

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

MAY 2018

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## *Footlights to discuss Swimming with Whales on Tuesday, May 8*

Join Footlights when we meet on May 8 to discuss **Bob Bartlett's** play *Swimming with Whales*, which will have its world premiere next month at 1st Stage Tysons. The story is about a restless teenager who visits his family's secluded cottage on the Outer Banks in North Carolina, misses his life in the city, clashes with his fisherman father over everything - until concern over an injured whale offshore, in danger of beaching and dying, may be the catalyst for erasing the differences and bringing father and son closer to each other.

*Whales* opens May 31 and runs until June 24, at 1st Stage.

Footlights is delighted to welcome playwright **Bob Bartlett** back. Bob was last here in 2011 to talk to us about "*Master Harold*" and *the Boys* which he directed for Quotidian Theatre. He also directed O'Neill's *Long Days Journey Into Night* and McNally's *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* for them - three truly memorable evenings of theater.

Bob grew up in the Accokeek area, graduated from Bowie State and then Catholic University, teaches Theater Arts at Bowie State as well as writing and directing plays. He is involved with the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, is an affiliate artist at the National New Play Network, and is a founding member of The Welders. He is working on a play set in D.C. the day of Martin Luther King's assassination, and another one which deals with the 1930 Bonus Army, and in his spare time directs plays at theaters all over this area. He says *Swimming with Whales* is a play about grief, and grieving, and healing, but is a comedy. It will be set partly on a beach and partly underwater, and will even feature a whale song.

We also welcome **Alex Levy**, who will direct

*Swimming with Whales* for 1st Stage. The last play he directed for 1st Stage was *Jesus Hopped the A Train*. (We hope all of you were lucky enough to see this amazing production!) Alex moved to this area from the West Coast to become Artistic/Managing Director for this tiny Tysons Corner theater, which continues to do remarkable work. The location is not impressive: a strip mall with Dogtopia (a pet grooming establishment) and a Meineke muffler shop as neighbors, but the number of awards the theater productions have won under Levy's direction is very impressive indeed.

Our third guest will be **Matthew R. Wilson**, who plays the father. Matthew has appeared in two plays which Footlights discussed: Dog & Pony's *Beertown* and No Rules's *Black Comedy*. He was in Constellation's *Lieutenant of Innishmore* among many other recent engagements. He teaches, directs, choreographs fight scenes, and is a member of Faction of Fools and is a specialist in Commedia dell'Arte (his University of Maryland PhD thesis was about that art form). He has had a role on TV's *House of Cards*. We believe this is the first time he has shared the stage with a whale.

**Read *Swimming with Whales*.** We will have an e-copy of the play available to those attending our discussion. First make your reservation with Phyllis - details below - then e-mail Robin for a copy at [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net).

**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 Friendship Blvd. Garage parking is available for \$5 with a voucher from the restaurant. Enter the garage just

as you turn into the surface lot from Friendship Blvd or into the Chase Tower building across The 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 promptly starting at 6:30.

**New reservation policy.** Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768. Reservations may be made until noon on Tuesday, May 8, but cancellations will be accepted only until **Friday, May 4 at noon**. Footlights **will** be charged for no-shows, and we expect you to cover our cost.

### *Calendar:*

- **Tuesday, May 8**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Swimming with Whales* with playwright **Bob Bartlett**, director **Alex Levy** and actor **Matthew R. Wilson**. Stephanie Olshan will moderate. At MeiWah, 4457 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768.

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### *About Footlights*

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### *Finding a meeting location . . .*

We continue to explore other venues for our dinner-discussions. We encourage you to suggest possible DC-area locations to Phyllis Bodin, at [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net) or 301-986-1768. And 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 available parking
- private quiet space, no music or other noise
- cost of dinner, including tax, tip and room