

November 1, 2017

Jill Evans La Penna  
SHOUT Marketing & Media Relations  
312-226-6727  
jill@shoutchicago.com

Media passes, photographs, videos, interviews and additional materials are available on request.

## **LIFELINE THEATRE ANNOUNCES SIX NEW ENSEMBLE MEMBERS**

CHICAGO – Lifeline Theatre is proud to announce six new members of its artistic ensemble: **Bilal Dardai**, **Andrés Enriquez**, **Diane D. Fairchild**, **Anthony Kayer**, **Martel Manning**, and **Michael McKeogh**. Lifeline's ensemble determines the company's artistic programming and provides leadership, support, and counsel in the play development process.

Now in its 35th season, Lifeline Theatre is driven by a passion for story. Our ensemble process supports writers in the development of literary adaptations and new work, and our theatrical and educational programs foster a lifelong engagement with literature and the arts. A cultural anchor of Rogers Park, we are committed to deepening our connection to an ever-growing family of artists and audiences, both near and far. Lifeline Theatre – Big Stories, Up Close.

Founded by five Northwestern graduates in 1982, the theatre now employs over 150 artists per year. In addition to the six new members listed above, Lifeline's artistic ensemble is led by Artistic Director Dorothy Milne, and consists of Aly Renee Amidei, Patrick Blashill, Jessica Wright Buha, Christina Calvit, Heather Currie, Victoria Delorio, Amanda Delheimer Dimond, Alan Donahue, Kevin D. Gawley, Peter Greenberg, James E. Grote, Chris Hainsworth, John Hildreth, Paul S. Holmquist, Elise Kauzlaric, Robert Kauzlaric, Frances Limoncelli, Amanda Link, Katie McLean Hainsworth, Shole Milos, Sandy Snyder Pietz, Suzanne Plunkett, Maren Robinson, Phil Timberlake, Jenifer Tyler, and Christopher M. Walsh.

Lifeline's artistic ensemble has developed more than 120 world premiere literary adaptations and 16 original plays, nearly 40 of which have had a life beyond their Lifeline debuts, with over 300 subsequent productions spread across over forty U.S. states, six Canadian provinces, Australia, England, Ireland, Guatemala, and South Africa. Additionally, three scripts developed at Lifeline Theatre have gone on to U.S. national tours, and 11 have been published. Lifeline Theatre has garnered a total of 54 Jeff Awards (Equity and Non-Equity).

**Bilal Dardai** is a writer and performer who has worked for nearly two decades in Chicago's vibrant live theatre scene. He spent 12 years as an ensemble member with the acclaimed artistic collective The Neo-Futurists, three of those years as the company's Artistic Director. Dardai is a regular at Chicago's many live-literature events, providing essays and social commentary for Write Club and The Paper Machete. He is also member of the writing staff for award-winning audio drama *Pleasure Town* and has recently embarked on a new audio project with HartLife, creators of *Our Fair City*. His plays include: *Contraption*, *Vox Pandora*, *Redeemers*, *The Sovereign Statement* (Non-Equity Jeff nomination: New Work), and *The Man Who Was Thursday* (Non-Equity Jeff nomination: New Adaptation). In addition to Chicago, Dardai's work has appeared on stages in New York, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Washington DC, Nottingham (UK), and Helsinki (Finland). Dardai has also appeared in the independent films *Unexpected* (dir. Kris Swanberg) and *Operator* (dir. Logan Kibens).

**Andrés Enriquez** is proud to have been on both the MainStage and the KidSeries stage for Lifeline, having understudied *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Soon I Will Be Invincible*, then appearing in *Sparky!*, *Northanger Abbey*, and most recently, *Sylvester*. Other notable productions in the Chicagoland area include *Forever Plaid* (Fox Valley Repertory), *The Life and Death Of Madame Barker* (Red Tape Theatre), *Love and Information* (Remy Bumpo), *The Adding Machine* (The Hypocrites), and *In The Heights* (Porchlight Music Theater). He has also worked with such great Chicago companies as Underscore Theater Company, Strawdog Theatre, 16th Street Theater, and Theater at the Center in Munster, IN. Enriquez received his B.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his M.F.A. in Acting from the University of Iowa in 2012. Enriquez is also the Music Director of No Big Deal, a Chicago a cappella quartet, and a proud company member of Barrel of Monkeys.

-more-

**Diane D. Fairchild** is a local and regional freelance lighting designer. She holds an M.F.A. in Lighting Design from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and a B.F.A. in Design and Technology for the Theater from Wright State University in her hometown of Dayton, Ohio. While in New York, Fairchild designed at The Juilliard School, Dixon Place, New Georges, NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing, Joyce Soho, and several NYC Fringe Festival productions. In 2003, she moved to Chicago and dove into its rich theater scene. Chicago area credits include work with Rivendell (ensemble), Raven, Teatro Vista, Babes with Blades, the side project, Wilmette Parks District, Citadel, Erasing the Distance, Theater Wit, Wheaton College, Piven, Boho (Artistic Affiliate), Next, Northlight, Court, Sideshow, and Victory Gardens. Regional credits include work with Intiman, Trinity Rep, Michigan Shakespeare Festival, Ensemble Studio Theatre, and Boise Contemporary Theatre. Her excellence in design has earned her nominations for Jeff, Broadway World Chicago, and Wilde Awards. At Lifeline, Diane has designed *Her Majesty's Will*, *Fable-ous!*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Lester's Dreadful Sweaters*, *One Came Home*, and *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Her work on Lifeline's *A Tale of Two Cities* was recognized with a Non-Equity Jeff Award for Outstanding Lighting Design.

**Anthony Kayer** first worked with Lifeline while he was pursuing his B.F.A. in Acting from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, starring as Mr. Bing in *Arnie the Doughnut* as part of Lifeline's KidSeries. Before graduating, he was also fortunate to work with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival (*The Three Musketeers*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *As You Like It*), Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (*Elizabeth Rex*), and Steppenwolf Theatre (*The March*). Since graduating in 2012, he has acted in the Lifeline productions of *The Emperor's New Threads*, *Lyle Finds His Mother*, and *Jane Eyre* (2014); he also joined Lifeline for *Monstrous Regiment* (understudy) and *Soon I Will Be Invincible* (understudy), and served as Assistant Director for *Northanger Abbey* (Non-Equity Jeff Award: New Work-Musical). Other Chicago credits include work with Next Theatre (*Iphigenia 2.0*), Lookingglass/Chicago Children's Choir (*Sita Ram*) – where he utilized his circus training as Circus Captain, Inappropriate Theatre Company (*R&J: a techno ballet*, *(the)Forget\_MeKnot*), and The House Theatre of Chicago (*The Great and Terrible Wizard of Oz*, understudy). Kayer also had the pleasure of Assistant Directing with Lookingglass/Chicago Symphony Orchestra (*Adventures with Aladdin*). He can be seen next at The Den Theatre performing in Griffin Theatre's production of *Violet*.

**Martel Manning** is an actor, teacher, and acting/vocal coach. His previous Lifeline Theatre credits include *Miss Buncle's Book* and *Her Majesty's Will*. Other Chicago credits include The Gift Theatre's *Grapes of Wrath* and *Richard III* in the Steppenwolf Garage, *Fallen Angels* and *Pirandello's Henry V* with Remy Bumppo, *Cymbeline* with Strawdog Theatre Company, and projects with Oracle Theatre, Two Pence Theatre Company, and others. Regionally, Martel has worked with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, New Light Theatre Project in New York (Off-Broadway), and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He is a member of The Gift Theatre's ensemble as well and holds an M.F.A. from the University of Houston.

**Michael McKeogh** began working at Lifeline in 2012, playing Col. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain in *The Killer Angels*, and most recently appeared as Dr. Jack Murry in *A Wrinkle in Time*. Other Chicago credits include Judge Moses in *Skin of Our Teeth* (Remy Bumppo); Eddie in *Pocatello* (Griffin Theatre, Non-Equity Jeff Nomination: Best Actor); Frankie Wild in *The White Road* (Irish Theatre of Chicago); Hamlet in *Hamlet* (Oak Park Festival Theatre); Dmitri in *Concerning Strange Devices From the Distant West* (TimeLine Theatre); and Dr. Greenberg in *Freshly Fallen Snow* (Chicago Dramatists). In 2014, he co-hosted The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's holiday show *Welcome Yule!* Other regional credits include: Mr. Brown in *The 20th Century Way* at The Know Theatre in Cincinnati, OH and Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Play Phare Theatre, NYC. In 2012, McKeogh received an M.F.A. in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. In addition to performing, Michael teaches acting at Green Shirt Studio and The Actor's Training Center in Wilmette.

# # #

Lifeline Theatre's programs are partially supported by Alphawood Foundation; A.R.T League Inc.; Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; Chicago CityArts, a grant from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; The Common Cup; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; FGMK LLC; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Grover Hermann Foundation; Illinois Arts Council Agency; Illinois Humanities Council; Lagunitas Brewing Co. Community Grant Program; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The PAV Grant Fund; The Polk Bros. Foundation; Poubelle Fund, a Donor Advised Fund of Renaissance Charitable Foundation; Rogers Park Social; The Saints; S&C Electric Company Fund; The Shubert Foundation; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.