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#LastMatchLTC

Lantern Theater Company Presents the Philadelphia Premiere of Anna Ziegler's *The Last Match*, Onstage November 7 – December 15, 2019

PHILADELPHIA (November 7, 2019) – **Lantern Theater Company** continues its 2019/20 season with the Philadelphia premiere of *The Last Match*, a funny and moving drama from award-winning playwright **Anna Ziegler**. Lantern resident director **M. Craig Getting** directs a cast that includes **Joanna Liao**, **Scott Miller**, **Lee Minora**, and **Matteo Scammell**. Theater critics and members of the press are invited to request press comps for opening night on **Wednesday, November 13 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Anne Shuff at ashuff@lanterntheater.org. *The Last Match* runs Thursday, November 7 through Sunday, December 15, 2019; a complete schedule of performances and audience enrichment events is included in the fact sheet below.

Set over the course of a key matchup in the U.S. Open Semifinals, *The Last Match* uses the tennis match as a springboard to reveal both the extraordinariness of elite athletes and their ordinariness as human beings. The conflict between the aging American champion and the young Russian challenger is both epic and personal, as are the obstacles they face building relationships with the women they love.

Playwright **Anna Ziegler**, who recently visited the Lantern and participated in *The Last Match* rehearsal process, says that her play explores “how we conquer our demons to fulfill our potential.” In the play, one of the characters asks, “How do you get to the bottom of wanting?” In these questions, Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon** sees the great panoply of human existence. “The characters in *The Last Match* are playing for very high stakes, and they are trying to transform their lives,” according to McMahon. “But there is something in us that makes us pursue this transformation through struggle, through contest, danger, and enmity. In order for the new world we are trying to create for ourselves to have any real meaning, it must arrive after a harrowing journey. I believe that Anna Ziegler’s brilliance in *The Last Match* lies in her ability to invest so much passion, so much of life’s real meaning into a brief moment on an imaginary court.”

Lantern Theater Company produced Ziegler's play *Photograph 51* to great acclaim during the 2015/16 season, featuring Geneviève Perrier as groundbreaking British scientist Rosalind Franklin. The play went on to win London's 2016 WhatsOnStage Award for Best New Play and Best of the Year play by *The Washington Post* and *The Telegraph*. Ziegler's other recent plays include *Actually* (LA Ovation Award-winner for Playwriting of an Original Play), *The Wanderers* (2018 San Diego Critic's Circle Award for Outstanding New Play), and *Boy* (nominated for the 2016 John Gassner Award by the Outer Critics Circle). Her work has been produced on the West End and in the U.S. at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, Geffen Playhouse, Roundabout Theatre Company, The Old Globe, Seattle Rep, South Coast Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Theater J, The Magic Theatre, and many others. She holds commissions from Roundabout, Manhattan Theatre Club, Geffen Playhouse, Second Stage Theater, and Grove/Whitman Productions. Oberon Books recently published a collection of her work entitled *Anna Ziegler: Plays One*.

Lantern Theater Company will delve into the themes of *The Last Match* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Published articles will explore the psychology of elite competitive athletes, the evolution of tennis superstars, American and Russian approaches to competitive sports training, fun quizzes, an interview with playwright Anna Ziegler, and much more.

Tickets for *The Last Match* start at \$28 and are available online at lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Discounts are available for students, seniors 65 and up, U.S. military personnel, and groups of 10 or more. All performances of *The Last Match* will take place at the Lantern's resident home at St. Stephen's Theater, 923 Ludlow St. in Center City Philadelphia.

About the Cast and Creative Team

The Last Match director **M. Craig Getting** has previously helmed Lantern productions of *The Heir Apparent*, *The Craftsman*, *An Iliad*, *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths*, *QED*, *Heroes*, and *A Skull in Connemara*. Getting also serves as the Lantern's education director, overseeing the award-winning *Illumination* education program and *The Empathy Project*, the company's pioneering partnership with the Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University.

Scott Miller will make his Lantern debut as American tennis superstar Tim Porter. Miller has appeared in New York at The Ohio Theatre, Ontological-Hysteric Theater, Brooklyn Lyceum, The American Living Room Festival, New York International Fringe Festival, and BAM, and internationally in Belgium and the Netherlands. He co-wrote and directed the short film *You're a Little Late* and the web series *The Wig Project*, and produced *Reality, Inc.* His television credits include *One Life to Live*, *All My Children*, *Guiding Light*, and *Youthful Daze*, and his film credits include *The Weekend*, *Café*, and *The Lovely Leave*.

Joanna Liao will portray Mallory, Tim Porter's wife and herself a former tennis champion. *The Last Match* marks Liao's fifth production with the Lantern, including recent productions of *36 Views* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. She has appeared regionally at People's Light, Trinity Repertory Company, Cherry Lane Theatre, The Flea, Perishable Theater, The Lark, Ensemble Studio Theatre, and as Shen-Te/Shui-Ta in the New York premiere of Tony Kushner's adaptation of Brecht's *The Good Person of Setzuan*.

Matteo Scammell makes his Lantern debut as rising Russian tennis champion Sergei Sergeyev. A company member of The Wilma Theater's HotHouse and New Paradise Laboratories, Scammell's local stage credits also include productions with Arden Theatre Company, Theatre Exile, and EgoPo Classic Theater.

Lee Minora returns to the Lantern stage as Sergei's girlfriend Galina. Minora's previous Lantern credits include *The Heir Apparent* and *Don't Dress for Dinner* (Barrymore nomination). Also a writer and solo performer, she has performed her original work in Philadelphia, London, San Francisco, Edinburgh, and New York City. She has also created work with The Berserker Residents, Applied Mechanics, and Lightning Rod Special, with whom she recently co-created and performed in *The Appointment*, which was named a *New York Times* Critic's Pick and *Time Out NY* Critics' Pick.

The talented design team for *The Last Match* includes scenic designer **Lance Kniskern** (previous Lantern credits include *The Heir Apparent*, *The Gospel According To...*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and many others), costume designer **Kelly Myers** (Lantern and Philadelphia debut), lighting designer **Mike Inwood** (*Minors* at the Lantern; Emmy Award-winner), and sound designer **Christopher Colucci**, an eight-time Barrymore Award-winner currently working on his 25th Lantern production. **Shannon Ryan** will serve as props master and **Marla Burkholder** will serve as the Russian dialect coach. Projection designer **Colin J. Sass** and movement consultant **Elizabeth Soch** are both making their Lantern debuts.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994, Lantern Theater Company launched its 26th season with a growing patron base and 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 and 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 been recognized with 106 nominations and 19 awards, including the 2009 Award for Excellence in Theatre Education and

Community Service. Following *The Last Match*, the Lantern's 2019/20 season continues with the return of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, created by Anthony Lawton, Christopher Colucci, and Thom Weaver through the Lantern's New Works Program (expanded run dates of Dec. 6 – 29, 2019; **press opening is Sun., Dec. 8, 2019 at 2 p.m.**); the Philadelphia premiere of *The Vertical Hour* by David Hare (Jan. 9 – Feb. 16, 2020; **press opening is Wed., Jan. 15, 2020 at 7 p.m.**); *Othello* by William Shakespeare (March 12 – April 19, 2020; **press opening is Wed., March 18, 2020 at 7 p.m.**); and a world premiere adaptation of *Molière's The Misanthrope* by Peter DeLaurier, commissioned and developed through the Lantern's New Works Program (May 21 – June 28, 2020; **press opening is Wed., May 27, 2020 at 7 p.m.**). More information is available online at lanterntheater.org.

Lantern Theater Company – 2019/20 Season
FACT SHEET
The Last Match

WRITTEN BY:

Anna Ziegler

DIRECTED BY:

M. Craig Getting

CAST:

Joanna Liao as Mallory

Scott Miller as Tim

Lee Minora as Galina

Matteo Scammell as Sergei

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Lance Kniskern, Scenic Designer

Kelly Myers, Costume Designer

Mike Inwood, Lighting Designer

Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer

Shannon Ryan, Props Master

Colin J. Sass, Projection Designer

Elizabeth Soch, Movement Consultant

Marla Burkholder, Dialect Coach

Rebecca Smith, AEA Stage Manager

Nick Schwasman, Assistant Director

Janet Embree, Production Manager

PRESS INFORMATION:

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TICKET INFORMATION:

Online: www.lanterntheater.org

By Phone: (215) 829-0395

In Person: Lantern Box Office, 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia

TICKET PRICING:

\$28 and up

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, November 7 – Sunday, December 15, 2019

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, November 7 at 7 p.m.

Friday, November 8 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 9 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, November 10 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, November 11 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT:

Wednesday, November 13 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. on November 19, November 26, December 3, December 10

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on November 20 [AIC], November 27 [AIC], December 4, December 11

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on November 20, November 27, December 4, December 11

Thursday at 7 p.m. on November 14, November 21, December 5, December 12

Friday at 8 p.m. on November 15, November 22 [PUB], November 29, December 6, December 13

Saturday at 2 p.m. on November 16, November 23, November 30, December 7, December 14

Saturday at 8 p.m. on November 16, November 23, November 30, December 7, December 14

Sunday at 2 p.m. on November 17 [AIC], November 24 [AIC], December 1, December 7, December 15

Sunday at 7 p.m. on December 1 only

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, December 15 at 2 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

▪ **[AIC] Artists in Conversation**

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, November 17; Wednesday, November 20; Sunday, November 24; and Wednesday, November 27. *The Last Match* director **M. Craig Getting** will moderate on Wednesdays and Lantern dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will moderate on Sundays.

▪ **[PUB] Lantern Pub Night**

Lively conversation over complimentary pub drinks immediately follows the 8 p.m. performance on Friday, November 22.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

What does it take to become a champion and how is an athlete's character and mettle tested on that journey?

From the playwright of *Photograph 51* comes this funny and moving drama about an American tennis star, the Russian player aiming to topple him, and the women in their lives who may hold the key to becoming the best in the world.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

St. Stephen's Theater at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia

PARKING/TRANSPORTATION:

Ample parking is available at nearby lots and garages, including The Autopark at Jefferson (10th & Ludlow Streets) and Jefferson Hospital Parking Garage (10th & Chestnut Streets). Metered street parking is available during posted hours. The venue is also easily accessible by taxi, SEPTA buses and trains, and the PATCO Speedline.