The Downstairs
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
October 27 - Nov, 2022

presents

THE HISTORY OF EMPIRES
by Witness Relocation

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Performed, co-created, and co-choreographed by Marcus McGregor

Performed and co-created by Daniel Pettrow

Choreographed / Directed / co-created by Dan Safer

Original Music / Sound Design and co-created by Christian Frederickson

Text: Chuck Mee
Set / Costume: Deb O
Lights: Jay Ryan
Film/ Projections: Tom Kalin
Projection Design/ Remix: Attilio Rigotti
Voiceovers: Daniel Pettrow, Kevin Mambo and Angela Winkler
Producer for WR: Sophie Ancival
Technical Director for WR: Becki Gray
In the Hazmat Suit: Masanori Asahara
Stage Managers: Sarah Greenberg and Dmitri Barcomi
Lightboard Operators: Juan Merchán, Will Rossiter

This piece was developed in part during a creative residency supported by the New York State Choreographers Initiative, a project of the NYS Dance Force and residencies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Art, Science & Technology Visiting Artist Program and MIT Music & Theater Arts.

Thank you Alison Clancy, Lois Welk, Katherine Profeta, Christoph Buchegger, Susan Wilson, Sara Brown, Josh Higgason, Kevin Fulton, Jay Scheib, Yi Tu, Julia Kent, John Parise, Mia Yoo and the entire team at La MaMa, and very good cats Twig the Wonderkid, Chan Marshall II, and Lux Interior (2013-2021).

Running time 60 minutes with no intermission
Since 2000, **Witness Relocation** have made cheerfully nihilistic dance/theater all over the world. This is their eighth show in 16 years at La MaMa, including *Dancing Vs The Rat Experiment, Haggadah, Five Days In March, Surveys The Prairie Of Your Room*, and three previous collaborations with Chuck Mee: *Heaven On Earth, Eterniday, Daily Life Everlasting*. The company formed in 2000 and makes shows ranging from original dance/theater to fully scripted plays to many things in between. They’ve received three New York Innovative Theater Awards and perform at venues including Abrons, Bushwick Starr, NYC Summer Stage, JACK, American Repertory Theater, Fuse Box Festival, and internationally in France, Thailand, Poland, Russia, Romania, Egypt, and more.

**Sophie Ancival (she/her/hers, producer for WR)** is a French Afro-Caribbean multidisciplinary and multi-cultural producer and problem-solver with a passion for the arts and culture. Credits include *Barbershop Chronicles, Clairvoyance, Endlings, In the Body of the World, Six at A.R.T., What To Send Up When It Goes Down, ABCD, Celebration of Black Voices*. In 2018, Sophie was recognized as one of the Rising Leaders of Color cohort #3, by the Theater Communication Group. Sophie has worked with non-profit organizations including the American Repertory Theater, Manhattan Theater Club, Barrington Stage Company and commercial producers including Broadway Asia International. Sophie was recently the Director of Production for MIT Theater Arts department. Fearless, an avid learner and passionate for people, Sophie has traveled the world to discover new cultures, art forms, languages and share that Black Lives Matter.

**Dmitri Barcomi (he/him, stage manager)** is a theater creator, director, and designer from New York City. Dmitri’s work has been seen throughout New York at Ars Nova, HERE Arts, Cloud City, BRIC, and other hubs of experimental new work, as well as internationally at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Teatr Słowackiego in Kraków. Upcoming: *A Jury of Our Queers* (writer/director), a metatheatrical drag show exploring queer legacy starring Mae West (Target Margin Theater, January 2023). BA: The New School. MFA: Columbia (anticipated graduation 2023). mxbarcomi.com | @dmxbarcomi

**Masanori Asahara (in the hazmat suit)** was born in Japan. He is a professional dance artist, and choreographer based in New York City. Masanori is a core member of the Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary company LEIMAY led by artistic directors Ximena Garnica and Shige Moriya. Masanori teaches, performs, and contributes to the development of the LEIMAY Ludus practice. He is an adjunct at Marymount Manhattan College and leads classes at LEIMAY’s studio, CAVE. As a company member, he has taught master classes and contributed to lecture demonstrations at MIT, the University of California Riverside, and the CUNY Graduate Center. He has performed at many venues across NYC, the US, and internationally.
Christian Frederickson (composer, sound designer, co-creator) is a violist, composer, and sound designer who specializes in live music performance for theater and dance. He has worked at a long list of theaters in New York City, notably the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Classic Stage Company, La MaMa, and Playwright’s Horizons as well as regional theaters around the U.S. He teaches design at MIT. He was a founding member of the instrumental band Rachel’s, who released 6 albums between 1995 and 2003. An ensemble of viola, cello, piano, guitar, drums, and percussion was surrounded by other orchestral instruments, tape manipulation, cinematic sound design, found sounds, and electronic elements. As a solo artist, Frederickson has released 7 albums since 2011: Bastard, Amidst, and Custodians of Beauty are scores for contemporary dance; Death Metal Angola was written for a documentary about the rock scene in Angola; Teratogeny, The Starving Season, and Islands of Light are collections of music from various projects. Frederickson holds a BM in performance from The Peabody Conservatory and a MM from The Juilliard School. From 2000 to 2004 he was the viola instructor at the University of Louisville, also teaching chamber music and orchestral playing.

Becki Gray (Technical Director, WR) has a background in costumes, puppetry, scenic, lighting, education, story-telling, and production management. She is a fabricator who delights in problem solving for story-telling. With a career spanning 2 decades, Becki has supported the design process on numerous shows, including I and You, at 59E59. She is currently TD at MIT Theater Arts.

Sarah Greenberg (she/her, stage manager) is thrilled to be making her NYC debut with The History of Empires. After two seasons with Barrington Stage Company as Assistant Production Manager, Sarah has returned to stage management. Regional credits include: Les Ballets des Porcelaines (MIT’s W97), Non Player Character (MIT’s W97) Upcoming: La Boheme (Maryland Opera Studio). Thanks to her parents and fiancé for their support!

Tom Kalin’s (projections, original film) work traverses diverse forms and genres, from narrative feature films to short videos and mixed media installations to activism. He is a prominent member of New Queer Cinema and his work often explores the tensions between private and public histories. His first feature film, Swoon, was awarded prizes in Berlin, Stockholm, Sundance and the Gotham Awards. Savage Grace, starring Julianne Moore and Eddie Redmayne, premiered in Cannes, screened worldwide and was named “top ten” by Artforum. As a producer, his films include I Shot Andy Warhol and Go Fish. He was co-writer of Cindy Sherman’s Office Killer. In 1993, fashion designer Geoffrey Beene commissioned
Kalin to direct a narrative film commemorating his 30th anniversary as a designer. Kalin was a founding member of the AIDS activist collective Gran Fury, known for its provocative public work, including t-shirts, billboards, television spots and bus and subway signage. With frequent collaborator Doveman (Thomas Bartlett), Kalin exhibited in 2015 at Participant gallery with the live installation My Silent One (In The Sweetness of Time) and at Dublin's National Concert Hall in a program inspired by Yeats. Bartlett, Kalin and Mandy Patinkin collaborated on a series of music videos, including a cover of Laurie Anderson's seminal From The Air, which was integrated into Mandy’s 2019 live tours. Kalin received the Pride Award from the 2020 Ashland Independent Film Festival. He is a Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellow, has twice been included in the Whitney Biennial and has screened in venues including ICA, London; Reina Sofia, Madrid; The Cartier Foundation, The Andy Warhol Museum, REDCAT, MoMA and The Getty Museum among many others. He directed the first episode of Pride (2021), a six part documentary series for the FX Networks about LGBTQ civil rights in America: his episode concerns the 1950s and features actors Alia Shawkat and Raymond Barry. He was a major contributor to The Films of Andy Warhol, Volume 2, published by The Whitney Museum of American Art and Yale University Press in 2021. His writing has appeared in ArtForum, Afterimage, Talkhouse, and The Village Voice among other publications.

Kevin Mambo (voiceover) has appeared on Broadway as the lead in Fela!, off Broadway in Ruined at Manhattan Theater Club and Venus at the Signature, amongst others. Film and television credits include the upcoming Rustin, Cadillac Records; Guiding Light (two-time Daytime Emmy Award for Younger Lead Actor in a Drama Series), Luke Cage, and many more. Next up he’s in The Tempest with the Folger Theater directed by Aaron Posner and Teller of Penn & Teller.

Marcus McGregor (performer, co-creator, co-choreographer) began studying ballet at The Hartford School of Ballet at the age of 13. During the summer months, Marcus studied ballet at Dance Theatre of Harlem and School of American Ballet (SAB). His professional career started as a company member with Dance Theatre of Harlem where he danced the classics from Balanchine. In his time at DTH, Marcus worked with legendary choreographers Agnes de Mille, Geoffrey Holder and Garth Fagan. He was also a company member for The Feld Ballet, originating some of Eliot Feld's ballets including Blooms Wake. Marcus received his Pilates Instructor certification from Balanced Bodies and received his certification in Fitness from The American College of Sports Medicine. Marcus taught in many NYC health clubs including Definitions for 14 years, Manhattan Center for
8 years. After moving to Upstate NY, Marcus taught Pilates and Personal Fitness classes for 6 years at Re-Center Pilates in Albany, NY. For the last 9 years, Marcus has taught Ballet at Hudson Valley Academy of Performing Arts where his students perform *The Nutcracker* annually. For the last 8 years, he has taught ballet at Creative Studio in Coxsackie, New York, and teaches Master Class for various dance schools throughout the Hudson Valley and Catskills. For 5 years, he worked as Director of Choreography with The Coxsackie/ Athens High School Drama Club and for the past 7 years with The Catskill High School Drama Club. He worked for 3 seasons with The Columbia County Youth Theatre in Chatham, NY teaching movement for actors. He has worked as a Choreographer at The Center of Performing Arts in Rhinebeck, NY and with Two of Us Productions. Marcus is currently in his 3rd year at The Petronio Residency Center as Education & Community Engagement Director where he engages young artists throughout the Public school districts throughout Greene and Columbia Counties.

Chuck Mee (text) grew up in Illinois, headed east, and graduated from Harvard College. Collaborations with Witness Relocation include *Heaven On Earth, Eterniday*, and *Daily Life Everlasting*, all of which had their world premieres at La MaMa. He has collaborated extensively with the SITI company, and has also written *Vienna: Lusthaus, A Perfect Wedding*, and a number of other plays in addition to his work inspired by Greek plays: *Big Love, True Love, Trojan Women: A Love Story*, and others. Among other awards, he has received the lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His complete works are available on the internet at charlesmee.org. His work is made possible by the support of Jeanne Donovan Fisher and Richard B. Fisher.

Deb O (set & costume designer) is happy to be back at La MaMa and excited to be working with Dan Safer. She just finished production designing *Man and Witch* the movie in Glasgow, Scotland. She received her MFA from Yale. See more of her work at http://www.debo.nyc or follow her on instagram @debodesign

Daniel Pettrow (performer/ co-creator) is a Brooklyn-based actor, director, and artist. He frequently focuses on new and experimental creations while fostering collaborations with artists from different disciplines. Recently, he created the film and art show *Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Hot Season* (in collaboration with Afghan artist Kubra Khademi) which premiered this year at Fondation Fiminco in Paris, and Collection Lambert in Avignon, France. In January 2021, Daniel created the short film *Wolf and Duck* as part of the Guggenheim's Work and Process Artist Virtual Commissions. For the

**Attilio Rigotti (projection design/ remix)** is a Chilean performer, director, technology artist, video-game designer and teacher. Along with Orsolya Szánthó, he founded the company GLITCH, creating work that seamlessly combines digital and physical mediums with new forms of storytelling. The company’s creative work and technology design has been featured in collaborations with Kaki King, Mason Gross School of the Arts, MIT Music & Theatre Arts, The Harvard School, The Juilliard School, as well as the most recent production of *Macbeth* on Broadway. His work has been featured at City Lyric Opera, Phoenix Theatre Ensemble, theatreC, LGPAC, NYU Tisch, Toronto Fringe, and Gamiotics Studios, as well as being recognized by the New York Times, Vulture, and American Theatre Magazine.

**Jay Ryan (lights)** A founding member/resident designer of Witness Relocation: *Surveys The Prairie of Your Room, Ubu Sings Ubu, The Loon, Daily Life Everlasting, MD of The Whale, Eterniday, ...Small Incision..., Heaven On Earth, Five Days In March, The Panic Show, Vicious Dogs On Premises, Haggadah, In A Hall in the Palace of Pyrrhus, Roberto Zucco, Mr. Kolpert, Germany In Autumn & Katzelmacher, No Exit...* Other stuff - Sets and lights for *Dystopian Distractions* by Mark Dendy; Lighting for *Body: Anatomies of Being* at the New Ohio Theater; *Flat Iron Hex* at Dixon Place; *The Upper Room* at The New Ohio; *Fame, Hamlet, Giant* and *Blown Youth* all at IWU. Awarded the Eva Adamson award for Excellence in Lighting Design as well as three Phoebes Awards for Lighting. – Originally from Richmond, Va. in the early 90’s he moved to NYC
and was Resident Lighting Designer at Dance Theater Workshop (DTW) for 11 years, designing lights for 100's of works. Later he was Senior Designer at Levy Lighting in NYC designing lights for many high end weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, fashion shows, corporate product launches and private parties. Recently he started working for Frost Productions doing weddings and corporate events. He continues enjoying a variety of rich collaborations.

Dan Safer (choreographer/ director/ co-creator) is the Artistic Director of WR and has choreographed/ directed all of their shows, all over the place, from the back rooms of bars in NYC to Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris to a giant leaky warehouse at a dance festival in Poland where a light fell off the grid halfway thru a show and almost killed him. Dan recently choreographed Jedermann, starring Lars Eidinger, at the Salzburg Festival in Austria and Ashley Tata’s Dom Juan at Bard SummerScape. His work has been at Brooklyn Academy of Music, Dance Theater Workshop, Danspace, Les Subsistances (Lyon, France), and many other places. In 2011, he choreographed Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring for Philadelphia Orchestra with Obie-winners Ridge Theater. Artforum Magazine called him “pure expressionistic danger” and Time Out NY called him “a purveyor of lo-fi mayhem.” He has choreographed fashion shows, music videos, and films, got kicked out of high school for a year, used to be a go-go dancer, was a member of Anhoni’s Blacklips Performance Cult in the 1990s, and once choreographed the Queen of Thailand’s Birthday Party. Dan taught at NYU for many years and is currently Dance faculty at MIT Theater Arts.

Angela Winkler (voiceover) is a German stage and screen actress. She has starred in The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum and The Tin Drum (both directed by Volker Schlöndorff), and has performed on stage with The Schaubühne Theater and Berliner Ensemble. She has worked with directors Robert Wilson, Peter Stein, and Romeo Castelluci, amongst many others, and is featured in Netflix series Dark and Luca Guadagnino’s remake of Suspiria. She recorded her voiceover for this show on a phone one night in her dressing room before Jedermann at the Salzburg Festival.
A full program with information on this production can be found on the
THE HISTORY OF EMPIRES
page of the La MaMa website.

In addition you can scan the
QR code Poster located in the theatre
lobby for access to the digital program.
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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Underneath the Skin
Dec 1 - 18, 2022
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Dec 10, 2022
Ellen Stewart Theatre