



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

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

---

2010-2011 PEAK Explores the Answer:  
Experiments in Arts & Technology

PEAK Performances Programming History

---

3-24-2011

## The Matter of Origins

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/peak-performances-2010-2011>



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

---

### Recommended Citation

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming and PEAK Performances at Montclair State University, "The Matter of Origins" (2011). *2010-2011 PEAK Explores the Answer: Experiments in Arts & Technology*. 15.  
<https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/peak-performances-2010-2011/15>

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 2010-2011 PEAK Explores the Answer: Experiments in Arts & Technology by an authorized administrator of Montclair State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@montclair.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@montclair.edu).

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Liz Lerman** (Founding Artistic Director) is a choreographer, performer, writer, educator, and speaker. Described by *The Washington Post* as “the source of an epochal revolution in the scope and purposes of dance art,” her dance/theater works have been seen throughout the United States and abroad. Her unique career has taken her from theater stages to shipyards, and from synagogues to science labs. Lerman’s aesthetic approach spans the range from abstract to personal to political. She founded Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 1976 and has cultivated the company’s unique multigenerational ensemble into a leading force in contemporary dance. Lerman has been the recipient of numerous honors, including a 2002 MacArthur “Genius Grant” Fellowship. Lerman’s work has been commissioned by Lincoln Center, American Dance Festival, and the Kennedy Center, among many others. This fall she will be artist-in-residence at Harvard University. Her newest work, *The Matter of Origins*, examines the question of beginnings through dance, media, and innovative formats for conversation. Her collection of essays, titled *Hiking the Horizontal: Field Notes from a Choreographer*, was recently published by Wesleyan University Press. Born in Los Angeles and raised in Milwaukee, Lerman attended Bennington College and Brandeis University and received her BA in Dance from the University of Maryland and an MA in Dance from George Washington University. She is married to storyteller Jon Spelman. Their daughter Anna recently graduated from college.

**Amelia Cox** (Creative Producer) has been working in performance since 1989. For several years post-college she worked nationally and internationally with Double Edge Theater (MA) and the Gardzienice Center for Theatre Practices (Poland), making theater happen in spaces from a 19th-century barn in Massachusetts to a hilltop medieval fortress in Romania. She came to the mid-Atlantic region as the technical director of Baltimore Theatre Project. Since 2005 she has worked at Dance Exchange, leading production for the premieres of *Small Dances about Big Ideas*, *Ferocious Beauty: Genome*, *Man/Chair Dances*, *Funny Uncles*, *Imprints on a Landscape: The Mining Project*, *613 Radical Acts of Prayer*, *The Farthest Earth from Thee*, *Drift*, and now *The Matter of Origins*. She holds a BA in Theater from Hope College (MI) and an MFA in Creative Writing from Warren Wilson College (NC).

**Holly Burnell** (Stage Manager) received her bachelor of fine arts in Stage Management and Lighting Design from the University of Arizona in 2008. Since then, she has worked for companies including the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, and Liz Lerman Dance Exchange.

**Ami Dowden-Fant** (Adjunct Artist), born in Richmond, VA, has worked with Doug Varone, Robert Moses, Joanna Mendl Shaw, and Bebe Miller. Recently Dowden-Fant pursued her BFA in Dance and Choreography at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has danced for Starr Foster Dance Project, Charles O. Anderson, and Gesel Mason with Mason/Rhynes Performance Projects. She is in the lab with her company, hersouldances (hersouldances.org), working on new projects.

**Leo Erickson** (Adjunct Artist) most recently appeared with the Washington Stage Guild as Darwin in *Darwin in Malibu*. At the Studio Theatre, Erickson has appeared in *The Solid Gold Cadillac*, *Guantanamo*, *The Life of Galileo*, *A Class Act*, and *Prometheus*. His regional theater roles include Cyrano in *Cyrano de Bergerac*; George in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*; and Honeyman in *A Walk in the Woods*. International work includes Lee Blessing’s *Two Rooms* at the Sibiu Theatre Festival (Romania) and the Merlin Theatre in Budapest.

**Julianne Franz** (Stage Manager) is the director of community programs for Center Stage in Baltimore. She is a guest artist and teaching artist with Liz Lerman Dance Exchange whenever possible. Other credits include Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 651 Arts Center, Mass MoCA, Glimmerglass Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, and Salzburg Music Festival. Franz is an Open Society Institute Community Fellow and a graduate of Towson University’s MFA in Theatre program.

**Kate Freer** (Video Programmer) is a Brooklyn-based video artist and theatrical designer. Over the past two years she has had the privilege to assist projection designers Logan Kibens and Maya Ciarrocchi. Assistant projections: *Red Hot Patriot* (Suzanne Roberts Theater; dir. David Esbjornson), *The Devil You Know* (La Mama, dir. Ping Chong). Selected theatrical designs: *John Faustus and the Overclocked Death Drive* (45th Street Theater; dir. Andrew Scoville), *Seed* (Hip Hop Theater Festival, Classical Theatre of Harlem, dir. Nigel Smith), *Wanted* (PS122, dir. Kamilah Forbes), *The Footage* (The Flea, dir. Claudia Zelevansky). www.room404media.com

**Sarah Gubbins** (Dramaturg) is a Chicago playwright whose most recent play, *Fair Use*, was produced at Actor’s Express in Atlanta after being developed at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Her plays have also been read or developed at the Public Theater, About Face Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, Next Theatre Company, and Collaboraction.

**Matt Hubbs** (Associate Sound Designer) recently designed *Telephone* for the Foundry Theatre, *1001* at Mixed Blood Theatre, *Blueprints of Relentless Nature* and *613 Radical Acts of Prayer* for Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and *100 Saints You Should Know* at Playwrights Horizons. A company member of the TEAM, he has designed *Architecting*, *Particularly in the Heartland*, *A Thousand Natural Shocks*, and *Mission Drift*. As an associate designer, he has recently worked at MTC’s Friedman Theatre, the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, and La Jolla Playhouse. He has also toured with SITI Company and the rachel’s band.

**Ted Johnson** (Adjunct Artist) is a dancer of long standing with Dance Exchange. He was a member of Bebe Miller Company (1995–2003) and Ralph Lemon Company (1994–95). He has also worked with choreographers Amy Sue Rosen, David Alan Harris, Sarah Pogostin, Eun-Me Ahn, Cheng-Chieh Yu, and, more recently, Colleen Thomas and Bill Young, among others. His improvisational work has

been featured in collaborative ventures onstage with Kirstie Simson, Gabriel Forestieri, and Kayoko Nakajima. Johnson has a background in visual arts (drawing, photography, painting, and design), theater, and voice. He has been a student of Klein/Mahler Technique with Barbara Mahler and Susan Klein for over a decade and continues a practice in contact improvisation.

**Meg Kelly** (Production Coordinator and Assistant Stage Manager) joined Dance Exchange full time in December 2008 after stage managing *The Farthest Earth from Thee* (Capital Fringe 2007) and *Muscle and Mortar* (Capital Fringe 2008). She serves as the stage manager for *Drift*, *Blueprints of Relentless Nature*, *Running with the Wind*, and numerous keynotes, company concerts, and community projects. She has worked at the Shakespeare Theatre Company and Round House Theatre and holds a BFA in Theater Design and Technology from the University of Arizona.

**Logan Kibens** (Projection Designer) is a Los Angeles–based filmmaker. Her work as a video designer includes projects in Chicago for Steppenwolf Theatre, the Goodman Theatre, Lucky Plush, and Lookingglass Theatre and in DC at the Washington Opera. Her films have screened at venues such as the Chicago International Film Festival, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and REDCAT Theater Los Angeles. Currently her film *Recessive*, a narrative/documentary hybrid, is touring festivals. She holds an MFA in Film Directing from CalArts.

**Lisa LaCharite-Lostritto** (Tea Graphics Designer) is a designer currently operating in the Boston area. With a professional education in architecture, LaCharite-Lostritto has focused her research, practice, and teaching on harvesting history, culture, and collective human consciousness in the experimental shaping of visual environments. She is co-founder of 0095b6, a collaboration providing services in graphic, media, and architectural design.

**Sarah Levitt** (Company Member) is a dancer, choreographer, and teacher based in the DC area. She received her BA in Dance from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2007, where she held a Creative and Performing Arts Scholarship in dance and was awarded the Dorothy Madden Emerging Artist Award upon graduation. Levitt began working with Dance Exchange in 2007 and became a full-time company member in 2010. She has performed and taught with the company at theaters, universities, senior centers, and in community settings across the US and abroad. She and company member Benjamin Wegman are 2011 recipients of the Kennedy Center’s Local Dance Commissioning Project for their new work, *Hammock*, which will premiere in fall 2011 on the Kennedy Center’s Millennium Stage.

**Michael Mazzola** (Scenic and Lighting Designer) has created critically lauded designs for venues in the US and Europe ranging from opera houses to circus tents to outdoor amphitheaters. A three-time BESSIE Award winner, he has recently designed lighting and scenery for National Ballet of Finland, Oregon Ballet Theatre, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Bebe Miller Company, Rumpus Room, Royal Ballet of Flanders, and Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. In the past two years Mazzola has achieved awards on the West Coast for his lighting of musical theater and drama.

**Paloma McGregor** (Adjunct Artist) is a New York–based dancer, choreographer, and co-founder of Angela’s Pulse, a collaborative performance company. Her choreography has been presented throughout New York, including at The Kitchen, Harlem Stage, EXIT Art, the Brecht Forum, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, and Bronx Academy of Art and Dance. McGregor toured internationally for five years with the critically acclaimed Urban Bush Women dance company. She earned her BS in Journalism (Florida A & M University) and her MFA in Dance (Case Western Reserve University).

**Naoko Nagata** (Costume Designer) started her career as a biochemist in Japan. In 1998, with no formal training, Nagata created her first costume (for Jeanine Durning). Since then, she has been creating nonstop for choreographers and dancers, collaborating with Amanda Loulaki, Bebe Miller, David Dorfman Dance, Doug Elkins, David Neumann, Ellis Wood, Gina Gibney, Liz Lerman, Nina Winthrop, Nora Chipaumire, Reggie Wilson, Tiffany Mills, Urban Bush Women, Zvi Gotheiner, and many others. Nagata helps bring to life what she calls “the creation of a shared dream.”

**Tamara Hurwitz Pullman** (Adjunct Artist) has danced with companies including the José Limón Dance Company, Ann Yachon Dance Conduit, Pacific Dance Ensemble, and Rosanna Gamson Worldwide. As a dance educator, she has taught dance to people of many ages and abilities in different settings ranging from dance conservatories to YMCAs. She received her BFA from UMass Amherst and MFA from Temple University. *The Matter of Origins* is Pullman’s second project with Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. She and her family live in Los Angeles.

**Shula Strassfeld** (Company Member) began dancing “too late” and has been dancing ever since. After training in New York with members of the José Limón Company and Colette Barry and Susan Klein, Strassfeld lived in the US, Israel, and Canada. She has danced with choreographers Susan Rose, Joy Kellman, Flora Cushman, Mirali Sharon, Jan Van Dyke, and Sandra Neels. Strassfeld has an MA in Dance Education from Columbia University and has taught at Trinity College (Hartford, CT), Rubin Academy of the Hebrew University, York University, and at the professional schools of Canadian Ballet Theatre, Ballet Creole, and the Kibbutz Dance Company. She joined Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 2007.

**Erin Tinsley** (Lighting Supervisor) has been working in theater and dance in the DC metro area since 2007. As a freelance electrician, lighting supervisor, and lighting designer, she has worked for a variety of companies including The Washington Ballet, The Suzanne Farrell Ballet, and at the Kennedy Center. Tinsley returns as lighting supervisor for *The Matter of Origins* after a trip with the company to Augusta, GA. She holds a BFA in Lighting Design from Millikin University.

**Keith Thompson** (Rehearsal Director/Adjunct Artist) is a choreographer, performer, and educator. He completed his MFA Research Fellowship in Dance from Bennington College in 2003. He performed with Trisha Brown Dance Company for ten years, the last three of which he also served as

rehearsal director. He has also worked with Bebe Miller Company, Creach/Koeser Company, and Danny Buraczeski. As a choreographer and teacher, Thompson has been on the faculties of American Dance Festival, Shenandoah University, George Mason University, and Temple University. He continues to immerse himself in his choreographic work with his own company, danceTactics performance group, which was formed in 2005.

**Benjamin Wegman** (Company Member) is a performer, choreographer, and teacher based in the Washington, DC, area. Originally hailing from a town called Normal, Wegman joined Dance Exchange in 2007. With the company he has made dances with communities across the United States and internationally in Canada, Japan, Ireland, Switzerland, and France. Currently, Wegman is working on a new piece, *Hammock*, with Sarah Levitt, set to premiere at the Kennedy Center in fall 2011. He has danced with Jeanne Ruddy Dance, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, Keith Thompson’s danceTactics, Headlong Dance Theater, CityDance Ensemble, SCRAP Performance Group, The Pillow Project, Troika Ranch, and Meyer Chaffaud Dance and was a featured dancer with the Washington National Opera.

**Darron L West** (Soundscape) has had his work heard all over Manhattan in more than 400 Broadway and Off-Broadway dance and theater productions as well as nationally and internationally. Among numerous nominations, his accolades for sound design include the 2006 Lortel and AUDELCO Awards, 2004 and 2005 Henry Hewes Design Awards, the Princess Grace Award, *The Village Voice* Obie Award, and the *Entertainment Design* magazine EDDY Award. He is the sound designer and a founding member of Anne Bogart’s SITI Company.

**Martha Wittman** (Company Member) has been teaching, dancing, and choreographing for more than 50 years. As a young performer she danced with the Juilliard Dance Theatre under the direction of Doris Humphrey and in the companies of Ruth Currier, Joseph Gifford, and Anna Sokolow. For many years she was an associate choreographer with the Dances We Dance Company directed by Betty Jones and Fritz Ludin. Her awards include three National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, the Doris Humphrey Fellowship from the American Dance Festival, Individual Artist Awards from the Maryland Council on the Arts, and two awards from Dance/USA’s National College Choreography Initiative. She was a long-term member of the Bennington College dance faculty in Vermont. Wittman joined Dance Exchange in 1996 and has been working with them ever since.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Liz Lerman founded Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 1976. Its unique brand of dance/theater breaks boundaries between stage and audience, theater and community, movement and language, tradition and the unexplored. Through explosive dancing, personal stories, humor, and a company of performers whose ages span six decades, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange stretches the expressive range of contemporary dance. Its work consists of formal concerts, interactive performances, specialized community residencies, and professional training in the art of community-based dance. An artist-driven organization, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange employs a collaborative approach to dance making, administration, and implementation. Representing the multiple artistic voices of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, current choreographic projects include explorations of coal mining, genetic research, radical prayer, human rights, particle physics, and the way land changes over time. More information is available at www.danceexchange.org.

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange gratefully acknowledges support from the following major funders: Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Diane & Norman Bernstein Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Covenant Foundation, Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts, Donors InVesting in Arts (DIVAs) of the Montgomery County Community Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Meyer S. Frucher, Lorraine Gallard & Richard Levy, Harman Family Foundation, Martha S. Head, Samuel M. Levy Family Foundation, The Marpat Foundation, Maryland State Arts Council, MetLife Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, AJ Pietrantone, Raymond Family Foundation, Reinisch Family Foundation, and Elliot Rosen & Sharon Cohen.

The Company **Thomas Dwyer**, **Sarah Levitt**, **Liz Lerman**, **Cassie Meador**, **Shula Strassfeld**, **Benjamin Wegman**, **Martha Wittman**

Founding Artistic Director **Liz Lerman**  
Incoming Artistic Director **Cassie Meador**  
Managing Director **Jane Hirshberg**  
Humanities Director **John Borstel**  
Creative Producer **Amelia Cox**  
Communications Manager **Emily Macel Theys**  
Projects Manager **Ellen Chenoweth**  
Partnerships Manager **Dorothy Williams**  
Production Coordinator **Meg Kelly**  
Assistant to the Directors **Kelly Bond**

Board of Directors **Ellen Coren Bogage** (Chair), **Elliot Rosen** (Chair Emeritus), **Elliot E. Maxwell** (Secretary), **Joseph Wnuk** (Acting Treasurer), **Theresa Cameron**, **Inés Cifuentes**, **Martha S. Head**, **Liz Lerman**, **Graciela Rivera-Oven**, **John Urciolo**, **Lew Winarsky**

### Dance

### Dance

### Dance

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President  
 Dr. Geoffrey W. Newman, Dean, College of the Arts  
 Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

Peak Performances @ Montclair presents:

Regional Premiere!

# Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

## *The Matter of Origins*

Founding Artistic Director, Direction/Conception **Liz Lerman**  
 Creative Producer **Amelia Cox**  
 Stage Managers **Julianne Franz, Holly Burnell**  
 Video Programmer **Kate Freer**  
 Dramaturg **Sarah Gubbins**  
 Associate Sound Designer **Matt Hubbs**  
 Production Coordinator and Assistant Stage Manager **Meg Kelly**  
 Projection Designer **Logan Kibens**  
 Tea Graphics Designer **Lisa LaCharite-Lostritto**  
 Scenic and Lighting Designer **Michael Mazzola**  
 Costume Designer **Naoka Nagata**  
 Lighting Supervisor **Erin Tinsley**  
 Rehearsal Director **Keith Thompson**  
 Soundscape **Darron L West**

Performing Ensemble **Ami Dowden-Fant, Leo Erickson, Ted Johnson, Sarah Levitt, Paloma McGregor, Tamara Hurwitz Pullman, Shula Strassfeld, Keith Thompson, Benjamin Wegman, Martha Wittman**

Tea Servers **Lauren Alvarez, Victor J. Carinha, Lauren Connolly, Tracy A. Dunbar, Lisa Graziano, Julie Marinucci, Avianna Perez, Morgan Hille Refakis, Hannah J. Rolfes, Gabriella Sanitate, Elise Tarantina, Jennifer Williams, Meagan Woods**

Co-commissioned by Peak Performances at Montclair State (NJ) and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at University of Maryland.

Additional support provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional funding for National Dance Project is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation.

This project is supported, in part, by a grant from the National Science Foundation for research to investigate the relationship of art-based audience engagement to informal science education.



*The Matter of Origins* employs Isadora® graphic programming software developed by Troika Ranch.

**To facilitate the resetting of the theater for Act II, the audience is asked to vacate the auditorium during intermission.**

Duration: 2 hours 15 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 inside the theater.

### Office of Arts & Cultural Programming

Executive Director **Jedediah Wheeler**  
 Executive Producer **Jill Dombrowski**  
 Associate Producer **Jessica Wasilewski**  
 Production Manager **J. Ryan Graves**  
 Cultural Engagement Director **Carrie Urbanic**  
 Finance Manager **Marilyn Fogarty**  
 Media and Marketing Specialist **Thomas P. Miller**  
 Project Coordinator **Sarah Bishop-Stone**  
 Technical Director **Jack Brady**  
 Audio Engineer **Andrew Lulling**  
 Production Coordinator **Rachel Malbin**  
 Director of Audience Services **Robert Hermida**  
 Box Office Manager **Leo Grimaldi**  
 House Manager **Natalya Brook**  
 Program Editor **Susan R. Case**  
 Program Design **Jamie L. Grubman**  
 Graphics **Floodesign**  
 Press **Ellen Jacobs Associates**

### College of the Arts

Dean **Geoffrey W. Newman**  
 Associate Dean **Ronald L. Sharps**  
 Assistant Dean **Linda D. Davidson**  
 Art and Design **Scott Gordley**  
 Broadcasting **Lawrence Londino**  
 Communication Studies **Harry Haines**  
 John J. Cali School of Music  
**Ruth Rendleman** (interim)  
 Theatre and Dance **Eric Diamond**  
 Academic Services and Outreach **Marie Sparks**  
 DuMont Television Center **Jeffrey Friedman**  
 University Art Galleries **Teresa Rodriguez**  
 College Administrator **Zacrah S. Battle**  
 Executive Assistant to the Dean **Alyson Thelin**  
 Program Assistant **Kilolo Kumanyika**

### Staff

### 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

For a full list of donors, visit <http://www.montclair.edu/peakperfdonors.html>

#### 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

### Major Donors

## SHANGHAI QUARTET

April 2, 2011 • 8:00pm

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE PRESENTS:

## DANCE WORKS 2011

April 6–10, 2011

Alexander Kasser Theater

### Upcoming

The 2010/11 season is made possible in part by funds from:

Association of Performing Arts Presenters

The National Endowment for the Arts

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

Discover Jersey Arts

New England Foundation for the Arts

Alison and James T. Cirenza

The Honorable Mary Mochary



This program is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle.

To view our complete season and for more information, visit [www.peakperfs.org](http://www.peakperfs.org).

To become a Peak Performances fan on Facebook, text "fan peakperfs" to FBOOK (32665)!



Peak performances  
 @montclair

10  
 11



Credit: Jaclyn Borowski

Regional Premiere!

# Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

## *The Matter of Origins*

March 24–27, 2011

Alexander Kasser Theater  
 Montclair State University