



Circus Atmosphere

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The show 'iL CiRCo' swings at Bally's through April

By [Sandy Posnak](#)

IL CIRCO is a production that is as unique as the spelling of the show's name. Part of it is reminiscent of a traditional old-fashioned circus with acrobats, clowns, aerialists and the comforting, upbeat sound of a calliope. Another part is suggestive of the modern French-style cirque circus that has been enjoying popularity in the United States during the past decade. The colorful and energizing show plays at Bally's Palace Theater through April 5.



Though cirque-style shows are not uncommon to Atlantic City audiences, *iL CiRCo* comes with a fresh approach. Its charming storyline is easy to comprehend, and the production's original music includes songs with real words that are clearly understandable and meaningful, rather than the unintelligible gibberish inherent in other shows of the cirque genre.

Please heed this advice: arrive at *iL CiRCo* at least 10 minutes prior to curtain time to watch the hilarious pre-show antics of performers that mingle with the audience. And hey, you may even get your 15 seconds of fame, since they kibitz with an audience member or two before the show officially kicks off.

The charming *iL CiRCo* journey relates the story of a young girl (portrayed by 12-year old Sasha Pivaral) who has auspicious dreams that take her on a fantasy journey. The youngster's inspiration and mother figure on the dream trip is Columbina (Molly Woltman), the show's lead clown. During their travels they encounter incredible characters, including 10-foot tall Marionetta, a German wheel performer and breathtaking acrobats who display outstanding skills on a trampoline.

As the young girl and Columbina continue their journey through dreamland, they observe other regimented *iL CiRCo* performers, including a fast-track Chinese pole group and graceful aerialists who manage to admirably pull off their act in spite of the Palace Theater's limited stage configuration. Other show acts include a solo hand balancer and a duo hand balancing segment strategically executed by Sasha Pivaral's real-life parents, Nelson Pivaral and his wife, Goulia Rozyeva. Two clown-like characters known as the Blue Boys make several lengthy appearances during the latter part of the performance. They're each dressed in hilarious costumes with



overstuffed derrieres and tummies that make them appear to be 12 months pregnant. The two are funny when first presented, but they appear too frequently with a repetitious act that loses its effectiveness after the first time around.

iL CiRCo's chic choreography and inventive costumes with their kaleidoscope of colors add to the show's overall dimension.

Young Sasha Pivaral has participated in *iL CiRCo* since she was six years old. "It's really fun; it's opened up a whole new world to me," she tells *AC Weekly*.

"What distinguishes *iL CiRCo* from other cirque style shows is that ours is more Italian while others are French-Canadian themed," says Sam Trego, the show's creator and artistic director, during a phone interview from his San Diego office. "All of our characters are Commedia dell'arte, which is historically Italian improvised drama."

Trego wrote the entire production, including its story and music, which is not surprising since he earned his college degree in musical theater. He adds that the show's artists also contributed many of their own ideas to the production, which was first performed in San Diego more than 10 years ago. "What we ended up with is a really powerful story," says Trego.

The audience at a recent performance agreed with Trego's evaluation. They accorded the cast a standing ovation and kind words. "The kids were just wonderful," remarked Atlantic City resident William Cradle. "I thought that the young man dressed in white [the solo balancer] was incredible, and at the end when the little girl supported her body weight with her mouth it was actually amazing. I think that Bally's really has a hit."



iL CiRCo proves that dreams can truly come to fruition.

iL CiRCo appears in the Palace Theater at Bally's through April 5. Show times are Sun. -Thurs. 3:30pm & 7pm; Sat. 7pm & 10pm. Dark Fridays. Tickets are \$25. Purchase online at www.ticketmaster.com or at 1-800 -736 -1420.