

LinksHall

Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts

Media Contact: Marie Casimir
773.281.0824
845.659. 6229
Marie@linkshall.org

For Immediate Release: 8/30/10

Hi-res digital images available on request

Links Hall renames the LinkUp program and announces the 2011 LinkUp Artists

Chicago, IL - Links Hall is pleased to announce its **2011 LinkUp Artists** in Residence: **Justin Cabrillos, Marc Frost, Molly Jaeger, and Ni'Ja Whitson** – body-based artists challenging convention and making arresting art through Links Hall's six month residency program. Links Hall is also delighted to announce that the LinkUp program is now named the **Lisa Dershin LinkUp Residency**. The Lisa Dershin Fall 2010 LinkUp showcase will feature new work by Emma Draves and Lily Emerson on September 24 – 26, Fri & Sat at 8pm, Sunday at 7pm, Tickets are \$15 General Admission/ \$10 Students and Seniors and are available online at www.LinkshHall.org. For more information call 773.281.0824, or visit www.LinkshHall.org.

Links Hall's Lisa Dershin LinkUP Residency supports independent artists and collaborations in the research of ideas and development of new innovative work in their movement based practices. The six-month residency program annually gives four artists free weekly studio time and a fully produced showcase to perform their work; a stipend to support their endeavors; a paid mentor; and peer support/feedback at work-in-progress events.

Lisa Dershin danced at Links Hall and MoMing before her death in 1988. Her family started the Lisa Dershin Creative Dance Foundation in her memory and have generously decided use the fund to underwrite the LinkUp artist stipends. The LinkUp program began under the artistic leadership of Asimina Chremos in 2002. Past LinkUp artists include Seth Bockley, Christian Bambara, Suzanne Dado, Adriana Durant, Jyl Fehrenkamp, Jonathan Meyer, Margaret Morris, and Brian Torrey Scott.

~Bios and More Information Follow~

LinksHall

Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts

LISA DERSHIN: DANCER



From six-year old Nutcracker characters in California to classical ballet to experimental modern creations presented at Links Hall, when she was in her twenties, **Lisa Dershin** was devoted to dance. This was her “voice,” her passionate expression, the vehicle by which she “put it all out there.” Why as an asthmatic with severe breathing problems, she chose dance as her medium is impossible to explain. But she danced to the highest standard despite it, uncompromising and uncomplaining but often painfully short of breath.

Lisa spent untold hours, often 7 days a week, in hot, sweaty rehearsal studios with teachers such as **JoAnne**

Warner in California, **Leila Haller** in New Orleans, and **Ruth Page** in Chicago – exclusively schooled in traditional ballet. Her interest and devotion to modern dance and experimental forms began in her mid teens with **Gus Giordano** and was cemented while attending the University of Michigan. She abandoned classical ballet and devoted herself entirely to modern dance, expanding her creative scope and abilities in workshops across the country with **Mark Morris**, **Margaret Jenkins**, and others. She performed with **People Dancing** in Michigan and **MoMing** in Chicago.

Lisa was encouraged by Mark Morris to head for New York and had arranged to move there, but made a last minute change to begin family building with her new husband Daniel Frohling. She remained in Chicago, beginning a choreographic career instead, often in collaboration with a close friend, **Lukie Marriot** and others such as **Dennis Wise**, **Bryan Saner**, **Lisa Fay** and **Kris Larsen**. As a struggling artist she performed in any available space, on the grass of Grant Park, or within the Thompson Building, utilizing the building’s unusual inner open and visible steel structure. At the time of her premature death she had begun, but not completed, a joint improvisation effort with Marriot on a piece by Fluid Measure, utilizing a moving vehicle as the setting. During these years, Links Hall played an important role in providing space as an inexpensive resource for rehearsal and performance of their newly evolving works and for audience building.

Stretching the limits, reaching for that glorious moment when it all came together she experienced both the wild joy when things worked out well and the dull tension when they did not. Either way, she always came back for more. Lisa knew how hard it was for young artists to “make it.” She knew the probability of success and the likelihood of failure. But it didn’t matter. All that mattered was that she could put on her leotard, turn on the music and dance. For that she was willing to take the risks.

Lisa died unexpectedly on July 9, 1988 at the age of 28 from anaphylaxis. Ironically, she had been scheduled to perform at MoMing the following Saturday in a leading role as Lucy in a performance of a piece titled, “The Day Lucy Died.” She had a premonition about her death, telling her mother three weeks earlier that she’d dreamed the previous night that she died and she questioned whether that could be happening.

According to her parents Barbara and Harvey Dershin, “Lisa would be thrilled to know that a Foundation carrying her name, the Lisa Dershin Creative Dance Foundation, is dedicated to helping emerging dance artists experiment and grow their creative expression.”

~Bios and More Information Follow~

LinksHall

Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts

Lisa Dershin LinkUp 2011 Resident Artists

JUSTIN CABRILLOS graduated with two Bachelors degrees in English and Philosophy from Occidental College. He went on to earn a Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Washington in Seattle Washington, and then a MFA in Writing from the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2009, he became a Summer Fellow at the Oxbow School of Art in Saugatuck Michigan, along with earning an Incubation Series Residency with the Cultural Center in Chicago, and becoming a James Nelson Raymond Fellow at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2010, he performed in *Faces, Varieties, Postures*, a site-sensitive response to the Chicago Cultural Center's dual histories as public library and Civil War memorial. Research into the construction of the Chicago Cultural Center, a poem by Walt Whitman, a Civil War Era etiquette book, images of Union soldiers with their guns, stump speech, and the minstrel show is transformed into a poetic space for re-imagining the relationship between language and body.

Justin Cabrillos explores the relationship between language and the body: how the use and misuse of language can have physical and social effects on the body. During his LinkUp residency, he hopes to continue his solo practice, as he works on finding systematic ways of developing his personal endurance, speech, and movement vocabulary. With his playful, yet methodical approach, he will bring dance notation and linguistics into conversation with endurance and ordeal.

MARC FROST graduated in 2009 with his M.F.A. in Lecoq Based Actor Created Theater from Naropa University, in association with London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). Previously, he had earned his B.A. from Tufts University outside of Boston, MA. While there, he co-founded the Bare Bodkin Theater Company, which continues to be dedicated to producing student-written theater in found spaces. Back in Chicago, he has recently founded Theater Un-speak-able. Recent credits include: *Homem Berinjela* at the Risadaria Festival in São Paulo, Brazil; *Superman the Show* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for *Clowns at Work*; Clown/Dancer in *Kinaesthetic: Fashion vs. Culture* at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London; street performances with *Pequeno Circo Lúdico* in London and Barcelona, *An Evening with...Aaron Aaronson* at the Prop Theatre in Chicago (forthcoming, June 2010), *An Evening with...Aaron and Esther* and *Macabret* at the Camden Fringe Festival, London.

Utilizing elements of physical theater, dance and mime, his LinkUp residency hopes to forge new ground, to engage new audiences and to spread awareness of Amtrak and its services. The ensemble will research the past, present and future of American rail travel, including the movement of the train itself and the stories of its passengers to create a traveling "road show" production.

MOLLY JAEGER received her Bachelors degree in sociology from Cornell College. After she graduated, she participated in a student and teaching apprenticeship with Scott Kelman, and went on to earn a Professional Development Grant from the Regional Arts & Culture Council in Portland Oregon. She has experience as a performer, dancer, choreographer, and producer in installments such as *Flight of the Performance* in Portland Oregon, *Things Can Sparkle* at the Fringe Festival in Boulder Colorado, and *My Love is Young* with Think/Dance Collective here in Chicago. Recently, she has worked as an artist in residence, director, and performer with High Concept Laboratories in Chicago.

A choreographer, director, performer and instructor, Molly Jaeger's work centers on investigating the expressive potential of the whole body as a physical, vocal and intellectual force. During her LinkUp residency, she will be working on playing with the social and physical dynamics of bodies meeting in space and negotiating a relationship together.

~Bios and More Information Follow~

LinksHall

Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts

NI'JA WHITSON has worked as an artist and choreographer with Guillermo Gomez-Peña and La Pocha Nostra, Margaret Morris, Sharon Bridgforth, and performed alongside Margaret Cho and Julie Atlas-Muz. Whitson is a performing member of the cross-disciplinary improvisational collective, *Nyabingi Choir* led by Douglas Ewart, resulting in collaborations with Tatsu Aoki, Dee Alexander, and Joseph Jarmon, among others. She is also a member of Ayodele, a Chicago-based women's drum and dance ensemble. Whitson's in-progress performance installation, *root shock* received February's "Critic's Choice" in Time Out Chicago and is scheduled to debut in 2011 as her LinkUp presentation. Ni'Ja Whitson has performed or exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Hyde Park Art Center, the Vic Theater, the Historic Y Hall in Tucson Arizona, and The Art Institute of Chicago. Awards include a 2009 3Arts Visual Artist Award Nomination, 2008 Columbia College mini-grant, 2007 Performance Network INCUBATION! Nominee, 2007 MFA Fellowship Award, and 2001 Mellon Research Fellowship. Whitson is an ongoing lecturer and presenter exploring feminism and anti-oppression, Black diasporic critical thought, and contemporary art practices, and is currently on faculty at Columbia College Chicago.

Ni'Ja Whitson's work serves as a critically transformational space, navigating and affirming the complexities of African diasporic performance practice with the techniques of contemporary conceptual performance art. Through her LinkUp residency, she will be developing a solo performance installation that blends Orixá ritual, personal storytelling and interdisciplinary performance in a guttural expression of loss and recovery.

~More Information about the Fall 2010 Showcase Follows ~

LinksHall

Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts

Lisa Dershin LinkUp Residency Fall 2010 Showcase

SEPTEMBER 24 - 26, 2010

An evening of two new works developed through the Lisa Dershin LinkUp Residency at Links Hall

A / part (like before we ever were, but with no after)

Created by LinkUp Residency Artist **Lily Emerson**

Featuring **Jamie Bragg, Lily Emerson, Tara Smith, and Charlie Universe**

Hundreds of millennia after mankind has disappeared, humanity's legacy is alive: a sentient, collective being which evolved from the plastic we've filled our world with. Moved by mythical imaginings of their makers, these ever shifting, ever changing, never dying beings extol the powers of Man, sing the praises of almighty Disintegration, and wonder how on Earth they can do as those powerful gods once did: die out.

Duel with an Orchid

Choreographed and Performed by LinkUp Residency Artist **Emma Draves**

An exploration into the disparate techniques of modern dance and Bharata Natyam (classical South Indian dance) and a movement study in which individual identity and identity in relation to the outside world has melded the black and white to bleed shades of gray

Friday & Saturday at 8pm / Sunday at 7pm

Tickets \$15 (\$12 online) / \$10 Students

*Post show opening night reception

For tickets and more information call **773.281.0824** or visit
www.LinksHall.org.

Links Hall is located at 3435 N. Sheffield Avenue, Second Floor, Chicago, IL 60657—convenient to the BROWN, RED & PURPLE lines stop at Belmont and RED line Addison stop in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. For more information call **773.281.0824** or visit **www.linkshall.org**

Links Hall is Chicago's Center for Independent Dance and Performing Arts.

Links Hall encourages artistic innovation and public engagement by maintaining a facility and providing flexible programming for the research, development and presentation of new work in the performing arts.

LinksHall

*Chicago's Center for Independent Dance
and Performance Arts*

###