



ZVIDANCE *The Art of Fugue*, captured at the Alexander Kasser Theater, January 2021. Photo: Maria Baranova

Innovation Forward

In October 2020, PEAK Performances acted on the belief that there's no need for a stage that brims with potential to sit unused or the creative energy of artists to remain static just because audiences cannot gather around them. The organization has, since then, invited genre-bending visionaries to make complete productions in its state-of-the-art home, the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University—with no live audiences. With rigorous safety precautions in place amidst the pandemic, PEAK has given artists creative freedom, work, space, and full performance fees in a moment that has desolated the community, boxed imaginations into Zoom screens, and stripped so many of their livelihoods.

Keeping the safety of artists, administrators, and technicians firmly in mind, PEAK's world-class production staff has zoned the Kasser so that each group is granted access to the given area they need while ultimately collaborating under one roof—and, importantly, in one non-virtual space. The staff's counterparts in **Broadcast and Media Operations at MSU's School of Communication & Media** began capturing PEAK's performances last season, before the shutdown; works from **Anne Bogart** and **Elizabeth Streb**, **Martha Graham Dance Company**, **Gandini Juggling & Alexander Whitney**, **Grand Band**, and **Richard Alston Dance Company** can now be viewed [on-demand](#). After artful editing and post-production, these exhilarating performances staged at the Kasser reach audiences—free of charge, in high definition, for viewing on phones, tablets, and TVs—via **PEAK HD**.

Kicking off a new slate of performances, in October 2020, PEAK welcomed back Stacy Klein and Double Edge Theatre to stage *Leonora: La Maga y la Maestra*, a new iteration of a work PEAK presented to acclaim in 2018. Full productions continue to fill the Kasser, with recent and upcoming captures including new works by Zvi Gotheiner, David Gordon, Bill T. Jones, Elevator Repair Service, and Heidi Latsky.

And as PEAK HD develops, PEAK Performances continues to make new discoveries and hone its approach, for instance implementing Steadicams that complement multiple previously installed 4K robotic video cameras to enhance the immediacy of performances. Well after theaters reopen to audiences, PEAK works will continue to be captured in breathtaking, technically complex video for audiences around the world to enjoy.

Being part of the hybrid arts presenting/higher education world has uniquely positioned PEAK to be able to continue in this full, fruitful manner: the university realizes the importance of keeping artists active, of granting them the time and resources to populate the Kasser stage with their challenging, provocative, unforgettable visions. In a testament to the indispensable work artists do at PEAK, the university recognizes that ticket sales are not part of the current plan; they offer support, regardless. As PEAK continues to offer artists ways to keep creating—in a moment when most performers and technicians haven't set foot onstage for over eight months—the organization is simultaneously making an inventory of experiences that students can have for years, and that professors across a variety of fields can utilize in their teachings.