Thursday, February 5, 2009, 8pm  
Friday, February 6, 2009, 8pm  
Saturday, February 7, 2009, 2pm & 8pm  
Sunday, February 8, 2009, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

Circus Oz

30th Birthday Bash!

Cal Performances’ 2008–2009 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

Please do not take flash photos or film during the show, as it is 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.
Program Act Descriptions

**Sway Pole**: Well, it’s a pole, eight meters tall, and it sways. Sound simple? Of course, you have to get up first... try wobbling on one of these for 10 minutes. Then try it while doing a handstand.

*Circus Oz Debut*: Lingy in 2004.

*Danger Factor*: Gravity, the dreaded wobbles and motion sickness.

**Aerial Straps**: Aerial Straps are strips of canvas hung from the ceiling. To perform on them requires tremendous upper-body strength and calloused hands.

*Circus Oz Debut*: Ben Lewis in 2006.

**Aerial Tissu**: Aerial Tissu is a curtain of silken material, which requires the ability to transform acts of great strength into graceful movement.

*Circus Oz Debut*: Flea in 2002.

*Danger Factor*: Self-preservation depends on complicated wrapping techniques and a strong set of shoulder muscles.

**Inline Skating**: This year, Circus Oz expands its repertoire to include something new from the streets of Melbourne (and Albury, home of our brand-new skater girl). We can verify that somersaults in skates are not impossible.

*Circus Oz Debut*: Flip in 2008.

*Danger Factor*: All that safety gear is not for show.

**Trapeze**: Trapezes, and the trapeze act, come in all shapes and sizes. Circus Oz has done everything from flying trapeze, which involved flying through space from a trapeze to a catcher, to static doubles, which usually sees a combination of grace and strength as two people climb around each other and their apparatus. The classic modern trapeze act is the swinging trapeze. A more recent version is called cloudswing, which is an elegantly slung rope. Sometimes they can be seen hanging from the rope by their toes.


*Danger Factor*: Missing the bar can leave an aerialist very highly strung.

**Hula Hoops**: Circus Oz takes the humble hula hoop to a whole new level—spinning more than one at a time is a skill that takes hours of practice every day for years, and requires incredible muscle control.

*Circus Oz Debut*: Karina in 1999.

*Danger Factor*: Ever smack yourself on the nose with one of these? They’re also hard to manage as carry-on luggage.

**Touring**: It takes enormous fortitude to stay on the road, and in the air, for most of the year. There’s the horrible food, the dehydration, the little bottles of gin....

*First Circus Oz tour*: In 1980, Circus Oz set off to Sydney, Papua New Guinea and Europe for the first time.

*Danger Factor*: Let’s not even go there!

**Musicians**: The music is the colourful heart of the show. Everyone plays at least a little bit. The band at its core has no limits. All music is originally composed individually and collectively by the band and is created to fit the acts, sometimes following the mood, sometimes driving it along.

*Circus Oz Debut*: The original mob in 1978.

*Danger Factor*: Daredevil drum sticks flying in the eyes.
Introduction

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.

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 have toured to 26 countries across five continents, where in each place, inevitably, audiences have never seen anything quite like it before. They have played sell out seasons on 42nd Street in New York, one-off gigs at refugee camps on the West Bank; they have 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 30 years, will be a once off. 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. Happy Birthday, Circus Oz!

David Carlin

About the Artists

Performers

Ben Lewis (performer) 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. Since graduating from NICA in 2004, Ben has been working as a freelance performer in circus companies around Australia and abroad.

_Circus Oz Debut_: Hobart, 2006.

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

Julia Watt (musician) 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 months tour of the Middle East with an all-girl cover band.


_Favorite Circus Moment_: Auditioning for Circus Oz in February 2007 and then being offered the job!

Flip Kammerer (performer) is a born and bred bush baby from Albury, were she began her circus career with the Flying Fruit Circus. She is a multi-skilled acrobat, tumbler, circus trainer, performer, musician, skater and break-dancer. Flip has been fortunate to have experienced a great deal, from performing on Broadway, New York, to competing in extreme sports.

_Circus Oz Debut_: Melbourne, 2008.

_Favorite Circus Moment_: The rush of flying off the teeterboard and watching the sunset on top of the Big Top after a season wraps up.

Scott Hone (performer) started doing sweet tricks on his BMX when he was 14. On his way to becoming a self proclaimed all-round nice guy and chick magnet, he finished his degree in computing science, taught high-school mathematics, moved to the big city and had his bike nicked. Scott is a performer from way back. He did his first standup routine in front of a public audience aged 11. He has done a lot of stuff.
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since then. His preferred mode of transport is his beloved scooter. He can go really fast on it.


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.

Michael Ling (performer), known as “Lingy,” started young, joining the Flying Fruit Fly Circus at the age of nine. He has 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.


Favorite Circus Moment: In New York, after being told we had to do the show without Tim Coldwell as his visa was delayed. At a critical moment, in walked Tim. Hooray!

Heavily inspired by B-grade horror and early cartoon music, Michael Lira (multi-instrumentalist, composer) has developed a unique style of composition that has led to a wide array of work across various mediums including circus, theatre, feature films and television shows.

Circus Oz Debut: Melbourne, 2008.

Favorite Circus Moment: The time when Celia Curtis, ring master of Circus Bizarre, while performing at the Enmore Theatre, summoned a heckler onto the stage, slapped him in the face performing all over the world with Circus Oz, with the odd break to renovate his house and try his hand at rigging.

Nicci Wilks (performer) has since strutted her skills around the world, performing in nine different languages. Companies she has worked with include Melbourne Theatre Company, Circa, Dislocate, Circus Monoxide, Hothouse Theatre, Born in a Taxi and The Humour Foundation. Training in Paris, Montreal, Germany and Norway, Nicci is/has been a circus artiste, clown doctor, wheel enthusiast, drag king, tent boss, Shakespearean actor, singer in a band and a musical, stage manager, production manager, tour manager....


Performing since age 11, Paul O’Keeffe (performer) has toured the world performing in theatre, circus, dance and puppetry. Paul is a co-creator of extreme circus company KRONIK that blends the traditional format of circus with hip-hop beats, MC-ing and skate culture and has graduated from the National Institute of Circus Arts.


Favorite Circus Moment: Watching a traditional circus show at age nine, when the elephant decided not to perform and after seeing a gap in the tent made his way out, roaming the streets of Canberra. The show went on.

Rockie Stone (performer) began her performance career at age four with a pair of ballet shoes and a poodle costume. After completing a zoological science degree, 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!

Jacqui Levy’s (performer) love of performance began when she was a child, traveling with her family in an old Bedford bus, and completing her schooling via correspondence. It was during this time that she began learning traditional bush poetry and busking on the dusty streets at folk festivals. In 2002, Jacqui completed a Bachelor of Arts in drama and a Bachelor of Secondary Education at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. Jacqui later graduated from the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) in 2006. Since graduating from NICA, Jacqui has performed around the world from the La Piste Festival in Belgium to a London-based circus musical funded by the British Arts Council.

Circus Oz Debut: Hong Kong, 2007.

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

Giving the piano accordion a good name since 1993, Svetlana Bunic (music director, composer) 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, Monsieur Camembert, ARIA-winning group Humour Foundation). Svetlana is now pursuing her musical magic with Circus Oz.

First Gig with Circus Oz: Cardiff, 2005.

Favorite Circus Moment: Performing, playing and jamming with the kids in remote Aboriginal communities around Australia and doing the same with the urban mob in Mexico in 2007.

Comments in front of 600 people. and then made him publicly apologize for his rude comments in front of 600 people.

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