



Cirque Dreams Illumination

By: Amanda Perreault - Grade 12, Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

Before going to see Cirque Dreams Illumination I had no idea what to expect. When walking into the Palace Theatre and seeing the curtain up with a urban scene in front of me, I still did not know what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised to see how many performers and acrobats that the stage held. What I was most in awe in was the costuming.

The costumes with all gorgeous with an urban inspiration, with things that everyday people wear. The first thing my eyes were drawn to was ensembles on a drop of a hat. The female wore glamorous dresses, while the male looked dashing a tuxedo.

With the show using an urban setting to create the magic, the costume designers were able to use bright colors that caught the viewer's attention. Sailors, soldiers, construction workers, a train conductor, a news broadcaster, police officers and pedestrians are just some of the characters that had fabulous costumes that were perfect that the look of the show was going for.

My personal favorite costume was that of the train conductor. He looked like he belonged in Grand Central Station, calling "all aboard." He had a jump suit that had black and white stripes, with a red undershirt, with a matching hat and scarf that went with it. It was one of the many costumes that looked so authentic, that you could picture seeing someone wearing that in real life. Even better, he was able to move around, and was able to flip in his silver ring over and over without ruining his costume.

Seeing *Cirque Dreams Illumination* made me realize that costumes can be beautiful, but they can also be wearable. I am now going to take that realization and turn it to my work in the WAMS Costume Shop. Seeing the show wasn't only amazing, but it made me learn something too. Job well done to all of the performers, and especially, the costume designers.

Cirque Illuminations Review from a Musical Perspective

By: Saleana Carneiro - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

When seeing a common New York City backdrop, one expects to be greeted with the sounds of the everyday hustle and bustle that the Big Apple is known for. Instead I was greeted with snappy music that made me want to bob my head and grabbed my attention. Unlike most people who were riveted on the mix of sailors, construction workers and the fashion illusionist, I was caught by the amazing vocals of the news reporter (Janine Ayn Romano of Trinidad) who also acted as a loose narrator for the show. The vocals and the music caught me and reeled me in so that I had trouble keeping up with everything that was going on in the show, much like in New York City. After racing to keep up, we were greeted with the black lights and music that were both riveting and suspenseful. The time-out from singing kept the musical side of the show universal. The New York setting appeals to the vocal lovers whereas the Illumination scene gave instrumental folk a mysterious aura and allowed everyone to focus on the amazing acrobatics of the show.

Throughout the performance the music complements what's going on, on the stage and what's going on through the characters. The scene "Drenched" can vouch for the latter. The vocals of the news reporter/narrator perfectly portray the feelings of the "dreamlike" scene, as singer Janine Romano states it; the lyrics of the song take what the strap flyer (Jean Chiasson) and what the supermodel (Stelly Rodriguez Vega) feel and give the audience a way to relate. The audience members can feel the emotion coursing through all three performers, including the street musician saxophonist (Marybeth Kern) whose lazy, romantic playing during the scene wrap everything up.

Cirque Dreams

By: Alexa Santiago - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

The show *Cirque Dreams* was an eye pleasing show. It was fantastic. From the lights, music and dancing, everything was right on. The show displayed acts that are pretty much like everyday situations. *Cirque Dreams* was amazing hands down. I loved it. After watching the show, I had the opportunity to have a chat with the actors and cast of the show. It was great.

The actors talked about life on the roads; how it is tough at first and then once you get the hang of it, it is easy. They also mentioned how in life, you may not like each other but you put your differences aside and do what you are supposed to do.

The show was overall amazing! I loved it. I thought it was a great opportunity to see professional live theater.

Cirque Dreams Illumination

By: Elisabeth Warren - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

Recently I had the privilege of attending "Cirque Dream Illuminations," a Broadway phenomenon that left me completely speechless. The performance featured every aspect of the arts, ranging from breathtaking contortionists, vivid New York City backdrops, a live saxophone player and incredible dancers. As a musician, I couldn't help but notice the wide variety of musical entertainment featured in the show. Classical, Afro beat, blues ballad, dance-pop, alternative and jazz were just a few select genres out of the performance as a whole. The performance also displayed a "Stomp" like style throughout several scenes incorporating rhythmic beats and captivating movements that left me enthralled.

My "gasps" and "shrieks" were in unison with the rest of the audience during the captivating scenes such as walking on wire and balancing on rolling paint cans 15 feet high! Though the performers wowed the audience on their own, the music really helped make the show worthwhile. From a musician's perspective, the show incorporated brilliant rhythm and song into every scene and it truly enhanced the show. I was marveled at the amount of time and practice that must have went into the production. Every last step, beat, and note had literally been perfected before stepping onstage.

With a not so needed "narrator" posing as a reporter, the show had it all. Every scene was to represent all of the many different aspects of New York City. The show was so vivid and eccentric, with the message that "anything can happen."

What is the difference between "Cirque Dreams" and "Cirque du Soleil"?

The term "cirque" is French for circus. "Cirque du Soleil" is a Canadian based company performed in circus tents whereas "Cirque Dreams" is a "Cirque du Soleil"-styled performance with musicians, theatre, and ballet. "Cirque Dreams" is a traveling show performed in theatres.

What kind of personal challenges did you encounter entering this show?

For many of the performers, it was their first tour and they were not used to performing in a new theatre every day. Life on the road is something they are still adjusting to. The full cast lives on a Motor Coach and sleeps in a different hotel every night.

Many of the performers do some dangerous-looking stunts, has anybody ever fallen during a performance?

About three years ago a performer balancing on rolling paint cans fell from about 15 feet and broke his foot. Thankfully, nothing like that happens often!

Cirque Dreams: Illumination

By: Tajanik Jones - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

On Saturday January 17, 2010 I was a kid in a candy store. What once started as a small circus that recruited people from all over the world in 1993, is now an amazing show with 27 performers. With the cast living in a different hotel everyday and driving on a coach motor bus they would travel all over the world presenting *Cirque Dreams Illumination*. Some of the challenges the performers had to adjust to was the touring life and going to new cities and states everyday performing. From the time the lights dimmed until the end of the show I couldn't stop watching! The lights were always flashing and showing beautiful combinations of colors. The acrobatics were amazing they would flip off each others feet in the air and land perfectly. One of the acrobatics even did a round off back hand spring tuck all in one. There was never a dull moment. There was always something going on. There were people on hula hoops in the air spinning and swirling, human caution signs walking around, a lady singing, and people just dancing around. In my opinion the show was a great combination of theater and acrobatics. They were singing, dancing, and doing acrobatics. It was the best show I have ever seen! I thought the best part was when they interacted with the audience members. They called four people from the audience and they had them act out a little skit that didn't involve any talking, which I thought was a great twist. It kept me laughing the whole time. The isolations one of the performers was creative and challenging it almost seemed as if he was a robot the way he executed the moves. They had a great transition in and out of clothes and costumes. Every time they changed it was quick and colorful. The show always kept me wondering wanting to see what was going to happen next.

Cirque Dreams: Illumination

By: Haleigh O'Toole - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

The Cirque Dreams Illuminations as a whole was an amazing show. It was for one was a fun and entertaining show, yet in had a universal message that I believe everyone should learn about. The theme was the idea that one should look at the world not at it is, but what it could be. In this show the performers took ordinary ideas or objects and turned them into something magical. Take for example the common act of driving down the road and looking at the signs on the side of the road. This is a very ordinary act that you've most likely already performed today. Now take that same ordinary act and add four acrobats, men on stilts, dancers, painters, and news reporters, all coming together and realizing that this along with many other ordinary everyday tasks can be much more. It's the idea of having fun with what the universe gives you everyday and to live in the moment.

Cirque Dreams: Illumination

By: Kelly Clarke - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

Cirque Dreams was the most amazing show I have ever seen! It was funny, vibrant, and it kept me on the edge of my seat. I found the flexibility and courage of the performers was incredibly amazing and really exceeded my expectations of the show. The use of color was perfect with the theme, and really made the show, along with the "busyness" of the stage. Throughout the show I found myself biting my lip, because of the risky and outrageous scenes, like the construction man that was doing tumbles on the tight rope and the painter balancing on all the paint cans.

I wasn't really sure of the plot or content of the show; however, I knew it took place in New York because of the subway and people walking all around in the background. At the Meet and Greet after the show when we got to ask some of the cast questions, the company manager Nick Mitsis explained that "Each scene is an element of everyday life in the city, and the scenes are open to interpretation." His explanation made everything come together, and to me when a show allows you to interpret your own meaning, that's what makes it unique.

The performers doing different things like dancing, balancing on objects, swinging on ropes, spinning on rings, and doing things you really wouldn't expect a person could do, separated the show from anything I have ever seen. The different values of color and movement made the show have unity and really brought it all together. Along with the lights and performers, I loved the humor in the show. The part where the performer with the whistle brought up three people on stage, and had them do a little act made the show so funny and different. I've never seen audience members being able to be involved in shows like that and made out to be so hilarious.

I would encourage anyone to go and see this performance because it's just absolutely amazing, and I'm so happy I had the opportunity to see such a work of art, as well as have a chance to meet some of the cast members. This show is so incredible and I want to see the other two versions of Cirque so badly. I have so much respect for the performers and the amount of effort they put in the show. Everyone really did an excellent job with their acts and made everything come together as a whole.

Cirque Dreams: Illuminations

By: Chloe Nixon - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

The show *Illuminations* by Cirque Dreams was, in a word, unbelievable. From the moment the curtain rose I, as well as the rest of the full theatre, was speechless. We could not take our eyes off the amazing show of twenty-five acts performed by a group of twenty-six talented artists representing over fifteen countries. It was a truly unique show.

The show is set in an imaginary and wonderful city where the everyday people and objects come alive with lights, sounds, and excitement. Some of the acts include a clothing magician and fashion illusionist featuring extremely quick changes on stage leaving viewers shocked and amazed and a chair climber, a man stacking more than ten chairs and balancing on top. One of the most unique acts, and my favorite, had four female contortionists from Mongolia performing in three cube frames suspended from the ceiling of the stage. It was full of exciting twists and turns from a breath-taking height and left viewers in awe of their flexibility and precision.

After the performance we were able to sit down with the manager of the traveling cast as well as three of the performers to hear about what goes on behind the scenes. We were not surprised to hear that many hours of rehearsals were necessary to perfect the show, but we were interested to hear about how the creative process goes. The artists are hired with skills in whatever type of performance they take part in and work with the director to create a piece that will fit with the show. When all the performers have their pieces ready, they all come together to create a show full of talent and passion.

Illuminations was a wonderful show that utilized simple tricks and made them amazing with repetition, light, and sound, like the performer who played a full drum set but instead of using drum sticks juggled several balls to bounce off the different drums and create a wonderful song. Every act left the audience waiting for more and wishing the show would never end. *Cirque Illuminations* is an incredible show that I would recommend to anyone and everyone.

Cirque Dreams: Illuminations

By: Samantha Dillon - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

Saturday, January 16, 2010 was the first time I viewed the production *Cirque Dreams*. As a newcomer I was anticipating lions and tigers and a ringmaster but I saw none of that. Instead, during the interview with the cast, I learned that Cirque Dreams is a mixture between theatre and the circus. Cirque worked the two together very well with having singing and music along with the usual tightrope. Everything about the show was absolutely breathtaking. From the acts to the costumes, the performances and the songs, everything was executed perfectly and superbly.

All of the acts were astonishing, but there were a few that keep me on the edge of my seat. One of these acts was called, "Dangle and Swerve". In this act, there was a very talented man that stacks paint cans and balanced on them. I was in shock as to how many paint cans he could stack and still stay balanced. I was literally on my toes, I feared that he might fall. Turns out, a few years ago, the paint can balancer did just that and fell during a performance. This shows that practice really does make perfect and you never know what will happen in the theatre. Along with bringing singing and dancing into the circus, the performers also brought along comedy. During one act, "Right to Remain Silent", the "director" had people come onstage and he gave them roles and acted as a director. He had a whistle that he blew to make the cues for the actors. The final result had the whole audience laughing along loudly.

My favorite act was by far called, "Circulation" which featured four contortionists who were on hollowed boxes, hanging from the top of the stage. The tricks they were doing and the amazing stunts they could do with their body made me want to learn and join the circus. Overall, the show was breathtaking and astonishing. I would definitely recommend it to anyone interested in seeing amazing stunts and perfect dances. I would defiantly go again and I will never forget this experience.

Cirque Comes to the Palace

By: Kherri Rose - Waterbury Arts Magnet School, Waterbury

On January 15–16, 2010, Cirque Dreams Illuminations came to the Palace Theater. The show was bright and urban. It included scenes from everyday life and brought the circus to an extreme level.

There was an amazing array of different acts. In one act, there was a pair of brothers juggling each other; it was very impressive to see their strength and ability.

In 1993, Cirque Productions created 13 new shows. They performed in casinos, theaters, and toured worldwide. The show has had over 50 million viewers. The cirque company has many performers from around the world. Many of the acrobats in the show come from Mongolia, because of the Mongolian State School of Contortions.

So, to do this attention- grabbing show, they must be skilled to do various stunts. I asked one of the performers how long it takes to prepare for the show. He said "about nine hours a day." These hard -working hours pay off when the cast comes together each night to perform. It was such a good show. The Palace was a full house!