

CIRQUE MECHANICS

ZEPHYR - A WHIRLWIND OF CIRCUS

FOUNDER/CREATIVE DIRECTOR/

PRODUCER/MACHINE DESIGNER Chris Lashua

PRODUCER/COLLABORATOR Aida Lashua

CO-DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER Aloysia Gavre

CO-DIRECTOR/SET DESIGNER/ARTISTIC RIGGER Sean Riley

CO-DIRECTOR/WRITER/PERFORMER Steven Ragatz

COMPOSER Michael Picton

COSTUME DESIGNER Kalin Henning

LIGHTING DESIGNER Joe D'Emilio

STORY CONCEPT Zion Lashua

LIGHTING DIRECTORS Leo Hidalgo, David Sexton

CREATIVE TEAM LIAISON/DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION Janeen Johnson

TOURING PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER Rachel A Lantow

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT Brendan Mullenix

CAST

CAPTAIN/COACH/ACROBAT Wes Hatfield

AERIALISTS/HAIR HANGERS Lindsey Covarrubias, Erika Radcliffe

ACROBATS/PERCH ACT Anngela Burt, Jon Dutch

ACROBAT/FOOT JUGGLER Tana Karo "Tank"

CONTORTIONIST Aryn Shelander

ACROBAT/JUGGLER/WHEEL OF DESTINY Ossy Sanchez

ACROBATS/HOOP DIVERS Chauncey Kroner, Luke Anderson

Zellerbach Theatre

Sunday, January 28 @ 3 PM

There will be an intermission.

PROGRAM NOTE

An emotive and exhilarating tale about human ingenuity and our natural resources. In *Zephyr – A Whirlwind of Circus* by Cirque Mechanics, audiences will witness the tug of war that exists between man and nature, in the name of progress.

Humans have been harnessing the power of the wind for thousands of years. The beauty and efficacy of that timeless and ingenious process inspired the creative team at Cirque Mechanics to create *Zephyr*, a theatrical circus show that harnesses human power, instead of wind, to generate an energetic acrobatic experience.

Cirque Mechanics has designed and built a performance windmill to serve as the multi-functional mechanical centerpiece of the story. Mounted on a turntable, the windmill combines both modern and older picturesque elements, with the transformation from one aspect to another providing a change of scenery in real time.

Inspired by a visit to a working windmill in central England, *Zephyr* (which means gentle breeze from the Greek god of the west wind Zephyrus) tells the story of Nigel, mill owner and operator and his complicated relationship with wind, the natural resource that powers his flour mill. His reliance on wind is tested and in turn, he is lured by fuel in the name of progress as his primary energy source. His choices cause elation and disruption, aptly represented by the community the mill serves as dynamic and lyrical circus acts. Nigel grapples with tough choices and unintended outcomes with humor and optimism, which lead to acceptance, coexistence and balance with wind, progress and his community.

FROM THE PRODUCERS

We want to thank our family, our three wonderful sons, Zion, Quinn and Iago, for their unconditional love and support, their enthusiasm, their imagination and for adopting the spirit of a true circus family by discussing act ideas, narrative and plot points over dinners and visits home from college, and for helping in the shop with painting, building and clean up! And, our parents for taking us to the circus as children and allowing us to dream.

Thanks to our cast and crew for their tireless efforts and their collaborative energy. The team at Alliance Artists Management for believing in our company and for their extensive support during the pandemic. Bo Bogatin and Kurt Nelson for keeping us honest and legal. Andy Espo at CallAndy for keeping our Macs in tip top shape. Bryan Schuette and the boys at United Machine for fabricating and creating and trusting us with their equipment. Thanks to Stephen for playing Chris' theme music almost every time he walked through the door. Brendan Mullenix for his incredible work ethic, dedication and willingness to learn. Kai Hou for his generous coaching. Drew Lupson for bringing color and dimension to the show with his amazing set painting. Toby Stanley for his craftsmanship. Don Seiersen at Vishnu Creative for his great graphic support. Kirk Marsh for capturing the essence of the show with his stunning photographs. The Las Vegas Circus Center for their incredible facility and the welcoming circus community they have built. Our family at Cirque du Soleil and our fellow American circus companies for their commitment to this art form and for continuing to set the bar higher.

We appreciate the ability to tech and launch our tours at home, so a most special thank you to Lori Cobo and the University of Nevada Las Vegas for their continued support of our company, their sponsorship, partnership and generosity. The creation process was long and arduous, but extremely rewarding. We had so much fun designing and exploring, training and rehearsing. Our goal is that you are entertained and our hope that you are moved. Finally, thank you to our audiences for venturing once more to the theatre, for your loyalty and your faith in our company, for the laughs, the applause and the appreciation for the circus arts.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Cirque Mechanics

Cirque Mechanics, which calls Las Vegas home, was founded in 2004 by Boston native and German Wheel artist Chris Lashua after the success of his collaborative project with the Circus Center of San Francisco, *Birdhouse Factory*. Cirque Mechanics quickly established itself as a premiere American circus, with its unique approach to performance, inspiring storytelling and innovative mechanical staging. *Spectacle Magazine* hailed it as "the greatest contribution to the American circus since Cirque du Soleil"

Cirque Mechanics, although inspired by modern circus, finds its roots in the mechanical and its heart in the stories of American ingenuity. The shows, rooted in realism, display a raw quality, rarely found in modern circus, that makes their message timeless and relevant. The stories are wrapped in circus acrobatics, mechanical wonders and a bit of clowning around. Cirque Mechanics applies these principles to their events and under canvas divisions, bringing their brand of unique circus entertainment, awe and amazement, to corporate and private clients, as well as families inside their custom, orange and gray big top.

The troupe has created a series of extraordinary touring theatrical productions, *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town*, *Pedal Punk*, *Orchestra Project*, *42ft – A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels* and for this season, *Zephyr – A Whirlwind of Circus*.

Chris Lashua (Founder/Creative Director/Producer/Machine Designer)

Company founder Chris Lashua hails from Boston, Massachusetts, where he spent most of his youth riding on a BMX bike. He was discovered by Cirque du Soleil and created/performed a BMX bike act that was entirely his own. He was then commissioned to build a German Wheel act for the company, which he performed for several years in Cirque du Soleil's production of *Quidam*, cementing his reputation as a visionary of circus gadgetry. His engineering chops and creative energy led him to 'run away' with his own circus company, Cirque Mechanics.

Lashua believes that innovative mechanical apparatus and the relationship between performer and machine sets his company apart and is at the heart of what makes Cirque Mechanics unique. Lashua has delivered on this unique approach in the company's theatrical productions. His innovative machines interact with acrobats, dancers, jugglers and contortionists on a 1920's factory floor in *Birdhouse Factory*, a gold rush era town in *Boom Town*, alongside renowned symphonies in the *Orchestra Project*, in a bicycle shop in *Pedal Punk*, inside a circus ring in *42ft – A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels* and now inside a countryside windmill in *Zephyr – A Whirlwind of Circus*.

Lashua adapted to the pandemic restrictions by developing and presenting two new projects, an outdoor, socially distanced, pandemic-compliant show at a Las Vegas golf course, where guests sat on the green and inside golf carts under the stars titled the *Cirque Mechanics Drive-n-Dine* and *Cirque Mechanics Under Canvas*, a stunning spectacle inside the company's new custom orange and grey circus big top.

Lashua continues to build on the might of his engineering mind, his passion for the circus and all things mechanical by designing performance apparatus in real world settings that amaze and awe. When Lashua is not developing material for a theatrical show, he is building other wacky performance devices for events, like the Paddle ship, a portable stage that not only floats, but can also be navigated by pedal-powered paddle wheels, and innovative hospitality devices like the Wine Trike and Buffet Train, which double as pedaled performance platforms and fare delivery apparatus.

Lashua is a producing partner of the Vegas International Variety Arts Festival (VIVA Fest), founding board member of the American Circus Alliance (ACA) and founding member of the Producers Alliance of Southern Nevada (PALS). He was a featured guest lecturer at the annual Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference and a recent guest on the *Circus History Live!* and *Hideaway Circus* podcasts.

Aida Lashua (Producer/Collaborator)

Aida Lashua has been Chris' co-producer and creative partner in life and work for nearly 30 years. Their partnership includes a decade of touring and work experience with Cirque du Soleil (CDS) as well as 15 years running their own company, Cirque Mechanics. Lashua worked for CDS sponsor AT&T, implementing their multi-million-dollar sponsorship agreement on tour, which included product placement, sales staff training and supervision of special sales promotions. She also worked as a Box Office Supervisor and House Manager for CDS, where she trained and managed a staff of 60 and implemented customer service policies, helped develop and revise training manuals and VIP Package tests.

Thanks to her experience with CDS, Lashua has an appreciation for business and a passion for the circus arts. She currently manages the day-to-day operations of Cirque Mechanics and family with poise, as a creative force and a stabilizing influence. Lashua's education and background in direct marketing allows her to use a targeted message approach in the development of the company's website and social media presence. As a mother of three boys, Lashua is an avid supporter of the educational component and community outreach programs offered by Cirque Mechanics. She has written the education outreach support materials and study guides, as well as developed the structure of the educational workshops. Lashua, a native of Puerto Rico, feels most at home near the ocean. She is a contributing writer for CityLife Publications and hopes to one day publish that elusive next great American novel.

Aloysia Gavre (Co-Director/Choreographer)

Gavre is a circus creator, director, educator and founding board member of the American Circus Alliance. She co-founded both Troupe Vertigo and Cirque School in Los Angeles in 2009 with a vision to contribute and grow a wider appreciation for the circus arts. She began her own performance career with the Pickle Family Circus in her hometown of San Francisco, and then went on to perform with Cirque du Soleil, Monte Carlo Circus Festival, Teatro Zinzanni and numerous international symphonies. Her expertise has been used in the films *Water for Elephants* and *Pitch Perfect 2*. She was featured on the cover of *Dance Teacher Magazine* for her expertise in circus arts. Speaking engagements include TEDx, Center Theater Group, Directors Lab, Chicago Circus Festival, AYCO and VIVA Fest Las Vegas. Gavre's creative journey with Cirque Mechanics began at its inception with its premier show, *Birdhouse Factory*, in 2004. Her expertise in integrating Cirque Mechanics trademark architectural machines with circus bodies in motion remains an integral part of the company. A vintage fun memory: in 1999, Gavre and Chris Lashua rode their bikes through Amsterdam after their performance in Quidam to see Lauryn Hill in concert.

Sean Riley (Co-Director/Set Designer/Artistic Rigger)

Riley has a 20-year career combining suspension, kinetic movement and design with performance. Through scenic design, rigging design and mechanical design, often in concert with each other, he creates unique performance environments. Concentrating his design for performance on site-specific and non-traditional work, Riley has created installations in collaboration with a wide spectrum of accomplished artists and collaborators.

Known for his bold and often surprising use of space and for large-scale movement, Riley's installations commonly reflect his lifelong obsession with gravity and Newtonian physics. His works have been installed from backyards to Broadway and continue to tour internationally. He is a founding member of Cirque Mechanics and his company, Gravity Design, through which he has developed an arsenal of specialized tools, pushing the bounds of performance as well as industrial safety. Riley is the host of the National Geographic Television series *World's Toughest Fixes* and the series *Speed* on Curiosity Stream. Riley lives in a fairy tale in British Columbia with his wife, three boys and lots of bears. visiblegravity.com

Steven Ragatz (Co-Director/Writer/Performer)

An original *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town* and *Orchestra Project* cast member collaborator, plus lead writer for *Pedal Punk* and now *Zephyr – A Whirlwind of Circus*, Ragatz has been entertaining audiences with his juggling, physical comedy, stilt walking and general antics for the past three decades. As a ten-year veteran of Cirque du Soleil, Ragatz has toured throughout North, South and Central America as well as Asia and Europe performing multiple juggling acts as well as an eclectic array of characters. Ragatz is on the staff of Bloomington's Stage Flight Circus Arts, where he teaches juggling and unicycle skills workshops. He recently toured his one-man show *Under the Umbrella, Life is a Circus*, an evening with a juggling virtuoso and stories from world-wide circus adventures.

Ragatz holds a B.A. in variety theatre and an M.S. in computer science from Indian University. He studied mime, stage movement and circus arts with Fred Garbo, Tony Montanaro, George Pinney and Michael Moschen. He and his wife, Lisa, have two children, Melissa and Andrew, and currently live in Maine, where they have mastered the art of making the perfect margarita.

Michael Picton (Composer)

Picton is an award-winning composer whose eclectic career spans film, television, advertising, theatre and circus. Picton has scored five Cirque Mechanics productions: *Boom Town*, *Orchestra Project*, *Pedal Punk*, *42ft* and now *Zephyr – A Whirlwind of Circus*. His circus career began as a performer, touring as keyboardist with Cirque du Soleil's *Quidam*. He has written songs and score for six editions of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus: *Bellobration*, *Funundrum*, *Dragons*, *Built to Amaze*, *Circus Xtreme* and the final edition *Out of this World*. Recently, his live work has expanded to include superhero arena shows with Feld Entertainment's *Marvel Universe Live* and *Marvel Universe Live - Age of Heroes*. The winner of the Turner Classic Movies Young Film Composers Competition, Picton has scored the silent films *The Temptress* and *The Red Mill* for TCM. Other film and television work includes *Mutt & Stuff* for Sid and Marty Krofft on Nickelodeon, *Hello, Jack! The Kindness Show* on Apple TV+, the SyFy series *Flash Gordon* and main title themes for *I Want to Work for Diddy* and *Bates Motel*. Picton has composed network themes for PBS, Amazon Originals and CNN International, among others, as well as commercials and promos for a long list of clients.

Kalin Henning (Costume Designer)

Henning has spent their life so far bouncing around between theatre, acrobatics and complete and utter confusion. They developed a love for historic costuming early on and was the head costume designer for four different Shakespeare productions before the age of 21. Since then, when not working as a performer, Henning has spent their time making costumes as a freelance designer, but more recently, is expanding their knowledge base by pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering from UNLV's Howard H. Hughes College of Engineering. Henning cannot decide if the favorite costume they've ever made was an Andolite, or a historically appropriate hand-sewn 1901 ballgown.

Joe D'Emilio (Lighting Designer)

D'Emilio is a New York City-based lighting designer with over a decade of experience in theatre, opera, dance and special events. He joined the Cirque Mechanics family in 2015 on *Birdhouse Factory* and continued to tour with *Pedal Punk*. Additionally, D'Emilio has designed for Circus Juventas in St. Paul, MN, Bindlestiff Family Cirkus in NYC and Circus Sarasota. His SF Bay Area designs include work with Ray of Light Theatre, Broadway by the Bay, Aurora Theatre and ACT. When not out on the road, D'Emilio works at the NYC venues National Sawdust, The Box and the Met Museum. He is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829. joedemilio.com

Zion Lashua (Story Concept)

Zion Lashua was born in Colorado, while his parents, Chris and Aida, were on tour with Cirque du Soleil. He toured North America and Europe before his fifth birthday and believes that was the foundation for his wanderlust. Lashua has always had a penchant for travel, history and storytelling. He pursued his passion by earning a B.A. in history with a minor in classics from the University of San Diego, where he studied abroad in Bali, Indonesia and Florence, Italy. He continued his studies earning an M.A. in classics from the University of Exeter in the U.K., where he interned cataloging antiquities at the British School in Athens, Greece. Lashua polishes his story-telling chops as the host of his very own podcast *It's A Classic* where he shares tales based on the classics, making connections to modern day pop culture. Lashua has been a part of Cirque Mechanics since childhood and has worked on almost every production. Having been part of the initial trip to the working windmill that inspired *Zephyr*, he was integral in developing the story concept and advancing the narrative arc. Lashua is an avid Pokémon fan and collector (his favorite: Lickitung).

Leo Hidalgo (Lighting Director)

Hidalgo is a New York-based lighting designer, production manager and educator with a focus on theatre, opera and dance. Currently, he is the Production Manager and Lighting Designer for Battery Dance Company with which he has internationally toured workshops built to create community, tolerance and acceptance. Additionally, he works with several New York area schools teaching lighting and theatre technology as well as safety in their programs. Past work includes Madcap Motel (Associate LD), an immersive space in the Arts District of Los Angeles; McKittrick Hotel (Guest Designer) home to *Sleep No More*, The Manderley bar and The Club Car. He is excited to be working with Cirque Mechanics as Lighting Director after his time with *Birdhouse Factory* last season.

David Sexton (Lighting Director)

Sexton is Brooklyn-based designer of live events. Selected theatrical credits include: *Written by Phillis* (Quintessence Theater Group); *Fun Home* (Cape Rep); *In the Heights*, *Damn Yankees*, *Ragtime* (Park Playhouse); *Kragtar: An American Monster Musical* (Third Space Theater); *What's Your Wish* (Thicket and Thistle); *Pippin*, *Sweet Charity* (Broadway Workshop); *How To Be A Good Witch* (Pantochino Productions); *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Two River); *The Plough and The Stars* (Abbey Theatre Company, North American Tour); *La Cage Aux Folles* (Cortland Rep); *Doubt*, *White Christmas* (Ocean State Theater Company); *Stuff Nobody Likes*, *Spring Fling* (F*it Club); *Silken Veils*, *Solider Bear* (Pantea Productions); and *Batboy* (First Stage). Sexton is a current associate company member of The Wooster Group with designs for *Nyatt School Redux* and *The Mother*. He's also a frequent collaborator with RWS and Associates and David Weiner Design on cruise ship, theme park and music festival entertainment including MSC, Azamara, Disney, Bonnaroo, Outside Lands and Format. Sexton is a graduate of North Carolina School of the Arts. davidasexton.com

Janeen Johnson (Creative Team Liaison/Director of Production)

Johnson is an arts administrator, stagecraft specialist and activist with 20+ years of experience in arts management, event operations and theatre arts production. Johnson facilitates creative visions to be realized through planning, producing and community partnerships. Her 10+ year tenure as a professional dancer informs her unique style and she is considered a maven for dance, theatre and special events, a production tour de force on any team. For the past 12 years, Johnson has served as Cirque Mechanics' Principal Touring Production Stage Manager, directing the administration and logistics of its four theatrical touring productions – *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boomtown*, *Pedal Punk* and *42ft: A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels* and now *Zephyr – A Whirlwind of Circus*. She has toured North America, Europe and Asia. Most recently, Johnson celebrated the launch of her company-based agency, O.Y.A. Strategies, a community agency designed to advance artistic and cultural arts expressions and promote positive social change. She hopes to continue service, in collaboration, with Cirque Mechanics and local agencies that work to develop a model of art creation for sustainability, community building and public sharing. Johnson is California-based and enjoys to *Dance* her *Fitness* anywhere!

Rachel A Lantow (Touring Production Stage Manager)

Lantow joined Cirque Mechanics in 2018 for the tour of *42ft*, including the off-Broadway residency at the New Victory Theatre. In the 2021-2022 season, she toured *Birdhouse Factory* and, in the summer of 2022, presented the inaugural show in the company's brand-new tent: *Cirque Mechanics Under Canvas*. Lantow is proudly from Minnesota, and when she's not with Cirque Mechanics, she is investing in her hometown's performing arts community. Selected stage management credits include five years with Circus Juventas in St. Paul, MN, the largest youth circus school in North America, and local theatrical work such as *What Is Emily Drawing?* (Illusion Theater), New Eyes Festival (Theater Mu), *Heaven & French Twist* (Flying Foot Forum), *Hatchet Lady* (Walking Shadow Theatre Company), *The (curious case) of the Watson Intelligence* (Park Square Theatre), and dance/movement works such as *10//X* (Alternative Motion Project), Loyce Houlton's *Nutcracker Fantasy* (Minnesota Dance Theatre), *SOLO* (McKnight Foundation), *In the Margins* (THREADS Dance Project) and Momentum: New Dance Works 2017 & 2019 (The Cowles Center/The Southern/Walker Arts Center/The O' Shaughnessy). Lantow received her BFA in theatre technology/design from Minnesota State University, Mankato. For my audience of one and for Kaela.

Brendan Mullenix (Production Assistant)

Mullenix is a stage manager and theatrical technician, working towards his MFA in lighting design at Tulane University where he puts on lighting for theatre and dance. He works as a technician and production assistant for productions in New Orleans at Tulane and Le Petit Theatre, and for Cirque Mechanics in Las Vegas.

Wes Hatfield (Captain/Coach/Acrobat)

Hatfield was born in California. His parents raised him in Germany where he got his start in gymnastics. At age 10, he joined T&T (Trampoline and Tumbling) when he and his family moved to Colorado. In the world of trampoline competition, his resume includes several state and national championship titles. At 19, he quit competition and became a circus performer, traveling around the world wowing audiences with his technical prowess and zany comedic antics. Hatfield has been an integral cast member in all of Cirque Mechanics touring productions, *Birdhouse Factory*, *Boom Town*, *Pedal Punk*, *42ft* and now *Zephyr - A Whirlwind of Circus*, performing trampoline, Chinese pole, Cyr wheel and general acrobatics along with group choreography. Over the years, Hatfield has become part of the Cirque Mechanics production team, acting as Team Leader for the cast and Head Artistic Rigger for the setup of the show. Hatfield now lives in Las Vegas where he continues his work with Cirque Mechanics. Hatfield is a fan of avocados, needing only a spoon to enjoy them. His favorite breakfast entree is steak and eggs with hash browns, not potato chunks, hash browns...don't forget the ketchup.

Lindsey Covarrubias (Aerialist/Hair Hanger)

Covarrubias, a San Francisco Bay Area native, began performing as a child and continued to pursue her love of the stage in college at the University of California, San Diego. Shortly after graduation, Covarrubias found a home in the circus arts after moving to Los Angeles where she taught and trained at Cirque School Los Angeles. Maintaining a strong emphasis on corde lisse and hair hang, Covarrubias has performed as an aerialist with various companies across the country including Troupe Vertigo and Cirque Mechanics, with whom she joined for three touring shows (*The Orchestra Project*, *Pedal Punk* and *Birdhouse Factory*). Additionally, as a freelance performer, Covarrubias has worked commercially for companies such as Dick's Sporting Goods and Neutrogena and has performed at many private events for similar corporations. Covarrubias currently resides in Paris, France, where she likes to snuggle with her dog, eat lots of weird cheeses and practice her accordion.

Erika Radcliffe (Aerialist/Hair Hanger)

Radcliffe was born in California and grew up in a small town in Idaho. She discovered circus at the age of 23 while living in Oregon and now lives in Las Vegas, Nevada where she continues to work and perform. She has had the pleasure of performing for special events around the country and was a first-place aerial rope artist at the 2019 VIVA Festival. She is excited to make her debut with Cirque Mechanics in *Zephyr - A Whirlwind of Circus*. Aside from hanging from ropes and her hair, Radcliffe is also a professional graphic designer and web developer servicing her clients during free time on the road, while also drinking copious amounts of coffee and espresso, of course.

Anngela Burt (Acrobat/Perch Act)

Burt grew up in a small town in southeast Idaho called Rigby. Growing up, she was a ballroom dancer for seven years and a cheerleader for five years. Shortly after graduating high school, she ran away and joined the circus and hasn't looked back since! She's been gracing the stages all over the country doing perch pole, chair stacking/hand balancing, partner acrobatics, high flying group acrobatics, Chinese pole, dancing and stilt walking. She also recently won ABC's *The Gong Show* with Rose City Circus with a perfect score! Burt is also a talented costume designer who designs and makes costumes for herself and other performers all over the world.

Jon Dutch (Acrobat/Perch Act)

Dutch has been performing ever since he learned to walk. Growing up just outside of NYC, he excelled in music, theatre and dance, but also found a deep love for athletics, and was a multi-sport athlete until college where they focused on football. After graduating, Dutch moved to Portland to attend chiropractic school. In 2007, just before graduating, he found circus and acrobatic arts, and his life changed forever. Performing partner acrobatics, stilt walking, clown, MC and most recently, perch pole, Dutch has traveled the world with numerous circus companies and even founded his own, the Rose City Circus. He appeared with Anngela Burt, his circus partner for the past eight years, on *The Gong Show* where they received a perfect score. This will be his first show with Cirque Mechanics, and he couldn't be more excited!

Tana Karo "Tank" (Acrobat/Foot Juggler)

Graduating with a Bachelor in circus arts in 2009 from the renowned Melbourne circus facility NICA, Karo clearly has the life skills to run her own "repelling zombies through cardio" fitness studio. Karo primarily performs foot juggling, comedy body puppetry and large-scale illusions. Karo has performed in cabarets and theatre productions across the globe, including the USA, Amsterdam, London, China and Australia. She's also spent some time on the seas honing her pirate skills and headlining shows for P&O Australia and Carnival Cruise Lines. With a background in fashion design and ballet, she completes the ultimate trifecta of dancing, sewing and.... sandwiches? Yup. Sandwiches. She's thrilled to be performing with Cirque Mechanic's new show, *Zephyr - A Whirlwind of Circus*.

Aryn Shelander (Contortionist)

Shelander is trained in Mongolian contortion and has performed on *America's Got Talent* and *France's Got Talent*, and is the creator of aerial archery. She was raised in San Francisco doing gymnastics, dance, swim team and chess club. Before joining the circus full time, Shelander studied cognitive design at UC Berkeley and co-founded an app design and development company. Shelander started training Mongolian contortion and hand-to-hand at 22. Six years later, she traveled to Mongolia with her coach Serchmaa Byamba to learn contortion and foot-archery which changed her life by giving her the skills she performs today.

Ossy Sanchez (Acrobat/Juggler/Wheel of Destiny)

Sanchez is a fifth-generation traditional circus performer from Mexico City, Mexico currently residing in Las Vegas. He has been performing such acts as trampoline, tumbling, juggling, gauchos and Russian swing since he was 11 years old. Sanchez was inspired by his dad to pursue and perfect his favorite skill, juggling, and aspires to be a master juggler, like his dad! Sanchez has performed his juggling act on circus stages, rings and theatres around the globe. He's thrilled to work and tour with Cirque Mechanics.

Chauncey Kroner (Acrobat/Hoop Diver)

Kroner was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. He began his circus training with Circus Harmony at age 12. A few years later, he became a member of the St. Louis Arches where he excelled in tumbling, partner acro, juggling, diablo and chair balancing. Kroner has performed at many venues both locally and around the country. Some of his most memorable performances to date are performing at the White House for President Obama, years of performing with Circus Flora and performing with Cirque du Soleil as a hoop diver for its first-ever Christmas show, *T'was the Night Before*. As a kid, Kroner spent many hours building with K'Nex. Recently, he was able to build a rotating base for his hoops with over 480 K'Nex.

Luke Anderson (Acrobat/Hoop Diver)

Anderson was born and raised in Oregon. Since a young age, he was fascinated by extreme sports, but it wasn't until his family moved to Arizona where his interests were able to blossom. At 13, he started to get into strength training and pushing the boundaries. From there, an interest in tumbling, parkour and tricking developed. He would spend all his time after school at the park working on tricks and technique and his very first job was coaching gymnastics at 15. After realizing he wanted to pursue this path professionally, he went to his first audition for Cirque du Soleil at 19 years old and shortly after, joined the show *Volta*. He later toured across Europe as a hoop diver with the show *Luzia*. The last six years of live performances and touring travel have nourished his passion for circus and performing. This is his first show with Cirque Mechanics, and he is excited to be learning a new apparatus.