

THE UNIVERSITY of
MISSISSIPPI

GERTRUDE C.
FORD CENTER
for the Performing Arts

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sh.**

[physical theatre]



Tuesday, November 14, 2023
7:30 p.m.

PUSH Physical Theatre

November 14, 2023

The Evolution of Aviation

Concept: Jesse Mangan, Dayne Nel, Mary VanLoon

Development: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson,
Jonathan Lowery, Avi Pryntz-Nadworny

Music: *Piano Sonata #14* by Beethoven,
Maple Leaf Rag by Scott Joplin,
Thus Spake Zarathustra by Richard Strauss

Performers: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson,
Ashley Jones

A tongue-in-cheek re-interpretation of the history of human flight through the lens of biological/evolutionary processes using iconic images of human flight.

The Natural World

Concept: Darren Stevenson

Development: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson,
Jonathan Lowery, Johanna Bystrom, Christine Prewitt

Music: *Zinc* by Zoe Keating, *Experimental Work* by Ryan Lott,
(bamm bamm bamm) by Sigur Rós, *Glosoli* by Sigur Rós,
Hoppipolla by Sigur Rós

Performers: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson, Ashley Jones,
Rachel Kodweis, Sarah Jacobs

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

The Soldier (or A Child's Bedroom)

Concept &**Development:** Darren Stevenson**Music:** *Vespers Nyne Otpushchayeshi (Now Let they Servant Depart)*
by Sergei Rachmaninoff**Costume &****Performance:** Darren Stevenson

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 of the men and women of the armed forces.

Journey

Concept &**Development:** Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson, Tom Ohl**Music:** *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber**Poetry:** *Charlie Côté* reading by Jonathan Nthekatha**Performers:** Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson

Being in a long-term relationship is a little like committing to a nautical voyage. Sunny skies or ravaging storms, come what may, you're in the boat with each other. Darren and Heather would like to thank Betty, our elderly neighbor, who told us that, without her walker, she would be confined to her house – "It's not a prison, it's freedom".

INTERMISSION

Parenthood

Concept &

Development: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson

Music: *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy & Russian Dance*
by Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, *Why Worry* by Dire Straits

Costumes &

Performance: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson

Based on the lives of the choreographers, Parenthood almost didn't make it to the stage. It was created when Darren & Heather's two children were an infant and toddler during a near hallucinogenic haze caused by lack of sleep and parental frustration. After a few weeks of development, the choreographers just couldn't see the funny side and assumed that no one else would either and decided to drop the piece after the first show. However, the audience (particularly other parents) had such a wonderful time laughing at their misfortune that it has been reinstated... "Please, enjoy our pain."

Suspicion

Concept: Darren Stevenson

Development: Darren Stevenson, Andreas Woerner, Ashley Jones

Music: *Egyptic* by Beats Antique

Performers: Darren Stevenson, Ashley Jones

A study of the internal struggle with one's own masculinity. Is violence and aggression part of our nature or a cultural construct? Can we shed the darkness within or should we embrace its existence as part of who we are?

The Visit

Concept &

Development: Heather Stevenson

Costume &

Performance: Heather Stevenson

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. Unfortunately, in the real Anna's story, this never happened.

Galileo

Concept: Darren Stevenson

Development: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson,
Topher Holt, Heather Holt, Tom Ohl

Music: *Summoning of The Muse* by Dead Can Dance

Performers: Darren Stevenson, Heather Stevenson, Ashley Jones, Rachel
Kodweis, Sarah Jacobs

Originally choreographed for composer Glenn McClure's oratorio, *The Starry Messenger*, this piece is an homage to Galileo's discovery of the heliocentric universe. It premiered with Rochester's chamber choir, Madrigalia, and was inspired by the New York Times bestseller, *Galileo's Daughter*, by Dava Sobel. Historians believe Galileo's artistic skills played a major role in his scientific breakthroughs. Likewise, the non-traditional partnering practiced by PUSH and its quest for a deeper understanding of the arts has led the company towards science. *Galileo* is, at its core, an attempt to realize the solar system in human form. This work was made possible by a generous grant from The Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester.

PUSH Physical Theatre

Powerful.

Provoking.

PUSH.

Intense athleticism, gravity-defying acrobatics, and soulful artistry are the trademarks of award-winning, genre-defining PUSH Physical Theatre. Founded in Rochester, NY in 2000 by husband-and-wife team, Darren and Heather Stevenson, out of a desire to "push" the boundaries of conventional theatre, PUSH has since earned an international reputation as one of the U.S.'s leading physical theatre companies.

Featured in acclaimed collaborations with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ying Quartet, and Pulitzer Prize-nominated composer Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon's two multi-media operas (*Comala* and *No Se Culpe* with fellow composer Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez), PUSH has also produced its own full-length works including *DRACULA*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, and *Arc of Ages*. Additionally, its wide-ranging repertory includes many shorter works such as "Red Ball," a hilarious take on the interplay between the real and virtual worlds using iPad technology. Most recently PUSH has taken their multiple award-winning show *Generic Male*:

Just What We Need, Another Show About Men from two US and Canadian tours to an Off-Broadway run at the Soho Playhouse.

PUSH was a season finalist on TruTV's national series, *Fake Off*, a competition/reality show featuring what producers dubbed "the captivating art of 'faking'" – a mix of theatre, acrobatics, and illusion. Their performances caused judge and Glee star Harry Shum Jr. to exclaim: "You guys are superhuman!"

These masters of physical storytelling have received the Community of Color/Anton Germano Dance Award, the Performing Artist of the Year Award from the Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, and the University of Rochester's Lillian Fairchild Award.

In addition to a busy touring schedule, PUSH is passionate about arts-in-education programs and runs its own summer day camp for kids, teen training, and summer intensive for adult students from all over the world. More information is available at pushtheatre.org.

About the Cast

Darren & Heather Stevenson (Founding Artistic Co-Directors, PUSHers), Born and raised in England, Darren met New Jersey native Heather during their mutual studies at The Center in St. Louis. Their shared love of theatre and performing planted the seeds for their relationship and eventual collaboration.

After completing their studies at The Goldston & Johnson School for Mimes and touring together, the couple founded the Studio School of the Arts in Atlanta, Georgia. They relocated to Rochester, NY with their two children in 2000 and created PUSH Physical Theatre, growing it over the next 18 years into the international touring company that it is today.

Darren and Heather have created many new works for PUSH, including full-length adaptations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll & Hyde*. Shorter works include "Flight 1549," set to the audiotape of the miraculous airplane landing in the Hudson River; and "-abled," an exploration of addiction. Heather's touching look at the elderly in "The Visit" is a thought-provoking counterpoint to Darren's powerful take on war in "The Soldier." A grant from the Farash Foundation enabled collaboration with RIT's National Institute for the Deaf to create "Red Ball," a study of the real and virtual worlds using iPad technology. They created *Arc of Ages*, a full-length exploration of Jewish history and culture, which featured an unprecedented 23 physical theatre performers trained by PUSH.

The Stevensons received the 2009 Performing Artist of the Year Award from the Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, as well as the Community of Color/Anton Germano Dance Award. Darren was awarded the University of

Rochester's Lillian Fairchild Award in 2017 for PUSH's collaborative work on a multi-media opera that brought together U.S. and Mexican artists for premieres in both countries for the second time.

Cross-genre collaborations with other world-renowned artists are becoming more and more frequent for the genre-defining company, such as its recent partnerships with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and the Ying Quartet.

The Stevensons have also created a children's education division called PUSH Pins and are sought-after teaching artists, developing programs that help students connect with curriculum concepts, life skills, and social issues. They also run an annual summer intensive for adults that attracts students from all over the world.

Sarah Jacobs (PUSHer) is a dance educator, choreographer, and movement artist. She has worked with over two dozen choreographers and directors across dance, physical theater, and performance art, most recently in Los Angeles with Victoria Marks and Cheng-Chieng Yu/Yu Dance Theater; in Rochester, NY with Greg Woodsbie; and with Street Dance Activism's worldwide network for the 28-Day Global Dance Mediation for Black Liberation. Sarah is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Dance and Movement Studies at Hamilton College. She has taught at SUNY-Brockport, Scripps College, The Wooden Floor, and numerous K-12 schools, and been a guest artist at Washington & Lee University, Carleton College, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Sarah holds an MFA in Dance from UCLA and a BA from Carleton College. This is her second project with PUSH.

Rachel Kodweis (PUSHer) is an actor, director, and vocalist. In NYC, Rachel collaborated frequently with Casa Cruz de la Luna (*Fausto Angleró, The Marquis de Sade is Afraid of the Sea*), Cloud of Fools Theatre Co. (*Dark Eyes, All That Dies and Rises*), Green Space (*Pullman Car Hiawatha, The Tempest*), and Mettawee River Theatre Company (*The Dancing Fox*, 2014 tour). Alongside Jon Froehlich, she is co-founder and co-artistic director of Infinite Spark Theater Company (*And They Never Recovered From The Shock, The Flower Debt*). Having returned to Rochester, NY after a decade in New York City, she is thrilled to be collaborating with PUSH Physical Theatre again (2022: *International Jewish Festival*, Israel, 2013: *Arc of Ages*).

Ashley Jones (PUSHer) is a physical performer, actor, and deviser. After earning his BA European Theatre Arts from Rose Bruford College, London and training in Physical Theatre at Academia Teatro Dimitri in Switzerland, he went on to train with Phillipe Gaulier and Angela De Castro in theatrical clowning, which has formed a large part of his solo practice. As a physical performer, Ashley has worked and trained with UK-based theatre companies Gecko Physical

Theatre, Nonsuch Theatre, and Frantic Assembly. His recent credits include: *The Party's Over* (2017), *Eclipse* (2017), *The Russian Play* (2017) and *Into the Clouds* (2018). As Artistic Director of Theatre Kinaesthetic, Ashley continues to develop and produce his own work exploring physical modalities within ensemble and devised performance. His credits with Theatre KinAesthetic include *Rite of Passage* (2015, 2016).

James Cunningham (Lighting Designer/Technical Director) owns and operates Rockshow Lighting, a concert lighting design company providing design and staffing for music festivals, touring acts, and venues. Recent adventures include multiple national tours with folk-rock act Carbon Leaf, international runs with pop-reggae act SOJA, and festival stage designs and staffing for Floydfest and Red Wing Roots. James uses the grandMA2 console line for lighting control, and employs Resolume Arena for video playback and live effects.

Josefina Calzada-Garza (Costume Designer/Fabricator), a native of Mexico, has been a veterinary doctor, a ceramics artist, a jeweler, and now a costume designer. She met PUSH through their work on *No Se Culpe*, a multimedia opera that was co-composed by her husband, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez. "Life is very interesting and takes you on many paths if you let it!"

Ford Center for the Performing Arts

COMMUNITY MUSICAL

Show and audition information coming soon!

PERFORMANCES

June 28 & 29, 2024

— Thank You! —

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fordcenter.org/support

About Gertrude Castellow Ford



With an ever-inquisitive mind, Gertrude Castellow Ford fully embraced the arts. As a patron, an observer and a practitioner, Mrs. Ford engaged in a lifelong exploration of all things of beauty and inspiration. Exceedingly well-read in poetry and classic literature, Mrs. Ford was often at the center of spirited discussions about the merits of all manner of literary works. Always at the very foundation of her spirit was a great and sincere love of the arts and letters.

In keeping with a generations-old family tradition of philanthropy, Mrs. Ford established the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation in Jackson, Mississippi, with a very generous gift in 1991 to support the arts in Mississippi. In addition to the donation for the construction of the Ford Center, the Foundation supports the USA International Ballet Competition, the Mississippi Opera, Mississippi Museum of Art, University of Southern Mississippi Orchestra and many others.

Mrs. Ford died in September of 1996. She and her husband, Aaron Lane Ford, who was an Ackerman attorney and U.S. congressman representing what was Mississippi's 4th District, are buried in Cuthbert, a small town in southwest Georgia.

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SPRING '24



BROADWAY SERIES

My Fair Lady

Tues., Jan. 16 • 7:30 p.m.

Boasting such classic songs as “I Could Have Danced All Night,” “The Rain in Spain,” and “Wouldn’t It Be Lovely,” *MY FAIR LADY* tells the story of Eliza Doolittle, a young Cockney flower seller, and Henry Higgins, a linguistics professor who is determined to transform her into his idea of a “proper lady.” But who is really being transformed?

Marie Osmond In Concert with Special Guest David Osmond

Mon., Feb. 5 • 7:30 p.m.

Marie Osmond has spent over 6 iconic decades in the entertainment business performing as a successful singer, television performer and talk show host, dancer, actor, author, entrepreneur and public speaker.

She has continued to maintain relevance, remaining an instantly recognizable figure across the globe.



POP SERIES

BROADWAY SERIES



HER VOICE. HIS VISION. THEIR STORY.

Sun., Jan. 28 • 7:30 p.m.

ON YOUR FEET! is the inspiring true story about heart, heritage and two people who believed in their talent—and each other—to become an international sensation: Emilio and Gloria Estefan. *CONTENT ADVISORY: Recommended for ages 8 and up for mild adult themes and situations.*



POP SERIES

Arrival From Sweden: The Music of ABBA

Sat., Feb. 10 • 7:30 p.m.

ARRIVAL from Sweden: The Music of ABBA has been called the most authentic ABBA show touring. They have sold out arenas and venues all over the world since their founding in 1995. Hits like: “Dancing Queen,” “Mamma Mia,” “Does Your Mother Know,” “Take A Chance,” “SOS,” “The Winner Takes It All,” “Super Trouper,” “Money Money Money,” “Waterloo,” “Honey Honey,” “Fernando,” “Chiquitita,” “Knowing Me Knowing You,” “Thank You For The Music,” “Lay All Your Love On Me,” “Gimme Gimme Gimme” and many more are delivered with such accuracy that it’s hard to believe that it’s not the real ABBA on stage.

BROADWAY SERIES



THE TONY AWARD®-WINNING MUSICAL!
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The Cher Show

Sat., Feb. 24 • 7:30 p.m.

Superstars come and go. Cher is forever. For six straight decades, only one unstoppable force has flat-out dominated popular culture - breaking down barriers, pushing boundaries and letting nothing and no one stand in her way. THE CHER SHOW is the Tony Award®-winning musical of her story, and it's packed with so much Cher that it takes three women to play her: the kid starting out, the glam pop star, and the icon. *CONTENT ADVISORY: Recommended for ages 12+.*

BROADWAY SERIES



"Once upon a time, there was a little ogre named Shrek...." And thus begins the tale of an unlikely hero who finds himself on a life-changing journey alongside a wisecracking Donkey and a feisty princess who resists her rescue. Yes, your favorite ogre is back in the hilarious stage spectacle based on the Oscar®-winning, smash hit, DreamWorks animated film.



BROADWAY SERIES

Come From Away

Tues., March 5 • 7:30 p.m.

On 9/11, the world stopped. On 9/12, their stories moved us all. This stirring and inspiring musical takes you into the heart of the remarkable true story of the small town in Newfoundland that opened their homes to 7,000 stranded travelers on 9/11. During that fateful week, cultures clashed and nerves ran high—but uneasiness turned into trust, music soared into the night and gratitude grew into enduring friendships. *CONTENT ADVISORY: Recommended for audience members aged 10 and up and at least a basic knowledge of the events of September 11, 2001.*

Lawrence Brownlee

Thurs., March 7 • 7:30 p.m.

Lawrence Brownlee is a leading figure in opera, both as a singer on the world's top stages, and as a voice for activism and diversity in the industry. Captivating audiences and critics around the globe, he has been hailed as "an international star in the bel canto operatic repertory" (*The New York Times*), "one of the world's leading bel canto stars" (*The Guardian*), and "one of the most in-demand opera singers in the world today" (NPR).



ARTIST SERIES

Shrek The Musical

Tuesday, March 26 • 7:30 p.m.

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