

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2015

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 2015-2016 SEASON OF BIG STORIES, UP CLOSE:
SIX WORLD PREMIERES, PLUS THE 19TH 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 2015-2016 season of *Big Stories, Up Close*. It's a season of six unforgettable world premiere productions – sprawling, classic stories and thrilling modern titles – as Lifeline retains its reputation for fresh, imaginative interpretations of beloved favorites and embraces the challenges of new, thought-provoking works.

The MainStage season of *INNOCENCE & AWAKENINGS* features the early-20th century British romp, “*Miss Buncle’s Book*,” followed by the modern American drama of “*Midnight Cowboy*,” and concludes with a new musical version of Jane Austen’s comedic romance, “*Northanger Abbey*.” The KidSeries season of *FANCIFUL FAMILIES & FABULOUS FRIENDS* features three musical adaptations: the beloved classic, “*Mr. Popper’s Penguins*,” followed by “*Sparky!*,” a delightful modern story about friendship and acceptance; and ending with “*Lester’s Dreadful Sweaters*,” a darkly humorous tale of fashion and clowning. Additionally, Lifeline Theatre will produce the 19th annual **Fillet of Solo Festival**, a three-week, multi-venue solo performance and storytelling festival; and the **2015-16 Concert Reading Series** will see the return of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Shadow*, and *The Moonstone* to the Lifeline stage in a season of murder and mystery.

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.

MainStage

“*Miss Buncle’s Book*,” September 11–November 1, 2015 (opens 9/21/15, 7:30 p.m.)

“*Midnight Cowboy*,” February 19–April 10, 2016 (opens 2/29/16, 7:30 p.m.)

“*Northanger Abbey*,” May 27–July 17, 2016 (opens 6/6/16, 7:30 p.m.)

KidSeries

“*Mr. Popper’s Penguins*,” October 24–November 29, 2015 (opens 10/25/15, 1 p.m.)

“*Sparky!*,” January 16–February 21, 2016 (opens 1/17/16, 1 p.m.)

“*Lester’s Dreadful Sweaters*,” March 19–April 24, 2016 (opens 3/20/16, 1 p.m.)

Plus

The 2015-16 Lifeline Concert Reading Series, October 31, 2015–April 16, 2016

The 19th Annual Fillet of Solo Festival, January 15–31, 2016

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 2016 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; gives first choice of seats with unlimited free ticket exchanges; knocks 25% off party room packages for pre- or post-show events; and offers invitations to subscriber events such as Sneak Peeks of the rehearsal process, book discussions, and author events.

- more -

Lifeline Theatre's 2015-16 Season/Page 2

Lifeline continues its popular "Book Club Add-ons," which include paperback copies of two of the source books for the MainStage season (*Miss Buncle's Book* and *Northanger Abbey*) for \$15, or hardcover copies of all three source books for the KidSeries season (*Mr. Popper's Penguins*, *Sparky!*, and *Lester's Dreadful Sweaters*) for \$35. Read the books beforehand and then experience Lifeline's adaptation. An additional add-on for KidSeries Subscriptions is admission to a "Stories Come Alive!" Hour during each KidSeries production for only \$10 (a \$15 value).

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 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. Additionally, Lifeline also offers three "**Stories Come Alive!**" **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.

Ticket prices for the 2015-2016 season are as follows: regular single MainStage tickets are \$40; seniors 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 also offers a full-service party room for on-site, pre- or post-show events.

Lifeline Theatre is located at 6912 N. Glenwood Ave. in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. Lifeline Theatre has a designated parking lot which may be used for all performances, located at the NE corner of Morse and Ravenswood (one block west of Clark Street). Lifeline Theatre's shuttle van will run between the theatre and the parking lot 45 minutes prior to each performance and make loops back to the lot immediately after each performance. Street parking is also available. The theatre is wheelchair accessible, and is located half a block south of the Morse Red Line El train stop.

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-two seasons** and over a **hundred and fifty 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**, two dozen of which have had a life beyond their Lifeline premieres, with more than **two hundred subsequent productions** spread across nearly forty U.S. states, four Canadian provinces, plus in England and Ireland. Additionally, two 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 **forty-seven 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, 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, Christopher M. Walsh, and Elizabeth Wislar.

Lifeline Theatre's programs are partially supported by Alphawood Foundation; A.R.T. League; The Arts Work Fund; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois; Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; The Common Cup; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; FGМК LLC; Flex Print, Inc.; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Grover Hermann Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Netrix LLC; Pierce Family Foundation; The Polk Bros. Foundation; The Shubert Foundation; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.

- more -

MainStage Productions

"Miss Buncle's Book"

A world premiere based on the novel by D.E. Stevenson

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Christina Calvit

Directed by Lifeline Theatre Artistic Director Dorothy Milne

September 11–November 1, 2015

Regular tickets \$40; preview tickets \$20

Previews: Fridays, 9/11 and 9/18 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9/12 and 9/19 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 9/13 and 9/20 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 9/21, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 9/20 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 9/24–11/1, 2015: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.
(No performances Halloween, Saturday, October 31, 2015)

Barbara Buncle is just an ordinary, unassuming spinster passing an unremarkable existence in the sleepy village of Silverstream. But when the Great Depression wipes out her nest egg, she tries her hand at writing and publishes a novel – under an assumed name – about her quaint hometown and the oddball characters that inhabit it. When the book becomes a surprise bestseller and her neighbors' foibles are thrust into the national spotlight, Miss Buncle must navigate a madcap storm of accusations, rivalries, and romances. A rollicking look at life imitating art and art imitating life, in a world premiere adaptation of the 1934 novel by D.E. Stevenson.

"Midnight Cowboy"

A world premiere based on the novel by James Leo Herlihy

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Chris Hainsworth

Director TBA

February 19–April 10, 2016

Regular tickets \$40; preview tickets \$20

Previews: Fridays, 2/19 and 2/26 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 2/20 and 2/27 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2/21 and 2/28 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 2/29, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 2/28 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 3/3–4/10, 2016: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

Joe Buck escapes his dead-end life in Texas and heads to New York City with dreams of making his fortune as a hustler for wealthy socialites. But his rugged cowboy persona masks the gullibility of a child, and Joe falls victim to all manner of con artists and predators. At the end of his rope, he partners with street-savvy Rico "Ratso" Rizzo in an alliance that could either save or destroy them both. A meditation on loneliness and the need to form real connections amidst the crushing isolation of 20th-century life, in a world premiere adaptation of the 1965 novel by James Leo Herlihy.

"Northanger Abbey"

A world premiere musical based on the novel by Jane Austen

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Robert Kauzlaric

Music and Lyrics by George Howe

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Elise Kauzlaric

May 27–July 17, 2016

Regular tickets \$40; preview tickets \$20

Previews: Fridays, 5/27 and 6/3 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 5/28 and 6/4 at 8 p.m.; Sundays, 5/29 and 6/5 at 4 p.m.

Press Opening: Monday, 6/6, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. (press also invited to final preview on 6/5 at 4 p.m.)

Regular Run: 6/9–7/17, 2016: Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 4 p.m.

Catherine Morland leaves her quiet country home for the splendors of Bath, armed only with an innocent heart and the examples of her favorite literary heroines. Immersed in a new world of parties, balls, and high society, Catherine soon finds herself caught in a web of social scheming far above her skill to master. False friends, greedy lovers, and a wealth of misunderstandings lead to the revelation that bruises of the heart can be far more painful than the imagined terrors of Gothic novels. Take a turn through the ballrooms of Bath and unravel the mysteries of Northanger Abbey in a world premiere musical based on the satirical 1817 comedy of manners by Jane Austen.

- more -

KidSeries Productions

“Mr. Popper’s Penguins”

A world premiere musical based on the novel by Richard and Florence Atwater

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Robert Kauzlaric

Music & Lyrics by George Howe

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Paul S. Holmquist

October 24–November 29, 2015

All tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 10/24 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 10/25 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 10/25 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 10/31–11/29, 2015: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Money is tight and times are tough in the town of Stillwater. With no houses to paint till next spring, Mr. Popper is stuck at home daydreaming of adventures in far-off lands, while Mrs. Popper must scrimp and save just to put beans on the table. But with the unexpected arrival of a spirited penguin named Captain Cook, a new horizon opens before them. As a quiet partnership expands into a boisterous flock, the Poppers learn that there's no problem that can't be solved with steady determination, lots of love, and a dash of unconventionality. Join this offbeat family on an unforgettable adventure in a world premiere musical based on the 1938 classic by Richard and Florence Atwater.

“Sparky!”

A world premiere musical based on the book by Jenny Offill, illustrated by Chris Appelhans

Adapted by Jessica Wright Buha

Music & Lyrics by Laura McKenzie

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Amanda Link

January 16–February 21, 2016

All tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 1/16 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 1/17 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 1/17 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 1/23–2/21, 2016: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Libby desperately wants a pet, but her mother says she can only have one that doesn't need to be walked, bathed, or fed. So she orders a sloth and names him Sparky. It's love at first sight... even if Sparky doesn't know how to fetch and always loses at Hide-and-Seek (though he's very good at playing Statue). But after know-it-all Mary Potts mocks Sparky as lazy and unimpressive, Libby must throw a backyard talent show to highlight the talents of her misunderstood companion. Roll up for the first-ever “Trained Sloth Extravaganza!” and learn about accepting your friends for who they are, in this world premiere musical based on the delightful 2014 book by Jenny Offill, illustrated by Chris Appelhans.

“Lester’s Dreadful Sweaters”

A world premiere musical based on the book by K.G. Campbell

Adapted by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Aly Renee Amidei

Music by Scott Tallarida

Lyrics by Aly Renee Amidei and Scott Tallarida

Directed by Lifeline Theatre ensemble member Heather Currie

March 19–April 24, 2016

All tickets \$15

Previews: Saturday, 3/19 at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and Sunday, 3/20 at 11 a.m.

Press Opening: Sunday, 3/20 at 1 p.m.

Regular Run: 3/26–4/24, 2016: Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

(No performances Easter Sunday, March 27, 2016)

One terrible morning, Cousin Clara presents young Lester with the gift of a hand-knit sweater... and it is DREADFUL: shriveled yet saggy and smothered with pom-poms. Lester (who likes things just so) is mortified to wear it, but his parents insist and the kids at school tease him relentlessly. When he ruins the sweater “by accident,” Clara just makes others, each more ghastly than the last. To restore his neatly ordered life and save face on the playground, Lester must find a way to stop the endless parade of horrifying sweaters once and for all. Enter a fashion nightmare and embrace your inner clown in this world premiere musical based on the charming 2012 book by K.G. Campbell.

- more -

The 2015-16 Lifeline Concert Reading Series: Murder & Mystery

"The Picture of Dorian Gray:" Halloween Night, Saturday, October 31, 2015

"The Shadow:" Saturday, February 6, 2016

"The Moonstone:" Saturday, April 16, 2016

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

Lifeline continues one of its most beloved new traditions with a fourth season of concert readings of beloved hits from its past. In 2015-16 season of Murder & Mystery features **The Picture of Dorian Gray** on Halloween night, adapted by ensemble member **Robert Kauzlaric** (originally produced in 2008, Non-Equity Jeff nomination: New Adaptation); **The Shadow**, adapted by ensemble member **John Hildreth** (originally produced in 2003); and **The Moonstone**, also adapted by Kauzlaric (originally produced in 2011). All three readings will feature numerous Lifeline ensemble actors and returning original cast members.

Each evening begins at 6 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres, a light supper, and wine (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 19th Annual Fillet of Solo Festival

January 15–31, 2016

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

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

Participants, locations, scheduling, and full details for the 2016 Fillet of Solo Festival will be announced Fall 2015.

Season subscriptions and single tickets for the 2015-2016 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.

###