

Harris Theatre Presents LUCKY PLUSH PRODUCTIONS TAB SHOW Review – A Comedic Intricate Delight!

Posted on April 29, 2018 by [Brittany Harlin](#)



It's not every day one sees the alternate world of a concert dance rehearsal space. From dancers seemingly mind-reading, to speaking in code while exploring movement concepts, the process is one that this dancer appreciates observing. Also what would the process be without laughs? This is what was we heard from ourselves and the movers of Lucky Plush as they effortlessly giggled through their improvisation-style choreography.





In their first piece, *Rink Life*, choreographed by Founding Director Julia Rhoads, we hear body percussion paired with rhythmic breath, a faint dialogue between movers, as if they were in the studio, working through a tricky combination. We delight in the humorous quirks presented by what is imagined to be their authentic personality off stage.

Through their building of movement, we hear another variation of voices from the stage — singing! Yes, these trained dancers are also flexing their vocal chops while delivering impressive harmonies. Ranging from simple vocal exercises to disco classics, we find ourselves humming along — to a capella renditions of The Bee Gees, Paul McCartney, and more — as their impressive full movement is still in effect.

We're transferred to a scene of bodies climbing in and out of tessellations, creating a kaleidoscope of movement. The playful shape-shifting descends into an ethereal display of dancers floating in and out of the ensemble. A duo emerges from the tangle, and a Spanish serenade leads one of the duo to swap out for another. A display of sharp held and release breath follows, first singularly, then led into a supportive & collective deep breath from all. Soon it's back to fun and games as duos hand clap & hop their way down to a remaining two.

Lucky Plush Blends Comedy and Whimsy

After a just as lively intermission introducing dancers via video and an exciting paddle benefit hosted by former Lucky Plush member Adrian Danzig, we're met with two Lucky Plush ladies crawling toward one another from across stage, donning large blue helmets for the second piece of the night, *Curb Candy*. Clunks of contact are met with even more laughter as they awkwardly keel over and slump themselves back up to complete their crawling quest.

This carnival-esque type piece features chair trick magic, morphing of helmets into balloon hats, and quirky jokes that keep us waiting for just what else will be pulled from their sleeves! All the while the poking fun- subtle and not so subtle- at the concert dance world is interlaced with moments of intricate synchronized dance sequences showcasing highly technical dance work.

Transporting to another corner of this dance theatre wonderland, we arrive at a tea party! Except this one has a slight choking mishap, eventually leading another to give their dance inspired variation on the Heimlich maneuver. Before we know it, the teacups are part of a race and the excitement is on! A couple of sub ins later, the winner of the race is crowned and prompted for a speech.

This speech is picked up by various movers listing their reasons for personal accolades as we drift back in to the signature style of kaleidoscopic movement.

From the delight heard in the voices of students come to see their dance teachers in action, this kid-friendly production could bring out the child in everyone privileged to experience their work. Highly recommended for lovers of improvisation of the dance and acting variety, Lucky Plush Productions may very well inspire the fearless multi-disciplined performer in us all.







For information on upcoming Lucky Plush performances, [visit the Lucky Plush website](#).

Lucky Plush ensemble members:

Kara Brody, Michel Rodriguez Cintra, Elizabeth Luse, Rodolfo Sánchez Sarracino, Aaron R. White and Meghann Wilkinson.

Guest performers: Enid Smith, Jacinda Ratcliffe, and Ethan Kirschbaum

Photos: William Frederking





Choreographer Brittany Harlin

About the Author:

Brittany Harlin is the founding artistic director of [Chicago Urban Dance Collective](#) and 2017 recipient of the [Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist Award](#). Her influences are Hip Hop and Modern Dance Pioneers. In addition to company work, her dancing and choreography has been featured at Ragdale Foundation, Links Hall, Elastic Arts, Aragon Ballroom, DRAMA Duo Music Productions, Black Ensemble Theatre, and Hip Hop International.

Brittany's focus is Hip Hop, Modern, Funk Styles, Waacking, and House, combined with growing knowledge of somatics and kinesiology, all through the concert dance lens. Her goal is to bring dance education to a place of complete body awareness, spiritual expression, and connection. Brittany hopes to establish her practice in expressive therapy, creating opportunities, and inclusiveness.

Her teaching artist pedagogy & philosophy are weighted in respecting the integrity of the vernacular movement, by sharing what she's been taught from respected community members - and stopping exactly there. She relates those concepts to personal natural movement, and the energy of the dancers she's working with. Her goal is to create solidarity between diverse backgrounds, conducive to the essence and intention of The Hip Hop Socio-Political Movement. Harlin's passion in dance extends to her community as she has launched her most recent endeavor of teaching professionalism and industry standards to aspiring professional dancers.

When Brittany isn't dancing, she is supplementing her work with her passions for poetry and songwriting. She's been referred to as a fawn and a hippie on multiple, separate occasions.

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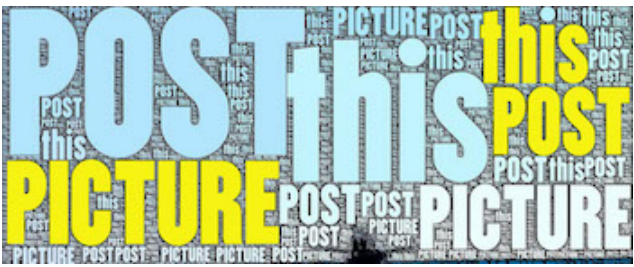
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