

It's Christmas time in the city

Acrobats perform in holiday-themed 'Cirque Dreams' show

With flipping gingerbread men, balancing penguins and a wire-walking toy soldier, among other treats, Cirque Dreams Holidayze isn't your typical, sentimental holiday show.

It's a dazzling visual feast that's way more fun than riding in a one-horse open sleigh or roasting chestnuts on an open fire.

The Broadway-worthy spectacle features an international cast of performers who pull off increasingly difficult, mind-boggling feats, all of it wrapped in holiday packaging.

The concept is brilliantly simple. After the curtain opens, life-size ornaments on a 30-foot silver tree come to life, one by one. The colorful set virtually explodes at you with the cast adorned in glittering, bright outfits, including one blazing with lights like a Christmas tree. Huge inflatable Nutcrackers anchor both sides of the stage.

All the "ornaments" symbolize Christmas in one way or another: marching soldiers, penguins on roller skates, bakers, rag dolls, puppets, Transformers, gift packages, Mummenschanz-like candy canes, icicles and more.

Holidayze, however, smartly avoids offering anything of a religious nature that might offend. Wouldn't be right, for example, to see Three Wise Men walking a tightrope, in other words. The show is purely for amusement and amazement, with one act after another performing the kind of impossible feats that make you wow and ooh like an awe-struck kid.

Debates may rage among families -- and this is a 100 percent, kid-friendly show -- about which act is the most spectacular. Five women tossing yo-yo-like objects on a string in the air, catching them and passing

them to each other? Two penguins balancing on a rolling pin who proceed to stack up tables and climb them?

The glittering, agile acrobat who performs balancing feats on a clock face? Five women cyclists who leap from one bike to another and also maneuver around each other while riding? Acrobat Vladimir Dovgan, who ascends a rope and "tumbles" down it, never losing his grip? The life-size Transformer who juggles up to eight balls, catching them in pockets and shoulder pads?

They're all pretty jaw-dropping. Crazier, still, is how Cirque Dreams Holidayze throws a ton at you. While the "penguins" balance, other penguins roller skate or dance. While gingerbread men flip each other, bakers dash around making cookies and toys ride unicycles.

Usually, a lot more is going on than just the featured act; Holidayze is like a three-ring circus, minus the extra rings. It's the kind of show you almost need to see twice to take in all that's unfolding, not to mention the extravagant set design and inventive, imaginative costumes.

Holidayze also incorporates plenty of seasonal music, including original songs and favorites like Brenda Lee's "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," Bobby Helms' "Jingle Bell Rock" and "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." They're zippy and keep the show moving briskly.

Holidayze is stuffed with so much holiday cheer and audacious acts that even Scrooge would exit with a big ol' smile on his face.

Review from November 25, 2009 edition of *Erie Times News* written by Dave Richards

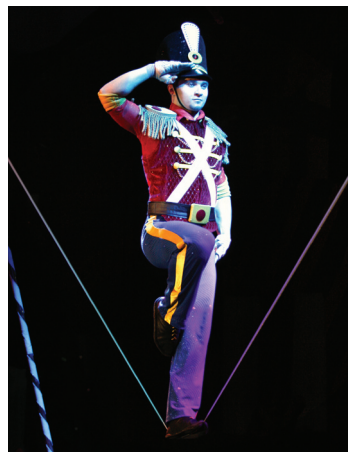


Photo: Carol Rosegg

CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE will light up the season when it performs at the Fox Theatre December 22-27 as part of the Fifth Third Bank Holiday Series. Tickets (\$30, \$45, \$55 & \$65) are on sale now and may be purchased at OlympiaEntertainment.com, the Fox Theatre and Joe Louis Arena box offices, Hockeystown Authentics in Troy (without service charge) at all Ticketmaster locations and Ticketmaster.com. To charge tickets by phone, call (800) 745-3000. For additional information, call (313) 471-6611.

Performance Schedule:

Tue. December 22, 2009	7:30 P.M. - SOLD OUT
Wed. December 23, 2009	1:00 P.M. - JUST ADDED!
Wed. December 23, 2009	7:30 P.M. - SOLD OUT
Thur. December 24, 2009	1:00 P.M.
Sat. December 26, 2009	2:00 P.M.
Sat. December 26, 2009	8:00 P.M.
Sun. December 27, 2009	1:00 P.M.
Sun. December 27, 2009	6:30 P.M.