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#MeasureLTC

Lantern Theater Company Continues New Plays from the Lantern Archives Program with Filmed Version of *Measure for Measure* by William Shakespeare, Streaming April 6 – May 2, 2021

PHILADELPHIA (March 31, 2021) – **Lantern Theater Company** continues its reimagined 2020/21 season with a filmed version of its 2019 mainstage production of *Measure for Measure* by William Shakespeare, directed by Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon**, and streaming **April 6 – May 2, 2021**. Part of the company's new **Plays from the Lantern Archives** program that celebrates some of the finest productions from recent seasons brought vividly back to life on screen, *Measure for Measure* was professionally filmed with a live theater audience by the Lantern's Emmy Award-winning partners at **Natural Light Films** during its original 2018/19 season run. The production features an ensemble cast of Lantern veterans, including **Chris Anthony, Kirk Wendell Brown, Ben Dibble, Adam Hammet, Claire Inie-Richards, Anthony Lawton, Jered McLenigan, and Charlotte Northeast**. Tickets and additional information are available online at www.lanterntheater.org.

This major play in the Bard's canon will surprise and move modern audiences with its timely insights into human motivation and resilience. When the power of the State is put in the service of one man's lust, Shakespeare creates one of his greatest heroines to combat the abuse. Isabella's courage and brilliance are called upon to fight back against power, corruption, and sexual blackmail. Regarded as one of Shakespeare's "problem plays," *Measure for Measure* is ostensibly a comedy, but with plotting that is far darker and more nearly tragic than in his more conventional comedies. While *Measure for Measure* defies easy characterization, its themes of political hypocrisy, gendered power dynamics, and bodily autonomy remain disturbingly relevant today.

“The urgency of the human problems on display in *Measure for Measure* is immediately recognizable to modern audiences,” noted **Charles McMahon** during the production’s original 2019 run. “We wrestle with these issues in almost every one of the powerful institutions in which generations of Americans have entrusted their good faith and life’s labors. Church, government, the legal system, and industry have been exposed as riven with systemic corruption, sexual harassment, and grotesque self-interest. This is the world that Shakespeare examines, and it is the world we confront when we read the morning news.”

Measure for Measure played to sold-out houses throughout its 2018/19 season run and was a smash hit with audiences and theater critics alike. For *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, **Toby Zinman** wrote: “A brilliant production. Problem solved. *Measure for Measure* is one of Shakespeare’s ‘problem plays,’ troubling directors and scholars for four centuries, and each production, each reader, each audience arrives at its own interpretation. Charles McMahon has found one solution, and it’s brilliant.” Writing for *Broad Street Review*, **Jillian Ashley Blair Ivey** said, “While I won’t give away how McMahon handled the (actually textually important) turn at the conclusion of the play, I will tell you that I found it very, very satisfying. An excellent ensemble... a fresh, modern take on *Measure for Measure* that nods to the present day without shoehorning it into the text.” PlayShakespeare.com’s **Jennifer Kramer** gave *Measure for Measure* five stars, calling it “a clear-eyed and engaging exploration of a cynical society, funny and biting without succumbing to cynicism itself.”

Tickets for *Measure for Measure* are **\$15 per household/device** and are available online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Ticket buyers will receive an email confirmation with full instructions and a private ticket access link, which will provide on-demand access to *Measure for Measure* for one viewing during the April 6 – May 2, 2021 streaming period. The play can be viewed on most internet-connected devices with email/web browser access, including desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and select smart TVs. The Lantern Box Office will be accessible by phone and email for extended hours throughout the streaming period to provide assistance. A new **Digital Shakespeare Pass is also available for \$39**, which includes one ticket for *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest* (streaming May 4 – 30, 2021), and *Coriolanus* (streaming June 1 – 27, 2021).

About the Artists

Measure for Measure 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 *Othello* (shuttered after one preview performance in March 2020 due to Covid-19), as well as *The Tempest* and *Coriolanus*, both of which were filmed and will stream in May and June 2021, respectively. Other Lantern directing credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry V*, *New Jerusalem*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Hamlet*, *La Ronde* (also translator and adapter), *Richard III* (Barrymore

Award), *The Comedy of Errors* (Barrymore nomination), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *King Lear*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, and *A Doll's House*. Recent acting credits include reprising the role of Heisenberg in *Copenhagen*, and writing credits include *Oscar Wilde: From the Depths* and co-creating an original adaptation of Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales*.

Longtime Lantern artistic partner **Anthony Lawton** takes on the role of the Duke of Vienna. His recent Lantern credits include highly acclaimed performances in this season's *Molly Sweeney* by Brian Friel, his original adaptation of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, and last season's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. Lawton is well known to Philadelphia audiences for his original works for the stage – including *The Foocy*, which had its world premiere production at the Lantern in 2005 and earned five Barrymore nominations including Best New Play, and *The Light Princess*, which premiered at Arden Theatre Company and earned eight Barrymore nominations and two wins. He has also created original adaptations of Shel Silverstein's *The Devil and Billy Markham* and C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Great Divorce*, which he has performed at the Lantern and across the U.S. under the aegis of his Mirror Theatre Company, earning him praise from *Philadelphia City Paper* as the city's "Best One-Man Theatre."

Ben Dibble returns to the Lantern stage in the role Angelo, the Duke's aide who rules in his absence. Dibble's many Lantern credits include Father Flynn in *Doubt: A Parable*, Elyot in *Private Lives*, Frank in *Minors*, and the title role in *Henry V*. He has appeared in almost 80 professional productions in the Philadelphia region, including productions with Walnut Street Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, The Media Theatre, and 1812 Productions.

Claire Inie-Richards plays the role of Shakespeare's great heroine Isabella, a young novice at a convent. Inie-Richards previously appeared at the Lantern as Vivie Warren in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Her other stage work includes productions with Theatre Exile, Theatre Horizon, Shakespeare in Clark Park, Delaware Theatre Company, and multiple productions at People's Light, where she is a resident company member.

Additional cast members include **Chris Anthony** (previous Lantern productions include *The Heir Apparent*, *The Tempest*, *Coriolanus*, and *As You Like It*) as Claudio/Ensemble, **Kirk Wendell Brown** (*Hapgood*, *Coriolanus*, and *As You Like It*) as Escalus/Ensemble, **Adam Hammet** (*The Heir Apparent*, *Red Velvet*, and *Coriolanus*) in his Barrymore Award-nominated role as Pompey/Ensemble, **Jered McLenigan** (*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* and *Betrayal*) as Lucio/Barnardine/Ensemble, and **Charlotte Northeast** (*Emma* and *Arcadia*) as Mistress Overdone/Mariana/Ensemble.

The talented design team includes scenic designer **Dirk Durossette** (Lantern credits include *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *QED*), costume designer **Janus Stefanowicz** (*Red Velvet*, *Coriolanus*, and *Mrs. Warren's*

Profession), lighting designer **Drew Billiau** (*The Resistible Rose of Arturo Ui* and *Coriolanus*), and sound designer **Mary Kate Smyser** (Lantern debut). Actor **David Bardeen** served as assistant director.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 27th 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 Philadelphia region with artistic and educational programming, notably partnering with middle schools and high schools in the Philadelphia School District to provide in-classroom residencies in support of curricular learning. Throughout the Covid-19 health crisis, the Lantern has continued to provide artistic programming on both a free and paid basis, including readings of Shakespeare plays in spring 2020; filmed versions of fully realized theatrical productions of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol* in December 2020 and *Molly Sweeney* by Brian Friel in January-March 2021; and the company's new Plays from the Lantern Archives program, which launched in March 2021 with a professionally filmed and edited version of its 2017 world premiere production of *The Craftsman* by Bruce Graham.

Following *Measure for Measure*, the Lantern's reimagined 2020/21 season will continue with filmed versions of *The Tempest* and *Coriolanus*, as well as newly created plays that may be safely rehearsed, staged, and filmed. Additional details will be announced as events and dates are confirmed. More information about the Lantern is available online at www.lanterntheater.org.

Lantern Theater Company – 2020/21 Season
FACT SHEET
Measure for Measure

WRITTEN BY:

William Shakespeare

DIRECTED BY:

Charles McMahon

CAST:

Chris Anthony as Claudio/Ensemble

Kirk Wendell Brown as Escalus/Ensemble

Ben Dibble as Angelo/Ensemble

Adam Hammet as Pompey/Ensemble

Claire Inie-Richards as Isabella/Ensemble

Anthony Lawton as The Duke/Ensemble

Jered McLenigan as Lucio/Barnardine/Ensemble

Charlotte Northeast as Mistress Overdone/Mariana/Ensemble

CREATIVE TEAM:

Dirk Durossette, Scenic Designer

Janus Stefanowicz, Costume Designer

Drew Billiau, Lighting Designer

Mary Kate Smyser, Sound Designer

Rebecca Smith, AEA Stage Manager

David Bardeen, Assistant Director

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TICKET INFORMATION:

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By Phone: (215) 829-0395

TICKET PRICING:

\$15 per household/device

\$39 Digital Shakespeare Pass, which includes access to *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest*, and *Coriolanus*

STREAMING ON DEMAND:

Tuesday, April 6 – Sunday, May 2, 2021

PLAY SYNOPSIS for LISTING EDITORS:

When the power of the State is put in the service of one man's lust, Shakespeare creates one of his greatest heroines to combat the abuse. Isabella's courage and brilliance are called upon to fight back against power, corruption, and sexual blackmail. This major play in the Bard's canon will surprise and move you with its timely insights into human motivation and resilience. *Measure for Measure* is part of Plays from the Lantern Archives, a new program celebrating some of the finest productions from recent Lantern seasons, brought vividly back to life on screen. This performance was professionally filmed with a live theater audience in April 2019.