



**HANCHER AUDITORIUM**

**MANUAL CINEMA**  
*THE 4TH WITCH*

Presented in collaboration  
with The Englert Theatre and FilmScene

**Friday, April 17, 2026**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**The Englert Theatre**

**IOWA**

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## PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION WITH



# MANUAL CINEMA

## *THE 4TH WITCH*

Friday, April 17, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.  
Hancher Auditorium, the University of Iowa

Manual Cinema's *The 4th Witch* is a fantastic new tale, inspired by elements of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, in which a girl escapes war and flees into a dark forest. Told through shadow puppetry, actors in silhouette and live music (without dialogue or narration), *The 4th Witch* begins on the eve of an invasion of a small town by the local warlord, Macbeth. The girl flees the invading army and escapes into the nearby forest. Orphaned and exiled, she is rescued by a witch, who adopts her as an apprentice. As she becomes more skilled in witchcraft, her grief and rage draw her into a nightmarish quest for vengeance against the warlord who killed her parents: Macbeth.

*The 4th Witch*, an inversion of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, explores themes of grief, war, generational conflict, and cycles of violence through the collateral damage left behind on the battleground.

*Run time is 65 minutes.*

*Recommended for ages 12 and up. There are loud sounds and flashing lights as well as themes of loss and death.*

# ***THE 4TH WITCH***

## **A MANUAL CINEMA PRODUCTION**

Concept and Direction by Drew Dir  
Devised by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, and Julia Miller

### **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

Original Score and Sound Design..... Ben Kauffman and Kyle Vegter  
Storyboards and Puppet Design .....Drew Dir  
Lighting Design .....David Goodman-Edberg  
Costume and Wig Design..... Sully Ratke  
Silhouette Masks ..... Julia Miller  
Costume Assistant..... Griffin DiStasi  
Puppet Build Assistant..... Caitlin McLeod  
Sound Engineer..... Mike Usrey  
Stage Manager and Board Operator ..... Kyle Vegter  
Creative Producer ..... Laura Colby

### **CAST**

#### **PUPPETEERS**

Lizi Breit (*Mother, Witch, Girl*)  
Leah Casey (*Father, Witch, Girl*)  
Sarah Fornace (*Girl*)  
Julia Miller (*Lead Witch*)  
Jeffrey Paschal (*Soldier, Macbeth*)

#### **MUSICIANS**

Alicia Walters (*Piano, Keys, Lead Vocals*)  
Erica Kremer (*Cello, Vocals*)  
Caroline Jesalva (*Violin, Vocals*)

#### **REPRESENTATION**

Elsie Management  
Laura Colby, President  
Anna Amadei, Vice President  
elsieman.org  
(718) 797-4577

#### **COMMISSIONING & SUPPORT**

*The 4th Witch* received lead commissioning support from Spoleto Festival USA with co-commissioning support from ArtsEmerson (Boston, MA), Cal Performances, University of California (Berkeley, CA), and Wisconsin Union Theater.

*The 4th Witch* is supported by a Production Grant from the Jim Henson Foundation.

# ABOUT MANUAL CINEMA

Manual Cinema is an Emmy Award-winning performance collective, design studio, and film/video production company founded in 2010 by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller, and Kyle Vegter. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive stories for stage and screen.

Using vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, live feed cameras, multi-channel sound design, and live music, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality. The company was awarded an Emmy in 2017 for *The Forger*, a video created for the *New York Times* and named Chicago Artists of the Year in 2018 by the *Chicago Tribune*. Their shadow puppet animations are featured in the film remake of *Candyman*, directed by Nia DaCosta and produced by Jordan Peele's Monkeypaw Productions. Recent productions include *Leonardo! A Wonderful Show about a Terrible Monster*, based on books by Mo Willems, an adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and a revamped production of *The Magic City*, based on Edith Nesbit's 1910 novel. In 2023, Manual Cinema completed production on their first self-produced short film, *Future Feeling*, and toured with folk rock band Iron & Wine the following year. Manual Cinema's newest production, *The 4th Witch*, is an inversion of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and premiered at the Spoleto festival in June, 2025.

Manual Cinema has toured throughout North America and to four continents. Highlights include: Under The Radar/The Public Theater (NYC), Adelaide Festival (AUS), Santiago a mil (Chile), Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Singapore International Festival of the Arts, and the Tehran International Puppet Festival (Iran). The company has received commissioning for new performance works from Cal Performances (Berkeley), Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), The Kennedy Center, ArtsEmerson (Boston), Spoleto Festival (USA), The Poetry Foundation, and La Monnaie de Munt (Belgium). They have received grant support from the National Theater Project, U.S. Artists International, and ArtsCONNECT.

We'd love to hear from you! Follow us at @manual\_cinema; join our newsletter via our website: manualcinema.com; and support us via Patreon.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## PUPPETEERS

**LIZI BREIT** (*Mother, Witch, Girl, Puppeteer*) is a Chicago-based artist. She has been performing and designing with Manual Cinema since 2011.

**LEAH CASEY** (*Father, Witch, Girl, Puppeteer*) is a Chicago-based actress, dancer, and writer. When not on stage, she can be found lending her voice to all manner of audiobooks, or with the cast of Project STELLAR, a science fiction podcast about a group of crazy kids who have close encounters of the awesome kind. Chicago credits: *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Grease*, *Cinderella* (Drury Lane), *A Christmas Carol* (Writers Theatre/Manual Cinema), *Leonardo and Sam* (Chicago Children's Theatre/Manual Cinema), *Frankenstein* (Court Theatre/Manual Cinema), *For Colored Girls...* (Court Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Teatro Vista), and *STORM* (Walkabout/Moonfool). Leah is represented by the dedicated team at Shirley Hamilton.

**SARAH FORNACE** (*Girl, Puppeteer, Co-Deviser, Co-Artistic Director*) is a director, puppeteer, choreographer, and narrative designer based in Chicago. She is a co-artistic director of Manual Cinema. Outside of Manual Cinema, Sarah has worked as a performer or choreographer with Redmoon Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Garage, and Blair Thomas and Co. Most recently, Sarah wrote the story mode for the video game *Rivals of Aether*. In 2017, she directed and edited the first episode of the web series, *The Doula is IN*. In 2016, she directed and devised an "animation" production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with Rokoko Studios for HamletScen at Kromborg Castle in Elsinore, Denmark.

**JULIA MILLER** (*Lead Witch, Puppeteer, Co-Deviser, Silhouette Masks, Co-Artistic Director*) is a director, puppeteer, and designer. With Manual Cinema she has directed *Mementos Mori* and *The End of TV* as well as created original roles in *Frankenstein* (The Creature/Elizabeth), *Ada/Ava* (Ada), *Lula del Ray* (Lula's Mother), *The Magic City* (Helen), *Hansel und Gretel* (Hansel), and *Leonardo!* (Sam). In Chicago, she has worked as a performer and puppeteer with Redmoon Theatre and Blair Thomas and Co. She spent several years training in devised theatre, clown and mask with Double Edge Theatre, Carlos García Estevez and at the Accademia dell'Arte in Arezzo, Italy.

**JEFFREY PASCHAL** (*Soldier, Macbeth, Puppeteer*) is a Chicago-based actor and filmmaker. Chicago credits: *The Bottle Tree* (Theater Wit), *The Magic City* (Chicago Children's Theatre/ Manual Cinema), *The End of TV* (Chopin Theater/ Manual Cinema), *Solar Storm* (Akvavit Theater), *No Blue Memories* (Studebaker Theater/ Manual Cinema), and *A Christmas Carol* (Writers Theatre/ Manual Cinema). Touring credits: *Lula del Rey* (Manual Cinema), *Ada/Ava* (Manual Cinema), and *The 4th Witch* (Manual Cinema). Directing credits: *Life of Harold* (available on YouTube) and Broadcast. He is represented by BMG Talent.

## MUSICIANS

**CAROLINE JESALVA** (*Violin, Vocals*) is a Chicago-based musician, improviser, multidisciplinary artist, and curator. She studied music at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA where she developed a practice centered on contemporary, improvised and experimental music composition and performance. Her work intersects many disciplines including experimental theater, songwriting, performance art, classical music, and free jazz. Caroline is a member of the improvising collective BananaAcid, and performs regularly with musicians and artists, such as cellist Katinka Kleijn and saxophonist Sarah Clausen. She has performed on violin as a soloist, in duos, and with ensembles such as Bang on a Can, ECCE Arts Ensemble, and Crossing Borders Music, appearing at venues across the U.S. including Jordan Hall, MASS MoCA, Compound Yellow, Oracle Egg, Elastic Arts Foundation, Moeser Auditorium, The Hideout, Hungry Brain, BOMBYX Center for Arts, Rosehill Cemetery, and the International Museum of Surgical Science.

**ERICA KREMER** (*Cello, Vocals*) is a cellist, pianist, and songwriter based in Brooklyn, New York. Having recently received a Master's degree under cellist Edward Arron, she is building a music career tailored to her interests of democratizing classical music, blurring genre and cultural lines, and making music on her own terms. Refusing to be put in a box, she has performed and toured as a former member of the Carriola String Quartet, holding a residency with Sinfonia Gulf Coast; as a rock and roll cellist, across the country, in the Black Jacket Symphony; and as a folk musician featured in the Ocracoke Festival, as a part of Saltare Sounds.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**ALICIA WALTER** (*Piano, Keys, Lead Vocals*) is a singer, composer, and musician from Chicago. Known for her “near-cosmic voice” (*WIRED*) and “stratosphere of songwriting all her own” (*Consequence of Sound*), Walter has released two celebrated albums under her own name: *Right Noise* (BIG EGO Records 2023) and *I Am Alicia* (Sooper Records 2021). She’s performed in venues across the U.S. and Europe, most recently alongside artists Veronica Swift and Danielle Ponder. Her music has been featured in nationally syndicated TV shows, including the NBC hit drama, *This Is Us*, and *All Rise*. Walter rose to acclaim as bandleader of beloved Chicago-based art rock group, Oshwa.

## TOURING PRODUCTION TEAM

**MIKE USREY** (*Audio Engineer*) “That may be the most important thing to understand about humans. It is the unknown that defines our existence. We are constantly searching, not just for answers to our questions, but for new questions. We are explorers. We explore our lives day by day, and we explore the galaxy trying to expand the boundaries of our knowledge. And that is why I am here: not to conquer you with weapons or ideas, but to coexist and learn.” – Benjamin Lafayette Sisko

**KYLE VEGTER** (*Stage Manager, Board Operator, Original Score and Sound Design, Co-Artistic Director*) is a composer, producer, sound designer, and managing artistic eirector of Manual Cinema. As a composer of concert music he’s been commissioned by such groups as The Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s MusicNOW series, The Pacific Northwest Ballet, and TIGUE. His music and sound design for theater and film has been performed worldwide and commissioned by the *New York Times*, NPR’s *Invisibilia*, Topic (First Look Media), the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, StoryCorps, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Poetry Foundation, Hubbard Street Dance, the O, Miami Poetry Festival, and others. His past composer/ sound designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Lula Del Ray*, *Ada/ Ava*, *FJORDS*, *Mementos Mori*, *The End of TV*, and various other performance and video projects. He has been an artist in residence at High Concept Laboratories, and co-founded Chicago’s only contemporary classical music cassette label Parlour Tapes+.

## STAFF & CREATIVE TEAM

**LAURA COLBY** (*Creative Producer*) Recipient of NAPAMA's 2016 Liz Silverstein Award, Colby secures funds to create new work via Elsie Management (which she founded in 1995). In 2020, Colby served as creative producer in the creation and delivery of Manual Cinema's *A Christmas Carol*—a show that was live-streamed for 24 performances in December 2020, during the height of the pandemic closures. She served as managing Producer for LaTasha Barnes' *The Jazz Continuum* and Monique Martin's *Minty Fresh Circus*. Colby's podcast, *The Middle Woman*, a roadmap to managing the performing arts, is available on all podcast platforms. [elsiemanager.org](http://elsiemanager.org)

**DREW DIR** (*Concept, Director, Storyboards and Puppet Design, Co-Deviser, Co-Artistic Director*) is a writer, director, and puppet designer. Previously, he served as the resident dramaturg of Court Theatre and a lecturer in theater and performance studies at the University of Chicago. He holds a master's degree in Text and Performance Studies from King's College London and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

**GRIFFIN DISTASI** (*Costume Assistant*) (they/he) is an illustrator, maker, voice actor, and circus artist who has been spending the years since graduating University of Illinois with a degree in mechanical engineering working to marry engineering and art any way they can. Their work spans from poster design and comic illustration to rigging and puppet design, and they are thrilled to be working with Manual Cinema for the first time.

**DAVID GOODMAN-EDBERG** (*Lighting Design*) is a Chicago-based lighting designer working in the realms of dance, theatrical, and architectural design. He has designed and toured with such companies as Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Eisenhower Dance Detroit, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Water Street Dance Milwaukee, and lit works set on companies such as Chicago Repertory Ballet, Chicago Tap Theater, Joel Hall Dancers, and Thodos Dance Chicago. Theatrically, he has designed with puppet & object-oriented companies such as Rough House and Cabinet of Curiosity as well as with such companies as Adventure Stage, Akvavit Theatre, Factory Theater, The Gift Theater, Organic Theater, Red Tape Theater, The Syndicate, and Trap Door Theatre. Architecturally, he has lit pieces at the art space 6018|North and worked as an assistant/associate designer for projects at various Universal Studios theme parks (in Beijing, Hollywood, Orlando, and Osaka), Disney Shanghai, and several Margaritaville restaurants. [dglxdesign.com](http://dglxdesign.com)

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**BEN KAUFFMAN** (*Original Score and Sound Design, Co-Artistic Director*) is a composer, director, interactive media artist and co-artistic director of Manual Cinema. His film and interactive work has been shown at The Jay Pritzker Pavilion (Chicago), The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum (Chicago), and CUNY's Baruch College (NYC). He has lectured and given workshops at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York University, and Parsons the New School of Design. His past composer/ sound designer credits with Manual Cinema include *Ada/ Ava*, *The End of TV*, and the *New York Times* documentary *The Forger*. He holds a Master's degree from New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP).

**CAITLIN McLEOD** (*Puppet Build Assistant*) is a Chicago-based costume, scenic, and puppet designer. Recent design credits include: *Romeo and Zooliet* (St. Louis Shakespeare); *Fat Ham* (Virginia Stage Co); *The Little Mermaid* (Drury Lane); *Lavender Men* (About Face); *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Virginia Stage Co); *The Dream King* (Teatro Vista); *Trouble in Mind* (Timeline); *The Seagull* (Steppenwolf); and *Exquisite Corpse* (Rough House). Craftwork credits include The Goodman, The Kennedy Center, Lookingglass, and Northlight. Caitlin is a co-curator of NBS: Chicago's Puppet Slam, company member of Rough House, and project manager of the Chicago Puppet Studio. Instagram @CaitlinMcLeodDesign

**SULLY RATKE** (*Costume and Wig Design*) is a multi-disciplinary visual storytelling artist with an appetite for compelling language, mystery, whimsy, and spiritual philosophy.

# 2025-2026 HANCHER PARTNERS

## *Thank you.*

We thank our 2025–2026 Partners for their unwavering loyalty and crucial support. Their generosity enables us to bring the world’s finest performing artists to university students, staff, our community, and the region.

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*Upcoming co-productions  
between Hancher Auditorium and The Englert Theatre!*

## **GILLIAN WELCH & DAVID RAWLINGS** **WOODLAND TOUR**

**Wednesday, August 5, 2026 / 7:30 p.m.**  
**Hancher Auditorium**

***A vital duo imbues their acoustic sound with power, beauty, and depth of feeling.***

The rich and remarkable careers of Gillian Welch and David Rawlings have made them essential pillars of modern acoustic music. That widely acknowledged reality was reinforced when their most recent album, *Woodland*, won the 2025 Grammy Award for Best Folk Album. Welch describes the music of *Woodland* as “a swirl of contradictions, emptiness, fullness, joy, grief, destruction, permanence. Now.” The duo’s signature sound is tinged with lovely lyricism and emotional intensity.

## **TIG NOTARO** **OUT OF NOWHERE TOUR**

**Wednesday, September 9, 2026 / 7:00 p.m.**  
**Hancher Auditorium**

***One of Rolling Stone’s 50 best comedians of all time rolls into Hancher.***

In 2013, Tig Notaro had the best-selling comedy album of the year. *Live* was recorded just days after Notaro was diagnosed with breast cancer (now in remission)—and the success of that set could be said to have launched her career from her native Mississippi to the far reaches of space (IYKYK) and plenty of places in between. Through it all, her comedy has remained razor sharp—and her appearance at Hancher builds on four previous stops at The Englert.

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HANCHER'S 2025-2026 SEASON IS DEDICATED TO

# WALLY CHAPPELL



Above: Robert Joffrey (left) with Wally Chappell (right) backstage at the original Hancher Auditorium in 1986.

We recently lost a major member of our Hancher family. Former executive director and forever friend Wally Chappell peacefully passed away in April of 2025 in Iowa City at the age of 83. His incredible wife Karen was by his side. Wally was a leader at Hancher Auditorium and the University of Iowa, a force within the field of the arts, and an unmatched champion for culture in Iowa City. He was full of love for people, passion for experiencing the world (art, food, adventure!), and always advocating for his community.

Our giants cannot be replaced, but they can be remembered with awe, joy, and sadness all at once. We can carry forward the values and inspiration they left behind. Our Hancher family will always build upon the incredible legacy left for us by Wally. He is a hero in our minds and his spirit is forever in our hearts.

  
25/26