



wexner center for the arts
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESENTS

NATURE THEATER OF OKLAHOMA

Romeo and Juliet

TUE-THU, MAY 18-20 | 8 PM



Rambo Solo

FRI-SAT, MAY 21-22 | 8 PM

SUN, MAY 23 | 2 PM



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joining us at tonight's
performance.

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out our groundbreaking **exhibitions, films, theater, dance,
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POLICIES

Latecomers will be seated during a break so as not to disturb other
patrons. At some artists' requests, late seating will not be permitted.
Taking photographs, filming, or operating recording devices during
the performance is strictly prohibited. Please turn off signal watches,
pagers, and cell phones before the performance begins. All programs
are subject to change. Sorry, no refunds or exchanges unless an event
is canceled.

GENERAL SUPPORT FOR
THE WEXNER CENTER



PRESENTS

Nature Theater of Oklahoma

Romeo and Juliet

TUE-THU, MAY 18-20 | 8 PM

Black Box on Mershon Stage

Rambo Solo

FRI-SAT, MAY 21-22 | 8 PM

SUN, MAY 23 | 2 PM

Performance Space

CREDITS

Nature Theater of Oklahoma's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Rambo Solo* are productions
of **International Summerfestival / Kampnagel Hamburg** and **Salzburger
Festspiele** in coproduction with **Kaaithheater Brussels, Workspace Brussels,
Buda Kunstcentrum, Noorderzon Festival, Grand Theatre Groningen, and
Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University**.

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2009-10 performing arts season is
generously provided by the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**.

Wexner Center for the Arts is an NPN 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
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the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

Accommodations are provided by **The Blackwell**.

All performing arts programs and events also receive support from the
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MAJOR PERFORMING ARTS
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PHOTOS: KERSTIN JOHANSON

PROGRAM

**Nature Theater of Oklahoma
*Romeo and Juliet***

Featuring..... **Anne Gridley
Robert M. Johanson
Elisabeth Conner**

Conceived and directed by..... **Pavol Liska
Kelly Copper**

From conversations with..... **Linda Copper
Eliotte Crowell
Anne Gridley
Teresa Gridley
Jo Liegerot
Robert M. Johanson
Zachary Oberzan
Kristin Worrall**

Design by..... **Peter Nigrini**

Production managers..... **Robert Saenz De Viteri
Gabel Eiben**

Please join us for a **Q&A session with Nature Theater of Oklahoma** on **Thursday, May 20 12:30–1:30 PM** in the Wexner Center’s Film/Video Theater. This session is free and open to all who attend either the Tuesday or Wednesday evening performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.

PROGRAM NOTES

*“Can you tell me the story of **Romeo and Juliet**?”*

Nature Theater of Oklahoma’s take on this classic tale is the result of a series of phone calls from directors Pavol Liska and Kelly Copper to friends and colleagues who were asked to tell, in their own words, the story of *Romeo and Juliet* from beginning to end. This one-of-a-kind performance wanders onto unexpected paths because no one they speak to seems to remember the exact plot.

Who loved whom first? Did they have sex?
Who killed Mercutio?

How did these star-crossed lovers ever get
so crossed?

Versions of the story compound in an array of competing scenarios as the participants try to invent themselves out of their own narrative blind alleys. In the end, far from recounting the identical story over and over, the participants radically reinvent *Romeo and Juliet* in their own voluptuous detail. Characters and scenes are created that never existed in the original, for example, Romeo’s flowery, flourished friend “Eurysthepis” and the mysterious scene where Juliet is serenaded by Romeo while being bathed by her nurse.

Where memory fails, a kind of necessary creativity steps in to fill the void. What we are left with is a highly personal and original series of *Romeo and Juliets*, pervaded with feeling and rife with thoughts about love, need, and the complex nature of self-sacrifice.

PROGRAM

Nature Theater of Oklahoma *Rambo Solo*

Featuring.....**Zachary Oberzan**
Conceived and directed by.....**Pavol Liska**
Kelly Copper
From conversations with.....**Zachary Oberzan**
Design by.....**Peter Nigrini**
Production managers.....**Robert Saenz De Viteri**
Gabel Eiben

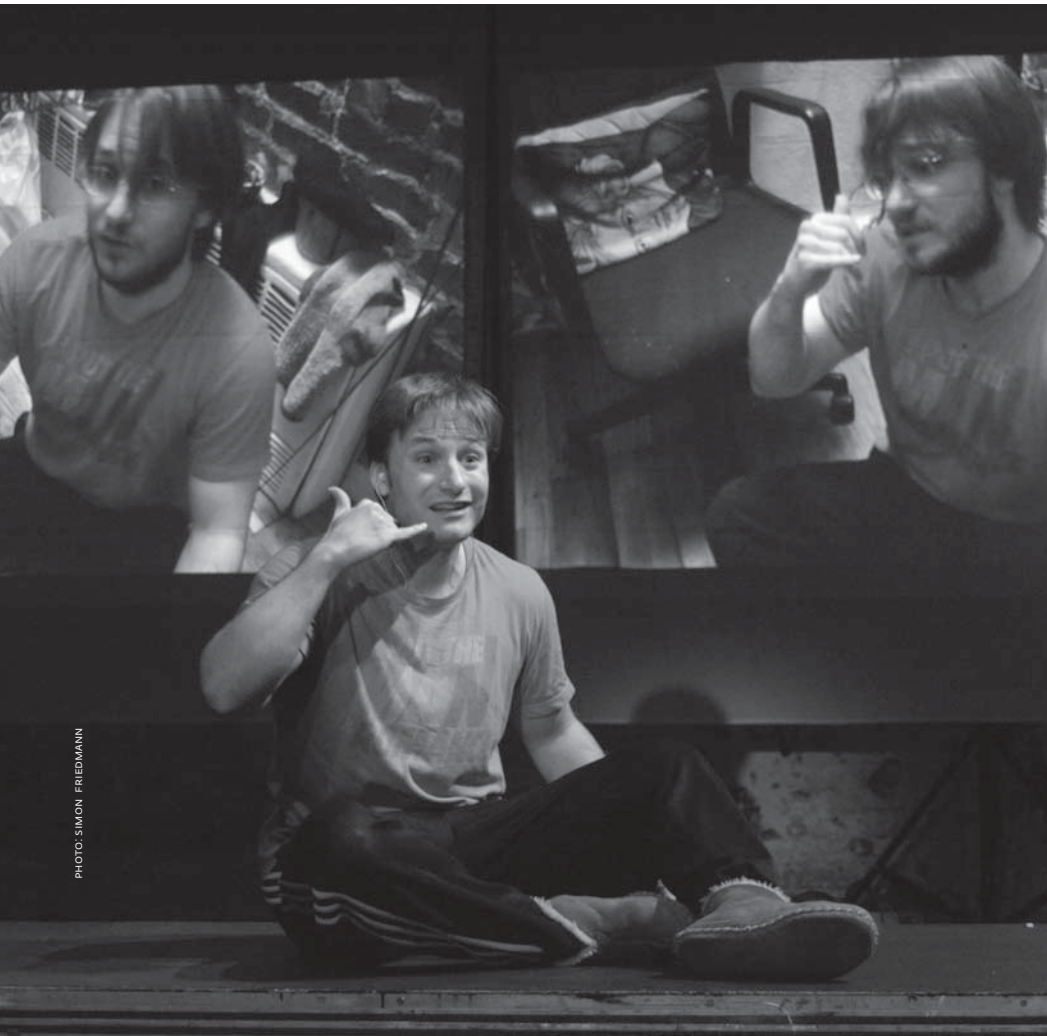


PHOTO: SIMON FRIEDMANN

PROGRAM NOTES

*“So you want me to tell you the story of **First Blood**?
Where should I begin...?”*

Nature Theater of Oklahoma actor Zachary Oberzan has had a deep connection with the story of *Rambo: First Blood* his entire life. He first saw the Hollywood blockbuster starring Sylvester Stallone at age ten during one magical weekend spent watching a free preview of the HBO movie channel in his home in Saco, Maine.

Zack knows the story almost by heart—but can he navigate all the perilous transformations of his own obsession with it?

Staged as a one-man war and set in the dark heart of Zack’s tiny 220-square-foot New York studio apartment, *Rambo Solo* takes one man’s private passion to its absolute limits as he struggles to adequately recount the entire *First Blood* story as he remembers it in all its sweaty athletic detail. Throughout the piece, the narrative voice floats somewhere just out of synchronization with the visuals. The sound of a faucet, for example, is heard a moment after we see the water run. Like a bad audio dubbing, everything is just a bit off track.

As the work progresses, it morphs into a complex examination of the versions. The focus shifts from the actual narrative to the slippage between various retellings and the distance between the ideal and the real. The deeper Zack goes in his pursuit of the story, the more these various versions begin to slide as Rambo’s backstory becomes his own. Suddenly and without warning, the endlessly digressing plot twists become a source of personal revelation. Along the way, we stop to ponder issues of character, ownership, psychology, realism, acting, and, ultimately, adaptation.



ABOUT THE COMPANY

“Personnel is being hired for the Theater in Oklahoma! The Great Nature Theater of Oklahoma is calling you! It’s calling you today only! If you miss this opportunity, there will never be another! Anyone thinking of his future, your place is with us! All welcome! Anyone who wants to be an artist, step forward! We are the theater that has a place for everyone, everyone in his place! If you decide to join us, we congratulate you here and now! But hurry, be sure not to miss the midnight deadline! We shut down at midnight, never to reopen! Accused be anyone who doesn’t believe us!”—Franz Kafka, *Amerika*

Nature Theater of Oklahoma is an OBIE Award–winning New York–based performance group under the direction of Pavol Liska and Kelly Copper. Since *Poetics: a ballet brut*, our first dance piece created as an ensemble, Nature Theater of Oklahoma has been devoted to making the work we don’t know how to make, putting ourselves in impossible situations, and working from our own ignorance and unease. We strive to create an unsettling live situation that demands total presence from everyone in the room. We use the readymade material around us, found space, overheard speech, and observed gesture, and through extreme formal manipulation, and superhuman effort, we effect in our work a shift in the perception of everyday reality that extends beyond the site of performance and into the world in which we live.

Visit oktheater.org for more information.

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.

While at the Wexner Center, members of Nature Theater of Oklahoma met with students from Ohio State’s Department of Theatre, as well as interested audience members from the general public to answer questions and discuss the approach to creating their production *Romeo and Juliet*. With the growing relationship between Ohio State and the Royal Shakespeare Company (for more information, visit artsinitiative.osu.edu), and associated civic interest in the master playwright’s legacy, the Wexner Center is programming a series of works by contemporary theater artists whose work is sparked by their fresh takes on Shakespeare’s plays. The opportunity to learn more about their concepts and creative process at discussion sessions like this one provides a larger context for understanding both the work of these ensembles and the lasting value of Shakespeare as a cultural touchstone.

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List reflects annual gifts and pledges of \$25,000 or more, as of January 1, 2010.

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