



Celebri!: Koozà Palooza

San Francisco, California (USA)

Cirque du Soleil's Koozà & More!

Friday, November 30th 2007 – Sunday, December 2nd 2007

EVENT GUIDE



Celebri!: Koozà Palooza

Event Guide – Table of Contents

Bienvenue, and welcome to the second gathering of friends we call *Celebri!* We would like to express our thanks to everyone who joined us "Au Nouveau Yorque" - it was great fun! And even though the stagehands union strike put the kibosh on our plans to see Disney's "The Lion King" on Broadway, Cirque du Soleil's Wintuk still tickled our hearts. We hope everyone had a grand time at Keen's steakhouse (and we must all thank the Metzgers for picking up the tab for us), at Wintuk and at Junior's afterwards for cheesecake (yum, yum, yum!).

We would also like to extend our personal thanks to Heather and Jim Strain for their kindness in inviting us out to dinner our last evening in New York City and for taking the time out of their personal lives to be our night-time tour guides (driving us from Uptown to Downtown and from Brooklyn to Queens). It was great fun. Thanks!

We're glad that you've decided to continue with our adventures and join us in San Francisco for Koozà, Cirque du Soleil's newest touring production. Within this event guide you'll find our show times, a brief overview of Koozà's theme and clippings related to the show. There's no schedule this go-round (we're winging it,) so, without further adieu, we give you *Celebri! Koozà Palooza!*

· Rich Alford & Richard Russo

Itinerary

- o Show Schedule & Thematic Overview 03

About Koozà

- o Koozà: The Set 04
- o Koozà: The Costumes 05
- o Koozà: The Characters 07
- o Koozà: The Acts 08

Upcoming Celebri!

- o Where are we Going Next? 19



Celebri!: Koozà Palooza

Itinerary – Show Schedule & Thematic Overview

KOOZÀ

Grand Chapiteau, AT&T Park (Giants Stadium) - San Francisco, California
Saturday, December 1st at 8:00pm & Sunday, December 2nd at 1:00pm

KOOZA tells the story of The Innocent, a melancholy loner in search of his place in the world.

KOOZA is a return to the origins of Cirque du Soleil: It 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 mélange that emphasizes bold slapstick humor.

The Innocent's journey brings him into contact with a panoply of comic characters such as the King, the Trickster, the Pickpocket, and the Obnoxious Tourist and his Bad Dog.

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



Celebri!: Koozå Palooza

About Koozå – The Set

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

—Stéphane Roy

KOOZA’s set evokes a public square that metamorphoses 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 concentrate the audience’s 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.
- The giant fabric structure, called the Void that overlooks the Bataclan 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 surface of the stage is decorated to look like a starry sky, and in the center ring is a graphic representation of the sky in Montreal on the night of the first public performance.
- The stage is ringed by recessed lighting units that cast a warm glow up into the faces of the performers, much like the footlights of a 19th-century theatre.



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About Koozà – The Costumes

“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

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, 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. In the Charivari number the garments switch from gold to red in a fraction of a second. The challenge, she says, was not so much the quick change itself as the fact that the artists are performing acrobatics and forming into a human pyramid at the same time as the transformation and they can use only their thumbs to pull off the trick.

- 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 “Bad Dog” costume proved to be another huge challenge because the performer wearing it has to be able to move the dog’s ears, stick its tongue in and out, 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 150 fake fur rats with 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.

- For the Juggler's costume Marie-Chantale found a fabric made of mirrored squares that reflect the light and make him look like a living disco ball. The effect is so dazzling she was actually afraid he might blind himself when he moves his arms.
- 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.
- The designs include truly spectacular luminous coats and hats made with fiber optics and LEDs molded in translucent resin to diffuse the light – with this delicate fabric, each coat takes 60 hours to make and the hats involve 30 hours of painstaking work.
- One army costume features more than 400 individually-sewn metallic flaps to create the effect that it is armored.



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About Koozå – The 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 loner 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.

The Pickpocket

The Pickpocket is a wily criminal in the guise of a clumsy clown. He makes improbable balloon animals and is constantly on the run from a pair of cops. And he almost always manages to give them the slip. He's a master scam artist and he'll steal the shirt off your back in no time at all!

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 Bad 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.



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About Koozå – The Acts

(In Alphabetical Order)

Charivari

The 19 artists of the House Troupe burst into action off the top of the show, combining acrobatics, rapid-fire costume changes and rebounds from three miniature trampolines set in the stage. 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.

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 tower on which to perform a balancing act that displays the human body at the very peak of condition and muscular control.

Contortion

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

Highwire

The twin high wires criss-cross diagonally stage left to stage right at 15 and 25 feet above the stage, and the four tightrope walkers add their own tension to the 6,600 pound load on each rope.

Juggling

Balls, hoops, and clubs fly in unprecedented numbers and at speeds that the eye and the brain can’t easily process. And they don’t just pass from hand to hand, they arc and fly into waiting props and receptacles with a seemingly impossible accuracy. This juggling act has been called, quite simply, the best in the world.

Teeterboard

The Teeterboard flings artists into the air, where they execute quintuple twisting somersaults – and that’s just the prelude for acrobats doing the same thing over 30 feet above the stage with double and single metal stilts strapped to their legs.

Solo Trapeze

The trapeze is installed stage left to stage right – a Cirque-created innovation. But the act goes beyond the stage setting and the artist's display of physical mastery. There is drama in the personalities as she interacts with The Trickster, and that adds even more dynamic undertones to the visual thrills and delights.

Unicycle Duo

A twist on the classic unicycle number introduces a passenger to the action. The two performers create a pas de deux in constant motion around the stage in 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 Highwire, 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.



Celebri!: Koozå Palooza

Where to Next?



Celebri!: Seattle

Seattle, Washington (USA)
Cirque du Soleil's Corteo & More!
Friday, May 2nd 2008 - Sunday, May 4th 2008

SEE YOU THERE!

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