

Review: Cirque, Fort Worth Symphony soar as one

BY GREGORY SULLIVAN ISAACS - SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM

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FORT WORTH — Years ago, you would have never associated the circus with the symphony.

Circuses had sawdust, bands and calliopes. Symphonies had ballet dancers. When Cirque du Soleil put them together — circus acts, dance and symphonic music — everything changed.

So it was a small step to bring that combination to Bass Hall with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. The result is spectacular.

The artists were not identified in the program, so we had to guess who was who from the brief biographies. The international cast of athletes has major credits and prestigious prizes.

They also formed a seamless ensemble, with the proceedings feeling more like a unified show than a series of individual feats of derring-do.

It was easy to identify Vladimir Tsarkov, a clown juggler in brightly colored motley who scurried around serving as continuity — helping where needed and providing props. He also managed to keep seven (maybe eight) hoops in the air in always different patterns.

The acrobatic acts couldn't use the regular trapeze, but they did amazing things with scarves hanging from the ceiling. One chiseled male, presumably Alexander Streltsov, hooked onto the scarves and sailed out over the audience. His act included a female partner, and their lyrical pas de deux was a highlight.

A female contortionist, perhaps Elena Tsarkova, managed to effortlessly tie herself in knots, maintaining remarkable grace and composure.

One woman did a mind-boggling quick-change act as she exchanged one frock for another with only the briefest covering. One female gymnast did a rhythmic gymnastic routine, which is a fairly recent addition to the Olympics.

The finale was a male balancing act that showed unbelievable strength. Skimpily dressed, with gilded, muscled torsos and shaved heads, the men seemed to be more than human — enhanced by science, perhaps?

The symphony played a selection of popular classics underneath the acts. Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya set energetic tempos, and the musicians responded with fine playing.

CIRQUE DE LA SYMPHONIE

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