

CIRQUE MECHANICS

Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus

Wednesday, January 31, 2024, 7:30 PM

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CIRQUE MECHANICS

Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus

There will be one 20-minute intermission.

This performance is supported in part by gifts
from Clem and Georgia Carter and
Mrs. Candi M. Kelly and Dr. J. Michael Kelly.



PROGRAM NOTES

In *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*, an emotive and exhilarating tale about human ingenuity and our natural resources, witness the tug of war that exists between man and nature in the name of progress.

Humans have been harnessing the power of the wind for thousands of years. The beauty and efficacy of that timeless and ingenious process inspired the creative team at Cirque Mechanics to create *Zephyr*, a theatrical circus show that harnesses human power instead of wind to generate an energetic acrobatic experience.

Cirque Mechanics has designed and built a performance windmill to serve as the multifunctional mechanical centerpiece of our story. Mounted on a turntable, the windmill combines both modern and older, more picturesque elements — with the transformation from one aspect to another providing a change of scenery in real time.

Inspired by a visit to a working windmill in central England, *Zephyr* (which means gentle breeze from the Greek god of the west wind Zephyrus) tells the story of Nigel, mill owner and operator, and his complicated relationship with wind, the natural resource that powers his flour mill. His reliance on wind is tested and in turn he is lured by fuel in the name of progress as his primary energy source. His choices cause elation and disruption, aptly represented by the community the mill serves as dynamic and lyrical circus acts. Nigel grapples with tough choices and unintended outcomes with humor and optimism, which lead to acceptance, coexistence, and balance with wind, progress, and his community.



THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE PRODUCERS

We want to thank our family: our three wonderful sons — Zion, Quinn, and Iago — for their unconditional love and support; enthusiasm; imagination; for adopting the spirit of a true circus family by discussing act ideas, narrative, and plot points over dinners and visits home from college; and for helping in the shop with painting, building, and clean up! Our parents for taking us to the circus as children and allowing us to dream.

Our cast and crew for their tireless efforts and their collaborative energy. The team at Alliance Artists Management for believing in our company and for their extensive support during the pandemic. Bo Bogatin and Kurt Nelson for keeping us honest and legal. Andy Espo at CallAndy for keeping our Macs in tip-top shape. Bryan Schuette and the boys at United Machine, for fabricating and creating and trusting us with their equipment. Thanks to Stephen for playing Chris' theme music almost every time he walked through the door. Brendan Mullenix for his incredible

work ethic, dedication, and willingness to learn. Kai Hou for his generous coaching. Drew Lupson for bringing color and dimension to the show with his amazing set painting. Toby Stanley for his craftsmanship. Don Seiersen at Vishnu Creative for his great graphic support. Kirk Marsh for capturing the essence of the show with his stunning photographs. The Las Vegas Circus Center for their incredible facility and the welcoming circus community they have built. Our family at Cirque du Soleil and our fellow American circus companies for their commitment to this art form and for continuing to set the bar higher.

We appreciate the ability to tech and launch our tours at home, so a most special thank you to Lori Cobo and the University of Nevada Las Vegas for their continued support of our company and their sponsorship, partnership, and generosity.

The creation process was long and arduous, but extremely rewarding. We had so much fun designing and exploring, training, and rehearsing. Our goal is that you are entertained, and our hope that you are moved. Finally thank you to our audiences for venturing once more to the theatre, for your loyalty and your faith in our company, and for the laughs, the applause, and the appreciation for the circus arts.

— *Chris and Aida Lashua*



BIOGRAPHIES

CHRIS LASHUA, FOUNDER, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, AND MACHINE DESIGNER

Company founder Chris Lashua hails from Boston, Massachusetts, where he spent most of his youth riding on a BMX bike. Lashua was discovered by Cirque du Soleil and created/performed a BMX bike act that was entirely his own. He was then commissioned to build a German wheel act for the company, an act he performed for several years in Cirque du Soleil's production of *Quidam*, cementing his reputation as a visionary of circus gadgetry. His engineering chops and creative energy led him to run away with his own circus company, Cirque Mechanics.

Lashua believes that innovative mechanical apparatus and the relationship between performer and machine set his company apart and are at the heart of what makes Cirque Mechanics unique. He has delivered on this unique approach in the company's theatrical productions. His innovative machines interact with acrobats, dancers, jugglers, and contortionists on a 1920's factory

floor in *Birdhouse Factory*; a gold rush-era town in *Boom Town*; alongside renowned symphonies in the *Orchestra Project*; in a bicycle shop in *Pedal Punk*; inside a circus ring in *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels*; and now inside a countryside windmill in *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*.

Lashua adapted to the pandemic restrictions by developing and presenting two new projects: an outdoor, socially distanced, pandemic-compliant show at a Las Vegas golf course, where guests sat on the green and inside golf carts under the stars, titled the *Cirque Mechanics Driven-Dine*, and a stunning spectacle inside the company's new custom orange and grey circus big top he called *Cirque Mechanics Under Canvas*.

Lashua continues to build on the might of his engineering mind, his passion for the circus, and all things mechanical by designing performance apparatus in real world settings that amaze and awe. When he is not developing material for a theatrical show, he is building other wacky performance devices for events, like the paddle ship, a portable stage that not only floats, but also can be navigated by pedal-powered paddle wheels, and innovative hospitality devices like the wine trike and the buffet train, which double as pedaled performance platforms and fare delivery apparatus.

Lashua is a producing partner of the Vegas International Variety Arts Festival (VIVA Fest), a founding board member of the American Circus Alliance (ACA), and founding member of the Producers Alliance of Southern Nevada (PALS). Lashua was a featured guest lecturer at the annual Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference and a recent guest on the *Circus History Live!* and *Hideaway Circus* podcasts.

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

AIDA LASHUA, PRODUCER AND COLLABORATOR

Aida Lashua has been Chris Lashua's co-producer and creative partner in life and work for nearly 30 years. Their partnership includes a decade of touring and work experience with Cirque du Soleil as well as 15 years running their own company, Cirque Mechanics. Aida worked for Cirque du Soleil sponsor AT&T, implementing their multi-million dollar sponsorship agreement on tour, which included product placement, sales staff training, and supervision of special sales promotions. She also worked as a box office supervisor and house manager for Cirque du Soleil, where she trained and managed a staff of 60, implemented customer service policies, and helped develop and revise training manuals and VIP package tests.

Thanks to her experience with Cirque du Soleil, Lashua has an appreciation for the business and a passion for the circus arts. She currently manages the day-to-day operations of Cirque Mechanics and family with poise as a creative force and a stabilizing influence. Her education and background in direct marketing allows her to use a targeted message approach in the development of the company's website and social media presence. As a mother of three boys, Lashua is an avid supporter of the educational component and community outreach programs offered by Cirque Mechanics. She has written the education outreach support materials and study guides and has developed the structure of the educational workshops. Lashua, who is a native of Puerto Rico, feels most at home near the ocean. She is a contributing writer for CityLife Publications and hopes to one day publish that elusive next great American novel.

CREATIVE DESIGN TEAM

ALOYSIA GAVRE, CO-DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER

Aloysia Gavre is a circus creator, director, educator, and founding board member of the American Circus Alliance. Gavre co-founded both Troupe Vertigo and Cirque School in Los Angeles in 2009 with a vision to contribute to and grow a wider appreciation for the circus arts. She began her own performance career with the Pickle Family Circus in her hometown of San Francisco and went on to perform with Cirque du Soleil, Monte Carlo Circus Festival, Teatro Zinzanni, and numerous international symphonies. Her expertise has been used in the films *Water for Elephants* and *Pitch Perfect 2*. She was featured on the cover of *Dance Teacher Magazine* for her expertise in circus arts. Speaking engagements include TEDx, Center Theater Group, Directors Lab, Chicago Circus Festival, AYCO, and VIVA Fest Las Vegas. Gavre's creative journey with Cirque Mechanics began at its inception with its premier show, *Birdhouse Factory*, in 2004. Her expertise of integrating Cirque Mechanics trademark architectural machines with circus bodies in motion remains an integral part of the company. A vintage fun memory: in 1999 Gavre and Chris Lashua rode their bikes through Amsterdam after their performance in *Quidam* to see Lauryn Hill in concert.

SEAN RILEY, CO-DIRECTOR, SET DESIGNER, AND ARTISTIC RIGGER

Sean Riley has a 20-year career combining suspension, kinetic movement, and design with performance. Through scenic, rigging, and mechanical design, often in concert with each other, Riley creates unique performance environments. Concentrating his

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

design for performance on site-specific and non-traditional work, he has created installations in collaboration with a wide spectrum of accomplished artists and collaborators. Being known for his bold and often surprising use of space and for large-scale movement, Riley's installations commonly reflect his lifelong obsession with gravity and Newtonian physics. His works have been installed from backyards to Broadway and continue to tour internationally. He is a founding member of Cirque Mechanics and his company, Gravity Design, through which he has developed an arsenal of specialized tools, pushing the bounds of performance as well as industrial safety. Riley is the host of the National Geographic Television series *World's Toughest Fixes* and the series *Speed* on Curiosity Stream. Riley lives in a fairy tale in British Columbia with his wife, three boys, and lots of bears. For more information, please visit visiblegravity.com.

STEVEN RAGATZ, CO-DIRECTOR, WRITER, AND PERFORMER

An original *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town*, and *Orchestra Project* cast member collaborator, plus lead writer for *Pedal Punk* and now *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*, Steven Ragatz has been entertaining audiences with his juggling, physical comedy, stilt walking, and general antics for the past three decades. As a 10-year veteran of Cirque du Soleil, Ragatz has toured throughout North, South, and Central America; Asia; and Europe, performing multiple juggling acts and an eclectic array of characters. Ragatz is on the staff of Bloomington's Stage Flight Circus Arts, where he teaches juggling and unicycle skills workshops. He recently toured his one-man show, *Under the Umbrella, Life is a Circus*, an evening with a juggling virtuoso and stories from world-wide circus adventures.

Steven holds a bachelor's degree in variety theatre and a master's degree in computer science from Indiana University. He studied mime, stage movement, and circus arts with Fred Garbo, Tony Montanaro, George Pinney, and Michael Moschen. He and his wife, Lisa, have two children, Melissa and Andrew, and currently live in Maine, where they have mastered the art of making the perfect margarita.

MICHAEL PICTON, COMPOSER

Michael Picton is an award-winning composer whose eclectic career spans film, television, advertising, theatre, and circus. Picton has scored five Cirque Mechanics productions: *Boom Town*, the Cirque Mechanics *Orchestral Project*, *Pedal Punk*, *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels*, and now *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*. His circus career began as a performer, touring as keyboardist with Cirque du Soleil's *Quidam*. He has written songs and score for six editions of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus: *Bellobration*, *Funundrum*, *Dragons*, *Built to Amaze*, *Circus Xtreme*, and the final edition, *Out of this World*. Recently, his live work has expanded to include superhero arena shows with Feld Entertainment's *Marvel Universe Live* and *Marvel Universe Live: Age of Heroes*.

The winner of the Turner Classic Movies (TCM) Young Film Composers Competition, Picton has scored the silent films *The Temptress* and *The Red Mill* for TCM. Other film and television work includes *Mutt & Stuff* for Sid and Marty Krofft on Nickelodeon, *Hello, Jack!* *The Kindness Show* on Apple TV+, the SyFy series *Flash Gordon*, and main title themes for *I Want to Work for Diddy* and *Bates Motel*. Picton has composed network themes for PBS, Amazon Originals, and CNN International, among others, as well as commercials and promos for a long list of clients.

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

KALIN HENNING, COSTUME DESIGNER

Kalin Henning has spent their life so far bouncing around between theatre, acrobatics, and complete and utter confusion. Henning developed a love for historic costuming early on and was the head costume designer for four different Shakespeare productions before the age of 21. Since then, when not working as a performer, they have spent their time making costumes as a freelance designer and more recently are expanding their knowledge base by pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering from University of Nevada, Las Vegas's Howard H. Hughes College of Engineering. Henning cannot decide if the favorite costume they've ever made was an Andolite or an historically appropriate hand-sewn 1901 ballgown.

JOE D'EMILIO, LIGHTING DESIGNER

Joe D'Emilio is a New York City-based lighting designer with over a decade of experience in theatre, opera, dance, and special events. D'Emilio joined the Cirque Mechanics family in 2015 on *Birdhouse Factory* and continued to tour with *Pedal Punk*. Additionally, D'Emilio has designed for Circus Juventas in St. Paul, Minnesota; Bindlestiff Family Cirkus in New York City; and Circus Sarasota. His San Francisco Bay Area designs include work with Ray of Light Theatre, Broadway by the Bay, Aurora Theatre, and American Circus Theatre. When not out on the road, he works at the New York City venues National Sawdust, The Box, and the Met Museum. D'Emilio is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829. His portfolio is available at joedemilio.com.

ZION LASHUA, STORY CONCEPT

Zion Lashua was born in Colorado, while his parents, Chris and Aida, were on tour with Cirque du Soleil. Lashua toured North America and Europe before his fifth birthday and believes that was the foundation for his wanderlust. Lashua has always had a penchant for travel, history, and storytelling. He pursued his passion by earning a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in classics from the University of San Diego, where he studied abroad in Bali and Florence. He continued his studies, earning a master's degree in classics from the University of Exeter in the U.K., where he interned cataloging antiquities at the British School in Athens, Greece. Lashua polishes his storytelling chops as the host of his very own podcast, *It's a Classic*, where he shares tales based on the classics, making connections to modern-day pop culture. Lashua has been a part of Cirque Mechanics since childhood and has worked on almost every production. Having been part of the initial trip to the working windmill that inspired *Zephyr*, he was integral in developing the story concept and advancing the narrative arc. Lashua is an avid Pokémon fan and collector; his favorite... Lickitung.

PRODUCTION CREW

LEO HIDALGO, LIGHTING DIRECTOR

Leonardo Hidalgo is a New York-based lighting designer, production manager, and educator with a focus on theatre, opera, and dance. Currently, Hidalgo is the production manager and lighting designer for Battery Dance Company, with whom he has internationally toured workshops built to create community, tolerance, and acceptance. Additionally, he works with several New

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

York area schools, teaching lighting and theatre technology as well as safety in their programs. Past works include *Madcap Motel* (associate lighting director), an immersive space in the arts district of Los Angeles, and *McKittrick Hotel* (guest designer), home to *Sleep No More*, the Manderley bar, and the Club Car. Hidalgo is excited to be working with *Cirque Mechanics* as lighting director after his time with *Birdhouse Factory* last season.

DAVID SEXTON, LIGHTING DIRECTOR

David A. Sexton is a Brooklyn-based designer of live events. Selected theatrical credits include *Written by Phillis* (Quintessence Theater Group), *Fun Home* (Cape Rep), *In the Heights*, *Damn Yankees*, *Ragtime* (Park Playhouse), *Kragtar: An American Monster Musical* (Third Space Theater), *What's Your Wish* (Thicket and Thistle), *Pippin*, *Sweet Charity* (Broadway Workshop), *How To Be a Good Witch* (Pantochino Productions), *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Two River), *The Plough and The Stars* (Abbey Theatre Company, North American Tour), *La Cage Aux Folles* (Cortland Rep), *Doubt*, *White Christmas* (Ocean State Theater Company), *Stuff Nobody Likes*, *Spring Fling* (F*it Club), *Silken Veils* and *Solider Bear* (Pantea Productions), and *Batboy* (First Stage). Sexton is a current associate company member of the Wooster Group with designs for *Nyatt School Redux* and *The Mother*. He's also a frequent collaborator with RWS and Associates and David Weiner Design on cruise ship, theme park, and music festival entertainment, including MSC, Azamara, Disney, Bonnaroo, Outside Lands, and Format. Sexton is a graduate of North Carolina School of the Arts. Find more information at davidasexton.com.

JANEEN JOHNSON, CREATIVE TEAM LIAISON AND DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

Janeen Johnson is arts administrator, stagecraft specialist, and activist with over 20 years of experience in arts management, event operations, and theatre arts production. Johnson facilitates creative visions to be realized through planning, producing, and community partnerships. Her over 10-year tenure as a professional dancer informs her unique style, and she is considered a maven for dance, theatre, and special events — a production tour de force on any team. For the past 12 years, Johnson has served as Cirque Mechanics' principal touring production stage manager, directing the administration and logistics of its theatrical touring productions: *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town*, *Pedal Punk*, *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels*, and now *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*; she has toured North America, Europe, and Asia. Most recently, Johnson celebrated the launch of her company-based agency, O.Y.A. Strategies, a community agency designed to advance artistic and cultural arts expressions that promote positive social change. She hopes to continue service in collaboration with Cirque Mechanics and local agencies that work to develop a model of art creation for sustainability, community building, and public sharing. Johnson is based in California and enjoys dancing her fitness anywhere!

RACHEL A. LANTOW, TOURING PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Rachel Lantow joined Cirque Mechanics in 2018 for the tour of *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels*, including the off-Broadway residency at the New Victory Theatre. In the 2021-2022 season, Lantow toured *Birdhouse Factory*, and in the summer of 2022,

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

she presented the inaugural show in the brand new tent: *Cirque Mechanics Under Canvas*. She is proudly from Minnesota, and when she's not with Cirque Mechanics, is investing in her hometown's performing arts community. Selected stage management credits include five years with Circus Juventas in St. Paul, Minnesota, the largest youth circus school in North America, and local theatrical work such as *What Is Emily Drawing?* (Illusion Theater), *New Eyes Festival* (Theater Mu), *Heaven & French Twist* (Flying Foot Forum), *Hatchet Lady* (Walking Shadow Theatre Company), *The (curious case) of the Watson Intelligence* (Park Square Theatre), and dance/movement works such as *10//X* (Alternative Motion Project), Loyce Houlton's *Nutcracker Fantasy* (Minnesota Dance Theatre), *SOLO* (McKnight Foundation), *In the Margins* (THREADS Dance Project), and *Momentum: New Dance Works 2017 & 2019* (The Cowles Center, The Southern, Walker Arts Center, and The O' Shaughnessy). Landow received a bachelor of fine arts in theatre technology/design from Minnesota State University, Mankato. For my audience of one and for Kaela.

BRENDAN MULLENIX, PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Brendan Mullenix is a stage manager and theatrical technician working towards a master of fine arts in lighting design at Tulane University, where he puts on lighting for theatre and dance. Mullenix works as a technician and production assistant for productions in New Orleans at Tulane and Le Petit Theatre, as well as for Cirque Mechanics in Las Vegas.

CAST

WES HATFIELD, CAPTAIN, COACH, AND ACROBAT

Wes Hatfield was born in California and raised in Germany, where he got his start in gymnastics. At age 10, Hatfield joined trampoline and tumbling when he and his family moved to Colorado. In the world of trampoline competition, his resume includes several state and national championship titles. At age 19, he quit competition and became a circus performer, traveling around the world and wowing audiences with his technical prowess and zany comedic antics. Hatfield has been an integral cast member in all of Cirque Mechanics' touring productions: *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town*, *Pedal Punk*, *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels*, and now *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*, performing trampoline, Chinese pole, Cyr wheel, and general acrobatics, along with group choreography. Over the years Hatfield has become part of the Cirque Mechanics production team, acting as team leader for the cast and head artistic rigger for the setup of the show. He now lives in Las Vegas, where he continues his work with Cirque Mechanics. Hatfield is a fan of avocados, needing only a spoon to enjoy them. His favorite breakfast entree is steak and eggs with hash browns. Not potato chunks, hash browns. Don't forget the ketchup.

LINDSEY COVARRUBIAS, AERIALIST AND HAIR HANGER

Lindsey Covarrubias, a San Francisco Bay Area native, began performing as a child and continued to pursue her love of the stage in college at the University of California, San Diego. Shortly after graduation, Covarrubias found a home in the circus arts after moving to Los Angeles, where she taught and trained at

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

Cirque School Los Angeles. Maintaining a strong emphasis on corde lisse and hair hang, she has performed as an aerialist with various companies across the country, including Troupe Vertigo and Cirque Mechanics, with whom she joined for three touring shows (*The Orchestra Project*, *Pedal Punk*, and *Birdhouse Factory*). Additionally, as a freelance performer, she has worked commercially for companies such as Dick's Sporting Goods and Neutrogena and has performed at many private events for similar corporations. Covarrubias currently resides in Paris, France, where she likes to snuggle with her dog, eat lots of weird cheeses, and practice her accordion.

ERIKA RADCLIFFE, AERIALIST AND HAIR HANGER

Erika Radcliffe was born in California and grew up in a small town in Idaho. Radcliffe discovered circus at the age of 23 while living in Oregon and now lives in Las Vegas, where she continues to work and perform. She has had the pleasure of performing for special events around the country and was a first-place aerial rope artist at the 2019 VIVA Festival. She is excited to make her debut with Cirque Mechanics in *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*. Aside from hanging from ropes and her hair, Radcliffe is also a professional graphic designer and web developer servicing her clients during free time on the road — while also drinking copious amounts of coffee and espresso, of course.

ANGELA BURT, ACROBAT AND PERCH ACT

Anngela Burt grew up in a small town in Southeast Idaho called Rigby. Growing up, Burt was a ballroom dancer for seven years and a cheerleader for five years. Shortly after graduating high school, she ran away, joined the circus, and hasn't looked back since! She's been gracing the stages all over the country doing perch

pole, chair stacking and hand balancing, partner acrobatics, high flying group acrobatics, Chinese pole, dancing, and stilt walking. She also recently won ABC's *The Gong Show* with Rose City Circus with a perfect score! Burt is also a talented costume designer who designs and makes costumes for herself and other performers across the world.

JON DUTCH, ACROBAT AND PERCH ACT

Jon Dutch has been performing ever since he learned to walk. Growing up just outside of New York City, Dutch excelled in music, theatre, and dance, but also found a deep love for athletics and was a multi-sport athlete until college, where he focused on football. After graduating, Dutch moved to Portland to attend chiropractic school. In 2007 just before graduating, he found circus and acrobatic arts, and his life changed forever. Performing partner acrobatics, stilt walking, clown, MC, and most recently perch pole, Dutch has traveled the world with numerous circus companies, and even founded his own, the Rose City Circus. He appeared with Anngela Burt, his circus partner for the past eight years, on *The Gong Show*, where they received a perfect score. This will be Dutch's first show with Cirque Mechanics, and he couldn't be more excited!

TANA "TANK" KARO, ACROBAT AND FOOT JUGGLER

Graduating with a bachelor's degree in circus arts in 2009 from the renowned Melbourne circus facility NICA, Tana Karo clearly has the life skills to run her own "repelling zombies through cardio" fitness studio. Karo primarily performs foot juggling, comedy body puppetry, and large-scale illusions. She has performed in cabarets and theatre productions across the globe, including in the U.S., Amsterdam, London, China, and Australia. She's also spent some

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

time on the seas honing her pirate skills and headlining shows for P&O Australia and Carnival Cruise Lines. With a background in fashion design and ballet, she completes the ultimate trifecta of dancing, sewing, and... sandwiches? Yup. Sandwiches. She's thrilled to be performing with Cirque Mechanic's new show, *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*.

ARYN SHELANDER, CONTORTIONIST

Aryn Shelander is trained in Mongolian contortion, has performed on *America's Got Talent* and *France's Got Talent*, and is the creator of aerial archery. Shelander was raised in San Francisco doing gymnastics, dance, swim team, and chess club. Before joining the circus full time, she studied cognitive design at UC Berkeley and co-founded an app design and development company. She started training in Mongolian contortion and hand-to-hand at age 22. Six years later, Shelander traveled to Mongolia with her coach, Serchmaa Byamba, to learn contortion and foot archery, which changed her life by giving her the skills with which she performs today.

OSSY SANCHEZ, ACROBAT, JUGGLER, AND WHEEL OF DESTINY

Ossy Sanchez is a fifth-generation traditional circus performer from Mexico City, currently residing in Las Vegas. Sanchez has been performing such acts as trampoline, tumbling, juggling, gauchos, and Russian swing since he was 11 years old. He was inspired by his dad to pursue and perfect his favorite skill, juggling, and aspires to be a master juggler like his dad! Sanchez has performed his juggling act on circus stages, in rings, and in theatres around the globe, and he's thrilled to work and tour with Cirque Mechanics.

CHAUNCEY KRONER, ACROBAT AND HOOP DIVER

Chauncey Kroner was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, and began his circus training with Circus Harmony at the age of 12. A few years later, Kroner became a member of the St. Louis Arches, where he excelled in tumbling, partner acro, juggling, diablo, and chair balancing. He has performed at many venues, both locally and around the country. Some of his most memorable performances to date are for President Obama at the White House, years with Circus Flora, and as a hoop diver for Cirque du Soleil's first-ever Christmas show, *T'was the Night Before*. As a kid, Kroner spent many hours building with K'Nex, and recently, he was able to build a rotating base for his hoops with over 480 K'Nex.

LUKE ANDERSON, ACROBAT AND HOOP DIVER

Luke Anderson was born and raised in Oregon. From a young age Anderson was fascinated by extreme sports, but it wasn't until his family moved to Arizona that his interests were able to blossom. At age 13 he started to get into strength training and pushing the boundaries. From there, he developed an interest in tumbling, parkour, and tricking, spending all his time after school at the park working on tricks and technique. Anderson's very first job was coaching gymnastics at 15. After realizing he wanted to pursue this path professionally, he went to his first audition for Cirque du Soleil at 19 years old and shortly after joined the show *Volta*, later touring across Europe as a hoop diver with the show *Luzia*. The last six years of live performances and touring travel have nourished his passion for circus and performing. This is Anderson's first show with Cirque Mechanics, and he is excited to be learning a new apparatus.

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

CIRQUE MECHANICS

Cirque Mechanics, which calls Las Vegas home, was founded in 2004 by Boston native and German wheel artist Chris Lashua after the success of his collaborative project with the Circus Center of San Francisco, *Birdhouse Factory*. Cirque Mechanics quickly established itself as a premier American circus, with its unique approach to performance, inspiring storytelling, and innovative mechanical staging. *Spectacle Magazine* hailed it as “the greatest contribution to the American circus since Cirque du Soleil.”

Cirque Mechanics, although inspired by modern circus, finds its roots in the mechanical and its heart in the stories of American ingenuity. The shows, rooted in realism, display a raw quality rarely found in modern circus that makes their messages timeless and relevant. The stories are wrapped in circus acrobatics, mechanical wonders, and a bit of clowning around. Cirque Mechanics applies these principles to their events and Under Canvas divisions, bringing their brand of unique circus entertainment, awe, and amazement to families and corporate and private clients inside their custom orange and gray big top.

The troupe has created a series of extraordinary touring theatrical productions: *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town*, *Pedal Punk*, *the Orchestra Project*, *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels*, and, for this season, *Zephyr: A Whirlwind of Circus*.

Cirque Mechanics previously performed at the Moss Arts Center in 2015 and 2022.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!



We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to Sō Percussion with Caroline Shaw and special guest Shodekeh on Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

bit.ly/cirque-mechanics-zephyr-feedback

ENGAGEMENT EVENT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE: *ZEPHYR: A WHIRLWIND OF CIRCUS*

Educators and students in grades 3-7, predominantly from Floyd, Giles, and Montgomery counties, experienced a free performance of *Zephyr* and spoke with the circus ensemble in an open Q&A.

GO DEEPER

"People have been harnessing the power of wind since 2000 B.C [. . .] While the Industrial Revolution put coal and petroleum in the forefront as energy sources, in recent years the value of wind power has gained in prominence," said Chris Lashua, artistic director of Cirque Mechanics (*San Diego Union Tribune*). In *Zephyr*, how do you see the performers experiment with and comment on the value of wind energy?



GIVING DAY

VIRGINIA TECH

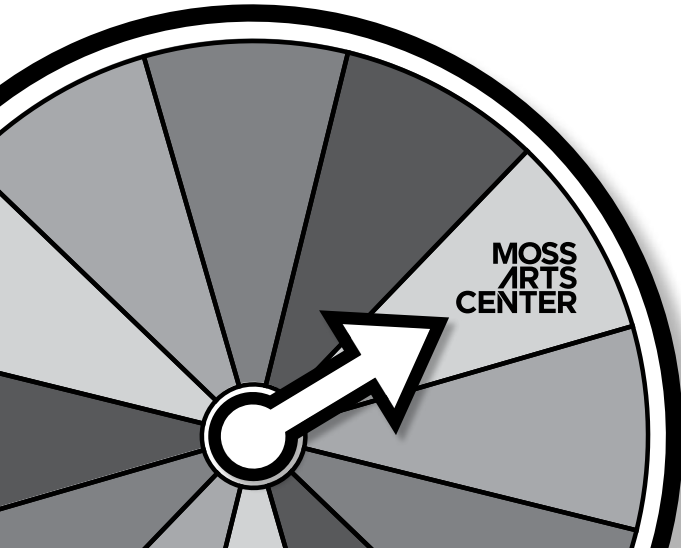
VIRGINIA TECH GIVING DAY BEGINS AT NOON ON FEBRUARY 21 AND CONTINUES THROUGH NOON ON FEBRUARY 22.

Give Children the Gift of the Arts

Encouraging children to explore and appreciate the arts from a young age can lead to a lifelong interest in artistic and cultural experiences. Your Giving Day gift to the Moss Arts Center will support our work to provide unforgettable arts experiences for children in our community.

Every gift makes a difference.

All Giving Day donations to the Moss Arts Center will be recognized in the 2024-2025 season Moss Arts Center performance programs.



artscenter.vt.edu

Learn more about how you can support the Moss Arts Center at artscenter.vt.edu/support or contact Paul Brammer at pbrammer@vt.edu.



IN THE GALLERIES

COMING SOON:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1-SATURDAY, APRIL 20

OPENING RECEPTION:

Thursday, February 1, 4-6 PM
Grand Lobby, Free

ARTIST TALK:

Friday, February 2, 11 AM
Cube, Free

Messengers

Leslie Hewitt | Tarrah Krajnak | Rodrigo Valenzuela

All galleries

Messengers explores the use of photography to communicate — not only through visual aesthetics, but to transmit more profound personal, cultural, and societal messages. Photography acts as a conduit for the artists' hybrid interdisciplinary approaches, enabling them to convey rich and multifaceted narratives, evolving through their formal and material languages.

Rodrigo Valenzuela; Garabato #21, 2023; archival inkjet print; 30 x 24 inches; ed. 1/3, 1 AP; courtesy of the artist and Galerie Kandlhofer, Vienna



K-12 PROGRAMS AT THE MOSS ARTS CENTER

At the Moss Arts Center, we believe that arts experiences are a crucial part of a child's education. We've been dedicated to providing opportunities for children at no cost since we opened in 2013. A wide array of Moss programming and experiences to inspire, engage, and empower students of all ages and backgrounds. This season, we're offering five school-day matinee programs, in-school workshops and performances, and gallery tours with professional artists for learners of all ages.

Learn more at bit.ly/moss-K12.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over the past 10 years, close to 24,000 school-aged children — from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade — have participated in the center’s engagement programs at no cost to the students or the schools they attend. These unforgettable experiences introduce new cultures, expand worldviews, and inspire imagination.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People’s homeland, and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that the Morrill Land-Grant College Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands in California and other areas in the West.

LABOR RECOGNITION

Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local White families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech’s predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.

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We are grateful for the generosity of our patrons and donors who sustain the Moss Arts Center with their annual gifts. The impact of all contributions, no matter the amount, is significant in helping us transform lives through exploration and engagement with the arts and the creative process. We are honored to have received cash donations during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, from the following:

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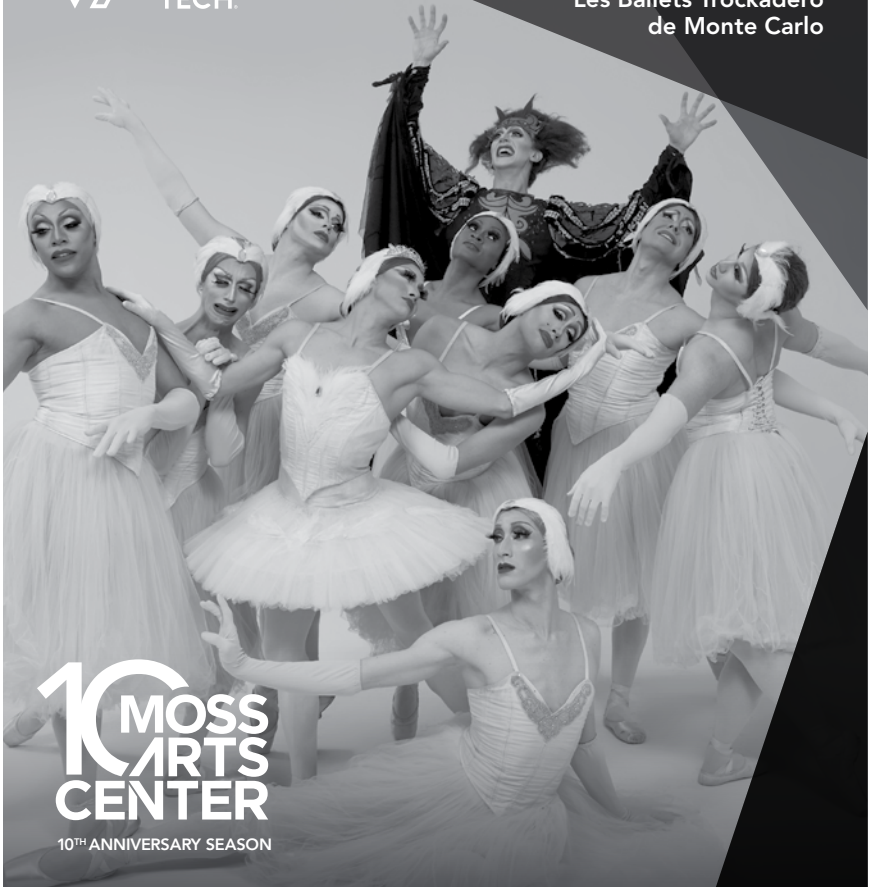
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Sat., April 13, 7:30 PM
Les Ballets Trockadero
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Thurs., Feb. 1, 7:30 PM
No-No Boy *(sold out)*

Wed., Feb. 14, 7:30 PM
Broadway in Blacksburg
My Fair Lady *(sold out)*

Sunday, February 18, 3 PM
United States Navy Band

Sat., Feb. 24, 7:30 PM
Mark Morris Dance Group
The Look of Love

Tues., Feb. 27, 7:30 PM
**An Evening with
Elizabeth Kolbert**

Fri., March 15, 7:30 PM
Meshell Ndegeocello

Wed., March 20, 7:30 PM
Sō Percussion
with **Caroline Shaw**
and special guest **Shodekeh**

Tues., March 26, 7:30 PM
Las Cafeteras

Thurs., April 4, 7:30 PM
**Ukulele Orchestra
of Great Britain**

Monday, April 8, 8 PM
Music on Mondays:
Barbara Nissman, piano

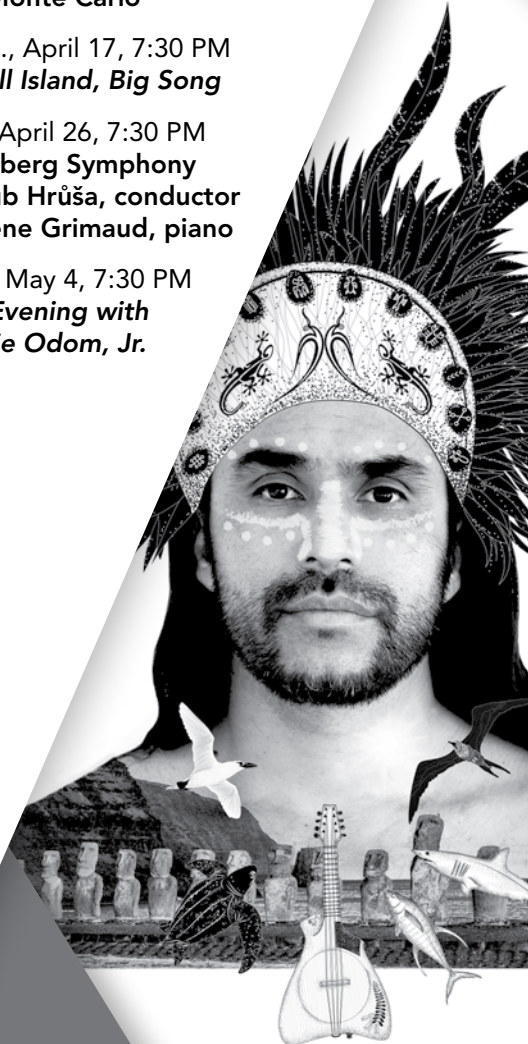
Sat., April 13, 7:30 PM
**Les Ballets Trockadero
de Monte Carlo**

Wed., April 17, 7:30 PM
Small Island, Big Song

Fri., April 26, 7:30 PM
Bamberg Symphony
Jakub Hrůša, conductor
Hélène Grimaud, piano

Sat., May 4, 7:30 PM
**An Evening with
Leslie Odom, Jr.**

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Associate Broker at Nest Realty
YMCA at VT Board Member and member of the Public Relations Committee

The YMCA @ VT is so dynamic. They're always open to starting new projects that serve our community. This is not a static organization content to do the same thing year after year. Their focus on sustainability, food security, international programs and student programs is truly inspiring.

Opening the year after Virginia Tech in 1873, the YMCA at VT is one of the oldest organizations in our community. This is a great opportunity to celebrate all that the YMCA has accomplished and also look forward to another 150 years of service for our area. I love the New River Valley and being involved with several local organizations such as the YMCA at Virginia Tech. Also – I highly recommend volunteering at local events – it's fun!



Vivian Peregrino

Junior majoring in Environmental Economics, Management, and Policy
President of the YMCA Student Programs, Program Leader for Y-TOSS, Y Board Member

The thrift store is my FAVORITE thing about our Y. I have found some of my favorite clothes at the thrift store and I love supporting sustainability.

It feels so good to be a part of an organization that has such a long history with the Blacksburg community!

When I'm not in class or volunteering at the YMCA, I enjoy playing pickleball, fishing, and cooking for my friends!

Meet more Y Team members in the next MAC program!



Paul Derring

After graduating in 1917, Paul Derring struggled to find someone who would give a job to a blind man. He turned to Henry J. Langston, state student secretary of the Virginia YMCA. "I wrote to him and told him that I was desperate, wanted to get into the war work of the YMCA, and would appreciate his help in securing an appointment," wrote Derring. After completing the six weeks of training, he was interviewed by Carol M. Newman, camp secretary for the YMCA at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute and chair of the college's English department. Derring accompanied Newman to Blacksburg. At VPI, Derring began his job as associate student Army Training Corps secretary, which was part of the National War Work Program of the YMCA, and operated from the YMCA Building (today's Performing Arts Building).



VOLUNTEER with the YMCA at Virginia Tech

Multiple volunteer opportunities to help us bring positive change to our community.

To find out more & to sign up please visit vtymca.org/volunteer/

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Mahatma Gandhi

