Circus Oz

Thursday, November 29, 2007, 8pm
Friday, November 30, 2007, 8pm
Saturday, December 1, 2007, 2pm & 8pm
Sunday, December 2, 2007, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

Circus Oz is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Circus Oz acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The City of Melbourne is proud to support Circus Oz through its Triennial Arts Program.

Cal Performances’ 2007–2008 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

Circus Oz

Performers

Svetlana Bunic
Mel Fyfe
James Holt
Scott Hone
Christa Hughes
Ben Lewis
Jacqui Levy
Michael Ling
John O’Hagan
Joel Salom
Rockie Stone
Julia Watt

Production Staff

Chad Albinger
Rigger
Michael Baxter
Props Builder
Margaret Burton
Production Manager
Antonella Casella
Artistic Associate
Tim Coldwell
Founding Member, Show Director
Mike Finch
Artistic Director
Laurel Frank
Design, Costume-Making, Head of Wardrobe
Cath Hedge
Stage Manager
David Murray
Lighting Design and Operation
Madge Fletcher
Tour Manager
Pete Sanders
Rigger
Graeme Stables
Sound Engineer
Anna Tregloan
Set Designer

Office Staff

Lesley Adeney
Administrator
Amber Rose Beaty
Finance Manager
Matthew Hughes
Programming Manager
Melinda Maillard
Marketing Director
Paul McGill
International Market Development
Robyn McGregor
Marketing Manager
Linda Mickleborough
General Manager
Tara Sanders
Classes Coordinator
Annie Stephens
Community and Corporate Programs Coordinator

“La Vie en Rose” by Édith Piaf and Louiguy.

The “Sticking to the Wall” stunt was originally devised by Geoff Toll and Circus Oz way back in the 1980s.

“Electric Bikinis” original concept by Richard Morrod.

Please don’t take flash photos or film during the show, as it’s dangerous and the performers may fall down and ruin your picture. We may need to make a change to the cast in the event of illness or other unavoidable cause.
Circus Oz Performers

Joel Salom (juggler, acrobat, funny guy) is a highly experienced and multi-talented MC, comic, rapper, juggler, gadget man and creator of Erik the Dog. During the Sydney Olympic Games Joel was a flying Master of Ceremonies on the harbor stage and has performed around the world at festivals, such as Livid Music Festival, Glastonbury Festival, The Thames Festival and Linz Straatfest-Austria, Zimbabwe International Festival and the Edinburgh Festival, where he made appearances on five of the prestigious Live Best of the Fest shows.


Favorite Circus Moment: Watching Erik the Dog flirt with Nicole Kidman on national television.

James Holt (flying trapeze catcher, acrobat) fell in love with circus in 2002. After training with Bizircus in Perth, he moved to Melbourne to study at the National Institute of Circus Arts, majoring in flying trapeze catching and Chinese pole. In addition creating his own teaching and performing company, he has performed throughout Australia and at the opening of the Asian Games in Qatar in the Middle East.


Favorite Circus Moment: The excitement of catching people who have taken the safety lines off for the first time, and seeing the smiles on their faces when they make it back to the bar!

John O’Hagan (performer, musician, musical director, co-composer, union rep) played in comedy, cabaret and jazz bands around Melbourne throughout the 1980s and ’90s and has a degree in double bass, which he plays with one eyebrow raised.


Favorite Circus Moment: Getting married on-stage on 42nd Street.

Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls,

The essence of circus is diversity and cooperation. It takes all sorts of people to make a human pyramid. Brains, strong bases, responsive middles, fearless little flyers, and brawn. To make a show that is funny, spectacular, varied, exciting, sad, whimsical and explosive needs all of us.

Our group is our community and reminds us of how important local connections are. We resist (and often lampoon) the homogenous global culture you see all over the media. The people in Circus Oz are simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary Australians. When we play to the rest of the world we like to be ourselves.

When we play to you tonight we hope you recognize yourselves, your mob, your place, your culture, the inherent danger of living, the thrill of surviving, and your ability to laugh in the face of adversity, chaos, crisis and gravity.

Mike Finch, Artistic Director

Circus Oz History

When Soapbox Circus and the New Ensemble Circus merged in 1978, Circus Oz was born. As one of the world’s very first full-scale contemporary circuses, all the animals involved were human (although suspicious kangaroos and flocks of flying cockatoos have been sighted on stage from time to time...). The show grabbed traditional circus skills, like trapeze, juggling and high wire, and flung them together with live music and a blatant disregard for the impossible—to create something entirely original. The critics called it post-modern. The performers kept their tongues firmly jammed in cheeks. Circus Oz, in its combination of hilarity and intelligence, spectacle, irony, beauty and—yes, occasionally dagginess—could only come from Australia. It wears its collective heart on its sleeve, passionately supporting gender equity and social justice but always combined with a good pratfall.

In the beginning, they were a collective and the company did everything, fixing up the battered old trucks they toured in and sitting down between shows to sew their first canvas tent on borrowed sewing machines. Now they tour with shipping containers, a highly skilled supporting crew and everything is state...
training and practice with great enthusiasm and went on to complete 10 years with the company, performing all over Australia and the world. After graduating from school, Ben has been working as a freelance performer in circus companies around Australia and overseas.

Favorite Circus Moment: Riding around New York in limousines on my 16th birthday after opening night with the Flying Fruit Fly Circus at the New Victory 1999.

Jacqui Levy (juggler, rola bola, acrobat) first found a love of performance as a child, traveling with her family in an old bus learning traditional bush poetry and bushking. With degrees in drama and education, Jacqui left her job teaching at the Flying Fruit Fly Circus to study at the National Institute of Circus Arts, starting her career in circus.

Circus Oz Debut: Hong Kong, 2007.
Favorite Circus Moment: Watching Sosi (Circus Oz performer Sosina Wogayehu) perform bounce-ball juggling when I was a school teacher with the Fruit Fly school, as it inspired me to pursue a whole new career.

In 1990, Reg Bolton, founder of Suitcase Circus and mentor, plucked Mel Fyfe (acrobat, tap-dancer, aerialist, wheel artist, strongwoman) directly from a chorus line of dancers to join him in West Australia Theatre Company’s production of Barnum. She fell in love with circus overnight and joined Circus Oz in 1998.

Favorite Circus Moment: Seeing the Moscow Circus when I was eight.

Christa Hughes (singer, gargler, wig addict) had her first gig with her dad, jazz pianist Dick Hughes, at the age of 15. At 21, she left Sydney to live and perform in New York, London, Edinburgh, and Hong Kong. She returned to Australia in 2001 and started singing with Machine Gun Fellatio. A cabaret hog through and through, her own shows have included Beer Drinking Woman, Sleepless Beauty, Go-Go Burlesco and Temptation. She has also sung for Opera Australia’s OzOpera’s The Eternity Man.

Favorite Circus Moment: Roy (of Siegfried and Roy, Las Vegas) being mauled on stage by his own, hand-raised white tiger while the audience oohed, aahed and cheered at such a convincingly executed “stunt.”

Rockie Stone (acrobat, aerialist) began her performance career at age four with a pair of ballet shoes and a poodle costume. After completing her studies to become a zoological scientist, Rockie began exploring the realm of circus and quickly moved to performing freelance. A graduate of the National Institute of Circus Arts, Rockie has worked as a core ensemble member of Circa in Brisbane and performed at festivals throughout Australia and in Shanghai.

Circus Oz Debut: Hong Kong, 2007.
Favorite Circus Moment: Watching people press stories, but a highlight was being in New York, after being told we had to do the show without Tim Coldwell, as his visa was delayed. And then, at a critical moment, in walks Tim. Hooray!

Ben Lewis (acrobat, aerialist) began his career in the circus at the tender age of seven, when he walked through the doors of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus based in his hometown of Albury. Ben took to hard