

Media Contact:

Anne Shuff, Finance & Communications Consultant
ashuff@lanterntheater.org or (215) 829-9002 x111

Online Press Room & Photos:

lanterntheater.org/press

Lantern Theater Company Closes 2024/25 Season with *THE 39 STEPS* by Patrick Barlow, Directed by Charles McMahon, May 15 – June 15, 2025

PHILADELPHIA (May 5, 2025) – **Lantern Theater Company** concludes its 2024/25 season with **The 39 Steps**, Patrick Barlow's take on Alfred Hitchcock's take on John Buchan's take on the spy thriller. Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon** directs an ensemble cast of Lantern veterans, including **Dave Johnson, Jered McLenigan, Eli Lynn, and Lee Minora**. *The 39 Steps* runs **Thursday, May 15 through Sunday, June 15, 2025**, at St. Stephen's Theater in Center City Philadelphia; a complete schedule of performances and audience enrichment events is included in the fact sheet below. Theater critics and members of the press planning coverage are invited to request press tickets for **opening night on Wednesday, May 21 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Anne Shuff at ashuff@lanterntheater.org.

"Sometimes theater is about exploring the deep dark truths of the human heart, and other times it is an opportunity for wild invention and dazzling stagecraft," said **Charles McMahon**. "The Lantern's production of *The 39 Steps* falls into this latter category. It is a mashup of spy thriller, romantic comedy, film satire, and springboard for theatrical invention. We have assembled a company of Philadelphia's most brilliantly inventive performers to bring this outrageous comedy to life for Philadelphia audiences – who I think we can all agree – deserve something purely enjoyable given the current state of world events."

Richard Hannay is bored, tired, and lonely in his quiet London flat in 1935. A trip to the music hall is just the ticket to shake things up. But a night on the town turns into one he will never forget when the alluring Annabella asks him for help in stopping a mysterious spy ring. Quicker than Richard can say "Stealing state secrets," Annabella is dead and he's on the run, wanted for a murder he didn't commit and determined to stop her killers from getting away with their dastardly plot. Train chases, plane pursuits, and multiple trips across the moors take Richard from cottages to country estates to inns to police stations and more as he seeks to stop an

international incident and clear his own name – all while the prickly and beguiling Pamela keeps reappearing to make his quest more difficult and perhaps more romantic. Featuring just four performers playing dozens of characters, *The 39 Steps* is a whizzing, deliriously funny, romantic, suspenseful, and all-around exhilarating comedy-and-thriller tour de force.

Patrick Barlow's adaptation of John Buchan's novel (which may be the first spy novel) and Alfred Hitchcock's movie makes free use of the screenplay and the ingenuity of its cast of four. As he writes in a forward to the play, "One of the thrilling things about writing this was the challenge of putting an entire movie on stage, complete with film noir murders, shootings, train chases, plane crashes, trilbied heavies in fast cars, villains with little fingers missing, not to mention some of the most classic moments in the history of cinema. There is much opportunity for comedy and satire here. But it's also a love story." This potent mix of parody, suspense, and romance made it an international hit. It was the fifth longest-running play on London's West End, ran successfully on and off Broadway in New York, and enjoys a long list of regional and international productions.

Lantern Theater Company will explore the multiple worlds of *The 39 Steps* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published throughout the production's run, including background on the play and its themes alongside behind-the-scenes conversations with the artists.

Tickets for *The 39 Steps* are \$30 – \$47 and are available online at www.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 will take place at **St. Stephen's Theater**, located at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia.

About the Lantern Artists

The 39 Steps director **Charles McMahon** co-founded Lantern Theater Company in 1994 and serves as artistic director in addition to directing, writing, and acting for the company. McMahon has directed all but one of the Lantern's annual Shakespeare productions, including recent productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest*, and *Coriolanus*. Other Lantern directing credits include *Tartuffe*; *Travesties*; *The Plague*; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*; *As You Like It*; *Henry V*; *New Jerusalem*, *The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza at Talmud Torah Congregation: Amsterdam, July 27, 1656*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Hamlet*; *La Ronde* (also translator and adapter); *Richard III*; *King Lear*; *The House of Bernarda Alba*; and *A Doll's House*. His acting credits include Heisenberg in the Lantern's production of *Copenhagen*, and his writing credits include *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths* and co-creating an original adaptation of Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales*.

The 39 Steps' ensemble cast of four actors will portray over 150 characters, including **Dave Johnson** as Clown/Ensemble (11th Lantern production, including *The Comedy of Errors*, *Tartuffe*, *Travesties*, and *The Tempest*) as Clown/Ensemble, **Eli Lynn** (movement director for *The Comedy of Errors*), **Jered McLenigan** as Richard Hannay (12th Lantern production, including *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Tartuffe*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Betrayal*, and Barrymore Award-winner for *Julius Caesar*), and **Lee Minora** as Pamela/Ensemble (*The Comedy of Errors*, *Tartuffe*, *Twelfth Night*, *Travesties*, *The Last Match*, many others).

The creative team for *The 39 Steps* includes scenic designer **Dirk Durossette** (Lantern credits include *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, and *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine*), costume designer **LeVonne Lindsay** (*Betrayal*), lighting designer **Shon Causer** (*The Comedy of Errors*, *The Plague, Me and the Devil*, Barrymore nominee for *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths*), sound designer **Christopher Colucci** (42nd Lantern production, including *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Faith Healer*, and *Tartuffe*), and projection designer **Michael Long** (Barrymore nominee for *The Lifespan of a Fact*). Actor **Lee Minora** will serve as associate director and Lantern Education & Artistic Associater **Talia Speak** will serve as assistant director, alongside Stage Manager **Leslie Ann Boyden**.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 31st season, Lantern Theater Company's mission is to produce plays that investigate and illuminate what is essential in the human spirit and the spirit of the times. The Lantern serves the Greater Philadelphia region with award-winning productions and education programming, notably partnering with middle schools and high schools in the Philadelphia School District to provide in-classroom residencies in support of curricular learning. The Lantern became a national leader in streaming theater during the Covid health crisis, producing ten fully designed plays that were created and filmed in the company's resident home at St. Stephen's Theater, garnering coverage in national media including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and reaching more than 30,000 people in 15 countries and all 50 states.

The Lantern's recently announced 2025/26 season will include ***The Real Thing***, Tom Stoppard's wry and moving drama, directed by **Peter DeLaurier** (Press Opening: Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 7 p.m.); ***Macbeth***, William Shakespeare's tragic masterpiece of love and ambition gone wrong, directed by **Charles McMahan** and appearing on the Lantern stage for the first time and (Press Opening: Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 7 p.m.); the Philadelphia premiere of ***Blues for an Alabama Sky***, Pearl Cleage's mesmerizing and inventive drama of the Harlem Renaissance, directed by **Brett Ashley Robinson** (Press Opening: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 7 p.m.); and the Philadelphia premiere of ***Franklinland***, Lloyd Suh's new play about Benjamin Franklin, directed by **Charles McMahan** and just in time to celebrate our nation's 250th birthday in

2026 (**Press Opening: Wednesday, May 23, 2026, at 7 p.m.**). More information is available online at **www.lanterntheater.org**.

Lantern Theater Company – 2024/25 Season
FACT SHEET
The 39 Steps

WRITTEN BY:

Adapted by Patrick Barlow
From the novel by John Buchan
And the movie by Alfred Hitchcock

DIRECTED BY:

Charles McMahon

CAST:

Dave Johnson as Clown/Ensemble
Eli Lynn as Clown/Ensemble
Jered McLenigan as Richard Hannay
Lee Minora as Pamela/Ensemble

CREATIVE TEAM:

Dirk Durossette, Scenic Designer
LeVonne Lindsay, Costume Designer
Shon Causer, Lighting Designer
Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer
Michael Long, Projection Designer
Leslie Ann Boyden, Stage Manager
Lee Minora, Associate Director
Talia Speak, Assistant Director

PRESS INFORMATION:

Anne Shuff, Finance & Communications Consultant
ashuff@lanterntheater.org or (215) 829-9002 x111

TICKET INFORMATION:

Online: www.lanterntheater.org
By Phone: (215) 829-0395

TICKET PRICING:

\$30 – \$47 / Students: \$25

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, May 15 – Sunday, June 15, 2025

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, May 15 at 7 p.m.
Friday, May 16 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 17 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, May 18 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, May 20 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE:

Wednesday, May 21 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on May 28 [AIC], June 4 [AIC], and June 11

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on May 28, June 4, and June 11

Thursday at 7 p.m. on May 22, May 29, June 5, and June 12

Friday at 2 p.m. on June 13 only

Friday at 7:30 p.m. on May 23, May 30, and June 6 (no performance June 13)

Saturday at 2 p.m. on May 24, May 31, June 7, and June 14

Saturday at 8 p.m. on May 24, May 31, June 7, and June 14

Sunday at 2 p.m. on May 25 [AIC], June 1 [AIC], June 8, and June 15

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, May 15 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, May 25; Wednesday, May 28; Sunday, June 1; and Wednesday, June 4. Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussions.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

A spy thriller or a rollicking comedy? Why not both! We travel from London to the Scottish Highlands and back again in this absurdist play about a social dandy trying to thwart the theft of state military secrets. Winner of the 2007 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy and a 2008 Tony Award® nominee for Best Play, this riotous adaptation of *THE 39 STEPS* was inspired by John Buchan's 1915 adventure novel and Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film and continues to delight audiences today.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

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