

Art Scene

Footlights and spotlights

Impulse begins

NEW THEATER AND A LOOK BACK AT DEATH

by Kim Leddy

This weekend, the Wexner Center begins this season's Theatrical Impulse series with the return of Anne Bogart's movement theater ensemble, SITI. The group will unveil the world premiere of *Alice's Adventures*, a production based on Lewis Carroll's original text of the classics *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice's Adventures Underground* and is informed by Carroll's personal obsessions.

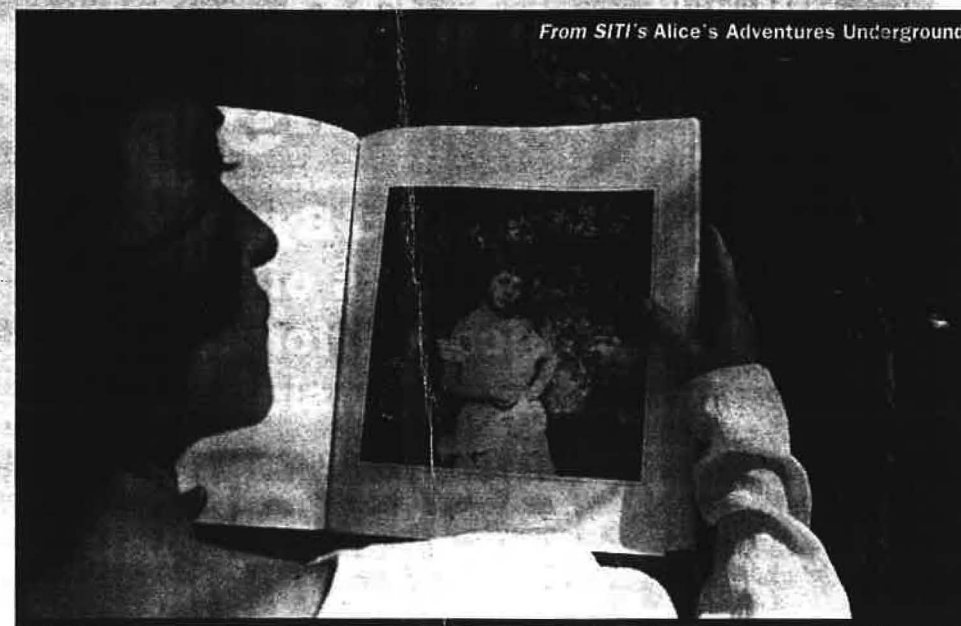
Founded in 1992 by Bogart and Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki, SITI focuses on three principles: the creation of new work, the training of young theater artists and a commitment to forming partnerships with international collaborators. On that list of collaborators, the Wexner Center features prominently, having showcased the troupe's acclaimed show *The Medium* during its first Theatrical Impulse series in 1996

and then offering commissioning support for the company's production *Bob* in early 1998.

With each trip to the Wexner Center, SITI's work with students demonstrates the uniqueness of the center's university setting. While *Alice's Adventures* plays the performance space for the general public to see, behind the scenes SITI members conducted a week-long teaching residency in Ohio State's Department of Theater and opened up several rehearsals to the inquiring minds of the students.

Working with the students is especially fitting for Bogart and SITI as the group is at the forefront of a new branch of theater education called Viewpoints. As American theater tries to disentangle itself from the dominance of The Method, this new model of acting training combines formal actor training—voice work, etc.—with kinetic education, learning about movement and space.

The Viewpoint's ideology will surely be in action this weekend with *Alice's Adventures*. A two-person show, featuring Sarah Hightower as Alice and Jefferson Mays as everybody else,



relates the famous tale but with a surface rippled by a gurgling underground current fed with issues of exploitation, power and obsession. As a man, Lewis Carroll was preoccupied with a worship of young girls, taking numerous photographs of them and celebrating their sublime Victorian purity. One, his

neighbor Alice Liddell, served as his inspiration, even after he had been banished from her presence by the young girl's worried mother.

Such a subtext should put anyone on notice that this is not your typical *Alice in Wonderland* production. A fitting

Continued on page 30

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COLUMBUS ALIVE • OCTOBER 15, 1998 • PAGE 13

ArtScene

Continued from page 13

opening for the Theatrical Impulse series, look for something much more exploratory, innovative and interesting in SITI's *Alice's Adventures*. The show hits the boards at the Wexner Center's Performance Space, November 5-8. For ticket info, call 292-2354.