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Love in the Time of LAVA

By Stephanie Schroeder



If you haven't seen or heard of LAVA, the award-winning all-female acrobatics, trapeze, and dance troupe based in Brooklyn and you are in or near New York City, you need to get to the Brooklyn Lyceum post haste. Beginning February 12 with a champagne and chocolate celebration to benefit LAVA, this ensemble of artists who perform "acrobatic and feminist feats" is presenting "we become" with music and text by lesbian powerhouse musician Toshi Reagon.

Led by lesbian artistic director Sarah East Johnson, who founded the group in 2000, LAVA is comprised of about a dozen women who created and perform the show which, according to Johnson, is all about female relationships. "While it's about intimacy between women, and not necessarily sexuality and most, but not all, the members are lesbian, we are all comfortable with the way we politicize our performance." The queering of female relationships in the broadest sense is the main theme of "we become."

While LAVA is director-led, the entire group has a voice. "The performers generated much of the material through assignments and also do a lot of improv, which helps keep it alive and personal," says Johnson. "It's a process — a balance of individuality and collectivity."