



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Open Eye Theatre and Girl Friday Productions present**

**LIFE SUCKS**

*A comic reflection on the ride of love and loss*

**October 12 – November 5, 2023**

(Minneapolis, MN) August 18, 2023 — Open Eye Theatre and Girl Friday Productions are partnering to produce the regional professional premiere of LIFE SUCKS by **Aaron Posner**, a cheeky revisioning of Anton Chekhov’s classic UNCLE VANYA that is at once irreverent, poignant, hopeful, raw, highly theatrical, and yes, very funny. Directed by Joel Sass, LIFE SUCKS runs October 12 – November 5 at Open Eye Theatre. More information and tickets are available at [openeyetheatre.org/life-sucks](https://openeyetheatre.org/life-sucks).

A group of old friends, estranged relations, and lifelong enemies gather to grapple with life’s thorniest questions—and each other. What could possibly go wrong? With seven extraordinary actors filling the tiny Open Eye stage with passion, hilarity, and many shots of vodka, this acclaimed contemporary play considers longing and the meaning of life in a way that is fresh, heartfelt, and surprisingly moving.

“Comic gold...Filled with laughs and anarchic asides...Posner’s ear for comedy is reminiscent of Mel Brooks in his prime.” – BroadwayWorld.com

LIFE SUCKS had numerous critically acclaimed productions pre-pandemic, including a *New York Times* Critic’s Pick and Off-Broadway Alliance Award in 2020 for Best New Play for the Wheelhouse Theatre’s production.

Although Girl Friday Productions’ **Artistic Director Kirby Bennett** and Open Eye Theatre’s

**Producing Artistic Director Joel Sass** have been frequent collaborators throughout their careers, LIFE SUCKS marks the first co-production between these two companies.

“LIFE SUCKS is a bold choice for each of our companies, and yet it plays to each of our strengths as well, so collaborating on this makes perfect sense,” says **Girl Friday Productions Artistic Director Kirby Bennett**. “Girl Friday has traditionally examined the human resilience and hope found in classic American works. LIFE SUCKS considers longing and the meaning of life in a way that is fresh, heartfelt, and surprisingly moving, much like our other work. And it clearly resonates with our post-pandemic realities of disconnection and environmental peril. A comic reflection on the ride of love and loss, LIFE SUCKS just may lead you to the opposite conclusion.”

In addition to many roles with Girl Friday Productions, **Kirby Bennett** has appeared at numerous local and regional theatres, most recently in HOLMES AND WATSON at Park Square Theatre. Other noted productions include Jungle Theater: NOISES OFF!, BLITHE SPIRIT; Park Square Theatre: THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, THE LEFT HAND SINGING, THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE, THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO, THE WOMEN; Frank Theatre: THE VISIT, GOOD PERSON OF SETZUAN, LOVE AND INFORMATION; History Theatre: PEACE CRIMES; DalekoArts: ADA AND THE ENGINE, MIDDLETOWN; Commonweal Theatre Company: SYLVIA, STEEL MAGNOLIAS; Red Eye Theatre: THE THUGS, POTATOES OF AUGUST; Minnesota Jewish Theatre: WOMEN’S MINYAN, THE TRIANGLE FACTORY FIRE PROJECT, HANUKKAH LIGHTS IN THE BIG SKY; and Paul Bunyan Playhouse: TWELFTH NIGHT, BUS STOP. Kirby also has extensive commercial/industrial credits and holds a B.A. in Dramatic Arts from Macalester College.

“Kirby Bennett and I go way back to the “glory days” of the Mary Worth Theatre company of the 1990s, and I’ve always admired the ambitious work of Girl Friday Productions, says **Director Joel Sass**. “This project is a perfect pairing, and represents a wonderful opportunity for the tiny Open Eye stage to be the playground for one of the largest casts ever to inhabit it!”

Acclaimed Twin Cities’ theatre artist **Joel Sass** is both directing and creating the scenic design for LIFE SUCKS. Sass serves as Open Eye Theatre's Producing Artistic Director, after having first joined the company as Associate Producer in 2017. He has been based in the Twin Cities since 1991, working as a producer, stage director, designer, and adapter, specializing in the creation of new multi-disciplinary work for the stage and devising imaginative reinterpretations of classic texts. His work has been seen regionally and nationally at the Guthrie Theater, Jungle Theater, Park Square Theatre, History Theatre, Open Eye Theatre, Girl Friday Productions, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Arizona Theatre Company, among many others.

LIFE SUCKS features an accomplished ensemble cast of seven actors: **Kirby Bennett, Georgia Doolittle, Elizabeth Efteland, Jonathan Feld, Sam Landman, Jim Ramlet, and Taj Ruler**. Joining Sass on the design team are Lighting Designer **Kathy Maxwell**, Costume Designer **Claire Looker**, and Sound Designer **C Andrew Mayer**.

*“Spoiler alert: Most of us won’t get everything we want.” –Babs in LIFE SUCKS*

[PHOTOS: Download press images by Bruce Silcox](#)

### **About Girl Friday Productions**

Girl Friday Productions' mission is to nurture artists, inspire audiences and illuminate the human condition. Girl Friday Productions historically has chosen to focus on a singular major project every other year. The company's work is characterized by exceptional literature, humanity, relevance and stimulating theatricality. Founded in 2004 by Artistic Director Kirby Bennett, Girl Friday Productions' most recent productions were WINTERLIGHT (2020 virtual program), THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH (2019 *Star Tribune*, *City Pages*, *Lavender Magazine* critical acclaim), IDIOT'S DELIGHT (2017 *Lavender Magazine* notable performances), and THE MATCHMAKER (2015 year-end recognition from Twin Cities Theatre Bloggers). Other highlights include CAMINO REAL (2013 *Lavender Magazine* notable performances), STREET SCENE (2011 "Top Ten"/Year End Highlights in the *Star Tribune*, *Pioneer Press* and *Lavender Magazine*; Ivey Award for director), THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH (*MinnPost* "Favorite for 2009") and OUR TOWN (*Pioneer Press* "Top Ten Shows of 2007"). More information is available at [girlfridayproductions.org](http://girlfridayproductions.org).

### **About Open Eye Theatre**

Open Eye Theatre serves artists and audiences by advancing adventurous and imaginative arts programming. Open Eye Theatre is nationally recognized as a vibrant home for artists who create imaginative and profound experiences that open eyes, hearts, and minds through the power of amazing stories and unforgettable performances. Experience a thrilling array of original theatre, inventive puppetry, live music, and world-class storytelling from local, national, and international artists year-round in our cozy 90-seat theater in South Minneapolis, or find us in neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities with our summer Driveway Tour! More information is available at [openeyetheatre.org](http://openeyetheatre.org).

## **LIFE SUCKS**

More info and tickets: [openeyetheatre.org/life-sucks](http://openeyetheatre.org/life-sucks)

### **Tickets**

\$30 — General Admission

\$24 — Seniors

\$18 — Students

\$15 — Economic Accessibility

A limited number of \$15 Economic Accessibility tickets are available online for all performances. If not sold out, a limited number of pay-as-able tickets will be available at the door.

**Performance Schedule**

Thursday, Oct 12, 7:30pm Opening  
Friday, Oct 13, 7:30pm  
Saturday, Oct 14, 7:30pm  
Sunday, Oct 15, 2:00pm

Thursday, Oct 19, 7:30pm  
Friday, Oct 20, 7:30pm  
Saturday, Oct 21, 7:30pm  
Sunday, Oct 22, 2:00pm

Thursday, Oct 26, 7:30pm  
Friday, Oct 27, 7:30pm  
Saturday, Oct 28, 7:30pm  
Sunday, Oct 29, 2:00pm

Thursday, Nov 2, 7:30pm  
Friday, Nov 3, 7:30pm  
Saturday, Nov 4, 7:30pm  
Sunday, Nov 5, 2:00pm Closing

**Run Time**

90 minutes

**Age Recommendation**

Ages 14 and up.

**Accessibility**

Contact us at [boxoffice@openeyetheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@openeyetheatre.org) or 612-874-6338 for accessibility information and requests.

**Location and Parking**

Open Eye Theatre  
506 East 24<sup>th</sup> St., Minneapolis, MN 55404 ([Map](#))  
612-874-6338

Open Eye is located 2 blocks south of Franklin Ave between Portland Ave and 35W. Park for free in the Lutheran Social Services lot at 24th and Portland.

**COVID-19 Policy**

All audience members will be required to wear masks during our Sunday performances. All other shows are masking-optional. More info: [openeyetheatre.org/covid19-policy](https://openeyetheatre.org/covid19-policy)

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