



LIFE SUCKS

REGIONAL PREMIERE

By Aaron Posner

Directed by Rob Lutfy

SEASON SPONSORS

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LIFE SUCKS

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

How do we accept life on life's terms when life sucks?

Anton Chekhov was a writer and a doctor during the 1892 cholera outbreak. He experienced a similar health crisis to the one we are in today which also included mass quarantines, face masks, fear, and uncertainty. And along with it, similar psychological, existential, and emotional ramifications. During the outbreak he wrote to a friend, "I feel lonely, tired and full of worry... My soul is exhausted." Five years later, he wrote *Uncle Vanya* and one hundred and twenty years after that, Aaron Posner handed me *Life Sucks*. I didn't feel a strong need to do this play when I first read it. I loved it, but it didn't call to me in the same way Aaron's *Stupid F**king Bird* did. And then the last two years happened, I re-read the play and it punched me straight in the gut.

Working on *Life Sucks* in the era of COVID, the characters seem like they could have walked right off the street and up onto the stage. They are in a crisis much like we are - their crisis simply being life. They don't know how to actualize their dreams or to articulate hope. Hell, they don't even know how they'll wake up the next morning. But they do. The past few years have been hard and quiet and painful. For all of us. They have been so utterly Russian. Personally, the only thing I could do at times was look at myself and laugh. That's Chekhov. He always finds us when we need a lesson in acceptance. He asks us to find the timeless, ridiculous comedy in dealing with the circumstances life has dealt us.

Life Sucks is both Chekhov's and Posner's medicine for us. Chekhov asks us to look at our absurdities, contradictions, complexities and longings with radical honesty and a hell of a good sense of humor and Posner has taken the healing a step further. Unlike in *Uncle Vanya* one hundred and twenty years ago, you're a character in *Life Sucks* tonight.

Thank you for coming to the theater today. This play can't happen without you. You will see why.




ROB LUFTY | DIRECTOR

Thank you to our Associate Production Sponsors Mike & Rhoda Auer



Producers Circle donors Mike & Rhoda Auer love to support our most daring productions and anything directed by Rob Lutfy. They have been loyal supporters and friends of Cygnet Theatre from the beginning and we thank them for allowing us to continue to take artistic risks.



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LIFE SUCKS

BY **AARON POSNER**
DIRECTED BY **ROB LUTFY**

Associate Production Sponsors
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CAST

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

BEATRICE BASSO
FRANK DIPALERMO
PATTY GALLAGHER ◆
SAVANNA PADILLA
JORGE RODRIGUEZ ◆
MJ SIEBER ◆
EMILY SHACKELFORD ◆

UNDERSTUDIES
MEGAN CARMITCHEL
MANNY FERNANDES ■
MELISSA FERNANDES ■

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TIME
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Q&A with Playwright Aaron Posner

LIFE SUCKS



Q What draws you to the work of Chekov?

A I love his plays, in all their elegant, awkward brokenness. They speak to me — which I don't always think is a particularly healthy thing. They are just such brilliantly constructed comic dramas about the difficulty and ridiculousness of getting through the struggles of everyday life. There is something about the way his people are so horribly stuck in their own issues and dilemmas that I find really moving. They are almost all trying to be their best selves and move forward in their lives, but most of them are failing at that most of the time. There is love and loss and longing and pain... but not a lot of hope. Because to have hope, you have to be able to imagine a realistic path forward towards what you want, and too many of his characters lack that essential skill. This harsh reality makes the plays extremely fertile playgrounds for engaging, frustrating, well-intentioned people striving endlessly to get that they want... and making very little progress. I find this kind of story sad, funny, and aching human.

Q What are you looking forward to with the Cygnet version of *Life Sucks*?

A I so enjoyed the version Robby and his whole team did of my play *Stupid F**king Bird* some years ago, I'm eager to see how he —

and this unique, dynamic cast and design team — will reimagine the play for right now. The play is asking big, hard questions about how we live our lives in difficult times. So how the real world feels to the actors and the audience at this particularly moment really matters. The reality is, this play is very different from when I wrote it in 2015 because the world is so different. The issues that are most active in the minds and hearts of our audience will be very different. I will be eager to see where that leads the production, and how it will land with Cygnet audiences.

Q How has the pandemic altered or reinforced your own opinion on whether *Life Sucks* or not? Has it influenced your rewrite of the play this time around?

A Since I am answering these question while being sick with COVID, it certainly sucks a little right now! But no, not really, I guess I believe that life is complicated... and that we all live a lot of our lives standing at the corner of Suck and Not Suck, and have to choose which way to go every day. But sometimes those choices don't feel like choices at all, and sometimes they can be incredibly fraught. So I think the pandemic has just put one more challenge onto an already endlessly complicated playing field.

It has been fun to do some rewrites from hearing these marvelous actors, but I would say about half the rewrites are because I hear things different in the world now because of social/political realities, and about half is simply because I have gotten older and had had new experiences, and I am hearing conversation with actors that are brining up fertile territory for further exploration. I never think my plays are ever really “done”. At some point I just have to stop, and it gets performed or published, but the world lives on in me, and it is always a pleasure to get to go back and tinker around some and spend some time with new version of old friends, which is how I think about the folks who occupy this play.

Q Which character do you most identify with?

A Oh, the age old question! I might as well be honest, I identify in significant ways with nearly all of them. This is a very personal play for me, and there is a lot of me in it, lurking behind certain aspects of nearly every character, so it's honestly an impossible question to answer.

Cabaret Style Entertainment

MIXED-UP MUSICALS

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Some of San Diego's brightest stars perform songs from roles in which they would not traditionally be cast.

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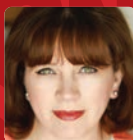
Musical Monday



Bryan Banville



Chris Bona



Melissa Fernandes



Shirley Johnston



Linda Libby



Patrick Marion

SONDHEIM CELEBRATION Apr. 4 @ 7pm **HEROES AND VILLAINS** July 18 @ 7pm

LEGACY SOCIETY HIGHLIGHT DR. LYNNE THROPE



Have you ever been to a Cygnet performance in which high school students were its audience? They inhabit this theatre once a run on a Wednesday morning. Sitting amongst them a few years ago, witness to their laughs, squeals, and gasps, convinced me to include Cygnet Theatre's Education and Arts Engagement Program in my estate planning. Cygnet's exquisite storytelling needs to continue to be accessible to people much younger than my demographic long after I'm gone. So, it's important for me to know that San Diego's students can continue to be rapt in the always stunning, frequently astonishing, and sometimes shocking work produced by Cygnet's amazing artists, directors and designers.

To learn more about Cygnet Theatre's Education and Arts Engagement Program go to <https://www.cygnettheatre.org/support/programs-to-support/youth-engagement/> or contact Tamara Carson at 619-574-0059 x130.

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CYGNET SWANS

The Swans are a volunteer group that takes great pride in bringing each new show cast under their wing, providing a delicious home cooked meal and treats. Many thanks to our swans: **Kate Bower, Diane Carpinelli, Connie Coe, Donna Cooley, Holiday Geiger, Susan Graceman, Yolanda Holcomb, Lori Jedlicka, Jeanne Lansdale, Joan Loomis, Linda & Rick Miles, Deborah Pantoni, Debbie Peck, Dr. Lynne Thrope, Julie Ustin, Barbara Wingate.** If you'd like to volunteer, contact us at volunteer@cygnettheatre.com.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

It's not always obvious when someone is in pain. If you or someone you know may be thinking about suicide, it's time to talk. Call the San Diego Access & Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240. Other mental health resources include NamiSanDiego.org and VistaHill.org.

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Are you a Cygnet Super Fan?

Join Us! Have fun with Cygnet friends and make new ones, all while supporting the theatre's mission and work. By joining the Cygnet Social Circle, you will have access to special member-only events, like Lunch with the Artists and Theatre Trips to LA. Cost is \$35 per person annually.

Questions? Please call **Barbara Bolt**, Cygnet Social Circle Chair, at 619-889-7121 or e-mail barbarabolt@me.com.

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Une soirée d'amour et de lumière

2022 Cygnet Gala
Sunday, April 24
US Grant Hotel

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All funds raised support Cygnet's artistic and arts engagement programs. Cygnet is a 501 © (3). Tax ID 57-1146474

PROFILES



BEATRICE BASSO
(she/her/hers)
Pickles

Beatrice Basso has performed at Long Wharf Theatre, YBCA, Cutting Ball Theater, CounterPulse, Brava Theater, The Front Gallery, and Santa Cruz Shakespeare. With Atosa Babao, Nora El Samahy and Emily Hoffman, she is founding member of "Affinity Project," whose piece was named one of "five wildest theatrical moments of 2015" by KQED. Bea is the lead in the short film *Laundry* by Danielle Katvan and has lent her voice to Guillermo del Toro's "*Crimson Peak*." Her directing credits include WOW Festival and Diversionary Theatre. Bea was cultural consultant on the Pixar film *Luca* and lectures at UCSD. **Beatrice Basso is sponsored by Artist Advocates Mike & Mimi Murray.**



MEGAN CARMITCHEL
(she/her/hers)
Sonya and Ella Understudy

She has also been seen at Cygnet in *Rock of Ages* and *A Little Night Music*. Other recent credits include Lamb's Players Theatre: *Alice!*, *Persuasion*, *Big Fish*, *OZ* (World Premiere), *You Can't Take it With You*, *Quilters*, *Fiddler on the Roof*; Diversionary Theatre: *Significant Other*, *A New Brain*, *Pippin*; New Village Arts: *Beehive: The 60's Musical*; The Old Globe: *The Last Goodbye* (World Premiere), *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*; La Jolla Playhouse: *Weatherman* (reading), *Without Walls Festival*; San Diego Repertory Theatre: *The Who's Tommy*; CCAE Theatricals: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*; Welk Resort Theatre: *South Pacific*, *Stepping Out*. Megan has also performed in and music directed shows at LEGOLAND, CA. She attended San

Francisco State University where she studied vocal performance and theatre.



FRANK DIPALERMO
(he/him/his)
The Professor

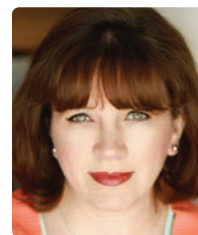
Frank DiPalermo received his MFA in fiction from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. In 2020 two of his poems were finalists in the Steve Kowit Poetry Prize, a flash hybrid piece appeared in *Ruminant Magazine*, a short story appeared in *Beyond Words* (an anthology of queer fiction), and two essays appeared in *The Whole Alphabet* (an anthology of essays by queer authors). He is currently at work on his novel, *Singing in Tongues*, about a queer young man born into a Catholic Charismatic family. *Life Sucks* is his return to the stage after a long, long absence. **Frank DiPalermo is sponsored by Artist Advocates Dr. & Mrs. Louis G. Gillerman.**



MANNY FERNANDES
(he/him/his)
The Professor and Vanya Understudy

Cygnet Resident Artist. Manny has appeared in over a dozen productions at Cygnet. Favorites include: *The Great Leap*, *The Last Wife* (San Diego Critics Circle nomination), *Gypsy*, *True West* (SDCC nomination), *Fool for Love*, *Travesties*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Assassins*, *Private Lives*, *Mauritius*, *Communicating Doors*. Select local credits include *Ring Round the Moon*, *Chaps*, *Once*, *Camping with Henry and Tom* (Lambs); *The Secret Garden*, *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, *Big River*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Of Mice and Men* (SDCC Award), *Golden Boy* (SDCC Award), *Simpatico* (New Village Arts); *Outside Mullingar*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cabaret* (San Diego Rep); *Anna in the Tropics* (Moonlight);

West Side Story (San Diego Musical Theatre); *Extraordinary Chambers* (Mo'olelo); *Jeffrey, Boys in the Band*, *Never the Sinner*, *Fifth of July* (Diversionary Theatre); *Arcadia*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *The Rivals* (North Coast Rep).



MELISSA FERNANDES
(she/her/hers)
Babs and Pickles Understudy

Cygnet Resident Artist. Cygnet: *La Cage aux Folles*, *On The 20th Century*, *Gypsy*, *The Whale*, *Assassins*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (nominee, San Diego Critics Circle), *Cabaret* (nominee, SDCC), *A Little Night Music*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. San Diego Theatre (select): ion Theatre: *Sunday in the Park with George* (nominee, SDCC); New Village Arts: *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Avenue Q*, *God of Carnage*, *Big River*, *Same Time*, *Next Year*, *Into the Woods* (nominee, SDCC), *The Seven Year Itch*, *The Full Monty*. Moonlight Theatre: *Sondheim on Sondheim* (nominee, SDCC). Moxie Theatre: *Eternally Bad*, *Mud Blue Sky*. Diversionary: *Falsettos*, *The Rocky Horror Show*. North Coast Rep: *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Regional: *Little Shop of Horrors* (Sierra Rep); *Harmony*, *The Car Plays* (La Jolla Playhouse) Education: MFA - Musical Theatre, SDSU. Awards: San Diego Critics Circle, Female Actor of the Year, 2016.



PATTY GALLAGHER ♦
(she/her/hers)
Babs

Patty Gallagher is an actor, choreographer, and director with specialties in Shakespeare, Beckett, and Clown. She has performed and taught in Asia, Europe, South America, and the US. Favorite roles include Maria Callas (*Master Class*, Jewel Theatre), Winnie (*Happy Days*, California

PROFILES

Shakespeare Theatre), Rosencrantz (*R&G Are Dead*, Rogue), Hoopoe (*Conference of the Birds*, Folger), The Dromios (*Comedy of Errors*, SCS), and Fool (*King Lear*, Rogue). She is a Fulbright Scholar (Ecuador), and an Artistic Associate at both Santa Cruz Shakespeare and the Rogue Theatre. She is a Theatre Professor at UC Santa Cruz, and received her Ph.D. from the UW-Madison. **Patty Gallagher is sponsored by Artist Advocates Lynn & Gertrude Mitchell.**



SAVANNA PADILLA
(she/her/hers)
Sonya

Savanna is an Actor and Teaching Artist originally from Humboldt County California. Theatre credits: *Shakespeare in Love*, *Mojada: A Medea* in Los Angeles, *Off the Rails* (U/S, Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Pick Me Last* (La Jolla Playhouse); *The Refugee Hotel* (Latinx Play Project); *The Madres*, *The Return of Tartuffe* (Ashland New Plays Festival); *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Oregon Fringe Festival); *Dream House* (Latinx New Play Festival); *Written in Stone* (LJP WOW Fest); *Saints Go Marching* (Ingenio Milagro Festival). SOU credits: *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *The Secret Garden*, *The Crucible*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Caliban's Dreams*, *Horse Girls*. UC San Diego credits: *Shame Spiral*, *Life is a Dream*, *Orestes 2.0*, *Elektra*, *HEAP*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. BFA in Acting: Southern Oregon University, MFA UC San Diego. **Savanna Padilla is sponsored by Artist Advocates Mike & Mimi Murray.**



JORGE RODRIGUEZ ♦
(he/him/his)
Dr. Astor

TV: *Dwight in Shining Armor*, *Days of our Lives*, *Terriers*. Theatre: *Sideways*, *El Henry*, *A Willow Grows Aslant* at La Jolla Playhouse.

PROFILES

Red Truck Blue Truck at Old Globe. *Into the Beautiful North, My Mañana Comes, Oedipus el Rey* at San Diego Rep. *Discourse on the Wonders of the Invisible World, References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* at Moxie Theatre. *Much Ado About Nothing* at New Village Arts. *Reasons to be Pretty, Julia* at Ion Theatre. *Seven Spots on the Sun* at Inner Misson. National campaign commercials: Walmart, Cricket, Celino and Barnes, The Barnes Firm. Studied acting with world-renowned master teacher Larry Moss for 4 years. Visit www.actorjorgerodriguez.com. **Jorge Rodriguez is sponsored by Artist Advocates Rob Watson & Maggie Riley-Hagen.**



MJ SIEBER ♦
(he/him/his)
Vanya

MJ is proud to be making his Cygnet and San Diego debut with *Life Sucks*.

Before the pandemic he lived in Seattle as an actor, director and filmmaker working regularly at the Seattle Rep (*Glengarry Glen Ross, Outside Mullingar, Dry Powder*), ACT Theatre (*Lt. of Inishmore, Olso, The Crucible, Stupid F**king Bird*) Seattle Shakes, Intiman, StrawShop, and was a founding member and associate artistic director of New Century Theatre Co. where he directed the west coast premiere of *The Flick* by Annie Baker. He exists mostly for his wife Keiko and their Bassett hound Gus. **MJ Sieber is sponsored by Artist Advocates Dean J. Haas, Nancy Sprotte.**



EMILY SHACKELFORD ♦
(she/her/hers)
Ella

Emily Shackelford is an AEA actor originally from San Diego. Recent Off-Broadway and regional credits include *Lucky Duck* (New Victory Theatre), *The*

Wolves (Syracuse Stage), *Indecent* (DC Arena Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, and Kansas City Repertory Theatre). To see more info visit emilyshackelford.com or find emily on Instagram @emilyareti.

Emily Shackelford is sponsored by Artist Advocates John S. & Patricia T. Baker.



AARON POSNER
(he/him/his)
Playwright

Aaron is an award-winning playwright, director, teacher, and former artistic director of two LORT

theatres. His Helen Hayes award-winning play, *Stupid F**king Bird*, was one of the ten most produced plays in the country in 2015. Other plays include *Life Sucks* and *No Sisters* (both re-inventions of Chekhov), *District Merchants* (inspired by *The Merchant of Venice*), *Who Am I This Time? & Other Conundrums of Love* (adapted from Kurt Vonnegut), *The Chosen* and *My Name Is Asher Lev* (adapted from Chaim Potok), *Sometimes a Great Notion* (adapted from Ken Kesey), and several more. He has directed more than 150 productions at major regional theaters across the country, and currently lives outside of D.C. with his wife, actress Erin Weaver, and his amazing daughter, Maisie. Member of Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, an Independent Labor Union.



ROB LUTFY
(he/him/his)
Director

Rob is the Associate Artistic Director at Cygnet Theatre. He was awarded the 2019 Craig Noel

Award for Director of the Year. Cygnet Theatre: *Life Sucks, The Great Leap, The Last Five Years, The Virgin Trial, Pride and Prejudice, Marie and Rosetta, Hir, Every Brilliant Thing, The Wind and the Breeze, The Last Wife, The Effect of Gamma*

*Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds, Shockheaded Peter, Bad Jews, Stupid F**ing Bird, When the Rain Stops Falling, Hay Fever, Sons of the Prophet, The Motherf**ker with the Hat*. He runs the new play programming at Cygnet. He has worked on plays in development at The Theatre at Boston Court, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Kennedy Center, The O'Neill Theatre Center, Burning Coal Theatre, The Hub Theatre and The Rensing Center. He has assisted directors at Shakespeare Theatre Company, Folger Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Arena Stage, The Kennedy Center and Marin Theatre Company. He was the 2014-2015 National New Play Network Producer-in-Residence at Marin Theatre Company, and the 2012-2013 William R. Kenan, Jr. Directing Fellow at The John F. Kennedy Center. Rob is a graduate of the directing program under Gerald Freedman at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. **Rob Lutfy is sponsored by Artist Advocates Jay & Julie Sarno.**

KIAN KLINE-CHILTON

(Asso. Artist Director & Casting Director) (he, they, Kiki) Kian is a queer multi hyphenate artist proudly serving as one of the Associate Artistic Directors and Casting Director for Cygnet. Some favorite directorial works include *La Cage Aux Folles, The Wind and The Breeze* (Cygnet Theatre), *Botticelli in the Fire* (Patchwork Theatre), *Stupid F**king Bird* (Skull and Dagger) and *This Bitter Earth* (Diversionsary Theatre). Kian holds a BA in Theatre from SDSU. He is the founder of Patchwork Theatre. The collective is dedicated to championing it's young and uprising community of artists and embracing new forms of theatre. He is thankful for the continuation to be an artist and to and is grateful for the continuous love and support in his endeavors.

WAVERLY BROOK STRICKLAND ♦

(Costume Design Fellow) Waverly Strickland is currently in her third year of the MFA Design and Technology

program at SDSU. During her program here, she has designed *Miku, and the gods, Pippin* and *RE: Euridice/Orfeo* and works as a G.A. in the costume shop. She received her B.A. in Costume Design and Technology from College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. Waverly worked at Playhouse on the Square in Memphis, TN as the Associate Company Costume Designer/Technician for two years. Her past designs include *Madagascar: The Musical Adventure, Junie B. Jones: The Musical, All Saints in the Old Colony, Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Stage Door, and Waiting for Godot.*

PETER HERMAN (Wig & Makeup Designer) Cygnet Resident Artist.

Cygnet Theatre: Costumes and Wig/Makeup Design for *Shakespeare's R&J, Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. Wigs/Makeup Design for *The Last Wife, Shockheaded Peter, On the 20th Century, Bad Jews, Seven Guitars, King Hedley II, Gypsy, Stupid F**king Bird, The Rocky Horror Show, When the Rain Stops Falling, Hay Fever, The Vortex, Dogfight, My Fair Lady, Sons of the Prophet, Pageant, Fool for Love, True West, The Motherf**ker with the Hat, Spring Awakening, Maple and Vine, The Importance of Being Earnest, Travesties, Company, Assassins, A Christmas Carol, Gem of the Ocean, Mistakes Were Made, Man of La Mancha, Dirty Blonde, Parade, and many more*. Elsewhere: Peter has designed hair and wigs for over 300 productions, including the La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Rep, San Diego Opera and Disneyland. Peter currently teaches wig and makeup at SDSU.

TERESA JOVE (Properties Designer)

(they/she) Teresa Jove is deeply grateful and honored to be a part of this production. They had the privilege of working on *La Cage Aux Folles* and *A Christmas Carol* here at Cygnet Theatre. Previously worked with San Diego Repertory Theatre (*Sweat, 33 1/3 House of Dreams, Bad Hombre Good Wives and The Humans*) and San Diego Musical Theatre (*Bring It On, South Pacific* and

PROFILES

Hairspray). She would like to give special thanks to all her friends and family who have been supporting and encouraging them to pursue their passion.

MINJOO KIM (Lighting Designer)

Minjoo Kim is excited to return to Cygnet Theatre with *Life Sucks*. Her collective lighting design credits include *The Great Leap* (Round House Theatre), *The Chief* (Pittsburgh Public Theater), *One in Two* (Diversionary Theatre), *Bette Davis Ain't for Sissies* (Mile Square Theatre), *The Two* (Space Owl), *The Great Leap* (Cygnet Theatre), *Quiet No More* (San Diego Women's Chorus), *Qulili* (The Blindspot), *IDEAS-Cetacea* (Calit2 Theater, Atkinson Hall), *Crimson Girl* (Dongsoong Art Center), *Die or Not* (Seoul Art Space Mullae), *Mask on/off* (Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre). Her work *Othello* got selected in the Emerging Artist/Imagination Exhibit from the USA at Prague Quadrennial in 2019 as well as Emerging Artist Exhibition of World Stage Design 2022. Check out her work on her website: minjoo-design.com

YI-CHIEN LEE (Scenic Designer)

Yi-Chien is a San Diego-based set designer working in theatre and film. She received MFA in Scenic Design at UC San Diego. Her work for "Moon drunk" was selected for the Emerging Artist/Imagination Exhibit in the 2019 Prague Quadrennial, and "Un-Tongue" was exhibited in The 28th Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre. Recent scenic design projects include *About Chia-Yi* (Our Theatre), *Burn* (STR Network), *The Great Leap* (Cygnet Theatre), *The Winter's Tale* (The Old Globe, Globe For All), *Girlfriend, A Kind of Weather, Best Lesbian Erotica 1995* (Diversionary Theatre, San Diego). portfolio: yichienlee.com **Yi-Chien Lee is sponsored by Artist Advocate Artist Dianne Sullivan.**

STEVEN LEFFUE (Sound Designer)

Steven Leffue is a sound designer and musician. He is currently Associate Director of the Ohio University School

of Theater, as well as professor of sound design. He is a co-founder and board member of JACK, Brooklyn (jackny.org), and is Director of the Americas Region for the International Computer Music Association (computermusic.org). You may have seen some of his other Cygnet work: *Angels in America, parts 1&2*, *Every Brilliant Thing*, *The Wind and the Breeze*. www.stevenleffue.com.

KATE MCLEOD (Asst. Stage Manager) (she/her/hers) Kate McLeod is excited to join Cygnet Theatre as assistant stage manager. Previous credits include stage manager (*The Tempest, mon(U) mental, Elektra*) at UCSD, assistant stage manager (*The Drowning Girls*) at On Stage Productions and assistant stage manager/sound designer with Center Stage Productions for 8 years. You can see her current projects at bit.ly/kmcleod76

HANNAH MEADE (Asst. Director) (she/her/hers) is an early-career director and choreographer currently residing in San Diego, CA. After growing up in Houston, Hannah attended Sam Houston State University to receive a BFA in theatre with an emphasis in directing. Hannah enjoys new play development and has participated in La Jolla Playhouse's *With Out Walls* (WOW) Festival, the Alley All New Festival and The Kennedy Center MFA Playwrights' Workshop. Some directing credits include *Actually* (SHSU) *NSFW* (Stages Theatre) and *Murder for Two* (Stages Theatre)

MICHAEL MIZERANY (Movement Director) Choreography Credits (selected): At Cygnet: *Spring Awakening, Shockheaded Peter* and *Pride & Prejudice*. Other Theatres: *Altar Boyz, Dooley, Scrooge In Rouge, Thrill Me, Bare: A Pop Opera, A New Brain and Tryst* (Diversionary Theatre), *Grey Gardens* and *Cabaret* (Ion Theatre), *The Full Monty* and *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (New Village Arts), *All Shook Up* (SDMT), *Voyeurs De Venus* (Moxie Theatre) and *Bay Boy: The Musical, Rocky*

Horror, American Idiot and *Heathers: The Musical* (OB Playhouse). Michael has been the recipient of numerous awards including the LA Stage Scene Award for Outstanding Choreography for *Altar Boyz, Bare: A Pop Opera, A New Brain and Shockheaded Pete*, and the Bravo SD Award for Outstanding Choreographer of 2012. He has been nominated five times for a Craig Noel Theater Award for Outstanding Choreography for *Dooley* (2011), *Altar Boyz* (2012), *Spring Awakening* and *Bare: A Pop Opera* (2014) and *Voyeurs De Venus* (2019).

SHRILEY PIERSON (Costume Designer) **Cygnet Resident Artist** Selected Cygnet Productions: *The Great Leap*, Kate Hamill's *Pride and Prejudice*, *Angels in America Millennium Approaches and Perestroika*, *Hir, Shockheaded Peter, Wind and the Breeze, Pageant, The Importance of Being Earnest, Travesties, Assassins*, WCYG *A Christmas Carol, Parade, Spring Awakening, Mistakes Were Made, Glass Menagerie, Little Shop of Horrors, Our Town, Cabaret, Sweeney Todd, Private Lives, It's a Wonderful, History Boys, A Christmas Carol*. Other Local Favorites: The Old Globe: *Hurricane Diane, Tiny Beautiful Things, Ken Ludwig's Baskerville*, Diversionary Theatre: *The Moors, Marry Me A Little, The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabbler, Pippin, Harmony Kansas*, and *Next Fall*. shirleypiersondesigns.com. **Shirley Pierson is sponsored by Artist Advocate Robin Luby.**

DEAN REMINGTON ♦ (Stage Manager)

Cygnet Resident Artist. Dean is thrilled to return to the Cygnet for *Life Sucks* having completed successful runs of *The Virgin Trial, Pride and Prejudice, Every Brilliant Thing, The Wind and the Breeze, A Christmas Carol, The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds, Shockheaded Peter, When the Rain Stops Falling*, and *Stupid F**king Bird*. National Tours include *The Lion King* and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. In the UK he was delighted to work with Cameron Mackintosh on his musical, *Hey, Mr. Producer!* Other highlights include

The Luckiest, the Annual Gala and the WoW Festival for La Jolla Playhouse; *Outside Mullingar* and the world premiere of *Manifest Destinities* at San Diego Repertory Theatre; *The Outsider* at North Coast Repertory; as well as international productions of *Grease, 42nd Street, Anything Goes, A Chorus Line* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*.



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Cygnet Theatre recognizes and respects that the land on which our theatre sits is the unceded homeland of the Kumeyaay Nation, who have been living time immemorial. As San Diego's first people, the Kumeyaay have faced violent efforts to separate them from their land, culture, and each other. We view acknowledgement as an important first step to build mindfulness and awareness. We find inspiration from this land and thank them for their centuries of stewardship.

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