

Journal de Montréal (Montreal Qc Canada)

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6July2021

Cirque Alfonse: An Evening at the Farm

Nothing is ever the way you imagined when you go to see a show by Cirque Alfonse. With this fifth creation, entitled *Animal: A Farm Story*, presented until July 11 at La TOHU as part of the Montreal Complètement Cirque festival, we plunge into an agricultural-industrial universe populated by all kinds of farm animals. Humour and self-mockery are always on the program, with an exciting trad, soul and funk live soundtrack.

Cirque Alfonse is a tightly woven family story. This authentic and unique bond is felt in the production. The grandfather, Alain Carabinier, is back on the job and we can't wait to see him having child-like fun on his pedal tractor. Even when he climbs a 15-foot pole perched on his son's shoulder, the joy of being still part of the show shines through. His presence is a reassuring element throughout the show and is a common thread in all the acts.

As always with Alfonse, the elements of the everyday life become the apparatus for juggling or acrobatics. We will thus see them juggling with plastic chickens, corn buckets, forks, but also “toupins”, those huge cowbells used during the Alpine transhumance. A gentle and elegant number.

Dreams galore...

We don't go to see a Cirque Alfonse show to be impressed by the breathtaking performances, we go especially for the invitation to dream and to the imagination that it provokes in us. The number of the egg on the rocker is a good example. Thanks to their mischievousness and generosity, we follow the artists in all their facetiousness.

Certainly, the female aerial acrobatic number on milk cans is impressive, as well as the Korean rocking act with the guys. The mixed hand-to-hand acts in wheelbarrows are also interesting.

But the one featuring a mechanical bull, like in a rodeo, is the most memorable. Jonathan Casaubon shows exceptional agility on this type of instrument, which is not often used in circus shows, and which offers a dizzying challenge.

Original music

In this show, even more than in the previous ones, the music is preponderant. The opening is worthy of a music concert and all the numbers are accompanied by songs

borrowing from trad and soul styles that fit perfectly with the theme. Several solely vocal interludes are integrated into the evening, to let the artists breathe between two numbers.

Mixing circus, dance, theater and humour, Cirque Alfonse succeeds once again in its challenge of awakening the childlike imagination of the audience, without taking itself too seriously.