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Apropos

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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

US Debut! The Symptoms Apropos

Artistic Director **Réka Szabó**
Creators/Performers **Réka Szabó, Emese Cuhorka, István Gőz, Dániel Szász**
Lighting Designer **Attila Szirtes**
Visual Designer **Zsolt Korai**
Costume Designer **Edit Szűcs**
Special Makeup Artist **Balázs Károlyi**
Mask Designer **Janka Haraszi**
Interactive Technology **Zsolt Korai, Gábor Papp**
Creative Coding **Gábor Papp**
Technician **Gábor Karcis**
Tour Manager **Adrienn Szabó**

PROGRAM

I will be all of these things one day
Performed by **Réka Szabó**

~~ Intermission ~~

I don't remember being raised like this
Performed by **Réka Szabó, Emese Cuhorka, István Gőz, Dániel Szász**

The Symptoms receives funding from the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources and the National Cultural Fund of Hungary. This production was also supported by the Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, Jurányi Production House, and National Dance Theatre.

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes, including one 15-minute 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.

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Peak Performances

THE 2014-15 SEASON

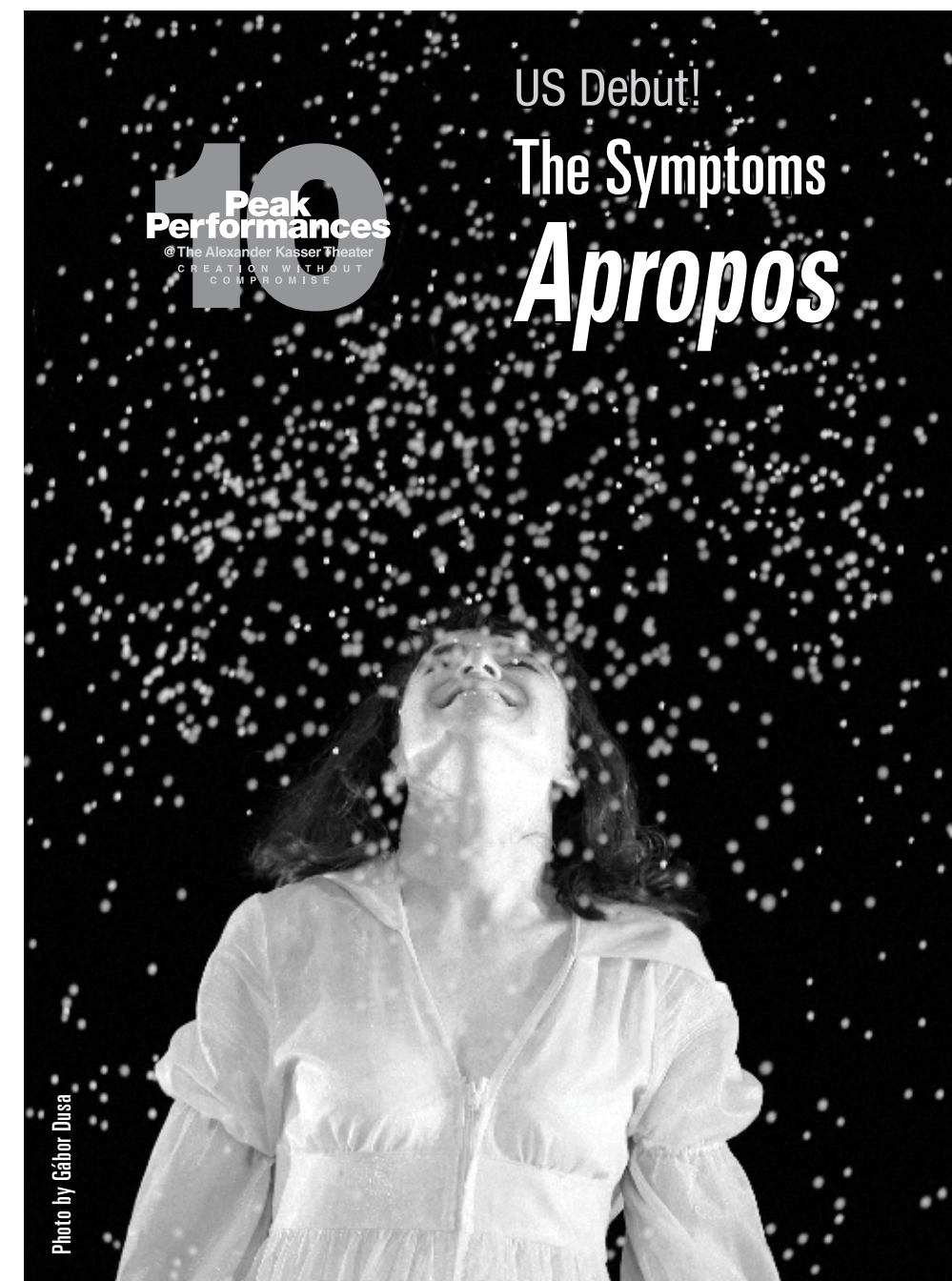


Photo by Gábor Dusa

October 16–19, 2014
Alexander Kasser Theater



MONTCLAIR STATE
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Program Notes

In 2012, when *Apropos* was created, The Symptoms celebrated its 10-year anniversary and the artistic director of the company celebrated her 44th birthday. This evening of two works marks this double occasion.

I will be all of these things one day

Following her two solos *The Lilac Ant-eater* (1999) and *Clearing the Attic* (2006), which were performed at numerous European festivals, Réka Szabó's long-awaited third solo, a personal inventory in which a 44-year-old woman—a mother and artist—recounts the tale of her reckoning with her lifetime of work. Szabó seeks the answer to the question of whether the survival strategies typically employed by children, such as escape into fairytales, singing, role playing, and sheer tantrum, can be put to good use in alleviating one's experience of aging. In this quest, she has been inspired by her own daughter's reactions when seeing her mother leave for the evening or when having to do without that coveted lollipop. Szabó embodies the little girl, the middle-aged woman, and the woman well ahead in years, subtracting time from the available dimensions of experience. Can you spin out of the orbit you have entered? Can you make a new start? Can you escape the tower where you locked yourself by the time you turned 44?

About the Artists

Réka Szabó (Artistic Director/Creator/Performer) has a degree in mathematics and computer science but had fallen in love with dance when she was 15. She was born in a country then under Communist rule, where classical ballet and folk dance were the only types of dance officially recognized as an art form and contemporary dance was banned as one of the “plagues of the West.” She took up apparatus gymnastics as a small child. Then, at age 15, she stumbled into an underground workshop where Hungarian dancers who had been to the West were teaching modern dance techniques already regarded as “classic” beyond the Iron Curtain (Graham, Limón, etc.). From that point on, she absorbed influences of all kinds, being interested in everything she could lay her hands on. Even as she finished high school, earned her BA, and started teaching at the Budapest University of Technology, she would spend most of her time with dance.

I don't remember being raised like this

Human statistics, subjective inventory. Life fragments from the age of 7 to 77.

The BBC's *7 Up* documentary series follows a group of children through life. They are 56 years old today. The fragmented life-documents that revisit them every 7 years show how unique and yet how similar human life stories are.

This was the starting point of The Symptoms' workshop in the autumn of 2012, under the leadership of Petra Arđai, artistic director of SPACE Theatre in The Netherlands. They collected their real or fictitious memories up to their imagined age of 77. The resulting performance is poetic, touching, humorous, and simultaneously personal and universal.

The version of *I don't remember being raised like this* as staged for Peak Performances has been developed specifically for The Symptoms' US debut. The interactive real-time video responding instantly to the movement of the performers—a technology previously used in the company's *Nothing There or Do Dreams Go to Sleep during the Day?*—progressively displaces the live performers, as the emphasis shifts from text to visuals, and the projected image renders the transience of human life immediately tactile and vivid.

Following the democratic shift in Hungary, opportunities opened to take classes with foreign instructors, and more and more companies brought shows to Budapest. Szabó studied under several distinguished masters, such as Jo Alegado, Roberto Galván, Krisztina de Châtel, Nigel Charnock, K. J. Holmes, Mark Tompkins, Daniel Lepkoff, David Zambrano, and Vicky Shick, among others. Her breakthrough came in 1994 when choreographer Rui Horta, renowned across Europe, gave her a role in his Hungarian project. As a performer, Szabó worked with numerous Hungarian and foreign creative artists, including ex-DV8 dancer Milli Bitterli and Javier de Frutos from London.

Since 1995, Szabó has been a creative presence in contemporary dance and theater. In 2002, she founded The Symptoms. In her work she relies heavily on the personality and creativity

of her team and on ways of thinking together with them. Perhaps because of her history of exposure to diverse and incongruous influences, her performances defy generic categorization and are wildly different from one another. The Symptoms quickly built a massive following in Hungary, owing in no small part to the tendency of their shows to dismantle the wall between artists and audience, mingle drama with humor, and accommodate multiple interpretations while remaining down to earth and very human. In recent years, independent art companies in Hungary have fallen on hard times, but The Symptoms remain what they always have been: a close-knit team of dedicated individuals seeking to express their views and questions about the world around us in ways that are innovative and thought provoking.

Emese Cuhorka (Creator/Performer) graduated in 2011 from the Budapest Contemporary Dance Academy, where she currently studies in the MA program. She started working with Adrienn Hód in 2005 and since then has participated in each Hodworks production, performing with the company widely in Europe in pieces such as *Dawn*, recently selected for the Aerowaves Festival. In addition to Hodworks, she regularly collaborates with other emerging artists such as László Fülöp. *I don't remember being raised like this* is her fourth production with The Symptoms. Cuhorka's latest stage work is a remake of Trisha Brown's *Set and Reset* by Vicky Shick and Éva Karczag. She regularly teaches improvisation at the Budapest Contemporary Dance School and is engaged in an outreach program to introduce performing arts to students.

István Gőz (Creator/Performer) graduated from high school in 1967 and then studied to become an actor at an amateur theater company. A year later, he and Pál Lengyel founded the Manézs Theatre of Miskolc, where he attended an intensive course in acting and, under the leadership of Miklós Köllő and János Karsai, studied pantomime art. The company became known throughout Hungary, and Gőz was invited by Gábor Zsámbéki to become a member of Csiky Gergely Theatre in Kaposvár. He worked there from 1975 to 1995 as part of the so-called “wonder in Kaposvár”—a period when this rural theater flourished. In 1988 he received a scholarship to Philadelphia through the Soros Foundation, where he fulfilled an international master's course. In 1995, he received a scholarship to Estudio Busqueda de Pantomima-Teatro in Guanajuato, Mexico, and then moved to Budapest. Since 1995, he has worked in many

theaters in Budapest and other cities as an actor or choreographer and has appeared in dozens of Hungarian and foreign movies and teleplays. After spending 25 years at “traditional” theaters, he felt the urge to try something new, something different. In 2001 he performed in many plays directed by László Hudi, which resulted in his meeting Réka Szabó, with whom he has worked since 2004. He is a founding member of The Symptoms and has performed in company pieces such as *Cold Pack*, *Alibi*, *Nookville*, and *I don't remember being raised like this*.

Dániel Szász (Creator/Performer) was born in 1975 in Budapest. He studied at Héttükör Studio Theatre from 1993 to 1997. He has worked with several Hungarian directors and choreographers, including Attila Csabai, who invited him to join his newly formed company. Attending contemporary dance and classical ballet classes in this company led by Csabai and Márta Ladjánszki, Szász became more and more interested in dance. He also took courses with many other well-known teachers, including Frey Faust and Tadashi Endo, whose work greatly influenced his own movement style. Since 2002, he has worked with Hungarian choreographers and directors such as Pál Frenák, László Hudi, Krisztián Gergye, Klára Pataky, and József Hámor. He has worked with Réka Szabó since 2002 and performed in almost every piece that The Symptoms has created in the past 10 years. Szász regularly teaches students as part of The Symptoms' education programs. He also performs in projects of other companies and artists, such as Béla Workshop, Kata Kántor, and Anarchist Theatre.

Attila Szirtes (Lighting Designer) graduated from the University of Theatre and Film Arts of Budapest in 1995 as a lighting technician, later working as a lighting designer and technical director. Since 1995 he has created lighting designs for about 60 projects for artists and companies in Hungary, including Gyula Berger, Andrea Ladányi, Márta Ladjánszky, Anna Réti, Artus, Krétakör, and Central Europe Dance Theatre, among others. Since 1997, Szirtes has worked for the Moving House Company, touring with them to many international festivals, including the Avignon Theatre Festival, LIFT Festival in London, and others in Berlin, Caracas, and Philadelphia. Since 2000, he has been a member of and lighting designer for the Collective of Natural Disasters. He has worked as a lighting designer for The Symptoms since 2004.

Zsolt Korai (Visual Designer/Interactive Technology) obtained an Animation Director's

degree from the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest. He has worked as a researcher at the Kitchen Budapest Media Lab since 2008. During this time he also has worked with many Hungarian dance and theater directors, including Réka Szabó, György Árvai (Collective of Natural Disasters), Gábor Goda (Artus), Enikő Eszenyi (Víg Theatre), Zoltán Kamondi, Szilvia Kárászy, and many others. Korai mainly creates interactive installations and performances with real-time generative graphics, projections, and electronics. He has taught at the BKF University of Applied Sciences, Budapest, and has written a textbook on generative graphics in the VVVV program in English and Hungarian.

Balázs Károlyi (Special Makeup Artist) completed his arts studies as a ceramic artist in 1989. After 10 years of working on theater projects, he graduated as a makeup artist from the makeup school of the mask artist Judit Török in 2002. Since then he has worked on several films (*The Other World*, 2009; *The Pillar of Earth*, 2010; *La Raffle*, 2010; *Asterix in Britain*, 2011; *World*

About the Company

The Symptoms is a performance collective based in Budapest, Hungary, founded in 2002 by dancer and choreographer Réka Szabó, who has been a part of the Hungarian dance-theater scene since 1995. The company's work provides an important prism through which to view contemporary life in a post-Communist society. Characterized by an unbridled spirit of creative enthusiasm, the basis for the company's work is inspired by a collective consciousness tackling subjects that were historically experienced underground in Budapest and focusing on people's personal experiences, doing so with laser analysis as well as buoyant good humor and keen artistic acumen.

The members of The Symptoms are not simply performing artists but fully involved contributors whose personalities, creativity, and team spirit

War Z, 2012; *Hercules*, 2013) and performance art projects with artists such as Krisztián Gergye and György Árvai. Since 2003 he has worked with several independent dance, theater, and music artists and companies in Hungary, including Márta Ladjánszki, Klára Pataky, András Jeles, Ágens, Krisztián Gergye, Gábor Goda, and The Symptoms, as well as on Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* at the Palace of Arts in Budapest.

Gábor Papp (Interactive Technology/Creative Coding) explores the cultural and aesthetic implications of software in his main field of interest, the intersection of art and technology. He utilizes technology in live performance settings through his pieces of software. Currently he works as a freelance creative technology consultant developing new media installations on the border of art and technology. He started working with The Symptoms in 2007, when he worked on the production *Nothing There or Do Dreams Go to Sleep during the Day?* He is a member of the Choreographic Coding Lab initiated by Motion Bank and the Forsythe Company.

fundamentally define every work of the company. In the last 12 years, The Symptoms has created 21 performances and 2 short films and received 16 national and international prizes—most recently the Rudolf Laban Award, for *Vote*, for the best dance production of 2012 in Hungary. The company performs regularly in Hungary and has presented its works in 30 European cities, including London, Berlin, Prague, and Vienna. The engagement at Peak Performances at Montclair State will be the first occasion that the company's work is presented in the United States.

Acknowledgments

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