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PRESENTS

*Cirque Le Masque*  
**RIO**

Conceived and Produced by **DENNIS** and **BERNIE SCHUSSEL**

Artistic Director/Choreographer  
**MIRIAM HERTZSON**

Stage and Road Manager  
**MIA CARESS**

Assistant Stage Manager  
**ANDREW McCLASKEY**

Scenic Design  
**LE MASQUE PRODUCTIONS**

Make up  
**DIANE MELLINA**

Production Assistant  
**GINA BEINER**

Video  
**CORY BENKHE**

Lighting Design  
**SHAWN PEKNIC**

Rigger  
**JEFF STATON**

**CIRQUE DANCERS**

**JESS BEHREND  
LARA CHAMBERLAIN  
SAMANTHA LYN DUBOFF  
RACHEL FOSTER**

**LAURA HALEY  
ROYCE LOVE RUSSELL  
BIANCA SALTAFORMAGGIO**

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# Cirque Le Masque **RIO**

Pre Show ..... Amaury Sanabria as "Weego"

## ACT I

Welcome to Rio! Entrance ..... The Cast

Flying Silk ..... Caroline Petrement

Hula Hoops ..... Alisa Panfilova

German Wheel ..... Andrei Roublev

Juggler ..... Ruslan Dmytruk

Hand To Hand Balancing ..... The Garza Family

## INTERMISSION

## ACT II

Duo Flying Straps ..... Caroline Petrement/Guillaume Blais

Cube Juggler ..... Ayadar Rakhmatullin

Silent Cinema ..... Mario Diamond

Chair Balance ..... Nathan Valencia

Duo Rolla Bolla ..... Vladimir Dovgan/Anatoliy Yenyi

Rio Finale ..... The Cast

**WARNING** – The photographing or sound recording of any performance is strictly prohibited. Gateway Playhouse offers a wireless sound enhancement system for the hearing impaired. Inquire at the box office for more information.

**FIRE NOTICE** — The exit indicated by a red light and sign nearest to the seat you occupy, is the shortest route to the outside. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do NOT run. WALK to that Exit. However, under normal circumstances, when leaving the Theatre, use the center rear exits. SMOKING is prohibited in the BUILDING, as required by the Suffolk County NO SMOKING Ordinance. Smoking in any area designated "No Smoking" renders the offenders subject to a fine, or imprisonment, or both.

Playbill Designed and Printed by Searles Graphics, Inc.

10 Holiday Season 2009

Gateway Playhouse 11



**JESS BEHREND** (*Cirque Dancer*) grew up dancing at Dance Dynamics in Michigan studying many different forms of dance and voice. After high school, Jess did 2 cruise ship contracts for Celebrity Cruises and moved to New York City. While in NYC, she has done commercial work for Time Warner Cable, MTV, University of Phoenix and Dr. Pepper, and can also be seen in numerous workout videos. Most recently, Jess was a part of the workshop of a new theatre show entitled *CinderellaROCK* in Texas & worked for Mattel doing 'The Barbie', choreographed by JaQuel Knight, for a Fashion Week event in NYC. Jess is also a certified make-up artist and really

enjoys choreographing. She is very excited to be joining the cast of Cirque Le Masque's *Rio!* Much love to my family and friends.

**GUILLAUME BLAIS** (*Duo Flying Straps*) was a successful hairdresser who worked with Cirque Du Soleil. During this time, he realized his true passion was for dance and the circus. After much thought he decided to follow his dreams and began training in Montreal in dance and circus arts. Guillaume now performs all over the world as an aerialist. He is a perfect example to show that if you follow your dreams they can come true.

**LARA CHAMBERLAIN** (*Cirque Dancer*) is thrilled to be joining this incredible cast! Originally from Parker, Colorado, she is now living in New York City and loving it! Most recently, Lara was singing and dancing on the high seas with Princess Cruises. Favorite previous roles include Kathy in *Singing in the Rain*, and Val in *A Chorus Line*. She'd like to thank her family and J-Boogie for their incredible love and support. Enjoy the show!

**VLADIMIR DOVGAN** (*Duo Rolla Bolla*) was born in Lviv, Ukraine in 1970 and started his circus career at the age of 10. Vladimir attended the College of

Circus Art in Kiev, Ukraine from 1985 to 1989. After graduation, Vladimir and his partner, Anatoliy Yenyi, traveled around Europe and Asia with the Moscow Circus. He has been performing in the USA since 1997 and his act "Duo Equilibrium" appeared on Broadway in 2008.

**MARIO DIAMOND** (*Comic Mime*) Born in 1958 in Louiseville, Canada, he discovered mime while studying literature in college. In 1976, Mario was on stage for the first time. Thirty-two years later the mime has performed in Europe, Asia, South and North America, over 8000 shows, played in

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**SAMANTHA LYN DuBOFF** (*Cirque Dancer*) is very excited to be touring again with this year's company of Cirque Le Masque. She graduated with a BFA in dance performance from the University of the Arts. Since then her credits include multiple appearances in Atlantic Cities Trump Plaza and Trump Taj Mahal as well as the Broadhallow Theater Company's production of *Anything Goes* (Purity) and *Thoroughly Modern*

*Mille* (Gloria/Pearl Lady). Much love and thanks to my family and fiancé Corey for all their love and support.

**THE GARZA FAMILY** (*Living Statues*) The Garza Family also known as "The Living Statues," is a slow-motion acrobatic balancing trio which do their work painted in solid silver. The act creates art form, from ancient Greek and Roman statues. The three members slowly assume statue-like positions moving into their acrobatic balancing formations silhouetted by a center spotlight. The Garza's studied ancient Greek and Roman statue-like formations and learned to slowly

mold themselves from one form to another. The Garza's have spent many years researching the poses they currently use in their performances. The act has evolved from ordinary temple hand balancing to an amazing display of strength and grace. They display a combination of grace, beauty, strength, and athletic discipline. The marble sculptures are reminiscent of the celebrated human form in ancient Greece. The poses they have selected are easily recognizable as Greek and Roman poses. Whether or not the audience is familiar with ancient statue-like forms, The Garza's are able to impress them with their remarkable

display. The Garza's were nominated for the act of the 80's on the Las Vegas Strip. They performed twelve straight years with the show "City Lites" at the Flamingo Hilton and also "Bal du Moulin Rouge" at the Grand Hilton. They shared the stage with artists like Vic Damone, Jim Nabors, Charo, and Suzanne Somers just to name a few. The Garza Family introduced the slow-motion hand balancing act or Living Statue Act into the United States. Every place The Garza's perform, they have the audience twisting and shouting for more. They have been imitated, but not replicated!

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**RACHEL FOSTER** (*Cirque Dancer*) born in Pittsburgh, PA is a graduate of the acclaimed Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Dance program. She has performed works by Alvin Ailey, Pascal Rioult, Christopher Huggins and Robert Battle among others. She is very excited to join Cirque Le Masque and thanks her family, friends and Carl for their support.

**LAURA HALEY** (*Cirque Dancer*) received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance Performance from Hofstra University, and is currently teaching and choreographing for studios around the country. She performed in the regional theatre production of *The Music Man*, and sung for Shirley Jones in

*Shirley Jones in Concert*. A seasoned tap dancer, Laura appeared in the NYC Fringe Festival in the production of *Break the Floor* as well as danced in a tribute to Bill Bojangles Robinson along with the most accomplished tap dancers of today. She has appeared in numerous fitness commercials, music videos and Dance Teacher Magazine fashion shows. This is Laura's second season with Cirque Le Masque.

**ALISA PANFILOVA** (*Hula Hoops*) was born in Russia and hails from a circus family. She studied at the "Studio of Circus Arts" at the National Circus of Ukraine in Kiev. Alisa has performed with The Cole Brothers Circus as well as with circuses in Lithuania and France. She appeared in the Millennium Theatre's 'Christmas Show' in New York City and has entertained audiences all over the US performing her hula hoop act. Alisa joined Cirque Le Masque in 2009.

**CAROLINE PETREMENT** (*Flying Silk*) is an aerialist from Montreal. Her career began in her exploration of trapeze, and it was here that she began to pursue movement. From static, flying, and swinging trapeze she moved into aerial silks, and that has now evolved into her performances on straps. Since meeting and training with her coach, Victor Fomine she has been able to turn her passion into a profession. Caroline is an artist whose passion for what she does is demonstrated in her every line as she creates what can be described best perhaps as art in motion.

**AYDAR RAKHMATULLIN** (*Cube Juggler*) is a second-generation performer, his parents being world-renowned circus acrobats. They trained him since he was born and he started performing professionally when he was only 11 years old. He has experience in many cirque disciplines including acrobatics, comedy, and juggling. In 1993 he got the idea of creating a new act, which would be different from traditional circus acts, something original and unique. He began to practice under the supervision of his parents and choreographer Vladimir Belyaev. He debuted on a ring of the Big Moscow Circus with an act, originally called "Geometric Fantasy". It was a success. Aydar's act is unlike anything you've seen before. The motions of the performer, his props, light and music fuse together to form a breathtaking, spectacular performance. In 1994 he took another step forward. He took his act to ice, his first appearance in an ice show was *Pearl of Russia*, and this was only the beginning. Aydar has appeared in a variety of venues including cirque shows, theaters, symphony orchestras, casinos, ice shows, corporate events, half-time shows and television (including *Late Show with David Letterman*). He has performed for millions of people throughout the world, for corporate audiences as small as 100 people and as large as 70,000 (half-time shows). He has performed for many top fortune 500 companies, as well as entertaining many world-renowned celebrities. Many years of perform-

ing experience, diverse training, and creativity have made Aydar a unique presence in the performing arts.

**ANDREI ROUBLEV** (*German Wheel*) was born in Moscow, Russia and at the age of 5 started to train as a professional gymnast attending the Gymnastic Sport School of Olympic Reserve #1. He competed at national and international levels for decades and earned the title "Master of Sport of Gymnastic and Acrobatic Tumbling". After receiving his degree from Moscow's State University of Physical Culture and Sports, he joined an innovative flying trapeze act, the structure of which is unique in its kind, consist-



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ing of two layered trapeze structures. Later, he performed the trick that has not been repeated since: "Double Passage with Triple Somersault". In 1996, Andrei was approached to join the Cirque du Soleil's top production show *La Nouba* in Orlando, FL. Being an original cast member, he spent 6 years as a Captain of Flying Trapeze team and one of the main characters of the show and 4 years of performing for World's Special Events Department of Cirque du Soleil. In 2004, Andrei created his new solo German Wheel Act that combines difficult tricks and unique elements of choreography in one performing routine. His performance list includes touring Theatre shows, VIP corporate and private performances for national celebrities and the world's corporations. Andrei is currently based in Orlando, FL.

**ROYCE LOVE RUSSELL** (*Cirque Dancer*) is stoked to be doing *Rio!* He hails from Dallas, Texas where he went to Booker T. Washington School for The Performing and Visual Arts. After high school he went to TWU in Denton Texas where he graduated with an emphasis in ballet performance. Royce was a semi-finalist on *So You Think You Can Dance* and has been seen in many commercials including iPod, Charmin and Puma. Royce would like to thank his parents for always feeding him only the best southern food!

**BIANCA SALTAFORMAGGIO** (*Cirque Dancer*) is beyond thrilled and thank-

ful to be joining the cast of Cirque Le Masque! A New York Native, she received her BA in Dance from Marymount Manhattan College. Just recently she originated the role of Tanya Taddle in the New York Workshop for the new musical, *Show N Tell*, working with Broadway's best: Stepp and Seth Stewart, Debra Byrd, and Linda Twine. Some Regional credits include *Music Man* and *Evita* at The Fireside Theatre. And part of the Kinetic Dance Theatre, Bianca has performed in several full length productions and cabarets with this NY based jazz company. Film credits include *Trying to Find the Words* (Waterway Productions) and the webisode series *Cop Doc* (mDialog). So much love and thanks to everyone in her life that keeps positivity around her...you know who you are!

**THE VALENCIA FAMILY** continues a seven generation tradition of astounding performances. All types of venues, hotel, casino, cruise ship, professional show and circus, allow this family to entertain audiences of all ages. Jose, born and raised in Chile, with his five brothers and one sister, formed the internationally famous "Flying Valencias" and "The Super Locos". In 1979, the Valencia family moved their home base to the United States from South America. The family continues to amaze audiences throughout North and South America, Asia and Europe, with their spectacular acts. Now, Jose Valencia is presenting his family, the new generation of "Valencias". Aman-



da, Enrique, Nathan and Lynn "his wife". Continuing the family tradition of aerialists, the "Apollos", performed by Enrique and Nathan, delight audiences throughout the Americas and Europe, with grace and gymnastic excellence. The "Valencia Gauchos" is performed by the whole family. Directly influenced by Jose's Argentinian father, the performance is a great cultural and exciting display of Argentine dance, percussion and artistic expression. The "Rola Bola" is performed by Enrique, who discovered his talent for balancing when he was 7 years old. He has since perfected this art, keeping the audience in suspense and culminating with the "Tower of Power". Lynn, British born and raised, is a professional dancer and aerialist. She performs with six beautiful Peacocks, expressing pure beauty in "Peacock Royale". The "Flower", performed by Lynn, is especially beautiful for stage shows and productions. Enrique, born in Great Britain, raised in the United States, is trained in gymnastics, dance, aerial acrobatics and equestrian bare-back riding. Nathan, born and raised

in the United States, is trained in gymnastics, dance, aerial acrobatics and equestrian bare-back riding.

**WEEGO** (*Clown*) GOT WEEGO? With his kooky characters, zillions of faces and outrageous costumes, WEEGO has shocked and dazzled audiences for years! Performing all over the country, WEEGO has now been on The Las Vegas Strip for 5 years. Having started in Orlando, Florida, where he did everything from promotions (Smirnoff Twist), Fashion Shows (Nicole Miller), and many Cabaret and Corporate Events, to hosting a night of his own ("Weego Wednesday's") at Universal Studios City Walk for 2 years with a cast of 10 dancers. WEEGO is a performer that can do anything! Following his dream to be featured on The Las Vegas Strip, WEEGO headed West. In Las Vegas, WEEGO started at The Rio's "Show in the Sky" and he has done numerous Grand Openings, Red Carpet Events and performances for Planet Hollywood, Hard Rock Hotel, Bellagio and others. He continues to be in high demand for Corporate Events as well.

Most recently he toured Greece and the U.S. with Cirque Le Masque "Carnivale" and is thrilled to be part of Cirque Le Masque's two new productions.

**ANATOLIY YENIY** (*Duo Rolla Bolla*) was born in Kishinev, Moldova in 197 and started his circus career at the age of 10. Anatoliy attended the College of Circus Art in Kiev, Ukraine from 1985 to 1989. After graduation Anatoliy and his partner Vladimir Dovgan were traveled around Europe and Asia with the Moscow Circus. He has been performing in the USA since 1997 and his act "Duo Equilibrium" appeared on Broadway in 2008.

**BERNIE SCHUSSEL** (*Co-Producer*) has been involved in the entertainment field since 1980, when he co-founded Le Masquerade Entertainment Troupe. This Entertainment company started performing at private, as well as corporate events, and grew through the years to perform for President Ronald Reagan, and the Inauguration party for President Bill Clinton. Le Masquerade has also performed

throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, Mexico, and Canada. Bernie grew up in Queens, before moving to Long Island where he currently resides. Cirque Le Masque is a dream come true as it encompasses all aspects of professional theater from concept and design, to opening night. My main focus is to produce the finest shows that will leave the audience spellbound and amazed.

**DENNIS SCHUSSEL** (*Producer*) Dennis has been in the entertainment industry since graduating CW Post College in 1966. Before transferring to Post, he started booking shows on campus at Nassau Community College, and knew then that he found his passion...In 1980 he developed the highly successful interactive and theatrical performing troupe of Le Masquerade. In the mid 1990s, he created his first attempt at a Cirque theater production show called Cirque Le Masque. Since that time, Cirque Le Masque has received national and international recognition, toured hundreds of cities including Atlantic City, Foxwoods,

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and Las Vegas, and performed around the world. Cirque Le Masque recently performed in Dubai to the highest of praise. Dennis thanks his wife Linda, Family Laurie and Eric, Robyn, and grandchildren Olivia and Spencer for their support and inspiration.

**MIA CARESS** (*Stage Manager, Road Manager*) Mia has toured nationally and internationally for more than a decade as a dancer, rehearsal director, dance captain and stage manager. Recently she worked as the choreographer, on-set rehearsal director, and dance coach to Laura Ramsey for the feature film, 'Whatever Lola Wants'

(Tribeca Film Festival, 2008). A 3rd generation circus performer, Mia has been a member of Cirque Le Masque for 8 years. Other credits include: hosting more than a dozen fitness videos including On-Demand segments for Exercise TV. She can also be seen in regional and national commercials and recently completed a television pilot for a green building show.

**MIRIAM HERTZSON** (*Choreographer/Artistic Director*) has been choreographing in one genre or another since 1982. Her critically acclaimed modern dance company Mirmdance performed in NYC and toured nation-

ally for six years including performances at the Atlanta Arts Festival. As her interests changed her work branched out into the world of business theatre. Miriam traveled internationally creating work for such companies as Revco, Citibank, MetLife, Prudential, and IBM. With her production company Mirmco, she choreographed and produced her own cruise ship show, business theatre productions and special events. Regionally she has choreographed countless musicals, occasionally directing as well. Her favorites include: *She Loves Me*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Candide*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Sugar Babies*, *Sweet Charity*, *Frog*

and *Toad, Merrily We Roll Along*, and *Chicago*. Ms. Hertzson has been a professor of dance and movement at Nassau Community College since 1995. Miriam would like to thank her 4 children and lovely husband for their love and support.●

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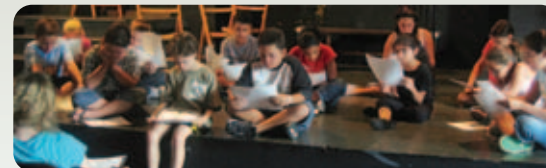
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 General Manager ..... Gale Edwards  
 Company Manager ..... Michael Baker  
 Assistant Company Manager ..... Stefan Schuette  
 Administrative Assistant ..... Sarah Innes

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Artistic/Casting Director ..... Robin Joy Allan  
 Director/Choreographer ..... Keith Andrews  
 Musical Director ..... Jeff Hoffman  
 Musical Arranger..... Peter Pece  
 Lighting Designer..... Brian Loesch  
 Costume Designer ..... Marianne Dominy  
 Production Photographer ..... Jeff Bellante

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 Kyle Reitan, Linda Unger, Francesca Welhous

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 Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Marianne Dominy  
 Scenic Coordinator/Technical Director ..... Brittany Loesch  
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 Sound Engineer ..... Shane Bourgeois  
 Shop Foreman ..... Mark Frederick  
 General Technicians..... A.J. Lebenns, Brendan Smith  
 Wardrobe Assistant ..... Vanessa Pynn  
 Scenic/Props Assistant ..... Annemarie Curro  
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