

Rakuten presenta

# MESSI10

## CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

THERE IS A 10 IN ALL OF US

AS FROM  
OCTOBER 10  
PARC DEL FÒRUM



WORLD PREMIERE IN BARCELONA



**PRESS KIT**  
October 3rd, 2019



## OVERVIEW

Cirque du Soleil has paid tribute to many iconic artists, but this is the first time in their history they have honoured one of our generation's most inspirational athletes, as the worlds of football and circus collide in a show unlike any other.

*“More than simply a show about Messi...  
this is a highly acrobatic and inspiring story about greatness”*

Promising to be an explosive, fan-fuelled live show, MESSI10 by Cirque du Soleil acrobatically uncovers the athleticism, devotion and brilliance that bridges sports and circus, by celebrating the exceptional talent and skills of the greatest footballer of our time, Lionel Messi.

## INSPIRATION AND STORYLINE

MESSI10 is an exploration of the greatness that's within all of us, and an inspiration to be the very best one can be.

*“There's a number 10 inside all of us”*

This immersive experience - where the stadium's electric atmosphere meets the intimacy of a theatre - tells the story of a young man with boundless ambition to overcome all obstacles in becoming the greatest number 10 in the world.

Exploring all the elements of his success, the show creates a universe where greatness is found in bouncing back to your feet, no matter how many times you are brought down on your way to achieving the impossible.



## CHARACTERS

### **The Number 10s**

There's a number 10 inside us all. The show's most iconic character is, in fact, not one single character, but portrayed by ten exceptional artists and athletes with a set of unique talents and strengths, that embody the message behind each skill represented in the show. These 10 are accompanied by a cast of 46, all aligned skill-by-skill, scene-by-scene throughout the defining moments of each act of the show, highlighting the path to greatness.

### **The Young Man**

The young man is the first character we see in the show. He represents anyone with a dream of greatness and the ambition to achieve their dreams. As the show's 1<sup>st</sup> number ten, his passion, sacrifice and determination set the scene as this energy travels throughout the show, and he too explores all the elements needed to realize the dream of becoming the perfect number 10.

### **The Savior**

An intriguing individual, this character appears at significant moments throughout the show, carrying the weight and pressure of the world on his shoulders, in the form of an ever increasing net tower of balls. He is a physical representation of the responsibility of balancing the demands of life, family, training and all the support and discipline one needs to become the perfect number 10. Finally, in the sections dedicated to fans and family, through the support he receives, he is able to unload the tower of balls and fly to his full potential.

### **The Referee**

In a regular game, the referee is responsible for keeping the peace and bringing law and order, but this referee also brings comedic value. A huge fan of football and dreaming of being the perfect referee, his role is to not only try and reinstate order amongst the chaos of what is happening on stage, but to interact with the crowd and encourage them to participate in this incredible journey.

### **The Commentators**

The pitch-side experts take their role to the extreme with their tailored 'turf' suits and microphone headsets. They've commentated many a performance, but none that will trigger their passionate vocabulary quite like what they witness on this stage.

### **The Streaker**

There's always that one guy, the distractor of attention, showing up to steal the limelight when you least expect it. He's cheeky, in more ways than one, and, as on TV, the crowd will be thankful that some well-placed pixels are protecting his modesty.



## CHAPTERS

Every aspect of the show is inspired by football and so, the show is divided into two parts, with a half-time intermission. The first half of the show is focused on the aspirations, hard work, discipline and qualities that are needed to build the skills that might one day put someone in contention for a place among the greats.

Following the half-time break, the second half focuses on the rewards of hard work and success, including the vital role of fans and family on this journey, and the celebration that can follow when you are devoted and dedicated entirely to your true passion.

### 1st HALF

#### ***Pre Game***

Before the show, like in all the world's biggest sporting events, the buzz of the pre game reaches a sensory high. Guided by the referee, the audience starts to meet some of the diverse characters of the show and participates in the pre-game chanting, connecting with some of the artists before the main game begins.

#### ***Opening – Celebration of the goal***

The journey begins with the young man standing in the middle of the stage, a radio to his ear, listening to the commentator's passionate voice speaking faster and faster, with ever increasing excitement. Then, finally we hear it..... GOOAAALLLLLLL!!!! The action onstage explodes into a celebration of the euphoria of the goal. Artists arrive from all sides of the stage, manipulating footballs and waving their flags high, while others are flying through the air from bungees and air mats. The scene transports spectators into another world where they can visually and physically feel the passion, the frenzy and the euphoria of a goal.

#### ***Training - Rope***

The show's focus shifts from a celebration to a breathtakingly honest tribute to the hard work and the relentless, daily training drills that go into becoming the perfect 10. Integrated at the very core of this sequence is a thrilling rope act, where this traditional circus element has been taken over by a highly dynamic trio, each with their very own abilities and strengths. There is no time to breathe or to take a break as they move with synergy to a high-speed piece of music that expresses the energy it takes to go through the kind of intense training that Messi experiences every day.



### ***Dribbling Symphony - Icarian games and football freestylers***

In this next sequence, fans are introduced to the first of the videos featuring Messi, recorded especially for this show. Messi dribbles his way into a concrete tunnel, while the stage slowly transforms itself into the intimate and playful atmosphere of a locker room that people rarely get to see. Here begins a friendly competition between 3 football freestylers and two pairs of Icarian performers who take footwork to the extreme, with both footballs and humans alike.

### ***Speed – Acro-dance***

Throughout a spectacular acro-dance group performance, this high energy non-stop act jumps from live action and to video and lighting-driven performance. An exploration of sport, performance and art, in an attempt to analyze and understand exactly how he can be so fast, with and without the ball at his feet.

### ***Courage – Free Fall***

It takes nerves of steel to step up and take a penalty or free-kick when thousands in the stadium and millions around the world are watching, waiting for you to put the ball in the net. In this act, the building tension of a penalty goal is dramatized by an artist climbing a rope ladder towards the skies, higher and higher as the pressure rises. All the while, we see on our huge screens the tension building in the face of Messi. This all leads up to two possible conclusions, the high-flying ecstasy of a goal or the crushing disappointment of a miss.

### ***Balance – Slack Wire***

Messi's perfect balance takes him gliding between defenders and avoiding their desperate challenges, leaving many opponents wondering how he does what he does. His balance is perfect, and for the show the number 10 is literally walking a wire! She pushes herself to higher and higher skill demands, whilst all the time keeping her focus on attaining the ball that's suspended high in the air above her, despite the distraction of the commentators watching on from the sidelines.

### ***Unbalance – Contortionist***

Unlike Messi's exceptional ability to balance his skills, discipline and good sportsmanship on the field, there are players who are prone to taking a dive on the turf and feigning injury! This moment pokes fun at these absurd moments with the arrival of the calamitous medical team. Along with being dropped and damaged, the artist shows off his incredible talent by being contorted in unbelievable ways that will leave the public flabbergasted and the diver wishing he'd stayed on his feet.



### **Strength - Banquine**

When Messi was young, one person in particular made sure he never doubted his potential or gave up on his dream. Now, with every goal that he celebrates, Messi points to the sky in memory of his grandmother, and now to both his grandparents, who told him, “Never give up, one day you will be one of the greatest football players that ever lived”. The strength that these words gave him are translated in this stunning banquine group number, where 8 strong defenders use all their power to repel the 4 attackers. The 4 flyers are continuously swept away as they relentlessly try to get the ball in the goal. Despite the challenges and people blocking their way, they too keep trying over and over again, determined never to give up!

## **INTERMISSION – Half Time**

### **SECOND HALF**

### **Confidence – Trampoline**

This act takes spectators back to where it all began with street football in the *barrios* of Argentina, here the game is improvised and the rules are re-invented. It's a place where skills are honed hour after hour and natural ability is the very least that a player will need to thrive. This performance sees the boundaries of the pitch and the rules of the game pushed to their limits. Athletes are launched from the nets and trampoline across the field, all in an attempt to gain a point and win the game for their team and the audience who are on their side!

### **Heart of the Ball – Diabolo**

In the end, the game of football - on the street, on the stage or on the screen - comes down to passion for the game, and the heart of the football. Inside this act, the number 10 finds the diabolo, hidden inside the object of his passion, the ball. An incredible performance by the world's top diabolo artist takes viewers to a world where the focus of his perfection flies and jumps in incredible and unbelievable directions. During his impassioned performance, he is joined onstage by his friends as they prepare for their next adventure, gaming.

### **Gaming - Robo-Pole**

Many of Messi's younger fans discovered him outside of the televised matches and away from the real-life field of play. This act is a celebration of those who discovered him through the world of gaming and a demonstration of what can happen when man meets machine. In the middle of this act - and featured for the first time ever in a Cirque du Soleil show - is a customized six-axis industrial robotic arm. She takes center-stage among her human counterparts, as she is accompanied by our next number 10, an artist of incredible prowess in this altered world of gaming reality.



### ***Fans & Family – Aerial Trapeze.***

Football would not be quite what it is without the passion of the fans, and the love between Messi and his supporters is unparalleled. The first part of this number is a very poetic dedication to the fans of the sport, culminating in the passing of huge football jerseys over each side of the audience, bringing everyone together.

The act that follows speaks to the great personal commitment made by Messi and his family, that helped him on his journey to success. A beautiful trapeze number is made even more special by the group of aerial net artists supporting him throughout his performance, demonstrating the incredible strength and support that exists mutually between Leo, his fans and his family.

### ***Vision – Lion Dance***

Messi is renowned for being able to spot a path to goal or see a defense-splitting pass that no one else on the field can see. As an introduction to this act, one of the exclusive video moments with Messi show a chance encounter between man and beast, leading viewers on a heart-pulsating onscreen chase into the world of perfect Vision. Drawing a connection between the powers of Leo the footballer and Leo the lion, this performance sees a traditional Chinese act of lion pillars transformed into a tribute to the incredible vision of Messi, as pairs of artists leap forwards and backwards, at times completely without sight on pillars eight feet from the ground.

### ***Goal Celebration – Russian Swing***

Goals, Goals, Goals! With over 600 career goals to his name, what better way to close the show than with a tribute to some of Messi's greatest goals! This final act sees a massive set change, with four nets across the audience and acrobats joining three Russian swings and ball machines onstage to reenact his coolest finishes and most dramatic strikes in a way that you have never seen them before.



## **MESSI10 - BEHIND THE SCENES**

### **SET DESIGN**

In this show a unique environment was created so that fans would undoubtedly associate with going to see a game of football, but in a very special Cirque du Soleil way; where the stadium's electric atmosphere meets the intimacy of a theatre. The space was designed so that, after entering the stadium through the two tunnels, the audience has an unobstructed 360 degree view, especially of their rival fans in the opposite stands.

Spectators will recognize iconic football features like the lines of the pitch, the center circle and full-sized goals, yet abstract and not as they have seen them ever before. In addition to what fans might expect at a game, the design incorporates surprise features, such as trapdoors, a mechanical arm and two huge video screens, just to mention a few of the surprises in the set. At eight feet tall and thirty-six feet long, the mammoth LED screens will not only feature archive footage of Messi's greatest moments, but also unique exclusive footage captured of the great man himself, recorded especially to enrich several significant moments of the show.

Fans will experience a theatre with a lot of color and striking, architectural lighting that cast a dramatic mood over a unique stage, custom-created for the show's non-traditional acrobats and artists. It is the perfect environment to witness the fundamental physical and mental principles of the world's most loved game, expressed in the most extreme and exceptional way, as only Cirque du Soleil can.

### **COSTUMES**

The design concept of the costumes for MESSI10 was influenced by the world of football and the artistic vision of Costume designer – James Lavoie. The inspiration was to create a universe that can be familiar and exciting for two different audiences – the football fans and the circus fans.

There are colors, patterns and gradients borrowed from the world of football to help reflect the energy and attitude of the sport, but this is a Cirque du Soleil show; a parallel world where the designs are bigger, bolder and where usual boundaries don't apply. For every costume that looks "fashionable" with cues from street wear and athletic wear, there's another that explores the limits of this universe, like the grass suits worn by The Commentators or The Streaker who is not wearing a great amount of costume at all.





While the costumes were custom created for specific characters, time was spent with each artist watching their act, talking to them and feeling their energy in order to know what would work for them. Alongside the one-off characters, there are group performances for which costumes have been created to work with many different body types. Each costume has its own textile process, it is printed, dyed, silk screened and laser cut. There are up to 10 custom processes for an individual fabric and many different fabrics in each costume.

Beyond the technical considerations, the costumes were designed to bring out the passion that the artists and acrobats have for the circus and for football while inspiring that same passion for life among the audience. The show is about pushing yourself to the extremes, about being the best one can be and exploring the greatness that's within.

## **COSTUME CLOSEUPS**

### **The Number 10s**

Football kits are iconic and a large part of the audience will be football fans. Each chapter has its own different number 10, represented by a variety of men and women. In a way, they must all be cohesive and dynamic whilst speaking to 10 unique visual themes. For example, one of the artists wears an LED number 10 beneath a beautiful translucent material that creates an aura and glow around their character.

### **The Referee**

This referee loves to be the center of attention, and while it's mostly his diabolical decisions and inability to maintain law and order that's drawing people's attention, the fluorescent accents on his uniform aren't going to help him hide from the spotlight of the glaring crowd. By far his most important accessories are his red and yellow cards, which at times he waves with wild abandon.

### **The Commentators**

Commentators are renowned for living and breathing the beautiful game through words. What could capture this and their football authority more than suits constructed entirely from the very same turf that football is played on? No Commentators costume would be complete without a microphone to broadcast their unique and sometimes controversial opinions.

### **The Streaker**

The crowd never quite knows when the streaker going to make a run for it, but they do know that they're glad there's some real-time pixels to protect his modesty.



## MUSIC

Many months were spent scouring through the musical catalogue of show partner Sony, looking for tracks that would bring the content to life, express the message of each act and complement the original tracks that were composed especially for the show.

Featuring tracks from artists from world renowned artists, the musical range of this show eclectic. Some versions of the existing songs have been reworked by Sony the original lyrics intact, but in a style unique to the show!

One very important piece in the musical puzzle, is Messi's very good friend and former Barcelona goalkeeper Pinto, who is a DJ and Sony music producer. He has created two tracks for the show, composing music for *Gaming* and for *Vision*.

To complement the choice of existing music while extending the show's unique musical identity, the highly talented Hugo Montecristo has composed and arranged all of the original music for the show. He has also led the arrangements of the existing tracks, integrating all of the musical elements of the show into one incredible soundtrack.



## **FAST FACTS**

- The tour includes 47 cast members and 38 crew members (from Technical, Artistic to Tour Management);
- The cast of Messi10 comes from 19 different nationalities (Canada, USA, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Kazakhstan, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, Taiwan, Ukraine and the UK);
- The cast of Messi10 arrived at Cirque du Soleil Headquarters for rehearsals and staging in April 2019.
- The artist can train up to 40-hours per week during the creation process;
- Thanks to innovative stage design, the stage itself at Messi 10 takes the form of a re-imagined football pitch.
- The audience will be sitting on each side of the stage;
- Inspired by the world of Football, the show is divided as follow:
  - o 1st half – 45-minutes
  - o Halftime – 25 minutes
  - o 2nd half – 45-minutes

## **About the venue**

- Messi10 by Cirque du Soleil will be presented in Parc del Forum in a brand new setting.
- The space is 60 meters wide by 65 meters long, the ceiling reaches 17 meters high;
- The seating capacity is 3 100 seats;
- The set up of the venue takes 20 days.



## EXECUTIVE TEAM

Executive Producer **Charles F Joron**  
Chief Creative Officer **Diane Quinn**

## SHOW CREATION

### Creative Team

Writer and Director **Mukhtar Omar Sharif Mukhtar**  
Creation Director **Sean Mckeown**  
Costume Designer **James Lavoie**  
Set and Props Designer **Stéphane Roy**  
Composer, Lyricist and Music Director **Hugo Montecristo**  
Acrobatic Performance Designers **Philippe Aubertin, Benoit Potvin**  
Acrobatic Choreographers **Benoit Potvin, John Cartin**  
Choreographers **Leah Moyer, Andre Kasten**  
Lighting Designer **Nicolas Brion**  
Video Content Designer **Jean-Sébastien Baillat**  
Sound Designer **Jean-Michel Caron**  
Acrobatic Equipment and Rigging Designer **Danny Zen**  
Make-up Designer **Véronique St-Germain**

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