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#TravestiesLTC

Lantern Theater Company Opens 2022/23 Season with TRAVESTIES by Tom Stoppard, September 8 – October 9, 2022

PHILADELPHIA (August 31, 2022) – **Lantern Theater Company** is thrilled to launch its 2022/23 Mainstage Season with **Tom Stoppard**'s Tony Award-winning comic masterpiece, *Travesties*. Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon** directs an ensemble cast of Philadelphia actors including **David Bardeen, Leonard C. Haas, Morgan Charéce Hall, Gregory Isaac, Dave Johnson, Anthony Lawton, Lee Minora, and Campbell O'Hare**. *Travesties* runs **Thursday, September 8 through Sunday, October 9, 2022**, at St. Stephen's Theater, the Lantern's resident venue; 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, September 14 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Anne Shuff at ashuff@lanterntheater.org. To ensure a safe and comfortable theater experience, everyone other than the actors on stage are required to wear **properly fitted masks** while attending *Travesties*.

Travesties marks the Lantern's sixth production by legendary British playwright Tom Stoppard, including *Hapgood* (2018), *Arcadia* (2014), *Heroes* (2013), *Rough Crossing* (1998), and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1997). *Travesties* is a madcap comedy about art, memory, revolution, and the stories we tell to and about ourselves. Like the art and political movements with which it gleefully plays, Stoppard's play takes a host of influences and turns them into something utterly new, set to the rhythms of the music hall and against the backdrop of the war that should have ended all wars.

Travesties finds legendary writer **James Joyce**, Romanian poet **Tristan Tzara**, and Russian revolutionary **Vladimir Lenin** all living in World War I-era Zürich in 1917. Joyce is working on his masterpiece *Ulysses*, Tzara is pioneering the Dadaist movement, and Lenin is planning the Bolshevik Revolution. Stoppard's protagonist, **Henry Carr**, is an obscure British diplomat who has been asked by James Joyce to play the lead

role of Algernon in a production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. *Travesties*' plot is a delightful parallel to the story of Wilde's timeless comedy. Carr and Tzara are both in love with Cecily and Gwendolyn, who are both in love with someone named Jack. Soon everyone in neutral Switzerland is at war over the question, "What does it mean to be an artist and a revolutionary?"

Stoppard's play asks audiences to consider the purpose of art and the artist in society – especially in times of war and turmoil. Stoppard wrote: "In an age when the difference between prince and peasant was thought to be in the stars...art was naturally an affirmation for the one and a consolation to the other; but we live in an age when the social order is seen to be the work of material forces and we have been given an entirely new kind of responsibility, the responsibility of changing society...No, no, no, no, no...art doesn't change society, it is merely changed by it."

The original production of *Travesties* was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company in London before transferring to Broadway and winning the 1976 Tony Award for Best Play. The 2018 Broadway revival was nominated for four Tony Awards, including a nomination for Best Play. Stoppard said of his play, "I speak on behalf of the world of the artist without hesitation! People don't realize that the part of the playwright is finding something for people to talk about."

"To work on a play by Tom Stoppard is to enter into his obsessions and share them for months at a time," said Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahan**, who will direct the Lantern's production of *Travesties*. "All of his works are radically different from one another in style, tone, and genre, but core themes emerge that tie them all together as the life's work of a mind on a mission to tease some pattern out of a chaotic world."

Lantern Theater Company will delve into the themes and history surrounding *Travesties* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published throughout the production's run, exploring the play's historical figures, the effect of World War I on the arts, artists and revolutionaries in neutral Switzerland, and more.

Tickets for *Travesties* are \$25 – \$42 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 *Travesties* will take place at **St. Stephen's Theater**, located at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia. During the 2022/23 season, the Lantern will announce updated health and safety guidelines 30 days prior to the start of each production. For *Travesties*, everyone other than the actors on stage must wear **properly fitted masks** at all times in all parts of the Lantern performance venue, including the lobby, performance space, restrooms, and stairwells. More detailed information is available at lanterntheater.org/health-and-safety.

About the Artists

Travesties 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 productions of *Othello* (shuttered after one preview performance in March 2020 due to Covid-19), *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest*, and *Coriolanus*. Other Lantern directing credits include *The Plague*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry V*, *New Jerusalem*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *La Ronde* (also translator and adapter), *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *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*.

The ensemble cast of *Travesties* include **David Bardeen** as Bennett (*Othello*, *Red Velvet*, *Coriolanus*), **Leonard C. Haas** as Henry Carr (*The Heir Apparent*, *Vigil*), **Morgan Charéce Hall** as Gwendolen (*A Man for All Seasons*), **Gregory Isaac** (*Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine*; *A Man for All Seasons*; *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens & Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*), **Dave Johnson** as Tristan Tzara (*The Tempest*, *The Heir Apparent*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*), **Anthony Lawton** as James Joyce (*Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *The Plague*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*), **Lee Minora** as Nadya (*The Last Match*, *The Heir Apparent*, *Don't Dress for Dinner*), and **Campbell O'Hare** as Cecily (*Othello*).

The creative team includes scenic designer **Nick Embree** (*Molly Sweeney*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Hapgood*), costume designer **Marla Jurglanis** (*Me and the Devil*, *Othello*, *The Heir Apparent*), lighting designer **Drew Billiau** (*Othello*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Measure for Measure*), and sound designer **Christopher Colucci** (*Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*; *A Man for All Seasons*; *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens & Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*; *The Plague*; *Molly Sweeney*). **Maria Carroll** is assistant director and **Rebecca Smith** is the stage manager.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and launching its 29th season with Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*, 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 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 continuously provided artistic programming on both a free and paid basis to more than 30,000 people in 15

countries and all 50 states, including livestreamed readings of Shakespeare plays in spring 2020; professionally filmed and edited Plays from the Lantern Archives; and newly created and critically lauded 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 *Travesties*, the Lantern's 2022/23 Mainstage Season will continue with the Philadelphia premiere of *The Royale* by Marco Ramirez and directed by Zuhairah McGill (**Press Opening: Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 7 p.m.**); the Philadelphia premiere of *The Lifespan of a Fact* by Jeremy Kareken, David Murrell, and Gordon Farrell (**Press Opening: Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 7 p.m.**); and *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, directed by Charles McMahon (**Press Opening: Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 7 p.m.**). More information is available online at www.lanterntheater.org.

Lantern Theater Company – 2022/23 Mainstage Season
FACT SHEET
Travesties

WRITTEN BY:

Tom Stoppard

DIRECTED BY:

Charles McMahon

CAST:

David Bardeen as Bennett
Leonard C. Haas as Henry Carr
Morgan Charéce Hall as Gwendolen
Gregory Isaac as Lenin
Dave Johnson as Tristan Tzara
Anthony Lawton as James Joyce
Lee Minora as Nadya
Campbell O'Hare as Cecily

CREATIVE TEAM:

Nick Embree, Scenic Designer
Marla Jurglanis, Costume Designer
Drew Billiau, Lighting Designer
Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer
Rebecca Smith, Stage Manager
Maria Carroll, Assistant Director

PRESS INFORMATION:

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TICKET INFORMATION:

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

TICKET PRICING:

\$25 – \$42

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, September 8 – Sunday, October 9, 2022

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, September 8 at 7 p.m.
Friday, September 9 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, September 10 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, September 11 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, September 13 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT:

Wednesday, September 14 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on September 21 [AIC], September 28 [AIC], and October 5

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on September 21, September 28, and October 5

Thursday at 7 p.m. on September 15, September 22, September 29, and October 6

Friday at 8 p.m. on September 16, September 23, September 30, and October 7

Saturday at 2 p.m. on September 17, September 24, October 1, and October 8

Saturday at 8 p.m. on September 17, September 24, October 1, and October 8

Sunday at 2 p.m. on September 18 [AIC], September 25 [AIC], October 2, and October 9

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, October 8 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, September 18; Wednesday, September 21; Sunday, September 25; and Wednesday, September 28. Lantern dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussions.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

Zürich, 1917. In Tom Stoppard's Tony Award-winning comic masterpiece, obscure British diplomat Henry Carr and Dadaist Tristan Tzara are in love with Cecily and Gwendolen, who are both in love with someone named Jack. Carr stages a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with James Joyce, and the action gets heated when Vladimir Lenin bursts onto the scene. Soon everyone in neutral Switzerland is at war over the question, "What does it mean to be an artist and a revolutionary?"

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

St. Stephen's Theater at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia

COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS:

To ensure the continued safety of our artists, staff, and patrons, everyone other than the actors on stage must wear properly fitted masks at all times in all parts of the Lantern's venue. More detailed information is available at lanterntheater.org/health-and-safety.