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Underbelly and UniverSoul present

UNIVERSOUL CIRCUS: HIP HOP UNDER THE BIG TOP

- Largest American Circus in the World makes European debut at Edinburgh Festival Fringe
- UniverSoul captures the energy of urban communities through an unparalleled interactive mix of Hip Hop, theatrics and outstanding circus arts
- Colossal cast includes the finest and freshest circus artists from across the world including the US, Africa and Cuba
- Tickets on sale now via www.underbellyedinburgh.co.uk



"The Coolest Show on Earth" Newsweek Magazine



“Show Stopping Spectacle” People Magazine

“Cirque du Soul” The Atlanta Journal Constitution

Having electrified US audiences for 25 years, America's largest circus makes it's European premiere at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. ***UniverSoul: Hip-Hop Under the Big Top***, combines edge-of-your-seat performances, stunning spectacle, hilarious audience participation and a soundtrack that will blow the roof off the big top tent!

UniverSoul Circus will open at The Underbelly Circus Hub this August boasting some of the most phenomenal acts ever to grace center ring! Leading the charge will be **Ringmaster Lucky Malatsi** of South Africa, a multitalented entertainer who brings his unbridled energy to every performance. Joining Lucky will be US internet hip hop dance sensation **Fresh the Clowns**, fiery limbo spectacular from Trinidad and Tobago **Caribbean Dynasty** and **The Willie Family**, a six member troupe from Colombia to astound audiences with a never-before seen hire-wire act, to name but a few from a huge cast from the world's finest circus acts.

UniverSoul Circus is more than a circus... it's a one of a kind, unparalleled interactive mix of music, theatrics, and circus arts that takes you on a journey of unlimited possibilities. Unmatched on the world stage, *UniverSoul Circus* will push you into a world of urban prisms with its non-stop, high-octane Big Top production and unique style of entertainment for all the family.

The show was created by top US concert promoter Cedric Walker, who 25 years ago had a dream to produce a live entertainment family show that celebrated urban African American communities. Walker sought to recreate the wild energy he witnessed when working with the likes of The Commodors, Jackson Five and Run DMC in a new show which authentically captured urban culture, broke down the traditional barriers between audiences and performers and was suitable for families to enjoy together. Fast-forward 25 years and Walker's vision, *UniverSoul Circus*, has entertained over 20 million people and is now firmly established as beloved and highly anticipated tradition in cities across the United States, featuring performers from across the world. Cedric Walker was recently inducted into the **Circus Ring of Fame** and continues to innovate and push the boundaries of circus performance, traveling the world to search out the freshest new talent to join the *UniverSoul* family.

UniverSoul Circus: Hip Hop under the Big Top is circus for a new generation and will set the stage a blaze this August at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe!



(P.C. Boon Vong)

ENDS/

For more information, interviews and review ticket requests please contact **Kate Bouchier-Hayes** on **078 25335489/ kate@thecornershoppr.com** or **Will Moss** on **07443334085/ will@thecornershoppr.com**

Images and trailer available for download [here](#)

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Underbelly and UniverSoul Circus present
UniverSoul Circus: Hip Hop Under the Big Top

Venue: The Lafayette, The Underbelly Circus Hub, Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018

Dates: Sat 4th August – Sat 25th August, 5pm

Prices:

Aug 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 7, 18, 19, 24, 25 £22.30 (£21.30)

Aug 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23

First review date: 7th August

Running time: 60 mins

Tickets available at www.underbellyedinburgh.co.uk

CAST INFORMATION

More acts will be announced in due course.

Ringmaster, Lucky Malatsi

South Africa

The UniverSoul Circus Ringmaster Lucky Malatsi, was born in Pretoria and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa. Lucky has been performing in front of an audience since the age of four when he was trained by his Uncle Prince, an accomplished performer and acrobat. At the tender age of six, Lucky made his first international trip to perform as an acrobat for festivals in Germany. In 1999, while performing in South Africa, Lucky caught the attention of UniverSoul Circus Founder and President Cedric Walker who regularly travels the world looking for new talent. By 2000, at the age of 10, he was performing a duo contortionist act with fellow South African, Lunga. After 14 years with UniverSoul, Lucky brings new meaning to the term, multi-talented. He has been an acrobatic hip hop dancer, gymnast, trapeze artist, teeterboard, trampoline and acro-dunking with basketballs. But he admits his toughest act, with the greatest rewards, has been as Ringmaster. "It's very exciting and challenging to be the Ringmaster," he admits. "But it's also hard work. I love everything I do for UniverSoul Circus. My family and I are truly blessed."

Caribbean Dynasty

Caribbean Dance, Limbo and Stilts

Trinidad and Tobago

The exotic paradise of the Caribbean comes to life as dancers in vibrant and colorful costumes swing to the rhythms of the islands. Marvel at the agility of the dancers as they proudly perform the national dance of the Caribbean. When the limbo bar goes to six inches from the floor – in a blaze of fire, it's a spectacle to behold. Join in and clap your hands and dance as the energy, the beat and the pageantry of the Caribbean engulf the big top. The Caribbean dance team, in all its glory, is a perennial favorite at UniverSoul.

The Willie Family

Hire Wire

Colombia

This six-person troupe is from Colombia, South America skillfully maintains balance while walking along a thin wire. And they perform these unbelievable acrobatic tricks an amazing 18 feet high. Training for this type of act requires much discipline and dedication. This incredible group spent more than a year perfecting their new act for its UniverSoul Circus debut. When asked what makes the UniverSoul Circus experience different from others, group member Dixie Meza responded emphatically: "Everything. The music, dancing, singing, just everything. The audience members are just as exciting as the performers. They are the performers!"

Duo Amour

Perch Pole Act

Cuba

Making UniverSoul Circus their circus debut in 2018, Duo Amour is a truly unique aerial performance on the Perch Pole that is simply breathtaking. Getting their start only three years ago, the couple has trained extremely hard to perfect a beautiful love story told through fluid twists, bends, and turns. When asked what advice they would give to young performers, they stated: “You have to be willing to sacrifice a lot and be dedicated to your craft. The life of a performer is very challenging but super rewarding.”

Fresh the Clownsss

USA

What started as a favor for a friend’s birthday party, turned into something larger than life. Hailing from Detroit, MI, Fresh the Clownsss bring a whole new meaning to the word clown! Forget the big red nose, big red shoes, and crazy ties . . . Fresh the Clownsss are always “swagged out” in the latest fashions and colorful hairstyles. The four members consider themselves unlike any clown brigade on the circuit today. The trio scouts the crowd daily for the best young dancers under the UniverSoul big top. Becoming an internet sensation in 2017 with their “Juju on the Beat” dance, our Clowns are taking it all in with a fresh perspective. Ira Smith, the group’s leader, was excited about their growing success: “We never thought that we would have so many fans. Traveling to different cities and touching kids all over the thru dance is the greatest feeling in the world.” When asked about his advice for young people he stated “Get an education and always believe in yourself no matter what.”

Bone Breakers

Guinea

The bone breakers consist of four young men from Conakry, Guinea in West Africa. These guys are gifted with the ability to bend, twist, and distort their bodies in extreme ways. To maintain their flexibility, they often practice yoga. You can catch them doing the downward dog or a simple handstand in preparation for a show.

Teeterboard Act

Gabon, Guinea, Ethiopia & South Africa

They’re our African Dream Team – one of the most thrilling troupes one will ever witness from the entire African continent. UniverSoul Circus has brought these acrobats from Gabon, Guinea, Ethiopia, and South Africa together in a single ring. This high-powered group performs a rousing collection of daredevil stunts utilizing a teeterboard and the human body as a prop. Without teamwork, this Dream Team couldn’t possibly work. Its perfection in motion.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About UniverSoul Circus

Cedric Walker, UniverSoul Found and President

Baltimore native and Tuskegee University alumni, Cedric Walker is a preeminent live entertainment promoter and pioneering force in American influenced music, theater and circus arts.

His skill, insight, diversity and veracity have earned him the reputation of being one of the country's leading entertainment promoters for more than 35 years. Cedric's innate ability to



accurately gauge the pulse of the marketplace has won him promotion and productions credits with industry legends from the Commodores to the Jackson Five, Run DMC, Keith Sweat, and Salt-n-Pepa to New Kids on the Block.

In the true spirit of this pioneering visionary, Cedric saw the growth potential in ethnic commercial theater, and again launched another success with the blockbuster play, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*. For more than three years, this moving comedy was one of the nation's top three grossing plays. It was during this period that Cedric realized the need for a multicultural entertainment attraction that engaged the entire family. This realization helped lay the foundation for the creation of the internationally acclaimed the UniverSoul Circus

Underbelly

Underbelly is a UK based live entertainment company, its festivals and events division produces a number of events annually, including Underbelly at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Underbelly Festival on London's Southbank, Underbelly Festival Hong Kong, Edinburgh's Christmas and Edinburgh's Hogmanay on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council, Christmas in Leicester Square, Pride in London and, West End Live in Trafalgar Square on behalf of the Society of London Theatre and Westminster City Council.

2017 marked their fifth year producing Edinburgh's Christmas for the City of Edinburgh Council, and their first year producing Edinburgh's Hogmanay (also for the City of Edinburgh Council), one of the world's leading New Year Festivals lasting three days in Scotland's stunning capital city drawing an estimated 150,000 people from Scotland and around the world.

Through its Underbelly Productions arm it produces and promotes live theatre in London's West End, throughout the UK and on tour internationally. Focusing on revivals of plays and musicals as well as commissions, their credits to date include, a revival of Clarke Peters' *Five Guys Named Moe* in association with Cameron Mackintosh and directed by Clarke Peters' himself, performed in a specially constructed theatre at Marble Arch; *Frankie Vah* by Luke Wright at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; and *Big Fish* at The Other Palace. In December 2017, Underbelly Productions brought improv group *Austentatious* to London's West End for the first time.

In 2017, Underbelly sold over 1.3 million tickets to their various events.