

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

AUGUST 2018

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## *Footlights to discuss Gloria by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins on Tuesday, August 21*

*Gloria*, a finalist for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, explores, with wit and empathy, the tensions among a diverse group of millennials working for a national magazine in New York City. (It happens that the playwright was once an editorial assistant at the *New Yorker*). As the action develops – often surprisingly and sometimes explosively – the play raises broader issues concerning celebrity culture; gun violence and how we process and move on from it; and the decline of traditional media. The Pulitzer committee wrote: "A play of wit and irony that deftly transports the audience from satire to thriller and back again." Productions Off-Broadway, in London and at the Goodman Theater in Chicago have garnered enthusiastic praise.

The playwright, 33-year-old **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**, a DC native, is familiar to Footlights members, who discussed and viewed *An Octoroon* in 2016. The latter was recently rated by *New York Times* theater critics as the second-best non-musical play in the last 25 years. Its author has won numerous theatrical awards, including an Obie, as well as a MacArthur "genius" fellowship. He holds degrees from Juilliard, Princeton and NYU.

In *An Octoroon*, Jacobs-Jenkins' alter ego, BJJ, complains about being typed as a "black playwright": "I can't even wipe my ass without someone trying to accuse of of deconstructing the race problem in America." In *Gloria*, he offers us compelling characters with multiple, layered identities: generational, racial, gender, work and personal.

Our guest, **Olivia Haller**, is Woolly Mammoth's dramaturg for this production. She is the Literary Director of Convergence Theater. Her play, *This is All Just Temporary*, was featured at the 2018

Women's Voices Festival in Washington where it was well-received by critics. She is also an actress and producer. Her Bachelor's in Fine Arts is from Boston University.

Footlights member Steve Weissman will moderate our discussion.

**Location.** We will meet at MeiWah Restaurant, 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 - 2 hour limit - 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. 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.

**Reservations.** 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, August 21, but cancellations will be accepted only until Saturday, August 18 at noon. Footlights will be charged for no-shows, and we expect you to cover our cost.

**Read the play.** *Gloria* is available to purchase from Dramatists Play Service, Inc. for \$9 plus shipping and handling.

**See the play.** *Gloria* opens the season for Woolly Mammoth Theatre Co. Performances will be September 3 - 30. Footlights members will receive a 15% discount off full priced tickets, using the code FOOTLIGHTS for any performance during the run (excluding Opening Night and PWYW previews). Woolly has three talkbacks scheduled so far that will be after Sunday matinees on September 16, 23 and 30.

## ***About Footlights***

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## ***Calendar:***

- **Tuesday, August 21**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of ***Gloria*** with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company dramaturg **Olivia Haller**. 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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