



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 11, 2011

**For more information contact:**

Amy Wilson  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
610.647.1900 x105  
wilson@peopleslight.org

Abby Stafford  
Associate Director of Marketing & Communications  
610.647.1900 x104  
stafford@peopleslight.org

## People's Light & Theatre Announces: Zak Berkman and Pete Pryor Will Join the Theatre as Associate Artistic Directors

(Malvern, PA) – People's Light & Theatre is pleased to announce that **Zak Berkman**, a Founding Executive Director of New York's Epic Theatre Ensemble, and **Pete Pryor**, Co-Founder of Philadelphia's 1812 Productions, will join the Theatre's full-time staff in September as Associate Artistic Directors.

"The arrival of Zak and Pete is part of a long-term process of rethinking organizational design," People's Light's Artistic Director Abigail Adams says. "We want to develop a stable of future leaders who are entrepreneurial, committed to our community, and first-rate artists. Zak will focus on programming, producing, expanding our relationships with playwrights, and his own writing. Pete will act, direct, teach, write, and lead special projects. Both will create and implement strategies to increase the Theatre's public engagement."

She continues, "It's such a remarkable opportunity for the Theatre, our community, the field at large, and for me personally to team up with such smart, multi-talented artists—a new door opens on what's possible at People's Light."

**Pete Pryor**, a recent Lunt-Fontanne Fellow, is a celebrated Philadelphia actor, director, teacher, and playwright. He has performed at the Arden, the Wilma, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Act II Playhouse, Theater Exile, the Lantern Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, and Azuka Theatre, winning a number of Barrymore nominations and awards. His extensive work at People's Light includes performances in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Doubt*, *Humble Boy*, *The Miser*, and *The Foreigner*, among others. He has also directed the last three holiday Pantos—*The Three Musketeers*, *Snow White*, and *Cinderella*. Pryor is the recipient of two Independence Foundation Individual Artist Fellowship Awards and is an Artist-in-Residence at the Pathway School. His play *Beautiful Boy* will be included in People's Light Community Matters Reading Series during the 2011-2012 Season.

"I'm incredibly excited to make the commitment to People's Light, which is where I've had some of my best directing and acting experiences," he says. "To be able to dedicate myself to People's Light full-time will give me the stability and support to do my next level of work. I am also looking forward to working with Zak, who is someone that I respect very much."

**Zak Berkman** has spent the last ten years as Executive Director of Artistic Programming with Epic Theatre Ensemble, an OBIE, Drama League, and Lucille Lortel Award-winning artist-run company. During his ten years of leadership, the company gained a distinguished reputation for developing new work and cultivating diverse, new audiences. Most recent Epic successes include the Off-Broadway premiere of Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play* and *Shakespeare Remix*, recipient of the Coming Up Taller Award from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Berkman is a former script writer for NBC's *Days of our Lives*. His plays include *Beauty on the Vine*, *A Breath Short of Breathing*, and *The Harassment of Iris Malloy*. He also co-adapted *Antigone* and *The Visit* for Epic's nationally-recognized Arts-In-Education residencies.

Berkman says, "I'm thrilled to be joining the People's Light community. The opportunity to collaborate with and learn from Abbey Adams and her passionately innovative company of artists, managers, teachers, and dreamers is an honor. To be able to take this leap in tandem with Pete Pryor makes me downright giddy. My wife and I are eager to get to know our new neighbors and we look forward to celebrating many days and nights in the theatre with them."

### **ABOUT PEOPLE'S LIGHT**

People's Light, a professional theatre founded in 1974 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, makes plays drawn from many sources to entertain, inspire, and engage our community. We extend our mission of making and experiencing theatre through arts education programs that excite curiosity about, and deepen understanding of, the world around us. These plays and programs bring people together and provide opportunities for reflection, discovery, and celebration.