The 20th Annual Eugene O’Neill Festival Aug. 24–Sept. 29

Thank you to our audiences at performances of the plays and the concert, as well as the hikers and history walkers; and to the army of volunteers who made all the events festive for everyone. We are grateful to our visionary Artistic Director, Eric Fraisher Hayes, and the wonderful casts and crews of The Second Girl, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, and The Glass Menagerie, who created for us the family stories of haunted poets; and to our visitors from Ireland, who delighted us with songs old and new and with salty performances of the Comeragh sea plays. The Foundation also appreciates the enthusiastic support of the town of Danville, the many local businesses that joined our Destination Danville Passbook and donated raffle prizes, and as always our partner, the National Park Service.

Visit www.eugeneoneill.org for more on EONF and our 20th Annual Festival

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram! Eugene_ONeill_Foundation

Eugene O’Neill Society News

Boston Conference, June 17–20, 2020

The Eugene O’Neill Society’s next international conference will be in Boston next June at Suffolk University. Steve Bloom, Beth Wynstra, and Katie Johnson are excited that this conference will include performances, readings, interactive activities, a film screening, and conversations with directors, along with traditional paper presentations. Also, a walking tour of O'Neill's Boston, a bus trip to Forest Hills Cemetery, and, of course, our Medallion Banquet. The Society is honored to award Medallions this year to Kurt Eisen, Thierry Dubost, Zander Brietzke, the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, and the Irish Repertory Theatre.

The conference hotel is the beautiful Sheraton Hotel in downtown Boston. Housing is also available in a university residence hall. The opening of Conference Registration will coincide with Society Membership Renewal in December. Watch for more information coming soon! Beth Wynstra

“Introducing” the Eugene O’Neill Review

The EOR has been around for 40 years, but I’d like personally to introduce the journal to the O’Neill Foundation, many of whose members I met at the 2019 New Ross festival. The EOR is written for the “scholars, theatre professionals, and enthusiasts” that constitute its parent organization, the O’Neill Society. If you’re a Foundation member, you’re an enthusiast, so here’s looking at you.

Sure, some entries trend cap-A Academic, but more do not. And even these are written in the “clear, correct, and readable prose” that our mission statement promises. We publish smart stuff for savvy readers, not hifalutin mumbo-jumbo. Some of our contributors will be familiar to you. Eric Fraisher Hayes and Dan McGovern appear in the current issue. William Davies King will share an essay on Long Day’s Journey Into Night, inspired by the Tao House production. We publish book reviews, performance reviews, and primary documents (including two previously unpublished screen treatments by O’Neill himself).

$20 buys an annual Society membership, thus a subscription to the EOR. Sign up this month to receive both 2019 issues. Happy reading!

Alex Pettit, editor, EOReditor@gmail.com
Artists in Residence Value Their Time at Tao House

Absolutely!" is how scholar Jane Dominik responded to the question, “Was the time at Tao House beneficial?” Dominik was chosen by the Eugene O’Neill Foundation as a 2019 fellow in the Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program.

“From the moment I arrived, the peaceful and private ambience of Tao House allowed a kind of focus not available elsewhere,” Dominik teaches English at San Joaquin Delta College, in Stockton, California. She planned to complete for publication a paper presented at the American Drama Conference. Titled “Vying for Their Fathers: The Struggle for Connection and Catharsis in American Drama,” the paper analyzed nine plays by five playwrights, including O’Neill’s semi-autobiographical Long Day’s Journey Into Night.

“Although thematic threads permeate many of his plays dealing with the relationships between fathers and sons,” Dominik notes, “O’Neill draws a lot from his observations and life experiences.” Some universal themes include pressures exerted on fathers and sons, the resulting internal and external conflicts, and the haunting lack of a healthy or happy resolution.”

“Before arriving at Tao House,” she remembers, “I decided to do more research and reading about O’Neill.” After her work here, Dominik decided to expand her project to analyze forty-two plays by ten playwrights, with possibly more in the future. Her use of the wealth of information in the archives gave her more insight into O’Neill than she expanded the paper. “Tours of the house, the barn, and other areas complemented my understanding of O’Neill’s time and writing at Tao House.” This included the library of renowned O’Neill scholar Travis Bogard, as well as DVDs, letters, and journals of O’Neill’s wife Carlotta. Dominik was gratified to absorb the environment in which O’Neill created. John Barry

It was raining hard as he raced down to the theatre in the Village. He had been rehearsing “All God’s Chillum” all day but tonight he would star as Brutus Jones . . . . Artist in Residence Katie Johnson’s creation of a day in the life of Paul Robeson begins her book Racing the Great White Way. Professor Johnson, from Miami University, Cincinnati, Ohio, said her book “will show that during a time when U.S. culture was profoundly segregated, the theatre was a site of inter racial traffic.” She explained that little attention has been paid to collaborations between downtown and uptown, between the emerging modernist (and largely white) theatre artists and Harlem theatres. O’Neill, whose dramas repeatedly broke color lines, was a central figure linking these co-extensive projects. The Emperor Jones made major breakthroughs in race relations; this play had firsts on Broadway, in opera and movies, and abroad.

EONF Artistic Director Eric Fraisher Hayes commented on hearing Johnson speak about her project, “What I particularly appreciated about Katie’s work was the infusion of storytelling. It made the material very accessible.” Advisory Board Member Martha Ross responded, “I wasn’t aware of this history of Broadway ... the significant influence of African-American artists in American theatre in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a lively, engaging, and illuminating discussion.” Johnson, also vice-president of the Eugene O’Neill Society, concluded, “I am glad Eugene O’Neill has offered a pathway into this work —my time here at Tao House has been nothing short of remarkable. I have worked at several distinguished archives and this experience has far surpassed other experiences.” Wendy Cooper

Travis Bogard Day-Use Program for Bay Area writers and visual artists. Application deadline for 1st session (from April) is Jan. 31, 2020. See guidelines at http://www.eugeneoneill.org/artist-in-residence-program/

Follow the Eugene O’Neill Foundation on Instagram!

The Foundation recently joined one follow other Instagram users and inaugurated a new account: Eugene O’Neill Foundation. It features images, events, news, stories, and history surrounding Foundation activities, along with background on O’Neill himself and the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site at Tao House. Instagram helps us share the many facets of the Foundation’s programs—plays, student programs, artists in residence and scholarship, while also engaging our local community and followers worldwide in the legacy of our favorite playwright.

National Park Service News

Visit the Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site

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

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 Monday and Tuesday.

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 Avenue in downtown Danville, outside of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Parking is available next to the museum. Admission to the site is free.

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

Gretchen Stromberg has been selected as the new Chief of Resource Management and Planning, coming on duty in early September and backfilling behind Paul Scolari, who served in this role for nearly 7 years. Gretchen has 20 years of federal service with the National Park Service (NPS), starting her career as an archaeologist in Yosemite. After getting her master’s in landscape architecture from the University of Washington, Gretchen returned to the NPS and worked as a historical landscape architect for the Pacific West Regional Office—travelling to parks throughout the West, such as Hawaii Volcanoes, Point Reyes, and Death Valley to inventory their historic landscapes. She returned to Yosemite as a planner and landscape architect working on the Merced and Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Plans, establishing a new Environmental Education Center, and managing a redesign of the historic Tunnel View overlook. Gretchen returned to the Bay Area in 2012, serving a 5-year stint as Chief of Planning and Administration for Eugene O’Neill NHS (and John Muir, Rosie the Riveter, and Port Chicago). Gretchen most recently worked as the Chief of Cultural Resources and Museum Management at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park before returning to the four East Bay national park sites. A native of Berkeley, Gretchen is thrilled to be back in the East Bay, managing the museum collection, natural resources, historic landscapes and structures, and working with partners like the Eugene O’Neill Foundation with their legacy of enlivening these sites with artists, audiences, and creative programming.

Thanks to Our Donors, Festival Patrons, and Volunteers

We are always grateful for the generosity of our donors, without whom the Foundation’s work would not be possible. Thank you for thinking of the Foundation in your end-of-year giving. To see a list of our donors, or to make a donation to the Foundation, go to www.eugeneoneill.org/join-us/ or send your check to Eugene O’Neill Foundation, Tao House, P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526-0402

Another EASY way to support our Foundation is through AmazonSmile. Go to AmazonSmile, shop online, and indicate that a percentage of your purchase goes to the Foundation.