

WRITING THEIR OWN SONNET

New improvisational dance outfit, Tesseract Theatre Company, takes shape

Tesseract Theatre Company is a new star in the constellation of local performing arts, launching into orbit with a series of informal workshops.

“The same way that a choreographer or troupe constructs a dance inspired by a particular piece of music or to express a certain emotion or idea, the Tesseract Theatre Company constructs devised works based on inspiration, to communicate a greater truth,” says group co-founder Mia Vance.

In geometry, a tesseract is the four-dimensional analog of a cube. Book nerds know it as a way of wrinkling time, so you can travel without having to go the long way ‘round.

And this theatrical Tesseract burns brightly, inviting curiosity and building community.

“In dance, there is more than just the movement and in theatre there are more than just the lines — each uses its tools and techniques to communicate something deeper with its audience,” Vance says.

Unlike more traditional venues, Tesseract Theatre Company — founded by Vance, her husband Cullen Vance, Eric Braman, Taylor Freeman and Gypsy Prince — doesn’t begin with a script.

“We begin with movement technique. From this technique, characters emerge,” Vance says. “We place these characters together, improvisationally, and story emerges.”

Via a process that develops story through accessible experimentation, repetition and deep discussion, Tesseract gently moves towards character and plot formation.



TESSERACT THEATRE COMPANY REHEARSES

“This process is guided not by a director but by what we call a ‘butcher,’” Vance says. “The butcher is responsible for cutting away bits of the devised work that do not serve the story as a whole.”

Beyond that point, the rehearsal process becomes a little more typical.

“We continue repeating the piece we’ve developed, exploring and refining what we’ve created, adding in costumes, props and any other theatrical elements as needed, and voila! A brand new, never-before-seen devised performance is born,” Vance says.

Tesseract Theatre Company’s model for devising a piece of theatre is rooted in movement at its core. Using the Viewpoints techniques developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, the group explores the emotions, characters and relationships that will become the ingredients for sto-

ries and, ultimately, a theatrical performance.

“Tesseract Theatre Company is excited to continue offering free monthly public workshops at Amazon Community Center,” Vance says.

(Full disclosure: This writer took one of the workshops last summer, and had a blast.)

“These workshops offer an opportunity for members of the community to become familiar with the shared language of our movement-based improvisation techniques, and to become eligible to participate in future devised performance projects,” Vance says.

Catch the next free workshops noon to 1:30 pm Nov. 5 and Dec. 3, at Amazon Community Center; you can find the group on FaceBook, or email them at tesseracttheatreco@gmail.com. ■

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