

Gravity & Other Myths

BACKBONE

US Premiere

**Memminger
Auditorium**

May 25, 8:00pm; May 26, 7:00pm; May 27, 5:00pm;
May 28, 2:00pm; May 29, 7:00pm; May 30, 1:00pm and 6:00pm

Director
Set and Lighting Designer
Composers/Musicians
Producer
Creative Associate

Darcy Grant
Geoff Cobham
Shenton Gregory and Elliot Zoerner
Craig Harrison
Triton Tunis-Mitchell

Ensemble

Lachlan Binns, Jascha Boyce, Joanne Curry, Lachlan Harper, Mieke Lizotte,
Jackson Manson, Simon McClure, Jacob Randell, Lewis Rankin,
Martin Schreiber, Lewie West

1 hour, 15 minutes | Performed without an intermission

About the Company

GRAVITY & OTHER MYTHS (GOM) is an internationally renowned circus company pushing the boundaries of contemporary circus. Formed in Adelaide, Australia, in 2009, GOM has rocketed to stellar acclaim with a series of disarmingly accomplished ensemble works. GOM's work utilizes an honest approach to performance, to create shows with a focus on human connection and acrobatic virtuosity. GOM's show *A Simple Space* has achieved huge international success, receiving multiple awards and having performed more than 500 times—including at Spoleto Festival USA in 2014—across 24 countries. *Backbone*, created in 2017, has been nominated for multiple awards, garnered stellar reviews, and toured to festivals internationally. *Backbone* examines the various perceptions of what strength is, where it comes from, and how it is measured. This frenetic celebration of human interconnectedness tests the limits of strength: physical, emotional, individual, and collective.

Director's Note

Backbone is a piece of devised circus that examines strength—honestly, ironically, and personally. When asked to direct Gravity & Other Myths's new show, I could hardly contain my excitement. This company of self-made success is young, raw, unpretentious, and hungry for the next challenge—to create strong and deliberate meaning. Acrobats have a kind of reverse career trajectory as artists. Unlike a musician or painter, for instance, an acrobat's technical peak is often when their conceptual skill is just forming. Somewhere in the middle of this career is a sweet spot, where body and mind are strong and willing. It is from this sweet spot that we began to devise *Backbone*—a show that is, at its core, a provocation to itself and the company. Are we strong enough to carry it?

The privilege of being commissioned for the 2017 Adelaide Festival was immense. It allowed us the time and space to deeply question ourselves and our form in a time when a great deal of circus is becoming homogenous. This same privilege means that as we rehearsed (and as I wrote this), our show was only partially written, and only on opening night did we truly know what we had given birth to. We hope it will be a show that anyone from any place at any age can access. An unpretentious, physically virtuosic, meaningful piece of circus.

– Darcy Grant

Sponsored by Sherman Capital Markets, LLC.

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Company



DARCY GRANT (director) is a classically trained acrobat, award-winning fine art photographer, physical-theater director, and founding member of Circa, revered as one of the world's most adventurous, genre-defying circuses. He has trained, taught, and toured work on the cutting edge of new circus to some of the world's most prestigious venues. Where theater,

dance, circus, and visual art meet is where Grant likes to practice. In 2017, Grant was commissioned by Adelaide International Arts Festival to direct *Backbone* by Gravity & Other Myths. The show premiered to 5-star reviews and standing ovations, also attracting three Helpmann Award nominations, including Best Choreography and Best New Australian Work. Also a celebrated photographer, Grant regularly shoots live performance for such companies as Opera Australia and The Farm. Grant has had solo photographic exhibitions in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Berlin.



LACHLAN BINNS (acrobat) was, at an early age, enthralled and inspired by a local circus show, and in the following years, he was drawn into the world of circus and physical performance. Specializing in group acrobatics, Binns is not quite big enough to be called a base yet not light enough to be called a flyer. He has embraced what he maintains is the vital

role of "middle." His passion for creativity is a driving force for both his work as a trainer for young people and as a performer and founding member of Gravity & Other Myths.



JASCHA BOYCE (acrobat) has been a performer almost all of her life. Beginning as soon as she could walk with dance performances in the lounge room, she discovered circus at age 4, and it wasn't long before she spent all of her time upside down and in the air. After years spent training, teaching, and performing, Boyce focuses her creative passion through

Gravity & Other Myths. She is a flyer in a majority of the group acrobatics as well as specializing in hula hoop and adagio.



JOANNE CURRY (acrobat) always knew she wanted to be the "girl who gets thrown around" in the circus. After seven years of competing nationally in sports acrobatics, she tumbled into completing certificate 3 and 4 in circus arts at the National Institute of Circus Arts. Curry gained confidence and drive through travel, using the world to find and define

her style within the performing arts. She specializes in partner acrobatics and hand-balancing.



LACHLAN HARPER (acrobat) was 4 years old when his parents put him into gymnastics to try and tire him out. After 11 years of training, he sought a new way to explore his body's acrobatic capabilities. His first taste of circus was when a friend introduced him to pitching. He became obsessed—having a career of being thrown around, flipping, and having fun was the dream. He pursued his career as a circus artist by attending the National Institute of Circus Arts, where he specialized in handstands, acrobatics, and banquine.



MIEKE LIZOTTE (acrobat) specializes in high-energy hula hoops, combined with a knack for being thrown around, and an ability to turn herself inside out and upside down. She started her career at a young age in the small, yet talent-rich state of Tasmania, with a local youth circus: Slipstream Circus. After more than six years performing and teaching circus across Australia, she moved on to train at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne and the Beijing International Acrobatics School, where she trained intensively in hula hoops, flexibility, hand-balancing, and acrobatics. She has a genuine love for all things circus, and her contagious smile will no doubt delight audiences everywhere.



JACKSON MANSON (acrobat) started circus at Flying Fruit Fly Circus (FFFC) in Albury-Wodonga when he was 12 years old. After graduating in 2015, he worked with fellow FFFC graduates to create a new show called *Stunt Lounge*. In January 2017, he joined Gravity & Other Myths to work on the creation of *Backbone*, and has continued to work with the company, touring with both *A Simple Space* and *Backbone*.



SIMON MCCLURE (acrobat) started down his acrobatic path at age 10 and joined the Flying Fruit Flies Circus (FFFC) in Albury. After seven years of training, he went on tour as a technician with the company Acrobat, while also teaching acrobatics at the FFFC. McClure performed a number of acts in a variety of cabaret settings before joining Gravity & Other Myths in 2014, specializing in tumbling and group acrobatics.



JACOB RANDELL (acrobat) has always been a jack of all trades when it comes to circus and sport, showing enthusiasm, energy, and strong natural talent at all times. As one of the founding members of GOM, he has been with the company since the start and aspires to continue to grow the company. Randell specializes in hand-to-hand, floating between roles

as both a base and flyer. He aspires to continue to pursue his adventurous side through circus training and touring, balanced alongside academic studies.



LEWIS RANKIN (acrobat) has been very active since a young age with his involvement in sports and a love for the outdoors. He found contemporary dance later in life, for which he trained at Adelaide Centre for the Arts. Since graduating, he has performed with Shaun Parker & Company, Leigh Warren & Dancers, Sandpit, and numerous other

independent companies. Circus and acrobatics are recent discoveries, and now he is passionate about combining and evolving these different art forms.



MARTIN SCHREIBER (acrobat) has been a competitive gymnast alongside his involvement in the circus community for most of his life, both as a circus trainer and finally as a performing artist. As one of the founding members of Gravity & Other Myths, Schreiber has performed both nationally and internationally with skills that include pitching, floor tumbling,

and group acrobatics. He hopes to continue creating work and inspiring audiences worldwide through the joy and spectacle of circus.



LEWIE WEST (acrobat) is an Australian acrobat through and through. He probably has circus in his blood stream due to all the rosin, chalk, and acrobat sweat he's accidentally ingested over the years. He started in Warehouse Youth Circus in Canberra before training at The National Institute of Circus Arts. After earning his bachelor's degree, West performed,

created, and choreographed with Circa for seven years, finding time to sneak off and earn a gold medal in Paris at the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain, or what his Mum calls "the circus Olympics" for his solo aerial straps act. In spite of this, West still considers himself to be mostly an ensemble acrobat and is very happy to come into "work" every day to create, move, and play with the group.

Composers/Musicians



SHENTON GREGORY (a.k.a. Shenzo Gregorio) had a violin passed down to him from his older sister when he was just 4 years of age. After 17 years of classical training, Gregory decided that real-world experience was the way forward. He continued to develop his knowledge in many styles of music; notably, his invention of playing the violin upside

down caused quite a stir. He has been a member of Sydney rock string quartet Fourplay for 12 years and continues to be one of the highest in-demand musicians in Australia.



ELLIOT ZOERNER took up the drums at age 11, and has played with a wide variety of musical groups in Australia. While studying classical percussion and engineering at Adelaide University, the circus entered his life, pulled him away from his studies, and took him on tour. He now works as a live musician and composer for Gravity & Other Myths,

collaborating with the acrobats to create the soundtracks for their shows. While on tour, he has continued to write music and release it under the name Sirins.

Producer



CRAIG HARRISON has worked in the arts sector for more than 23 years, in many aspects of creative, production, administration, and management. After working on more than 30 festivals around the world, as a lighting designer for 70 productions, and a stint as an independent producer based in Melbourne, he worked as a programming executive for the

Adelaide Festival Centre and at Country Arts South Australia (SA) as manager of artform development. He then worked for the National Touring Selector, an online international marketplace for the performing arts, and made it part of core-business for Country Arts SA before moving on to Arts South Australia. He concurrently held a seat on the Arts Industry Council of SA and has been on the board of youth circus company Cirkidz Inc. for nine years. Now, Harrison is the creative producer and general manager for contemporary circus company Gravity & Other Myths after joining them in April 2016.

Backbone has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., Adelaide Festival, Sydney Festival, and Melbourne Festival.