

from the FOOTLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2016

“Life shouldn’t be all work and no plays.”

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

December 13: Footlights’ Dinner–discussion of Edward Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Footlights meets on **Tuesday, December 13** to discuss a classic of modern drama: ***Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*** by **Edward Albee**. Joining us will be **Patrick Pearson**, Director of Artistic Programming at Ford’s Theatre, to explore their new production opening January 21, 2017.

When Albee died earlier this fall, The New York Times obituary called him “widely considered the foremost American playwright of his generation.” Yet Footlights has discussed only two of Albee’s plays: *A Delicate Balance* and *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* A re-examination of his work is long overdue.

Albee’s concerns were certainly up-to-date: He “explored the contentiousness of intimacy, the gap between self-delusion and truth and the roiling desperation beneath the facade of contemporary life...”; he thought “that self-interest is a universal, urgent, irresistible and poisonous agent in modern life.” (NYTimes, 9/17/16) Those comments alone could focus our December discussion.

Hilton Als, in his New Yorker appreciation, said that for Albee “Life is a way station between the worse and the worst.”

And yet, *Woolf* is a laugh-out-loud tour de force. Despair and laughter intertwine in a shocking way, delightful way.

As part of our discussion, Footlights attendees are encouraged to consider other productions they have seen and share insights. Although “Martha” is a sought-after role, different actresses portray this character quite differently. Consider Uta Hagen, who originated the role, and compare her rendition to Elizabeth Taylor’s in the movie or Colleen Dewhurst’s in the 1976 Broadway revival. How will Holly Twyford depict her?

Charlotte Baer will moderate.

Our dinner-discussion is at Alfio’s, 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 if you drive, but valet parking is available at Alfio’s. Dinner is at 6:30, the discussion at 7:30 and ends no later than 9.

The all-inclusive cost for dinner and discussion is \$20. 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.

Read the play. Copies of *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* are readily available in local libraries and bookstores and also from the usual online sites. Note: We encourage you to read the play before our discussion. Our discussion may include spoilers.

See the play. *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* will be performed at Ford’s Theatre, 511 10th St NW, Washington, DC 20004, from January 21 to February 19. We are considering group tickets.

January 24: Footlights’ Dinner–discussion of Mike Bartlett’s *King Charles III*

Join us on **Tuesday, January 24** to discuss ***King Charles III*** by **Mike Bartlett**. Our guest will be **Sivan Battat**, associate director of Shakespeare Theatre’s production opening February 7. Joanna Ward will moderate our discussion.

The Queen is dead. After a lifetime of waiting, Prince Charles finally ascends to the throne, flanked by wife Camilla, sons William and Harry, and daughter-in-law Kate. The Prime Minister proposes legislation designed to restrict the freedom of the press, which the newly crowned sovereign opposes, subverting the understood rules of British democracy. Written primarily in Shakespearean blank verse, this smash Broadway and

West End hit and the 2015 Olivier Award winner for Best New Play is a modern take on the future of the British Royal Family. Directed by David Muse, the upcoming production at Shakespeare Theatre will be a regional premier as part of a three city run, produced in association with American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

We'll meet at Alfio's. Make reservations with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.

About Footlights

To subscribe to our e-list, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/footlightsdc/join>, or e-mail footlightsdc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To learn more about Footlights, see <http://www.footlightsdc.org>.

Calendar:

- **Tuesday, December 13**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*** Guest: **Patrick Pearson**, director of Artistic Programming, Ford's Theatre. Charlotte Baer moderates. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **Tuesday, January 24**, 6:30 p.m., dinner-discussion of **Mike Bartlett's *King Charles III***. Guest: **Sivan Battat**, assistant director of Shakespeare Theatre's production. Joanna Ward moderates. At Alfio's, 4515 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD. Reserve with Phyllis Bodin, phylbo@verizon.net or 301-986-1768.
- **Performances** - Footlights is considering group tickets for *The Hard Problem* (Studio Theatre: 1/11 - 2/19), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Ford's Theatre: 1/21 - 2/19) and *King Charles III* (Shakespeare Theatre: 2/7 - 3/12).

Robin Larkin for **FOOTLIGHTS**
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