Playwrights’ Theatre presents Eugene O’Neill’s mask masterpiece

**The Great God Brown**

at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley
Jan. 12 and 13, 2019

When Eugene O’Neill debuted his 1926 play *The Great God Brown*, he redefined the centuries-old practice of using masks in theatrical productions. In this four-act play, actors display their hidden inner thoughts through the use of masks.

Soon, *Brown* will be coming to town, performed script-in-hand at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, in Danville. Director Eric Fraisher Hayes notes that O’Neill’s plays of the 1920s paved the way for audiences to understand the multiple layers at work in the human experience. “The use of masks in the play is a fascinating examination of how we adjust our identity to find love and acceptance in this world.”

Two performances at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley,
205 Railroad Avenue in Danville
January 12 at 8:00 pm and January 13 at 2:00 pm
Seating is limited. Tickets: $25
To order: www.eugeneoneill.org

**Tribute to Dan Cawthon (January 31, 1938—August 8, 2018)**

Dan Cawthon was Professor of Performing Arts at St. Mary’s College, Moraga. He also taught The Vision of Eugene O’Neill (“O’Neill 101”) for many years in the Bay Area. He devoted more than 20 years of service to the Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, and served as director for 18 years. His first involvement was in the planning of the 1988 Eugene O’Neill Centennial Celebration, and he was an active participant in 10 Annual O’Neill Festivals. He was recognized as the Foundation’s preeminent scholar, and as Vice-President of Programs for 13 years, he inspired the Foundation’s creative direction.

He directed several fall plays at Tao House, including Brian Friel’s *Faith Healer*, which heralded the return of performances to Tao House following the access settlement; He was instrumental in establishing Playwrights’ Theatre. He became its artistic director after the death of Travis Bogard in 1997, directing 13 Playwrights’ Theatre productions.

He created and produced “The Rhythms of His Soul,” a musical revue based on Bogard’s *The Eugene O’Neill Songbook*. He chose the artwork and wrote the text for the O’Neill Commemorative Park in downtown Danville.

In 2009 the Foundation honored him with the Genie, its Artistic Award, for his dedication and unique contributions to its mission of promoting the vision and legacy of Eugene O’Neill. Dan was a friend, a mentor, a gentle spirit, and a lasting creative influence.

**A Festival retrospective**

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation and the Town of Danville went international this year with “One Festival, Two Countries” and the Friendship City relationship with New Ross, Ireland. Learn more about the festival as it was experienced both here and abroad at www.eugeneoneill.org.
Foundation Named Tri-Valley Hero

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House received the 2018 Tri-Valley Hero Award for Arts and Culture. The awards were presented October 22 by Pleasanton Weekly/DanvilleSanRamon.com, and Embarcadero Media, East Bay Division. Especially noted in the award were the annual Eugene O’Neill Festival and its partnership with the Eugene O’Neill International Festival of Theater in Ireland, Artist in Residence Program, educational programs for high-school students, and research library and archive.

Travis Bogard Artists in Residence, Summer 2018

Kara Lee Corthron, a playwright with an impressive background of commissions and residencies, teaches playwriting at New York University and writes young-adult novels—notably The Truth of Right Now; published last year and awarded the Parent’s Choice Gold Award and the Kirkus Star. She recently completed a television pilot and is also collaborating on a graphic novel. Much of her work focuses on issues of social injustice. Ms. Corthron came to the Artist in Residence Program to continue work on a play, What Are You Worth, a time-traveling history of slavery. The story is told in three parts separated by 400 years. She reported that her project benefited from the quiet and natural beauty of Tao House and the proximity of O’Neill’s spirit, which may have been present in the hummingbirds that hovered nearby as she worked.

O’Neill scholar William Davies King, professor and former chair of Theater and Dance at the University of California Santa Barbara, found that working at Tao House on a book, “The Days and Nights of Long Day’s Journey Into Night,” was a remarkable, even mystical experience. His residency focused on Tao House as a workplace as well as a dwelling: “A domestic masterpiece, however precarious, became the generator of a dramatic masterpiece.” O’Neill’s work on the play was conditioned by the material and imaginative environment created by his wife Carlotta, also by the war, a “distorted take on Taoism,” and O’Neill’s lamentable medical condition. King suggests that the play pertains to Tao House and Monte Cristo Cottage, where it is set, to the degree that we should read this play of New England “through the landscape of Corduroy Ranch.”

It was with sadness that we learned of the passing of O. John Haering on September 22. John had served on the Eugene O’Neill Foundation board. He is fondly remembered for the twinkle in his eye as he added the “Carlotta story” to the National Park Service tours he gave as a docent at Tao House. His family requests that donations to the Foundation be made in his memory.

National Park Service News Superintendent’s Message

In December, Thaddeus (Tad) Shay (pictured) will hang up his Park Ranger hat for the last time, retiring after 33 years of dedicated service to the American public, the last half-dozen spent spinning tales of literary giant Eugene O’Neill at Tao House. In addition to inspiring visitors in recent years, Tad has been a stable force supporting the Foundation’s educational and artistic programming. He will be missed! Tad spent his early career in mid-Atlantic national parks: the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and several sites at the National Mall (Washington Monument, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, and the Old Post Office). After a stint at De Soto National Memorial in Florida, Tad ventured to California where, like O’Neill, he found a home and harbor. He worked first at John Muir National Historical Site before serving at Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial and, of course, Tao House.

At first, says Tad, “I knew as much about O’Neill as most visitors, which is not much. I made many connections with his life and mine. His love of the sea, love of dogs, love of being Irish, of reading and music. These are easy for visitors to connect with.” O’Neill would be envious of Tad’s next move, “I have been saving for a boat and that will be my next big thing. Say goodbye to apartment living!”

Tad, we thank you for your service, and wish you fair winds and following seas as your life’s journey continues!

Tom Leatherman

Visit the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site

Guided Tours Available Wed., Thurs., Fri., and Sun. 10 am & 2 pm. Reservations are required. Admission is free.

Self-guided Tours “Saturdays Without Reservations” at 10:15 am, 12:15 pm and 2:15 pm. If hiking to the site on Saturdays, please be here before 3 pm. The park is closed to visitors Mon. and Tues.

Due to the location of this park, all visitors are required to take a free National Park Service shuttle to the historic home and grounds. Visitors are not permitted to drive their personal/private vehicles to the site. The shuttle meets at 205 Railroad Ave. in downtown Danville, outside of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Parking is available near the museum.

Reservation Line (925) 838-0249 Visit www.nps.gov/euon for more information.

The Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House is most grateful to you, our supporters, for your generous contributions that enable us to provide artistic and educational programs that focus on O’Neill’s vision and legacy. Thank you to the following donors (through Nov. 2018).

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