



Jean-François Savaria

# FLIP FABRIQUE *SLAM!*

A co-production of Ex Machina and FLIP Fabrique

**DIRECTOR** Robert Lepage

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR** Steve Blanchet

**CIRCUS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** Bruno Gagnon

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR** Félix Dagenais

**ACROBATS** Jérémie Arsenault, Fabien Cortes, Maeva Desplat, Naomi Eddy, Jonathan Julien, Stéphane Pansa, Cédrik Pinault, Adèle Saint-Martin

**MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN** Bob & Bill

**ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGN** Stanislas Élie and Jérôme Boiteau Studio Expression

**ASSOCIATE SET DESIGN** Ariane Sauvé

**LIGHTING DESIGN** Renaud Pettigrew

**ASSOCIATE VIDEO DESIGNER** Nicolas Dostie

**ANIMATOR** Irina Litvinenko

**COSTUMES DESIGN** Camila Comin

**PROPERTIES DESIGN** Ariane Sauvé

**ACROBATIC DESIGN** Olivier Normand

**WRESTLING ADVISOR** Marko Estrada

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Zellerbach Theatre

Friday, October 25 @ 8 PM

Saturday, October 26 @ 2 PM

There will be no intermission.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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In 2002, the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) filed a lawsuit against the World Wrestling Federation, claiming the exclusive property rights of its acronym. The sports federation therefore became the World Wrestling Entertainment, recognizing the fact that professional wrestling was first and foremost a performance.

This entertaining art form, gathering diversified, fervent crowds letting off steam, represents to my eyes the ideal interface between circus and theatre. The wrestling ring permits the acrobatic performers to transform into characters that are bigger than themselves and the stage directions ultimately become theatrical. *SLAM!* suggests being a ritual in flying colors where we willingly agree to the "suspension of disbelief."

- Robert Lepage

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### **Robert Lepage** (Stage Director)

A multidisciplinary artist, Lepage is all at once an actor, a director, a playwright and a stage director. Hailed by international critics, his original, contemporary and unique works (inspired by recent history) transcend borders and challenge the standards of scenic writing, particularly through the use of new technologies.

From a very early age, Lepage took a keen interest in geography, but his growing passion for theatre dictates his choice of career, inspiring him to enroll at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec in 1975. After an internship with Alain Knapp in Paris in 1978, he returned to his hometown, where he developed the great artistic versatility for which he is known.

The year 1994 marked an important step in his career: he founded Ex Machina, a multidisciplinary creation company of which he is the artistic director. Also, under his leadership, the multidisciplinary production center, La Caserne, was created in June 1997 in Quebec City. This last creative space saw the birth of almost all of Ex Machina's productions until 2019. Lepage's vision and dedication to create led him to promote and implement the construction of Le Diamant theatre in the heart of Quebec City. Inaugurated in August 2019, this new and unique cultural venue is intended to be an anchor point for the public, emerging artists and creators from all horizons.

His most significant works include the plays *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* and *The Dragons' Trilogy*; his solos *The Far Side of the Moon* and *887*; the operas *The Damnation of Faust* and Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle; his multimedia works *The Image Mill* and *The Library at Night*; Peter Gabriel's shows, *The Secret World Tour* and *The Growing Up Tour*; and with Cirque du Soleil, *KÀ* and *TOTEM*.

### **Bruno Gagnon** (Artistic Director – Circus)

Gagnon was the most hyperactive student in his class. On his eighteenth birthday, he took off with Cirque du Soleil to become a trampolinist and juggler for the *Corteo* show. Thousands of shows and two million spectators later, he aspires to express, create and share his own artistic vision of the circus. Therefore, together with his friends, he co-founded FLIP Fabrique. For eight years, he traveled the world presenting his shows full of camaraderie, poetry and humor, pausing only to create a future number. Over the years, FLIP Fabrique has grown significantly, and Gagnon is now dedicated to managing the dynamic company. With *SLAM!*, he accomplished one of his greatest goals and dreams: working alongside Ex Machina and Robert Lepage.

### **Olivier Normand** (Acrobatic Design – Circus)

A graduate of the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec, Normand has performed on all of Québec City's stages. Most notably, he has played in *Les Feluettes* by Michel-Marc Bouchard, *Le Misanthrope* by Molière, *Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare and *Britannicus* by Racine. Normand has also played many leading roles in Robert Lepage - Ex Machina productions, notably in *Playing Cards: Hearts, Needles and Opium* (The Kennedy Center) and earlier this year starred in *Courville* (Hong Kong Arts Festival). Passionate about movement, Normand has been teaching at l'École de cirque de Québec for numerous years. He has directed several circus shows for FLIP Fabrique, including *Attrape-moi*, which was staged in Berlin for six months and *Blizzard*, which premiered in Amsterdam in 2019 and has been touring the world ever since. In 2022, Robert Lepage - Ex Machina invited Normand to join its team as an artist in residence.

### **Jérémie Arsenault** (Performer)

Raised in Québec city, Arsenault has always been passionate about the arts. That is why, at a considerably young age, he discovered a love for theatre, dance and most notably, circus. During his training years at the École de cirque de Québec, he familiarized himself with a wide range of circus disciplines, all while refining his skills as a base porter. After five years of traveling around the world with different companies such as Cirque du Soleil and Cirque Éloize, Arsenault co-founded FLIP Fabrique in 2011. Since then, he has worked in almost every show as an artist for the company, thus continuing to share his art with the whole world.

### **Jonathan Julien** (Performer)

Julien is a true showman from Québec. After traveling across Canada with his juggling set, he joined the professional training program of the École de cirque de Québec and graduated in 2012. His trampoline wall expertise combined with his passion for hand-to-hand acrobatics have taken him around the globe, working with some of the world's leading circus companies. Julien performed his acrobatic numbers on popular TV sets such as *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* (NBC) and *Le plus grand cabaret du monde* (TV5).

### **Cédrik Pineault** (Performer)

Prior to graduating from l'École de cirque de Québec in 2013, Pineault won the Québec Cup in the trampoline category. Since graduating, he has participated in multiple shows around the world. Pineault was cast in Cirque du Soleil shows and ESPN special events, and his performances have led him all the way to Rio de Janeiro. *SLAM!* is his third show performing as an artist for FLIP Fabrique.

### **Maeva Desplat** (Performer)

Born in Monaco, Desplat started artistic gymnastics at the age of three. After her first French team championships at 11 years old, she discovered acrobatic gymnastics thanks to her coach. She qualified twice for the European Championships and once for the World Championships as a trio carrier. After her gymnastic career, she entered the circus world, first at the École de cirque de piste d'Azur in the South of France and subsequently at the École de cirque de Québec from which she graduated in 2020. Desplat specializes in swing, but also enjoys other disciplines such as Cyr wheel, trampoline wall and even Chinese hoop diving.

### **Naomi Eddy** (Performer)

Eddy is originally from Pennsylvania. They are a martial arts artist turned circus artist who specializes in contortion, hand balance and the Chinese pole. Eddy loves contemporary dance and contortion allows them to create new pathways, which makes moving very versatile. In Québec City, Eddy was trained in contortion by their coaches Erdenesuvd and Buyankhishig Ganbaatar, and graduated from École de cirque de Québec in 2022. *SLAM!* is their first big circus production, and they are very happy to be traveling around the world, while incorporating their new wrestling skills!

**Fabien Cortes** (Performer)

Cortes comes from Gers, France. Cortes fell in love with the circus at a very young age and started his career with Pop Circus - Arc en Cirque. Soon after, he entered École de cirque de Québec. A versatile artist, he excels as a hand to hand carrier and in trampoline duos. Since graduating from school, Cortes has been seen in several circus shows with Cirque Kikasse, Machine de Cirque and FLIP Fabrique.

**Adèle Saint-Martin** (Performer)

Saint-Martin is a young hand to hand acrobat. Having discovered the circus at age 13, Saint-Martin trained with the goal of being selected for the National Circus School of Châtellerauld in France. The following year, in 2013, she entered the school. In addition to her two main disciplines, Saint-Martin continues to develop other skills such as hand balancing, banquine, passing, teeterboard and trampoline. She graduated from École de cirque de Québec in June 2020 and has since worked for various companies.

**Stéphane Pansa** (Performer)

Pansa's circus journey began at age 12 in French Guiana, a neighboring country of Brazil. He was inspired by his older brother who taught him acrobatics. After a few years, Pansa invested himself in becoming a slack wire specialist. Subsequently, Pansa committed to a civic service with the Latitude Cirque school to immerse himself further in the circus environment, hoping to become a professional artist. After completing his school year, he moved to France to train professionally at the Piste d'Azur school. At age 19, he has already participated in various international projects and has fully realized his childhood dream to continue developing himself as an artist and circus artist.

**ADDITIONAL SLAM! CREDITS**

**CREATIVE PRODUCTION MANAGER** Antoine Caron

**CIRCUS PRODUCTION ADVISOR** Christophe Hamel

**CREATIVE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR** Émilie Bérubé

**TOUR PRODUCTION MANAGER** Nadia Bellefeuille

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR/LIGHTING MANAGER** Michel Bisson

**TOUR MANAGER AND STAGE MANAGER** France Godin

**SOUND MANAGER** Samuel Sérandour

**VIDEO MANAGER** Zachary Noël-Ferland

**HEAD RIGGER AND HEAD STAGEHAND** Ian Lemire

**COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES MANAGER** Clara Clauss

**VIDEO PROJECT MANAGER AND R&D** Samuel Sérandour

**SET BUILDING** Scène Éthique

**SET & PROPS COLLABORATORS** Geneviève Bournival, Noémie Richard,  
Chloé Blanchet, Coralie Dansereau

**COSTUME MAKERS** Camila Comin, Par Apparat, Judith Bouchard

**COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

**FOR ROBERT LEPAGE/EX MACHINA** Nina Lauren

**REPRESENTATION FOR ROBERT LEPAGE** Lynda Beaulieu

**IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH** Le Diamant, La TOHU, Centre des Arts Juliette-Lassonde  
de Saint-Hyacinthe, Centre culturel de l'université de Sherbrooke

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH** Le Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec

**PRODUCER FOR EX MACHINA** Michel Bernatchez

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS** Hélène Paradis, Menno Plukker Theatre Agency

**UNITED STATES REPRESENTATION** CAMI Music

**ORIGINAL CONCEPT** Ex Machina and FLIP Fabrique