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Lantern Theater Company Presents Philadelphia Professional Premiere of *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS* by Robert Bolt, Live On Stage March 10 – April 10, 2022

PHILADELPHIA (February 24, 2022) – Lantern Theater Company is thrilled to launch its 2021/22 Mainstage Season and return to live performances with an epic production of *A Man for All Seasons* by award-winning British playwright and screenwriter **Robert Bolt**. Lantern artistic partner **Peter DeLaurier** directs an ensemble cast of Philadelphia actors including **Frank X** as Sir Thomas More, **Scott Greer** as The Common Man, and **Anthony Lawton** as Thomas Cromwell, with **Jake Blouch**, **Benjamin Brown**, **Morgan Charéce Hall**, **Gregory Isaac**, **Paul Harrold**, and **Mary Elizabeth Scallen**. *A Man for All Seasons* runs **Thursday, March 10 through Sunday, April 10, 2022, at Plays & Players Theatre**; a complete schedule of performances and audience enrichment events is included in the fact sheet below. Theater critics and members of the press are invited to request press tickets for **opening night on Wednesday, March 16 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Anne Shuff at ashuff@lanterntheater.org. To ensure a safe and comfortable return to live performances, all audience members will be required to present proof of **full Covid-19 vaccination** and a **corresponding photo ID** for entry. Everyone other than the actors on stage will also be required to wear **properly fitted masks** at all times.

Bolt's searing drama focuses on Sir Thomas More's refusal to acknowledge King Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England, exploring themes of ethics and personal conscience as it compels audiences to consider how far they might go to keep clear their own conscience in the face of pressure from a powerful ruler or government. Producing *A Man for All Seasons* at a time fraught with political division, divisive debate, and pervasive inequality, the Lantern's production focuses on the ongoing need for public ethics in contemporary politics and policy-making.

"While Tudor England was undeniably a dangerous place and time, governed by the whims of a fickle monarch and administered by people who would do anything to please him, Bolt wrote *A Man for All Seasons* to address

the dilemmas of conscience that people and politicians faced in his own time. I think in doing so he has created something for all times,” said Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon**. “After all, do we think the world today is run by people different from King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, and Thomas Cranmer? I see them in the paper every day. But what would it mean to look them all in the eye and say: ‘No.’ It’s humbling to remember that we are not the heroes of the story; we are the common folk.”

“In epochs of change and crisis we seem to need heroes and martyrs,” said **Peter DeLaurier**, who helms the Lantern’s production. “We make plays about them to remember that it’s possible to have that strength and steadfastness even when we can’t muster it ourselves. Thomas More was a brilliant, sociable, loving man, filled with life, successful and well-liked. But his world was also changing, quickly, and in ways he could not accept and, finally – as Bolt says – he ‘found something in himself without which life was valueless and when that was denied him was able to grasp his death.’ Do we have something like that in us? Would we recognize it? For what, right now, would we put our virtue on the table... our identities... our lives? The Right to Life? The Right to Choose? Traditional American Values? The salvation of ‘Small-d-Democracy?’ Thomas More is a man for our season.”

Lantern Theater Company will delve into the themes of *A Man for All Seasons* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published weekly throughout the production’s run, exploring the history of Sir Thomas More, Henry VIII and the English Reformation, the Tudors, and modern prisoners of conscience, plus behind the scenes interviews with the creative artists.

Tickets for *A Man for All Seasons* start at \$25 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 of *A Man for All Seasons* will take place at **Plays & Players Theatre**, located at 1714 Delancey Place in Center City Philadelphia.

About the Artists

Lauded by *The New York Times* as “one of the most successful British writers of his generation,” **Robert Bolt** was an Academy Award-winning screenwriter and playwright, best-known for writing the screenplays for *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Dr. Zhivago*. *A Man for All Seasons* was first performed at The Globe Theatre (now The Gielgud Theatre) in London before becoming a hit on Broadway, playing 620 performances and winning four Tony Awards in 1962, including Best Play. Scripted by Bolt himself, the 1966 feature film of the same name won six Academy Awards in 1967 including Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay.

A Man for All Seasons will be directed by longtime Lantern artistic collaborator **Peter DeLaurier**, whose recent directing credits include Lantern productions of *Molly Sweeney* by Brian Friel, *Hapgood* by Tom Stoppard, *Red*

Velvet by Lolita Charkabarti, *36 Views* by Naomi Iizuka, and *The Island* and *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, both by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona. Celebrating 54 years in professional theater in 2022, DeLaurier has also appeared at the Lantern in productions of *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 and received 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 been a resident company member since 1991.

Beloved Philadelphia actor **Frank X** will tap into his unique combination of searing intelligence and deep empathy to bring the towering role of Sir Thomas More vividly to life. Appearing in his 19th Lantern stage production with *A Man for All Seasons*, his other Lantern credits include *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *"Master Harold"...and the boys*, and *King Lear*. He has appeared on stages locally and nationally throughout his career, including InterAct Theatre Company, Arden Theatre Company, Quintessence Theatre, Seattle Rep, and Actors Theatre of Louisville.

Following his pandemic appearance as Falstaff in the Lantern's Shakespeare *NOW* live reading of *Henry IV, Part 2*, **Scott Greer** makes his long-awaited Lantern mainstage debut as The Common Man. He has worked at almost every theater company in Philadelphia during his 28-year career as well as regionally at Actors Theatre of Theatre of Louisville, Round House Theatre, Cape May Stage, and others.

Anthony Lawton takes on the role of Thomas Cromwell. Lawton's recent Lantern credits include *The Plague*, *Molly Sweeney*, his original adaptation of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, and *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 at the Lantern in 2005, and *The Light Princess*, which premiered at Arden Theatre Company in 2017. His original adaptations of works by C.S. Lewis, Shel Silverstein, and others have earned him praise from *Philadelphia City Paper* as the city's "Best One-Man Theatre."

The ensemble cast also includes several Lantern stage veterans: **Jake Blouch** as King Henry VIII and others (*Emma*, *As You Like It*, *Henry V*, *The Liar*, *A Skull in Connemara*), **Benjamin Brown** as the Duke of Norfolk (Lantern Shakespeare *NOW*), **Gregory Isaac** as Cardinal Wolsey and others (*The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson*, *Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*; *Betrayal*), **Anthony Lawton** as Thomas Cromwell (*Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, *The Plague*, *Molly Sweeney*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*), and **Mary Elizabeth Scallen** as Lady Alice More (*Happy Days*). Making their Lantern debuts with *A Man for All Seasons* are **Morgan Charéce Hall** as Lady Margaret More and **Paul Harrold** as Richard Rich.

The creative team includes scenic designer **James F. Pyne, Jr.** (*Me and the Devil*, *The Plague*, *Othello*), costume designer **Kelly Myers** (*The Last Match*), lighting designer **Lily Fossner** (*Hapgood*, *Red Velvet*), and sound design and original music by **Christopher Colucci** (*The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson*, *Charles Dickens & Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*; *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*; *The Plague*; *Molly Sweeney*). Lantern Education Director **M. Craig Getting** and Lantern 2021/22 Season Professional Apprentice **Leah Brockman** serve as associate director and assistant director, respectively.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 28th 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: livestreamed readings of Shakespeare plays in spring 2020; Plays from the Lantern Archives, which included professionally filmed and edited versions of its 2017 world premiere production of *The Craftsman* by Bruce Graham and three recent Shakespeare productions; and newly created and critically acclaimed digital productions of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, *Molly Sweeney* by Brian Friel, *The Gospel According To...* by Scott Carter, the American premiere of Neil Bartlett's *The Plague* from Albert Camus' *La Peste*, and the world premiere of *Me and the Devil*, co-written and directed by Steve H. Broadnax III.

Following *A Man for All Seasons*, the Lantern's 2021/22 Mainstage Season will continue with the Philadelphia premiere of two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Lynn Nottage's satirical **Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine**; Tom Stoppard's Tony Award-winning comic masterpiece **Travesties**; and a fourth play to be announced shortly.

More information about the Lantern is available online at **www.lanterntheater.org**.

Lantern Theater Company – 2021/22 Mainstage Season
FACT SHEET
A Man for All Seasons

WRITTEN BY:

Robert Bolt

DIRECTED BY:

Peter DeLaurier

CAST:

Jake Blouch as King Henry VIII / William Roper / Chapuys' Attendant
Benjamin Brown as Duke of Norfolk
Morgan Charéce Hall as Lady Margaret More
Gregory Isaac as Cardinal Wolsey / Eustace Chapuys / Thomas Cranmer
Anthony Lawton as Thomas Cromwell
Scott Greer as The Common Man
Paul Harrold as Richard Rich
Mary Elizabeth Scallen as Lady Alice More / A Woman
Frank X as Sir Thomas More

CREATIVE TEAM:

James F. Pyne, Jr., Scenic Designer
Kelly Myers, Costume Designer
Lily Fossner, Lighting Designer
Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer & Original Music
Peter Schmitz, Dialect Coach
Rebecca Smith, Stage Manager
M. Craig Getting, Associate Director
Leah Brockman, Assistant Director

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TICKET INFORMATION:

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

TICKET PRICING:

\$25 – \$41

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, March 10 – Sunday, April 10, 2022

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, March 10 at 7 p.m.
Friday, March 11 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, March 12 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, March 13 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT:

Wednesday, March 16 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. on March 22 and March 29 only

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on March 23 [AIC], March 30 [AIC], and April 6

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on March 23, March 30, and April 6

Thursday at 7 p.m. on March 17, March 24, March 31, and April 7

Friday at 8 p.m. on March 18, March 25, April 1, and April 8

Saturday at 2 p.m. on March 19, March 26, April 2, and April 9

Saturday at 8 p.m. on March 19, March 26, April 2, and April 9

Sunday at 2 p.m. on March 20 [AIC], March 27 [AIC], April 3, and April 10

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, April 10 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, March 20; Wednesday, March 23; Sunday, March 27; and Wednesday, March 30. Lantern dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will moderate both Sundays and Wednesday, March 23; Lantern artistic director **Charles McMahon** will moderate on Wednesday, March 30.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

When Henry VIII puts aside Queen Catherine, he fears opposition from Sir Thomas More, his own Lord Chancellor, even more than from the Pope. A man of principle and politics, More tries to thread a vanishingly small needle to uphold his principles and to keep his head. Robert Bolt's searing drama forces us to confront what we too might bear – or not – to keep clear our conscience.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

Plays & Players Theatre at 1714 Delancey Place in Center City Philadelphia

COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS:

To ensure a safe and comfortable return to live performances, all audience members will be required to present proof of full Covid-19 vaccination and a corresponding photo ID for entry. Everyone other than the actors on stage will also be required to wear properly fitted masks at all times.