

Bogart bounces back big-time

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Anne Bogart is looking good these days.

The 47-year-old theater director says she feels good, too. Healthy. Optimistic, looking to the future.

But she also admits that almost a decade after it ended, she's not yet over her one tumultuous year as artistic director of the Trinity Repertory Company.

Seated in a tiny office at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Bogart says that since she left abruptly during a dispute with Trinity's board of directors in 1990, she hasn't been back to the state where she thought she'd found a theatrical home.

"I feel that if I crossed the border, there'd be a police car telling me to turn around," she said with a rueful smile.

In 1989, Bogart was brought in by Trinity's board to

follow the legendary Adrian Hall at the theater. The idea was that Bogart, known for her revolutionary productions, would rekindle the excitement and glory of Hall's early and middle years at the theater.

"But as we know," Bogart says, "it didn't work out."

Indeed, Trinity used up its million-dollar reserve fund and endowment in her year in charge, and the theater is only now pulling itself out of the financial depths.

Bogart has rebounded, too. After breaking up with director Tina Landau, her partner while she was in Providence, she has been with lighting designer Mimi Jordan Sherin for the last three years. Professionally, Bogart heads the graduate program in theater directing at Columbia University in New York and has her own theater troupe, the SITI (pronounced "city") Company.

"I've figured out how to do it right, for me," she says of running a theater company.

That includes *not* owning a building ("No real estate") but having "complete ownership" of the company itself.

The SITI Company has 11 actors and a budget of \$650,000 a year, mostly raised from foundation and government sources. The company plays art centers around the world. After an appearance in Louisville, SITI will tour to Paris, Prague, Budapest and Amsterdam.

Bogart and the SITI actors collaborated on *Cabin Pressure*, her well-received show at the Humana Festival in Louisville, which explored the relationship between audiences and actors.

That needed to be done, Bogart says, because "there's a crisis in the theater. We keep comparing it to television." The theater, she said, is — must be — something very different.

Cabin Pressure (see accompanying review) is perhaps the best of Bogart. Verging on a cartoony feel, with actors often playing larger than life as in many European productions, *Cabin Pressure* has a serious underlying idea explored with speed and wit on stage.

Bogart will have another show next year at the Louisville festival and has guest-directed around the country, but no longer wants to run a large mainstream company like the Actors Theatre.

"I'm building my own thing," she says. "I'm very optimistic."

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ANNE BOGART



RICHARD C. TRIGG

A NEW LIFE IN NEW YORK: Anne Bogart says she's never been back to Rhode Island since her abrupt departure from Trinity Rep.