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remixed/ reimagined

On June 23, 2011, MCA Chicago celebrated the achievements of MCA Stage with the **remixed/reimagined** Performance Benefit. This innovative evening was cochaired by MCA Trustee Sara Albrecht and MCA Performance Committee member Jay Franke. Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the event and to all who continue to support MCA Stage in its 15th season.

remixed/reimagined Host Committee

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Photo: Cheryl L. Mann

**Lucky Plush Productions October 27–29 and
The Better Half November 3, 5, and 6, 2011**

**Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago**

Artists Up Close

Artists Up Close
This series brings together MCA Stage artists with the public over a variety of intimate conversations and training to provide insight into the creative process.

Earlier this year in June, Lucky Plush Productions was in residency at MCA to work on the design of sound, lighting, and set for *The Better Half*. The residency culminated June 30 with public open showing of the work in progress.

Open Doors
October 26
Museum visitors were invited to view Lucky Plush Productions at work on the stage during regular hours.

First Night
October 27 and November 3
Following the performance, audience members are invited to join an insightful discussion led by Peter Taub, Director of Performance Programs, with co-directors Julia Rhoads, Leslie Buxbaum Danzig, and their creative team.

Saturday Speakeasy
October 29 and November 5
Following the performance, audience members are invited to mingle with the company in the lobby, with a cash bar and snacks available.

Support for *The Better Half* is generously provided by Pamela Crutchfield.

The Better Half is a National Performance Network Creation Fund Project commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in partnership with Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and NPN.

The National Performance Network Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency).

The Better Half is also supported in part by Audience Architects' New Stages for Dance Initiative. Leadership support for the New Stages for Dance Initiative is provided by MetLife Foundation and Dance/USA.

The creation and presentation of *The Better Half* is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with the New England Foundation for the Arts through the National Dance Project. Major support for NDP is provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation. Additional support for *The Better Half* is provided through project grants to Lucky Plush Productions from Boeing, The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.



Special thanks:
Peter Taub, Yolanda Cesta Cursach, Surinder Martignetti, Richard Norwood, Erin Baldwin, Chaz Olajide, Mia Wicklund, and the rest of the fantastic staff at Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Paul Brohan and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center; Elaine Adams and the Lucky Plush Board of Directors for their ongoing and Better Half Gala support; Pamela Crutchfield for her many contributions to the project; Susan Manning, Ginger Farley, and Matt Glavin for their early project support; Heidi Coleman and the University of Chicago Summer Lab Inc; Nick Pupillo, Sarah Robinson and the staff at Visceral Dance Studio; Chicago Moving Company for presenting an early in-progress version of the work at Hamlin Park Studio Theater; Cheryl Mann (photography) and Carol Genetti (graphic design) for their contributions to the project; Alex Brenneman for tech and web support; and Lauren Nixon, Angela Luem, Ivan Sygoda, and everyone else at Pentacle for their ongoing advocacy and representation

Lucky Plush Productions The Better Half

Co-created and co-directed by Leslie Buxbaum Danzig and Julia Rhoads

Collaboratively devised and performed by The Ensemble: Adrian Danzig, Kim Goldman, Tim Heck, Julia Rhoads, Meghann Wilkinson

Original Script:
Leslie Buxbaum Danzig, Julia Rhoads, and the Ensemble

Text Excerpts:
Gaslight, stage play titled *Angel Street* (Patrick Hamilton)
Scenes from a Marriage (Ingmar Bergman)
The Bourne Identity (Robert Ludlum)
Trust (Hal Hartley)
Flirt (Hal Hartley)
All the Real Girls (David Gordon Green)

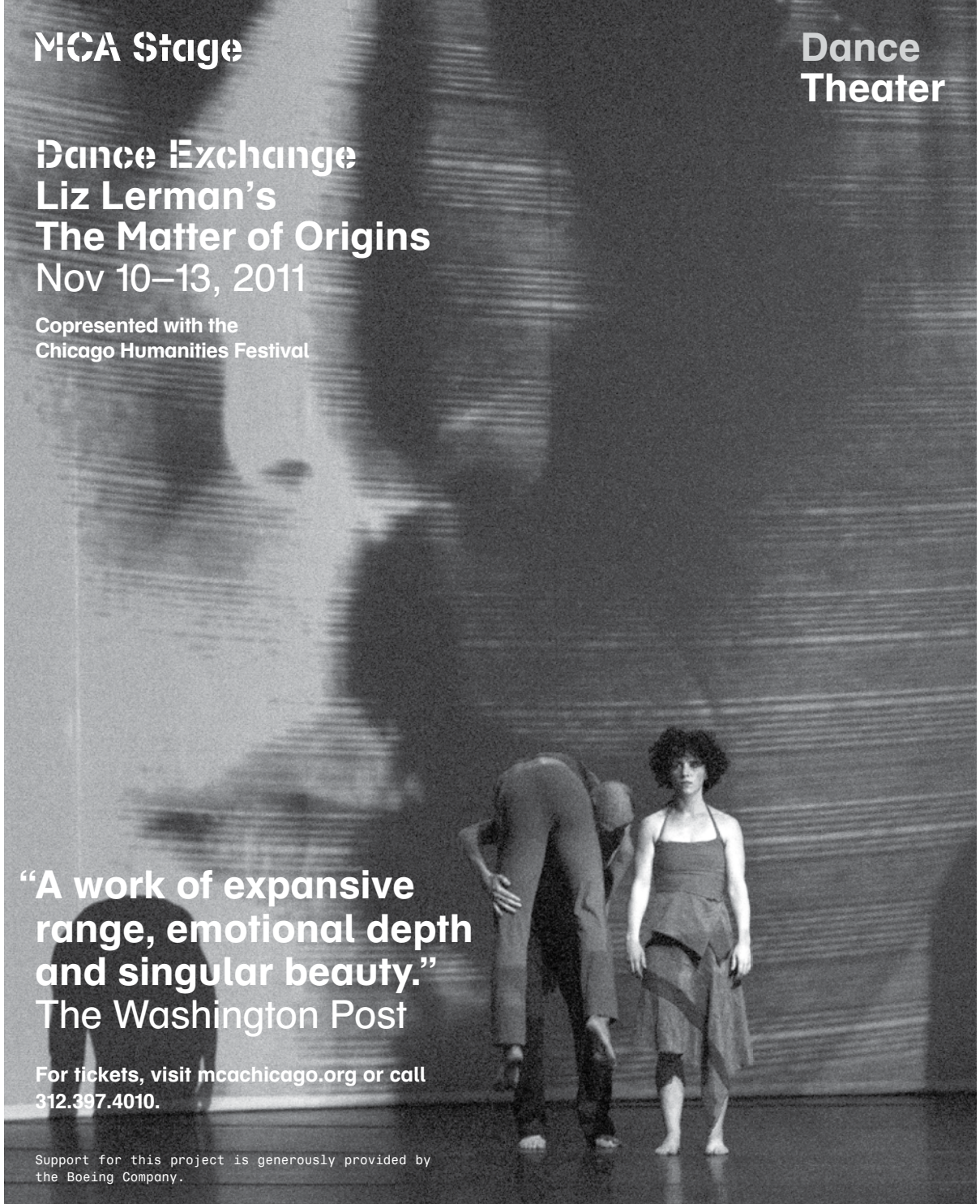
Composition/Sound Design: Mikhail Fiksel*

Lighting Design: Heather Gilbert*

Costume Design: Jeff Hancock

Stage Management: Clare Roche
Additional music by:
“Egon & Edith.” Rachel’s. Music for Egon Schiele, 1996 Quarterstick Records (BMI).

* Member of United Scenic Artists (USA)



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Support for this project is generously provided by
the Boeing Company.

Photo: George Hagegeorge

About the artists

Lucky Plush Productions

is a Chicago-based dance-theater company that devises works with a focus on strong ensembles, complex choreography, innovative uses of technology, and intellectually bold content. Led by choreographer Julia Rhoads, Lucky Plush is known for its lush and evocative movement, witty commentary, and artful integration of dance, theater, and visual design. Since its founding in 1999, Lucky Plush has premiered 30 original works including performance installations, two dance films, and nine evening-length productions. The company has been presented by a wide range of venues including Joyce SoHo (NY), Jacob's Pillow (MA), Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, Steppenwolf Garage (IL), Chicago Humanities Festival, Cusp Conference (IL), Grace Street Theater (VA), Spring to Dance (MO), Madame Walker Theater (IN), and the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival (AK). Lucky Plush's world premiere of *Cinderbox 18* was created in residence and presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 2007. Upcoming tours by the company include Doudna Fine Arts Center (IL), Hancher Auditorium (IA), and Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (MD).

Lucky Plush's work has been supported through regional and national awards to Julia Rhoads including a Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist grant, two Illinois Arts Council fellowships in Choreography, and a fellowship from the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography. The company has been recognized by the *Chicago Reader's* “Best of Chicago 2010”; *Time Out Chicago's* “The Decade's 10

Best Original Dance Works” (for *Endplay*); the *Chicago Tribune's* “Best of Dance 2008”; *Chicago Sun-Times's* “Lasting memories in Dance” for 2005 and 2007, and a *Time Out Chicago* feature cover story “5 reasons to love dance in Chicago.”

Lucky Plush Productions is a member of Pentacle (DanceWorks, Inc.), a non-profit service organization for the performing arts, Mara Greenberg and Ivan Sygoda, Directors (www.pentacle.org). Information about Lucky Plush Productions' activities may be obtained by contacting Lauren Nixon at 212-278-8111 ext. 305, or at laurenn@pentacle.org. For additional information about Lucky Plush Productions, or to learn about our Board of Directors and other volunteer activities, please contact us at www.luckyplush.com.

Leslie Buxbaum Danzig

is co-founder of the Chicago-based physical theater company 500 Clown, where she co-created and directed *500 Clown Macbeth*, *Frankenstein*, *Elephant Deal*, and *Christmas*. 500 Clown has played in Chicago at venues including Steppenwolf and Lookingglass, tours regularly throughout the US, and has received commissions/fellowships from Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (MD), College of St. Benedict's/Saint John's University (MN), and University of Chicago. Other credits include directing Redmoon's *Hunchback* at New Victory Theater (NYC) and *Float* (About Face Theater); touring nationally and internationally as an actor with NYC's Elevator Repair Service; assisting director Julie Taymor; dramaturging for choreogra-

pher Molly Shanahan; and this past summer appearing as Masha in *The Seagull* in Chekhov on Lake Lucille in NY (director Brian Mertes). Buxbaum Danzig received her BA from Brown University and PhD in Performance Studies at Northwestern University, and trained in physical theater and clown with Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier. For the past five years, she has taught at the University of Chicago and recently began a new role at the University as Program Curator for the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry.

Julia Rhoads

is choreographer and founding Artistic Director of Lucky Plush Productions. Her work with the company has been presented in Chicago venues including the MCA Stage, Dance Center of Columbia College, Steppenwolf Garage, Cusp Conference, and Chicago Humanities festival, and recent and upcoming tours include Joyce SoHo (NYC), Jacob's Pillow (MA), Grace Street Theater (VA), Spring to Dance (MO), Hancher Auditorium (IA), Doudna Fine Arts Center (IL), and Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (MD), among others. Her independent work has been commissioned by Alaska Dance Theater, Mordine and Company Dance Theater, and River North Chicago Dance Company, and she has choreographed for theater, performance and film companies including Lookingglass Theatre Company, Redmoon Theater, Walkabout Theater, Hyperdelic, and M5.

Rhoads has received a Cliff Dwellers Foundation Award for Choreography, two Illinois Arts Council Fellowships for Choreography, a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, a Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist Award, and a fellowship from the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography. In 2010, she was named one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" and included in *NewCity's* feature "The Players:

The 50 people who really perform for Chicago". She is formerly a company member of the San Francisco Ballet, and a collaborating ensemble member of XSIGHT! Performance Group. She earned a BA in History from Northwestern University and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute Chicago, and is currently a part-time faculty member in the theater department at Columbia College Chicago.

Adrian Danzig

was a featured performer most recently for *The Seagull* at Lake Lucille and *Orlando* at The Court Theater. He regularly performs the shows in the 500 Clown touring repertoire: *500 Clown Macbeth*, *500 Clown Frankenstein*, *500 Clown Christmas*, and *500 Clown Trapped*. Danzig has led workshops in physical theater throughout the US and internationally for the past 10 years. He has performed in productions at The Goodman Theatre, The Second City, Steppenwolf Studio, Berkeley Rep, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Public Theater, and with Shakespeare & Company and Lookingglass. He has performed his solo works at The Kitchen, P.S. 122, The Ontological Hysteric Theater and Soho Rep. He was an early Neo-futurist and a founding member of Redmoon Theater, Hubinspoke Theater and is the founding Producing Artistic Director of 500 Clown. He graduated from the High School of Performing Arts in New York, received his BA from Oberlin College and his MFA from the School of The Art Institute of Chicago. He has studied clown with CtiiborTurba, Philippe Gaulier, Ronlin Foreman, Dominique Jando, ElsComediants, David Shiner, Avner the Eccentric and was a clown with Big Apple Circus Clown Care for seven years. He is currently writing a book on physical theater with support from the Raven Foundation.

Kim Goldman

has been a collaborating ensemble member with Lucky Plush Productions on seven company works since 2004. She has also danced with Hedwig Dances and Mordine and Company in Chicago, toured Virginia & NY with James Hansen/Assemblage, and danced for numerous independent choreographers in both Chicago and New York. Goldman has received Bachelor's degrees in Dance & Psychology from the University of Illinois, and an MFA in Dance Performance & Choreography at New York University where she danced in work by Tere O'Connor, Larry Keigwin and Gerald Casel. Her independent choreography has been presented at The College of William & Mary (VA), Danspace Center, Williamsburg Art nexus, Dance Theater Workshop, and St. Mark's Church. She has been a guest teacher for Luna Negra Dance Theater, and a part-time faculty member of Illinois Wesleyan University and The Dance Center of Columbia College.

Tim Heck

has been an ensemble member with Lucky Plush Productions for *She/Three* (2006) and *The Sky Hangs Down To Close* (2008), and will be part of their upcoming tour of *Punk Yankees*. Since graduating Hope College in 2004, he has also worked and performed with Molly Shanahan/Mad Shak, Redmoon Theater, Thodos Dance Chicago, Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago, and Eisenhower Dance Ensemble. From 2007-2009, he performed as a Blue Man in Blue Man Group at the Briar Street Theater. In 2011 Heck joined the company of 500 Clown for the premier of *500 Clown Trapped*, toured as a part of the performing ensemble with New Belgium Brewery's bicycle celebrating festival Tour de Fat, played percussion with the Brooklyn-based band The Hollows, and continued as cheerleader for Chicago's circus-punk-marching band Mucca Pazza.

Meghann Wilkinson

is a graduate of Northwestern University and is in her eighth season as a collaborating ensemble member with Lucky Plush Productions. She is a former company member of Mordine and Company Dance Theater and has appeared in Chicago with Smith/Wymore Disappearing Acts, Cie Felix Ruckert, Raizel Performances, NU Group, and Peter Carpenter Performance Project. Wilkinson has been a guest teacher and choreographer for the Cecchetti Council of America, Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, and the Evanston Dance Ensemble and was Assistant Choreographer for Lookingglass Theater's *The Great Fire*. Currently on faculty at Columbia College Chicago, she has taught at Northwestern University, Dance Center Evanston, and Visceral Dance Chicago and has organized for the Chicago Seminar on Dance and Performance and the Society of Dance History Scholars.

Mikhail Fiksel

is originally from Siberia. He is on the faculty at Loyola University and works as sound designer, composer, musician and DJ. He is an ensemble member of StrawdogTheatre Company and 2nd Story, and Artistic Associate with Teatro Vista, Collaboraction, and Redmoon Theatre. His recent Chicago credits include work for The Goodman Theatre, Writers Theatre, Redmoon, Victory Gardens, Lifeline, Northlight, Albany Park Theatre Project, The Hypocrites, Teatro Vista, About Face, and Collaboraction. His regional and off-Broadway credits include The Geffen Playhouse, 2nd Stage, St. Louis Repertory, and Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. He has worked at TukkersConnexion (Arnhem, Holland) and Festival FILO (Londrina, Brazil), and his film composition credits include *The Wise Kids*, *In Memoriam*, and *both/and*. He has received five Joseph Jefferson Awards, a Lucille Lortel Award, and an After Dark Award for an

Original Musical. He was nominated for the Henry Hewes Design Award and recently honored with The Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award. He performs regularly with his band Seeking Wonderland and Dynamic DJ Duo, The Ordeal.

Heather Gilbert
has designed lighting for the Chicago productions *The Detective’s Wife*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *The Old Settler* (Writers’ Theatre); *Home*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Court Theatre); *Honus and Me*, *Esperanza Rising*, and *The Hundred Dresses* (Chicago Children’s Theatre); *The Front Page*, *Master Harold and the Boys*, and *Not Enough Air* (Timeline Theatre); *Our Town* and *Cabaret* (Hypocrites); and *A Separate Peace* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). Her regional credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Williamstown Theatre Festival) and *The Farnsworth Invention* (Alley Theatre), and Off-Broadway credits include *Our Town* (Barrow Street Theatre). Upcoming projects include *The Caretaker* at Writers’ Theatre and *Our Town* at the Broad Stage in LA. She is a 1999–2001 recipient of the NEA/TCG Development Program Award. She serves as the Head of Lighting Design at Columbia College and received her MFA from The Theatre School at DePaul.

Jeff Hancock
has been designing and constructing costumes for over 20 years, and his design company, *-ish*, was formed in 2007. He has created costumes for River North Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Inside/Out, Gus Giordano Dance Chicago, Danceworks Chicago, Peter Carpenter, Molly Shanahan Mad/Shak, and Lucky Plush Productions, among many others. Hancock is a founding member of River North Dance Chicago, has danced for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and the Lyric Opera, and formerly directed

Same Planet Different World Dance Theater. His independent choreography has been created for River North Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street 2, the Edinburgh Festival, Same Planet Different World, among others. He has been nominated for Ruth Page Awards for his dancing and choreography, is an Illinois Arts Council grant recipient, and teaches at Northwestern University.

Clare Roche
has worked as stage manager for the Chicago productions *13 Clocks* (Lifeline); *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre); *500 Clown* (Shakespeare Theatre); *500 Clown Trapped* (Adventure Stage/500 Clown); *Sinbad: The Untold Tale* (Adventure Stage); *Cabaret* (Hypocrites); *Red Noses* (Strawdog); *Woody Guthrie’s American Song* (Blindfaith); and *On My Parent’s 100th Wedding Anniversary* (Side Project). She has toured with 500 Clown productions of *Frankenstein* and *Macbeth*. Roche works as Master Electrician at Loyola University Chicago and resident designer at Sacred Heart Academy. She was assistant lighting designer for *Cyrano* (House Theatre). Her forthcoming projects include assistant lighting designer for *Death and Harry Houdini* (House) and stage manager for *The Giver* (Adventure Stage).

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Program notes compiled by
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Courtesy Guidelines and Information

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