

For immediate release

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## INVENTIVE NYC THEATER GROUP RETURNS WITH TWO NEW SHOWS

**ROMEO AND JULIET, RAMBO GIVEN FRESH TWISTS; PUBLIC TALK INCLUDED IN WEEKLONG RUN**

**"AS UNEXPECTEDLY MOVING AS IT IS IMPROBABLY ENTERTAINING."**—*The New York Times* on Nature Theater's *Romeo and Juliet*

An ever-inventive theater group garnering increasing international critical and audience acclaim, New York's **Nature Theater of Oklahoma** returns to the Wexner Center with two different productions **May 18–23**, both **co-produced by the Wexner Center**: its version of *Romeo and Juliet*, using amusingly awry—and verbatim—retellings of the Bard's timeless romantic tale; and *Rambo Solo*, featuring one actor's detailed recounting the story of vengeful Vietnam vet John Rambo, live and on video.



A scene from Nature Theater's *Romeo and Juliet*.  
Photo by Kerstin Joensson

**EVENT INFORMATION:** Nature Theater of Oklahoma performs *Romeo and Juliet* (run time approximately 90 minutes) **May 18–20 at 8 pm** in the Wexner Center's **Black Box on Mershon Stage**. *Rambo Solo* (run time approximately 95 minutes) follows **May 21–22 at 8 pm** and **May 23 at 2 pm** in the **Wexner Center Performance Space**. Tickets for each show are \$16 for the general public, \$13 for members, and \$10 for students. See both shows and save (\$28/\$22/\$16 for both shows). Call (614) 292-3535 or visit [wexarts.org](http://wexarts.org) for tickets and more information.

For *Romeo and Juliet*, to be performed **May 18–20**

in the Wexner Center's

Black Box on Mershon Stage, company directors Pavol Liska and Kelly Copper asking friends and colleagues, "Can you tell me the story of *Romeo and Juliet*?" The result is nine wildly divergent recollections of Shakespeare's world of desire, royal intrigue, and doomed love. As much about how our memories work and the creative leaps our minds take in the absence of clear recall as it is about the iconic tragic narrative at its center, *Romeo and Juliet* is, as *The New York*

*Times* wrote in December, "The star-crossed story...twisted into a big, gnarly knot in this flat-out hilarious riff on that revered classic."

*Rambo Solo*, to be staged **May 21–23**

in the Wexner Center Performance Space, uses the novel *First Blood* as its source material rather than the more widely known macho epic film that starred Sly Stallone. Nature Theater



Video stills from the triptych accompanying *Rambo Solo*. Image courtesy of Nature Theater of Oklahoma

directors Liska and Copper instigated the work by prompting actor and collaborator Zachary Oberzan to tell his version of one of his favorite stories over the phone. Oberzan reenacts this retelling on stage while his performance is accompanied by a triptych of videos that Liska and Copper staged in the actor's cramped apartment using his personal belongings as props. *Variety* praised the show: "Nature Theater of Oklahoma has forged a sharp, witty, and utterly distinctive performance style and have hit the mother lode in *Rambo Solo*...performed with hilarious conviction."

## RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

In addition to organizing public presentations of contemporary work in the performing, media, and visual arts, the Wexner Center actively seeks to provide opportunities for interaction among visiting artists, students, faculty, and staff of The Ohio State University, and members of the community. These activities and associated discussions led by authorities in many fields offer our audiences a better understanding of the creative process and the work of artists engaged by the Wexner Center.

To that end, while in Columbus, Nature Theater will **lead a discussion with the public** and members of the OSU Theater Department on **Thursday, May 20 at 12:30 pm** in the Wexner Center's Film/Video Theater. Attendees are encouraged to have seen Nature Theater's *Romeo and Juliet* prior to the discussion.

With Ohio State involved in a multiple-year partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Wexner Center will be working with contemporary ensembles that, like Nature Theater of Oklahoma, value these classic plays as points of departure for their own dramatic work.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Nature Theater of Oklahoma is an OBIE Award-winning New York-based performance group under the direction of Pavol Liska and Kelly Copper. The group—named after the reference in the Kafka novel *Amerika*—first appeared at the Wexner Center in 2008 with *Poetics: A Ballet Brut* and *No Dice*. For more info, visit [oktheater.org](http://oktheater.org).

## EVENT AND SEASON SUPPORT

Nature Theater of Oklahoma's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Rambo Solo* are productions of **International Summerfestival / Kampnagel Hamburg and Salzburger Festspiele** in co-production with **Kaaitheater Brussels, Workspace Brussels, Buda Kunstcentrum, Noorderzon Festival, Grand Theatre Groningen**, and the **Wexner Center for the Arts**.

Wexner Center for the Arts is a Partner of the **National Performance Network (NPN)**. This project is made possible in part by support from the NPN Performance Residency Program. Major contributors of NPN include the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation**, the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **MetLife Foundation**, and the **Nathan Cummings Foundation**.

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2009–10 performing arts season is generously provided by the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. Accommodations provided by **The Blackwell Inn**. All performing arts programs and events also receive support from the Corporate **Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation** and **Wexner Center members**, as well as from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council, The Columbus Foundation, Nationwide Foundation**, and the **Ohio Arts Council**.

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