

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

# Corteo™



**PRESS KIT**

# Show Overview

Written and Directed by Daniele Finzi Pasca

*Corteo*, which means “cortege” in Italian, is a joyous procession, a festive parade imagined by a clown. The show brings together the passion of the actor with the grace and power of the acrobat to plunge the audience into a theatrical world of fun, comedy and spontaneity situated in a mysterious space between heaven and earth.

The clown pictures his own funeral taking place in a carnival atmosphere, watched over by quietly caring angels. Juxtaposing the large with the small, the ridiculous with the tragic and the magic of perfection with the charm of imperfection, the show highlights the strength and fragility of the clown, as well as his wisdom and kindness, to illustrate the portion of humanity that is within each of us. The music, by turns lyrical and playful, carries *Corteo* through a timeless celebration in which illusion teases reality.



# The Acts (in alphabetical order)



## Acrobatic Ladder

A ladder specialist amazes the audience with his unnerving balance and finesse as he performs on various ladders, trying desperately to reach the angel who is watching him from above.



## Artist Marionette

Like a live puppet, an artist marionette suddenly appears in an innovative, rigging apparatus to play with Mauro the Dreamer Clown in a setting which evokes a beach scene from his childhood.



## Bouncing Beds

Like a gaggle of young kids playing in their grandparents' room, six artists jump on two 600-pound beds that move on rotating platforms. In a playful atmosphere, they perform acrobatic feats, each more daring than the last.



## Chandeliers

Four women, the Dreamer Clown's former loves, come together in dreamlike joy. They perform aerial acrobatics on three giant chandeliers that spin above Mauro's bed.



## Crystal Glasses and Tibetan Bowls

Implored by Mauro the Dreamer Clown and the Giant Clown as they prepare to perform a haunting melody on crystal glasses, the Loyal Whistler, a whistling virtuoso, showcases his remarkable talent in a breathtaking performance.



## Cyr Wheel

Five artists perform solos and group figures on Cyr wheels. The simplicity of the Cyr wheels' line—a pure circle—sets off the intricate and energetic performance.



## Duo-Straps

In this mesmerizing act, a duet uses aerial straps to create a magical and tender connection that enchants the audience with beautiful displays of agility, balance and strength.



## Golf

To the sound of bagpipes, a patch of green light appears, suggesting a golf course scene. The Giant Clown walks on stage, intent on giving it his best shot!



## Helium Dance

A tender and poetic moment between Mauro the Dreamer Clown and his little Clownness who bespells the audience with child-like delight.



## Hula-Hoop

At the height of a frenzied moment, a gypsy performer emerges, causing everyone to stop. Using her entire body and all her limbs, she dazzles them with her ability to spin and twirl a multitude of hoops.



## Juggling

Three young artists perform fast-moving feats of prowess in a surprising act that blends juggling and acrobatics. With unsurpassed style, they defy the law of gravity as they juggle successively with rings, hoops and clubs.



## Paradis

By superimposing a trampoline-like net and two Korean double frame stations, a universe is created in which high-flying and bouncing come together, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, in a single breathtaking act.



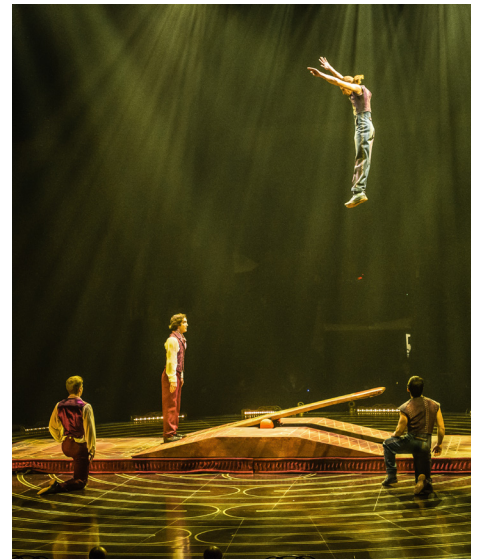
### Suspended Pole

Accompanied by the distant sounds of guitar and impassioned vocals, a young ingénue discovers the sheer pleasure of exploring movement and contortion-like shapes while flying above the ground on a suspended pole.



### Teatro Intimo

Eight characters pile into a tiny theatre to present a wild and zany version of "Romeo and Juliet" where the unexpected awaits at every turn.



### Teeterboard

Surrounded by two groups of artists lending rhythm to the act with their voices and percussion work, two acrobats redefine teeterboard technique in an act where speed is rivalled only by complexity.



### Tournik

A group of artists cross paths in an act which marries horizontal bar techniques with circus arts. The artists perform on a central cube-shaped structure, with two additional bars on each side of the cube. The complexity of the fright pattern and the defiance of gravity will keep you on the edge of your seat. A final farewell to Mauro.



# The Characters



## Mauro the Dreamer Clown

Mauro the Dreamer Clown is the central character of the story, the one who is being honoured by this fantastic funeral ... but could it all be a dream? With a former member of the troupe surrounding him, he dons his costume to perform onstage one last time.



## Mr. Loyal (The Whistler)

The origins of the role of "Mr. Loyal", lie in the ringmaster of traditional circuses. Mr. Loyal evokes images of a former military man, one who has retrained in the circus arts but never quite lost his former ways. When he starts to whistle, his boundless artistic passion comes to the fore.



## The White Clown

For the White Clown, appearances are what matters most. Like Mr. Loyal, he is an authority figure ... at least, he'd like to be. Of all the colourful characters, he admires only the stars and scorns the others. He is the one who opens the door to the magic of the circus for Mauro the Dreamer Clown.



## The Clowness

The Clowness is an actress, a veritable Grande Dame of the stage, who somehow found herself a part of this nutty troupe. Her professionalism and her strength of character allow her to bear the foolishness of her partners, whom she never fails to charm.



## The Little Clown

A diminutive clown who's in love with the Clowness, the Little Clown is always ready to play tricks on his associates. Impish and lively, he is both an endearing companion and a force to be reckoned with.



## The Giant Clown

Although only an amateur opera singer, the Giant Clown imagines himself to be a great artist of worldwide renown. Without doubt, it is with him that the Dreamer Clown is closest, almost like brothers.



## The Little Angel

The embodiment of sweetness and light, the Little Angel watches over the Dreamer Clown's bed and acts as his guide, like Beatrice, who guided Dante through Paradise. It is the Little Angel who teaches the Dreamer Clown to fly.



## The August Clown

The August Clown is the White Clown's antagonist. As much as the White Clown represents order and appearances, the August Clown is the one who always messes everything up and, as a result, finds himself in the most incredible situation. The August Clown is a physical character: he is prone to falling down and his fellow stooges give him a rough ride especially the White Clown.

# Set Design

The set and décor of *Corteo* plunge the audience into a lyrical world, a strange area between heaven and earth.

## The Stage

Set Designer Jean Rabasse has divided the Venue and its rotating stage in two, with each half of the audience facing the other half, so they see not only the performance, but also have a performer's eye view of the audience. This is a first for *Cirque du Soleil*.

- There is one turntable built into the stage, which is about 41 feet long, and the track is almost 120 feet long.
- More than 9,000 images were used in the R&D phase of the set design to blend many visual styles and influences, from the baroque to the modern.
- A completely new stage and acrobatic structure have been fabricated for *Corteo* arena tour. A good portion of the original design had to be adapted for that matter.

## The “Patience”

The “Patience” is a massive technical structure made of steel above the stage. It is one of the most complex set elements in the show and is used to transport various scenic elements and pieces of acrobatic equipment on and off stage from above.

- The Patience has three rails that traverse the stage.
- Each rail is fitted with two platform-like carts to carry the scenic and acrobatic elements.
- The six carts have a lifting capacity of 500 lbs and a top speed of four feet per second.
- The Patience is 40 feet above the stage. It is entirely suspended from the sealing structure of the arena.

## The Curtains

It was a visit to the exhibition “The Great Parade: Portrait of the Artist as Clown” at the National Gallery of Canada that inspired Jean Rabasse to paint the *Corteo* Procession on the curtains. His design was influenced by the work of such painters as Willette, Picasso, Tiepolo, Pelez and Knight.

The inspiration for the show's curtains was an 1885 painting by the Parisian artist Adolphe Willette.

The two enormous baroque-style “Roll Drop” curtains (58 feet wide and almost 40 feet high), and the four sideways-opening Italian-style curtains are among the most striking scenic elements in the show. They were sewn in Canada and sent to France to be painted.

- It took more than two weeks to paint each of the central curtains in watercolors.
- The central curtains are attached to huge supports which contain winding motors to roll them.

## The Labyrinth

In the center of the circular stage is a labyrinth which exactly reproduces the proportions and size of the classic design on the floor of the aisle in Chartres cathedral.

- The labyrinth incorporates an eight-inch Moebius strip painted at its center as a symbol of infinity and continuity.





# Costumes and Make Up

To create over 260 costumes for *Corteo's* cast, Costume Designer Dominique Lemieux set out to accentuate the natural beauty of the artists.

- She used more than a hundred different fabrics and trims, concentrating on a subtle color palette that includes blues, pinks, fuchsia and gold with appliquéd spangles and jewels.
- Most of the fabrics were dyed, sublimated and silk screen printed to give them a patina of age while retaining the attributes necessary for high-performance acrobatics.
- There are numerous angels on *Corteo* such as the little angel, the archangels and the grand angels. On average, each angel dress requires 25 meters of fabric which translates to over 500 meters of material (or the approximate length of five football fields) appearing on stage each night.
- For a single year of operation, performers require over 200 bottles of liquid foundation, hundreds of eye shadows, blushes, pencils and lipsticks as well as more than 50 liters of make-up remover.
- The smallest shoe size in the show is a children's size 3 and the largest is an 18 EEE.



# Acrobatic and Rigging Material

*Corteo* features a variety of innovative acrobatic equipment elements that were invented at *Cirque du Soleil* and designed to mesh seamlessly with the set design.

- The “Paradis” act brings together two circus skills: The Korean Cradle and the Tramonet (a combination of trampoline and safety net). The artists are thrown between two Korean Cradle double frame stations and rebound off the Tramonet, which is 80 feet long.
- The “Tournik” consists of a steel frame and twin high bars mounted on the stage turnables.
- The “Lustres” are giant chandeliers that float in mid-air above the stage. They are decorated with some 4,000 sparkling “jewels” and garlands of reflective acrylic spheres.
- There are three custom-built ladders in the show, each designed to meet a different acrobatic demand. They include a bungee ladder and a tall ladder which is almost 15 feet high.



# Fast Facts

## The Show:

- *Corteo* first premiered in Montreal in 2005 and has visited more than 60 cities in 19 different countries as a Big Top show before transforming in an arena show in 2016.
- *Corteo* celebrated its 3,500<sup>th</sup> performance in 2015 in Bogotá, Colombia.
- More than 9 million people have been enthralled by the world of *Corteo*.
- In the remount process, from the Big tent to the arena, new acts have been added to the *Corteo* show with a small adaptation to the original story line.

## Cast and Crew:

- The cast is an international one, representing more than 18 nationalities. Performers are from Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States and Uzbekistan.
- Although you will generally hear French and English spoken on-site, many other languages are spoken: Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and more.



# The Creative Team



**DANIELE FINZI PASCA**  
CREATOR AND DIRECTOR

Daniele Finzi Pasca lives in three worlds at once: stage directing, circus arts, and the art of clowning. Born into a family steeped in the arts (his great-grandfather, grandfather and father were photographers while his mother was a painter), he started his career as a gymnast and became a circus artist before delving into the world of theater. In 1983, he headed to India where he volunteered to care for terminally ill patients in Calcutta. On his return to Switzerland, he created the company Teatro Sunil in 1986 where he went on to direct close to twenty shows. His impressive career includes *Icaro*, a monologue imagined for a single spectator. Presented in 15 countries in six different languages over the past 20 years, the show was recognized by the theater critics association of Montevideo as the “Best Foreign Show.” Daniele went on to publish *Come Acqua Allo Specchio*, a collection of short stories. He also wrote and performed in *Aitestás*, considered the “Best Foreign Show” by the national theater critics association of Mexico. In the early 2000s, he came back to Quebec where he directed *Visitatio*, a coproduction of Teatro Sunil and Carbone 14, then directed the shows *Nomade* (2002), *Rain* (2003) and *Nebbia* (2007) for Cirque Éloize.

In 2011, he founded Compagnia Finzi Pasca with Julie Hamelin Finzi and the members of Teatro Sunil. Together they created operas and other productions including *Donka – A Letter to Chekhov*, a coproduction with The Chekhov International Theater Festival and Vidy-Lausanne Theater to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Anton Chekhov. They created *La Vérità* (2013) and *Bianco su Bianco* (2014), among others. Daniele also directed the Closing Ceremony of both the Olympic Games in Torino (2006) and the Sochi Olympic and Paralympic Games (2014). Daniele picked up several awards over the years including the 2012 Hans Reinhart Ring – the highest distinction in Swiss theater – in recognition for his lifelong contribution to the performing arts. He was chosen to create and direct the next edition of the Wingrowers’ Festival of Vevey, Switzerland, in 2019, an event held every 25 years that attracts hundreds of thousands of people.

After *Corteo*, *LUZIA* is Daniele Finzi Pasca’s second collaboration with *Cirque du Soleil* in 2016. In the occasion of the Montreal’s 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Daniele create *Montréal Avudo*, a show that pays tribute to the St-Laurent River will come to life with enormous projections inspired the city’s history.



**LINE TREMBLAY**  
DIRECTOR OF CREATION

Line Tremblay first fell in love with *Cirque du Soleil* in 1984, drawn by its freewheeling spirit, a spirit she says has never gone away. “For me, circus is the most complete art form. It addresses the audience on the visual, the emotional and the physical level all at the same time. I always knew I was destined for a life in this milieu.”

Before joining *Cirque du Soleil*, Line developed a passion for working in the world of film and television, notably as an Assistant Director at Radio-Canada, where she worked closely with designers and creators. In 1992, she joined Franco Dragone, assisting him in the creation and direction of the *Cirque du Soleil* shows *Mystère*, *Alegría*, *Quidam*, “*O*” and *La Nouba*. Her talents were also put to work as Artistic Director of *Quidam*. Her rich association with Franco helped her to master the mechanics of stage direction and show creation.

A newcomer to the equestrian field, Line worked with Gilles Ste-Croix assisting in the creation of the 2000 show *Cheval Théâtre*. She left *Cirque du Soleil* to work with Franco Dragone on the creation of the Celine Dion show *A New Day*, and returned to *Cirque* in 2003 to work on *Corteo* as the first woman in *Cirque*’s history to occupy the position of Director of Creation. In 2008, she took on the position of Director of Creation once again with *ZED*, working with director François Girard for the first time. They renew their collaboration on *Cirque du Soleil*’s *ZARKANA* in 2011.



**JEAN RABASSE**  
SET DESIGNER



**DOMINIQUE LEMIEUX**  
COSTUME DESIGNER



**DEBRA BROWN**  
CHOREOGRAPHER



**JEAN-FRANCOIS COTE**  
COMPOSER



**PHILIPPE LEDUC**  
COMPOSER AND  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR



**MARIA BONZANIGO**  
COMPOSER AND  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR



**MARTIN LABRECQUE**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER



**HUGO GARGIULO  
& ANTONIO VERGAMIN**  
ACTING COACHES TEATRO SUNIL



**JONATHAN DEANS**  
SOUND DESIGNER



**DOLORES HEREDIA**  
DRAMATURGICAL ANALYST  
TEATRO SUNIL



**DANNY ZEN**  
ACROBATIC RIGGING  
DESIGNER



**NATHALIE GAGNÉ**  
MAKEUP DESIGNER