



CASTING NEWSLETTER Special edition – SPORTS



July 2009

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MEETING OF THE FIG TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AT CIRQUE IN MONTREAL



Centre: Dmitry Belyaykov, Acrobatic Talent Scout, with members of the technical acrobatic gymnastics committee.

Last May, the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) had its technical acrobatic gymnastics committee meeting in our facilities.

This first visit to Montreal was a follow-up to the workshop given in Lisbon at the beginning of the year by choreographer Debra Brown, who has participated in the creation of several *Cirque du Soleil* productions. We took the opportunity to have a few discussion sessions to better understand our common interests in acrobatic gymnastics. We also discussed how the current partnership between Cirque and FIG could make a tangible contribution to developing and promoting this discipline worldwide.

These sessions were also used to present the on-stage job opportunities and working conditions for artists offered by *Cirque du Soleil* to athletes at the end of their competitive careers. It was clear to the Committee, its Chair Tonya Case, and to Cirque representatives that uniting our passions and efforts will have positive and stimulating impacts on the acrobatic community. We are working with FIG to evaluate the possibility of creating a special prize for the best acrobatic gymnastics choreography. We would also like to announce that Cirque will be taking part in the celebrations surrounding the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in London this fall.

ROBERT RAYMOND VISITED CIRQUE INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN MONTREAL



From right to left: Philippe Agogué, Head Acrobatic Talent Scout, Robert Raymond and his partner.

This French former tumbler and trampolinist, who now trains the Swiss national team, paid a visit to our creation studios in July. This courtesy visit enabled the scouts to touch base with this valuable collaborator, whose recommendations have led to the hiring of three talented athletes. Robert used to train Ludovic Martin and Michel Boillet, world runners-up in 2005 and bronze medallists in 2007 in synchro and now trampolinists for OVO, and Didier Raffaelli, trampolinist and acrobatic skier on the Swiss national teams and currently an artist with ZAIA. These were well-planned medium- and long-term reorientations, which were achievable because of the trust built up over the years between our team and this coach.

MARK CALTON, FROM CASTING TEAM PARTNER TO ACROBATIC HEAD COACH – TOURING SHOWS

For the past 20 years, Mark has worked as a high-level gymnastics coach in Australia. Our team met first met him in 1999 during the American Cup in St. Petersburg. The following year, during a stay in Sydney for the summer Olympics, our paths crossed once again, and Mark accepted our proposal to collaborate as a partner to the Casting team. At the time, his mandate for Cirque was to keep an eye on the local acrobatics and sports scenes, cover major competitions, and lend a hand during our auditions. A few months ago, Mark joined the

What is your most memorable experience with our casting team?

Apart from the 3 a.m. phone calls I used to get from Montreal (there is a 10-hour time difference to Australia), I would say it's the true satisfaction of seeing an athlete I have auditioned go into a show and the great feedback that the majority of them give me on the life-changing experience it is. My new position also allows me to catch up with some of them. Also, the actual casting team in itself is a pretty memorable group.

How is it working at *Cirque du Soleil* IHQ?

Working here is like being in the wash cycle. There are many things going on at once, a lot of different perspectives to be considered and so little time to do it all. I travel a lot so time here is short with a lot to do.

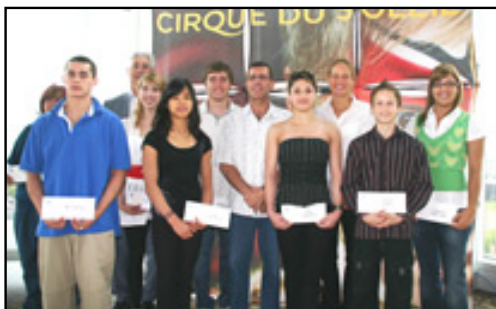
Which aspect of your new coaching job at *Cirque* do you enjoy the most?

The mix of people I get to meet and work with. They are from such a diverse range of backgrounds.

What is the biggest motivation or challenge for a coach working with athletes who will be performing on stage?

8–10 shows a week, 350–440 shows a year... keeping artists healthy and motivated, and trying to balance the demands of training and performing to allow this to happen. This is totally different from peaking for specific events, as they'd be used to from their athletic careers

WINNERS OF A *CIRQUE DU SOLEIL* BURSARY FROM THE FAEQ, 2009–2010



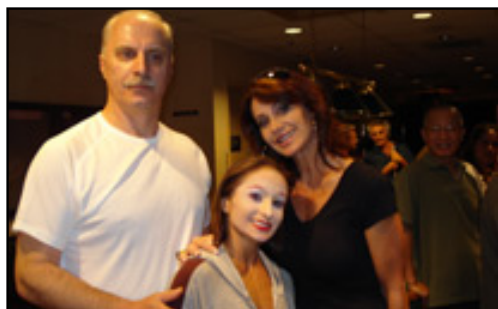
Centre: Bernard Petiot, Vice-President of Casting and Performance, Creative Content with the winners.

Cirque du Soleil was pleased to award bursaries to young athletes via the Fondation de l'athlète d'excellence du Québec (FAEQ). The efforts of these nine young people, who successfully combine their love of competitive sports with academic performance, were rewarded with \$20,000 divided among them. The award ceremony took place at International Headquarters (IHQ) on May 27. Bernard Petiot, Vice-President of Casting and Performance, took the opportunity to

announce the renewal of the CDS commitment to FAEQ. Cirque will be endowing the Foundation with other bursaries, to be awarded over the next five years, for a total amount of \$125,000. Once again, all our congratulations go to the recipients of the 2009–2010 awards.

Name	Field	City
Jennifer Abel	Diving	Laval
Chloé Isaac	Synchronized swimming	Brossard
Nansy Damianova	Artistic gymnastics	Montreal
Coralie Leblond-Chartrand	Artistic gymnastics	La Prairie
Laurie-Ève Pépin Gagné	Artistic gymnastics	Candiac
Sébastien St-Germain	Trampoline	Montreal
Cassandre Duplessis-Lalonde	Rhythmic gymnastics	Montreal
Samuel Paquin	Artistic gymnastics	St-Jérôme
Bryson Hunt	Artistic gymnastics	Montreal

IMPORTANT VISITORS FOR *MYSTÈRE* ARTISTS



Octavian Belu, his partner and artist Magalie Chacon.

The *Mystère* team was privileged to have a few famous Olympic athletes the show on June 1. Bart Conner and Nadia Comaneci were just a couple of "the greats" in the group. Also present were world-renowned coaches Octavian Belu and Paul Ziert. Octavian Belu is Secretary of State with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Romania. This former head coach of the Romanian national gymnastics team led his athletes to no fewer than 279 medals during his career, including 16 Olympic gold medals. Paul Ziert was assistant coach for the U.S. team and is now editor of *International Gymnast* magazine.

COME MEET OUR SCOUTS

Each year, the Casting scouts attend various events organized all over the world by sports federations and associations. These special events allow us to see the athletes and their progress. It is also an opportunity to discover new talent and track how disciplines are changing. What we like most about these trips is meeting coaches and their athletes and chatting with them at our information kiosk or in the stands. We will be on hand at these upcoming events—come and see us:

British Trampoline, DMT and Synchro Championships 2009, Birmingham (GBR) – July 18 and 19, 2009

41st Artistic Gymnastics World Championships 2009, London (GBR) –

October 13 to 18, 2009

24th European Championships for Seniors and 8th European Championships for Juniors and 4th European Age Group Games in Acrobatic Gymnastics, Vila Do Condo (POR) – September 28 to October 4, 2009

26th Trampoline Gymnastics World Championships, St. Petersburg (RUS) - November 14 to 22, 2009

UPCOMING AUDITIONS

Sports: [Las Vegas](#) (2009-09), [Portugal](#) (2009-10), Australia (2009-10)

To find out about upcoming auditions throughout the world, check out the [Auditions dates table](#) on our website. It is regularly updated.

LOOKING FOR A FUTURE CAREER WITH CIRQUE? SUBMIT YOUR PROFILE!

Signal your interest in a stage career with *Cirque du Soleil* by applying online. This will provide us with more information about your training and background in the sports world. It is the first step towards being invited to audition for the Casting team, and the best way to get noticed by our staff!

Discover all the [positions](#) open to athletes and acrobats in our current and upcoming shows!

DID YOU KNOW. . .?

It is simply not true that *Cirque du Soleil* recruits mainly Olympic athletes. Actually, they represent only 3% of the acrobats specializing in a FIG discipline featured in our shows.



ENGLISH | FRANÇAIS | РУССКИЙ

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