

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL ECHO™



PRESS KIT

■ THE WORLD IS YOURS TO CREATE

“ECHO is about connecting everybody together, and working together to create the world we want to live in. It’s not just a concept. It’s something I truly believe in.” – Mukhtar Omar Sharif Mukhtar, Author-Director

ABOUT THE SHOW

Cirque du Soleil brings modern and surprising twists under the Big Top with ECHO, a story of connection, intention, and the bond between humans and the animal kingdom.

When FUTURE (the protagonist) and her best friend EWAI stumble upon an enigmatic CUBE, they set in motion a journey of life, discovery, hope, and empathy, quickly learning how their actions have the power to shape this world.

Packed with vibrant characters, inspiring music, contemporary abstract costumes, astounding lighting and projections, and never-before-seen acrobatics, ECHO brings audiences on a journey through a universe of color, wonder, and infinite possibilities.



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THE CONCEPT

The underlying theme of ECHO is the symbiotic connection between humans and the natural world. The show explores how the actions of man can ripple out to the animals and planet we treasure so much.

“ECHO” is a fitting title because the audience discovers this effect in different metaphors throughout the show.

We experience an echo through humanity and the way our actions have a resounding impact on the surrounding world. This concept is brought to life by how artists and characters interact with the CUBE. As the massive structure is extracted and rebuilt, we come to understand that empathy and compassion can restore our relationship with animals and the natural world, and ultimately lead us to a space of hope, love, and connection.

An echo is also expressed through choreography. Many of the show’s performances are inspired by the notion of repetition, telling stories through continuous movement, and exploring the dynamic between organic, free-moving animals and the structured uniformity of scientific thinking.

As Author-Director Mukhtar Omar Sharif Mukhtar says, “I think it’s important when people come to ECHO to be blown away by the performances and acrobatics, and at the same time, I want them to leave feeling empowered.”

ECHO AT A GLANCE

- ECHO is the 20th Big Top creation from Cirque du Soleil and its 51st overall, with a cast of 52 artists representing 19 different nationalities.
- Aesthetically, ECHO brings bold new visuals and an innovative approach to the Big Top, weaving together high-level acrobatics in a modern and contemporary visual universe.
- ECHO performs up to 10 shows a week, and visits approximately 6 different cities per year.
- Several of the cast and crew of ECHO have been involved in other Cirque du Soleil productions, including Volta, MJ ONE, OVO, and many more. Even the Author-Director was originally an artist in The Beatles LOVE.
- ECHO is the first ever Cirque du Soleil show to feature 6 live vocalists, with most of the musicians also singing at some part in the show.
- A full performance of ECHO pushes the envelope with 5 acrobatic winches and 3 double lines that can support 2 artists each.
- ECHO uses an impressive 10 video projectors to cover the CUBE, the stage, and the artists, which marks the most ever for a Cirque du Soleil Big Top show.
- The mysterious CUBE at the heart of the show is essentially the size of a 2-story apartment building that rotates on the central pivot, moving from upstage to downstage, and even floating above stage.
- ECHO was originally going to be released in 2020 by the name Under the Same Sky, but was forced into a hiatus due to the global pandemic.
- Production and rehearsals resumed in 2022 under the name ECHO, and its first performance was April 20, 2023 in the Old Port of Montreal.

THE CHARACTERS



FUTURE

FUTURE is the curious and caring protagonist of ECHO. Representing the energy and awareness of today's youth, she sees the world through the eyes of a new generation. Her natural curiosity inspires her to seek out her place in the world, and with her playful companion, the DOG, she wanders upon an enigmatic CUBE, setting in motion a journey of life, discovery, hope, and connection.



EWAI THE DOG

A symbol of unconditional love, the DOG is FUTURE's selfless companion whose only wish in life is to make her happy. Thanks to his playful and curious nature, the DOG helps FUTURE make unique connections with the animal characters they encounter on their journey. When he gets carried away chasing the hopeful light of the FIREFLIES, he loses track of FUTURE, and searches urgently to get back to her side.



THE CARTOGRAPHER

The CARTOGRAPHER is a mysterious character with an inventive mind. With his bright energy and vibrant colors, he flies around the CUBE casting vivid light projections with every movement. In constant pursuit of new ways to move forward and look at things the CARTOGRAPHER introduces FUTURE to the concept of science. Like an inquisitive scholar, he is there to offer FUTURE knowledge and options, but will never tell her where to go or what to do, because he knows that on a journey of discovery, it's up to everyone to decide their own path.



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Representing an era of industrialization, DOUBLE TROUBLE pride themselves on productivity, but the more they try to maintain order, the more they lose control. The comedic duo consistently pushes to keep the work moving, recruiting the characters of ECHO (and even members of the audience) to stack boxes, build structures, and help them achieve their ambitious goals. Despite their demands, something always seems to go awry, leaving DOUBLE TROUBLE visibly annoyed. When they grow impatient with the pace of work, they decide to take matters into their own hands.



■ THE CHARACTERS – CONT.



THE FOSSORIAL

The FOSSORIAL is an introverted creature who lives alone underground. Once in a while he pops his head above the surface to see what's going on, because any action taking place above ground has a direct impact on his home and livelihood. Having to mold himself to so many circumstances beyond his control has turned the FOSSORIAL into a master of improvisation, but also makes him distrustful of others, including a young girl named FUTURE and her friendly companion the DOG.



THE FIREFLIES

When the CUBE gets stripped away by the efforts of DOUBLE TROUBLE, two beautiful FIREFLIES appear to return hope to the world of ECHO. Suspended by their hair, they soar above the stage in a spiritual performance of acrobatics and light projections.



■ THE ACTS

ECHO beautifully blends story with a spectacular range of acrobatic performances, all taking place on, in, around, or throughout the mysterious CUBE. You'll witness performances like bungee straps, banquine, icarian games, double hair suspension, slackwire and triple teeterboards.



SYMBIOSIS: ACRO-DANCE OF THE ANIMALS

Animals hang in a vertical position on the CUBE, performing an acro-dance routine where we see them meeting each other as animals who share this world, discovering life, and living in harmony.



THE CARTOGRAPHER'S BUNGEE STRAPS

As the CARTOGRAPHER flies into the story, light projections track his every movement, leaving behind marks that influence the world. The animals move away from him, not knowing his intentions, but his energy and presence demand the respect of the stage.



INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ICARIAN GAMES

Two performers come to the stage in an act of flipping and rotation that spins the story forward. Their motion acts as a machine to help DOUBLE TROUBLE extract boxes from The CUBE, moving faster and faster to speed up the process of extraction.



■ THE ACTS — CONT.



DOUBLE TROUBLE'S BOXES

Discontent with the pace of work, **DOUBLE TROUBLE** take matters into their own hands. Using all the boxes at their disposal, they attempt to streamline their work, but quickly find out that it's easier said than done, and the mess is bigger than when they first started.



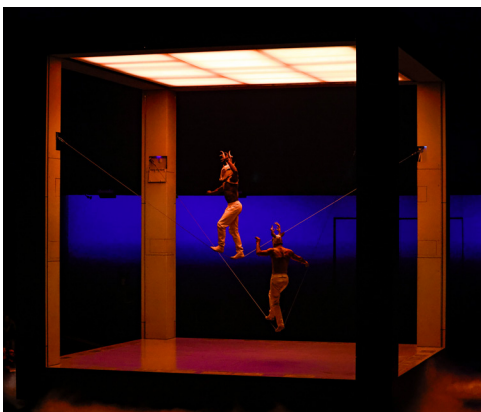
THE FIREFLIES DOUBLE HAIR SUSPENSION

When some troubling questions arise, the lights reveal two **FIREFLIES**, beautiful artists who soar through the air suspended by their hair. Their grace and power inspire **FUTURE** and the **DOG**, giving them hope that the world can be rebuilt.



BANQUINE AND HUMAN CRADLE TO RESIST AND EXPRESS

The **COLOR PAPER PEOPLE** come together in a thrilling mix of banquine and human cradle acts. With the help of the **CUBE** and the encouragement of **FUTURE**, they learn to collaborate and realize the importance of having fun in a dizzying array of stunts.



DOUBLE SLACKWIRE

A tense double slackwire number opens the second act of the show, as two animals stand on a line between life and death. They will give everything they can to survive as long as they both have each other.



■ THE ACTS — CONT.



REBUILDING ON POLE STRUCTURES

This flying poles act features three poles that simultaneously take flight, with two acrobats per pole performing tricks in the air. This ground-breaking performance requires exceptional strength, and signals the rebuilding of The CUBE.



THE DOG'S JUGGLING

In an act of love and gratitude, the DOG breaks into a fascinating juggling act that catches the eye of an unseen character. The FOSSORIAL appears above ground, approaching the DOG with caution and curiosity, and pushing him to be more and more creative with his flicks and tricks.



DOUBLE TROUBLE'S HUMILITY

Seeing the consequences of their actions, Double Trouble want to help recreate the CUBE. They chase after all their boxes in a comical manipulation act that leads them to build an impossibly tall tower of boxes.



THE FOSSORIAL'S CONTORTION

The FOSSORIAL puts his flexibility and adaptability on full display in an act of contortion and dislocation that will leave audiences stunned.



■ THE ACTS — CONT.



FUTURE AND THE WASHINGTON TRAPEZE

When FUTURE looks up to see the final missing box flying in the air, she realizes it's up to her to place the missing piece back into the CUBE. The Washington trapeze descends towards her in a poetic moment, as the animals return to stage to orchestrate her flight.



CELEBRATING CONNECTION ON TRIPLE TEETERBOARDS

In a high-flying performance, the paper animals celebrate connection and coexistence through an exhilarating triple teeterboard act. As the playful birds take flight from their teeterboards, they inject a palpable energy into the air, overjoyed by the feeling of togetherness.



■ SET DESIGN

IN, ON, AND AROUND THE CUBE

The imaginative set design of ECHO revolves around the CUBE, a simple yet profound set piece that blends a spectacular range of audio, visual, and tactile media. Measuring 23' x 23' (7 m x 7 m), the CUBE sets the stage for a wide range of acrobatics and theatrics. At different points, it may be dismantled, stripped, and rebuilt, scaled by animals, swung from by artists, and used as a mesmerizing projection surface.

Surrounded by a stage that resembles water in a lake, every interaction with the CUBE creates a unique effect that ripples into the future.

With so many elements involved in a single set piece, ECHO Author-Director Mukhtar Omar Sharif Mukhtar says the CUBE is up to interpretation. "It's not just as literal as 'this is the world'," he says. "It could be anything: a relationship, love, something you cherish... It could represent the world, or the planet, but it's really a symbol. The more we take away from it, the emptier it becomes, and the more we put into it, the fuller it becomes. That's what I would love for people to see when they see this."



■ SET DESIGN — CONT.

ONE CUBE, SO MANY DIMENSIONS

Designing the CUBE was a massive undertaking. Not only does it need to support the acrobatics and theatrical performances of the show, but it also has to meet the technical requirements of a traveling Big Top show. Here are a few highlights:

- The CUBE measures 23 square feet and weighs roughly 12 tons.
- It is built to track from upstage to downstage on a single central pivot.
- The roof of the CUBE contains a lightbox with 2.7 kilometers of LED strips.
- Lighting it from within instead enables the technical team to highlight performers and characters with greater precision than relying strictly on outside lighting.
- It takes 10 projectors to project imagery on the rotating CUBE and throughout the stage—the most ever for a traveling Cirque du Soleil show.
- Each video projector tracks a single zone of the stage, and crossfades projections between zones as the CUBE moves and rotates.
- These projectors can create 3D effects on the surface of the CUBE to appear like it's deconstructing and constructing while never moving an inch.
- To ensure so many projectors could meet the mobility demands of a Big Top show, Cirque technical teams had to design a special self-standing infrastructure just for this equipment.
- The primary structure of the CUBE is mostly made of steel with some aluminum trussing.
- There are 40 lightweight blocks that fill in the CUBE, which are made of different materials based on their use.
- There are soft blocks made of foam so they can be easily dropped from various heights, while “acro blocks” are made of carbon fiber or fiberglass to support the requirements of the performers.
- At one of the most surprising points in the show, one of the CUBE's walls supports 40 artists.
- In a first-of-its kind performance, a dual slackwire act takes place within the rotating CUBE.

Yet despite so much built into one impressive structure, Production Director, Serge Côté says the biggest challenge when designing the CUBE was integrating it in a way that brings theatricality to the performance—not attention to its technical feats. “We want people to forget about the technicality... to come into the Big Top, which is kind of a magical space, forget about everything that goes on [behind the scenes], and step out with a smile.”



■ COSTUMES & MAKEUP

Conceptually, the costume and makeup design for ECHO are slick, contemporary, and clean, with fewer flourishes than most Cirque du Soleil productions.

Costume Designer Nicolas Vaudelet uses color to draw a contrast between animals and humans, with more than two dozen animal heads fabricated in white, and 26 brightly colored outfits for ECHO's human characters.

While Makeup Designer Julio Cesar Da Silveira's concepts incorporate a subtle yet powerful geometric touch to create a connection point between the two groups. Together they strike the perfect balance between fashion, circus, and story.



FUTURE & THE CARTOGRAPHER

Each costume and makeup concept was presented to ECHO'S Director for approval to ensure they connect to the larger concept of the show.

For the protagonist FUTURE, makeup designers tested hundreds of shades of makeup before perfecting on the cloud concept, which adds an emotional touch with sparkles that appear like raindrops or tear drops.

For the CARTOGRAPHER, there's a unique pencil stroke that appears to be connecting the dots. The perfect touch for a character who makes maps, draws connections, and represents the possibilities of scientific discovery.



TWO FAMILIES CONNECTED BY CRUMPLES

For the PAPER ANIMALS and COLOR PAPER PEOPLE, Costume Designer, Nicolas Vaudelet has clad all characters in white fabric made to resemble crumpled paper. The wrinkles give the feel that these characters' lives are still being crafted.

While the PAPER ANIMALS wear white head to toe, the COLOR PAPER PEOPLE wear white suits featuring a rainbow of different colors. If you look closely though, you'll see that all of these artists are wearing the same style of suit.



■ THE MUSIC OF ECHO

Music and sound play a key role in driving the emotional arc of ECHO. Featuring 14 eclectic show tracks inspired by a mix of pop, electronic, vocal, and classical stylings, the music of ECHO defies any single genre. It is uniquely layered with depth and textures inspired by our relationship to the natural world.

As Band Leader, Michael Lieberman describes it, “Our most natural instrument is the human voice, and so it makes sense conceptually to use vocals to establish a symbiotic relationship between humanity and the environment.” This is followed closely by strings and percussion, which represent the sounds, rhythms, and beating heart of nature.

A MUSICAL FIRST FOR CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Like many Cirque du Soleil productions, ECHO features a live band incorporated into the performance, but for the first time in Cirque history, the band features 6 vocalists who also play instruments.

A SOUNDSCAPE THAT DRIVES EMOTION

As one might expect from a show titled “ECHO,” each performance builds on a repetition of sound effects, but with a slightly different intention depending on the emotional curve in the show. Taken together, these unique sounds have a huge effect on the storytelling and audio experience for the audience.



■ VILLAGE ON WHEELS

Cirque du Soleil's mobile village for ECHO includes a white and blue Big Top, with one large entrance tent, the artistic tent, a kitchen, administrative offices, warehouses, and dining area for cast and crew.

Completely self-sufficient for electrical power, the site relies only on a local water supply and telecommunication facilities to support its infrastructure.

- It takes 4.5 days to install the Big Top, entrance, and other structures for ECHO, and 2 days to tear down.
- The Big Top measures 167.3 ft (51 m) wide and is 79.3 ft (24.357 m) at its tallest points.
- It has a minimum seating capacity of about 2,600, and a team of approximately 50 people are needed to raise the structure.
- The artistic tent houses a wardrobe area with all costume pieces, including accessories and shoes. It also has dressing rooms, a fully equipped training area, and a physiotherapy room.
- The kitchen is the heart of the village, serving between 300 to 400 meals every day to artists, staff, families and friends. It is also a meeting place where cast and crew chat, watch TV, and enjoy their free time.



■ THE CREATIVE TEAM

“What really excites me most about this beautiful project is the ability to push the boundaries of what can be achieved in a Big Top setting and deliver a joyful experience, full of surprises, to millions of people around the world.”



AUTHOR-DIRECTOR — MUKHTAR OMAR SHARIF MUKHTAR

Mukhtar O.S Mukhtar has been directing, choreographing and dancing for over 20 years. Prior to directing ECHO, Mukhtar spent 8 years with *Cirque du Soleil* (2005–2013) as a performer in *The Beatles LOVE* in Las Vegas, later returning to the show as a creator/choreographer for the successful 10th anniversary refresh in 2015. Mukhtar has also been in writing and directing roles for “One Night for One Drop” (Las Vegas), *Messi10* (a touring show), and more recently *FUZION* (Saudi Arabia).

“The start of Cirque is the chapiteau—the Big Top... The smell, the canvas, the leather, the sound of the bleachers, you can feel you’re on tour. You have a [close] proximity to the start of what the circus was. To do a project under the chapiteau, it’s always great to get back and feel the connection.”



CREATION DIRECTOR — CHANTAL TREMBLAY

In the late 1980s, Chantal Tremblay joined *Cirque du Soleil* as a performer after seeing one of the company’s shows. Tremblay quickly rose to become an assistant to choreographer Debra Brown during the creation of *Mystère*. She became senior artistic director on *Alegría*, *La Nouba*, and *Mystère*. In 2006, she was asked by the company to become the director of creation for *The Beatles LOVE*, followed by *OVO* in 2009, *Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL World Tour* in 2011, *KURIOS: Cabinet of Curiosities* in 2014, and *SEP7IMO DIA – No Decansaré* in 2017. She’s now been acting as ECHO’s Director of Creation since its inception.



■ THE CREATIVE TEAM — CONT.

ORIGINAL IDEA — Es Devlin

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR — Serge Côté

COSTUME DESIGNER — Nicolas Vaudelet

SET AND PROPS DESIGNER — Es Devlin

ASSOCIATE SET AND PROPS DESIGNERS — Matteo Mastrandrea and Amalie White

ASSISTANT SET AND PROPS DESIGNERS — Alain Rouillier

CO-COMPOSERS — Jade Pybus & Andy Theakstone

CO-COMPOSER AND MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS — Hugo Montecristo

MUSIC CONSULTANT AND MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS — Thierry Angers

LYRICS OF CELEBRATE CONNECTION SONG — Es Devlin

SOUND DESIGNER — Jacques Boucher

LIGHTING DESIGNER — Martin Labrecque

PROJECTION DESIGNER — Jérôme Delapierre

HUMAN PERFORMANCE DESIGNER — Daniel Cola

ACROBATIC EQUIPMENT AND RIGGING DESIGNER — Jaque Paquin

ACROBATIC CHOREOGRAPHER — John Cartin

MOVEMENT CHOREOGRAPHER — Andrew Skeels

MAKE-UP DESIGNER — Julio Cesar Da Silveira

PRODUCTION TECHNICAL DIRECTOR — Christian Laflamme



■ CAST & PERFORMERS

FUTURE, CHARACTER – Louana Seclet-Monchot (France)

THE DOG, CHARACTER & JUGGLING – Philippe Dupuis (Canada)

THE CARTOGRAPHER, CHARACTER – Alexandre Humbert (France)

DOUBLE TROUBLE, MANIPULATION – Clement Malin (France) & Caio Sorana (Italy)

THE FOSSORIAL, CONTORTION & DISLOCATION – Shakirudeen Alade (UK)

SLACKWIRE – Taras Hoi (Ukraine) & Antino Pansa (French Guiana)

HAIR SUSPENSION – Charlotte O’Sullivan (Canada) & Penelope Elena Scheidler (Austria)

ICARIAN GAMES – Robel Mezgebe Weldemikael & Meareg Hishe Mehari (Ethiopia)

BANQUINE/HUMAN CRADLE – Taye Gebeyehu Yemam (Leader), Sammy Mededu Mohammed, Yared Wolde Chraga, Asnake Shimelis Dinberu, Abel Matiyas Disasa, Teka Bacha Debele, Abeselom Demeke Kebede, Bruktawit Lijalem Wondiyfraw, Hayder Nuredin Badeg, Getaw Mamo Tekeda, Getnet Feleke Ayele (Ethiopia)

FLYING POLES – Lucas Coelho Costa (Brazil), Neal Courter (USA), Ethan Lottman (USA), Ivan Tushnov (Russia), Iana Lebedeva (Russia), Denis Degtyarev (Russia), Lucas Matias Suarez (Argentina)

TEETERBOARDS – Aleksandr Zebrov (Russia), Thomas Leask (Australia), Campbell Clarke (Australia), Joseph McAdam (UK), Cooper Ayton (Australia), Luan De Souza Vieira Pretko (Brazil), Daniel Alejandro Aguilar Briceno (Mexico), Alexey Ozerov (Kazakhstan), Sergey Ozerov (Kazakhstan), Fidel Lancaster-Cole (Australia), Leonardo Louzada (Brazil)

BACKUP FUTURE, CHARACTER – Evelyne Lamontagne (Canada)

BAND LEADER – Michael Lieberman (USA)

FEMALE VOICE – Edyta Krzemien (Poland)

MALE VOICE + KEYBOARDS – Jonathan Stombres (USA) & Alex Wignall (Australia)

CELLO + VOCALS – Lizzy Munson (Canada)

VIOLIN + VOCALS – Anna Follia Jordan (Spain)

PERCUSSION + VOCALS – Agata Kruszewska (Poland)

