

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



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

Production Staff

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

Office Staff

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

"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 Bikini" 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.

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.

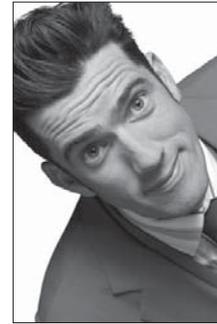
In the beginning, they were a collective and the company did everything, fixing up the battered old trucks they toured in and sitting down between shows to sew their first canvas tent on borrowed sewing machines. Now they tour with shipping containers, a highly skilled supporting crew and everything is state of the art. But they have never lost their commitment to that original spirit of multi-skilling and anarchic but disciplined creativity. Matt, their Programming Manager, who helps tour them around the world, used to tumble, fly and bounce on the trampoline as one of the Circus Oz acrobats, and Mel the strongwoman is always a dab hand with a database in the Circus Oz office if called upon.

Circus Oz has struck an acrobatic chord with audiences from Hobart to Arnhem Land, from Fremantle to the Sydney Opera House and all points in between. And since 1980 they've toured to 24 countries across five continents, where in each place, inevitably, audiences have never seen anything quite like it before. They've played sell-out seasons on 42nd Street in New York, one-off gigs at refugee camps on the West Bank; they've performed at the Royal Festival Hall in London, the Tivoli in Copenhagen, in a tent erected in the Plaza de Toros Monumental in Barcelona and another in a walled compound in Bogota where the crowds almost rioted to get in, even, like a scene from a magic realist novel, in a glass opera house in the Brazilian rainforest. As they say, people seemed to like it and one thing led to another...

This show, like every Circus Oz performance in almost 30 years, will be a one-time-only event. When the performers meet the audience and the band kicks into gear, you never know exactly what will happen...that's the sheer joy of it. Have fun!

Circus Oz merchandise can be purchased at circusoz.com and Circus Oz music can be downloaded on iTunes.

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.

Circus Oz Debut: Sydney, 2003.

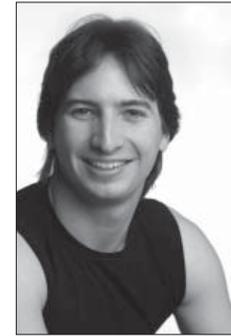
Favorite Circus Moment: Watching Erik the Dog flirt with Nicole Kidman on national television.



Starting out as a BMX trickster, **Scott Hone** (*acrobat, BMX guy, juggler*) has also been a whitewater rafting guide, an orange juice salesman, high school math teacher, and a juggler. Circus Oz snapped him up when they realized he drove a Kombi.

Circus Oz Debut: Sydney, 2003.

Favorite Circus Moment: That time in the show when the audience is entering the tent—full of excitement and anticipation—and knowing that they do not know what to expect.



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.

Circus Oz Debut: Christchurch, 2007.

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.

Circus Oz Debut: Woolongong, 1998.

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

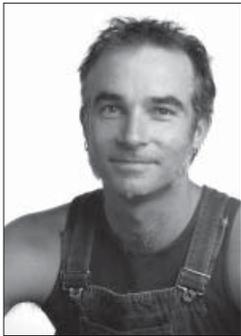
About the Artists



Julia Watt (*drummer*) has always enjoyed hitting things, but no one ever believed she would make a career out of it. Since her first drum lesson in 1995, Julia has been on many musical adventures, including a four-month tour of the Middle East with an all-girl cover band.

Circus Oz Debut: Newman, 2007.

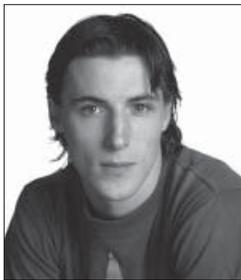
Favorite Circus Moment: Auditioning for Circus Oz in February 2007 and then being offered the job!



Michael Ling (*acrobat, aerialist*), or “Lingy,” started young, joining the Flying Fruit Fly Circus at the age of nine. He’s spent the past 20 years performing all over the world with Circus Oz, with the odd break to renovate his house and try his hand at rigging.

Circus Oz Debut: Sydney, 1986.

Favorite Circus Moment: I’ve got many favorite 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

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 was accepted into the National Institute of Circus Arts, where he completed a three-year bachelor’s degree. Since graduating in 2004, Ben has been working as a freelance performer in circus companies around Australia and overseas.

Circus Oz Debut: Hobart, 2006.

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 busking. 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 bounceball 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.

Circus Oz Debut: Fremantle, 1999.

Favorite Circus Moment: Sitting backstage, listening to Lynden Ball, our 120kg truck driver telling himself that he was a “butterfly” so as not to hurt me when he stood on my guts as I did a back bend.



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 hag 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*.

Circus Oz Debut: Canberra, 2006.

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.”

About the Artists



Giving the piano accordion a good name since 1993, **Svetlana Bunic** (*composer, musician, performer*) has been squeezing life into a treasury of musical styles. Recognized for her ongoing work with the multi-ARIA-winning group Monsieur Camembert,

Christa Hughes (*Sleepless Beauty*, *Temptation*, *Go-Go Burlesco*), Darth Vegas and Ukes of Hazzard, Svetlana is now pursuing her musical magic with Circus Oz.

Circus Oz Debut: Cardiff, 2005.

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



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 be come 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 up into a handstand for the first time—reminding me of my first press handstand. A magical thing to learn to do!