

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®



Press Kit

Overview

Written and directed by Deborah Colker

About OVO

OVO is a headlong rush into a colorful ecosystem teeming with life, where insects work, eat, crawl, flutter, play, fight and look for love in a non-stop riot of energy and movement. The insects' home is a world of biodiversity and beauty filled with noisy action and moments of quiet emotion.

When a mysterious egg appears in their midst, the insects are awestruck and intensely curious about this iconic object that represents the enigma and cycles of their lives.

It's love at first sight when a gawky, quirky insect arrives in this bustling community and a fabulous ladybug catches his eye—and the feeling is mutual.

OVO is overflowing with contrasts. The hidden, secret world at our feet is revealed as tender and torrid, noisy and quiet, peaceful and chaotic. And as the sun rises on a bright new day the vibrant cycle of insect life begins anew.

Name

The name OVO means “egg” in Portuguese. This timeless symbol of the life cycle and birth of numerous insects represents the underlying thread of the show. Graphically, OVO hides an insect in its name: The two “Os” represent the eyes while the letter “V” forms the nose.



Characters

The Ladybug



The Ladybug is big and strong (but doesn't realize it) and full of life. Unlike all the other insects in the community she is not part of a family. She's all alone and lonely, and she's secretly waiting for something wonderful to happen in her life—something like love. When The Foreigner arrives carrying a strange egg she's excited by the possibility that her life – and everyone else's – could be about to change.

The Voyager



The Foreigner is a fly in constant buzzing motion, a live wire, an attention seeker, full of bravado and misplaced confidence—and sometimes just plain crazy. The sexy spider doesn't stand a chance of winning his heart when he sees The Ladybug for the first time. He's instantly smitten!

Master Flipo



Master Flipo is the chief of the insect community, maybe because he's the oldest. He's smart and wise – but eccentric too, and he's very silly sometimes. The whole community respects and likes him even though they know he can be a bit dim-witted.



Costumes

Complicity with the world of insects

Liz Vandal, the costume designer for OVO has a special affinity for the world of the insects. “I’ve always had passion for them,” she says. “When I was just a kid I put rocks down around the yard near the fruit trees and I lifted them regularly to watch the insects who had taken up residence underneath them. I petted caterpillars and let butterflies into the house. So when I learned that OVO was inspired by insects, I immediately knew that I was in a perfect position to pay tribute to this majestic world with my costumes.”

Liz has a signature style inspired by futuristic superheroes and by suits of armour from all eras. These two sources inform her designs for the OVO costumes. Flattering lines and an elongated, corseted look are a nod to the world of super heroes while the segmented shells on many of the garments alternate between hard and soft, much like the armour and the bodies of knights in the Renaissance.

Evocation rather than imitation

Liz’s first challenge was to imagine a way to evoke insects without copying their actual anatomy. “The solution was to connect with the feeling of being face to face with a spider, a cockroach or a butterfly,” she explains. “Then I made detailed drawings of designs that interpreted their morphology. For example, the dragonfly’s wings are evoked by pants made of veined lace, and the mosquito’s stinger by a ‘Mohawk’ of fine red stems. The idea of the shell also became a metaphor, since the word ‘insect’ refers to ‘sections’. This revelation consolidated my approach.”

Organic/Synthetic

Liz drew on the wealth of experience and know-how of Cirque’s costume shop to put it all together. “Together we developed techniques of pleating fabrics to provide three-dimensional muscle, volumes and shells,” she says. “The result is a sort of organic origami. The most obvious example of that is the crickets’ costumes. The team also explored the textures of wings and shells using the sublimation technique to poeticize them and give them an evocative texture.”

In a play of colors and patterns, Liz implemented variations on a theme by incorporating thin lines on the ants and crickets, and pleated abstract transparent outfits for the dragonflies. She also used materials to suggest insects’ shells, and lacy fabrics for the wings and soft sections of their bodies. To enable certain characters such as the mosquito to move, she placed sections of shell within other sections, which open and close to reveal the soft body inside.

Crickets – symbols of the colony

Ten crickets are the key insects in the show. At times, they have detachable legs that break away from their bodies, which the impression that there is an insect invasion going on. “I have a particular soft spot for these characters,” she says, “because their costumes are so sexy, graphic and vibrant.”

The Foreigner is a character who lands in the middle of OVO. He is a fly in vintage suit who only reveals his true nature when he falls for The Ladybug. After his transformation, he wears a costume of bristling spines. His lanky, angular form contrasts with the roundness of The Ladybug.

Sources of inspiration

Liz Vandal took her inspiration from many sources, including certain fashion designers such as Pierre Cardin, who focused on graphic lines and geometric shapes. She was also inspired by the slashed sleeves of Renaissance garments.

Liz and her team in the costume shop have exploited the permanent pleating technique developed by Japanese designer Issey Miyake, which gives a certain rigidity to material and creates an organic effect. “We pushed this technique even further,” she says, “by printing on colored materials, sublimation and eroding the fabric not only to stiffen it, but also to give it a metallic sheen.”

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

- Most characters have two versions of their costumes: the first, more lightweight and functional, for their acrobatic performance, and the second, more richly detailed and heavier, for their life in the community.
- The initial cricket costumes required 75 hours of work each because of their complexity and the need to give them rigidity while maintaining the flexibility and expandability of the material.

Music

To create the musical score for OVO, Berna Ceppas combined the sounds of bossa nova and samba with funk and electro music. And, as you might expect from a Brazilian – there is a lot of percussion in the score.

Berna Ceppas sampled actual insect sounds to combine with the music directly from the keyboard. He also assigned instruments and individual themes to specific characters.

The 7-piece band includes a bandleader/drummer, bass and double bass player, percussionist, violinist, wind instruments player, keyboard player, guitarist, plus one singer.

In almost all of Cirque du Soleil shows, the music is performed live. And, unlike musicals, the music needs to adapt to what is going on stage and not the other way around. To do so, the band leader, the musicians, the singers and the sound staff are in constant communication via headsets and microphones.



Set Design

Creating an organic space and interpreting nature

Designer Gringo Cardia drew inspiration from the structures that certain species of insect create when they establish nests and colonies.

Gringo has worked closely on many dance productions with OVO's director Deborah Colker and they are used to a cross-pollination of ideas. He has contributed content to the show and she has brought ideas to the set design—neither approaches their role in isolation.

The overall setting of OVO is a stylized habitat that is home to the insects. At times it is a forest, at other times, a cave—or it could even be a house. Gringo's objective was to create an organic environment that could lead to many other places.

The set elements: giant objects in a minuscule world

The show starts with a gigantic Egg on stage, obscuring much of the performance space from view. The mysterious object from the outside world is an inexplicable enigma in the eyes of the insects (and a nod to the monolith from the Kubrick film 2001). This timeless symbol of fertility and regeneration reappears in other forms later in the show, laid by the insects.

The largest set element is the Wall, which is set against the rear of the stage. The performers climb on it, disappear into it and use it as a stage, a platform and a launching pad.

Cirque du Soleil worked with 4U2C to integrate projections thru all the show. It took over 40 days of shooting of a miniature forest. The forest was built from real plants and represented a miniature world of table 24' X 8'. A team of 30 Artist were involved in the production of the content. Only 1 Min of the show doesn't have content.

Art imitating life

There are almost no straight lines to be found anywhere in the set. True to the organic inspiration of the show, the Wall is curved, and so is the stage. But there is one exception: the Spider's Web. Real spiders' webs are made up of straight lines, so this is a case where art imitates life with a nod towards geometry. It is made of strong woven synthetic straps.

Giant props that evoke nature

An enormous 30-foot / 9.1 meter mechanical Flower appears on stage.

The Flower blooms and becomes much more than an over scale prop, it's a character in the show. Part sculpture, part puppet, part robot, it is seen from the insects' point of view as a towering, inspiring feature of their environment.

Tall Poles rising high above the insect world represent the strands of flowers. The performing artists climb them and appear at various levels above the stage. Big or small, short or tall, it's just a perspective matter after all...

SOME FACTS

- A completely new stage and acrobatic structure have been fabricated for OVO arena tour. A good portion of the original design had to be adapted for that matter.
- The Wall measures 64 feet / 19.5 meters wide by 30 feet / 9.1 meters tall and is a giant projection surface that will be used all across the show.
- In the post pandemic relaunch, 3 new acts have been added to the OVO show while revisiting the original story line.
- The Egg, which is inflatable, measures 28 feet / 8.5 meters wide by 22 feet / 6.7 meters tall.
- The acrobatic structure is at 45 feet / 13.7 meters from the ground and weigh over 22,000 Lbs / almost 1000 Kilos.
- The stage floor is made of 225 panels.



Creators



Guy Laliberté
Guide and Founder

"Cirque du Soleil began with a very simple dream. A group of young entertainers got together to amuse audiences, see the world, and have fun doing it."

Guy Laliberté was born in Quebec City in 1959. An accordionist, stilt-walker and fire-eater, he founded Quebec's first internationally-renowned circus with the support of a small group of accomplices. A bold visionary, Guy Laliberté recognized and cultivated the talents of the street performers from the Fête foraine de Baie-Saint-Paul and created Cirque du Soleil in 1984.

Guy Laliberté was the first to orchestrate the marriage of cultures and artistic and acrobatic disciplines that is the hallmark of Cirque du Soleil. Since 1984, he has guided the creative team through the creation of every show and contributed to elevating the circus arts to the level of the great artistic disciplines.

Cirque du Soleil has become an international organization, as much in terms of its makeup as in the scope of its activities and influence. Guy Laliberté now heads an organization with activities on five continents.

In 2007, Guy Laliberté entered into a second lifetime commitment by creating ONE DROP to fight poverty around the world by providing sustainable access to safe water. This new dream stems from the knowledge that the right to water is key to the survival of individuals and communities all over the world and from the values which have been at the heart of Cirque du Soleil since its inception: the belief that life gives back what you have given and even the smallest gesture will make a difference.

Awards and distinctions

Université Laval (Québec) awarded an honorary doctorate to Guy Laliberté in 2008. The year before, Guy Laliberté took the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award for all three levels: Quebec, Canada and International. In 2004, he received the Order of Canada, the highest distinction in the country, from the Governor General of Canada. The same year, he was recognized by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. In 2003, he was honored by the Condé Nast group as part of the Never Follow Program, a tribute to creators and innovators. In 2001, he was named a Great Montrealer by the Académie des Grands Montréalais. In 1997, Guy Laliberté received the Ordre national du Québec, the highest distinction awarded by the Government of Quebec.



Gilles Ste-Croix
Artistic Guide

In 1980, Gilles Ste-Croix and a band of street artists founded the Échassiers de Baie-Saint-Paul and organized a street performance festival called the Fête foraine de Baie-Saint-Paul, which would eventually lead to the founding of *Cirque du Soleil* with Guy Laliberté in 1984.

In 1984 and 1985, Gilles Ste-Croix designed and performed many stilt acts for *Cirque du Soleil*. In 1988, he became Cirque's Artistic Director, as well as coordinating a talent search that extended to the four corners of the globe. He was Director of Creation for all of *Cirque du Soleil*'s productions from 1990 to 2000: *Nouvelle Expérience*, *Saltimbanco*, *Alegría*, *Mystère*, *Quidam*, *La Nouba*, "O", and *Dralion*. In 1992, he directed *Fascination*, the first *Cirque du Soleil* show presented in arenas in Japan. He also directed the groundbreaking 1997 dinner/cabaret show *Pomp Duck* and *Circumstance* in Germany.

In 2000, while continuing to act as a consultant for *Cirque du Soleil*, Gilles Ste-Croix decided to realize one of his greatest dreams: driven by his passionate interest in horses, he founded his own company to produce the 2003 show *Cheval-Théâtre*, which featured 30 horses and as many artist-acrobats under canvas, and toured ten cities in North America.

In December 2002, Gilles St-Croix returned to *Cirque du Soleil* as Vice-President of Creation, New Project Development. In July 2006 he was nominated Senior Vice-President of Creative Content and New Project Development. Gilles currently focuses on his role as Creative Guide, alongside Guy Laliberté.



Deborah Colker
Writer, Director
and Choreographer

"I love to work on a large scale and create a big impact with tons of energy and excitement on stage."

As a child in her native Brazil, Deborah Colker grew up in a creative environment. Her father was a violinist and conductor, and she started piano lessons at the age of eight.

Deborah became a member of Uruguayan choreographer Graciela Figueroa's Coringa company in 1980. In 1984, she began creating choreographies and directing piece movements for musicals, shows, TV programs, movies and samba schools.

Wanting to create a choreographic language of her own, Deborah founded her company, Companhia de Dança Deborah Colker in 1994, and created many highly acclaimed full-length dance pieces for it.

Deborah's award-winning work quickly caught the attention of the entire dance world. In 2002, she was invited by Komische Oper in Berlin to choreograph a full program, Casa (a piece originally created for Deborah's own company in 1999) and Ela. In 2006, she went on to create Maracanã for the Culture Factory of Kampnagel in Hamburg. Deborah became the first Brazilian artist to win the Laurence Olivier Award, one of the most important cultural prizes in the UK, in the "Outstanding Achievement in Dance" category for her choreography MIX in 2001.

Working with *Cirque du Soleil* called for a departure from Deborah's customary way of working. She is used to developing concepts as an integral part of the rehearsal process, but for OVO she had to come up with the concepts a year and a half before rehearsals began.

"OVO presents the world of insects with the emphasis on constant movement and color," says Deborah. "I have a very physical choreographic language and for me the insects' movements translate into emotion. OVO reflects my background in dance, of course, but it also represents my lifelong love of music, the inspiration I draw from sport and the liveliness you can discover in every aspect of life. I love to work on a large scale and create a big impact with tons of energy and excitement on stage."



Chantal Tremblay
Director of Creation

"My role is to reach out in every direction to connect all the varied aspects of the production, to frame the approach of the creators, to support them throughout the process of creation and maintain the focus on the artistic intention of the show."

Chantal Tremblay is hardly a newcomer to *Cirque du Soleil*. At the end of the 1980s, she was drawn to a performance of the touring Cirque production *We Reinvent the Circus*. She decided on the spot to join the company and has been with Cirque ever since.

Tremblay started out as a dancer on a Cirque project, then became choreographer Debra Brown's assistant in the creation of *Mystère*. Her next position was as Artistic Coordinator of *Alegría*, and two years later, in 1995, she was appointed the show's Artistic Director. During this effervescent period she undertook numerous other challenges, most notably participating in the first *Cirque du Soleil* feature film *Alegría*, directed by Franco Dragone, the television series *Solstrom*, and televised versions of various Cirque shows.

Building on these early achievements, Chantal went on to become the Artistic Director of *La Nouba* and *Mystère*. In 2001, she assisted the director in the creation of a highly-acclaimed *Cirque du Soleil* number featured in the telecast of the Academy Awards and was appointed Creation Director of the 2006 show LOVE.

As Creation Director of OVO, Chantal is the pivotal link between the Producer and the team of Creators, overseeing the day-to-day process of creation and making sure that the Creators have all the tools they need to deliver the show.

"OVO is a very physical show," says Chantal. "Everything is constantly in motion, which underlines the emphasis we're placing on human performance. This energy draws on the movements, the rhythms and the cadences of insects—which were our key inspiration throughout the process of creating the show."





Gringo Cardia

Set and Props Designer

"When I design sets I always think big, whether it's a small project or a large-scale production. I'm satisfied when the viewer enters another dimension and all of his or her senses are engaged."

Gringo Cardia, who started out as a gymnast, has earned an enviable reputation as one of the most sought-after designers in the world of performing arts and video in Brazil.

In his career as a designer, Gringo has successfully integrated the three disciplines he has worked in: architecture, graphic design and theatrical staging. He has also made his mark as a director in film and video as well as a producer in the world of theatre, opera and fashion.

In 1989, he founded a circus troupe in Brazil before joining forces with Deborah Colker, the director of OVO in 1994. Together, they invented a visual language that owes a great deal to set design.

Gringo has designed the sets for over 100 theatrical productions and more than 150 music shows. His 70-plus music videos have won him numerous awards including the MTV Video Award for Best Brazilian Video in 1990. He has also designed hundreds of album covers for the most prominent Brazilian musicians, including Antonio Carlos Jobim and Gilberto Gil. His work has been recognized with more than 20 awards.

Gringo Cardia designed and curated the exhibition Amazonia Brazil, which has been touring the world since 2004, and in 2006 he directed the film *No Arms for Amnesty International*. Among his recent architectural commissions was the design of the Museum of Telecommunications in Rio de Janeiro and the new Minas Gerais Memorial in Belo Horizonte.

Gringo's set for OVO evokes the mysterious habitat of insects and is infused with colors and sounds taken from nature. "We are in a cave or a termite's nest," he explains. "One of the biggest challenges for a designer is to recreate the natural environment. I believe the way to do that is to interpret rather than copy, and in this case to translate the forms and curves of nature so we can see the world through the eyes of insects."



Liz Vandal

Costume Designer

"Through my study of line I try to make the body dynamic and reveal its intrinsic beauty."

Liz began her career as a fashion designer in 1988. Her style was inspired by futuristic superheroes and medieval armour. She used materials such as vinyl, plastic and polyurethane to bring her fantastic creations to life.

In 1990 Liz began working closely with Édouard Lock, founder of the Montréal dance company La La La Human Steps. She designed the costumes for his shows *Infante c'est destroy* (1991), *2* (1995), *Exaucé/Salt* (1999), *Amelia* (2002), *André Auria* (2002) for the *Opéra de Paris* and *Amjad* (2007).

Other choreographers and dance companies turn to Liz regularly because of her ability to combine costumes and body movement. Among others she has worked with La Compagnie Marie Chouinard, Margie Gillis, Bill Coleman, José Navas, O Vertigo, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, the Washington Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada, Mannheim Theater and Stuttgart Ballet (Germany).

Since founding her own company Vandal Costumes in 1992 with her partner Yveline Bonjean, Liz has created and innovated costumes in the fields of fashion, theatre, opera, music and film. The Backstreet Boys hired her to design the costumes for their Black 'n' Blue tour and her work appeared in the films *The Lathe of Heaven* directed by Philip Haas and *La turbulence des fluides* directed by Manon Briand, both released in 2002.

OVO marks the first time Liz has worked with *Cirque du Soleil*. "I explored techniques of transforming material in order to evoke, not imitate, insects."





Berna Ceppas

Composer and Musical Director

"The most important thing music can do is to elevate the emotions."

In 1994, Berna began working with Deborah Colker, the Director of OVO, and wrote music for all her dance company's shows.

Berna has worked extensively in the film industry since 2000, writing scores for many movies, notably *O Passageiro* (The Passenger) and *Niemeyer A Vida é um Sopro* (Niemeyer—Life is a Breath of Air). His work for the Globo television network includes *Brasil Legal* and *Muvuca*, and his score for the Discovery Channel series *Blast Off* was broadcast around the world.

In 2002, he formed *A Orquestra Imperial*, a band that became immensely popular, revitalizing the contemporary music scene in Rio de Janeiro and further afield. The band has launched its international career with shows in various European and American cities including Paris, Chicago and London.

Berna sees himself as a kind of chameleon, constantly adapting to his creative surroundings. "I am always me, but the challenges I set myself are intimately interwoven with those of the other members of the creative team as we converge toward a common goal."

The show itself puts them into the world of the insects. I've sampled actual insect sounds to combine with the music directly from the keyboard. I'm also assigning instruments and individual themes to specific characters."



Éric Champoux

Lighting Designer

"I have luminous adventures every day. Whether I'm in front of a canvas or in a theatre, I'm painting on bodies with light."

Since graduating from the National Theatre School of Canada in 1997, Éric has designed the lighting for more than 60 theatre productions in Quebec and Europe. He has worked with such Quebec directors as André Brassard, Gilles Champagne, Alice Ronfard, René Richard Cyr, Claude Poissant and Yves Desagnés.

For the last dozen or so years, Éric has worked particularly closely with Wajdi Mouawad, lighting his productions of *Rêves*, *Les Troyens*, *Le Mouton et la Baleine*, *The Three Sisters*, *Incendies*, *Forêts*, and, most recently, *Seuls*.

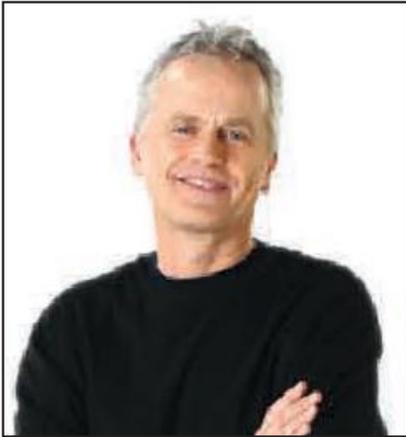
Éric designed the lighting for Alice Ronfard's 2006 production *Désordre Public* at Théâtre Espace Go, where he also lit *La Promesse de l'aube* and *Les hommes aiment-ils le sexe, vraiment, autant qu'ils le disent?* created by a collective of writers and directors.

In his mission to bring the art of the real—and the unreal—to the audience, Éric is constantly seeking to improve his mastery of painting with the medium of light.

"I paint light onto bodies and objects," he says. "I create a luminous image on stage exactly the same way I paint, layer by layer, revealing the characters on a canvas of color. Both results are based on the same approach."

OVO marks the first time Éric has worked on a *Cirque du Soleil* show. "I wanted to make use of the apparatus and equipment in the centre, the four masts and the set elements located way in the background. I started by designing on paper from the very beginning of the project, and that's how I continued to work, looking at the stage as a whole, and observing how dance and the harmony of colors play off each other."





Jonathan Deans

Sound Designer

"I need to make sure that sonically the audience members know they are entering a different world."

Jonathan Deans, one of the most sought-after sound designers in the musical theatre world, is the man behind the sound environments of OVO. Having created the soundscapes of *Saltimbanco*, *Mystère*, "O", *La Nouba*, *Zumanity*, *KÀ*, *Corteo*, *LOVE*, *KOOZA*, *Wintuk* and, most recently, *CRISS ANGEL Believe*. Jonathan finds Cirque's work-in-progress and team-oriented creative approach highly stimulating.

At 15, he joined the Royal Shakespeare Company as an actor where his keen interest in sound began to blend with a theatrical context. Several years later, after a spell as a sound engineer in the music industry, notably at Morgan Studios where he brushed shoulders with artists such as Cat Stevens, Paul Simon and Rick Wakeman, he made his way back to the theatre via the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and later went on to mix the sound for the musical *A Chorus Line*. One success soon followed another and he became the sound mixing engineer for over a dozen productions including *Evita*, *Cats*, *Bugsy Malone* and *The Sound of Music*.

Jonathan's success as a mixing sound engineer led to him being hired as sound designer on the musical *Marilyn*. This was followed by work on other West End shows including *Time*, *Les Misérables*, *Mutiny*, *Jean Seberg* and then on Broadway, *Ragtime*, *Fosse*, *King David*, *Damn Yankees*, *Taboo*, *Brooklyn*, *Lestat*, *Pirate Queen* and *Young Frankenstein*.

"I see OVO as the immersive surroundings of a world where the insects are magnified," says Jonathan. "And to accentuate that immersive aspect we've worked with a full surround system – which is unusual for a Big Top show. When you walk into the tent there's already a sense of a different space, which I would never try to compete with. On the contrary, I embrace this uniquely sounding environment and work to enhance the captured presence of the performance inside the Big Top."

As with every other Cirque show, Jonathan works very closely with the composer, Berna Ceppas. "By playing with pitch, tempo, mix and rhythm we are able to create many different 'flavors' of sound."



Julie Bégin

Make-up Designer

"Makeup is the instrument I use to reveal the many magical facets of each personality."

Julie got her first job on a dare. A friend persuaded her to apply for a makeup position while visiting Toronto. Despite the fact that she had no formal training, her talent shone through and she found herself working in a field that proved to be a perfect fit.

In 1998, after spending more than eight years refining her trade in Europe and Asia, Julie moved to New York to further her career and pursue her interest in arts. She soon attracted the attention of celebrated makeup artist Dick Page and rapidly became a top player on his team working in New York, Milan and Paris.

Julie's methods are wide-ranging and imaginative. From effortless natural looks to dramatic styles, her main focus in fashion is always to reveal the beauty of a face. "The challenge of designing makeup for a *Cirque du Soleil* show is to go beyond beauty to reveal character," she says. "Every face is a new inspiration, and when it all works you're actually revealing more than the person, you're able to catch a glimpse of their soul."

Julie's designs for OVO called for an evocation of the insect world.



Fred Gérard
Rigging and Acrobatic
Equipment Designer

"In every show under the Grand Chapiteau, there is always a trouble-maker who gets in the equipment designer's way. His name is Newton."

Fred Gérard was among the first to graduate from the National Centre for Circus Arts in Châlons-sur-Marne (France)—as a porter in flying trapeze. He was approached in 1989 by Gilles Ste-Croix to join the company of the *Cirque du Soleil* show *Nouvelle Expérience* as a trapeze artist, but he was forced to give up performing because of a back injury. He then became Assistant to that show's Director Franco Dragone and Artistic Director Gilles Ste-Croix.

Acting as Artistic Coordinator on tour, he also took care of acrobatic rigging. Following a trip to Europe, Fred came back to Cirque to take his first steps in acrobatic equipment design for the shows *Alegría* and *Mystère*. He put in a stint as Head Rigger at Cirque's International Headquarters in Montréal where he trained acrobatic equipment technicians before taking up duties as "Head Trainer and Itinerant Rigger" on the *Alegría*, *Saltimbanco* and *Quidam* tours—a position he held from 1997 to 2006.

For Fred the key to success lies in establishing perfect harmony between the creator of the acrobatic performance and the designer of the equipment. "In putting together an acrobatic number," he says, "the former deals with biomechanics—i.e. the performer's movements—while the latter deals with biodesign—the mechanical equipment that makes those movements possible. And it all has to be done seamlessly within the context of the show's concept."



Philippe Aubertin
Acrobatic Performance
Designer

"The principles that guide me always start with the safety of artists – that can never be compromised. But I'm also determined that they don't ever forget the 'fun factor' on stage, and seek the highest level possible in the creation of acrobatic numbers."

Philippe Aubertin became coach at the Gymnastics Centre of Montréal, a position he held until 1999. During his tenure, he was certified by the Canadian Association of Coaches.

At the same time, Philippe pursued a university education in athletic training, but the appeal of *Cirque du Soleil* offered him new horizons.

Cirque's Director of Acrobatic Performance and Coaching, Boris Verkhovsky, hired him in 1999 to train artists at the company's international headquarters in Montréal.

Philippe joined *La Nouba* in Florida as a Coach, then took up duties in Japan as Head Coach on the touring show *Saltimbanco*. In 2004, he returned to Montréal as Cirque's Head Coach before joining *Corteo* on the road for two years.

Philippe's first engagement as a Creator came in 2007 with his appointment as Acrobatic Performance Designer of OVO.

"For OVO, the decision to focus on human performance and numbers inspired by the dynamics of insects was there from the beginning.

Fast Facts

OVO

- OVO is the 25th Cirque du Soleil live production created on the company's 25th anniversary.
- OVO first premiered in Montréal in April 2009 and has visited more than 30 cities in 6 different countries as a Big Top show before transforming in an arena show in 2016.
- OVO celebrated its 3500th show in May 2023 in Sweden.

Cast and Crew

- 100 people from 25 nationalities for the OVO Cast and Crew, including 52 artists on stage.
- There is no narration on OVO, only "bug language", making the show very accessible! On tour, the official language is English but many languages are spoken daily : French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, etc.

