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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Chicago Humanities Festival  
Hosts Author Gary Shteyngart  
Author of the Just-Published Memoir *Little Failure*  
In Conversation with Aleksandar Hemon  
Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014 at First United Methodist Church**

**CHICAGO, IL—Jan. 8, 2013—**The Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) hosts author **Gary Shteyngart** in conversation with Chicago writer **Aleksandar Hemon** on **Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014 at 6 p.m.** at **First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple** (77 W Washington St). Shteyngart's only Chicago appearance comes on the heels of his just-published memoir *Little Failure*, which is receiving rave reviews from critics. Hailed by *The New York Times* as "hilarious and moving," *Little Failure* details Shteyngart's childhood in Leningrad to his adolescence in Queens. Shteyngart joins Hemon, another brilliantly funny immigrant who found his calling as an American writer, to discuss his life and career. Tickets are on sale now at [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org).

"We are thrilled to welcome Gary Shteyngart to Chicago!" said **CHF Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**. "His voice is among the most unique of contemporary American writers—fierce and funny, deeply honest and full of hyperbole. We are delighted to have him in conversation about *Little Failure*, which is earning well-deserved accolades across the literary spectrum."

Born in Leningrad in 1972, Gary Shteyngart came to the United States at the age of seven. He is the author of *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, *Super Sad True Love Story*, and *Absurdistan*, which was chosen as one of the ten best books of 2006 by *The New York Times Book Review* and *Time* magazine, as well as a book of the year by the *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*. His work has also appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Travel & Leisure*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. In June 2010, Shteyngart was named one of *The New Yorker* magazine's "20 under 40" luminary fiction writers. Shteyngart's new memoir, *Little Failure*, was released on Jan. 7, 2014 to critical acclaim.

"*Little Failure* is Gary Shteyngart's best, funniest and saddest book to date," said **Hemon**. "It turns out that the greatest wrangler of the English sentence in America and the funniest man in the world is also a human being. I can't wait to talk to him about it all."

Aleksandar Hemon is the author of the *The Lazarus Project*, *The Question of Bruno*, *Nowhere Man*, *Love and Obstacles*, and *The Book of My Lives*. Born in Sarajevo, Hemon traveled to Chicago in 1992, intending to stay for a matter of months. During his visit, Sarajevo came under siege, preventing him from returning home. He currently lives in Chicago with his wife and daughters.

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For more information about the **Gary Shteyngart/Aleksandar Hemon** program, visit [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org). Tickets are on sale now at [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org) or through the **CHF Box Office** at 312-494-9509, Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. **Tickets range from \$10–15, with a limited number of reduced-price tickets available for students and teachers (with valid ID).** A \$6 per order processing fee is applied to all pre-event sales. Tickets are \$5 more per ticket at the door.

**CHF Winter 2014 Schedule:**

**G=General Admission, M=CHF Member, ST=Students**



**[Little Failure: Gary Shteyngart in Conversation with Aleksandar Hemon](#)**

**Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014 | 6 p.m.**

**First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5**

**Book/ticket packages also available—see [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org) for details**

Gary Shteyngart is the unlikely offspring of Anton Chekhov and Judd Apatow. His new memoir, *Little Failure*, takes us from his Lenin-loving, ratty-fur-overcoat-wearing childhood in Russia to the triumphs and catastrophes of his Queens adolescence. Shteyngart will be joined in conversation by Aleksandar Hemon, another brilliantly funny immigrant who found his calling as an American writer.



**[Vampires in the Lemon Grove: A Conversation with Karen Russell](#)**

**Thursday, Feb. 13, 2014 | 6 p.m.**

**First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5**

The worlds of writer Karen Russell are wild and weird. Her latest, *Vampires in the Lemon Grove*, is no exception. Who else would morph Japanese women into silkworms, expose the surprising antidote to a vampire couple's bloodthirsty inclinations, and rewrite the Iraq war by entering the tattooed back of a veteran? *Time Out Chicago's* Laura Pearson will join this sublime storyteller, newly minted MacArthur Fellow, and one of the *New Yorker's* "20 Under 40," as she reinvents magical realism for our generation.



**[Mohsin Hamid: How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia](#)**

**Anita and Prabha Sinha Program | Tuesday, March 11, 2014 | 6 p.m.**

**First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5**

Who doesn't love a get-rich-quick scheme? That's the conceit of Mohsin Hamid's witty and wicked novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, which cleverly mimics the self-help genre to tell the story of one man's rise from rural poverty to massive wealth. Hamid, a Booker Prize finalist and *The New York Times* bestselling author, gives voice to the relentless churning of our global moment.

**About the Chicago Humanities Festival**

The Chicago Humanities Festival began in 1989 as a dream shared by a determined group of Chicago's cultural leaders eager to extend the riches of the humanities to everyone. Since that first year, some of the world's most exciting thinkers, artists, and performers have come to Chicago each fall for a festival that celebrates ideas in the context of civic life. Past Festival themes include Laughter, The Body, tech knowledge, America, and last year's **Animal: What Makes Us Human**. Under the leadership of **Executive Director Phillip Bahar** and **Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**, CHF partners with Chicago's premier cultural institutions and the festival has become an annual highlight for thousands of people from Chicago and beyond. In addition to the annual fall festival, CHF also presents the spring **Stages, Sights & Sounds**, a global performance festival for families, students, and theatergoers of any age, and programs throughout the year that encourage the study and enjoyment of the humanities. Visit [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org) for more information.