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Lantern Theater Company Opens 2026/27 Season with *SUMMER, 1976* by David Auburn, Directed by Kate Galvin, September 10 – October 11, 2026

PHILADELPHIA (August 11, 2026) – Lantern Theater Company opens its 2026/27 season with *Summer, 1976* by **David Auburn**, the award-winning author of *Proof*. Led by guest director **Kate Galvin**, the production features **Grace Gonglewski** in her Lantern debut and **McKenna Kerrigan** returning to the Lantern stage. *Summer, 1976* runs **Thursday, September 10 through Sunday, October 11, 2026**, 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, September 16 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Emily Wilson at ewilson@lanterntheater.org.

Set against the backdrop of America's Bicentennial summer in Ohio, *Summer, 1976* follows the unexpected friendship between Alice, a free-spirited academic wife, and Diana, a driven and self-critical artist. When their paths cross through their young daughters, an arrangement of shared childcare gradually deepens into a transformative friendship. Despite coming from different worlds, Alice and Diana find in each other a rare kind of recognition that offers escape from isolation, routine, and the societal expectations of motherhood. Yet beneath their growing bond, questions of marriage, ambition, and personal fulfillment begin to surface, testing the limits of their trust. David Auburn's poignant and humorous drama captures a fleeting but defining encounter between two women whose lives are altered long after the summer fades.

"David Auburn's beautiful and subtle play encourages us to lean into the shades of grey that we find in ourselves and each other," said director **Kate Galvin**. "Alice and Diana are unlikely friends who leave an indelible impression upon one another, and I'm thrilled to be working with Grace Gonglewski and McKenna Kerrigan to bring these rich characters to life."

Lantern Theater Company will explore the world of *Summer, 1976* on its **Lantern Searchlight on Medium**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published throughout the production's run, including background on the play, its themes, and behind-the-scenes conversations with the artists.

Tickets for *Summer, 1976* are \$31 – \$49 and are available online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Discounts are available for students, theatergoers under age 30, seniors 65 and up, 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.

About the Playwright

David Auburn is a Tony Award– and Pulitzer Prize–winning American playwright, screenwriter, and director best known for his play *Proof*, which he also adapted for the screen. His other plays include *The Adventures of Augie March* (Court Theatre, Chicago, 2019), *Lost Lake* (Manhattan Theatre Club, 2014), and *The Columnist* (Broadway, 2011). His film credits include *The Girl in the Park*, which he also directed, as well as *Georgetown* and *The Lake House*. A graduate of the University of Chicago and Juilliard's playwriting program, where he studied with Marsha Norman and Christopher Durang, Auburn is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, and a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. His work is recognized for its intellectual depth, strong characterization, and exploration of complex human relationships.

About the Lantern Artists

Summer, 1976 will mark **Kate Galvin**'s Lantern directorial debut. She is a Barrymore Award-winning director with regional directing credits that include 11th Hour Theatre Company, Fulton Theater, Pittsburgh CLO, Portland Stage, Walnut Street Theatre, Weston Theater Company, and others. Galvin previously served as the Artistic Director of Cardinal Stage and Constellation Stage & Screen in Bloomington, Indiana, and she currently serves as the Casting Director for Constellation Stage & Screen. She is a graduate of NYU (Vocal Performance, Musical Theater) and Goldsmiths, University of London (Producing for Musical Theater).

Summer, 1976's cast includes **Grace Goglewski** as Alice (Lantern debut; theater credits include 1812 Productions, Arden Theatre Company, Arena Stage, Folger Theatre, Fulton Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Theatre Horizon, Walnut Street Theatre) and **McKenna Kerrigan** as Diana (*Hapgood*).

The creative team for *Summer, 1976* includes scenic designer **Chris Haig** (Lantern debut; theater credits include Arden Theatre Company, EgoPo Classic Theater, Inis Nua Theatre Company, InterAct Theatre

Company, People's Light, Theatre Horizon, Theatre Exile), costume designer **Natalia de la Torre** (*An Iliad*, *Informed Consent*), lighting designer **J. Dominic Chacon** (Lantern debut; theater credits include Azuka Theatre Company, EgoPo Classic Theater, Walnut Street Theatre), and sound designer **Elizabeth Atkinson** (*Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Faith Healer*). Lantern Artistic & Education Associate **Talia Speak** will serve as assistant director, alongside Stage Manager **Maya Nguyen-Haberneski**.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 33rd 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 *Summer, 1976*, Lantern Theater Company's 2026/27 season continues with *The Weir*, **Conor McPherson**'s masterful and haunting exploration of storytelling, directed by **Matt Pfeiffer** (**Press Opening: Wednesday, November 18, 2026, at 7 p.m.**); *Hamlet*, **William Shakespeare**'s timeless tragedy of revenge, morality, and madness, directed by Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon** (**Press Opening: Wednesday, February 10, 2027, at 7 p.m.**); and the Philadelphia premiere of *Wild With Happy* by **Colman Domingo**, a vibrant and deeply moving journey through grief and self-discovery (**Press Opening: Wednesday, May 12, 2027, at 7 p.m.**). More information is available online at www.lanterntheater.org.

Lantern Theater Company – 2026/27 Season
FACT SHEET
Summer, 1976

WRITTEN BY:

David Auburn

DIRECTED BY:

Kate Galvin

CAST:

Grace Gonglewski as Alice
McKenna Kerrigan as Diana

CREATIVE TEAM:

Chris Haig, Scenic Designer
Natalia de la Torre, Costume Designer
J. Dominic Chacon, Lighting Designer
Elizabeth Atkinson, Sound Designer
Maya Nguyen-Haberneski, Stage Manager
Talia Speak, Assistant Director

PRESS INFORMATION:

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TICKET INFORMATION:

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

TICKET PRICING:

\$31 – \$49 / Under Age 30: \$25

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, September 10 – Sunday, October 11, 2026

PREVIEWS:

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

OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE:

Wednesday, September 16 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on September 23 [AIC], September 30 [AIC], and October 7
Wednesday at 7 p.m. on September 23, September 30, and October 1

Thursday at 7 p.m. on September 17, September 24, October 1, and October 8
Friday at 2 p.m. on October 9 only
Friday at 7:30 p.m. on September 18, September 25, and October 2
Saturday at 2 p.m. on September 19, September 26, October 3, and October 10
Saturday at 8 p.m. on September 19, September 26, October 3, and October 10
Sunday at 2 p.m. on September 20 [AIC], September 27 [AIC], October 4, and October 11

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, October 11 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, September 20; Wednesday, September 23; Sunday, September 27; and Wednesday, September 30. Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussions.

FOR LISTINGS EDITORS:

One summer an unlikely friendship springs up between two young mothers that changes forever the course of their lives. Alice and Diana couldn't be more different, one a free-spirited academic spouse and the other a driven and self-critical artist. As the events of that fateful season test their friendship, we join them on their poignant and humorous journey in this captivating drama from the author of *Proof*.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

St. Stephen's Theater at 10th and Ludlow Streets (923 Ludlow Street) in Center City Philadelphia