

## Canadian art circus “ID” premieres in Incheon Powerful beat, breath-taking acrobatics --- “It’s art”

DONG AH  
August 13th,  
2009  
Incheon,  
South Korea

“ID”, the first art circus to be introduced in Korea, was distinctly different from previous art circuses.

Most of the existing art circuses, referred to as Cirque du Soleil, that have emerged as a new global cultural product have been elegant and lyrical.

“ID”, which was introduced in Incheon, at the Big Top Theater with 1,400 seats at the Global Fair & Festival 2009, was a combination of circus arts with big city underground cultural codes, such as hip-hop dance and extreme sports.



Cyr Wheel using a big rolling hoop

The stage set reminded one of a back street behind a skyscraper, and the background music was a combination of a hip-hop beat drum and an electronic rock keyboard. This unique combination created a modern and urban atmosphere, while previous art circuses used to create a phantasmal and meditative one.

The show starts with a red-haired girl in hot pants in the middle of a busy and crowded downtown street. This girl, who reminds us of Milla Jovovich in the movie “The 5th Element”, or of Natalie Portman in “Closer”, is a symbol of the solitude and the covert passion for an urban life. She encounters a man on the street and performs acrobatics with him, including dancing, and then parts with him. She then shows up every once in a while throughout the show, like a cat wandering around downtown, providing a sense of uniformity to the overall flow of the show.

When the moon is full, citizens in full dress change to casual and sporty outfits and show off their different talents. Fourteen artists perform a unique dance, combining break dance, hip-hop and techno, Chinese pole, straps, contortion, trampolining, tumbling, etc.



These acrobatic arts shine even brighter through the imagination of anti-gravity that transforms the vertical space of a big city into a horizontal one. A unique combination of exquisite Yamakasi skills, like running up stairs on a bike or jumping between buildings, and trampolining at an angle of 90 degrees, provokes awe and wins applause. Also, the acrobatic art of balancing on a stack of twelve chairs, imitating the dance battles of urban youngsters, and Cyr Wheel acrobatics using a big rolling ring, are thrilling. These acrobatic arts won applause every 3 minutes during the 70 minute show.



Chinese pole acrobatics using a streetlight

"ID" is the seventh show introduced by Cirque Eloize, a Canadian art circus troupe, but it is quite different from "Rain" and "Nebbia", which were introduced in Korea in 2006 and 2008, respectively. This innovation is due to the fact that this show was created on an OEM basis. Mr. Junghun Yoon, CEO of Show Wave Entertainment, who successfully promoted investments equivalent to more than half of the total production cost, was the actual middleman of this show in the sense that the blue-print concept of "a speedy and dynamic art circus" came from him. Mr. Yoon said, "ID is just a teaser of a show that will be performed in a dedicated art circus theatre with 2,000 seats that will be built in Songdo by 2011."

The performance of a Korean singer (Jongsuh Kim) that had been scheduled to highlight the show's finale was cancelled because his songs would not be in harmony with the overall background music. Because the stage is lower than the audience seats, it is inevitably difficult to watch the show from the back rows.

The show is about a 5 minute walk from Central Park Station at Incheon Subway Line 1. \30,000 – 100,000. Until October 25.



## Art circus "ID" introduced in Incheon

CHOSUN  
August 10th, 2009  
Incheon,  
South Korea

"ID", a new art circus by Cirque Eloize, a Canadian art circus troupe, was staged at the Big Top Theater, at the site of the Global Fair & Festival 2009, in Incheon, on August 7.

This show, directed by Jeannot Painchaud, President of Cirque Eloize, drew attention especially because it was being staged in Incheon for the first time. Cirque Eloize was founded in 1993 by Jeannot Painchaud and seven other artists from the National Circus School of Canada and Cirque du Soleil. In Korea, they have introduced shows like "Rain" and "Nebbia", and "ID" is their 7<sup>th</sup> show.

ID is clearly a new kind of art circus in the sense that it is speedy and dynamic, combining circus with youth dances like hip-hop, while previous art circuses were lyrical and strongly artistic. It deserves to be recognized as a show customized for the Incheon City Festival.

The show is full of dynamic dances and arts, keeping the audience amazed throughout its entire 70 minute duration and making it a spectacle that could be enjoyed by all ages, and not just by youths, as well as a hugely popular show that transcends generational and geographical boundaries.

It is said to depict the journey of someone seeking one's own identity in a future city as the background, but it does not have a clear-cut story line. It is rather a depiction of the explosive energy of the younger generation through circus-based dances, music, visuals and images. The production team created an urban show using a stage filled with video art, dances, such as break dance, hip-hop and Techtonik, as well as modernistic rock music mainly based on electronic sounds.

Fourteen young performers from many countries, including Germany, Canada, Laos and the U.S., shake up the stage with dynamic and flamboyant acrobatics and dance moves.

Even though acrobatic arts, such as Chinese pole, bicycle, straps, etc., are not new or overwhelmingly large-scaled, they are performed in a totally new fashion. It demonstrates that the differences between a small-town circus and a global one are not technical, but are rather based on a different perspective.



The hottest part of the show is the thrilling scene where the performers jump off the set and soar high into the air using trampolines set up on the stage. The audience is in awe in front of this scene of performers returning to their original locations. It makes one feel like watching an upside-down screen.

This show will be performed until October 25 and then proceed onto the international scene.



## Art circus "ID" Magnificent traditional performances in a future city

CHOSUN  
August 13th,  
2009  
Incheon,  
South Korea

It was like walking on a vertical wall. The acrobats fell on trampolines (highly elastic mats) set 5 meters below, and then bounced off to climb a wall. Sometimes racing, sometimes crossing each other, they created dynamic and colorful patterns with their bodies. There was art in the very high tension between the elasticity of soaring and the gravity of falling. This unique "dance", using even the protrusions, doors and holes of the set, which was shaped like a building, was the climax of the show. The visual effect of countless cubes moving in and out was also fantastic.

Art circus "ID" was introduced in the Incheon Tent Theater, at the site of the Global Fair & Festival 2009, on August 7. This show, introduced in Korea for the first time by Cirque Eloize, a Canadian circus troupe that had visited Korea with "Rain" and "Nebbia", was a bit disappointing at the beginning: the city set up on the stage was visually poor and didn't look like a future city in any sense of the word; in fact, it reminded one of the handicraft era.



Hoop-riding acrobatics at ID

Cirque Eloize opened the show following its own principles that focus on an analog body, unlike Cirque du Soleil, another Canadian circus troupe. The show started out with acrobatics by holding the body vertically and upside down on a pole, body acrobatics that use balance, strength, rhythm, and the breath of men and women. It was even more beautiful because it was dangerous. The next segment consisted of bicycle acrobatics. The acrobat performed wheelies, cycling around seats, jumping over amazed audiences and dancing as if the bicycle were part of his body. Another scene that provoked awe and won applause was the one where the wonderful geometry of a human body was demonstrated by holding hands at the top of a stack of eight chairs.

There were quite a few vestiges of the traditional circus, including aerial acrobatics using straps and ribbons hung from the ceiling. Since the word "circus" originated from the Latin term for "wheel", wheel acrobatics was not exempted. The acrobatics involved in riding a big hoop was like a dance. Director Jeannot Painchaud's promise that he would change the scenes a lot faster while minimizing the clown show in order to please Korean audiences was kept most effectively in the last sequence that used trampolines and walls. Poor building structures went through repeated transformations and were used entirely without waste. This idea was not used in "Rain" or "Nebbia".

"ID" was very successful in satisfying the audience. Even though the stage art was not great and the story line was poor, the interaction with the audience was somewhat energetic. It is not very different from classical circuses when it comes to the materials used, but it is a greatly successful in terms of combination and application.

At the Tent Theater at Songdo, in Incheon until October 25.

