301 986-1768 or Phylbo@verizon.net.
- Saturday, June 16, 2 p.m., performance of *Sleuth* at Olney Theatre Center, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd. Olney, MD 20832. Reserve with Robin Larkin, 240-669-6300 or robinlarkin@comcast.net. Tickets for Footlights are \$30.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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