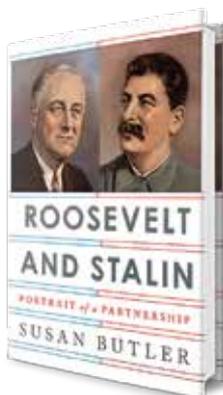


9-12

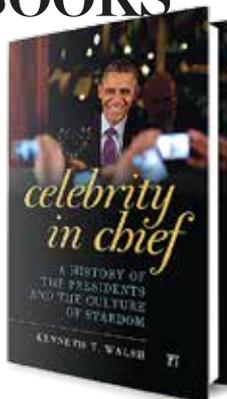


Francine Mathews—Georgetown Visitation grad, onetime CIA analyst, and general overachiever (“all but dissertation” in history at Stanford, 20-plus novels to her name, including a dozen mysteries under the pseudonym Stephanie Barron)—has a new espionage thriller, *Too Bad to Die*. Like Mathews’s previous novel, the well-received *Jack 1939*, which put an imagined John F. Kennedy in Europe on a spy mission for Franklin Roosevelt, this one mixes fact, fiction, and World War II: Working as an intelligence officer at 1943’s Tehran Conference, a young Ian Fleming (a decade before birthing James Bond) tries to foil a Nazi plot.

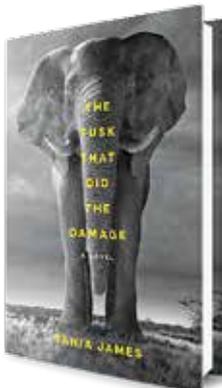


As it happens, this month also sees a sturdy nonfiction look at two of the same players—*Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership* by Susan Butler.

NEW BOOKS



For more on chief executives past and present, see *Celebrity in Chief: A History of the Presidents and the Culture of Stardom* by Kenneth T. Walsh, chief White House correspondent for U.S. News & World Report, in which the author argues that Presidents’ effectiveness has been directly tied to how well they leverage their stardom. At the end of his second term, the very popular Andrew Jackson invited the public to the White House to help him eat a 1,400-pound block of cheddar he’d been given. You be the judge.



In *The Tusk That Did the Damage*, local author Tania James (*Atlas of Unknowns; Aerogrammes*) takes on multiple perspectives in a novel about South India’s ivory trade, including—why didn’t someone think of this before?—that of an elephant.

—WILLIAM O’SULLIVAN



13 THE BLUES PROJECT

AMERICAN DANCE INSTITUTE

March 6-7

Tap may conjure school recitals, but in the hands—and feet—of contemporary artist Michelle Dorrance (left), it feels elegant, thrilling, fresh. Add live rock and blues by BIGLovely and Toshi Reagon and it becomes a dynamic celebration of American history. \$31.25; americandance.org.

14 THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

KENNEDY CENTER

March 7-21

Eric Owens’s plan to take over Washington is proceeding nicely: In addition to his turn as the cursed sea captain in Wagner’s popular opera (below), the Philadelphia-born bass-baritone is scheduled to perform a program of jazz standards at the Kennedy Center’s Terrace Theater on February 28, and he’ll conduct the Washington National Opera Orchestra on March 20. This blitz follows a third season as artist-in-residence with the Wolf Trap Opera. Owens is known for his studied, often subtle interpretations of big roles, such as the titular monster in Elliot Goldenthal’s *Grendel*. How will he use that restraint when playing a man looking for love while being hounded by Satan? Philippe Auguin conducts this whistle-whetter for WNO’s planned Ring cycle next spring. \$25 to \$300; kenedy-center.org.

—ANDREW BEAUJON

