

wexner center
for the arts

For Immediate Release

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**RISING THEATER TROUPE ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE
TWISTS GREEK CLASSIC *THE BACCHAE***

"One of the best shows this year . . . fantastically inventive and strange."—*New York Times*

Highway to Tomorrow, a wildly warped funhouse mirror view of Euripides' classic *The Bacchae*, will be performed by **Elevator Repair Service** at the Wexner Center Performance Space on **February 28–March 3**. This marks ERS's second trip to the Wexner Center; the troupe was here in 2000 with *Total Fictional Lie*.

ERS's work combines elements of slapstick comedy, high-tech audio, low-tech set design, obscure historical events, both literary and found texts, found objects, discarded furniture, and the group's signature choreographic style. Its version of *The Bacchae* is set in St. Louis, instead of ancient Thebes, with Dionysus's godlike presence at times portrayed by an omniscient, bug-eyed puppet made from a chrome thermos bottle. There are Bacchanalian dances displaying ERS's hilarious "zombie aerobics" choreography, seers influenced as much by Cheech and Chong as by divine vision, and courtiers whose royal robes are fashioned from plastic to-go packs of soy sauce." ERS's slapstick greatly amplifies the more absurd aspects of the Olympian pantheon and the mythology-driven plotlines of this Greek tragedy.

THE COMPANY

Elevator Repair Service has been appearing on New York's downtown performance circuit since 1991, cultivating a loyal following. The majority of the group's 15 core performers, writers, directors, and designers first met as undergraduates at Yale University. Upon moving to New York, several members lived together in a loft and began creating ensemble performance work. They now have eight full-length original pieces created through extended periods of collaboration. Said Elevator Repair Service's John Collins in *Bomb*: "We're always saying we want people to laugh, but

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don't want them to know why they're laughing. We like a kind of humor that suggests something crazy, complicated, and mysterious.”

The *Village Voice* has called Elevator Repair Service “the best young performance group in town,” while *New York Newsday* has called the group “wacko enough to be truly inspired.”

Elevator Repair Service previously visited the Wexner Center in 2000 with their play *Total Fictional Lie*, in which the group skewered our culture of pervasive hype with a text based on monologues from documentary films.

For further information on Elevator Repair Service visit www.elevator.org.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES

While at the Wexner Center, members of Elevator Repair Service will meet with students from Ohio State University's Department of Theatre to discuss their unique approach to developing new work. At this session ERS will discuss *Highway to Tomorrow's* text source, Euripides' classic Greek *The Bacchae*, and the smash-and-grab methods they used to realize new dimensions in staging this timeless tragedy.

EVENT SUPPORT

The Wexner Center for the Arts is a member of the **National Performance Network** comprised of arts organizations located throughout the United States. The NPN and this presentation of Elevator Repair Service have been made possible with major funding from the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation** and the **National Endowment for the Arts** (a federal agency). This presentation funded in part by the **National Dance Project** of the **New England Foundation for the Arts**, with lead funding from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. Additional funding is provided by **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, **Philip Morris Companies Inc.**, **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts**, and the **British Council**.

CALENDAR INFORMATION for Elevator Repair Service

Description: Downtown New York theater company performs twisted version of *The Bacchae*.

Dates and times: Four performances: Thursday–Saturday, February 28–March 2 at 8 pm, and Sunday, March 3 at 3 pm

Location: Wexner Center Performance Space, 1871 N. High St. at 15th Avenue on the campus of The Ohio State University.

Tickets: \$16 general public / \$14 Wexner Center members, students

Ticket outlets: Wexner Center Ticket Office, 614/292-3535; Ticketmaster outlets, 614/431-3600.

Public information: www.wexarts.org or 614/292-3535.

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Images of Elevator Repair Service available upon request.

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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