

from the FOOTLIGHTS

JANUARY 2021

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

<http://www.footlightsdc.org>

January 14: A First-look Discussion of Lauren Gunderson's new play, The Catastrophist, with Ryan Rilette and the playwright herself

We’re back! Mark your new calendars for Footlights’ first discussion of 2021: **Thursday, January 14 at 7pm.**



The Catastrophist, a world premiere by **Lauren Gunderson** is based on the life and work of virologist Nathan Wolfe who peers into science, theory and viral exploration to understand and alleviate impending biological catastrophe.

Lauren Gunderson is already achieving acclaim as one of the most produced playwrights for the American stage. That these two are real life husband and wife heightens the intrigue for a project that couldn’t be more relevant in today’s pandemic riddled world.

Wolfe was highlighted in TIME’s 100 Most Influential People in the World for coverage of earlier viral outbreaks. In an interview he stated—*“I work to create systems that can accurately detect pandemics early, determine their likely importance, and, with any luck, crush those that have the potential to devastate us.”*

The stakes couldn’t be higher today to discover how Wolfe connects the dots while looking down the barrel at wide-spread calamity. The character based on Wolfe seeks scientific breakthrough discoveries in a world gone berserk, where normal routines and everyday life are whacked and fear of contamination smashes all societal norms and expectations.

In her previous works, Gunderson’s memorable characters are full throttled, bold and ambitious in their quests. At the same time, they are multi-layered with humanity as they work through their relationships with insight that touch us to the core. Come see what she does in portraying Nathan Wolfe as he tackles world-shattering devastation as the catastrophist.

Footlights is thrilled to feature this exciting world premiere in a digital discussion format (via Zoom), a first-ever for Footlights. While the environment has changed

from our usual dinner sessions, the intention is the same. We’re planning a thoughtful and deliberate session to discuss exciting topics and explore the issues with the show’s stellar professionals for a fun-filled interactive experience.



Round House barely missed a beat this year adjusting to the shutdowns, cancelled performances and spiraling losses in the theater community. Their *Homebound Series* continues to get rave reviews and hits, and Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette** is developing a full slate of shows, including a current theater

festival featuring the work of Adrienne Kennedy. Ryan joins us again and will share how theater remains alive in this precarious and constantly evolving reality, along with playwright, Lauren Gunderson herself!

Come join us for a spirited discussion with these special guests for Footlights’ inaugural digital meeting to start the new theatrical year. Debbie Jackson will moderate.

To reserve for our Zoom discussion, please send an email to Phyllis Bodin, Phylbo@verizon.net. You will receive the Zoom link a couple of days before our meeting.

Streaming The Catastrophist at Round House

Streaming on demand begins on January 25. See Round House website for [details and to purchase tickets](#) (one per household).

About Footlights

If you’re receiving this message, you’re probably already a subscriber on our listserv. Since we updated our distribution list, our lives have changed over the year so we hope we’re still reaching you. As a reminder, to subscribe to our email list send any message to FootlightsDC+subscribe@groups.io. See our website at www.Footlightsdc.org.

Donations to Footlights may be sent to Robin Larkin, 5800 Nicholson Lane, Apt. L-07, Rockville, MD 20852.

Looking forward to “seeing” you on **Thursday, January 14 at 7pm.**