

Artisans de L'Imaginaire

30 ans du Cirque du Soleil



PART TWO: 1987 - 1992





"Commedia dell'arte Comes to the Circus"

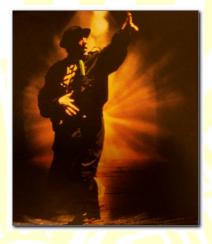
PART TWO: 1987 - 1992

"The clowns have put on their makeup, the jugglers have polished their jugging pins, the aerial artists have pulled their tight-rope taut, the acrobats have honed their concentration and the musicians have tuned their instruments. In the wings, the ringmaster is impatiently waiting for the curtain to rise! All that's left is for you to open up your hearts and let your imagination soar to the world of magic. It's show time...Make way for the circus!" – Guy Laliberte.

Inspired by the best of what was happening internationally, in 1986 Cirque created a new theatricality and adopted a vision whereby rules exist only to be broken. Guy Caron brings in Franco Dragone to teach Cirque artists commedia dell'arte. The mandate is clear: to produce a European-style professional show anchored in acrobatics, with original music and without animals. From the Chinese they learned about perfecting the blend of presentation, music and choreography--about grace and beauty, gestures and smiles. Cirque drew upon an impressionistic sensibility, took everything that had existed in the past, and pulled it into today. In response to all that it has learned, Cirque du Soleil staged La Magie Continue in eight cities across Canada, including



Vancouver, where it put on several performances at the Children's Festival and universal exposition (Expo 86) to varied success.



Cirque gained some traction, but it had its appetite set on bigger sights: North America. To conquer the land south of the border, Cirque began to think of ways to re-invent the circus. By the end of the 1986 tour over 250,000 spectators had seen the show; however, Cirque du Soleil finds itself in dire financial straits. Several factors prevented Cirque from going bankrupt at the end of 1986. The Desjardins Group, which was Cirque du Soleil's financial institution at the time, covered about \$200,000 in bad checks. Also, a financier named Daniel Lamarre, who worked for one of the largest public relations firms in Quebec, represented the company for free, knowing that they didn't have the money to pay his fee. And the Quebec government itself, realizing what they could have on their hands, came through,

and granting Laliberté enough money to stay solvent for another year.

Undeterred, Cirque du Soleil mounted a new tour - Le Cirque Réinventé (or We Reinvent the Circus, in English) - and after a brief time in Canada, visited its American neighbors for the first time. Cirque took the biggest risk in its history up to that point by agreeing to perform at the Los Angeles Festival that September without the funds necessary for a return trip home. After years of honing its craft across Québec and in cities throughout Canada, its future depended entirely on being



successful in the U.S. market. The gamble paid off. Exhilarated by the Californian public's response, Cirque du Soleil becomes an overnight success. The show is performed in Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Monica to rave reviews. Cirque du Soleil even appears twice on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show" program!



They also catch some unwanted attention. Executives from Columbia Pictures become enthralled with the show and meet with Laliberté and Gautheir under the pretense of wanting to make a movie about Cirque du Soleil and its success. Laliberté was unhappy with the deal, claiming it gave Columbia too many rights, in attempting to secure all rights to the production. Laliberté and Gauthier pulled out before it could be concluded, keeping Cirque du Soleil

independent. (Consequently, Guy Laliberté has expressed that experience stands out as a key reason why Cirque remains independent and privately owned today.)

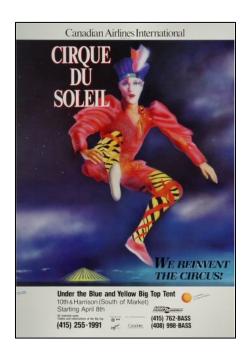




Cirque du Soleil returned to Santa Monica in February 1988, traveled to San Francisco in April, and expanded its U.S. appearances. The company now comprised of 150 people. With the success of *Le Cirque Réinventé* on the West Coast of the United States, Cirque boldly launched a Midwest and eastern itinerary. After a brief appearance at the Calgary Winter Olympics, the blue and yellow big top popped up in the shadows of the World Trade Center in New York City, spending several weeks dazzling Toronto, then Washington D.C. Wherever it went the result was the same: rave reviews and sold-out performances went hand-in-hand. 796,937 people had now seen *Le Cirque Réinventé*, including patrons in Cirque's home town. Despite the cold Canadian winter, the company ended its 1988 tour at home in Montreal. There, as well as all over the continent, Cirque du Soleil won many awards for its entrepreneurship and its innovative and creative spirit.

But not everyone is happy.

Guy Caron leaves the company at the end of the season due to artistic differences over what to do with the money generated by Le Cirque Réinventé's success. Laliberté sees expansion and the start of a second show while Caron wants the money to be saved, with a portion being reinvested in his National Circus School. An agreement is never met and Caron, along with a large number of artists loyal to him, depart. Laliberté seeks out Gilles Ste-Croix, who had been away from Cirque since 1985, as replacement for artistic director. He agrees to return and while the 1989 tour of Le Cirque Réinvené commands successes, more internal troubles ensue: including a failed attempt to add Normand Latourelle as a third man to the Laliberté-Gauthier partnership. This triumvirate lasts only six months before disagreements prompt Gauthier and Laliberté to buy out Latourelle. By the end of 1989, Cirque du Soleil was once again in a deficit.





The year marks the end of Cirque du Soleil's original "five-year plan". "What will the next five years bring?" Cirque du Soleil asked. And would these years eclipse those that came before it? Buoyed by its growing creative success, Cirque du Soleil begins attracting artists from around the world, particularly Russians whose proud circus and acrobatic tradition makes a valuable contribution. But what can the company do when financials are tight? Cirque attempts to revive *Le Cirque Réinventé* for a fourth tour (1990), which

begins in Montreal the attempt is abandoned after weak critical reception (it would send the show to London and Paris later on). Instead, the powers that be craft a new show based on the plans Guy Caron originally drew up before his departure.

Originally intended to be called *Eclipse*, the show is renamed *Nouvelle Expérience* (or Cirque du Soleil II: A New Experience) and draws inspiration from Jules Verne's "La Chasse du Météore" whereby the performers are playing the parts of jewels spread around the Earth. Franco Dragone agreed to return — albeit reluctantly — but only if he had full creative control of the show's environment (something he did not have with 1986's *Le Magie*



Continue. One of the first things he did was to remove the curtain that separated the artist from the audience, so that they would both feel part of a larger show.

Whereas in a traditional circus the artist could go past the curtain and drop his role, Dragone had created an environment where the artist had to remain in character for the full length of the production.



Montreal is the setting for the world premiere of Cirque's most successful show yet, *Nouvelle Expérience*, in a new, 2,500-seat big top. With this new production, Cirque du Soleil shatters all previous records for ticket sales, and it decides to make its first foray into Europe, staging "We Reinvent the Circus" in London and Paris. Although not runaway successes (approximately 161,102 spectators see the show in both cities), the overseas excursions have just begun. Suddenly it begins to happen.

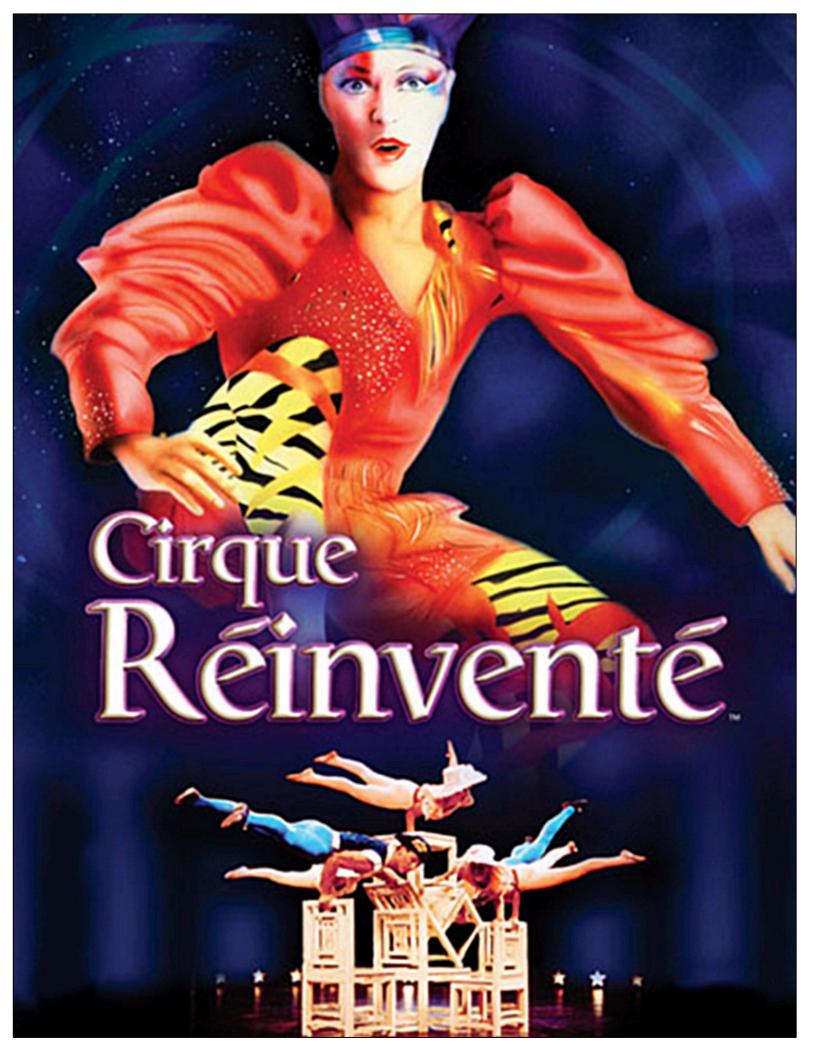
The show, like a reluctant spirit hounded by a posse of mediums, slowly reveals itself. An organic resonance emerges: each act finds its place, a succession of moments as fleeting as they are eternal. Franco Dragoné impact is enormous: He pushes Cirque's theatricality to new limits, informing Cirque's approach for many years to come. Key to Franco's indelible stamp will be his successful creative association with set designer Michel Crête and, later, costume designer Dominique Lemieux amongst many others.

Throughout 1991, *Nouvelle Expérience* continues on its travels across North America, opening up new cities - like Atlanta – for Cirque du Soleil. By the end of an extensive 19-month tour of Canada and the United States, 1.3 million (1,212,926) spectators have cheered the show. Long before the house lights go down and the excitement begins to build under the Grand Chapiteau, designers and craftspeople have put in months of work behind the scenes to create the perfect costumes and makeup to bring life to a cast of characters. Their work is about to pay off in ways they cannot yet imagine.



* * *

In this section we take a peek at Cirque du Soleil's next endeavors: *Le Cirque Réinventé*, *Nouvelle Expérience* and *Fascination* (although created in 1992, it is a combination of *Le Cirque Réinventé* and *Nouvelle Expérience*).



Le Cirque Réinventé

Where magic is pure and fantasy real... Where dreams cease being just dreams!

Beginning in LaSalle in 1987 and ending in Paris in 1990, Le Cirque Réinventé (or "We Reinvent the Circus"), is the show that elevated Cirque du Soleil from a provincial rag-tag band of performers to a colorful set of international entertainers, creating nothing less than a phenomenon in the process. Today we as fans are intimately familiar with the story: how Cirque banked its success in West by performing outside their native Canada at the Los Angeles Festival in summer 1987, later criss-crossing the North American continent, before picking up stakes and sailing across the pond to England and France. By today's standards the production is a simple one, without an esoteric story or theme, but if you look hard enough you can see a simple thread, the beginnings of a tapestry, which would be expanded and expounded upon year over year.

The colorful production centers on a small group of people who we'll call "Ordinary People." These persons are dressed in everyday clothes, and mill about the big top exchanging looks of amazement with the audience. They, like us, have been drawn into a realm of fantasy – not knowing whether they are dreaming or whether what they see is real. But before they know it, these "Ordinary

ESSENTIALS

Premiere:	December 25, 1993	
Type:	Resident / Theater	
Director:	Franco Dragone	
Composer:	René Dupéré & Benoît Jutras	
Location:	Treasure Island, Las Vegas	

Creative Team

Guide Composer Guy Laliberté René Dupéré Director Composer Franco Dragone Benoît Jutras **Lighting Designer** Creation Guy Caron Luc Lafortune Choreographer **Costume Designer** Debra Brown Michel Crête

Set Designer

Andre Caron



People" begin to respond to the forces at work here, and let out the folly and playfulness buried deep inside them. Joined by interesting characters such as the Queen of the Night, the King of Fools and their helpers, they produce an atmosphere from which the transformed people play out their destiny – as Circus performers! And with the help of the ringmaster – Ti-Claude – he will guide them toward their destiny. Our destiny!

/// 1987 - BRIDGING THE GAP

Stage director for a circus? Well, that's because not many Western circuses have one. Franco believes that the circus and the theater play on the same registers of perception and emotion to a very large extent. "I don't see why art has to be divided up into small compartments, each with its own label," explains the Cirque du Soleil's stage director. "What we do is essentially a circus show in the sense that the emphasis is on the acts themselves," he adds. "Strictly speaking, there is no scenario. What I try to do is to establish relations between the characters and create moments of intensity. Each act is treated as a separate entity."

Franco Dragone works primarily with the "Theatre Campus" in Belgium, but what hasn't prevented him from designing three shows in a row for the Cirque du Soleil. Now 34, Italian-born but Belgian by choice, he studied at the Belgian Royal Conservatory before working as an actor; producer and teacher in both amateur and professional theater. But he really learned the ropes at the "Theater Campus," which put on a number of shows with non-actors. In 1982, the National Circus School invited him to come to Montreal and organize a workshop program on commedia dell'arte. He supervised the production of the school's year-end shows in 1983 and 1984, and finally became the young Cirque du Soleil's producer in 1985. "The 1987 show is more acrobatic," he explains. "The general concept is to present a number of familiar, every-day characters who invent their own circus persona. As the show unfolds, the characters begin to glimpse their special inner light, which ultimately shines through in a burst of color."

When **Guy Caron** talks with his characteristic enthusiasm, both halves of his rather comic mustache bob in symmetry; a hilarious and hind-hearted storyteller, he is never at a loss for an image. "I'm a catalyst," he says. "I polarize energy like a magnet and when I reverse the charge, the energy explodes in every direction, and people just let loose!" The 37-year old artistic director is unquestionably the "heart" of the company. He is also the founder of the National Circus School and Canada's foremost specialist of the circus. Guy Caron, who is equally at home wearing the hat of artistic director, actor, clown or scriptwriter, learned almost everything he knows as a street performer. He did theater workshop in the early 1970's then went to Hungary to perfect his techniques at the Budapest Circus School. He's also criss-crossed the province as a clown with the "Chatouille and Chocolat" team. Guy Caron is an explorer in constant search of new ideas and images; he's always wanted to create a unique circus, one that, "combines theatrical and traditional techniques and is inspired by the oriental troupes," he says. "There is no reason why the circus can't change with the times."

For original music man **René Dupéré**, the instrument is a synthesizer. The means, the accents and the rhythms of the tango, jazz, rock and music hall he uses to compose sound-scapes far removed from the boom and crash of the traditional circus band. "Music is like a soundtrack, a stream of sound that has the power to shape our emotions." Himself the son of a musician, the 41-year old has reached a new point in a long career that began in his native Quebec City with the harmonica, trumpet and piano, and continued with a degree in music from Laval University and 13 years as a secondary school music teacher. A former member of Cirque's original band, La Fanfafonie, Rene has become the circus' official composer. Maestro Dupéré thrives on original musical images. "When I'm composing for the trapeze, I get so excited that I want to get up and fly!"

You could say that **Luc LaFortune** is a juggler, but not the kind you'll ever see in the ring. As the circus' lighting and special effects man, he juggles with light, shadow and color and never misses an opportunity to play visual tricks and arouse the audience's curiosity. Now 28, Luc joined the Cirque in 1984 after studying at Concordia University in Montreal and working as a lighting engineer in television, variety shows and the theater. "In the circus," he maintains, "you have to remember three basic rules: the audience has to be able to see everything that's going on, you have to avoid blinding the performer or performers, and the general effect must serve the act and be pleasing to the eye. I do a lot of backlighting and saturated color, and I love to mix colors! During the year I try to attend as many shows as possible to come up with lighting effects that might be effective in the circus. Nothing ventured, nothing gained!"

While you're wandering around the great tent, you might run into a group of fairies, a court jester or a couple of seedy-looking cabaret characters. The person to blame is probably **Michel Crête**! Michel Crête, 33, joined the circus this year as costume designer. "I wanted to bring fairy tale and magical creatures to life for the audience," says the graduate of the National Theater School of Canada, who has designed the scenery for several very successful plays over the past 3 years, including Being at Home with Claude by Rene Daniel Dubois, Fool for Love with Marie Tifo and Guy Tauvette, Carmen by Robert Lepage, Brighton Beach Memoirs performed by Jean Duceppe's Company and Dube's Florence at the N.C.T. Why did he join the circus? He likes the spirit of friendship, he enjoys a challenge and he finds the work stimulating! "In the theater," says Crête, "costumes are designed with the characters in mind, but in the circus, their design depends on the type of performance, I wanted a compromise between the two, and the athletic side of the circus made me more conscious of the body and the way it is made."

Michel Crête has captured the athlete's energy by creating strange and fascinating characters that explode into a myriad of colors!

• Ti-Claude (Ringmaster) – Michael Barrette (James Keylon in 1989), one of the veteran performers at the Cirque du Soleil, trained as an actor and appeared often on the stage. Michael has concentrated on developing his acrobatic skills since joining the Cirque. You will have the opportunity to appreciate his boundless energy and talent at several points during the show. "Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen". This is the first official contact between the audience and the Ring Master. There's something about the way he taps his foot and wags his head. Since he is the symbol of authority, the Ring Master delights in telling the clowns what they can and can't do, and he even chides



the audience for siding with the unruly rogues. There isn't much of the traditional ring master about him. Why, he's just about to leave the ring to appear as Ti-Claude, who will eventually guide those you have yet to meet toward a magical metamorphosis.

• Queen of the Night / King of Fools – Out of the billowing white cloud emerge the Queen of the Night (or King of Fools) and her/his helpers. They will weave the web of magic in which our Ordinary People are turned into acrobats.

• The Ordinary People -- Now, the ring is full of ordinary people dressed in their everyday clothes, milling about and exchanging looks of amazement with the audience. Is this a dream or is it really true? Who knows? The truth is that they begin responding to some mysterious urge to let out some of the folly and playfulness buried deep down in each of them, and in each of us. Arabesques, cartwheels, handstands... they can hardly contain



their joy! Is this dream or reality? All we can tell is these characters are being drawn into a world of fantasy so transformed they've become an integral part of the show. And what a show!

Music, movement, color and light combine to produce an atmosphere of true enchantment. In the acts that follow, each of the performers will play out his or her destiny.

HAND BALANCING

Eric and Amélie met in 1980 as students of Claude Victoria at the Annie Fratellini Circus School in Paris. Within a year, they had placed second at the Louis Merlin Scholarship competitions in Paris. They performed together for two years with the Fratellini Circus before deciding to pursue separate careers. Eric traveled extensively doing acrobatics in the circus, film, cabaret and advertising. Meanwhile, Amélie modeled and did some screen acting and advertising work. In 1986, she presented her "Clockwork Doll" act at the Cirque du Soleil. Eric and Amélie are back together again in a hand-balancing act of stunning purity and precision.

SLACKWIRE

Masha Dimitri was only 6 when she made her first appearance in the ring with the Knie Circus in Switzerland. After studying in Hungary at the Budapest Circus School until 1981, she returned to Switzerland and soon graduated from the Dimitri Theater School, where she studied wire-walking with Szilard Szekely. Masha subsequently worked with the Pickle Family Circus of San Francisco and the Gruss French National Circus in Paris. Perfect balance and balletic grace characterize Masha's use of her preferred instrument, the slack wire. Her act is a wonderful complement to the tango number danced by the whole troupe.



CHAIR BALANCING

Although he is only 23, this young acrobat had accumulated 13 years of experience since he began working with the Targowek Acrobatic Club in his native Poland, where he has already been national champion three times. In 1982, he won first place at the World Championships held in London, England. The figures he performs in his chair balancing act require tremendous agility, flexibility... and concentration! The routing you will see was put together last spring with the help of two acrobatics



coaches visiting from the People's Republic of China. The acrobats name is Christopher Suszek.

WHAT A TEAM!

Luc Dagenais, Roch Jutras, Alain Gauthier and André St Jean form an acrobatic foursome that never stops! They take turns in a whirlwind of feats of balance and agility. As you'll soon see, they know how to keep the audience "on its toes" too!

CATITAN CACTUS (CLOWN)

Former tree-planter, carpenter, bricklayer and label-sicker, Catitan Cactus never was one to lay about doing nothing. After he happened upon his career as a clown in Downtown Mexico City while celebrating a friend's birthday in 1968, Catitan search high and low for a circus ring to perform in. He came to Canada in 1976.

VOLTIGE

In March 1984, Andrew Watson (27 years old) and Jacqueline Williams (23) quit their office jobs and signed up with the Gerry Cottles Circus School in London. They made their debut with the circus of the same name. In 1986, their aerial acrobatics routine won them the bronze medal at the World "Circus of Tomorrow" Festival in Paris. Since then, Andrew and Jacqueline have worked in England with the Senso Circus and with the Roncalli Circus of West Germany.

DENIS LACOMBE (CLOWN)

Bronze medalist at the World "Circus of Tomorrow" Festival in Paris in 1985, Denis Lacombe toured with the Cirque du Soleil in 1985 and 1986 and performed with the Big Apple Circus of New York during its 1986-1987 season. The Cirque du Soleil is pleased to have Denis present his hilarious orchestra conductor routine during the California segment of its 1987 tour. When Denis is ambushed by an invisible man, the result is one of the funniest tragi-comic episodes you could possibly imagine. When he plays a mechanical clown caught up in a zany adventure, or turns into a mad orchestra conductor who gets carried overboard directing his tape recorder... Actually, whatever Denis does, you're sure to be a mazed.

KOREAN PLANK

This team of dynamics acrobats includes Alain Gauthier, André St-Jean, Luc Dagenais and Roch Jutras. They obviously have great fun doing their routine of jumps, pirouettes and spins... and the faster the better! An acrobatic Jack-of-all-trades with training in Geology, Alain won the gold, silver and bronze medals at the 1986 Canadian trampoline championships. André is a trampoline teacher, coach, and judge at international competitions. If you watch Luc and Roch, you'll probably

detect the influence of their background in theatre. This is year number two with the Cirque du Soleil for Luc, Roch and André, all of whom studied at the National Circus School.











TOWER ON WHEELS

The cycling of the Cirque du Soleil won't break any records for speed, but they can get an astounding number of people on the same bike! Most members of this team have been working together for the last three years at the National Circus School in Montreal. Nathalie Sabourin and Nicolas Dupéré are two experts in this exacting discipline whom you'll see in this dazzling display of group coordination.

BENNY LE GRAND (CLOWN)

After five years of putting the glue on fly-catchers, Benny Le Grand enters the select world of the performing arts. He leaves Saskatoon and is hired on as a spare tire by a traveling circus. He later writes, produces and performs the worst magic acts ever seen on North American TV. Benny is the perfect example of the independent artist all funding agencies flee like the plague. The Cirque du Soleil thinks Benny le Grand is just "Great"!

TRICK CYCLING

All three members of the Zhao family are natives of China's capital, Beijing. These superb acrobats will be performing the incredible bicycle routine that won them the gold medal at the 1986 World "Circus of Tomorrow" Festival in Paris. Performers: Zhao Yanping, Zhao Yanyan, Zhao Yanyang.





/// 1988 – THE CIRCUS AS A BUSINESS?

With all the fire and optimism of youth, Cirque du Soleil set out to reinvent the art of the circus, an art hitherto almost unknown in Canada. Back in that first year, we already had the feeling that nothing would come between us and the realization of their cherished dream. And indeed, in the space of four short years, the Cirque du Soleil has become a success story, gaining recognition not only in Quebec and Canada but also internationally.

This tremendously gratifying achievement would never have been possible without the unflagging determination creativity and willingness to go one step further displayed out by every member of our company. This was especially true for 1987, the year of Cirque's first appearances in the United States and a tour of California that can only be described as a triumph. Although Cirque's still basking in the glow, we've no intention of resting on our laurels.

This year - 1988 - is the last year of our five-year plan, and a very important point in the evolution of the Cirque du Soleil. To consolidate our breakthrough in the American market, we've set our sights on the Eastern US. The challenge is colossal, but our accomplishments of the last four years told us we can do it! – Guy Laliberté.

Far from being polar opposites, creativity and business go together like hand and glove. That's long been the guiding principle of the Cirque du Soleil, a Quebec-based performing arts company with an operating budget of \$10 million for 1988.

Back in 1984, the project looked like an incredible gamble (especially to the bank managers). Today, the Cirque has achieved a level of success that makes it unique in the history of the arts in Quebec and Canada. The key to that success was inventiveness, innovation, the desire to create something truly original. And, of course, a high quality product that speaks a universal language and appeals to all cultures and age groups. Last but not least, as the company's directors Normand Latourelle, Daniel Gauthier and Guy Laliberte are quick to point out, there's the fact that the Cirque du Soleil "has always delivered the goods," i.e., "a high-tech circus with a strong theatrical component that relies heavily on effective musical accompaniment and the latest in staging techniques."

When asked what makes him tick, Guy Laliberte responds, as artist and administrator, that his goal remains to surpass himself. "Anything is possible," he says, "if you're prepared to do what it takes to make it worthwhile." In his case, that means unswerving determination, the kind of honesty that inspires immediate respect and a very rare gift of intuition, plus the many other qualities of Guy's unique personality. All of which are inseparably bound up with the destiny of the Cirque du Soleil, and the company's growing reputation for fresh thinking, sharp business acumen and second-to-none standards of quality.

Those ingredients were essential even in those early days in 1984 to achieve what the community of street performers in Quebec had been dreaming about for 15 years: a traveling circus of their own.

The perfect opportunity came with the festivities organized to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City by Jacques Cartier. That very summer, funded to the tune of 97% by various levels of government, the Cirque du Soleil unveiled a new artistic concept and launched into an 11-city tour of Quebec. The tour was a resounding success. Better still, the marketing study conducted as the circus moved along indicated that the future potential was considerable.

The next logical step was to take the leap. Not only did the Cirque forge ahead; it was able to decrease its dependency of government grants to 50% in 1985 and 27% in 1986, by seeking out and developing ties with private industry. Artistically, the company gained recognition throughout Quebec and then in Ontario when its first tour outside of Quebec was organized. Expo 86 in Vancouver brought expansion and financial consolidation. However, to break even, the company would have to be on the road at least eight months of the year. The solution? Export the show.

In 1987, government subsidies accounted for only 15% of the company's operating budget. A turning point was reached when the Cirque headed south across the border last summer after a tour of Quebec and performed the opening of the prestigious Los Angeles Festival before embarking on a three-month tour of California. The praise was enthusiastic and the tour got extensive media coverage.

Meanwhile, the Cirque was turning heads in the Quebec business community for its success in exporting - of all things - a cultural event. New openings led to an internal reorganization that included provisions for indoor performances, the rental of the circus' costume and set production facilities and the marketing of secondary products such as tee-shirts, coloring books, educational toys, video-cassettes and records.

In 1988, with the proportion of government funding down to 10% and its budget in the \$10 million range, the Cirque du Soleil has met its objectives. This last year of a five-year plan ends the first phase of the development of the young company, whose sights are set on consolidating its presence in North America and gaining a strong foothold in the Eastern United States. The expanded foreign programming of the circus has resulted in further changes in the administrative structure of the company, which presently employs 122 people, and emphasizes the need for a comprehensive development strategy.

The success of the first American tour means that the door to the future is wide open. The only limit is imagination, and there's no shortage of that at the Cirque du Soleil. For instance, according to Guy Laliberte, the Cirque "could become a tremendous bonus for its active employees by letting them enter and develop subsectors linked to the cultural sector while benefitting from the company's organizational support both at the level of production and administration and artistically."

Does that mean that the Cirque du Soleil might be the seed of something yet to come? "The range of possibilities is wide open," he counters. Who knows? Perhaps the poet president has already started working on a completely new multidisciplinary concept the likes of which this country has never seen before!



CHAIR BALANCING

One by one, the chairs are raised slowly and placed ever so gently on top of each other to form a pyramid. Like a larger- than-life house of cards, the structure is so delicate, so fragile that everyone holds their breath in silence, lest the slightest gust of wind cause it to topple to the ground. Erected in the purest Chinese tradition, the pyramid is so tall that anyone who climbs to the top looks as small as a child from the ground. Suddenly, the acrobats do a flip and balance themselves upside down on their column of chairs! Wow!



There is total silence when Daniel Le Bateleur makes his entrance. A single gesture and expectancy once again gives way to astonishment. The juggler plays as much with the rhythms as he does with the objects he sets in motion with amazing deftness and speed. Balls fly faster and faster until they're just a blur. A dizzying sight! Daniel's performance is more than just a feat of dexterity. It's also a feat of imagination in which time and space become one.





KOREAN PLANK

In their parody of Yuppie rituals, the dashing daredevils pirouette, spin and fly to the frenzied rhythm of the music. Their penguin-like waddle is a delightful take-off on the non-stop lifestyle of aspiring businessmen who never lose their grip... at least not on their briefcases. Fortunately, there is a way to blow off steam. You just have to let yourself be catapulted sky-high on a teeter board!



TONATIUH MORALES (CLOWN)

The gag may be subtle or slapstick and the intention boyish or biting, but he always seems to know what buttons to push to trigger a roar of laughter. Tonatiuh tries to go unnoticed, except during the takeoff he does early in the show. To no avail. You'll find him popping up all over the place, and doing what you least expect! The 1987 Circuba festival held in Havana found Tonatiuh just as crazy as we do, and gave him first prize in clowning to prove it!



FIL DE FER

What better compliment to this gentle moving performance than the slightly melancholic lilt of the oboe? Using dance an acrobatics for inspiration, Agathe Olivier and Antoine Rigot have created a wonderfully paced routine. The proof of their skill is that they make a feat of poise, timing and balance look so deceptively easy! This act was hailed at the World "Circus of Tomorrow" Festival, where they won the silver medal in tightrope in 1983. The pair previously toured with Cirque during the 1985 and 1986 tours.



CONTORTION

If you think you know how to tie yourself into knots, wait until you've seen Angela Laurier. Watch her put her arms and legs into positions that hardly seem possible and move so effortlessly from one position to another. It's simply unbelievable! Her flexibility literally defies the laws of nature. But when your reaction of astonishment passes, you'll begin to appreciate the consummate ease of her transitions, the perfect lines, the sensuality of each movement. Don't be fooled by the composure and the winsome smile: Angela Laurier is a fascinating and amazingly disciplined talent!





HAND BALANCING

As Eric Varelas and Amelie Demay (barely out of their teens) prolong the slower tempos of the tango to the breaking point, the tension rises, drawing the audience closer and closer into the circle of magnetic attraction that connects the two young performers. Theirs is a world of passion, of perfect yet unspoken communication, of two bodies and min



passion, of perfect yet unspoken communication, of two bodies and mind moving, feeling and thinking as one.

Yet their style is anything but pretentious, and their execution is imbued with a dual sense of self-assured elegance and total vulnerability that gives true meaning to the words "Grace and Balance". When we watch these two performers barely out of their teens we are not just beholding a brilliant display of acrobatic skill. Eric and Amelie actually reveal themselves through their medium-and judging by audience reactions everywhere the spectators definitely get the message.



VOLTIGE

The excitement climbs a notch with the performance of the Andrews, two artists from Britain who execute a series of breathtaking acrobatics suspended in the air at the very top of the Big Top. This is thru "no holds barred" entertainment. With nothing but one another for support, they leap and spin far above the ground, holding the audience on the edge of its seats from beginning to end. The Watson-William tandem is one of the few doing russian trapeze with neither net nor safety wire. Their movements are so graceful and effortless that it's hard to believe that gravity exists.



TOWER ON WHEELS

This act gets practically the whole cycling complement out. As they circle the ring and climb one after the other onto the bicycle, the performers piece together a moving sculpture that branches upward like a tree. This chinese inspired routine is one of the most gripping events in the entire show. The brilliant thing about it is that an incredibly difficult feat of balance looks so easy. No wonder it won a bronze medal at the 1987 World "Circus of Tomorrow" Festival in Paris.

TRICK CYCLING

Perched on his bike in the ring, Luc Tremblay is the personification of coordination, balance, strength and concentration. Things lots of children dream of doing like spinning on one wheel and balancing on his handlebars, Luc pulls off as if there was no such thing as gravity. One of the few trick-cycling instructors in North America, Luc conceived the award-winning "Tower on Wheels" routine you'll see during the show.

/// 1989 & 1990 - RE-INVENTING RÉINVENTÉ

In 1984 we gave ourselves five years to establish our organization. We started as street performers, and we are now considered an International Cultural Enterprise. We should be proud! However, the challenge still remains. Beyond all success, how can we continue this magic and this dream that has made us what we are? The show that Le Cirque du Soleil presents this year will answer for itself. The 1989 edition is more theatrical, more acrobatic, and more colorful than ever. Furthermore, Le Cirque goes international: never have we invited so many foreign artists. The emotion and the awakening will still emanate throughout America this year because as in the past years, they will hear the wheels of our Caravan full of happiness. – Guy Laliberté

CHAIR BALANCING

Performed by at least four artists, this act is a pretty nifty show of balance. Here, they stack chairs in an ever changing assortment climbing higher and higher to the ceiling. When in place, one, two and eventually all four balance themselves on the leaning contraption. This act gives new meaning to "Leaning Tower of Pisa"! Performers: Alain Gauthier, Marie-Josée Lévesque, Amélie Major and Ninon Parent.

FIL DE FER

From hoops to umbrellas, Pasqualina uses a myriad of objects to bounce her way across the wire. Dressed in Yellow with blue highlights and a tuft of features, Pasqualina w as a sight to see!



ACROBATIC DANCE

Two striking young women, Bulgarian world champion gymnasts, Maia Taskova and Mariela Spasova, dance through a routine which incorporates strips of gossamer cloth, swirling ribbons of colors from the tips of long sticks while doing ball manipulation.



ROLA BOLA

Rola Bola is a traditional Chinese performance and is usually mastered by young men. Here we see a trio of young men and their leader perform this magnificent act of balance. As one can imagine, balancing on the Bola is not easy -- and flipping bowls on top of your head is not an easy feat when you're trying to keep your balance! This act is a great one to show balance and stamina and is not to be missed live! Performers: Hou Yi, Wang Jian, Hou Aman, Liu Qing.



T RICK CYCLING

Like Luc Tremblay before him in 1988, in 1989, Angelo T. Ballan took over the duties for a single rider trick-cycling act. Costumed in a red shirt and white pants, Angelo takes to the stage.



TOWER ON WHEELS

A tower of people on a bicycle! A dozen people climb on a set of bicycles and form a tower - similar to a banquine act only on wheels! Performers: Amélie Major, Alain Gauthier, Hou Yi, Ninon Parent, Colin Heath, Marie-Andrée Richard, Hou Aman, Marie-Eve Dumais, Li Qian, Marie-Josée Lévesque, Jacinthe Normandeau, Annette Devick, and Frank Michel.

HAND BALANCING

This duo, dressed alike, shows us that a duo can work flawlessly together and show just how much the body can be pushed into doing just about anything. Performers: Éric Varelas and Amélie Demay.

JUGGLING

Among the outstanding international cast is Frederich "Boul" Zipperlen from France, a creative juggler and contortionist. He emerges in the ring from a gigantic cellophane ball and begins a beguine of dancing, juggling and balancing that dazzles the audience. He contorts his body into graceful knots while crystal balls fly from his fingers into the air. One lands on his head and moves smoothly from forehead to ear, then ear to neck, glides down his arm to the elbow's bend, then up again to a bicep bump. Boul (his nickname in French means... you guessed it, "ball") specializes in balls. Now he juggles five, and, catching one on his neck he juggles the rest until they come to a soft landing on his back and, like neat little soldiers, march down the length of his spine. He smiles and suddenly three balls move under his leg, merging with two others into a five ball cascade. Next he does a knee catch and a forehead balance, his body drops into the splits and twists artfully into a neck stand with a ball spinning on a finger of each hand. Contortions now begin in earnest. With one ball held tightly between his feet he vaults into a handstand, his feet dip in a gradual arch to his head. The ball drops to his neck while his body lowers to a resting place, chest on the ground. The crowd is suitably impressed, imagining the hours of work involved in mastering these seemingly effortless maneuvers. A court jester moves behind him holding a hat. Boul bends backward from the waist and shoots five ping-pong balls, rapid fire, in an arc. They plop safely one after the other into the waiting bowler. It's his favorite trick.









KOREAN PLANK

Ahh, the Penguins. They get their name for their black and white dress but differ just slightly from normal penguins -- as these have devo style yellow caps. Performing their Korean Plank act with precision, these artists are definitely top notch as they w willfully spring their bodies into the air and wow us all with their twists, turns and somersaults. The performers: Stéphane Ricordel, Frank Michel, Bogdan Zajac, Alain Gauthier, Angelo T. Ballan, Daniel Cyr, Colin Heath, Annette Devick, Marie-Josée Lévesque, Marie-Andrée Richard, Jacinthe Normandeau, Amélie Major, Amélie Demay and Ninon Parent.

TRAPEZE

Performed by Stéphane Drouard, Frank Michael, Stéphane Ricordel, Marie-Hélène Carasse and Odile Simonin in Pink and Blue costumes, they hurl themselves across the skies - jumping from bar to bar.

BALTHAZAR (CLOWN)

Balthazar (whom Cirque fans may recognize from La Nouba) performs "Window with String". He goes through a series of wonderfully witty visual effects, changing from window to stringed instrument, and then becoming a spider's web, engulfing his face complete with a buzzing fly.

* * *

Le Cirque Réinventé has won many awards including - La Rose d'Or 1989, Montreux, Switzerland; Emmy Award 1989, United States; four Gemini Awards 1989, Canada; Ace Award 1990, National Cable Television Association, United States; Silver Medal 1990, and the 32nd New York International Film and TV Festival.

1987: North American Tour

• LaSalle: 5/7/87 - 5/13/87

• Sherbrooke: 5/18/87 - 5/23/87

• Montréal: 5/28/87 - 7/3/87

• Québec: 7/7/87 - 7/31/87

• Saint-Sauveur: 8/4/87 - 8/10/87

• Longueuil: 8/14/87 - 8/23/87

• Los Angeles: 9/3/87 - 9/27/87

• San Diego: 10/2/87 - 10/25/87

• Santa Monica: 10/29/87 - 11/22/87

1988: North American Tour

• Santa Monica: 2/4/88 - 2/21/88

• Calgary: 2/25/88 - 2/27/88

• Santa Monica: 3/1/88 - 4/3/88

• San Francisco: 4/8/88 - 5/8/88

• New York: 5/25/88 - 7/10/88

• Toronto: 7/23/88 - 8/28/88

• Washington, DC: 9/9/88 - 10/9/88

• Montréal: 10/25/88 - 11/13/88

1989: North American Tour

• Miami: 4/13/89 - 5/7/89

• Chicago: 5/18/89 - 6/18/89

• Ste-Foy: 6/27/89 - 7/23/89

• San Francisco: 8/8/89 - 9/10/89

• Santa Monica: 9/20/89 - 11/12/89

• San Diego: 11/20/89 - 12/17/89

• Phoenix: 11/28/89 - 1/21/90

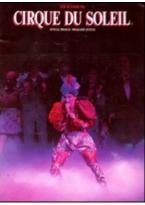
1990: European Tour

• Montréal: 7/11/90 - 7/15/90

• London: 7/31/90 - 9/16/90

Paris: 10/2/90 - 12/30/90











NOUVELLE EXPERIENCE

Replace Lions with Magic and Tigers with Fantasy and the Circus is redefined!

"The circus as we know it is only about three centuries old, but even in antiquity the world had its public entertainers, tumblers, jesters, and mimes", Cirque du Soleil once mused. There's the cruel and bloody combat that took place in the Arenas of the Roman Empire, but athletes, acrobats, and dancers also performed there. The circus traditions, anchored in the cultures of many peoples, have withstood the test of time since the Middle Ages, in the East as well as the West. "Cirque du Soleil draws on this rich heritage to purify and update the art of circus," they say.

The Cirque's original troupe came into being in a region with no circus tradition, through street performers were ubiquitous in Quebec. Guy Caron, artistic director at the time, and director Franco Dragone were able to build upon the theatrically inherent in street performance. They had a staying, which has become very close to the performers' hearts: "Behind each

perilous leap, there is a purpose, an intention, an individual, an emotion."

Thus was born an unprecedented fusion of street performance, theatre, and circus. Ever since, the independence of circus arts and theater has been an essential part of Cirque du Soleil's productions. Added to this basic mix are dance, music, and *commedia dell'arte*. The visual arts are represented in the lighting, sets, and costumes. All of these disciplines are not

costumes. All of these disciplines are not merely juxtaposed - they are united in an inseparable whole.

ESSENTIALS

Premiere:	May 5, 1990 (Tour) November 8, 1992 (Mirage)
Type:	Touring / Big Top
Director:	Franco Dragone
Composer:	René Dupéré
Finale:	December 21, 1991 (Tour) November 21, 1993 (Mirage)

Creative Team

Guide Composer Guy Laliberté René Dupéré **Lighting Designer** Director Franco Dragone Luc Lafortune Creation Sound Designer Gilles Ste-Croix Guy Desrochers Choreographer **Costume Designer** Debra Brown Dominique Lemieux Set Designer **Makeup Designer** Michel Crête Nathalie Gagné



/// THE THEATER OF CIRCUS

"The show is also inspired by the cosmopolitan make-up of the troupe, as the circus provides a spot where all functions and social roles come together," emphasizes Franco Dragone. The biggest surprise is that Cirque du Soleil has drawn people who love circus and people who hate it! Though the Cirque takes the spirit of the circus to heart, it happily breaks the old rules - the conventional master of ceremonies, the traditional circus characters, and the climactic charivari.

Breaking the Rules

Paradoxically, the circus spirit is more present than ever in the new concept, distilled to a minimalistic purity that leaves plot behind. And thus with Nouvelle Experience, the creators of Cirque du Soleil have written a new chapter in what they've termed as "the history of the circus in the west." The show is totally original, the fruit of five years of exploration, research, and discovery. There are new artists, fabulous costumes, audacious lighting, an original musical score, colorful sets, a new Big Top, a rejuvenated production team and the company beginning to expand its horizons - visiting new cities and delighting new audiences.

"The very definition of the Cirque du Soleil is the will to act, to invent, and to grow. But how do we make it happen? After seven years, how do we start again from zero, and risk all the success and security that we've achieved?" Guy Laliberté posed to us then. "The show that we are presenting this year will answer these questions. It's absolutely different from anything we've created before. But you can be sure that one thing hasn't changed: our desire to entertain you, to make you laugh and cry - to stir your hearts."

It's the Nouvelle Expérience Cirque du Soleil!

Risk and Excess

Paradoxically, the circus spirit is more present than ever in the new concept, distilled to a minimalistic purity that leaves plot behind. Michel Crête's designs literally set the stage: the guy wires and supports are in plain view. The audience can even see the costume changes. The physical exploits are without precedent. The Cirque du Soleil acrobats offer the delight of seeing the impossible made possible. "The circus gives the same pleasure as a child feels accomplishing a new physical feat," observes Dominique Lemieux, costume designer. "It's the contentment found when ease is born of repetition of a movement."

The round circus stage awaits you with the promise of a thrilling experience. The Big Top imbues you with a taste for risk and excess. Cirque du Soleil invites you to take a trip to the country of raw and pure emotion, a voyage under a fluid sky, into landscapes replete with contrasts. The sense of theater that characterized the Cirque's first shows has been taken even further this time. "Since 1984, we have dealt primarily with circus acts in a theatrical context," explains Franco Dragone. "The concept has widened. The public will see the physical theater itself integrated into the numbers." To press the point home, the performance areas are linked by a catwalk.

The theatrically is brought to the fore through the elimination of pretense. The concept of the show allows for use of props as what they really are, without masking or disguising them. It is enough to light the trapeze safety net to make it into a sail. The trapeze artist flies without wings. The most incongruous elements are coherently linked.

There are a beginning, an end, intense climates, rapid rhythms, and slow ones: not a false note in the piece. The tone, the play, the movements, and the vision ring true. The audience will always feel a little disorientated. It's no illusion. This sensation has been carefully built into the staging. As you enter the Big Top, search the aisles for your seat, the show is already taking form before your eyes. "It's a little like Oriental circuses, which have no animals," says Gilles Ste-Croix, casting director. "No stars either. The production depends on the work and spirit of the team."

The show conveys the impossibility of doing things alone. Like a teacup-and-saucer set that Michel Crête brought back from Italy, it symbolizes the necessity of synergy. Each is part of a pattern - very beautiful but incomprehensible without its counterpart. United, the parts reveal a surprising third image, until then invisible.

/// A VOYAGE INTO CREATIVITY

In June of 1986 an adventure began - a veritable odyssey through the oceans and rivers of creativity. The members of Cirque du Soleil's creative team, who have plied the rollicking seas of production for three years together, undertook to create a totally new show.

Each team member has his or her specialty. Franco Dragone is the director. As artistic director, he also guides the group and shapes the production. Michel Crête, the set designer, imagines how the show will look and how to fill the new spaces in the Big Top. Dominique Lemieux, the costume designer, fishes for characters swimming in imaginary waters. René Dupéré, the composer, learns the languages, captures the murmurs and cries of unknown shores. Gilles Ste-Croix searches the four corners of the globe for beings who twirl and dance on tightropes, or twist themselves into impossible contortions.

In the friendly confines of Créations Méandres, the creative team embarks on a voyage into the unknown that will last long months. At this initial stage, choreographer Debra Brown and lighting designer Luc Lafortune join the crew. The team uses the "work in progress" creative method, which allows for gradual construction of a show through a flow of ideas and materials. "This approach lets us use the thrust of our first sketches to shape the show and weave it together," explains Michel Crête.

The team at Cirque has worked in this way for years, building a framework within which the show will take shape. The supreme confidence the team members have in each other counteracts the inevitable insecurity this method engenders. In the first drafts of the show, a theme begins to emerge, bearing the imprint of the world context of the 1990s. "Our work tools have always been our emotions, our spontaneity, and our childlike imagination," recalls Michel Crête.

Franco Dragone has the profound conviction that "we cannot work on a show without a purpose; a content; a vision of the world."

His instructions to everyone working on the show, including the artists when they arrive, are to let themselves be infused with the life that teems around them, to let their vision of the world influence their work, and to be daring. The members of the creative team share their personal thoughts and feelings. "Our reflections and perceptions help us create images that inspire us," observes Franco Dragone. "They color the show, leave imperceptible traces."

FRANCO DRAGONE, Uniting Circus and Theatre Arts

"Our company is organized in such a way that it tends to work against individual desires," remarks Franco Dragone, "to stay away from important things like love and dreams. We created the new show to remind ourselves of what's essential." In his work as creator and director, he wants to create a spark in people. "The spark - that's the show. A breath, a moment when time stops, that's what it seeks to portray," he specifies.

In this production, life comes to the universe of the "Flounes," the nasty clowns, and spreads like a virus, creating transformations that blossom in the heart of the show. Franco, like the American scientist James Lovelock (For Lovelock - biologist, physicist, chemist and philosopher - Gaia, the Earth, is not fragile, but the human being is), has been inspired by a certain mythological vision. He sees Gaia, the Earth, as a living being. In the context of today's world, the director refers to the worlds of Chief Seattle.

In 1854, this Native American reflected on a subject that is very relevant today. "How can you buy or sell the sky, or the heat of the earth?" Chief Seattle asked. "The idea seems strange to us. If we do not own the air's freshness and the water's mirror, how can you buy them? ... We know at least this: the Earth does not belong to people; people belong to the Earth. Everything that happens to the earth happens also to the sons and daughters of the earth."

"The planet has become very small," concurs Franco Dragone. "As Albert Jacquard put it so well, people live cheek to cheek, but they act as if one's misfortune is another's good fortune." According to the director, the new production does not preach, moralize, or tell a story. The show is a "meeting we are proposing, a gift we are offering," he continues.

Franco Dragone has been largely responsible for the theatricality that permeates these productions. He does not like the labels that isolate theater, music, circus, and dance. "This show is a step toward integrating all the disciplines and having everyone work together," he asserts. "Every art has a special place, and also contributes to the unity of the show."

MICHEL CRETE, Creating a Moving Environment

When he "crossed the floor" and allows himself the pleasure of being simply an audience member, Michele Crête likes to receive a good jolt of creative energy. He wants Le Cirque's show to exude this kind of energy, which is capable of shaking, the deepest convictions. Michel was the costume designer for Cirque du Soleil in 1987, when he moved from clothing characters to shaping the space in which the show takes place. His future set designs, full of geometrical shapes, have taken over the Big Top, which is larger and more spacious than the previous one.

Michel was trained at the National Theatre School, and designed the sets for many memorable plays produced in Montreal, including "Le Songe d'une nuit d'été" and "La Vie de Galilée", both directed by Robert Lepage, a major figure in Quebec theater. For each of these productions, he created imposing stage environments for the actors to move through, climbing and descending as the plays progressed. His world vision colors all of his designs, for the theater as well as for Le Cirque. "For this show," he recalls, "we had no pre-established script. So we struck a spark from nothing. The creative team made instinctive choices, choices on which all aspects of the production now rest, including the plot, the characters, the costumes, the masks, the sets, and the lighting."

The new set design has completely re-created the space. A circus stage is linked to a theatre stage by a catwalk. In different contexts, the audience may discern in the Big Top a spaceship or a shipwreck, or even a crude shelter huddled up against the tent's inclined wall. All of the Big Top's structures - the wires, the acrobatic equipment - are integrated into the sets. The colors of the earth and fire, along with the warm texture of wood, prevail in this stripped, futuristic environment. Michel Crête has adopted a talisman. The little piece of curved wood, christened the "Gizmo", appeared in the first models of the sets. For the designer, it symbolizes a mischievous spirit that wreaks the disorder conducive to creativity and breathes life into objects.

The various groups of characters have brought the new Big Top to life. Thus, Michel Crête has drawn from the Devils the spirit of disobedience that haunts the Big Top even before the show starts. From the "Flounes", those mocking clowns, he has taken sly winks and crooked grins. These indispensable elements embody Michel Crête's idea of the show's spirit of enthusiasm and excitement.

DOMINIQUE LEMIEUX, Costumes for Invented Characters

Costume designer Dominique Lemieux sees the show as a celebration. As the summer solstice marks the end of spring and the beginning of summer, the 1990s are announcing the arrival of the next millennium. The show is a celebration of life, bridging the last bright years of this century and the dawn of the next. Dominque started out as a graphic artist and illustrator of children's books, before being seduced away by the theater. When she arrived at Cirque du Soleil in 1987, she worked with Michel Crête. Two years later, she made a great leap, taking over all the costume design for this new production. Her sketches gave birth to the colorful characters that live in the show's universe. Whole families of characters flowed from her drawings: the Devils drew their first breaths, while storytellers became the "Flounes" and the Giants.

Dominique, a member of the creative team, drew her inspiration from images and music of ancient and modern peoples, as well as fantastical creatures. She came up with one of the "Flounes" costumes, for example, while she was listening to Inuit chants. Dominique's palette includes colors, different for each family, that harmonize with wood tones, since wood is omnipresent in the sets: ochres, oranges, turquoises, and purples. Interestingly, the costumes chosen by the team don't belong to any ethnic group and cannot be tied to any period. They blend the archaism and the modernism. The characters, clothed in the colors of sky and earth, come to life in a futuristic environment.

GILLES STE-CROIX, Creative Ambivalence

Five years ago, Gilles Ste-Croix was performing perilous leaps, wearing meter high stilts, on a teeter-totter. As a fire-eater and silt-walker, he was the first artist hired by Le Cirque du Soleil, and he founded Le Club des Talons Hauts, Le Cirque's cradle. Having been responsible for special projects, he has taken on the job of artistic director since 1988 for the "We Reinvented the Circus!" Show, scout for new artists and numbers, and training manager.

In his year of globetrotting, Gilles has kept a sharp lookout for the rare pearl of a performer who would fit into the new troupe. He is also a member of the creative team that developed the original concept of the new production. For Gilles, "Englishman in New York," a song by Sting, expresses one of the facets of the new show: "At night a candle's brighter than the sun."

"A rich variety of contrasts and confrontations of all kinds animate the characters and the plot," he states. "The audience can see the meanness and the generosity that co-exist in each artist, or see the feminine side of a muscular man. Just like a kaleidoscope, the show stimulates the imagination, providing juxtapositions out of which everyone can make up his or her own story."

RENE DUPERE, The Music of Noises and Rumors

"The first show we put together showed how a character could be beautiful; this production shows how each person is both strange and unique."

This is how composer Rene Dupere summarizes the essence of the new show. The characters in the first sketches by Dominique Lemieux, the costume designer, set the standard. Rene's intuitions have guided him toward music inspired by the noises and rumours of an unfamiliar world. Body noises, crowd noises. These envelope the characters and animate the show's tableaux. The composer imagines sounds that breathe with the artists' movements. His score creates a cohesion that links a series of diverse acts.

"In the same way that Michel Crête's set designs pierce the canvas of the Big Top to extend to the exterior; the characters have a past and a future beyond the show."

For Rene, this show constitutes a synthesis of five years of musical exploration. In 1985, an innovative sound space was created. Loudspeakers were installed under the performance areas of the Big Top. After experimenting with synthesizers, Rene reintroduced a fanfare and acoustical instruments.

Rene taught classical music for 14 years before pursuing a career as a composer, arranger, and performer. He has been involved in more than twenty stage and screen productions. A member of La Fanfafonie, Le Cirque du Soleil's first orchestra, he is the only composer of the orchestra that took its place. In 1988, he won the Best Instrumental Record award given by ADISQ. "We say humans are equal," says Rene. "Above all, they are unique. Everyone is a little different." His music opens the door to the strange, the edge of reality.

DEBRA BROWN, Motion and Emotion

Chroeographer Debra Brown works with the director to wed the energy of acrobatics to the fluidity and expressiveness of dance. Debra discovered Le Cirque at Expo'86. It was love at first sight. In spite of the language barrier - Franco speaks Friench, Debra English - the director and the choreographer have been able to work together, to learn from and be inspired by each other.

Debra Brown's style is a fusion of dance and rhythmic gymnastics. She has been active in the Canadian dance scene, and has also won numerous awards for her gymnastic routines. In fact, she was the trainer and choreographer for Lori Fun, rhythmic-gymnastics gold medalist at the 1988 Olympic Games. Her compositions, full of life and fantasy, contrast with the tension required by the circus disciplines by giving the body a chance to relax. Debra translates the games and emotions of the characters into body language. She explores their universe and enriches their vocabulary through the art of dance.

Franco Dragone gives the tone, prescribes the atmosphere. Debra suggests the movements and routines, which are created out of the explosive energy of the Korean Plank number, the interdependence of the acrobats and the catchers, the agility of the contortionists. Using the very long hands and flexible spines of the contortionists, Debra breaks lines, forms unexpected shapes, and creates a happy combination of strength and vulnerability. She tightens the transitions, gives a rhythm to the solos, duets, and trios, and infuses the contortion number with constant movement. In fact, the Soviet press cited her for best choreography for this act at the *Festival mondial du cirque du demain*. As Franco Dragone emphasizes, dance has its rightful place under the lights!

LUC LAFORTUNE, Lighting: Technology as Art

Luc Lafortune's lighting is an essential component of the ambiance, the atmosphere of the show. It is inextricably linked to how the space is used. "The size of the new set was a great challenge for me," he says. "I had to break through the technical constraints so that they don't dictate how things are lit." Integrated with the lighting design, the sets, the apparatus and even the bare bones of the Big Top became important elements and not obstacles. For example, when the suspended wall, designed by Michel Crête, pivots, the light beams emanating from many sources move. They climb the masts to linger on the swing of the big trapeze, casting bizarre shadows.

After studying at Montreal's Concordia University, Luc signed on with Le Cirque du Soleil in 1984. Since then, his designs have lit the company's way through performances in theatres or under the Big Top, on television shows, and elsewhere. Luc is always looking for new ways to turn the theatrical aspects of his specialty to the needs of artistic expression. The lighting must direct the eyes, influence our perceptions and suggest ideas. Luc even thinks of darkness as a form of lighting, since it creates curiosity, stimulates the imagination, or fools the audience.

The lighting draws its effectiveness from contrast. The wood textures of the set are illuminated by a wide range of colors. The whites are startling, with backlight provided by high-intensity lights. Beams of light, movement, and a fountain of hues, infuse and connect each number.

TO YOUR STATIONS, SAILORS!

The circus - the Big Top, a round stage, an orchestra, the incorporation of acrobatics - these are the basic necessities. Other elements are added along the way, and are literally swept up into the concept. A trampoline is integrated into the sets. A circus artist who juggles with her feet agrees to join the show. A chance meeting with an actress gives birth to one of the main characters.

When the artists arrive, a new stage in the creative process begins. The characters, up to now pure figments of the team's imagination, find artists to embody them: The Fallen Angels, the "Flounes", and the Devils come to life and become individuals. Now the colors and textures of the show begin to blossom in the costume room. The nuances take shape. The strongest images emerge. The boat on which the creative team has sailed from the home port of ideas has become a ship with many new passengers. The production team comes aboard at this point to work on a show that is not yet completely scripted - only the director has all the details in his fertile imagination. As lighting, props, a sound track, costumes, and characters are added, the production snowballs toward completion.

The costume room is abuzz. The sewing machines hum. With imagination and audacity, the costume crew whips up leotards, jackets, hats, footwear, and masks. At the same time, resourcefulness and speed are the order of the day in the set shop. Designers, craftspeople, and suppliers outdo themselves too, in a common effort to construct sets that work properly and fit the vision of the creative team. Now the structure of the show comes together. There will be no plot, but rather a series of contrasting tableaux that will present facets of the human condition. Life, death, opulence, solitude, disobedience, excess, and simplicity will take their turns in the Big Top.

"Creativity is a volatile process," concludes Lorraine Turpin, pre-production director. "We have had to grab ideas on the run and work as a team, shoulder to shoulder. We have constantly readjusted production schedules, budgets, and deadlines in our effort to make this crazy dream into reality."

/// THE THEATRICAL CHALLENGE

"The show is a great human farce," summarizes Franco Dragone. "It's a carnival odyssey, in the tradition of the circus and the theater, that takes the audience along, for their delight and pleasure. The characters are all in the same boat, equal but unique – they take on disguises, cloak themselves in different roles," he adds.



The Flounes, a central element of the show, form a sort of chorus. They "move, breathe, and express themselves as a single character without the members losing their individuality," as Werner Straub, designer of the superb masks, so aptly wrote. They occupy a little kingdom, a corner of paradise that hasn't yet been contaminated by life. The Flounes eat life, absorb vital energies. They consume sunshine for breakfast and stars for dinner.

Their name comes from "flo", a slang word meaning "children" currently in use in certain regions of Quebec. Amused by the sound of this expression, Franco Dragone baptized these characters "Flounes". Like children, they have preserved their lucidity and their penetrating gaze. They are curious, soaking things up like sponges – they ingest everything they see and hear, and spit raw emotion back out. They cast a candid and admiring look at every situation – even the most ridiculous. Thus in the Floune's universe, everything is possible.

But in their protected corner of the universe, in a kingdom all their own, the "Flounes", or Angels (Cécile Ardail, Christophe Lelarge, Patrice Wojciechowski, David Lebel and Isabelle Chassé) are quite vulnerable. The world of the "Flounes" is invaded by characters in red - the Devils - who become the spirits of disobedience. Life comes to their world and spreads like a virus, which they look upon candidly. Madame Corporation, Queen of the Flounes (played by France La Bonté), is the epitome of control, reigning supreme over this corner of the universe. She rules over her slaves, "Corporation", with her right-hand-man, the "Grand Chamberlain". As stated, "Corporation", cloaked in blues, is the slaves of this world; their destinies controlled for them (they are the house troupe). Together they conjure fantastical displays of dreams, wants and needs...

PROLOGUE

Suddenly two characters appear on stage, quite overdressed and carrying something rather heavy and large, its mass tripping them up from time to time. Once they set down their package we're surprised to learn it's a man – our Everyman. Once they release him from their clutches, he tries to leave, but he cannot. They turn him away, preventing him from doing so. Submitting to his situation, and not knowing what else to do, the man tries to introduce himself via a shaking of the hands. The strangers look surprised; they do not seem to comprehend his actions, or his kindness. They become frightened. But is it of him or of Grosse Femme, who makes herself known through her voracious belly-filled laugh? And soon more characters follow, including the Grand Chamberlain (the Ringmaster), who has come to rescue him and beckon him to watch. Thus begins the Nouvelle Experience!

CONTORTION

With their extreme flexibility, Nadine Louis-Binette, Isabelle Chassé, Laurence Racine-Choinière, and Jinny Jacinto are masters of the art of contortion. Watch as they tumble, fold, and otherwise amaze the audience with their unusual skill, bending about the stage with ease.











KOREAN PLANK

At the crack of a whip, the house troupe (dressed in blue and known as Corporation) are on the move. "Bascule" accompanies their adventure from one plank to the next, as Flyers become living projectiles, performing leaps and flips before landing on the catchers' shoulders.

SOLO TRAPEZE

Anne Lepage combines agility, great technical difficulty, and acrobatic movements as Patrice Wojciechowski looks on, fascinated. The music sets the emotions of this piece. First, is "Fixe", an emotional set played on Cello by Robert Stanley. A loneliness seems to fill the universe. But then, as Ms. Lepage reaches her perch atop the big top, "Ballant" fills the air and she begins her long swing into the void.

FIL DE FER

Moving across the void of space on a tightrope is not easy, but Isabelle Brisset (1990) and Nicky Dewhurst (1991) make it look easy, hopping from one wire to the next with grace and ease. Although the act takes place no higher than 10-feet off the floor, falling here could be just as dangerous. An element of laughter comes into play when the resident ring master, the Grand Chamberlain, tries his luck on the wire. And after he too amazes the audience, the celebration is shattered by Grosse Femme's snappy melody. She chases off our performers, and our Everyman, to give room to our next performer.

AERIAL STRAPS

Supported by straps, Vladimir Kehkaial (Tour) / Dimitri Arnaoutov (Mirage) realizes one of humanity's greatest dreams: to fly.

TRAPEZE VOLANT

Fresh from France, trapeze artists Didier Antoine (1990), Cécile Antoine, Cécile Ardail, Christophe Lelarge, Jean-Francois Rogement, Patrice Wojcierchowski, and Amélie Major (1991) challenge the sky with audacity and humour.

ANTIPODISME

"Suite Chinose" fills the big top with a little Asian flair while Wang Hong (1990), Xu Hui Man (1991) and Yajing Huang & Lifang Wang (Mirage) use their talented feet to keep carpets, parasols, and a person twirling in the air!

FILM SCENE

What circus is complete without its clown? In Nouvelle, the clown plays a movie director trying to film a scene. His actors? Why people from the audience of course.











Given parts like any other actor, the people plucked from the audience assume a man, a woman, and a jealous lover. Another person is picked from the audience to be the stage hand (the one to click the cross bars down to mark the scene). Each one is given a part and in the end... it just falls apart. Words can ot express the laughter that comes from this piece!



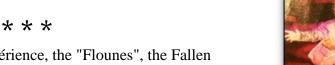
RUSSIAN BAR

Once again Mme Corporation and her team fill the stage to perform the Russian Bar, a flexible slender padded plank. With two holders (at each end of the bar) resting the apparatus upon their shoulders, the rest of the team amaze by jumping up on them. Several feet above the ground, the flyer takes flight from the narrow perch provided by the catchers. (Note: Russian Bar was not included in the special engagement at the Mirage.)



BALANCE ON CHAIRS

Vassilly Demenchoukov, with his assistant Viktoria Demenchoukova, build a tower of Babel with a half-dozen chairs, then climb to the top.



By the end of our Nouvelle Expérience, the "Flounes", the Fallen Angels, the Devils and all of the Human Race must learn to live together, to come together in harmony and celebrate life. Our everyday man rushes back onstage shocked, and unsure. His briefcase is thrown at him, as if he's being told to leave the world and go out as a new man... an informed man... a changed man. But before he has a chance to think about what he has seen, the troupe grabs him with a mysterious force. Further and further they drag him into their inner sanctum. When he remerges the everyday man has been transformed into a young boy! This is a youth filled with dreams and aspirations: who will live for the future and change society for the better. Ultimately, that's the message behind Nouvelle Expérience, a message conveyed in the dance at the end: that we must all wake up and save the world.

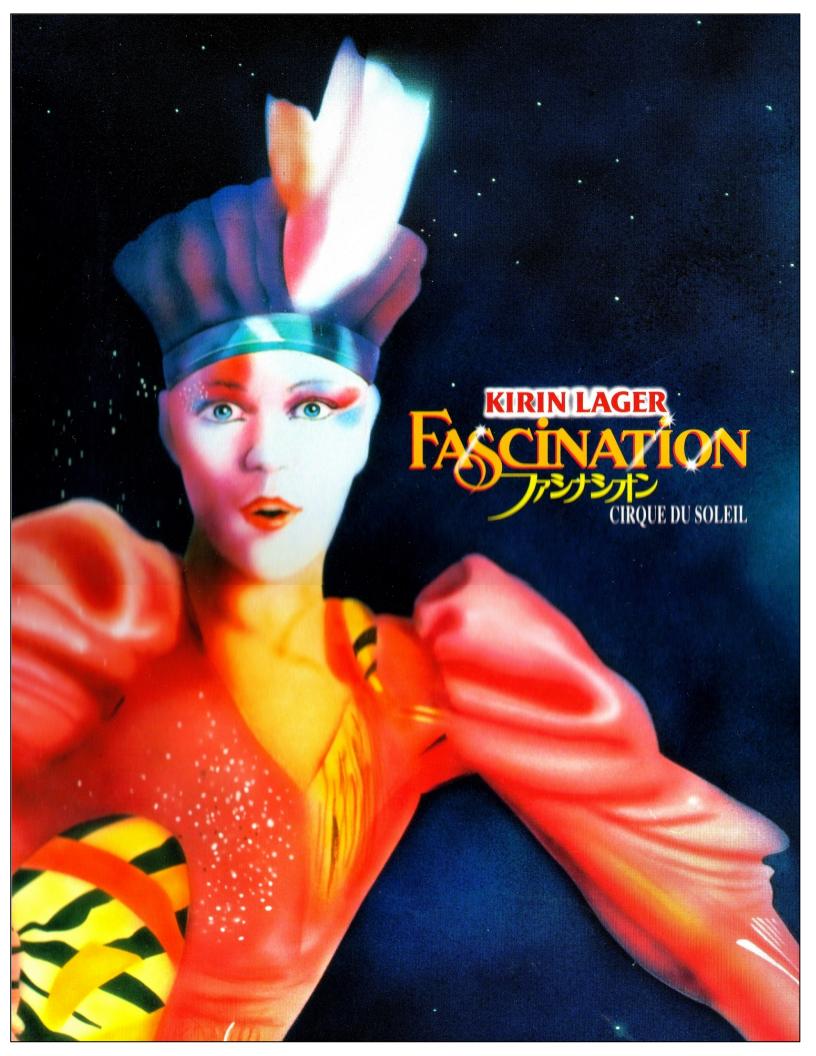


As explained by Debra Brown: The Coming together / all over the world / to fight / we are ready to die / for the earth. | The fight / around the world / there is suicide / so wake up / now! | The crying / all over the world / the urgence / to wake up / now!



Cirque woke up. In retrospect, the contrast between what came before (*Le Cirque Réinventé*) and this was so stark that many fans, including myself, say that *Nouvelle Expérience* was the defining moment of their sophistication. Everything that came after *Nouvelle Expérience* had an evolving sense of theatrics, daring and creativity. Thus, *Nouvelle Expérience* began the "second" chapter of Cirque du Soleil.





FASCINATION

"Welcome to our big top full of dreams," exclaimed Guy Laliberté in 1988, after the smashing success of *Le Cirque Réinve*nté. He repeated this welcome four years later, only this time not in French or English but in Japanese.

In 1992, Cirque du Soleil visited the Land of the Rising Sun – Japan – for the very first time. Not since Le Cirque *Le Cirque Réinventé* ventured to London and Paris to perform had a Cirque show been experienced outside of North America. But thanks to its success, Fascination would not be the last of Cirque's creations to traverse the Asian market.

Fascination is a combination of Le Cirque Réinventé (1987 - 1989) and Nouvelle Expérience (1990 - 1992), consisting of many of the acts featured in both. But that's where the likeness ends. The costumes were reimagined and made brighter and more colorful. The casts of each were also merged, and the show itself had a different direction. And like some of the older Cirque shows (1984/1985), Fascination remains one of the most elusive to fans; hopefully here, we can shed a little light on such a colorful world.

ESSENTIALS

Premiere:	May 22, 1992
Type:	Touring / Special Big Top
Director:	Roger Parent
Composer:	René Dupéré & Benoît Jutras
Finale:	August 31, 1992

Creative Team

Guide
Guy Laliberté
Director
Roger Parent
Creation
Gilles Ste-Croix
Choreographer
Allison Brierly
Sceneography
Michel Crête
Makeup Designer
Nathalie Gagné
Clown Acts

Wayne Hronek

Composer
René Dupéré
Composer
Benoît Jutras
Lighting Designer
Luc Lafortune
Sound Designer
Guy Desrochers
Costume Designer
Dominique Lemieux
Choreographer
Catherine Archambult





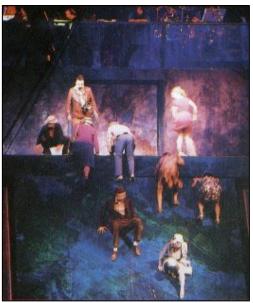


/// A BIG TOP FULL OF DREAMS

As for theme, the show (like *Le Cirque Réinventé*) begins with the Prologue. Masked people - Ordinary People - dressed in their ordinary everyday clothes. They mill about, uncertain where they are. Are they dreaming? Are they still in reality? Or somewhere in between? Regardless of where they find themselves, these people begin responding to a mysterious urge deep inside of themselves, a playful urge - full of folly. Then, out of a billowing white cloud the Queen of the Night (Michelle Rawlake) and the King of Fools (Stéphane Drouard) emerges, with their child-like helpers. They wave their hands (full of magic) and transform the Ordinary People in their dull ordinary gray clothes into whimsical, colorful acrobats. Color



and movement fill the air as the Transformation (the second step in the opening of *Fascination*) is complete - dreams and fantasy can now be played out!









• Les Chaises (The Chairs):

From Le Cirque Réinventé. Cai Qiming, Gong Zengli, Huang Le, Liu Yunlong, Liu Yong, Meng Shan, Sha Yan, Liu Yuntao, Yao Jingmei.

• Contortion:

From Nouvelle Expérience. The four nimble girls from Nouvelle Expérience are joined by 2 others making the performance six strong: Katia Arnaoutova, Nadine Louis- Binette, Isabelle Chassé, Julie Choquette, Jinny Jacinto, and Laurence Racine.



• Fil de Fer:

From Nouvelle Expérience. Now here's an interesting collaboration between shows! Ayin De Sela and Nicky Dewhurst play with Brian Dewhurst, our Chef de Piste. But what is more exciting is that Sally Dewhurst (His Wife) also gets in on the act completing the family circle.



From Nouvelle Expérience. Performed by Rebecca Perez.



From Le Cirque Réinventé. Those wacky, waddling penguins are at it again! They are: Bogdan Zajac, André St-Jean, Eligiusz Skoczylas, Marie-Andrée Richard, Zdzislaw Pelka, Ryszard Ostrowski, David Lebel, Francois Ducharme, Oleg Kantemirov, Stacey Bilodeau, and Bruce Bilodeau.

• Hand to Hand:

From Le Cirque Réinventé. Amélie Demay and Eric Varelas, two veteran Cirque performers.

• Flying Man:

From Nouvelle Expérience. Performed by Dimitri Arnaoutov.



• Trapèze Volant (Flying Trapeze):

From Nouvelle Expérience. Didier Antoine, Cécile Ardail, Tatiana Arnaoutova-Lissovtseva, Alexandre Arnaoutov, Lionel Hassin, Philippe Chartrand, Amélie Major, and Jean-Francois Rogemont.

Rhythmic Gymnastics:

An interesting new addition that would later be featured in some form in Saltimbanco, performed by six excitingly energetic young ladies: Vessela Ianakieva, Filipa Filipova, Albena Loukanova, Kristina Pavlova, Lana Sotirova, and Elena Zaharieva.

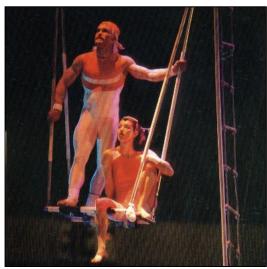
• Bicycles:

From Le Cirque Réinventé. Irna Arnaoutova, Caroline Franc, Luc Tremblay, Barbara Gosselin, and Chris Lashua.

And, in-between, through and sometimes those who would get in the way of acts are the clowns. Fascination had a handful of them, and they were just as colorful as the rest of the performers (colorful in more ways than one).

The Chef de Piste, or Ring Master, is costumed as he would appear in Le Cirque Réinventé (in blue with a hat), but played by Brian Dewhurst, the right-hand man of Madame Corporation in Nouvelle Expérience. Even so, he takes part in the Fil de Fer performance with his son like before, with his wife adding an even higher comedic value to the show. François Dupuis, a large but energetic baby. Fans know him best from Mystère. There was also Balthazar, just kind of hanging around. Fans know him best from La Nouba (He also appeared in Le Cirque Réinventé). Two other clowns/characters appeared in the show as well. They are known as Miss Steak (a vivacious woman with one mission - to wear outrageous clothes). Her companion, Daniel Le Bateleur, was a normal enough man with a fetish for bugs (He even appeared on stage as a big red tick or flea!)







Fascination began its limited engagement in May 1992 and concluded that September, running exactly 118 times across eight Japanese cities. And in just those four months over 560,000 (569,883 according to count) people saw the show. Even though the show was a hybrid of two of the Cirque's previous productions, Fascination proved to be a rousing success, opening up the Japanese market from then on. After Fascination, a stream of Cirque shows would eventually tour here: Saltimbanco (1994), Alegría (1996), Saltimbanco (as "Saltimbanco 2000" in 2000), Quidam (2003), Alegría (as "Alegría 2" in 2005), Dralion (2007), Corteo (2009), Kooza (2011), Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL (2013) and, as of this writing, OVO (2014).

Itinéraire		
Location	Dates	
Tokyo	5/22/92 – 6/4/92	
Nagoya	6/7/92 - 6/21/92	
Hiroshima	6/25/92 – 7/6/92	
Osaka	7/15/92 – 7/19/92	
Sapporo	7/24/92 - 8/2/92	
Yokohama	8/7/92 - 8/16/92	
Sendai	8/18/92 - 8/24/92	
Kita-Kyushu	8/27/92 - 8/31/92	