

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

# KOOZÁ™



PRESS KIT



# Overview

KOOZA™ is a return to the origins of *Cirque du Soleil*® that combines two circus traditions—acrobatic performance and the art of clowning. The show highlights the physical demands of human performance in all its splendor and fragility, presented in a colorful way that emphasizes bold slapstick humor.

“KOOZA is about human connection and the world of duality, good and bad,” says the show’s writer and director David Shiner. “The tone is fun and funny, light and open. The show doesn’t take itself too seriously, but it’s very much about ideas, too.”

The show starts with the Trickster bursting onto the scene like a jack-in-the-box in front of The Innocent, and that’s just the first of many surprises to come. The Innocent’s journey brings him into contact with a panoply of comic characters such as the King, the Trickster, the Clowns and his Mad Dog.

Between strength and fragility, laughter and smiles, turmoil and harmony, KOOZA explores themes of identity, recognition and power. The show is set in an electrifying and exotic visual world full of surprises, thrills, chills, audacity and total involvement.

The name KOOZA is inspired by the Sanskrit word “koza,” which means “box,” “chest” or “treasure,” and was chosen because one of the underlying concepts of the production is the idea of a “circus in a box.”

KOOZA features an international cast of 54 artists including 6 musicians and 2 singers.



# Acts

## Balancing on Chairs



The equipment is as simple as it gets: eight chairs and a pedestal, but in this act, the artist uses them to create a 23-foot, (7 meters-) tower on which to perform a balancing act that displays the human body at the very peak of condition and muscular control.

## Charivari



The Artist Troupe burst into action at the top of the show. The act highlights include human pyramids, bodies flying through the air and a “crash bash”—a daring dive into a circle of fabric inspired by the “Nalukauq”, the traditional Inuit game of “Blanket Toss” and the landing mats used by firefighters..

## Contortion



Three performers work in unison to bring a new approach to the art of contortion. What sets this number apart are the artists’ innovations in movements and position, their speed, and the way they work as a team to create tableaux of sculptural beauty.

## High Wire



The twin high wires are suspended 15 feet (4.5 meters) and 25 feet (7.6 meters) above the stage. Each wire can reach 6,600 lbs tension while the four tightrope walkers are walking the wire. Their expert ability allows them to perform feats in the air that most of us would find difficult to do on the ground.

## Hoops



An act combining the art of contortion with hula hoops is quite a rare demonstration of skills. The artist shows exceptional balance, impressive dexterity, and a unique ability to spin, throw, twirl one, two, three or even multiple hoops.

## Silks



With the ability to fly, spin and swing in all directions, the flowing dynamics of the aerialist’s motion is juxtaposed against the gripping high acrobatics performed in this silk act. The breathtaking versatility of the artist allows her to own the space and soar into incredible aerial feats while continuously build the excitement to an outstanding climax.



## Teeterboard



The Teeterboard flings artists into the air, where they execute multiple twisting somersaults—and that's just the prelude for acrobats doing the same thing over 30 feet (9 meters) above the stage with double and single metal stilts strapped to their legs.

## Unicycle Duo



A twist on the classic unicycle number introduces a passenger to the action. Two performers create a pas de deux in constant motion around the stage with a combination of balance, acrobatic control, physical strength, choreographic grace and a spirit of partnership.

## Wheel of Death



KOOZA's 1,600-pound Wheel of Death rotates at heart-stopping speeds, powered only by the two artists who leap and counter-rotate in a death-defying display of fearless acrobatics and astonishing teamwork. Like the High Wire, the Wheel of Death is positioned diagonally, stage left to stage right, in order to break with the usual symmetry and bring the action as close as possible to the audience.

## Icarian Games, Act in rotation



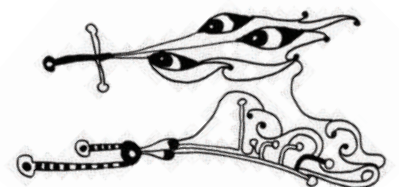
This traditional circus discipline is seen for the first time in KOOZA. An artist is propelled in the air by another artist in a fast-paced, high-energy display of strength, balance, and agility.

Photo credit: Millissa Martin

## Diabolos, Act in rotation



In this high energy act, the artist spins, throws, juggles not one, not two but three diabolos at once. He performs his act in a blink of an eye intensively with rhythm and rapidity.



# Characters

## The Trickster



Charming and sophisticated, the Trickster is a sublimely quick and agile being, a genius who knows all about the world of KOOZA because he created it. He appears and disappears at will and there's electricity in the air each time he arrives on stage. He created this world for the Innocent and keeps a watchful eye out for him. He teases him and plays tricks on him with his powers, but it's the Innocent's own subconscious that leads the dance...

## The Innocent



The Innocent is a naïve and melancholy character carried off into the Trickster's world. Outwardly childlike, ingenuous and simple, he is eager to get to know the new world he's in, but as soon as he uses the Trickster's powers he discovers an unexpected and jarring environment, a reflection of his soul.

## The King



The King is the king of fools, the most burlesque of all the characters. His hair is tousled and his crown has a mind of its own as he tries desperately to gain the respect of those who are crazier than himself.

## Clowns



The two Court Clowns are the King's foolish footmen, his indispensable sidekicks in the extravagant adventures in the realm of KOOZA.

## Heimloss



The very strange Heimloss lives beneath the stage where he's in charge of the mechanical machinery that gives life to everything in the hidden world of KOOZA.

## The Mad Dog



In this crazy world, even the Dog is nutty. He chases everyone, barks and is impossible to control. The word "training" means nothing to him. But, like everyone else, he's drawn to the Innocent and becomes his playful, over-the-top companion.

# Costumes

For KOOZA, Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt has drawn on a wide variety of sources of inspiration: everything from graphic novels, the painter Klimt, Mad Max movies, time-travel movies to India and Eastern Europe. She was also inspired by clock movements, tin soldiers, marching band uniforms and children's book illustrations. All this merges to create a look that alludes to Alice in Wonderland, Baron Munchausen and the Wizard of Oz.

There are many rapid costume changes during the show and Marie-Chantale researched magicians' quick-change techniques to create costume magic of her own.

- Marie-Chantale had percussion instruments made out of molded carbon for the Skeleton costume. They look and sound like bones when the performers hit them against each other to create a musical rhythm.
- The “Mad Dog” costume proved to be another huge challenge because the performer wearing it has to be able to move the dog's ears, dribble and wag its tail.
- The “Rat Cape” is a costume that creates the illusion that rats are running down a performer's body before disappearing into a trap. This would be relatively easy in a film, but it's a lot more difficult to achieve live on stage. Following a long period of trial and error, the final Rat Cape costume is made up of 95 fake-fur rats with red crystal eyes to catch the light. The running effect was inspired by the mechanism of vertical blinds and several of the rats are fitted with little wheels to make them seem even more alive.
- There are more than 175 costumes and 160 hats in the show—1,080 items in all, including all the shoes, props, wigs and so on.
- One army costume features more than 400 individually-sewn metallic flaps to create the effect that it is armored.

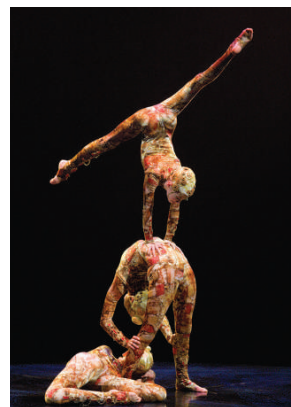


## Costumes at *Cirque du Soleil* – Facts:

- All costumes are custom-made and the majority are produced at the Costume workshop in the International Headquarters in Montreal, Canada.
- The only facility of its kind in North America, the costume workshop includes specialists in fields as varied as shoemaking, textile design, lace-making, wig-making, patternmaking, costumes making and millinery.
- Each year, the Costume workshop artisans use more than 50 kilometres of fabric. 80% of all fabrics are treated and dyed in-house by the artisans of the textile design team.
- Shoes are hand and custom-made for all artists by the artisans of the Shoe Workshop. The leather pieces are dyed, trimmed and assembled on location. Brand new sports or dance shoes are sometimes altered to meet the specific requirements of a costume. Approximately 1,000 pairs of shoes are produced by the workshop every year.
- Hats can be seen in every *Cirque du Soleil* show and are a key part of the costumes. Like the costumes, they are custom-designed and made in the workshop. To do this, precise measurements of each of the artist's heads are taken by a portable scanner and the milliners build the hats with the help of 3D prints obtained with these figures.

***“It's been a great challenge, but it's also full of traps. You don't want to exaggerate or slip into creating a caricature when you're trying to capture a character.”***

**— Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt**





# Music

The music of KOOZA beautifully demonstrates the spirit of the live show with its themes of human connection and fun in a world of duality. With a stream of uplifting songs with timeless influences where forms and styles intertwine seamlessly, the music of KOOZA is inspired by the sounds of western pop culture, from 1970s funk to full orchestral arrangements. It also draws heavily on traditional Indian music.

There are six KOOZA musicians who play live music during each performance: trumpet, trombone, bass, drums, percussion, saxophone, electric guitar, and keyboard. There are also two singers who sing live during each performance.

*“I was inspired by Western pop music, from 1970s funk to orchestral music. I also drew upon traditional Indian music and film scores from the 1940s and 1950s, a period I’m particularly fond of.”*

— Jean-François Côté



# Set Design

KOOZA's set evokes a public square that morphs into a circus ring. The circular stage provides the audience with excellent sight lines through 260 degrees.

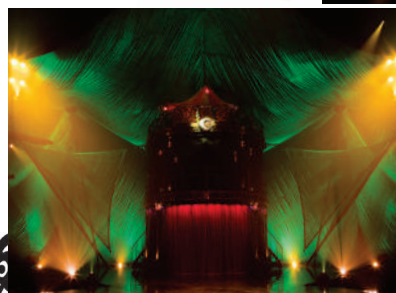
There has been no attempt to conceal or disguise the acrobatic equipment. The structure of the Big Top is always in full view. Everything is done out in the open with simplicity and transparency in order to focus attention on the artists and the acrobatic performances.

- The stage is dominated by one major set element, a traveling tower called the Bataclan, which alters the configuration of the performance space as it moves.
- The Bataclan moves artists in and out of the spotlight, serves as a bandstand and is flanked by two curved staircases.
- The decoration of the Bataclan is inspired by Hindu culture, Pakistani buses and Indian jewelry.
- Overlooking the Bataclan, the giant fabric structure called the Void was printed with motifs inspired by the internal structure of leaves to give it a decidedly organic look.
- The "sails" that frame the Bataclan can be opened and closed like the petals of an enormous flower by just two people using ropes and pulleys.
- The diameter of the top of the stage is 36 feet; it is 42 feet from the bottom step. This is the diameter of a standard circus ring, which is determined by the minimum area in which a horse can comfortably gallop.

- The KOOZA stage is the highest stage ever designed by *Cirque du Soleil* (39 feet vs 30 - 36 feet normally). The extra space is needed for the Jack-in-the-Box hydraulics (which leaps six to seven feet in the air).
- Technicians and artists travel under the stage on dollies similar to those used by car mechanics to roll under cars.
- The musician pit is located on the upper level of the structure.

*"I wanted to capture the essence of circus itself by creating a scenographic environment that offers true proximity to the audience and where danger is palpable."*

— Stéphane Roy





# Creators



**Guy Laliberté**  
Guide and Founder



**David Shiner**  
Writer and Director



**Serge Roy**  
Creation Director



**Stéphane Roy**  
Set Designer



**Marie-Chantale Vaillancourt**  
Costume Designer



**Jean-François Côté**  
Composer



**Clarence Ford**  
Choreographer



**Martin Labrecque**  
Lighting Designer



**Jonathan Deans**  
Co-Sound Designer



**Leon Rothenberg**  
Co-Sound Designer



**Danny Zen**  
Acrobatic Equipment  
and Rigging Designer



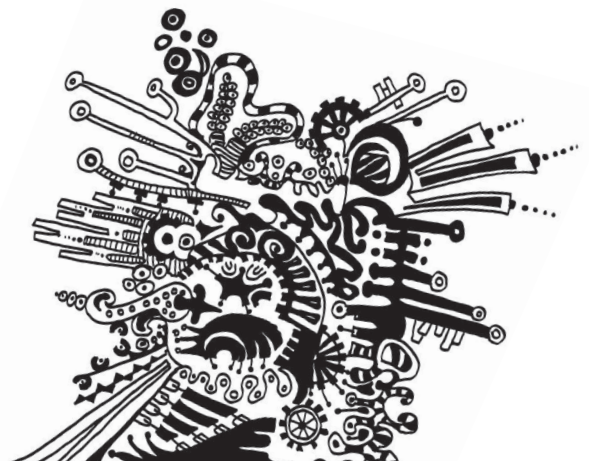
**André Simard**  
Acrobatic Performance  
Designer



**Rogé Francoeur**  
Props Designer



**Florence Cornet**  
Makeup Designer



# Fast Facts

## KOOZA

- KOOZA had its world premiere in April 2007 in Montréal, Canada and has since played in over 66 cities in 22 countries, on four different continents.
- KOOZA celebrated its 1,000th performance in Santa Monica, California in 2009, its 1,500th performance in Tokyo, Japan in 2011 and its 2,000th performance in Dallas, Texas in 2012, its 2500th performance in Vienna, Austria in 2014, its 3000th performance in Montevideo, Uruguay in 2016, its 3500th performance in Shanghai, China, in 2017 and its 4,000th performance in Gijón, Spain, in 2019, and its 4500th performance in Mexico City, in Mexico in 2022.
- KOOZA has mesmerized close to 8 million spectators since its creation.

## Cast and Crew

- The cast and crew of KOOZA represents 32 different nationalities: Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, New Zealand, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, Jordan, Lebanon, Italy, Argentina, Ireland, Estonia and Ethiopi.
- Although French and English are the main languages on tour, many other languages are spoken including: Spanish and Russian.
- More than 120 people travel with the tour including 54 artists.

- The tour relies on local suppliers for many essentials such as food, bio-diesel fuel, machinery, food and beverage supplies for patrons, banking services, delivery services, recycling, and waste management—thereby injecting a significant amount of money into the local economy.
- During an engagement in a city, over 120 people are hired locally to help with ticketing, seating, janitorial services and administration.
- The kitchen employs one kitchen manager and four sous-chefs
- Two performance medicine specialists travel with the tour.





# Village on Wheels



*Cirque du Soleil's* mobile village includes the Big Top, one large entrance tent, artistic tent, box office, kitchen, offices, warehouses and more. Completely self-sufficient for electrical power, the site relies only on a local water supply and telecommunication facilities to support its infrastructure.

## The Site

- On average, the site takes seven days to set up and three days to take down.
- 70 trailers are needed to travel more than 2,000 tons of equipment from city to city.
- The Big Top the artistic tent and the VIP tent are entirely climate controlled.

## The Big Top

- The seating capacity of the Big Top is 2 500.
- The Big Top is comprised of 18 pieces of flame retardant vinyl canvas and is manufactured in Bordeaux, France by Voileries du Sud-Ouest, internationally renowned for their big tops tents.
- The canvas for the tent and its 11 tunnels weighs approximately 11,500 pounds.
- The Big Top is 56 feet, (19 meters) high and has a diameter of 164 feet (51 meters).
- The four masts stand at 82 feet (25 meters) above the ground.
- 17,000 square meters (4.2 acres) are needed to house the entire site including the tents and trailers.

## The Entrance Tent

- A large entrance tent holds the merchandise, food and beverage counters.

## The Artistic Tent

- The artistic tent includes a wardrobe area, dressing rooms, a fully equipped training area and a physiotherapy room.

## The Kitchen

- The kitchen is the heart of the village. It serves three meals a day to 200 people five days a week and serves as a meeting place for cast and crew.