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ARTS

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Exploring the darker side of "Alice's Adventures Underground."

SITI's 'ALICE'S ADVENTURES' to kick off 'Theatrical Impulses' series at Wexner

By Kelli Erasing
Lantern arts writer

"Once upon a time..." is a string of words that took us on childhood journeys to mythical places full of enchanting characters. Although most of us have outgrown these youthful tales of lore, they still hold a special place in our lives. This week, Anne Bogart, director and SITI organizer, will once again take us down that path to our own little "wonderland."

On Nov. 5-8, SITI (previously known as the Saratoga International Theatre Institute) will return to the Wexner Center with their new work, "Alice's Adventures," to open the center's "Theatrical Impulses" series. Based on Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures Underground," a precursor to what came to be "Alice in Wonderland." The work explores the darker undertones of the classic children's book. Commissioned by the Wexner Center, "Alice's Adventures" is its latest per-

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formance.

Bogart said she first became interested in interpreting the production after receiving books from Carroll's "Alice" series as gifts.

"I always wanted to do a fairy tale so that I could explore the power of storytelling," Bogart said.

Bogart and text collaborator Jocelyn Clark's exploration portrays the complicated relationship of Carroll and Alice Liddle, his inspiration for the Alice character. First published in 1865, "Alice in Wonderland" is full of emotional complexities and power struggles. Bogart describes this version as both "a love story and a dangerous game." Bogart's vision is performed by only two actors, Karen June Sanchez as

Alice and Jefferson Mays as all the other characters.

"This work has more focus, spontaneity and quiriness," Bogart said. "It's a theatrical tour de force."

It is this novel approach to theater that first brought Bogart's movement theater ensemble SITI and the Wexner Center together. Charles Helm, director of performing arts for the Wexner Center, had followed Bogart's career both with SITI and as an independent director. When the Wexner Center first introduced its theater season in 1996, Bogart's works immediately came to mind. Since the Wexner Center did not have a resident theater company, Helm welcomed the opportunity to have Bogart bring

her work, "The Medium" to Columbus for its debut.

The overwhelming response for "The Medium" led to the ongoing collaboration between Bogart and the Wexner Center, which has since commissioned "Bob" and now "Alice's Adventures." Helm said that the Wexner Center will continue to bring Bogart's productions to Columbus in the future.

"It's unusual to bring someone back for consecutive seasons," Helm said, "but there is so much to be gained from having a relationship with Anne."

The mutual benefits of such a relationship can be seen when Anne Bogart and SITI present "Alice's Adventures" in the Wexner Center's Performance Space on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$14 for Wexner Center members and \$16 for the general public and can be purchased at the Wexner Center or through Ticketmaster.