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BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn Presents BRIClab Artists in Residence Abigail Nessen Bengson and Shaun McClain Bengson



Listing Information: Abigail Nessen Bengson and Shaun McClain Bengson:

Ain't That Good News

Date: 4.23.09 and 4.25.09 at 8:00 PM

Venue: BRICstudio

Address: 647 Fulton Street at Rockwell Place

Neighborhood: Fort Greene

Travel: 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Nevins Street; B, M, Q, R to DeKalb Avenue; G to Fulton Street

Tickets: \$12 adults / \$10 students

Buy: briconline.org/bricstudio or 866.811.4111

Info: briconline.org/bricstudio or 718-855-7882 x53

High-Res Images: 718-875-4047x11; jtaylor@briconline.org

BROOKLYN, NY – BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn continues its 2009 spring performing arts season with a new musical theatre piece by performance duo **Abigail Nessen Bengson** and **Shaun McClain Bengson**. A part of BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn's BRIClab artist residency program, *Ain't That Good News* will be performed as a work in progress on **April 23** and **April 25 at 8pm**.

Performance duo **Abigail Nessen Bengson** and **Shaun McClain Bengson** have embarked on a wildly dynamic two-person rock musical. Bringing together their varied musical skills (including banjo, accordion, horse-head-fiddle, trumpet, flute, piano, and electronic sampling) with folktales and fables, first person accounts of survival, and interviews with refugees and retirees, their new work is a revelatory celebration of everyday people doing small and large things to positively change their lives and their communities. After BRIClab, the duo will take the piece on the road internationally. *Ain't That Good News* is directed by **David Eppel**; the BRIClab Creative Advisor is **David Neumann**. Funding in part made possible by the Puffin Foundation.

BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn's 2009 season of performances, which runs from **Thursday, March 26 through Sunday, May 17 at BRICstudio**, presents a compelling mix of cutting edge dance, music, and theatre. This season marks the third year of the successful BRIClab is a vital incubator for emerging and established local artists working in theater, dance, music, and multi-disciplinary performance. New works in various stages of development receive a one-week intensive residency at BRICstudio that includes over 50 hours of on-site development time and artistic mentoring. Residencies culminate in two work-in-progress performances followed by public conversations with the artists, moderated by special guests.

After the show, join BRICstudio for *eLABorate: Conversations with Artists*, a unique opportunity for audiences to discuss the creative process with BRIClab resident artists. This conversation series takes place following each BRIClab workshop presentation and will be moderated by prominent individuals from the performing arts community. For information on group opportunities, contact 718-855-7882 x 31.

Abigail Nessen Bengson is an internationally recognized performer, writer and teacher. She began her career with Theater Group Limited at age 6. In 2004, she premiered her first one-woman show, *Anthem*, at the La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. Her latest work, another one-woman show called *The Magic Show*, opened

in April 2008 at Eve Ensler's Women Center Stage Festival at the Culture Project, New York. Abigail has appeared to critical acclaim in several off-Broadway musicals, including *BUSH WARS: A Musical Revenge*.

She graduated with a BA in Theater from Williams College, and has performed original solo works with the Royal Shakespeare Company, New York Hip-Hop Theater Festival, and the Apollo New Works Festival, The Flynn Theater, and has performed as a hip-hop artist in venues across New York City, through which she earned two clothing sponsorships. She is a founding member of Zombie Nationalists with her husband, Shaun Bengson. Abigail teaches and performs internationally in orphanages and refugee camps and sends gratitude and love to the Barefoot Angels of El Salvador.

Shaun Bengson is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, songwriter, composer, and actor. He has performed in venues across the Midwest and East Coast, including the off-Broadway premiere of *The Magic Show* at Eve Ensler's Women Center Stage Festival at the Culture Project, New York. He is the principal songwriter of the Brooklyn rock group, Zombie Nationalists, with Abigail Nessen Bengson, and has appeared at prominent New York City venues including The Knitting Factory and Arlene's Grocery.

Bengson grew up in Bellbrook, Ohio, where he performed as an actor and musician with community productions around Dayton. He was homeschooled, and later graduated from Indiana University where he triple majored in ethnomusicology, anthropology, and Japanese. While there he studied Mongolian throat singing and southern Indiana fiddling. During a year abroad in Japan, He studied Japanese and the traditional Japanese instrument, the shamisen. In 2008 Bengson earned a Master's degree in Special Education from Pace University. He recently completed work as a New York City Teaching Fellow, where he taught music, theater and general studies at a New York City public school for children with autism.

David Eppel (Director) is a founding member of the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he performed as an actor for many years. His professional acting credits, in major and fringe theatre companies of South Africa, span almost fifteen years, as well as in film, TV and radio. After transitioning to the United States in 1983, he has worked professionally with the New York Shakespeare Festival; The American Ibsen Theatre; StageWest as an Associate Artist and director; and various fringe companies in New York City including the Ubu Rep and The West Bank Cafe Theatre. He is currently an Associate Professor of Theatre at Williams College in Massachusetts, where he teaches acting, directing, dramatic literature and theory.

David Neumann (BRIClab Creative Advisor) has been a featured dancer in the works of Susan Marshall, Jane Comfort, Sally Silvers, Irene Hultman, Cathy Weiss, Big Dance Theater, and the late club legend Willi Ninja. He continues to perform and choreograph for theater, opera and film. Recent and upcoming projects include: creature movement on *I Am Legend* with Will Smith, performing in *Beckett Shorts* with Mikhail Baryshnikov at New York Theater Workshop and choreographing *The Bacchae* at the Public Theater. Neumann is the artistic director of advanced beginner group, a New York-based experimental dance company. He is a professor of Theater at Sarah Lawrence College and a guest lecturer at both Barnard College and The Graduate Acting Program at Yale University.

Tickets and Information: Tickets on sale now. \$12 Adults; \$10 Students.
Purchase online at www.briconline.org/bricstudio, or call 866-811-4111

Directions: BRICstudio is located on the 2nd floor of 647 Fulton Street. Enter at 57 Rockwell Place, around the corner from the BAM Harvey Theater. Subway: 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Nevins St; B, M, N, Q, R to DeKalb Av; G to Fulton St. Bus: B25, B26, B38, or B52 to Ashland Place/Rockwell place, turn right on Rockwell.

About BRIC: BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn is a multi-disciplinary arts and media non-profit dedicated to presenting performing arts, contemporary art, and community media programs that are reflective of Brooklyn's diverse communities, and to providing resources and platforms to support the creative process. All of our offerings are free or low cost, to enhance the public's access to and understanding of arts and media. Each year, upwards of a million people in Brooklyn and citywide are served through our programs.

About BRIC Performing Arts: BRIC performing arts programs present emerging and established artists in music, dance, theater, and multidisciplinary performance to broad audiences from Brooklyn and throughout New York City, and support the development of new work. Signature programs include the Celebrate Brooklyn! Performing Arts Festival, which presents a summer season of free performances at the Prospect Park Bandshell, and BRIClab, a commissioning and residency program presented at BRICstudio.

2009 BRIC Spring Performing Arts have been supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Council members Vincent Gentile, Darlene Mealy, Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., David Yassky, Assembly members William F. Boyland and Hakeem Jeffries, the Brooklyn Delegation of the New York State Assembly, and State Senator Martin Golden.

For more info visit briconline.org/bricstudio

Upcoming in the 2009 Spring Performing Arts Season

Co-Presentation: DANSPACE@BRIC

Week 1: *Home*

Happy Hour: Tuesday, April 28 at 6PM; Performances: Saturday, May 2 at 8pm & Sunday, May 3 at 5pm

Week 2: *Stranger*

Show & Tell: Saturday May 16 at 6:30pm; Performances: Saturday, May 16 at 8pm & Sunday, May 17 at 5pm

BRIClab: ETHEL with Gutbucket: *The Monsters' Ship (La Nave de los Monstruos)*

Commissioned for the Celebrate Brooklyn! Performing Arts Festival

Thursday and Saturday, May 7 and 9 at 8pm

Co-presentation: 651 ARTS & TONI BLACKMAN, *Travels of a Lyrical Ambassador*

Thursday, May 14 at 8pm