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#MoorLTC

Lantern Theater Company Continues 2024/25 Season with Philadelphia Premiere of Keith Hamilton Cobb's *AMERICAN MOOR*, Directed by Kash Goins, November 7 – December 8, 2024

PHILADELPHIA (November 1, 2024) – **Lantern Theater Company** continues its 2024/25 season with the regional premiere of *American Moor*, actor/playwright **Keith Hamilton Cobb**'s poetic exploration of Shakespeare, race, and modern America. Led by guest director **Kash Goins**, *American Moor* features **Thane Madsen** in his Lantern debut and **Phillip Brown**, who returns to the Lantern stage following his Barrymore Award-winning performance in the 2022/23 season production of *The Royale*. *American Moor* runs **Thursday, November 7 through Sunday, December 8, 2024**, at St. Stephen's Theater in Center City Philadelphia; a complete schedule of performances and special events is included in the fact sheet below, including **James Baldwin Black Theater Night on Saturday, November 30**, hosted by our Associate Producers at **The Brothers' Network**. Theater critics and members of the press are invited to request press tickets for **opening night on Wednesday, November 13 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Anne Shuff at ashuff@lanterntheater.org.

Hailed by *The Boston Globe* as a “deep-from-the-heart spellbinder” and “a blisteringly eloquent and penetrating meditation on the ever-urgent matter of race in America,” *American Moor* is Keith Hamilton Cobb's excavation of Shakespeare's power in a contemporary American context. An actor waits, preparing, pacing, going over his lines. The director is late. But the actor has been waiting for more than this single audition slot – he has been waiting to be truly seen and heard in the fullness of his experience and identity, and waiting for that fullness to be valued in the audition and rehearsal rooms in which he has spent his career. When the younger, white director arrives, we watch as the actor wrestles with his relationship to Othello, the frustrations and indignities faced by a Black classical actor who sees himself in *all* of Shakespeare's canon, a process that he knows will not honor his lived experience, and his desire to tackle this towering, troublesome role anyway. The actor lets

the audience into his innermost thoughts while also negotiating the tension between the director's power and his own hard-earned authority – a tension that Othello himself must navigate. Shakespeare's text and modern lyricism knit together in this vital, propulsive monologue play, holding up a mirror that reflects both 400 years of theater history and the current moment.

Performed across the United States and making its Philadelphia premiere with the Lantern's production, *American Moor* has been added to the Folger Shakespeare Library's permanent collection in recognition of its insistent and penetrating perspective on Shakespeare in a modern world. Originally conceived and written in 2012 with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, **Keith Hamilton Cobb** describes *American Moor* as “a play about race in America, but it is also a play about who gets to make art, who gets to play Shakespeare, about the qualitative decline of the American theatre, about actors and acting, and about the nature of unadulterated love.” A graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Cobb brings a rich classical performance background to the writing, having performed roles including Laertes in *Hamlet*, Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, Tullus Aufidius in *Coriolanus*, and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on regional theater stages across the country – as well as numerous roles in television and in contemporary dramas.

“With *American Moor*, Keith Hamilton Cobb has created a work of profound and personal insight into the Shakespearian canon as well as a powerful statement about race in modern American society,” said Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon**. “In the course of auditioning for the role of Othello, a brilliant Black performer who has spent his professional life in deep dialog with the works of Shakespeare is repeatedly undercut by a well-meaning but callow and clueless white director. *American Moor* is a story told with caustic irony showing the many ways in which Black genius is routinely discarded in American power structures.”

“I see theater as a transformative medium, where the most tangible experiences are *felt* more than *seen*,” said *American Moor* director **Kash Goins**. “I so enjoy working with plays that allow opportunities to craft a world that includes the audience. What Keith has offered us here is a literal smorgasbord of artistic possibilities. I look forward to sharing the journey that we take with this work with all who will sit with us and consume.”

Lantern Theater Company will delve into the world of *American Moor* on its **Lantern Searchlight blog**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published throughout the production's run, including background on the play and its themes alongside behind-the-scenes conversations with the artists.

Tickets for *American Moor* are \$30 – \$47 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. Performances of *American Moor* will take place at **St. Stephen's Theater**, located at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia.

About the Lantern Artists

Kash Goins makes his Lantern directorial debut with *American Moor*. An accomplished actor, playwright, and director, Goins previously appeared on the Lantern stage as the Father and other roles in *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine* by Lynn Nottage. His recent directing credits include *An Army of Lovers* at Azuka Theatre and *Radio Golf* at Arden Theatre Company, where he also starred in his own play, *74 Seconds...To Judgment*. His skill as a writer, actor, and director – and his experience on both sides of the audition room table – make Goins a natural fit for *American Moor* and its incisive critiques.

Phillip Brown returns to the Lantern stage as the Actor, following his Barrymore Award-winning performance in the Lantern's 2022/23 season production of *The Royale*. Brown's Philadelphia stage credits include *Radio Golf* at Arden Theatre Company; *Beautiful Boy* at Walnut Street Theatre; *Written by Phillis, Flyin' West*, and *Camille* at Quintessence Theatre; and *Beginners* and *Good Grief* at Hedgerow Theatre Company, as well as his work on several Disney shows, including *That's So Raven*, *Cory in the House*, and *Suite Life of Zack and Cody*. He is currently the Director of Theater at the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, PA.

Thane Madsen makes his Lantern stage debut as the Director. Madsen's recent stage credits include Proteus in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the title role in *Macbeth*, and Harker in *Dracula: The Bloody Truth* at Hedgerow Theatre Company, as well as roles in Off-Broadway musicals and tours of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Fancy Nancy: Splendiferous Christmas*, and multiple television shows for Investigation Discovery.

Goins has assembled a talented creative team that includes scenic designer **Marie Laster** (Lantern debut; credits include Arden Theatre Company, Azuka Theatre, Theatre Horizon, and TheatreSquared), costume designer **Tiffany Bacon** (*Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine* at the Lantern, Creative and Production Director for WURD Radio), lighting designer **Tydell Williams** (*Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *Tartuffe*, and *Twelfth Night* at the Lantern), sound designer **Adiah D. Hicks** (Lantern debut; credits include Philadelphia Artists' Collective, Azuka Theatre, and Teatro Del Sol), and production dramaturgy consultant **Dr. Kimmika Williams-Witherspoon** (*Crumbs from the Table of Joy* and *The Royale* at the Lantern). Lantern 2024/25 Season Professional Apprentice **Rasheed Booker** serves as assistant director, alongside longtime Lantern Stage Manager **Rebecca Smith**.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 31st 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 *American Moor*, the Lantern's 2024/25 season will continue with William Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by Lantern Artistic Director **Charles McMahon (Press Opening: Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 7 p.m.)**; and *The 39 Steps*, **Patrick Barlow's** rollicking adaptation of the classic **John Buchan** adventure novel and **Alfred Hitchcock** film, also directed by **McMahon (Press Opening: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 7 p.m.)**. More information is available online at www.lanterntheater.org.

Lantern Theater Company – 2024/25 Season
FACT SHEET
American Moor

WRITTEN BY:

Keith Hamilton Cobb

DIRECTED BY:

Kash Goins

CAST:

Phillip Brown as An Actor
Thane Madsen as A Director

CREATIVE TEAM:

Marie Laster, Scenic Designer
Tiffany Bacon, Costume Designer
Tydell Williams, Lighting Designer
Adiah D. Hicks, Sound Designer
Kimmika Williams-Witherspoon, Production Dramaturgy Consultant
Rebecca Smith, Stage Manager
Rasheed Booker, Assistant Director

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TICKET INFORMATION:

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

TICKET PRICING:

\$30 – \$47 / Students: \$25

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, November 7 – Sunday, December 8, 2024

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, November 7 at 7 p.m.
Friday, November 8 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 9 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, November 10 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, November 12 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE:

Wednesday, November 13 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on November 20 and November 27 (no performance on December 4)

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on November 20 and November 27 (no performance on December 4)

Thursday at 7 p.m. on November 14, November 21, and December 5 (no performance on November 28)

Friday at 7:30 p.m. on November 15, November 22, and November 29 (no performance on December 6)

Saturday at 2 p.m. on November 16, November 23, November 30, and December 7

Saturday at 8 p.m. on November 16, November 23, November 30, and December 7

Sunday at 2 p.m. on November 17, November 24, December 1, and December 8

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, December 8 at 2 p.m.

JAMES BALDWIN BLACK THEATER NIGHT on Saturday, November 30 at 8 p.m.

Hosted by our Associate Producers at **The Brothers' Network**, this special performance of *American Moor* will be followed by a casual reception in the St. Stephen's Theater lobby. The Brothers' Network is based on the teachings, readings, writings, and philosophical framework of the iconic James Baldwin – one of the most celebrated playwrights, novelists, and advocates for equity and justice. In 2024, we celebrate 100 years of his life and his legacy as a thinker, purveyor of culture, and profound understanding of the human condition. Black Theater Night creates a safe space for theatergoers to be in community with each other, free from the white gaze. (Use promo code BALDWIN35 for \$35 tickets to this performance and post-show celebration. Offer cannot be combined with other offers or ticket discounts.)

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

An actor auditions for the title role in OTHELLO. From this simple scenario springs a rich and penetrating exploration of Shakespeare in a story told with wit, passion, and linguistic brilliance. The conflicting views of the actor and the director shine a revealing light on race and art in modern America, and bring a refreshing new perspective on the enduring power of Shakespeare's work.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

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