



[ physical theatre ]

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## **PUSH PHYSICAL THEATRE DEBUTS AT WINNIPEG FRINGE**

### ***Generic Male: Just What We Need, Another Show About Men***

**Winner of Critics' Choice Best Show Award at Orlando Fringe**

**Outstanding Overall Production, Best of Fest Venue #1,**

**& Volunteers' Choice at Ottawa Fringe**

*"...Like Cirque du Soleil meets Samuel Beckett with a dash of Monty Python..."*

*--Orlando Weekly*

*Macho competition, absurd immaturity, touching emotion, all displayed through incredible movements."*

*--Apartment613*

*"This is the type of inventive, thought-provoking, relevant art the Fringe was made for."*

*--Orlando Sentinel*

Rochester, NY – Rochester's internationally renowned **PUSH Physical Theatre** will perform for the first time at the **Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival** (July 13-24). The award-winning company brings its two-person **Generic Male: Just What We Need, Another Show About Men** to the **Rachel Browne Theatre** (Venue #8) in the McKim Building (211 Bannatyne Ave.) for nine performances: **Wednesday, July 13 at 8 PM; Saturday, July 16 at 1:15 PM; Sunday, July 17 at 2:30 PM; Monday, July 18 at 4:30 PM; Wednesday, July 20 at 6:15 PM; Thursday, July 21 at 8 PM; Friday, July 22 at 9:45 PM; Saturday, July 23 at 12:45 PM; and Sunday, July 24 at 11 AM.** The one-hour show suggests Parental Guidance (Mild Language)\*, and General Admission tickets are \$12 + service fees, available here: <https://www.winnipegfringe.com/performer-detail.aspx?kw=PUSH+Physical+Theatre>.

The official description of the show states: "Explosive, athletic, physical theatre ruined by a tragic lack of understanding. PUSH Physical Theatre, called "a perfect metaphor-in-motion" by Rochester's CITY Newspaper and "a rare treat" by NY Theatre Guide, creates a masculinity satire by two well-meaning fools who argue, dance, and desperately cling to the status-quo. Are we just watching a couple of petty idiots or is this the most insightful piece of theatre of the 21st century? No."

*Generic Male*, featuring PUSH Founding Artistic Co-Director **Darren Stevenson** and Creative Director **Ashley Jones**, made its world premiere at the 2021 **Rochester Fringe Festival**.

"*Generic Male* is loaded with comedy...yet strong messages begin creeping into the loose narrative," reviewed Rochester PBS affiliate WXXI's Arts & Life Editor Jeff Spevak. "The Generic Male has been shattered. To a standing ovation."

This send-up of masculinity raises some serious questions.

“*Generic Male* begins a serious journey with a comically absurd premise: men apologizing for their show about masculinity before it even starts,” explains Stevenson. “Hilarious hijinks ensue as they examine the thoughts and assumptions that go unquestioned until they are spoken aloud. The show is about being powerful, who owns that power, and what that does. But it’s also about fathers and sons, war and death, and...James Bond. We hope it will empower people to speak up and begin to have the conversation that our characters can’t quite seem to engage in.”

Like all of PUSH’s work, *Generic Male* began as an improvisation and progressed through years of refinement and audience input, much of it from very non-generic males.

“Getting feedback from audiences is a very important part of our creative process,” explains Jones, who – like Stevenson – hails from the U.K., where physical theatre is much more prevalent. “Our entire process is collaborative rather than the more common practice of a choreographer “setting” their work on a company.”

\*From PUSH: “Can you bring kids? Probably. There are some swears and one awkward conversation about consent. If it were a movie, it would probably be a PG-13. The underlying message for boys and girls is positive and thoughtful. There will be lots to talk about on the ride home.”

### More reviews:

“I can pretty much guarantee you’ve never seen an acrobatic clowning show as cleverly complex as *Generic Male*...This pair doesn’t merely break through the fourth wall; they tear it down entirely and dance merrily on the rubble.” (Seth Kubersky, *Orlando Weekly*, [full review here.](#))

“Darren Stevenson and Ashley Jones of PUSH Physical Theatre combine playfulness, theater of the absurd, social commentary, strength and grace to create a mesmerizing look at nothing less than the patriarchy. But this is no rant; this is true art.” (Matthew J. Palm, *Orlando Sentinel*)

This show stays with you—you’ll find yourself turning over moments in your mind hours or even days later...This is definitely another Fringe favourite for me, and it’s no wonder it’s award winning and has already traveled to other Fringes around the globe.” (Samara Caplan & Laura Gauthier, [apt613.ca](#))

### More about the performers:

**Darren Stevenson** (Founding Artistic Co-Director, PUSHer), born in England and now a proud U.S. citizen, met PUSH co-founder and wife Heather Stevenson during their studies at The Center in St. Louis. Both went on to study with Several Dancers Core in Atlanta and The Goldston & Johnston School for Mimes at Kenyon College. “Darren Stevenson has developed a physical ability that makes the art look easy,” remarked Greg Goldston. In Atlanta, the Stevensons founded The Studio School of the Arts, a community training center. In 2000, they relocated to Rochester, NY, where PUSH Physical Theatre was born. Rather than relying on their trained movement vocabulary, PUSH was formed from a shared belief that each performer should bring their unique life experiences to the stage. Darren has also spoken about PUSH’s unique creative process at TEDx Rochester.

**Ashley Jones** (PUSHer) is a physical actor, deviser, and director. He trained at Rose Bruford College and Academia Teatro Dimitri before going on to train with Phillipe Gaulier and Angela De Castro in theatrical clowning. As a physical performer, Ashley has worked and trained with international theatre companies Gecko Physical Theatre, The David Glass Ensemble, Nonsuch Theatre, and Frantic Assembly. His recent devised work includes: *LifeHack* (2019), *Intotheclouds* (2018), *The Party’s Over* (2017), *Eclipse* (2017), and *The Russian Play* (2017).

Directing credits include *Rite of Passage* (2015, 2016), *EnCircled* (2019), and *TILT* (2019). Ashley would like to thank the generous support of the Genesee Valley Council on the Arts.

**About PUSH Physical Theatre:** Founded in Rochester, NY in 2000 by husband-and-wife team, Darren and Heather Stevenson, out of a desire to “push” the boundaries of conventional theatre, PUSH Physical Theatre has since earned an international reputation as one of the U.S.’s leading physical theatre companies.

Recently featured in acclaimed collaborations with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ying Quartet, Pulitzer Prize-nominated composer Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon’s two multi-media operas (*Comala* and *No Se Culpe* with fellow composer Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez) and storyteller Penny Sterling, PUSH has also produced its own full-length works including *DRACULA*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Arc of Ages*, *Generic Male: Just What We Need*, *Another Show About Men*. Additionally, its wide-ranging repertory includes many shorter works such as “Red Ball,” a hilarious take on the interplay between the real and virtual worlds using iPad technology. Known for intense athleticism, gravity-defying acrobatics, and soulful artistry, PUSH has been called “a perfect metaphor-in-motion” by CITY and “a rare treat” by NY Theatre Guide. PUSH was a season finalist on TruTV’s national series, *Fake Off*, a competition/reality show featuring what producers dubbed “the captivating art of ‘faking’” – a mix of theatre, acrobatics, and illusion. Their performances caused judge and *Glee* star Harry Shum Jr. to exclaim: “You guys are superhuman!”

These masters of physical storytelling have received the Community of Color/Anton Germano Dance Award, the Performing Artist of the Year Award from the Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, and the University of Rochester’s Lillian Fairchild Award. In addition to a busy touring schedule, PUSH is passionate about arts-in-education programs and runs a summer intensive for adult students from all over the world.

**Media, please note:** additional high-resolution *Generic Male* photos can be found at [https://1drv.ms/u/s!Asq00\\_mms0JTcA5dXEi4FpM0w1c?e=9bbraN](https://1drv.ms/u/s!Asq00_mms0JTcA5dXEi4FpM0w1c?e=9bbraN) video: [https://youtu.be/2\\_1O4ZJzL30](https://youtu.be/2_1O4ZJzL30), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HI5vXR2hho>; more information: <https://www.pushtheatre.org/shows/generic-male>. General PUSH assets here: [pushtheatre.org/media-kit](https://www.pushtheatre.org/media-kit).

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