



# **Artisans de L'Imaginaire**

**30 ans du Cirque du Soleil**



**RICHARD & RUSSO**





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# "Happiness Merchants"

## PROLOGUE

*"We're happiness merchants - giving people the opportunity to dream like children." - Guy Laliberté*

History is replete with glorious ups and bitter downs, with stead-fast heroes and hard-fought battles, with interesting twists and surprising turns, with heady accomplishments and harrowing challenges, and with occurrences no one could have predicted often with consequences no one intended. But how does one look over the annals of an artistic entertainment company like Cirque du Soleil and apply this kind of logic with its striking, dramatic and complex history? You do so by first subjecting the company to a little transitional analysis. Or, put more simply: defining where and when the subject has taken its dramatic turns and highlighting the consequences of those actions, whether they're heady or harrowing.

With Cirque du Soleil one can point to a number of years on its timeline that stand out in this way: its creation in 1984, the end of its first five-year plan in 1989, the launch of Saltimbanco in 1992, beginning anew in 1999, its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004, and, of course, Cirque's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. But perhaps there's one of these turning points that stands out above the others for fans of Cirque du Soleil - fifteen years after the company's founding... 1999. For it was in the early throws of that year that Franco Dragone left Cirque du Soleil for good. As Director, Dragone had been seen as the creative visionary behind the very essence of Cirque du Soleil's productions almost since the beginning, helping drive the company from a collection of street performers to an avant-garde troupe of artists. And following the completion and release of *Alegria: Le Film*, he - and a few other collaborators - left the company. Cirque du Soleil would, of course, go on but many would argue the creative enterprise would never be the same.

In this work we explore these facets of Cirque du Soleil's history from a fan's perspective, going (we endeavor) beyond the company line. We'll do this by diving into each show's creative backgrounds, tracing the process (when we can) from initial spark of conception, through creation to premiere, and beyond through the use of company press releases & kits, articles written about the company over the years (from Fascination!) and other sources, and by dividing up the company's history into five distinct periods: "A Leap of Folly" (1979-1986), "The Vague Intuition" (1987-1992), "Commedia dell'arte comes to the Circus" (1992-1999), "Cirque in Transition" (1999-2004), "L'explosion du Cirque" (2004-2009) and "Walking a Tight Rope" (2009-2014).

*We are off and running!*

<b>LE GRAND TOUR</b>	<b>LA MAGIE CONTINUE</b>	<b>Cirque Réinventé</b>	<b>NOUVELLE EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>FASCINATION</b>
1984-1985	1986	1987-1990	1990-1993	1992
<b>SALIMBANGO</b>	<b>MYSTÈRE</b>	<b>ALEGRIA</b>	<b>QUIDAM</b>	
1992-2012	1993+	1994-2013	1996+	1998+
<b>NouBA</b>	<b>ALEGRIA Le Film</b>	<b>DRAÏON</b>	<small>CIRQUE DU SOLEIL</small> <b>JOURNEY OF MAN</b>	<b>VAREKAI</b>
1998+	1999	1999-2015	2002	2002+
<b>Fire Within</b>	<b>ZUMANITY</b>	<b>Solstrom</b>		<b>Corteo</b>
2002	2003+	2004	2004+	2005+
<b>DELIRIUM</b> <small>A CIRQUE DU SOLEIL LIVE MUSIC CONCERT</small>	<b>THE BEATLES LOVE</b>	<b>KOOZÀ</b>	<b>WINTUK</b>	<b>ZAIA</b>
2006-2008	2006+	2007+	2007-2011	2008-2012
<b>ZED</b>	<b>CRISS ANGEL BELIEVE</b>		<b>BANANA SHPeel</b>	<b>Viva ELVIS</b>
2008-2011	2008+	2009+	2009-2010	2009-2012
<b>TOTEM</b>	<b>ZARKANA</b>	<b>IRIS</b>	<b>MICHAEL JACKSON IMMORTAL WORLD TOUR</b>	<b>Amaluna</b>
2010+	2011+	2011-2013	2011-2015	2012+
<b>CIRQUE DU SOLEIL WORDS AWAY 3D</b>	<b>Michael Jackson ONE</b>	<b>KURIOS CABINET OF CURIOUSITIES</b>	<b>JOYÀ</b>	
2012	2013+	2014+	2014+	





CIRQUE DU SOLEIL



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# **Artisans de L'Imaginaire**

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## *"A Leap of Folly"*

**PART ONE: 1979 - 1986**





# "A Leap of Folly"

**PART ONE: 1979-1986**

"Those who are able to walk on stilts can roam the earth unstopped by mountains or rivers. They are able to imagine flying and therefore to reach the Isles of the Immortals." - P'ao Tseu

Cirque du Soleil's story is one about a group of young people who wanted nothing more than the freedom to dream a dream. It's a tale of individuals like Guy Laliberté, Gilles Ste-Croix, Guy Caron, Normand Latourelle and Daniel Gauthier, amongst many, many others, who came forward at special moments in a time of creative ferment and great energy in Quebec, to cultivate and move that dream forward, and to eventually share their inspiration with the world. It all started in Baie-Saint-Paul, a small Canadian town near Québec City, in 1980. In this haven of creativity, whose rural charm attracted artists, artisans and tourists alike, a group of young street performers mixed in with the crowd. Loud, eccentric, brash and impossible to avoid, they walked on stilts, juggled, breathed fire and played music. They were *Les Échassiers de Baie-Saint-Paul* (the Baie-Saint-Paul Stilt walkers); a street theatre group founded by Gilles Ste-Croix. But long before *Les Échassiers* walked the bay, the Charlevoix region was an ideal location for generations of young urbanites to embark to on a quest to find their roots, to seek a balance between Man and Nature, to live in love and harmony.



During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Baie-Saint-Paul was home to a group of Canadian landscape painters known as the *Groupe des Sept* (Group of Seven) - Franklin Carmichael (1890–1945), Lawren Harris (1885–1970), A. Y. Jackson (1882–1972), Frank Johnston (1888–1949), Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), J. E. H. MacDonald (1873–1932), and Frederick Varley (1881–1969). In the 1940s and 1950s, a priest – Father Jean-Paul-Médéric Tremblay (1918-1999) - was given charge of a group of young people called *Équipiers de Saint-Michel*. The philosophy of this particular group rested on a nomadic lifestyle concept and a mentality of open-mindedness (which was quite rare at that time). These activities would lay the foundations of the *Balcon Vert*, a Youth Hostel located at the top of *Cap aux Corbeaux* in *Baie-Saint-Paul*.

Many had already associated the popular site with a place to experience a freedom of mind, and so, from the 1970s on, it became a meeting place for many creative young people – a nerve center of the area's growing cultural scene. In 1974, a non-profit organization was created in order to ensure *Le Balcon Vert* would be properly managed. Enter Gilles Ste-Croix. In the spring of 1979, Gilles Ste-Croix was hired as the manager of *Le Balcon Vert* and was working to create a summer activity program that year. One particular project interested him; for, not long before, he had gone to see a show produced by Peter Schumann at the Bread and Puppet Theatre in Vermont. The shows made considerable use of giant puppets and the effect was so striking, he was inspired to put a similar group of artists together. The only difference would be that his show would feature legendary characters from Quebec's history and legends.



### /// CLUB DES TALONS HAUTS

The challenge was that Gilles Ste-Croix had only a few individuals whom he could count on to help him with the endeavor. However, just before the tourist season began, Guy Laliberté, barely 20 years old, had unexpectedly arrived at *Le Balcon Vert* in *Baie-Saint-Paul*.

Originally, Laliberté intended to work in James Bay, where he expected to quickly make the money he needed to pay for his studies in nuclear engineering, but his plans were set back by a strike among the workers that had prevented him from working there. And so, Laliberté found himself in Baie-Saint-Paul, where he was hired as an activity coordinator in exchange for lodging. A proactive young man, Guy “Pantoufle” (slippers) Laliberté would eventually even be chosen to be a candidate for the *Parti Rhinocéros* (a comedic political platform to contest the federal election) in 1980. As a member of the party, one of his audacious proposals was to build a macramé bridge between *Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive* and *Isle aux Coudres* - a project that was certainly a demonstration of his originality and imagination. Another young mover and shaker was Daniel Gauthier, who, after his studies in management, became the manager and accountant for *Le Balcon Vert*.



Club des Talons Hauts Logo



In March 1980, Gilles Ste-Croix and Sylvain Neron officially founded the *Échassiers de la Baie Enr.*, an entertainment and artist agency. They applied, without success, to the government for funding. It was Gilles Ste-Croix who then organized a stilt-o-thon that would allow them to raise funds and generate a little publicity for their project. They planned to walk all the way from Baie-Saint-Paul to Quebec City on stilts (a distance of more than 90 kilometers [56 miles]).

The major challenge along the way

was that the route climbs over a series of ridges known as the Caps, the highest summit being more than 740 meters [2428 feet] high. The climb is a feat in and of itself, not to mention the rest of the journey. Gilles Ste-Croix succeeded in reaching Quebec City and upon his arrival his achievement makes the front-page headlines of a local newspaper known as *Le Soleil*. The campaign was a success and enabled them to collect \$60,000 in addition the ample free publicity for their organization.

The first show given by the *Échassiers de la Baie* was centered on a legendary character from the Charlevoix region: Alexis Lapointe alias le Trotteur (1860-1924). The show, written and produced by Jean-Pierre Brouillé, included three musicians and seven actors on stilts. The premiere of the show took place on June 23rd, 1980 in the Baie-Saint-Paul hockey stadium. *Alexis le Trotteur* was then presented in a number of regions across Quebec. This show clearly demonstrated the artists' desire to promote the cultural heritage of the Charlevoix region where they had put down roots. It also demonstrated their interest in developing a circus act that involved people on stilts instead of the traditional show animals. Unfortunately, though well received by critics and audiences that year, it was a financial failure.

Quebec had a similar circus tradition like most European towns, and to promote circus arts and street performers in Canada, the young artists there pooled their talent and dreams and went on to found the "*Club des Talons Hauts*" (or "High-Heels Club") April 7, 1981. Its purpose was to raise public funding through government programs, particularly employment programs.

Although the *Échassiers* had been little more than an entertainment agency composed of volunteers, this new enterprise would set forth to carve its own creative niche in the popular entertainment industry. During the summer of 1981, the *Échassiers* continued to tour Quebec under the management of Guy Laliberté. Then a new show, called *Le Défilé du Dragon* [Parade], was added to the troupe's repertoire.



That winter, with a subsidy of \$10,000, the *Échassiers de la Baie* presented the new show in hockey stadiums all across the Province of Quebec (at intermissions of course). The show's skating stilt walkers (quite a risky feat) received only a lukewarm welcome from hockey fans, though. Nonetheless, the group was able to balance its budget during its second year of operations. And so, the time had come establish a common vision

of the group's future, in order to be able to develop more substantial activities. Therefore, *La Fête foraine de Baie-Saint-Paul* (the Baie Saint-Paul Fair), a cultural event in which street performers from all over met to exchange ideas and techniques, and enliven the streets of the town for a few days, had been born.

*La Fête foraine* was intended to re-create the atmosphere similar to that of a Middle Ages Festival, when street performers would roam the cities during the great market fairs of the period, done so to keep with the concept concerning entertainment ambiance and environment. Their wish was to interact with the spectators in a more playful way, rather than being limited to the rigid formal social constraints of traditional performing environments. "When we decided that this event would take place downtown, we had a few objectives in mind: getting involved in the everyday life of the population that had encouraged our success so far, so as to be able to share with them the joy we had in just being alive" (Plein-Jour sur Charlevoix, July 14th, 1982).



For three years in a row, from 1982 to 1984, the Baie-Saint-Paul Fair was a tremendous success. For a whole week, the streets of Baie-Saint-Paul became the playground of a new generation of circus artists from Quebec, Canada, the United States and Europe. *Le Club des talons hauts* attracted notice, and Guy Laliberté, Daniel Gauthier, Gilles Ste-Croix and many others began to cherish their crazy dream: to create a Québécois circus and take the troupe travelling around the world. This talented group of young Quebec street entertainers had come together

under a lucky star. Although a full two years pass before Cirque du Soleil as we know it today is created, its founders say that it was at that mystic moment in Baie Saint-Paul in 1982 that Cirque du Soleil was conceived. The aurora borealis hits Baie Saint-Paul on the first day of *La Fête Foraine*. The sun has set but the sky is streaked with waves of otherworldly light. Green and silver refractions chase each other across the dome of the sky throughout the performance.

In 1983, as Québec prepared to celebrate the 450th anniversary celebration of the French explorer Jacques Cartier's discovery of Canada, a number of events were organized by the provincial government. *Club des Talons Hauts* took advantage of their Fair as an occasion to propose the creation of a bona-fide circus. Guy Laliberté presented a proposal for a show called "Le Grand Tour du Cirque du Soleil" and at first Clément Richard, the Minister of Cultural Affairs, showed little interest in the idea.



But Guy Laliberté was tenacious and persevering; he went all the way to the capital to directly meet with the Prime Minister of Quebec, René Lévesque, who ended up granting him a large sum of money (\$1.5 million) on the behalf of the Government of Quebec to stage it. This sowed the seeds of converting a group of street performers into one of the Cirque Nouveau... new Circus.

### /// 1984: LE GRAND TOUR

The name, meaning "Sun Circus" or "Circus of the Sun", came to the troupe's founder Guy Laliberté while pondering his future on a white, sandy beach in Hawaii. Wishing his new circus to embody youth, energy, power, light and spirit, he naturally chose the sun as his emblem. Once armed with an identity, the *Les Productions du Cirque du Soleil* officially came together on June 16, 1984. The show debuts in a little 800 seat blue-and-yellow big top in the small Quebec town of Gaspé, the very same place Mr. Cartier's voyage took him as he desperately tried to find a land route through to the Orient so long ago, and continued across 11 towns over the course of 13 weeks (running concurrently with the third *La Fête Foraine*) delighting 30,000 spectators.

It was far from an instant smashing success, however.



were being treated! (Well enough for a street group, apparently not so for an established circus performer). The problems were only transient, however, and by the time the festivities came to a close, *Le Grand Tour du Cirque du Soleil* was a success (one of the few successful events of the 450<sup>th</sup> celebration).

And Cirque du Soleil hasn't stopped since!



The first shows were riddled with difficulty, starting with the collapse of the big top thanks to the increased weight of rainwater – the central mast snapped. Working with a borrowed tent, Laliberté and Co then had to contend with difficulties from the European performers. They were so unhappy with the Québécois inexperience they had, at one point, sent a letter to the media complaining about how they



With \$60,000 left in the bank, Laliberté went back to the Canadian government to secure funding for a second year. Unfortunately, while the Canadian federal government was enthusiastic to the idea, the Quebec provincial government was resistant. It was not until Quebec's Premier, René Lévesque, intervened that the provincial government relented and funding for the second year was secured. (Consequently, the original big top tent that was used during the 1984 *Le Grand Tour du Cirque du Soleil* tour can now be seen at *Carnivàle Lune Bleue*, a 1930s-style carnival that is home to the Cirque Maroc acrobats.) With funding secured, Laliberté took steps to renovate his troupe from a group of street performers into a "proper circus".



With a burning desire to return circus tradition to the esteem and quality it knew at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Cirque du Soleil troupe welcomed Guy Caron, head of the National Circus School, as Artistic Director. Caron had toured the world to discover new trends in life entertainment of all kinds and he brought that knowledge and know-how to Cirque du Soleil, which revamps the show: he wanted strong emotional music, played from the beginning by musicians; he wanted to emulate the Moscow Circus' method of having the acts tell a story; and most of all, have performers, rather than technical crew, move equipment and props on and off the stage so as not to disrupt the momentum of the storyline. The rationale: to draw the audience more into the performance.



## /// 1985: WE'RE OFF AND RUNNING!

For 1985, the Cirque presented a totally new concept: a striking, dramatic mix of the circus arts and street entertainment, featuring wild, outrageous costumes, staged under magical lighting and set to original music. With not a single animal in the ring, Cirque's difference was clear from the very start. After performing in Montreal, Sherbrook and Quebec City, Cirque du Soleil leaves its home province for the first time to take its show to neighboring Ontario. Performances are given under a brand new 1,500 seat big top in Ottawa, Toronto and Niagara Falls to over 137,000 spectators. The Cirque is made for travelling and the blue and yellow tent quickly becomes a symbol of Quebec youth and artistic energy.



### LES STAGIARIES

By the hand of ringmaster Michel Barette, these folks, dressed in Blue and White, form a human pyramid of people, among various other acrobatic acts. Of course, they're the trainees! Eight artists perform these various acrobatic acts together: Michelle Croze, Elisabeth Geissbuhler, Michael Legault, Nathalie Sabourin, Jean Saucier, Tonatiuh Morales and of course Michel Barette.

### LES ENFANTS

Children are especially sacred to Cirque du Soleil, and during the tour five children were featured in the ring. Lucie Laurier (10), Claude Beaudoin (14), Noémie Gélinas (10), Daniel (12) and Jean-Paul Seart-Boun (15) participated with: "The Small Girl", "Bicycletas", "Monkey's", "Soap Bubbles" and "The Dream"; connecting segments between the main acts. The children are watched over by Ben La Barouette, a clown in a red hat.

### ESSENTIALS

Premiere:	June 16, 1984 (1984) May 14, 1985 (1985)
Type:	Touring / Big Top
Director:	Michael Chelnikov
Composer:	René Dupéré
Finale:	August 26, 1984 (1984) September 22, 1985 (1985)

### Creative Team

<b>Guide</b>	<b>Artistic Director</b>
Guy Laliberté	Lorraine Turpin
<b>Director</b>	<b>Set Designer</b>
Michael Chelnikov	Gilles Ste-Croix
<b>Creation</b>	<b>Lighting Designer</b>
Guy Caron	Claude Accolas
<b>Costume &amp; Props</b>	<b>Studio Director</b>
Hélène Dubé	Serge Roy
<b>Composer</b>	<b>Trainer</b>
René Dupéré	Zygmunt Biegaj



### BREAK DANCE

Yves Decoste and Sylvain Gaumont perform one of the more unique acts seen in Cirque du Soleil's beginnings - a "new wave" dance performance! Dressed in colorful Yellow, Red and Green outfits, the two men jump kick, hop and dance their way around the big top.



### HAND-BALANCING

Angela Laurier and Steve Kielbasinski bond together to perform a man-to-woman hand balancing act. Angela, after stunning the audience with her nimble body, goes solo to show just how flexible she really is!



### JUGGLING

What is a circus without a juggling act? For Cirque du Soleil, Pierre Duhaime and Daniel Gulko came together and produced this act: club juggling, ball juggling and just about anything else they could get their hands on.



### LA FANFAPONIE

La Fanfaronie are a group of professional musicians from Quebec that inhabit the big top. You'll hear them toot their horns for the opening number and even find themselves transformed by the end of the show – from musicians to actors!



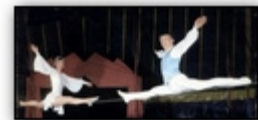
### LE TANGO

An interesting performance by future Cirque du Soleil director: Gilles Ste-Croix. After creating a performance for the 1984 tour, Gilles Ste-Croix returned with his performance "Les Singes" ("the Monkeys") and presented a new act: "Le Tango de l'Échassière" ("The Tango of Échassière"). A stilt walker, Gilles shows his ability in this performance where he and a young lady dance on stilts.



### ALUNA

Hailing from Argentina; Juan Saavedra, Elisabeth La Commare and Luis Lopez formed the group with a desire to express their native land through rhythm and dance. "Aluna is the mother of fire and of the sun," and with their instruments, dance to fertility. Called Zapateo, it is the dance of the Argentinean man. Joined with the Malambo, the dance and beat awaken the history of a forgotten Indian race. With exciting choreography and continuous beat of the bombos, Aluna is impressive.



### TIGHTROPE

This year, the tightrope was performed by a duo - a man and woman - as they walked across the wire on their tip-toes, balance on the wire with their heads and performed various other acts of strength and balance.





The 1985 tour also had its share of comedic acts: "La Ratatouille" was one such group. They were mischievous clowns who made their presence known at the wrong time and place. They were masters of disguise and appeared as Hockey Players, Magicians and Eccentric Women throughout the show.



And not only were they talented in the arts of comedy, they even surprised with their juggling abilities. Formed by: Michel Dallaire, Doug Vernon, Wayne Hronek, Francine Côté and John White. Denis Lacombe, who is an amazing man and who is seen in later incarnations of Cirque (*La Magie Continue* (1986), and *Le Cirque Réinventé* (1987-1989)), took comedy to new levels. Most fans know him as the "Conductor" and even in this early stage he was the master of the orchestra. Another character he performed was the "Invisible Man", where he talked to a person who did not exist; the "Mechanical Clown"; and he performed a parody of a hand-to-hand act with Chatouille.



The final character of the 1985 tour, and the most elusive, is "Chatouille", which is literally translated into "Tickle".

"Chatouille" was brought to life by Sonia Côté who was trained in music, dance, piano and song. She even had theater, acrobatics, juggling and magic talents. She was part of the 1984 Grand Tour and once again, created two new numbers "Pierrette lunaire" and "Tuyaux", which translate into "Lunar Rock" and "Pipes".

But the troupe receives lukewarm responses outside Quebec. In Toronto, for example, the company performs in front of a 25% capacity crowd after not having enough money to properly market the show. (Gilles Ste-Croix dressed in a monkey suit and walked through downtown Toronto in a desperate attempt to draw some publicity.) The stop at Niagara Falls turns out to be equally problematic, as Cirque du Soleil underestimates the amount of time visitors spend in the area. Although thousands upon thousands visit, they're only there for a brief period of time – not long enough to take in a show. Cirque brings the 1985 tour back to Montreal before pushing on.

Itinéraire	
Location	Dates
Gaspé	6/16/84 – 6/19/84
Baie-Comeau	6/23/84 – 6/25/84
Jonquière	6/28/84 – 7/1/84
Rimouski	7/5/84 – 7/8/84
Saint-Jean	7/12/84 – 7/15/84
Saint-Paul	7/19/84 – 7/22/84
Quebec City	7/26/84 – 7/29/84
Magog	8/2/84 – 8/5/84
Hull	8/9/84 – 8/12/84
Montréal	8/23/84 – 8/26/84
Montréal	5/14/85 – 6/2/85
Sherbrooke	6/7/85 – 6/16/85
Ottawa	6/21/85 – 7/1/85
Quebec City	7/5/85 – 7/21/85
Toronto	7/26/85 – 8/11/85
Niagara Falls	8/16/85 – 9/2/85
Montréal	9/8/85 – 9/22/85

### /// 1986: THE BEGINNINGS OF THEATRICALITY

*The Cirque du Soleil was born of heady ambition, the desire to capture the marvelous, to seize two hours of magic from life. Because it offers entertainment for all ages, adults and children alike share a moment of enchantment. Outside the ring, after we had removed our makeup and the stage lights were off, we put this 1986 show together with one goal in mind – to cast a spell on the audience the moment they enter the big top. We offer abandon, magic moments when time stands still.*



*This year, the Cirque du Soleil is making a major breakthrough in its brief career. Barely into our third season, we are already conquering new horizons; embarking on a tour that will take us to Vancouver. Part of this new momentum is the common will shared by performers and administrators to make the Cirque du Soleil a unique and solid cultural institution, as well as a business that contributes to the economy. Our show has been created with love and spirit; we have always felt that our country should have its own circus and all our efforts have been directed to making this dream come true! – Guy Laliberte.*



Following on the heels of their past successes, Cirque du Soleil revamps their young show into *Le Magie Continue*. The magic and fantasy continued to follow them wherever they went (including a brief stint in Vancouver where Cirque had the distinction of representing their Canadian heritage and homeland as part of the festivities surrounding Expo '86), propelling Cirque du Soleil to new heights in attendance and success. That success also allowed them to take risks – for the first time in Cirque history they extended an invitation to the

Chinese government to have a team of its most talented acrobats take part. That invitation grew into the Spinning Meteor performance and a life-long partnership with the Chinese arts.

Thankfully today *Le Magie Continue*, or the 1986 tour, can be seen by fans and spectators alike through home video versions (DVD/VHS), which has not always been made available. And it is through these media that many of us have been able to see the show for the first time. But even from that crude recording we find a theatricality about the show not seen in *Le Cirque Réinventé*, which immediately followed the 1986 tour. This theatricality can be traced to the arrival of Franco Dragone; in fact, much of what you see in *Le Magie Continue* would rear its head again in *Nouvelle Expérience*, *Saltimbanco*, *Alegría*, and even *Dralion* (a non-Dragone work, but tied to Guy Caron, Le Cirque's Director of Creation): the masked, double-faced characters, setting the scene, and introducing the world of the show to the audience one bit at a time. To that end...

## ESSENTIALS

Premiere:	May 1, 1986 (Expo '86) May 18, 1986 (Tour)
Type:	Touring / Big Top
Director:	Franco Dragone
Composer:	René Dupéré
Finale:	September 28, 1986

## Creative Team

<b>Guide</b>	<b>Composer</b>
Guy Laliberté	René Dupéré
<b>Director</b>	<b>Co-Composer</b>
Franco Dragone	Fernand Bernard
<b>Creation</b>	<b>Co-Composer</b>
Guy Caron	Jean Neron
<b>Artistic Director</b>	<b>Lighting Designer</b>
Lorraine Turpin	Luc Lafortune
<b>Set Designer</b>	<b>Costume &amp; Props</b>
Andre Caron	Jean-Yves Cadieux

## PERSONAGES

- Michel Barette – Ringmaster par excellence, Michel Barette has what it takes to create a strong rapport between the public and the performers: a friendly, enthusiastic and perfectly charming host.
- Ben La Barouette – A clown and a poet with a sense of fantasy, Ben La Barouette personifies the magic of the circus, making him the ideal choice as the showman who links the different acts together. He also performs an amazing balancing act on a vertical pole with Tonatiuh Morales. He's easily spotted: wearing a red top hat!
- Rodrigue «Chocolat» Tremblay – For the past twelve years, he has been pleasing audiences with the antics of his stage character. He also performs a bicycle act as well as a parody, «Les Cloches», and brightens up the show with his brief comic appearances.
- Denis Lacombe – Winner of a bronze medal at the 1985 Paris "festival du cirque de demain", this Quebec circus artist is back as the irresistible orchestra conductor wearing ski boots, in addition to a mechanical clown and a trainer of robot dogs.
- The Musicians – Musical support is of primary importance at the Cirque du Soleil. The orchestra, conducted by René Dupéré, consists of three keyboard players: Fernand Bernard, René Dupéré, and Gérard Cyr, with Sylvain Clavette on drums and Claude Vendette playing saxophone.



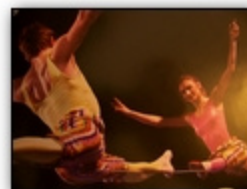
## EXPERIENCE

*La Magie Continue* opens very simply: with a man and a lamp. The two creep across the stage slowly, turning its darkness into day. And soon that light begins to leak into the world around him, illuminating those who inhabit here, invading their privacy: creatures with multi-colored umbrellas in their hands. As these creatures begin to gather in the center of the ring, their umbrellas hover, allowing them to shy away from the light and revert back to golem-like creatures of the dark. This anonymous group only comes to life when "Red Hat" touches them with his own colorful umbrella – and off they go, one-by-one, removing their double-face and showing their true selves to us! And what follows is one amazing spectacle of the human condition.



### TIGHTROPE

Back for their second year with Cirque du Soleil, Agathe and Antoine have reworked last year's success with even more flamboyant staging. Dancing on points and doing head stands on a tightrope has to be seen to be believed!



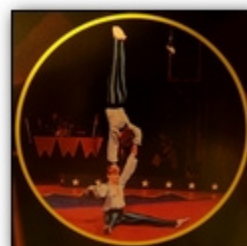
### JUGGLING

Virtuosos in several different disciplines, Nicolette Hazenwinkel, Frédéric Zipperlin and Eric Borgman juggle rings, pins and even soccer balls for their performance - and this after exploding from a box on stage!



### HAND-TO-HAND

Pawel Biegaj and Piotr Matula, the artists for hand-to-hand placed third in the European indoor acrobatics championship and prepared a one-of-a-kind performance -- standing on the shoulders of his catcher, one acrobat actually flips landing back on the same shoulders!



### CYCLES

This solid and talented crew is the cornerstone of Cirque du Soleil. In a crowd-pleasing balancing act on a bicycle are Frédéric Zipperlin, Amélie Demay, Luc Tremblay, Roch Jutras, Tonatiuh Morales, Jean Saucier, Daniel Seart-Boun, Nicolas Dupéré and Piotr Matula.



### EQUILIBRISTE

This young girl (Amélie Demay) from France has been studying the circus arts since the age of twelve. A talented equilibrist, she is suddenly transformed into a charming mechanical doll.

### TRAPEZE

The Double-Faced people have shrouded the stage in a white cloth, giving an impression of rebirth. The cloth sheath then becomes the womb of the earth and from it, Lorraine Desmarais, a Québec writer, actress and choreographer, is born to perform a spectacular aerial act.



### LES CYCLONES

For the 1986 tour André St-Jean and Luc Tremblay celebrated the tenth anniversary of their professional partnership by joining the Cirque. Here they perform as waiters on unicycles; juggling bottles of champagne, balancing chairs on their chins and generally running amok.



### SPRINGBOARD

Then off they go, one after the other onto the springboard in an explosion of springs and jumps: Zigmunt Biegaj, Michael Barette, Jean Paul Seart-Boun, Luc Dagenais, Roch Jutras, Tonatiuh Morales, André

St-Jean and Jean Saucier. When one looks at the Korean Plank performance by the Ring Team, one immediately perceives an eerie likeness to Nouvelle Expérience: the blowing of the whistle by the ringmaster and the rude bellows of Madame Corporation. And even though the performance here is simple in its theatrics compared to what followed, there's still a simply amazing piece which occurred right at the beginning of the act: with the two planks side by side, one man is tossed into the air and instead of landing on the same board, he jumps from one to the end of the second board, sending a second man flying over his head to be caught by the catchers.



### SPINNING METEORS

These three acrobats (Cui Feng Yun, Li Yi Shi and Xu Juan) put on quite a show, performing a balancing act while twirling bowls (using their feet and hands) filled with water. They won the Silver Clown award at the International Circus Festival in Monte-Carlo in 1984. An impeccable performance!



\* \* \*

While *Le Magie Continue* eases out of the starting gate, the show closes on quite a high note. Following the breathtaking performance by the Cirque's Chinese counterparts, all of the performers re-enter the ring to take part in charivari, and then take their much-deserved bows. And sometimes, if you were lucky, you might have had a young Guy Laliberté taking his bows right along with the rest of the artists. Why? Well, for one thing Guy Laliberté is a highly skilled fire swallower who perfected his art in Hawaii. On occasion he was known to present a fascinating performance, backed up by fireworks that were downright spectacular. The act was performed only occasionally, however, but what a special night that would have been!

Itinéraire	
<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Expo '86	5/1/86 – 5/11/86
Sherbrooke	5/18/86 – 5/24/86
Montréal	5/29/86 – 6/30/86
Quebec City	7/5/86 – 7/27/86
Saint-Sauveur	8/1/86 – 8/10/86
Longueuil	8/14/86 – 8/23/86
Ottawa	8/28/86 – 9/7/86
Toronto	9/12/86 – 9/28/86