

from the FOOTLIGHTS

MARCH 2018

"Life shouldn't be all work and no plays."

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Footlights to discuss Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* on Tuesday, February 27

Few authors have had such a dramatic effect as **Bertolt Brecht**. His work has helped to shape a generation of writers, theatergoers, and thinkers. His plays are studied worldwide as texts that changed the face of theater.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle is a parable inspired by the Chinese play *Chalk Circle*. Written at the close of World War II, the story is set in the Caucasus Mountains of Georgia, Russia. It retells the tale of King Solomon and a child claimed by and fought over by two mothers. But this chalk circle is metaphorically drawn around a society misdirected in its priorities. Brecht's statements about class are cloaked in the innocence of a fable that whispers insistently to the audience.

The city burns in the heat of civil war and a servant girl sacrifices everything to protect an abandoned child. But when peace is finally restored, the boy's mother comes to claim him. Calling upon the ancient tradition of the *Chalk Circle*, a comical judge sets about resolving the dispute. But in a culture of corruption and deception, who wins?

To help us deconstruct Brecht's modernist epic play we are delighted to welcome our guest, Constellation Theatre Company's founding artistic director, **Allison Arkell Stockman**. Allison will be directing this production at Constellation. It will run from April 12 - May 13. Longtime Footlights member Dorothy Marschak will moderate our discussion.

Read the play. Find *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in local libraries, bookstores or order an e-book copy from online bookstores. We have a pdf scanned copy available to email you if you are coming to the dinner-discussion on February 27. Once you have reserved with Phyllis, email Robin for a copy at robinlarkin@comcast.net.

New location. We will meet at **MeiWah**, located at 4457 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD - a short walk from the north entrance of the Friendship Heights metro stop on the red line.

MeiWah is on the second floor. There is an elevator to MeiWah from the street and garage levels. There

is limited parking in a small surface lot behind the restaurant, entered from either Friendship Blvd or The Hills Plaza. Garage parking is available for \$5 with a voucher from the restaurant. Enter the garage from Friendship Blvd or across Hills Plaza. Some street parking may be open.



Dinner is at 6:30, the discussion begins at 7:30 and ends by 9. The all-inclusive cost for dinner and the discussion is \$30. Cash or check, please – no credit cards, and no cash back. You may

come at 7:20 for the discussion only for just \$5.

Dinner consists of two appetizers, five main dishes, orange slices and fortune cookies, served family style at each table. Drinks are not included, but can be ordered and paid for individually. MeiWah has a bar for beer, wine and drinks. Please be on time. Food will be served around 6:45.

New reservation policy. Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. Reservations may be made until noon on Tuesday, February 27 but cancellations will be accepted only until **Saturday, February 24 at noon**. Footlights **will** be charged for no-shows, and we expect you to cover our cost.

April: Dinner-discussion of *Vietgone* by Qui Nguyen

The New York Times calls *Vietgone* "a refuge tale with laughs and rap." In his play, **Qui Nguyen** reimagines his parents' reluctant courtship: Fresh from Saigon, they meet in an Arkansas refugee relocation camp in 1975. Whether their courtship actually involved quite so many ninjas, drugs, expletives, and hip-hop ballads is unknown. With pop culture, a live band, and plenty of funk-rock-punk-n-roll, *Vietgone* follows these new Americans through a bewildering land. A story full of lust and heartache, cowboys and motorcycles from a screenwriter for Marvel Studios.

Studio Theatre will produce *Vietgone* April 25 - May 20. Look for details of our April dinner-discussion in our next newsletter.

About Footlights

To subscribe to the Footlights e-list, go to groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join, or e-mail any message to footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To learn more about Footlights, see www.footlightsdc.org. Copies of the monthly newsletter are sent to the Footlights e-list and are also available at www.footlightsdc.org. To get a newsletter print copy contact Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300.

Finding a meeting location . . .

Footlights has met at Alfio's for many years. It has been a bargain. Recently, we found out just how

much of a bargain it has been. Group dinner prices have risen repeatedly and substantially. We think it is time to explore other venues for our dinner-discussions.

To that end, we encourage you to suggest possible DC-area locations to Phyllis Bodin, at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. But before you do, kindly help us by checking out your suggested location. If you can, try the food and ask for a group or banquet menu. Other considerations:

- close to a Metro stop, and has available parking
- private space, without piped-in music or background noise
- total price for dinner, including tax, tip and room

Calendar:

- **Saturday, February 24**, 2 p.m., performance of **Julia Cho's** *Aubergine* at Olney Theatre Center. Tickets are \$35 using code FOOTLIGHTS. Postshow discussion included.
- **Tuesday, February 27**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Bertolt Brecht's** *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* with Constellation Theatre Company's **Allison Arzell Stockman**. At MeiWah, 4457 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **April** (date/location/speaker tba), 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Vietgone* by **Qui Nguyen**.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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