

EUGENE O'NEILL
FOUNDATION, TAO HOUSE

WINTER 2024



Happy Holidays!

A Look Back at the 2024 Eugene O'Neill Festival

The 2024 Eugene O'Neill Festival was again a great success! This year's main event – O'Neill's *"Mourning Becomes Electra"* – drew sold-out crowds for all eight performances. Tao House took center stage as the haunting backdrop to this production, and our mobile audience was treated to scenes both in the courtyard and the historic Old Barn.

In addition, the local community of Danville had the opportunity to participate in multiple events over the two-month run of the Festival. Highlights include a Whiskey Tasting/Stroll; a Nature Walk at Tao House; a Historic Walk in downtown; an Irish music concert by visiting band The Nomads; a Tao House photography showcase; and a self-guided Ghost Stroll through Danville that featured some of our *Ghosts of Tao House*. If you haven't seen our *Ghosts of Tao House* (a virtual series that brings O'Neill's characters to life in short snippets), check them out on our YouTube channel [here](#).

A special thanks goes out to our steadfast partner, the National Park Service, and the countless volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Their coordination, organization, and upbeat engaging attitude helped to make all of our patrons feel welcome and to pull off eight performances smoothly.

If you missed out on the Festival this year,
we hope to see you in 2025!



O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* where Tao House took center stage



Historic tour of Danville, led by EONF Volunteer Jeff

Tickets are going fast!

Eugene O'Neill's First and Last Act

January at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley offers an opportunity to compare Eugene O'Neill's very first one-act play with his very last. Further heightening the contrast will be the fact that his last one-act (*Hughie*) will be presented traditionally as written while his very first attempt to write a play, the one-act *A Wife for a Life*, has been radically reimaged to include the relationship between Eugene and his father, the famous actor James O'Neill.

A Wife for a Life: A Backstage Story

By Eugene O'Neill, adapted and directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes

Hughie

By Eugene O'Neill, directed by Cynthia Lagodzinski

We hope to see you there!

TICKETS



**Fri., Jan. 10,
7:30pm**

**Sat., Jan. 11,
7:30pm**

(plus post-performance
discussion)

Sun., Jan. 12, 2pm

Museum of the San
Ramon Valley

Athenian Students Visit Tao House

The National Park Service was happy to welcomed a class of over fifty 8th graders to Tao House this fall. The students acted out scenes from *Mourning Becomes Electra*, our featured 2024 Festival play, and spent the day learning about O'Neill and his influence on the American Theater. They were asked to reflect on his work, and discuss their opinions on O'Neill's plays, positive or not!



EONF Board Leadership Transitioning in the New Year

As board members Tom Baxter and Teresa Morley step into the co-president role in 2025 we:

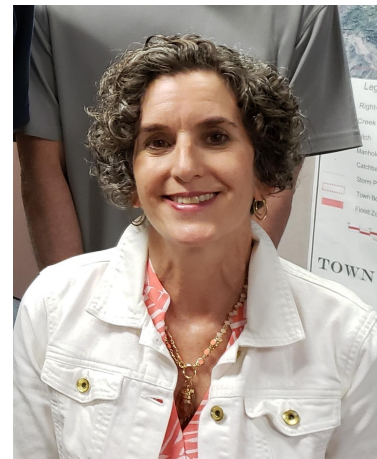
Look to the past with appreciation for Dan McGovern and Carole Wynstra's leadership and guidance in this transition.

Look to the present with gratitude for the leadership team, advisory and board members, and volunteers who say "yes" to volunteering and serving this unique non-profit.



Look to the future in collaborating with essential partners like the National Park Service, Town of Danville, our friends in New Ross Ireland, the Eugene O'Neill Society, and more.

Wish you blessings this holiday season and in the New Year and THANK YOU for your continued support as we move forward together and explore what O'Neill has to say to us in these times.



EONF Co-presidents Tom Baxter and Teresa Morley

Tom Baxter and Teresa Morley,
newly-elected Co-presidents

National Park Service News



Lauren Gurnewicz, Acting Superintendent

Hello, I have the honor to serve as the Acting Superintendent of Eugene O'Neill and our three other NPS sites for a few months and I am incredibly grateful to say hello to Foundation members. We are committed to continuing to work with them to steward this incredibly unique site.

Here is a little about me in the meantime. I serve as the chief of interpretation at the National Parks of Philadelphia, where I lead one of the largest permanent interpretation teams in the National Park Service. Prior to moving to Philly, I was the chief of visitor experience and community engagement at Colonial National Historical Park. I also served as chief of interpretation at Congaree National Park and San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, and held a permanent interpreter position at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. I am incredibly grateful to serve the 4Parks team, supporting staff and spending time reconnecting with the Bay area, where I started my career over 20 years ago!

Ranger Hilary shared that the recent Festival was a wonderful undertaking. Eric's usage of Tao House as the Mannon Mansion made for a truly memorable experience for both the audience and staff.

This year continued the great work of outstanding youth programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and Traditional Trades Advancement Program (TTAP) which helped with landscape planting. A professional conservator performed conservation treatment on Carlotta's silverware set, and an exhibit case highlighting archives in the museum collection related to *Mourning Becomes Electra* was installed in the Visitor Center.

Additionally, the site was brightened up with repainting the exterior of Tao House and screen doors were repaired.

We were pleased to bring on Matt Bayless as the Facilities and Administration division manager at our four parks. Matt has 10 years of experience with the National Park Service coming to us from Golden Gate National Recreation Area where he was the Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor. Please join me in welcoming Matt to the team!

In the new year we are looking forward to continuing our work with the Foundation on Studio Retreat. This past year's offering grew in size and impacted many students. We enjoyed hosting the students and the working artist instructors and hope they all took inspiration from the same setting as O'Neill.

As we look towards the new year, we continue to experience change and transition at the four park units we manage. Several employees have moved on to new opportunities and others are away on temporary work details, including Superintendent Berry. Despite the continuous shifts, we look forward to partnering with you to share Eugene O'Neill's story and support the arts in Danville. Thank you for your unwavering support!

Lauren Gurniewicz, Acting Superintendent



Please check www.nps.gov/euon for updates about access to the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/EugeneONeillNPS

The Eugene O'Neill International Festival of Theatre

The three evenings of this year's Eugene O'Neill Festival in New Ross, Ireland featured the premiere of a play by Irish playwright Sheila Forsey, a performance by the acclaimed County Wexford band *Green Road*, and a bill of O'Neill one-acts as reimagined by Eugene O'Neill Foundation Artistic Director Eric Fraisher Hayes. There was again a strong scholarly component, and the sightseeing excursions each day, led by Festival Co-Chair Sean Reidy, made friends of the American visitors.

Teddy

In *Teddy*, a mother returns to her parents' home to demand custody of her now teenage son, a mentally handicapped child who was taken from her and raised, lovingly, by her parents because he was born out of wedlock. That theme struck a particularly resonant chord with an Irish audience well familiar with similar tragedies on an institutional scale represented by the Magdalene Laundries. *Teddy* was originally workshopped during the pandemic at the Wexford Arts Centre. Eric Fraisher Hayes worked closely with Forsey to shape the

script for its inaugural performance. The production featured an Irish and American cast made up of Los Angeles-based actor Isabel Siragusa and four actors from Southeast Ireland: Andy Doyle, Margaret Rossiter, Sean O'Brien, and Kevin Phelan in the title role.

O'Neill Reimagined

Adaptation was the focus of this program of reimagined early O'Neill one-acts. Mashing together the play *Warnings* about an isolated and desperate man with the play *Before Breakfast* about an isolated and desperate woman, adaptor and director Eric Fraisher Hayes forged a new play about two lost people searching for each other. *Warnings Before Breakfast* was first performed in Danville last January. Emily Keyishian and Cynthia Lagodzinski reprised their roles and were joined on stage by American actors Ryan Hayes, Willem Long and Isabel Siragusa. The second play on this bill of adaptations was the premiere of *A Wife for a Life: A Backstage Story*. *A Wife for a Life* was framed in the historical context of its writing. A young aspiring playwright Eugene O'Neill knocks on the door of the dressing room of his famous father, the actor James O'Neill with his first script. In debating the script's merits and what audiences want from theatre, the two men end up playing out the story of the original play. London-based American actor Don Sage Mackay played James O'Neill along with Los Angeles-based actor Willem Long, and O'Neill Foundation favorite Ryan Hayes.



The cast outside St. Michael's Theatre, New Ross (L-R): Ryan Hayes, Don Sage Mackay, Emily Keyishian, Cynthia Lagodzinski, Willem Long, and Isabel Siragusa



(L-R): Isabel Siragusa and Kevin Phelan in *Teddy*.



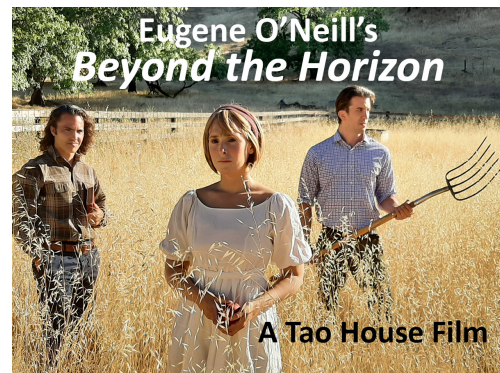
Remembering **Linda Grundhoffer**, EONF Treasurer, whose long-time contribution and support of the Foundation will be truly missed...

O'Neill's *Welded* and *Beyond the Horizon* and More Available to Stream!

The Tao House Films of O'Neill's *Welded* and *Beyond the Horizon* are available on the EONF YouTube channel. These films, along with our many other virtual offerings, demonstrate our ongoing commitment to bringing Eugene O'Neill's plays to the screen. As far as we know, our filmed adaptation of *Welded* is the only one in existence! We hope you enjoy this rare glimpse into the lesser-known canon of America's greatest playwright.

Also included in this playlist is the [recorded online discussion](#) between director Eric Fraisher Hayes, Dramaturg Beth Wynstra, our four actors, and several O'Neill scholars. *Beyond the Horizon*, the accompanying guide, and scholar videos can all be found [HERE](#).

Our [Ghosts of Tao House](#) short monologues are also available to view. O'Neill left Tao House in 1944, but did his characters leave with him?



DONATE

Give a Little, Get a Lot!

Please consider us in your year-end giving. Invest in the future of our theatre, education, and artist-in-residence programs. Your generous donations help cover production costs and enable us to continue bringing performances and programs that promote the legacy and vision of America's greatest playwright.

Click **HERE** or send your check to Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526-0402

Thank you for your continued support

Support our Foundation through **AmazonSmile!**
Go to smile.amazon.com, shop online as usual, and indicate that a percentage of your Amazon purchase is donated to the Eugene O'Neill Foundation at no cost to you.

Be sure to check out our Instagram feed: [eugene_oneill_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/eugene_oneill_foundation) and like us on Facebook

Contact us at taohouse.eonf@gmail.com

www.eugeneoneill.org



Eugene O'Neill.
FOUNDATION, TAO HOUSE

Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House | P.O. Box 402 | Danville, CA 94526-0402 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!