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Lantern Theater Company Announces *In Conversation: Thomas Jefferson's Religious Beliefs* with Historians Dr. John C. Van Horne and Dr. Charles T. Cullen on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, at 8:15 p.m.

In Conversation Program Presented in Conjunction with the Lantern's Production of The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord by Scott Carter, Onstage June 1 – July 2

PHILADELPHIA (May 30, 2017) – As part of its ongoing **In Conversation Series** of fascinating discussions with theater artists and special guests, **Lantern Theater Company** will host noted historians and scholars **Dr. John C. Van Horne** and **Dr. Charles T. Cullen** for ***In Conversation: Thomas Jefferson's Religious Beliefs*** on **Tuesday, June 13, 2017, at approximately 8:15 p.m.** These two eminent historians of the late colonial and Federal period of American history will explore what Founding Father Thomas Jefferson really thought about God, religion, and religious freedom. The hour-long discussion will focus on Jefferson's views on Christianity, freedom of conscience, and the establishment of religions, especially his authorship of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. Presented in conjunction with the Lantern's production of Scott Carter's ***The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord***, the program will also respond to the play, exploring the extent to which Jefferson lived up to the principles espoused in his own "gospels," *The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth* and *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. The conversation immediately follows the 6:30 p.m. performance on Tuesday, June 13, and is free to the general public with ticket purchase. Members of the press are invited to attend; advance reservations are required.

About the Panelists

Discussion moderator **Dr. John C. Van Horne** is director emeritus of the Library Company of Philadelphia, an independent, nonprofit research library founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, which houses a collection of rare books, pamphlets, manuscripts, graphic works, and art and artifacts documenting American history in the

17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Van Horne has served as editor or co-editor of several books, including *America's Curious Botanist: A Tercentennial Reappraisal of John Bartram (1699-1777)* and *Traveling the Pennsylvania Railroad: The Photographs of William H. Rau*. He has also published a number of articles, including "The Education of African Americans in Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia" in *Educating the Youth of Pennsylvania: Worlds of Learning in the Age of Franklin* and "The History and Collections of the Library Company of Philadelphia" in *The Magazine Antiques*, as well as articles about the William Rau Collection of Pennsylvania Railroad Photographs in *The Magazine Antiques*, *Pennsylvania Heritage*, and *Railroad History*. Van Horne holds an AB in history from Princeton University and an MA and PhD in history from the University of Virginia. He has received many awards and honors over the course of his career, including induction into the American Philosophical Society and the American Antiquarian Society.

Jefferson scholar **Dr. Charles T. Cullen** is interim president and chief executive officer of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Cullen served as president and librarian of The Newberry Library in Chicago from 1986 to 2005, and previously as editor of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* at Princeton University and editor of *The Papers of John Marshall* at the Institute of Early American History and Culture at the College of William and Mary. He holds an AB from the University of the South (Sewanee), an MA from Florida State University, and a PhD from the University of Virginia.

In Conversation: Thomas Jefferson's Religious Beliefs immediately follows the Tuesday, June 13, 6:30 p.m. performance of *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord* and free to the general public with ticket purchase. Tickets are \$33 and are available online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Student tickets are \$15 in advance; \$10 student rush tickets are available 10 minutes before curtain with valid ID. Discounts are also available for theater industry professionals (\$10 in advance or at the door), seniors 65 and up, groups of 10 or more, and U.S. military personnel. Lantern Theater Company is located at St. Stephen's Theater, 10th & Ludlow Sts. in Center City Philadelphia.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994, Lantern Theater Company is closing its twenty-third season with a record number of subscribers, its largest-ever operating budget at \$1.3 million, and a growing community of theater artists engaged in its productions and audience enrichment events. Last season, the Lantern launched its **Theater Artist Fair Pay Initiative**, which was recently featured in *American Theatre* magazine as a leading national success story for increasing artist compensation through a combination of fundraising and higher ticket sales. The Lantern seeks to be a vibrant, contributing member of its community, exposing audiences to great theater, inviting participation in dialogue and discussion, engaging audience members on artistic and social issues, and employing theatrical language and techniques to enrich learning in the classroom. Since the inception of the

Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre in 1995, the Lantern has received 94 nominations and 19 awards, including the 2009 Excellence in Theatre Education and Community Service Award for its innovative education program, *Illumination*. The Lantern's upcoming 2017/18 season includes the Philadelphia premiere of *Red Velvet* by Lolita Chakrabarti, the world premiere of *The Craftsman* by Philadelphia playwright Bruce Graham, *Copenhagen* by Michael Frayn, *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare, and the Philadelphia premiere of *Don't Dress for Dinner* by Marc Camoletti and adapted by Robin Hawdon. More information is online at www.lanterntheater.org.

FACT SHEET
In Conversation: Thomas Jefferson's Religious Beliefs

PRESENTED BY:
Lantern Theater Company

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EVENT DATE:
Tuesday, June 13, 2017
6:30 p.m. performance of *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*
8:15 p.m. *In Conversation* panel discussion

TICKET PRICING:
Tickets are \$33 and include the performance and post-show discussion
Discounts available for students, seniors, military, and groups of 10 or more

TICKET INFORMATION:
Online: www.lanterntheater.org
By Phone: (215) 829-0395
In Person: Lantern Box Office, 10th & Ludlow Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19107

VENUE:
St. Stephen's Theater, 10th & Ludlow Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19107

PARKING/TRANSPORTATION:
Ample parking is available at nearby lots and garages, including The Autopark at Jefferson (10th & Ludlow Sts.) and LAZ Parking (10th & Chestnut Sts.). Metered street parking is available during posted hours. Venue is also accessible by taxi, SEPTA buses and trains, and the PATCO Highspeed line.

SYNOPSIS:
Presented by Lantern Theater Company in conjunction with its current production of *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*, this fascinating conversation with two eminent historians of the late colonial and Federal period of American history will explore what Jefferson really thought about God, religion, and religious freedom. Dr. John C. Van Horne, director emeritus of the Library Company of Philadelphia, will moderate this dialogue with Jefferson scholar Dr. Charles T. Cullen, who is interim president and chief executive officer of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Dr. Cullen has served as editor of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* at Princeton University and was the president and librarian of The Newberry Library in Chicago from 1986 to 2005. The discussion will focus on Jefferson's views on Christianity, freedom of conscience, and the establishment of religions, especially his authorship of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. The program will also respond to the play, exploring the extent to which Jefferson lived up to the principles espoused in his own "gospels," *The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth* and *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. The discussion immediately follows the 6:30 p.m. performance of *The Gospel According To...* on Tuesday, June 13 and is free with ticket purchase.