

EUGENE O'NEILL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Long-awaited O'Neill biography by Gelbs is in press

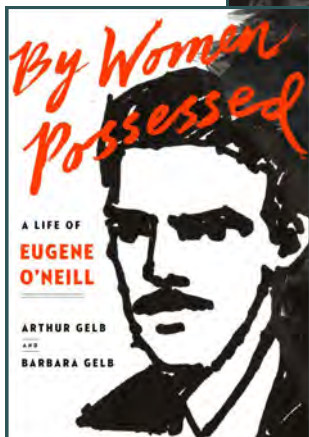
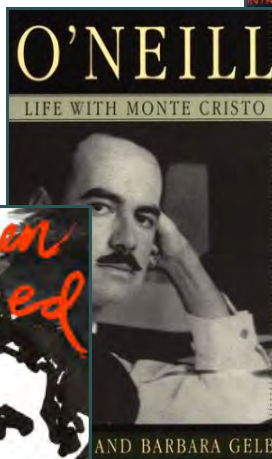
By Jo Morello

By *Women Possessed*, Arthur and Barbara Gelb's biography of Eugene O'Neill, will be released on November 1 according to the publisher, Marian Wood Books/Putnam. It is the third O'Neill biography by the Gelbs, who won critical acclaim for their seminal work in 1956 and subsequent revision in 2002. There is a hint in the title of the newest book that this one will be different: O'Neill's name has been superseded by the authors' overview of the famous playwright.

Here are excerpts from the publisher's release: "One is dragged into the very presence of a genius and made to feel his awful size," cautioned Arthur Miller, commenting on Arthur and Barbara Gelb's highly praised first exploration of the life and work of the tormented playwright. The accolades won in his lifetime battle to transform American theater seemed to be both compliment and warning.

"Beyond the friends and colleagues, and ... the plays themselves, there was little else by which to know the man behind the curtain when the Gelbs first began their research. In the dec-

ades that followed, much new material came to light and became the focus



1956, 1974

of their second book on O'Neill. But it was not

until letters and diaries belonging to O'Neill and his third wife Carlotta Monterey were released that a more fully rounded picture of

O'Neill could emerge. Readers ... will find it is worth the wait.

"*By Women Possessed* opens in 1928 as *Strange Interlude* debuts on Broadway to stunning reviews. In eleven days, Eugene O'Neill and Carlotta Monterey will be eloping to France. ... Monterey was to introduce O'Neill to the finer things in life ... and O'Neill— handsome, charming, dangerous— would take Monterey to the borderline where creativity and madness collide. Their monumental quarrels became the stuff of legend. Yet, after his death in 1953, when it seemed O'Neill had faded from the public eye, it

(Continued on page 2)

May 2016

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Biography: By Women Possessed

***By Women Possessed*, extensive O'Neill biography, set for November 1 release; culminates six decades of dedication by biographers Arthur and Barbara Gelb**

by Jo Morello

Shortly after their honeymoon in 1946, newlyweds Arthur and Barbara Gelb splurged on orchestra seats for *The Iceman Cometh*. "Our shared admiration for O'Neill had never flagged and, while we were both too young to have seen an original O'Neill production, we had faithfully read all the published plays," wrote Arthur in [The City Room](#). The book, a memoir of his days as managing editor (and other positions) at *The New York Times*, documents this landmark event. It marked the unofficial start of a literary triangle that would endure for almost seven decades for Arthur, who died in 2014, and still continues for Barbara, Arthur's partner in life and literature.

"Both have been devotees of O'Neill since their teens," wrote Peter McDermott in [Irish Echo in 2011](#). "Barbara Gelb's stepfather, the noted playwright S. N. Behrman, arranged for her to meet the great man at a rehearsal. 'I shook his hand,' she said.



Arthur & Barbara Gelb

'He was quite frail already at that time.'" Arthur said, "The first gift that Barbara gave me was *The Collected Plays of Eugene O'Neill*." Later O'Neill's third wife, Carlotta, would agree to be interviewed by Arthur and Barbara for their books on her late husband.

In the late '50s Harpers asked NYT theater critic Brooks Atkinson about a biography of O'Neill. Deferring because of his age, Atkinson passed the torch to the Gelbs. "We barely thought twice," Arthur wrote in *The City Room*. They planned to spend two years documenting the first half of O'Neill's life. Instead it took over five

years and left the young couple \$30,000 in debt—but their seminal biography, simply titled *O'Neill*, was published in 1962 to critical acclaim and presumably set their finances back in order.

As new material and resources became available, they wrote an updated revision, *Life with Monte Cristo*, in 2000 and eventually, as even more resources opened to them, they began work on the long-awaited volume. Over the years they have become authorities on O'Neill, writing [dozens of articles](#), appearing on [Charlie Rose](#) and other programs and co-authoring [Eugene O'Neill: A Documentary Film](#).

O'Neillians have appreciated the Gelbs: the Eugene O'Neill Society presented the Eugene O'Neill Medallion to them in 1995, the Foundation bestowed the Tao House Award in 1996 and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center awarded the Monte Cristo Award in 2005.

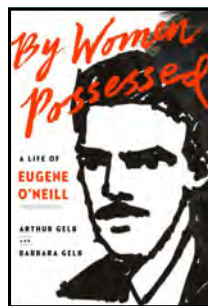
By Women Possessed: tour of a magical moment

(Continued from page 1)

was Monterey's canny decisions that revived his reputation. ... [S]he chose who would mount the revival of *The Iceman Cometh* and the premiere of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* that guaranteed O'Neill a permanent place in the theater.

"Seasoned by a lifetime of experience with their subject, the Gelbs' final work offers a masterly portrait of an emotionally damaged virtuoso and his troubled marriage.

"*By Women Possessed* is a tour through both a magical moment in American theater and the troubled life of a genius. Just over 125 years after his birth, O'Neill is a towering presence in the theater, his work—always in performance here and abroad—still electrifying audiences. Perhaps of equal importance, he is the acknowledged father of modern American theater, [but] at a cost. As Tennessee Williams said, 'O'Neill gave birth to the American theater and died for it.'"



By Women Possessed: Cover Story
by Barbara Gelb

The jacket image is a painting of Eugene O'Neill in black and white by the prominent American artist, Alex Katz. It's a gift to us in memory of Katz's friendship with Arthur.

Available Nov. 1, 2016. Marian Wood Books/Putnam. In hard cover and Kindle. 896 pages with illustrations.



A Message from Society president J. Chris Westgate

Dear O'Neillians,

As I write this letter, I am still brimming with enthusiasm from the Comparative Drama Conference in Baltimore in early April. Although much about the conference was enjoyable, the highpoint was the attendance of Tony Kushner, the keynote speaker. He was also part of a roundtable organized by David Palmer, "Representations of Eugene O'Neill: Fiction, Autobiography, and Adaptation." Other participants were past Society presidents Jackson Bryer and Jeff Kennedy, vice president Rob Dowling, *The Review* editor Dave King, and secretary/treasurer Beth Wynstra. It was an engaging discussion of the ways in which O'Neill's image has been shaped by plays, by biographies including Arthur and Barbara Gelb's forthcoming *By Women Possessed*, by photography, and by the ways we teach O'Neill. A version of these excellent presentations will appear in *The Eugene O'Neill Review*.

When we weren't discussing representations of O'Neill with Kushner, the O'Neillians were hard at work with Society business, including a meeting with Diana Pesek of Penn State University Press, who described



Beth Wynstra, Robert M. Dowling and Tony Kushner participate in a Society-sponsored roundtable at the Comparative Drama Conference in Baltimore in early April.

the ways that Penn State is disseminating and marketing *The Eugene O'Neill Review*. We seem to have a great partner in Penn State.

Additionally, the Society elected Kurt Eisen to the board and re-elected Steve Bloom as the chair of the board, two decisions that are certainly welcome given the ways the Kurt and Steve have advanced O'Neill studies and the Society.

Finally, we took the Society meeting as an opportunity to honor Dave King for the superb work that he has done as the editor of *The Review*. As most of you know, Dave is stepping down at the end of this year and we will certainly miss him. Our thanks, Dave! Although the Executive Committee has not yet found Dave's replacement, Judith Barlow has agreed to guest-edit the spring 2017 issue of *The Review* so the journal is in good hands during this time of transition.

We have exciting news on another front, namely, the upcoming International O'Neill Conference in Ireland. The conference will be held on July 19-22, 2017 at the University of Galway, where Patrick Lonergan will host the Society. Nelson Ritschel has been

working closely with the Executive Committee in working out the logistics of this conference and sent a report that Rob Dowling delivered. First, Michael Higgins, president of Ireland, is a

huge O'Neill enthusiast and has committed not only to attend the conference but also to deliver a talk on O'Neill.



J. Christopher Westgate, new Society president, presents an overview.

Additionally, Nelson reports that Lonergan is hoping to entice the Druid Theater to do a production of an O'Neill play, which is an exciting possibility. And the dates of our conference coincide with the Galway Festival, which will provide plenty for all of us to do, see, and experience while we are in Ireland. For now, we need an estimate of attendance. Beth has emailed all of you asking you if you plan to attend. If you haven't responded yet, please do. We need the numbers to begin working on the conference budget.

While I am offering reminders, allow me a moment to ask you to renew your Society membership if you haven't already. At the CDC, Beth told us that membership is up slightly from this time last year, which is great! But we still need all of our members in good standing. If you haven't renewed yet, I urge you to do so soon. As always, you can renew online at the society website: <http://www.eugeneoneillsociety.org/>

I hope you had the chance to see
(Continued on page 4)



Eugene O'Neill Society holds annual meeting at CDC in Baltimore

By Beth Wynstra
Secretary/Treasurer

The Society held its annual board and business meeting in conjunction with the Comparative Drama Conference in Baltimore on April 2. Since the Eugene O'Neill Society website is under construction, we will mail meeting minutes to our members.



O'Neillians attending the annual meeting are vice president Robert M. Dowling and president J. Chris Westgate, seated. Standing behind them are secretary/treasurer Beth Wynstra, former president Jackson Bryer, playwright Tony Kushner, past president Jeff Kennedy and The Review editor William Davies King.

Here are some meeting highlights. Additional coverage of many items appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

- Past president Kurt Eisen was elected to the board of directors and Steve Bloom was re-elected as board chair .
- Our membership numbers are up slightly from last year! We ended 2015 with a slight surplus and are on target to do the same in 2016. The increase in membership dues and the change in structure of our membership levels seems to be helping. We also now receive a yearly royalty check from Penn State University Press for *The Eugene O'Neill Review*.

- Dave King was honored for his incredible work as editor of *The Eugene O'Neill Review*. The Society presented him with a commemorative plaque. Judi Barlow will be guest editing the first issue of 2017. More information about this issue will be coming soon.
- A progress report on the Eugene O'Neill International Conference in Galway, Ireland was presented for Nelson Ritschel, conference chair, who could not attend our meeting. The conference will be July 19-22 at the National University of Ireland, Galway.
- Jeff Kennedy presented the new logo for the Society which will be used on our new website. Our new website is currently under construction and should be up and running this summer.

Moderators for upcoming conferences include:

- 2017—Comparative Drama Conference, Orlando, Florida: Chris Westgate and David Palmer
- 2017—American Literature Association Conference: TBD
- 2018—Modern Language Association Conference, New York City: David Palmer

President's message (continued from page 2)

O'Neill's influence extends into second 100 years

Forrest Whitaker in *Hughie* before it closed in early April. If not, there's plenty of excitement for Jessica Lange and Gabriel Byrne in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, which Roundabout Theatre is presenting at American Airlines Theatre through June 26, along with many other productions described in *The Review*. In this centennial of O'Neill's first play, it is clear that productions of and scholarship on O'Neill are still going strong. It's even more exciting to realize that when we are in Ireland next year, it will be the begin-

ning of the next hundred years!

My thanks to Dave King for his work on *The Review* and to Judith Barlow for taking on the next issue. Thanks, too, to Jeff Kennedy for his ongoing work on O'Neill Facebook page and the re-design of the Society website. Thanks to Jo Morello for her tireless work in producing the *Newsletter*. And finally, thanks to Beth, Rob, and Steve who have been great to work with during these first few months of my time as President of the Society.

Welcome to our new members!

Susan Brown-Hartford, CT

Herman Farrell-Midway, KY

John Hagan- NY, NY

Ann Hall-Columbus, OH

James Pecora-Potsdam, NY

Barbara Voglino-Grand Island, FL



Parting Words from Editor of *The Eugene O'Neill Review*

By William Davies King

The upcoming issue of *The Eugene O'Neill Review* (37:2) will be my last as editor, and I am pleased to go out with a jointly edited issue, like a baton pass in a relay race. Our Society secretary/treasurer Beth Wynstra and I have assembled an issue largely devoted to the subject of how O'Neill as a character and O'Neill's extended family history as a plot have been used as the material of dramatic invention. How often has it been said (and not facetiously) that the best O'Neill play is the life story of O'Neill himself? Of course, a mover and shaper of that story was O'Neill, who learned a lot from his father about what makes a good story. Throughout his career O'Neill tried and tested himself as material for drama—selecting, editing, adapting—always pushing the leading edge of what plays can and should do.

At last, after the last play was marked as finished, and then after his life was finished, biographers, novelists, and scenographers took up the material, and O'Neill became a character. (Think Jack Nicholson leering at Diane Keaton in *Reds*.) The level of fascination with O'Neill as the material of drama has never fallen off. Before I ever met Beth Wynstra, about a decade ago, she had written a play about O'Neill and his women, which was eventually produced in several incarnations in conjunction with the Eugene O'Neill Foundation. The Foundation's Playwrights' Theatre also presented a full-length play about O'Neill by our *Newsletter* editor Jo Morello for its



Society president Chris Westgate, right, and secretary/treasurer Beth Wynstra honored William Davies King with a plaque in appreciation of his six years as editor of The Eugene O'Neill Review. He received the plaque at the Comparative Drama Conference in Baltimore in April.

tenth anniversary celebration. Jo has been working on this subject, in one-act and full-length form, for a number of years, and in the Winter 2013 *Newsletter* she addressed the topic. Tony Kushner got Eugene O'Neill to sing (operatically, with the help of Jeanine Tesori). And when at last I ventured into that sort of creation last year, with a little frame play for a production of *Exorcism*, it seemed clear at last that an issue of the *Review* might be devoted to such works.

Ronan Noone was wonderfully responsive to our suggestion that we publish his "downstairs" angle on the world of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, and so we have the privilege of premiering the full text of his play for publication. We also have dramatic ventures by Ms. Morello and Mr. Herman Farrell (recent Travis Bogard Fellow at Tao House), a monologue by Laura Shea (think of that famous photo of O'Neill at eleven on the

front porch of Monte Cristo Cottage), and a Tao House poem by Rupendra Guha Majumdar. David Palmer had the good sense to think that a Comparative Drama Conference panel might be organized on this topic, and he brought in some "usual suspects" and an "artist, not nothing," named Tony Kushner. The unfoldings of that panel are also featured in this issue.

And (as the vaudeville posters put it) SO MUCH MORE! My thanks go to Judith Barlow for taking the helm of this journal, if only for a moment, and my call goes out to all who read this article that feeding your journal with your creative and ingenious and merely workaday smart contributions is of vital importance to the future of O'Neill as a topic. Read on!—and write often!

Judith Barlow will edit *The Review* in 2017

Judith E. Barlow, Ph.D., will edit a special 2017 issue of *The Eugene O'Neill Review*, devoted to "The Women in O'Neill's World." Essays will explore colleagues who influenced or were influenced by O'Neill's work; family and friends who helped shape his career; and recurrent female archetypes in his plays. Articles investigating the relationships between the women in his life and his art are also welcome. A formal CFP will be issued this summer.

Dr. Barlow is Professor Emerita of English, Women's Studies, and Theatre at SUNY Albany. Her bio appears on page 13.



O'Neill is Bound East for Provincetown in his centennial year

by Stuard M. Derrick

One-hundred years ago, on July 28, 1916, the American theater took a giant, culturally inestimable stride into modern dramatic realism on a ramshackle wharf in a small fishing village at the end of Cape Cod with the debut of Eugene O'Neill's *Bound East for Cardiff*. In celebration of that historic evening, Provincetown will honor its visionary hometown playwright with an impressive array of readings, lectures, film, theatre, and exhibitions throughout this centenary year.



The casts of two short O'Neill plays, *Warnings* and *Fog*, pose for a photo in the Provincetown Library, where they read the two plays on March 15 as part of the O'Neill 100, celebrating the centennial of O'Neill's first production. PHOTO: MICHELE CLARK



John Andert embraces the body of Dian Hamilton in O'Neill's *Fog*, presented as part of the O'Neill 100.

The O'Neill 100, a series of readings of the playwright's shorter plays, commenced in January at the Provincetown Library with a double bill of *A Wife for a Life* and *The Web*. Other readings have included *Warnings* and *Fog* on March 15, *Abortion* and *The Movie Man* on April 19 and *The Sniper*

and *Before Breakfast* on May 17. The S.S. Glencairn cycle will sail into the library's Marc Jacobs Reading Room with *The Moon of the Caribbees* and *The Long Voyage Home* on June 21, followed by *In the Zone* and *Bound East for Cardiff* on July 19. Other readings include *Ile* and *The Rope* on August 16, *Shell Shock* and *The Dreamy Kid* on September 20, and *Where the Cross Is Made* and *Exorcism* on October 18.

A special feature of the O'Neill 100 series will be commentaries by O'Neill scholars and board members of the Eugene O'Neill International Society including Professor Robert M. Dowling, author of *Eugene O'Neill: A Life in Four Acts*; author and Professor Beth Wynstra; and Robert A. Richter, author of *Eugene O'Neill and Dat Ole Davil Sea*. The Provincetown Public Library is videotaping and archiving each month's readings, and the series

can be viewed on the library's website (www.provincetownlibrary.org).

On Wednesday, July 13, at 6 p.m. the Provincetown Writer's Voice Café, sponsored by the Provincetown Public Library, will host "Footprints in the Sand," a presentation by cultural critic and journalist Susan Rand Brown. The evening will focus on the anniversary of O'Neill's arrival in town and the "great Provincetown summer" of 1916, an emblematic season marked by the advent of Modernism in the arts and

theater. Ms. Rand Brown will present an illustrated overview of the town's formative artistic years, spanning the years from the arrival of *plein air* painter Charles Hawthorne to that of the founders of the influential Prov-



Paul E. Halley and Jane Macdonald read O'Neill's *Warnings* at Provincetown Library as part of the O'Neill 100.

PHOTOS: MICHELE CLARK

(Continued on page 8)

Asolo Rep presents enchanting *Ah, Wilderness!* in Sarasota

By Jo Morello

Asolo Repertory Theatre staged a minimalist production of Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* from January 20-April 10 in its elegant 500-seat auditorium, which was an interesting contrast with the play's simple staging. The production was directed by Greg Leaming, associate artistic director of Asolo Rep and director of Florida State University/Asolo Conservatory for actor training, which is closely affiliated with the professional company. Leaming cast five actors from the rep company, eight from third-year conservatory students, and the other two from Sarasota-area schools. He trimmed 40 minutes from the script (with permission), employed a skeletal set, used music for scene shifts, and staged a charming production that won hearts, audiences and raves. My review of this production will appear in the fall issue of *The Eugene O'Neill Review* (37:2).



Clockwise: 1) Members of the cast sing "Love's Old Sweet Song" to open *Ah, Wilderness!*. 2) Nat (David Breitbarth) and Sid (Doug Jones) discuss Richard's behavior. 3) The extended Miller family awaits Richard's return.

TampaRep stages *Iceman* from June 16-July 3

Tampa Repertory Theatre will produce Eugene O'Neill's landmark American drama *The Iceman Cometh* at Studio 120 on the University of South Florida campus from June 16 to July 3.

In his masterful *The Iceman Cometh*, O'Neill presents broken and lost men

and women, and the salesman with a pitch he says will save them from themselves. It's a story of hope and regret in a cheap ginmill on New York's lower West Side in 1912.



Theodore Hickman sells a pitch his friends don't want to hear.



From left: Larry Slade (Michael Mahoney), Don Parritt (Nick Hoop), Harry Hope (Ernie Rowland), the General (Tom Crutcher) and a sleeping drunk (C. David Frankel) brood in Harry Hope's saloon.

PHOTOS: DESIREE FANTAL

C. David Frankel, director, is founder of five-year-old Tampa Rep, which has earned a reputation for solid professional productions.

Long Day's Journey: many raves, some pans;

Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at American Airlines Theatre opened on April 25 to [mostly praise and some pans](#) from critics. The latest Tyrone family members—Jessica Lange, Gabriel Byrne, John Gallagher Jr., and Michael Shannon—are frequently singled out for noteworthy performances but some critics feel that they never become a family. Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* calls it a "[disjunctive production](#)" while Charles McNulty of the *Los Angeles Times* says it "[fails to connect](#)." Conversely, Marilyn Stasio of *Variety* calls it an "[outstanding revival](#)" and Jeremy Gerard of *Deadline* called it "spectral" and "[transfixing](#)."

The play runs through June 26.



The Great Provincetown Summer, 1916—and more

(Continued from page 6)

Provincetown Players, O'Neill's first theatrical home. (www.facebook.com/WritersVoiceCafe)

The prestigious Berta Walker Gallery will feature *Children of the Sea*, O'Neill's initial version of *Bound East for Cardiff* on Saturday, July 23, from 4 -6 p.m. The reading is a highlight of the gallery's featured summer exhibit, *Bound East for Provincetown*, which melds the extraordinary achievements of the artists, writers and actors who created American modern art, letters and theatre in Provincetown during the historic summers of 1915 and 1916. The reading will be followed by a wine and cheese reception for the actors and attendees. www.bertawalkergallery.com

The Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum will continue its program on "Bohemians, Radicals and Free Thinkers: The Great Provincetown Summer – 1916." Launched on April 1, the season-long exhibit presents objects, art and narrative about the remarkable summer that marked Provincetown's emergence as the nation's first arts colony. From 7-9 p.m. on Thursday, July 28, the Museum will



The Pilgrim Monument, seen in this 2005 photo, is a Provincetown landmark.

PHOTO: JO MORELLO

host a re-enactment of the evening of exactly 100 years earlier on Mary Heaton Vorse's wharf theater. The program will include readings of *The Game* by Louise Bryant, *Not Smart* by Wilbur Daniel Steele, and *Bound East for Cardiff*. Actors reading from the works of Vorse and Susan Glaspell will also be featured. This special evening will be preceded by a reception from 6-7 p.m. at the Museum. <http://www.pilgrim-monument.org>

In August, the Provincetown Art Asso-

ciation and Museum will host the debut of Provincetown-based director and screenwriter Arthur Egeli's *Eugene O'Neill*. The film is a re-imagining of O'Neill's life from his months at the Gaylord Farm Sanitarium in Wallingford, Connecticut, to his arrival in Provincetown and the production of *Bound East for Cardiff* as well as his ardent affair with Louise Bryant. www.paam.org.

Rounding out the yearlong O'Neill celebrations, from September 22 to 25 the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Festival will feature a program titled *Beyond Success: Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill*, featuring a South African adaptation of *Desire Under the Elms*. Brian Dennehy, noted for his critically acclaimed interpretations of O'Neill's characters, will be the Festival's guest of honor at their annual dinner on Saturday, June 4, which includes a conversation with the Tony Award-winning actor, led by Professor Robert M. Dowling (twptown.org).

Stuard M. Derrick has written extensively on the arts for Provincetown Magazine and the Provincetown Banner. He is the director and curator of the O'Neill 100 series at the Provincetown Library.

Norwegian play about O'Neill set for Ann Arbor on June 24-26

Ann Arbor Civic Theatre's A2CT Studio Series will present *And Give Us the Shadows*, a play by Lars Norén, considered Sweden's preeminent contemporary playwright. The play is set for June 24-26 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with Paul Bianchi directing. Marita Lindholm Gochman has

translated the script.

First staged in 1991, *And Give Us the Shadows* posits a fictitious birthday visit by O'Neill's sons Eugene Jr. and Shane to O'Neill's home in Marblehead Neck, MA. The play had its American premiere in 2013 at The Schoolhouse

Theater, Westchester County, NY.

(Ed. Note: The Eugene O'Neill Review published Michael C. O'Neill's review of the premiere production in 2015 (36: 1, 104-107). His review is also available on Project Muse (<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/578072>).



10th Eugene O'Neill International Society Conference set for July 19-22 in Galway with Ireland's president as keynote speaker

The Tenth Eugene O'Neill International Society Conference—for members and nonmembers—is fast becoming a reality says Nelson Ritschel, conference chair. The event will be held July 19-22 at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), hosted by Dr. Patrick Lonergan, Head of Drama at NUIG. Dr. Lonergan has been most accommodating and is enthusiastic about the conference.

Since NUIG maintains the Abbey Theatre's archives, he is planning an exhibit of Abbey O'Neill productions. He is also planning to entice the internationally acclaimed Druid Theatre, based in Galway, to stage an O'Neill play during the conference week. The Theatre has a history of O'Neill productions.

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, has confirmed that he will attend the Medallion Banquet on 21 July. As an O'Neill enthusiast, the President will deliver a lecture during the Banquet on O'Neill and the Irish tradition. An academic before turning to politics, President Higgins' literary knowledge is astounding. His lecture will be extremely memorable.

The Galway area offers literary day trips to Lady Augusta Gregory's Coole



Park estate and to nearby Thoor Ballylee Castle, once owned by W. B.



Yeats. Yeats and Gregory were founders and directors of the Abbey Theatre, with Yeats admiring O'Neill's work. Coole Park still features Gregory's Copper Beech autograph tree, which was signed by many Irish writers and artists during the 1900-1930 period. If O'Neill had visited Ireland during 1920s, he would have been required to carve his initials in the tree.

In addition to the events planned as part of the conference, we will be able to visit the numerous cultural events of the Galway International Arts Festival, which takes place during our conference week.

There are many hotels in and around Galway, and NUIG will have some dormitory space available for housing during the conference.

Dr. Lonergan is awaiting an attendance estimate in order to provide detailed cost analysis for the conference. Since President Higgins is attending the Banquet, that event may need to be held in an area hotel. The President will have a small entourage, which will need to be accommodated.

In addition, Dr. Lonergan anticipates a great deal of interest in the conference

among scholars in Ireland and the U.K. This should help to attract new Society members.

Conference chair Nelson Ritschel, Ph.D., is professor in the Department of Humanities at Massachusetts Maritime Academy and a noted authority on Ireland, its culture and especially its literary and dramatic heritage. To learn more about him, see <https://www.maritime.edu/profile/ritschel-nelson>

WHO DESERVES A MEDALLION?

We are in full preparation mode for the 10th Eugene O'Neill Society International Conference in Galway in July 2017. We are honored that Ireland's President Michael Higgins will be the keynote speaker at our banquet.

One of the highlights of the conference will be the awarding of the 2017 Eugene O'Neill Medallions, which we will present at the banquet. The Medallion honors distinguished scholars, theater professionals and others who have dedicated significant portions of their careers to furthering knowledge and appreciation of O'Neill.

We have received nominations for Medallion recipients and our board of directors is reviewing them carefully. We will select the Medallion winners from the list of nominees.



Bogard Artist-in-Residence Program names 2016 Tao House Fellows

By Gary Schaub

A scholar from France and a playwright from Pennsylvania have been selected by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation Board to be the 2016 Tao House fellows in the Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program at Tao House in Danville.



Valerie Joyce

Thierry Dubost, professor of English at the University of Caen, Normandy, France, will arrive in May to spend a month at Tao House working on a short biography of Eugene O'Neill in French, targeting readers, actors, directors, and theatre lovers who are interested in the life and works of Eugene O'Neill.

Valerie Joyce, associate professor in the Graduate Theatre Department at Villanova University, Pennsylvania, will work on revising her one-woman play and writing a chapter of a book, both projects focusing on African women's lives from the Colonial Period to the Civil War.

Professor Dubost's planned biography of O'Neill will focus on the playwright's life. Each play will be set within the author's creative context and summarized so readers have an understanding of the themes and aesthetic achievements of the playwright. Dubost says, "Selecting photos from the Foundation's library will be the first purpose of my stay.... Photos would enable French readers to have a visual entry into the staging of O'Neill's works. Visual aspects of the stagings are essential. Through illustrations, readers will have an adequate



Thierry Dubost

outlook on O'Neill's works. This means including photos of his staged works—first productions or significant pictures of later productions."

Dubost also looks forward to reading the entire collection of O'Neill's letters in the library, starting with those written in France, then all his letters in order to find O'Neill's remarks about France and French art. He plans to select letters for the second part of the book and translate them on returning to France.

He added, "I have decided to write this book because there is no French equivalent to what I intend to do. Eugene O'Neill is hardly ever played in France for various reasons. For some plays, as in the United States, the plays are not produced because they are not major dramatic achievements and are unlikely to draw crowds. . . . Conversely, I feel that many great plays are simply left aside because directors do not have the biographical and aesthetic background which could help them situate each work within a whole dramatic spectrum.... I believe the book will benefit the whole theatre community.... Once the book is

published in French, I hope directors will have a better understanding of the playwright and his works, which would probably lead to updated translations."

Dubost, a board member of the Eugene O'Neill International Society, is the author of *Struggle, Defeat or Rebirth: Eugene O'Neill's Vision of Humanity*, as well as *The Plays of*

Thomas Kilroy, an Irish playwright whom many critics associate with Pirandello. He is editor or co-editor of six books mainly focused on theatre and is a regular contributor to *The Eugene O'Neill Review*.

While at Tao House Professor Joyce plans to work on two aspects of her project titled *I Will Speak for Myself*. "This project intertwines a full-length play with a scholarly manuscript about African-American women and embodied performance," Joyce says.

Her first task will be to revise and refine her one-woman play, which portrays sixteen African American women's lives from the Colonial period to the Civil War.

"The text and performance breathe life into slave narratives, personal letters, memoirs, diary entries, court records, poems, public addresses, and newspaper advertisements to share the voices and experiences of long-forgotten women. Although I traverse two hundred years of African American women's history, the monologues

(Continued on page 11)



Fellows focus on books, one in French, one about African American women

(Continued from page 10)

I wrote are not vague overviews of historical periods. Instead, each character experiences a moment: a catalyzing, crystallizing, singular moment that reflects the broader historical context as it relates to one woman's life, breathing life into her story," Joyce says.

The play has been presented in Pennsylvania and Maryland, where Joyce experimented and focused on form and content. At Tao House she will revise the text, as she plans to take the play to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August.

Professor Joyce also hopes to complete a chapter of her book, *Embodied Performance and African American Women, 1649-1865: A Living Historiography* (under contract to a publisher), which documents and vivifies the long-forgotten early American black women in the play.

Ellen Craft, a slave in Macon, who with her husband became a celebrity after a daring escape in 1848, will be the



Tao House was home to the O'Neills from 1937 to 1944.

topic of the chapter Joyce plans to write at Tao House. "This 'living historiography' offers a roadmap for contemporary scholars to recover and reintegrate those lives and histories into our dominant narratives ... providing compelling texts for performers of every level," Joyce said.

Professor Joyce has directed many plays and has written, directed and designed *I Will Speak for Myself* (Beacon Theatre Company). She co-conceived, directed, choreographed and designed, *(Dis)Embodied Voices*, (Mainstay Arts Center, MD) and *To Sirloin with Love: a Meat Opera* (NYC Fringe Festival). She is a member of the American Society of Theatre Research, Association for Theatre in

Higher Education, American Theatre and Drama Society, Women and Theatre Program, Society for Early Americans, Mid America Theatre Conference and American Literature Association, and has written and lectured extensively on the history of black women.

Tao House Fellows last year were a scholar and two playwrights: professor David Palmer of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and playwrights, Herman Farrell III from the University of Kentucky, and Adrienne Earl Pender from North Carolina. All lauded the experience that allowed them to work in the creative atmosphere in which Eugene O'Neill wrote his masterpieces. The program, open to artists, scholars or critics of the performing arts, is named for the late Travis Bogard, professor of Dramatic Arts at UC Berkeley and the O'Neill Foundation's first artistic director.

The Artist in Residence is a program of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation www.eugenoneill.org, run in association with the National Park Service at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site.

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Eugene O'Neill Foundation presents a Season of Firsts

By Gary Schaub

As part of its celebration of this year as the 100th anniversary of a production of a play by the playwright known as “The Father of American Drama,” the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House in Danville, has scheduled “A Season of Firsts.” Tao House in the Danville Hills was home to Eugene O'Neill and his wife, Carlotta, from 1937-1944. It was here that O'Neill wrote his last and greatest plays, so it's fitting to observe his triumphs here.

In July 1916 in Provincetown, Massachusetts, *Bound East for Cardiff* marked the first production of an O'Neill play, of fifty-one plays by the playwright who later was awarded four Pulitzer Prizes for drama and was the first—and still the only—American playwright to be honored with the Nobel Prize. To recognize the beginning of his significant journey, the Eugene O'Neill Foundation will present *Bound East for Cardiff* in the Old Barn at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site that encompasses Tao House on July 30-31.

“We thought it important to recognize the centennial of O'Neill plays with several special productions during 2016,” says Eric Fraisher Hayes, director of artistic programs for the O'Neill Foundation. “Eugene O'Neill brought many innovations to the American theatre, and we want to honor that during this special year with several important firsts.”



O'Neill's plays often feature the desire to escape life's disappointments (and sometimes responsibilities). No place is more symbolically linked with this longing for release than the barroom, whether in The Iceman Cometh or The Long Voyage Home. O'Neill chose lively songs for the plays and some will be featured in the revue O'Neill: The Rhythms of His Soul.

“Throughout 2016 our programs will focus on a series of firsts for O'Neill and the American Theatre,” he adds. In early January, the O'Neill Foundation presented *Beyond the Horizon* in a staged reading at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. This is the play that earned O'Neill the first of three Pulitzer Prizes for drama and opened the doors to Broadway.

On April 30-May 1 and May 14-15 in the Old Barn at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site in Danville, the Foundation presented *O'Neill: The Rhythms of His Soul*, a lively musical revue devised by Foundation Director-Emeritus Dan Cawthon. The production includes early American popular music, well-known songs of the day, songs of the sea, and familiar music hall tunes. With a cast of five singers and dancers, *O'Neill: Rhythms of His Soul* presents over seventy songs of the period, which O'Neill incorpo-

rated into many of his plays. The revue, directed by Rachel Robinson, is based on *The Eugene O'Neill Song Book*, published in 1993 by Travis Bogard. An Afterglow Gala benefit for the Foundation was part of the May 14 evening.

In September and October, the 17th annual Eugene O'Neill Festival will feature O'Neill's *The*

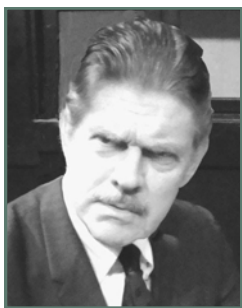
Emperor Jones. The original production in 1920 featured African-American actor Charles Gilpin in the leading role. This was a first for the American theater. The Foundation will present seven performances in the Old Barn at Tao House.

Also, as part of the Eugene O'Neill Festival, the Foundation will again partner with Role Players Ensemble of Danville for a production of Edward Albee's prize-winning play *Seascape*. This will be presented at the Village Theatre in downtown Danville in September.

In addition to its public performances, the Eugene O'Neill Foundation will continue its student educational programs of Student Days at Tao House in March, and the Travis Bogard Artist in Residence program for writers and scholars later in the year.



Meet some O'Neillians who contributed their talent to this issue



William Davies King has recently put together [Long Day's Journey Into Night: Multimedia Edition](#) for Yale University Press, which

follows on his 2014 "critical edition." He is currently working on a critical edition of *The Iceman Cometh*, also for Yale. John Gallagher's wonderful performance as Edmund Tyrone did not inspire him to re-grow his *Exorcism* mustache.

Judith E. Barlow is professor emerita of English, Women's Studies, and Theatre at the University at Albany, SUNY. Her books include



Final Acts: The Creation of Three Late O'Neill Plays; *Plays by American Women, 1900-1930*; *Plays by American Women, 1930-1960*; *Women Writers of the Provincetown Players: A Collection of Short Works*; and *Howe in an Hour*. She has been a visiting professor at Nankai University in China and Sofia University in Bulgaria.

Judi's dedication to the work of women playwrights has been recognized by the creation of the Judith E. Barlow Prize, named in her honor by History Matters: Back to the Future. Applications are accepted from students participating in the History Matters program "One Play At A Time: Historic Women Playwrights Initiative."

Jo Morello, newsletter editor, has operated a public relations business in Sarasota, Florida, since 1986 and in Philadelphia before that. She is also a



freelance writer and award-winning playwright. She founded and manages Starlite Players in Sarasota, FL. Recent productions of short plays include *Gene & Aggie* (Starlite Players, Sarasota, FL; Tampa Bay Theatre Festival, Tampa, FL; Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Short Play Festival, NYC); *Talkback*, (Tampa Bay Theatre Festival; Starlite Players; Future Ten, Pittsburgh, PA); *Ancient Oaks*, Starlite Players; and three collaborations with Jack Gilhooley: *Connubial Bliss* (Lantern Theatre, Sheffield, Kent, UK; Starlite Players, Sarasota); and *Co-Dependents* (Starlite Players) and the full-length *Life Upon the Wicked Stage* (Gypsy Rep Stage, Tampa, FL). Her full-length play *E.G.O.: The Passions of Eugene Gladstone O'Neill* was produced by Balagula Theatre Company, Lexington, KY, as winner of the Kentucky Women Writers Conference). (www.jomorello.com).



Gary Schaub, co-president of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, has been on its board since 2002. He was president (2007-09) and vice president of development (2009-13) and helped secure funding for both Student Days at Tao House and the O'Neill Studio Retreat. He was also Cultural Services Director for Walnut Creek, CA, from 1974-2001. Gary's awards include Lifetime Contributions to the Local Arts Agency Field (California Arts Council,

2001); Special Arts Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts (Arts & Culture Commission, Contra Costa County, 2001), Outstanding Arts Supporter (Diablo Regional Arts Assn., 1974-2001), Contra Costa County Theatre Shellie Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Performing Arts (1991 and 1999).



Beth Wynstra, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of English at Babson College, where she teaches courses in American Drama,

modernism, acting, public speaking, and business writing. She serves as Faculty Director for the Sorenson Center for the Arts at Babson and regularly directs musicals and plays. Beth is the secretary/treasurer of the Eugene O'Neill Society.



J. Chris Westgate, Ph.D., president of the Eugene O'Neill Society and book review editor of *The Eugene O'Neill Review*, is associate

professor of English at California State University, Fullerton. He is the author of *Urban Drama: The Metropolis in Contemporary North American Plays* and articles in *Modern Drama*, *Theatre Journal*, and *Comparative Drama*; and editor of *Brecht, Broadway, and United States Theatre*. His book, *Staging the Slum, Slumming the Stage*, which examines the intersection of theatergoing and slumming during the Progressive Era, has just been published by Palgrave Macmillan.



We mourn the Countess of Monte Cristo

by Jo Morello



Nearly everyone who visited Monte Cristo Cottage enjoyed Sally Pavetti's charm, wit and knowledge. A founder and honorary board member of the Eugene O'Neill Society, she became curator for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in 1966, then curator for Monte Cristo Cottage in 1972 when the O'Neill bought the National Historic Landmark.

At its conference in June 2014 the Society presented the Eugene O'Neill Medallion to Sally, then curator emeritus of the Monte Cristo Cottage Museum and Library. Because she was struggling with Alzheimer's, her devoted husband Fran accepted her Medallion and accompanied her to a party on at the Cottage. (See photo.)

Sally left us on May 16. Her obituary appears in the [New London Day](#) but memories by O'Neillians are more personal. Lois MacDonald, co-curator

at Monte Cristo Cottage, said, "Sally became my soul mate in so many ways beyond our ties to the O'Neill Center and especially Eugene O'Neill's Monte Cristo Cottage." Board member Robert A. Richter of Connecticut Cottage speaks for many of us:

"I cannot remember when I first met Sally Thomas Pavetti, but it was probably close to thirty years ago and it had to have been at the Monte Cristo Cottage. Sally, along with Lois McDonald, was a fixture at the cottage. She brought the cottage to life, sharing her knowledge, warmth and her graciousness. She welcomed me into the cottage and the world of Eugene O'Neill with open arms, as she did for countless others. As curator she was a champion for the cottage, preserving it and the memory of Eugene O'Neill in New London. She touched so many; from students and teachers, researchers and scholars to some of the greatest theater artists from around the globe and even the casual summer tourist; each and every one leaving with new insight into America's greatest playwright. But what I think I will remember the most, and will never forget, is Sally's smile from across the room and the twinkle in her eyes that telegraphed her warmth and support. And as I have heard many say over the years Sally Pavetti was the Countess of the Monte Cristo."

Untitled Poem

by Eugene O'Neill

(with apologies to J. W. Riley)

Our Teddy opens wide his mouth,
N'runs around n'yells all day,
N' calls some people naughty names,
N'says things that he shouldn't say.
N'when he's nothing else to do
He swells up like he'd like to bust,
N'pounds on something with his fist
N'tells us 'bout some wicked trust.
I always wondered why that was -
I guess it's cause
Taft never does.

He tells the farmers how to sow
N'shows the cav'lry how to ride,
N'if you try to say a word
He's angry, n'he says you lied.
N'when it's quiet over here
He goes way far across the seas
N'gets a great big gun n'shoots
The elephants n' chimpanzees.
I always wondered why that was -
I guess it's cause
Taft never does.

Gene, 24, wrote about the 1912 election, which pitted Republican William H. Taft against Progressive Theodore Roosevelt. (Readers may substitute names of candidates as desired.) Note: Democrat Woodrow Wilson won.

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The Eugene O'Neill Society

Founded 1979 eugeneoneillsociety.org

A nonprofit scholarly and professional organization devoted to the promotion and study of the life and works of Eugene O'Neill and the drama and theatre for which his work was in large part the instigator and model.



The Eugene O'Neill Society publishes this newsletter and the scholarly journal *The Eugene O'Neill Review* twice each year for its members. Please direct newsletter correspondence to Secretary/Treasurer Beth Wynstra at 26 Salem End Lane, Framingham, MA 01702 or bethwynstra@gmail.com.

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