



Friday and Saturday, February 22–23, 2019, 8pm
Sunday, February 24, 2019, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

Les 7 Doigts (The 7 Fingers) *Reversible*

Directed, Written, and Choreographed by
Gypsy Snider

Starring

Maria del Mar Reyes Saez, Vincent Jutras, Jérémie Lévesque,
Natasha Patterson, Hugo Ragetly, Émilie Silliau, Julien Silliau, Emi Vauthey

Due to the physical demands of circus arts performances, the artists performing each day are subject to change.

Coproducers

Thomas Lightburn, *producer* (Vancouver, Canada)
TOHU (Montreal, Quebec)

Théâtre du Gymnase et des Bernardines (Marseille, France)

Commissioning Partner

La Strada (Graz, Austria)

Cal Performances' 2018–19 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.



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| <i>Associate Director</i> | Isabelle Chassé |
| <i>Movement Design Collaborators</i> | Phillip Chbeeb and Hokuto Konishi (AXYZM) |
| <i>Choreographic Assistant</i> | Kyra Jean Green |
| <i>Chinese Pole Choreography</i> | Shana Carroll |

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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Set & Props</i> | Ana Cappelluto |
| <i>Lighting</i> | Yan Lee Chan |
| <i>Costumes</i> | Geneviève Bouchard |
| <i>Acrobatic Coaching</i> | Francisco Cruz |
| <i>Rigger</i> | Guillaume Ménard-Crête |
| <i>Project Manager</i> | Chloé Rondeau |
| <i>Stage Manager</i> | Julie Brosseau-Doré |
| <i>Technical Director</i> | Louis Héon |

Music

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| <i>Music Direction</i> | Colin Gagné, in collaboration with Sébastien Soldevila |
| <i>Original Lyrics & Music, Sound Design, and Music Arrangements</i> | Colin Gagné, in collaboration with Raphaël Cruz, Ines Talbi, and Dominiq Hamel |
| <i>Singers & Musicians</i> | Luzio Altobelli, Jocelyn Bigras, Colin Gagné, Guido Del Fabbro, Alexandre Désilets, Cédric Dind-Lavoie, Dominiq Hamel, Frannie Holder, Ines Talbi, Julie-Blanche Vandenbroucque, Leif Vollebekk, Spike Wilner, Maxime Fortin |

Original music available on BandCamp (album/reversible)

Touring Team

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|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Tour Manager</i> | Olaf Triebel |
| <i>Technical Director & Lighting Operator</i> | Gabrielle Bérubé-Forest |
| <i>Head Electrician</i> | Marjorie Lefebvre |
| <i>Sound Operator</i> | Mathieu Dumont |
| <i>Rigger</i> | François Brosseau |

*“Fans and Whips” text excerpt from Eugène Ionesco’s La Cantatrice Chauve (The Bald Soprano).
Presented with the support of Conseil des art et des lettres du Québec,
Conseil des arts de Montréal, et Conseil des arts du Canada.*



Les 7 Doigts (The 7 Fingers) is an acclaimed arts collective unlike any other. In 2002 the seven founders set out to redefine the circus arts by stripping down the spectacle to its thrilling essence.

The contemporary company tells stories that combine death-defying acrobatics with a life-affirming theatricality that is unique to the 7 Fingers. Since its inception, the group has expanded from its own signature touring shows to creating theatrical experiences as diverse as the artistic directors themselves: original productions varying from intimate one-man shows to large-scale arena performances; Broadway musicals; artistic collaborations with renowned international artists and companies; production design and direction; special events; Olympic ceremonies; televised performances; fashion, art, and music events; immersive experiences; and much more.

Ambassadors of diversity, the company has consistently spread its horizons by mixing genres and exploring new ways to tell stories. Fascinated by the human condition, the artists create performances that celebrate our world, our time, and our identity. Their shows tour the globe, enthraling audiences wherever they go.

In 2018 the 7 Fingers opened their own center of creation and production. Situated in the heart of Montreal's downtown theater district, the new complex houses all of the company's activities, departments, and dreams under one roof.

Gypsy Snider (*director*) is the co-founder and artistic director of the 7 Fingers. She has written, directed and/or co-directed the company's productions *Réversible*, *Intersection*, *Amuse*, *Traces*, and *Loft*. Snider has also choreographed televised performances for *America's Got Talent*, *Her Majesty's Royal Variety Performance*, the illusionist Darcy Oake's *Edge of Reality*, and a Bench Denim and Underwear fashion show in the Philippines. In 2013, working with director Diane Paulus on a new vision of *Pippin*, she integrated circus into the revival of the Broadway musical. Snider's work on *Pippin* earned her a Drama Desk Award and an Outer Critics Circle Award. She is also a guest teacher and

guest director at the National Circus School of Montreal. In 2015 she received the Evolving Circus Award in New York City.

Originally from San Francisco, Snider is the daughter of the founders of the Pickle Family Circus. After receiving her degree in physical theater from the Accademia Teatro Dimitri in Switzerland in 1993, she performed internationally for 18 years, with Cirque du Soleil and many other groups.

Nassib El-Husseini, CEO, a political scientist and author (*L'Occident imaginaire, Éditions PUQ*), has been an advisor and volunteer for dozens of provincial, national, and international organizations. In 2003, he fell under the charm of the 7 Fingers and took on the executive direction of this jewel of the Montreal stage.

El-Husseini is currently the president of the International Exchange for the Performing Arts (CINARS). He sits on the boards of the National Theatre School of Canada and the Société des arts technologiques (SAT), and was a board member of the Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM) from 2012 to 2018.

In 2013 El-Husseini received the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)'s Prix Reconnaissance in recognition of his exceptional career.

Maria del Mar Reyes Saez (Spain)

Disciplines: hand balancing; Chinese pole; dance. Training: Montreal National Circus School (2012–16); Escuela de circo Carampa in Spain (2010–12). Shows: *Crece 2015*; *Danses Buissonnières* (Quantum Collective); *Babel remix* and *Lours, l'écureuil et le dauphin* (Montréal Complètement Cirque); co-founder of Sphinx Sans Secret (cabaret of feminine circus).

Vincent Jutras (Canada)

Disciplines: hoop skate; Korean plank; dance. Training: Circus School of Verdun (2011–12); Montreal National Circus School (2013–16). Shows: *Coups de Coeur* (Tohu); Jazz Festival of Montreal; Festif in Baie St-Paul; *Lours, l'écureuil et le dauphin* (Montréal Complètement Cirque); *Les Étincelleurs* (École Nationale de Cirque); *Cirque EnVol Rochester* (Haut-Vol

Productions), *Les Minutes Complètement Cirque* (Montréal Complètement Cirque).

Jérémi Lévesque, (Canada)

Disciplines: Korean plank; hoop diving. Training: Montreal National Circus School (2013–16). Shows: *Cirque Envol* (Haut-Vol Productions); Opening ceremonies of the 2015 Pan-American Games (Cirque du Soleil); *Coups de cœur* (Tohu).

Natasha Patterson (USA)

Disciplines: juggling; contortion; dance. Training: San Francisco Circus Center (2001–05); Montreal National Circus School (2011–16). Shows: *Kooza* (Cirque du Soleil); *ID* (Cirque Éloïze); *Les sphinx sans secrets* (Saint-Catherine Theatre); *Just for Laughs* (hosted by Andy Samberg); *Hansel et Gretel* (Opéra de Montréal); *Cubes au Carré* (Les 7 Doigts, 2018). Television appearances: *The Oprah Winfrey Show*; *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*; *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*; *Today* (NBC); *The Morning Show*.

Hugo Ragetly (France)

Disciplines: juggling; Chinese pole. Training: School Circus Piste d'Azur (France, 2011–13);

Montreal National Circus School (2013–16). Shows: *Turbo 418*; Festival Montréal Complètement Cirque; International Jazz Festival of Montreal; Festif in Baie St-Paul; *Les Etincelleurs* by Johanne Madore (TOHU); *Carnaval of Nice*.

Émilie Silliau (France)

Disciplines: aerial rope; trapeze; aerial silk; Chinese pole. Training: Circus Arts School Balthazar (Montpellier, France, 2009–10); Autodidact (2010–12). Shows: *Daruma et Les Fourmis dans la Tête* (Street Compagnie Entr'Act); *Aperté* (Cirque Starlight); *Queen of the Night* and *Amuse* (Les 7 Doigts); *A corps perdus* (Les DésAxés). Awards: Club Circus Prize for the 37th edition of Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain (France).

Julien Silliau (France)

Disciplines: German wheel; juggling; Chinese pole; whip cracking. Training: Circus Arts School Balthazar (Montpellier, France, 2004–05); National School of Circus Arts of Rosny-sous-Bois (2005–07); Montreal National Circus School (2007–09). Shows: *PSY*, *Queen of the Night*, *Amuse* (Les 7 Doigts); *À corps perdus*

Fun Facts About the Show

- The inspiration for the final scene of the show came during a trip made by Gypsy Snider to her family's farm in Massachusetts. She was hanging laundry on a clothesline. There wasn't anyone for miles around her.
- Natasha Patterson started performing professionally when she was nine years old.
- To create the characters for *Reversible*, the artists researched their family histories for almost a year. Prior to this, many among them weren't aware of the dark and fascinating pasts of some of their ancestors.
- Hugo Ragetly hadn't ever hung a piece of laundry on a clothesline before this creation.
- Two of our performers play a married couple on stage and they are married in real life.
- The aerial scene symbolizes determination, resilience, and sisterhood. It tells the story of two women who, at a specific moment during their lives, decide to take a leap of faith and live the way they want to live. The choice first causes them incredible loneliness, but soon proves emancipating and liberating as they open up to the world and take part in a global movement.

(Les DésAxés). Awards: Participation in the 36th edition of Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain (France); Club Circus Prize for the 37th edition of Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain (France); Guinness world record for German wheel.

Emi Vauthey (Switzerland)

Disciplines: contortion; aerial silk; hula hoop; dance; aerial hoops. Training: Rhythmic Gym-

nastics in Switzerland (1997–05); School Circus of Lausanne (2000–08); Dance in the Clubs for young dancers (2005–08); School Rudra-Béjart (2008–10). Shows: *ID* (Cirque Éloize); *Amuse* (Les 7 Doigts); *Le concours* (Béjart Ballet Lausanne). Awards: Third Prize at the International Festival Artistika; Final Round in *La France a un incroyable talent*; Somodial Prize at the International Festival of Monte Carlo *La première Rampe*.

Connecting to the Past

An Interview with Gypsy Snider

What are some of the stories and themes going into *Reversible*?

I sent the cast out in November 2015 to start looking into their genealogies. At the least, they had to go to their grandparents, but some of them went as far as their great-grandparents and their great-great-grandparents. I wanted them to create characters based on where they came from, a past that they were not even aware of. The idea was that in studying that past, they might see a deeper, stronger path to how they became the people that they are. And the idea was that we would then construct characters to tell the story of *Reversible* based on events that occurred in these artists' DNA pool over the last 150 years. This has proven to be the deepest and most exciting part of creating *Reversible*. Every day they would come back with new stories about their grandparents or their great-grandparents, things they had never known. One girl found out she was Jewish—she had no idea! One girl who is Swiss found out that her Japanese grandmother had abandoned an arranged marriage in Japan and run away with a Swiss man. She became the first Japanese woman to immigrate to this tiny Swiss village. The stories are just incredible. What we're feeling in this current generation is that we are uprooted. We are not as connected to family and past as we were even 50 years ago.

Who are the artists on stage?

In casting the show, it was really important that we had the usual, versatile 7 Fingers cast. A cast that is not only made up of incredible acrobats and jugglers, but also a cast of characters that were really going to mold themselves to the experience that I was trying to create. I knew I wanted people who were going to help me write the story from their own personal experience.

Why *Reversible*?

The initial spark of *Reversible* was the idea of working with walls. Walls that would create confined theatrical spaces and situations, walls that could move and transform and give us interesting geometric forms. Walls are also hugely theatrical. Walls are something that we're all familiar with: walls that confine us, walls that separate us, walls that enclose us, walls that keep us from doing the things that we want to do in our lives. We created *Reversible* with walls that represent the exterior and walls that represent the interior.

The idea of having these two-sided walls helped me to define the storytelling, which very clearly became about who we are on the inside and who we are on the outside. Our reversible selves.

What has the creative process of *Reversible* been like?

The process for *Reversible* is based on the creative process the company has been developing over the last 15 years. We begin with a spark, an idea, a desire to express and explore a concept that fascinates us, something that we feel will fulfill our search for a better humanity, for a better understanding of who we are. We take a storyline, a vehicle to explore the capacity of storytelling through circus, and then we cast a show of characters based on that desire and through improvisation. We create a playground in which we ask the artists to improvise on themes, structures, situations, so that they are able to bring in their own quality—their own flavor—and together we create the show.

The artists enter the process almost a year before the premiere. Their contribution is fundamental; creating this way is heavily based on improvisation, on a very personal way of working.

I propose concepts, music, stage designs, situations, a theatrical framework onto which the artists must improvise to fill this canvas. Of course, there are choreographed segments and images that are already very clear to me, but I always expect the artists to go further. It's a very organic, very creative, and always surprising process, one that allows us to create an entity that is separate from us, an entity that takes us further than something that any of us might have imagined alone.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram @The7fingers

Facebook @les7doigts

Twitter @the7fingers

#REVERSIBLE

#the7fingers

#circuseverydamnday

#circusaroundtheworld

#circus

#circuslife

#acrobatics

Fun Facts About the Show

- The comedy routines created by the beautiful and talented woman in the show are based on their grandmothers' true-life stories.
- Jérémi Lévesque is the most agile of all on stage and the clumsiest of all offstage.
- Three doors were destroyed during the show's creation.
- Vincent Jutras studied to be a baker.
- Julien Silliau has performed in several other 7 Fingers shows: *Traces*, *PSY*, *Amuse*, and *Queen of the Night*.
- The carousel in the final scene is a time machine for Natasha Patterson. Every room that she visits represents a specific era inspired by the lives of her ancestors. Through the juggling balls, she is able to delve into different memories.
- All the clowning/physical comedy scenes are played by the four females in the cast.
- There is an act that combines juggling fans and cracking whips with dialog from Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*, a play that originally premiered in 1950.
- The original soundtrack of *Reversible* features more than 15 of Montreal's finest musicians and singers.