

# from the FOOTLIGHTS

JUNE 2011

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

## June 6: *Opus* by Michael Hollinger – Dinner-discussion with Jim Petosa

"Sex, drugs and chamber music! . . . an absorbing new play by **Michael Hollinger**," a New York Times critic wrote at the New York premier of *Opus* almost four years ago. "*Opus* considers the matter of music making with an intimate, appraising eye, showing us the sweat, the drudgery and the delicate balance of personalities that lie behind the creation of a seemingly effortless performance," the review went on. Another critic called the play a "smart, funny and ultimately shocking and downright breathtaking comedy/drama." "Much like the fictional string quartet that is its subject, Michael Hollinger's drama *Opus* plays all of its notes with an utmost precision and delicacy," the New York Post critic wrote.

Hollinger is writing about a world he knows well. He studied viola at Oberlin but eventually became a playwright whose work is being done all over Washington this season, from *Red Herring* at the Washington Stage Guild to the adaptation of *Cyrano* at the Folger. As we will learn in the discussion and then at the production of *Opus*, there is good reason for doing his play.

Equally important is the return to Footlights of **Jim Petosa**, Artistic Director of the Olney Theatre Center who gave himself the job of directing *Opus*. Jim has been one of our most frequent guests because he is one of the most knowledgeable and articulate directors in the Washington region. Jim also heads the School of Theatre at Boston University.

The play opens on a nervous young violist, Grace, auditioning before the three remaining members of the renowned Lazara Quartet. She is very good, she gets the job and rehearsals begin the next day. They feel the pressure of performing in a week at a televised ceremony for the president of the United States. They dislike him, but an audience is an audience. And they choose to do one of the most difficult and beautiful quartets in music, Beethoven's Opus 131.

Problems persist, new ones arise, of course. The "play moves fluidly between scenes taking place during rehearsals for the big night and flashbacks to the events that preceded the ouster of Dorian, Grace's predecessor," as one reviewer puts it. But a constant in their lives is making wonderful music, which washes over us in several scenes.

We are returning to **Casa Fiesta**, 4910 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington DC 20016 – one of our old favorites because of its delicious Central American buffet – for this discussion. But, this time we are taking over the whole street-level dining room. The rest rooms are upstairs but the downstairs where we will eat is accessible to the handicapped. Casa Fiesta is halfway between the Tenleytown and Friendship Heights metro stops on the red line. There is usually plenty of nearby street parking, if you drive.

Casa Fiesta's buffet is \$15, including tax and tip. We appreciate a \$5 donation for Footlights. Cash or check, please; no credit cards. Make your reservation for **Monday, June 6** with Phyllis Bodin, 301-986-1768 or [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net). We meet at 6:30 for dinner; the discussion begins at 7:30. We finish about 9 p.m. – no later than 9:30. You may come for the discussion only if you wish.

**Read *Opus*.** Find *Opus* at your local library or order from bookstores or online.

**See *Opus*.** We'll see *Opus* on **Sunday, June 26, 2 p.m.** at Olney Theatre, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd., Olney MD 20832. Orchestra group seats are \$30, and include a postshow discussion. Reserve with Robin, 240-669-6300 or [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net). Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.

## July 12: Footlights Discussion of Bruce Norris' *Clybourne Park* with Howard Shalwitz

Please join us on **Tuesday, July 12**, at **Alfio's** for our dinner-discussion of *Clybourne Park* with guest **Howard Shalwitz**, Artistic Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Shalwitz is directing the upcoming Woolly Mammoth revival of their production of the multiple award-winning *Clybourne Park* – 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Drama; 2011 Helen Hayes Award Winner for Outstanding Resident Play and Outstanding Director.

Wikipedia describes Norris' plays as verbally dexterous and fast-paced. The Washington Post's Peter Marks applauded the Woolly Mammoth production and praised *Clybourne Park* as a serious and seriously funny work. The play is about the resale, after fifty years, of the Chicago home in *Raisin in the Sun* and explores issues of race and class as irritated by gentrification.

Alfio's Trattoria is located on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments, 4515 Willard Avenue, in Chevy

Chase, MD. The restaurant is two blocks from the red line Friendship Heights Metro station. Street parking is limited but valet parking is free. The cost for dinner is only \$13 for salad, bread, choice among six entrees, ice cream, and coffee or tea. The price includes tax and tip. We appreciate a \$5 contribution to Footlights. Cash or check; no credit cards. Wine, beer, and cocktails are available from the bar. Phyllis Bodin will take reservations for our dinner-discussion. You can reach her at 301-986-1768, or [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net). You may come for the discussion only if you wish.

Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. and the discussion begins at 7:30, ending no later than 9:30. If you have to cancel your dinner reservation please let Phyllis know by noon on July 12 so we will have an accurate count for the restaurant.

### See *Tennessee Continuum* with Footlights

In May we discussed *Tennessee Continuum* – two one-act plays by Tennessee Williams, produced by the

Washington Shakespeare Company. Footlights will see the Williams plays on **Sunday, June 19, at 2 p.m.** Tickets for our group are \$15. Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, # L07, Rockville, MD 20852. Contact Robin – 240-669-6300 or [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net).

WSC now performs at the Artisphere in Rosslyn, 1101 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA. It is two blocks from the Rosslyn metro stop, and offers free parking in the building garage. We will go across the street to China Garden for dinner after the talk with the cast. Meet in the lobby.

### 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, June 6, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *Opus* by **Michael Hollinger**. Our guest is **Jim Petosa**, Artistic Director, Olney Theatre Center. Jerry Stilkind moderates. At Casa Fiesta, 4910 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington DC 20016. Reserve with Phyllis, 301-986-1768 or [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net).
- Sunday, June 19, 2 p.m. performance of *Tennessee Continuum* at Washington Shakespeare Company, Artisphere, 1101 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA. Tickets are \$15. Reserve with Robin, 240-669-6300 or [robinlarkin@comcast.net](mailto:robinlarkin@comcast.net). Send your check, payable to Footlights, to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, #L07, Rockville, MD 20852.
- Sunday, June 26, 2 p.m., performance of *Opus* at Olney Theatre, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd., Olney MD 20832. Tickets are \$30. Reserve with and send your check to Robin.
- Tuesday, July 12, 6:30 p.m. dinner-discussion of *Clybourne Park* by **Bruce Norris**. Our guest is **Howard Shalwitz**, Artistic Director, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. John Glynn moderates. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Ave., Chevy Chase, MD, 20815. Reserve with Phyllis, 301-986-1768 or [phylbo@verizon.net](mailto:phylbo@verizon.net).

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**  
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