



MINTY FRESH CIRCUS

CONCEIVED & DIRECTED BY Monique Martin

CLOWN/DANCER Alexa "Lex" Alston

ACROBAT/DANCER Hezekiah "Z Loco" Farrell

DANCER Ian "Drowzee" Robinson

AERIALIST/DANCER Julia Baccellieri

AERIALIST/DANCER Luciany Germán

ACROBAT/DANCER Isabella Diaz

ACROBAT/DANCER Tyshaun Thomas

CO-CHOREOGRAPHER (DANCE) Adesola Osakalumi

CO-CHOREOGRAPHER (DANCE) Traci Bartlow

CO-CHOREOGRAPHER (CIRCUS) Susan Voyticky

DRAMATURGE & CREATIVE CONSULTANT Kim Cook

COSTUME DESIGNERS Ashaka Givens and Ty Brooks

LIGHTING DESIGNER & TECHNICAL CONSULTANT Amanda K. Ringger

SOUND DESIGNER Corey Action

ORIGINAL MUSIC Soul Science Lab and The Ajanku Brothers

MUSIC CONSULTANT Dr. Fredara Hadley

MUSIC RESEARCH Traci Bartlow

TECHNICAL RIGGING LIAISON Luciany Germán

RIGGING CONSULTANT Andrew Adams

MANAGING PRODUCER Laura Colby

Zellerbach Theatre

Friday, January 31 @ 8 PM

Saturday, February 1 @ 2 PM

There will be no intermission.

Penn Live Arts is a co-commissioner of the world premiere of *Minty Fresh Circus* as part of the Accelerator Program.

PROGRAM

RITUAL AND MUSIC

Departure

Heart Music Vol 1 by Ajunku Brothers

"The Creator Has a Master Plan" by Pharoah Sanders

"Gimme Dat" by Soul Science Lab - Chen Lo and Asanté Amin

Arrival

"The Reckoning" by Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah

"Beatbox Boom Bap" by Hit Force

"Have Some Love" by Childish Gambino

Learning

"I Got the Chop" by Tower of Power

Conjuring

"Transcendental March (Creation Song)" by Brother Ahh

"River" by Ibeyi

Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Surrender

"Oya" by Ibeyi

Adornment

"Black" by Buddy

"Money" by Leikili47

Afro-Futurism

"Deep Reset" by Soul Nubian/Rashad Pridgen

Joy

"Joy (Unspeakable)" by Voices of Fire featuring Pharrell Williams

PROGRAM NOTES

Created by Monique Martin in collaboration with performing artists, *Minty Fresh Circus* is a U.S.-based circus show performed by an all-Black and Brown cast, with a majority-Black and Brown creative team. The performance celebrates the healing power of Black music and movement, infused with the joy and resilience of those who traversed the transatlantic slave trade.

Grounded in Sankofa with an Afro-futuristic vibe, *Minty Fresh Circus* features movement, music and circus arts in a time-bending journey of redemption. Inspired by abolitionist Harriet Araminta Tubman and the survival of generations of African Americans, the central question in *Minty Fresh Circus* is: **what does freedom feel and sound like if your only access to it is through your imagination?** The journey explores liberation spaces, oasis spaces and joy spaces where Black and Brown bodies have found sovereignty. The show celebrates the power of Black music as a healing, alchemical, transformative force: a ritual, a portal to joy, and an invitation to tap into your imagination. The energy of call-and-response within Black culture serves as a circular structure within the arc of the show.

Minty Fresh Circus is structured in eight rituals: Departure, Arrival, Learning, Conjuring, Surrender, Adornment, Afro-Futurism and Joy.

Acknowledgements

Minty Fresh Circus was made possible with funding by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, with lead funding from the Mellon Foundation and additional support from the Doris Duke Foundation. The creation of *Minty Fresh Circus* was made possible by co-commissioning support from: Arizona Arts Live at University of Arizona; Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University; ArtsEmerson, Boston, MA; and Penn Live Arts at University of Pennsylvania. The research and development of *Minty Fresh Circus* was made possible with support from: Lake Placid Center for the Arts; The Apollo Theater; Samuels Foundation; The MICC; Factory International, Manchester, UK; and La Grainerie, Toulouse, France.

Minty Fresh Circus wishes to thank Christopher Gruits and the Penn Live Arts team! A special thanks to Gail Thomas and the estate of Rashad Prigden, Aisha Bilal, Jazz Hudson and the Oakland, CA Freedom Schools. We are deeply grateful for the support from Isisara Bey, Donna Walker-Kuhne, Muslimah Mohammed, Danni Gee, James Lemons and Jean-Pierre Dion. Thank you, Shana Kennedy/Circadium School of Contemporary Circus and Adam Woolley.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Monique Martin (Creator & Director)

Martin uses her passion and experience in community building through the arts to elevate and instigate. An independent creative producer, artist, curator and marketing consultant, she has partnered with and produced for Joe's Pub, Disney Theatricals, Apollo Theater, New Victory Theater, Southbank Centre/UK, The MET Museum, The Shed, Park Avenue Armory, NJPAC, Queens Theater in the Park and HBO. As Programming Director for the River2River Festival, SummerStage and Harlem Stage, she expanded the programming by including contemporary circus and international artists. She is an experienced commissioner of new work, working closely with artists from ideation to successful premiere. She is an ardent facilitator of collaborations across cultures, sectors and genres, and has partnered with cultural consulates and embassies across the globe.

Martin is an artist and cultural worker, creating projects at the intersection of imagination, sovereignty and joy. Her play, *Cracked*, was produced by Brava Theater's new playwright series in San Francisco during the height of the crack epidemic in the early 1990's. She has created two highly successful series for Joe's Pub: *Urban Griots* and *Soul Erotica*, where she collaborated with some of New York City's disruptive artists in spoken word, music and dance. Her *Soul Erotica* series toured nationally.

She is thrilled and humbled to make her first circus show! Gratitude to Lillian Faye Bell Bartlow, Paul Bartlow, Freddy Martin and Alassane Keita for inspiration and encouragement. Deep gratitude to her creative collaborators who caught the vision and brought incredible creativity and JOY! moniquemartin.net

Kim Cook (Dramaturge & Creative Consultant)

Cook creates: Impact. Shows. Stories. Community projects. Places. Experiences. Spectacle. Known for her ability to take conceptual work and translate it into results, Cook has established herself as a trusted collaborator and ally with a multitude of artists and organizations. She successfully builds urban, regional, national and international projects that are dynamic, stimulating new possibilities for experience creation and public art initiatives. And sometimes, she does things for the adventure, the learning, the discovery and the fun. She has a BA in performing arts, an MA in arts and consciousness, and a certificate in circus dramaturgy from the French and Belgian national circus schools. She is a nine-time NEA award recipient and author of *What Remains is Love: 55 Letters to My Mother*. With *Minty Fresh Circus*, Cook has served as the dramaturge and collaborative creative concept developer. She is grateful to know Monique and to support her vision, and happy to have been a part of this compelling project. kimcookcreates.com

Susan Voyticky (Co-Choreographer - Circus)

A native Brooklynite, Voyticky traveled far and wide to study at both Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris and The Circus Space in London. She has worked for the past two decades for a variety of circus companies including Keith Hennessy's Circo Zero and the New Pickle Circus in San Francisco, toured the U.S. with the Universoul Circus, spent a year in Japan at Universal Studios and worked with the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus and Circus Abyssinia in New York. For the past decade, Voyticky could also be found at the Circus Warehouse in NYC inspiring and training the next generation of circus artists.

Ashaka Givens (Costume Designer)

Givens is a visionary designer, milliner and costume artisan celebrated for her innovative creations. Her statement hats, bold fashion pieces and intricate costumes have graced the pages of *Vogue* and *Essence* and adorned notable figures such as singer/actress Erykah Badu, artist Nina Chanel Abney and *Essence* CEO Caroline Wanga. With a deep appreciation for storytelling through design, Givens infuses each piece with cultural richness and individuality. Her work, showcased on runways, editorial spreads and stages, redefines modern millinery and fashion. Passionate about authentic self-expression, Givens continues to craft timeless, transformative designs for clients and collaborators worldwide. ashakagivens.com

Ty Brooks (Costume Designer)

Brooks believes "fashion is transformative," but not deceptive or precious. The genesis of style is character, not vanity. It has a language and an intellect. How you move through the world with style, grace and an unrelenting JOY is your signature.

Adesola Osakalumi (Co-Choreographer - Dance)

Choreography: *Skeleton Crew* (MTC); *Diary of A Tap Dancer* (A.R.T. Additional Choreography); *Leroy & Lucy* (Steppenwolf Theater); *Cullud Wattah*, *Coal Country*, *Othello* (Public Theater); *Syncing Ink* (Victoria Theater); *runboyrun*, *Eyewitness Blues* (NYTW); *Good Grief* (Vineyard); *Jam on the Groove* (City Center Fall For Dance and Minetta Lane Theater); *School of Rock* (Paramount Pictures). Actor: Broadway: *Skeleton Crew*, *Fela!*, *Equus*. Off Broadway: *runboyrun* (NYTW); *Syncing Ink* (Victoria Theater). TV: *Harlem*, *Endgame*, *Ice*, *Blue Bloods*. Film: *Red Pill*, *IBRAHIM*, *Enchanted*, *Across the Universe*, *Sex and the City 2*. Upcoming: *The Grove* (Huntington Theater). Awards: Bessie Award. Special thanks to Monique for the vision! adesola.com

Amanda K. Ringger (Lighting Designer & Technical Consultant)

Ringger has been designing locally, nationally and internationally for over 20 years with artists such as Faye Driscoll, Cynthia Oliver, Doug Elkins, Leslie Cuyjet, Molly Poerstel, Ivy Baldwin, Laura Peterson, Darrah Carr, Antonio Ramos, Alexandra Beller, Sean Donovan and cakeface, among many others. She received a BA from Goucher College in Baltimore and an MFA from Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. She is the recipient of a Bessie Award for her collaboration on Faye Driscoll's *837 Venice Boulevard*.

Traci Bartlow (Co-Choreographer - Dance & Music Research)

Bartlow is a native of Oakland, CA and a passionate dance maker. Her performance career includes working with luminaries such as Debbie Allen, Micheal Peters and Amiri Baraka. She has served as guest faculty for UC Davis, UC Berkeley and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Her choreography has been commissioned by the Eastbay Community Foundation and Illadeph Legends Dance Festival, and she is a California Arts Council Creative Corps Fellow. In 2022, she was a contributing writer and story consultant for an Emmy award-winning film, KQED's *If Cities Could Dance* - Oakland Boogaloo segment. The following year, she received a proclamation from the mayor of Oakland as "a great woman of hip hop" recognizing her significant contributions in dance and photography. Currently, she is the owner of B-Love's Guest House and continues her work documenting and preserving black dance and culture through lecture, research, performance and collaboration.
iamtracibartlow.com

Corey Action (Sound Designer)

Action is from Oakland, CA and has choreographed and provided artist development for a diverse group of artists. Soul Train Music Award and Grammy® Award-winner Melanie Fiona and R&B star Kehlani have trained with Action. He has traveled the globe to over 12 countries working as a producer, DJ, MC, costume designer, casting agent, lighting/sound designer, make-up consultant, choreographer, coach and dancer. He was awarded the Bay Area Legend Award in Hip Hop in 2018, the International Isadora Duncan Dance Award for best performance by a company in 2005/2006 and a Legendary Black Film Makers Award in 2001. Hip hop is his life.

Laura Colby (Managing Producer)

Recipient of NAPAMA's 2016 Liz Silverstein Award, Colby secures funds to create new work via Elsie Management (which she founded in 1995). In 2020, Colby served as creative producer in the creation and delivery of Manual Cinema's *Christmas Carol*, a show that was livestreamed for 24 performances in December 2020 during the height of the pandemic closures. She served as managing producer for LaTasha Barnes' *The Jazz Continuum*. elsieman.org

Alexa "Lex" Alston (Clown/Dancer)

Alston is a New York-based performing artist and teaching artist. Their solo clown show, *Falling On Purpose*, premiered at their alma mater, Purchase College, in 2019. Since then, they have had the honor of performing with Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, Circus Amok!, Clown Gym, Parallel Exit, AB Cirque and more. Alston is a proud Laughter League pediatric healthcare clown and a circus arts instructor.
@museomoflex

Hezekiah "Z Loco" Farrell (Acrobat/Dancer)

Farrell is a circus performer based in Philadelphia. Born into a hip hop family in Nashville, he moved to New Mexico at 14 and joined 3HC Crew, where he gained proficiency in breakdance, tumbling and performance. Performance credits include Wise Fool New Mexico, Santa Fe Opera, 505 Circus and the Flynn Creek Circus.
@bboyzloco

Ian “Drowzee” Robinson (Dancer)

Robinson is a Brooklyn-born pro longboarder, parkour teacher and dancer. He has been featured in videos and advertisements with Bustin Boards Co since 2014 and the Gap 2022 summer campaign. Robinson has taught parkour at Brooklyn Zoo in Bushwick, Brooklyn since 2019. @shadow_pine

Julia Baccellieri (Aerialist/Dancer)

Baccellieri was born and raised in the Chicago performing arts community and began dancing at age five. Specializing in dance and trapeze, their work is grounded in storytelling with a blend of musicality, unique movement and dynamic technique. Baccellieri teaches workshops and classes to create a foundation for future aerialists and people of color who strive to make a living in circus. @julia.makes.art_

Luciany Germán (Aerialist/Dancer)

A dancer/aerialist born and raised in the Bronx, New York, Germán attended Lehman College where she studied modern dance. She began her journey with the STREB Extreme Action company through the SLAM Remote program in 2013. With STREB, notable engagements include WOMBADelaide Festival, Picasso Circus at the Musée d’Orsay and FALLING & LOVING, a collaboration between the SITI Company and STREB Extreme Action. @luci_anyyy__

Isabella Diaz (Acrobat/Dancer)

Diaz is a physical theatre artist from Chicago, Illinois. As a child, they were put into gymnastics and with that deep love for movement, they went on to study dance at Western Michigan University. In 2016, they were a part of Pilobolus’ touring repertoire company. In 2020, they were introduced to the world of circus and began working with The 7 Fingers. Through that, they became a part of the original cast of the Broadway production *Water for Elephants*. They are so excited to be a part of *Minty Fresh Circus* and embark on this new adventure!

Tyshaun Thomas (Acrobat/Dancer)

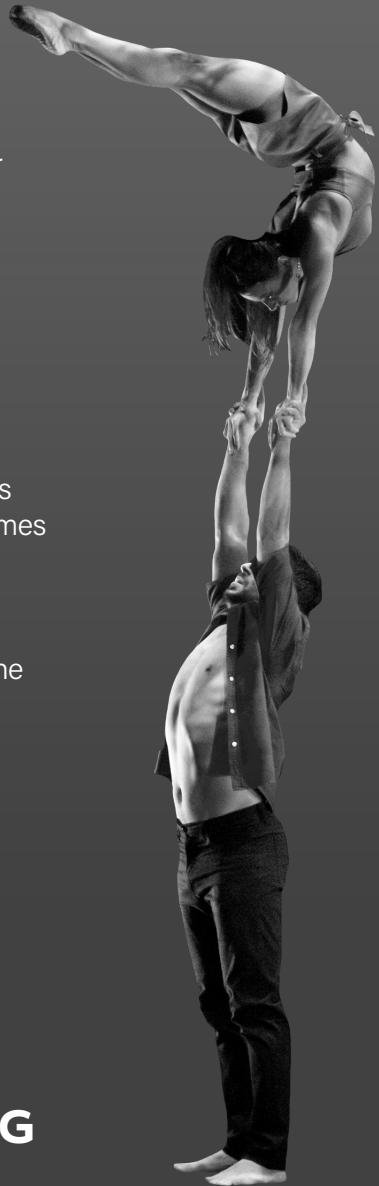
Thomas is a NYC/NJ-based dance and circus artist and teacher. He has been dancing as long as he can remember, but circus grabbed his attention intensely. Starting at The Trenton Circus Squad, his main focuses are choreography, aerial, acrobatics and juggling. He performed in and created *Take Care* by Princeton University, Cirqovation’s *The Circus Nutcracker*, *Change* (1&2) by Trenton Circus Squad, *Forbidden Fruit*, and tours for Circus Culture and Trenton Circus Squad. @Tyshaun_Thomas

THE 7 FINGERS

DUEL REALITY

APR 5

"Every time they take the stage — or soar above it — the 7 Fingers test the limits of possibility." (*The Boston Globe*) Revered around the world as one of the very best cirque troupes, Canada's The 7 Fingers makes its Penn Live Arts debut with the Philadelphia premiere of *Duel Reality*, an acrobatic tour-de-force inspired by the star-crossed lovers and feuding families of *Romeo and Juliet*. The sporting arena is where we lay our scene, as conflict becomes competition and the lines between love, honor and betrayal blur. A smash hit at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, this is an immersive, daredevil showdown where the stakes have never been higher.



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