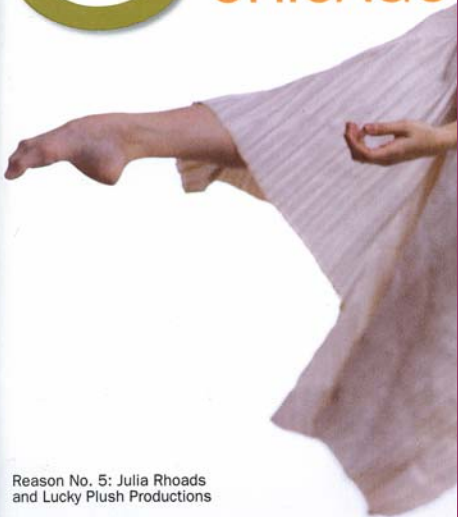


# Time Out

## Chicago

### 5 REASONS TO LOVE DANCE IN CHICAGO



Reason No. 5: Julia Rhoads and Lucky Plush Productions

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The where-to-go what-to-do weekly  
November 3-10, 2005 Issue No. 36 \$2.50

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#### THE SOX AREN'T THE ONLY TEAM SPARKING A SOUTH SIDE RENAISSANCE

Thirty-three-year-old **Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago**, Chicago's leading African dance company, broke ground last year on a new \$15 million arts complex at 47th Street and Greenwood Avenue. It's a major development that shifts the balance of the city's cultural traffic in wonderful new ways.

"Being South Siders, we always hear things like, 'I wish we had such-and-such an artist on the South Side,'" says Joan Gray, a founding member of Muntu and now its president. "People like dressing up and going downtown, but we'd like to have some of this cultural activity going on in our own community. We always joke that the media think Chicago stops at McCormick Place."

Besides providing a more convenient destination for South Side audiences, Muntu hopes the new center will draw artists of all performance genres from around the city, country and world. "Our dancers and musicians travel all over the world. They go to Cuba, Africa and Brazil to study, teach and perform. Someone will come back and say, 'Ooh, I ran into this wonderful Brazilian dancer.' We want to start bringing those people here."

Muntu's dream isn't a reality just yet; to date, it has raised \$10.5 million for the center. "We're really dreaming big, but we've had to be frugal," Gray says. "We keep saying we'd like this and that, and the architect has to remind us how much it will cost."

*Support Muntu by attending its holiday performance, Jaama Rekk [Peace Only], at the DuSable Museum on December 8, 10 and 11. For more info, call 773-602-1135 or visit [www.muntu.com](http://www.muntu.com).*

**Muntu Dance Theatre's Joan Gray at the site of the company's future home**

