

THE HEIGHTS OF IMAGINATION

T H E 2 0 1 8 / 1 9 S E A S O N

T I C K E T S O N S A L E J U L Y 1 !

September 14 – 23

American Premiere

Frank London | Elise Thoron | Music-Theatre Group

Hatuey: Memory of Fire

Directed by **Mary Birnbaum** | Designed by **Camellia Koo** | Choreographed by **Maija Garcia**

Music Direction by **Constantine Kitsopoulos** | Costumes by **Oana Botez**

“Hatuey: Memory of Fire” is a soaring Cuban love story set in a Havana nightclub in 1931. Oscar, a young Jewish writer who escaped the pogroms in the Ukraine to make a new home in Cuba, falls in love with Tinima, a beautiful singer and passionate revolutionary of Taino descent. As Oscar pens an epic poem about Cuba’s legendary 16th century freedom fighter, Hatuey, Tinima draws him into her fight against the corrupt Machado regime. This vibrant fusion of Afro-Cuban and Yiddish music and culture is also a powerful celebration of freedom.

September 29

The Crossing (**Donald Nally**, conductor)

The National Anthems: Music of **David Lang**, **Caroline Shaw**, and **Ted Hearne**

With the strings of **International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)**

Where does patriotism end and nationalism begin? Are there universal values that transcend national borders? The Crossing, hailed as an “ardently angelic” chamber choir by *The Los Angeles Times*, considers these difficult questions with works by three powerhouse composers: Pulitzer Prize winners David Lang and Caroline Shaw and Pulitzer Prize finalist Ted Hearne. The strings players of ICE (International Contemporary Ensemble) magnify the impact of this stirring and timely concert.

September 30

Shanghai Quartet

All Beethoven Program

“They are not for you, but for a later age!” Beethoven’s string quartets were ahead of their time. One violinist even said they were “unreasonably difficult to play,” prompting Beethoven’s famous response. The mighty and beloved musicians of the Shanghai Quartet are more than up to the challenge. This exhilarating program features Beethoven’s “Rasumovsky” Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 8; his String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4; and his String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, No. 14. Treat yourself to the “superb” playing of the Shanghai Quartet. (*The Boston Globe*)

October 4 – 7

Faye Driscoll

Thank You for Coming: Attendance

Thank You for Coming: Play

Faye Driscoll is an award-winning choreographer and director whose work has been described as “creative, awkward, hilarious, goofy, surprising, rowdy, randy, chaotic, and sweet.” (*Berkshire Eagle*) “Thank You for Coming” is her playful, moving, mind-boggling trilogy about “how we are all wrapped up in each other, whether we like it or not.” In October, see the first two parts of the trilogy; then come back in April for the world premiere of the trilogy’s final installation.

In part one, “Attendance,” six virtuosic performers morph through breathless, surprising physical entanglements and create soaring music from their stomps and voices. In this souped-up flipbook of human emotion, they sing, talk, fight, frolic, and make love. In part 2, “Play,” mouths and bodies say one thing while words say another in a strange and delightful meditation on the glories and limits of language, an experience that adds up to “a fun and unexpectedly moving evening.” (*Berkshire Eagle*)

October 18 – 21

World Premiere

Liz Gerring

field

According to Alastair Macaulay of *The New York Times*, choreographer Liz Gerring’s mind is “warmly modernist: scientific but also passionately and infectiously in love with movement.” Gerring returns to the Kasser with “field,” the third in a trilogy of works by she has created in collaboration with composer Michael J. Schumacher and designer Robert Wierzel, all commissioned and produced by Peak Performances. In “field,” Gerring and her team conceive a place in which the elements — movement, sound, and light — combine to envelope and engage the audience, and where her magnificent dancers test their the physical limits.

November 15 – 18

American Premiere

Marrugeku

Cut the Sky

Is it a pop concert? Is it modern dance? Is it a political statement? “Cut the Sky” by Marrugeku, Australia’s preeminent dance theater ensemble of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists, is all three. As soul singer Ngairé belts out tunes from Buffalo Springfield and Nick Cave to her own soul and pop songs to Indigenous music, Marrugeku’s “incredibly expressive and visceral” dancers (*The Guardian*) form a band of climate change refugees facing another extreme weather event. This is “Cut the Sky,” a production Dance Australia called “raw, thought-provoking, and aspirational.”

December 13 – 16

American Premiere

Gandini Juggling

Smashed

What do you get when you toss together nine jugglers, 80 apples, and four crockery sets? “Smashed,” a tea party you’ll never forget. Nine well-dressed, perfectly respectable young people take the stage and, under the guise of a quaint afternoon tea, engage in the dark art of juggling. Their virtuosic blend of skills, precision, and theatricality will leave you breathless. Gandini Juggling is at the vanguard of the explosive contemporary circus scene. According to *The Guardian*, [“Smashed”] is as terrifyingly vicious as it is funny.”

February 9 – 17

American Premiere

Raphaëlle Boitel

When Angels Fall

Raphaëlle Boitel began her career as a young girl when she and her family ran away to join the circus. A mesmerizing contortionist and aerialist, Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* called her “truly ravishing.” Peak Performances introduced American audiences to Boitel’s boundless talents in 2016 with her luminous directorial debut “The Forgotten.” In her new work, “When Angels Fall,” her agile, athletic performers create a rugged, ethereal dreamscape at the crossroads of circus, dance, theater, and cinema. Everything once organic has been replaced by machines, and humans’ very existence depends on making themselves passive, conformist cogs in a massive engine controlled by the manipulators who watch from above. A heroic figure rises to resist the manipulators and bring fresh hope to the survivors. In Boitel’s world, aerial feats and theatrical invention are the building blocks for a work of fantasy, poetry, and hope.

March 28 – 31

East Coast Premiere

Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company

Elizabeth, the Dance by **Ann Carlson**

Imagine a world in which classical ballet, modern dance icon Martha Graham, and questions of cultural appropriation collide with clowns, basketball players, hula dance, and The Beatles, and you may begin to grasp the creative force, intelligence, and wit of choreographer Ann Carlson. In “Elizabeth, the Dance,” she pays homage to “the visionaries and teachers” of modern dance history. With movement both formal and physically awkward, deliciously surprising and joyfully restrained, Carlson has created an astonishing tribute to modern dance and to the joy of being human.

April 6

Shanghai Quartet

With **Haochen Zhang** (piano)

Since his gold medal win at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009, 27-year-old Chinese pianist Haochen Zhang has captivated audiences with his deep musical sensitivity, fearless imagination, and spectacular virtuosity. In 2017, he received the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, and in 2018, he made his Carnegie Hall solo recital debut. Zhang joins the Shanghai Quartet for Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Bright Sheng’s Dance Capriccio and the Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor, op. 34. Don’t miss this “fiery piano virtuoso” (San Francisco Chronicle) recognized as “a star in the making.” (*Seattle Times*)

April 11 – 14

World Premiere

Faye Driscoll

Thank You for Coming: Space

Choreographer Faye Driscoll returns to Peak Performances to stage the world premiere of the final part of her “Thank You for Coming” trilogy. She conceives “Space” as a joyful requiem for the myth of human progress. Performers reanimate historical and contemporary images, from scratches on a cave wall to snapshots in an Instagram feed, forcing us to consider how we are creating ourselves and our worlds when we make an image. The audience is invited to ponder the possibility that progress happens in the shape of spiral rather than a line in this tableau-vivant meets sing-along.

May 9 – 12

American Premiere

Romeo Castellucci

Democracy in America

Romeo Castellucci is one of Europe’s best-known directors, a firebrand known for productions that are as thought-provoking as they are visually stunning. He returns to Peak Performances with the American premiere of “Democracy in America,” freely inspired by the work of Alexis de Tocqueville. Castellucci conjures majorettes who stir the crowd’s enthusiasm for democracy in America, colonial settlers who confound the native Americans, and a puritan couple who struggle to farm a barren land. He asks us to consider the empty promises of a political system steeped in Biblical egalitarianism rather than the concept of tragedy so essential to ancient Greek democracy, the dangers of majority rule, and the inherent violence that springs from religious puritanism and territorial conquests. His challenging, soul-stirring brand of theatrical magic transposes these painful, profound ideas into an enticing, vibrant, celebratory work of art.