



Taylor Lamb  
Communications Manager  
[tlamb@centerstage.org](mailto:tlamb@centerstage.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Baltimore Center Stage and Two Strikes Theatre Collective Partner for Bridge Series Reading

**Baltimore, MD, April 22, 2021**---- Baltimore Center Stage and Two Strikes Theatre Collective, an independent Baltimore theatre company founded to celebrate, promote, and encourage the intersectional voice of Black women, announced today that they are partnering for a virtual Bridge Series Reading of Alice Childress's *Florence* on Thursday, May 13, 2021.

"Partnering on this Bridge Series event with the extraordinary artists of Two Strikes Theatre Collective has been a wonderful way to deepen our evolving relationship," said **Director of Artistic Partnerships and Innovation Annalisa Dias**. "We're thrilled to continue finding ways to amplify the local Baltimore arts ecology through our programming, and we look forward to all that is to come."

*The Bridge Series* is a new series of virtual gatherings Baltimore Center Stage began this season. *The Bridge Series* explores the interconnectedness of classic and contemporary theater through virtual play readings and conversations between artists and scholars. This is the first Bridge Series Reading in partnership with another theater.

"Two Strikes Theatre Collective is excited about this unique partnership with Baltimore Center Stage," said **Two Strikes Theatre Collective Executive Director, Aladrian C. Wetzel**. "Alice Childress is a foremother of Black theatre, but all too often her work is not known or appreciated in the canon of so called 'classics.' We hope this reading provides an introduction to Childress' work as well as generates conversation surrounding colorism and privilege."

The virtual reading of *Florence* is directed by **Nicole A. Watson**. It will be followed by a discussion between **playwright Donnetta Lavinia Grays** and **Two Strikes Theatre Collective's Mistress of Play Development Christen Cromwell**, contextualizing the

themes of the play, such as colorism and its impacts on Black women's representation, and more.

*The Bridge Series* is free for students using the code CHILDRESS, and free for Baltimore Center Stage members. It is pay-what-you-will for non-members. People can register to attend the event at <https://www.centerstage.org/plays-and-events/bridge-series/>. More information about the event is below.

### **Alice Childress's *Florence***

**May 13, 2021**

**7PM**

Join Baltimore Center Stage and Two Strikes Theatre Collective for a Bridge Series reading of Alice Childress's one act play, *Florence*. A playwright, actress, and director, Alice Childress produced work over four decades exploring themes of empowering Black women, interracial politics, and working-class life. All of these themes are present in *Florence*, the play that started her career! This reading is directed by Nicole A. Watson and will be followed by a conversation contextualizing the themes of the play, such as colorism and its impacts on Black women's representation, and more. Don't miss out!

About *Florence*: A Black mother sits at a segregated railroad station in the South, preparing to take a train North to give her daughter Florence money and urge her to abandon her dreams of being an actress and come back home. She is joined by Mrs. Carter, a white woman who insists she's not "*Southern*" and therefore not racist, as far she's concerned. As Mrs. Carter urges Mama to talk to her, what starts as an innocuous conversation reveals the depths of the liberal racism of Northern white women, and pushes Mama to think differently about her journey.

For interview requests, more information and other media related inquiries, please contact the Communications office. For general information, visit [www.centerstage.org](http://www.centerstage.org) or call the box office at 410.332.0033.

### **About Two Strikes Theatre Collective**

Two Strikes Theatre Collective is an independent Baltimore theatre company founded in July 2019 to celebrate, promote, and encourage the intersectional voice of Black women and how it can be used for social change through art and community engagement. Created as a direct response to a lack of diversity and representation in theater spaces and propelled forward by the #SayHerName movement, our mission is to create art that is unapologetically Black femme-centric, to upset the white patriarchal status quo, and to provide creative outlets for Black women in the Baltimore community to express themselves through art. We were born with Two Strikes against us: Being a woman and being Black. We choose both. We are the match to ignite the revolution of Black women in theatre.

### **About Baltimore Center Stage**

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Managing Director Michael Ross. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access For All. Our mission is heavily rooted in providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.

