



Ray Caspio, Lauren Joy Fraley and Sarah Moore in *Black Cat Lost*, mounted by Theater Ninjas.

COURTESY OF THEATER NINJAS

tory's first full-fledged production. "Usually you start a company by selling candy bars and a car wash. With this we have a champagne and vodka sponsor," boasts Stephens, who is cooking up plans for more jewelry-centered plays. His next idea: a radio play about a diamond heist in the spring. "We'll do it live at the Breakers Hotel," he says. For more info, go to [www.diamanteatelier.com/midsummer-nights-dream-tickets](http://www.diamanteatelier.com/midsummer-nights-dream-tickets).

### Three Black Cats

**CLEVELAND AND AKRON, OHIO:** Cleveland's Theater Ninjas are about to conclude a three-location site-specific tour of Obie-winner Erin Courtney's play *Black Cat Lost*. Performances of Courtney's poetic meditation on grief and impermanence began at Arts Collinwood, a film and music venue in East Cleveland, last month before moving to 78th Street Studios in West Cleveland, and finally Summit ArtSpace in Akron this month.

"78th Studios is actually a former American Greetings warehouse," notes Ninjas artistic director Jeremy Paul, "whereas Summit ArtSpace has a lot of galleries that have a very

raw, open-space feel."

Paul says he was drawn to Courtney's text—influenced by Zen poetry, silent-film imagery, fiction and memoir—because of its "fascinating shape. It weaves together so many different ideas, art forms and raw expression with rhythm and energy," says Paul. The play, which is not structured in a typical narrative manner, is constantly moving; so, too, will the audience, even participating in various activities and games. "We're planning to do something with sand, a material that's very impermanent," says Paul, adding that water is another element that may enter the equation.

Theatre Ninjas recently concluded a four-month partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Art that included an exhibition/installation called "The Excavation," about

the ruined city of Pompeii. The group, which was founded in 2006, is committed to reducing barriers to the avant-garde and providing opportunities for new artists and audiences to engage with each other. Visit [www.theaterninjas.com](http://www.theaterninjas.com).

### East and West Players

**BROOKLYN AND ANAHEIM, CALIF.:** It's been a good fall for two companies on the East Coast that opened new venues, and for one in Southern California that announced a move designed to double its capacity.

Last month BRIC Arts | Media House opened the doors of a new \$35-million, 40,000-square-foot multidisciplinary arts and media complex in a former theatre in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, which also houses the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Architect Thomas Leeser turned the former Strand Theatre building on Fulton Street into a complex featuring an art gallery and a television studio as well as a 240-to-400-seat flexible performance space and an artist's work/performance studio. The space will kick off with a "Fireworks Residency," bringing together designer/director Julian Crouch (*Shockheaded*

Peter) with composer Mark Stewart and filmmaker Ragnar Friedank to create *Armchair Parade*, an installation featuring a 24-foot handmade musical instrument, original film and puppetry.

Right around the corner on Ashland Place, Theatre for a New Audience, which has done its Shakespeare-focused seasons at various Manhattan venues over the years, opens its first dedicated home venue this month with a new production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Julie Taymor, with music by her partner Elliot Goldenthal. Thanks to a \$10-million gift in September from the Polonsky Foundation, TFANA's new home, designed by Hugh Hardy, becomes the Polonsky Shakespeare Center, which includes a 299-seat mainstage, a 50-seat studio and a wraparound arts plaza.

Meanwhile, in sunny Orange County, the Chance Theater plans a move to a larger venue on the same block on La Palma Avenue in Anaheim where it's resided since 1999, doubling its square footage and tripling its seating from 49 to 150. The move should happen by February of next year, with a further expansion of the Chance's scenery workshop and offices by the end of 2014. The fundraising goal for the move and expansion is estimated at \$700,000, of which roughly a third had been raised by press time. Go to [www.bricartsmedia.org](http://www.bricartsmedia.org), [www.tfana.org](http://www.tfana.org) and [www.chancetheater.org](http://www.chancetheater.org).



A rendering of the new BRIC Arts | Media House.