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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*"Alex Kahn and Sophia Michahelles are artists who specialize in processions, parades, and puppetry... they use volunteers in the "puppet-raising" and performance of their works.*

*Involving the community, they said, makes the piece better." – The New York Times*

*"I have never seen so many people smiling in New York at the same time. This is unique. Absolutely unique."*

*– Audience member at Inuksuit, June 21, 2011, Morningside Park*

## The Arts Initiative and Miller Theatre at Columbia University School of the Arts

announce

### "MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS"

a new free neighborhood arts festival in Morningside Heights

**Daily puppet-making workshops September 22 – 28**

Miller Theatre at Columbia University (2960 Broadway)

**Parade on Saturday, September 29, 8 p.m.**

Morningside Park & Columbia University

*Meet in Morningside Park (117 St. & Morningside Ave.) at 7 p.m. to join the procession!*

Community and university partners unite with **Processional Arts Workshop (PAW)** to present this weeklong arts event, culminating in a lantern-lit parade of large architecture-inspired puppets

People of all ages are invited to help create the virtual skyline of this *"Imagined City"*

**From Melissa Smey, Executive Director, Arts Initiative and Miller Theatre at Columbia University:**

"I am excited that the Arts Initiative and Miller Theatre are joining forces this year to build upon the success and warm reception of *Inuksuit* and to continue our tradition of bringing the community into the campus and our campus into the community. MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS will showcase the neighborhood's rich and diverse imagination, and offer people of every age, background, and ability the chance to participate."

[Click here to view a video featuring 10 years of Processional Arts Workshop puppets!](#)

On the evening of **September 29, 2012**, a strange and luminous city will emerge amidst the streets of Morningside Heights. Winding its way around Morningside Park and through the heart of the Columbia University campus, **MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS**—a procession of illuminated mobile architecture—will be the culmination of a week of drop-in workshops at the university's Miller Theatre, during which community members from the campus and surrounding neighborhood will come together to create their vision of an imaginary metropolis.

Beginning on **Saturday, September 22** and running daily **through Friday, September 28**, the workshops—which are **free** and open to participants of all ages—will take place at **Miller Theatre** at Broadway and 116<sup>th</sup> Street. Participants are invited to paint, craft, sew, papier-mâché, and put their creative skills to use in building illuminated lanterns and fantastical city-inspired sculptures. On **September 22 and 23**, workshops will run from **noon to 6 p.m.** During the week, workshops will run from **2 to 8 p.m.** Those interested in taking part can visit [www.morningside-lights.com](http://www.morningside-lights.com)

for more information and to sign up to participate in the build, the procession, or both.

The procession will also include musicians of all backgrounds, invited to perform in a world premiere by composer [Nathan Davis](#). The score, like the parade itself, will be participatory in nature, with opportunities for musicians to perform as part of the piece or to submit recorded audio to be integrated into the work. In addition to live music, the piece will incorporate an electronic score **broadcast simultaneously on WKCR-FM** and tuned in on a variety of radios and smartphones carried by participants, who can also contribute to the score by recording and submitting sound clips via SoundCloud using a computer or smartphone. Visit [www.morningside-lights.com](http://www.morningside-lights.com) for details and a link to the MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS dropbox.

The artists from [Processional Arts Workshop \(PAW\)](#)—a New York-based partnership whose creations lead the city’s annual Halloween Parade—will be on hand to guide the building of the large-scale illuminated structures throughout the week, and they will help each participant realize his or her own individual vision of urban space—realistic or fantastical. Composer Nathan Davis will also be in residency, working closely with musicians interested in performing.

Inspired by the theme “The Imagined City,” MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS will explore concepts of urban planning and development in one of New York’s most diverse neighborhoods, at the intersection of Harlem, Morningside Heights, and the Upper West Side. When Olmsted and Vaux designed Morningside Park in 1873, they could not have foreseen the diversity of communities who would one day settle along its borders. Produced by two of Columbia University’s artistic powerhouses, MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS seeks to celebrate and further the continued revitalization of Morningside Park and its surroundings through a shared act of creation and public performance.

*MORNINGSIDE LIGHTS is co-produced by the Arts Initiative and Miller Theatre at Columbia University School of the Arts, in collaboration with Friends of Morningside Park. The procession will be part of the Friends of Morningside Park’s annual fall festival, “On Common Ground,” which takes place in the park on September 29 from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.*

## **BIOS:**

**Processional Arts Workshop (PAW)**, under the direction of Alex Kahn and Sophia Michahelles, creates site-specific parades, processions, and immersive theatre happenings worldwide. Inspired by diverse, global traditions of Carnavalesque street theater, large-scale puppetry, and ritual pageant, PAW uses processional art as means to build and sustain community spirit and awareness, designing original works for established public events and festivals, as well as seeding site-specific pageant traditions in communities where no such events may have existed before. Drawing on regional cultures, history, folklore, ethnicity, and current sociopolitical concerns, PAW engages local residents in every stage of production, empowering them to identify and express the narratives that uniquely define “local” in their own community, against the modern tide of global homogenization.

The resulting works bring together hundreds of volunteers – integrating pageant puppetry, mobile architecture, illumination and projection, masked costume, and sound. Though best known for their giant puppet performances that lead NY’s Village Halloween Parade each year, PAW has also created work for Socrates Sculpture Park, the High Line (for the PEN World Voices Festival), Trinidad Carnival, the EON Performance Festival in Istanbul, the Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre, and the opening ceremonies of the Walkway Over the Hudson. In addition PAW has worked with communities internationally to create processions, flashmobs, and mobile performances in locales ranging from the streets of Kiev to the South Bronx; from Italian Alps to rural Texas. Their work has been recognized with numerous awards, including a Fulbright Scholarship to Trinidad, a Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Artists and Communities Grant, a CEC Artslink Grant to Ukraine, a Dutchess County Arts Council Project Grant, and a Roman Witt Visiting Artist Fellowship at University of Michigan. Alex and Sophia have also lectured on PAW’s work and Carnavalesque art in general, at the New School, Bard College, Maine College of Art, University of the

West Indies, and Kiev's Les Kurbas Centre. A complete catalogue of PAW's projects can be found at [www.proccionalarts.org](http://www.proccionalarts.org).

### **Nathan Davis**

Inspired by natural processes, acoustic phenomena, and the abstraction of simple stories, Nathan Davis "writes music that deals deftly and poetically with timbre and sonority" (Steve Smith, *The New York Times*). Lincoln Center inaugurated its new Tully Scope Festival in 2011 with the premiere of Nathan's half-hour, site-specific work *Bells*, performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). He has also received commissions from the Calder String Quartet, Yarn/Wire, TimeTable Percussion, and the Ojai Festival (for Eighth Blackbird and an installation by sound-sculptor Trimpin), with performances at NYC's Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Symphony Space, Roulette, Le Poisson Rouge, across the U.S., and internationally at festivals in Holland, Germany, Finland, Poland, China, Russia, Canada, and Cuba. He has received awards from Meet The Composer, Copland Fund, Jerome Foundation, American Music Center, MATA, ASCAP, and ISCM. Recordings of his music include a monograph of his chamber works performed by ICE entitled *The Bright and Hollow Sky* (one of *Time Out NY's* top 10 classical albums of 2011), his electroacoustic percussion disc *Memory Spaces*, and flutist Claire Chase's debut *Aliento*. Also an active percussionist, Nathan is a core member of ICE and has recorded for Nonesuch, Tzadik, Mode, Kairos, New Albion, Bridge, BMOP, Karnatic Lab, and Cold Blue records. [www.nathandavis.com](http://www.nathandavis.com)

### **The Arts Initiative**

The Arts Initiative at Columbia University exists to make arts and culture a meaningful part of every Columbian's experience. Its diverse programs encourage students, faculty, and staff in all fields to generate, study, and engage the creative life of the campus, the city, and the wider world, connecting Columbians to the arts and to each other.

Founded by Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger in 2004, the Arts Initiative has created and continues to support a wide variety of programs to further its mission, from coordinating and subsidizing class trips to ballet and opera performances to producing on-campus lunchtime talks that connect students with working professionals in the arts. The Arts Initiative maintains partnerships with more than 100 cultural organizations throughout the city, from Harlem to Brooklyn.

### **Miller Theatre**

Miller Theatre at Columbia University is the leading presenter of new music in New York City and one of the most vital forces nationwide for innovative programming. In partnership with Columbia University School of the Arts, Miller is dedicated to producing and presenting unique events in dance, contemporary and early music, jazz, opera, and performance, and is committed to reinvigorating public enthusiasm in the arts nationwide by pioneering new approaches to programming. Founded in 1988 with funding from John Goelet, Brooke Astor, and the Kathryn Bache Miller Fund, Miller Theatre has built a reputation for attracting new and diverse audiences to the performing arts and expanding public knowledge of contemporary music.

In June 2011, Miller Theatre produced its first free outdoor performance in Morningside Park, presenting John Luther Adams' *Inuksuit* performed by 99 percussionists scattered throughout the park. Other community programs include an ongoing series of free early-evening *Pop-Up Concerts*, which the *New York Times* called "a wonderfully informal way to experience bracing contemporary music."

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For further information, press passes, and to arrange interviews,  
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