

RUN AWAY AND JOIN THE CIRCUS

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S PERFORMING ARTIST LEE BREARLY PROVIDES INSIGHT INTO THIS UNIQUE CIRCUS WORLD.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL is a vibrant display of performing artists undertaking extraordinary feats with the human body.

OVO meaning 'egg' in Portuguese is the name of the latest Cirque du Soleil show to visit Australia, and when created in 2009 it was the company's 25th production in 25 years. Comprising of 54 performing artists from 16 countries, *OVO* depicts a colourful and energetic interpretation of an insect's life, including how they eat, play, fight and search for love.

Cirque du Soleil performer and former British Olympic trampolinist, Lee Brearly, has been with the company for 10 years. Lee not only plays the role of an energetic cricket in *OVO* but also joined the cast in 2008 for the show's

original creation. 'As a result, bits of our personalities are engraved into the show. It's a fantastic feeling knowing future artists will learn parts of the show that I, myself, helped create.'

Lee says that playing the character of a cricket in *OVO* is very different to other Cirque du Soleil performances he's been involved with. 'In other shows I have always been a human character, but here I spend a lot of time on all fours crawling at different speeds.' He is also part of the finale that sees him running, jumping and walking across and straight up an eight-metre vertical wall, and all without artificial support.

With varying physical demands, Lee says that everyone has their own fitness regime, which specifically relates to their role. 'The crickets in the show have very high-energy cues so I like to do Pilates, plus some workouts with weights.'

'I always like to do a good warm up

and stretch before I go on stage because I am very active in the show. But, I have to be careful to avoid doing too much too close to show time, or it can affect my energy levels on stage,' says Lee.

He adds, 'In addition to a good stretch after every show, I use a massage pillow and apply ice to any specific aches and pains.'

Injuries are difficult to avoid when you're dealing with such frequent performances at such high intensity but the company has an extensive injury-prevention program, which includes strength and conditioning programs, core strengthening, Pilates, and massage activities.

'My role, itself, helps keep me fit because I am constantly running, dancing, crawling, jumping or climbing and, of course, then there's the finale act, which consists of trampolines and a huge vertical climbing wall,' Lee says.



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S OVO TOUR DATES

- >> Sydney: From 13 September 2012
 - >> Adelaide: From 6 December 2012
 - >> Melbourne: From 17 January 2013
 - >> Perth: From 14 April 2013
- Tickets for *OVO* are available from cirquedusoleil.com/ovo

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1984, 73 people worked for Cirque du Soleil. Today, the business has 5,000 employees worldwide, including more than 1,400 artists.

Close to 15 million people will see a Cirque du Soleil show in 2012.

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