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Playwrights Chosen for Lifeline Theatre's First Writer's Workshop and Showcase, Presentation Summer 2022

CHICAGO – **Lifeline Theatre** has selected two incredible playwrights to take part in its inaugural Adapting to Stage Developmental Workshop and Showcase. Over the next 5 months, **Sandra Jackson-Opoku** and **Tanuja Devi Jagernauth** will work in tandem members of Lifeline Theatre's artistic ensemble along with a small creative team of their choosing to develop their world premiere stage adaptations, culminating in a small-scale public presentation of their works in process in July 2022 (dates forthcoming).

"We are excited to launch our first ever development process for non-ensemble members geared to adaptation of public domain books or other literary works," enthused artistic director iLesa Duncan. "We believe that writers need *time* to write combined with robust feedback from other writers and theatre-makers," says ensemble member Frances Limoncelli. "As a writer and educator, I am enthusiastic to share Lifeline's well-honed development process while collaborating with and learning from writers and dramaturgs that are new to us."

PLAYWRIGHTS:

- **Sandra Jackson-Opoku** (she/her) is an award-winning author of novels, *The River Where Blood is Born* and *Hot Johnny (and the Women Who Loved Him)*, an Essence Magazine Hardcover Fiction Bestseller. Her fiction, poetry, essays, reviews, travel articles and dramatic works appear in *Both Sides: Stories from the Border*, *storySouth*, *Obsidian*, *New Daughters of Africa*, the Chicago Humanities Council, and other outlets. She also co-edited *Revise the Psalm: Work Celebrating the Writing of Gwendolyn Brooks*, a Chicago Review of Books Nonfiction Finalist. Jackson-Opoku is a recipient of a Pushcart Prize nomination, the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the American Library Association Black Caucus Award, a Chicago Esteemed Literary Artist Award, and many other awards and honors. She has won fellowships at sixteen arts residencies, including Hedgebrook, Djerassi, and MacDowell. She teaches literature and creative writing at colleges and universities, and presents workshops and readings throughout the U.S. and around the world.
- **Tanuja Devi Jagernauth** (she/her) is an Indo-Caribbean playwright and dramaturg who believes in the necessity of creation during times of destruction. In 2016, she shifted career paths from Traditional East Asian Medicine to Theatre in hopes of practicing four frameworks for collective liberation and wellness: self/community care, harm reduction, trauma-informed practice, and body positivity. Tanuja is currently honored to be devising a musical adaptation of *FAUST* for Prop Thtr with Olivia Lilley (Director), Vero Maynez (Assistant Director), Sofia Fey (Dramaturg), Alec Phan (Composer), and a wickedly talented ensemble.

Tanuja was honored to have her play, *HOW TO PICK A LOCK*, presented at RhinoFest 2019 in Chicago. Her play, *FIRST DATA GOLD*, was presented as part of Our Perspective: Asian American Play Readings at Steppenwolf Theatre. Her short play, *BATTLEGROUND*, was recently part of Revolutionary Acts, the 6th National Asian American Theater Conference & Festival, and her short play, *SKIN*, was recently part of the Our Perspective: Asian American Play Readings at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. It has been workshopped and produced by The Pulp Stage in Portland, OR.

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Now in its 39th season, Lifeline Theatre continues to explore, interpret, and reimagine books and other literary works to create stories that move us beyond the margins of our own lives. Lifeline Theatre – Big Stories, Up Close.

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