

CSULB Theatre Arts Department presents:

ELEMENTS

Written and Directed By
Ezra LeBank and Rebecca Nakano

Scenic Design
Merve Çaydere Dobai

Stage Manager
Brittni Finley

Lighting Design
Kit Baumer

Costume Design
Kathryn McGaughey

Sound Design
Matthew Barabasch

Makeup Design
**Keren Ochoa
Cassie Shima**

Cast

(in order of appearance)

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| Sally..... | Kim Pernia |
| Avi..... | Alexander Romero |
| Icy..... | Kayla Manuel |
| Smokey..... | Malik Proctor |
| Stormy..... | Cynthia Price |
| Breezy..... | Melvin Alas |
| Rainy..... | Daniela Naranjo |
| Steamy..... | Jaime Martinez |
| Muddy..... | Shane Monaghan |
| Swing..... | Stacey Patino |

November 12 - 19, 2016

This show contains strobe lighting and theatrical haze.

There will be no intermission.

The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited.

Production Crew

Assistant Stage Manager
Josie Austin

Production Assistants
Mandingo Eldridge
Rosalie Helling
Marissa Martin
Gabey Medina
Ashley Trutanich

Company Manager
Rebecca Swartz

Assistant Scenic Designer/
Props Designer
Paige Bossier

Scenic Crew
Kendra Andrews
Daisy Montalvo
Yoon Park
Brenda Qujada
Keanu Regan

Programmer
Brett Bahrke

Assistant Lighting Designer
Kelsey McGill

Electrics Crew
Steph Argent
Ariana Carter
Jared Crisostomo
Max Garcia
Jasmine Vang

Assistant Costume
Designer
Lesley Su

Cutter
Lalena Hutton

Stitchers
Jazmin Araujo
Maria Huber
Amanda Martin
Lesley Su

MFA Costume Crew
Supervisors
Amanda Martin
Lesley Su

Costume Crew
Florentino Carrillo
Mia D'Kari
Edrick Dee
Gabriel Ducharme
Daniel Fuentes
Thomas Oglesby
Kyla Quinn

Makeup Crew
Brendon Backman
Haley Fenninger
Smantha Focarino
Mark Hay
Scarlet (Sang Ah) Kim
Naoi Sakuma

Company Photographer
Kip Polakoff

Special Thanks

Liliana Frandsen, Florentino Carillo, Mark Piller, Taylor Casas, Shanti Pillai, Jeff Janisheski, Rebecca Bryant, Turner Munch, and THEA 418 for support developing Elements including: Karina Cervantes, Annalise Diadema, Robert Hart, Jianyi Hu, Ian Martinez, Tyler Martinez, Stacey Patino, Sarah Regli, Brittney Rodriguez, Marcos Garrido, Edgar Yudkevich & The Cast

COMING SOON!

CSULB Theatre Arts Department



December 2 to December 11

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

BY

JOHN WEBSTER

DIRECTED BY
ROB CLARE

Elements Written and Directed by Ezra LeBank and Rebecca Nakano

Interviewer: Kevin Johnson

Interviewee: Ezra LeBank

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I'm the Head of Movement in the Theatre Department and I teach acrobatics and physical theatre and create a fusion that we like to call acrobatic theatre.

Is Elements a spawn of what is taught in class?

Yeah, in the classes in the theatre department we teach a variety of different approaches through improvisation, acrobatic structures, and collaborative creative processes. Elements is a combination of all of those things, even a little bit of stage combat.

What is the overarching story of elements?

It's a relatively large scale acrobatic and physical theatre show with a simple story. It's about two people named Sally and Avi who live these mundane routine lives. These elements that represent earth, water, air and fire literally disrupt and infiltrate their lives in order to shake them and wake them up. It creates a really fun platform to create a nice simple story that I think is fun to tell in a really amazing way.

What are the moments that happen where we start to realize that the elements are coming into their lives?

The way the story exists is that we enter a day in a life of these two people. They wake up, they go to work, they have lunch, they go home, they go to sleep, they do all of these basic things. In this routine we start to see those different places as the elements start to disrupt or taunt or tease these people. The Elements pull them out with increasing intensity until it's kind of a full blown war because these people are resistant and don't want things to change. They feel like it's something they want to go away. There is this sort of rising tension until it eventually hits a fever pitch. Then they give up and realize that it's actually really incredible and are able to befriend these elements, allowing their imagination and their dreams to live in a way that they couldn't when they were stuck in their cubicles.

Why did you want to tell this particular story through movement?

Well, so, this is everything. I like to tell stories through movement and so this was an interesting story in part because I think it's really fun to use our connection to the natural world, the elements; they're very physical and very dynamic. By allowing us to become those things we invite a whole range of physical story telling so that we can play in a universe where we make the rules the way we want them to be. They don't have to be realistic or normal; they can be as surreal, as supernatural as we want, And that allows us to create a story in the movement, vocabularies [that] allow us to create a story that lives beyond and outside of our normal realm of reality and of our expectations of what does and can happen.

You and Rebecca Nakano created *Elements* together, what inspired this idea?

It started actually when Rebecca was a student here. She created a piece called *Wind* that was a short piece about someone who had a letter they were writing and it got blown away in the wind. They chase after the letter as it gets tossed and turned until finally it makes its way to the person it was intended for. I thought it was a really compelling and one of the strongest undergraduate pieces I've ever seen. As I was thinking of things to make, I wanted to invite Rebecca to create something together. We were talking about this idea of expanding on the notion of the elements and it just sort of seemed like the thing to do. It also fit in the way of playing with notions of climate change, our relationship to the natural world, and how we ignore it in a sense to our peril. Allowing us to investigate that relationship in a very personal and dynamic way without being didactical is a lot of fun and feels appropriate to the state of the world that we're in right now.

Was there a process in seeing how these elements affect your daily life and wanting to put them in the piece? What do actors bring from their everyday lives?

Certainly we've invited each of the actors to do so, even the actors who play elements. We've given each of them an individual character; there's Muddy, Steamy, Icy, Stormy, Rainy, and so on. Between their own personality and the personality they find of their association to those words and ideas, they're invited to explore the specific properties of what kind of element they are or what their contribution is to that. It does feel like while they're both an ensemble that is the elements or become the elements together, they also play an individual part in the story and have moments when they can access that and play with those ideas.

What is a process like in rehearsal?

We tend to give the actors scenarios or pieces that they can create something from. For example, there will be a scene and I'll want for them to have a certain tempo, have a particular story moment or particular relationship that happens, or I'll want them to create a certain piece. So maybe we're working in an office and I want to explore water coolers so I'll say 'how would you make a water cooler out of your bodies and the water cooler should be able to pour water, it should be able to break, it should be able to have opinions about things, can you make a water cooler that can do that?' and I'll send them off and they'll make a bunch of versions of that and I'll look at them and sometimes they'll do something wonderful and I'll say 'great, let's use that!' and sometimes they'll do something that has a piece of something interesting and Rebecca and I will say 'oh great! Do that again but now do it like this and now can you do this and can you make it this way.' Then we have a conversation and sometimes they'll do something and it will inspire Rebecca or I or both of us to go a different direction but we'll take that information and then take it in the direction that we become interested in because of what happened. It's very much a give and take, constantly, and so everyone is part of the creative process. I find that when people are performing material that they intuitively do, they do it better than material you try to put on them. When I try to set material on people then it becomes a process of trying to be more like me. If I can find a way of capturing who they are and how they move and incorporate other aspects that might increase the acrobatic nature of something, the visual story telling of it, or how it connects to another piece, we have a much more organic or a lively sense of self in the performance. So that's what we do, every day, piece by piece.

How do you think this piece affects us so that we could be more reactive to the elements around us in our everyday lives?

The thing that I think is really important and I've been doing a lot of work with is sustainability and integrating understanding about your local bio region into an educational format and into our personal lives. Additionally, we feel an intimate relationship between our natural surroundings and ourselves. If we live a life that is constantly boarded by man-made things, roads, buildings, doors and so forth that don't actually connect to the natural place, place based learning for example, then we don't really develop an investment in taking care of that place because we don't really know what that is. So the thing about the show that I hope people can take away, in one sense, is simply to note that if you don't pay attention to the elements to the natural world then they will take it out on you eventually and they will win. You can't beat them as much as you might want to; it's not a fair fight and they're going to come out ahead. But the second part of that is that when we immerse ourselves in the natural world I think that we find opportunities to feel more at one with the world that we live in, more tuned to ourselves and to who we are as human beings and into the changing natural landscape that we're experiencing. So it isn't particularly about telling people to do anything, it's more about just encouraging awareness and that if we pay attention then we'll behave differently and look at things through a different lens. That's the hope on some level. Beyond that, there's a certain level of finding space to explore and play and feel this sort of connection between the natural world and us.