



EXPLORE EXPERIMENTAL

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**Cutting Ball Theater**  
**Kicks off 2016-17 Season with**  
***Avant GardARAMA!***  
**Festival of 7 short experimental plays featuring Bay Area directors**

**October 5 through 23**

SAN FRANCISCO (July 2016) – San Francisco’s cutting-edge and highly acclaimed experimental Cutting Ball Theater kicks off its 18<sup>th</sup> season with ***Avant GardARAMA!*** an all-in-one performance festival of seven short experimental plays showcasing the work of Bay Area directors. One of these short plays, a winning submission from a Cutting Ball Theater writer’s workshop, is penned by a 16 year old student from San Francisco’s celebrated Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts and directed by one of his instructors. ***Avant GardARAMA!*** runs October 5 – 23 at Cutting Ball’s venue at the EXIT on Taylor (277 Taylor Street at Ellis). Preview is October 5, Press Night is October 6, and Gala Opening Night is October 7. Tickets for all performances through October 23, ranging in price from \$15 to \$60, are on sale now at [cuttingball.com](http://cuttingball.com) or by calling 415-525-1205.

For the first time since 2008, ***Avant GardARAMA!*** returns to Cutting Ball Theater’s repertoire, infused with fresh vision, contemporary perspective, on the subjects the plays broach. The festival is a raucous anthology production of short, razor-sharp experimental works helmed by some of the Bay Area’s most enterprising directors. An eclectic collection of pieces, the ***Avant GardARAMA!*** festival encourages audiences to embrace wildness, unpredictability, and contrasting directorial voices.

*Piece #1:* The anchor piece of the 2016 ***Avant GardARAMA!*** iteration is *The Wasps*, a ferocious 30-minute play about Jenna and Barbara Bush as they await execution in a post-apocalyptic wasteland, following twenty years of brutal captivity. *The Wasps* will be directed by Artistic Director and Cutting Ball co-founder **Paige Rogers** whose Cutting Ball directing credits include *Life is a Dream*, *Antigone*, *Mud*, and *Tontlawald*. The play is written by **Guy Zimmerman**, an award-winning writer, director, and producer and the Artistic Director of Padua Playwrights in Los Angeles where he’s staged over 40 productions of new plays that have moved to stages in Atlanta, New York City, Edinburgh, Prague, Berlin, Beirut, and Cluj, Romania. *The Wasps* will also feature original choreography by **Liz Tenuto**, choreographer of *Ondine* in Cutting Ball’s 2015/2016 Season, whose work has been seen at Z Space, ODC, CounterPulse, A.C.T., and Killing My Lobster.

*Piece #2:* **Rem Myers**, Cutting Ball’s former Directing Apprentice and Literary Manager, will direct *An Evening With Activists*, a 25-minute new play by **Yussef El Guindi**, past recipient of the Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Awards. Since his departure from Cutting Ball, Rem has maintained a close working relationship with Cutting Ball – in the last season serving as Dramaturg on *Ondine* and directing a workshop of Bennett Fisher’s *Borealis* in RISK IS THIS... – all the while nurturing a flowering freelance career in the Bay Area. Rem recently directed a wild world premiere production of former Resident Playwright Andrew Saito’s *Stegosaurus (or) Three Cheers for Climate Change* at San Francisco’s FaultLine Theater.

*Piece #3:* **Beatrice Basso**, a long-time artistic resident at the American Conservatory Theater, first an Artistic  
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Associate and ultimately Director of New Works spearheading programming for their new Civic Center venue, The Strand Theater, has devised a short bilingual solo piece with Italian-German collaborator **Valentina Emeri** whose only scene partner will be a large teddy bear.

*Piece #4:* Published poet **Susan Terris'** brand new *Whatever Self* is a compact play clocking in at less than five minutes. The play explores an otherworldly meeting of two oppositional facets of Virginia Woolf's personality. Linguistically rich and robust, the play externalizes an internal and personal struggle. Terris penned the short play in December 2015 during Cutting Ball's MicroPlay Workshop, led by former Resident Playwright Andrew Saito. **Carlos Mendoza**, freshly graduated from San Francisco State and recently brought into the Cutting Ball fold as Assistant Director for *A Dreamplay*, will direct.

*Piece #5:* A teacher-student team from the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts will bring a piece to **Avant GardARAMA!** in a unique opportunity to merge artistic mission and community outreach. SOTA's Staff Artist-in-Residence **Isaiah Dufort**, who has been a patron of Cutting Ball since he was a teenager and involved in Art and Film, a program he now assistant directs, will direct a short piece by his teenage student **Isaac Schott-Rosenfield**. The play, only four minutes long, features a metatheatrically-keen and antagonistic narrator and a man-eating crocodile.

*Piece #6:* A recent Princeton graduate, choreographer and generative performance artist **Katerina Wong** will create a dance-theater fusion piece inspired by America's political landscape and the nation's response to, and purposeful disengagement from, our electoral process. Weaving sound bytes from debates, media coverage, satirical sketches, and interviews together with text and movement, Katerina aims to share a comical yet impactful perspective on our civic duty and impending choice, just in time for the general election.

*Piece #7:* The seventh and final piece in *Avant GardARAMA!* will be directed by award-winning Spanish writer and director **Sonia San Sebastian**, creator of the wildly popular TV series *Girl Seeks Girl*. Her piece, inspired by Federico García Lorca's *An Audience*, a work often categorized as "impossible" theatre, will be called *Lorca al vacío* and will be performed in Spanish with English supertitles.

Co-founded in 1999 by theater artists Rob Melrose and Paige Rogers, **Cutting Ball Theater** presents avant-garde works of the past, present, and future by re-envisioning classics, exploring seminal avant-garde texts, and developing new experimental plays. In addition to producing West Coast premieres and re-imagining various classics, Cutting Ball Theater has produced nine world premieres and seven world premiere translations. Cutting Ball received the 2008 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* "Goldie Award" for outstanding talent in the performing arts, and was voted "Best Theater Company" in the 2010 *San Francisco Bay Guardian* Best of the Bay issue. The company also earned the Best of SF award in 2006 and "Best Experimental Theater Company" in 2012 from *SF Weekly*, and the 2013 inaugural Acker Award for "Achievement in the Avant-Garde". Cutting Ball was selected by *San Francisco Magazine* as Best Classic Theater in 2007 and was featured in the February 2010, 2012, December 2014 and January 2015 issues of *American Theatre Magazine*. In 2012, Cutting Ball was awarded a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund a three-year residency for playwright Andrew Saito. The American Theatre Wing, best known as the creator of the Antoinette Perry "Tony" Awards, awarded the company a 2013 National Theatre Company grant.