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2013-2014 Raise the Bar

PEAK Performances Programming History

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## **Stardust**

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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

## Regional Premiere!

# David Roussève | REALITY Stardust

Choreographer/Writer/Director **David Roussève**  
Video Art **Cari Ann Shim Sham\***  
Original Music and Sound Design **d. Sabela grimes**  
Recorded Music Performed by **Nat King Cole, Johnny Mathis, Ella Fitzgerald**  
Lighting **Christopher Kuhl**  
Costumes **Leah Piehl**  
Dramaturg **Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns**

Performers **Charisse Skye Aguirre, Emily Beattie, Leanne Iacovetta, Jasmine Jawato, Nehara Kalev, Michel Kouakou, Kevin Le, Nguyễn Nguyễn, Taisha Paggett, David Roussève, Kevin Williamson**

Technical Director **Christopher Kuhl**  
Assistant Technical Director **Katelan Braymer**

*Stardust* is commissioned by the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ).

The presentation of *Stardust* was made possible by the MetLife Community Connections Fund of the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project. Major support for NDP is also provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Additional funding for *Stardust* provided by an Investing in Artists grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation, the University of CA Institute for Research in the Arts, and the UCLA Faculty Research Grants program.

This tour of David Roussève is made possible by a grant from Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Duration: 1 hour 20 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

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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

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### The 2013/14 season is made possible in part by funds from:

The National Endowment for the Arts

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State,  
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To view our complete season and for more information, visit [peakperfs.org](http://peakperfs.org).



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# Peak Performances

THE 2013|14 SEASON

## Regional Premiere!

# David Roussève | REALITY Stardust

Photo by Valerie Oliveira

February 6-9, 2014

Alexander Kasser Theater



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY



## Program Notes

A coming-of-age story for the Twitter generation, *Stardust* follows an African-American gay urban teenager who never appears on stage. Instead, he is known only by the (unanswered) text messages he sends, by the music that both comforts and challenges him, and by the dance movements that are the analog of his states of mind and heart.

**Music** (in performance order)

**“Nature Boy”**: Eden Ahbez.  
Golden World Publishing.

**“When I Fall in Love”**: Victor Popular Young and Edward Heyman.  
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**“Sweet Lorraine”**: Mitchell Parish and Clifford Burwell.  
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**“You Call It Madness (But I Call It Love)”**: Russ Columbo, Con Conrad, Paul Gregory, and Gladys Dubois.  
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## About the Artists

**David Roussève** (Choreographer/Writer/Director/Performer), artistic director of REALITY since 1988, has created 13 full-evening works for the company that have toured throughout the US, Europe, and South America, including three commissions for the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival. His works for other companies include Dancing Wheels, Ririe-Woodbury, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Dance Alloy, Ballet Hispanico (in collaboration with Eddie Palmieri), Atlanta Ballet, and Houston Ballet. In 2006 Roussève spent seven weeks in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, creating a piece for Ilkhom Theater Company. In 2012 he directed, wrote, and co-choreographed his third dance film, *Two Seconds After Laughter*. Filmed in Java by Cari Ann Shim Sham\*, the film has been screened in 11 countries and won 10 festival awards including four for Best Short or Experimental Short. Twice a fellow in the Sundance Institute's Feature Film Screenwriter's Lab, Roussève has had his writing published by Bantam Press and Routledge Press. His awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a “Bessie,” three Hortons, the CalArts/Alpert Award, Best Choreography from the IMZ International Dance Film Festival, two Irvine Fellowships, and seven consecutive NEA Fellowships. Roussève is a professor of choreography and former chair in UCLA's department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance. davidrousseve.com

**Cari Ann Shim Sham\*** (Video Artist) is a magical manipulator of digital, celluloid, and moving things, residing in Topanga Canyon, where she hunts mushrooms and makes movies. Awards include Best Director from the First Glance Film Festival and Best Mini Documentary

**“Ave Maria”**: Johann Sebastian Bach.  
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**“Mona Lisa”**: R. Evans and J. Livingston.  
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**“Reach for Tomorrow”**: Ned Washington and Jimmy McHugh.  
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**“Stardust”**: Hoagy Carmichael and Mitchell Parish.  
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from the St. Louis International Film Festival for her film *SAND* and Best Experimental Short from the New Orleans Film Festival for *Two Seconds After Laughter*, a dance film collaboration with David Roussève. She is currently in preproduction on her first feature film, *SHEETS*; touring video art with Lionel Popkin's *Ruth Doesn't Live Here Anymore*; in her fifth year of curating the Dance Film Showcase for Topanga Film Festival; and teaching Dance for Camera at UCLA and St. Mary's College. She is teaching a year-long quarterly filmmaking workshop through the Topanga Film Institute, Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer: Pathway to creating a film. carianنشimsham.com

**d. Sabela grimes** (Original Music and Sound Design), a.k.a. Ovasoul7, is an interdisciplinary artist and educator. grimes has conceived and presented a body of dance-theater work that proactively seeks to expand beyond contemporary notions of hip-hop culture and aesthetics. His performance work and pedagogical approach reveal his invested interest in the physical and metaphysical efficacies of Black dance practices. Recently, his personal and collaborative art making has focused on exploring masculinity and manhood, reflecting the artist's effort to evolve into a more valuable pro-feminist being. He created and continues to cultivate a technique-based approach to learning Black vernacular dances/dance forms, called Funkamentals.

**Christopher Kuhl** (Lighting/Technical Director) is a lighting, scenic, installation, and conceptual designer for new performance, theater, dance, and opera. Recent work includes *ABACUS* for Early Morning Opera (Sundance Film

Festival, REDCAT, EMPAC), *John Cage Song Books* (San Francisco Symphony, Carnegie Hall), *Under Polaris* for Cloud Eye Control (REDCAT, EXIT Festival Paris, Fusebox Festival Austin), *Watch her not know it now* for Meg Wolfe (REDCAT), *Monster* for Pappas and Dancers (UCLA), *The Elephant Room* for Rainpan 43 (Philadelphia Live Arts, St. Ann's Warehouse), *Motherhood Out Loud* (The Geffen), *How to Completely Disappear*—Ovation Award, *The Nether, Eclipsed* (Center Theatre Group), *Model Behavior*, and *Monster of Happiness*—Ovation Award nomination (Theatre Movement Bazaar). He was lighting director for Ralph Lemon's *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere*; Victoria Marks's *Not About Iraq*, and David Roussève's *Saudade*. Kuhl is originally from New Mexico, a graduate of CalArts, an associate artist of Hand2Mouth Theatre, and co-director of Live Arts Exchange.

**Leah Piehl** (Costumes) recently costumed the following theatrical productions: *The Steward of Christendom* (Mark Taper Forum), *The Most Deserving* (Denver Center Theatre), *The Motherlucker with the Hat*, *Robin Hood*, and *The Borrowers* (South Coast Rep), *The Second City Twist Your Dickens* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Intimate Apparel* (Los Angeles Drama Circle Critics' winner, best costume design; Pasadena Playhouse), and *The Heiress* (Ovation award, nominated for best costume design; Pasadena Playhouse). This is her second collaboration with David Roussève. Piehl earned her BA from the University of California—Berkeley and her MFA in Theater from CalArts in 2006. She currently teaches at the University of Southern California. leahpiehl.com

**Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns** (Dramaturg) is at work on new plays: Cindy Garcia's *How to Make It to the Dance Floor: A Salsa Guide for Women (Based on Actual Experiences)* and R. Z. Linmark's *But, Beautiful*. Other dramaturgy projects include TeAda Productions' *Native Immigrant and Global Taxi Drivers* (2013). In 2012 and 2013, she was a member of San Francisco–based Kularts, Inc.'s curating team for *Make Your Own Revolution*. Burns began her professional involvement in theater at the New WORLD Theater with Roberta Uno, theater director/foundation officer and editor of *Unbroken Thread* and *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color* (with Kathy Perkins). Burns is an associate professor in the Asian American Studies department at UCLA. Her book *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the United Stages of Empire* is published by NYU Press (2012). She is co-editing *California Dreaming: Production and Aesthetics in Asian American Art* with Dr. Christine Bacareza Balance.

**Katelan Braymer** (Assistant Technical Director) is a lighting designer and production manager based out of Los Angeles, CA, and Portland, OR. She has been an assistant lighting designer at the Los Angeles Opera since 2011 and the Kirk Douglas Theatre since 2012. She was the production supervisor and lighting director for the 2013 Live Arts Exchange, a three-week-long festival presenting work by LA artists. In Portland, Braymer is an associate artist with Hand2Mouth Theatre and regularly designs for Miracle Theatre Group.

### Performers

**Charisse Skye Aguirre** is a young choreographer and movement artist who recently graduated from UCLA, where she majored in World Arts and Cultures with an emphasis on dance. She is also a CrossFit Level One Certified Trainer with CrossFit Gymnastics Certification at her family's gym, CrossFit Proper. Aguirre is a strength and conditioning coach/trainer at UCLA's John Wooden Center, where she enjoys teaching a variety of fitness courses ranging from CrossFit and barbell technique to dance conditioning.

**Emily Beattie** is a Boston- and Los Angeles–based artist who collaboratively designs body-based experiences that engage the effects of technology on empathy. Her experimental works for stage, screen, and sites have been supported by REDCAT, Brown University, Pieter Performance Space, Boston Cyberarts Festival, World Arts Music/CRASHarts, Green Street Studios, Somerville Arts Council, Gloucester New Arts Festival, Design Boston, American Repertory Theater's Oberon Theater, Support Women Artists Now Day Inc., Kyoto Renku Festival 2011, and Rhodopi International Theater Lab. Beattie has been honored to perform in the works of Stephan Koplowitz, Edisa Weeks, Donald Byrd, Sara Rudner, Jennifer Monson, Simone Forti, and Lionel Popkin. She has served on faculty at Brown University, UCLA, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, and Boston Ballet Community.

**Leanne Iacovetta** moved from Columbus, OH, to Los Angeles five years ago to attend UCLA, where she graduated *magna cum laude* with degrees in World Arts and Cultures (WAC)/Dance and Communications. At UCLA, she co-produced the annual undergraduate showcase, *WACsmash*, and was president of the WAC Undergraduate Society. Iacovetta has had the honor of working with faculty members Lionel Popkin, Vic Marks, Michel Kouakou, and David Roussève. She is currently the assistant director for the UCLA Summer Dance/Theater Intensive and teaches dance to youth around Los Angeles.

**Jasmine Jawato** is a native of Los Angeles and a recent graduate of the department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance at UCLA. During her undergraduate studies, Jawato had the opportunity to work with Maria Gillespie/Oni Dance and Michel Kouakou, in addition to David Roussève. She has performed in Los Angeles; at Bates Dance Festival in Maine; in Côte d'Ivoire; Bielefeld, Germany; and at the Joyce Soho in New York.

**Nehara Kalev** is an interdisciplinary performing artist from New York City. Combining experimental dance-theater, improvisation, and aerial dance imagery, she has created and performed works with support from private foundations, artistic residencies, and public institutions, including the Bogliasco Fellowship in Italy, Djerassi, and the Center for Cultural Innovation. As co-founder of Catch Me Bird, she has performed with her company in major California and New York venues, supported by the Gerbode, Scripps, Durfee, and Flourish Foundations, Cirque du Soleil, the LA County Arts Commission, and the Department of Cultural Affairs. She holds an MFA in choreography and looks forward to completing two new works during upcoming creation residencies at ComPeung in Thailand and Montalvo Arts Center in Silicon Valley.

**Michel Kouakou** is a dancer-choreographer from the Ivory Coast. He has danced with Germaine Acogny (Senegal), Seydou Boro (Burkina Fasso), Bud Blumenthal (Belgium), Kota Yamazaki (New York/Japan), Jutta Czurda (Germany), Giorgio Rossi (Italy), Reggie Wilson (USA), and Victoria Marks (USA). His own company, Daara Dance, has performed in the US, Holland, France, Chad, Ivory Coast, Tunisia, Italy, Israel, Japan, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Kouakou has taught throughout Africa, Europe, the US, and Japan. His solo *S.A.C.K.* was featured in both the New York (2010) and Los Angeles (2011) *A.W.A.R.D. Show*. Kouakou is a recipient of a 2007 NYFA Artist Fellowship, 2008 US-Japan Fellowship for Research, and 2012 Jerome Foundation fellowship and is a recent winner of the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise.

**Kevin Le** is a fourth-year student in the World Arts and Cultures/Dance department at UCLA. He has been trained in hip-hop, jazz, modern, and ballet under the direction of Jessie Hartley at the School of Dance and Music. In addition to David Roussève, he has worked with dancers/choreographers Jessie Hartley, Peter Chu, Sonya Tayeh, and Kevin Williamson and is a member of Sonya Tayeh's company, Tayeh Dance. Le was titled first runner-up in the nonclassical dance division of the Music Center Spotlight Awards in 2009.

**Nguyễn Nguyễn** was born in Vietnam and came to the United States at age seven. He was a Regents Scholar at UCLA and graduated with a BS in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics. Nguyễn was on the dance faculty at Santa Monica College and California State—Los Angeles. He has worked with various artists including David Roussève, Cheng-Chieh Yu, Simone Forti, Holly Johnston, and Maria Gillespie. Nguyễn is a founding member of Los Angeles Movement Arts. He holds an MFA from UCLA's department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance. Nguyễn is currently a dance adviser at Renaissance Arts Academy.

## Acknowledgments

David Roussève | REALITY extends special thanks to Montclair State University and Jedediah Wheeler and the entire staff of Peak Performances and to Conor McTeague and the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance.

David Roussève | REALITY is fiscally sponsored by Unique Projects, Inc., a New York State not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization administrated by Pentacle/DanceWorks, Inc.

**Taisha Paggett** is a Los Angeles– and Chicago-based artist and co-founder of *itch* dance journal. Her work has been presented nationally and abroad, including at The Studio Museum in Harlem, Danspace (NYC), THEOFFCENTER (San Francisco), and BAK Basis Voor Actuele Kunst in Utrecht, The Netherlands. *Stardust* is Paggett's third project with David Roussève | REALITY. She also has worked with the Stanley Love Performance Group, Fiona Dolenga-Marcotty, Vic Marks, Cid Pearlman, Cheng-Chieh Yu, Baker & Tarpaga Projects, Rebecca Alson-Milkman, Kelly Nipper, Meg Wolfe, Ultra-red, and with Ashley Hunt in their ongoing collaborative project, *On Movement, Thought and Politics*. Paggett has been a guest lecturer at the Dance Center of Columbia College in Chicago since 2010 and holds an MFA from UCLA's department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance.

**Kevin Williamson** is a Los Angeles–based artist currently pursuing his MFA in Dance at UCLA. His collaborative, choreographic works explore aspects of contemporary queer experiences through movement, text, and media. His works have been presented by REDCAT, CounterPULSE, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Highways, Diavolo, Los Angeles Contemporary Dance, Loyola Marymount University, Nate Holden Theater, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His performance credits include dancing for David Gordon, Julie Taymor, Angelin Preljocaj, Robert Moses, Stephan Koplowitz, Maria Gillespie, Kate Hutter, Sebastian Prantl, Ryan Heffington, David Bridel, and the Los Angeles Opera. He is a Lestor Horton Award recipient for Outstanding Achievement in Performance and a Bates Education Fellow. Williamson teaches choreography, dance technique, and improvisation at UCLA's department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance and for the American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

David Roussève | REALITY is a member of Pentacle/DanceWorks, Inc., a nonprofit management support organization for the performing arts, Mara Greenberg, Director; 246 West 38th Street, 4th floor, New York, NY 10018; 212-278-8111; pentacle.org. For booking information, contact Sophie Myrtil-McCourty, Artist Representative, sophiem@pentacle.org.