

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 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 2017-2018 SEASON OF BIG STORIES, UP CLOSE:  
35TH SEASON FEATURES FOUR WORLD PREMIERES AND TWO RETURNING HITS,  
PLUS THE 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL FILLET OF SOLO FESTIVAL  
AND THE LIFELINE CONCERT READING SERIES.**

Subscriptions available now

CHICAGO – **Lifeline Theatre** Artistic Director **Dorothy Milne** and the artistic ensemble announce their **35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season** of *Big Stories, Up Close*. It's a year of unforgettable stories brought to life, from timeless classics to thrilling modern tales, as Lifeline retains its reputation for imaginative interpretations of beloved novels. Both the MainStage and KidSeries seasons celebrate Lifeline's milestone 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with one world premiere production by a long-time Lifeline mainstay, a world premiere by one of the company's newest ensemble members, and the return of one of the most popular hits of the past decade.

The 2017-18 MainStage season features a world premiere adaptation of the comedic romance, "***Sylvester: or the Wicked Uncle***;" followed by a world premiere adaptation of the sweeping Russian drama, "***Anna Karenina***;" and concludes with the return of Lifeline's award-winning adaptation of the epic urban fantasy, "***Neverwhere***." The KidSeries season opens with the hit musical, "***Arnie The Doughnut***;" followed by "***Montauciel Takes Flight***," a world premiere musical inspired by the true story of the first animals to fly in a hot air balloon; and concludes with a funky and fun world premiere musical adaptation of "***You Think It's Easy Being The Tooth Fairy?***" Additionally, Lifeline Theatre will produce the 21<sup>st</sup> annual **Fillet of Solo Festival**, a three-week, multi-venue solo performance and storytelling festival; and the **2017-18 Concert Reading Series** will feature Terry Pratchett's ***Monstrous Regiment***, readings from the works of **Edgar Allan Poe**, and a pairing of Dylan Thomas' ***A Child's Christmas in Wales*** and Truman Capote's ***A Christmas Memory***.

Lifeline Theatre is located at 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. 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).

**MainStage Season**

***"Sylvester: or the Wicked Uncle,"*** September 8–October 29, 2017 (opens 9/18/17, 7:30 p.m.)  
***"Anna Karenina,"*** February 16–April 8, 2018 (opens 2/26/18, 7:30 p.m.)  
***"Neverwhere,"*** May 25–July 15, 2018 (opens 6/5/18, 7:30 p.m.)

**KidSeries Season**

***"Arnie The Doughnut,"*** October 21–November 26, 2017 (opens 10/22/17, 1 p.m.)  
***"Montauciel Takes Flight,"*** January 13–February 18, 2018 (opens 1/14/18, 1 p.m.)  
***"You Think It's Easy Being The Tooth Fairy?,"*** March 17–April 22, 2018 (opens 3/18/18, 1 p.m.)

**Plus**

**The 2017-18 Lifeline Concert Reading Series**, July 19, October 31, and December 9, 2017  
**The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Fillet of Solo Festival**, January 12–28, 2018

Season subscriptions offer the three MainStage productions for \$80 (a \$120 value), or the three KidSeries plays for \$30 (a \$45 value). Passes to the Fillet of Solo Festival may be added to any subscription for only \$25 (a \$50 value; allows entry to all performances in the 2018 Festival). Being a Lifeline subscriber allows patrons to save 33% off regular ticket prices; offers discounts on additional tickets and reduced admission to the Concert Reading Series; offers discounts to drama camp registration; and gives first choice of seats with unlimited free ticket exchanges.

- more -

## Lifeline Theatre's 2017-18 Season/Page 2

Lifeline continues its popular "Book Club Add-ons," which include paperback copies of three source books for the MainStage season (*Sylvester: or the Wicked Uncle*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Neverwhere*) for \$30, or hard cover copies of two source books for the KidSeries season (*Arnie the Doughnut* and *You Think It's Easy Being The Tooth Fairy?*) for \$30. 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, as will cast recordings of selected musical productions.

Lifeline Theatre also offers fun and educational programming for children. Lifeline presents three **Library Days** at the Rogers Park Branch of the Chicago Public Library (6907 N. Clark St.). These **FREE** events for children ages 4 and up feature read-alongs from a KidSeries book with interactive drama games. Additionally, Lifeline continues its **"Stories Come Alive!"** series, running Saturdays and Sundays at 12 p.m., between regularly-scheduled KidSeries performances. These hour-long sessions cost only \$5 per child, and feature readings, on-your-feet drama games, and fun to supplement the KidSeries productions. 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).

Ticket prices for the 2017-2018 season are as follows: regular single MainStage tickets are \$40; seniors, active and retired military personnel (with ID), and groups (12 or more) are \$30; previews, students (with ID) and rush tickets (half-hour before show, subject to availability) are \$20. Lifeline's KidSeries single tickets for adults and kids are \$15 each; and groups of 15 or more are \$10 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 the Field School parking lot (7019 N. Ashland St., entrance on Greenleaf between Ashland and Greenview) 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-four seasons** and nearly **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 over **one hundred world premiere literary adaptations** and **thirteen original plays**, more than thirty of which have had a life beyond their Lifeline premieres, with nearly **three hundred subsequent productions** spread across over forty U.S. states, six Canadian provinces, plus productions in England, Ireland, Australia, and Guatemala. Additionally, three 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-one Jeff Awards** (Equity and Non-Equity), including fourteen for New Adaptation or New Work, and **twenty-one After Dark Awards**.

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 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 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 Chicago Community Trust: Persons with Disability Fund; 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; S&C Electric Company Fund; The Shubert Foundation; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.

- more -

**MainStage Productions**

***“Sylvester: or the Wicked Uncle”***

A world premiere based on the novel by Georgette Heyer

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Christina Calvit

Directed by Lifeline Theatre Artistic Director Dorothy Milne

Licensed by arrangement with Heron Enterprises Ltd.

September 8–October 29, 2017

Regular tickets \$40; preview tickets \$20

Previews: Fridays, 9/8 and 9/15 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9/9 and 9/16 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 9/10 and 9/17 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 9/18, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 9/17 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 9/21–10/29, 2017: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

Sylvester, Duke of Salford, was born with wealth and good looks, but a life of privilege has rendered him unfeeling towards others. Phoebe Marlow was graced with a sparkling wit and independent spirit, but languishes under the thumb of her domineering stepmother. When this mismatched couple is thrust together by their meddling families, both rebel and their tidy little worlds spin into chaos. Midnight flights, desperate sea voyages, and scathing society hijinks ensue as these unlikely lovers labor to avoid their fate. Grab the reins and charge headlong into a topsy-turvy tale of madcap romance in this world premiere comedy based on the 1957 novel by Georgette Heyer.

***“Anna Karenina”***

A world premiere based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Jessica Wright Buha

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Amanda Link

February 16–April 8, 2018

Regular tickets \$40; preview tickets \$20

Previews: Fridays, 2/16 and 2/23 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 2/17 and 2/24 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2/18 and 2/25 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 2/26, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 2/25 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 3/1–4/8, 2018: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

As a wave of profound upheaval sweeps through Russian society, it is a time of impossible choices. Anna is torn between raising her cherished son and languishing in a lifeless marriage, or sacrificing everything to follow her lover Alexei into disgrace. Konstantin struggles to reconcile his existential torment with his enduring passion for Kitty. Innocents will suffer, hearts will be broken, and families will be torn apart as two couples learn that living truthfully is no simple thing. Travel to the palaces and farms of imperial Russia in a world premiere meditation on the complexities of love based on the 1877 novel by Leo Tolstoy.

***“Neverwhere”***

Based on the novel by Neil Gaiman

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Robert Kauzlaric

Directed by Ilesa Duncan

May 25–July 15, 2018

Regular tickets \$40; preview tickets \$20

Previews: Fridays, 5/25 and 6/1 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 5/26 and 6/2 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 5/27 and 6/3 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Tuesday, 6/5, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 6/3 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 6/7–7/15, 2018: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

Richard Mayhew commits an act of kindness on the streets of London and finds himself trapped in a shadow world beneath the city. Lady Door returns home one day to find her family slain and her life upended. Drawn together by fate – and forces more powerful than they can guess – these two must brave countless trials, uncover the truth behind a dark conspiracy, and face the indomitable Great Beast before they can set things right again. Journey to London Below with a rogues' gallery of liars, outcasts, and assassins, on a treacherous quest to awaken the hero within, in a new production of Lifeline's hit adaptation of the 1996 novel by Neil Gaiman.

Pegasus Theatre Executive Artistic Director **Ilesa Duncan** returns to Lifeline Theatre (after directing 2010's *The Blue Shadow*) to helm a new envisioning of Kauzlaric's Non-Equity Jeff Award-winning script.

- more -

**KidSeries Productions**

***“Arnie The Doughnut”***

Based on the book by Laurie Keller

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Frances Limoncelli

Music & Lyrics by George Howe

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Elise Kauzlaric

Performed by arrangement with Henry Holt and Company, LLC. All rights reserved.

October 21–November 26, 2017

All tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 10/21 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 10/22 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 10/22 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 10/28–11/26, 2017: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Arnie, a loveable chocolate-frosted, rainbow-sprinkled doughnut, is the happiest pastry in the bakery when he's chosen to be taken home by a new owner. But when mild-mannered Mr. Bing tries to eat the unsuspecting Arnie, both are in for the surprise of their lives. Man and doughnut are drawn into a sugar-fueled existential crisis as they work to redefine their relationship while trying to outwit the meddlesome President of the Cozy Confines Condo Community. Join Arnie on a zany quest to prove that he's more than just delicious – and that friends come in all shapes and sizes – in this hit musical adaptation of the 2003 book that kicked off the beloved series by Laurie Keller.

***“Montauciel Takes Flight”***

A world premiere musical inspired by true events

Book by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member James E. Grote

Music & Lyrics by Russell Coutinho

Directed by Aileen McGroddy

January 13–February 18, 2018

All tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 1/13 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 1/14 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 1/14 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 1/20–2/18, 2018: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Montauciel's name may mean “climb-to-the-sky,” but for all her life the young ewe has been stuck on the ground. Then one day, her adventurous spirit carries her to the town of Annonay, where she teams up with the legendary Montgolfier brothers. Bringing her ingenuity and love of science to bear, Montauciel helps the two scientists invent the hot air balloon, and she soon finds herself captaining the first “manned” test flight, with a duck and a rooster as trusty co-pilots. Take a leap into the unknown and realize your full potential with this world premiere musical inspired by the story of the first living creatures to take to the skies in a human-made flying machine.

***“You Think It's Easy Being The Tooth Fairy?”***

A world premiere musical based on the book by Sheri Bell-Rehwoldt; illustrated by David Slonim

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Heather Currie and Derek Czaplewski

Music and lyrics by Laura McKenzie

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Heather Currie

March 17–April 22, 2018

All tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 3/17 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 3/18 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 3/18 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 3/24–4/22, 2018: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

(No performance Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018)

Dew Drop just got her dream assignment: becoming the next Tooth Fairy. But after a botched first mission, she discovers there's more to her new job than simply being sparkly; it's going to take guts, skill, and a whole lot of training to succeed. Working closely with her mentor – and a flashy flock of firefly assistants – Dew Drop must learn the rules of Command Central, master “Tooth-o-Finder” technology, and bench press mountains of quarters before she'll be ready to fly on her own. Tackle a new challenge and learn what it takes to succeed in the fast-paced tooth collection industry with this world premiere musical based on the 2007 book by Sheri Bell-Rehwoldt and David Slonim.

- more -

**The 2017-18 Lifeline Concert Reading Series** – All performances at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave.

***“Monstrous Regiment”*** on Wednesday, July 19, 2017

**An Evening of Edgar Allan Poe** on Tuesday, October 31, 2017

***“A Child’s Christmas In Wales”*** and ***“A Christmas Memory”*** on Saturday, December 9, 2017

Tickets: \$75 for each performance; \$50 for Lifeline subscribers

Lifeline continues one of its most beloved traditions with another season of concert readings. This year’s roster features ensemble member **Chris Hainsworth’s** adaptation of ***Monstrous Regiment*** by **Terry Pratchett** on July 19, an evening of **Edgar Allan Poe** stories and poetry on October 31, and a holiday pairing of ensemble member **Jessica Wright Buha’s** adaptation of ***A Child’s Christmas in Wales*** by **Dylan Thomas**, and a reading of ***A Christmas Memory*** by **Truman Capote** (read with permission of the Truman Capote Literary Trust) on December 9. All readings will feature numerous Lifeline ensemble actors and returning favorites.

Each evening begins at 6 p.m. with a light supper plus wine and beer (plus conversation with the cast and Lifeline ensemble). At 7 p.m., the performances start. (Script times vary, but are approximately two to two-and-a-half hours in length.) Conversation with the ensemble will follow, and coffee and dessert will be served afterwards.

Only 108 tickets will be sold for each performance. Tickets can only be ordered by calling the Lifeline Box Office at 773-761-4477.

**The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Fillet of Solo Festival**

January 12–28, 2018

Tickets: \$10 per performance; Festival Pass: \$50

Celebrating the breadth of Chicago’s enduring storytelling and live lit scene, Lifeline brings together numerous solo performers and more than a dozen storytelling collectives for a three-week, multi-venue selection of powerful personal stories.

Participants, locations, scheduling, and full details for the 2018 Fillet of Solo Festival will be announced Fall 2017.

Season subscriptions and single tickets for the 2017-2018 MainStage and KidSeries seasons are on sale now. Lifeline Theatre is located at 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. 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).

**###**