



NEWS RELEASE

Press Contact: Jorge Luis González at 545-4482 or jlj@admin.umass.edu

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- WHAT:** C!RCA
WHEN: Tuesday, March 6, 7:30 P.M., 2012
WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
TICKETS: Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or go online to <http://www.fineartscenter.com/>
IMAGES: To download images relating to this press release please go online to <http://www.fineartscenter.com/pressphotos/>

AUSTRALIAN DANCE TROUPE C!RCA BRINGS ITS FUSION OF MODERN DANCE AND DARING CIRCUS ACROBATICS TO THE FINE ARTS CENTER

“... knee trembling sexy, beautiful and moving.” –The Guardian

C!RCA is a simultaneous celebration of both the human body's strength and its fragility. The acclaimed seven-member Australian troupe, which will be performing at the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall on Tuesday, March 6 at 7:30 P.M., combines circus skills with dance, performing without props on an empty white stage. The audience is able to appreciate each twitch of a limb, each tremor of muscle as the performers come together in mini-duets, colliding and then pushing each other apart or flopping and twisting on the ground like fish on the deck of a boat.

C!RCA is unique in a world filled with circus works that conserve and preserve the traditional and spectacle-driven elements of the circus art form. Too often, circus is about continuing practices that affirm rather than extend our understandings of what circus, and indeed, the world can be. In place of this, C!RCA's work posits that the human body is, in extremis, emotionally connected, spiritually resonant and deeply affecting. In its five current creations touring Australia and the world, C!RCA has created

a boutique contemporary art form from the traditional languages of circus. Alive to improvisation, multi-media and collaborations, infused with an immersive use of light and sound and featuring startlingly re-imagined circus skills, the work is a new frontier in circus arts

There is no real connecting narrative thread as such in the eponymously named production (the program is titled "Circa"); rather the presentation is a series of sometimes spectacular and sometimes intimate episodes and encounters gleaned from previous CIRCA shows. Physical power over another is a recurring theme. A woman is tossed in the air like a thing of balsa wood or spun like a skipping rope. In one of the show's most wince-inducing and unexpected moments, a female performer emerges wearing cherry red spike heels and proceeds to walk across a male performer's torso.

Slick as the production is, the huge physical effort involved in achieving these things is never disguised, never hidden; instead it has been made part of a fabric of the show. In one sequence, a woman lifts a man onto her shoulders and one can see her face twitch with exertion, her whole body tremble and shake. Later one of the female performers stands on a man's outstretched forearm and it's possible to see him brace himself and to grimace with the strain. The capacity for things to fail, to go wrong, is always there, simmering underneath the surface, and when one the male performers hangs suspended from the ceiling by straps, only to suddenly tumble to within centimeters of the floor, the wave of tension and release that ripples through the audience is audible. People gasp with fear and delight.

The potential for the body to betray is also explored. In one superb sequence, played out without music, a female performer contorts herself, her head between her legs and her hands crabbing and scuttling around her, seemingly independently. The architecture of the human form is inevitably brought to the fore, from the male torsos, slender yet with every muscle clearly delineated to the female thighs which, refreshingly, still jiggle, even while hoisting another human being into the air.

Indeed, the production Circa has its risqué moments. The woman treading over a male body in blood-red stilettos is certainly a sequence that's been designed to make you wince, but, as the performers and producers might put it, it's a wince that leaves the

viewer in an emotionally heightened state, and a bit wiser. (Please note that the show is recommended for audiences 10 years of age and older.)

Tickets for CIRCA are \$15, \$25, and \$30 (\$10 for Five College, GCC, STCC students and youth 17 and under). Tickets are available online at www.fineartscenter.com or by calling 545-2511 or 800-999-UMAS. The performance is sponsored by 93.9 FM The River and *The Rainbow Times*.

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