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**PEAK PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
FALLING & LOVING, THE FIRST-EVER COLLABORATION BETWEEN
ANNE BOGART AND ELIZABETH STREB, SEPTEMBER 24-29**

In *FALLING & LOVING*, Peak Performances Brings Together Two Contemporary Avant-Garde Visionaries and Their Ensembles, SITI Company and STREB EXTREME ACTION, in a Kinetic Adaptation of Works by Charles Mee

Peak Performances Presents

***FALLING & LOVING* (World Premiere)**

Co-directed by Anne Bogart and Elizabeth Streb

Adapted from the Plays of Charles Mee

Created and Performed by SITI Company and STREB EXTREME ACTION

Performances: September 24-29, 2019

The Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University (1 Normal Ave., Montclair, NJ)

\$30; FREE for Montclair State undergraduates with ID

www.peakperfs.org or 973.655.5112

Peak Performances begins its 2019-2020 season with the joining of two revolutionaries of avant-garde performance, influential theater and opera director **Anne Bogart** and the pioneering choreographer **Elizabeth Streb**, in their first-ever collaboration, *FALLING & LOVING* (September 24-29). Co-produced by **Peak Performances** and created and performed by **SITI Company** (co-founded and co-artistic directed by Bogart) and **STREB EXTREME ACTION** (founded and artistic directed by Streb), *FALLING & LOVING* kinetically interprets writing by playwright and SITI member **Charles Mee**. Six actors from SITI Company and six dancers from STREB EXTREME ACTION share the stage with a “Guck Machine,” a contraption conceived by Streb featuring rings and buckets armed to continually release a variety of materials in cascades, performing what Streb describes as a “symphony of falling.” Streb explores falling—in such varied forms—as Bogart uses Mee’s Love Sonnets and plays as a springboard for accessing multiform expressions of loving. Artists, ideas, and objects collide in this radical new production.

Elizabeth Streb has, across her career, explored the vast potentials of the human body under and against the force of gravity; in 1985, she founded STREB EXTREME ACTION and, in 2003, opened SLAM (Streb Lab for Action Mechanics), a hub for artistic experimentation and exchange centered around the powerful force of action. Drawing on dance, theatre, and visual art, Elizabeth Streb creates an aesthetic of risk, velocity, and shock using the elements of gravity, centrifugal force, and balance/counterbalance. Manipulating these tools,

Streb dares to dive into acrobatics in performances such as *FORCES* and *SEA* (Singular Extreme Actions), defy physics in works such as *Revolution* and *AIR*, and explode dance in works such as *Human Fountain*, *Gizmo*, and *Passage*. Such work recalls the energy vested in investigations of light, space, and time by visual art movements like Fauvism, Cubism, and Futurism. In conjunction with performances, the exhibit ***Extreme: The Pop Action Performance Art of Elizabeth Streb***, displaying notebooks, videos, photographs, drawings, and equipment related to 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.

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).

Performance Schedule and Ticketing

Performances of *FALLING & LOVING* will take place Tuesday, September 24-Friday, September 27 at 7:30pm, Saturday, September 28 at 8:00pm, and Sunday, September 29 at 3:00pm at the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University (1 Normal Ave, Montclair, NJ). Immediately after the Saturday, September 28 performance, the audience is invited to join Anne Bogart, Elizabeth Streb, and Charles Mee to share reflections and responses.

Tickets are affordably priced at \$30, and can be purchased at www.peakperfs.org or 973.655.5112. Tickets are always free for Montclair State students.

The exhibit *Extreme: The Pop Action Performance Art of Elizabeth Streb* will be on view at the Segal Gallery August 27 through September 29. For more information visit www.montclair.edu/galleries

Standard Gallery hours are 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and 12:30 PM – 7:30 PM on Thursdays (closed on Sundays and Mondays).

Extended Gallery hours throughout the course of the performances:

Tuesday, September 24 (11:00 AM – 7:30 PM)
Wednesday, September 25 (11:00 AM – 7:30 PM)
Thursday, September 26 (12:30 PM – 7:30 PM)
Friday, September 27 (11:00 AM – 7:30 PM)
Saturday, September 28 (11:00 AM – 8:00 PM)
Sunday, September 29 (11:00 AM – 6:00 PM)

Credits

FALLING & LOVING was made possible by with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New England Foundation for the Arts - National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Harkness Foundation for Dance, NYSCA, NDP, and Mertz Gilmore.

Early development occurred during SITI Work/Space, SITI Company’s in-house residency program for new play development, which was supported by the National Endowment of the Arts, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

About Anne Bogart (Director)

Anne Bogart is one of the three Co-Artistic Directors of the SITI Company, which she founded with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki in 1992. She is a Professor at Columbia University where she runs the Graduate Directing Program. Works with SITI include *The Bacchae*, *Chess Match No. 5*; *Lost in the Stars*; *Persians*; *Steel Hammer*; *A Rite*; *Café Variations*; *Trojan Women (After Euripides)*; *American Document*; *Antigone*; *Under Construction*; *Freshwater*; *Who Do You Think You Are*; *Radio Macbeth*; *Hotel Cassiopeia*; *Death and the Ploughman*; *La Dispute*; *Score*; *bobrauschenbergamerica*; *Room*; *War of the Worlds—the Radio Play*; *Cabin Pressure*; *Alice's Adventures*; *Culture of Desire*; *Bob*; *Going, Going, Gone*; *Small Lives/Big Dreams*; *The Medium*; *Noel Coward's Hay Fever* and *Private Lives*; August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*; and Charles Mee's *Orestes*. Recent operas include: *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Handel's Alcina*, Dvorak's *Dimitrij* Verdi's *Macbeth*, Bellini's *Norma* and Bizet's *Carmen*. She is the author of five books: *A Director Prepares*; *The Viewpoints Book*; *And Then, You Act*; *Conversations with Anne*, and *What's the Story*.

About Elizabeth Streb (Director)

Elizabeth Streb has dived through glass at The Joyce Theater, walked down London's City Hall for the 2012 London Olympics, dumped a ton of dirt on her head for the Whitney Museum's Groundbreaking, and set herself on fire, among many other feats of extreme action. She founded the STREB EXTREME ACTION COMPANY in 1985 and established SLAM (STREB Lab for Action Mechanics) in Brooklyn, NY in 2003. Streb holds a MA in Humanities and Social Thought from New York University, a BS in Modern Dance from SUNY Brockport, and three honorary doctorates SUNY Brockport, Rhode Island College, and Otis College of Art and Design and has received numerous honors including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation 'Genius' Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship and a Doris Duke Artist Award. A board member of the Jerome Foundation, Streb has been a featured speaker at TED2018: The Age of Amazement. Streb is the subject of two documentaries: *Born to Fly*, directed by Catherine Gund (Aubin Pictures), which premiered at the SXSW Festival and was featured at the Film Forum in NYC and *OXD*, directed by Craig Lowy, which premiered at Doc NYC. In 2010, Feminist Press published her book, *STREB: How to Become an Extreme Action Hero*.

About Charles Mee (Playwright)

Charles Mee (Playwright) Chuck Mee grew up in Illinois, headed east and graduated from Harvard College. He wrote *Orestes 2.0*, the first play that was done by the SITI Company when it was first formed, and has also written *bobrauschenbergamerica*, *Hotel Cassiopeia*, *Under Construction* and *American Document* for SITI. He has also written *Vienna: Lusthaus*, *A Perfect Wedding*, and a number of other plays in addition to his work inspired by Greek plays: *Big Love*, *True Love*, *Trojan Women A Love Story* and others. Among other awards, he is the recipient of the lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His complete works are available on the internet at charlesmee.org. His work is made possible by the support of Jeanne Donovan Fisher and Richard B. Fisher.

About SITI Company

Founded in 1992 by Anne Bogart, Tadashi Suzuki, and a group of likeminded artists, SITI Company began as an agreement to redefine and revitalize contemporary theater in the United States through an emphasis on international cultural exchange, training and collaboration. Originally envisioned as a summer institute in Saratoga Springs, New York, SITI expanded to encompass a year-round Season inclusive of touring, the creation of new work and running a biennial Conservatory program for 9 months of the year to cultivate the next generation of independent theater artists. Based in New York City, SITI continues to operate its international training program during its summer season in Saratoga. The Company is known nationally and internationally as a top-level artistic collective that generates groundbreaking theater.

In addition to Co-Artistic Directors Anne Bogart, Leon Ingulsrud and Ellen Lauren, SITI Company is comprised of eight actors, four designers, a stage manager, and a playwright. The company represents a change

in thinking about the relationships between artists and institutions. Offering performances from their varied repertoire, and workshops in the unique theater training they champion, SITI Company is dedicated to establishing long lasting relationships with theater presenters and their communities around the world.

About STREB EXTREME ACTION

For more than three decades, STREB has performed in theaters large and small and served as artists-in-residence at the world's top art museums. At the same time, STREB has taken its work into the streets and sports stadiums: at Grand Central Station; in front of the Cyclone roller coaster at Coney Island's fairground; under the arches of the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage; as part of V-Day at Madison Square Garden; during halftime at a Seattle Sonics basketball game; at the Minneapolis Metrodome; on the mall outside the Smithsonian Institution and descending the façade of Bergdorf Goodman. The company's extensive touring calendar has included presentations at the Lincoln Center Festival, the Fall for Dance Festival at the Delacorte Theater, the Wolf Trap Foundation, the Walker Art Center, Los Angeles MOCA, the Wexner Center, Spoleto USA, the River-to-River Festival, the Barbican Center, the Theatre de la Ville, at both the Brisbane and Melbourne Festivals and in Chile, Singapore and Taiwan.

In January 2003, STREB moved into a vacant former loading facility and transformed 51 North 1st Street into the STREB LAB FOR ACTION MECHANICS (SLAM). In 2007, STREB purchased SLAM with unprecedented support for building acquisition from the New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs, City Council, Mayor's Office and Brooklyn Borough President's Office ensuring its future as the home of STREB EXTREME ACTION, the STREB PopAction School and the Espana/STREB Trapeze Academy. As a performance and presenting venue and an open access education and rehearsal space, SLAM creates community through interaction and experimentation.

About Peak Performances

Under the artistic direction of ACP's Executive Director, Jedediah Wheeler, PEAK Performances has achieved international recognition for presenting and producing innovative works in dance, music theater and opera. With a celebrated emphasis on interdisciplinary work, PEAK hosted 75 World and American Premieres since 2005. Notable among the artists whose work has been seen on the Alexander Kasser Theater stage are Richard Alston, David Rousseve, Bill T Jones, Camille A. Brown, Wayne MacGregor, Robyn Orlin, Romeo Castelucci, Crystal Pite, Liz Gerring, Faye Driscoll, Angelica Liddell, Jan Fabre, Emma Dante and Pam Tanowitz.

Robert Wilson conceived and directed *The Life of Clementine Hunter* for the Kasser stage and has also directed Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* with himself in the title role. Writer, director, designer and choreographer David Gordon revived his production of Robert Brustein's seminal musical, *Schlemiel the First*. PEAK commissions work notably *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek, *Spinning* by Maya Beiser, *Julia Wolfe* and *Laurie Olinder, Leonora and Alejandro* by Stacy Klein for Double Edge Theater and *My Coma Dreams* by Fred Hersch. Companies making their American debuts include *Gandini Juggling* (UK), *Via Katlehong* (South Africa), *Inbal Oshman* (Israel), *Charlotte Vincent* (UK) and *Raphaelle Boitel* (France). By bringing together artists of uncommon imagination with diverse audiences of adventuresome spirit, PEAK promotes a greater appreciation of human possibility.

Peak Performances is a program of the Office of Arts + Cultural Programming at Montclair State University and has been honored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts with an Arts Citation of Excellence and Designation of Major Impact. Programs in this season are made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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