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#FaithLTC

Lantern Theater Company Continues 30th Anniversary Season with *FAITH HEALER* by Brian Friel, Directed by Peter DeLaurier, February 1 – March 3, 2024

PHILADELPHIA (January 16, 2024) – **Lantern Theater Company** is thrilled to continue its **30th anniversary season** with *Faith Healer*, legendary Irish playwright **Brian Friel**'s masterpiece play about memory, belief, and the stories we tell to others and to ourselves. Directed by **Peter DeLaurier** and featuring **Anthony Lawton, Ian Merrill Peakes, and Geneviève Perrier**, *Faith Healer* reunites the artistic team from the Lantern's highly acclaimed digital production of Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney* in 2021. *Faith Healer* runs **Thursday, February 1 through Sunday, March 3, 2024**, at St. Stephen's Theater in Center City Philadelphia; a complete schedule of performances and audience enrichment events is included in the fact sheet below. Theater critics and members of the press planning coverage are invited to request press tickets for **opening night on Wednesday, February 7 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Anne Shuff at ashuff@lanterntheater.org.

Faith Healer is a deep dive into the psyche of an inspired performer – but is he really a shaman, an artist, or a con man? Friel's mesmerizing play comprises four *Rashomon*-style monologues, with each character sifting through their recollections in an effort to reveal the truth. The play begins and ends with monologues from Frank Hardy (Ian Merrill Peakes), an itinerant faith healer who travels town to town healing – or failing to heal, depending on the night – the wounded and the sick. In one Welsh village, he heals 10 people, earning him a reputation for a gift he knows is not reliable and that he is not sure is even real. Between Frank's monologues, we hear from his wife Grace (Geneviève Perrier) and his manager Teddy (Anthony Lawton) as they reckon with what it means to be in the orbit of this difficult, magnetic, and perhaps-mystical man. The stories they tell – both to others and to themselves – prove to be but parts of a whole, a complete story that can never be fully known from a single perspective.

“*Faith Healer* is one of the greatest plays by one of the 20th century’s greatest playwrights,” said Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon**. “At times lyrical and at times ironic, the play shines a searchlight deep into the psyches of its three characters as they take us on their journeys through the small towns of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland in a quest to heal the sick. But even the healer himself is never sure if they are dealing in miracles or fraud.”

Brian Friel has often been called the Irish Chekhov and was long recognized as Ireland’s greatest living dramatist until his death in 2015. In addition to *Faith Healer* and *Molly Sweeney*, his work includes *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1991 Olivier Award for Best New Play and 1992 Tony Award for Best Play); *Translations*; *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*; *Freedom*; *Wonderful Tennessee*; *The Home Place*; and *Lovers*, which the Lantern produced during the 2002/03 season. According to theater historian Christopher Murray, Friel’s plays “take the spiritual pulse of the Irish people and find the dramatic form that will render the condition of universal interest.” *Faith Healer* was Friel’s first use of the three-monologist format that he would return to with *Molly Sweeney* – a form that highlights his humane and delicate explorations of identity, history, and memory. Since its first performance in 1979, *Faith Healer* has been seen on some of the most prestigious stages in the world, including two Broadway productions.

Lantern Theater Company will delve into the world of *Faith Healer* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published throughout the production’s run, exploring the extraordinary work of Brian Friel, the geography and politics of Friel’s Ireland, and charismatic figures as con men in drama, as well as behind the scenes conversations with the artists.

Tickets for *Faith Healer* are \$28 – \$45 and are available online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Discounts are available for theatergoers under age 30, seniors 65+, U.S. military personnel, and groups of 10 or more. Performances of *Faith Healer* 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 the Lantern Artists

Faith Healer will be directed by longtime Lantern artistic collaborator **Peter DeLaurier**, whose recent directing credits include Lantern productions of *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt, *Molly Sweeney* by Brian Friel, *Hapgood* by Tom Stoppard, *Red Velvet* by Lolita Chakrabarti, *36 Views* by Naomi Iizuka, and *The Island* and *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona. Celebrating 56 years in professional theater in 2024, DeLaurier has also appeared on the Lantern stage in *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, receiving 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 has been a resident company member since 1991.

Ian Merrill Peakes takes on the titular role of faith healer Frank Hardy. Peakes previously appeared as writer John D'Agata in the Lantern's 2023 production of *The Lifespan of a Fact*, as Frank Sweeney in the Lantern's 2021 digital production of Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney*, and as Dutch military captain Joseph Pillel in the Lantern's 2017 world premiere of *The Craftsman* by Bruce Graham. A Barrymore and Helen Hayes award-winning actor, Peakes' stage credits also include productions with Walnut Street Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Theatre Exile, Philadelphia Theatre Company, The Wilma Theater, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, American Conservatory Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Folger Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and many others.

Geneviève Perrier will play Frank's wife, Grace. *Faith Healer* marks Perrier's tenth Lantern production, including *Molly Sweeney*, *The Vertical Hour*, *Betrayal* (Barrymore nomination), *Photograph 51* (Barrymore nomination), *A Child's Christmas in Wales* (Barrymore Award for Outstanding Ensemble), *Private Lives* (Barrymore nomination), *The Lonesome West* (Barrymore nomination), *The Screwtape Letters*, and *Skylight*, for which she was honored with the 2008 Barrymore for Outstanding Leading Actress in a Play. Perrier has also worked locally with Arden Theatre Company, Azuka Theatre, The Berserker Residents, Headlong, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, EgoPo Classic Theater, Theatre Exile, and Pig Iron Theatre Company.

Anthony Lawton returns to the Lantern stage as Frank's manager, Teddy, fresh off his sixth consecutive year as the Storyteller in his highly acclaimed original adaptation of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*. Lawton's other recent Lantern credits include *Molly Sweeney*, *Travesties*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Measure for Measure*, and the world premiere of *The Craftsman* by Bruce Graham. 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 2017 Barrymore nominations including Best New Play 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." His acting credits also

include film, television, and local productions with Arden Theatre Company, Walnut Street Theatre, The Wilma Theater, 1812 Productions, and the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival.

Director Peter DeLaurier has assembled a talented creative team that includes scenic designer **Nick Embree** (30+ Lantern designs, including *Travesties*, *Molly Sweeney*, and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*), costume designer **Marla Jurglanis** (*Twelfth Night*, *Travesties*, *Me and the Devil*, others), lighting designer **Lily Fossner** (*A Man for All Seasons*, *Hapgood*, *Red Velvet*), sound designer **Elizabeth Atkinson** (Lantern debut). Lantern 2023/24 Season Professional Apprentice **Matt Melchior** is assistant director, alongside longtime Lantern Stage Manager **Rebecca Smith**.

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 *Faith Healer*, Lantern Theater Company's 30th anniversary season will conclude with **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
Faith Healer

WRITTEN BY:

Brian Friel

DIRECTED BY:

Peter DeLaurier

CAST:

Anthony Lawton as Teddy

Ian Merrill Peakes as Frank Hardy

Geneviève Perrier as Grace

CREATIVE TEAM:

Peter DeLaurier, Director

Nick Embree, Scenic Design

Marla Jurglanis, Costume Design

Lily Fossner, Lighting Design

Elizabeth Atkinson, Sound Design & Original Music

Rebecca Smith, Stage Manager

Matt Melchior, Assistant Director

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TICKET INFORMATION:

Online: www.lanterntheater.org

By Phone: (215) 829-0395

TICKET PRICING:

\$28 – \$45 / Under Age 30: \$25

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, February 1 – Sunday, March 3, 2024

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, February 1 at 7 p.m.

Friday, February 2 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, February 3 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, February 4 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, February 6 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE:

Wednesday, February 7 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on February 14 [AIC], February 21 [AIC], and February 28

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on February 14, February 21, and February 28

Thursday at 7 p.m. on February 8, February 15, February 22, and February 29

Friday at 8 p.m. on February 9, February 16, February 23, and March 1

Saturday at 2 p.m. on February 10, February 17, February 24, and March 2

Saturday at 8 p.m. on February 10, February 17, February 24, and March 2

Sunday at 2 p.m. on February 11 [AIC], February 18 [AIC], February 25, and March 3

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, March 3 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, February 11; Wednesday, February 14; Sunday, February 18; and Wednesday, February 21. Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussions.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

From the rich imagination of the great Irish playwright Brian Friel, FAITH HEALER is a deep dive into the psyche of an inspired performer – but is he really a shaman, an artist, or a con man? This story of a village set on edge by his machinations is at times comical and at times startling. Friel's masterpiece shines a light on the dark places of the human soul, but its mysteries endure.

HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS:

Face masks are welcome, but not required.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

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