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#CrumbsLTC

Lantern Theater Company Announces One-Week Extension of *CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY* by Lynn Nottage

**Critically Lauded and Barrymore Recommended Production
Will Now Close December 17, 2023**

PHILADELPHIA (November 29, 2023) – **Lantern Theater Company** announced today that its acclaimed production of *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* will extend its run to meet audience demand and will now close on Sunday, December 17, 2023. **The following performances have been added:**

Wednesday, December 13 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Thursday, December 14 at 7 p.m.

Friday, December 15 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 16 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sunday, December 17 at 2 p.m.

Directed by **Bianca LaVerne Jones** and featuring **Monet Debose** as Ermina Crump, **Walter DeShields** as Godfrey Crump, **Morgan Charéce Hall** as Ernestine Crump, **Hillary Parker** as Gerte Schulte, and **Brett Ashley Robinson** as Lily Ann Green, the Lantern's production of *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* has played to mostly sold-out houses since its first performance on November 9.

Nottage's warmly lyrical memory play about growing up through grief and in tumultuous times is set in the aftermath of a devastating loss. Following the death of his beloved wife, Godfrey Crump moves his two teenage daughters Ernestine and Ermina from Florida to 1950s Brooklyn. He is hoping to be closer to the mission of Father Divine, seeking spiritual fulfillment that will help him and his daughters through their grief. Shortly after their arrival, the late woman's sister Lily arrives from Harlem, offering the girls a different model of

independence, empowerment, and fulfillment that clashes with their father's strict household. When Godfrey suddenly remarries and brings home new wife Gerte, a recent German immigrant, tensions deepen as the girls seek to make their own lives and tell their own stories. Ernestine is our guide through the play, weaving the memories of this formative period in her life into an imaginative, poetic, and charming narrative about finding hope and building a self in a time of personal and political upheaval.

“Is there a better living American playwright than **Lynn Nottage**?” Terry Teachout asked in a 2021 *Wall Street Journal* review. For many, the answer is simple: there is not. Nottage is one of today's most prolific, most empathetic, and most surprising writers. Her illustrious career spans comedy, drama, and plays that live in between the two, and her work is always deeply grounded in place and circumstance. She is the first – and remains the only – woman to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice. Her wide-ranging curiosity leads her to write on an astonishing variety of subjects and themes, and her extraordinary talent enables her to mold the structure, language, and tone as a particular story demands. Nottage writes smart, incisive investigations into human nature, and her stories and the characters peopling them are richly specific. The plays are rooted in their place and time, suffused with authenticity and real human heartbeats. This specificity helps the work resonate broadly by showing us the human desires, failings, kindness, disappointment, and resilience that connect us all. “All my plays are about people who have been marginalized,” Nottage has said. One of her earliest full-length plays, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* carries the seeds of so many of the genres, explorations, and human characterizations across her canon. At the play's heart are the essential questions that animate Nottage's oeuvre: How do we make the life we want to live? What do we do with our crumbs of joy?

“*Crumbs from the Table of Joy* is the play that launched the career of Lynn Nottage,” said Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon**. “Told through the lens of memory, the story takes place at a pivotal moment in young Ernestine's life and a turning point in 20th century American society. At times funny and beautifully moving, *Crumbs* is a seemingly simple story that grows in emotional complexity as it unfolds. By the play's conclusion, Ernestine stands at a crossroads that could lead in any number of directions, liberated by the power by her own imagination. Many of the themes Ernestine muses over in the play become the seeds of Nottage's later plays – and the foundation from which she blossomed into a two-time Pulitzer Prize awardee and cemented her reputation as America's greatest living playwright.”

“Lynn Nottage's language in *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* is a pool of never-ending delicious fruit,” said **Bianca LaVerne Jones**, who makes her Lantern directorial debut with this production. “Her brilliant well of connections sends us into our own worlds thirsty for honesty. This is my first Lynn Nottage play and I am excited to feed this audience. They are going to love *Crumbs*.”

Lantern Theater Company is delving into the world of *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Written by Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch**, published articles have explored the extraordinary range of playwright Lynn Nottage's works and inspirations, the hysteria around communism in 1950s America, The Great Migration, and Father Divine – the charismatic religious leader with a Philadelphia connection who draws the Crumps north in the play. Articles will continue to be published throughout the play's extended run, including a behind the scenes conversation with *Crumbs* director Bianca LaVerne Jones.

Tickets for all added performances of *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* go on sale today and are available online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Tickets are \$30 – \$45 for all performances; discounts are available for under age 30, seniors, U.S. military personnel, and groups of 10 or more. All performances will take place at **St. Stephen's Theater**, located at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia. Face masks are welcome, but not required.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and celebrating its 30th anniversary during the 2023/24 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 Greater Philadelphia region with award-winning productions and education programming, notably partnering with middle schools and high schools in the Philadelphia School District to provide in-classroom residencies in support of curricular learning. The Lantern became a national leader in streaming theater during the Covid health crisis, producing ten fully designed plays that were created and filmed in the company's resident home at St. Stephen's Theater, garnering coverage in national media including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and reaching more than 30,000 people in 15 countries and all 50 states.

Following *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, Lantern Theater Company's 30th anniversary season continues with the Lantern's annual adaptation of ***Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol***, a Philadelphia holiday tradition co-created by local theater artists **Anthony Lawton, Christopher Colucci, and Thom Weaver (Press Opening: Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 2 p.m.)**; ***Faith Healer*** from legendary Irish playwright **Brian Friel**, directed by longtime Lantern artistic collaborator **Peter DeLaurier (Press Opening: Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 7 p.m.)**; and **William Shakespeare's** lyrical and hilarious ***The Comedy of Errors***, directed by Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon (Press Opening: Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at 7 p.m.)**. More information is available online at www.lanterntheater.org.

Lantern Theater Company – 2023/24 Season
30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
FACT SHEET
Crumbs from the Table of Joy

WRITTEN BY:

Lynn Nottage

DIRECTED BY:

Bianca LaVerne Jones

CAST:

Monet Debose as Ermina Crump
Walter DeShields as Godfrey Crump
Morgan Charéce Hall as Ernestine Crump
Hillary Parker as Gerte Schulte
Brett Ashley Robinson as Lily Ann Green

CREATIVE TEAM:

Bianca LaVerne Jones, Director
Dirk Durossette, Scenic Designer
Leigh Paradise, Costume Designer
Tydell Williams, Lighting Designer
Christopher Colucci, Sound Designer
Kimmika Williams-Witherspoon, Production Dramaturgy Consultant
Nicole Perry, Intimacy Coach / Choreographer
DeWanda Smith Soeder, Cultural Competency Consultant
Rebecca Smith, Stage Manager
Leah Jackson, Assistant Director

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TICKET INFORMATION:

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

TICKET PRICING:

\$30 – \$45 / Under Age 30: \$25

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 2 p.m. [AIC] and 7 p.m.
Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 7 p.m.
Friday, December 1, 2023 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 7 p.m.
Saturday, December 9, 2023 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 2 p.m.
Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 7 p.m.

Friday, December 15, 2023 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 16, 2023 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Sunday, December 17, 2023 at 2 p.m.

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, December 17, 2023 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Our final moderated post-show discussion with the cast will immediately follow the 2 p.m. performance on Wednesday, November 29. Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussion.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

Just arrived in Brooklyn from the South, the Crump family is seeking their place in the Philadelphia-based Father Divine movement – but their two brilliant daughters on the cusp of adulthood are chafing at their father's religious strictures. Their big dreams for the future are encouraged by their lively, fearless, free-thinking, communist Aunt Lily. This dramatic gem from two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Lynn Nottage gently reveals the funny and touching struggles of a family trying to make a fresh start in a strange world full of temptations and surprises.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

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

HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS:

Face masks are welcome, but not required.