



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

Montclair State University
**Montclair State University Digital
Commons**

2014-2015 Discover the Heartbeat of Creative
Life

PEAK Performances Programming History

9-10-2014

Imagining O

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/peak-performances-2014-2015>



Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming and PEAK Performances at Montclair State University, "Imagining O" (2014). *2014-2015 Discover the Heartbeat of Creative Life*. 2.

<https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/peak-performances-2014-2015/2>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the PEAK Performances Programming History at Montclair State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2014-2015 Discover the Heartbeat of Creative Life by an authorized administrator of Montclair State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@montclair.edu.

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

World Premiere!

East Coast Artists *Imagining O*

Concept **Richard Schechner**
Direction **Benjamin Mosse** and **Richard Schechner**
Movement and Choreography **Roanna Mitchell**
Environments and Lights **Chris Muller**
Costumes **Oana Botez**
Films and Photographs **Matt Bockelman**
Dramaturgy **Carrie Lee O'Dell**

Stage Manager **Sarah Lucie**
Additional Visual Design **Teresa Braun**
Assistant Stage Managers **Natalie Romero** and **Nicole Mageros**
Assistant to Richard Schechner **Jessica Katz**
Additional Films **Jake Juba**
Translation from French **Marianne Mayer-Thibault** and **Richard Schechner**

Performance Ensemble
Madeline Barr, Julia Blauvelt, Parker Denton, Melissa Krodman, Caiti Lattimer, Deborah Leiser-Moore, Niamh Lynam-Cotter, Simona Maicanescu, Agape (Gabriela Moreno), Kaitlin Overton, Calista Small, Kim Snauwaert, Allison Taaffe, Maga Uzo

General management for East Coast Artists **Sarah Lucie**

World Premiere of *Imagining O* produced by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ) on September 10, 2014.

Imagining O began as a work-in-progress in 2011 at the University of Kent, Canterbury, UK, where Richard Schechner was in residence as a Leverhulme Fellow, and in 2012 at the International Theatre Festival of Kerala, Thrissur, Kerala, India.

The films for *Imagining O* were collectively conceived by the cast and crew of the production. Matt Bockelman served as cinematographer and editor for the new work. Additional films from previous work-in-progress productions were created by Jake Juba.

Sound composition for Deborah Leiser-Moore's second dispersal by Gail Priest.

Special thanks to Randy Mugleston, Ben Merrick, and Montclair State's Department of Theatre and Dance for its support of this production.

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes, no intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

Staff

Office of Arts & Cultural Programming

Executive Director **Jedediah Wheeler**
Executive Producer **Jill Dombrowski**
Producer **Jessica Wasilewski**
Production/Facility Manager **J. Ryan Graves**
Cultural Engagement Director **Carrie Urbanic**
Media and Marketing Specialist **Amy Estes**
Director of Audience Services **Robert Hermida**
Lighting Supervisor **Chris Holland**
Project Coordinator **Omonike Akinyemi**
Cultural Engagement Assistant **Hannah Rolfes**
Box Office Manager **Pierson Van Raalte**
House Manager **Maureen Grimaldi**
Marketing/PR Assistant **Noah Befeler**
Graphics **Patrick Flood/pfloodesign.com**
Press **Ellen Jacobs Associates**
Program Editor **Susan R. Case**

Montclair State's **Office of Arts & Cultural Programming (ACP)** presents and produces leading artists of the world in dance, music, theater, and opera. Under its signature series Peak Performances, ACP has produced works such as *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* by Robert Wilson, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon, and Jacqueline Woodson; *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek; Harry Partch's *Oedipus*; and Ridge Theater's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* by David Lang. In addition, ACP has commissioned works by Bill T. Jones, Kronos Quartet, Jan Fabre, Liz Lerman, Wayne McGregor, Laurie Anderson, Romeo Castellucci, Richard Alston, Susan Marshall, Fred Hersch, and David Gordon.

Major Donors

Alexander Kasser Theater

Founders

Mary Mochary
I. Michael Kasser
Alexandra and Seth Bergstein
Matthew Mochary

Automatic Data Processing
Doris and Felix Beck
Robert and Barbara Constable
Andrew Constable
George and Linda Hiltzik
Montclair State University Alumni Association
Margaret and Herman Sokol
Jack and Jeanette Sullivan

The 2014/15 season is made possible in part by funds from:

The National Endowment for the Arts

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State,
a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts

Discover Jersey Arts

National Dance Project (NDP) of the New England Foundation for the Arts

Alison and James T. Cirenza

Robert and Holly Gregory

The Honorable Mary Mochary

To view our complete season and for more information, visit peakperfs.org.



College of the Arts

Dean **Daniel Gurskis**
Associate Dean **Ronald L. Sharps**
Assistant Dean **Linda D. Davidson**
Director of Administration **Marie Sparks**
College Administrator **Zacrah S. Battle**
Executive Assistant to the Dean **Alyson Thelin**
Program Assistant **Kilolo Kumanyika**
Art and Design **Aissa Deebe**
John J. Cali School of Music **Jon Robert Cart**
School of Communication and Media **Merrill Brown**
Theatre and Dance **Randy Mugleston**
Broadcast and Digital Media Facilities **Nick Tzanis**
University Art Galleries **Teresa Rodriguez**

Benefactors

Arlene Allen
Bank of America
John and Cynthia Barnes
Grace Lyon Concialdi
Jean Hall
The Hillier Group
Audrey V. Leef
The Prudential Insurance Company of America
Schering-Plough Research Institute
Wachovia Bank
Josh and Judy Weston



Peak Performances

THE 2014-15 SEASON



World Premiere!

East Coast Artists *Imagining O*



September 10-13, 2014
Alexander Kasser Theater



Program Notes

Who is “O” if not the hidden and silenced part of ourselves? And Ophelia? These O-women are imaginary, even as they inform our erotics, politics, literature, fantasies and dreams, personal and cultural histories. *Imagining O* is an exercise in imagining—in creating from both what is and what might be: complex domains that are simultaneously facts and fictions. Facts because the theater is factual: actors doing real things face-to-face with spectators. These two groups agree to meet at a definite place and time to do...what? Look, interact, decide. This fateful meeting is no longer only live, but saturated and modified by media. Do these webs enable us? Or do they distort who we “really” are?

Imagining O is made from the women who die in Shakespeare’s plays—Ophelia particularly—the paintings of Balthus (Balthasar Klossowski), and “O,” the central figure (dare we call her a heroine?) of Pauline Réage’s 1954 *Histoire d’O*, an erotic novel in the style of the Marquis de Sade. Réage herself is imaginary—the *nom de plume* of Dominique Aury who was born

About the Artists

Richard Schechner (Concept/Co-direction) is University Professor and Professor of Performance Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. He is founding artistic director of East Coast Artists and editor of *TDR: The Drama Review*. Schechner is the author of many books, including *Environmental Theater* and *Between Theater and Anthropology*. His *Performed Imaginaries* will be published in October. Schechner is the founder of The Performance Group in New York, with whom he directed a number of productions. Schechner has directed in the United States, China, Taiwan, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. *Imagining O* began as a work-in-progress and was a faculty-student collaboration at the University of Kent, Canterbury, UK.

Benjamin Mosse (Co-direction) is artistic director of East Coast Artists. He has directed over 55 pieces internationally and in the United States, including the New York debuts of works by Garrett Fisher, Gracie Leavitt, Manjula Padmanabhan, and Saviana Stănescu. With Finnish-American soprano Maria Männistö, Belgian composer Joachim Brackx, and Belgian videographer Quincey de Buck, he is creating a multimedia installation, *Hämärä*, which will premiere this winter. He received his BS from Northwestern University, MA in Performance Studies from NYU, and MFA in Directing from Yale School of Drama.

Roanna Mitchell (Movement and Choreography) is a movement artist based in the UK and working internationally. She is an associate of East Coast Artists and co-founder of the artists’ collective Allied Productions. Recent movement direction, choreography, and performance work includes international performance series *Resting Place* (Platform-7 Events, UK and France, 2014–16), *Here Is Where We Meet* (Accidental Collective, Canterbury), *Through the Grapevine* (Allied Productions, Canterbury), *Imagining O* (International Theatre Festival Kerala, India), *Up the Line* (Platform-7 Events, London and South East), and *Tapescape* (Platform-7 Events, London).

Chris Muller (Environments and Lights) is a designer and artist based in Brooklyn. His sets for East Coast

Anne Desclos. Complex because women in our still pervasively sexist cultures are “instructed” to play their assigned roles. When they step out of line they are admonished, as is “O” repeatedly. If only “O” were the creation of a man (as for years she was presumed to be), her sufferings and pleasures would be more palatable. And Shakespeare, this master who wrote roles for boys embodying women: what’s his gender? Add to this the rich panoply of “dispersals,” scenes located in and around the Kasser Theater, imagined by the women performers working closely with the directors.

The result is yours to enjoy or not. These merged and collaged tales of troubling and triumphant submission, love, empowerment, politics, and prison; these imagined women. We are still in progress. What we are doing is not finishable; as Ophelia says, “We know what we are, but know not what we may be.” “O” pronounced means “water” in French. We took the plunge. You, jump in.

—*The Artistic Team*

Artists and Collaborators

Artists include *Faust Gastronom*e, *Amerika*, and *Three Sisters*. He also designed Richard Schechner’s *The Oresteia* with Contemporary Legend Theater of Taipei. He has designed sets for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Juilliard Opera, Manhattan School of Music, and Laurie Anderson’s *Scenes from the Nerve Bible* world tour. He has designed exhibits for the Museum for African Art, Jewish Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, World War II Museum, Children’s Museum of Manhattan, Yale University Art Gallery, and more. He is currently a visiting associate arts professor at New York University’s Graduate Department of Design for Stage and Film.

Oana Botez (Costumes), a native of Romania, has designed for major theater, opera, and dance companies, including the National Theater of Bucharest, and has been involved in various international theater festivals. United States collaborators in theater, opera, film, and dance include Robert Woodruff, Richard Foreman, János Szász, Maya Beiser, Richard Schechner, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Andrei Serban, Blanka Zizka, Brian Kulick, Zelta Fichandler, Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, Ken Rus Schmoll, Jackson Gay, Rebecca Taichman, Eric Ting, Michael Sexton, and Charles Moulton, among others. She holds an MFA in Design from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. Honors include a Princess Grace Award, NEA/TCG Career Development Program, and a Barrymore Award.

Matt Bockelman (Films and Photographs) is a documentary cinematographer and director. He has created original documentary films for New York City Ballet, Madison Square Garden, MTV, and East Coast Artists and has shot commercial campaigns for ESPN, Allstate, SAP, and Humana. In 2010 he founded Fly’s Eye Films, which has produced award-winning documentary shorts shown internationally at film festivals including Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, the Hamptons International Film Festival, DOC NYC, and HotDocs. Fly’s Eye Films creates original content and short documentaries for nonprofit organizations around New York City. Bockelman is an adjunct professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

Carrie Lee O’Dell (Dramaturgy) has served as dramaturg for *Ominium Gatherum* (SUNY Stony Brook), *The Dybbuk* (Elizabeth Swados at NYU/Tisch), *La femme est morte* (Shalimar Productions/NY Fringe), and *Three Sisters* (HiveMind Theater). O’Dell holds an MFA in Dramaturgy from SUNY Stony Brook and teaches first-year writing and playwrighting in the English Department at Montclair State.

Sarah Lucie (Stage Manager) is a writer, manager, and producer. Recent projects include *The S.M. Cabaret: Slaves of Sallie Mae* by The Grace Period Blog and producing the world premiere of *Wet Glitter* at IRT Theater. She is editor and theater critic for *Show Business Magazine* and former assistant editor of *TDR: The Drama Review*. Lucie holds an MA in Performance Studies from New York University and is a PhD student in Theatre at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Teresa Braun (Additional Visual Design) is an interdisciplinary artist working in performance, sculpture, and installation. Her work has been shown in several solo and group exhibitions, including an upcoming installation for *Nuit Blanche* at La Petite Mort Gallery in Ottawa, Canada. In 2011 she graduated from the University of Manitoba with a BFA Honours degree. She is currently pursuing graduate studies at Montclair State and has been an artist in residence at the Vermont Studio Center.

Natalie Romero (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Theatre graduate student at Montclair State. Originally from Colombia, she grew up dancing Afro-Caribbean folklore in the Carnival of her hometown, Barranquilla. She is also part of the Shakedown Dance Collective in New York City, led by professional dancers Deborah Lohse and Jamie Benson. Romero has worked collaboratively producing a variety of interdisciplinary projects in the United States and Latin America, from independent films and television to cultural festivals.

Nicole Mageros (Assistant Stage Manager) is currently a junior at Montclair State, where she is working toward her BFA in Theatre with a concentration in production and design. Her past credits at MSU include *Middletown* (production stage manager) and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Equus*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and *Carousel* (assistant stage manager). This past summer she was the stage manager for the world premiere of *Mythos* at the New York Children’s Theater Festival.

Jessica Katz (Assistant to Richard Schechner) is a director, deviser, dramaturg, and performer. She is embarking on her fourth and final year at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and is directing an adaptation of Brecht’s *Baal* this fall. Her most recent work includes dramaturgy and performance in Jordan Schulze’s *The Farewell Experiment* as part of NYU Abu Dhabi’s inaugural Capstone Festival.

Jake Juba (Additional Films) is an English filmmaker, currently working in Copenhagen. He graduated from the University of Kent in 2012, where he specialized in multimedia theater and received a technical excellence award for his contribution to drama and theater studies. More recently, Juba graduated from Screen Academy Scotland with an MFA in film directing and is currently in post-production with two of his short films.

Performers

Madeline Barr is a senior at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, studying acting at the Experimental Theatre Wing. Her past theatrical credits

include *The Inconvenient Truths*, a play she collaboratively wrote and acted at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and *Jesus Hopped the A’ Train*, which she directed with The Black Actors Guild. She has interned at The Atlantic and LAByrinth Theatre. This spring she will write, direct, and act in her own original piece.

Julia Blauvelt is an actor, playwright, and monologist originally from the Berkshires. In addition to acting in productions in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles, she has produced and directed two original Web series and several short films. Most recently, she performed in Opera Cabal’s deconstructed opera *Atthis* (at The Kitchen). Coming up this October, Blauvelt will present her monologue show *The Australia Cure* as part of the United Solo Festival in Theatre Row.

Parker Denton trained with Double Edge Theatre on their Farm in Ashfield, MA. This past year he completed an MA in Performance Studies at New York University. While on hiatus from academia, he is experimenting with comedy in the city with his newly formed group, Mechanical Wondershow.

Melissa Krodman is a Philadelphia-based creator and performer of original, experimental works. Upcoming projects include *Jean and Terry: Your Guides through Dark Light and Nebulous* (co-choreographed with Nashville-based Kelly Bond) and *The Sincerity Project* (Team Sunshine). Previous credits include *Colony* (2012, co-choreographed with Bond) and *Elephant* (2010, with Bond). Krodman is a 2014 Breaking Ground resident artist at Theater Emory and 2014–15 resident artist at thefidget space in Philadelphia. She graduated from Pig Iron’s School for Advanced Performance Training in Philadelphia.

Caiti Lattimer is an actor and poet. Born and raised in Ohio, she holds a BFA in Acting from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She has completed intensive study programs at the Actors Movement Studio Conservatory and Headlong Performance Institute. Lattimer is a member of the John Desotelle Studio and has recently earned her teaching certification in the Williamson Technique for Movement. She currently serves as co-artistic director for Reckless Divine.

Deborah Leiser-Moore is an Australian contemporary performance maker whose bold works use multiple theatrical languages to investigate culture/identity. Her most recent work, *KaBooM: Stories from Distant Frontlines*, is about memory and war. Other works include *Cordelia*, *Mein Kind*, *a room with no air*, and *HUNGRY*. Leiser-Moore’s touring includes Festival Szekspirowski (Poland), Toga Festival (Japan), Marsh Theater (San Francisco), Magdalena Festival (New Zealand), and Adelaide Festival (Australia). She studied with Tadashi Suzuki in Japan, trained in Étienne Decroux, and regularly teaches at universities.

Niamh Lynam-Cotter is a performer based in Kent, England, who has been part of the first two *Imagining O* iterations in England and India. Having obtained her master’s degree in Physical Actor Training and Performance from the University of Kent in 2013, she continues to collaborate with movement director Roanna Mitchell. In their work together, they have explored the manner in which the body in performance tells its own narrative to an audience.

Simona Maicanescu holds a master’s degree in Acting from the Academy of Arts, Bucharest. After starting her career in Romania, she has continued in France since

1994, thanks to a French-Romanian production performed at the Avignon Festival. She has been involved in theater, radio, TV, and film and has performed at international festivals in Edinburgh, Amsterdam, São Paulo, Stockholm, and Montreal. Last year, she performed at La MaMa E.T.C. in Wallace Shawn’s *The Fever*.

Agape (Gabriela Moreno) grew up in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico. She holds a BA in Arts and Letters from SUNY College at Buffalo and an MA in Performance Studies from New York University. She is co-founder of The Grace Period Blog, a cross-media platform that speaks to the student debt crisis through devised performance. Her latest credits include MC in *The S.M. Cabaret: Slaves of Sallie Mae* and Gabaccia in *Allar para Veracruz y Todas las Tierras*.

Kaitlin Overton is a Theatre Studies graduate from Montclair State. Theater credits include *The Earth Works Project* (Genesis Farm, Blairstown, NJ), *You Me Bum Bum Train* (dir. Kate Bond, London), *UNCIVIL WARS* (dir. David Gordon, Peak Performances), *Revolutionary Readings* (NJ/ NY Tour/TEDx Youth Event, Princeton, NJ), and *Windward Hotel* (ALTERnetREALITY.COM/Mikrotone Entertainment, Chester, NJ). Overton has also interned with the critically acclaimed New York Neo-Futurists (*Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, Kraine Theater).

About the Company

East Coast Artists (ECA) was founded in 1992 by Richard Schechner as a professional ensemble dedicated to boldly reinventing classic texts, debuting radical international work, and going beyond conventional notions of contemporary theater and performer training.

Committed to cross-cultural dialogue, ECA has partnered with international artists and companies like Manjula Padmanabhan, Saviana Stănescu, the Shanghai Theater Academy, the Grotowski Institute, Dramalabbet, and the University of Kent to examine the intersections of diversity that are fundamental components of living within a global community. In the last five years, ECA productions have performed in New York, Shanghai, Wrocław, Craiova, Sibiu, Bucharest, Stockholm, Canterbury, and Thissur, with artists from Japan, China, Romania, Finland, Mexico, Peru, Germany, France, Serbia, Belgium, and India as well as the United States.

Lauded by critics and scholars from such diverse publications as the *New York Times*, *Performing Arts Journal*, *National Geographic*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *American Theatre*, ECA, under recently appointed artistic director Benjamin Mosse, continues its mission of promoting intercultural exchange and artistic experimentation as a model of global collaboration.

A basic part of the training for *Imagining O* is the rasaboxes technique devised by Richard Schechner. Rasaboxes training is part of every East Coast Artists

Production Crew

Technical Director **Colin Van Horn**
Video and Projections System Engineer **J. Ryan Graves**
Lighting Designer **Chris Holland**
Audio System Design **Marc Critelli**

Calista Small graduated this past May from Yale College with a BA in Humanities. As an undergraduate, she performed in over 15 productions, including *In the Next Room*, or *The Vibrator Play* (Mrs. Givings), *Crimes of the Heart* (Babe), *Dangerous Liaisons* (Cecile), *A Doll’s House* (Nora), and *Dry Land* (Amy). In 2011 she graduated from the School at Steppenwolf, where she studied ensemble work and acting. She now lives and works in Chicago.

Kim Snauwaert studied drama, photography, art history, and multimedia. She has worked with artists such as Arno Nollen, Lars Siltberg, Boris Ljugov, Márcio Carvalho, and Benjamin Mosse. She developed several performances, including *The you in me*, *sad fest of fools*, *She sat silently until I was speechless*, *Mold for togetherness*, and *Marie*.

Allison Taaffe is a graduate of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts where she studied at Playwrights Horizons Theater School and the Classical Studio. She was most recently seen as Emilia in *Othello* at Access Theater.

Maga Uzo began her career in Lima, Peru, in 1998. She has resided in Miami since 2009, where she has performed *Monologos de la Vagina*, *Cronicas Desquiciadas*, and *Monologo en la Habana*. She also appears in several short films.

Artists and Collaborators

preparation for production. Rasaboxes trains performers (and others) in accessing and expressing their emotions within the context of a theatrical exercise. Rasaboxes combines Asian-Indian, European, and American theories and practices. For more information, visit rasaboxes.org.

Acknowledgments

East Coast Artists thanks the Leverhulme Trust for supporting Richard Schechner’s Kent residency; Paul Allain and the Department of Drama and Theatre at the University of Kent; Sam Westbury, the owl mask designer; Scott Illingworth and Mark Wing-Davey of the Graduate Acting Program and Noel Rodriguez of the Performance Studies Department, both at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University; Jeanne Wu; Daniel Morowitz; and Rishika Mehrishi. Thanks to the Montclair State team, especially Jedediah Wheeler, Jill Dombrowski, Jessica Wasilewski, Ryan Graves, Chris Holland, Marc Critelli, and Colin Van Horn. Also thanks to the casts of the work-in-progress productions: India—Krysta Dennis, Victoria Double, Eluned Herold, Jenna Hobbs, Cieranne Kennedy-Bell, Rosemary Napier Klich, Niamh Lynam-Cotter, Marianne Mayer-Thibault, Jess Monk, Pablo Pakula, Rachael Eleanor Smith, and Sandy Wardrop; Kent—Lauren Baino, Electa Behrens, Abbye Eva, Jenna Hobbs, Cieranne Kennedy-Bell, Rosemary Napier Klich, Niamh Lynam-Cotter, Marianne Mayer-Thibault, James Moffatt, Jess Monk, Pablo Pakula, Rachael Eleanor Smith, and Sandy Wardrop.

Production Crew

Build/Installation/Run Crew **Heather Ball**, **Jeffrey Cierniak**, **Marc Critelli**, **Jesse Monahan**, **Vickie Nidweski**, **David O. Smith**, **Rocco Terranova**
Project Associate **Gillian P. Holmes**