Dance in QUANTITY

Founders of PUSH Physical Theatre stretch perceived limits

NANCY O'DONNELL

It's hard to describe exactly what Darren and Heather Stevenson do, but more and more people are wanting to — and still unable to describe it.

They call PUSH Physical Theatre — an artistic dance aesthetic that has been described as somewhere between fine art sculpture and the film The Matrix. The digital effects, only live and without wires or the benefit of dance.

Their inspiration can come from unusual places. Recently, PUSH performed High edge, a dance accompanied by the life and artwork from the U.S. government's notorious Hudson River landing.

Later this month, they'll hit Cowell Theatre Center's Harvest for the world premiere of Dance The Shape of Evil. Then they'll be on a different sort of stage in November when they receive the Artist of the Year Award from the Arts Council for Greater Rochester.

Yes, after a decade in existence, PUSH has definitely arrived. But with PUSH, PUSH runs its first of Georgia's Heaven- stages for the world premier of Dance: The Shape of Evil.

Darwin. It has also come full circle. It was a production of the December in Darren's native England, when he was 30 years old, that first inspired this project. It was a production of the December in Darren's native England, when he was 30 years old, that first inspired this project.

"I was terrified. And I was amazed that people just walking around a stage could actually move," he says.

The plaza they play in Georgia was adapted for dance by the couple from the play's original set design by friend Danny Hoskins. Because of PUSH's particular art form, Stevenson considers it more cinematic than theatrical.

Dance was adapted for dance by the Stevenson from a play written by actor friend Danny Hoskins.

If you go

What: Dance: The Shape of Evil.

When: Oct. 21 and Nov. 11

7 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Where: Live streaming from Cowell Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd.

Cost: $20 (some discounts available)

For information: (505) 317-5187 or www.pushtheatre.org

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"Instead of a codified set of dance movements, we start with the idea and ask which movement fits around it, or all of the possible ways a body can move."

Darron Stevenson

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to get coffee at midnight or last thing at night and talk.

But really, they can't even leave the work completely behind. "A painter can paint the back drop. A composer can compose the music. A dancer can dance the choreography. A designer's body is in the instrument. 26 hours a day."

Darren says, "No idea what you eat, your posture. You're building your body and you're opening your eyes of how you're holding your shoulders or your hip."

O'Donnell is a Rochester-based freelance writer.