

For further ticket information:
Lantern Theater Company Box Office
215-829-0395 or lanterntheater.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 2015

Lantern Theater Company Presents
World Premiere Production
OSCAR WILDE: FROM THE DEPTHS

Lantern Theater Company will present the world premiere of *Oscar Wilde: From The Depths*, written by Lantern's Artistic Director **Charles McMahon** and directed by Lantern's Education Director **M. Craig Getting**, from **January 14 – February 14, 2016**.

Inspired by Wilde's own "De Profundis," a letter he wrote to his lover from his prison cell, this new play pries open the imagination of Oscar Wilde, the most original and artistic mind of his generation. At the height of his literary success and incandescent celebrity he is brought to sudden and catastrophic ruin. Now, desolate and alone in his cell at Reading Gaol, he struggles to overcome the darkness that threatens to engulf him. Conjuring up a cast of characters from his memory, he revisits the stories from his meteoric career and unconventional personal life in search of transformation and salvation.

Having been interested for some time in Oscar Wilde and the fascinating trajectory he took in his life and his career, the Lantern's Artistic Director felt strongly that he wanted to craft an original piece to be both an exploration of the history of this character and relevant to some of the broader issues in society today. McMahon states: "Wilde was in prison for private behavior, and while that seems insane to us, there are still arguments about civil rights - women's rights, gay rights, the right to privacy - here and now. That's not entirely what the play is about, but it's something that has persisted and becomes clear in any story about Wilde."

This production is not only a project of personal interest to McMahon as a playwright, but it is also an important part of the Lantern's commitment to developing new work. According to McMahon: "Developing new work is the critical next step in the Lantern's artistic growth, enabling us to develop complex creative projects and to better control our own artistic destiny. We see generating new work as essential for giving full expression to the creative passions of the Lantern's key theater artists. Committing to telling new stories in inventive ways will also require us to seek out new

creative voices - playwrights, actors, designers - and set them loose on our stage.” The Lantern’s 2013/14 season saw the first production of the Lantern’s new works initiative: *A Child’s Christmas in Wales*, the Barrymore Award-winning world premiere original adaptation of Dylan Thomas’ poem of the same name. *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths* represents the Lantern’s second world premiere production, and the theater is currently in discussion with several playwrights regarding commissioning new works for upcoming seasons.

ABOUT THE CAST AND PRODUCTION TEAM

Directing this world premiere is M. Craig Getting, also the Lantern’s Education Director. Getting’s previous Lantern mainstage directing credits include *QED* (2014), *Heroes* (2013) and *A Skull in Connemara* (2011). “Wilde’s writing was iconic, singular – just like the man himself,” says Getting. “What’s most exciting about *From the Depths* is the opportunity to give Wilde’s voice new life – and to do it in a setting quite different from where we’re used to encountering him. This is also a chance to work more closely with Charles, who has been such a great mentor to me since I joined the Lantern, and I look forward to wrestling with the deep themes of beauty, identity, and redemption that this world premiere explores.”

Marc LeVasseur (Oscar Wilde) makes his Lantern debut playing the title role. LeVasseur hails from Astoria, NY and has performed previously in the Philadelphia area at People’s Light in their productions of *Arthur and the Red Dragon: A Musical Panto* and *Pride and Prejudice*. **Jered McLenigan** (Lord Alfred Douglas/Ensemble) returns to the Lantern following his Barrymore Award-winning performance of Marc Antony in *Julius Caesar* in the 2013/14 season. McLenigan has also appeared in Lantern’s productions of *The Lady from the Sea* (2005), *The Taming of the Shrew* (2007); *Henry IV, Part 1* (2010) and *A Skull in Connemara*. **David Bardeen** (Robbie Ross/Ensemble) most recently appeared at the Lantern in *Taming of the Shrew* (2015), and previously in *Henry V* (2013) and *New Jerusalem* (2012 and 2011).

The Lantern’s Technical Director **Lance Kniskern** (*Taming of the Shrew*, *Doubt*) will design the set. Costumes will be designed by **Millie Hiibel** (*QED*, *Uncle Vanya*). Lantern veterans **Christopher Colucci** (*Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Doubt*) and **Shon Causer** (*Photograph 51*, *Taming of the Shrew*) will design sound and lights, respectively.

Playwright Charles McMahon is the co-founder and Artistic Director of the Lantern. He has directed all but one of the company’s Shakespeare productions over the past 20 years, beginning with *All’s Well That Ends Well* in the 1996/97 season. He has been nominated twice for the Barrymore Award for Excellence in Theatre for Outstanding Direction of a Play: in 2006 for *Richard III* and in 2004 for *The Comedy of Errors*. McMahon also directed the Lantern’s best-selling production of *New Jerusalem: The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza at Talmud Torah Congregation: Amsterdam, July 27, 1656* by David Ives, and he acted in many of the company’s early productions, including *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard, *Copenhagen* by Michael Frayn and *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett. In the 2006/07 season, McMahon directed the world premiere of his new translation of *La Ronde* by Arthur Schnitzler, and in 2014 he co-created the world premiere adaptation of the Dylan Thomas poem *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* which went on to receive five Barrymore Award nominations including one for Outstanding New Play/Musical. *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths* represents McMahon’s first foray into penning an original full-length play for production.

Tickets for *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths* are \$24 – \$39 and are available online at lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Discounts are available for seniors 65 and up, groups of 10 or more, U.S. military personnel and students. \$10 student rush tickets are available 10 minutes before curtain with valid ID; cash only. \$10 industry tickets are available online, by phone, or at the box office, in advance or at the door.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994, Lantern Theater Company is committed to an authentic and intimate exploration of the human spirit in its choice of classics, modern, and original works. The Lantern seeks to be a vibrant, contributing member of its community, exposing audiences to great theater, inviting participation in dialogue and discussion, educating audience members about artistic and social issues, and employing theatrical language and techniques to enrich learning in the classroom. The Lantern has received 88 Barrymore Award nominations, winning 19 times including the 2009 Barrymore Award for Excellence in Theatre Education and Community Service for its innovative education program, *Illumination*. Lantern Theater Company has been in residence at St. Stephen's Theater at 10th & Ludlow Streets in Center City Philadelphia since 1996, managing the performance space and developing it into an affordable multi-purpose performing arts venue. For more information, please visit lanterntheater.org.

**LANTERN THEATER COMPANY'S PRODUCTION OF
OSCAR WILDE: FROM THE DEPTHS FACT SHEET**

WRITTEN BY: Charles McMahon

DIRECTION BY: M. Craig Getting

CAST: David Bardeen as Robbie Ross/Ensemble
Marc LeVasseur as Oscar Wilde
Jered McLenigan as Lord Alfred Douglas/Ensemble

DESIGNERS: Set Designer – Lance Kniskern
Lighting Designer – Shon Causer
Sound Designer – Christopher Colucci
Costume Designer – Millie Hiibel

PRESS INFORMATION: Jessica Doheny, General Manager
(215) 829-9002 x101 or jdoheny@lanterntheater.org

TICKET INFORMATION: LanternTheater.org or (215) 829-0395

PREVIEWS: Thursday, January 14 at 7:00 PM
Friday, January 15 at 8:00 PM
Saturday, January 16 at 8:00 PM
Sunday, January 17 at 2:00 PM
Tuesday, January 19 at 6:30 PM

OPENING: Wednesday, January 20 at 7:00 PM

PERFORMANCES: Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM on January 26
Wednesday matinee at 2:00 PM on January 27 and February 10
Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM on January 27, February 3, and 10
Thursday evening at 7:00 PM on January 21, 28, February 4 and 11
Friday evening at 8:00 PM on January 22, 29, February 5 and 12
Saturday matinee at 2:00 PM on January 30 and February 6
Saturday evening at 8:00 PM on January 23, 30, February 6 and 13
Sunday matinee at 2:00 PM on January 24, 31, February 7 and 14

CLOSING: Sunday, February 14 at 2:00 PM

LOCATION: St. Stephen's Theater, 10th and Ludlow Streets in Center City Philadelphia

TICKET PRICES: Tickets range from \$24-39; Preview tickets are \$24
Opening night tickets are \$56 (limited availability)
Student, Senior Citizen, Military and Group Discounts available

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:
Lantern Theater, 10th and Ludlow Streets
(215) 829-0395 or LanternTheater.org

PARKING/TRANSPORTATION:
Ample parking is available near the Lantern at a variety of lots and garages. The Autopark at Jefferson (10th & Ludlow) and LAZ Parking (10th & Chestnut) offer discounts to Lantern patrons. Metered street parking is also available during posted hours.

The theater is accessible by taxi, SEPTA buses and trains, and the PATCO Highspeed line.

ACCESSIBILITY: Open Captioning: Friday, February 5 at 8pm and Saturday, February 6 at 2pm

SYNOPSIS:

This new play pries open the imagination of Oscar Wilde, the most original and artistic mind of his generation. At the height of his literary success and incandescent celebrity he is brought to sudden and catastrophic ruin. Now, desolate and alone in his cell at Reading Gaol, he struggles to overcome the darkness that threatens to engulf him. Conjuring up a cast of characters from his memory, he revisits the stories from his meteoric career and unconventional personal life in search of transformation and salvation.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Directors in Conversation: Pre-show discussion with director M. Craig Getting on January 22 at 7 PM.

Lantern Pub Night: Post-show beers and conversation in the Lantern lobby on Friday, January 22 following the performance.

Young Friends Night: Post-Show networking reception with Lantern staff, cast, and members of the creative team on Friday, January 29 following the performance.

Artists in Conversation: Post-show discussions with the cast on Sunday, January 24 and Sunday, January 31 following the 2pm performances.

In Conversation Event – Wild(e) Modern Celebrities
Monday, February 1 at 7 PM

Dig into the themes of our plays with fascinating discussions featuring Lantern artists, esteemed scholars, and other special guests. Followed by a wine & dessert reception.

We'll take an in-depth look at Oscar Wilde's cultivation of himself as a world celebrity and how we craft public personas in today's society. Panelists include culture, style, and celebrity blog icons **Tom Fitzgerald** and **Lorenzo Marquez** of TomandLorenzo.com; **Dr. Marylu Hill**, Director, Villanova Center for Liberal Education and the Graduate Program in Liberal Studies; and **Charles McMahon**, Lantern Artistic Director and *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths* playwright.