

Richard Foreman

Once, director-playwright **Richard Foreman's** career followed a pretty conventional path—at one point, he even had a play titled *Harry in Love* optioned for Broadway. “I had been sort of a normal playwright up until 1967,” he says. “But when my option fell through, I was sitting at home and I said, ‘This is silly. If I walk into a theater tonight, what do I want to see onstage?’ And in as much time as this has taken me to tell you, I had this image of a certain kind of tension between performers and a certain kind of minimal language and I started doing it. Basically, I’ve been mining that moment ever since.” For more than twenty years, Foreman has specialized in nonnarrative works that strive to capture what he calls “the nuances of the unfathomable.” Today Foreman focuses on more intimate pieces, the latest of which—*I’ve Got the Shakes*—opens January 5. “I’m always trying to evoke what is evanescent,” he says. “In this play, the lead character says, ‘I have something to teach, but I don’t know what it is.’ And I think that’s everybody’s position in life. We may have one idea of what we’re achieving, but the world ends up choosing to make use of us in ways we can’t imagine.” Despite numerous awards (including an NEA award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theater), Foreman is most proud that his writing—as opposed to his directing—is slowly garnering more attention. “When I began, people said, ‘Well, he’s a pretty creative director, but his writing is Dadaistic nonsense. Anybody could do that,’” Foreman says. “And I’ve always maintained that I’m basically a writer. I only started directing plays because when I started writing the strange kind of pieces I’m writing now, no one would direct them.”



MICHAEL GILTZ