

LA MAMA

EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB

2018 Regional Theatre Tony Award Recipient

presents

THE LA MAMA PUPPET FESTIVAL

TIAN WEN

Heavenly Questions for Modern Times
(World Premiere)

Creator, Artistic Director, Puppet & Set design and sculptor, performer:
Hua Hua Zhang

Production Manager & Stage Manager: Adam Danoff

Composer: Cory Neale

Co-writer: Michael Cocchiarale

Lighting Designer: Federico Restrepo

Cello: Nan-Cheng Chen

Guest Dance Artist: Nai-Ni Chen for performance "Water"

Performers:

Hua Hua Zhang, David Regan, Travis Draper, Jeanne Lyons,
Xingxin Liu, Nai-Ni Chen and Adam Danoff



Ellen Stewart Theatre
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
November 3 - 5, 2018

Dreams:

Figure and Balloon -

How might we learn to accept our essential loneliness?

Paper Woman's Nightmare -

These days, why do we become so filled with fear and anxiety?

Who Are You? -

Why does the focus on ourselves get in the way of knowing others?

Reunion Under the Lion Mountain -

How do we find the balance between love of self and love of other?

Water -

How might we learn to value ourselves for who we are, not for who others wish we would be?

Note from Director

I am very honored to be invited by La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club to create a show at Ellen Stewart Theatre. I had a dream more than a decade ago that one day I would be able to perform in that theatre. I would like first to thank Federico Restrepo and Denise Greber of La MaMa Theatre for giving me a chance to make my dream come real and always support of my art.

In production of *Tian Wen: Heavenly Questions for Modern Times*, I seek to honor the tradition of puppetry while at the same time pushing that tradition into the contemporary world. Tian Wen was inspired by a Chinese poem and uses dream imagery and stream of consciousness to convey my vision of life experiences I have observed since coming to America 22 years ago. I do not want to tell the audience what to believe. I want each person to become a kind of co-creator of the piece—shaping and interpreting the show according to their own individual experiences.

The dream motif was inspired by Zhuang Zi, an ancient Taoist philosopher, who dreamed he had become a butterfly and derived pleasure from flying. After he awakened, he asked whether he dreamed he was a butterfly, or the butterfly was dreaming that he was a man. This ambiguity is explored throughout the show through the continual blurring of the line between reality and dream.

I am grateful to have a wonderful, collaborative team to work with. Exploring the new potentials of puppetry is so important to me, and I could not do it without a team that trust me and shares my vision. My thanks from the bottom of my heart to them all!

Finally, I want special thanks to the Jim Henson Foundation for their years of supporting the creation of new puppet theater and Asian Arts Initiative of Philadelphia for providing me a space to experiment and perform my works.

-Hua Hua

Special Thanks to Denise Greber, Federico Restrepo, the Jim Henson Foundation, the 26th National Puppet Conference and Eugene O'Neil Theater Center, Pam Arciero, Richard Termine, David Yang, Phillip Huber, Alice Therese Gottschalk, Kurt Hunter, Patty Lane, Austin Costello, the Duvall Family, Jarrod Markman and the FringeArts Festival staff, Ying Ying Zhang, Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training, the Asian Arts Initiative staff, and to everyone at the LaMaMa Experimental Theatre Club!

Hua Hua Zhang (Creator, Artistic Director, Puppet & Set Design and Sculptor, Performer) was born in Beijing, China, Hua Hua Zhang studied and performed as a rod puppet performer. She came to the United States in 1996 and earned an MFA in Puppet Art in UConn 2000. In 2002, she founded Visual Expressions. Crossing cultures and employing a variety of art forms, Hua Hua's vision of puppet theater is without boundary or limits. In recent years, innovative shows such as *Dream of Land*, *White Nights*, and *Long Sleeve Woman* were performed at Asian Arts Initiative, the Barnes Foundation of Philadelphia, and Taiwan Lizé Puppet Art Colony. Her mission is to mix traditional puppetry with the contemporary in order to better connect with today's audiences.

David Regan (Performer) is a theater artist focusing variously on performance, design, construction, and technical, for both human and puppet theatre. Upon his return from these NYC performances, he will begin a new adventure as the Technical Director and Resident Scenic Designer for New England Youth Theater in Brattleboro, VT.

Nan-Cheng Chen (Cellist) has collaborated with many orchestras internationally. He is the executive director of the New Asia Chamber Music Society and teaches at CUNY Queens College. Nan-Cheng holds a B.M. and M.M. from The Juilliard School and is currently a doctoral candidate at CUNY Graduate Center.

Travis Draper (Performer) is an interdisciplinary, devising performer and aspiring puppeteer. Traveling from the Atlanta theater scene, Travis is finishing his Master's Degree in "Devised Performance" at Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training, and has trained in Hua Hua Zhang's style of puppetry since the summer of 2017.

Jeanne Lyons (Performer) is an emerging composer and interdisciplinary performing artist whose work is grounded in experimentation and play. She thrives in highly physical and collaborative work. Jeanne is currently pursuing her MFA in Devised Performance at the Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training in Philadelphia.

XingXin Liu (Performer) graduated from the University of Connecticut Puppet Arts Program. She has worked with Hua Hua before, and is very grateful to have the opportunity to work with her again! She has done field studies in Chinese traditional shadow puppetry in China and also created her own original shadow works.

Nai-Ni Chen (Performer) is coming from a rich dance tradition, Nai-Ni has studied with some of the most respected Peking Opera and traditional dance masters in Taiwan. She served on ambassadorial cultural missions to 19 countries around the world. She graduated from the Chinese Cultural University and came to America to seek her own voice in the world of contemporary dance.

Cory Neale (Composer) is an architect and multi-media artist from Philadelphia, PA. He is resident sound designer for several theater and dance companies, and is a producer for Earthdance's E[MERGE Interdisciplinary Arts residency. Cory was the recipient of the AACT Sound Design Award (2011) and a Philadelphia Rocky Award (2015).

Federico Restrepo (Lighting Designer) is director of his own dance-puppet theater company called Loco7. As a resident artist at La MaMa, he has created and performed a number of original pieces and toured internationally over the past twenty-five years. www.loco7.org

Adam Danoff (Stage Manager) is a multimedia producer who works on projects for both stage and screen. He has produced four feature films, directed children's theater, narrated over twenty audiobooks, and performed in a variety of regional and touring theaters since graduating from West Chester University with a Bachelor's of Music in 2003.

The 8th La MaMa Puppet Festival Fall 2018 has been made possible with support from Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, The Jim Henson Foundation, Puppet Slam Network, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust and public support by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Cultural on the Arts. Additional support from Cheryl Henson is gratefully acknowledged.

LA MAMA



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Rendering: 74 East 4th St.

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street is undergoing an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit www.lamama.org/remakeaworld

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The Downstairs

La MaMa Puppet Festival
TIAN WEN: Heavenly Questions for
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November 3 - 5, 2018
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Puppet Slam
Monday, November 5, 2018 at 8:30pm
The Downstairs

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Blind
November 8 - 11, 2018
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Everything Starts From a Dot
November 8 - 10, 2018
The Downstairs

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Don Quixote Takes New York
November 10 & 11, 2018 at Noon
The Downstairs

COMING SOON

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Coffeeshouse Chronicles: Ralph Lee
Saturday, November 10, 2018 at 3pm
The Downstairs

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Exodus
November 15 - 18, 2018
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Food For The Gods
November 15 - 18, 2018
The Downstairs

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Chicken Soup, Chicken Soup
November 17 & 18, 2018
The Downstairs

La MaMa Puppet Festival
Jump Start
November 23 - 25, 2018
The Downstairs

Chasing the New White Whale
November 24 - December 9, 2018
Ellen Stewart Theatre