



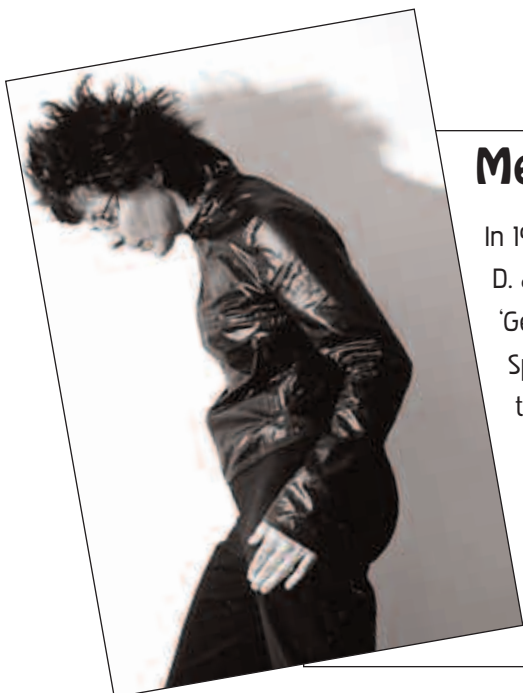
STREB vs. Gravity

For more than 20 years, Elizabeth Streb has asked questions that challenge many widely-accepted assumptions about dance. Her investigation of movement through the study of science and the human body has led her to make formal choices that vary from traditional norms. Aesthetics of grace, the use or camouflage of gravity, the presence or absence of transitions, treatment of gender, the nature of spatial and temporal dimensions as well as the use of sound in theatrical presentations have been primary areas of exploration. Streb's approach is to take it apart and see how it works—to isolate the basic principles of time, space, and human movement potential. The outcome is a distinct way of moving, an idiosyncratic vocabulary, and a visceral performance experience.



STREB Extreme Action has become a platform for this investigation, a collective attempt to uncover movement's true nature by harnessing it without debilitating it. Founded in 1979, the company sees rehearsal as a laboratory for testing scientific principles on the human body. The company has engineered a system that allows the body to execute the choreography—through the development of specific muscles and the unusual placement of the body parts, the dancers are able to explore time, space, air, and aim. Streb's creative process draws from the sciences and mathematics, requires the design and creation of beautifully engineered equipment, and demands an athleticism, fearlessness and precision from her dancers. The result is work that is unique, compelling, and popular.

"Streb's work is an exploration of human movement aided by structure, technology and the (seeming) absence of normal, rational fear. Freed from fear, her dancers fly through space, splat against walls, run on walls, slam against floors and each other, dive from high places, smush each other, dangle from wires and get crammed into tiny spaces. The result is multilevel theater that demands attention."
—Whitley Setrakian, *Metro Times*



Meet Elizabeth Streb

In 1997 Elizabeth Streb was awarded a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation 'Genius' award. She is currently the Dean's Special Scholar at New York University at the Draper Program, working towards an M.A. in Time and Space studying physics, philosophy, and architecture.

Streb's choreography, (she calls it POPACTION) intertwines the disciplines of dance, athletics, extreme-sports, and Hollywood stunt work into a bristling muscle and motion vocabulary that combines daring and strict precision in the pursuit of attempting to display publicly the aggressive and deep effect of 'pure movement.'

"Go to the edge and peer over it. Be willing to get hurt, but not so hurt that you can't come back again."
—Elizabeth Streb

STREB Extreme Action believes that one of the main responsibilities of the arts community is to make art and the artist more familiar to the general public. This goal is intrinsic to the art the company makes. Conscious that the work is attractive to a wide audience that can enjoy the athleticism of the movement and the speed and strength of the dancers, STREB likes to perform in spaces that are widely public: the beach; a park; or indeed the hugely public medium of television.

The company has been seen in such unusual venues as New York's Grand Central Terminal, in front of the Cyclone at Coney Island, on the mall outside the Smithsonian Institution, during a Minneapolis Twins and New York Yankees game at the Minnesota Metrodome, under the Brooklyn Bridge, and during intermission of the International Squash Tournament finals! STREB has also appeared on the *David Letterman Show*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, CNN's *Showbiz Today*, Nickelodeon, NBC's *Weekend Today*, on MTV, *ABC Nightly News* with Peter Jennings, and on *Larry King Live* debating with Dick Armey about the National Endowment for the Arts.

STREB tours extensively throughout the United States and internationally from its home studio/laboratory, the STREB ACTION INVENTION LAB, in Brooklyn. The company has received numerous awards including annual support from the National Endowment for the Arts. They believe that art can be made out of the simplest things.



“We want to be part of the general public’s daily activity just as working/walking/shopping/commuting. We want them to see us invent new pieces dancing/flying/flailing/crashing. We want them to watch/question/interact/participate in our creation and to get a clear picture of the hard work that mingles with skill and talent in the making of art. For the past decade, in this way, I have consciously worked to shift the paradigm of how we see art, where we see it, why we see it... continuing a general quest to bring dance to the people, believing that there is a huge untapped number of people out there who are dying to participate in an Action Exchange.”

—Elizabeth Streb

The performance of *STREB vs. Gravity* involves the following “action events.”

Orbit

Crash

Moon

Spin - A solo created and performed by Terry Dean Bartlett, in which the graceful and supple Bartlett nods to his Montana boyhood. He is suspended 15 feet in the air from a bailing hook and turns the barnyard fixture into an accomplished dance partner.

Tip - An adult-strength teeter-totter for the stout of heart. A children’s playground fixture is examined by muscular, gravity-challenged grownups. The teeter-totter severely limits the movement spectrum. Nowhere to go but up (or down).

Ricochet - Watch as the amazing Action Engineers hurl themselves into a plexi-glass wall. Using the vertical as their ground, the performers suspend themselves in the air and come at you with amazing speed!

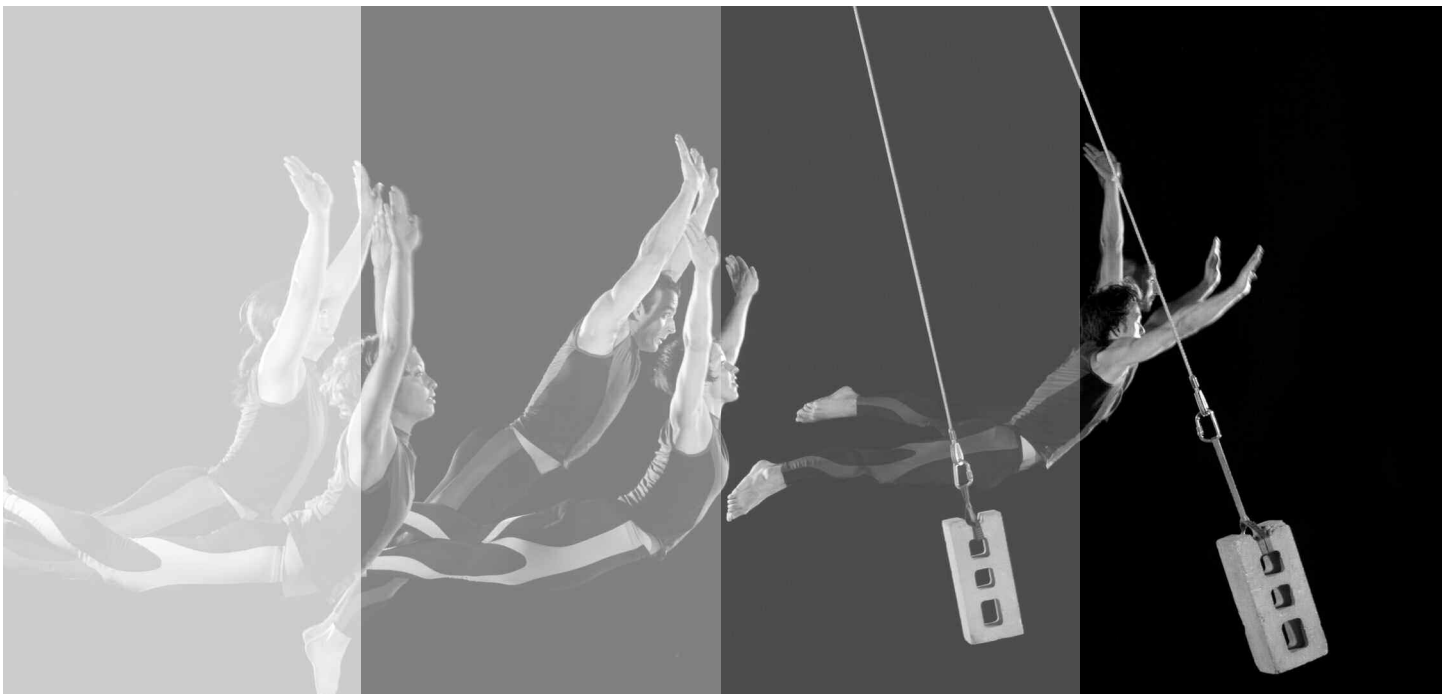
Gauntlet

Ripple - A 22-foot-long truck strap is stretched across the performance space. It stands four feet off the ground and is only three inches wide. For the duration, this three inch surface is the performers’ base, which they learn to occupy and de-occupy, using the thrumming tension of the truck strap to explore unique trajectories like teamster tightrope walkers.

Revolution

-Intermission-

Program subject to change.



The Elements of Dance

Dance is a series of movements usually performed to music. Dances may be performed solo, in couples, or in groups. Dances can be *choreographed* (the movements planned in advance) or they can be *improvised* (made up on the spot). People from all around the world use dance for different reasons—to express themselves, to pass on their histories, to exercise their bodies, etc. Dances can tell a story or be about nothing in particular.

There are four basic elements that make up every dance: **body**, **energy**, **space**, and **time**. Each element has its own vocabulary of descriptive words. Here are the four elements you may want to look for when you're watching Pilobolus:

BODY - a dancer uses his or her body by isolating, moving, and coordinating the parts to shape it in space. *Shape* can mean a design made by one body, part(s) of a body, or by the relationship between two or more bodies.

ENERGY - the amount or force of the movement, also sometimes referred to as the *color*, *texture*, or *quality* of the movement. Some words used to describe energy in dance are sharp/smooth, heavy/light, or tense/relaxed.

SPACE - in dance, space can refer to *level* (low, medium, high), *direction* or *pathway* (such as forward, backward, sideways, diagonal, zigzag, turning), and *focus* (straight/curved, open/closed). Movement can be *stationary* (done in place) or *locomotor* (traveling through space). *Spatial pattern* (line, circle, clump, wedge, etc.) refers to the arrangement of bodies in the space.

TIME - a measurable period during which movement or dance occurs. Time implies use of *rhythm* (a repeated pattern of long and short accents), *duration* (how long something lasts), and *tempo* (speed).



The Elements of Gravity

The motion of an aircraft through the air can be explained and described by physical principals discovered over 300 years ago by Sir Isaac Newton. Newton worked in many areas of mathematics and physics. He developed the theories of gravitation in 1666, when he was only 23 years old. Some twenty years later, in 1686, he presented his three laws of motion in the “Principia Mathematica Philosophiae Naturalis.”

The Three Laws of Motion

1. Every object persists in its state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed on it.
2. Force is equal to change in momentum (mV) per change in time. For a constant mass, force equals mass times acceleration. $F=m a$
3. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Law of Universal Gravitation

Every object in the universe attracts every other object with a force directed along the line of centers for the two objects that is proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the separation between the two objects.

Dance Glossary

apron - the part of the stage that is in front of the curtain and proscenium.

articulation - clarity of movement, engaging the full range of movement available through our muscular-skeletal structure.

choreographer - the person who creates the dance and teaches it to the performers.

downstage - a stage direction meaning the front of the stage, by the audience. The words "downstage" and "upstage" come from a time when stages were angled ("raked") so that the front of the stage actually was lower than the back.

dynamics - changes in rhythm, muscle tension, and strength movements.

fly loft - the area above the stage that conceals curtains, drops, and other scenery out of sight of the audience by means of ropes and pulleys.

focus - directing the eyes and looking to a definite point in space but also involves "looking" with other body parts. Refers to deliberate concentration and commitment.

house - the part of the theater where the audience sits. A "full house" refers to a sold out performance.

improvisation - creating movements as you move. Instantaneous performance and choreography.

isolation - moving one part of the body by itself.

kinesthetic awareness - sensitivity to muscle tension, body position and body control.

kinesthetic memory - remembering not only the movement mentally but the "feeling" of the action physically.

movement transition - one movement following another smoothly, logically or in a way that "works".

projection - total involvement of face and body in movements to intensify the actions and communicate the ideas.

proscenium - the arch or frame that surrounds the stage opening.

technique - all the exercises used by a dancer to help develop kinesthetic awareness, gain flexibility, control, coordination, and a greater range of movement in the body.

upstage - the back of the stage.

wings - the areas offstage to the left and right of the stage.



Do You Know Your Part?

A performance is only a performance if there's an audience to see and hear it. As a member of the audience, you are a partner with the artists in bringing the performance to life.

Live performances have special rules.

Attending a live performance is not the same as watching a movie or television show. You will be in the same room with the performers and the rest of the audience. Talking or getting out of your seat will disturb the artists and spoil the experience for the rest of the audience. The same is true for using personal electronic devices, such as a cell phone, camera, or portable music device. Please put them away before the performance starts.

During the show, your job is to stay seated and pay careful attention to what's happening onstage. The way audiences react to a show matters a great deal to the dancers. Laugh at the funny parts. Applaud if you like what you see and hear!

key notes

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