



Circa

Sacre

by Circa

Created by Yaron Lifschitz and the Circa Ensemble

Sunday, Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

Poetic tenderness. Raw emotion. Physical strength.

Eleven acrobats from the Circa ensemble bring Stravinsky's seminal *The Rite of Spring* to the circus stage. Pulsating with tension and infused with dark humor, this distinctive production from Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz confronts humanity's inter-connectivity, our inherent sexual desire and relationship with divinity.

Featuring a piercing lighting design by Veronique Bennett and a stirring new composition by Phillippe Bachman for the first half, *Sacre* penetrates the senses and stirs the soul.

Circa is represented by **Allen Moon / David Lieberman**
Artists' Representatives

The Rite of Spring by Igor Stravinsky is used by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agent for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers of London.

Commissioned by Merrigong Theatre Company
Co-produced by La Comete

CIRCA



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PLEASE NOTE

- Masks are required in public indoor spaces on the CU Boulder campus, regardless of vaccination status.
- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

Tonight's show is generously sponsored by:



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Personnel

YARON LIFSCHITZ (Director) is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director's course. Since graduating, Lifschitz has directed over 60 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre and circus. His work has been seen in 40 countries and across six continents by over one million people and has won numerous awards including six Helpmann awards and the Australia Council Theatre Award. His productions have been presented at major festivals and venues around the world including Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chamaleon and all the major Australian festivals. His film work was selected for the Berlin and Melbourne Film Festivals. He was founding artistic director of the Australian Museum's Theatre Unit, head tutor in directing at Australian Theatre for Young People and has been a regular guest tutor in directing at NIDA. He is currently artistic director and CEO of Circa, and was creative director of *Festival 2018: the arts and cultural program of the 21st Commonwealth Games*.

PHILIPPE BACHMAN (Composer) is a musician, artistic director and producer based in Paris. After his studies at Paris Conservatoire (CNSMDP) and at SciencesPo Paris, he was awarded Villa Medicis Hors-les-Murs (France) and Fulbright Scholar (US), and lived in New York City. He has toured as a trio in a dozen countries and composes for international stage productions, including for Canadian director Robert Lepage. In 2015, he was chair of the National Committee for New Music Commissions (Ministry of Culture) and has worked for UNESCO, Paris "Cité de la Musique," Ircam. He has been CEO of the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra (1997-2001) and the Chamber Choir Accentus (2002-2003). Since January 2019 he has taught the seminar *Being an Artist in Today's World: facts and fantasies* at SciencesPo Paris (Europe-America and Europe-Africa programs). Since 2004, he has been CEO and artistic director of La Comète—Scène nationale de Châlons-en-Champagne, a national performing arts venue (three halls, 120 performances, including an international dance season), awarded one of the eight European Artistic Hubs by French Ministry of Culture since 2018. He is founding member of Tour de Dance, an informal network bringing together dance venues and programmers from France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany that shares international dance projects and tours. In 2008, he created the 360° Network, bringing together 18 circular performing arts venues from eleven countries. Since 2013, he has been the CEO and artistic director of War on Screen International Film Festival.

VERONIQUE BENNETT (Lighting Designer) is a lighting,

set and costume designer. As a lighting designer, her credits include *Banging Denmark* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Wolves* (Belvoir); *The Smallest Hour* (Griffin Theatre); *John* (Outhouse Theatre Co.), for which she was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award; *The Life of Us* (Hayes Theatre); *Nosferatu* (Old 505); *Stupid Fucking Bird* (New Theatre); *Chorus, Anatomy of a Suicide, Permission to Spin, Howie the Rookie* (Old Fitz); and *A Girl if a Half-Formed Thing* (KXT). Bennett's associate lighting designer credits include *Cursed!* designed by Chloe Oglvie (Belvoir); *No Pay? No Way!* designed by Paul Jackson (Sydney Theatre Company); *Prima Facie* designed by Trent Suidgeest (Griffin Theatre); *Cry-Baby* directed and designed by Alexander Berlage (Hayes Theatre); and *Macbeth, The Tempest, and A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Sport for Jove.

LIBBY MCDONNELL (Costume Designer) is a designer and choreographer who is currently head of design at Circa. She works in diverse genres and forms. At the heart of her work are people and movement. McDonnell has a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) in visual art from Queensland College of Art-Griffith University and an Associate Degree in dance from Queensland University of Technology. Her professional career has included performing and making independent dance work, as an artistic director of Ballet Theatre of Queensland and choreographer for Blue Roo Theatre Company. For 11 years she has worked with the team at Circa to imagine, develop and deliver their productions locally, nationally and internationally. During her time at Circa she has designed costumes for over 30 productions, co-directed three main stage productions and led many of the company's engagement projects including the pilot of the Circability program. McDonnell is based in Brisbane with her family.

JASON ORGAN (Technical Director) graduated from Queensland University of Technology in 1988 and has had an extensive career as a lighting designer, production manager, technician and rigger. He has worked with companies such as Queensland Ballet, Queensland Theatre, La Boite Theatre Company, Kooemba Jdarra and festivals such as Out of the Box, Qld Music Festival and Brisbane Festival. Organ was the co-founder of JLX productions, a lighting design and technical consultancy based in Brisbane. Since 2010 he has been working exclusively with Circa as technical director. In this time, he has helped deliver more than 20 new productions and toured to 31 different countries presenting Circa's work.

FRAN ALVAREZ (Cast) was introduced to circus at the age of 16, after a restless adolescence looking for an activity to focus his abundant energy on. He went on to start his circus career at 18 at the preparatory school of Madrid, Carampa, and later at the Ecole Supérieure des Arts du Cirque de Bruxelles, specialising

in hand-to-hand and group acrobatics. With a focus on improving his core technique—and becoming a human trampoline—Alvarez continued his training in France and was involved in the creative development of several shows with high-level acrobatic collectives across Europe. In his free time, he enjoys Olympic-style weightlifting and reading epic fantasy books.

MARTY EVANS (Cast) came to circus by a more roundabout route than most. After watching nothing but circus videos during his lunch breaks at Australia's only nuclear reactor, Evans left behind his published scientific career and embraced his physical sports background to pursue a career in circus. His first taste of circus came at the University of Sydney in 2010 as he tried to entertain himself during free periods by learning to throw people into the air and trying to catch them again. Evans trained at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne. He is a fiercely determined and hardworking hand-to-hand base who enjoys exploring new challenges and techniques. Evans joined the Circa ensemble full time in 2015, and has been involved in the creation of numerous Circa productions including *When One Door Closes* and *Humans*.

NANCY GUTIERREZ (Cast): Nancy Luna—an artist born in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico, on Jan. 10, 1997—began her training in circus at 15 years of age through aerial techniques. Her development and learning were shaped thanks to her previous acrobatics training at Fly Academy Gymnastics. At the age of 16, she began her professional career, joining the main cast of the Mexican production company Circo Dragón as an artist. With Circo Dragón, she participated in many national and international festivals, while also continuing her training in circus, specializing in hand-to-hand and aerial hoop. She participated as a guest artist in the gala presentations of three consecutive editions of the Periplo International Circus Festival, and won third place as an aerialist (aerial hoop) in the National Circus Competition of Ficho International Festival of Circus and Show of Mexico in 2015. In 2016, she started training at Ecole de Cirque de Québec. Today, she dedicates her training and work to creating highly sensitive numbers that have the ability to connect with her audience, create a variation of emotions in her and at the same time possess a high level of exploration and technique. Recently, she has performed in the Montreal Completément Cirque Festival (2019), *Midnight Circus* (2019), and *Cirque Du Soleil's Nysa* (2020).

SAM LETCH (Cast): Instead of paying attention in school, Sam Letch focused all of his energy on throwing himself around in the cold and rainy north west of England, where he grew up. At the ripe old age of 15, Letch decided that doing back tucks off sand dunes wasn't enough. The answer to his problem: Parkour. He trained for three years until his acrobatics took him

to the National Centre for Circus Arts (London), where he picked up such skills as teeterboard, hand-to-hand, banquine, floor and group acrobatics. After graduating his first job performing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival led him on to work with such companies as Cirque Eloize. His primary love is performing, shortly after that is his moustache, followed by singing musicals at the top of his lungs for anyone who will listen.

HAMISH MCCOURTY (Cast) is an acrobat and musician. He began his circus journey at Cirkidz in Adelaide when he was eight years old and, after graduating from the performance program, he's been creating his own work touring nationally and internationally. He is currently working on fusing together his passion for music and circus on stage. His main specialties are tumbling and basing pair and group acrobatics and he prides himself on making people laugh and being a loon onstage. McCourty is a keen performer and multi-talented acrobat with his sights set on leaving his mark in the world of circus.

DANIEL O'BRIEN (Cast) has been physically active throughout his whole life, primarily focusing on his gymnastics training in his hometown of Maryborough and a few small gyms along the Queensland coastline. After attending National Institute of Circus Arts for three years, where he specialized in hand-balancing and aerial straps, O'Brien joined Circa as an ensemble member in 2015. Having fostered an immense passion for circus, he has since performed in many iconic Circa works including *What Will Have Been*, *Closer* and *Humans*. He spends his spare time feeding his unhealthy addiction to video games or reading whatever he can get his hands on.

KIMBERLEY O'BRIEN (Cast) grew up competing in athletics and playing representative AFL. After seeing one of Circa's shows, she joined Circa's youth performance troupe Circa Zoo in 2008. After two years of training and performing, she was given the opportunity to be the first member of Fast Track, a program designed for young and aspiring performers within Circa. In 2011 O'Brien left Circa Zoo to be a full-time ensemble member. Since then, she has toured numerous shows in various countries and performed in over 30 Circa shows. One of her highlights was performing *Wunderkammer* at the Sydney Opera House in 2012.

JARROD TAKLE (Cast) is an Australian raised, Montreal-based, free-range circus artist specializing in hand-balancing and teeterboard with a splash of banquine and solo and group acrobatics. He spent a glorious childhood decade training and performing with Australia's leading youth circus, The Flying Fruit Fly Circus, which inspired a life-long passion for the art form. After honing his craft at l'École Nationale de Cirque de Montréal, completing four years of higher

education in Circus Arts, he has since worked with some of the world's leading contemporary circus and performance companies. Outside of his artistic pursuits he spends the remainder of his time and energy in search of good coffee and/or avoiding the type of people who stand directly in front of the baggage train at airports.

LUKE THOMAS (Cast) was always driven to pursue an acrobatic career as a child, and was constantly found swinging upside down on the hills hoist in his backyard. At age 11, he joined Circus 35° South, and trained in aerials, tumbling and manipulation for seven years before studying at the National Institute of Circus Arts, graduating in 2017. During his study, Thomas specialized in tissue, foot juggling and group acrobatics. Thomas co-created and performed *Out of This World Children's Show*, with seasons at Woodford Folk Festival and Melbourne Fringe Festival. He also performed in One Fell Swoop's *By a Thread* at Mullumbimby Circus Festival, Perth Fringe Festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival and the Circa Festival at Auch, France. He joined the Circa Ensemble in 2018, performing in the world premiere of Circa's *Peepshow*.

GEORGIA WEBB (Cast) was born and raised in outback Western Australia as a competitive gymnast and dancer for 13 years. This background gave her the discipline and work ethic which now informs her circus practice. After both parents insisted that their only child join the military, Webb decided to forgo those plans to follow her own dream of running away with the circus. Graduating from the National Institute of Circus Arts in 2019, Webb joined Circa as a full-time ensemble member in January 2020. In her spare time she enjoys motorbike riding, surfing and free diving. She also hopes to travel the world skydiving someday.

CHRISTINA ZAUNER (Cast) grew up in the countryside in Austria. She started dancing when she was four years old and participated at her first competition at the age of six. Zauner graduated with a bachelor's in classical and contemporary dance at MUK Vienna. During her education she started to train aerials and vertical dance. After graduating, she worked at the Vienna State Opera as an aerial double, followed by a role in the musical *Cats* in Switzerland. She worked with the Irish company Fidget Feet and as a performer and choreographer at Krystallpalast Varieté Leipzig. She found her way into the circus world as a self-taught aerialist, specializing in straps. At the age of 24, she started to enjoy to climb on people or have them climb on her. A very determined person, Zauner loves to challenge herself and explore what her body is capable of. She also plays accordion and loves to design and sew costumes.

ABOUT CIRCA

"The mighty Circa" (Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian*)

Circa Contemporary Circus is one of the world's leading performance companies. Since 2004, from its base in Brisbane, Australia, Circa has toured the world—performing in 40 countries to over 1.5 million people. Circa's works have been greeted with standing ovations, rave reviews and sold-out houses across six continents.

Circa is at the forefront of the new wave of contemporary Australian circus—pioneering how extreme physicality can create powerful and moving performances. It continues to push the boundaries of the art form, blurring the lines between movement, dance, theatre and circus. Compelled by the question "what is possible in circus?" Circa is leading the way with a diverse range of thrilling creations that "redraw the limits to which circus can aspire." (The Age).

Under the direction of circus visionary Yaron Lifschitz, Circa features an ensemble of exceptional, multi-skilled circus artists who have been a regular fixture at leading festivals and venues in New York, London, Berlin and Montreal with seasons at Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Barbican Centre, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chamäleon Theatre as well as major Australian Festivals.

Visit circa.org.au to find a Circa performance near you and discover why Circa has been hailed as nothing short of "... a revolution in the spectacle of circus." (Les Echos).

Circa is committed to fostering the next generation of circus artists and runs public circus classes from its studio in Brisbane. Circa also runs regular circus programs with communities throughout Queensland and around Australia.

As a champion of live performance, Circa was the Creative Lead for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games arts and cultural program.

Discover more about Circa by subscribing to enews at circa.org.au and following the company on facebook.com/circacontemporarycircus, instagram.com/circapresents, spotify.com/user/circapresents and via #circacircus