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2018-2019 Borders and Boundaries

PEAK Performances Programming History

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12-13-2018

## Smashed

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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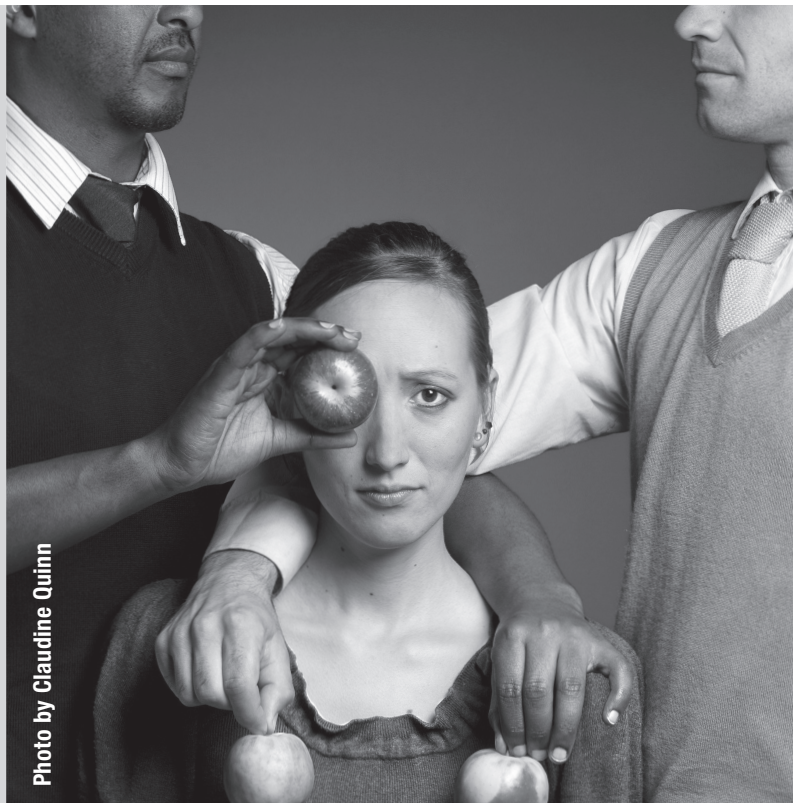
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**THE 18/19 SEASON**  
THE HEIGHTS OF IMAGINATION

**American Debut!**  
**Gandini Juggling (UK)**  
***Smashed***



**December 13-16, 2018**  
Alexander Kasser Theater

**Large  
Print**

**Arts + Cultural  
Programming**



**MONTCLAIR STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President

Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts

Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts + Cultural Programming

## **American Debut!**

**Gandini Juggling (UK)**

# ***Smashed***

Director **Sean Gandini**

Lighting Design **Mark Jonathan** and **Guy Dickens**

Dramaturg **Jean-Paul Zaccarini**

Assistant Director **Kati Ylä-Hokkala**

Jugglers **Sean Gandini, Tedros Girmaye, Kati Ylä-Hokkala, Kim Huynh, Owen Reynolds, Iñaki Fernandez Sastre, Niels Seidel, Arron Sparks, Malte Steinmetz**

Management **Anne-Agathe Prin, Hélène Roques, Marina Arranz, Rae Lee**

Technician **Chris Swain**

## **Music**

**Little Jack Little**, "I've Always Wanted to Waltz in Berlin"

**Hoosier Hot Shots**, "I Like Bananas Because They Have No Bones"

**Johann Sebastian Bach**, French Suite no. 2 in C Minor, BWV 813, Sarabande,  
performed by **Angela Hewitt**

**Bill Frisell**, "The End of the World"

**Tammy Wynette**, "Stand By Your Man"

**Mills Brothers, Louis Armstrong**, "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree"

**The Ink Spots**, "That Cat Is High"

**The Charioteers** "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel"

**Al Bowlly**, "Dreaming"

**Antonio Vivaldi**, “Gelido in ogni vena” from *Il Farnace*, RV 711,  
performed by **Lorenzo Regazzo**, **Rinaldo Alessandrini**, **Concerto Italiano**  
**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, Sonata in C Major, K545, Rondo (allegro),  
performed by **Mitsuko Uchida**  
**Brenda Lee**, “I’m Sorry”

**First Impressions:** Saturday, December 15, post-show

Share your First Impressions of *Smashed* with Sean Gandini, Kati Ylä-Hokkola, and Arts + Cultural Programming’s Executive Director Jedediah Wheeler.

With the support of Watch This Space Festival, National Theatre, London EPCC Centre des Arts du Cirque de Basse-Normandie—La Brèche, Arts Council England.

Duration: 60 minutes, no intermission.

In consideration of both audiences and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

## About the Company

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Formed in 1992 by world-renowned jugglers Sean Gandini and Kati Ylä-Hokkala, Gandini Juggling was set up to explore the wondrous choreographic potential of juggling: to filter juggling through a dance aesthetic. Over the past 27 years their artistic journey has been prolific and rich, producing 30 full-length pieces and performing in 50 countries.

The Gandinis have recently completed a trilogy of pieces that are dialogues between juggling and sophisticated dance forms. The company is a central part of the Metropolitan Opera House’s upcoming production of *Akhmaten*, which features 10 jugglers meticulously choreographed to Philip Glass’s enigmatic score.

The Gandinis’ journeys have always been countercurrent, an individual voice in the global circus scene, with quotidian risk-taking and fearless upturns. They continue to

be at the vanguard of contemporary circus, reinventing and reinvigorating juggling for the 21st century.

@gandinijuggling  
gandinijuggling.com  
info@gandinijuggling.

## Program Notes

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Premiered at the National Theatre's Watch This Space Festival in 2010, *Smashed* is an hour-long piece involving nine skilled jugglers, 100 red apples, and a soundtrack featuring popular songs ranging from Tammy Wynette to Music Hall and Bach. A series of nostalgic filmic scenes explore conflict, tense relationships, lost love, and afternoon tea. Inspired by the work of the great choreographer Pina Bausch, directors Sean Gandini and Kati Ylä-Hokkala have borrowed elements of her gestural choreography and combined them with the intricate patterns and cascades of solo and ensemble juggling. Simultaneously evoking great pleasure and small disquiet, *Smashed* lightly disrupts the rigid conventions of etiquette, dress, and body language. The result is a new hybrid of juggling that is performed with meticulous unison and split-second timing. This funny, inventive, and characterful work is akin to dance theater and will challenge your perception of contemporary juggling.

### **Herald Angel Award Winner**

"A bravura entertainment for all ages, this is a juicy treat from first bite to its mid-air core."

—*The Herald*

"Juggling: not just artful but art. . . Glorious. When it comes to juggling, the Gandinis pip everyone else."

—*The Guardian*

"It's been twenty years since we started doing Contemporary Juggling. We started mixing our discipline to Dance a few years ago. Kati and I are fans of Dance,

including Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham. The week we were in residency creating *Smashed*, Pina Bausch died and that's what inspired this Bauschienne parade. [...] For us, this is not a show to be funny, even if people laugh generously. *Smashed* is a freed composition, with British humour, where we laugh as much at tradition as contemporary jugglers who take themselves very seriously!"

—Extract of Sean Gandini interview by Isabelle Paré  
from the newspaper *Le Devoir* (Montréal, 4 July 2013)

In the original outdoor incarnation of *Smashed*, commissioned for the National Theatre's Watch This Space Festival in 2010, Gandini Juggling continued its joyful acceptance of the failure of juggling, of the "drop." This resulted in a light-hearted and zesty destruction of apples and crockery that celebrated the release that comes with accepting failure, accompanied by the performers' mischievous disruptions of each other's work.

For this indoor and extended version, the material has taken on a darker, less benign feel. Sean Gandini and Kati Ylä-Hokkala have acknowledged their debt to Pina Bausch, and this influence runs through the piece, with echoes of 1980 and *Kontakthof*. Ostensibly, much of the material is the same as the outdoor version, but now the summer romance has turned sour. Instead of the light-hearted teasing, the nine jugglers prey mercilessly on each other.

What is central to this new version of *Smashed* is that Gandini Juggling has taken advantage of the juggler's underlying relationship with power. The act of juggling imbues the jugglers with power, merely through keeping their objects aloft. This power, which comes with a certain mastery over the fundamental force of gravity, is here translated into power over the other performers. Thus we see acts of humiliation, subjugation, and isolation played out around and in between the various solo and passing patterns.

With *Smashed*, Gandini Juggling has concluded 20 years of experimentation with an increasingly nuanced and complex theatricality. In many ways *Smashed* is no longer a juggling show. [...] Instead, the juggling is one gestural vocabulary within the work, alongside the choreography and the personae of the performers. This last part is key in the impact of the piece: each gaze or response from the performers sets up and



develops the underlying relationships on the stage. All the while, the audience is complicit in this developing action, as the performers seek their approval and play up to their responses.

—Thomas JM Wilson, published in *Total Theatre*, January 2012

**PEAK**  
**JOURNAL**  
BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES. PUBLIC AND PERSONAL.

“The Wayward Line: When are the circus arts allowed to be experimental?” by Cori Olinghouse in *PEAK Journal*

## About the Artists

**Sean Gandini** (Artistic Director) is a pioneer of contemporary juggling. Working as a performer, choreographer, and director he has, for over 25 years, pushed the boundaries of juggling as a discipline and an art form. A prolific creator, throughout his career he has collaborated with many acclaimed artists, including pioneering American musician Tom Johnson and the influential British choreographer Gill Clarke. More recently Gandini has collaborated with choreographer Ludovic Ondiviela and composer Nimrod Borenstein in the groundbreaking juggling ballet *4 x 4: Ephemeral Architectures*. In 2016 Gandini choreographed the Skills Ensemble for the ENO’s acclaimed production of Philip Glass’s opera *Akhnaten*. In 2018 the company premiered *Spring* in collaboration with choreographer Alexander Whitley and composer Gabriel Prokofiev. Gandini regularly teaches in many of the world’s leading circus schools, inspiring the next generation of jugglers.

**Kati Ylä-Hokkala** (Artistic Director) is one of her generation’s iconic jugglers. As a co-founder of Gandini Juggling she has not only built a reputation as a highly skilled technical juggler but is also renowned as one of the leading innovators in dance-juggling. A former rhythmic gymnast, Ylä-Hokkala’s distinctive ability to combine movement with extremely complex coordination, while standing on one leg, is second-to-none.

**Tedros Grimaye** (Juggler), born in 1978 in Jimma, Ethiopia, has been performing circus, theater, and dance around the world for the past 15 years, including for Cirque du Soleil, Circus Ethiopia, and Gandini Juggling. He started performing in *Smashed* in September 2012.

**Kim Huynh** (Juggler) trained in classical dance from the age of four in Germany. She continued in contemporary dance and received her dance certificate in 2003 at the Conservatoire de Saint Denis in France. Self-taught in juggling from the age of 10, Huynh has been working since 2004 as a professional juggler in companies that combine dance and juggling, such as the Cie Jérôme Thomas, Cie 14:20, and Gandini Juggling. In 2008 she co-founded the French company Sens Dessus Dessous, which focuses on choreographed juggling, merging dance, object manipulation, and juggling. Today Huynh mainly works with Gandini Juggling and is performing in many of their current productions.

**Owen Reynolds** (Juggler), born in Dublin, specialized in juggling and doubles trapeze at Circomedia in Bristol, England, graduating in 2000. He went on to form Spot the Drop with fellow graduate Malte Steinmetz and later, Freehand Juggling with juggler and visual artist Howie Bailey. Reynolds has previously held the position of Head of Juggling in the degree program at the National Centre for Circus Arts, London, and continues to teach there in the degree program. For the past decade, Reynolds has performed in and contributed to many of Gandini Juggling's productions and he continues to tour with them in *Smashed* and *4x4: Ephemeral Architectures*. He is currently co-creating a piece of children's circus with juggler Arron Sparks.

**Iñaki Fernandez Sastre** (Juggler) has been juggling for more than 20 years. He joined the Gandinis after moving to London from his native Spain 15 years ago. He is part of the original cast of *Smashed* that was involved in the creative process for the show in 2010.

**Niels Seidel** (Juggler) studied the science of sport at University of Bochum, Germany, before training at the academy for circus arts ESAC in Brussels with focus on acro balance and juggling. In 2002 he had a solo in Mauricio Kagel's opera *Variété* at the Flemish Opera, directed by Ben Benaouisse. He also made a solo for a piece entitled *Walsque*, directed by Philippe Van de Weghe. From 2003 to 2007



he toured with *Le Vertige du Papillon*, a contemporary circus piece of the Belgian company FERIA Musica, in more than 200 performances worldwide. From 2008 to the present he has performed as Spot the Drop, a juggling duo with Malte Steinmetz, in more than 600 shows. He has performed with Gandini Juggling from 2009 to the present in various shows including *Smashed*, *Sweet Life*, *Blotched*, and *20/20*.

**Arron Sparks** (Juggler) is a juggler.

**Malte Steinmetz** (Juggler) has worked as a juggler, master of ceremonies, and teacher across the world since graduating from Circomedia, Bristol, England's Centre for Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre. Both as a soloist and in various companies he has built a reputation as one of the most innovative and interesting jugglers to have come from Germany. In the last 20 years, he has presented his unique style of juggling at festivals, gala shows, corporate events, cinema, and television productions in more than 25 countries. He continues to teach juggling and object manipulation at leading European circus schools. Together with Niels Seidel, he performs as Spot the Drop on the international variety and festival circuit. He joined Gandini Juggling in 2006 and has been with *Smashed* since the beginning.

## Staff

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The **Office of Arts + Cultural Programming** (ACP) enhances the cultural, creative, and academic life of the Montclair State campus and the broader community. Its signature program, Peak Performances, features innovative works by international contemporary artists of exceptional merit, and by the next generation of great artists training at Montclair State University's College of the Arts. Through its Cultural Engagement program, ACP offers master classes, workshops, lectures, and discussions designed to deepen participants' understanding of the aesthetic, cultural, and social contexts of the performances presented.

**ACP gratefully acknowledges our student staff and volunteers:**

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## Next Up

Raphaëlle Boitel *When Angels Fall*  
February 9–17, 2019

### Programs in this season are made possible in part by funds from:

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner  
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