

## ABOUT THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

The Chocolate Factory Theater exists to encourage and support artists in their process of inquiry. We engage specifically with a community of artists who challenge themselves and, in doing so, challenge us. We believe that by supporting the labor of artists and the public presentation of their work, we contribute to elevating New York City as a thriving and more equitable wellspring of ideas.

The Chocolate Factory embraces artistic practice as an integral part of the artist's whole life, an essential component of the life of our community and a key element of a larger national and international artistic dialogue. As such, we host artists as our equal partners with shared autonomy, trust and appreciation. While we seek to make big ideas and extended relationships possible, we commit to working at a small, intimate and personal scale, with few artistic compromises or boundaries.

We achieve all of this by creating a vessel for artistic experimentation through a residency package serving the whole artist - salary, space, responsive and flexible support for the development of new work from inspiration to presentation.

MAJOR SUPPORTERS: Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Harkness Foundation, The Henry Luce Foundation, the Willem de Kooning Foundation, and Teiger Foundation through the Coalition of Small Arts New York, New York Community Trust, New York State Parks, NYC Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, NYS Assemblywoman Catherine T. Nolan, Plaxall, The Chocolate Factory Theater Trustees, The McGue Millhiser Trust, Mental Insight Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Carl and Laurie Rogers, Select Equity Group Foundation, Emma A. Sheaffer Charitable Trust, Shine Electronics, Shubert Foundation, The Trust for Mutual Understanding, and our many individual donors.

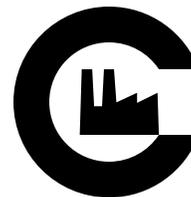


## CHOCOLATE FACTORY STAFF and TRUSTEES

Sheila Lewandowski	Co-Founder/Executive Director
Brian Rogers	Co-Founder/Artistic Director
Madeline Best	Director of Operations
Regine Pieters	Development Associate
Peter Richards	House Videographer
Michael Reardon	Graphic Design
Shana Crawford	Production Manager
Julie Brandano	Front of House
Lydia Sloan	
Lillie De	Technicians
Ben Demarest	
Serena Wong	
Pamela M. Golinski, Esq.	Legal Counsel

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Chris Ajemian, Diane Eisenstat (President), Stephen Facey, Daniel Fish, Vallejo Gantner, Neil Greenberg, Jonathan Kratter (Treasurer), Jerry Laspisa, Sheila Lewandowski, Diana Manalang, Alton Murray, Angie Pittman, Antonio Ramos, Brian Rogers, Mary Torres (Secretary), Frank Wu.

[chocolatefactorytheater.org](http://chocolatefactorytheater.org)



# THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY THEATER 2021 / 2022

Yanira Castro

Aya Ogawa  
(with Japan Society)

AUNTS  
(with NYU Skirball)

Flux Factory

Sibyl Kempson /  
7 Daughters of Eve Thtr & Perf. Co.  
(with Abrons Arts Center and NYU Skirball)

Luciana Achugar  
(with PICA and NYU Skirball)

ISSUE Project Room

Kristen Kosmas (with On The Boards)

James Allister Sprang

Justin Allen

Jon Kinzel

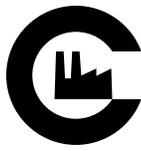
Justin Cabrillos

Laurie Berg

Donna Uchizono  
(with Baryshnikov Arts Center)

Abigail Levine

Larissa Velez-Jackson



**THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY THEATER PRESENTS**

**Larissa Velez-Jackson**  
***Protecting Complexity with the***  
***Star Pû Method***

**June 22-25, 2022**

Creator/Artistic Director/Performer: **Larissa Velez-Jackson**. Choreographic collaborators/Performers: **Angie Pittman** and **Mary Read**. Lighting designer: **Madeline Best**. Sound designer: **Larissa Velez-Jackson**. Costume stylist: **Marie Rao**. Production manager: **LD DeArmon**.

The Star Pû Method is a dance-theater technique and a corresponding theater work created by Larissa Velez-Jackson in 2012, originally known as the Star Crap Method. It is a technique in which a small ensemble of dancers improvises a work together—replete with song, text, movement, sculptural elements and digital sound—by peeling away all of the layers of the moment of performance. These layers consist of the dancers' felt experience, emotional landscape, history (personal and their formal training) and what can be experienced in the room together with the audience. An important factor in the Star Pû Method is the allowance of failure, anti-climax and human ordinariness as the foreground for creative expression, on equal ground with the dancer's exceptional stage skill. With healing as a core facet through movement, breath, communal connection and vocal sound, LVJ asks whether the performance encounter provides a space that makes healing actually possible. With an openness to the lessons accrued by failure, the Star Pû Method makes any attempt at healing and connection a form of blessing.

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Commissioned and Presented by The Chocolate Factory Theater. Final development at The Yard in 2022. Supported by Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts' Caroline Hearst Choreographer-In-Residence Program, a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant, a Mertz Gilmore Late Stage Production Stipend and a NYSCA Individual Artist Commission. Also supported by Dance/NYC's DISABILITY. DANCE. ARTISTRY. RESIDENCY Program, made possible by the Craig H. Nielsen Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, CreateNYC Disability Forward Fund, and The Shelly & Donald Rubin Foundation.

**Larissa Velez-Jackson** (Artistic Director/Dancer/Sound Designer) (LVJ) is a choreographer, interdisciplinary artist, performer and teacher who uses improvisation as a main tool for research and creation. Called "an adroit physical comedian" who "seems to be questioning entrenched conventions of contemporary performance" by The New York Times, LVJ creates works that grant audiences a gentle entry into contemporary art's critical and political discourse. LVJ was named a Caroline Hearst Choreographic Fellow at Princeton University 2021-2022. In 2011, she launched an experimental song-and-dance collaboration with her husband, Jon Velez-Jackson, called Yackez, "The World's Most Loveable Musical Duo." Yackez presented their two-act world premiere at New York Live Arts in March 2017, entitled "Give It To You Stage," a year after LVJ received the prestigious Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Grant to Artists Award. In 2016, LVJ was also nominated for "Outstanding Emerging Choreographer" by the New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" awards. She is the Artistic Director of her project-based company, LVJ Performance Co. A Boricua-American originally from Newark, New Jersey, and a recent cancer survivor, LVJ is committed to the healing and transformative potential of art and integrated body/mind practice.

**Angie Pittman** (Dancer/Company member) is a New York-based dancer-choreographer. Angie's work resides in a space that investigates how the body moves through ballad, groove, sparkle, spirit, spirituals, ancestry, vulnerability, and power. Her work has been performed at The Kitchen, Gibney Dance, BAAD!, Movement Research at Judson Church, Triskelion Arts, STooPS, The Domestic Performance Agency, The KnockDown Center, The Invisible Dog(Catch 73), The Chocolate Factory, Danspace Project, and Roulette. Angie has had the pleasure of being able to create collaboratively with A Sef, Jasmine Hearn, Jonathan Gonzalez, Athena Kokoronis, and Anita Mullin. She holds a MFA in Dance and Choreography from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a graduate minor in African American Studies and is a certified Professional teacher of the Umfundalai technique. As a dancer, she has danced in work by Larissa Velez-Jackson, MBDance, Ralph Lemon, Tere O'Connor, Cynthia Oliver, Anna Sperber, Donna Uchizono Company, Jennifer Monson, Kim Brandt, Tess Dworman, Antonio Ramos, C Kemal Nance and many others.

**Mary Read** (Dancer/Company member) has a diverse educational background spanning dance, masked theater, psychoanalysis, social work and couples and family therapy. In addition to working with Larissa Velez-Jackson in both Star Pû Method and Yackez, Read has performed in works by Vanessa Anspaugh, Hilary Clark, Lily Gold, Natalie Greene, Molly Poerstel, Tere O'connor, Katy Pyle, Jen Rosenblit, Jacob Slominski, and enrico d wey.

**Madeline Best** is a Lighting Designer, Performer, Mother and The Director of Operations at the Chocolate Factory Theater. Recent artists she has worked with include Heather Kravas, Ursula Eagly, Milka Djordjevich, Efrin Rozas, Luciana Achugar, Andrea Kleine, Anne-B Parson/Big Dance Theater, and more. Madeline grew up in Durham, North Carolina and currently lives in Long Island City, Queens.

**Marie Rao** (Costume stylist) A design and branding expert, Marie Rao has held a number of esteemed roles within the fashion industry and is looked to as a leading voice. Currently, she serves as Chief Executive Officer of MRao Design Consulting Group. Previously and most recently, she served as Senior Vice President and Chief Creative Officer, Women's Private Brands for Hudson's Bay Company, designing womenswear for two of North America's most iconic department stores: Lord & Taylor and Hudson's Bay. From 1997 to 2006, as President at Limited Design Services, Ms. Rao led a think tank of 60 designers, working on special projects for the Chairman; in this role, she created Victoria's Secret PINK and Body by Victoria for Victoria's Secret. Her leadership also included the branding and design for C.O. Bigelow stores and Bath & Body Works. Ms. Rao served as Executive Vice President of Design and later as President of Banana Republic, from 1993 to 1997.

**LD DeArmon** (Production Manager) is a recent Richmond, Virginia transplant and a big fan of Larissa and Yackez. Since 2008 they've worked in dance as a performer, stage manager, production manager and lighting designer. They have worked on projects for artists including Yvonne Rainer, Sam Kim, Daria Fain, Yvonne Meier, Ephrat Asherie, Kim Brandt and Ayano Elson, as well as Yanira Castro, Tess Dworman, and David Thomson on their Bessie awarded productions. Thank you to Larissa for bringing me in as a part of this work, as well as works past.

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that The Chocolate Factory Theater is situated on the unceded ancestral lands of the Munsee Lenape and Canarsie people. We pay respect to the past, present and future stewards of these lands.

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Special Thanks to 92STY Harkness Dance Center Movement Research, and Target Margin Theater where this work was being researched and created since 2018. A heartfelt hug to David Brick of Headlong Dance Theater in Philadelphia who shepherded this work in its final stages, care of The Yard and over text message, meals and boardgames. Thanks to my husband Jon whose love and support makes all possible for me. To my mom Laura, my sister Stephanie, Mimi Carmen and my whole family for their love too. Thanks to all the close dance friends who came to studio showings, cohort meetings, zooms, and phone calls that helped form this work as well. Thanks to Talya Epstein, Jess Pretty, Kyli Kleven, Lily Gold and Awilda Rodriguez Lora who helped form this work in the early and late stages as collaborators. Thanks to Alex Romania for the gorgeous filming and producing of our live stream, and Peter Richards for the incredible documentation of this show and our residency work at CFT.

I am so grateful for the artistry, brilliance and kindness of the amazing team of artists---read their bios!---who made this work with me, and to The Chocolate Factory for summoning this work into being with a commission. I love The Chocolate Factory!