

from the FOOTLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2018

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Footlights to discuss Julia Cho's *Aubergine* on Thursday, February 1

"In *Aubergine*, a moving new play by **Julia Cho**, a meal is more than a meal. It's a form of communication, freighted with history, private meaning, hope for the future and grief for the past." (LA Times)

Aubergine is Footlights' third selection from this year's Women's Voices Theatre Festival. On Thursday, February 1, 6:30 p.m. at Alfio's, we will be joined by **Jason Loewith**, Artistic Director of Olney Theatre Center, for our discussion of *Aubergine*. Footlights last welcomed him in August 2016 for our discussion of *Angels in America* - Olney's brilliant collaboration with Round House Theatre. Charlotte Baer will moderate our discussion.

Picture all the holiday cards and TV shows that overwhelm the U.S. in December. The American dream is that food brings families together. Publicity about the winter holidays shows families putting aside their differences to sit at the holiday table, full of emotion and love, no political discussions, no lifestyle clashes. However, while food can unite families, it can also divide them. In this play, the Korean-American son, Ray, becomes a French chef and his father is not pleased. When the father gets sick, Ray has one last chance to please his father with a special meal. Will it work?

Further complications arise. As if it's not enough that Ray and his father can't talk about food; they don't truly speak the same language. Like many immigrants' children, Ray doesn't speak much Korean. He calls upon his estranged girlfriend Cornelia for translation services when his non-English speaking uncle arrives with a sack full of strange ingredients.

Read the play. *Aubergine* is published. Cost is \$9 for a paperback copy. See Dramatists Play Service at <https://www.dramatists.com/> to order.

As part of your preparation for the February 1 discussion, we suggest that you think about food's role in your family - whether you come from the American South, Europe, Asia or a unique combination of backgrounds. Everybody eats.

The Second Women's Voices Theatre Festival brings excitement and richness to the DC area theatre scene. While still featuring new plays by women playwrights, this year's festival includes plays having their second or third production, which is lucky for us since the new criteria include *Aubergine*. Originally produced by the Berkeley (California) Repertory Theatre, *Aubergine* won the 2017 award for best new play in the San Francisco

region.

Playwright Julia Cho has long been fascinated by language, as in her play, *The Language Archive*, which Footlights discussed in 2012.

We meet at **Alfio's La Trattoria**, located at 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments - a short walk from the north entrance of the Friendship Heights metro stop on the red line. Street parking is limited, but valet parking is available at Alfio's. 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 \$25. Dinner is a green salad, choice among six entrées, and spaghetti, green beans, bread and butter, ice cream, and tea or coffee. Alfio's salad bar may be substituted for the entrée if you wish. Cash or check, please - no credit cards, and no cash back. Wine, beer, cocktails are available from the bar. You may come at 7:20 for the discussion only for just \$5.

Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768. Reservations and/or cancellations will be accepted until noon on the day of the dinner-discussion. If you must cancel, please let Phyllis know as soon as possible since the restaurant needs a complete count. This is a seated, table-service dinner, not a buffet. We may be charged for no-shows and expect you to cover our cost.

See the play. *Aubergine* will play at Olney Theatre Center from February 7 through March 4. It is a co-production with Baltimore's Everyman Theatre, and directed by Everyman's founding artistic director, Vincent M. Lancisi. (*Aubergine* will play at Everyman March 14 - April 15.)

Footlights may buy tickets at \$35 using the code FOOTLIGHTS for the **February 24, 2 p.m.** matinee at Olney. A postshow discussion is included. Go online at <https://tickets.olneytheatre.org/>. Select ADULT type tickets and then enter the promo code for the discount.

March: Dinner-discussion of Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

Constellation Theatre's website describes their upcoming production: *Caught in a social revolution, a young servant girl named Grusha promises her heart to a soldier on his way into battle. Soon the city is aflame and Grusha risks everything and becomes a refugee to save an abandoned baby. She must tiptoe across a precarious rope bridge strung across a gaping chasm in order to escape the enemy. In this corrupt and violent world, Grusha relies on compassion and perseverance to begin*

her own family. Brecht's epic adventure tale features vivid characters, high stakes scenarios and live music.

In March we will discuss Brecht's modernist epic play with Constellation's artistic director, **Allison Arkell Stockman**. Allison will be directing this production. And she will be joined by **Tom Teasley**, noted percussionist and winner of Helen Hayes Awards for his work with Constellation Theatre. Tom will be providing live music for the production. We are thrilled to have them join us for our March dinner-discussion, details to come. Dorothy Marschak will moderate.

Women's Voices Theater Festival Tickets

The Women's Voices Theater Festival has begun. Purchase of a \$15 Festival pass on TodayTix.com gives you a 25% discount on tickets to any of the Festival plays.

Mosaic Theater is offering a 50% discount on tickets to Footlights members for any performance (through

February 4) of *Queens Girl in Africa*. We suggest attending the 3 p.m. Sunday, January 28 performance which includes a postshow discussion. Tickets are available online at <http://www.mosaictheater.org> or through the box office at 202-399-7993. Use the code FOOTLIGHTS.

Ford's Theatre's *Jefferson's Garden*, our January discussion play continues through February 8.

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.

Calendar:

- **Sunday, January 28**, 3 p.m., performance of *Queens Girl in Africa* by **Caleen Sinnette Jennings** at Mosaic Theater. See above for ticket information.
- **Thursday, February 1**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Julia Cho's** *Aubergine* with Olney's **Jason Loewith**. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **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.
- **March** (date tba), 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Bertolt Brecht's** *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* with Constellation Theatre's **Allison Arkell Stockman** and percussionist **Tom Teasley**.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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