




"The choice is between Freedom & Fear."

-Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

In recent weeks, there's been an increasing amount of fear circulating our communities. Those who are meant to lead our nation have in fact destroyed the essence of its existence. As a whole, we entered this year more divided, distressed, and discomforted than ever. As pressures increase, people are leaning on their communities and loved ones for support. Mount Productions wants to reiterate our mission of safety in lieu of these horrific actions from our country's Administration. Your support means that we are persevering despite relentless attempts to push our communities aside and erase them from history. Keep loving, keep hoping, and keep creating.

 Read more about Mount's upcoming projects and events on their [website!](#)

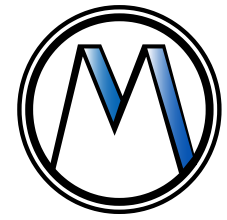
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Dynamic Duos: The Making of 'Twilight, After Dark'



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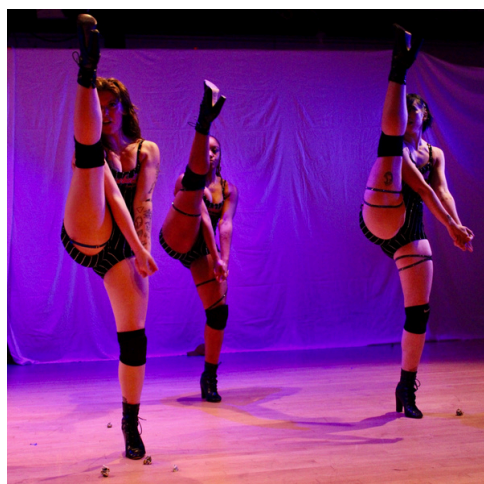
Meet Maddy McCarthy (she/they) and Virginia Vanlieshout (they/them); Two powerhouse friends that fit together like puzzle pieces. Both Maddy and Virginia are Chicago based performers, choreographers, and producers. Working freelance and with notable companies such as LoudBodies Dance and the Hail Marys, both dancers stay booked and blessed. Virginia is a resident company member of Queer Dance Freakout, produced by GenderFucked Productions, making them well versed in the process of building a show from the ground up. Meanwhile, Maddy's experience serving on the board of directors at LoudBodies Dance allows her to see the inner workings of the creative process in an intimate way. When an opportunity came knocking to audition for a parody burlesque show that would alter the course of their creative and personal futures, both Maddy and Virginia submitted their materials in record time. With no signs of rejection, the two kept watch for that "Congratulations" email like a hawk does a mouse. It was only when the cast list was posted online that they realized the truth. As Maddy cried in the car, Virginia was seething. It was the ashes of this missed opportunity that sparked inspiration for 'Twilight, After Dark.' As Maddy told Virginia, "This is no longer a hypothetical conversation. We are making a show. Starting now."



Photos: Julien Vasquez



If you've never heard of *Twilight*, let's give a brief synopsis. The novel's protagonist, a teenage girl named Bella Swan, meets an enticing stranger Edward Cullen. Edward lives with a family of Vampires who vow to protect Bella because of Edward's love for her. McCarthy, pictured left, plays Bella in this burlesque parody, taking a painfully boring character and honing in on the parts of her that would work well on stage. "I decided she was gonna be dumb as rocks." Maddy jokes. This decision was spurred by Jacque Brejay (Edward Cullen), who took Edward and transformed him into something entirely his own.



The casting of this project mostly fell into place. Virginia would play Alice, pictured bottom left, but when it came to casting the male lead, Virginia says, "We went through three Edwards before Jay." With intimacy so deeply woven into the medium, this casting would be more important than they realized.



Maddy, having known Jacque through other dance circles, thought he would fit perfectly. And with their missing puzzle piece found, '*Twilight, After Dark*' began to develop as its own entity rather than just a spin on popular source material. Virginia and Maddy reflected on the process as one of collaboration. While they were producing and choreographing their own pieces, they encouraged other dancers to do the same and share pieces as they developed. "It didn't feel right to teach someone how to strip their clothes off," McCarthy says, "I wanted them to have autonomy when it came to that." That freedom opened up doors for the entire cast, exploring improvisation, pole tricks, and prop-filled character features from dancers like Alix Schillaci (Charlie Swan).

Photos: Julien Vasquez & Sammy Flores

Photos: Bill Frederking



In the months leading up to their first round of performances, Maddy and Virginia had a lot of decisions to make. Chief among them was booking a venue. Links Hall on Western Ave was the most obvious choice, having been a pillar in the performing arts community since its founding in 1978. With arts funding being cut down to bare bones, Links Hall is at great risk of closing its doors for good. “We wanted to book Links Hall for this October, but they don’t know if they’ll be around at that point.” Maddy says solemnly. With organizations like Links Hall unable to plan for the future, it leaves artists like Virginia and Maddy scrambling for solutions. While the “where” is uncertain, one thing is clear: ‘Twilight, After Dark’ plans on returning for year three.

Virginia has big plans for how they want to shake up Alice this time around. “It’s rare something like this gets brought back for a third time.” They say. With many of their ensemble booking gigs consistently, they hope for little to no casting changes, but the future is never certain. Both producers understand the nature of freelance performing, and express pure gratitude for the individuals who made this show a reality. Creating something of your own is so rewarding that the success of the show becomes secondary. This dynamic duo shows no signs of slowing down and I’ll personally be sat front and center this October to witness it for myself. Watch the trailer for ‘Twilight, After Dark’ [HERE](#).



Photos: Andrew Weeks



Romance on Film

TOP 10

1. *When Harry Met Sally* Directed by Rob Reiner
2. *Big Fat Greek Wedding* Directed by Joel Zwick
3. *The Shape of Water* Directed by Guillermo del Toro
4. *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* Directed by Céline Sciamma,
5. *The Princess Bride* Directed by Rob Reiner
6. *The Big Sick* Directed by Michael Showalter
7. *One Day (2011)* Directed by Lone Scherfig
8. *Dirty Dancing* Directed by Emile Ardolino
9. *Crazy, Stupid Love* Directed by Glenn Ficarra & John Requa
10. *Palm Springs* Directed by Max Barbakow



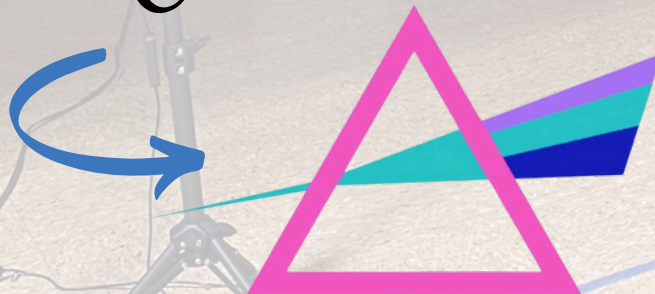


PROCESS AND PRODUCT: A COLLABORATION W/ GENDERFUCKED PRODUCTIONS

This past October, Mount Productions had the unique opportunity to film a promotional video in collaboration with GenderFucked Productions. Our goal? To highlight the voices behind the creations, and marry the process with the product through visual storytelling.

Edited by Columbia College graduate Ellie Moody, this short and high energy project was a stepping stone for both companies, and an insightful look into the ways that emerging film companies can explore the world of live performance in a digital age.

Click to watch!



**GENDER
FUCKED**
PRODUCTIONS



Support our Mission: Donate to our GoFundMe!

Starting a business requires significant time, effort, and passion. As a new company, we are funding creative projects independently. While some may view this as a substantial risk, it's a risk we are willing to take in order to fulfill our mission.

Adapting the film industry to reflect our changing world is a crucial part of the Mount Productions mission, and we are fully committed to it. Through programs like our Artist of the Month feature, we are building a network of multidisciplinary artists who value collaboration and discipline.

We invite you to take a chance on us, to support the telling of valuable stories just waiting to be shared by donating to our cause. The money raised from this GoFundMe will not only go towards licensing and start-up costs, but will also aid in our ability to reach the eyes and ears of future supporters and creatives.

LINK: <https://gofund.me/06647465>