

**Press Contact:**

Jessica Doheny, General Manager  
[jdoheny@lanterntheater.org](mailto:jdoheny@lanterntheater.org) or (215) 829-9002 x101

**Online Press Room & Photo Downloads:**

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

**Facebook & Twitter:**

#oldestboybenefit

## **Lantern Theater Company Joins Theaters Nationwide in Presenting One Night Only Reading of Sarah Ruhl's *The Oldest Boy* on Monday, April 26, 2016 at 7 p.m.**

### ***Benefit reading to support the Emergency Earthquake Relief Fund of the Tibet Fund***

PHILADELPHIA (April 6, 2016) – **Lantern Theater Company** will be the local site for a multi-city play reading series of *The Oldest Boy* by Pulitzer Prize finalist and Tony Award-nominated playwright **Sarah Ruhl**. The Lantern will produce the reading with support from **PAPA (Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists)** on **Monday, April 25, 2016 at 7 p.m.** at St. Stephen's Church at 19 S. 10th St. in Center City. The confirmed cast includes **Justin Jain** and **Geneviève Perrier** with others to be announced; local actress/educator **Bi Jean Ngo** will direct. Tickets are free, but reservations are recommended. Tickets may be reserved online at [www.lanterntheater.org](http://www.lanterntheater.org) or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Donations are welcome in advance or at the door, with all proceeds going to the **Emergency Earthquake Relief Fund of the Tibet Fund**.

In this moving and delightful exploration of motherhood, love, and letting go, *The Oldest Boy* follows an American mother whose young son is believed to be the reincarnation of a high Buddhist lama. When Tibetan monks arrive unexpectedly, asking to take her child away for a life of spiritual training in India, she and her Tibetan husband must make a life-altering choice that will test their faith – and their hearts. *The Hollywood Reporter* praised the play as “an extraordinary story with playful humor and unstinting compassion” and *Newsday* called it “bewitching, ingenious, and seriously moving.” *The Oldest Boy* premiered at **Lincoln Center Theater's** Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater in 2014.

“*The Oldest Boy* is a sensitive and eloquent story of a multi-ethnic American family struggling to reconcile Buddhist tradition and community with modern American culture,” said Lantern Theater Company Artistic

Director **Charles McMahon**. “We welcome this opportunity to work with acclaimed playwright Sarah Ruhl and to commemorate the first anniversary of the Gorkha earthquake in an artistic and constructive way.”

This multi-city reading series was spearheaded by Ruhl as a fundraising effort for the Earthquake Relief Fund of the Tibet Fund on the anniversary of the 7.8 magnitude Gorkha earthquake that shook Nepal on April 25, 2015. In addition to the Lantern, participating theaters include **Arena Stage** in Washington, D.C.; **Central Square Theater** in Boston; **Goodman Theatre** in Chicago; **Irondale Ensemble Theater** in Brooklyn, N.Y.; **Shaking the Tree Theatre** in Portland, Ore.; **Soulpepper Theatre Company** in Toronto, Ontario; and **Trinity Repertory Company** in collaboration with the URI Center for Nonviolence and the MFA in Playwriting Program at Brown University in Providence, R.I.

“I am so moved by how theaters are coming together to support a relief effort in Nepal. The news cycle is so terribly short, and so many people are still suffering in that part of the world,” said Ruhl. “I’m so happy *The Oldest Boy* can be a very small part of reaching out to Tibetans affected by the earthquake in Nepal, and so grateful to the participating theaters for their generosity.”

### **About Bi Jean Ngo (Director)**

Bi Jean Ngo is an actress, theater educator, and a founding member and creative director of PAPA (Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists). She will make her Lantern stage debut in the Philadelphia premiere of *36 Views* by Naomi Iizuka, which begins previews on May 26, 2016. Ngo and the Lantern are participants in the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowships, funded by the William & Eva Fox Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group. Ngo is a 2014 and 2015 finalist for the F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Philadelphia Theatre Artist.

### **About Sarah Ruhl (Playwright)**

In addition to *The Oldest Boy*, Sarah Ruhl’s plays include *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* (Pulitzer Prize finalist, Tony Award nominee for Best New Play); *The Clean House* (Pulitzer Prize finalist, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize); *Passion Play, a cycle* (Pen American Award, Fourth Freedom Forum Playwriting Award from the Kennedy Center); *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* (Helen Hayes Award); *Melancholy Play*; *Eurydice*; *Orlando*; *Demeter in the City* (NAACP nomination); *Late: a cowboy song*; and most recently, *Stage Kiss* and *Dear Elizabeth*. More information is online at [www.sarahruhlplaywright.com](http://www.sarahruhlplaywright.com).

### **About the Emergency Earthquake Relief Fund**

On April 25, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake shook Nepal, taking a huge toll on human life and property. With more than 20,000 Tibetan refugees and hundreds of thousands of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners living

along the Himalayan Buddhist Belt in Nepal, the Tibet Fund established the Emergency Earthquake Relief Fund to ensure that resources reach those most affected by the quake. This effort brings urgently needed supplies and assistance to survivors and coordinates long-term efforts to rebuild communities. Online donations are accepted at [www.tibetfund.org/programs/humanitarian-aid](http://www.tibetfund.org/programs/humanitarian-aid).

### **About the Tibet Fund**

The Tibet Fund's mission is to preserve the distinct cultural and national identity of the Tibetan people. Since 1981, under the patronage of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibet Fund has been the primary funding organization for health care, education, refugee rehabilitation, religious and cultural preservation, elder care, and community and economic development programs serving more than 140,000 Tibetan refugees living in India, Nepal, and Bhutan. More information is online at [www.tibetfund.org](http://www.tibetfund.org).

### **About Lantern Theater Company**

Lantern Theater Company is currently producing its twenty-second season with a record number of subscribers, its largest-ever operating budget at \$1.3M, and a growing community of theater artists engaged in its productions and audience engagement events. The company recently launched the **Lantern Theater Artist Fair Pay Initiative**, a pioneering program to increase the compensation of its contract theater artists by 50% beginning with the current season. Founded in 1994, 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, the Lantern has received 88 nominations and 19 awards, including the 2009 Excellence in Theatre Education and Community Service Award for its innovative education program, *Illumination*. The Lantern's 2015/16 season continues with Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (now through April 17, 2016), followed by the Philadelphia premiere of *36 Views* by Naomi Iizuka (May 26 – June 26, 2016). More information is online at [www.lanterntheater.org](http://www.lanterntheater.org).

# FACT SHEET

## The Oldest Boy: A Reading to Benefit the Tibet Fund

### PRODUCED BY:

Lantern Theater Company with support from PAPA (Philadelphia Asian Performing Artists) and in collaboration with the Philadelphia Asian Theatre Project (PATP)

### WRITTEN BY:

Sarah Ruhl

### DIRECTED BY:

Bi Jean Ngo

### CAST (additional cast members to be announced):

Justin Jain

Geneviève Perrier

### PRESS INFORMATION:

Jessica Doheny, General Manager

[jdoheny@lanterntheater.org](mailto:jdoheny@lanterntheater.org) or (215) 829-9002 x101

### TICKET INFORMATION:

Online: [www.lanterntheater.org](http://www.lanterntheater.org)

By Phone: (215) 829-0395

In Person (in advance): Lantern Box Office, 10th & Ludlow Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19107

In Person (at the door): St. Stephen's Church, 19 S. 19th St., Philadelphia, PA 19107

### PERFORMANCE DATE:

Monday, April 25, 2016 at 7 p.m.

### PERFORMANCE VENUE:

St. Stephen's Church, 19 S. 10th St., Philadelphia, PA 19107

### TICKET PRICES:

Admission is free, reservations are recommended

Donated accepted; all proceeds benefit the Emergency Earthquake Relief Fund of the Tibet Fund

### 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 Highspeed line.

### SYNOPSIS:

In this moving and delightful exploration of motherhood, love, and letting go, *The Oldest Boy* follows an American mother whose young son is believed to be the reincarnation of a high Buddhist lama. When Tibetan monks arrive unexpectedly, asking to take her child away for a life of spiritual training in India, she and her Tibetan husband must make a life-altering choice that will test their faith – and their hearts. All proceeds from this one night only reading will benefit the Emergency Earthquake Relief Fund of the Tibet Fund.