

Thursday, October 29, 2015, 8pm

Friday, October 30, 2015, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall

Circa



Justin Nicholas, Atmosphere Photography

Opus

Created by Yaron Lifschitz with the Circa Ensemble and the Debussy Quartet

Cal Performances' 2015–2016 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Opus

by

Circa

Director Yaron Lifschitz

Circa Ensemble

Nathan Boyle, Robbie Curtis, Jessica Connell, Lauren Herley, Rowan Heydon-White,
Bridie Hooper, Paul O’Keeffe, Todd Kilby, Gerramy Marsden, Daniel O’Brien,
Brittannie Portelli, Kim Rossi, Billie Wilson-Coffey

Producer Danielle Kellie

Technical Director & Lighting Designer Jason Organ

Costume Design Libby McDonnell

Set Design Yaron Lifschitz and Jason Organ

Debussy String Quartet

Christophe Collette, *violin*

Marc Vieillefon, *violin*

Vincent Deprecq, *viola*

Cédric Conchon, *cello*

Music Dmitry Shostakovich (1906–1975):

Adagio (Elegy) for String Quartet, after

Katerina’s aria from Act 3 of *Lady Macbeth
of the Mtsensk District*, Op. 29 (1931)

String Quartet No. 5 in B-flat major, Op. 92 (1952)

String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110 (1960)

String Quartet No. 11 in F minor, Op. 122 (1966)

Debussy Sound Engineer Christophe Germanique

U.S. Tour Agent Tommy Kriegsmann, ArKtype

Opus première in 2013. It is performed without intermission.

Opus is a Nuits de Fourvière production/Département du Rhône, co-produced with Les Théâtres de la ville de Luxembourg, GREC Festival of Barcelona, Le Cirque-Théâtre d’Elbeuf, Dusseldorf Festival, Barbican Theatre, and CACCV Espace Jean Legendre-Compiègne. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government’s Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals, Brisbane Festival, Perth International Arts Festival, and Melbourne Festival.

Circa acknowledges the assistance of the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding advisory body, and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. The Debussy String Quartet acknowledges the support of the French Ministry of Arts, Région Rhône-Alpes, City of Lyon, and SPEDIDAM.



Justin Nicholas, Atmosphere Photography

O*pus* is a work of stunning power, virtuosity, and poetry. Fourteen acrobats and a string quartet celebrate the music of Russian composer Dmitry Shostakovich.

Shostakovich's quartets are by turns intimate, passionate, lyrical, ironic, and deeply moving personal testimonies by one of the 20th century's greatest composers. In *Opus*, three of his quartets form the musical and dramatic spine of a red-hot fusion of extreme acrobatics, lyrical movement, and group choreography.

Opus begins from a solo performer suspended on a rope serenaded by musicians, then moves through rapidly alternating scenes of dislocated stillness and violent explosions into geometries of acrobats intersected by extreme physicality to arrive at exquisitely detailed and nuanced choreographies of acrobats flying, balancing, and landing.

Opus explores the complex relationships between the individual and the group, between the march of history and the dictates of the heart, and between the tragic and the comic. This is groundbreaking work of intense power. A melding of music and bodies at the highest level.

Yaron Lifschitz



Justin Nicholas, Atmosphere Photography

FROM BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, comes a bold new vision of contemporary circus. A blending of bodies, light, sound, and skills. A place where acrobatics and movement meld into a seamless whole. A celebration of the expressive possibilities of the human body at its extremes. Since 2006, Circa has toured to 33 countries across six continents. Circa's work has been rapturously received by audiences, presenters, and critics around the world. Critics have raved about Circa, calling its work "stunning...exquisite...heart-stopping" and "electrically charged."

Circa's current touring shows span diverse contexts, from works for families in traditional

arts centers to European contemporary arts festivals. Its works are highly innovative, genre-bending pieces that stretch the practice and perceptions of circus. Circa features a full-time ensemble, a concentrated administrative team, and a dedicated circus studio.

Circa also runs a training center with an impressive workshop program in Brisbane at our professional studio, in schools, and with partners throughout Queensland and beyond. On top of our term-based and one-off training activities, Circa has an impressive track record of producing quality workshops for children, young people, and adults in a range of community contexts. Learn more at circa.org.au.



Gilles Paugigny

The **Debussy String Quartet** (Christophe Collette and Marc Vieillefon, *violins*; Vincent Deprecq, *viola*; and Cédric Conchon, *cello*) has built a reputation graced with international acclaim through its many recordings and live performances. Since its founding in 1990, the Quartet has enlivened the chamber music world with its stylish and stimulating performances.

Based in Lyon and honored as winners of the Evian International String Quartet Competition, the Quartet performs about 120 concerts a year in Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America.

The Quartet's recording schedule has included the release of more than 25 CDs in 25 years, with works ranging from French music—recently, Debussy and Caplet, which enriches its collection composed of Bonnal, Ravel, Fauré, Witkowski, and Lekeu—to Weber and Shostakovich, recording the latter's complete string quartets for Arion. It includes the acclaimed Decca label release of the landmark Mozart Requiem recording, in the 1802 transcription by Peter Lichtenthal, about which a documentary film has also been made. The Quartet's mixed chamber music repertoire includes a highly regarded CD of the Brahms and Webern clarinet quintets with clarinetist Jean-François Verdier and a highly acclaimed collaboration with François Chaplin in several Mozart piano concertos.

Its members are the founders of Les Cordes en Ballade, a chamber music festival and academy of chamber music in the South of France, where they perform and teach each summer.



Nathan Boyle has been a natural performer his whole life. After terrorizing his parents at a young age with handstands and cartwheels, his parents saw his passion for performing and acrobatics and enrolled him in gymnastics. His passion for acrobatics took him to sports acrobatics, where he represented and won titles for New South Wales at many national championships.

After accepting his position at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA), Mr. Boyle specialized in cloudswing, adagio, bungee trapeze, and teeterboard. A memorable moment for Mr. Boyle while at NICA was performing at an International Circus Festival in Auch, France, in 2009.

Mr. Boyle joined Circa as a full time ensemble member in 2011 and has since entertained audiences nationally and internationally. He is excited for all the new adventures still to come.

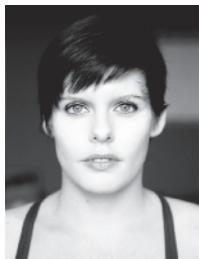


Robbie Curtis has performed nationally and internationally. He started off his circus career in the Flying Fruit Fly Circus. During his high school years, he also performed with Opera Australia as a dancer, juggler, and acrobat. After completing high school, he moved to New Zealand to train in contemporary and classical dance at the New Zealand School of Dance in Wellington.

Mr. Curtis has since worked with Legs on the Wall in *Beautiful Noise* for Brisbane Festival, *Voyage* at the Birmingham Cultural Olympiad, and the opening of the Sydney

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Festival. He has also worked with The Australian Ballet in *Infinity* for its 50th anniversary season, and in Gideon Obarzanek's work *There's Definitely a Prince Involved*. Mr. Curtis has also collaborated and performed work by Anton, Alice Lee Holland, and Circus Monoxide, and Shaun Parker.



Jessica Connell completed a diploma in circus arts at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne. Formerly a member of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus specializing in hula-hoops and aerials, Ms. Connell

spent five years performing around Australia in a variety of productions. She also contributed to A4's first production, *Downpour*, in 2009.

In 2011, Ms. Connell joined Circa, where she was part of an eight-month season of *Wunderkammer* at the Chamäleon Theater in Berlin. She then performed a three-month Australian regional tour of the Helpmann Award-winning show *CIRCA*. Ms. Connell says one of her highlights was world premiering *S* by Circa at the Brisbane Festival in September 2012, which was her first new creation with the company. Ms. Connell is excited to continue touring with the company.



Lauren Herley was born on March 21, 1989—the first day of spring, the first day of Aries. Ms. Herley graduated from the National Circus School of Montreal, specializing in vertical rope, contortion, and handstands. She has worked and collaborated with Compagnie Dave St-Pierre, Cirque Eloize, Les 7 Doigts de la Main, Cirque du Soleil, Compagnie Marie Chouinard, and Nord Nord Est.

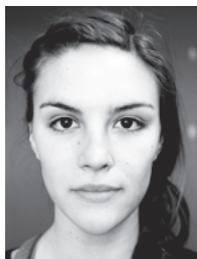
Ms. Herley describes herself as a rope artist, but on stage and in creation she has also

performed and studied everything from hand to hand to hair hanging. She enjoys risk and the beauty of pain. In her spare time, she enjoys playing guitar, singing late at night, listening to jazz, and writing poetry.



Rowan Heydon-White started flying around on a trapeze at an early age. After graduating with a bachelor of arts, majoring in physical theater, she decided she wanted to actively delve further into circus and moved to New Zealand to complete a diploma in circus arts.

Over the years, she has performed widely around both Australia and overseas for various events, ranging from corporate and private functions to festivals and many contemporary circus productions. Her highlights so far include touring with Circus Oz, Legs on the Wall, Awkward Productions, and Catcher.



Bridie Hooper tumbled into Spaghetti Circus at age eleven, where her imagination became entirely unleashed. She was taught to bend, fly, and dream, and at 16, Ms. Hooper ventured south to the banks of the Murray River to join the Flying Fruit Fly Circus. In 2008, she bid Australian soils adieu to complete her studies at the Montreal National Circus School, where she also had the chance to perform in the Vancouver Olympics Opening Ceremony, at Festival CIRCA, and in the Montreal Completément Cirque Festival in 2010 and 2011. Upon graduating in 2012, Ms. Hooper toured Quebec with Vague de Cirque, performed in GOP Variété's *Dummy*, and returned to Australia to work for Circa.

After an already smashing year with Circa, she is dead keen to see what will happen next.



Paul O'Keeffe, aka "the human whippet, dexterous daredevil, neat freak, and mister fixit," had his first professional gig in 1996, playing one of the lead roles in Company Skylark's *Wake Baby*. Since then,

he has toured the world from outback Australia to 42nd Street in New York, performing in circus, dance, puppetry, musical, and physical theater. Off stage, Mr. O'Keeffe co-founded Kronik circus company, co-set up a professional circus training studio in Melbourne, co-managed Warehouse Circus, ran independent circus troupes, and co-coordinated and implemented a number of circus workshops, including one for 10,000 scouts over a ten-day period.

He has performed with Circus Oz, Circus Monoxide, Kronik, Cantina by Strut & Fret Production House, the Australian Choreographic Centre, Jigsaw Theatre Company, Out of the Blue Studios, Malcom C Cooke & Associates, and Legs on the Wall, to mention a few. Mr. O'Keeffe used to believe in his own immortality; now he just believes he's a nut.



Todd Kilby, from the New South Wales coastal city of Newcastle, was born into the life of surfing and all things beach. He is a black belt in Taekwondo and has both trained and performed with Circus

Avalon and Hands Free Physical Theatre, with whom he won a City of Newcastle Drama Award for stunt choreography.

He joined the National Institute of Circus Arts in 2008, and while there worked with the Tangentyre Council in Alice Springs teaching in the local Indigenous Youth Circus Arts Centre. While specializing in Chinese pole and hoop-diving, he has also been trained in

teeterboard, adagio, tumbling, and knock-about. Mr. Kilby is a multifaceted performer with a uniquely Australian style combining circus, dance, martial arts, and drama. Mr. Kilby has a passion and love of performing and entertaining audiences through exploration and raw human energy.

For Mr. Kilby, Circa is an elephant of awesome in the Savanna of Circus.



Gerramy Marsden

started his circus training at age 14, joining a youth circus based in Queensland. After discovering a natural talent for object manipulation, it was not long before he found himself performing

seasoned shows at different venues from the Brisbane Powerhouse to the Adelaide Fringe Festival. He has recently completed a bachelor of circus degree studying at the National Institute of Circus Arts, where he has further advanced his training in the art forms of acrobatic basing and Rolla Bolla.



Daniel O'Brien, born in

1992, has been physically active throughout his whole life, primarily focusing on his gymnastics training in his hometown and a few small gyms along the Queensland coastline.

After high school, Mr. O'Brien made a decision to transition from the sport of gymnastics to a possible career in circus performance. He decided to move to Melbourne and study at the National Institute of Circus Arts, specializing in hand-balancing and aerial straps, where he gained his first experiences as a performer. Mr. O'Brien spends his spare time feeding his unhealthy addiction to video games or reading whatever he can get his hands on.

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Brittannie Portelli has over ten years' experience in elite sport, and so had the perfect foundations to transition into circus. After competing internationally in both aerobic gymnastics and synchronized swimming, she wanted to combine her love for physical movement with her passion for performing. In 2010, she completed the three-year bachelor's degree program at the National Institute of Circus Arts, where she specialized as an aerialist. Shortly after graduating, at age 20, she started working with Circa as a full-time ensemble member.

While at Circa, Ms. Portelli has toured extensively and has many career highlights, including three Helpmann awards, an eight-month season of *Wunderkammer* at the Chamäleon Theater in Berlin, an Australian tour of *CIRCA*, and performing in New York City and Montreal.



Kim Rossi grew up competing in athletics and playing representative AFL. After seeing one of Circa's shows, Ms. Rossi joined Circa's youth performance troupe, Circa Zoo. After two years of training and

performing, Ms. Rossi was given the opportunity to be the very first member of "fast track," a program designed for young and aspiring performers within Circa.

In 2011, Ms. Rossi left Circa Zoo and fast track and became a full-time ensemble member. Since then, Ms. Rossi has toured numerous shows in various countries. One of her highlights was performing *Wunderkammer* at the Sydney Opera House.



Billie Wilson-Coffey discovered Spaghetti Circus at age eleven before moving to Melbourne to study at the National Institute of Circus Arts in 2007. In her graduating year, Ms. Wilson-Coffey made her international debut at the fourth World Circus Festival in Moscow. She joined Circa as a guest artist in 2011 for the world premiere of *Nocturne* in South Korea. While working as a guest artist for Circa, she continued her solo work, performing in cabarets and festivals nationwide. Becoming an ensemble member at Circa in 2014, Ms. Wilson-Coffey toured *How like an Angel* before an eight-month residency at the Chamäleon Theater in Berlin performing Circa's production of *Beyond*.