

Elizabeth Streb's artistic creations, organized by George Segal Gallery interim Executive Director Dr. Ronald Sharps and the STREB team, will be on view at the George Segal Gallery and in the Alexander Kasser Theater Lobby at Montclair State University August 27 - September 29.

Anne Bogart is a two-time Obie-winning director; writer of *A Director Prepares* (of which *Backstage* writes, "Not since Peter Brook's *The Empty Space* have we had a text that so successfully addresses what theatre means today and what it has meant historically"), *And Then, You Act*, and *What's the Story*. She is the co-author, with Tina Landau, of the influential *The Viewpoints Book*, and co-founder, with Tadashi Suzuki, of the acclaimed SITI Company—as well as one of its three artistic directors.

Though Bogart and Streb had long been part of overlapping Downtown performance circles and been awestruck by each other's work, the idea of collaboration only recently started to take form, after Charles Mee brought them together to see if they might be interested in joining forces. Both artists, after all, have maintained keen focuses on—and developed groundbreaking approaches to—honing how bodies navigate the many challenges of performance, whether delivering complex texts while staying physically aware and hyper-specific and connected to an ensemble (as in the world of Bogart with SITI company) or leaping around pendulous cinderblocks and attempting flight (as in the world of STREB EXTREME ACTION). Both have placed immense emphasis on process and training—with Bogart's joining of The Viewpoints and the Suzuki method, now taught together in many acting schools nationwide, and Streb's PopAction technique, confronting falling and fear and posing unique challenges to dancers.

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As these two artists momentarily join their groundbreaking performance vocabularies, *FALLING & LOVING* sets the stage for Peak Performances' 2019-2020 season considering ideas of language,

translation, and exchange.

Says Bogart, "Elizabeth's courage and singular vision plus her great spirit as a person are what drew me to working with her. As the ensembles have come together, I think that the STREB dancers and Elizabeth have been surprised about how rooted and strong the actors are and how our Suzuki and Viewpoints have prepared them for this collaboration. The actors have been amazed at what the STREB dancers can do and are endlessly inspired by their courage, resiliency and generosity. They're learning how to adapt their own understandings of the theater to the phenomenon of physical impact and certain kinds of showmanship."

Streb adds, "I have been listening to and watching SITI's work for a long time, and I thoroughly relate our actions in the way they take no move and no sound for granted. It's how we at STREB must 'do the move in as much time as it takes you your body right now to do that move no more no less,' and then always go 'faster harder higher sooner,' leaving nothing unnecessary in the move. We drill down to discover the exact physical rhythm that holds the truth about action in some invisible secret caldron. And with this project with Anne, this is the first time I have come to the altar of believing that there is a place on earth for action and language sharing the same seconds."

Streb notes that the question of "how things fall" has always preoccupied her, and each material's cascade downward is the result of and a display of its particular physical nature. She says the Guck Machine (built by Hudson Scenic Studio) "tries to fill the 30 by 30 cubic foot square of ordinarily theatrically empty air with these falling substances...it's the opposite of what paint does on a canvass...it's ever in motion. And it makes a glorious mess—which I have discovered upsets people."

Bogart adds, "To me, the Guck machine is extremely metaphorical. As we live our lives, our lives get messy, we get covered with the guck of mistakes, mis-moves, attempts at loving, attempts at living, attempts of flourishing. We end up covered in guck, but how glorious!"

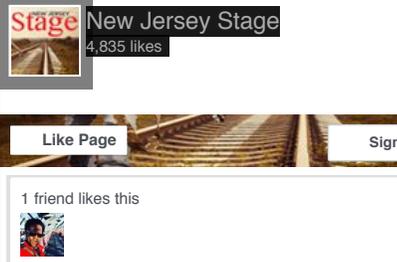
FALLING & LOVING is performed by SITI Company members Akiko Aizawa, Will Bond, Ellen Lauren, Leon Ingulsrud, Barney O'Hanlon, and Stephen Duff Webber, and, from STREB EXTREME ACTION Kairis Daniels, Luciany Germán, Chance Hill, Julia Karis, Brigitte Manga, and Fabio Tavares. The creative team includes James Schuette (costume design); Brian H Scott (lighting design); in scenic design: Elizabeth Streb, Matt McAdon (prototype), Peter Dean and Hudson Scenic Studio (design and engineering); David Van Tieghem (original music and sound design). The production staff includes Peter Dean (Director of Production), Aimee-Marie Holland (Stage Manager), Velani Dibba (Assistant Director), Fabio Tavares (STREB Assistant Director), Zaire Baptiste (Technical Director), and Michelle Preston (SITI Executive Director).

The Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University is located at 1 Normal Avenue in Montclair, New Jersey.

Image: "Gauntlet" (c) Tom Caravaglia



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