

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LIFELINE THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2019-2020 SEASON OF BIG STORIES, UP CLOSE:  
37TH SEASON FEATURES THREE WORLD PREMIERES AND TWO REVIVALS,  
PLUS THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FILLET OF SOLO FESTIVAL.**

Subscriptions available April 1, 2019

CHICAGO – **Lifeline Theatre** Artistic Director **Ilesa Duncan** and the artistic ensemble announce their 2019-20 season of *Big Stories, Up Close*. It's another year of unforgettable stories brought to life, from beloved classics to modern titles.

The 2019-20 MainStage season features a return of Dorothy L. Sayers' classic whodunit *Whose Body?*, followed by an epic adaptation of National Book Award winner *Middle Passage*, and concludes with a world premiere rock musical based on Norse mythology *LOKI, The End of the World Tour*. The KidSeries season opens with our musical adaptation of Bernard Waber's beloved classic *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*; followed by the world premiere of *Bunny's Book Club*; and concludes with a world premiere musical adaptation of *Neither*, a story that celebrates what makes us unique. Additionally, Lifeline Theatre will produce the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual **Fillet of Solo Festival**, a three-week, multi-venue solo performance and storytelling festival.

Season subscriptions for the 2019-2020 MainStage and KidSeries seasons go on sale April 1. To purchase season subscriptions or for more information call the Lifeline Theatre Box Office at 773-761-4477, or visit [www.lifelinetheatre.com](http://www.lifelinetheatre.com).

**MainStage Season**

*Whose Body?*, September 6–October 27, 2019 (opens 9/16/19, 7:30 p.m.)

*Middle Passage*, February 14–April 5, 2020 (opens 2/24/20, 7:30 p.m.)

*LOKI, The End of the World Tour*, May 22–July 12, 2020 (opens 6/1/20, 7:30 p.m.)

**KidSeries Season**

*Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*, October 19–November 24, 2019 (opens 10/20/19, 1 p.m.)

*Bunny's Book Club*, January 11–February 16, 2020 (opens 1/12/20, 1 p.m.)

*Neither*, March 14–April 19, 2020 (opens 3/15/20, 1 p.m.)

**Plus**

**The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fillet of Solo Festival**, January 10–26, 2020

Season subscriptions offer the three MainStage productions for \$100 (a \$135 value), or the three KidSeries plays for \$40 (a \$45/\$60 value). Passes to the Fillet of Solo Festival may be added to any subscription for only \$30 (a \$60 value; allows entry to all performances in the 2020 Festival). Being a Lifeline subscriber allows patrons to save 25% off regular ticket prices; offers discounts on additional tickets; offers discounts to drama camp registration; and gives first choice of seats with unlimited free ticket exchanges.

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## Lifeline Theatre's 2019-20 Season/Page 2

Lifeline continues its popular “Book Club Add-ons,” which include copies of all three source books for the MainStage season for only \$35 (paperback versions of *Whose Body?*, *Middle Passage*, and *The Penguin Book of Norse Myths: Gods of the Vikings*), or copies of all three source books for the KidSeries season for \$40 (paperback version of *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile* and hardcover versions of *Bunny's Book Club* and *Neither*). Read the books beforehand and then experience Lifeline's adaptation. Copies of the source books for the MainStage and KidSeries seasons will be on sale in the lobby.

An additional add-on for KidSeries Subscriptions is admission to one “Stories Come Alive!” hour during each KidSeries production for only \$10 (a \$15 value). These hour-long sessions (running Saturdays and Sundays at 12 p.m., between regularly-scheduled KidSeries performances) feature readings, on-your-feet drama games, and fun to supplement the KidSeries productions.

Ticket prices for the 2019-2020 season are as follows: regular single MainStage tickets are \$45; seniors and groups (12 or more) are \$35; previews, and rush tickets (half-hour before show, subject to availability) are \$25; students (with ID) and active and retired military personnel (with ID) are \$20. Lifeline's KidSeries single tickets for adults are \$20 and kids (ages 2-18) are \$15; and groups of 15 or more are \$13 each. “Name Your Price” KidSeries tickets are available a half-hour before show time (subject to availability).

Lifeline Theatre is located at 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. Lifeline is accessible by CTA (Red Line Morse stop/busses) and free parking is available at Sullivan High School (6631 N Bosworth Ave, lot located on the corner of Albion and Bosworth) with free shuttle service before and after the show. Street parking is also available. Lifeline is accessible to wheelchair users and visitors who need to avoid stairs.

Founded in 1982, Lifeline is known for staging innovative adaptations of great works of fiction as well as commissioning original work. In 1987, Lifeline added KidSeries plays for children and families, and has been producing full seasons of programming for both adults and children ever since. Over the course of **thirty-six seasons** and **two hundred productions**, Lifeline Theatre has made not only an indelible mark on the Chicago theatre scene, but an invaluable contribution to the theatre world at large. Lifeline's dedicated artistic ensemble has developed **one hundred and forty-three world premiere literary adaptations and original plays**, nearly forty of which have had a life beyond their Lifeline premieres, with over **three hundred subsequent productions** spread across over forty U.S. states, six Canadian provinces, plus productions in England, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, and Guatemala. Additionally, four scripts developed at Lifeline Theatre have gone on to U.S. national tours, and over a dozen have been published. Lifeline Theatre has garnered a total of **fifty-three Jeff Awards** (Equity and Non-Equity), including sixteen for New Adaptation, New Musical, or New Work.

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's artistic ensemble is led by Artistic Director Ilesa Duncan and includes Aly Renee Amidei, Patrick Blashill, Jessica Wright Buha, Christina Calvit, Heather Currie, Bilal Dardai, Victoria DeForio, Amanda Delheimer, Alan Donahue, Andrés Enriquez, Diane D. Fairchild, Kevin D. Gawley, Peter Greenberg, James E. Grote, Chris Hainsworth, John Hildreth, Paul S. Holmquist, Elise Kauzlaric, Robert Kauzlaric, Anthony Kayer, Frances Limoncelli, Amanda Link, Martel Manning, Dorothy Milne, Michael McKeogh, Katie McLean Hainsworth, Shole Milos, Sandy Snyder Pietz, Suzanne Plunkett, Maren Robinson, Phil Timberlake, Jenifer Tyler, and Christopher M. Walsh.

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Lifeline Theatre's programs are partially supported by Alphawood Foundation; A.R.T League Inc.; Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Illinois; Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; Chicago CityArts, a grant from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; CIG Management; CNA Foundation; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; FGMK LLC; FlexPrint Inc.; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Michael and Mona Heath Fund at The Chicago Community Trust Foundation; Illinois Arts Council Agency; Illinois Humanities Council; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The National Endowment for the Arts; The PAV Grant Fund; The Polk Bros. Foundation; Rogers Park Social; The Saints; S&C Electric Company Fund; The Shubert Foundation; The Steele Foundation; Th Manufacturing; William Blair and Co.; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.

### MainStage Productions

#### *Whose Body?*

Based on the classic mystery novel by Dorothy L. Sayers

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Frances Limoncelli

Director: **TBA**

September 6–October 27, 2019

Regular tickets \$45; preview tickets \$25

Previews: Fridays, 9/6 and 9/13 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9/7 and 9/14 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 9/8 and 9/15 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 9/16, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 9/15 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 9/19–10/27, 2019: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

When a dead body turns up in a bathtub wearing nothing but a pair of pince-nez, amateur detective Lord Peter Wimsey assigns himself to the case. However, when the mystery becomes labyrinthine he enlists the help of close friend Inspector Parker to follow his only lead, a teaching hospital near the scene of the crime. Could it be a harmless prank by a medical student or something more sinister? Follow the clues and uncover the truth in this beloved 1923 whodunit by Dorothy L. Sayers.

Ensemble member **Frances Limoncelli**, adaptor of 2009's *Busman's Honeymoon* (Non-Equity Jeff Award: New Adaptation), 2006's *Gaudy Night* (Non-Equity Jeff Award: New Adaptation), and 2004's *Strong Poison* (Non-Equity Jeff Awards: New Adaptation) re-explores this beloved and charming whodunit for a new generation.

#### *Middle Passage*

Based on the National Book Award winning novel by Charles Johnson

Adapted by David Barr, III and Lifeline Theatre Artistic Director Ilesa Duncan

Directed by Lifeline Theatre Artistic Director Ilesa Duncan

February 14–April 5, 2020

Regular tickets \$45; preview tickets \$25

Previews: Fridays, 2/14 and 2/21 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 2/15 and 2/22 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2/16 and 2/23 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 2/24, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 2/23 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 2/27–4/5, 2020: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

*Middle Passage* is an epic work adapted from Charles Johnson's celebrated book of the same name. Written for the stage by David Barr, III and Ilesa Duncan, the story follows cavalier, self-confessed rascal Rutherford Calhoun, a recently freed slave, from Illinois down to decadent 1830 New Orleans. In an attempt to escape debtors and avoid a forced marriage, he stows away on an outbound rigger, *The Republic*. But *The Republic* is not just any ship. It's a slave ship—and it's headed to Africa. Thus begins a voyage of self-discovery that changes our young hero forever.

Co-adaptors **David Barr, III** and **Ilesa Duncan**, Lifeline Artistic Director, revisit Johnson's epic tale, originally mounted at Pegasus Theatre in 2016 under the title *Rutherford's Travels*, to share a tale of personal growth within a dark phase of American history. Of *Middle Passage*, the Chicago Tribune said, "Long after we'd stopped believing in the great American novel, along comes a spellbinding adventure story that may be just that."

## Lifeline Theatre's 2019-20 Season/Page 4

### ***LOKI, The End of the World Tour***

A world premiere rock musical based on Norse Mythology

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Christina Calvit

Music and Lyrics by George Howe

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Heather Currie

May 22–July 12, 2020

Regular tickets \$45; preview tickets \$25

Previews: Fridays, 5/22 and 5/29 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 5/23 and 5/30 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 5/24 and 5/31 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Tuesday, 6/2, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 5/31 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 6/4–7/12, 2020: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

Welcome to the greatest rock and roll show not on Earth! From award-winning artists George Howe and ensemble member Christina Calvit comes a world premiere rock musical based on known, and maybe not-so-known, Norse mythology. Join Odin, Freya, Thor, and the original bad boy himself, Loki, as they explore the role of the outsider in society and question what is good and what is evil, all while is thrashing their way to Ragnarok. This show tells the stories of the gods as you've never seen—or heard—they before.

Ensemble member **Christina Calvit** and composer **George Howe**, reuniting from 2005's *Queen Lucia: A Musical Romp* (Non-Equity Jeff Award: New Work – Musical), join ensemble member **Heather Currie** (*You Think It's Easy Being the Tooth Fairy?*), making her MainStage directorial debut, in bringing you a world premiere musical about the complexities of juggling relationships and ultimate power.

### **KidSeries Productions**

#### ***Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile***

Based on the book by Bernard Waber

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble Christina Calvit

Music and Lyrics by George Howe

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Amanda Link

October 19–November 24, 2019

Adult tickets \$20; Child (ages 2-18) tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 10/19 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 10/20 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 10/20 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 10/26–11/24, 2019: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

While the Primm family is busily moving into their new home on East 88th Street, they are shocked to discover a crocodile in their bathtub! His name is Lyle, he performs tricks, and, oh, he only eats Turkish caviar. The Primm's are quick to welcome Lyle into the family, but not everyone is so thrilled about a crocodile living on the block. Discover the meaning of family in this musical based off the beloved classic by Bernard Waber.

Ensemble member **Christina Calvit** (*Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, *Snowflake Tim's Big Holiday*) joins **George Howe** (*Arnie the Doughnut*, *Mr. Popper's Penguins*) and ensemble member **Amanda Link** (*Sparky!*, *The Velveteen Rabbit [2014]*) to introduce Bernard Waber's classic to a new generation.

#### ***Bunny's Book Club***

A world premiere based on the book by Annie Silvestro; Illustrated by Tatijana Mai-Wyss

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Aly Renee Amidei

Director: **TBA**

January 11–February 16, 2020

Adult tickets \$20; Child (ages 2-18) tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 1/11 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 1/12 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 1/12 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 1/18–2/16, 2020: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

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## **Lifeline Theatre's 2018-19 Season/Page 5**

Ever since he overheard the librarian reading outside of the library, Bunny has been enamored with books. But upon reflection, he isn't sure if animals are allowed in the library. With the help of his furry friends, Bunny decides to share his love for reading and start a book club, but how can they get their hands on those books? Celebrate the joy of reading in this world premiere adaptation of Annie Silvestro's celebrated picture book.

Ensemble member **Aly Renee Amidei** (*Lester's Dreadful Sweaters*) tackles Annie Silvestro's new book about a group of friends who are inspired by their local library and quench their thirst for knowledge by starting a book club.

### ***Neither***

A world premiere musical based on the book by Airlie Anderson

Adapted by Jeff Trainor and Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Bilal Dardai

Music and Lyrics by Diego Colón

Director: **TBA**

Based on the book Copyright © 2018 by Airlie Anderson

March 14–April 19, 2020

Adult tickets \$20; Child (ages 2-18) tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 3/14 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 3/15 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 3/15 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 3/21–4/19, 2020: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. (No performances on Sunday, April 12)

In the land of This and That there are only two kinds of animals, these and those. Then, one day something different hatches! But it isn't this or that. Is it both, or is it neither? What do you do when you feel you don't belong? Based on the book by Airlie Anderson, explore the things that make us unique in this world premiere musical that teaches that it's our differences that make us special.

Ensemble member **Bilal Dardai** (*The Man Who Was Thursday*) joins forces with artists **Jeff Trainor** and **Diego Colón** to bring our young audiences a world premiere musical that teaches them important lessons about what happens when you don't fit, embracing our unique qualities, and self-love.

### **The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fillet of Solo Festival**

January 10 – 26, 2020

Tickets: \$10 per performance; Festival Pass: \$60

Celebrating the breadth of Chicago's enduring storytelling and Live Lit scene, Lifeline brings together numerous solo performers and storytelling collectives for a three-week, multi-venue selection of powerful personal stories.

Participants, locations, scheduling, and full details for the 2020 Fillet of Solo Festival will be announced Fall 2019.

Season subscriptions and single tickets for the 2019-2020 MainStage and KidSeries seasons go on sale April 1. To purchase season subscriptions, single tickets or for more information call the Lifeline Theatre Box Office at 773-761-4477, or visit [www.lifelinetheatre.com](http://www.lifelinetheatre.com).

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