

LUCKY / PLUSH PRODUCTIONS

RINK LIFE

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

"A BRAND OF MOVEMENT-BASED THEATER THAT CAN BE COMFORTABLY CALLED, WITHOUT EXAGGERATION, GENIUS."

—*NEWCITY*



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ABOUT LUCKY PLUSH

Now entering its 19th season, Lucky Plush Productions (LuckyPlush.com) is a Chicago-based dance theater company led by founder and artistic director Julia Rhoads. Lucky Plush is committed to provoking and supporting an immediacy of presence – a palpable liveness – shared by performers in real-time with audiences. A unique hybrid of high-level dance and theater, Lucky Plush's work is well-known for carefully crafting dramatic and rhythmic arcs, pushing its artists to move beyond the predictable by earning the exciting slippage between – and surprising coherence of – pedestrian action, realistic dialogue, abstract choreography and humor. Though rigorously composed, much of the company's work feels like it is generated spontaneously.

Since 2000, Lucky Plush has created 30+ original dance-theater works. In addition to regularly performing in the Chicago area, the company has presented work in 55+ US cities from Maine to Hawaii, and its international partners span from New Zealand to Cuba. Commissioning and development partners include the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Krannert Center at University of Illinois, The Yard (MA), Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (MD), Flynn Center for the Performing Arts (VT), Door Kinetic Arts Festival (WI), and Links Hall Chicago. Presenting partners include the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (MA), Joyce Theater (NYC), ODC (CA), TITAS (TX), Spoleto Festival/USA (SC), NC State LIVE (NC), Portland Ovation (ME), and Skirball Center (NYC), among others, and the company will have its debut performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts this season.

Lucky Plush Productions is the first and only dance company to receive the prestigious MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, a recognition of the company's exceptional creativity and impact. Other awards include creation, residency, and touring awards from National Endowment for the Arts, National Dance Project, and National Performance Network; exchange awards from the MacArthur Foundation International Connections Fund; a presentation award from MetLife Foundation; and an achievement award from the Lester and Hope Abelson Fund for the Performing Arts at The Chicago Community Trust.

Press features include the *Boston Globe's* "10 Best Dance Performances of 2013," *Chicago Public Radio's* "Best of 2011"; the *Chicago Reader's* "Best of Chicago 2010"; *Time Out Chicago's* "The Decade's 10 Best Original Dance Works"; the *Chicago Tribune's* "Best of Dance 2008"; *Chicago Sun Times'* "Lasting memories in Dance" for 2005 and 2007, and a *Time Out Chicago* cover story "5 reasons to love dance in Chicago," among others.

Lucky Plush is also recognized for its innovative arts management practices. The company's leadership received a Fractured Atlas Arts Entrepreneurship Award for initiating Creative Partners, a shared staff fundraising model. Lucky Plush launched its newest sustainability initiative, Volunteer Cultivation Lab (VCL), with the significant endorsement and financial support of Chicago's lead funders through Arts Work Fund. In activating a network of diverse high-level professional volunteers, VCL dramatically increases the organizational and creative output of LPP without a corresponding surge in expense.

ABOUT RINK LIFE

In *Rink Life*, Lucky Plush brings its highly-integrated brand of dance theater into a communal space that nods to the visual aesthetics and social dynamics of 1970's roller rink culture. Launching from a collision of plot points in several one-act plays, the script-turned-libretto is both spoken and sung by the ensemble, and builds upon fragments of everyday aural input—passing conversations, intimate exchanges, distant whispers, pop song ear-worms. These source inspirations come together in the delightful and moving world of *Rink Life*, where people navigate relationships, self-expression, and rejection in real-time.

CREDITS

Created and directed by:

Julia Rhoads

In collaboration with the Ensemble:

Kara Brody

Michel Rodriguez Cintra

Elizabeth Luse

Jacinda Ratcliffe

Rodolfo Sánchez Sarracino

A.Raheim White

Meghann Wilkinson

Collaborating designers/production team:

Bethany Hamilton Clearfield: Vocal Collaborator

Leslie Buxbaum Danzig: Collaborating Director

Heather Gilbert: Lighting Designer

Patrick Burns: Costume Designer

RINK LIFE TECHNICAL STATS

RUN TIME: 75-80 min. w/no intermission

CAST: 7 performers

SETTING: Proscenium or thrust

*performers do not wear roller skates

TRAVELING PARTY: 10-11

ACCOMMODATIONS: 7 rooms

FREIGHT: none

TECH RIDER: [Rink Life DRAFT tech rider](#)

CONTENT ADVISORY: the full version of the show contains some adult language and content, but there is no nudity. Content is adjusted for **student matinee performances**.

EXCERPTS, IN-PROGRESS SHOWINGS & DEVELOPMENT RESIDENCIES:

- STEPPENWOLF 1700 THEATRE (Chicago, IL)
- Work-in-progress showings during company run of *The Better Half*, November 2018
- ELEVATE CHICAGO DANCE 2018 (Chicago, IL)
- Excerpt performance, October 2018
- DOOR KINETIC ARTS FESTIVAL (Bailey's Harbor, WI)
- Work-in-progress showing during creation residency, June 2018
- HARRIS THEATER FOR MUSIC AND DANCE (Chicago, IL)
- Excerpt performance of company-in-residence, April 2018

RINK LIFE MEDIA

Rink Life Excerpt Video: <https://vimeo.com/309343023>

Rink Life Images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/13kd384n832zyzx/AADacDgETMwC657I156IMFOHa?dl=0>

MORE MEDIA

About Lucky Plush Video [Youtube](#) / [Vimeo](#)

Rink Life [Images](#)

Cinderbox 2.0 [Images](#) / [Video](#)

SuperStrip [Images](#) / [Video](#)

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Julia Rhoads is the founding artistic director of Lucky Plush Productions. She has created more than 25 original works with Lucky Plush, several of which have toured extensively throughout the U.S. Additional directing and choreography credits include projects with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Lookingglass Theatre, Walkabout Theater, River North Dance Chicago, and Redmoon, among others. Rhoads is the recipient of an Alpert Award in Dance and fellowships/awards from Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, Chicago Dancemakers Forum, Cliff Dwellers Foundation, Illinois Arts Council, and the Jacob K. Javits Foundation, and she received a Fractured Atlas Arts Entrepreneurship Award for spearheading Creative Partners, an innovative nonprofit financial model. Rhoads is a former member of San Francisco Ballet and ensemble member of XSIGHT! Performance Group. She received her BA in History from Northwestern University, her MFA in Performance from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and she has taught in the dance and theater programs of several Chicago-area colleges and universities. She is currently Director of Dance and Lecturer at University of Chicago's Department of Theater and Performance Studies.

Leslie Buxbaum Danzig is a collaborating director with Julia Rhoads/Lucky Plush Productions where she co-created *The Better Half*, *The Queue* and *Rooming House*, and is currently collaborating on *Rink Life*. For over a decade, Leslie was co-founder and resident director of the Chicago-based physical theater company 500 Clown, whose shows performed in Chicago and throughout the US. Other directing credits include Third Coast Percussion's *Paddle to the Sea* and *Wild Sound*, composed by Wilco's Glenn Kotche, with performances at MCA Chicago, Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), National Forum of Music (Wroclaw) and De Doelen (Rotterdam), and a number of productions in Chicago at The Actors Gymnasium, House Theatre, Redmoon, Chicago Children's Theater, About Face Theater, and in New York, at New Victory Theater and PS 122, among others. Prior to turning to directing, Leslie toured nationally and internationally as an actor with NYC's Elevator Repair Service. Leslie is Assistant Professor of Practice in Theater and Performance Studies, University of Chicago. She is currently developing a circus-puppet-theater adaptation of the myth of Atalanta with the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival.

KARA BRODY (ensemble) joined Lucky Plush in 2016, originated roles in *Rooming House*, *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*, and joined the touring cast of *SuperStrip* and *Cinderbox 2.0*. Kara is a native of Detroit and received a BFA in Dance from Wayne State University. She is currently in process with Khecarri under the direction of Julia Rae Antonick and Jonathan Meyer. She is also a recurring member with The Cambrians for their annual "Chicago Dances" showcase, and has performed in works by Shannon Alvis, Kevin Iga Jeff, and Alice Klock. In 2018, Kara joined Amanda Maraist for her on-going project "Burrow, Tousele" which premiered at Links Hall, and has

been performed in the JELLO: Performance Series, HIJACK, and An.Open.Space. Kara teaches in Chicago and throughout the midwest. She has been on faculty at Visceral Dance, Dovetail Studios, The Cambrians' Winter and Summer Intensive, Brighton Dance Festival, The Dance Place LTD., and The Actors Gymnasium. She has guest taught at University of Chicago and regularly teaches company class and master classes for Lucky Plush Productions.

MICHEL RODRIGUEZ CINTRA (ensemble) joined Lucky Plush in 2013, originated roles in *The Queue*, *SuperStrip*, *Rooming House*, *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*, and joined the touring cast of *The Better Half* and *Cinderbox 2.0*. Michel was born in Havana, and is a former principal member of Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, and danced with Hedwig Dances, Concert Dance Inc., and as a guest artist with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. As a founding member and co-choreographer with The Cambrians, Michel was named one of Dance Magazine's "25 To Watch" in 2014. Choreography credits include works for Hedwig Dances, one of which was a finalist in the A.W.A.R.D Show 2010, Visceral Dance Chicago's Solus and Dance in the Parks, among others. Michel was named one of "The Men of 2010" by Time Out Chicago, and is the recipient of the 2013 3Arts Award in Dance. In addition to being an ensemble member of Lucky Plush, Michel is an adjunct faculty member at Columbia College Chicago and has taught master classes nationally and internationally.

ELIZABETH LUSE (ensemble) joined Lucky Plush in 2014, originated roles in *SuperStrip*, *Rooming House*, *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*, and joined the touring cast of *The Queue* and *Cinderbox 2.0*. Elizabeth is originally from Orlando, FL, and she holds a B.S. in Ballet Performance from Indiana University where she studied with Leslie Peck, Violette Verdy, and Guoping Wang. Since moving to Chicago, Elizabeth has danced with Winifred Haun and Dancers, Nomi Dance Company, Dance in the Parks, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has worked as a guest artist with Ballet Quad Cities, Madison Ballet, Ron de Jesus Dance, and Emily Stein Dance. In addition to performing, Elizabeth has taught for Visceral Dance Center, The Actors Gymnasium, and is currently on faculty at the Joffrey Academy of Dance.

JACINDA RATCLIFFE (ensemble) joined Lucky Plush in 2018 to originate roles in *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*. Jacinda graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in Dance and Psychology. Upon graduating, she trained on scholarship at Lou Conte Dance Studio under Claire Bataille. She has received additional training through intensives at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, Washington School Of Ballet, and Ballet Híspanico. While living in Chicago, she danced as an apprentice with Project Bound Dance in addition to working freelance throughout the city. Most recently, she performed in *Frankenstein AI: A Monster Made By Many* at Sundance Film Festival. She is currently based out of New York City.

RODOLFO SÁNCHEZ SARRACINO (ensemble) joined Lucky Plush in 2016, originated roles in *Rooming House*, *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*, and joined the touring cast of *Cinderbox 2.0*. Rodolfo was born in Cuba where he graduated from the National School of Arts Instructors and studied at the University of Arts. He was a Principal dancer with Danza Teatro Retazos from 2007-2016

during which time he toured internationally to Italy, Sweden, the U.K., the U.S., Uruguay and Argentina. He has danced in choreography by Isabel Bustos, Stéphane Boko, Miguel Azcue, Pepe Hevia, Venetia Stifler, among others. In addition to working with Lucky Plush, Rodolfo is a member of Concert Dance Incorporated.

A. RAHEIM WHITE (ensemble), joined Lucky Plush in 2016, originated roles in *Rooming House*, *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*, and joined the touring cast of *SuperStrip* and *Cinderbox 2.0*. A Chicago, IL native, Raheim earned their MFA from New York University -Tisch School of the Arts and BFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, both in Dance Performance and Choreography, and studied abroad in Taiwan to train in Classical Chinese Dance, Dance Meditation, and Kung Fu at the Taipei National University of the Arts. They have performed with Sean Curran Company, Project 44, and Trainor Dance, and a host of other projects. Choreography credits include Opera Lafayette, UIUC-Theater, UIUC-Dance, Dance Africa Pittsburgh, among others. As a Master Instructor, they have taught at The American Dance Festival, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Point Park University, Barnard College at Columbia University, University of Hawaii – Manoa, Dance at Illinois, Gibney Dance, and Dance New Amsterdam. Raheim is currently an ensemble member of Lucky Plush Productions, a Reiki Master-Teacher, and crystal healing adornment designer who strives to facilitate healing through art, Reiki, education, dance, and dialogue.

MEGHANN ROSE WILKINSON (ensemble) joined Lucky Plush in 2004, and originated roles in *Lulu Sleeps*, *Cinderbox 18*, *The Sky Hangs Down Too Close*, *Punk Yankees*, *The Better Half*, *Cinderbox 2.0*, *The Queue*, *SuperStrip*, *Rink Life* and *Curb Candy*, among others. She has been a recurring ensemble member of *The Arrow* with The Neo-Futurists, and is a former member of Mordine and Company Dance Theater. Working toward regenerative practices for people and planet, Meghann has organized for the Society of Dance History Scholars, participated in Urban Bush Women's Summer Leadership Institute, attended immersive programming at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage, and completed certificates in permaculture design with Midwest Permaculture and Earth Activist Training. Meghann was a 2017 recipient of the 3Arts Make a Wave grant. She was Assistant Choreographer for Lookingglass Theatre's *The Great Fire* and movement director for Walkabout Theater's *Crow* and has presented choreography with Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, Cecchetti Council of America, Evanston Dance Ensemble, and Columbia College Chicago. Meghann has taught at Northwestern University, Dance Center Evanston, Thodos Dance Chicago, University of Chicago, and Visceral Dance Chicago, as well as national and international master classes with Lucky Plush Productions. She is an adjunct faculty member in the dance and theater programs at Columbia College Chicago and is a budding herbalist.

PATRICK BURNS (costume design) is a visual and dance artist with a focus in digital art, multimedia collage, and dance for camera. Costume design credits include Lucky Plush's *Rooming House* and *Rink Life*, and he has also designed costumes for Chicago artist Darrell Jones. As a dancer, Patrick has performed in the works of Thomas DeFrantz, Carrie Hanson, Vershawn Sanders-Ward, Brian Feigenbaum, Emma Draves, Jane Jerardi, Anna Normann, and Pranita Jain. He received a BFA in Dancemaking and Performance from Columbia College

Chicago. Currently, Patrick is an ensemble member of Same Planet Performance Project and is developing work as a solo artist under the moniker BAD DANCER.

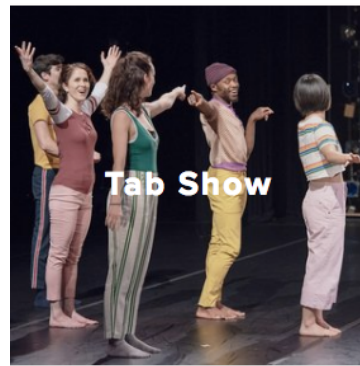
BETHANY HAMILTON CLEARFIELD (Vocal arrangement/vocal coaching) is delighted to work with Lucky Plush for the first time, having collaborated with Julia Rhoads for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's New Works Festival in 2017. Bethany is a member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and performs as both soloist and ensemble member with the Grant Park Chorus and Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, and Chicago a cappella. While she specializes in early and new music, Bethany is recognized for her mastery of multiple styles and remains in demand as a jazz, folk-rock, and session singer. Additionally, she performs her original compositions with the band Outertown. Bethany holds a jazz studies degree from Roosevelt University and masters degree from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Instead of a one-size-fits-all form of outreach, Lucky Plush tours with a customizable audience engagement program. Rhoads works with presenters and local stakeholders to tailor each engagement in a way that best connects distinct communities with strong points of access to the work, including:

1. In communities with roller rinks (which are increasingly rare), LPP hopes to perform part of the work at the rink alongside featured local skaters or historians with knowledge about the venue.
2. When there is interest, Lucky Plush invites local community members (students, performers, audience members) as “extras” into a designated section of Rink Life, heightening the show’s vocal score in a delightful and unexpected way. The opportunity to include community extras is optional and does not impact the overall arc of the work. A 1.5-hour rehearsal with community extras is required in advance the performance.
3. While more traditional, some of LPP’s deepest engagement occurs through interdisciplinary based workshops (at all skill levels) in which the company shares its methods for crafting uniquely hybrid dance-theater work.

PRESS FEATURES



MORE ARTICLES

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: Lucky Plush Productions

Twitter: @LuckyPlush

Instagram: @luckyplush #TeamPlush

www.luckyplush.com

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