The Guest Artist/Collaborator/Actor Fees for this production are sponsored by John Shannon and Jan Serr.

By Edward Morgan & John Kishline
Produced by Danceworks and Theatre MXT

OCTOBER 20-21 & 25-28, 2018
DANCEWORKS STUDIO THEATRE

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AGAINT THE GRAIN
THE LIFE & TIMES OF LEVI FISHER AMES

By Edward Morgan & John Kishline
Produced by Danceworks and Theatre MXT

OCTOBER 20-21 & 25-28, 2018
DANCEWORKS STUDIO THEATRE

Director: Edward Morgan
Choreographer: Dani Kuepper
Film: Kym McDaniel
Lighting Design: R.H. Graham
Costume Craftsperson: Lyn Kream
Technical Crew: Colin Gawronski
Light Board, Sound and Film Operation: Corbin Putz
Set Design and Construction: John Kishline & Ryan Kuepper

Cover photos: Kym McDaniel.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Danceworks is a proud member of the United Performing Arts Fund.
We all know that Milwaukee is blessed with an abundance of creative hearts and minds producing art, large and small in big venues and in the smallest nook and crannies of the city—bringing with it beauty in the most unexpected places. Aren’t we fortunate!

To be a city like Milwaukee with its rich layering and textures of artistry and artistic expression there must also be a wisdom in more than the art in and of itself. By this I mean, what comes before it? What feeds it and keeps it alive, and what happens to a person or the art after it has been produced or recognized?

We can see that the creation of art is no different than the creation of a person. There is the time of conception, the development, the expression flowing forth, the experience of and connection to others and to life itself. Then finally there is the appreciation and recognition of the value of what has come and gone.

A portion of Milwaukee’s artistic wealth is found in the formation of creative expression of and exposure to our young artists waiting in the wings. Through unique collaborative initiatives across the boundaries of our sector, we have much arts education happening in our youth. Our greatest asset: these are our future artists and audience members. They are a part of the process. And if we are really wise, we lay credence to the legacies that have gone before us and opened doors for us to step into, laying creative mosaics that share the human condition through art—each story as unique as the individual. We are better for having valued those who have gone before us, have learned from and preserved the good work.

Tonight you will witness artists who understand that the true beauty of art is a continuous process. It lies within the soul of the one who suffers as well as the one who rejoices—each an observer and a creator having within them the power to connect and transform tragedy to joy, insanity to brilliance, and ultimately, isolation to community.

The work of Levi Fisher Ames, Edward Morgan, Dani Kuepper and the actors and dancers in Against the Grain are living representations of carrying forward and preserving art in its fullest capacity to transform. We are so glad you are here. Tonight would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors John Shannon and Jan Serr, the United Performing Arts Fund and you, our patrons. We hope you leave this evening richer than you came.

Deborah Farris | Chief Executive Officer, Danceworks
FROM THE DIRECTOR

I first saw the animal carvings of Levi Fisher Ames at the J. M. Kohler Arts Center in the spring of 2007. The 600-piece collection had recently been donated to the Kohler Foundation by Levi’s grandson, Howard Jordan, who kept it safe for nearly 70 years before finally finding a way to keep his grandfather’s creative legacy intact.

I was fascinated by the carvings and the man. He was the son of Swiss immigrants and came to Wisconsin as a teenager. He was a Civil War veteran who recovered his sanity after the madness of war in part by teaching himself to carve. He was a carpenter who reinvented himself as an eccentric traveling showman. That very day I imagined bringing Levi and his menagerie to life through theatre and dance. But the inspiration sat on a back burner for nine years. It took the trust and collaboration of many talented folks to finally make it happen. I’m grateful for that.

The story speaks to me because I believe in the power of creative expression to give voice to our wounds, our wishes and our wildest imaginings. It speaks to me because I believe in the possibility of people reinventing themselves. It speaks to me because we still have soldiers coming home from war. It speaks to me because we all face the mystery of goodbye. So here’s to Levi Fisher Ames. And here’s hoping our telling of his tale speaks to you.

Edward Morgan | Director

FROM DANCEWORKS’ ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

One of the best things about collaboration is that it can encourage an artistic range of expression that may not have occurred as fully, without the influence of the co-working artists. Against the Grain is a prime example of this potential. This project has pulled me from my own stylistic instincts and habits and nudged me to a new area of discovery. Being pulled away from habit is almost always a good thing for an artist in any discipline.

Reading John and Edward’s script, I’m fascinated by how much of it is based in an abstracted reality, with fuzzy lines delineating what is actually occurring vs. what is being imagined by Levi. The dancers are an extension of Levi’s memories and imagination, that ebb and flow along with Levi’s state of consciousness. The script gives the audience context and story, but not in a heavy-handed dose. There is plenty of room in the narrative for audience to make choices and interpret their own meaning. Guest artists/actors John Kishline, Deborah Clifton and Kirk Thomsen bring the script to life with integrity and relevance.

Kym McDaniel’s nuanced, evocative film style is the perfect match for Levi’s evocative world – and I’m so glad to work alongside her again to bring it to life! She is a former student, that has become one of the most compelling and mature collaborators I’ve worked alongside. Lyn Kream created costumes for the dancers that invoke the whimsy, simplicity and intricacy of Levi Fisher Ames’ carvings – the very inspiration of this entire performance!

What a rare privilege it has been to bring this work to life, with such talented and dedicated people. Artists matter. The arts matter. Thank you for supporting the Milwaukee arts community as we continue to band together to accomplish what we cannot do alone.

Dani Kuepper | Artistic Director, Danceworks
Levi Fisher Ames was born in 1840 and raised in rural Wisconsin. He served in the Civil War, then came home and taught himself wood carving. This became his life’s work.

SETTING
The Veterans Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin—June 1923

CAST
Levi: John Kishline
Thomas/Charles: Kirk Thomsen
Lucinda: Deborah Clifton
Ghosts, Animals, Children, Neighbors: Danceworks Performance Company (Dani Kuepper, Liz Licht, Elisabeth Roskopf, Zach Schorsch, Christal Wagner, Andrew Zanoni)

NIGHTMARE
Music: Tyrolienne Variée by Johann Nepomuk Hummel

HOMECOMING
Music: Nonesmanneslond by Thomas William Hill

CREATION
Music: Nightrail from the Sun by Lubomyr Melnyk

CHILDREN
Music: Hops-Walzer by Hanneli-Musig

NEIGHBORS
Music: Küsse mich by Hanneli-Musig

THE FAIRGROUNDS
Music: After the Ball; Wurlitzer 153 Band Organ

THE SHOW
Music: Maori Poi Dance by Hanneli-Musig

TWOSOME
Music: Läendler 2 by Hanneli-Musig

LEGACY
Music: Porpita Porpita by Thomas William Hill

GOODBYE
Music: A Warmer Place by Lubomyr Melnyk
The Levi Fisher Ames Collection is one of the permanent collections at the J.M. Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, WI.

“This unique collection is comprised of over 600 carvings by self-taught artist Levi Fisher Ames...Levi Fisher Ames firmly believed that his body of work needed to be seen as a comprehensive group in order to be understood and fully appreciated. For this reason, he kept the carvings together, never selling any of them...Through Howard Jordan, Ames’s grandson, Kohler Foundation acquired this entire body of work in 2001 in order to preserve it and keep the collection together as Ames desired.”

This production will also be performed at the Kohler Arts Center November 9 and 10.

SPECIAL THANKS: Next Act Theatre, Jim Guy, John McGivern, Colin Gawronski, Ryan Kuepper, Cathy Vandermeuse, Sandy Wallisch, David Cesarini, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Elyse Transon, Milwaukee Irish Dance Company, Mike Van Dreser, Matt Carr, Marsha Senfleben Williams

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Danceworks Performance Company is a dynamic group of dancers/choreographers that is committed to creating and performing contemporary dance that is physical, virtuosic, entertaining and honest. Collaboration fuels the creative vision of the company members as they regularly work alongside guest artists, including musicians, poets, visual artists, actors and choreographers.

Theatre MXT John Kishline, Deborah Clifton and Edward Morgan are Theatre MXT, an informal trio who periodically create plays. Their first project was A RISING WIND, The Lady Elgin Story, written by Kishline and Morgan with support from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, Milwaukee Irish Fest and Pier Wisconsin. A RISING WIND was performed at the J. M. Kohler Arts Center and Best Place Tavern. It was taped and broadcast by Milwaukee Public TV and published in The Irish American Post. Theatre MXT’s next project was an update of Kishline’s play, SUCCESS, which toured 6 cities in India with support from the U.S. State Department and the Hindi MetroPlus Theatre Festival. SUCCESS was also later presented at Next Act Theatre. Theatre MXT is thrilled to collaborate with Danceworks on this exciting new production.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Deborah Clifton was a company member of Theatre X where she performed, wrote and produced over 100 plays. A HISTORY OF SEXUALITY, nominated for best play, Deborah, nominated for best actress and John Kishline for best acctor by the San Francisco Bay Area Critics. DESIRE OF THE MOTH FOR THE STAR, which she co-wrote, was nominated for Best Play by the American Critics Assoc. She has also worked at Chicago Shakespeare, The Goodman Theater, Madison Rep, Milwaukee Rep, Forward Theater, Theatre Gigante, Chamber Theater, First Stage and toured India with MXT’s SUCCESS.

R.H. Graham was a Resident Scenic and Lighting Designer for the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre Company for five years during Nagel Jackson’s artistic leadership and Resident Lighting Designer for the Milwaukee Ballet Company for three years during Jean Paul Comelin’s artistic leadership. Mr. Graham has also been a Resident Designer at the Alley Theatre in Houston and the Mill Mountain Playhouse in Roanoke, Virginia. He has designed for theatre, dance and opera across the country, including New York and Chicago and for virtually every theatre company in Milwaukee as well as the Milwaukee Art Museum, The Symphony Orchestra and Discovery World. He was resident designer for Theatre X for 14 years and a member of the company. His international credits include productions in Germany, Japan, Australia, Canada, Slovenia, France and China. He has designed multiple productions for Michael Pink’s Milwaukee Ballet including La Boheme and Peter Pan which was broadcast on PBS nationwide. Mr. Graham taught Design and Graphics at the UW–Milwaukee’s Peck School of the Arts for 38 years.
John Kishline has been making and performing professional theatre since 1972 across the United States and in Holland, England, Wales, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, India (U.S. State Dept. tour) and Japan. He has written 14 produced plays, helped create 50 more from scratch. He was a founding member of Milwaukee’s Theatre X and Theatre MXT. His work has been nominated for national and regional awards and won an OBIE from the Village Voice in 1978. He’s also done feature films and network TV. He is married to Deborah Clifton and lives in Wisconsin.

Dani Kuepper joined Danceworks Performance Company in 1998 and has since choreographed more than 30 dances for the company. As a Danceworker, she has enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate extensively in the Milwaukee community with established organizations as well as independent artists. Dani received both her BFA and MFA from UW–Milwaukee, where she has been a faculty member of the UWM dance department since 1999. She was honored in 2009 as a “Forty Under 40” recipient by the Business Journal of Milwaukee and also received the UWM Alumni Association Teaching Excellence Award for non-tenure track instructors in 2010.

Lyn Kream has parlayed an overactive imagination into an oddly satisfying career in costume design. Credits include costumes for Trixie Mattel’s runs on Season 7 and All Stars 3 of RuPaul’s Drag Race, Hedwig and the Angry Inch with All In Productions and bringing the whimsical sculptures of Levi Fisher Ames to life in this wonderful production. By day, Lyn is a part of the magical team of the Milwaukee Ballet Costume shop.

Liz Licht is in her eighth season with DPC. She also teaches 50+ Yoga at Danceworks. Other performance credits include Warped Dance Company, where she initiated the role of Clara in an aerial dance version of The Nutcracker; Gina Laurenzi Dance Company; Wild Space Dance Company; Li Chiao-Ping Dance; Skylight Music Theatre; Cooperative Performance Milwaukee; and internship performances with the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. She studied on full-tuition scholarship at Garth Fagan Dance. Liz holds a Dance BFA, Honor’s College degree, and journalism minor from UW–Milwaukee. She is pursuing her master’s degree in community mental health counseling at Lakeland University.

Kym McDaniel is a filmmaker and choreographer currently based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her work explores themes of vulnerability, resistance and trauma recovery. Originally from Chicago, she has a BFA in Contemporary Performance & Choreography, and a BA in Psychology. Her dances and films have performed and screened most recently at the American
Dance Festival’s Movies by Movers, EXCHANGE Choreography Festival, and the Chicago Underground Film Festival, among others. In 2015, she became certified as an AmSAT Alexander Technique teacher. She has an MFA in Film, Video, Animation & New Genres from the UW–Milwaukee.

Edward Morgan is a director and playwright who’s worked at regional theatres, festivals and universities across the USA, in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and India. His Milwaukee credits include numerous productions with Next Act and Milwaukee Rep. He’s a past winner of the Drama League of NY Director’s Project and his work has been honored with Helen Hayes Awards, IRNE nominations and various writing commissions. He’s also a Casting Partner for Cirque du Soleil. Next year, he’ll go to Bulgaria as a Fulbright Scholar, directing, teaching and writing. PS: He’s wanted to work with Danceworks for years.

Corbin Putz is finishing his degree in Theatre Production at UW–Milwaukee, and has done work on a wide variety of shows, from Les Liaisons Dangereuses and Springdances at UWM to The Taming of the Shrew with Voices Found Repertory. He is overjoyed to be working with Danceworks for the first time as he approaches the end of his college career, and is excited to work with a new crowd of talented individuals.

Elisabeth Roskopf’s passion for dance began at age 6 and she has been dancing ever since. She graduated with a BA in Piano and a minor in Dance from the UW–Eau Claire in 2011. She is a company member with Li Chiao-Ping Dance and Danceworks Performance Company as well as a guest artist with Wild Space Dance Company, Marlene Skog Dance, and an alumna of Catey Ott Dance Collective. Since the spring of 2014, Elisabeth has been performing in the Lake Arts Project, directed by Jennifer Miller and Karl von Rabenau of the Milwaukee Ballet. Since 2015, Elisabeth still continues to choreograph and perform her solo works with the Danceworks DanceLAB Get It Out There concert series.

Zach Schorsch (BFA Dance ‘16) is newest member of Danceworks Performance Company. He has appeared with Hyperlocal MKE and has previously danced in the works of Maria Gillespie, Dani Kuepper, Deb Loewen, Joelle Worm and Posy Knight. Zach’s choreographic body of work has been presented in Cooperative Performance Milwaukee’s One Act Festival and the Danceworks DanceLAB Get It Out There concert series. Since being awarded a Danceworks Space Grant this spring, Zach continues to collaborate and create within several different creative mediums.
For 17 years, actor Kirk Thomsen has worked to build collaborative relationships with many performance companies in Chicago and Milwaukee. He is an artist consultant for the Grand Imagination Theatre on Holton Street as well as a member of the Center Street Community Arts Redevelopment Project. Kirk helped create performance venues and memorable productions with the Alchemist Theatre in Bay View and Studio G at the Grand Avenue Mall for Quasimondo Physical Theatre to name a few. He continues to work with groups finding and building space and is passionate about bringing to life multi-media theatrical productions.

Christal Wagner has been with Danceworks Performance Company since 2007. She is a graduate of UW–Milwaukee with her BFA in Dance. Christal is a founding member of the collaborative trio Cadance Collective performing their original works since 2012. She has formally danced with Your Mother Dances and Gina Laurenzi Dance Project. She has been a featured performer with Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Present Music and Dawn Springer Dance Projects. She choreographs Musical Theatre throughout the Milwaukee area at Divine Savior Holy Angels, Shorewood High School, Nicolet High School and Skylight Music Theatre.

Andrew Zanoni is thrilled to be back at it again! After a temporary hiatus from dance, he is more than excited to get back to performing with the wonderful group of artists who make up Danceworks Performance Company. Andrew graduated with a BFA in Dance from UW–Milwaukee in 2010 then moved to NYC where he spent two years dancing with David Parker and The Bang Group. After returning home in 2013 he performed with DPC for two seasons and now comes back to them once again. Tons of love to my amazing family for always supporting me.

Did you know you can sponsor a dancer, or even an entire concert?

For details regarding sponsorships, please contact Senior Director of Development & Communications Candice Wegner at 414.277.8480 x6019 or cwegner@danceworksmke.org.
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Danceworks is a proud member of the United Performing Arts Fund.

We gratefully acknowledge our funders from September 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018. Our apologies to any individual or organization that was inadvertently omitted or incorrectly listed. Call Candice Wegner at 414.277.8480 x6019 with any corrections or to make a pledge to Danceworks. Your support keeps Milwaukee moving!
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Torch and Glamour: An Exploration of Love and Illusion
February 9-10 & 14-16, 2019 | Danceworks Studio Theatre
Featuring guest artist Andréa Moser
Torch and Glamour’s collaboration with Andréa Moser is sponsored by Jane Lewis and Mickey Maier.

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March 15-17, 20-24 & 27-31, 2019 | Cabot Theatre
In collaboration with Skylight Music Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre and Chant Claire Chamber Choir

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November 4, 11, 18, December 2

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November 4, 11, 18

DANCE FITNESS SERIES: WEDNESDAYS, 6:15-7:15PM
Pilates November 7, 14, 28, December 5

BALLROOM & LATIN SERIES: FRIDAYS, 7:30-8:30PM
Swing November 9, 16, 30, December 7

IN OTHER EXCITING NEWS…

We are thrilled to announce that beginning in the 2018-19 program year, Danceworks Mad Hot’s two annual Competitions will be held at the UW–Milwaukee Panther Arena! Join us on Thursday, January 24, 2019 as we cheer on more than 1,000 dancers from more than 40 Milwaukee schools at the Mad Hot Tap Competition. The event is free and open to the public. Mad Hot Ballroom Competition date TBA.
DANCEWORKS PERFORMANCE COMPANY

Torch & Glamour

FEBRUARY 9-10 & 14-16, 2019

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Photo: Jeff Zmania

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