

LOOKINGGLASS THEATRE COMPANY

presents

life sucks.

Written by Aaron Posner

Directed by Andrew White⁺

There will be one 15-minute intermission

**Scenic and
Lighting Designer**
Brian Bembridge^{*USA}

Costume Designer
Mieka van der Ploeg

Sound Co-Designer
Andre Pluess^{*USA}

Sound Co-Designer
Chris LaPorte

Properties Designer
Amanda Hermann

Stage Manager
Patia Bartlett^{**}

Production Manager
Sarah Burnham

Technical Director
Chad Hain

CAST

Chaon Cross* Ella
Eddie Jemison* Vanya
Jim Ortlieb* The Professor
Barbara E. Robertson* Babs
Philip R. Smith** Dr. Aster
Penelope Walker* Pickles
Danielle Zuckerman Sonia
Understudies Rengin Altay*, J. Nicole Brooks**, Joe Dempsey*,
Samantha Kaser, Jim Krag*, Sarah Razmann, Andrew White**

Artistic Director
Heidi Stillman⁺

Executive Director
Rachel E. Kraft

Producing Director
Philip R. Smith⁺

**Connectivity and
Engagement Director**
Andrew White⁺

General Manager
Michele V. Anderson

LEAD PRODUCER'S CIRCLE MEMBERS:

Leigh and Henry Bienen

PRODUCER'S CIRCLE MEMBERS:

Lee and Sandy Golub

OPENING NIGHT SPONSOR



* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers

+ Lookingglass Theatre Company Ensemble Member, Artistic Associate or Production Affiliate

USA Denotes member of United Scenic Artists, the union for Designers, Artists and Craftspeople

Lookingglass Theatre Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for American Theatre, and of the League of Chicago Theatres, the local service organization for theatre.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Interim Assistant

Technical Director

Samuel Moryoussef

Fight Choreographer

Matt Hawkins

Assistant Stage Manager

Andi Sturtevant*

Assistant Lighting Designer

Toria Gibson

Assistant Costume Designer

Robert Kuhn

Assistant Properties

Designer

Lydia Hanchett

Costume Shop Manager

Stephanie Cluggish

Master Carpenter

Isaac Schoepp

Lead Carpenter

Jake Puralowski

Carpenters

Nick Harazin

Jacob Brown

Scenic Charge

Sarah Lynn Lewis

Scenic Artists

Emily Moore

Emily Smith

Assistant Master Electrician

Shawn Kronk

Electricians

Andrew Glasenhardt

Grover Holloway

Neal Javenkoski

Andy Kauff

Aaron Lorenz

William McGhee

Billy Murphy

Cameron Petti

Ryan Plunkett

Jacob Snodgrass

Jonah White

Costume Shop Assistant

Melissa Perkins

Draper

Beth Uber

Stitchers

Kristin Bernstein

Madeleine Low

Elise Petrucci

Valerie Vanderkolk

Wardrobe Supervisor

Amber Collins

Wardrobe Assistant

Mel Motz

Makeup/Wigs

Samantha Umstead
for Penny Lane Studios

Costume Crafts

Melissa Bochat

Properties Artisans

Bronte DeShong

Shannon Golden

Christopher Neville

Deck Crew

Austin Kopsa

Jake Wiener

Casting

Philip R. Smith*

Raymond Fox*

Stage Management Intern

Bryana Barry

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In Conversation

with Playwright Aaron Posner
and Director Andrew White

Interview by Audience Development Coordinator
Corinne Bass

Aaron, where did the idea for *Life Sucks* come from?

AP: *Life Sucks* is my own odd and idiosyncratic response to Anton Chekhov's masterpiece, *Uncle Vanya*. I love the original play and its smart and insightful treatment of day-to-day human love, longing, hope and heartache—but the hundred plus years that separate us from Chekhov seem to be increasing exponentially, and our weird and worrisome world feels so radically different than his Russia, so... I decided to write a new version! It's a variation on a theme, if you will, or a new riff on an old melody. My goal was not, in any way, to replace his, but to hopefully stand alongside it and engage it in an active, living conversation.

Andy, what would you say to people who might consider this sort of adaptation an irreverent treatment of a cultural classic?

AW: I'd reply that this is actually a very reverent adaptation, in the best possible way—it's not *stodgy* reverent, it's alive and fresh and contemporary, but still very true to the intent of the original. Aaron totally captures what (I think) is most essential in Chekhov's work, which is his warmth and fondness for our foolishness, his sympathy for both our earnestness and our ridiculousness. So, yes, the language and the lines are contemporary but the play completely delivers what is at the heart of the original.

Why do you think artists and audiences still find resonance with Chekhov's work, 120 years later?

AW: Chekhov is interested in what makes us tick, our most basic and eternal human behaviors—our absurdities, our contradictions, our complexity. Why we sometimes (or often!) do dumb or reckless things, or things that are radically against our better instincts; how we can be generous of heart one minute and horribly ungenerous the next; how we're forever caught between the most noble aspirations and these ridiculous human bodies we find ourselves in, between our people we want to be and the physical and emotional needs that continually get in the way.

He looks at all of this—the absurdity and the complexity—with great humor and warmth. He was a doctor and had an intimate acquaintance with both the human body and the human heart, and how they live side by side, sometimes compatibly and sometimes not so much. Though Chekhov's work is not explicitly political, he encourages us to look at ourselves and laugh at ourselves, which in turn can increase our empathy and compassion for ourselves and others. So in crazy political times (and let's face it, these qualify), his work has both personal and political resonance.

As playwright, why did Lookingglass feel like a good fit for this play?

AP: I've been a huge fan of the company from the start. I went to school with many of the founders, some of whom are very good friends whose work as artists I have always deeply admired. Like so many Lookingglass productions, *Life Sucks* is a story told in an original, highly theatrical manner—and in direct relation to the audience. It is a play about folks who are about the age of the original Ensemble Members of Lookingglass. Yet it is quite different than Lookingglass' primary work, so I think the places we overlap and diverge make for a really exciting combination.

**What challenges do you face when directing a “dark comedy”
(if that’s even the right category for this play)?**

AW: Yeah, good question. I'm not sure it's a “dark comedy,” it's just a very human comedy, which by definition has (as we all do) some dark moments. So it's a matter of finding the right balance, and defining a world in which things can shift and change very quickly, where you can be bending over with laughter one moment and then quite suddenly leaning in to listen and finding tears on your cheeks—again, as in real life. Sometimes people expect one or the other: “this show is just a comedy” or “tonight I'm seeing a serious play.” But most of our days are some crazy mix of both, and we never know which is coming around the corner—so our plays can probably be that, too.

What was the design process like for this production?

AW: Aaron's stage directions, like Chekhov's, are wonderfully open-ended and spare. Chekhov indicates it's a country house, and that's about it. Aaron suggests “a fairly simple, flexible space...open, practical and yet theatrical...since the play is about Love and Longing, that could be reflected in the setting somehow.” So that gives the director and designers some gentle guidance but also leaves a LOT of room to imagine. Our design team—Brian, Mieka, Andre, Chris, Amanda—are then tasked with putting together a coherent world in which there might be little references to Chekhov, but is primarily contemporary and gets at what interests both playwrights. So, a playground where we can watch us humans be as loving and foolish and ridiculous as, well, we actually are.

Aaron, what should audiences expect from the production?

AP: Well, I don't know what they should expect, but I hope they will get a twisty, complex, funny and moving story about life, love, hope and despair, told with integrity by the amazing cast, crew and design team that Andy has put together for the production.

I also think audiences can expect no fourth wall whatsoever—no real divide between actors and audience. This is a play. It knows it is a play, and we are asked to be active and present participants in the production. DON'T WORRY! No one is forced to participate in any way, but there is some degree of theatrical connectivity. Chekhov said “Any idiot can face a crisis. It's this day to day living that wears us out.” I think that is true. In Chekhov's world, and in mine, life and love can be very hard... but just in the normal, everyday way that it actually, actually is.

I've poured a lot of my heart and soul into this play. Perhaps more than anything else I have written, it tries to get to the heart of how really difficult life can sometimes be—but also how worthwhile and unutterably beautiful and precious.

REFLECT

lookingglasstheatre.org/REFLECT

REFLECT is a curated series of post-show discussions featuring panelists with a range of viewpoints and expertise on the content and context of the play.

Discussions take place directly following the **2PM** matinee on select **SUNDAYS** at Lookingglass Theatre. The discussions are free and open to the public.

**The Overwhelming World
and How We Live In It**

Sunday, October 2

**Great Neurotics of Stage
and Screen**

Sunday, October 9

Families: Can't Live With 'Em...

Sunday, October 16

**Love, Love, Love—
Unrequited and Otherwise**

Sunday, October 23

Why Chekhov Speaks to Us Today

Sunday, October 30



ACCESS

Lookingglass is pleased to offer an open captioned performance and an audio described performance for each production in our 2016–17 season. For more information, visit lookingglasstheatre.org/ACCESS.

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AND AFFILIATES

OPEN CAPTIONING

<i>Life Sucks</i>	October 6, 2016	7:30PM
<i>Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth</i>	January 5, 2017	7:30PM
<i>Beyond Caring</i>	April 20, 2017	7:30PM
<i>Moby Dick</i>	July 6, 2017	7:30PM

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

<i>Life Sucks</i>	October 13, 2016	7:30PM
<i>Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth</i>	January 12, 2017	7:30PM
<i>Beyond Caring</i>	April 27, 2017	7:30PM
<i>Moby Dick</i>	July 13, 2017	7:30PM

PROFILES



CHAON CROSS (Ella) Chaon is happy to return to Lookingglass after appearing in *Brothers Karamazov* in 2008. Chicago credits include: *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Proof* (Jeff Award Nomination), *Uncle Vanya*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Scapin*, *The Romance Cycle*, *Phèdre* (Court Theatre), *Cyrano* (Court Theatre and Redmoon Theater), *Hedda Gabbler*, *Arcadia* (Writers Theatre), *The Wheel*, *The Cherry Orchard*, (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *As You Like It*, *Private Lives*, *Cymbeline*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *Macbeth* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), and *Grace* (Northlight Theatre). Regional credits include: *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater) and *Pride & Prejudice* (Cleveland Play House). TV credits: *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Boss* (Starz) and *Detroit 187* (ABC). Film credits: *My Dog Skip* (Warner Bros).



EDDIE JEMISON (Vanya) is honored to make his Lookingglass debut in *Life Sucks*. Past Chicago performances include *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *Only Kidding* (Wisdom Bridge Theater) and *Wizards of Quiz* (National Jewish Theater—Jeff Award Nomination). Film credits include: *Ocean's Eleven*, *Twelve and Thirteen*, *Waitress*, *The Punisher*, and *King of Herrings* (New Orleans and Phoenix Film Festival Laurel Winner) which he wrote and co-directed.

Eddie was a regular on HBO's *Hung* and currently recurs in *iZombie*.



JIM ORTLIEB (The Professor) is excited to be working with Director Andrew White and Lookingglass Theatre Company for the first time. Since leaving Chicago, Jim has worked in TV (*Grey's Anatomy*, *The CSI's*, *Masters of Sex*, *Roswell*, *West Wing*), film (*Magnolia*, *A Mighty Wind*, *Latter Days*, and the upcoming films *Inheritance* and *Jekyll Island*), and on Broadway (*Of Mice and Men*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Farnsworth Invention*). He has continued teaching and directing

young people from age 8 through 18 at Highland Hall Waldorf School. Jim and his wife have also been busy raising their two wonderful daughters, one of whom presently attends The Theatre School at DePaul University.



BARBARA E. ROBERTSON (Babs) is very happy to return to Lookingglass Theatre where she last played in *Hard Times*. Other credits include: Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Writers Theatre, Goodman Theatre, The Marriott Theatre, Broadway Playhouse, Oriental Theatre, Cadillac Palace Theatre, American Theater Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Royal George Theatre, and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

A member of AEA, SAG/AFTRA, and P-Fac, Barbara also teaches at Columbia College. Barbara has received more than 20 awards and nominations for her work in theatre, and her film credits include Robert Altman's *The Company*, and David Lynch's *A Straight Story*.



PHILIP R. SMITH (Dr. Aster/Producing Director/Lookingglass Ensemble Member)

most recently appeared as Captain Smollett in *Treasure Island* at Lookingglass and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Other Lookingglass credits include Bass in *Big Lake Big City*, Ethan in *Ethan Frome*, Will in *Trust*, Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days*, Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Tinker Bosch in *The Wooden Brecks*, and Creon in *Hillbilly Antigone*. Other recent credits include: Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Rev. Parris in *The Crucible*, and Wrede Sartorius in *The March* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), and Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days* (Baltimore's Center Stage). Other regional credits include work at McCarter Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Brooklyn Academy of Music (NYC), and The Actors' Gang (LA). TV and film credits include: *Boss*, *Prison Break*, *Chicago Hope*, *Friends*, *Early Edition*, *Kissing a Fool*, *Since You've Been Gone*, *High Fidelity*, *The Express*, and *The Dilemma*. As Producing Director, oversight includes Lookingglass casting, and serving as a primary artistic liaison to the Development, Marketing and Production departments.



PENELOPE WALKER (Pickles)

Penelope has previously performed at Lookingglass in *Black Diamond*. She recently performed in *The House That Will Not Stand* at Victory Gardens Theater. Chicago credits include: *No One As Nasty*, and the Ignition Festival (Victory Gardens Theater); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Story*, *Crowns*, *Matchmaker* (US), and *Gem Of The Ocean* (US) (Goodman Theatre); *Love & Information* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company); *The Projects*, *Agnes Of God*, *Doubt*, and *People's Temple* (American Theater Company); *Will You Stand Up* (Erasing The Distance); *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wandering New England* (Theater Wit); *Love Lies Bleeding* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *10 Virgins*, *Voyeurs de Venus* (Chicago Dramatists); *Eclipsed*, *Gees Bend*, *Bee Luther Hatchee* (Northlight Theatre); and *The Clink* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble). She performed her own solo show, *How I Jack Master Funked The Sugar in My Knee Caps*, throughout 2013 and 2014. Her film, web series and TV credits include: *Olympia: An Instruction Manual For How Things Work*, *Severed Ties*, *Flowers*, *Matching Pursuit* (web series); *Chicago Fire* and *Boss* (TV).



DANIELLE ZUCKERMAN (Sonia)

is making her Lookingglass Theatre Company debut. Previous roles include Edna in *Waiting for Lefty*, Celia in *As You Like It*, and Kate in *Kiss Me Kate*. She is a graduate of The American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

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AARON POSNER (Playwright) is an award-winning playwright and director and co-founder of Philadelphia's Arden Theatre Company. *Life Sucks* is his second re-imagining of a Chekhov play. His first, *Stupid F*cking Bird*, has won numerous awards and is one of the 10 most produced plays in the country this season. Other plays include *No Sisters* (another Chekhov re-invention), *District Merchants*, *Who Am I This Time? & Other Conundrums of Love*, *The Chosen*, *My Name Is Asher Lev*, *Sometimes a Great Notion*, a nine-actor *Cyrano* (with Michael Hollinger), *A Murder, A Mystery and A Marriage* (with James Sugg), and *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* (with Teller of Penn & Teller). Aaron has directed at major regional theaters from coast to coast, is an artistic associate at the Folger Theatre in Washington, D.C., and lives outside of D.C with his wife, actress Erin Weaver, and his amazing daughter, Maisie.

ANDREW WHITE (Director/Connectivity and Engagement Director/Lookingglass Ensemble Member) has participated as an actor, writer, or director in more than forty Lookingglass productions, most recently appearing in *Treasure Island* as Dr. Livesey. He wrote the book and lyrics for *Eastland: A New Musical*, received a Jeff Award for his 2004 adaptation of George Orwell's *1984* (which was presented at Steppenwolf Theatre Company last season as part of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults program), and wrote and directed *Of One Blood*, about the murder of three civil rights workers in 1964. He has taught in various Lookingglass outreach programs and residencies, and co-founded Mosaic Experience, a company which uses an arts-based approach to dialogue about diversity. His family in Evanston includes one wife, Shari; two children, Julia and Asher; and one cat named Jane.

PATIA BARTLETT (Stage Manager/Lookingglass Production Affiliate) is delighted to return to Lookingglass for her 19th production, after wrapping up a six-year run of *Million Dollar Quartet* in Chicago. Some Lookingglass favorites include: *Hephaestus*, *Lookingglass Alice*, *Black Diamond*, *Race*, and *Hard Times*. Other credits: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Voysey Inheritance*, *Brontë*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Real Thing*, *The Best Man*, *Power*, *Aren't We All*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Some Americans Abroad*, *Top Girls* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company); *Ruthless!* and *Eleemosynary* (Creede Repertory Theatre).

ANDRA STURTEVANT (Assistant Stage Manager) returns to Lookingglass Theatre after previously serving as the stage management intern for *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*. Other Chicago credits include *Short Shakespeare! Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, *Wonderland: Alice's Rock & Roll Adventure*, *The Selfish Giant*, *Frederick*, *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*, and *A Year with Frog and Toad* (Chicago Children's Theatre); and productions with the Evanston Dance Ensemble. Andra is a graduate of Northwestern University. She also teaches creative drama and theatre classes for young students at Northwest Children's Theater and School in Portland, OR.

BRIAN SIDNEY BEMBRIDGE (Scenic and Lighting Designer/Lookingglass Production Affiliate) has extensive design credits including Off-Broadway at The Public Theater, Second Stage Theatre, Jean Cocteau Repertory, Kids With Guns, and Theatre at St. Clement's. Internationally, Brian has designed at Theatre Royal Stratford East in London; Town Hall Theatre in Galway, Ireland; and Illawarra Performing Arts Centre and Platform

Hip Hop Festival in Sydney, Australia, among others. Regionally, his work has been seen at the Guthrie Theater, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, TimeLine Theatre, The Second City, Arden Theatre Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Alliance Theatre, Geffen Playhouse, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Northlight Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, Ravinia Festival, Children's Theatre Company; Asolo, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Madison Repertory Theaters, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Circle X Theatre Co., Opera Omaha, and Virginia Opera. He has received six Jeff Awards, two LA Drama Critic Circle Awards, LA Weekly Theater Awards, three Back Stage Garland Awards, and an Ovation Award. Brian represented the U.S. at the Prague Quadrennial in 2011 with his design of *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Film production designs include *Marie and Bruce*, *Holding Out*, *Stray Dogs* and *Late for Church*, and sets for *Muppets from Space*. For more information, visit briansidneybembridge.com.

MIEKA VAN DER PLOEG (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for a variety of Chicago theatres, including Chicago Children's Theatre, Second City Theatricals, The Hypocrites, About Face Theatre, Theater Wit, Redmoon Theater, Griffin Theatre, Next Theatre Company, The Building Stage, The House Theatre of Chicago, Albany Park Theater Project, Dog and Pony Theatre Co., and Pegasus Players. Further credits include wig and make-up work at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, and Goodman Theatre.

AMANDA HERRMANN (Properties Designer) is pleased be designing again at Lookingglass where she recently designed *Moby Dick*. Other credits include: *The Hollow*, *Tin Woman* (Peninsula Players Theatre); *Fallen Angels* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company); *Balm in Gilead* (Griffin Theatre); *The Sweeter Option* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *The Apple Family Plays* (TimeLine Theatre); and *Velveteen Rabbit* (Lifeline Theatre). Amanda is a graduate of Ripon College with a BA in Theater and Art.

CHRIS LAPORTE (Co-Sound Designer)'s upcoming/recent design and composition collaborations include: *Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth* (Lookingglass Theatre Company) and *Roof of the World* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre). Chris has collaborated on projects with many local Chicago companies such as Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, 17 productions with Sideshow Theatre Company, TimeLine Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, InFusion Theatre Company, Raven Theatre, University Of Illinois at Chicago, Interrobang Theatre Project, and Emerald City Theatre. Regional collaborations include Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, The Old Globe (San Diego), Center Stage (Baltimore), Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.), Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and United Solo Festival (NYC).

ANDRE PLUESS (Co-Sound Designer/Lookingglass Artistic Associate) is a composer/sound designer based in Chicago. His credits include composition and sound design for numerous productions for Lookingglass Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, About Face Theatre and many other Chicago and regional theatres. Broadway credits: *Metamorphoses*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *33 Variations* and *The Clean House* (Lincoln Center). Andre has received multiple Jeff Awards, an Ovation Award, Barrymore Award, New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and Drama Desk/Lucille Lortel Awards nominations for composition and sound

PROFILES

design. Recent projects include: *Treasure Island*, *Eastland*, *Cascabel* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *Equivocations* (Arena Stage); *Stage Kiss*, *The Jungle Book* (Goodman Theatre); *Endgame* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Milk Like Sugar* (La Jolla Playhouse/Playwrights Horizons); *Arabian Nights*, *Argonautika* (Lookingglass and regional productions); *Ghost Light*, *White Snake*, *King Lear*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); and *Macbeth* and *Titus* (California Shakespeare Theater).

HEIDI STILLMAN (Artistic Director/Lookingglass Ensemble Member) most recently directed *Death Tax* and created/directed *Cascabel*, in collaboration with Tony Hernandez and Rick Bayless. She has both written and directed for Lookingglass: *The North China Lover*, *Hephaestus* (in collaboration with Tony Hernandez), *The Brothers Karamazov* (2009 Raven Award), *Hard Times* (five Jeff Awards including Director, New Work, and Production; also produced at Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia), and *The Master and Margarita* (Jeff Award Nominated). Additional writing credits with Lookingglass: *The Last Act of Lilka Kadison* with Nicola Behrman, David Kersnar, Abbie Phillips and Andrew White, *The Old Curiosity Shop* with Laura Eason and Raymond Fox (Jeff Award for Adaptation), and *The Baron in the Trees* with Larry DiStasi (Jeff Award Nominated). Directing work with Lookingglass: *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Trust*, *The Wooden Brecks*, and *Hillbilly Antigone*. Heidi's adaptation of *The Book Thief* premiered at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 2012.

RACHEL E. KRAFT (Executive Director) is in her twelfth season as the Executive Director of Lookingglass Theatre Company, the recipient of the 2011 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Her thirty years of experience in arts management include over a decade as director of development at Goodman Theatre, in addition to key roles with the Arts and Business Council, Northlight Theatre, and the Chicago Dance Coalition. Rachel currently serves on the Executive Committee and Foundation Board of the League of Chicago Theatres, the local service organization for Chicago theater, after having served on its Board of Directors (including a term as Vice Chairman). She also served on the Board of Directors (including a term as Vice President) of Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for nonprofit professional theater in the United States. Rachel remains an advisor to the documentary film organization the Kindling Group, where she was a charter board member and served on the board for fifteen years, is a trustee of the Jewish Women's Foundation of Chicago, and serves on the Alumnae Council of the Chicago Foundation for Women after serving on the board and as Co-Chair of its Alumnae Council.

MICHELE V. ANDERSON (General Manager) is in her tenth season with Lookingglass Theatre Company, and in her seventh year as General Manager after having been the Director of Finance and Administration. Her over 20 years of experience in arts management include nearly ten years as Director of Finance & Administration at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Business Manager of the International Theatre Festival of Chicago and numerous short-term consulting and freelance positions with Writers Theatre, About Face Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago Gateway Green, Storycatchers Theatre and others. After receiving both a B.A. and a B.S. from Indiana University, Michele started her career in Chicago working for the for-profit producers Cullen Henaghan and Platt. Michele also has an M.A. in Arts Administration from Columbia College Chicago. She lives in Chicago with her husband Ken.

LOOKINGGLASS THEATRE COMPANY

2016-17 Season

Join us for a hilarious, heartwarming,
heartwrenching and heroic season!

Packages still available!



life sucks.

Sept. 9–Nov. 6, 2016

Written by Aaron Posner

Directed by Andrew White

MR AND MRS PENNYWORTH

Dec. 7, 2016–Feb. 19, 2017

Written and Directed by Doug Hara

Puppetry by Blair Thomas

Shadow Animations by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace
and Julia Miller for Manual Cinema Studios

BEYOND CARING

March 22–May 7, 2017

Written and Directed by Alexander Zeldin

In Association with Dark Harbor Stories

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Adapted and Directed by David Catlin

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In Association with The Actors Gymnasium

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December 7, 2016–February 19, 2017

MR AND MRS PENNYWORTH

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Residence Fund through the *Imagine* campaign.

Season Sponsors



Hubbard Street Dancer Emilie Lerche in Imprint by Lucas Crandall. Photo by Todd Rosenberg.

ABOUT LOOKINGGLASS

Inventive. Collaborative. Transformative. Lookingglass is home to a multi-disciplined collective of artists who create original, story-centered theatre through a physical and improvisational rehearsal process centered on ensemble. Lookingglass has staged 65 world premieres and garnered numerous awards in its mission to change, charge and empower audiences and artists alike. Lookingglass Education and Community programs encourage creativity, teamwork, and confidence with thousands of students and community members each year. In 2003, Lookingglass Theatre opened in Chicago's landmark Water Tower Water Works. In 2011, Lookingglass received the American Theatre Wing's Tony Award® for Outstanding Regional Theatre. In February of 2016 Lookingglass received the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

LOOKINGGLASS COMPANY MEMBERS

Ensemble

Eva Barr	Laura Eason	David Schwimmer
Mara Blumenfeld	Anthony Fleming III	Joey Slotnick
J. Nicole Brooks	Raymond Fox	Philip R. Smith
David Catlin	Joy Gregory	Heidi Stillman
Thomas J. Cox	Doug Hara	Tracy Walsh
Lawrence E. DiStasi	David Kersnar	Andrew White
Kevin Douglas	John Musial	Temple Williams III
Christine Mary Dunford	Daniel Ostling	Mary Zimmerman

Artistic Associates

Kareem Bandealy	Joshua Horvath	Alison Siple
Chris Binder	Eric Huffman	Lisa Tejero
Sara Gmitter	Louise Lamson	Troy West
Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi	Andre Pluess	Lindsey Noel Whiting
Tony Hernandez	Scott Silberstein	
Lauren Hirte	Rick Sims	

Production Affiliates

Patia Bartlett	Ray Nardelli	Ben Spicer
Brian Sidney Bembridge	Mele Ortiz	Jonathan Templeton
Eva Breneman	Sage Reed	
Jason Burkett	Nick Rupard	

ENSEMBLE UPDATE

EVA BARR most recently appeared in *Blood Wedding* on the Lookingglass stage. She is likely weeding carrots on her farm in Minnesota (DreamAcres) and involved in another season of food and performance fun. dreameryruralartsinitiative.com

MARA BLUMENFELD recently designed costumes for *Blood Wedding*. Current and upcoming projects include *Timon of Athens* for Oregon Shakespeare Festival, *Julius Caesar* for Writers Theatre, and *King Charles III* for Chicago Shakespeare Theater. She will return to Lookingglass to design *Mr. & Mrs. Pennyworth* and *Beyond Caring*.

J. NICOLE BROOKS recently co-directed *Thaddeus and Slocum: A Vaudeville Adventure* for Lookingglass. She has several projects and commissions in development. [@doctaslick](https://twitter.com/doctaslick)

DAVID CATLIN recently adapted and directed *Moby Dick* at Lookingglass as well as *Lookingglass Alice* for both the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (Miami, FL) and the Denver Center Theatre (Denver, CO). *Moby Dick* will return to Lookingglass in the summer of 2017.

THOMAS J. COX recently directed the Lookingglass Young Ensemble in his adaptation of *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest*. He was last seen at Lookingglass in a single performance as Ahab in *Moby Dick*; prior to that, he appeared in *Cascabel*. He recently appeared in Court Theatre's *Agamemnon* and *Richard III* at The Gift Theatre.

LAWRENCE E. DISTASI was last seen on the Lookingglass stage as Frank in *Thaddeus and Slocum: A Vaudeville Adventure*. He is currently in hiding in an undisclosed location.

CHRISTINE MARY DUNFORD most recently appeared in *Blood Wedding* at Lookingglass. She directed her own adaptation of *Still Alice* at Lookingglass in the spring of 2013. Christine continues to work on The Memory Ensemble, and as director of the School of Theatre & Music at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

KEVIN DOUGLAS recently appeared in *Lookingglass Alice* in Chicago, Miami and Denver. His play *Thaddeus and Slocum: A Vaudeville Adventure* had its world premiere at Lookingglass this past summer. He has also co-written an independent film called *Call Center*, which recently completed filming.

LAURA EASON's play *Sex with Strangers* is one of the most produced plays in America in 2015/16 (over 20 productions). She is a writer/producer in her fourth season on the Emmy nominated Netflix drama *House of Cards* and is developing a new TV series with Fox21. lauraeason.com [@LeasonNYC](https://twitter.com/LeasonNYC)

ANTHONY FLEMING III recently appeared in *Moby Dick* at Lookingglass.

RAYMOND FOX recently appeared in *Thaddeus and Slocum: A Vaudeville Adventure* at Lookingglass. He will be seen this fall in *Moby Dick* at Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, GA.

JOY GREGORY is writing and producing season three of the CBS series *Madam Secretary*. She is still adapting her play, *The Shaggs: Philosophy of the World* for a feature film. She's also pursuing meaning and delight during her time on this earth and hopes you're doing the same. "Only connect."

DOUG HARA recently played Jack in *The Stinky Cheese Man* at the Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia. This winter he will return to Lookingglass to direct his own play *Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth*.

DAVID KERSNAR has received a City of Chicago grant studying dance and puppetry in Bali and will be directing Strauss' *Don Quixote* with Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

JOHN MUSIAL recently provided scenic restraint for *Death Tax* at Lookingglass as well as designing *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest* for the Lookingglass Young Ensemble.

DANIEL OSTLING recently directed and set designed *Blood Wedding* at Lookingglass, *All The Days* (McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ), *Timon of Athens* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), and *King Charles III* (American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, CA).

DAVID SCHWIMMER recently appeared in a new one-hour drama, *Feed the Beast*, for AMC. He has additionally been nominated for a 2016 Emmy Award for his performance in *The People Vs. O.J. Simpson* on FX.

JOEY SLOTNICK will be appearing on Broadway this fall in the revival of *The Front Page* directed by Jack O'Brien. He recently became a dad to a beautiful baby girl.

TRACY WALSH choreographed *Blood Wedding* at Lookingglass as well as choreographing and appearing in *Iphigenia in Aulis* at Court Theatre and *The North China Lover* at Lookingglass. She recently wrote and directed a play about working mothers and child-care for the Lookingglass Young Ensemble.

TEMPLE WILLIAMS III is Chief Operating Officer of 51 Minds Entertainment (an Endemol Company), a Los Angeles based production company focused on non-scripted television. Additionally, Temple is Chief Executive of Freedom Media, a company dedicated to financing independent feature films (credits include, *The Forger* and *Maggie's Plan*). Temple lives in Los Angeles with his wife, photographer and entrepreneur Cyndi Finkle, and their daughter, Sullivan Clare Williams.

MARY ZIMMERMAN travelled this spring to Berkeley Repertory Theatre with the Lookingglass production of *Treasure Island*. This fall she is directing the Leonard Bernstein musical *Wonderful Town* for Goodman Theatre.

For **PHILIP R. SMITH**, **HEIDI STILLMAN** and **ANDREW WHITE** see the **PROFILES** section.

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