



# CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

# Corteo™

Written and directed by Daniele Finzi Pasca

**PRESS KIT**



# About the Show

"Clowns are essential, especially when we are going through difficult times."

Daniele Finzi Pasca, director



*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.





# Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group

In 1984, on the banks of the Saint Lawrence River, east of Quebec City, a group of about twenty street performers, including jugglers, fire-eaters, and musicians, harbored a wild dream: to create a new form of circus and travel the world. Over the past forty years, with more than 50 creations, 19 of which are currently being performed, *Cirque du Soleil* has revolutionized live entertainment and continuously reinvents itself with original shows that consistently push the limits of the body and imagination. These shows are brought to life by creators, artists, and artisans from various disciplines and from all corners of the globe.

*Cirque du Soleil's* mission is to invoke imagination, provoke the senses, and evoke the emotions of spectators worldwide. Beyond producing world-renowned shows, *Cirque du Soleil* Group has expanded its creative approach to various forms of entertainment, including multimedia productions, immersive experiences, theme parks, and special events. *Cirque du Soleil* aspires to create a positive impact on individuals, communities, and the planet by using its most precious tools: creativity and art.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL  
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP



With 400 million tickets sold in over 400 cities since its creation, *Cirque du Soleil* has established itself as one of the world's leading entertainment companies and remains so in 2024.

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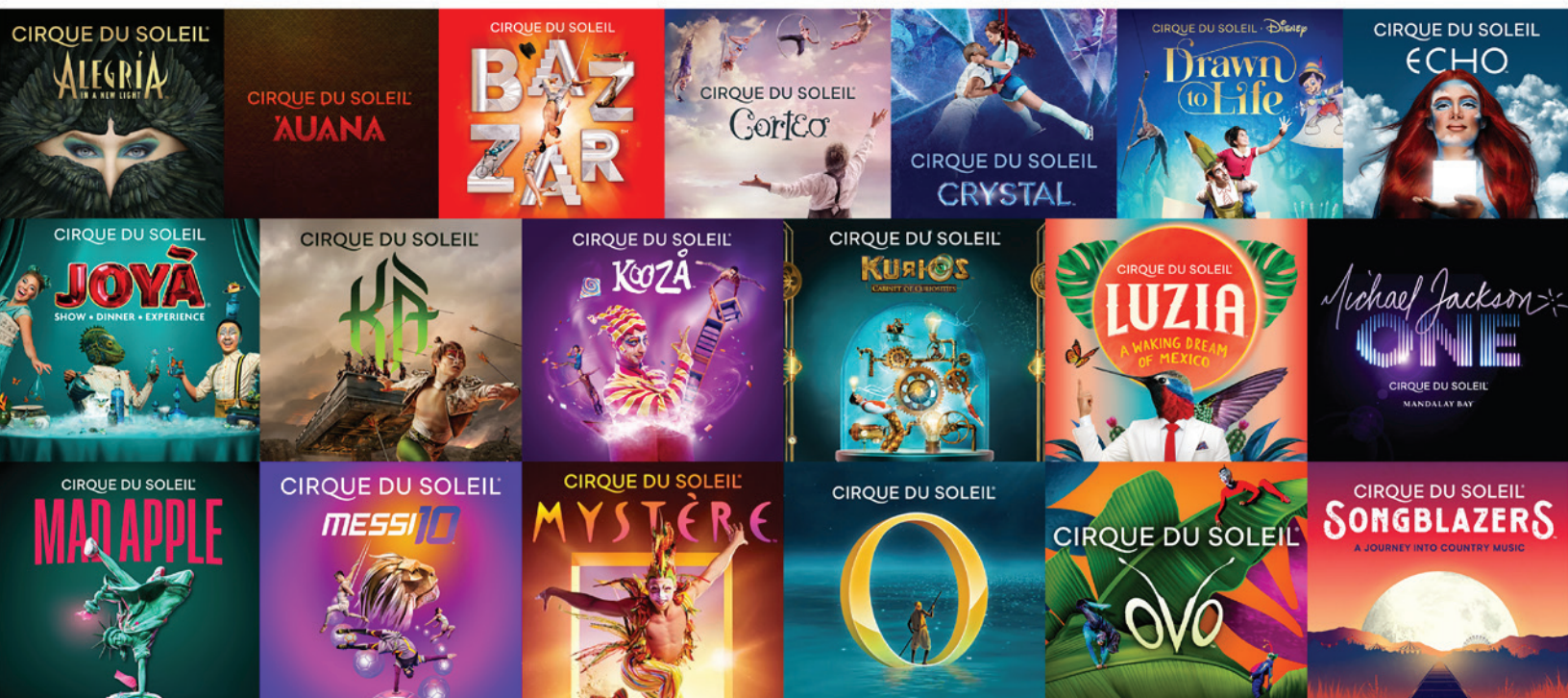
COUNTRY

4,000

EMPLOYEES

1,200

ARTISTS





# A Word from the Director

**Corteo** is a triumphant journey into the world of circus, populated by deeply human characters bound by friendship and solidarity. It embodies the essence of Italian spirit, one that immerses me in my dreams at night. There is the wonder of acrobatic movement, filled with theatricality thanks to exceptional performers and stage machinery that allows us to create unusual and surprising images.

I used poetry to tell the story of Mauro, a moonlit clown, delicate in his way of moving in a world inhabited by nomads and street performers. Corteo traveled for years under its big top, and when we decided to bring it to arenas, we realized it could become even more beautiful and impressive. It is a show that literally flashes before your eyes, uniting the earthly universe of clowns with the angelic presence of the dream world.

For years, performance after performance, we have strived to preserve the essence and spirit of this creation by continuously refining each image, rounding the edges, and making every surprise even more astonishing. In its simple monumentality, Corteo is a journey woven from the fabric of dreams.

Daniele Finzi Pasca, 2024



# Corteo on tour highlights:



**Corteo is Cirque du Soleil's 18th creation. The show has been seen by over 10 million spectators in 150 cities across 22 countries since its premiere in April 2005 at the Old Port of Montreal. Corteo has traveled over 250,000km, equivalent to circling the Earth six times.**

It is the first Cirque du Soleil show to feature a bilateral stage, where the audience is seated face to face.



A TROUPE  
CONSISTING OF

**117**

MEMBERS  
FROM

**27**

DIFFERENT  
COUNTRIES  
INCLUDING

**53**

ARTISTS AND

**34**

TECHNICIANS.

Some have been traveling with *Corteo* since its creation 19 years ago!

There are more than

**175**

DIFFERENT COSTUMES

to dress the artists of *Corteo*, all custom-made in *Cirque du Soleil's* workshops.

In total,

**40**

of them

DEPICT ANGELS.

*Corteo* changes cities every week, requiring

**24**

TRUCKS

to transport the show from one city to another.

After 10 years of touring under the Grand Chapiteau, *Corteo* has been adapted to visit arenas worldwide, bringing new creative visions to life.

The giant chandeliers of *Corteo* are acrobatic elements adorned with around 4000 sparkling jewels and reflective garlands.

*Corteo* was honored with a Pollstar Award, a prestigious recognition in the live entertainment industry, in the "Family, Event, Non-Musical Tour" category in 2024.



## THE MUSIC

**of the show is played live.**

The show's music is performed live by a band visible to the audience throughout the performance. It consists of eight musicians, including two singers, a pianist, a bassist/double bassist, an accordionist/guitarist, a violinist, a saxophonist, and a drummer/percussionist.



# Set Design

**The first *Cirque du Soleil* show to offer an immersive stage experience by dividing the audience into two, the set and décor of *Corteo* plunge the audience into a lyrical world, a strange area between heaven and earth.**

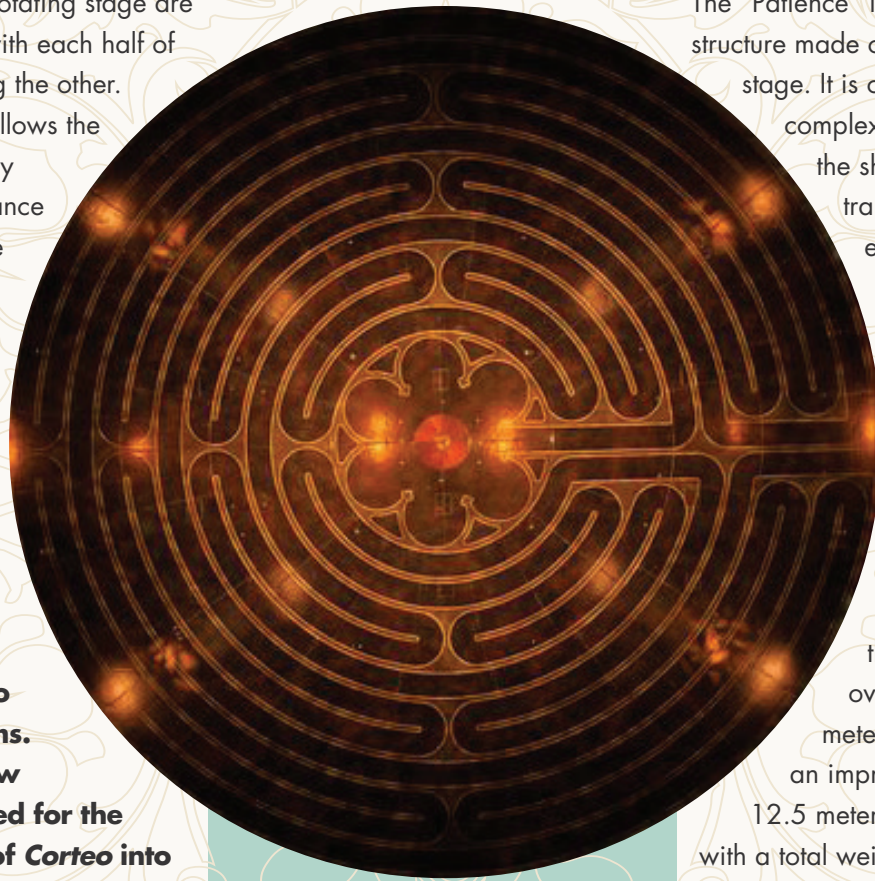
## THE VENUE

The venue and its rotating stage are divided into two, with each half of the audience facing the other. This unique setup allows the audience to not only watch the performance but also experience a performer's view of the audience. This innovative approach is a first for *Cirque du Soleil*.

**The stage has a diameter of 12.5 meters and features two rotating platforms. A completely new stage was created for the transformation of *Corteo* into an arena format. Most of the set pieces had to be adapted for this new production.**

## 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. Suspended from the arena's ceiling, The Patience is equipped with three rails spanning the stage, extending over a length of 40 meters and positioned at an impressive height of 12.5 meters above the ground, with a total weight of 27 tons. Its name recalls a term from French theater referring to an aerial curtain track.



## THE LABYRINTH

In the middle of the stage lies a labyrinth, with a single path stretching from the edge to the center measuring 260 meters. It is an exact replica of the labyrinth incorporated into the floor of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Chartres, France. The labyrinth incorporates a 20 centimeters Moebius strip painted at its center as a symbol of infinity and continuity.



# Set Design (more)

## 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 central curtains, known as “Polichinelles,” were primarily inspired by a work dating back to 1885 by the French painter and illustrator Adolphe Willette, who was the architect of the legendary Parisian cabaret, the Moulin Rouge. As for the

side curtains, which conceal the backstage area, they drew their inspiration from the iconic metal structure of the Eiffel Tower.

The two enormous baroque-style “Roll Drop” curtains (58 meters wide and 12 meters 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 Characters

## And their costumes

To create the 175 costumes for *Corteo's* cast, utilizing a total of 2500 different pieces such as shoes, hats, and other accessories, 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. Surrounded by costume makers, milliners, cobblers, and other craftsmen, Dominique Lemieux brings the characters of *Corteo* to life.



### 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 Characters

## And their costumes (more)



### 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.



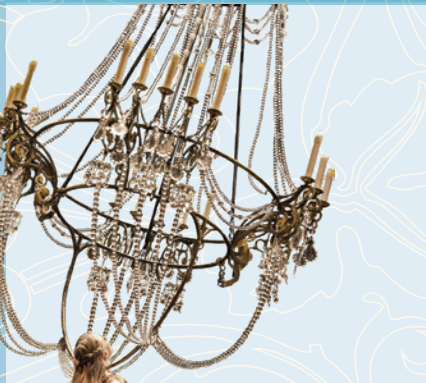
### THE AUGUST CLOWN

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.





# Acts



## 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.



## BOUNCING BEDS

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



## 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.



## 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.



# Acts (more)



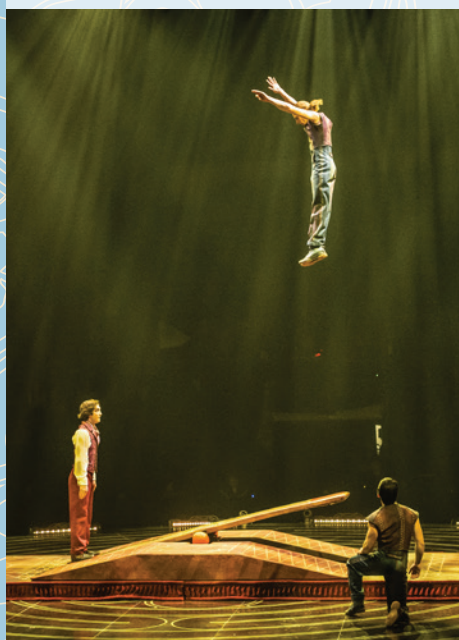
## GOLF

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! In 2024, an excerpt of this act published on *Cirque du Soleil's* social media channels is nominated for a Webby Award for Best Comedy Video in the United States.



## ARTIST MARIONNETTE

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.



## 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.



## HELIUM DANCE

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



# Acts (more)



## 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.



## 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.

## 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.



## 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.





# Acts (more)



## 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.



## 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.



## 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 Secrets of Corteo

“Daniele Finzi Pasca wanted to to bring the circus closer to the world of theatre, closer to the romantism.”

Jean Rabasse, *Corteo's* set designer

## A Week with *Corteo*

**MONDAY:** Arrival of the first trucks at the arena, load in and installation of initial equipment

**TUESDAY:** Set and technical setup, backstage setup

**WEDNESDAY:** Artistic and technical validations, first performance

**THURSDAY – SATURDAY:** Rehearsals and maintenance during the day, performances in the evening

**SUNDAY:** Final shows and load out, departure to a new city

Load in takes 12 hours, load out less than 4 hours. It requires hiring 100 local professionals to assist *Corteo's* technicians in each city.

All equipment is transported in 500 road cases loaded into 24 trucks.

When a new artist joins the cast, they are sent to *Cirque du Soleil* headquarters in Montreal to learn their role. Their costumes are tailor-made. Each artist must learn to apply their own makeup after being trained by a professional makeup artist.

The show travels with its own washing machines; 50 cycles are needed each week to wash *Corteo's* costumes.

During *Corteo's* creation, over 9000 art images inspired the designers, ranging from Baroque to modern era.

200 pairs of shoes are regularly painted or touched up. The smallest shoe size in the show is European size 18 for children, and the largest is 53.5 XXL.

“*Corteo* is a celebration that tells the story of friendship and the joy of dreaming together; it is a show deeply dedicated to circus.”

Daniele Finzi Pasca, director



# The Creators



DANIELE FINZI PASCA  
CREATOR AND DIRECTOR

Daniele Finzi Pasca (Ticino, Switzerland) lives in three worlds at once: theater, circus arts, and the art of clowning. Coming from a family deeply rooted in the arts, he began his career as a gymnast and later became a circus artist before delving into the world of theater. In 1983, he traveled to India where he volunteered to care for terminally ill patients on the streets of Calcutta.

Returning to Switzerland, he founded Teatro Sunil in 1986, staging approximately 30 productions performed in around twenty countries. His impressive career includes **"Icaro,"** a monologue performed for a single spectator in six languages across more than fifteen countries, acclaimed as the best foreign show by the Montevideo Theater Critics Association. He also published a collection of short stories titled **"Come acqua allo specchio"** and wrote and performed **"Aitestás,"** recognized as the best foreign show by the National Association of Mexican Critics.

In the early 2000s, Daniele reconnected with Quebec, directing **"Visitatio"** for Teatro Sunil and **"Carbone 14"**, as well as productions like **"Nomade"** (2002), **"Rain"** (2003), and **"Nebbia"** (2007) for Cirque Éloize.

In 2011, he co-founded Compagnia Finzi Pasca in Lugano, Switzerland, with Julie Hamelin Finzi and members of Teatro Sunil. Together, they have created over 40 shows, including **three Olympic ceremonies** (Turin 2006 and Sochi 2014), operas such as **"Aida"** and Verdi's Requiem (officially entered the repertoire of the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg), **"Carmen"** and **"Pagliacci"** at Teatro San Carlo in Naples, and **"L'Amour de loin"** for the English National Opera in London.

Their work also includes **"Einstein on the Beach,"** which opened the 2019/2020 season at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, **"Les contes d'Hoffmann"** for Hamburg Staatsoper in 2021, and **"María de Buenos Aires"** at the Grand Théâtre de Genève in October 2023. In notable events, the company produced **"Montréal Avudo"** in 2017, a multimedia spectacle combining video mapping, lights, and water fountains for the city of Montreal (249,000 spectators in 4 months), and **"Abrazos"** for the Feria de León fair in Mexico in 2019 (200,000 spectators).

Currently, five productions by Compagnia Finzi Pasca are on tour: **"Nuda"** (2021), **"52"** (2021), **"Luna Park – comme un tour de manège"** (2020), **"Bianco su Bianco"** (2014), and **"Icaro"** (1991).

Daniele's work has garnered numerous accolades, including three Broadway nominations for **"Rain"** (2006), the Montréal English Critics Circle Award (MECCA) in 2009 for **"Icaro,"** the Hans Reinhart Ring in 2012 (Switzerland's highest theater honor for lifetime contribution to the performing arts), Best Circus Director Award 2016 (Russia) for **"La Verità,"** the Swiss Society of Grants Prize in 2020 (New York, USA), and the **"Marco Borradori - In tutto ciò che genera bellezza"** Prize in 2021 (Lugano, Switzerland).

Following his direction of *Corteo* (seen by 10 million spectators) in 2005, LUZIA marked Daniele Finzi Pasca's second collaboration with *Cirque du Soleil* in 2016.



# The Creators

## 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.



# The Creators



**JEAN RABASSE**  
SCÉNOGRAPHE



**DOMINIQUE LEMIEUX**  
CONCEPTRICE DES COSTUMES



**DEBRA BROWN**  
CHORÉGRAPHE



**JEAN-FRANÇOIS CÔTÉ**  
COMPOSITEUR



**PHILIPPE LEDUC**  
COMPOSITEUR  
ET DIRECTEUR MUSICAL



**MARIA BONZANIGO**  
COMPOSITEUR  
ET DIRECTEUR MUSICAL



# The Creators



**MARTIN LABRECQUE**  
CONCEPTEUR D'ÉCLAIRAGE



**JONATHAN DEANS**  
CONCEPTEUR SONORE



**HUGO GARGIULO  
& ANTONIO VERGAMIN**  
ENTRAÎNEURS THÉÂTRAL



**DOLORES HEREDIA**  
ANALYSTE DRAMATURGE



**DANNY ZEN**  
CONCEPTEUR DES ÉQUIPEMENTS  
ACROBATIQUES



**NATHALIE GAGNÉ**  
CONCEPTRICE DES MAQUILLAGES







"My grandfather always used to say,  
'Life is like riding a bicycle. If you go too fast,  
you'll get tired and have to stop. If you go  
too slowly, you'll lose your balance.  
Find the right pace, Mauro...'"

Mauro the Dreamer Clown

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®  
Corteo™