KOOZA™ is a return to the origins of Cirque du Soleil® that combines two circus traditions—acrobatic performance and the art of clowning. The show highlights the physical demands of human performance in all its splendor and fragility, presented in a colorful mélange that emphasizes bold slapstick humor.

“KOOZA is about human connection and the world of duality, good and bad,” says the show’s writer and director David Shiner. “The tone is fun and funny, light and open. The show doesn’t take itself too seriously, but it’s very much about ideas, too. As it evolves, we are exploring concepts such as fear, identity, recognition and power.”

The show starts with the Trickster bursting onto the scene like a jack-in-the-box in front of The Innocent, and that’s just the first of many surprises to come. The Innocent’s journey brings him into contact with a panoply of comic characters such as the King, the Trickster, the Heimloss, the Obnoxious Tourist and his Bad Dog.

Between strength and fragility, laughter and smiles, turmoil and harmony, KOOZA explores themes of identity, recognition and power. The show is set in an electrifying and exotic visual world full of surprises, thrills, chills, audacity and total involvement.

The name KOOZA is inspired by the Sanskrit word “koza,” which means “box,” “chest” or “treasure,” and was chosen because one of the underlying concepts of the production is the idea of a “circus in a box.”
Acts

Straps

With the ability to fly, spin, and swing in every direction, the long flowing dynamics of the aerialist’s motion is juxtaposed against the gripping, high acrobatics performed by the Straps artist. The breathtaking versatility of the Straps allows her to take command of the stage and soar to incredible acrobatic feats while continuously building the excitement to an astounding climax. She is a powerful character – distinctively feminine.

Balancing on Chairs

The equipment is as simple as it gets: eight chairs and a pedestal, but in this act, the artist uses them to create a 23-foot (7 meters-) tower on which to perform a balancing act that displays the human body at the very peak of condition and muscular control.

Charivari

The House Troupe burst into action at the top of the show. The act highlights include human pyramids, bodies flying through the air and a “crash bash” – a daring dive into a circle of fabric inspired by the “Nalukaq”, the traditional Inuit game of “Blanket Toss” and the landing mats used by firefighters.

Contortion

Young performers work in unison to bring a new approach to the art of contortion. What sets this number apart are the artists’ innovations in movements and position, their speed, and the way they work as a team to create tableaux of sculptural beauty.

High Wire

The twin high wires are suspended 15 feet (4.5 meters) and 25 feet (7.6 meters) above the stage. Each wire can reach 6,600 lbs tension while the four tightrope walkers are walking the wire. Their expert ability allows them to perform feats in the air that most of us would find difficult to do on the ground.

Hoops Manipulation

A hoops act with such a high level of difficulty is a rare demonstration of skill, and the KOOZA artist is one of the best in the world. Combining fluidity of movement, physical contortion, exceptional balance and impressive dexterity, her performance is out of this world, whether she is spinning one, two, three, or even seven hoops simultaneously.
A twist on the classic unicycle number introduces a passenger to the action. Two performers create a pas de deux in constant motion around the stage with a combination of balance, acrobatic control, physical strength, choreographic grace and a spirit of partnership.

The Teeterboard flings artists into the air, where they execute quintuple twisting somersaults—and that’s just the prelude for acrobats doing the same thing over 30 feet (9 meters) above the stage with double and single metal stilts strapped to their legs.

KOOZA’s 1,600-pound Wheel of Death rotates at heart-stopping speeds, powered only by the two artists who leap and counter-rotate in a death-defying display of fearless acrobatics and astonishing teamwork. Like the High Wire, the Wheel of Death is positioned diagonally, stage left to stage right, in order to break with the usual symmetry and bring the action as close as possible to the audience.
Charming and sophisticated, the Trickster is a sublimely quick and agile being, a genius who knows all about the world of KOOZA because he created it. He appears and disappears at will and there’s electricity in the air each time he arrives on stage. He created this world for the Innocent and keeps a watchful eye out for him. He teases him and plays tricks on him with his powers, but it’s the Innocent’s own subconscious that leads the dance…

The Innocent is a naive and melancholy loner carried off into the Trickster’s world. Outwardly childlike, ingenuous and simple, he is eager to get to know the new world he’s in, but as soon as he uses the Trickster’s powers he discovers an unexpected and jarring environment, a reflection of his soul.

The King is the king of fools, the most burlesque of all the characters. His hair is tousled and his crown has a mind of its own as he tries desperately to gain the respect of those who are crazier than himself.

The two Court Clowns are the King’s foolish footmen, his indispensable sidekicks in the extravagant adventures in the realm of KOOZA.

The very strange Heimloss lives beneath the stage where he’s in charge of the mechanical machinery that gives life to everything in the hidden world of KOOZA.

In this crazy world, even the Dog is nutty. He chases everyone, barks and is impossible to control. The word “training” means nothing to him. But, like everyone else, he’s drawn to the Innocent and becomes his playful, over-the-top companion.
Costumes

For KOOZA, Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt has drawn on a wide variety of sources of inspiration: everything from graphic novels, the painter Klimt, Mad Max movies, time-travel movies to India and Eastern Europe. She was also inspired by clock movements, tin soldiers, marching band uniforms and children’s book illustrations. All this merges to create a look that alludes to Alice in Wonderland, Baron Munchausen and the Wizard of Oz.

There are many rapid costume changes during the show and Marie-Chantale researched magicians’ quick-change techniques to create costume magic of her own.

- Marie-Chantale had percussion instruments made out of molded carbon for the Skeleton costume. They look and sound like bones when the performers hit them against each other to create a musical rhythm.
- The “Mad Dog” costume proved to be another huge challenge because the performer wearing it has to be able to move the dog’s ears, stick its tongue in and out, dribble and wag its tail.
- The “Rat Cape” is a costume that creates the illusion that rats are running down a performer’s body before disappearing into a trap. This would be relatively easy in a film, but it’s a lot more difficult to achieve live on stage. Following a long period of trial and error, the final Rat Cape costume is made up of 150 fake-fur rats with crystal eyes to catch the light. The running effect was inspired by the mechanism of vertical blinds and several of the rats are fitted with little wheels to make them seem even more alive.
- There are more than 175 costumes and 160 hats in the show — 1,080 items in all, including all the shoes, props, wigs and so on.
- One army costume features more than 400 individually-sewn metallic flaps to create the effect that it is armored.

Costumes at Cirque du Soleil – Facts:

- All costumes are custom-made and the majority are produced at the Costume workshop in the International Headquarters in Montreal, Canada.
- The only facility of its kind in North America, it has over 300 full-time employees, including specialists in fields as varied as shoemaking, textile design, lace-making, wig-making, patternmaking, costumes making and millinery.
- Each year, the Costume workshop artisans use more than 50 kilometres of fabric. 80% of all fabrics are treated and dyed in-house by the artisans of the textile design team.
- Shoes are hand and custom-made for all artists by the artisans of the Shoe Workshop. The leather pieces are dyed, trimmed and assembled on location. Brand new sports or dance shoes are sometimes altered to meet the specific requirements of a costume. Approximately 1,000 pairs of shoes are produced by the workshop every year.
- Hats can be seen in every Cirque du Soleil show and are a key part of the costumes. Like the costumes, they are custom-designed and made in the workshop. To do this, precise measurements of each of the artist’s heads are taken by a portable scanner and the milliners build the hats with the help of 3D prints obtained with these figures.

“It’s been a great challenge, but it’s also full of traps. You don’t want to exaggerate or slip into creating a caricature when you’re trying to capture a character.”

— Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt
The music of KOOZA beautifully demonstrates the spirit of the live show with its themes of human connection and fun in a world of duality. With a stream of uplifting songs with timeless influences where forms and styles intertwine seamlessly, the music of KOOZA is inspired by the sounds of western pop culture, from 1970s funk to full orchestral arrangements. It also draws heavily on traditional Indian music.

There are six KOOZA musicians who play live music during each performance: trumpet, trombone, bass, drums, percussion, saxophone, electric guitar, and keyboard. There are also two singers who sing live during each performance.

“I was inspired by Western pop music, from 1970s funk to orchestral music. I also drew upon traditional Indian music and film scores from the 1940s and 1950s, a period I’m particularly fond of.”

— Jean-François Côté
KOOZA’s set evokes a public square that morphs into a circus ring. The circular stage provides the audience with excellent sight lines through 260 degrees.

There has been no attempt to conceal or disguise the acrobatic equipment. The structure of the big top is always in full view. Everything is done out in the open with simplicity and transparency in order to focus attention on the artists and the acrobatic performances.

- The stage is dominated by one major set element, a traveling tower called the Bataclan, which alters the configuration of the performance space as it moves.

- The Bataclan moves artists in and out of the spotlight, serves as a bandstand and is flanked by two curved staircases.

- The decoration of the Bataclan is inspired by Hindu culture, Pakistani buses and Indian jewelry.

- Overlooking the Bataclan, the giant fabric structure called the Void was printed with motifs inspired by the internal structure of leaves to give it a decidedly organic look.

- The “sails” that frame the Bataclan can be opened and closed like the petals of an enormous flower by just two people using ropes and pulleys.

- The stage is ringed by recessed lighting units that cast a warm glow onto the faces of the performers, much like the footlights of a 19th-century theater.

- The diameter of the top of the stage is 36 feet; it is 42 feet from the bottom step. This is the diameter of a standard circus ring, which is determined by the minimum area in which a horse can comfortably gallop.

- The KOOZA stage is the highest stage ever designed by Cirque du Soleil (39 feet vs 30 - 36 feet normally). The extra space is needed for the Jack-in-the-Box hydraulics (which leaps six to seven feet in the air).

- Technicians and artists travel under the stage on dollies similar to those used by car mechanics to roll under cars.

- The musician pit is located on the upper level of the structure.

“I wanted to capture the essence of circus itself by creating a scenographic environment that offers true proximity to the audience and where danger is palpable.”

— Stéphane Roy

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“I wanted to capture the essence of circus itself by creating a scenographic environment that offers true proximity to the audience and where danger is palpable.”

— Stéphane Roy
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 six continents.

In 2007, Guy Laliberté entered into a second lifetime commitment by creating ONE DROP which fights 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 that 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.

In September 2009, Guy Laliberté became the first Canadian private space explorer. His mission was dedicated to raising awareness on water issues facing humankind on planet Earth. Under the theme Moving Stars and Earth for Water, this first Poetic Social Mission in space aimed at touching people through an artistic approach: a special 120-minute webcast program featuring various artistic performances unfolding in 14 cities on 5 continents, including the International Space Station.

Awards and distinctions

Université Laval (Quebec) 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.
“The clown takes our deepest human weaknesses and makes them funny. The clown is also an anarchist. The clown gets to break the rules.”
— David Shiner

David Shiner loves to make people laugh but he takes the art of clowning seriously. “In essence the clown is a character who helps us keep in touch with the sacred part of ourselves,” he explains. “It’s a difficult part to play. At the core of the character is longing and the wish to find meaning in life.”

David Shiner, who is best known as a clown, started out as a street mime in Paris and his career really took off in 1984 when was discovered at the renowned circus festival Cirque de Demain. He went on to perform with a succession of well-known companies including the German troupe Circus Roncalli and the Swiss National company Circus Knie.

David’s first formal association with Cirque du Soleil came in 1990, when he performed in Nouvelle Expérience, touring for 19 months throughout Canada. Thanks to such antics as stepping through, on and over much of the audience and his classic improv-based staging of a mock silent-movie melodrama with four members of the audience, he is probably the best-remembered of Cirque’s clowns. The production was filmed for HBO in 1991 and his other television performances include numerous appearances on The Tonight Show.

David made his feature film debut in 1992, playing the part of a clown in Lorenzo’s Oil, and the following year he played straight man to Bill Irwin in Sam Shepard’s Silent Tongue. He and Irwin then created the two-man, wordless show Fool Moon, featuring music by the Red Clay Ramblers, who had also performed in Silent Tongue. From this chance collaboration grew “Fool Moon, the inspired Broadway show which ran from 1992 to 1999, including three separate runs on Broadway. Fool Moon won a special Tony Award for Live Theatrical Presentation in 1999, a Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience, and an Outer Critics Circle Special Achievement Award.

In 2000 David originated the role of the Cat in the Hat, the host and guide of the Broadway stage musical Seussical. With the support of a grant from the Pugh Foundation he went on to develop a show at Seattle’s ACT Theatre and later adapted part of that show for his one-man production David Shiner in the Round.

“KOOZA is about human connection and the world of duality, good and bad,” says David. “The tone is fun and funny, light and open. The show doesn’t take itself too seriously, but it’s very much about ideas, too. As it evolves we are exploring concepts such as fear, identity, recognition and power.”

Presently David teaches at the August Everding Theater in Munich.

David was born in 1953 in Boston, Massachusetts.
Serge Roy had become part of the *Cirque du Soleil* family well before the organization officially came into being.

Serge grew up in a highly musical showbiz family—his father was a saxophonist working the thriving cabaret circuit in Quebec. Serge inherited a great enthusiasm and a remarkable talent for music and occasionally sang professionally as a child. He fell into pop music almost by accident and recorded a hit single, but by the time it was released he was already looking for a different direction, a career that would be more artistically satisfying and personally fulfilling.

He studied theater and played drums for a couple of years but it was only when he traveled to the artistic community of Baie St. Paul that everything really clicked. It was a time and a place of tremendous creative ferment. Gilles Ste-Croix and Guy Laliberté were putting together the shows that would eventually lead to the foundation of *Cirque du Soleil*—and Serge knew immediately that this was where he belonged.

Following a stint as stage manager for the 1984 and 1985 show *Le Cirque du Soleil*, he left the company for several years to work on other projects. In 1989, he came back to Cirque to take on the job of North American Tour Manager for the show *Nouvelle Expérience*, and continued as Tour Manager for *Saltimbanco* in 1992 and 1993.

He then pursued other projects for a period of more than two years. But the appeal of Cirque drew Serge back once again in 1995 to become Artistic Coordinator for the show *Alegría*, during its runs in North America and Tokyo. Later the same year, he joined the *Saltimbanco* troupe for its European tour, also as Artistic Coordinator. Also in 1995, Serge became the Artistic Director of *Quidam*.

Two years later, he left Europe for Las Vegas to work as Artistic Coordinator for the show *Mystère*, presented at Treasure Island. Soon afterwards, he accepted the position of Artistic Director for *Dralion* during its creation and first touring years in North America. In January 2003, he left *Quidam* to return to his “first love,” *Saltimbanco*, as Artistic Director. *KOOZA* has been his first project as a Creation Director followed by *Banana Shpeel*.

*KOOZA* showcases two major circus traditions: clowns and acrobatic performance. “They are very different,” says Serge Roy. “But it’s a marriage that goes back centuries. They come from the same world, the world of circus. This show as a whole brings us closer to the simplicity and humanity of an earlier circus—and closer to the audience. Very convivial. It reminds you of street performance. It’s a mixture of acrobatics and clowning that is really rooted in circus and in the origins of *Cirque du Soleil*.”

Serge Roy was born in Montreal.

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*Serge Roy*

Creation Director

“This show... brings us closer to the simplicity and humanity of an earlier circus – and closer to the audience. Very convivial. It reminds you of street performance. It’s a mixture of acrobatics and clowning that is really rooted in circus and in the origins of *Cirque du Soleil*.”
A graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, Stéphane Roy has worked as both a set designer and artistic director on over 100 productions in Montreal and abroad. While mainly active in theater and dance, he has also worked in film, television, advertising and variety shows.

Over the years, Stéphane’s career has led to special relationships with a number of directors and arts companies. For example, he has created the sets for more than 20 plays presented at Espace Go and the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in Montreal. And since 1995, he has been the set designer for several productions by the internationally acclaimed dance troupe La La La Human Steps.

His achievements have earned him many awards and honors, including being named Revelation of the Year, all categories combined, by the Association québécoise des critiques de théâtre in 1989. In 1992, the same association honored him with the award for best set design. His talent has also been recognized by the Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal, the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television and the Académie québécoise du théâtre.

Given this professional background, plus an architect father, a mother active in theater and a unique social and artistic approach to performance space, it’s not surprising that Stéphane Roy would, sooner or later, gravitate toward Cirque du Soleil—and vice versa. His formal association with Cirque began with his sets for Dralion, and he followed this with designs for Varekai, Zumanity and Zarkana. “In theater, set design gives concrete form to the author’s discourse and the director’s vision,” he says. “At Cirque du Soleil, I discovered the blank page. It’s another way of doing set design—an opportunity for me to take my artistic approach and its impact a step further. I approach each new creation with no preconceptions. No door is closed to the designers and the creative process is free and open.”

Stéphane says of KOOZA: “I wanted to capture the essence of circus itself by creating a scenographic environment that offers true proximity to the audience, and where the danger is palpable—a scenic space in which everything is done out in the open with simplicity and transparency, where even the acrobatic equipment, the structure of the big top and the orchestra are in full view.”

For the past 20 years, Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt has designed costumes for a large number of theater, dance, opera and film productions. Her work, which combines the two disciplines she has specialized in—set design and costume design—has been seen around the world.

Since 1989, she has worked particularly closely with world-renowned writer, actor and director Robert Lepage, creating the costumes for many of his productions, including Les sept branches de la rivière Ota, La Géométrie des miracles, La Face cachée de la lune, Peter Gabriel’s Growing Up tour, La Trilogie des dragons and KÀ, for Cirque du Soleil.

Through the years, Marie-Chantale has won many major Canadian awards for her work, including two Masques for costume design, in 1995 and 2005. She has also received many award nominations—notably from the Genies and the Jutras for her work with Robert Lepage on the feature film Nô.

“My costumes draw on a wide variety of sources of inspiration: everything from graphic novels, the paintings of Gustav Klimt, Baron Munchhausen, the Mad Max movies, time-travel movies to India and Eastern Europe.”

Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt was born in Sept-Îles, Quebec.
A self-taught keyboard player, composer and prolific electronic musician since the 1980s, Jean-François Côté is very active on the L.A. music scene. He has also worked with many of Quebec’s leading singers and trailblazing groups. He is known for mixing existing styles seamlessly with electronic music to invent new forms.

Jean-François was a promising hockey player as an adolescent, but he discovered his true calling at the age of 16 when he started playing keyboards with rock and soul groups on the Montreal music scene, developing sounds and a style that were uniquely his own. At the same age he got a job as a security guard for the very first Cirque du Soleil show. “At night,” he recalls, “I would sneak behind René Dupéré’s keyboard to make music and polish my technique.”

Years later, Jean-François was playing keyboards for singer Julie Masse and was noticed by Cirque du Soleil composer Benoit Jutras. This encounter led to his first formal association with the company as musical director and conductor for the Cirque shows “O” and Mystère. He also created the sound design for the Taiko drum sequence in the Cirque Imax film Journey of Man.

Jean-François says Cirque is one of the most stimulating environments in which to work as a composer. “In spite of its size, Cirque has remained true to its primary vocation: the creation of quality shows. The liberty they give to the creators is unequaled.”

To express the human and funny aspects of KOOZA, Jean-François Côté says he was inspired by Western pop music, from 1970s funk to orchestral music, adding, “I also drew upon traditional Indian music and film scores from the 1940s and 1950s, a period I’m particularly fond of.”

Jean-François Côté was born in Montreal.

Clarence Ford is a prolific dancer, choreographer, teacher and film director from Toronto whose creations have been seen and enjoyed throughout Canada, the US and the rest of the world. He loves to collaborate with other artists and has worked alongside the legendary James Brown and on stylized music videos for Robbie Williams and Barenaked Ladies to mention a few.

When he was 5, Clarence dreamed of becoming a professional hockey player. In high school, he competed in track and field, breaking the Canadian Interscholastic record for the 100 meters, which attracted many athletic scholarships from the US. At the age of 17, he discovered dance and his career took off when he became a member of Soul Express, a troupe that undertook several cross-Canada tours, appeared on award shows and TV shows including their own special on CBC television.

From a stylistic point of view, Clarence Ford is an innovator. He was one of the first choreographers in North America to incorporate street and hip hop choreography in Olympic figure skating and synchronized swimming. His work was so sensational that two Olympic skaters won gold medals with his choreography.

Clarence has choreographed several figure skating specials such as Stars on Ice, and prize-winning routines for international skating stars including Kurt Browning, Scott Hamilton, Victor Kraatz and Shae-Lynn Bourne. He has also worked on Canadian award shows such as the Junos, the Genies and the Geminis.

His work in film has taken him to Los Angeles, the West Indies and all over Europe, and includes choreography for such major studios as DreamWorks, Universal and Miramax. The feature films he has worked on include The Ladies Man, starring Will Ferrell, Tuxedo with Jackie Chan and Jennifer Love Hewitt, and Undercover Brother with Eddie Griffin and Billy Dee Williams. He has also choreographed around 40 television commercials, and produced, directed and choreographed fashion shows and numerous special events such as the Reebok fashion show for Fashion Television. He has also produced, directed and choreographed concerts for Arrested Development, Soul Decision and Sugar Jones.

Clarence Ford first worked with Cirque du Soleil in 1997, when Debra Brown invited him to take part in the studio workshops and contribute some of his choreographies for the Cirque show La Nouba. He followed this by joining the general training program at Cirque’s International Headquarters in Montreal.

Clarence says the choreography in KOOZA takes its inspiration from urban pop culture, vaudeville’s “eccentric dance,” jazz and street performance. “For me, it’s about this fusion of choreography evolving into its own language,” he says. “It provokes emotions, shows power and gives our audiences excitement!”

Clarence Ford was born in Toronto.
Martin Labrecque's professional assignments include around a hundred theatrical productions. He contributed to the critical success of several Quebec shows including L’Homme en Lambeaux in 2001, for which he won an award for his lighting design. In 2003, he co-wrote a show with Patrice Dubois about the life of Orson Welles: Everybody’s Welles pour tous, for which he received the Masque for the best Montreal production. He has won two other Masque awards, in 2005 for his work on Le Peintre des Madonnes, and in 2007 for Hosanna, both of which were directed by Serge Denoncourt. His other lighting designs have garnered a dozen award nominations.

Before coming to Cirque du Soleil, Martin Labrecque created the lighting for two acclaimed circus shows produced by Cirque Eloize, Rain and Nomade, which was directed by Daniele Finzi Pasca, who went on to write and direct Cirque’s Corteo. KOOZA marks the first time Martin has worked with director David Shiner. “David told me right off the bat, ‘I want people to see my clowns,’” he recalls. “So one of the challenges I faced was to accentuate the faces of the comic actors—which is crucial to the appreciation of their performance—without upsetting the balance or compromising the aesthetic of the show as a whole. And it was tough, because they have to be visible from all around a 280-degree stage.”

Martin Labrecque was born in Montreal.

Jonathan Deans, one of the most sought-after sound designers in the musical theater world, is the man behind the sound environments of KOOZA, his ninth sound design project for Cirque du Soleil. Having produced the soundscapes of Saltimbanco, “O”, Mystère, La Nouba, Zumanity, KÀ, Corteo and, most recently, LOVE, Wintuk, CRiSS ANGEL Believe, VIVA Elvis and most recently, OVO, Jonathan says he finds Cirque’s work-in-progress and team-oriented creative approach highly stimulating.

A successful child actor, Jonathan was fascinated by electronics at an early age. At 15, he joined the Royal Shakespeare Company where his keen interest in sound began to blend with a theatrical context. 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 theater to mix the sound for the musical comedy A Chorus Line. One success soon followed another and he became the sound operator for many productions including Evita, Cats, Bugsy Malone and The Sound of Music. His latest work for Broadway is the sound design for Pirate Queen, which opened in April 2007.

As soon as the West End caught wind of Jonathan’s success, he was hired as sound designer on the musical Marilyn. This was followed by work on shows including Time, Les Misérables, Mutiny, Jean Seberg and then on Broadway Ragtime, Fosse, King David, Damn Yankees, Taboo and Brooklyn.

His numerous achievements as sound designer have garnered him many awards. In 1998, for instance, while putting the finishing touches on the soundscape of La Nouba, he received the Entertainment Design Award for Production of the Year for his contribution to “O”. For Jonathan Deans, Cirque’s permanent theaters and its Grand Chapiteau are two quite different worlds when it comes to sound design. He finds that the beauty of the Grand Chapiteau is in the proximity between the artists and the audience, which creates an intimacy that is the foundation of the entire entertainment experience. “There are different technical demands, but as far as the texture and the layering of the music and sounds are concerned, it’s the same,” he says. “Whatever the environment for KOOZA, I have to make sure that sonically the audience knows they are entering a different world.”

Jonathan Deans was born in England.
Leon Rothenberg brings an extensive and varied background in music composition and computer programming to his work as a sound designer. In 1995, he studied North Indian Classical Music at the Sangit Mahabharati School in Mumbai, India, while a student at Oberlin College, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree as well as a B.A. in Computer Science. He earned his MFA in Sound Design from the California Institute of the Arts in 2002.

“I like to think that my way of thinking about sound is very musical. Even as a kid I knew I wanted a career in music and I played many different instruments. But I had also done lots of sound experiments using a reel-to-reel machine, starting when I was about 8 years old,” Leon recalls. “In college I started writing music for plays and I realized sound composition and sound design for theater provided far more opportunities for collaboration, and that was exciting.”

After completing graduate school, Leon worked as a production engineer for college and community theatrical productions in Southern California. It wasn’t long before he found himself in demand for larger shows at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, New York and further afield. In 2003, he co-designed the sound for a large multi-building site-specific production of King Lear that was presented in Los Angeles and in France. He has also worked on a number of experimental animation films and taught courses in creative listening and sound design.

Leon Rothenberg came to the attention of Jonathan Deans, the sound designer for several Cirque du Soleil shows as a college graduate, but they didn’t work together for many years. His first assignment alongside Jonathan was as his assistant on KÀ at MGM Grand, and their association continued with Corteo and the groundbreaking show LOVE at the Mirage. KOOZA marks the first time Leon has worked as a sound designer for Cirque du Soleil, sharing the duties with Jonathan Deans.

“We were looking for different ways of creating depth and width with the sound—ways to envelop the audience by creating different kinds of perspectives,” he says. “But we need to maintain the intimacy as well.”

Leon Rothenberg was born in Boston, Massachusetts.

Danny Zen first arrived at Cirque du Soleil in 1990 to work as a welder in the company’s workshops. He brought with him several other qualifications: he’s an accomplished hang glider, a fierce paintball competitor and he can sew just about anything.

Danny went on the first European tour of le Cirque Réinventé in 1990, then moved on to Nouvelle Expérience, the first show he worked on as a rigger. He toured with Saltimbanco in 1992 as a tent technician. He was chief rigger for Quidam in 1996, and as head technician for Cirque’s Creation Studio he contributed his expertise to the creation of Alegría, Mystère, Quidam, Dralion, Varekai, “O”, La Nouba and KÀ.

Because he’s involved in the design and creation of the equipment, Danny Zen sees the work of the rigger as more than mechanical. “It is creative in its own way,” he says. “We have to work closely with the set designer because although we’re designing acrobatic equipment and devices, they often do double duty as set elements. That calls for a marriage between technological requirements and the artistic demands of the show.”

Danny is constantly aware of the need for safety as the first priority for any piece of equipment or set element used by the artists and has worked to develop the safety standards in use throughout Cirque’s productions. He has also been active in the training of all riggers for the company. “The riggers are the people closest to the artists,” he explains. “They’ve got the artists’ lives in their hands.”

Danny worked on the creation of Corteo and Zarkana, KOOZA is the second Cirque du Soleil show Danny has worked on as the acrobatic rigging designer in addition to his regular duties as director of technical research and development at the Creation Studio.

He says the creative team have kept the manipulations of the stage to a minimum because they wanted to keep the audience’s attention firmly focused on the performances: “In KOOZA, the aerial acrobatics are of the highest caliber, and to put the emphasis on that, I set out to establish the maximum simplicity, fluidity and lightness from every point of view.”

Danny Zen was born in Saint-Luc, Quebec.
André Simard has been working with *Cirque du Soleil* since 1987. That year, he created a swinging trapeze act for the show *Nouvelle Expérience*, sparking a genuine revolution in high-flying aerial movement. Under his direction, the acrobatic feats performed by artists in motion somewhere between Earth and sky, either in a theater or under a big top, achieved the fluidity of ballet. Between 1989 and 2000, 13 of the acts he created for *Cirque du Soleil*, the National Circus School and his own company of artists, Studio de création les gens d’R, garnered accolades in festivals attended by the finest circus artists from all over the world.

The new circus arts are indebted to Simard for his creation of the discipline of aerial silk acrobatics in 1995. Another example of technological and choreographic innovation, stemming from his collaboration with acrobatic apparatus designer Jaque Paquin, was the Boat act in “O”. As well, Simard has designed most of the aerial acts in the eight shows that *Cirque* currently performs around the world.

For over 30 years, André Simard has succeeded in striking a harmonious balance between his three areas of expertise: the fine arts, elite sports, and the circus. In the early 1970s, he was a member of Canada’s national gymnastics team while a student at the Institut des arts graphiques de Montréal. In addition, while preparing to compete in the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, he trained clowns and other public entertainers at the Centre Immaculée-Conception in Montreal, a forerunner of the National Circus School. In his own words, he is “constantly trying to meld the rules of biomechanics, as applied to athletic training, with the evocative power of the performing arts.” This approach has also infused his teaching at the National Circus School, as well as at the Centre national des arts du cirque de Châlons-sur-Marne and the École nationale de Cirque de Rosny-sous-Bois, both in France.

In 1995, he founded the Studio de création les gens d’R in Montréal, an artistic endeavor that affords him the opportunity to push the envelope of emotional expression through aerial movement. In 2001, this troupe gave the world premiere performance of *Échos* in Venice. The show was commissioned by the organizers of that city’s celebrated Biennale arts festival.

André Simard is more in his element than ever with *KOOZA* because of its emphasis on acrobatics, risk, courage and the fragility of the acrobats. “*KOOZA* is a return to the origins of *Cirque du Soleil*,” he says. “Human effort—human performance in its rawest state—is explored in all its dimensions and all its frailty.”

André Simard was born in Montreal.
Rogé Francoeur dreamed of acting as a youngster, but it was behind the scenes rather than on stage that he was to make his mark. His studies in fine arts in Quebec and sculpture at York University in Toronto led him to a career creating props for film, theater and television productions.

Rogé started in film as a set decorator, model-maker and props designer. He worked on many features, including Emile Radok’s *Taming of the Demons* (1985) which was instrumental in his choice of career. He also applied his three-dimensional point of view to *Shadow of the Wolf* (1992) directed by Jacques Dorfmann, the 1993 TV movie *Zelda* directed by Pat O’Connor, and *Screamers* (1995) directed by Christian Duguay.

In 1996, Rogé Francoeur worked as a creative assistant, set decorator and model-maker for *Cinema Avenue Japan*, a major film exhibition presented in Tokyo. For the past six years, he has taught prop design and set painting at a college in Saint Hyacinthe, Quebec.

Rogé’s first formal association with Cirque did not come until 1992 when he worked with the costume designer Dominique Lemieux on the creation of *Saltimbanco*. He went on to work with set designer Michel Crête, creating props for the shows *Mystère* and *Alegria* in 1993 and 1994. Since 2003, he has been a consultant on R&D projects for Cirque and has also worked closely with the costume department. He says it was his work on Alegria that really caught the attention of the company, which led to KOOZA—the first time he has worked on a Cirque show as a designer.

“KOOZA is an exploration of the world of the clown, as imagined by David Shiner,” he explains. “The performances of the comic actors are at a very high level and the props must never upstage their characters. My constant preoccupation is to keep things simple, ergonomic and compatible with the set design. My approach to prop design is impressionistic. Props are often only fully revealed when seen from a distance, or under lighting.”

Rogé Francoeur was born in Macamic, Quebec.

Florence Cornet has been exploring ways to connect with the public through her makeup designs for over two decades.

After graduating from Collège de Sainte-Foy in Quebec City in the early 1980s, Florence took makeup courses offered by the Gaspesian set designer Yvan Gaudin. This experience awoke her future métier. Her training continued at Mikie Hamilton’s Mytho Maquillages school. Her prolific professional career began before she turned 20.

Florence’s career path took her to France in 1985 for an internship in makeup, which led, among other things, to a double assignment as artistic director and set designer for a multicultural show at the World Marionette Festival. Since then, she has accumulated an impressive list of credits in makeup, costume design, art direction and marionettes. She has worked on some 200 Quebec productions. Her work has been featured in productions at Le Théâtre Petit à Petit, the Théâtre du Trident, the Théâtre de la Licorne and the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde. She has worked with many renowned Quebec theater directors including Serge Denoncourt, Dominic Champagne, Claude Poissant, Wajdi Mouawad, Denise Guilbault, Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon.

In addition to teaching makeup for about 20 years in various theater schools, including the National Circus School in Montreal, Florence Cornet has worked in film and television, notably as head makeup artist on the TV series *Hommes en quarantaine*. In 2000, she received a Gémeaux Award nomination (best makeup) for her work on *Une Âme Immortelle* produced by Cine Qua Non Film and directed by Bernar Hébert.

This is not the first time Florence Cornet has worked for *Cirque du Soleil*. She worked as a makeup assistant on KÀ in 2004, and on a number of special events. KOOZA is her first assignment with the company as a makeup designer. “I explored textures inspired by the Middle East and Africa, where you have recourse to gold, jewels, brilliance and earth. I adopted a signature that favors the spontaneity of gesture, and accentuates the asymmetry of line, the instinctive and the ritual.”

Florence Cornet has lived in Montreal for 20 years. She was born in Toulon, in the South of France. She moved to Quebec at the age of 5.

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Fast Facts

KOOZA
• KOOZA had its world premiere in April 2007 in Montréal, Canada and has since played in over 65 cities in 22 countries, on four different continents.
• KOOZA celebrated its 1,000th performance in Santa Monica, California in 2009, its 1,500th performance in Tokyo, Japan in 2011 and its 2,000th performance in Dallas, Texas in 2012, its 2500th performance in Vienna, Austria in 2014, its 3000th performance in Montevideo, Uruguay in 2016 and its 3500th performance in Shanghai, China, in 2017.
• Over 7.5 million people have seen KOOZA.

Cast and Crew
• The cast and crew of KOOZA represents 26 nationalities: Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.
• Although French and English are the main languages on tour, many other languages are spoken including: Spanish and Russian.
• Approximately 150 people travel with the tour including 122 members of the cast and crew. The rest are official accompanying members (spouses and children). Of all the employees, 50 are performers.
• The tour relies on local suppliers for many essentials such as food, bio-diesel fuel, machinery, food and beverage supplies for patrons, banking services, delivery services, recycling, and waste management—thereby injecting a significant amount of money into the local economy.
• During an engagement in a city, over 120 people are hired locally to help with ticketing, seating, janitorial services and administration.
• The kitchen employs one kitchen manager and three cooks.
• Two performance medicine specialists travel with the tour.
The Entrance Tent
• A large entrance tent holds the merchandise, food and beverage counters.

The Artistic Tent
• The artistic tent includes a wardrobe area, dressing rooms, a fully equipped training area and a physiotherapy room.

The Big Top
• The seating capacity of the Big Top is approximately 2,600.
• The Big Top is comprised of 18 pieces of flame retardant vinyl canvas and is manufactured in Bordeaux, France by Voileries du Sud-Ouest, internationally renowned for their big top tents.
• The canvas for the tent and its 11 tunnels weigh approximately 11,500 pounds.
• The Big Top is 56 feet (20 meters) high and has a diameter of 164 feet (51 meters).
• The four masts stand at 82 feet (25 meters) above the ground.
• 17,000 square meters (4.2 acres) are needed to house the entire site including the tents and trailers.

The Kitchen
• The kitchen is the heart of the village. It serves three meals a day to 300 people six days a week and serves as a meeting place for cast and crew.

Cirque du Soleil’s mobile village includes the Big Top, one large entrance tent, artistic tent, box office, kitchen, offices, warehouses and more. Completely self-sufficient for electrical power, the site relies only on a local water supply and telecommunication facilities to support its infrastructure.
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL AT A GLANCE

From a group of 20 street performers at its beginnings in 1984, Cirque du Soleil is a major Québec-based organization providing high-quality artistic entertainment. The company has close to 4,500 employees, including 1,400 artists from more than 70 different countries.

Cirque du Soleil has brought wonder and delight to more than 200 million spectators in more than 450 cities in over sixty countries on six continents.

For more information about Cirque du Soleil, visit www.cirquedusoleil.com.

THE MISSION
The mission of Cirque du Soleil is to invoke the imagination, provoke the senses and evoke the emotions of people around the world.

THE CREATION OF CIRQUE DU SOLEIL
It all started in Baie-Saint-Paul, a small town near Québec City in Canada. There, in the early eighties, a band of colourful characters roamed the streets, striding on stilts, juggling, dancing, breathing fire, and playing music. They were Les Échassiers de Baie-Saint-Paul (the Baie-Saint-Paul Stiltwalkers), a street theatre group founded by Gilles Ste-Croix. Already, the townsfolk were impressed and intrigued by the young performers – including Guy Laliberté who founded Cirque du Soleil.

The troupe went on to found Le Club des talons hauts (the High Heels Club), and then, in 1982, organized La Fête foraine de Baie-Saint-Paul, a cultural event in which street performers from all over met to exchange ideas and enliven the streets of the town for a few days. La Fête foraine was repeated in 1983 and 1984. Le Club des talons hauts attracted notice, and Guy Laliberté, Gilles Ste-Croix and their cronies began to cherish a crazy dream: to create a Québec circus and take the troupe travelling around the world.

In 1984, Québec City was celebrating the 450th anniversary of Canada’s discovery by Jacques Cartier, and they needed a show that would carry the festivities out across the province. Guy Laliberté presented a proposal for a show called Cirque du Soleil (Circus of the Sun), and succeeded in convincing the organizers. And Cirque du Soleil hasn’t stopped since!

A Few statistics
- In 1984, 73 people worked for Cirque du Soleil. Today, the company hires close to 4,500 employees worldwide, including 1,400 artists.
- At the Montreal International Headquarters alone, there are close to 1,500 employees.
- More than 100 types of occupations can be found at Cirque.
- The company’s employees and artists represent more than 70 nationalities and speak 25 different languages.
- More than 200 million spectators have seen a Cirque du Soleil show since 1984.
- Close to 10 million have seen a Cirque du Soleil show in 2017.
- Cirque du Soleil hasn’t received any grants from the public or private sectors since 1992.
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL IS NOW PRESENTING 19 DIFFERENT SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD.

TOURING SHOWS UNDER THE BIG TOP

ARENA SHOWS
RESIDENT SHOWS

ALEGRIA, AMALUNA, CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

BAZZAR, CORTEO, CIRQUE DU SOLEIL CRYSTAL

JOYÀ, KÀ, KOOZA, KURIOS – CABINET OF CURiosITIES

LUZIA, MYSTERE, "O", OVO, TORUK – THE FIRST FLIGHT, TOTEM, CIRQUE DU SOLEIL VOLTA, ZUMANITY

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