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Cleveland Public Theatre's Big Box series gives new works a forum

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Time once again for Cleveland's premiere festival of brand-new works: never before tested, gutty and brainy.

It is called Cleveland Public Theatre's Big Box series, and it begins Friday, Jan. 14.

CPT executive artistic director Raymond Bobgan hands over the keys to 6415 Detroit Ave. to a group of artists who have the run of the place for a week, culminating in a weekend of three performances. The series runs through Sunday, March 6.

This year, the most ambitious yet, will see shows by Cleveland State University students and recent graduates, as well as out-of-town artists drawn by CPT's reputation as an avant-garde theater that welcomes risk taking.

Shows are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 3 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$15. Go to cptonline.org or call 216-631-2727.

Week 1: Jan. 14-16 "Ya Mama!"

Written and performed by Nina Domingue and directed by Cathy Hartenstein, this one-woman show explores the life of an artist, wife, mother, Christian and black woman.

"**She Cried at the Circus.**" Jeff Glover writes a story about a woman who discovers at a young age that she has power beyond dreams, wealth beyond imagination and presence that inspires fear.

Week 2: Jan. 21-23 "Soliciting for Change." Bitch, terrorist, dreamer. Those are some of the names people call playwright/performer Molly Andrews-Hinders as she goes after corrupt corporations and advocates for working-class families. Directed by James Langa and Erin McCardle.



Cleveland Public Theatre

Dancer and choreographer Kenya Woods performs her "Through Her Eyes," which will be presented Feb. 11-13, as part of Cleveland Public Theatre's eight-week Big Box festival.

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"Seppuku." Written and performed by Melissa Crum and BC Miles, this piece weighs the differences between suicide and ritual suicide. Directed by James Kosmatka.

Week 3: Jan. 28-30 "Mother/Tongue." A family's dysfunction surfaces as a workaholic mom obsessively makes Julia Child's beef tongue, disappears for hours and speaks French. Written by Claire Robinson May and directed by Danielle Hisey.

Week 4: Feb. 4-6 Everything Is Everything Project. Two plays, "A Sleep" and "A Wake," written and performed by Val Kozlenko and Eric Perusek, explore what it is to be truly awake or to sleepwalk through life. A third play, "30 Awkward Minutes With Pat and Glenn," written and performed by Renee Schilling and Lew Wallace, imagines two people trapped in the void of unreality.

"Sick F- - -." John Robert Armstrong (of Indiana) will be directed by Noe Montez (who recently moved to Cleveland from Indiana) in a play by Paul Shoulberg (of Kansas) about a terminal cancer patient dealing with resentment, regret and heartache.

Week 5: Feb. 11-13 "Through Her Eyes." Choreographed and performed by Kenya Woods, this dance piece is about three women finding grace through being broken by fears and frustrations, crisis and the job of motherhood.

"Fast Forward-Rewind-Stop." The Marquez Dance Project does a piece choreographed by Jennifer Sandoval about the pursuit of gender equilibrium.

Week 6: Feb. 18-20 "Sonic Cinema." FiveOne Music performs a fusion of local films and new music composed by Michael Bratt and Jeremy Allen. **Week 7: Feb. 25-27 "Cowboy Poet."** A country musical by Deborah Magid, directed by Douglas Farren, looks at a cowboy poet, a WASP socialite and an ex-con who throw a benefit gala for adult literacy in New Mexico.

Week 8: March 4-6 "Voice Over." Conceived and directed by Pandora Robertson, this piece asks, "Who am I?," "Do other people know who I really am?" and "Will I ever be the same person again?"

"Side Effects May Include." Former "Seinfeld" writer Marc Jaffe and Cleveland Heights playwright Eric Coble write about a man with a lovely wife, a lovely kid and a lovely life, until Parkinson's disease and the side effects of the medicines that treat it invade his home. Eric Schmeidl directs Nick Koesters.

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