

# CURATOR NOTE

Years ago when I worked at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, I met the legendary theater director Peter Brook. He was the size of a leprechaun with a mischievous smirk and electric blue eyes that burned through to the back of my skull. I've never read his famous text *The Empty Space* because I never felt like I had to. The title says it all, encapsulating a theater making approach that allows him to take on big themes and narratives with apparent ease and ingenuity, and make something out of nothing.

I am certain – though I would never dare crack the book to verify it – that Brook must dispute the idea of nothingness or a bare stage. He surely must spend a great deal of the book depicting the phenomenological energy which exists in every space and the way psychologies and histories of the performers and audiences can charge a room. Maybe this is why The Smarties are always espousing the idea of context; because it's always there.

This is part of the challenge of sitting down in a theater – you have to negotiate what's rolling around in your beady brain: an early fall, ISIS, the dumb iPhone 6, traffic, the anniversary of *Nevermind*, Michael, who sleeps on the porch and scares the neighbors but doesn't mean any harm – and decide what you want to hang on to and what you want to let go of. It can make all the difference about what you experience.

My naturopath recently turned me on to chi kung and that in turn has me walking around with a dopey smile as I try to send positive energy into my insides. *Germinal* kind of does this, too. There's seemingly nothing and then it seems like it's about everything and you're smiling. About everything.



**Lane Czaplinski, Artistic Director**