



# Advance Program Notes

## Manual Cinema

*Ada/Ava*

Saturday, February 10, 2018, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

## Manual Cinema

*Ada/Ava*

### Credits

Directed by Drew Dir

Score and Sound Design by Kyle Vegter and Ben Kauffman

Designed by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornance, and Julia Miller

Additional Drums, Synthesizer, and Piano by Michael Hilger

Wigs and Costumes by Mieka van der Ploeg

Mask Design by Julia Miller

### Cast

Ada/Puppeteer: Vanessa Valliere

Ava/Puppeteer: Kara Davidson

Puppeteer: Drew Dir

Puppeteer: Sam Deutsch

Puppeteer: Charlotte Long

Vocals/Guitar/Live Sound Effects: Quinn Tsan

Synthesizer/Guitar: Michael Hilger

Cello/Keyboard: Lia Kohl

Production Manager/Sound Engineer:

Company/Stage Manager: Shelby Glasgow

For all North, Central, and South American booking enquiries please contact:

Laura Colby, director, Elsie Management

[laurac@elsieman.org](mailto:laurac@elsieman.org)

(p) 718-797-4577 | [elsieman.org](http://elsieman.org)

Exclusive Asian Touring representation:

Anna Rhoads, touring and licensing, Broadway Asia Company

[info@broadwayasia.com](mailto:info@broadwayasia.com)

(p) 212-203-9986 | [broadwayasia.com](http://broadwayasia.com)

# Biographies

## MANUAL CINEMA

Manual Cinema is a performance collective, design studio, and film/ video production company founded in 2010 by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller, and Kyle Vegter. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive stories for stage and screen. Using vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, live feed cameras, multi-channel sound design, and a live music ensemble, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality.

Manual Cinema has been presented by, worked in collaboration with, or brought its work to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City), BAM (New York City), the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Under the Radar Festival (New York City), La Monnaie-DeMunt (Brussels), the Noorderzon Festival (Netherlands), the Kimmel Center (Washington, D.C.) The O, Miami Poetry Festival, the Tehran International Puppet Festival (Iran), Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), the Ace Hotel Theater (Los Angeles), and elsewhere around the world. They have collaborated with StoryCorps (New York City), Erratica (London), the Belgian Royal Opera (Brussels), Hubbard Street Dance (Chicago), Pop-Up Magazine (San Francisco), Nu Deco Ensemble (Miami), the *New York Times* best-selling author Reif Larsen (New York City), and three-time Grammy Award-winning eighth blackbird (Chicago).

This year the company will have debuts in Cairo and Holland.

## PUPPETEERS

### KARA DAVIDSON, *Ava*

Kara Davidson is an actor and playwright living in Chicago. Previous shows with Manual Cinema include *Ada/Ava*, *The End of TV*, *My Soul's Shadow*, *The Electric Stage*, and *Pop-up Magazine*. She is a company member with the House Theatre of Chicago and has also worked with Lookingglass Theatre (Chicago), Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville (Kentucky), Nebraska Repertory Theatre, Aporia Theatre (New York City), and Project Y (New York City), among others. She holds degrees in theatre performance and French from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She also trains in aerial/circus arts and does motion and performance capture for video games. She most recently completed the cinematic performance capture for Supergirl in *Injustice 2*.

### SAM DEUTSCH, *puppeteer and Manual Cinema company member*

Sam Deutsch is a performer and designer based in Chicago and a proud company member of Manual Cinema. Select performance and design credits include Denise (the fish) in *Mistakes Were Made* (world premiere at A Red Orchid Theatre, Chicago, and off-Broadway at Barrow Street Theatre, for which it was the 2011 Henry Hewes Design Award nominee) and Zoopy (the dog) in *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money* (world premiere at Chicago Children's Theatre and off-Broadway at the Atlantic Theatre). He is a co-producer and artistic council member with The Inconvenience, a multidisciplinary arts organization based in Chicago.

### DREW DIR, *puppeteer, co-artistic director, director, and designer*

Drew Dir is a writer, director, and puppet designer. Previously he served as the resident dramaturg of Court Theatre and as a lecturer in theatre and performance studies at the University of Chicago. He holds a master's degree in text and performance studies from King's College London and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

# *Biographies, continued*

## **CHARLOTTE LONG**, *puppeteer*

Charlotte Long is a Chicago native with a liberal arts degree from Sarah Lawrence College in New York concentrating in literature and performance. Long has a dance and writing background and has studied under Dan Hurlin in puppetry, David Neumann in movement/creation, and Pig Iron in devising. She has worked with Manual Cinema on performance and video for over four years, touring all over the U.S., as well as in the Netherlands, Taiwan, and Berlin with *Lula del Ray*, *Ada/Ava*, *Mementos Mori*, and *My Soul's Shadow*. In 2017 she was seen as Lula in *Lula del Ray* at the Public Theater's Under the Radar Fest. She is a proud member of Red Tape Theater in Chicago, has worked for many storefront theatres, and is represented by the Grossman & Jack Talent Agency. On her own, she makes small dance/text-driven pieces using humor and representative choreography.

## **VANESSA S. VALLIERE**, *Ada*

Vanessa Valliere is currently in her sixth season as a member of an ensemble of performers for Tour De Fat, a national touring festival. She has performed in Chicago with the Neo-Futurists and the New Colony and in New York City at Lincoln Center Education with Theater Unspeakable, a Chicago company that she has been devising, touring, and performing with for five years. Valliere frequently performs her short solo clown/puppetry shows in Chicago, and she also tours her work nationally in Le Tigre, a 100-seat vaudeville tent. She has also presented her work in Brooklyn; Asheville, North Carolina; and Los Angeles, and has developed an evening length clown/puppetry show with the support of Chicago's Pivot Arts. Valliere has performed with Big Nazo Puppet Company in Providence, Rhode Island, and she is a proud nerd-cheerleader for Chicago's 30-piece circus punk marching band, Mucca Pazza. This is her first production with Manual Cinema.

## **MUSICIANS**

### **MICHAEL HILGER**, *guitar, synthesizer, vocals, and Manual Cinema company member*

Michael Hilger is a composer, sound designer, and multi-instrumentalist based in Chicago. Hilger's sound design and composition credits include Redmoon Theater's *2012 Youth Spectacle*, Manual Cinema's own *Show & Tell*, the short film *Kept* by Kacey Meyer, *Amygdala Rest* by Erasing the Distance, and Mariko's *Magical Mix*, a collaboration between Hubbard Street Dance and Manual Cinema. He has produced two EPs with Thin Hymns, a group he founded and fronts. He is currently working on new music and performing solo under the name Michael Albert.

### **LIA KOHL**, *cello*

Lia Kohl is a cellist and multidisciplinary artist based in Chicago. Kohl's work centers on improvisation, performance, and sound art. She is a curator and ensemble member with acclaimed performance ensemble Mocrepe, with whom she has toured nationally and internationally. As a member of Mocrepe, she has collaborated with artists such as Jennifer Walshe, Natacha Diels, and Steven Kazuo Takasugi and partnered with the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lumpen Radio, and Mana Contemporary Chicago. As an improviser she performs regularly around Chicago and with her clarinet/percussion/cello trio, ZRL. An avid interpreter of contemporary music, she performs with Chicago Composers Orchestra, Fonema Consort, Manual Cinema, and Ensemble Dal Niente.

# *Biographies, continued*

**QUINN TSAN**, *sound effects, guitar, and vocals*

Quinn Tsan is a producer, performer, songwriter, and organizer in Chicago. Tsan has released two EP's and an award-winning short film titled *Bedrooms* and is a founding cast member of *The Fly Honey Show*. Tsan co-founded State Matters in 2017, a non-profit organization that produces video content explaining the most impactful and/or pressing legislation in the Illinois state legislature. Tsan has collaborated with artists and organizations such as Manual Cinema, Salonathon, Alphawood Gallery, Constellation Arts, Ohmme, and Erin Kilmurray, among others.

## **STAFF AND CREATIVE TEAM**

**BEN KAUFFMAN**, *music and sound designer and co-artistic director*

Ben Kauffman is a composer, director, interactive media artist and co-artistic director of Manual Cinema. His work has been shown at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion (Chicago), the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (Chicago), and CUNY's Baruch College (New York City). He has lectured and given workshops at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York University, and Parsons the New School of Design. His past composer and sound designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Lula Del Ray*, *Ada/Ava*, and the *New York Times* documentary *The Forger*. He holds a master's degree from New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP).

## **SARAH FORNACE**

Sarah Fornance is a director, puppeteer, choreographer, and narrative designer based in Chicago. She is a co-artistic director of Manual Cinema. Outside of Manual Cinema, Fornance has worked as a performer or choreographer with Redmoon Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Garage, and Blair Thomas and Co. Puppet Theatre. Most recently, Fornance wrote the story mode for the video game *Rivals of Aether*. In 2017 she directed and edited the first episode of the web series *The Doula is IN*. In 2016 she directed and devised an "animotion" production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with Rokoko Studios for HamletScen at Kromborg Castle in Elsinore, Denmark.

**SHELBY GLASGOW**, *company/stage manager*

Shelby Glasgow is a freelance stage manager who loves to travel! Glasgow joined Manual Cinema in September 2016 as touring stage manager and company manager. She has since toured within the United States and internationally with *Ada/Ava*, *Lula Del Ray*, *Mementos Mori*, and their newest show *The End of TV*. She graduated from the University of Central Florida with a bachelor of fine arts in stage management and has stage managed regionally all over the country. Thank you to Manual Cinema for this amazing opportunity!

**JULIA MILLER**, *mask design and co-artistic director*

Julia Miller is a director, puppeteer, and puppet designer. Manual Cinema provides her with an outlet for many artistic impulses, including but not limited to breathing life into the inanimate, making delicate small things, and telling stories without words. In Chicago she has worked as a performer and puppeteer with Redmoon Theatre and Blair Thomas and Co. Puppet Theatre. In 2017 she helped produce, direct, and edit episode two of the new web series *The Doula is IN*.

# *Biographies, continued*

**KYLE VEGTER**, *music and sound designer and co-artistic director*

Kyle Vegter is a composer, sound designer, theater artist, and managing artistic director of Manual Cinema. As a composer he's been commissioned by such groups as TIGUE, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW series, the Chicago Composer's Orchestra, and Homeroom Chicago. His production credits span genres and include recent releases by Thin Hymns, Spektral Quartet, Tim Munro (of eighth blackbird), and Color Card. His past composer and sound designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Lula Del Ray*, *Ada/ Ava*, *FJORDS*, *Mementos Mori*, *My Soul's Shadow*, and various other performance and video projects. He has been an artist in residence at High Concept Laboratories and co-founded Chicago's only contemporary classical music cassette label, Parlour Tapes+.

# *Engagement Events*

Friday, February 9, 2018

## **WORKSHOP: MANUAL CINEMA**

In this workshop, participants learned about Manual Cinema's work with video samples and audio story techniques through exercises in sound design, music composition, and a guided sound walk. Workshop participants explored basic cinematic puppetry and the company's visual storytelling techniques. Participants created and performed short narrative pieces using the company's equipment and puppets.

## **LEARNING GUIDE QUESTIONS**

The Moss Arts Center Learning Guide is a resource for educators, students, and anyone who enjoys digging deeper into our programming. To engage even more fully with our season performances, view the full Learning Guide at [bit.ly/LearningGuideMAC](http://bit.ly/LearningGuideMAC). Please use the following questions to spark your own contemplation about today's performance:

- 1.) Throughout *Ada/Ava*, the puppeteers' work is fully exposed to the audience. What is the effect for you of seeing the story unfold, as well as how the performers are creating the shadow-play, simultaneously?
- 2.) Losing a loved one is a life changing experience. How have you dealt with grief in your own life?
- 3.) Ben Brantley's *New York Times* review of *Ada/Ava* calls the show transgenerational. What elements appeal to which generations? Did you learn something about relating between generations?

# *In the Galleries*

## **RAY KASS**

January 18-March 31, 2018

All galleries

Ray Kass, a prominent Virginia artist with a long record of national and international exhibitions, is well known not only for the quality and breadth of his art but as a pivotal, even catalytic figure in this region. Over the years Kass stood out as an exemplary artist, here and in the art world beyond, as well as a distinguished art professor at Virginia Tech. Among his many accomplishments was establishing and directing the Mountain Lake Symposium and Workshop programs, through which he brought art-world luminaries to this region—Clement Greenberg, Donald B. Kuspit, and John Cage, among others—and subsequently influenced generations of artists in Virginia and the southeast.

This exhibition highlights exemplary work from Kass' prolific career, ranging from his large scale, multi-panel *Polyptych* (1961-2003) paintings to his most recent *Still Lives* (2015-2018), created with stencils in an inventive layering of water media, oil emulsion, and dry pigment on rag paper. Among the key works in the exhibition is the monumental painting *Broad Channel: Vorticella Polyptych*, 1991, from the permanent collection of the Nevada Museum of Art, which will be seen in Virginia for the first time in 20 years.

## **ALSO ON VIEW**

Ray Kass: *Silk and Water*

January 16-March 3, 2018

Perspective Gallery, Squires Student Center

*Primary Elements: Foundational Works* by Ray Kass

January 18-February 16, 2018

Armory Gallery, 203 Draper Road, Blacksburg

## **GALLERY HOURS**

Monday-Friday, 10 AM-5:30 PM

Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

To arrange a group tour or class visit, please contact Meggin Hicklin, exhibitions program manager, at [megh79@vt.edu](mailto:megh79@vt.edu) or 540-231-0840.