



LUCKY PLUSH PRODUCTIONS
TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC: THE MAKING OF SUPERSTRIP

Thursday, October 27, 2016, at 7:30pm
Colwell Playhouse

PROGRAM

LUCKY PLUSH PRODUCTIONS

TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC: THE MAKING OF SUPERSTRIP

Created, directed, and choreographed by Julia Rhoads

DEvised IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ENSEMBLE

Michel Rodriguez Cintra
Springster

Elizabeth Luse
Professor Visionné

Meghann Wilkinson
Sparky Lightstep

Jeff Ewing
Shadow*

Jamy Meek
The Big Liberjinski**

Sojourner Zenobia
Onstage Media Artist

Daniel Gibson
Rapid Glitch

Melinda Jean Myers
Mmm

COLLABORATING DESIGNERS/PRODUCTION TEAM

Liviu Pasare
Video/Media Design

Kevin Rechner
Lighting Design

Leslie Buxbaum Danzig
Production Consultant

Michael Caskey
Original Music

Jeff Hancock
Costume Design

Brandon Reed
Audio Engineer

Mikhail Fiksel
Sound Design

Scott Nelson
Production Stage Manager

RECONTEXTUALIZED REFERENCES (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Invocation salute, Patti Eylar and Micki Selander

El año en que nació/The Year I Was Born, Lola Arias (2012)

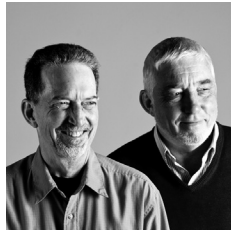
I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing, The New Seekers (1971)

*Lucky Plush appears by arrangement with:
David Lieberman/Artists Representatives
Post Office Box 10368
Newport Beach, CA 92658
714.979.4700 | info@dlartists.com*

**Special thanks to Marc Macaranas for his contributions to originating the role of Shadow
**Special thanks to Benjamin Wardell for his contributions to originating the role of The Big Liberjinski*

THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF THIS PERFORMANCE

Krannert Center honors the spirited generosity of these committed sponsors whose support of this performance continues to strengthen the impact of the arts in our community.



JERALD WAY & DIRK MOL

Thirty-Two Previous Sponsorships
Two Current Sponsorships

JOIN THESE INSPIRING DONORS BY CONTACTING OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM TODAY:

KrannertCenter.com/Give • development@krannertcenter.illinois.edu • 217.333.1629

PROGRAM NOTES

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I could not be more excited about this project, and inspired by my collaborators who helped me bring it to life. The idea for *SuperStrip* was sparked after reading the works of contemporary graphic novelists like Emily Carroll, Alison Bechdel, Fabien Vehlmann, and Kerascoët, followed by late-night binges of pulp superhero magazines. I started to draw parallels between the fictional realms of superhero leagues and the everyday dramas of real life do-gooders, which hit close to home with my experience running a nonprofit organization.

Lucky Plush's ensemble-based approach is fitting for the community-of-supers context of *SuperStrip*. In the studio, I began by orchestrating elaborate games with bygone costume pieces and anthropomorphic sidekicks, and the work started to emerge. The awkwardness, joy, chaos, and undeniable skill of my collaborators charged my ongoing curiosity about the ways in which comedy is often in close proximity to the tragedy of our lives. While we had great fun riffing on the exhausting tropes and circularity of meeting culture, we drew great inspiration from our collective efforts, and the efforts of people everywhere, to make the biggest impact with limited resources in order to simply do good.

Thank you for your presence here tonight.

—Julia Rhoads, Artistic Director

TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC: THE MAKING OF SUPERSTRIP is commissioned and presented by the Harris Theater for Music and Dance and the Pamela Crutchfield Dance Fund through the Imagine Campaign. Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign supported *SuperStrip* through its 2015 Intensive Development Lab with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Further support for *SuperStrip* is provided through a creation grant and a residency grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a project grant from the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, as well as development and residency support from The Yard (Martha's Vineyard) and Hope College.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lucky Plush extends its deepest gratitude to Mike Ross and the rest of the staff of Krannert Center for their generosity and support in this presentation of *SuperStrip*. We are also grateful to our amazing collaborators: the designers and production personnel and to the ensemble for their generosity, thoughtfulness, and insanely diverse talents. *SuperStrip* is the sum of so many invaluable parts.

We would like to thank our project and season funders: Alphawood Foundation, Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events CityArts Program, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, GCM Grosvenor, The Grover Hermann Foundation, Myra Camille Holland Foundation, Illinois Arts Council Agency, MacArthur Funds for Arts and Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation International Connections Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Peter G. & Elizabeth Torosian Foundation.

We would also like to thank all of our individual donors, with an extra special thanks to our “Producers Circle” (donations of \$500 or more who made the creation of *SuperStrip* possible): Elaine Adams, Pamela Crutchfield, Matthew DeYoung, Jennifer and Scott Edgcomb, Charles Gardner & Patti Eylar, Ginger Farley and Bob Shapiro, GCM Grosvenor, Martin C. V. Johnson Jr., Elizabeth Liebman, Susan Manning and Douglas Doetsch, Susan Parker O’Connell and Scott O’Connell, Raymond and Nancy Powers, Mary and Kevin Rechner, Stacey Recht, Geoff and Nicole Rhoads, Paul and Kay Vee Rhoads, Bette Rosenstein and John Brix, Mark Shevitz and CBD Marketing, Dick and Mary Beth Weiss, and Bobbi Zabel.

ABOUT THE COMPANY



LUCKY PLUSH PRODUCTIONS is a Chicago-based dance theatre company led by founder and Artistic Director Julia Rhoads. Lucky Plush is committed to provoking and supporting an immediacy of presence—palpable liveness—shared by performers in real time with audiences. A unique hybrid of high-level dance and theater, Lucky Plush’s work is recognized for its layered choreography, moving content, surprising humor, and socially relevant storytelling.

Since 2000, Lucky Plush has created 30 original dance-theater works including 14 evening-length productions. In addition to regularly performing in Chicago, the company has presented work in over 40 US cities from Maine to Hawaii, and its international partners span from New Zealand to Cuba. Presenting venues include Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (Massachusetts), Spoleto Festival/USA (South Carolina), Portland Ovation (Maine), ODC (California), Maui Arts and Cultural Center (Hawaii), Skirball Center (New York City), and NC State LIVE (North Carolina), among others. Commissioning presenters include Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, The Yard (Massachusetts), Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (Maryland), Flynn Center for the Performing Arts (Vermont), and Links Hall Chicago.

Lucky Plush is the first and only dance company to receive the prestigious MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, a recognition of the company’s exceptional creativity and impact. Lucky Plush has also received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, NEFA’s National Dance Project, National Performance Network, Illinois Arts Council, Metlife Foundation, and the Lester and Hope Abelson Fund. Press features include *Boston Globe’s* “10 Best Dance Performances of 2013,” Chicago Public Radio’s “Best of 2011,” and *Time Out Chicago’s* “The Decade’s 10 Best Original Dance Works” and cover story “5 Reasons to Love Dance in Chicago,” among others.

Lucky Plush is also recognized for its innovative arts management practices. The company’s leadership received a Fractured Atlas Arts Entrepreneurship Award for initiating Creative Partners, a fundraising model that provides a shared development staff for Lucky Plush and two other nationally recognized companies: Eighth Blackbird, a multiple Grammy Award-winning contemporary music ensemble; and Blair Thomas & Co., Chicago’s source for intimate and handmade puppet theater.

www.luckyplush.com
Facebook: Lucky Plush Productions
Twitter: @LuckyPlush
Instagram: @luckyplush #TeamPlush

LUCKY PLUSH STAFF

Julia Rhoads

Producing Artistic Director

Kim Goldman

Managing Director

Laura Flamion

Finance and Grants Manager

Anne Cauley

Development Director, Creative Partners

Meggie Keiser

Development Associate, Creative Partners

Marc Macaranas

Social Media Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan O'Connell, Chair

Julie Englander, Secretary

Katie Leander

Stacey Recht

Julia Rhoads

ADVISORY BOARD

Pamela Crutchfield

Jennifer Edgcomb

Matt Hoffman and HMS Media

CONTACT US

Julia Rhoads, Producing Artistic Director

julia@luckyplush.com

773.862.9484

www.luckyplush.com

Lucky Plush Productions is a nonprofit organization. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law: luckyplush.com/donate

PROFILES

JULIA RHOADS (Creator/Director/Choreographer) is the founding Artistic Director of Lucky Plush Productions and created over 25 works with the company, several of which have toured extensively throughout the US and internationally. Rhoads' independent choreography credits include Steppenwolf Theatre's *Love Kills*, Lookingglass Theatre's *The Great Fire*, Walkabout Theater's *Mama: A Play for Voices*, Redmoon's *Project Y*, River North Chicago Dance Company's *Oasis* and *Between Three*, among others, and she will create a new work for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in 2017. Rhoads is the recipient of the 2013 Alpert Award in Dance, a fellowship from the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, a Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist Award, a Cliff Dwellers Choreography Award, two Illinois Arts Council Fellowships for Choreography, a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, and a 2014 Fractured Atlas Arts Entrepreneurship Award for her work with Creative Partners. She was named as one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" in 2010, and was three times named in *Newcity's* "Players: The 50 People Who Really Perform for Chicago." Rhoads is a former member of the San Francisco Ballet and ensemble member of XSIGHT! Performance Group. She received her BA in History from Northwestern University, her MFA in Performance from the School of the Art Institute Chicago, and she taught in the dance and theater programs of several Chicago-area colleges and universities. She is currently a Part-time Lecturer and Dance Advisor at University of Chicago's department of Theater and Performance Studies.

MICHEL RODRIGUEZ CINTRA (Springster) was born in Havana and is a former member of Danza Contemporanea de Cuba and Hedwig Dances. Her choreography credits include three

works for Hedwig, one of which was a finalist in the A.W.A.R.D Show 2010. Cintra was one of "The Men of 2010" by *Time Out Chicago* and is the recipient of the 2013 3Arts Award in Dance. In addition to being an ensemble member of Lucky Plush Productions, he is a member of The Cambrians, through which he co-created two works including *The Nexus Project*, which was one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" in 2014. Cintra is currently an adjunct faculty member at Columbia College Chicago.

DANIEL GIBSON (Rapid Glitch) is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, where he formally trained in African, hip hop, jazz, modern, tap, ballet, and breakdance. Gibson earned a BFA in dance from the University of Georgia, and upon graduating, he joined a national tour with 13th Floor Performing Arts as a featured performer and choreographer. Shortly after, he moved to Chicago where he performed for Culture Shock Chicago, Chicago Dance Crash, the Seldoms, 5 Star Boogie, Elephant Filmworks, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, a national campaign for UPS, Johnny Dangerous, and Kid Sister with Kanye West. He was also a featured dancer in the short film *Wonderland or Humans Who Dance and Talk*.

JEFF EWING (Shadow) is from Torrance, California, where he began his classical ballet training at the age of six. He trained at the Juilliard Summer intensive, the apprentice program at The Chautauqua Institution, and assisted Cathy Young at Bates Dance Festival. Ewing apprenticed for Terpsicorps Theatre of Dance for three seasons and as a member of the company for another two. At the Boston Conservatory he earned a BFA in Dance Performance where he worked with Danny Pelzig, Cathy Young, Gianni DiMarco, Diane Arvanites,

Doug Elkins, Adam Barruch, Omar Carrum and Claudia Lavista. He spent a year dancing with Charlotte Ballet's second company where he performed the works of Mark Diamond, Dwight Rhoden, and David Ingram.

ELIZABETH LUSE (Professor Visionné) started dancing at The School of Performing Arts in Orlando, Florida, and continued her dance education at Indiana University where she studied with Violette Verdy, Guoping Wang, and Leslie Peck. Professionally, Luse danced with Winifred Haun and Dancers, Nomi Dance Company, Dance in the Parks, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Her guest appearances include Ballet Quad Cities, Madison Ballet, and Ron de Jesus Dance and she currently works as a guest artist with Emily Stein. Luse taught for Visceral Dance Center and is on faculty at the Joffrey Academy of Chicago.

JAMY MEEK (The Big Liberjinski) is a native of Lubbock, Texas, who enjoyed a 13-year career with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago – first with founder Lou Conte, then under the direction of Jim Vincent. He then joined Nederlands Dans Theater in The Hague for three years. Since his return to Chicago, he performed with the Goodman Theatre's production of *Brigadoon*, Lyric Opera Chicago in *The Merry Widow*, and joined The Cambrians contemporary dance company for *The Nexus Project: Autumn and Jamy*. Meek taught master classes in ballet, jazz, and contemporary modern throughout the United States and holds a BFA in Dance Performance from Oklahoma City University.

MELINDA JEAN MYERS (Mmm) is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in Dance at the University of Iowa. Along with teaching dance classes and performing with Lucky Plush Productions, she creates interdisciplinary ensemble works and one-woman cabaret performances. Her works were presented throughout the Midwest, New York City,

Germany, and South Korea. She received her MFA from the University of Iowa (2012) and BFA from New York University (2005). She was honored to perform and tour internationally with the Trisha Brown Dance Company for four years (2006-2010) and currently re-stages their repertory.

MEGHANN WILKINSON (Sparky Lightstep) is in her 12th season with Lucky Plush Productions. She is a former company member of Mordine and Company and performed with Smith/Wymore Disappearing Acts, Cie Felix Ruckert, Raizel Performances, and Peter Carpenter Performance Project. Wilkinson was a guest teacher and choreographer for Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, Cecchetti Council of America, and Evanston Dance Ensemble. She was Assistant Choreographer for Lookingglass Theatre's *The Great Fire* and movement director for Walkabout Theater's *Crow*. Wilkinson organized for the Chicago Seminar on Dance and Performance and the Society of Dance History Scholars. She taught at Northwestern University, Dance Center Evanston, and Visceral Dance Chicago, and is currently on faculty in the dance program at Columbia College Chicago.

SOJOURNER ZENOBIA (Onstage Media Artist) graduated from Naropa University with a BFA in Interdisciplinary Performance and a minor in Buddhist Philosophy. In 2008 she founded Soul Journey Productions under which she works as a freelance solo artist and director. She completed the School at Steppenwolf in 2009 and Pantheatre's experimental vocal technique training in 2011. In 2015 she joined Chicago Folklore Ensemble as the resident storyteller. She finds purpose working the "underground" Chicago performance scene where the most innovative and heart-full artists dwell. She is excited to be a part of *SuperStrip* with Lucky Plush Productions, a company that boldly integrates text and movement with a diverse representation of bodies on stage.

MICHAEL CASKEY, aka Bunny Patootie, (Music Composition) hails from rural Southwestern Michigan. He performed with artists such as Chuck Mangione, Koko Taylor, Toni Tenille, Danilo Perez, Marvin Hamlisch, John Sinclair, Grazyna Auguscik, oh my god, Goran Ivanovic, the Grammy-nominated Heritage Blues Orchestra, Hood Smoke, Leslie Hunt, Ron Perillo, and Striding Lion Performance Group. As a member of Eastern Blok, a pan-cultural Chicago-based ensemble, Caskey presented concerts and masterclasses at numerous educational institutions such as Princeton, Cornell, Carnegie Mellon, and University of Michigan, among others. A *DownBeat Magazine* award winner and five-time Detroit Music Award recipient, Caskey performed for audiences throughout North America and Europe. He also created original music and sound design for Hedwig Dances, Zephyr Dance, Same Planet Different World, Peter Carpenter, and members of Mad Shak.

LESLIE BUXBAUM DANZIG (Production Consultant) is a collaborating director with Julia Rhoads/Lucky Plush Productions, where she co-created *The Better Half* (2011), *The Queue* (2014), and *Rooming House*, set to premiere in fall 2017. For over a decade, Danzig was resident director of the Chicago-based nationally touring physical theater company 500 Clown, whose shows (*Macbeth*, *Frankenstein*, *Christmas*, and *Elephant Deal*) performed in Chicago at venues including Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Lookingglass Theatre. Other credits include stage directing *Wild Sound*, composed by Wilco's Glenn Kotche for Third Coast Percussion, with performances at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, and with upcoming tours in the US and Europe; directing Damon Kiely's *The Revel* (House Theatre of Chicago); co-directing Redmoon's *The Elephant and the Whale* (commissioned by

Chicago Children's Theater); directing Redmoon's *Hunchback* (New Victory Theater, NYC); directing *Float* (About Face Theater, Chicago); and touring nationally and internationally as an actor with NYC's Elevator Repair Service. Danzig taught for University of Chicago's Theater and Performance Studies and Northwestern's MFA Directing program. She received her PhD in Performance Studies at Northwestern University and trained in physical theater at Écoles Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier. She is the curator of the University of Chicago's Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, a laboratory for experimental collaborations between artists and scholars.

MIKHAIL FIKSEL (Sound Design) is a sound designer, composer, musician, and DJ based in Chicago and New York. Recent Chicago credits include projects with the Goodman Theatre, Writers Theatre, The Seldoms, Redmoon, Victory Gardens, The Inconvenience, Lifeline, Northlight, Albany Park Theatre Project, and The Hypocrites. New York and regional credits include Manhattan Theatre Club, The Pearl, The Flea, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Dallas Theatre Center, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Geffen Playhouse, 2nd Stage, and The Playwright's Realm. International credits include TukkersConnexion (Arnhem, Holland) and Festival FILO (Londrina, Brazil). Fiksel recently composed film scores for *Glitch*, *The Wise Kids*, *In Memoriam*, and *both/and*. He received eight Joseph Jefferson Awards, the Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award, a Lucille Lortel Award, and an After Dark Award for an Original Musical. He performs under the moniker DJ White Russian, with his band, Seeking Wonderland, or with the DJ duo, The Ordeal. Fiksel is a Resident Artist with Albany Park Theatre Project, a member of Strawdog Theatre Company and 2nd Story, an Artistic Associate with Timeline Theatre and Teatro Vista, and an instructor at Loyola University and University of Chicago.

JEFF HANCOCK (Costume Design) was a founding member of River North Dance Chicago, danced for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Dance Kaleidoscope, and Same Planet Different World Dance Theater, where he was a Co-Artistic Director. He appeared in many productions with the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He travelled nationally and internationally with several tours, including *West Side Story*, *Song and Dance*, *Oklahoma!*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and Disney. Hancock's recent choreography includes *And We Shall Be Rid of Them* with Molly Shanahan, *Impolite Society* at The Kennedy Center, *Miss Saigon* at the Paramount Theatre, and *The Pajama Game* at Northwestern University. He created work for River North Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street 2, Columbia College, Northwestern University, the Edinburgh Festival, Same Planet Different World, The Dance COLEctive, Pegasus Players, and Ohio Northern University, among others. His company, -ish design, formed in 2007, for which he designs and constructs costumes. Recent design includes Parson's *Train* by Robert Battle, River North Dance Chicago's *In the End*, Khecari's *Cronus Land*, *Listen* by Colin Dunne for Trinity Irish Dancers, and Striding Lion's *DADA/GERT*. He was nominated for a McCormick Distinguished Lecturer Award, Ruth Page Awards for his dancing and choreography, and is an Illinois Arts Council grant recipient.

SCOTT NELSON (Stage Management) is a lighting designer, production manager, and stage manager based in New York City. He toured across the US, Australia, New Zealand, Bosnia, UK, and almost all of Western Europe with Carolyn Dorfman Dance, Quantum Theater, the Andy Warhol Museum, and The Bang Group. During the summers, Nelson is the production manager at The Yard on Martha's Vineyard, producing with over thirty contemporary dance and movement theater companies each season. Nelson is a member of the Actors' Equity Association and a graduate of Point Park University. He joined Lucky Plush in 2015.

LIVIU PASARE (Video Design) has a Chicago-based practice creating works and visual experiences using new media and technology. He works as a video designer, cinematographer, editor, and animator; and produced, directed, and performed for live multimedia experiences. He was affiliated with theaters and artists such as Luftwerk, Collaboraction, Redmoon, Manual Cinema, Blue Man Group, The Seldoms, Claudia Hart, Maria Marshall, Takao Kawaguchi, and is excited to work with Lucky Plush.

KEVIN RECHNER (Lighting Design) worked with Lucky Plush Productions on *Cinderbox 18*, *Cinderbox 2.0*, *The Sky Hangs Down Too Close*, and *Punk Yankees*. Other designs include Natya Dance Theatre's *Alakshaya*, and Mordine and Company's *40th Anniversary*. He remains the Production Manager, Technical Director, and Lighting Designer for the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago since 1996 where he collaborates with many visiting artists, including designing the set and lights for Trisha Brown's *Set and Reset/Reset*. He also served as the LD/TD for the Dance Division of the National High School Institute for five years. Rechner has a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre from Illinois State University and spent three years in Paris studying Movement Theatre with Jacques Lecoq and Daniel Stein. He created four solo performance works including *I AM HUGO*.

BRANDON REED (Sound Engineer) is currently in his first year of graduate school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he pursues an MFA in Sound Design + Technology. Previously based in Chicago, his recent design credits include work with The Hypocrites, Congo Square, Teatro Vista, Bluebird Arts, Silk Road Rising, and more. He also designed regionally in New York where he served as the 2015 design fellow at Chautauqua Theater Company designing *Our Town*, *Afterlove*, and *The Engine of Our Ruin*. He also served as Steppenwolf Theatre Company's 2014-2015 sound apprentice.