

from the FOOTLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2017

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

Footlights discusses Queens Girl in Africa by Caleen Sinnette Jennings on Thursday, December 7

Assassinations rocked the nation in the 1960s with almost back to back regularity. The country's societal framework was torn apart with the killing of Medgar Evers and John F Kennedy in '63, the "Freedom Summer" murders of civil rights workers Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman in 1964, then Malcolm X in Washington Heights, New York in February 1965. That was just too close for a circle of Malcolm's friends who felt that any one of them could be targeted as "race men" who spoke truth to power or traitors who didn't go far enough.

With the social turmoil that torched churches and condoned brutality with regularity with no end in sight, some families resorted to escape for other options. That's how a New York teen from Queens ended up in Africa, specifically civil war torn Nigeria. The story follows the journey of Josephine Marie Butler as she makes her way in uncharted territory, in unfamiliar surroundings, learning about herself along the way.

This new play commission is part of Mosaic's "Transformational Journey, Inspired Singular Exploration." *Queens Girl in Africa* is also part of the 2018 Women's Voices Theater Festival.

Join our guests, American University professor and award-winning playwright **Caleen Sinnette Jennings**, whose *Queens Girl in the World* received national acclaim as heartwarming fun and funny. Caleen will be joined by Helen Hayes winner **Erika Rose** who has captivated audiences most recently in *An Octoroon*, and director **Paige Hernandez**, a multidisciplinary artist and critically acclaimed as a performer, director, choreographer and playwright. Paige is also known for her effective fusion of theatre, hip-hop, music and dance. Debbie Minter Jackson will moderate the discussion.

Our **December 7** dinner-discussion will be held 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 goes from 7:30 - 9:00.

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and the discussion is now \$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. 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.

Queens Girl in Africa will be produced by Mosaic Theater at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Lang Theatre from January 4 - February 4. Tickets are available online at <http://www.mosaictheater.org> or through the box office at 202-399-7993.

The script of *Queens Girl in Africa* is in development and not available yet.

Monday, January 8: Dinner-discussion of Jefferson's Garden by Timberlake Wertenbaker

Another entry in DC's 2018 Women's Voices Festival is Ford Theatre's upcoming production of **Timberlake Wertenbaker's Jefferson's Garden** (2015), playing January 19 - February 11.

The play presents us with a study of America's battle for independence, and argues that America's historic mistake lay in its failure to enshrine the

concept of universal freedom in its constitution. Christian, a young idealist Quaker, joins the fight against British rule: a move for which he is ostracized from his community. He breaks his vow not to kill, in order to achieve a greater one, and is then appalled when his hero, Thomas Jefferson, does not press for equality for slaves.

Jefferson's Garden is published. Paperback and e-book copies are available.

Footlights welcomes back **Patrick Pearson**, director of Artistic Programming at Ford's. Robin Larkin will moderate our discussion. At Alfio's. Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.

2018 Women's Voices Theater Festival

Following the success of the first Festival in 2015, the Women's Voices Theater Festival will return in January and February, continuing to highlight both the scope of plays being written by women, and the

Calendar:

- **Thursday, December 7**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Queens Girl in Africa* with playwright **Caleen Sinnette Jennings**, actor **Erica Rose** and director **Paige Hernandez**. Debbie Jackson moderates. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, on the ground floor of the Willoughby Apartments. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin at phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **Monday, January 8**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of *Jefferson's Garden* by **Timberlake Wertenbaker**. Our guest is **Patrick Pearson**, Ford's Theatre Director of Artistic Programming. At Alfio's. Reserve with Phyllis.
- **Thursday, February 1**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Julia Cho's** *Aubergine* with Olney's **Jason Loewith**. At Alfio's.

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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range of professional theater being produced in and around the nation's capital.

Footlights has scheduled three of the festival plays on our dinner-discussion calendar: *Queens Girl in Africa*, *Jefferson's Garden*, and, on February 1, *Aubergine* by Julia Cho. For festival details see <http://www.womensvoicestheaterfestival.org/>.

About Footlights

To subscribe to the Footlights elist, go to groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join, or email 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 elist and are also available at www.footlightsdc.org.

To get a newsletter print copy contact Robin, robinlarkin@comcast.net or 240-669-6300.