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[Press Room](#)



Images of Circa are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
CIRCA IN *IL RITORNO*,
A RETELLING OF HOMER'S *THE ODYSSEY*
THROUGH BAROQUE OPERA AND CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS ARTS
SATURDAY–SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3–4, 2018**

The performances are part of the Berkeley RADICAL 2017–18 *Blurring Boundaries* thematic strand, which explores inventive artistic hybrids that challenge the conventions of traditional performance disciplines

Circa's five day residency in Berkeley includes a public discussion of Homer's *The Odyssey*, a free WhimsiCAL "pop-up" performance, a circus arts movement master class, and a pre-performance talk

Berkeley, January 4, 2018 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes back innovative Australian performance troupe Circa in its newest production, *Il Ritorno*, which combines circus arts

and Baroque opera to explore themes of loss and displacement, Saturday–Sunday, February 3–4 in Zellerbach Hall. Monteverdi’s 17th-century opera *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* is reimaged for six acrobats, four chamber musicians, and two singers, in a stark and emotionally gripping production that uses the story of Ulysses’ homecoming to illuminate the plight of contemporary refugees and exiles. The performances are part of the 2017–18 Berkeley RADICAL *Blurring Boundaries* thematic strand, which shines the spotlight on artists whose work dissolves the very boundaries of their art forms, creating performances that cut across cultures and disciplines, accepted definitions of classical and contemporary, and even notions of time and space. Circa last visited Cal Performances during the 2015–16 season with *Opus*, a work that featured the instrumentalists of the Debussy String Quartet performing three Shostakovich string quartets along with the troupe’s skilled acrobats.

In *Il Ritorno*, Circa uses the metaphor of movement to explore the physical and emotional struggles of displaced people throughout history. Monteverdi’s score, performed live with the musicians onstage as part of the action, is a companion to a visual staging that finds the performers striving to connect with each other in a hostile environment. The movement and music, augmented by contemporary sound design and bold lighting effects, embody and enact ideas of homesickness, longing, grief, and alienation against the backdrop of a stark black wall.

In conjunction with the performances, Circa’s five day residency in Berkeley includes a number of community events. Professor Mark Griffith of the UC Berkeley Department of Classics hosts a discussion on Homer’s *The Odyssey* on Wednesday, January 31 at 6pm at the Musical Offering Café in Berkeley (\$5, includes a soft drink, coffee, or tea). On Thursday, February 1 at noon in Lower Sproul Plaza Circa performance artists will give a sneak preview into the show with a free WhimsiCAL “pop-up” performance. In addition, Circa associate director Libby McDonnell will lead a circus arts movement master class on Sunday, February 4 at 11am (venue TBA, \$5). Finally, Circa associate director Libby McDonnell and Cal Performances associate director Rob Bailis will host a pre-performance talk on Sunday, February 4 at 2pm in Zellerbach Hall (free to ticket holders).

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Circa: Il Ritorno* on Saturday February 3 at 8pm, and Sunday February 4 at 3pm, in Zellerbach Hall, range from \$30–\$68 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for

UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, February 3, 8pm
Sunday, February 4, 3pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana St.
UC Berkeley campus

Early Music
Circa
Il Ritorno

Program: The Australian troupe Circa tells a timeless story of loss and displacement in its latest production, *Il Ritorno*, which juxtaposes circus arts with the music of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, Monteverdi's 17th-century opera about Ulysses' homecoming. Six masterful acrobats join four chamber musicians and two singers in a stark staging that powerfully unites music with movement.

Berkeley RADICAL: This performance is part of Cal Performances' Berkeley RADICAL *Blurring Boundaries* strand, which shines the spotlight on artists whose work dissolves the very boundaries of their art forms, creating performances that cut across cultures and disciplines, accepted definitions of classical and contemporary, and even notions of time and space.

Tickets: \$30–\$68 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Homer's *The Odyssey* as a Theatrical Resource
Wednesday, January 31, 6pm
The Musical Offering Café
2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

A conversation with Professor Mark Griffith, UC Berkeley Department of Classics, about Homer's *The Odyssey*. \$5, includes a soft drink, coffee, or tea. Advance registration requested at calperformances.org/learn/calendar/2017-18/.

WhimsiCAL "Pop-Up" Event
Thursday, February 1, 12pm
Lower Sproul Plaza, UC Berkeley campus

The artists of Circa give a sneak preview into the show with a free pop-up performance on the steps of Zellerbach Hall. Free and open to the public.

Movement Master Class
Sunday, February 4, 11am
Venue TBA

Circa associate director Libby McDonnell leads a circus arts movement workshop. Open to participants who have had gymnastics, dance, or circus training. \$5, space is limited. Advance registration required at calperformances.org/learn/calendar/2017-18/.

Pre-Performance Talk
Sunday, February 4, 2pm
Zellerbach Hall

With Circa associate director Libby McDonnell and Cal Performances associate director Rob Bailis. Free to ticket holders.