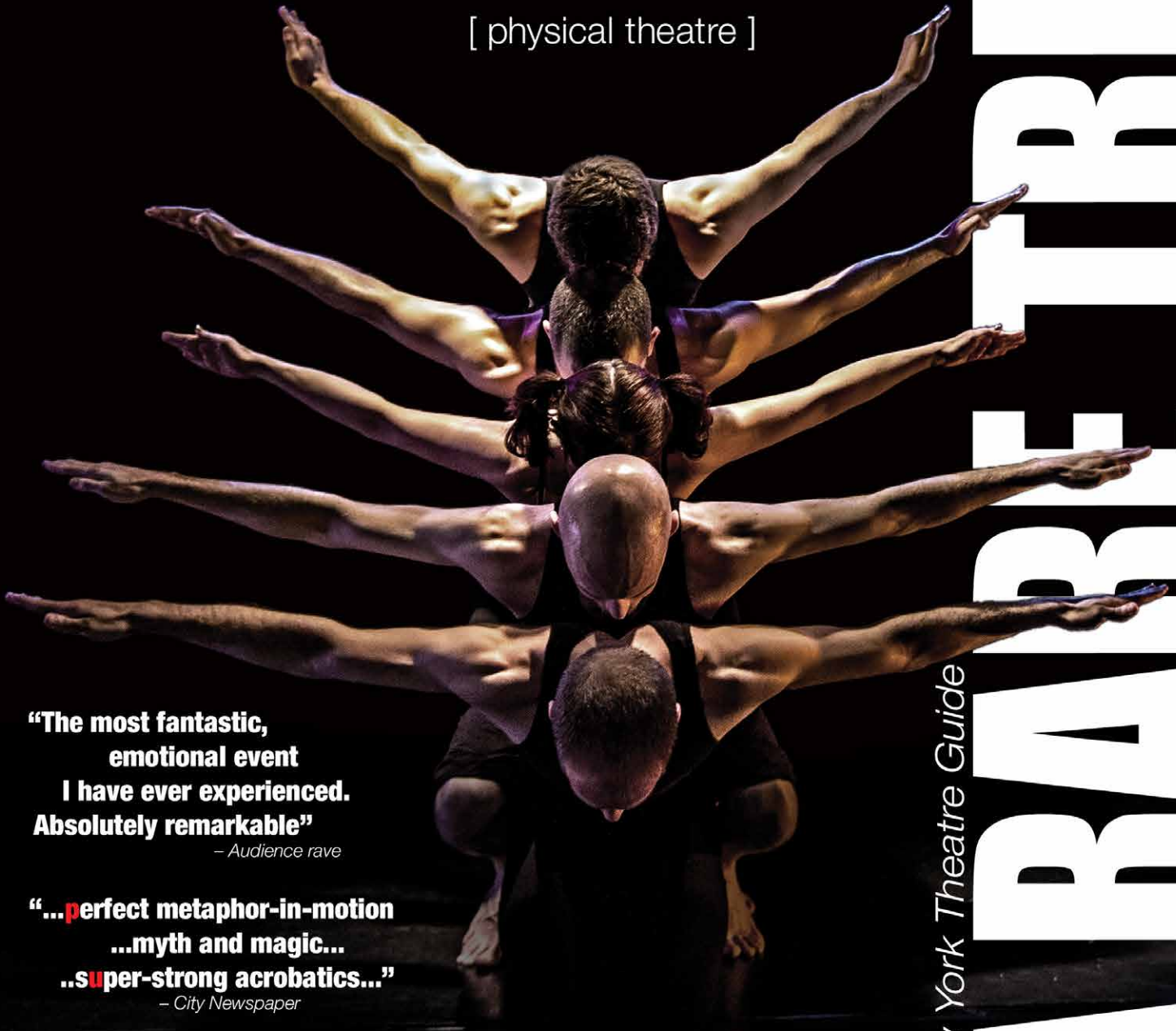


**pu
sh.**

[physical theatre]



**“The most fantastic,
emotional event
I have ever experienced.
Absolutely remarkable”**
– Audience rave

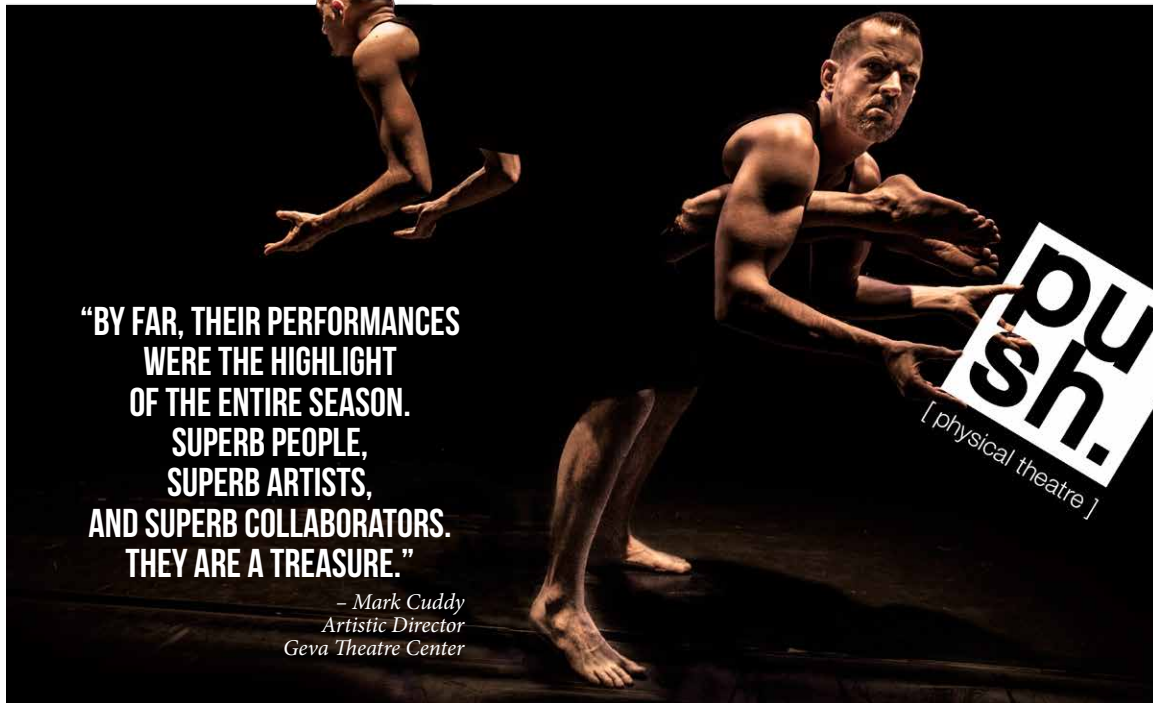
**“...perfect metaphor-in-motion
...myth and magic...
..super-strong acrobatics...”**
– City Newspaper

“...emphas^{is} on the awe.”
– New York Theatre Guide

“It was amazing...the star of the night!”
– Rozonda “Chilli” Thomas, TLC

– New York Theatre Guide

“A BAREBREATH”



**“BY FAR, THEIR PERFORMANCES
WERE THE HIGHLIGHT
OF THE ENTIRE SEASON.
SUPERB PEOPLE,
SUPERB ARTISTS,
AND SUPERB COLLABORATORS.
THEY ARE A TREASURE.”**

*– Mark Cuddy
Artistic Director
Geva Theatre Center*

POWERFUL. PROVOKING. PUSH.



[physical theatre]

It's untheatre.

Intense athleticism, gravity-defying acrobatics, and soulful artistry – award-winning PUSH Physical Theatre, the genre-defining masters of physical storytelling, express what it means to be human: the joy and sorrow, humor and tragedy, the big questions and the simple things.

PUSH's repeated sold-out performances have led to creative collaborations with the National Institute for the Deaf and Rochester Institute of Technology, during which PUSH created “Red Ball,” using iPad technology. Choreography for the Pulitzer-nominated cantata “Comala” resulted in a Mexico and US tour. TruTV's national series, *Fake Off*, in which PUSH became the season finalist, elicited this from judge and *Glee* star Harry Shum Jr.: “You guys are superhuman!”

Unparalleled performers bring the narratives of our lives to the stage with hope and optimism: The strength of the human soul expressed by the power of the human body.

Ready?

PUSH Physical Theatre began with a belief that each performer should bring his or her unique life experiences to the stage. PUSH performers they incorporate any movement that speaks to the audience. If the perfect method doesn't exist, they invent it.

PUSH PERFORMER BIOS

DARREN & HEATHER STEVENSON (*founding artistic directors/PUSHers*) Born and raised in England, Darren met Heather, a New Jersey native, during their mutual studies at The Center in St. Louis. Their shared love of physical theatre, dance and acrobatics planted the seeds for their relationship and eventual collaboration.

In addition to touring and collaborating, Darren and Heather created the Studio School of the Arts in Atlanta, Georgia. They relocated to Rochester, NY with their two children in 2000 and founded PUSH Physical Theatre, growing it into an international touring company.

In 2001, they created PUSH Pins, a children's educational program, which evolved into a summer day camp and added a Teen Mentorship Project – both of which Heather directs. In addition, the couple runs a Summer Intensive for adults that attracts students from all over the world.

The Stevensons received the 2009 Performing Artist of the Year Award from the Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, as well as the Anton Germano Dance Award.

A 2012 grant from the Farash Foundation enabled collaboration with RIT's National Institute for the Deaf during which PUSH created "Red Ball," using iPad technology.

In 2013 in Mexico, PUSH premiered its choreography for the Pulitzer nominated opera *Comala*, an opera by composer Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon.

In 2014, PUSH Physical Theatre became a season finalist in truTV's debut season of *Fake Off*.

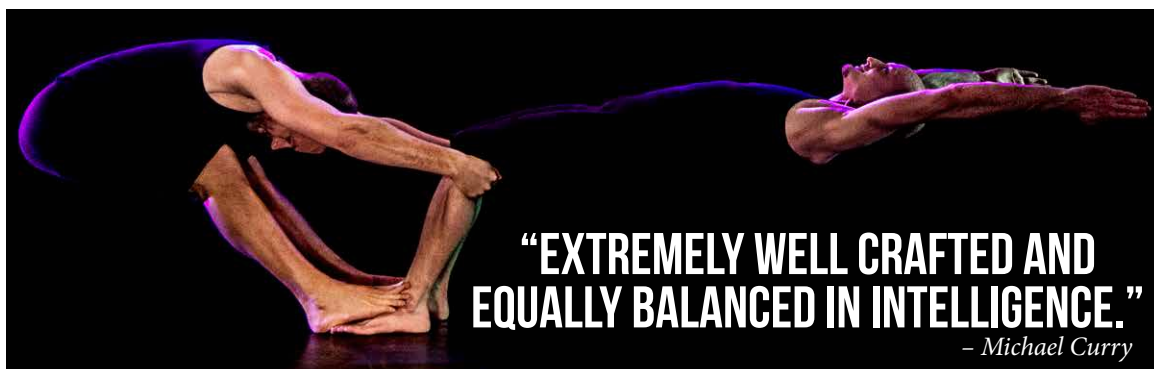
TONI ELDERKIN (*Lighting Designer/Technical Director*) is a multi-media artist and lighting designer who has worked in visual and performing arts for more than 25 years. She earned her B.S. Degree in Painting and Illustration from Nazareth College of Rochester, NY, and found lighting to be another beautiful form of expression. Her eclectic past includes Gallery Manager/

Technical Director at the former Pyramid Arts Center in Rochester and Resident Lighting Designer/Technical Director at Dance Theater Workshop in NYC. She has had the pleasure of working closely with Blue Man Group and Urban Bush Women, and spent several years touring nationally and internationally with Dance Brazil as their Lighting Designer/Technical Director. She first designed for PUSH while working at Geva Theater Center in 2008. She's worked with them many times since, and is thrilled to be a part of their magical adventure.

AVI PRYNTZ-NADWORN (*PUSHer*) grew up in Rochester, NY, where he was involved with acting, juggling, and gymnastics. After moving to Canada to study circus at École De Cirque de Québec, he continued his education at Scuola di Circo Flic in Turin, Italy. Avi has performed all over America and Europe as a soloist, and with companies such as Cirque du Soleil, Airplay Jugglers, and Cirq'ulation Locale.

JONATHAN LOWERY (*PUSHer*) is a classically trained actor and mime from Jackson, Mississippi. He began his studies with Dr. Lou Campbell and continued his training under other movement masters such as Avner Eisenberg, James Donlon, and Daniel Stein. Jonathan has appeared on national TV and toured as a mime and vaudeville performer throughout the U.S. and in Italy, Switzerland, Japan and Taiwan. He has performed with PUSH since 2007.

KATHERINE MARINO (*PUSHer*) grew up in Rochester, NY and has performed professionally since age 13. She holds a dual degree in Dance and Environmental Studies from William Smith College. In 2014, she won a year-long Fulbright fellowship to Mendoza, Argentina. Katherine's professional performing experience includes the Elizabeth Clark Dance Ensemble, *Finger Lakes Dance!* Concert, Rochester Dance Project, Tres Puntos, and Present Tense Dance Company.



**"EXTREMELY WELL CRAFTED AND
EQUALLY BALANCED IN INTELLIGENCE."**

– Michael Curry

CURRENT REPERTOIRE

JEKYLL & HYDE (2016, EVENING LENGTH)

Dr. Henry Jekyll delves into the exotic – his own psyche – ripping himself apart, piece by piece-emptying out the villainy within, creating another creature, the broken and mangled Edward Hyde. Gutted of guilt and conscience, Hyde is free to commit the sins Jekyll is too civilized to comprehend.

STRANGERS (2014)

Exploring human relationships and missed connections in a rapidly changing world. Made possible by a generous grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation.

JOB (2013)

The Book of Job: *Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return. ADONAI gave; ADONAI took; blessed be the name of ADONAI. My spirit is broken, my days are quenched, I am marked for the grave."*

RED BALL (2013)

Funded by a (\$28,000) grant from the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation, 'PUSHinterPLAY' was born as a collaboration with students and faculty from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (at Rochester Institute of Technology) to explore the interplay between virtual and physical reality and communication. "Red Ball" was inspired by the use of iPads and other digital devices to create on-stage adventures for electronic characters.

WEB (2012)

Aggression is a universal challenge. For every person who dies as a result of violence, many more are injured and suffer from a range of physical and mental health problems. Survivors often find themselves emotionally tied to their aggressors years after the physical incident. Made possible in part by generous donations from The Puffin Foundation, The Rochester Area Community Foundation, and the Arts and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester.

EVOLUTION OF AVIATION (2012)

A tongue-in-cheek reinterpretation of the history of human flight through the lens of biological/evolutionary processes.

THE NATURAL WORLD (2011)

What does it look like – literally – to give someone a hand? Physical illusions and gravity-defying, acrobatic high jinks show us how. The ramifications of kindness, respect, conflict, friendship, and more are discovered by a community of fantastical creatures created from the performers' bodies. Meet The Two Headed Bug, The Scorpion and the playful Squat Frogs.

DRACULA (2009, EVENING LENGTH)

Will you let him in? Can you keep him out? *Dracula* was made possible in part by a generous grant from The Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester.

GRACE (2007)

Often when grace is most present in our lives, we are most oblivious to it. Accepting help – whether from mentors, strangers or of a more spiritual kind – can be a humbling and sometimes difficult experience. A simple act of kindness is a powerful thing.

JOURNEY (2007)

An exploration of long-term relationships. Commitment – even when it feels broken down, worn out, even aimless – is sometimes enough to carry us through. *Journey* was created as a collaboration between the choreographer, the performers, the poets and the musician.

GALILEO (2003)

Originally choreographed for composer Glenn McClure's oratorio, *The Starry Messenger*, this piece in an homage to Galileo's discovery of the heliocentric universe. It premiered with Rochester chamber choir, Madrigalia, and was inspired by the *New York Times* best seller, *Galileo's Daughter*, by Dava Sobel. This work was made possible by a generous grant from The Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester.

CHERISHED (2000)

Often, we prescribe the sorts of relationships people should have based on outward appearances or other arbitrary social standards, and approach life wearing the kind of masks we feel will help us to reach our goals.

PARENTHOOD (1996)

Based on the lives of the choreographers, *Parenthood* almost didn't make it to the stage. It was created when Darren and Heather's two children were an infant and toddler during a near-hallucinogenic haze caused by lack of sleep and parental frustration. The choreographers just couldn't see the funny side at the time.

THE SOLDIER (1995)

Created in honor of the British holiday, Remembrance Sunday, this piece follows a young man from his bedroom and home to the battlefield. The work was the result of a study of the parallels between play and war, and is dedicated to the sacrifice of innocence and life by the men and women of the armed forces.

BALLOON ANIMALS (1994)

An exploration of the wonder of childhood and the frustration of trying to blow up balloons.

THE VISIT (1993)

During college, the choreographer had the opportunity to work at a nursing home. She made friends with a resident, Anna, who suffered from Parkinson's disease. The "Visit" imagines Anna's daughter and granddaughter spending time with Anna.



RECOMMENDATION LETTERS



After your performance, a member of the audience made a comment that I came to hear over and over again throughout the following week: "PUSH made me laugh, they made me cry, they were just amazing! Are you going to bring them back next year?"

I am grateful for your attentiveness to the theme of the festival. PUSH so aptly and movingly explored the human condition or what I like to call "the universal condition." The emotions, paradoxes and conflict we face as humans and that you explore through physical theater provides a mirror to illuminate our own values.

Bravo to you, PUSH Physical Theater. I was happy to join the Jackson Hole audience in their standing ovation to you. Your art form transcends the banality of our everyday actions and thoughts. You took us outside of ourselves to show us a bigger picture of the world we live in.

Thank you very much. I look forward to future collaborations.

Sincerely,
Marylee White
JH Wild Festival Director



This letter serves as an unqualified recommendation for Darren, Heather and the PUSH company.

The troupe gave a thrilling and artful performance and workshop to three, very diverse audiences, including a free showing for our local elementary and middle school students. PUSH was open and flexible to our programming and master class needs, and adapted their storytelling specifically for each audience. Their incredible experience, practice and skill showed through in their performances, and our programming for the year benefited from their imaginative contribution.

From first booking to the final performance, PUSH was open, communicative and professional. They were easy to work with, flexible, and engaging. We will be happy to have them back again, and we would recommend them highly for a performance or a workshop.

Sincerely,
Alli Crandell
Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts
Coastal Carolina University



Geva
Theatre
Center

This letter should serve as an unqualified rave for the nimble and innovative PUSH Physical Theatre Company.

By far, their performances of their repertory were the highlight of the entire season – so much so that I invited them back this year to perform alone in our regular Nextstage season: the only company I did so.

Their work incorporates humor, pathos, musicality, character, and theme. They only create a piece if they have a question to explore, and any answers come out of their collaborative rehearsals. I was deeply involved in their rehearsal of a piece we commissioned from them after the Theatre-Fest performances so I know first-hand their process. I had asked them to create a wordless "announcement" of all ten plays that we would be producing – sort of a collage of scenarios inspired by our selections. They performed this at our annual subscriber night when I unveiled the new season...and again they stole the show. Good thing I didn't have to follow them.

In short, Darren and Heather are superb people, superb artists, and superb collaborators. We are blessed to have them in our community though I am hopeful that they have an opportunity to reach audiences outside Western New York, too. They are a treasure.

Regards,
Mark Cuddy
Artistic Director
Geva Theatre Center



Their innovative vision of bringing dance to communities and populations that broaden the understanding and definition of dance movement and visual theatre continues to amaze and inspire audiences, sponsors and colleagues wherever they go. The level of aesthetic and artistic quality that PUSH produces – not only within their company but in the students they work with – is an astounding feat.

I have been able to observe their unique ability to work with and teach a wide variety of students from a myriad of backgrounds, abilities and ages. Their expertise is not merely in their breadth of knowledge and intimate understanding of dance, music, theatre, mime and the arts of nonverbal communication but as exceptional educators as well.

Most Sincerely,
Thomas Warfield
Director
RIT/NTID Dance Company

Rochester Fringe Review: 'PUSH' at Eastman School of Music: Kilbourn Hall

By Marisa Caruso

September 25, 2014

It is a rare treat to be awed, amused, provoked and moved in the course of a single performance. PUSH Physical Theatre, an acrobatic movement-based theatre troupe, puts on just such a show—with an emphasis on the awe.

...any chance to see a PUSH Physical Theatre performance is an opportunity not to be wasted.

The group, founded in Rochester in 2000 by husband and wife Darren and Heather Stevenson, has an archive of movement pieces that range from the highly abstract to the near-linear, all intoxicating to observe. The abstract pieces, such as "Galileo" are striking, sleek dances that require incredible feats of balance and strength with weight-sharing and human shape-shifting. Physical relationships are created, destroyed, repeated and shifted within seconds. The more straightforward pieces, like "The Visit," are poignant vignettes that use physicality to tell a specific story.

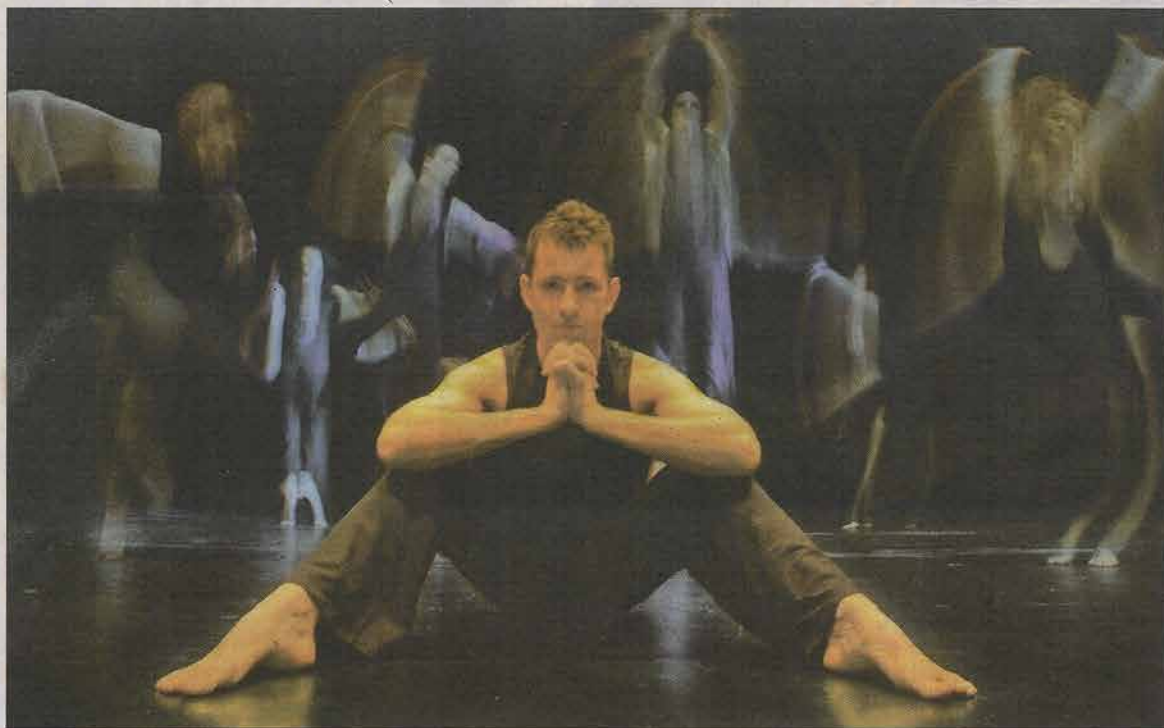


The five members of PUSH: Jonathan Lowery, Avi Printz-Nadworthy, Troy Mercier and the Stevensons, are perfectly in sync with each other and the heartbeat-accelerating soundtrack that accompanies them. They take their time to make each gesture specific and meaningful within the tight pace of the performance; a care that demonstrates both their skill as performers and a trust and belief in the quality of their work.

Just as the pieces PUSH perform are ever-shifting, so is the show they put on. This Rochester Fringe presentation included a developing piece never-before-seen by audiences called "Strangers." Therefore, any chance to see a PUSH Physical Theatre performance is an opportunity not to be wasted.



Dance



PUSH Physical Theatre presents its evocative, acrobatic works at the Geva Theatre Nextstage starting this week. PHOTOS PROVIDED

It's a bird, it's a plane...

Time Remix

PUSH PHYSICAL THEATRE
FRIDAY, MAY 29-SUNDAY, JUNE 7
GEVA THEATRE CENTER,
75 WOODBURY BLVD.
\$8-\$30 | 232-4383, GEVATHEATRE.ORG

[PREVIEW] BY REBECCA RAFFERTY

When two people love each other very much, they get together and create something special. Sometimes they share that creation with the world: PUSH Physical Theatre is the love child of spouses and collaborators Darren and Heather Stevenson, who met while training at The Center in St. Louis, Missouri. In 2000, the couple brought their children and their talent to Rochester and formed PUSH out of the desire to work together, and with other gifted performers, to explore and leap out of the boundaries of both theater and modern dance. The troupe draws from literature, war, art movements, and current events to create interpretive movement pieces that combine acrobatics with drama and comedy.

Geva Theatre's Nextstage is hosting PUSH's new performance, "Time Remix," which

features two world-premiere pieces: "Time" and "Flight 1549." As a bonus, viewers will get to see a live-action "trailer" of the company's major work-in-progress, "Dracula: The Shape of Evil," which is scheduled to debut in time for this upcoming Halloween.

I recently had the opportunity to sit in on one of PUSH's rehearsals for the upcoming shows. More versed in painting than performances, I can only liken seeing the practice to getting a peek at the planning stages of an acrylic or oil. The seams were still being worked out, but I simultaneously got an inkling of the amazing finished piece, while gaining a serious respect for the innovative, technical work that arose from the vague ether of inspiration and countless hours of physical labor. PUSH's work exhibits a depth of understanding and innovative physical vocabulary for the universals in human life. The group loosely defines "physical theater" as not just movement, but the purpose and emotion behind the motions made visible.

"Time" is an exploration of time perception during competition. The audience hears the disembodied voices of athletes describing the phenomenon, while the troupe brilliantly simulates running, hurdling, and vaulting in alternating slow motion and real time. The PUSH players flow smoothly as they

transition from impersonating the grace of athletics, to imitating a hungry crowd, to embodying athletes in victory or in pain. I was totally immersed — the group members have the capacity to make you believe they are really in that space, rounding the bend on the track, their eyes glimpsing the finish line up ahead as their faces express excruciating exertion. PUSH utilizes all of the strength and poise required of ballet, as well as all of the emotional complexity required of storytelling.

When the company broke for a break, it morphed from highly focused troupe into the friendly, down-to-earth team that currently includes the co-founders and spouses, as well as Jonathan Lowery, Johanna Bystrom, and Christine Prewitt. They democratically and scientifically went about tweaking the pieces, with each member having a say in how to perfectly convey an emotion through an artful focus on different body parts, spatial relationships, tension between dancers, balance, and expressions.

During the following run-through of "Flight 1549," the team collapsed into clusters and broke away, vaulting off of each other's bodies to push, pull, and wheel through a reenactment of the titular flight's suspense-filled emergency landing in the Hudson River this past January. Of the unlikely pairing of

movement set to the recording of the pilot calmly exchanging with air traffic control, Darren Stevenson says, "When I heard the audio tape, like everyone else, I was struck by how incredibly calm the pilot [Captain Chesley Sullenberger] was. Then a pilot friend explained that it's a skill, called 'deliberate calm,' which pilots practice for emergency situations, and that — to him — it felt like slowing down time. Since manipulating time and space is basically what PUSH does, I was immediately inspired to create this piece."

The performance will include pulsing blackouts and spotlights where dancers will disappear and reappear elsewhere on the stage, as their bodies simulate the birds, the plane banking for landing, the waves of the river, and the passengers in a powerful tension between sky, water, gravity, terror, and control.

"Dracula: the Shape of Evil" materializes right in time for the vamp resurgence in pop culture. The "trailer" performance will give a taste of local talent Danny Hoskins's version of the story, which is seen from Renfield's crazy, jumbled point of view. In Bram Stoker's the novel, Renfield is an asylum inmate who is under the influence of Dracula, but who suffers a conflict of conscience when he takes pity on Mina Harker (the Count's obsession), and begs her to flee. Hoskins's version is "meant to confuse the audience as to what is real, and what's in his mind," Stevenson says. Hoskins will play Renfield on stage, narrating while the dancers completely creep out the audience. I watched them work out the bits they want to include in the preview, trying to capture, as Stevenson put it, the "violence and speed of gesture," and the mood of Stoker's mythic, iconic tale. Stevenson estimates that the finished piece will clock in at 40 to 45 minutes, making it the longest movement piece PUSH has ever done.

To say that the performance is powerful is to understate it — the group emphasizes the strength of humanity's heart and soul made manifest in the body. The group's style evokes both oral-history stories being acted out around a fire, and the super-strong acrobatics from the circuses of our youth. Poised bodies and careful kinetics bridge the gaps between perception and reality, tragedy and hope, myth and magic. What this group executes physically is the perfect metaphor-in-motion for the strength with which we meet our experiences.

Rochester Fringe Festival, Day 3: PUSH Physical Theatre review

ONE OF THE MUST-SEE SHOWS OF THE FRINGE

by Casey Carlsen

A large crowd filled the lobby and looped around the entrance to the TheaterROCS stage at Xerox Auditorium Friday night as people waited patiently for the doors to open for **PUSH Physical Theatre's** first show at Rochester Fringe. I gleaned from snippets of conversation in the rapidly overheating space that many had seen PUSH perform before and were coming back for more. They were, in PUSH parlance, "PUSHERS," as followers are playfully dubbed on the group's website.

Darren and Heather Stevenson founded the group in Rochester in 2000, wanting a vehicle in which to perform and create that embodied not just dance and not just theater, but a host of other disciplines, including mime, gymnastics and acrobatics. In short, it was to encompass whatever physical vocabulary they needed in order to convey what they wanted to express. In fact, the company includes a classically trained actor, Jonathan Lowry; a parkour (climbing urban spaces) instructor, martial arts expert and gymnast, Andrew Salmon; and an actor, juggler, and gymnast from Cirque du Soleil, Avi Pryntz-Nadworny.

The company's first piece last night, the premiere of "The Evolution of Aviation," immediately demonstrated the impact of combining these various forms of movement and expression. The members of PUSH possess a startling ability to transform their bodies into other entities through movement, sound, and expression. Without using any props, the performers became gliders, helicopters, and planes, as well as the pilots of these vehicles. Starting with the basic position of laying stomach to the ground, arms hovering sideways like wings -- the plunky strains of ragtime music establishing the time period - the group progressed to more elaborate depictions of flying machines. A flurry of hands became propellers. A central dancer supported a smaller dancer in the air on either side of him to become a plane's wings. PUSH possesses the beguiling ability to access the inner world of the imagination through physical transformation, that innate gift of early childhood that most of us, sadly, left behind long ago.

The audience responded with resounding enthusiasm throughout the show, bursting into laughter or chuckling with appreciation again and again. In fact, humor and accessibility are part of the group's wide appeal. Unusual for a dance company -- almost unorthodox, in fact -- Darren Stevenson spends substantial time on stage during every show addressing the audience, his truly funny anecdotes and insightful, self-effacing quips chipping away at that limiting wall between performers and their audience.

By far my favorite piece of the evening was the gut-wrenching "Web," a dark departure for the group. The 2011 piece closely examines both the savagery of abuse and violence and its emotional and psychological fall-out. Lowry was superb as the victim, literally harnessed and roped to his torturers who yanked him around and mimicked striking him with ugly sneers on their faces. Lowry's classical background was evident, as finely filtered expressions moved across his face to convey the pain, fear, and bewilderment at the brutality he was enduring. His body was no less expressive than his face. He recoiled again and again as would an animal under attack, each time his resistance fading incrementally. **The most affecting 10 seconds of the night's performance -- in fact, the most affecting 10 seconds of anything I've seen in Fringe so far** -- transpired after the brutes had finally tired of their tormenting, unleashed Lowry and left him, a collapsed heap of humanity. Salmon turned abruptly then and mimed a final fierce jerk in the air. Brilliantly choreographed, Lowry responded as if he were still wearing the rope; his body spasmed up into the air, then collapsed back into itself.

Dance



Jonathan Lowery and Darren Stevenson (left to right) in "Arc of Ages." PHOTO COURTESY PUSH PHYSICAL THEATRE

PUSH's new testament

"Arc of Ages"

BY PUSH PHYSICAL THEATRE
THURSDAY, MAY 30-SUNDAY, JUNE 9
JCC HART THEATRE, 1200 EDGEWOOD AVE.
\$18-\$26 | 461-2000, JCCROCHESTER.ORG

[PREVIEW] BY CASEY CARLSEN

PUSH Physical Theatre's new masterwork, "Arc of Ages," embraces epic stories of Western civilization and explores basic human archetypes by depicting the legendary struggles of biblical characters. Dramatic, action-packed interpretations of Samson, Delilah, David, Bathsheba, and Job connect audiences to these characters' flawed humanness, and to the continued relevance of their plights today.

"What do these stories have to tell that keeps returning them to the forefront of art and popular culture?" co-founder and director Darren Stevenson asked in a recent interview with City. "Certainly these characters embody some of the most dysfunctional relationships you can imagine. There is an awful lot of sex and violence perpetrated on these

people. Our generation tends to sanitize the classics, ignore issues we prefer not to deal with."

Stevenson promises, however, that the production would warrant no rating higher than PG if paralleled to film. There is no nudity, and the rawness and violence are neither random nor meaningless. Indeed, for children ages 8 and over seeing the production with parents, the content can provide fodder for important conversations, Stevenson says.

Stevenson and his wife, Heather Stevenson, formed the company in 2000 as a means to "push" the boundaries of conventional theater. Its first major work, premiered in 2009, was the highly praised "Dracula."

"For us, physical theater is about communicating with the body as the primary tool, which is really pretty cool," Darren Stevenson says. "One pertinent saying is that 'the body never lies.' We are so attuned to body language, and the stories of our lives are recorded in our muscles. When we move, memories and emotions come up in us — and in the audience. If you watch the audience at one of our performances, you will see them

moving — swaying, leaning, and so on. It's a basic physiological response."

PUSH uses a hybrid movement form that incorporates modern dance, non-traditional partnering (heavily influenced by the contemporary dance group Pilobolus), acrobatics, mime, and other disciplines, depending in part on the particular talents of its current company members. Right now, its five core members include veteran Jonathan Lowery, former Cirque du Soleil performer Avi Pryntz-Nadworny, Rochester Parkour member Andrew Salmon, and both Stevensons. Eighteen additional members round out the cast for "Arc of Ages."

At a recent rehearsal, Pryntz-Nadworny, 25, was practicing his role as the suffering title character in "The Trials of Job." For a good part of this piece, Pryntz-Nadworny propels himself around stage within a 60-pound steel ring called the *cyr wheel*, a potentially dangerous piece of equipment named after Daniel Cyr, a circus artist from Montreal who popularized the apparatus. More popular in Canada and Europe, the wheel, is, however, slowly gaining in popularity in the States. This is the first time that PUSH has incorporated it into a piece.

Pryntz-Nadworny, who grew up in Brighton, studied circus art in Quebec and Italy, and has been performing professionally since he was 21. This is his second year with PUSH. Watching him simultaneously keep the *cyr wheel* in motion and express the wrenching pain of Job's plight through his tormented facial expressions, bodily movements, and anguished breathing and cries, belies the difficulty of performing on this piece of equipment.

"It's almost like an extension of Ari's body at this point," Stevenson says. "And having Ari inside that wheel is a great metaphor for Job being stuck in pain."

Pryntz-Nadworny worked closely with Stevenson to create the piece. Stevenson is not an expert on the *cyr wheel*, so a good deal of improvisation from Pryntz-Nadworny was needed to put together the choreography.

"Avi was basically like, 'Yes, I can do that.' Or 'No, I can't do that.' Or 'Yes, I can do that, but it would be cooler to do this,'" Stevenson says.

"There are really three sequences that correspond to Job's emotions," Pryntz-Nadworny says. "First, Job experiences anger, questions why this is happening

to him. Next, despair. And finally, tormented possession. I basically looked for movements that expressed those qualities."

During this rehearsal, the group runs through the work's wrenching ending again and again, struggling to find the truest and most emotionally affective depiction of the final plot element: Job's wife, portrayed by Rachel Kodweis, rejoining her husband, choosing to share in his pain.

By this point, Pryntz-Nadworny has expressed frenzied agony at his situation — tearing and scratching at his skin (boils were one of Job's curses), lunging from side to side, lashing out at stage-mates and letting loose with primal yelps of pain. Finally, he sinks to the ground within the circle of the *cyr wheel*, knees to chest, forehead to floor, hands covering head. Eventually, he rises back up to his knees, gaze casting suspiciously around, before leaning backward onto his arms, his palms open in a gesture of submission.

Kodweis enters from offstage, darting in alarm toward the ring, only to bring herself up short, afraid and unsure, teetering there like someone unwilling to enter a body of cold water. But, a dawning of awareness slowly suffuses her features, as if just now she is realizing what a balm her presence could be and, gingerly but with determination, she steps over and into the ring, literally joining her husband in his eternal circle of pain. And Job's face brightens slightly, not even a smile, but enough to register his appreciation of her act of love.

This is strong stuff, and my eyes actually moisten watching this scene again and again in such close proximity. I find myself thinking about people in my own life and feeling unsettling inflections of guilt that will linger with me throughout the evening. That is the kinesthetic power of PUSH, its ability to elicit emotions within us through physical witness. It forces me to ponder earlier comments Stevenson made about art.

"Art asks questions. There are so few answers anywhere in life, and art creates more uncertainty," Stevenson says. "That can be a very powerful thing. It can also make people angry or uncomfortable. They don't want to be asked those questions."

But I don't doubt that PUSH will keep posing them.

CITY POST YOUR COMMENT
www.rochesternewspaper.com

PUSH has performed in theatres, festivals, special events, arts-in-education and residency projects. Audiences ranged from 11,000 at the Blue Cross Arena in Rochester, NY to around 200 for smaller theatres.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Finalist on TruTV's national series, *Fake Off*
- Collaboration with composer Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon for his Pulitzer-nominated opera, *Comala*, which resulted in performances in Mexico at the Cervantino Festival and a US tour.
- Two-week teaching residency with performers from Pilobolus in Monterey Bay, CA.
- Original, full-length work, *Arc of Ages*, ran for two weeks with an expanded cast of 24 performers. PUSH's world premiere of "Dracula" ran for three-weeks to sold-out audiences at Geva Theatre Center.
- Residency at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf to collaborate on the creation and premiere performance of "Red Ball" was supported by a \$28,000 grant from the Farash Foundation.
- Darren Stevenson has spoken at TEDx Rochester and several colleges about PUSH's unique artistic process.
- PUSH continues to run a year-long training and development program for its professional company as well as the Teen Mentorship program, PUSH Pins Summer Camp for Kids and a Summer Intensive for adults, attracting students from all over the world.

PARTIAL LIST OF VENUES:

THEATRES

Organización Para Las Artes (Guatemala)
Degollado Theater (Guadalajara, Mexico)
Festival Internacional Cervantino (Guanajuato, Mexico)
The Symphony Space (New York, NY)
The Center for the Arts (Jackson Hole, WY)
Casella Theater (Castleton, VT)
Van Nostrand Theatre (Brentwood, NY)
Michael D. Palm Theatre (Telluride, CO)
The Bishop Center (Aberdeen, NY)
The Wheelwright Auditorium (Conway, SC)
Rialto Center for the Arts (Atlanta, GA)
The Miller Outdoor Theatre (Houston, TX)
Eastman School of Music, Kilbourn Hall (Rochester, NY)
Xerox Auditorium (Rochester, NY)
Abbey Theatre (Hardwick, MA)
Caribbean Festival for Mime & Physical Theatre (San Juan, Puerto Rico)
Centro De Bellos Artes (San Juan, Puerto Rico)
Cleveland Convention Center (Cleveland, OH)
Blue Cross Arena (Rochester, NY)

Geva Theater Center (Rochester, NY)
Mechanics Hall (Worcester, MA)
State Theatre (Ithaca, NY)
Rochester Institute of Technology, Panara Theatre (Rochester, NY)

SPECIAL EVENTS

US Classic Gymnastics Championship (Rochester, NY)
Cuyahoga County Fair (Cuyahoga, OH)
Dixon Schwabl Advertising (Rochester, NY)
Kodak (Rochester, NY)
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (Rochester, NY)
M&T Bank (Buffalo, NY)
Rochester Contemporary Art Center (Rochester, NY)
Chatterbox Club (Rochester, NY)
Rockpointe Church (Detroit, MI)
Temple B'rith Kodesh (Brighton, NY)
Young Audiences (Rochester, NY)
Rochester Indie Fest (Rochester, NY)
Melissa's Living Legacy Foundation (Rochester, NY)
The Strong, National Museum of Play (Rochester, NY)
Met Life Dance for Life (Rochester, NY)
Utica Monday Nights (Utica, NY)

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Coastal Carolina University (Conway, SC)
SUNY Purchase (Purchase, NY)
Belhaven University (Jackson, MI)
Nazareth College (Rochester, NY)
Roberts Wesleyan College (North Chili, NY)
Cortland University (Cortland, NY)
Buffalo State College (Buffalo, NY)
Genesee Community College (Batavia, NY)
Aesthetic Education Institute (Rochester, NY)
Greece Arcadia High School (Greece, NY)
Bancroft School (Worcester, MA)
Irondequoit High School (Irondequoit, NY)
William R. Satz Middle School (Holmdell, NJ)
Oswego County/Madison-Oneida BOCES
Rochester BOCES

Numerous schools throughout the Northeast US.

TEACHING

Annual PUSH Summer Intensive 2001 - Present (Rochester, NY)
Annual PUSH Pins Camp for Kids 2005 - Present (Rochester, NY)
Eagle Hill School (Harwick, MA)
Inlet Dance Theatre (Cleveland, OH)
University of Rochester (Rochester, NY)
School of the Performing Arts (Greece, NY)
The Next Step Workshop (Green Bay, WI)
Greece Community Education Fine Arts Camp (Greece, NY)
University of Rochester (Rochester, NY)
Youth with a Mission (Long Island, NY)
Youth with a Mission (Lake City, MT)
Art Peace (Rochester, NY)
Nazareth College Dance Department (Rochester, NY)
Teens Living With Cancer (Rochester, NY)
Rochester Children's Theatre (Rochester, NY)