

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

AUGUST 2012

“Life shouldn’t be all work and no plays.”

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## Footlights to Discuss *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* August 20

Join us at Alfio’s for our **Monday, August 20** Footlights dinner-discussion when we meet to talk about **Rajiv Joseph’s *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*** with our special guest, director **Jeremy Skidmore**.

*Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* was a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist for drama, and also awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. It’s a haunting play, set against the backdrop of the Iraq War. Playwright Rajiv Joseph says he thinks of it more as a ghost story than a war story. It’s told from multiple perspectives – a Bengal tiger is the chief narrator, but we also hear from two American soldiers, their Iraqi translator and a host of spirits. The dead have just as much voice as the living, maybe more. It’s a complicated play – at times surreal, highly theatrical, philosophical and deeply imaginative. Not to mention extremely funny at unexpected moments.

Footlights is very pleased to welcome back our guest, director Jeremy Skidmore. Jeremy served for two years as Producer of the Source Festival and for six years as the Artistic Director of Theater Alliance where he produced 22 productions in five years that garnered 22 Helen Hayes nominations. Recent directing credits reflect the diversity and range of his work, and include *If You Give a Moose a Muffin* for Adventure Theatre, *New Jerusalem* at Theater J, *My Name is Asher Lev* – Round House Theatre, *Angels in America* – Forum Theatre, *Glengarry Glenn Ross* – Keegan Theatre, *Lieutenant of Inishmore* – Signature Theatre, and many more local, national and international productions. Jeremy is a Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts. He recently earned his MBA at American University while also serving as President of the Capital Talent Agency.

Make reservations for August 20 with Phyllis Bodin, 301-986-1768 or [Phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:Phylbo@verizon.net). Prior to August 10, you may reserve with Mary Ann Wren, 301-770-4572 or [wjwren@rcn.com](mailto:wjwren@rcn.com).

We will meet at Alfio’s Trattoria, located on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Avenue, in Chevy Chase, MD. The restaurant is just two blocks from the Friendship Heights metro station on the red line. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free at Alfio’s if you drive. Dinner is at 6:30 and the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends around 9. Cost for dinner is just \$13, including tax and tip, for which you get salad, bread, a choice among six entrees, ice cream, and coffee or tea. Cash or check, no credit cards please. We appreciate a \$5 contribution to Footlights. Wine, beer, and cocktails are available from the bar. You may come for the discussion only, if you wish.

If you have to cancel, please let Phyllis know by noon on the 20<sup>th</sup>, so that we have an accurate count of reservations for the restaurant. You may need to pay for your dinner if you do not cancel.

**Read the play:** *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* is included in a 3-play collection by one of today’s most acclaimed young playwrights, Rajiv Joseph. The other plays are *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (produced recently at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company) and *Animals Out of Paper*. Find your copy at Amazon, Barnes & Noble in paperback or electronic copy, or order from your favorite bookstore.

**See the play:** *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* opens Round House Theatre, Bethesda’s new season, playing from September 5 – 30. Visit Round House Theatre online at <http://www.roundhousetheatre.org/performance/bengal-tiger-at-the-baghdad-zoo/>. Group and single tickets go on sale August 13. Stay tuned for information on a Footlights group trip to see *Tiger*.

## In September: *Invisible Man*

Footlights will meet at Alfio’s on **September 18** to discuss *Invisible Man*, adapted for the stage by **Oren Jacoby**, based on the novel by **Ralph Ellison**. Studio Theatre will co-produce with The Huntington Theatre Company. Performances begin at Studio Theatre on September 5.

Studio’s website describes *Invisible Man* as “A blistering adaptation of Ellison’s 1952 masterpiece.

The play follows an anonymous black man as he journeys from the Deep South to a basement in the borderlands of Harlem, from a betrayal at his ivy-covered Negro college to a nightmare job in a paint factory in New York City to the story's violent climax at a Harlem race riot. Ellison's hero moves through an America divided by race and class, and grapples with the paradoxes of identity that have rendered him invisible. This savage, hypnotic, and impassioned adaptation of *Invisible Man* explores bigotry and its effects on the minds of both victims and perpetrators."

We'll meet at Alfio's. Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin at 301-986-1768, or Phylbo@verizon.net. Debbie Jackson and Mark Gruenberg will moderate our discussion. Speakers to be announced.

### About Footlights

To learn more about Footlights, visit our website: <http://www.footlightsdc.org>. To subscribe to our e-list, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>, or e-mail [footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

### Calendar

- **Monday, August 20**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* by **Rajiv Joseph** with **Jeremy Skidmore**, director of the upcoming Round House Theatre, Bethesda production. At **Alfio's**, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, 301-986-1768 or Phylbo@verizon.net. Prior to August 10, reserve with Mary Ann Wren, 301-770-4572 or wjwren@rcn.com. Robin Larkin will moderate the discussion.
- **Tuesday, September 18**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Invisible Man* adapted from the **Ralph Ellison** novel by **Oren Jacoby**. Guests to be announced. Moderated by Mark Gruenberg and Debbie Jackson. At **Alfio's**, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, 301-986-1768 or Phylbo@verizon.net.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**  
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