

Cirque ZUMAZUMA

PRESS KIT



The Company: Cirque Zuma Zuma

The tradition of dance and acrobatics in Africa goes back over 2,500 years. The members of African Acrobats International Academy uphold this centuries' old tradition through their training, artistry, and touring performances. AAI was originally founded in East Africa as a private school with a goal of providing entertainment to the tourist hotels in Africa. Cirque Zuma Zuma was established about a decade later, in late 2005, as a touring arm of the company with a mission of teaching the world about African cultures. African Acrobats International now has training schools in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya and Las Vegas. Due to the physical demands put on Cirque's performers, their on-stage careers may not extend much beyond their 30th birthdays. In addition to training performers, AAI is working to collect and publish numerous African opera scripts and historical texts as well as issuing DVDs and videos for education and promotion of the traditional arts of Africa. The performers of African Acrobats International have toured the world, presenting more than 150 performances annually.

For more information...

<http://www.ecetouring.com/cirque-zuma>

<http://www.zumazuma.com/>

Check out the websites above for more information on their performances and the variety of acts and art forms—see photos and check out video clips from their shows.

AS SEEN ON
America's Got Talent - Season 6



What is "Cirque"?

The term refers to a style of performance that incorporates circus arts from all over the world such as clowning, acrobatics, mime, trapeze, contortionism, stunts, and more and then adds a layer of theatricality not usually seen in a standard circus performance.

"Adding theatricality" means the use of costumes, sound, lighting, and perhaps even some plot or storyline. The performances are entertaining and inventive. The various art forms are blended together to create one seamless, energetic, and dramatic experience for the audience.



Sample Elements

The performance of Cirque Zuma Zuma blends traditional African dance, song, and music, with feats of acrobatics, contortionism, mime work, clowning, magic and more. The performance includes lively music, colorful costumes, and dramatic lighting.

Here are some of the acts the troupe commonly performs. *Each performance is a little bit different—the company may substitute other acts not listed here in place of some of these acts but this list will give you an idea of what you might expect to see.*

Flag Dance—Flags of different parts of Africa waving in synchronization combined with tumbling stunts.

Celebration of Acrobatic Skills—An exhibition of some of the most popular acrobatic moves.

Diablo Spinning—This special spinning-wheel called a diablo is based on an ancient Ethiopian child's toy. The act is accompanied by traditional African melodies as acrobats throw, coil, and toss the diablos to one another with dexterity and finesse.

Dexterous Feet—Look for some incredibly fancy and skillful footwork by the performers.

Hoops and Barrels—Two female performers dance and move through hoops and barrels with amazing agility.

Chair Balance—Demonstrating balance, daring, and unbelievable focus, acrobats will perform atop stacks of chairs. Don't try this at home!

Zulu and Gumboot Dance—The Zulu reed dance is part of a traditional ceremony performed in the regions populated by the Zulus, for their kings. The Gumboot dance comes out of the mining culture of the region. Learn more about these traditional dances in the "Further Exploration" box on this page.

Acrobatic Clown Show—Traditionally, African acrobatics performances include a clown who combines humor and acrobatic techniques in his act.

Candlesticks—An elegant female performer balances candlesticks on the soles of her feet, her forehead, hands, and even on her mouth while moving through space in a graceful dance.

Further Exploration...

The **Zulu Reed Dance** is an important part of traditional Zulu festivities which take place in September each year at the start of spring (remember South Africa is in the Southern hemisphere). Young girls dressed in traditional Zulu attire come to sing, dance, and celebrate at the eNyokeni Palace in Nongoma, Zululand. The festivities take place over several days and represent the rite of passage of young girls into womanhood. The Reed Dance has also become an opportunity to teach girls about their culture and for Zulu women to teach the girls about respect for their bodies. Today this age-old ceremony has also taken on some contemporary social issues affecting the Zulu people including HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy.

A highlight of the event is the reed-giving ceremony in which young women dressed in intricately beaded and colorful outfits collect a cut reed to present to the king. The reed is an important symbol in Zulu tradition as it is believed that their original ancestor emerged from a reed bed. Reeds are used to build traditional Zulu huts, mats, and baskets so the laying of reeds at the king's feet is a symbol of respect for Zulu culture.

The **Gumboot dance** began with rural laborers working in the gold mines of South Africa. In the mines they faced harsh oppression and abuse including punishment for even talking to one another while working. Mine executives feared an uprising and so they worked hard to keep the workers separate and divided. Miners were also forbidden to practice their traditions or wear traditional attire. As a result of this oppression as well as the fact that many ethnic groups with many different languages were working side by side in the mines, the miners began to create new forms of communication. Because mine floors often flooded due to poor drainage and mine bosses refused to spend the money to properly fix the problem, the miners were issued rubber boots to wear. These gumboots along with jeans or overalls, bandannas, and hard hats became the miners' uniform. Workers began to adapt traditional dances and rhythms using the only instruments they had in the mines, their boots and their bodies. By slapping their gumboots, stamping their feet, and rattling their ankle chains (many workers were actually chained to their work stations) they developed a kind of communication with one another. The form developed over time into a popular social activity with songs dealing with life, love, family, and the problems and oppression of the mining work.



Cirque ZUMAZUMA

REVIEWS

“Thank you so much for notifying us about Cirque Zuma Zuma coming to New Mexico. Their performances were great and our Las Vegas community was very pleased with their show! The troupe did a remarkable job! The cast was extremely easy to work with and very friendly. I hope they felt the same way about us! :) My supervisor and I were so happy with the performances, and the venue was packed last night! Overall, it was a great experience that we'd love to do again. Please keep us in mind when you have performers headed this way! Thank you again for your help with this event. I look forward to working with your agency again!”

– Ilfeld Auditorium – Las Vegas, NM

“The event went great. One of the performers was actually featured on the front page of Duluth's most popular newspaper the Duluth News Tribune. Our turnout was successful as well. The cast was very easy to work with and a pleasure to talk to and the show was amazing, I don't think one audience member would disagree. I do believe we would like to bring them back in the future.”

– Marshall Performing Arts Center – Duluth, MN

“The event was AMAZING!! We had a blast and the crew was just awesome. We had just a great time hosting them and making them feel welcomed. We did not want them to leave , they had such wonderful personalities. They kept the crowd in suspense and awe, just all around a great experience. I have attached pictures from the event to this email. Please enjoy and thank you so much for all your help. We could not have done this without you.”

- Eastern New Mexico University – Portales, NM

“I sold this show out two years in a row! Can't say enough good things about it. Memphis LOVED it!!”

– Buckman Performing Arts Center – Memphis, TN

“Last year's sold out show left audiences mesmerized, asking for more. This troupe has been described as an African-style version of Cirque du Soleil, but I can't think of any description to do them justice! They bring the culture's mysticism and magic of Africa together with the theatrics of a European circus performance. They killed here last year - it's really something to see!”

-Arcada Theatre – St. Charles, IL

“The high energy from Zuma Zuma one again graced the stage of *America's Got Talent* on Tuesday. The acrobatic troupe from Las Vegas, Nevada once again showed just how flexible they are during their routine. With new elements to the act, the delivery of the act was intense and exciting. The two poles in the center of the stage were three floors high and had the contestants pushing the boundaries of movement in a unique way.

The act, first auditioning in Atlanta, but said to be from Kenya, repeatedly brings gymnastics, jumping, juggling, balancing and contortionism into their act. With only 90 seconds to impress, the group jumps from one stunt to the net, barely letting the audience catch their breath. The extraordinary talent of the team has provided the audiences in Las Vegas a chance to see some amazing performances.”

- Examiner.com on their *America's Got Talent* performance



[INSERT VENUE NAME OR LOGO HERE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFO HERE

[Venue Name] presents an African-style Cirque Du Soleil

WHO: *[Venue Name]*

WHAT: Cirque Zuma Zuma

WHEN: *[Insert performance date]*

WHERE: *[Insert venue location]*

TICKETS: *[Insert ticket information]*

[Insert Release Date] – *[City, State]* – America’s Got Talent finalist **Cirque Zuma Zuma** comes to *[Venue Name]* on *[Performance Date]* at *[Performance Time]*. Known as the “ultimate African circus,” this show is filled with non-stop action and African culture, including dance, acrobatics, tumbling, and music.

Cirque Zuma Zuma features disciplined performers who are trained in Kenya and Tanzania. Many describe it as an African-style Cirque du Soleil; such is the standard of the performers and the quality of the show. The performance showcases an array of never before seen talents mixed with some of the best skills associated with African variety arts.

Cirque Zuma Zuma combines the mysticism of Africa with the excitement of a theatrical cirque performance. With live music and percussionists, the talented cast performs an action-packed show of pole and aerial acts, Egyptian limbo dances, South African gumboot dances, Gabonese tumbling, and South African contortionist feats which will keep the audience breathless.