

# Imago Theatre

Friday and Saturday, February 8–9, 2002  
Zellerbach Hall

## Frogz

### Creators

Carol Triffle and Jerry Mouawad

### Performers

Catherine Egan      Michael Vertlieb      Danielle Vermette  
Jonathan Godsey      Rex Jantze

### Original Music by

Katie Griesar

### Light Design & Production Stage Manager

Jeff Forbes

### Production Coordinator & Audio Engineer

Jeff Simmons

“Cowboy” Score  
Dan Brandt

Recording Engineer  
Jeff Saltzman

Contributing Musicians  
Erik Yates  
Jeff Saltzman  
Katie Griesar

### By arrangement with

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Frogz

Reptiles

Paper Bag

Windbags

Cowboy

Sloth Circus

#### INTERMISSION

Strings

Larvabatic

Penguins

Orbs

Paper

Imago Theatre began performing in 1979 in small communities in the Northwest, and by 1986 was touring internationally. Imago's explorations of the stage began as a combination of theater, movement, and

the visual arts as influenced by renowned French theater master Jacques Lecoq of Paris. First working in the realm of physical comedy and mask theater, the ensemble progressed toward creating and staging experimental works, original text works, and contemporary adaptations of classics. In 2001, Imago's *Frogz* completed a two-week run on Broadway (the production will return to the New Victory Theatre in New York for a four-week run in May). Artistic directors Carol Triffle and Jerry Mouawad, trained in the methods of Jacques Lecoq (and also influenced by Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Alain Platel, and Trisha Brown), have created a company that is one of the most innovative dramatic ensembles in the United States. The troupe's ingenuity has manifested itself in numerous memorable stagings—featuring a tilting stage in Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*, underground projections in Triffle's *Buffo*, a giant 14-foot metallic wheel in Richard Foreman's *Symphony of Rats*, underwater soliloquies in Triffle's *Oh Lost Weekend*, and the matrix puzzle of a set in Mouawad's *House Taken Over*. Those fortunate to have witnessed Imago's productions in past years have journeyed to some unusual and fantastic universes. Having won numerous Drammy Awards and nominations, and with repeated honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, Imago's work has been seen on national television on several continents, and during extensive tours of Europe, Asia, and North America.

Carol Triffle (co-creator, co-director), grew up in a family of 10 girls and one boy, soon becoming the family clown and turning the bedroom, dining room, and kitchen into a three-ring circus. Years later, in the mid-1970s, she debuted on the legitimate stage, performing contemporary dance and ballet. Seeking a more theatrical medium, Triffle became inspired by movement theater after discovering the methods of Jacques Lecoq (she is a third-year graduate of the acclaimed L'Ecole Jacques Lecoq). Triffle is honored to have worked directly with Lecoq as his assistant in 1997, and is one of 40 people authorized to teach his work. With Jerry Mouawad, she co-founded Imago Theatre. Triffle has written and directed the following at Imago Theatre: *Buffo*, *Ajax*, *Ginger's Green*, *Trailer Park Paradise*, *Oh Lost Weekend*, and *No Can Do*. Her staged theatrics have also been presented in Europe and Asia. She has received two Oregon Arts Commission Fellowships and has served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Triffle has received Drammy Awards for Best Costumes and Best Original Play, and was commissioned to create a theater/dance concert for the Oregon Symphony.

Jerry Mouawad (co-creator, co-director) was first stage-struck performing in a seventh grade one-act play. He later picked up the stage bug again in high school, to the sacrifice of his wrestling career (13 losses, of which 10 were pins). In 1977, he stumbled upon the Hayes-Marshall School of Theatre Arts in Portland. At the Lecoq-based school, Mouawad was drawn to theater's physical aspects. He has designed and directed the following at Imago Theatre: *Phoenicians in the House*, *Samuel's Major Problems*, *Symphony of Rats*, *Half Light*, *Dead End Ed*, *No Exit*, *Blood Wedding*, *Blood Wedding*, and *The Imaginary Invalid*. Mouawad has also staged work for Portland Center Stage, the Portland Opera, and the Oregon Symphony as choreographer, puppet play designer, and writer/director. His excursions into experimental work led to his direction and design of two Richard Foreman plays—*Samuel's Major Problems* and *Symphony of Rats*. Mouawad's commissions include *Macy's Passport '95* in San Francisco, the Vancouver School for

Arts and Academics, and Jefferson High School. He has been recipient of Oregon Arts Commission Fellowships, the Portland Civic Theater Fellowship, and Drammy Awards for Best Actor, Best Set, Best Choreography, and Best Original Play.

Catherine Egan (rehearsal co-director, performer) combines movement and media to create theater for her production company Eggshell. She is the recipient of a 2001 Oregon Artist Fellowship for choreography and recently staged *Troyland*, a jerky, skittery, bent-up adaptation of Euripides' tragedy. A native of the Pacific Northwest, Egan started performing on stage at the age of five. She calls Portland home but travels often to Baton Rouge for the chicory coffee and "dat boudin." Egan is an avid natural gardener and is working on the perfect éclair. Her dream is to appear on the Antiques Road Show. She has performed in the following Imago productions: *Phoenicians in the House*, *Buffo*, *Passport 95*, and *Ajax*.

Michael Vertlieb (rehearsal co-director, performer) has been a performer from his early playground antics to his most recent performances in college. Recently transplanted to the rainy days of Portland from the flat plains of Missouri, he came in search of the kindred spirit of Dionysus. Leaving roles like *Silva Vicarro* in *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* and *The Corporal* in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* behind in Missouri, he continued as sound operator and assistant director for Jerry Mouawad's *Blood Wedding* in Portland. Soon after, he was swept away with movement, rhythm, and frogs. When Vertlieb is not bouncing, jumping, or running, you can find him penning idiosyncratic thoughts in his writing journal. From these journals have emerged the plays *Ghost In The Desert* and *Creamed Corn* (premieres at Central Missouri State University, 1998). Vertlieb has appeared in Imago's *The Imaginary Invalid* and *No Exit*. This is his third season touring with *Frogz*.

Danielle Vermette (performer) is thrilled to be a Frog. The youngest of 10 children, her passion for movement and mischief was cultivated at an early age. After spending much of her childhood attending sporting events in support of her older siblings, it was in the theatrical arena that she finally found her niche. Upon graduating with a BFA in performance from Central Missouri State University, Vermette headed west. Soon she was cast in *Blood Wedding* at Imago Theatre, and found herself engaged in a process that revitalized her entire outlook on theater. This began a relationship with Imago that has included work on stage and off, and culminated when she was recently cast in *Frogz*. Special thanks to friends and family for their continuous inspiration, and to Joan Honeycutt and Dr. Ed See for support and vision.

Jonathan Godsey (performer) was awe-struck by the overwhelming potential of human motion after his first class in the classical Chinese art of Taijiquan Gongfu in 1989. Ensuing years of dedicated practice and research led him to the teachings of Jin Taiyang (Kris Brenner), a 20th-generation successor of Chen Family Laojia Taijiquan and indoor disciple of the famous master Chen Qingzhou. The unfortunate departure of his teacher in the summer of 1998 led him to explore the possibility of other movement arts. It was at this point that he noticed an audition announcement for Imago Theatre's world-acclaimed *Frogz*. He had no previous performance experience but he thought a martial arts performer could attempt creature theater. The fascinating similarity between Imago's Lecoq-based theory and that of his previous training fueled his interest. Godsey has appeared in Imago's *Trailer Park Paradise*, *Oh Lost Weekend*, and *The Imaginary Invalid*.

Rex Jantze (performer) first began to perform during his junior year in high school—which contributed directly to the demise of his GPA. Haphazardly involved with college, community, and professional theater for 10 years, the "monkey-boy" landed with Imago Theatre—at its newly acquired home—in the summer of 1993, with a paintbrush, hammer, and a few years of remodeling experience. Since then, Jantze has performed, teched, or built numerous productions for Imago and other associated groups. He has appeared in *Verdad* and *The Imaginary Invalid* at Imago Theatre. Jantze's embarkation into *Frogz* began in 1999 in a walk-on part as a behemoth pair of pants and shoes. He anticipates expanding into other body parts in the future.

Jeff Forbes (light design, production stage manager) is a Portland-based lighting designer working primarily in theater and dance. He is an eight-time winner of the Willie and Drammy Awards for Theater, for work with such companies as Storefront Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, Tygres Heart Shakespeare, and the Musical Theatre Company. He has been lighting director for the Portland International Performance Festival since its inception. Forbes' work in dance and performance includes frequent collaborations over the last 15 years with choreographers including Linda Austin, Mary

Oslund, Josie Moseley, Minh Tran, Linda Johnson, Drew Pizarra, Katherine Petersen, and Sue Brantley. He has also worked with Do Jump Movement Theatre and Imago Theatre, and in the original staging of Talk Radio with Eric Bogosian and Tad Savinar. Forbes is co-founder, with Linda Austin, of Performance Works NW, for which he serves as technical director. He has also designed lighting for the following Imago productions: Verdad, Buffo, Oh Lost Weekend, Blood Wedding Blood Wedding, No Exit, House Taken Over, Trailer Park Paradise, Symphony of Rats, and Frogz.

Katie Griesar (composer) composes for guitar, antique and toy musical instruments, found objects, and collected sounds. She is a graduate of Vassar College and the American Repertory Theatre Institute at Harvard University. In 1994, she founded Waltzing Mice with Kahlil Aisha and together they have scored numerous Imago productions, including Symphony of Rats (1997 Drammy, Best Sound Design), Half Light, Ginger's Green, and Trailer Park Paradise. Griesar also composed the score for Imago's House Taken Over (1999 Drammy, Best Original Music) and selections for The Imaginary Invalid, Oh Lost Weekend, and No Can Do.

Jeff Simmons (production coordinator, audio engineer) started out in North Brunswick, New Jersey, and quickly moved with his parents to and through Louisville, Atlanta, and Kansas City, Missouri. This fast-paced childhood led him to discover theater at Raymore-Peculiar High School in Peculiar, Missouri (odd, isn't it?). Falling in love with the stage at Ray-Pec High led Simmons to speedily earn a bachelor's degree in theater from Central Missouri State University (1998). With that degree under his belt, the next stop was Portland, Oregon, where he experienced Imago Theatre's mesmerizing House Taken Over. Simmons was soon lucky enough to be asked to fill the sound engineer position for the world premiere of Carol Triffle's Oh Lost Weekend, and has since happily worked with the company. In his spare time, Simmons enjoys designing sound and composing for other local theater companies, as well as recording and performing in the Portland-area band Wooden Nickel. He has appeared in Jerry Mouawad's The Imaginary Invalid at Imago Theatre. Simmons began operating sound for Frogz in 2000. This is his first season touring with the production.

Daniel Brandt (composer) has composed for Imago since the company's inception. Active in the film and television industry, he was also the keyboardist for the pop music group Quarterflash, and has collaborated with composer Thomas Svoboda.

George Smith (illustrations for "Cowboy") is a nationally syndicated cartoonist. He is best known for his strip The Smith Family. His inspiration for the strip came from his one son and 10 daughters, of which Carol Triffle is one.

Shauna Uselman (artistic consultant) has worked for Imago Theatre as performer, dramaturge, and stage manager in Frogz, Dead End Ed, Verdad, and numerous other productions. She is the daughter of Carol Triffle and stepdaughter of Jerry Mouawad. Uselman is currently completing a doctoral degree in environmental science at the University of Reno, Nevada (which makes her parents proud).

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Imago is a nonprofit organization. Ticket sales and fees received from touring productions cover only a portion of expenses. Contributions to Imago are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.

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