

THEATRE DIRECT

EXCEPTIONAL THEATRE FOR **YOUNG** PEOPLE

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Bicycle-powered dance theatre maps the route to happiness

Meagan O'Shea uses dance to de-code complex emotions, imagination to pose earth-saving ideas and inner strength to come to terms with her "inner-outcast".

17-Oct-2011, Toronto – Theatre Direct is proud to present *The Atomic Weight of Happiness* as part of its 2011-2012 35th anniversary season.

As a dancer born with 12 toes, Meagan O'Shea has always had to acknowledge her inner outcast. In *The Atomic Weight of Happiness*, she involves her audience in an hour-long experiment to arrest global warming; dissect, identify and measure the ingredients of each human emotion. She is an engaging dance artist who has co-created a unique, funny and quirky eco-inspired performance piece that weaves compelling dance and text.

This "eco-centric" show speaks directly to young and old about human emotion and ecological responsibility in our modern world. **Meagan O'Shea**, dance and multi-media artist, is the co-creator and performer in this one-woman tour-de force.

"This is one of the most energetic and creative performances I've ever seen. O'Shea gets the audience completely involved in the work. Uplifting, energetic and totally out of the ordinary, Meagan O'Shea creates a highly amusing and unconventional theatre/dance performance that is bound to intrigue." - **Theatre Mania**

After seeing the show, Artistic Director Lynda Hill invited the production to play for young people in grades 7 and up and for the general public. Over 500 students will have the opportunity to see the show and then exchange in dance, drama and writing workshops inspired by the show throughout the day.

"Meagan is an engaging and generous performer. The ideas behind this intriguing piece of dance theatre while completely universal, are of special interest to young people exploring the themes of identity and personal and collective responsibility. We are thrilled that Meagan and her creative team are a part of our season!" - **Lynda Hill, Artistic Director**

About the Show

A production of Stand Up Dance, *The Atomic Weight of Happiness* was originally produced at Hub 14 in May of 2011 and was nominated for Outstanding Dance Production at the 2011 Dora Awards. *The Atomic Weight of Happiness* is one of those rare theatrical experiences that transcend genre and discipline. Co-creator **Andrea Donaldson** along with acclaimed design team **Lindsay Anne Black** and **Michelle Ramsay**, recreate the show for young audiences and the general public.

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Meagan O'Shea / Stand Up Dance

Loved for her innovative solo work Meagan O'Shea jumps from dance, storytelling, clown, and comedy, often through improvisation, in her "whacky, whimsical, and wonderful" [Toronto Star] performances. *The Atomic Weight of Happiness* (created with and directed by Andrea Donaldson) received 2 Dora Mavor Moore Award Nominations (Outstanding Lighting and Outstanding Set Design) was named "Based Dance Piece" of 2010 by Ottawa XPress, premiered as a DanceWorks CoWorks and has been presented by Series Danse 10 in Ottawa, and Crimson Coast Dance in Nanaimo BC, and Performance Mix in New York City.

Meagan also creates group performances, bringing her sense of play and humour to audiences of all ages. Her popular outdoor contemporary dance/public art project, *dance like no one is watching*, has included more than 200 dancers and engaged over 30,000 audience members since its inception in 2007. She is also the co-artistic director of hub14 Art & Performance Works, an organization that supports dance and related arts through presentation, workshop and residency programs.

Meagan O'Shea is the artistic director of Stand Up Dance. Founded in 2007, performing in living rooms, theatres and public spaces, Stand Up Dance engages a broad audience. Meagan creates and performs intimate house concerts, dance-theatre solo shows and large scale ensemble work with her company and local community dancers. www.standupdance.com

About Theatre Direct

Theatre Direct is one of the country's leading professional theatres dedicated to young audiences. Now in its 35th year, the award-winning company's productions tour locally, nationally and internationally. In 2009, Theatre Direct opened the doors to two new creation/education and performance venues in the Wychwood Barns where it engages a diverse community of families and over 30 local schools. www.theatredirect.ca

THE ATOMIC WEIGHT OF HAPPINESS

A production of Stand Up Dance presented by Theatre Direct

Created by Meagan O'Shea & Andrea Donaldson

Performed by Meagan O'Shea

At Theatre Direct's Wychwood Theatre

76 Wychwood Ave. Toronto, ON

Tickets are \$10 - \$15

Public performance dates:

Saturday, November 19, 8:00 PM

Sunday, November 20, 2:00 PM

Saturday, November 26, 8:00 PM

Sunday, November 27, 2:00 PM

Public can book online via www.theatredirect.ca or via 416.537.4191

Media can book through Dan Daley via communications@theatredirect.on.ca