

LinksHall

Chicago's Home for Independent Dance
and Performing Arts

the dance center of Columbia College Chicago

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Hi-res digital images available on request

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Links Hall and The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago Host Chicago's First Dance Improvisation Festival June 12-19.

Chicago, IL – Links Hall and The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago are collaborating to host Chicago's first-ever Dance Improvisation Festival. The week-long festival, which features performances, workshops, jams, and discussions with internationally acclaimed improvisation artists, is curated by **Lisa Gonzales**, Associate Chair of the Dance Department at Columbia College Chicago and an acclaimed compositional improvisation artist in her own right. Her company **The Architects** will be featured at The Dance Center, along with **Chris Aiken** and **Angie Hauser's** National Performance Network-commissioned premiere *Utopia Parkway*, inspired by the Lindy and Edwin Bergman collection of Joseph Cornell's assemblage boxes at the Art Institute. **Nancy Stark Smith**, an originator of Contact Improvisation, will perform at the Dance Center with her longtime collaborator **Mike Vargas** and conduct their famous Underscore workshop. **Bebe Miller** will share the bill with local improvisers in an intimate evening at Links Hall, and **Every house has a door...** will demonstrate how improvisation in development can create highly structured work like the Chicago Dancemakers Forum-funded premiere *They're Mending the Great Forest Highway* at Holstein Park. The festival is made possible through the support of The Boeing Company, National Performance Network, The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, Chicago Dancemakers Forum, and Arts Midwest.

The **Dance Improvisation Festival** runs **Sunday, June 12 to Sunday, June 19**. Locations and prices vary by event and are listed below. Festival Passes are available. For more information call **773.281.0824** or visit Linkshall.org. To register for any workshop, purchase tickets to any festival event, visit colum.edu/dancecenter. To buy Fest Passes, call The Dance Center's box office at 312-369-8330.

"In a world where everything is in flux, it feels appropriate to be honoring an art form that embraces the ephemeral, that honors the mystery and potential inherent in a moment, in a foundation of beliefs, in a body," said Festival curator Lisa Gonzales, Associate Chair of Dance at Columbia College Chicago.

Schedule of Festival Events

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 11:30 A.M.–2 P.M.

CONTACT JAM

Led by Matthew Griffin

Since 1979, Contact Improvisation has made its home in Chicago at Links Hall. Contact Improv is a unique dance form involving the awareness and use of weight, gravity, and the body's pathways and mechanics. This physical investigation with a partner and with the surroundings is at the heart of this participatory practice.

Links Hall, 3435 N Sheffield Ave., Chicago

Workshop Fee: \$5 Suggested Donation/ Free with Fest Pass

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SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2:30 P.M.

KINETIC SCULPTURES

Sponsored by the Boeing Company

In partnership with the Mies van der Rohe Society

Improvising music artists and dance artists Julia Mayer and JulieAnn Graham activate stationary sculpture installations by Jeff Carter and Christopher Furman, carving new works of art in movement through space. The event includes artists talk and reception.

Musicians TBA

IIT Crown Hall, 3360 S. State St., Chicago

Free with Fest Pass or Advance Registration (Space is Limited)

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, JUNE 13-14, 1:30–4:30 P.M.

FRAMEWORKS: DANCE IMPROV AND DESIGN

Taught by Chris Aiken and Angie Hauser

This two-day workshop is a laboratory for the investigation of dance improvisation through the lens of perception, imagination, and design principles. Taking inspiration from the work of Joseph Cornell, the mixed-media artist known for creating assemblage boxes, which he called poetic theatres, workshop participants will develop compositional methods linking the natural world, the constructed world, and the imaginary. The workshop includes material drawing from release-based movement technique, somatic practices, contact improvisation, composition, and performance. Aiken and Hauser's provide students with deep dance experiences as well as methods that they can apply to their own compositional process and teaching.

The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Fee \$60/ \$48 For Fest Pass Holders—limited to 20 spots

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 7:30 P.M.

collision_theory

SUPERCOLLIDER

Curated by Dan Mohr and Rachel Damon

Featuring dancers Rachel Damon, Benjamin Law, Nadine Lollino, & Jessie Marasa, and musicians Josh Berman (cornet), Carol Genetti (voice), Quinlan Kirchner (percussion), and Dan Mohr (voice, keyboards) For the final performance of this season of collision_theory, we're raising the stakes; in collisions past, participating musicians have had a history of playing together as a band, and the dancers have had working experience as collaborators in movement.

This time around, we've assembled two novel assemblages of seasoned improvisers for an 8-way supercollision. SUPERCOLLIDER will present constantly shifting 'chapters' populated by different combinations of the artists involved, and will likely culminate with the entire group performing together. Come celebrate the risks and rewards of the cross-disciplinary improvised performances that collision_theory has been presenting since 2009!

Links Hall, 3435 N Sheffield Ave., Chicago

Tickets \$12/\$10 Students & Seniors

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, JUNE 15–16, 1:30–4:30 P.M.

CONTACT AND MUSIC: LISTENING TO EACH OTHER*

Taught by Nancy Stark Smith

Accompaniment by Mike Vargas

This two-day workshop combines Smith and Vargas' practice of contact improvisation (CI) with the pleasure and discipline of listening to sound. In the two sessions, the focus will be on essential CI principles and sensations to simplify and challenge our play with the physical forces and with each other in our dancing. We will move in silence and with many species of live and recorded music to develop conscious and varied relationships between what we hear, what we feel, and how we move.

**Recommended for dancers with previous experience in Contact Improvisation.*

The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

2-day Workshop Fee \$60/ \$48 For Fest Pass Holders—limited to 20 spots

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 5:30 P.M.

IMPROVISATION JAM IN THE PARK

Come out and improvise with dancers and musicians. Synapse Arts' Factor Ricochet Ensemble starts off the evening with a demonstration workshop.
Musicians TBA

Grant Park, 601 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Free and open to the public

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 8:30 P.M.

CHICAGO DANCEMAKERS FORUM SALON: RANGING DEFINITIONS AND CURIOSITIES OF IMPROVISATION

After the jam in the park, gather at The Dance Center for a conversation led by Nancy Stark Smith, Bebe Miller, and Chris Aiken in dialogue with other festival artists and attendees. Salon moderated by festival curator, Lisa Gonzales and Jennifer Kayle.

The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Free with Fest Pass or Advance Registration (Space is Limited)

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 9 A.M.–12 NOON

DANCE MAKING: PHYSICALITY AND CONTEXT

A Chicago Dancemakers Forum Workshop taught by Bebe Miller

This workshop focuses on physicality and context: how to listen to the weight of a gesture, how to qualify action, how to stay mindful of the human context and how to expand into the full range of technique.

Links Hall, 3435 N Sheffield Ave., Chicago

Workshop Fee \$50/ \$40 For Fest Pass Holders—limited to 15 spots

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 12NOON

MIKE VARGAS PIANO SALON

In partnership with Piano Forte Foundation

Enjoy a lunchtime concert of on the spot musical invention by acclaimed pianist and longtime Nancy Stark Smith collaborator Mike Vargas.

PianoForte, 410 S. Michigan Ave., Studio 825, Chicago

Free with Fest Pass or Advance Registration (Space is Limited)

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 8 P.M.

DUET WITH PIECE OF STRING

Presented by Bebe Miller and Local Artists

Bebe Miller performs a solo exploring the essence of *story-ness* on a shared bill with Midwestern improvisation artists: Rebecca Bryant and Don Nichols. Suzy Grant and Donnell Williams, and Synapse Arts' Factor Ricochet Ensemble: Rachel Damon, Adriana Durant, Marc Macaranas, Michael Rioux, and Ni'Ja Whitson.

Links Hall, 3435 N Sheffield Ave., Chicago

Tickets \$20/\$12 Students & Seniors

FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 10 A.M.–1 P.M.

THE ARCHITECTS WORKSHOP

Taught by The Architects and Accompaniment by Ensemble V

Cultivate awareness as an entry point to movement improvisation and discover how composition emerges from an attuned group. This workshop balances in-depth solo exploration with rigorous practice in spontaneous ensemble dance-making. Fresh perceptions and new choices are set in motion through provocative open-ended questions; each kinesthetic/conceptual proposition creates windows into authenticity, connection, depth, and range.

The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Workshop Fee \$30/ \$24 For Fest Pass Holders

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FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 8 P.M.

COLLABORATIONS...FROM SCRATCH

Presented by Nancy Stark Smith, Mike Vargas, The Architects, and Ensemble V

Longtime improvisational collaborators The Architects (dance) and Ensemble V (music), along with Nancy Stark Smith (dance) and Mike Vargas (music), will pair off to spin an elaborate sensory world from scratch. Working with no predetermined score other than the time of the performance, the space in which it will happen, and a history of shared work, they will compose a piece of theater in the moment.

The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Tickets \$20/\$12 Students & Seniors

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 11A.M. –1P.M.

SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 12NOON–4P.M.

UNDERScore TALK AND PRACTICE

Taught by Nancy Stark Smith

Accompaniment by Mike Vargas

Saturday's Talk-Back explores the progression of changing states of body and mind that occur in Contact Improvisation and Improvisational dance practices. At Sunday's Practice, participants embody the progression from solo sensitizing, to gravity and support, into group circulation and CI engagements, opening out into whole room compositional awareness, and back to rest and reflection. Bring your own paper and pen.

Location TBA

2-day Workshop Fee \$75/ \$60 For Fest Pass Holders

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2–6 P.M.

OPEN HOUSE

Links Hall is opening its space for artists to simply hang out, stretch, move, connect and relax.

Links Hall, 3435 N Sheffield Ave., Chicago

Open to all Fest Pass Holders, Workshop Participants, and Festival Artists

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 8 P.M.

UTOPIA PARKWAY

Created and Performed by Chris Aiken and Angie Hauser with media artist Nathan Ruyle, musicians Jesse Manno and Ty Burhoe and lighting designer Kevin Rechner

Chris Aiken and Angie Hauser pay homage to surrealist Joseph Cornell (who dedicated several of his assemblage boxes or "poetic theaters" to dancers) through a performance collage of movement, music and media. Inspired by the Edwin and Lindy Bergman collection at The Art Institute of Chicago, Utopia Parkway is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by Links Hall, University of Utah, Kenyon College and NPN.

Utopia Parkway is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by Links Hall in partnership with the University of Utah, Kenyon College, and NPN. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency).

For more information: npnweb.org.**The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago**

Tickets \$20/\$12 Students & Seniors

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SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 2 P.M.

THEY'RE MENDING THE GREAT FOREST HIGHWAY

By Every house has a door...

Directed by Lin Hixson

Derived primarily from found movement mining YouTube archives and inventions from the dancers in response to prompts, *They're Mending the Great Forest Highway* takes its structure from the written score of Béla Bartók's "Contrasts."

Supported by a Lab Artist grant from the Chicago Dancemakers Forum (logo)

Holstein Park, 2200 N. Oakley Ave., Chicago

Available only through Festival Pass

Fest Pass Pricing

Choose 3: \$39/\$27 Students

Choose any 3 performances and receive 20% off any workshop.

Choose 4: \$50/\$35 Students

Choose any 4 performances and receive 20% off any workshop.

Choose 5: \$58/\$40 Students

Attend all 5 performances and receive 20% off any workshop.

*Festival Pass Holders receive free admission to Contact Jam, Kinetic Sculptures at IIT Crown Hall, the CDF Salon: Ranging Definitions and Curiosities of Improvisation, and Open Jam at Links Hall.

Artist Bios:

[Dan Mohr](#)

[Chris Aiken](#)

[Angie Hauser](#)

[Nancy Stark Smith](#)

[Daniel Halkin](#)

[Mike Vargas](#)

[Bebe Miller](#)

[The Architects](#)

[Every house has a door...](#)

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. Links Hall is supported by 3Arts, Allstate, Alphawood Foundation, Arts Midwest, Arts Work Fund, The Boeing Company, The Chicago Community Trust, Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, James S. Kemper Foundation, Lisa Dershin Creative Dance Fund, MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, National Performance Network, The Weasel Fund and many individuals with additional support by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and a CityArts Program 2 grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, named "Chicago's Best Dance Theatre" by *Chicago* magazine and "Best Dance Venue" by the *Chicago Reader*, is the city's leading presenter of contemporary dance, showcasing artists of regional, national, and international significance. Programs of The Dance Center are supported, in part, by Alphawood Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, New England Foundation for the Arts, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, The Irving Harris Foundation, and Arts Midwest. Additional funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council. Special thanks to Friends of The Dance Center. For more information visit colum.edu/dancecenter.

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