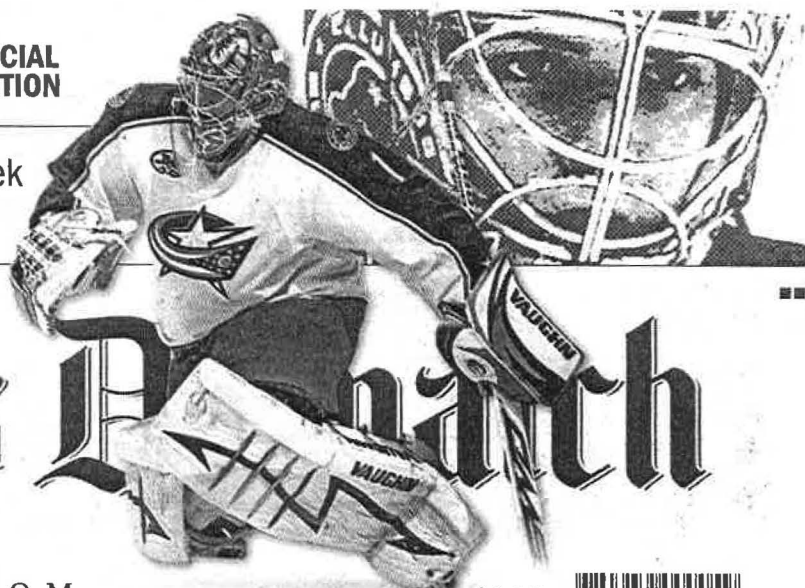




OUT! Indians fire manager Eric Wedge | **c1**



IN! Browns will start Derek Anderson at QB | **c1**



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VETERAN TROUPE'S NEW EFFORT REALLY IS BRAIN SCIENCE

BY MICHAEL GROSSBERG | THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Inspired by recent breakthroughs in neuroscience, the SITI Company has returned to the Wexner Center for the Arts to challenge audiences anew.

Who Do You Think You Are, which opened last night and continues through Sunday, explores how brain science might enhance social interaction.

"The science tells us more about what it means to be human," director Anne Bogart said. "What we find from the discoveries being made is that it changes your perceptions of what life is, of what relationships are."

Akiko Aizawa, J. Ed Araiza, Will Bond, Leon Ingulsrud, Ellen Lauren and Barney O'Hanlon make up the cast for the 80-minute one-act.

The performers also explore the nature of memory, the difference between the brain and the mind, and whether recent advances in scientific understanding of the brain might help boost social harmony.

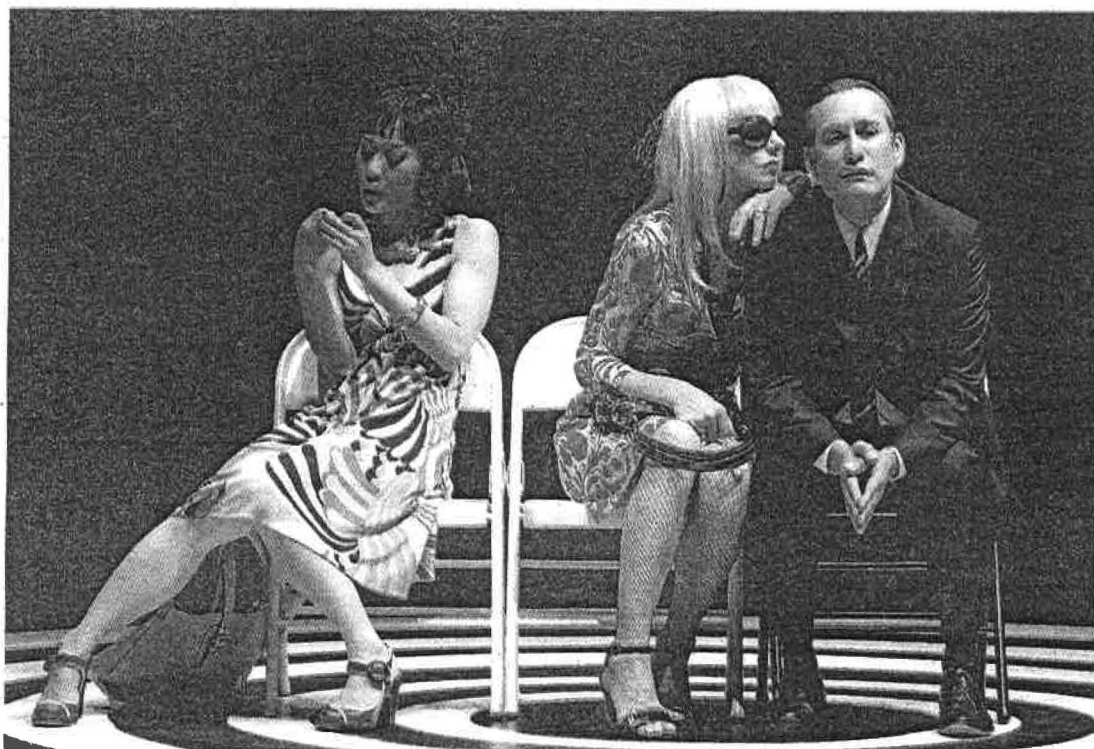
"I wanted to make a play that at its heart asks: Can the study of neuroscience actually not only make someone a better human being but stop wars?" Bogart said.

The answer, she suggests, is a cautiously optimistic yes.

For example, around 1990, scientists identified a physical foundation in the brain for empathy through "mirror neurons," which help people understand others.

One person mirroring another, though, can work both ways.

"If I pushed you and you pushed me back and I pushed you back, each time we would push harder — even if we tried to push evenly," Bogart said. "It's



MICHAEL BROSILOW

Members of the SITI Company cast, from left: Akiko Aizawa, Ellen Lauren and J. Ed Araiza

at a glance

Who Do You Think You Are

WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS
PERFORMANCE SPACE,
1871 N. HIGH ST. (614-292-
3535, WWW.WEXARTS.ORG)

SHOWTIMES » 8 tonight and
Friday night, 2 and 8 p.m.
Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday

TICKETS » \$24, or \$20 for
members and BalletMet
Columbus subscribers, \$10 for
students

somehow in our nature, and eventually a fight will break out.

"But if you understood that your tendency was to push harder, as scientists have demonstrated, could you stop the violence?"

The SITI troupe of New York became fascinated with brain science partly because of the implications for theater.

"I think mirror neurons have a lot to do with theater," Bogart said. "They tell us something about what actors do, what the audience does and what their relationship is."

The Wexner Center has brought in Bogart and the SITI company more often for resi-

dencies and world premieres than any other artists.

Among SITI shows staged there since 1996: *The Medium* (about critic Marshall McLuhan), *BOB* (about director Robert Wilson), *Alice's Adventures* (from *Alice in Wonderland*), *Cabin Pressure* (about the chemistry of live theater) and *Room* (about novelist Virginia Woolf). To balance impressions about the serious-sounding subject of *Who Do You Think You Are*, the Wexner is advertising with a lighthearted disclaimer:

Not to worry: There's no audi-

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BRAIN

FROM PAGE 11

ence participation involving electrodes, and Ph.D.s aren't a prerequisite for grasping the dramatic situations that SITI puts into play onstage.

Alan Woods, an OSU theater professor who has seen many SITI productions, thinks the company has broadened the artistic possibilities of theater.

"Bogart's approach is

movement-based," Wood said, "and that makes it far more physical and vital than a lot of conventional realistic theater."

SITI's touring piece was co-commissioned by the Wexner Center and Arizona State University, where it premiered last year.

"I've been surprised by the tremendous level of enthusiasm and laughter," Bogart said — "which is not what our shows always get."

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