

La MaMa

Experimental Theatre Club

presents

BIRTH + CARNAGE

By Marla Phelan



Ellen Stewart Theatre
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
December 19-21, 2025

Birth + Carnage

Choreographer + Director: Marla Phelan

Director: Tim Richardson

Composer: James Newberry

Video Artist: klsr

Video Artist: reinfected.me

Astrophysicist: Dr. Blakesley Burkhart

Lighting Designer: Devin Cameron

Assistant Director: Kelly Ashton Todd

Dramaturg: Catherine Correa

Stage Manager: Emily Pathman

Producer: Yazmany Arboleda, The People's Creative Institute

Producer: Cameron Sczempka, Polymath Production

Producer: Lisa Kjerulff

Producer: Movement Museum

Executive Producer: Eric Alba

Executive Producer: Laura Frank

Executive Producer: Yanjun Zhou

Choreographed in collaboration with:

Dancer: Damontae Hack

Dancer: Sydney Hirai

Dancer: Mizuho Kappa

Dancer: Eleni Loving

Dancer: Sayer Mansfield

Dancer: Meenah Nehme

Dancer: Marla Phelan

Dancer: Wyeth Walker

Dancer: Paul Zivkovich

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thank you to Mia Yoo, Amy Cassello, Ivvet Modinou, Elizabeth Simolke, Kelsa Trom, Yanjun Zhou, Mainlight, Fuse, Robbie Alvarez. Every moment of *Birth + Carnage* carries the imprint of your trust, generosity, and spirit. You provided a stable ground for us to create something magnificent.

SUPPORT

Birth + Carnage is supported by the Simons Foundation's Science, Society & Culture division. Developed with residency support from La MaMa, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), New Directions Choreography Lab (NDCL) at The Ailey School, and Simons Foundation & Gibney's Open Interval Residency Program.

A note:

Birth + Carnage moves between the macro and the micro — from the infinite churn of the cosmos to the trembling pulse of a single body. — Marla Phelan

Birth + Carnage is a dance work fusing choreography, astrophysics, and video installation. Born from the collaboration between choreographer Marla Phelan and astrophysicist Dr. Blakesley Burkhart, the work is inspired by the astrophysical phenomenon of stellar birth as both visceral metaphor and choreographic framework.

In collaboration with director Tim Richardson and video artists Klsr and reinfected.me, Astrophysical data is abstracted into shifting visual fields that echo cycles of creation. An ensemble of dancers performs against the backdrop of a monolithic digital installation, creating a feedback loop of allegory and sensation. The score by James Newberry deepens the emotional terrain through layered electronic textures.

MARLA PHELAN (Director, Choreographer, Performer) is a choreographer and performer whose work spans stage, film, and immersive installations. She is the founder and Artistic Director of Movement Museum, a multidisciplinary company fusing choreography, theater, science, film, and technology to craft visceral worlds of physical rigor and emotional depth. Her choreography has been presented at Lincoln Center, La MaMa Experimental, The Juilliard School, The Joyce Theater, Dixon Place, and Gibney Center, with features in V Magazine, Nowness, and New York Magazine. She has choreographed for Kinlaw, Fischerspooner, Michael C. Hall, Maison Margiela, Mugler, Mazda, Emursive LLC, The Mckittrick Hotel (Creative Director), City Springs Theater, Theater Aspen, and Broadway's Fiddler on the Roof National Tour. Phelan is a Simons Foundation, NYSCA, LMCC, and AKC Fund awardee, NYFA/NYSCA Fellow Finalist, and past Ailey NDCL, Gibney MTJ and Open Interval Fellow. Phelan has danced with Gibney Company, Hofesh Shechter Company, Akram Khan (The Shed), and Punchdrunk's Sleep No More and The Drowned Man. A Juilliard graduate, she is on faculty at the Mark Morris Dance Center and has taught workshops for NYU Tisch, Bard College, Brigham Young University, and Washington University. Follow @marlaphelan @movementmuseum

TIM RICHARDSON (Director) is a New York-based artist and director known for creating imagery acutely attuned to its time. From his breakthrough collaborations with Lady Gaga and Nike to immersive installations for Epic Games and Iris van Herpen, he has explored storytelling across fashion, film, and technology. His visionary approach has drawn commissions from Dior, LVMH, Givenchy, Maison Margiela, NARS, Lexus, and L'Oréal, as well as collaborations with Billie Eilish, Bill Skarsgård, and LCD Soundsystem. Richardson's work has been exhibited internationally and is held in the collections of Sir Elton John, Deutsche Bank, and ModeMuseum Hasselt. Three books have been published on his art, including *Spiritual Machine* (Prestel, 2014). His recent film *Neon Rapture*, created with Iris van Herpen, received over a million views within 48 hours and screened alongside HBO's *House of the Dragon* and Amazon's *Rings of Power*. He is founder and director of RCHRDSON Studio.

BLAKESLEY BURKHART (Astrophysicist) is an astrophysicist whose research explores the turbulent processes that shape galaxies, star formation, and the interstellar medium. She has made significant contributions to studies of star formation, interstellar plasma turbulence, and ultraviolet space telescope design. She is an Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Rutgers University and a Research Scientist at the Flatiron Institute's Center for Computational Astrophysics. Burkhart is the author of more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific papers and a recipient of numerous honors, including the Packard Fellowship, Sloan Fellowship, the American Physical Society's Maria Goeppert Mayer Award, and the American Astronomical Society's Annie Jump Cannon Award.

KLSR (Video Artist) is an innovative audio-visual artist who combines sound and visual art, exploring light and textures through real-time processes. His distinctive approach utilizes audio reactivity to create a harmonious blend of auditory and visual experiences, resulting in immersive, multi-sensory creations where sound and image merge seamlessly.

MARCIN POSPIECH (Video Artist) is known as reinfected.me, is a London-based multimedia designer and graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław, Poland. His work channels personal mental journeys and experiences of alienation into short films, where he confronts his deepest fears. In collaboration with music composers, he creates animations that transport viewers into unfamiliar realities and alternate dimensions, sharing his ceremonies and visions where insanity always prevails.

JAMES NEWBERRY (Composer) is an award-winning film and television composer. His music aims to subvert expectations, defy conventional norms, and elevate visual media. Recent projects include forthcoming 'Is This Thing On?' for Director, Bradley Cooper. Feature stars Will Arnett and Laura Dern. Other recent projects include 'Barron's Cove', starring Garrett Hedlund and directed by Evan Kelman; Elegance Bratton's 'Move Ya Body: The Birth of House'; HBO's 'Enigma'; 'Row of Life' and Suzannah Herbert's 'Natchez'. 'Natchez' won the Best Documentary Feature Award at the Tribeca Festival in June 2025 and is being positioned by Oscilloscope as a potential Oscar contender for the upcoming awards season. He is a classically trained percussionist and also performs clarinet, piano, hardware synthesizers, and experimental strings on his scores. He is currently based in California.

For over two decades, **DEVIN CAMERON (Lighting Designer)** has illuminated the worlds of theatre, dance, music, and immersive experiences. From New York City's premier stages to renowned global venues, his work has been hailed by The New York Times as "brilliantly designed" and "extraordinary." Notable credits include the Drama Desk Award-winning The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart with the National Theatre of Scotland, Toshi Reagon's Parable of the Sower at Lincoln Center, Carmen with Opera Naples, and numerous productions for Norwegian Cruise Line. He was the longtime resident lighting designer for Punchdrunk's groundbreaking Sleep No More. Devin's portfolio also spans work at the Apple Steve Jobs Theater and Nemačin Woodlands Resort, where his designs enhance both cultural and luxury events. His approach merges narrative storytelling with sculptural use of light—crafting space, mood, and meaning in every design. To explore his work, visit devincameron.com

YAZMANY ARBOLEDA (Producer) (b. 1981, Colombian-American) is an artist, educator, and community organizer and cultural producer whose work transforms cities into canvases of collective imagination. Based in Brooklyn, he is the inaugural People's Artist for New York City and the founder of The People's Creative Institute, a radical civic studio that uses art to ignite belonging and reimagine democracy. Trained as an architect, Yazmany approaches public space as sacred ground for storytelling. For over two decades, he has conceived and led large-scale participatory art projects across five continents—including in South Africa, Afghanistan, India, Spain, and the United States—often in response to crisis, disconnection, and systemic invisibility. His raw materials are people, place, and the courageous act of dreaming together. In 2022, he served as lead creative producer for Little Amal Walks NYC, a city-wide procession that invited over 100,000 New Yorkers into shared ritual around migration, memory, and hope. He is the Senior Artistic Advisor to the Community Arts Network and has been commissioned by institutions such as Carnegie Hall, Yale University, the United Nations, and BRIC. Yazmany believes art is a verb—a living

force that invites us into deeper relationship with each other and the world we're building. His work lives at the intersection of government, community, and poetry, and poses luminous, urgent questions: Where do we go to practice imagining? How do we do that together? He teaches at Cornell University's College of Architecture, Art, and Planning. His life—shaped by migration, grief, resistance, and radical joy—continues to inform a practice that is ever evolving.

CAMERON SCZEMPKA (Producer) is a producer and creative artist working across live art and film production developing commercials, music videos, dance films, short films, fashion shows, dance performance art, dance raves, and other boundary-shifting live arts through his production company POLYMATH. In addition to BIRTH+CARNAGE, he is a lead producer of FUTURE FORMS, a new dance show/dance rave debuting at National Sawdust this January in Brooklyn. He is a front development co-producer of ILLINOISE (Bard, Armory, Broadway), and HAMLET HAIL TO THE THIEF, co created by Radiohead's Thom Yorke, Steven Hoggett, and Christine Jones (Factory Int'l, RSC, London '26). He recently directed the creative campaign for CATS: THE JELLCLE BALL on Broadway, as well as STEREOPHONIC on Broadway. He is currently devising other new shows and hopes to be making exciting forms of live art for the rest of his life. @cam_bond_sczempka @polymath__production

LISA KJERULFF (Producer) is an award winning independent film producer and founder of Sea Wolf Productions. She Executive Produced the feature SANCTUARY (NEON 2023), starring Margaret Qualley and Chris Abbott. Her latest film, the nonfiction narrative FORTY POUNDS, which she co-wrote and produced with director Nicholas Bentgen, will be released in 2024. She produced and co-wrote Anna Rose Holmer's, THE FITS (Oscilloscope 2016) with a world premiere at the Venice Film Festival, 2015. The film was nominated for Gotham and Independent Spirit Awards and Lisa was nominated for the coveted Piaget Producers Award. Rolling Stone, New York Magazine and Esquire heralded the film as one of the best of the year. Her credits also include collaborations with artist David Michalek and the New York City Ballet, experiential pieces for brands including the Mondrian Hotel and Zales, a short documentary, #LOVEYOURZ, which premiered on Dazed, Zachary Shedd's feature AMERICANA (Paramount Plus) and Nick Bentgen's feature NORTHERN LIGHT (Amazon). The film was an official selection of Hot Docs, True/False, and BAMcinemaFest, and a Critic's Pick in The Village Voice and The New York Times. Lisa is a fellow of the Cannes Producers Network, the Venice Biennale Cinema College and the Sundance Producers Lab, Catalyst Forum and Screenwriters Lab.

KELLY ASHTON TODD (Assistant Director) is a Brooklyn-based director, choreographer, performer, and environmental activist whose work merges dance, theater, and film to confront land exploitation, politics, and the poetics of collapse. She performed in the acclaimed off-Broadway production Sleep No More from 2015–2022 and has received numerous honors, including the NYFA Fellowship in Choreography, NYSCA Media and Choreography Commissions, Springboard Dance Emerging Choreographer, and the Baryshnikov Arts Residency. Her work has been presented at The United Nations, 92nd St Y, Pioneer Works, Usine C, and Meow Wolf Santa Fe. Her award-winning film series Under Review exposes the accelerating sell-off of public lands.

CATHERINE CORREA (Dramaturg) is a Colombian-born performing artist and dramaturg. Trained in the Vagaova Academy, she later pursued theater and immigrated to New York, becoming an active presence in the downtown experimental theater scene. She spent 15 years immersed in this community and performed extensively with the New Stage Theater Company under Hungarian director Ildiko Nemeth. She also worked with The Amoralists as movement director for *Enter the Forest Lawn* by Mark Roberts and contributed to *The Cheaters Club*. Her dramaturgical collaborations include Yara Travieso, Laia Cabrera, Orly Anan, Annabelle Lopez-Ochoa, Marla Phelan, and Daniela Urrias with Ballet Hispánico.

SAYER MANSFIELD (Performer) is a movement artist, performer, and choreographer based between NYC and the Hudson Valley. A graduate of NYU Tisch, Trinity Laban (UK), and Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance (Austria), she has spent the past decade touring the world with Compagnie Marie Chouinard and Pilobolus Dance Theater. Her performance work spans stage and screen, including *The Metropolitan Opera*, Mark Morris Dance Group, and films *Little Women*, *Maestro*, and *Sproutland*. Sayer's choreography has been presented at Jacob's Pillow, PS21 Chatham, WSA Studios, and Art Cake NY. She is the creator of INNERSTANDING, a movement language and online space for brighter being.

WYETH WALKER (Performer) is a dancer and choreographer who strives for originality. As an artist creating in the 21st Century (and an identical twin), he finds this rather impossible. Originally from Virginia Beach, Virginia, Walker grew up training under Denise Wall. He was later accepted into the Gloria Kaufman School of Dance at the University of Southern California, where he first began experimenting with choreography, as well as training in improvisation and street styles. After graduating with his B.F.A. in 2022, Walker joined RUBBERBAND, completing three seasons with the company. He has since relocated to NYC, and is thrilled to join Movement Museum for Birth + Carnage.

DAMONTAE HACK (Performer) is originally from Baltimore, MD, Damontae Hack is a New York-based choreographer, dancer, and director exploring the intersections of Black Queer Love, identity, and vulnerability through movement, music, and visual storytelling. A graduate of the California Institute of the Arts, his work fuses ballet, contemporary, hip hop, and theatre with soundscapes inspired by jazz, R&B, and experimental composition. He has danced commercially with artists such as Solange Knowles, rubberlegz Gerard & Kelly, and collaborated with visionaries including Pina Bausch, Dimitri Chamblas, and Ralph Lemon. Damontae's work invites audiences to confront the beauty and complexity of being human.

MEENAH NEHME (Apprentice Performer) integrates movement, performance, and experience. She explores ways to blend her performance with discovery, collaboration, and artistic expression, challenging the boundaries of artistry and entertainment. A graduate of NYU's Tisch, Meenah performed Andrea Miller's *SAMA* (Radio City Music Hall) and Mikee Ellis; *A Moment Between Breaths* (The Skirball Cultural Center). Currently in New York City with Rylan Joenk in the WADE-Pride Residency. Awarded the Collaborative Impact Grant for <dance prompts>; AI Choreographer with cari ann shim sham, Demetris Charalambous, and Karsen Tengan. Previously in Matt Luck's *x2* and Chelsea Thedinga's *Swan Song* in Los Angeles.

MIZUHO KAPPA (Performer) is a choreographer and performing artist with a degree in Entomology, originally from Osaka, Japan. She has recently performed with Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* NY, Peridance Contemporary Dance Company, and Yoshiko Chuma & The School of Hard Knocks, among others. Her multidimensional choreographic works have been presented at The Shed, La MaMa, Dixon Place, Gene Frankel Theater, The Brick, Ars Nova and more. She also collaborates with cross-disciplinary artists, including a neuroscience researcher, a transmedia playwright, a hybrid writer, and a choreographic researcher. These works have been showcased at New Museum, New York Hall of Science, City University of Hong Kong and beyond. She is a commissioned choreographer for Peridance Contemporary Dance Company's 2025 Spring Season, also a recipient of the GALLIM Moving Artist Residency. Kappa was a resident artist at Films That Move 2022, where she performed lead roles in two award-winning films, *Devouring Stones* Up Close and *Sole*, both of which premiered at Lincoln Center's Dance on Camera Festival.

ELENI LOVING (Performer) is from Dallas, Texas, Eleni Loving (she/her), joined Gibney Company in 2022 and shortly after, graduated from The Juilliard School. She received an award from the Princess Grace Foundation and in 2024, joined the closing cast of Punchdrunk's immersive theater production, *Sleep No More*. Eleni was featured in Dance Magazine's "Career Spotlight" and has had the privilege of working with choreographers such as Ohad Naharin, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Johan Inger, Tiffany Tregarthen and David Raymond, and Francesca Harper. Most recently, Eleni has worked with The Stephen Petronio Company, NVA & Guests, and was featured in Apple's iPhone 17 Pro release.

PAUL ZIVKOVICH (Performer) is an Australian-born performer, choreographer, movement director, and creative collaborator based in Los Angeles. His international career bridges dance, theatre, and immersive performance, blending these worlds with humanity, heart, and striking physicality. A recipient of the 2004 Australian Dance Award for Most Outstanding Male Dancer, Paul has worked with leading companies including Australian Dance Theatre, Sydney Dance Company, Akram Khan Company, Eastman/Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Australasian Dance Collective, and Punchdrunk. Since 2012, he has performed, created, and served as Rehearsal Director for Punchdrunk in the UK, America, and China. Most recently, he premiered his own work, *Dueling*, in Los Angeles (2025) and performed in Maxine Doyle's *Salamander* for the Brisbane Festival.

SYDNEY HIRAI (Apprentice Performer) began her training in Cupertino, CA at her local dance studio training in classical and commercial styles. Furthering her career she attended and recently graduated with a BFA in dance from NYU Tisch under the direction of Pamela Pietro. Following her time at NYU, she moved to Torino, Italy to professional train at NOD under the direction of Tom Weinberger, getting to create new works with numerous choreographers such as Ethan Colangelo, Ella Rothschild, Roy Assaf, Mario Bermudez, Jiri Pokorny, and Tom Weinberger. Now returning back to New York, she is excited to start her freelance journey with Marla Phelan's *Birth + Carnage*.

A full program with information on this production can be found on the La MaMa website page of *Birth + Carnage*

In addition you can scan the QR code Poster located in the theatre lobby for access to detailed information on this program.

LA MAMA



RESTORE A BUILDING REMAKE A WORLD



Rendering: 74 East 4th St.

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street underwent 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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Ellen Stewart Theatre

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The Club

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The Club

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