

WOLFGANG'S MAGICAL MUSICAL CIRCUS

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WHO IS CIRCA?

Circa Contemporary Circus is one of the world's leading performance companies. Since 2004, from our base in Brisbane, Australia, we have toured the world – performing in 39 countries to over a million people. Our 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. We continue to push the boundaries of the art form, blurring the lines between movement, dance, theatre and circus, and 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. We are 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.

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).

We are committed to fostering the next generation of circus artists and run a [Training Centre](#) from our studio in Brisbane. We also run regular circus programs with communities throughout Queensland and around Australia.

As a champion of live performance, we anage [arTour](#) and was the Creative Lead for the [Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games arts and cultural program](#).

Circa respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, waters and seas on which we work and live paying respects to Elders, past, present and future.

ABOUT WOLFGANG'S MAGICAL MUSICAL CIRCUS:

Straight from the score and onto the stage, the man known as Mozart appears amid a storm of powder, tumbling and twirling, as musical mayhem and movement fuse in this family show with a circus twist.

To those who know him, he is Wolfgang, the dart-playing, pun-loving ratbag. To those who are watching and listening, he is the wiggled genius Mozart. Come and discover his irrepressible spirit and vibrant compositions through physical comedy and mischievous antics.

Designed to amaze people from the age of three and upwards, Wolfgang's Magical Musical Circus reinvents the composer's magical music in a skilful and illuminating show featuring Circa's dexterous daredevil artists and a live accordionist. Watch as the notes are physically lifted off the page as performers bring the renowned compositions to life amidst a storm of powder, tumbles and crashes, all under the eccentric swirl of the conductor's baton.

THE TEAM:

Director

Yaron Lifschitz

Associate Director

Benjamin Knapton

Music

Mozart and Quincy Grant

Lighting Designer

Geoff Squires

Technical Director

Jason Organ

Costume Designer

Libby McDonnell

Assistant Costume Designer

Selene Cochrane

Artistic Consultants

Darcy Grant & Scott Wit



THINGS TO PONDER

- You might like to explore the history of contemporary circus.

- Discuss about and watch some short mime excerpts to explore scene with no dialogue.

- Discuss how music has been listened too over time, originally live, on radio, on records, on CDs and now online.

- Listen to and explore who Mozart is.

- Explore the concept of conducting – different beat patterns as well as how to indicate changing tempo and dynamics

- Discuss how set design can enhance or take away from visual productions.



ELEMENTS OF DRAMA DISCUSSION POINTS AND DESCRIPTORS

CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Discuss and explore how the acrobats communicated Character and their Relationships without words.

Character Descriptor: Identification and portrayal of a person's values, attitudes, intentions and actions as imagined relationships, situations and ideas in dramatic action.

Relationship Descriptor: The connections and interactions between people that affect the dramatic action.

SPACE

Space Descriptor: The space of the performance and audience, fictional space of the dramatic action and the emotional space between characters.

MOVEMENT AND TENSION

- Discuss how Tension is created through Movement.
- How is Tension created through the playing of music?

Movement Descriptor: Using facial expression, posture and action expressively in space and time to create roles, situations, relationships, atmosphere and symbols.

Tension Descriptor: A sense of anticipation or conflict within characters or character relationships, or problems, surprise and mystery in stories and ideas to propel dramatic action and create audience engagement.

DRAMATIC FOCUS

Dramatic Focus Descriptor: The driving force and forward motion of drama to create dramatic meaning, tension, belief and audience engagement. The movement of the drama from the introduction, exposition of ideas and conflict to a resolution.

*The elements of drama descriptors have come from the Australian Curriculum: The Arts: Drama.

5 MINUTES WITH THE DIRECTOR:

What inspired the work?

Yaron Lifshitz: The music of Mozart and his personality. The question of how you can be a dart playing, pun loving ratbag and a genius. Mostly how much life I feel in the music and how little I see when it's performed like it's in a museum.

Who do you see on stage? / Who are you asked to identify with?

YL: Mozart. The music. We are planning a lot of gags, some nifty acrobatics, and some circus delights.

What kind of experience do you hope the audience will have?

An experience that leaves them energised and amazed.

What are the themes of the piece and what messages are the audience going to take away?

YL: I see this as a defense of culture – in two directions;

from those who don't care about it and from those who think it's theirs and there is only one way to experience it. I planned for a creation that argues the best way to preserve culture is to make it live and circus is us at our most alive and present and dangerous. And Mozart is not just part of our cultural legacy – he has great music that you can dance, thump, giggle and cry along to.

In what ways might the piece cross art-form boundaries / genres? (e.g. does it include music, visual art, projection, audience participation)

YL: It mixes circus and classical music. There's audience participation. And wigs. And powder.

What makes you excited about the show and why do you think people should see it?

YL: At its heart it is about an energy. You feel it in Mozart. It's smart, alive, vibrant. And I want to get that on stage and let everyone enjoy it.

CLASSROOM ANTICS

Play: Wolfgang's Magical Musical Circus

Written By:

Style: Contemporary Circus, Clowning

Characters: Young Girl, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Accordion Playing Cherub

Start of the Play: The Young Girl is preparing for her birthday party, however, no one arrives. She opens one of her presents which is a record by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. On playing the record, Wolfgang and his music playing sidekick the Accordion Playing Cherub enter her life through a fridge and brightens her day.

Relationships: The young girl forms a friendly and playful relationship with the character of Wolfgang. This relationship is strained in the middle of the play which does cause a fight. With the help of the Accordion Playing Cherub this conflict is resolved and they all end up as friends.

Major Themes: Loneliness, Friendship, Joy through music

End of the Play: Wolfgang and the Accordion Playing Cherub leave and the girl is left alone waiting again for guests to come to her party. She picks up the record and goes to play it again, the audience is left wondering if the fun continues.



AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

THE ARTS LINKS

DRAMA AND MUSIC GENERAL CAPABILITIES

Literacy, Numeracy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding.

YEAR	DRAMA	MUSIC
Prep to 2	<p>Explore role and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama ACADRM027</p> <p>Use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation ACADRM028</p> <p>Present drama that communicates ideas, including stories from their community, to an audience ACADRM029</p> <p>Respond to drama and consider where and why people make drama, starting with Australian drama including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ACADRR030</p>	<p>Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion ACAMUM080</p> <p>Sing and play instruments to improvise, practise a repertoire of chants, songs and rhymes, including songs used by cultural groups in the community ACAMUM081</p> <p>Create compositions and perform music to communicate ideas to an audience ACAMUM082</p> <p>Respond to music and consider where and why people make music, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ACAMUR083</p>
Years 3 & 4	<p>Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama ACADRM031</p> <p>Use voice, body, movement and language to sustain role and relationships and create dramatic action with a sense of time and place ACADRM032</p> <p>Shape and perform dramatic action using narrative structures and tension in devised and scripted drama, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama ACADRM033</p> <p>Identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, starting with Australian drama, including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, using the elements of drama to make comparisons ACADRR034</p>	<p>Develop aural skills by exploring, imitating and recognising elements of music including dynamics, pitch and rhythm patterns ACAMUM084</p> <p>Practise singing, playing instruments and improvising music, using elements of music including rhythm, pitch, dynamics and form in a range of pieces, including in music from the local community ACAMUM085</p> <p>Create, perform and record compositions by selecting and organising sounds, silence, tempo and volume ACAMUM086</p> <p>Identify intended purposes and meanings as they listen to music using the elements of music to make comparisons, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ACAMUR087</p>
Years 5 & 6	<p>Explore dramatic action, empathy and space in improvisations, playbuilding and scripted drama to develop characters and situations ACADRM035</p> <p>Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action ACADRM036</p> <p>Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative, drives dramatic tension, and uses dramatic symbol, performance styles and design elements to share community and cultural stories and engage an audience ACADRM037</p> <p>Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama ACADRR038</p>	<p>Explore dynamics and expression, using aural skills to identify and perform rhythm and pitch patterns ACAMUM088</p> <p>Develop technical and expressive skills in singing and playing instruments with understanding of rhythm, pitch and form in a range of pieces, including in music from the community ACAMUM089</p> <p>Rehearse and perform music including music they have composed by improvising, sourcing and arranging ideas and making decisions to engage an audience ACAMUM090</p> <p>Explain how the elements of music communicate meaning by comparing music from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music ACAMUR091</p>

BEFORE YOU SEE THE SHOW

ACTIVITY	WHAT TO DO	EQUIPMENT/RESOURCES	SUBJECT LINKS
Emotion walk	<p>PRE or POST SHOW:</p> <p>Students are to work individually moving in an open space with no sound. The teacher announces an emotion and the students are to physically take on that emotion using facial expressions body language and move through the space. When the teacher calls out another emotion they change immediately and move again through the space. (Emotions: Happy, sad, angry, lonely, shy, scared, jealous, excited). Ensure students work individually and do not interact with each other. Encourage no sound as the movements and expressions are the main focus. Take this activity further by playing different music and having students decide for themselves the emotion this music conveys, again moving in that way around the space.</p>	Open space, Music and speakers.	Drama, Dance, Music
Mirroring	<p>PRE or POST SHOW:</p> <p>Students stand opposite each other. Ask students to identify who is 'A' and who is 'B'. Student A leads the movement and Student B copies. Get them to start slow and make sure it is working well before speeding up movements or make them more difficult. Get them to swap.</p> <p>Put on different styles of music and do the activity to the music.</p> <p>Discuss with students if their movement changes depending on the type of music. Does the speed/tempo change? Does the style of movement change? Etc.</p> <p>Who finds it easier to lead? Who finds it easier to follow?</p> <p>You can set the task of getting students to developing a movement piece based on their movements of following by having students use canon, tempo, duration and rehearsing it to show the class. Students could also create their own music to accompany the movement if you want to incorporate Music making into the task/activity.</p>	Music and speakers Music instruments	Drama, Dance, Music

BEFORE YOU SEE THE SHOW (CONTINUED)

ACTIVITY	WHAT TO DO	EQUIPMENT/ RESOURCES	SUBJECT LINKS
Conducting	<p>PRE or POST SHOW:</p> <p>Teach the students how to conduct in simple time: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4.</p> <p>Learn to sing/play simple songs in each metre e.g. 2/4 "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"; 3/4 "Happy Birthday" and 4/4 "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star".</p> <p>Use something as a baton – pencils, straws, fingers, mallets and teach the patterns for each metre.</p> <p>Play/sing songs together while taking turns to conduct – explore how to control speed and volume as well as beat.</p> <p>Develop a movement motif for each time signature (a 2 beat movement; 3-beat movement or 4 beat movement) and perform this while being conducted by a classmate</p>	<p>Music and speakers Music instruments</p>	<p>Music, Dance</p>
Juggling and balancing objects to create Tension	<p>PRE or POST SHOW:</p> <p>Teach the students how to juggle with one, two or three bean bags/balls.</p> <p>Have students practice balancing different objects using their hand and then only their fingers (E.g. A4 paper, fidget spinner, music baton/chopstick)</p> <p>Discuss what could be done to build tension with these actions. Discuss and explore the use of facial expressions, body language and different music.</p> <p>TASK: Students are to work in pairs to create a short juggling and/or balancing scene where they use facial expression, body language and music to build tension. One child acts out the scene, whilst the other plays an instrument to build tension (e.g slow drum beats to fast). They then swap over roles. Both perform to an audience of their peers.</p>	<p>Bean bags, balls, A4 paper, fidget spinners, music baton/chop sticks, musical instruments.</p>	<p>Drama, Music</p>

AFTER THE SHOW

ACTIVITY	WHAT TO DO	EQUIPMENT/ RESOURCES	SUBJECT LINKS
Shadow Puppetry	<p>POST SHOW:</p> <p>Sit students in a circle and have a torch and piece of paper ready. Try to find a room which can be made darker so that the shadows work more effectively.</p> <p>Ask students what they remember about the use of shadow in the show and how the actors used voice and facial expressions to make the shadows more interesting and funny. Make your own shadow with the paper and torch.</p> <p>TASK:</p> <p>Students can either improvise or write a short story which they need to perform using shadow puppetry.</p> <p>You could either use existing fairy tales or stories, or get them to create their own depending on time and length of unit. You could also create puppets out of materials if you have the time and want to embed move visual art components into the lesson.</p> <p>Students then rehearse their story using shadows and perform for the class.</p> <p>You can also simplify this task to just telling a story using a hand puppet behind a piece of paper.</p> <p>Really, you can make this as simple or complex as you like!</p>	<p>Torches, paper and/or material</p> <p>Optional: Paddle pops, string, glue, paper bags, straws and other material for puppets</p>	<p>Drama, Visual Art, Literacy</p>
Musical Motives	<p>POST SHOW:</p> <p>Teach students a simple musical motif – one-two bars e.g. the first two bars of "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" or "Symphony No. 40" and get them to improvise variations to the melody in small groups – have them explore inversion, retrograde and rhythmic changes to demonstrate their understanding of the elements of music.</p> <p>Have students notate the motif and their variations using graphic notation</p>	<p>Music instruments or voices</p>	<p>Music</p>
Children's Party	<p>POST SHOW:</p> <p>Write an invitation to the class letting them know that they have been hired to perform at a class party for their peers. You could either do it just for each other, or for another class and then the other class can perform for your class.</p> <p>The students need to get into groups and develop their own routine/act based on what they saw in Wolfgang's Magical Musical Circus. They might use shadow puppetry, play with lighting (such as the spotlight scene and you could use torches), juggling, magic tricks, clowning, a movement piece using mirroring, playing music, etc. Different groups could do different routines and be developed either over a couple of lessons, or longer if you have time to extend them and get them to use costumes and refine their performance.</p>	<p>Materials depend on what you decide to do with your students</p>	<p>Drama, Dance, Music, Visual Art</p>

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