

23/24



Manual Cinema's

FRANKENSTEIN

Sunday, Oct 29, 2023 • 2pm
Jackson Hall, UC Davis

THE SEASON IS PRESENTED BY
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PROGRAM

Manual Cinema's
FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein*—which, among its myriad other contributions to popular culture, single-handedly founded the modern genre of science fiction—casts a long shadow over the medium of cinema. The story of Victor Frankenstein and the unnamed Creature he brings to life has itself being perennially re-animated for movie audiences; from the first 1910 silent film adaptation produced by Thomas Edison's studio, to Boris Karloff's iconic visage in the 1933 Universal Studios monster, to more recent Hollywood reboots, riffs, and parodies. With each new era, *Frankenstein* manages to connect with our sympathy and revulsion at Frankenstein's monster, our ambivalence about the progress of science and technology, and our anxieties about the mysterious threshold between life and death.

Mondavi Center presents *Frankenstein*, an adaptation by Manual Cinema, a theater company that seeks to create cinema on stage through an ingenious choreography of live music, object theater, and shadow puppetry using old-school overhead projectors. The work of Manual Cinema shares a special affinity with Mary Shelley's story about the reanimation of obsolete materials, and their adaptation aims to capture the breadth of *Frankenstein's* legacy in film: the novel's cinematic afterlife, so to speak. These artists are doing so by taking a cue from Mary Shelley herself, who gave her novel a *gothic* structure—the story is told in a series of narrative frames, like Russian nesting dolls, with each frame narrated by a different character (the centermost frame being an account by the Creature itself). In Manual Cinema's adaptation, each “frame” of the story will be told through a different cinematic genre or style, depending on which character's point-of-view is being presented. Like the Creature itself, the production becomes a pastiche of different visual idioms scavenged from a century of cinema.

Manual Cinema has also written an additional frame for the novel: the story of Mary Shelley herself, and how she came to write a novel of such enduring relevance. *Frankenstein* was originally conceived by Mary as a ghost story—a response to a friendly competition with the poets Percy Shelley and Lord Byron during an unusually stormy summer on Lake Geneva. Manual Cinema's adaptation aims to re-animate their own *Frankenstein* against the backdrop of Mary Shelley's fascinating, tragic, and little-told biography.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT We should take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people. Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.

diversity.ucdavis.edu

PRODUCTION CREDITS

A Manual Cinema Production

Adapted from the novel by Mary Shelley

Concept and Direction by Drew Dir

Devised by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, and Julia Miller

Original Music by Ben Kauffman and Kyle Vegter

Storyboards by Drew Dir

Music and Sound Design by Ben Kauffman and Kyle Vegter

Shadow Puppet Design by Drew Dir with Lizi Breit

Projections and Scenic Design by Rasean Davonte Johnson

Costume and Wig Design by Mieka van der Ploeg

Lighting Design by Claire Chrzan

3D Creature Puppet Design by Lizi Breit

Prop Design by Lara Musard

Technical Director: Mike Usrey

Stage Manager, Video Mixing and Live Sound Effects: Kyle Vegter

Lighting Director: David Goodman-Edberg

Sound Engineer: Saqeef Ali



CAST

PUPPETEERS:

Sarah Fornace Victor Frankenstein, Mary Shelley
Julia Miller The Creature, Elizabeth Frankenstein
Jyreika Guest Percy Shelley, Vocals
Sara Sawicki Lord Byron
Myra Su Puppeteer

MUSICIANS:

Nora Barton cello, aux percussion, vocals
Peter Ferry percussion
Jason Gresl clarinets and aux percussion
Emma Hospelhorn flutes, aux percussion, piano

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MANUAL CINEMA COMPANY BIO

Manual Cinema is an Emmy Award winning 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. The company was awarded an Emmy in 2017 for "The Forger," a video created for *The New York Times* and named Chicago Artists of the Year in 2018 by the *Chicago Tribune*. Their shadow puppet animations are featured in the film remake of *Candyman*, directed by Nia DaCosta and produced by Jordan Peele's *Monkeypaw Productions*. Recent productions include *Leonardo! A Wonderful Show about a Terrible Monster*, based on books by Mo Willems, and an adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.



CAST BIOS - PUPPETEERS

SARAH FORNACE (Mary Shelley, Victor Frankenstein, MC Co-Artistic Director) is a director, puppeteer, choreographer, and narrative designer based in Chicago. She is a Co-Artistic Director of Manual Cinema. Outside of Manual Cinema, Sarah has worked as a performer or choreographer with Redmoon Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Garage, and Blair Thomas and Co. Most recently, Sarah 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 "animation" production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with Rokoko Studios for *HamletScen* at Kromborg Castle in Elsinore, Denmark.

JYREIKA GUEST (Percy Shelley, Vocals) is an actor, dancer, poet, and intimacy director/coordinator based in Chicago, IL. Her philosophy as both an Actor and Intimacy Director is advocating for the culture to change for not only the performers but for the whole industry. Chicago credits include *Lindiwe U/S* (Steppenwolf); *Frankenstein* (Remy Bumpo); *columbinus* (The Yard Theatre Company); *In the Blood* (Red Tape Theatre); *Fly Honeys Show* (The Inconvenience Project); *The Wiz* (Kokandy Productions); *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Filament Theatre). Intimacy direction credits: *Fun Home*, *Groundhog Day*, *Rock of Ages*, and *Hand to God* (Paramount Theatre-Aurora), *The Last Pair of Earlies* (Raven Theatre); *Seagull* (Steppenwolf) *Intimate Apparel* (Northlight Theatre); *The Light* (Coalescence Theatre); *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (Lyric Opera Chicago); Film/TV credits: *Starz Force Season 1 & 2*, *Heist 88*. She is proudly represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent. IG: @jevelling

JULIA MILLER (The Creature, Elizabeth Frankenstein, Co-Artistic Director) is a director, puppeteer, and puppet designer. With Manual Cinema she has directed *Mementos Mori* and *The End of TV* as well as created original roles in *Frankenstein* (The Creature/Elizabeth), *Ada/Ava* (Ada), *Lula del Ray* (Lula's Mother), *The Magic City* (Helen), *Hansel und Gretel* (Hansel), and *Leonardo!* (Sam). In Chicago, she has worked as a performer and puppeteer with Redmoon Theatre and Blair Thomas and Co. She spent several years training in devised theatre, clown and mask with Double Edge Theatre, Carlos García Estevez and at the Accademia dell'Arte in Arezzo, Italy.

SARA SAWICKI (Lord Byron) tours internationally with Manual Cinema, credits include: *FRANKENSTEIN* (Lord Byron); *LULA DEL RAY* (Lula's Mother); *MENTOS MORI* (Lady); *ADAIAVA* (Aba). Sara is a Company Member with Sojourn Theatre most recently appearing in their newest touring piece, *DON'T GO*. Other ongoing and past projects include work with: NetherRealm Studios (cinematic performance capture); Actors Gymnasium (Youth Circus co-director and writer); one step at a time like this in collaboration with Chicago Shakespeare Theater (performer).

MYRA SU (Puppeteer) is a multimedia artist and puppeteer based in Chicago. She primarily works in 2D forms, often combining paper puppets with crankie, shadow and video. Her most recent project was a 20 minute puppet film for Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *THE CYMBELINE PROJECT*, which divides the play into separate episodes led by

different artists. Previously, she has been a featured artist at the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival, Baltimore Crankie Festival, the National Puppet Slam, and with Handmade Puppet Dreams. In addition to her independent work, she is a co-curator for NASTY, BRUTISH & SHORT: A PUPPET CABARET and a touring puppeteer and builder with Manual Cinema. For her full portfolio visit myrasu.com.



CAST BIOS — MUSICIANS

NORA BARTON (cello, aux percussion, vocals) is a Northern Kentucky based cellist, sound artist, event producer and educator. Years of working within the massive artist network of Chicago (Mucca Pazza, Tom Musick, a.pe.ri.od. ic ensemble) allowed Nora to experiment and expand on the purpose of her musical abilities. Since moving to the Cincinnati area she has continued to cultivate collaborative opportunities and further explore the benefits of listening to cello. Beyond accompanying yoga classes and hosting ambient noise jams, Nora performs regularly as *Planchette*, enriching spaces with her ethereal cello energy.

PETER FERRY (Percussion) called “the ingenious percussionist Peter Ferry,” (Chicago Sun-Times) and “an artist of vision” (Democrat and Chronicle), is a young American percussion soloist and artistic collaborator. Following his concerto debut at age 18, Ferry has championed the works of living composers, including Michael Daugherty who has praised Ferry as “one of the most promising and committed soloists of his generation.” A TEDx speaker, Ferry has collaborated with choreographer Nick Pupillo at Chicago’s Harris Theater and abroad at the European Museum of Modern Glass where he was nominated for the Coburg Prize. An alumnus of the Eastman School of Music, Ferry graduated with the first ever John Beck Percussion Scholarship, an Arts Leadership Program certificate, and the prestigious Performer’s Certificate recognizing outstanding performing ability.

JASON GRESL (Clarinets, aux percussion) From playing bass clarinet while upside-down in front of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra to an impromptu performance of Mozart’s clarinet quintet just after almost drowning in the Panama Canal, woodwind specialist Jason Gresl spends his days diving from one artistic adventure into another. Recently, Jason has been dividing his time in two directions. On one side, he explores music with his multidisciplinary concert series, The Muses’ Workshop, his duo, Claricello, and through new music commissions. On the other, he plays for musicals (most recently: *Wicked*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Book of Mormon*, and *In The Heights*). Jason teaches at Andrews University, Saint Mary’s College and Indiana University - South Bend. In his spare time, Jason attempts to learn feats of wonder with playing cards and enjoys cooking Thai and Indian cuisines.

EMMA HOSPELHORN (flutes, aux percussion, piano) is a Chicago-based flutist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist. She is a member of Ensemble Dal Niente and is one half of the electroacoustic duo The Machine Is Neither. She performs and tours with a wide variety of improvising ensembles, folk, and pop groups, and can be heard on recordings for labels including New World, New Focus, Trouble In Mind, KAIROS, Orindal, American Dreams, and more. Previous theatrical collaborations include stints with the Neo-Futurists, Lookingglass Theatre, and Silk Road Rising. Emma writes and performs experimental folk music under the moniker Em Spel. www.emmahospelhorn.com

STAFF & CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

SAQEEF ALI (Audio Engineer) is an audio engineer from Chicago, IL. He found his way into live sound while attending the Santa Fe University of Art and Design as a vocal performer, where he inevitably took a number of live sound and recording classes and found his passion behind the board. Since graduating in 2016, he has worked countless shows, ranging from corporate events to live shows in clubs and venues around Illinois. He strives to do good by both the audience and the performers and hopes to do his part to make the experience positive and worthwhile for all who experience it.

LIZI BREIT (Puppet Designer) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Chicago. She has worked with Manual Cinema as a performer, designer, animator and director since 2011.

CLAIRE CHRZAN (Lighting Designer) is excited to collaborate with Manual Cinema again after previously designing *No Blue Memories: The Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*, and *The End of TV*. Other credits include; *Evening at the Talk House*, *The Mutilated* and *The Room (A Red Orchid)*; *The? Unicorn? Hour?*, *Saturn Returns*, (The Neo-

Futurists); *The Distance, We're Gonna Die* (Haven Theatre); *Caught* (Sideshow Theatre Company); *After Miss Julie, The Night Season* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *Peerless* (First Floor Theater); *Pinocchio* (Neverbird at Chicago Children's Theatre); *Love and Human Remains, Good Person of Szechwan* (Cor Theatre); *The Terrible* (The New Colony); *The Guardians, Uncle Bob* (Mary-Archie); *The Hero's Journey, Best Beloved: The Just So Stories, The Pied Piper* (Forks and Hope Ensemble). Claire also works as a production stage manager for various companies including Hubbard Street's HS2, The Joffrey Ballet's Joffrey Academy and Alonzo King LINES ballet. Clairechrzandesigns.com

DREW DIR (Director, Puppet Designer, MC Co-Artistic Director) is a writer, director, and puppet designer. Previously, he served as the Resident Dramaturg of Court Theatre and a lecturer in theater 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.

DAVID GOODMAN-EDBERG (Lighting Director) is a Chicago based lighting designer working in the realms of dance, theatrical, and architectural design. He has designed and toured with such companies as Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Eisenhower Dance Detroit, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Water Street Dance Milwaukee, and lit works set on companies such as Chicago Repertory Ballet, Chicago Tap Theater, Joel Hall Dancers, and Thodos Dance Chicago. Theatrically, he has designed with puppet & object oriented companies such as Rough House and Cabinet of Curiosity as well as with such companies as Adventure Stage, Akvavit Theatre, Factory Theater, The Gift Theater, Organic Theater, Red Tape Theater, The Syndicate, and Trap Door Theatre. Architecturally, he has lit pieces at the art space 6018North and worked as an assistant/associate designer for projects at various Universal Studios theme parks (in Beijing, Hollywood, Orlando, and Osaka), Disney Shanghai, and several Margaritaville restaurants. dglxdesign.com

RASEAN DAVONTE JOHNSON (Projections & Scenic Design) is delighted to be working with Manual Cinema to which previous projects include *Lula Del Ray* and *Fjords*. A Chicago-based video artist and theatrical designer, he has had the opportunity to work with institutions such as Steppenwolf Theatre, The Hypocrites, Yale Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center, Geva Theatre Center, Berkshire Theatre Group, Alliance Theatre, the Ningbo Song and Dance Company, and B-Floor Theatre. MFA Yale School of Drama. raseandavontejohnson.com

BEN KAUFFMAN (Composer, Sound Designer, MC Co-Artistic Director) is a composer, director, interactive media artist and co-Artistic Director of Manual Cinema. His film and interactive work has been shown at The Jay Pritzker Pavilion (Chicago), The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (Chicago), and CUNY's Baruch College (NYC). 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/ Sound Designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Ada/ Ava, The End of TV*, and the New York Times documentary *The Forger*. He holds a Master's degree from New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP).

LARA MUSARD (Prop Designer) Ms. Musard serves as the Prop Manager at Court Theatre in Chicago where Manual Cinema's *Frankenstein* first premiered in October of 2018. For this project, she worked with Mr. Dir to design and create the majority of the two and three dimensional pieces seen in the Victor Frankenstein portion of the storytelling. Having propped nearly 60 shows at Court Theatre over a twelve year period, Manual Cinema's *Frankenstein* was by far the most unique. She is grateful for the experience of working in this medium and proud to have been part of the team.

MIKA VAN DER PLOEG (Costume Designer) has designed costumes for many Chicago theaters, including Lookingglass Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, The Hypocrites, About Face, Chicago Children's Theatre, About Face Theatre, The House Theatre, Next Theatre, Griffin Theatre, The Building Stage, Albany Park Theater Project, Dog and Pony Theatre, and Manual Cinema. She is proud to be an Artistic Associate at About Face Theatre. She has received two Jeff Award nominations for *Golden Boy* (Griffin Theater) and *Mr. Burns* (co-designed with Mara Blumenfeld, Theater Wit).

KYLE VEGTER (Composer, Sound Designer, MC Co-Artistic Director) is a composer, producer, sound designer, and Managing Artistic Director of Manual Cinema. As a composer of concert music he's been commissioned by such groups as The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW series, The Pacific Northwest Ballet, and TIGUE. His music and sound design for theater and film has been performed worldwide and commissioned by the New York Times, NPR's *Invisibilia*, Topic (First Look Media), the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, StoryCorps, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Poetry Foundation, Hubbard Street Dance, the O, Miami Poetry Festival, and others. His past Composer/ Sound Designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Lula Del Ray, Ada/ Ava, FJORDS, Mementos Mori, The End of TV* 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+.

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