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**AGAIN, BY LOCAL KATIE KA VANG & MELISSA LI, MAKES ITS
WORLD PREMIERE AT THEATER MU**

The Hmong American musical will run at Mixed Blood Theatre
from Mar 31-Apr 16, 2023

(Minneapolis/Saint Paul) – Local Hmong American playwright and theater artist [Katie Ka Vang](#) returns to Theater Mu for the world premiere of her and [Melissa Li](#)'s musical, *Again*. Weaving together unlikely friendships, complex family dynamics, and original songs, *Again* runs Mar 31-Apr 16 at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis (previews Mar 29 & 30). The story begins when cancer survivor Mai See, a successful memoirist who can't seem to get her life together, meets Quest, an aspiring filmmaker who is battling chronic cancer herself. Inspired by Mai See's work, Quest asks her to star in her documentary. Although Mai See reluctantly agrees, they're both thrown for a loop when Mai See discovers she has relapsed.

"I want to tell a story that highlights the nuances most folks wouldn't normally see when dealing with cancer," says Vang, who also created plays such as *WTF*, which made its world premiere at Mu in 2011. She adds, "As someone who survived cancer, it was also important for me to have moments of levity and magic."

While the tagline for this irreverent and heartfelt show is "a musical about what to do when sh*t happens," Li refers to it as a musical about discovering what in life is worth keeping and what is worth letting go. "Katie has created a beautiful show that's heartfelt and funny, with characters who are imperfect and relatable, so my approach as a songwriter was to lean into the pop/rock musical style, where we can dig into the angst but also the joy of each moment," she says.

The duo has been together since 2020, but Vang technically began working on the story in 2017, when Mu accepted her play pitch about an all-female band and commissioned it with help from the Jerome Foundation. As Vang began working on the initial script, though, she kept hitting writer's block until a friend's musical reading made her think that music could convey the nuances she was struggling to articulate. Vang connected with Li through Mu, and the two of them began their collaboration from Minnesota and New York, respectively, evolving and settling into their creative roles.

In the end, *Again*'s book and additional lyrics are by Vang, and music and lyrics are by Li. Like all good partnerships, though, their efforts have intertwined to become something greater than a sum of its parts.

“Whether we’ve experienced cancer ourselves or cared for a loved one, most of us can connect with *Again’s* humor and heartbreak,” says Mu artistic director Lily Tung Crystal. “When Mu held *Again’s* first public reading at our [New Eyes Festival](#) last spring, the musical brought the audience to tears and impacted them in astonishing ways, and it’s particularly exciting that *Again’s* three leads are all played by Hmong American women. We at Mu are proud to produce *Again* as part of our [30th anniversary season](#) and believe it will be a special, even revolutionary, theatrical event.”

Portraying the cast are Dexieng “Dae” Yang as Mai See ([Man of God](#), 2022); Melody Herr as Quest; internationally recognized singer Pagnia Xiong as Shia, Mai See’s sister; and Aaron Komo as ensemble roles ([Blended 和 \[Harmony\]: The Kim Loo Sisters musical reading](#), 2023). Nana Dakin, who directed *Again’s* public reading in 2022, will also be helming its mainstage debut.

Please contact Lianna McLernon (lianna@theatermu.org) with any media requests such as press tickets, interviews, and photo/video assets. Press Night is Friday, Mar 31.

TICKET INFORMATION: Pay As You Are pricing asks those who routinely pay \$45 for theater tickets to pay that amount—it’s the market value—but if an audience member needs to pay less, they can choose to do so, as low as \$10. Tickets and more information are available at (651) 789-1012 or theatermu.org.

COVID-19 POLICY: Masks, preferably KN95s or N95s, are required at all Sunday performances. Mu recommends guests wear masks while attending any show, however, and the staff encourages those who feel unwell to stay at home. (Guests can reschedule their tickets within 48 hours of the performance.) Any policy updates will be communicated on [Mu’s COVID-19 web page](#).

THEATER MU (pronounced MOO) is the largest Asian American theater company in the Midwest. Founded in 1992, Mu tells stories from the heart of the Asian American experience, presenting a fusion of traditional and contemporary artistic influences, which range from classics to up-and-coming voices in our community. Theater Mu’s continuing goal to celebrate and empower the Asian American community through theater is achieved through mainstage productions, emerging artist support, and educational outreach programs. Theater Mu is a member of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists as well as a member of the Twin Cities Theatres of Color Coalition, proudly standing alongside New Native Theatre, Pangea World Theater, Penumbra Theatre, and Teatro Del Pueblo. | theatermu.org

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