



CIRCA

HUMANS 2.0

PHILADELPHIA PREMIERE

CREATED BY Yaron Lifschitz and the Circa Ensemble

DIRECTOR Yaron Lifschitz

ORIGINAL MUSIC Ori Lichtik

LIGHTING DESIGNER Paul Jackson

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Jason Organ

COSTUME DESIGN Libby McDonnell

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION Allen Moon/David Lieberman Artists' Representatives

PERFORMERS

Fran Alvarez, Marty Evans, Nancy Gutierrez, Sam Letch, Hamish McCourty, Daniel O'Brien, Kimberley O'Brien, Jarrod Takle, Luke Thomas, Georgia Webb, Christina Zauner

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FRIDAY, **MARCH 11** @ 8 PM
SATURDAY, **MARCH 12** @ 2 PM

Annenberg Center, Zellerbach Theatre

There will be no intermission.

PENN LIVE ARTS

21/22 SEASON

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Circa

Circa Contemporary Circus is one of the world's leading performance companies. Since 2004, from its base in Brisbane, Australia, Circa has toured the world, performing in 40 countries to over a million people. Circa's works have been greeted with standing ovations, rave reviews and sold-out houses across six continents.

Circa is at the forefront of the new wave of contemporary Australian circus, pioneering how extreme physicality can create powerful and moving performances. It continues to push the boundaries of the art form, blurring the lines between movement, dance, theatre and circus. Fueled by the question of what is possible in circus, Circa is leading the way with a diverse range of thrilling creations that "redraw the limits to which circus can aspire." (*The Age*)

Under the direction of circus visionary Yaron Lifschitz, Circa features an ensemble of exceptional, multi-skilled circus artists who have been a regular fixture at leading festivals and venues in New York, London, Berlin and Montréal with seasons at Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Barbican Centre, Les Nuits de Fourvière and Chamäleon Theatre as well as major Australian Festivals.

Circa is committed to fostering the next generation of circus artists and runs a Training Centre from its studio in Brisbane. Circa also runs regular circus programs with communities throughout Queensland and around Australia.

As a champion of live performance, Circa manages arTour and was the Creative Lead for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games arts and cultural program.

Yaron Lifschitz (Director)

Lifschitz is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director's course. Since graduating, Lifschitz has directed over 60 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre and circus.

His work has been seen in 40 countries and across six continents by over one million people and has won numerous awards including six Helpmann Awards and the Australia Council Theatre Award. His productions have been presented at major festivals and venues around the world including Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chamaleon and all the major Australian festivals. His film work was selected for the Berlin and Melbourne Film Festivals. He was founding Artistic Director of the Australian Museum's Theatre Unit, Head Tutor in Directing at Australian Theatre for Young People and has been a regular guest tutor in directing at NIDA.

He is currently Artistic Director and CEO of Circa, and was Creative Director of Festival 2018: the arts and cultural program of the 21st Commonwealth Games. In 2018, Lifschitz directed four new Circa creations, and a new production of *Idomeneo* which opened in Lisbon at The Teatro Nacional de São Carlos.

Ori Lichtik (Original Music)

Lichtik is a multifaceted musician, drummer and creative DJ. He creates throughout the choreographic process, reflecting off the dancers' movements, and as often inspiring and prompting them with the tone and pace of his percussive sounds and rhythms. The compositions result in precise sets that structure the works. Each live show is then improvised with fresh layers of digitally manipulated effects, creating a unique sound experience for every event.

One of the founding fathers of the techno scene in Israel, he has created, produced and spinned musical productions, techno raves and various other music and performance events since 1996. Lichtik has also taught and coordinated the DJ Department of Muzik, college for musical productions.

Paul Jackson (Lighting Designer)

Jackson is a multi-award-winning lighting designer and theatre maker. Jackson has designed lighting for The Australian Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Berlin Staatsballett, West Australian Ballet, Victorian Opera, West Australian Opera, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Gordon Frost Organization, TML, The Production Company, Bell Shakespeare, Playbox, Malthouse, Belvoir, Ballet Lab, Lucy Guerin, Chunky Move, World of Wearable Art New Zealand, Kage, Australian Art Orchestra, La Mama and many others. Jackson has designed and co-designed sets and performance environments for Belvoir, Malthouse, Berlin Staatsballett, Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin and Griffin. Jackson has won a Helpmann Award, two Sydney Theatre Awards, seven Green Room Awards and three Australian Production Design Guild Awards for Best Lighting Design. Jackson has received four Helpmann Award nominations and 32 Green Room Award nominations.

Jason Organ (Technical Director)

Organ graduated from Queensland University of Technology in 1988. He has worked as a technician, rigger, lighting designer and production manager. During this time, he has lit all manner of productions from pantomimes and product launches to ballet, festivals, military tattoos, circus and live television, with contemporary dance and circus being his favorites. Organ was the co-founder of J LX productions, a lighting design and technical consultancy, based in Brisbane. Since January 2010, he has been working exclusively with Circa, lighting and production managing its international tours.

Libby McDonnell (Costume Design)

McDonnell works across disciplines as a designer, choreographer, director and performer and has an associate degree in dance from the Queensland University of Technology. McDonnell has co-directed for Ballet Theatre of Queensland and has been resident choreographer and designer for Blue Roo Theatre Company. As Associate Director with Circa, McDonnell has designed costumes for all of Circa's major creations since 2010 and has directed and managed tours in Australia and abroad.

Fran Alvarez (Performer)

After a restless adolescence looking for an activity to focus his abundant energy on, Alvarez was introduced to circus at the age of 16. He went on to start his circus career at 18 at the preparatory school of Madrid, Carampa, and later at the Ecole Supérieure des Arts du Cirque de Bruxelles, specializing in hand to hand and group acrobatics. With a focus on improving his core technique – and becoming a human trampoline – Alvarez continued his training in France and was involved in the creative development of several shows with high-level acrobatic collectives across Europe. In his free time, Alvarez enjoys Olympic-style weightlifting and reading epic fantasy books.

Marty Evans (Performer)

Evans came to circus by a more roundabout route than most. After watching nothing but circus videos during his lunchbreaks at Australia's only nuclear reactor, Evans left behind his published scientific career, embracing his physical sports background to pursue a career in circus. His first taste of circus came at the University of Sydney in 2010 as he tried to entertain himself during free periods by learning to throw people into the air and trying to catch them again. Evans trained at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne. He is a fiercely determined and hardworking hand-to-hand base that enjoys exploring new challenges and techniques. Evans joined the Circa ensemble full-time in 2015 and has been involved in the creation of numerous Circa productions including *When One Door Closes* and *Humans*.

Nancy Gutierrez (Performer)

Gutierrez, an artist born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, began her training in circus at age 15 through aerial techniques. Her development and learning were shaped thanks to her previous acrobatics training at Fly Academy Gymnastics. At 16, she began her professional career, joining the main cast of the Mexican production company Circo Dragón as an artist. With Circo Dragón, Gutierrez participated in many national and international festivals, while also continuing her training in circus, specializing in hand to hand and aerial hoop. Gutierrez was as a guest artist in the gala presentations of three consecutive editions of the Periplo International Circus Festival, and won third place as an aerialist (aerial hoop) in the National Circus Competition of Ficho International Festival of Circus and Show of Mexico in 2015. In 2016, she started training at École de Cirque de Québec. Today, Gutierrez dedicates her training and work to creating highly sensitive numbers that have the ability to connect with her audience, create a variation of emotions in her and at the same time, possess a high level of exploration and technique. Gutierrez performed in the Montreal Completément Cirque Festival in 2019, Midnight Circus in 2019 and Cirque Du Soleil's *Nysa* in 2020.

Sam Letch (Performer)

Instead of paying attention at school, Letch focused all of his energy on throwing himself around in the cold and rainy northwest of England, where he grew up. At the ripe old age of 15, Letch decided that doing back tucks off sand dunes wasn't enough. The answer to his problem: parkour. He trained for three years until his acrobatics took him to the National Centre for Circus Arts (London) where he picked up such skills as teeterboard, hand to hand, banquine, floor and group acrobatics. After graduating, his first job performing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival led him on to work with companies such as Cirque Eloize. Letch's primary love is performing, shortly after that is his moustache, followed by singing musicals at the top of his lungs for anyone who will listen.

Hamish McCourty (Performer)

McCourty is an acrobat and musician. He began his circus journey at Cirkidz in Adelaide when he was eight years old and after graduating from the performance program, he's been creating his own work touring nationally and internationally. McCourty is currently working on fusing together his passion for music and circus on stage. His main specialties are tumbling and basing pair and group acrobatics, and he prides himself on making people laugh and being a loon onstage. McCourty is a keen performer and multi-talented acrobat with his sights set on leaving his mark in the world of circus.

Daniel O'Brien (Performer)

O'Brien has been physically active throughout his whole life, primarily focusing on his gymnastics training in his hometown of Maryborough and a few small gyms along the Queensland coastline. After attending National Institute of Circus Arts for three years, where he specialized in hand-balancing and aerial straps, O'Brien joined Circa as an ensemble member in 2015. Having fostered an immense passion for circus, he has since performed in many iconic Circa works including *What Will Have Been*, *Closer* and *Humans*. He spends his spare time feeding his unhealthy addiction to video games or reading whatever he can get his hands on.

Kimberley O'Brien (Performer)

O'Brien grew up competing in athletics and playing representative AFL. After seeing one of Circa's shows, O'Brien joined Circa's youth performance troupe, Circa Zoo, in 2008. After two years of training and performing, O'Brien was given the opportunity to be the first member of Fast Track, a program designed for young and aspiring performers within Circa. In 2011, O'Brien left Circa Zoo to be a full-time ensemble member. Since then, O'Brien has toured numerous shows in various countries and performed in over 30 Circa shows. One of her highlights was performing *Wunderkammer* at the Sydney Opera House in 2012.

Jarrold Takle (Performer)

Takle is an Australian-raised, Montréal-based, free-range circus artist specializing in hand-balancing and teeterboard with a splash of banquine and solo and group acrobatics. He spent a glorious childhood decade training and performing with Australia's leading youth circus, The Flying Fruit Fly Circus, which inspired a life-long passion for the art form. After honing his craft at l'École Nationale de Cirque de Montréal, completing

four years of higher education in circus arts, he has since worked with some of the world's leading contemporary circus and performance companies. Outside of his artistic pursuits, Takle spends the remainder of his time and energy in search of good coffee and/or avoiding the type of people who stand directly in front of the baggage train at airports.

Luke Thomas (Performer)

As a child, Thomas was always driven to pursue an acrobatic career, constantly found swinging upside down on the hills hoist in his backyard. At age 11, he joined Circus 35° South and trained in aerials, tumbling and manipulation for seven years before studying at the National Institute of Circus Arts, graduating in 2017. During his study, Thomas specialized in tissue, foot juggling and group acrobatics. Thomas co-created and performed *Out of This World Children's Show* with seasons at Woodford Folk Festival and Melbourne Fringe Festival. Thomas also performed in One Fell Swoop's *By a Thread* at Mullumbimby Circus Festival, Perth Fringe Festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival and the Circa Festival at Auch, France. Thomas joined the Circa Ensemble in 2018, performing in the world premiere of Circa's *Peepshow*.

Georgia Webb (Performer)

Born and raised in outback western Australia, Webb was a competitive gymnast and dancer for 13 years. This background gave her the discipline and work ethic which now informs her circus practice. After both parents insisted that their only child join the military, Webb decided to forgo those plans to follow her own dream of running away with the circus. Graduating from the National Institute of Circus Arts in 2019, Webb joined Circa as a full-time ensemble member in January 2020. In her spare time, Webb enjoys motorbike riding, surfing and free diving. She also hopes to travel the world skydiving someday.

Christina Zauner (Performer)

Zauner grew up on the countryside in Austria. She started dancing when she was four years old and participated in her first competition at the age of six. Zauner graduated with a bachelor's degree in classical and contemporary dance at MUK Vienna. During her education, she started to train in aerials and vertical dance. After graduating, she worked at the Vienna State Opera as an aerial double, followed by a role in the musical *Cats* in Switzerland. Zauner worked with the Irish Company Fidget Feet and as a performer and choreographer at Krystallpalast Varieté Leipzig. Zauner found her way into the circus world as a self-taught aerialist, specializing in straps. At the age of 24, she started to enjoy climbing on people or having them climb on her. A very determined person, Zauner loves to challenge herself and explore what her body is capable of. She also plays accordion and loves to design and sew costumes.