

**Media Contact:**

Stacy Dutton, Executive Director  
[sdutton@lanterntheater.org](mailto:sdutton@lanterntheater.org) or (610) 420-1121

**Online Press Room & Photos:**

[lanterntheater.org/press](http://lanterntheater.org/press)

## **Lantern Theater Company Opens 2025/26 Season with *THE REAL THING* by Tom Stoppard, Directed by Peter DeLaurier, September 4 – October 5, 2025**

PHILADELPHIA (August 25, 2025) – **Lantern Theater Company** opens its 2025/26 season with ***The Real Thing***, the company's seventh production of **Tom Stoppard's** work. Longtime Lantern collaborator **Peter DeLaurier** directs a cast of Lantern veterans, including **Trevor William Fayle, J Hernandez, Adam Howard, Campbell O'Hare, Cheyenne Parks, and Brett Ashley Robinson**. *The Real Thing* runs **Thursday, September 4 through Sunday, October 5, 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, September 10 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Emily Wilson at [ewilson@lanterntheater.org](mailto:ewilson@lanterntheater.org).

In *The Real Thing*, playwright Henry is married to Charlotte, who is also the leading lady in his newest play. In Henry's play, her character is married to Max. Max's real-life wife, Annie, is having an affair with Henry. On top of that, the couples are friends. This tangled web of love and performance continues off-stage, as Henry and Annie seek to hide their affair. Once it comes to light, Henry and Annie begin a relationship in the open. But honesty proves just as challenging as performance, as Henry discovers he was not the only one lying in his first marriage. He also suspects Annie of romantic involvement with both an imprisoned activist she works to free (she isn't) and another actor she works with (she is). *The Real Thing* explores romance, suspicion, honesty, and uncertainty – and the ability of the writer to capture the vagaries of the human heart.

"*The Real Thing* is a delightfully engaging comedy and a huge play, sliding through levels of reality and asking big questions about intimate human relations, language, life, and love," said director **Peter DeLaurier**. "I'm so glad to be exploring this territory with Lantern's great staff and a cast and team of marvelously talented artists."

Lantern Theater Company will explore the world of *The Real Thing* on its **Lantern Searchlight on Medium**, available online at [lanterntheater.org/searchlight](https://lanterntheater.org/searchlight). Articles will be published throughout the production's run, including background on the play, its themes, and behind-the-scenes conversations with the artists.

Tickets for *The Real Thing* are \$31 – \$48 and are available online at [www.lanterntheater.org](https://www.lanterntheater.org) or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Discounts are available for students, ages 30 and up, 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 Playwright

Tom Stoppard has long been a favorite of the Lantern and our audiences, and *The Real Thing* is the seventh of his plays to be produced on our stage: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* appeared in the company's third season (1996/97), followed by *Rough Crossing* (1998/99), *Heroes* (2012/13), *Arcadia* (2014/15), *Hapgood* (2018/19, also directed by Peter DeLaurier), and *Travesties* in 2023/24. Though he is one of the UK's most celebrated playwrights, Tom Stoppard was born Tomáš Straussler in Czechoslovakia in 1937, just before World War II. His family fled Europe for Asia, where his father died. When Stoppard was eight-years-old, his widowed mother married Englishman Kenneth Stoppard, and they moved from India to the UK, giving the young boy a new home, a new country, and a new name. In his early career, Stoppard worked as a reporter and a theater critic before turning to writing plays for both the stage and the radio. Beginning with his breakout hit, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Stoppard has been a prolific writer, consistently offering plays with beating hearts beneath their dizzying intellect like his most recent play, the deeply personal *Leopoldstadt*. His wildly varied plays take inspiration from British spy novels and quantum physics, chaos theory and Romanticism, Soviet-era politics, Shakespeare, and much more.

## About the Lantern Artists

*The Real Thing* will be directed by longtime Lantern artistic collaborator **Peter DeLaurier**, whose recent directing credits include Lantern productions of *Faith Healer* by Brian Friel, *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt, the filmed production of *Molly Sweeney* by Brian Friel, *Hapgood* by Tom Stoppard, *Red Velvet* by Lolita Chakrabarti, *36 Views* by Naomi Iizuka, and *The Island* and *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona. Celebrating 57 years in professional theater in 2025, DeLaurier has also appeared on the Lantern stage in *The Plague*, *The Tempest*, *An Iliad*, *Underneath the Lintel*, *QED*, *The Train Driver*, *Emma*, *Heroes*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *Skylight*. DeLaurier is a seven-time Barrymore Award nominee, receiving the award twice: for his role as The Librarian in *Underneath the Lintel* at the Lantern and as Kent in *King Lear* at People's Light, where he has been a resident company member since 1991.

*The Real Thing*'s cast includes **Trevor William Fayle** as Billy (Lantern credits include *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, and *Hapgood*), **J Hernandez** as Henry (*Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Romeo and Juliet*), **Adam Howard** as Max/Brodie (*The Wanderers*), **Campbell O'Hare** as Annie (*The Comedy of Errors*, *Tartuffe*, and *Travesties*), **Cheyenne Parks** as Debbie (*Much Ado About Nothing*), and **Brett Ashley Robinson** as Charlotte (*Crumbs from the Table of Joy*).

The creative team for *The Real Thing* includes scenic designer **James F. Pyne, Jr.** (Lantern credits include *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A Man for All Seasons*), costume designer **Kelly Myers** (*The Wanderers*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Tartuffe*), lighting designer **Lily Fossner** (*Faith Healer*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Hapgood*), and sound designer **Christopher Colucci** (43rd Lantern production, including *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, *The 39 Steps*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Faith Healer*). Lantern Education & Artistic Associate **Talia Speak** will serve as assistant director, alongside Stage Manager **Lyndsey Connolly**.

## About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 32nd 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.

Following *The Real Thing*, Lantern Theater Company's 2025/26 season continues with ***Macbeth***, **William Shakespeare**'s tragic masterpiece of love and ambition gone wrong, directed by **Charles McMahon** 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 McMahon** and just in time to celebrate our nation's 250th birthday in 2026 (**Press Opening: Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 7 p.m.**). More information is available online at [\*\*www.lanterntheater.org\*\*](http://www.lanterntheater.org).

**Lantern Theater Company – 2025/26 Season**  
**FACT SHEET**  
*The Real Thing*

**WRITTEN BY:**

Tom Stoppard

**DIRECTED BY:**

Peter DeLaurier

**CAST:**

Trevor William Fayle as Billy  
J Hernandez as Henry  
Adam Howard as Max/Brodie  
Campbell O'Hare as Annie  
Cheyenne Parks as Debbie  
Brett Ashley Robinson as Charlotte

**CREATIVE TEAM:**

James F. Pyne, Jr., Scenic Designer  
Kelly Myers, Costume Designer  
Lily Fossner, Lighting Designer  
Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer  
Lyndsey Connolly, Stage Manager  
Talia Speak, Assistant Director

**PRESS INFORMATION:**

Stacy Dutton, Executive Director  
[sdutton@lanterntheater.org](mailto:sdutton@lanterntheater.org) or (610) 420-1121

**TICKET INFORMATION:**

Online: [www.lanterntheater.org](http://www.lanterntheater.org)  
By Phone: (215) 829-0395

**TICKET PRICING:**

\$31 – \$48 / Under Age 30: \$25

**PERFORMANCES:**

Thursday, September 4 – Sunday, October 5, 2025

**PREVIEWS:**

Thursday, September 4 at 7 p.m.  
Friday, September 5 at 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday, September 6 at 8 p.m.  
Sunday, September 7 at 2 p.m.  
Tuesday, September 9 at 6:30 p.m.

**OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE:**

Wednesday, September 10 at 7 p.m.

**REGULAR RUN:**

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on September 17 [AIC], September 24 [AIC], and October 1

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on September 17, September 24, and October 1  
Thursday at 7 p.m. on September 11, September 18, September 25, and October 2  
Friday at 2 p.m. on October 3 only  
Friday at 7:30 p.m. on September 12, September 19, and September 26 (no performance October 3)  
Saturday at 2 p.m. on September 13, September 20, September 27, and October 4  
Saturday at 8 p.m. on September 13, September 20, September 27, and October 4  
Sunday at 2 p.m. on September 14 [AIC], September 21 [AIC], September 28, and October 5

**CLOSING PERFORMANCE:**

Sunday, October 5 at 2 p.m.

**ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]**

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, September 14; Wednesday, September 17; Sunday, September 21; and Wednesday, September 24. Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussions.

**FOR LISTINGS EDITORS:**

How do you know when it's the real thing or a tragic romance? When Tom Stoppard writes a play about a playwright falling in love, you can be sure that comedy and drama will get married – or at least have a serious fling. *THE REAL THING* is Stoppard's masterful exploration of the human heart, at war with itself and the beloved.

**PERFORMANCE VENUE:**

St. Stephen's Theater at 10th and Ludlow Streets (923 Ludlow Street) in Center City Philadelphia