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## Lantern Theater Company Announces One-Week Extension of World Premiere Play *The Craftsman* by Bruce Graham

***Critically Lauded and Barrymore Recommended Production Will Close Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017***

PHILADELPHIA (November 22, 2017) – **Lantern Theater Company** announced today that its world premiere production of *The Craftsman* by celebrated Philadelphia playwright **Bruce Graham** will extend its run to meet audience demand and will now close on **Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017**. The following performances have been added:

Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 15 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 17 at 2 p.m.

Bruce Graham's darkly ironic tale of ambition, genius, and deception has played to sold out houses since its first public performance on November 9. 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. *The Craftsman* uses the strange case of historical figure **Han van Meegeren**, a 20th century Dutch artist and art dealer, to explore how we define and value art, the reverberations of war into peacetime, and how ethical actions in one world can fail in the next.

Two years ago, Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon** commissioned **Bruce Graham** to write a new play for the Lantern under the auspices of the company's **New Works Initiative**. The two theater artists quickly agreed that the fascinating true story of Han van Meegeren was worthy of dramatic treatment; the con man of one generation journeyed easily into our own. Of the finished work, McMahon states, "If art holds the mirror up to nature, then *The Craftsman* holds a funhouse mirror up to art. Bruce Graham creates a fascinating world where the assumptions we make about the world around us keep shifting until the very notion of authenticity itself may seem like a shallow fiction." Knowing that this new play will speak eloquently for itself, Graham challenges audiences to examine their own experiences in light of the characters' actions in the play. "To me the play is about overcoming hate. As I get older I realize that hate can be more corrosive than battery acid."

The production has achieved acclaim with Philadelphia audiences and theater critics alike. *DC Metro Theater Arts'* **Deb Miller** called *The Craftsman* "a richly-layered examination of truth and deception, human motivation and widespread gullibility," lauding both Graham's script and the Lantern's production: "Bruce Graham proves once again that he is a master at observing the human condition and understanding the deep-seated emotions that drive us. And the Lantern's world-class production proves once again that this is the thinking person's go-to theater company, delivering Graham's insightful vision with a superb cast, director, and design team." Writing for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, **Toby Zinman** said "Graham has given us not only a juicy slice of history, but also plenty of relevance to chew on as we contemplate the world." And **Howard Shapiro** in *WHYY News* said "I haven't seen everything that Bruce Graham, the prolific Philadelphia playwright, has written... But I can say that *The Craftsman*, in a stirring world-premiere production from Lantern Theater Company, has to be among the very best of them. *The Craftsman* is a true story, told with Graham's flourishes that turn the tale into riveting theater."

The Lantern further explores the world of *The Craftsman* with **Lantern Searchlight**, available online at [www.lanterntheater.org/searchlight](http://www.lanterntheater.org/searchlight). Penned by Lantern Dramaturg **Meghan Winch**, published articles for *The Craftsman* include an exploration of post-World War II Amsterdam, Vermeer's work, and why trials make for compelling theater, as well as a backstage interview with Bruce Graham. New content is added weekly throughout the production's run.

Tickets for all added performances of *The Craftsman* go on sale today and are available online at [www.lanterntheater.org](http://www.lanterntheater.org) or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Tickets are \$34 – \$39 for performances now through Sunday, Dec. 3; prices increase to \$38 – \$43 for performances beginning Tuesday, Dec. 5. Student tickets are \$15 in advance; \$10 student rush tickets are available ten 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 launched 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 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, Lantern Theater Company has been recognized with 96 nominations and 19 awards, including the 2009 Barrymore Award for Excellence in Theatre Education and Community Service. Following *The Craftsman*, the Lantern's 2017/18 season continues with *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](http://www.lanterntheater.org).

# FACT SHEET

## *The Craftsman*

WRITTEN BY:  
Bruce Graham

DIRECTED BY:  
M. Craig Getting

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  
Ian Merrill Peakes as Joseph Pillel

PRODUCTION TEAM:  
Meghan Jones, Scenic Designer  
Kayla Speedy, Costume Designer  
Shannon Zura, Lighting Designer  
Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer  
Janelle Kauffman, Projection Designer  
Dale Roth Nadel, Props Master  
Rebecca Smith, AEA Stage Manager

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

TICKET PRICING:  
Tickets are \$33 – \$43  
Students: \$15 in advance  
Student Rush: available 10 minutes before curtain for \$10 with current student ID  
Industry: \$10 in advance or at the door  
Discounts also available for seniors, military, and groups of 10 or more

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:  
Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. on November 28, December 5, and December 12  
Wednesday at 2 p.m. on November 22 [AIC], November 29 [AIC], and December 6  
Wednesday at 7 p.m. on November 22, November 29, December 6, and December 13  
Thursday at 7 p.m. on November 30, December 7, and December 14  
(no performance November 23 due to Thanksgiving)

Friday at 8 p.m. on November 24, December 1 [PUB], December 8, and December 15  
Saturday at 2 p.m. on November 25, December 2, December 9, and December 16  
Saturday at 8 p.m. on November 25, December 2, December 9, and December 16  
Sunday at 2 p.m. on November 26 [AIC], December 3, December 10, and December 17  
Sunday at 7 p.m. on November 26 only

**CLOSING:**

Sunday, December 17 at 2 p.m.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

▪ **[AIC] Artists in Conversation**

Post-show discussions with the cast immediately follows 2 p.m. performances on Wednesday, November 22; Sunday, November 26; and Wednesday, November 29.

▪ **[PUB] Lantern Pub Night**

Lively conversation over a complimentary pub beverage immediately follows the 8 p.m. performance on Friday, December 1.

**PLAY SYNOPSIS:**

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. Commissioned and 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.

**PERFORMANCE 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 Speedline.