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Lantern Theater Company Announces 2017/18 Season Casting

Tickets Now On Sale for Eclectic Mix of Classics and New Work, Including a World Premiere by Philadelphia Playwright Bruce Graham, Two Philadelphia Premieres, a Science Classic, and the Lantern's Annual Shakespeare Production

PHILADELPHIA (September 5, 2017) – **Lantern Theater Company** announces complete casting for its upcoming 2017/18 season, which begins this week with the Philadelphia premiere of *Red Velvet* by **Lolita Chakrabarti**. Theater critics and members of the press are invited to attend *Red Velvet* **opening night on Wednesday, September 13 at 7 p.m.**

“Lantern Theater Company’s 2017/18 season will bring us stories of great minds striving to expand the human experience through art, science, magic, and fine food,” said Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon**. “From 19th century London to Amsterdam after the Second World War, from 20th century Copenhagen to modern-day France, we will perform a cycle of stories that put the world on stage in all its beauty, mystery, complexity, and wit.”

Single tickets, 5-play subscriptions (starting at \$100), and flex packages (\$124 – \$175) are now on sale online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Single tickets are \$26 – \$43 with discounts available for students (\$15 in advance or \$10 ten minutes before curtain), 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.

Lantern Theater Company's 2017/18 Mainstage Season with Casts and Press Openings

RED VELVET

Philadelphia Premiere

By Lolita Chakrabarti

Directed by Peter DeLaurier

September 7 – October 8, 2017

Press Night: Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 7 p.m.

London, 1833. There are riots on the streets protesting the Slavery Abolition Act. Inside the Theatre Royal, tragic actor Ira Aldridge is making history. Fresh from dazzling success in the capitals of Europe, he is about to become the first African American actor to play Othello in London, where the play was created. The conflict inside the theater mirrors that on stage and outside: what price will artists pay for their audacity?

The Cast: David Bardeen as Terence/Bernard Warde, Damon Bonetti as Pierre LaPorte, Liz Filios as Halina Wozniak/Betty Lovell/Margaret Aldridge, Adam Hammet as Charles Kean, Forrest McClendon as Ira Aldridge, David Pica as Casimir/Henry Forester, Ebony Pullum as Connie, and Lauren Sowa as Ellen Tree.

THE CRAFTSMAN

World Premiere

By Bruce Graham

Directed by M. Craig Getting

November 9 – December 10, 2017

Press Night: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 at 7 p.m.

From the ashes of World War II, Dutch patriots discover that one of their own – a rich and reputable art dealer – has sold rare Vermeer paintings to the Nazis. Accused of treason and on trial for his life, he must decide whether to destroy his own reputation or to reveal bigger secrets behind these works that the Dutch consider national treasures. Developed through the Lantern's New Works Initiative, this world premiere by celebrated Philadelphia playwright Bruce Graham spins a darkly ironic tale of ambition, genius, and deception.

The Cast: Mary Lee Bednarek as Johanna Van Meegeren, Dan Hodge as Boll, Anthony Lawton as Han Van Meegeren, Brian McCann as Augustun/Rotke/Judge, Paul L. Nolan as Abraham Bredius, and Ian Merrill Peakes as Joseph Pillel.

COPENHAGEN

By Michael Frayn

Directed by Kittson O'Neill

January 11 – February 11, 2018

Press Night: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 7 p.m.

A fascinating mystery: why did German physicist Werner Heisenberg visit his old mentor and Danish counterpart Niels Bohr in 1941 while their countries were at war? Was he looking for clues to atomic secrets, seeking absolution, or simply saying goodbye to an old friend? As the characters wrestle with their memories and motives, what becomes clear is the ultimate unknowability of why we do what we do. Perhaps the greatest play ever written about science, Michael Frayn's drama puts us in the heart of the greatest moral dilemma of the 20th century.

The Cast: Charles McMahan as Werner Heisenberg, Sally Mercer as Margrethe Norlund Bohr, and Paul L. Nolan as Niels Bohr.

THE TEMPEST

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Charles McMahan

March 15 – April 22, 2018

Press Night: Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at 7 p.m.

With poetry that brings the roiling sea to heel, *The Tempest* commands us to examine what happens when one ruler is exiled, his successor washed up on shore, and both must choose between conflict and reconciliation. Can old grievances lead to new hope or are we compelled to repeat our past sins? In the great comic fable of his artistic maturity, Shakespeare explores how the choices we make lead to unexpected consequences. Power becomes magic. Exile leads to revenge. Love paves a path to reconciliation, and poetry triumphs over all.

The Cast: **Chris Anthony** as Ferdinand, **Peter DeLaurier** as Prospero, **J Hernandez** as Antonio/Caliban, **Dave Johnson** as Sebastian/Trinculo, **John Lopes** as Alonso, **Bi Jean Ngo** as Ariel, **Ruby Wolf** as Miranda, and **Frank X** as Gonzalo/Stephano.

DON'T DRESS FOR DINNER

Philadelphia Premiere

By Marc Camoletti

Adapted by Robin Hawdon

Directed by Kathryn MacMillan

May 24 – June 24, 2018

Press Night: Wednesday, May 30, 2018 at 7 p.m.

Bernard wants Suzanne, and his wife Jacqueline wants his best friend Robert. Suzette comes to cook them all dinner, and her husband George might have to set everybody straight in this wickedly funny comedy by French playwright Marc Camoletti. The action spills from the drawing room to the bedroom to the kitchen in this hilarious and fast-moving farce of marriage, lust, and cordon bleu cuisine.

The Cast: **Chris Anthony** as George, **Jessica Bedford** as Suzanne, **Marc LeVasseur** as Robert, **Lee Minora** as Suzette, **Karen Peakes** as Jacqueline, and **William Zielinski** as Bernard.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994, Lantern Theater Company is launching its twenty-fourth season with a record number of subscribers, its largest-ever operating budget at \$1.5 million, and a growing community of theater artists engaged in its productions and audience enrichment events. The Lantern's innovative **Theater Artist Fair Pay Initiative** 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 96 nominations and 19 awards, including the 2009 Excellence in Theatre Education and Community Service Award for its education program, *Illumination*. More information is online at www.lanterntheater.org.