

Q&A

Bloody Interesting

Artistic director **Alex Timbers** and his New York-based theater company, Les Freres Corbusier (www.lesfreres.org), dissect and reinvent historical figures, infusing the subject matter with equal parts academia and punk rock—and staging it with a good dose of madcap multimedia effects. In January, Los Angeles's Center Theatre Group (www.centertheatregroup.org) will debut the company's Wild West-infused rock musical *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. Timbers talked to us about the production, which mixes historical events with burlesque decor and a live soundtrack of emo rock.



Alex Timbers

How did you start the theater company?

Les Freres Corbusier was established in 2003 with the goal of creating work about historical figures and subject matter through irreverent contexts and idioms. The work was intended to lampoon academia while simultaneously celebrating it, and in the same way, lampooning avant-gardist theater troupes while also embracing them. We focus on historical figures whom people might know two sentences about.

How did you conceive of *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*?

I wrote the book, and Michael Friedman from the terrific experimental theater company the Civilians wrote all the songs. This is our first collaboration. It started with an interest in emo music—we were interested in that as a stylistic trope. [Emo] songs are so sincere that they're hilarious, but they're also moving and truthful. We're interested in investigating highly emotive expression as a theatrical style. We started thinking, Who is an emo figure from history? Andrew Jackson is the ultimate emo president! He would literally bleed himself with his wife. He was angry and angsty. That was our jumping-off point.

How does that influence the look of the play?

It's going to be Wild West-emo couture. It's going to have a period vibe with contemporary style. A Wild West brothel filled with taxidermy. Like if *Deadwood* were a music video: big red velour curtains, a deer head. It's going to be fun.

Is there multimedia?

Yes, there's video, but it's more textural. It will hopefully confuse the audience as to how we pull it off. We aren't doing big concert visuals, but there will be battle smoke and live music. There's a three-piece rock band, and everyone sings. It started off as a play with music, and it's turned into having songs at regular intervals. But it isn't really a musical—just a really good play with really good music. —*Andi Teran*

Costume sketches for *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*

Get Inspired



Cai Guo-Qiang's "Inopportune: Stage One"

The solo show "**Cai Guo-Qiang: I Want to Believe**" at the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum** will include the Chinese-born artist's stunning site-specific installations, such as real cars pierced with blinking lights and suspended from the museum's rotunda. The show opens February 22. (www.guggenheim.org)

Film Forum will screen ***Last Year at Marienbad***, the 1961 avant-garde film by Alain Resnais—featuring luscious black-and-white cinematography, baroque Bavarian castles, and costumes by Coco Chanel—from January 18 to 31. (www.filmforum.org)

"**Dreams About Japan**" as performed by the **State Ballet of Georgia**.



The **Brooklyn Academy of Music** presents the **State Ballet of Georgia** in its New York debut at the **Howard Gilman Opera House** on February 27 and 29. (www.bam.org)

Chan Marshall—a.k.a. Cat Power—follows her award-winning album *The Greatest* with ***Jukebox***, which features cover songs from the likes of Hank Williams, Billie Holliday, and Frank Sinatra. From Matador Records on January 22. (www.matadorrecords.com)

From the twisted imagination of director Michel Gondry, the comedy ***Be Kind Rewind*** features Jack Black as a likable loser who unintentionally erases all of the tapes in his friend's video store and decides to refilm what customers choose to rent. From New Line Cinema on January 25. (www.bekindmovie.com)

John Lurie, who dabbles in the worlds of indie film, music, and art, has compiled his playful paintings into ***A Fine Example of Art***, which PowerHouse Books will release on January 28. Anticipate contemplative animals and humorous non-sequitur titles alongside text by buddies Steve Buscemi and Flea. (www.powerhousebooks.com)