

From fish to nuts for Lookingglass Theatre's 2016-17 season

A reworking of a Chekhov play bearing a title sure to strike a chord with the millennial crowd. A fairy tale remix infused with film and puppetry. A searing look at the “shadow economy” of temporary workers. And the return of that great white whale.

Yes, you guessed it, Lookingglass Theatre has announced its four-show lineup for the 2016-2017 season: a mix of two Midwest premieres, one world premiere and an acclaimed classic back by popular demand. Count on satire, whimsy, realism and adventure.

As artistic director Heidi Stillman described the lineup in a prepared statement: “The season will bring old friends and new collaborators to Lookingglass. Aaron Posner went to school with many of us in the ensemble and is a longtime friend, and we are thrilled to finally work together on ‘Life Sucks,’ his whip-smart, hilarious riff on Chekhov’s ‘Uncle Vanya.’ We’ll welcome brilliant puppet creator Blair Thomas, and the cutting-edge shadow puppetry company Manual Cinema, for ensemble member Doug Hara’s heartwarming and imaginative adventure, ‘Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth,’ which promises to be an enchanting visual feast.”



“Alexander Zeldin’s play, ‘Beyond Caring,’ is a timely and important look at the shadow economy of temporary workers in America. Ensemble member David Schwimmer was instrumental in bringing this powerful and heart-wrenching piece to Lookingglass, and we’re excited that it will debut in Chicago. And just in time for summer, we are bringing back ensemble member David Catlin’s stunning and profound ‘Moby Dick,’ with Anthony Flemming III, Raymond Fox, Kareem Bandealy reprising their roles as Queequeg, Stubb and Starbuck.”



Anthony Fleming III will reprise his role as Queequeg in the Lookingglass Theatre production of "Moby Dick."

Here are the season details:

- The Midwest premiere of Aaron Posner’s **“Life Sucks”** (Sept. 9 – Nov. 6), directed by Andrew White and featuring Joey Slotnick as Vanya and Philip R. Smith as Dr. Aster. As in Chekhov, Posner homes in on a group of old friends, ex-lovers, estranged in-laws, and lifelong enemies who gather to grapple with life’s thorniest questions—and each other. Lust, loneliness, haplessness and hope collide as seven souls stumble their way towards a new understanding. Posner’s previous riff on Chekhov was the popular “Stupid F—ing Bird.”

- The world premiere of **“Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth”** (Dec. 7, 2016 – Feb. 19, 2017), written and directed by Doug Hara, with shadow animations by Chicago’s Manual Cinema and puppetry by Blair Thomas. Traveling storytellers Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth (the latter played by Lindsey Noel Whiting) captivate audiences with spellbinding tales. But one day, The Big Bad Wolf mysteriously dies before his story is complete, and as fairy tales disappear from the pages, and characters are utterly forgotten, the Pennyworths must journey through the stories to restore order before they are lost forever.



Doug Hara. (Photo: Kim Carson)

- The U.S. premiere of **“Beyond Caring”** (March 22 – May 14, 2017), written and directed by Alexander Zeldin, and presented in association with Dark Harbor Stories (a company led by David Schwimmer and Tom Hodges, dedicated to producing original stories with a social conscience in theater, television and film). The show looks at the margins of society, people on the edge of survival who work for low wages and in harsh conditions, with no safety net, insurance or the guarantee of the next day’s work. Most recently produced at London’s National Theatre, it has been re-imagined for Chicago by writer-director Alexander Zeldin and shines a light on America’s shadow economy and “and the incendiary intersection of race and class.”



Alexander Zeldin. (Photo: Tommy Biog)

• **“Moby Dick”** (June 7 – Sept. 3, 2017), adapted and directed by David Catlin from the novel by Herman Melville, and presented in association with The Actors Gymnasium. Fresh off a national tour, this production, a winner of four Jeff Awards (including best production), is a marvel of imaginative storytelling as it probes Melville’s harrowing tale of revenge, obsession, and destiny.

Subscriptions are now on sale for the 2016-2017 season, with all performances to be held at Lookingglass Theatre at the Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan. Subscribers can choose between 3-play, 4-play and a new flex pass programs. For the 2016–2017 season, 3-play subscriptions range from \$116–\$170 and include “Life Sucks,” “Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth” and “Beyond Caring,” while 4-play subscriptions range from \$146-\$230 and include all four of Lookingglass’ announced productions.

The Madhatter’s Club flex pass is new for the 2016-2017 season. Available to those 35 or younger, it costs \$100 and includes four tickets that members can use in any combination and denomination for any Lookingglass production. The first 100 members of the Madhatter’s Club will also receive a \$25 gift certificate from the official Madhatter’s Club sponsor Mity Nice Bar & Grill.

Also new in the 2016–2017 season is the Gglasspass for first-time subscribers. For \$180, Gglasspass holders will receive four tickets that can be used in any combination and denomination for any Lookingglass production in the season.

For tickets call (312) 337-0665 or visit lookingglasstheatre.org.