



Amy O'Neal's "In the Fray," part of the NW New Works Festival this weekend at OtB.
Photo by Gabrielle Biencycki.

This weekend is the opening of one of my favorite performance events all year: the [Northwest New Works Festival at On the Boards](#). Over the next two weekends, sixteen artists or companies will be presenting 20-minute pieces that speak to the vibrancy and diversity of performance in Seattle and the greater Northwest region. It's a smorgasbord of cutting-edge arts, and while you're bound to hate some of it, you're also bound to have something blow your mind.

The festival is broken up into two spaces over two weekends. Here's the breakdown for the coming weekend; [tickets to the festival are \\$14 for one showcase, \\$20 for two, \\$24 for three, and \\$30 for four.](#)

Studio Showcase (Fri. 8 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 5 p.m.)

Daughters of Air. A new work by avant-garde musician and composer Ivory Smith, *Daughters of Air* reinterprets Hans Christian Anderson's classic fairy tale "The Little Mermaid" as a polyphonic vocal symphony. But beyond the musical component, Smith and her collaborators Kelli Frances Corrado and Joseph Gray, have created a beautiful piece of multimedia art that evokes the story's setting beneath the sea. Using re-purposed videogame controllers, the performers will be generating digitally projected imagery live during the performance.

ourselves. And ninja lore. (See [here for TSB's previous coverage](#) of Amy O'Neal.)



Danny Herter & the Invasive Species, with "trek (couloir)". Photo by Tim Summers.

Danny Herter & The Invasive Species, *couloir (trek)*. This is one of those pieces I struggle to describe. Based partially on photographic documentation of snow fields in the Cascades, *couloir (trek)* is a dance theatre piece that uses mountainclimbing as a metaphor for space travel and enlightenment. Or maybe we need to rearrange some of the words in the last sentence. Whatever the case, Herter's developed a concrete choreographic language in the piece, which suffers for its description, because it's both funnier and more moving than an abstract explanation of its themes communicates.


[Josephine's Echopraxia](#), *stifle*. Inspired by both personal loss and a near-death experience, choreographer and dancer Marissa Rae Niederhauser has crafted an intensely physical dance piece about the primal drive to survive. The performance, by Niederhauser and four other dancers, is performed to a live accompaniment by three musicians, led by Murder City Devils frontman Spencer Moody. (See [here for TSB's previous coverage](#) of Marissa Rae Niederhauser/Josephine's Echopraxia.)

Mark Haim, *This Land Is Your Land*. The response I've heard from everyone who's seen this piece in rehearsal is similar to the same stunned response I had when I first saw a video of an earlier version. As a choreographer, Haim thinks well outside the box. A troupe of ten performers, some of whom are professional dancers and some of whom are not, simply parade across the stage to a soundtrack of country music, as subtle changes occur. It's the sort of piece you watch with a slightly stunned and slowly widening grin as it unfolds--thoughtful, clever, genuinely warm and original, *This Land Is Your Land* is easily one of the pieces I'm most excited to see.

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