

BACKSTAGE

40 YEARS

THE PERFORMING ARTS WEEKLY

40 YEARS

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Antigravity's Crash Test Dummies

Reviewed by Lisa Jo Sagolla

Presented by The New 42nd Street at the New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42 St., NYC, May 18-June 3.

We were having too much fun watching the daredevil antics of "Antigravity's Crash Test Dummies" at the New Victory Theater to notice that this collection of wild, physical comedy sketches has no driving dramatic force. A loosely and, it seems, randomly connected series of wowing movement sequences, "Antigravity's Crash Test Dummies" employs Olympic-caliber gymnastics, clowning, aerial stunts, and an array of wacky props to portray the hilariously rigorous "tests" that are performed on consumer products by a team of delightfully game "dummies" led by a merciless drill sergeant.



Two dancers from Antigravity

Directed and choreographed by **Christopher Harrison**, the outrageously severe "product tests" are accompanied by original, live music by **Sxip Shirey** and **Paul Weir** that brilliantly enhances every nuance of the amazingly athletic choreography.

After a fun, slapstick pre-show in which **Amy Gordon** clowns with charming rag-doll agility and **Jonah**

Logan wrestles comically with a rubber suction hose, an ensemble of dummies launch into a whirlwind of crash test activities. They scamper up scaffolding and belly-flop onto a giant mattress, testing its cushioning. One dummy spins on his head, break-dance style, to test a helmet. Contortionist **Jonathan Nosan** is terrific as a damaged dummy undergoing repairs. A glue test develops into a nifty duet between not-so-bright dummies that repeatedly get stuck together. Fabric testing inspires an exquisitely choreographed routine of dive rolls, tumbling, and trapeze work. Vigorous calisthenics are cleverly used to test deodorants, and impressive strength skills propel an emergency rescue of a dummy in distress. When they strap "rocket shoes" onto their feet, and test the springy-ness of the footwear with an acrobatic basketball game, the dummies exhibit astonishing physical prowess.

But it's the final challenge—the test of the mysterious "New Product #7"—that proves as heartwarming as it is spectacular.

Carl Saylor