During the dawn of the 20th century, ideas of what it is to be human were evolving. The field of modern psychology was emerging as a major force, shaping our views of the human experience. The writers of the Provincetown Players, a newly formed theatre collective searching for the authentic voice of America, were charging into this new territory known as human psychology. Mental illness as an explanation for the challenges of our lives was a new concept still meeting a great deal of resistance. A primary force affecting perceptions and treatments of mental illness was (and in some ways still is) gender.

This May, Playwrights’ Theatre will feature two Provincetown voices delving into the relationship of gender and mental illness. Rita Creighton Smith’s *The Rescue* is a story of a family of women coping with the prospect of inherited madness. In Eugene O’Neill’s *Shell Shock*, a man struggles to make sense of his wartime experience and the burden it has placed on his psyche. “Both of these short plays represent an early attempt to start our ongoing and ever-evolving dialogue about the role of mental illness in our lives and the lives of those we love,” says EONF Artistic Director Eric Fraisher Hayes. “This unique pairing lends a deeper understanding to the role gender plays in shaping our ideas of mental illness.”

The performances of *Shell Shock* and *The Rescue* will be presented as a collaboration between the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House and Symmetry Theatre Company of San Francisco. Symmetry is a professional company committed to addressing issues of gender parity in theatre and society. Both performances will be followed with a discussion of the relationship of gender and mental illness led by scholars and the artists involved in creating this presentation.

Saturday, May 6, 8PM and Sunday, May 7, 2PM

Tickets available at www.eugeneoneill.org
2017 STUDENT DAYS A ROUSING SUCCESS

This March, the Eugene O’Neill Foundation hosted its 26th annual Spring Student Days. These free, one-day student workshops led by professional Bay Area actors, playwrights, directors, visual artists and photographers are often a next step up in a young person’s theatrical, literary or visual art career. Hosted by the Foundation and supported by NPS and grants from the Dean and Margaret Lesher and Wood Family foundations, the workshops take place in the dramatic rolling hills of Tao House. Many thanks to the instructors who took part in Student Days for their dedication and enthusiasm in sharing their craft - Don Lacy, Amber Flame, Erin Edens, Evertis Wright and John Armitage, and kudos to all the students who participated, eager to challenge themselves in pursuit of their creative goals. Finally, our gratitude to the many volunteers who helped make this year’s event a success.

“Today was really eye-opening for me. Thank you so much for dedicating your Saturday to better me as an actor and as a person. The enthusiasm and life you bring to the art of theater is so much fun to be a part of.” - Zach Lowburst, student
THREE NEW ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE TO VISIT TAO HOUSE THIS SUMMER

Three new Artists in Residence have been selected for the 2017 Travis Bogard Residence Program at Tao House, bringing with them an impressive breadth of scholarship.

The Fellows are Scott T. Cummings, Professor of Dramatic Literature and Playwriting and chair of Boston College’s Theatre Department; Patrick Midgely, a Ph.D. student at Texas Tech University, Lubbock; and Adam Versenyi, Chair of the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Adam Versenyi arrives in June and will spend three weeks at Tao House working on the first draft of a translation of Chilean playwright/director Ramon Griffero’s book, *La dramaturgia del espacio* (The Dramaturgy of Space). Versenyi regards Griffero as one of the most important contemporary Chilean theatre artists, although his work is little known in the English-speaking world. In the past year Versenyi has translated ten of Griffero’s plays, and in 2016 published the first English language translation of his work. Versenyi believes this project will expose theatre artists and scholars to new ways of thinking about theatre and Latin American culture.

Scott T. Cummings hopes to complete the manuscript for a book, “Finding Inspiration: Maria Irene Fornés, Playwriting, Theatre, and Creativity,” during his three weeks at Tao House in August. Cummings considers Fornés the most important American woman playwright of the 20th Century, widely recognized in professional and academic theatre communities as a major figure, though not a mainstream commercial success.

With the aid of primary source documents, Cummings hopes to create an approximation of a book Fornés planned to write, but did not complete: *The Anatomy of Inspiration*, a book of playwriting exercises for writing students and aspiring playwrights.

Patrick Midgely will be at Tao House in July for a performance project that will explore O'Neill’s dramatic relationship with Shakespeare. Midgely spent five years working in the resident company of the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia, and was awarded Texas Tech’s Presidential Fellowship. Midgely will examine the unique ways in which the performance of related characters, themes, and language can help us glimpse how O'Neill absorbed Shakespeare. He will have a “dress rehearsal” at Tao House on July 9 before taking his work to the O'Neill International Conference in Ireland.

The Foundation, in association with the National Park Service at the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site, is pleased to welcome these outstanding scholars to Tao House. - Wendy Cooper
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NEWS

With Playwrights’ Theatre in January and Student Days in March successfully behind us, we are excited about what the rest of 2017 has to offer. Our student programs are an important part of the combined efforts of the Foundation and the National Park Service to reach younger generations, learning about and being inspired by Eugene O’Neill. We hope that some of the students from our 2017 Student Days program will join us up at the site this summer for the more immersive experience of Studio Retreat. Over the ten days of the Retreat program the writing students will compose original one-act plays, and the acting students will work with them to rehearse and ultimately perform these plays for friends and family in the old barn. As past students attest, the atmosphere and landscape of the Eugene O’Neill Site and Tao House is inspirational and tranquil, and we are so happy to be able to share this national treasure with all who visit.

In our ongoing efforts to maintain and preserve historic Tao House, this year we are working on rebuilding the west porch of the house, which has some structural problems. We are bringing in an historic preservation crew from the National Park Service’s Historic Preservation Training Center in Maryland to do this work. The crew will work over the course of two weeks meticulously preserving and replacing the bricks on the porch, while rebuilding the supporting understructure. Once completed, it will look much like it did when Eugene O’Neill and his wife Carlotta built the house, but hopefully it will hold up better to the elements.

We hope that you can come up to the site this year to experience a performance, tour the house, or just wander around the landscape where Eugene O’Neill gained inspiration to write his most powerful and influential works. As one of the 417 National Park sites, it belongs to you, and I hope you can take some time in 2017 to enjoy it.

Tom Leatherman, Superintendent
FAREWELL TO TWO O’NEILL FOUNDATION FRIENDS

Earlier this year, the Foundation lost two good friends who made major contributions to our efforts to celebrate the legacy of America’s greatest playwright.

Locally, the Eugene O’Neill Foundation lost one of its pioneers with the passing of Carol Lea Jones on February 27, at the age of 83. A resident of Diablo, Carol Lea Jones was an early member of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation Board of Directors, and in recent years served on the Foundation’s Advisory Board. Carol was honored with the Foundation’s Freeman Award in 2013 for her volunteer work, beginning in 1979, spearheading community volunteer and educational programs during the early years of the O’Neill Foundation. Her efforts brought awareness to O’Neill and his place in San Ramon Valley.

In 1992, Carol was also instrumental in urging Katherine Hepburn to encourage Gump’s to return Eugene O’Neill’s Chinese “Opium Bed” to Tao House, a piece of furniture that the O’Neill’s had returned to Gump’s when they left Tao House in 1944. It is now back in Tao House. At her family’s request, donations in her honor may be made to the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Box 402, Danville 94526.

A second major loss occurred with the death in New York of Barbara Gelb, biographer and playwright who passed away on February 9 at age 91. Together with her late husband, Arthur Gelb, Barbara spent decades researching and journaling the life of Eugene O’Neill. Their work, over a sixty year period, provided great detail and insight into the story of O’Neill’s complex life.

The Gelbs were long-time friends of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, and frequent visitors to Tao House. They were honored in 1996 with the Foundation’s Tao House Award for their significant contributions to the American Theater. Barbara also wrote a one-woman play about Carlotta Monterey, “My Gene,” (1987) which was presented in the Tao House barn after its New York production. - Gary Schaub

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Don Metz

Don joined the Foundation board in December 2016 and accepted the position of Treasurer. He comes to us with a wealth of experience in financial matters and we are very fortunate to have him in this position. Don was a career military officer with the United States Air Force serving with distinction. He and his wife Jo moved to Danville and promptly volunteered with non-profits in financial areas. He was on the board of directors for the AARP Foundation’s Tax-Aide program and has served on the Board of Directors of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley where he was their treasurer and continues to serves on their finance committee.

Susan Terzuoli

Susan was elected to the Board of Directors in November 2016, officially starting her tenure on the first of January. Susan, formerly of New York, is a resident of Alamo where she has lived since 1990. She has been an active volunteer in several organizations, including the American Association of University Women where she was president. She is also on the Board of the San Ramon Valley Democratic Club. Susan recently retired from her part-time teaching position and now has time to pursue her interests in her grandchildren, gardening, hiking and traveling. We welcome her decision to share her talents with the Foundation.
EUGENE O’NEILL WINTERS IN LOS ANGELES BEFORE MIGRATING NORTH TO TAO HOUSE THIS FALL

A Noise Within Theatre Company recently invited me to present on Eugene O’Neill in conjunction with their Spring production of O’Neill’s *Ah, Wilderness!* The trip south represented a rare opportunity of which I am sure many Southern Californians were unaware. Not only was LA getting A Noise Within’s production of *Ah, Wilderness!* but in nearby Westwood the Geffen Playhouse was producing O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, featuring Alfred Molina and Jane Kaczmarek. Seeing both productions was a great opportunity to experience an artist’s efforts to reconcile with a painful past in two completely different ways.

Famously, *LDJN* is O’Neill’s tormented take on his family that plays so closely to his autobiography that it’s hard to distinguish a difference. *Ah, Wilderness!*, on the other hand, represents O’Neill’s fantasy of “a road not taken.” A version of his family in which love and support (absent in his real life) yields a hopeful outlook. Had O’Neill’s life followed the fantasy we would probably have been robbed of some great art, but Eugene O’Neill certainly would have had a happier life. His loss is our gain.

Viewed together the two plays shed light on O’Neill’s hopes and regrets. And thankfully the artist O’Neill renders all of this in such a way that it deepens the understanding of our regrets and joys and the choices and forces that brought them into being.

I am happy to say that both productions were effective ambassadors for the playwright and that his winter months in LA this year are being well spent. He will be in good condition when he takes flight on his way to join us at Tao House this fall. - *Eric Fraisher Hayes*

Photo credit: A Noise Within Theatre Company
FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS TO PRESENT AT INTERNATIONAL O'NEILL CONFERENCE, IRELAND

The Foundation is pleased to have three of its own Board members carry on the tradition of O’Neill scholarship at the 10th International Eugene O’Neill Conference at the National University of Ireland, Galway, July 19-22.

This year’s Conference theme, “Eugene O’Neill: Ireland, the Constant Presence” is particularly poignant. Although he never set foot on Irish soil, O’Neill embodied the American journey for many of the nineteenth-century-born Irish - and like many, that past was never far from the present. He began finding his dramatic voice after witnessing the Abbey Theatre’s 1911 tour of the eastern United States.

Foundation Board President Dan McGovern will present “From Stage to Live Broadcasts and Streaming: O’Neill’s Theatre Guild Model in the Digital Age.” Eric Fraisher Hayes, the Foundation’s Artistic Director, will discuss, “Producing the Unproduceable.” And Janet Roberts, Foundation board member, will examine “Masks and the Influence of the Noh Mask in Eugene O’Neill and W. B. Yeats.”

Also on the roster are two Tao House Artists in Residence (AIR): Patrick Midgley, a 2017 AIR from Texas Tech University, and 2016 AIR alum Thierry Dubost, Université de Caen Normandie.

We wish them all Ádh mór ort!

SAVE THE DATE! SUMMER MASTERCLASS IN PLAYWRITING AND ACTING FOR TEENS

Do you know of a talented teen aspiring to enter the theatre as an actor or playwright? The Foundation is pleased to once again offer Studio Retreat, a ten-day intensive for teens in advanced acting and playwriting in the hills of the beautiful Eugene O’Neill Historic Site in Danville, California. This year’s camp runs July 11 – 23 and is FREE for those chosen to participate. Students will develop original scripts and mount a performance for friends and family on the afternoon of the final Sunday, July 23.

Because space is limited, only a select number of playwrights and actors will be chosen. All interested students must apply by June 2017. For more information, visit our website at www.eugeneoneill.org/studio-retreat/
The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House is most grateful to you, our supporters, for your generous contributions that allow us to provide artistic and educational programs which focus on O’Neill’s vision and legacy. Eugene O’Neill is recognized throughout the world as America’s foremost playwright. Please join us in recognizing the following donors (through March 2017). All donations received after that date will be acknowledged in our next publication.

Thank you also to all of our valued Crew Level and Actor level members.

Executive Producers’ Circle: $1000+
Ed and Linda Best
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Florence and David Woolsey

Interested in becoming more involved with the Foundation as a volunteer or board member? If you are, we are interested in hearing from you. Email the Foundation at taohouse.eonf@gmail.com for additional information. We can use your talents!

Our performances and educational programs would not be possible without our generous members and volunteers offering their time and resources! Please contact us if you would like to volunteer.

Editor Pam Patterson • Design and Production Alison C. Bodden

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