

# CIRCUS ABYSSINIA

*Ethiopian Dreams*





## **Media Pack**

[www.bibiandbichu.com](http://www.bibiandbichu.com)  
[www.circusabyssinia.com](http://www.circusabyssinia.com)

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## The Cast

Bibi Tesfamariam and Bichu Shimellis

& The Circus Abyssinia Troupe:

(The 5 female artists)

Betelhem Dejene

Semeret Getachew

Etsegenet Ashenafi

Helen Shimeles

Hanna Tina

(The 8 male artists)

Ezera Nigusse

Dagmawi Fekeru

Alemayehu Mulugeta

Cherenet Dereje

Befekadu Esmael

Behaylu Tesfaye

Daniel Gezahegn

Zenebe Fantu

## The Band

Nini Aseffa

Lead Vocals

Temesgen Zeleke

Krar, Waschint, Backing vocals

Fitsum Minwalkulet

Masinko, Keyboard, Backing Vocals

Bereket Kassa

Drums

Sebastien Parfait

Bass Guitar

## The Creative Team

Writer

Cal McCrystal

Director

Bichu Shimellis

Choreographer

Kate Smyth

Lighting Designer

Mark Whatmough

Producers

Bibi Tesfamariam and Bichu Shimellis

Project & Stage Manager

Gabriella Cooke

Tour Manager

Elshaday Shimels

**PRESS RELEASE****Bibi and Bichu** presents**Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams**

**This jaw-dropping spectacular show is the very first internationally touring circus created entirely by Ethiopian artists, all pursuing their dreams from humble beginnings on the streets of Addis Ababa to the world's stage.**

*'extraordinary, irresistible circus'* ★★★★★ **Daily Review (Australia)**

*'one of the best acts ever seen'* ★★★★★ **Mail on Sunday (UK)**

Images available for [download](#).

Written by Cal McCrystal and directed by Bichu Shimellis, **Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams** is an unashamedly joyful family show brimming with astonishing stunts and enchanting adventure. Inspired by the magical true tale of brothers **Bibi and Bichu**, who dreamed as little boys of joining the circus and grew up to help raise a phenomenal new tradition of circus in Ethiopia, the show weaves their story through death-defying tricks and stunning ensemble feats of **juggling, human juggling, contortion, hoop-diving and Chinese pole**. This is a joy-driven journey through Ethiopia's rich and storied artistic traditions and a transformative celebration of circus itself.

The absence of circus tradition in Ethiopia means that most acrobats never get to make a living by their skills. Where Bibi and Bichu grew up, no circus ever rolled into town; they carved their own juggling clubs out of wood and learned their skills busking for crowds on the dusty city streets of Jimma. At 14 and 15 years old they **journeyed overseas to perform at Brighton Fringe** and the response of audiences and performers blew them away, teaching them for the first time that what they could do was extraordinary!

As jugglers, Bibi and Bichu have met with more success than they ever dared hoped for, this year even starring in **Disney and Tim Burton's Dumbo** (2019). But most important to them both is the very real possibility of social change circus holds for their country: since 2010 they've been funding **circus schools in Addis Ababa** and there discovered the incredible artists who now tour with them in Circus Abyssinia – artists who started out like they did, honing their skills on city streets, with no expectation of pay. All now bread-winners for their families, the cast have performed their astounding signature feats of strength, dexterity and fluid grace across the globe, from **Asia to Australia to Broadway New York**.

Thrumming with the living rhythms and vibrant traditions of contemporary Ethiopia, Circus Abyssinia is 'not an archaic expression of African culture but [an exploration of] the richness of culture, outstanding talent and exuberant joy that modern Ethiopians have to offer' (Broadway World). Together the cast perform **a celebration of dreams**, of the people who make them possible and the power in all of us to fight for them. They use the **wonderful surreal language of circus** to tell their stories - how they dreamed up the circus as children and how they live out their dreams today.

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**Website:** [www.bibibandbichu.com](http://www.bibibandbichu.com) **Facebook:** @Ethiopiandreams **Twitter:** @CircusAbyssinia



# PRESS QUOTES

## Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017

### Broadway Baby 5\*\*\*\*\*

'a phenomenal hour of circus that shows that dreams can come true'

<http://broadwaybaby.com/shows/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/719782>

### The Scotsman 4\*\*\*\*

'needs to be seen to be believed ... pure circus gold'

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/edinburgh-festivals/superhumans-set-up-camp-as-the-circus-comes-to-the-fringe-1-4530299>

### Edinburgh Festivals for Kids 5\*\*\*\*\*


'a joyful, uplifting extravaganza of colour and excitement ... a total gem'

<https://edinburghfestivalsforkids.com/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/>

### Daily Record 5\*\*\*\*\*

MORE AT DAILYRECORD.CO.UK

## ACROBATS BRING A FLAVOUR OF AFRICA



**ARR WE THERE YET? UNDERBELLY CIRCUS HUB MEADOWS**

**CIRCUS ABYSSINIA**

THIS year, even Edinburgh's Meadows park has been taken over by the Fringe. As a result, it has become one of the most vibrant and colourful venues, with the Underbelly Circus Hub tents offering all kinds of diverse performances and shows.

First up, my kids and I checked out pirate circus Arr We There Yet?. A surefire marketing winner

this one, as that's two words which automatically win the attention of kids, delighting their parents.


This is a three-man acrobatics troupe, who use their amazing skills on a treasure hunt across the seven seas. Great skills, great fun.

Then we were off across the park for the stunning Circus Abyssinia show Ethiopian Dreams, which is

one of the real gems of this festival.

This is an amazing, funky, energetic and truly awe-inspiring show full of acrobatics, contortionists, human trapeze, and a genuinely funny clown, all set to a thumping African dance beat and performed at pace and with a level of enthusiasm that is infectious. You'll be smiling all day at this.

**BRIAN McIVER**



### The Times 4\*\*\*\*

## Bibi and Bichu will bewitch you

**Circus Donald Hutera**

**Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams**  
Circus Hub on The Meadows  
★★★★☆

Now in its third year, the Fringe's sole venue dedicated to circus-based performance bears a big responsibility. Or perhaps it's best to call it a Big Top responsibility, given that there is indeed a large tent, The Lafayette, for which Underbelly has programmed a handful of international shows with an all-ages appeal.

One of the most captivating is this solid hour of often sensational entertainment from Circus Abyssinia, founded by the brothers Bibi and Bichu Tesfamariam. *Ethiopian Dreams* is based on

the siblings' desire to become professional circus performers. Thus we see, at the top of the show, two live boys being advised (on film) by a man in the moon to follow their dreams. Narrative is then dropped as we're invited to revel in acts by an ensemble drawn from the Konjowoch Troupe of Addis Ababa. Most will knock your socks off. That includes those two extraordinarily limber boys, at the centre of a thrilling opening routine in which they fly and twirl after being flipped and flung about by men standing on the shoulders of other men. I was fascinated by the freakish physical poetry of two young

female contortionists who treat each other's rib cages and pelvises like platforms, or curl up together like a beautiful shell while supported by just one pair of hands.

This duo is also part of a quartet of women who spin polka-dot cloths on their hands and feet as if the fabric is pizza dough, and later form into an astonishing human totem pole.

And then there is a couple whose balancing act has a rare tactile intimacy.

The show is a tad padded out, but it leaves you with an uplifting appreciation of what the human body can do.

Box office: 03333 444167, to Aug 26



**Mail on Sunday 5\*\*\*\*\***

'One of the best acts I've ever seen'

**Roll up  
to dream  
stunts**

**CIRCUS ABYSSINIA -  
ETHIOPIAN DREAMS @  
UNDERBELLY CIRCUS HUB  
ON THE MEADOWS** ■■■■■■

Circus acts can be hit and miss, and often we've seen it all before.

But this amazing, energetic show is one of the best such touring acts I've ever seen – a 60 minute rollercoaster of high-flying acrobatics and trapeze, comedy clowns, incredible contortionists and towering feats of strength.



It's all soundtracked by a thumping African dance beat. Fun for all the family, there are thrills and incredible moves, some which appear to defy gravity and physics.

It all culminates in a bouncing final turn where all the performers take turns climbing up and sliding down twin poles. You'll be grinning and foot tapping all day.

**The Royal Variety Performance 2017**

Review of the Royal Variety Performance:

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2017/royal-variety-performance><https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2017/royal-variety-performance-miranda-hart-review-london-palladium-2/miranda-hart-review-london-palladium-2/>

The ITV Press Release:

<https://www.itv.com/presscentre/press-releases/royal><https://www.itv.com/presscentre/press-releases/royal-variety-performance-2017>

**Adelaide Fringe 2018**

**The Advertiser 4\*\*\*\***

'dazzling acrobatic gymnastics'

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/entertainment/adelaide-fringe/other-events/adelaide-fringe-review-2018-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/news-story/4cb798ac885597fbd3a8105502a411d9>



**All Over Adelaide 5\*\*\*\*\***

'a true standout spectacle of human endurance ... A must-see for everyone!'

<https://www.alloveradelaide.com.au/post/2018-03-04-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-grand-auditorium-royal-croquet-club>

**The Underbelly Festival 2018****The Reviews Hub 5\*\*\*\*\***

'Now Circus Abyssinia has arrived, the other circuses in town may as well pack up and go home'.

<http://www.thereviewshub.com/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-underbelly-southbank/>

**Arthur's Seat 5\*\*\*\*\***

'an unstoppable and almost unbelievable hour of absolute joy'

<https://www.arthursseat.com/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-underbelly-festival-southbank-review/>

**The Stage 4\*\*\*\*\***

'jaw-dropping – and jaw-clenching'

[www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-review-at-underbelly-london/](http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-review-at-underbelly-london/)

**Colourful Radio**

'a mind blowing night of non-stop entertainment that has audiences cheering, shouting, laughing and covering their eyes in utter fear'

<http://www.colourfulradio.com/content/review/30171>

**Critical Dance**

'kept both children and adults on the edge of their seats'

<http://criticaldance.org/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/>

**Ought To Be Clowns**

'shows just how much the big top can stand for'

<https://www.oughttobecloowns.com/2018/04/beyond-circus-even-when-i-fall-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams.html/>

**Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018****Voice Mag 5\*\*\*\*\***

'Circus Abyssinia is a wonder to behold'

<https://www.voicemag.uk/review/4548/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams>

**Edinburgh Festival For Kids 5\*\*\*\*\***

'a joyful, uplifting extravaganza of colour and excitement... Prepare to be astounded'

<https://edinburghfestivalsforkids.com/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/>

**Get2Gether 5\*\*\*\*\***

'amazing'

<http://get2gether.org.uk/fringe-review-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams>

**Blog review by Graham Richardson**

'Ethiopian Dreams, this is my (belated) ovation to you'

<https://www.gnrichardson.co.uk/blog/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-review-and-a-note->

[on-standing-ovations](#)

## **The New Victory Theater, New York 2018**

### **TheaterMania**

'Some of the most talented jugglers, tumblers, and contortionists you're likely to ever see...Circus Abyssinia is a journey worth taking'

<https://www.theatermania.com/off-broadway/reviews/review-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-87309.html>

### **Broadway World**

'Experience the richness of culture, outstanding talent and exuberant joy that modern Ethiopians have to offer'

[https://www.broadwayworld.com/off-broadway/article/BWW-Review-CIRCUS-ABYSSINIA-Ethiopian-Dreams-Come-True-in-NYC-20181226?fbclid=IwAR0HtVdVE1bqOscZ23Cium2QcVsLmu\\_H4qYJ5HL29hZrHoucQ9wU-F0k68](https://www.broadwayworld.com/off-broadway/article/BWW-Review-CIRCUS-ABYSSINIA-Ethiopian-Dreams-Come-True-in-NYC-20181226?fbclid=IwAR0HtVdVE1bqOscZ23Cium2QcVsLmu_H4qYJ5HL29hZrHoucQ9wU-F0k68)

### **Mommy Poppins**

'Circus Abyssinia Is a Jaw-Dropping Holiday Show Kids Will Love'

<https://mommypoppins.com/new-york-city-kids/shows/circus-abyssinia-is-a-jaw-dropping-holiday-show-kids-will-love>

## **ADELAIDE FRINGE 2019**

### **Daily Review 5\*\*\*\*\***

'brim with energy, verve and astonishing skill ... This is extraordinary, irresistible circus.'

<https://dailyreview.com.au/adelaide-fringe-festival-reviews-2/80979/>

### **Play and Go 5\*\*\*\*\***

'This high energy, vibrant and colourful show will have you clapping and cheering after each and every act ... A truly uplifting and joyous performance that easily deserves their five star rating.'

<https://playandgo.com.au/index.php/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-adelaide-fringe-2019-review/>

### **Fresh 92.7 5\*\*\*\*\***

'There are three simple words to describe this one of a kind circus performance. ELECTRIFYING. OUTSTANDING. WOW.'

<https://fresh927.com.au/delve-into-the-magic-that-is-ethiopian-dreams/>

### **Kryztoff RAW 5\*\*\*\*\***

'Astonishing ... An ideal show for all ages'

<http://www.kryztoff.com/RAW/?p=11160>

### **The Advertiser 4\*\*\*\***

'A standing ovation was testament to the talent on stage and the appreciation and enjoyment of the audience.'

[www.adelaidenow.com.au/entertainment/adelaide-fringe/other-events/adelaide-fringe-review-2019-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/news-story/7c22e95b3f88d5b162f3e3a35f38307f?nk=42334aa30ff780b16267f31ef0338f65-1550731137](http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/entertainment/adelaide-fringe/other-events/adelaide-fringe-review-2019-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/news-story/7c22e95b3f88d5b162f3e3a35f38307f?nk=42334aa30ff780b16267f31ef0338f65-1550731137)

### **Glam Adelaide 5\*\*\*\*\***

'In a flooded landscape of amazing circus troupes, Circus Abyssinia has provided something truly fresh and memorable.'

<https://glamadelaide.com.au/fringe-review-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/>  
<https://glamadelaide.com.au/fringe-review-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/>  
**Eventalaide 10/10**

'One of the most mind-boggling shows I have ever seen...This really is a MUST-SEE'

<https://eventalaide.com/reviews/adelaide-fringe-circus-abyssinia/>

## **Brighton Fringe 2019**

### **Broadway Baby 5\*\*\*\*\***

'Perfect for any and all ... left the audience in a unanimous standing ovation, wishing that the jam-packed hour hadn't come to an end'

<https://broadwaybaby.com/shows/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/744280>

## **Children's Theatre Company, Minneapolis, 2019**

### **Minnemama Adventures**

'absolutely stunning from beginning to end ... the joy. The JOY! THE JOY!!'

[www.minnemamaadventures.com/2019/09/22/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/?fbclid=IwAR2CSUjXyYz2jtJnFguXz7-BMa65LwU2vY9RLaGQB-EiHyBgytGvKHaQqF8](http://www.minnemamaadventures.com/2019/09/22/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/?fbclid=IwAR2CSUjXyYz2jtJnFguXz7-BMa65LwU2vY9RLaGQB-EiHyBgytGvKHaQqF8)

### **Star Tribune**

'A mini Cirque du Soleil that also doubles as a cultural showcase'

[www.startribune.com/ethiopian-dreams-offers-thrills-at-children-s-theatre/561156132/](http://www.startribune.com/ethiopian-dreams-offers-thrills-at-children-s-theatre/561156132/)

### **Family Fun Twin Cities**

'Your kid may want to join the circus when this is over. Mine does.'

[www.familyfuntwincities.com/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-review-parental-guidance](http://www.familyfuntwincities.com/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-review-parental-guidance)

### **Pioneer Press**

'...gasps, dropped jaws and howls of approval'

[www.twincities.com/2019/09/21/review-to-open-the-childrens-theatre-season-the-circus-comes-to-town/](http://www.twincities.com/2019/09/21/review-to-open-the-childrens-theatre-season-the-circus-comes-to-town/)

### **El Minnesota de Hoy**

'El ritmo de Etiopía vuelve a la vida con una hazaña increíble tras otra, desafiando la gravedad y despertando la posibilidad' [Translation: 'The rhythm of Ethiopia comes to life with one incredible feat after another, defying gravity and awakening possibility'].

[www.elminnesotadehoy.com/asombroso-el-circus-abyssinia-es-todo-un-wow-para-chicos-y-grandes/](http://www.elminnesotadehoy.com/asombroso-el-circus-abyssinia-es-todo-un-wow-para-chicos-y-grandes/)

### **The Lavender Magazine**

'Breathtakingly beautiful ... The physical becomes the spiritual'

[www.lavendermagazine.com/featured-home-page/circus-abyssinia-joyous-feats-of-wonder-from-ethiopia/?fbclid=IwAR39a-Fk2Be-Z\\_6TuL38u\\_6SqUjyqfawZDOcdea9UyRe\\_Ufty04t2niOu0/](http://www.lavendermagazine.com/featured-home-page/circus-abyssinia-joyous-feats-of-wonder-from-ethiopia/?fbclid=IwAR39a-Fk2Be-Z_6TuL38u_6SqUjyqfawZDOcdea9UyRe_Ufty04t2niOu0/)

### **Talkin' Broadway**

'awesome entertainment, with mind-boggling acts that testify to the capabilities of the human body, mind and heart'

<https://www.talkinbroadway.com/page/regional/minn/minn891.html>

### **Broadway World**

'Circus Abyssinia Captures Audiences Dreams'

[www.broadwayworld.com/minneapolis/article/BWW-Review-CTCs-CIRCUS-ABYSSINIA-Captures-Audiences-Dreams-20191003](http://www.broadwayworld.com/minneapolis/article/BWW-Review-CTCs-CIRCUS-ABYSSINIA-Captures-Audiences-Dreams-20191003)

## PRESS COVERAGE

### VIDEO FEATURES

#### **Al Jazeera (Aug 2017)**

'Ethiopian Circus Act Steals the Show at Edinburgh Fringe Festival'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_Ek9M1poaY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_Ek9M1poaY)

#### **AFP News Agency (Aug 2017)**

'Ethiopian Brothers Bring Stunning Circus to Edinburgh'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbiH3Q3q8l4>

#### **The Circus Abyssinia Troupe on BBC Breakfast (Aug 2017)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huxLq00I2wI>

#### **The Royal Variety Performance (Dec 2017)**

Excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwGp9tttcj0>

Full performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZSHOHLN1cl>

#### **Singapore's Channel 8 News report Circus Abyssinia's Asian debut (Dec 2017):**

<http://www.channel8news.sg/news8/singapore/20171130-sg-christmascircus/3898978.html?cid=ch8news-fb>

#### **Interviews and Coverage by Embassy of Ethiopia, London (Apr 2018)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ltznqAZeaA>

<https://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams-makes-london-premiere/>

#### **Telegraph's Top Picks for the Fringe (Aug 2018):**

<https://twitter.com/Telegraph/status/1028578694535806976>

#### **Interview with The Brad Show, New York Broadway (Jan 2019)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nohGwC0f0Fw>

#### **Behind the News ABC, Australia (Feb 2019)**

<http://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/circus-abyssinia/10834272>

#### **CNN Africa (Oct 2019)**

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/03/africa/ethiopia-circus/index.html>

#### **Twin Cities, Minneapolis (Oct 2019)**

[www.mcp-cdn-](http://www.mcp-cdn-)

[hubbard.storage.googleapis.com/ua\\_hubbard\\_kstp/473/19/10/08/4763887/4763887\\_2ECEFA4A5160439BA591A61E37C288CB\\_191008\\_4763887\\_Circus\\_Abyssinia\\_1800.mp4](http://hubbard.storage.googleapis.com/ua_hubbard_kstp/473/19/10/08/4763887/4763887_2ECEFA4A5160439BA591A61E37C288CB_191008_4763887_Circus_Abyssinia_1800.mp4)

### RADIO

#### **Interview with Bibi and Bichu on Colourful Radio (Apr 2018)**

<http://www.colourfulradio.com/content/guest/30161/>

#### **Interview with Bibi, Daniel and Betty on KFAI Voices of Ethiopia (Sept 2019)**

<https://www.kfai.org/episode/09-15-2019-voices-of-ethiopia/>

## FEATURES IN PRINT

**Bibi and Bichu's full page interview with Susan Mansfield for The Scotsman (August 2017):**

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/edinburgh-festivals/circusabyssinia-the-ethiopian-jugglers-living-the-dream-1-4524830>

**Editorial in Scenestr, Adelaide Fringe edition (Feb 2018)**

<https://scenestr.com.au/arts/circus-abyssinia-are-realising-their-ethiopian-dreams>

**Whats On Stage - Week in the Life Feature (Apr 2018)**

<https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dream-week-life-underbe-46301.html>

**Bichu's Interview with Miro Magazine (UK, Apr 2018)**

<http://www.miro magazine.com/theatre/underbelly-festival-spotlight-circus-abyssinia/>

**The Weekender (UK, Apr 2018)**

<http://www.weekender.co.uk/articles/arts/high-energy-circus/>

**Bichu's Interview with The Stage (UK, May 2018)**

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/interviews/2018/circus-abyssinia-juggler-bichu-tesfamariam-our-show-about-every-artist-ethiopia/>

**Press call at The Grand for Brighton Fringe (UK, May 2019)**

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/17661783.daredevil-acrobats-cause-a-scene-at-iconic-brighton-hotel/?ref=twshr#gallery1>

**Bibi and Bichu's interview with Broadway Baby (UK, May 2019)**

[https://broadwaybaby.com/features/interview-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/2137?fbclid=IwAR0yIM2IW3ETV9zAV-QjYizBjroz0xwGO\\_QQAt6LaNTU3bcz5a3AI-AqQGk](https://broadwaybaby.com/features/interview-circus-abyssinia-ethiopian-dreams/2137?fbclid=IwAR0yIM2IW3ETV9zAV-QjYizBjroz0xwGO_QQAt6LaNTU3bcz5a3AI-AqQGk)

**Report by 'The Latest' on Circus Abyssinia's Brighton Debut (UK, May 2019)**

<https://thelatest.co.uk/brighton/2019/05/29/the-circus-abyssinia-arrives-in-brighton-for-the-first-time/>

**Article in The National (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Sep 2019)**

<https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/on-stage/dazzling-acrobatics-and-pulsating-ethiopian-music-circus-abyssinia-comes-to-abu-dhabi-1.906749>

**Interview with the Spokesman Recorder (Minneapolis, U.S., Sep 2019)**

[www.spokesman-recorder.com/2019/09/26/circus-abyssinia-is-an-ethiopian-dream-come-true](http://www.spokesman-recorder.com/2019/09/26/circus-abyssinia-is-an-ethiopian-dream-come-true)

**Interview with El Minnesota de Hoy (Minneapolis, U.S., Oct 2019)**

<http://www.elminnesotadehoy.com/entrevista-con-los-creadores-del-circus-abyssinia/>

**Article in the Addis Herald on circus as Ethiopia's 'Latest Export' (Ethiopia, Oct 2019)**

[www.addisherald.com/ethiopias-newest-export-circus/?fbclid=IwAR3z1PPmMDu1udQpWLgwbRXAGrlZii5XZ5iU16FmuajG5IIXVAVIjQmF8lg](http://www.addisherald.com/ethiopias-newest-export-circus/?fbclid=IwAR3z1PPmMDu1udQpWLgwbRXAGrlZii5XZ5iU16FmuajG5IIXVAVIjQmF8lg)

## Bibi and Bichu's Interview with The Advertiser (Adelaide, Feb 2019)

FRINGE

SAWEEKEND FEBRUARY 9-10, 2019

# PERFECT BALANCE

Two juggling Ethiopian brothers used the money from roles in a Disney movie remake to start their own dream circus

WORDS PATRICK MCDONALD

**D**isney's decision to make a live-action version of one of its animated classics about an airborne baby elephant has helped another real-life circus act's dream to finally take flight.

Ethiopian juggler brothers Bibi and Bichu Tesfamariam used their appearance money in Hollywood director Tim Burton's upcoming remake of *Dumbo* to fund their own long-held plan of starting a circus in their homeland.

Now their company, Circus Abyssinia, is headed for a full season at this month's Adelaide Fringe – after a bit of a fumbled attempt at a first takeoff.

Confusion over visas meant that Circus Abyssinia's planned season at last year's Fringe started late, and that only one of the brothers – Bichu – eventually arrived here.

"We managed to do a show without him," Bichu says of his older brother Bibi. Extra measures were taken to ensure there was no repeat of the problem this year.

"The first time, we were in a lot of trouble getting to Australia," Bichu laughs. "Hopefully this time it will be easier."

The brothers' scenes for *Dumbo*, which will arrive on screens at the end of March, were shot on some of the world's biggest soundstages at Pinewood Studios in London, inside which the film's circus tents and their environs were created.

"It's a very exciting project. We never thought we would be in a big Tim Burton movie... but what an experience, to be treated like stars," Bichu says.

"It was just amazing, this completely different world to what we have experienced before. We were involved for seven months shooting. Pretty much every single day, we were in the studio. We were part of the travelling circus, the Medici family."

Danny DeVito plays Max Medici, ringmaster and owner of the circus into which *Dumbo* is born, that is then taken over by ruthless entrepreneur V.A. Valdemere (Michael Keaton). Coincidentally, *Dumbo* is the first project that DeVito, Keaton and Burton have all worked together since *Batman Returns* in 1992.

"What an exciting project, sharing the stage



and the screen with such big actors," Bichu says. The brothers even feature, among the other circus performers, on the *Dumbo* poster.

Without any assistance from the UK Arts Council or other funding, the Tesfamariam brothers say their payments from *Dumbo* were "100 per cent" what enabled them to start Circus Abyssinia.

"It was meant to be. We had the opportunity... we decided we'd take the money we earned and it was going to go toward Circus Abyssinia, and look at where we are now," Bichu says.

"Me and my brother... even when we were young, what we wanted was to run away with the circus."

"But there isn't any circus where we started. Only on the TV would you see circus with jugglers and acrobats."

"To get out in Europe and work on one of these big circuses, once we achieved that... there were a lot of dreamers still back in Ethiopia, so we had to give an opportunity for them as well."

As children growing up in Jimma, the largest city in southwest Ethiopia, Bibi and Bichu had an unlikely introduction to circus training.

"It was in our school break. One of our French-Canadian teachers was doing juggling and we saw him," the younger brother recalls.

"We used to tumbling and stuff like that, as an after-school activity, but we'd never juggled before. We were fascinated when we saw him juggling three oranges and we just asked him, 'How do you do this? Is it magic?'"

"So he showed us, and the next day we came back... 'Can you juggle this? Can you juggle that?'"

"Then he gave us the first video and said 'Have a look at this'. It was *Saltimbanco* (by Cirque du Soleil). We saw that and it was like, wow – this was exactly what we wanted to be."

In Ethiopia, the boys couldn't even get access to proper circus materials, such as juggling balls, so their teacher told them they would be able to make their own by attending workshops.

"We crafted ourselves wooden clubs, then we got in trouble with our mum for cutting our socks in half, putting in seeds and then sewing them back together to make our juggling balls," Bichu laughs.

"The wooden clubs we were juggling with were so heavy and uncomfortable... that

when we managed to get the proper clubs, they were so easy and it gave us a massive advantage."

The brothers came to England in 1999 for the Brighton Fringe, after touring as part of a group called Circus Ethiopia, and there met Sean Gandini from internationally acclaimed company Gandini Juggling (which brought its hit show *Smash* to the Adelaide Fringe in 2015).

"We'd heard about Gandini for a while... people kept telling us that you need to meet this guy if you are going to make it."

The brothers didn't even know the technical terms Gandini was using to describe the juggling tricks they were performing – although he was particularly impressed by one of their routines in which two clubs remain in the air while three more are being juggled.

"Pretty much, he offered us a job the next day. Since then, he's been mentoring us and we've been working for him on the side as well, while we do Circus Abyssinia."

By attending Circus Abyssinia, audiences are not only experiencing a different culture through circus, but also helping the families of the performers back in Ethiopia.



"We try to rotate our artists and give them opportunity, but there's a core group of eight," Bichu says.

"With this company, they have changed not just their lives but their families' and friends' lifestyles, even paid their brother's tuition fees for school. Alemayehu (Mulugeta) bought his family a house, and Danny (Gezahegn) is about to buy his first minibus for public transport."

Perhaps not surprisingly, Circus Abyssinia's show is called *Ethiopian Dreams*. The project grew out of the Circus Wingate school they began sponsoring in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in 2010, "to give back what we never had".

"There's a couple of African circuses but what makes us different is that, even though we use some European tricks, the way we put it together is that we arrange it with Ethiopian music and dance," Bichu says.

"Plus there's a storyline going through it, which is my and my brother's story ... how all the dreamers got together and created this show to inspire the generations." •

**Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams is at The Peacock in Gluttony from February 15 to March 17. Book at FringeTix or [adelaidefringe.com.au](http://adelaidefringe.com.au)**

**"Me and my brother... when we were young, what we wanted was to run away with the circus."**

Bibi and Bichu Tesfamariam from Circus Abyssinia, main picture; *Finale* by Analog (Berlin), top right, at Gluttony (Pictures: Supplied)

SARREGUEMINES Cirque

# Bibi et Bichu mettent l'Éthiopie en scène

Ce dimanche, la scène de l'hôtel de ville prendra des accents éthiopiens. La troupe Circus Abyssinia y proposera un show unique en son genre. Les deux frères fondateurs, Bibi et Bichu Tesfamariam, expliquent leur vision du cirque, eux qui viennent d'un pays où la pratique est d'ordinaire peu répandue.

Vous êtes précurseurs du cirque en Éthiopie. Pourquoi avoir créé cette troupe ?

**B**ibi et Bichu Tesfamariam : « Nous avons découvert le cirque lorsque notre professeur de français nous a montré une vidéo du Cirque du soleil. En Éthiopie, le cirque est pratiqué, mais pas de la même façon qu'en Europe. C'est plus une tradition sociale qu'une forme d'art. C'est une façon de partager du temps ensemble. Nous avons décidé de créer notre troupe lorsque nous sommes retournés en Éthiopie une fois adultes en pensant à tous les enfants que nous avons rencontrés et qui rêvaient de faire du cirque sans avoir l'opportunité d'être des professionnels. Comme nous lorsque nous étions gamins... »

C'est aussi une vitrine internationale



Les artistes de la troupe raconteront leur histoire à travers ce spectacle haut en couleur. Photo Matilda TEMPERLEY

pour l'Éthiopie ?  
« Absolument. Nous voulons partager la musique et les traditions artistiques d'Éthiopie. Nous souhaitons bannir les stéréotypes et les représentations inexactes et archaïques que les pays occidentaux peuvent avoir sur la culture et le mode de vie en

Afrique. Lors de ce spectacle, le public va expérimenter l'Éthiopie contemporaine, son héritage et ses talents. »

Quel genre de cirque proposez-vous ?  
« Notre spectacle représente la réalisation des rêves de membres de notre troupe. Il parle du pouvoir et de l'importance des rêves dans un monde trop souvent marqué par le cynisme et le doute. Nous imaginons un cirque qui entraîne un véritable changement social et exprime des idées à travers les arts physiques. Même s'il débute par une scène de dialogue, nous privilégions les histoires racontées par d'autres moyens que la parole. »

Qu'est-ce qui vous semble le plus important dans cette pratique ?  
« La passion et la confian-

ce. Si l'on se passionne pour la performance et que l'on a une vraie confiance en ses coéquipiers, on peut réaliser des prouesses. Le talent, la discipline et le sens du spectacle sont bien sûr cruciaux également. Avec tout ça, ensemble, on peut engendrer quelque chose d'extraordinaire sur scène. »

Vous avez ouvert une école de cirque en Éthiopie. C'est le début d'une longue tradition dans votre pays ?

« Nous aimerions ! Durant la dernière décennie, le cirque est devenu un phénomène social de plus en plus important en Éthiopie. Lentement, il devient un domaine professionnel à part entière. Nous sommes impatients de voir encore plus d'artistes de cirque éthiopiens jeter leur chapeau sur la scène internationale. »

Alexandre ROL

Circus Abyssinia, *Ethiopian Dreams*, ce dimanche 19 mai à 16 h sur la scène de l'hôtel de ville. 20 €, 15 € en tarif réduit et tarif jeune.



Le show circassien s'annonce spectaculaire. Photo Andy PHILLIPSON

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## 5 good reasons to visit the Passages Festival in Metz (France, May 2019)

**SORTIR** Evénement

# Cinq bonnes raisons d'aller au festival Passages



**Ethiopian dreams de Circus Abyssinia (Éthiopie). Un spectacle à voir dès 6 ans, du 11 au 17 mai sur la place de la République à Metz, sous le grand chapiteau. Photo DR/Andy PHILLIPSON**

**Le festival engagé Passages revient à Metz du 10 au 19 mai avec du théâtre, de la danse, du cirque, des concerts et de la poésie. Pour la première fois, la Biennale invite des spectacles venus de pays africains et des Caraïbes. Voici cinq bonnes raisons d'y aller.**

**1. On y va pour voir des spectacles du monde entier**  
**P**assages n'est plus le festival des théâtres à l'Est de l'Europe mais le festival qui « relie les mondes ». Cette année, il invite 330 artistes venus de 20 pays différents avec 30 propositions artistiques. Il y aura du théâtre, de la danse, de la poésie et des concerts. « Ces spectacles sont des fenêtres ouvertes sur le monde qui permettent de repartir moins ignorants », affirme Hocine Chabira, directeur d'un festival qui lutte contre le repli sur soi. Cette année, les artistes viendront du Maroc, de Turquie, d'Irak, de Syrie, du Liban, du Burkina Faso, d'Éthiopie, du Togo, de Congo-Brazzaville, d'Europe et de France, notamment de Guyane et de la Martinique.

**2. On y va pour l'ambiance festival**  
 Le cœur du festival battra sur la place de la République à Metz, qui accueillera des spectacles sous chapiteau. Il y aura aussi des expositions de photographies, dont celles de commerçants messins prises par Claude Somot et celles de Nicolas Demé qui a fait le tour des carnavales des Caraïbes. On pourra trouver des livres en lien avec la thématique du festival, voir des courts-métrages proposés par l'association les Courtisans et écouter des créations radiophoniques de RFI dans un transat.

**3. On y va pour briser ses clichés**  
 C'est une nouveauté ! En marge des spectacles, Serge Mboukou, anthropologue et professeur de philosophie, animera des « apéros-déconstruction » avec un artiste programmé. Ses thèmes : l'art africain se démasque (11 mai à 18 h), Noir n'est pas mon métier (12 mai à 12 h), L'Europe hantée (16 mai à 18 h), Pourquoi tant d'Antillais à La Poste ? (19 mai, 11 h).

**4. On y va pour partager**

**un moment en famille**  
 On ne manquera pas *Musée Bombana de Kokologo*, un spectacle franco-burkinabé qui pose un autre regard sur l'Afrique de la débrouille en présentant une collection d'objets farfelus. On découvrira également la première d'*Ethiopian Dreams* du Circus Abyssinia, 19 danseurs et contorsionnistes qui défient la loi de la gravité.

**5. On y va pour ses concerts gratuits**  
 Cette année, le festival proposera à 22 h des concerts gratuits. À l'affiche : la chanteuse et percussionniste Lucia de Carvalho (10 mai), la musicienne aux influences haïtiennes Mélissa Laveaux (11 mai) et 7Son@ta, un groupe de jeunes percussionnistes guadeloupéens (16 mai).  
 La semaine se poursuivra avec la guitariste française aux origines congolaises Mary May (17 mai) et la première représentante féminine du « deejaying » en Tunisie, Missy Ness (18 mai).

**Gaël CALVEZ**

### Retrouvez tous les renseignements pratiques

- **Réservation** : les réservations s'effectuent jusqu'au 9 mai à la billetterie du festival située 7 rue des Trinitaires à Metz ou par téléphone au 07 81 68 34 40 ou sur [www.festival-passages.fr](http://www.festival-passages.fr). À partir du 10 mai, place de la République.
- **Tarifs** : 20 € tarif plein, 15 € tarif réduit 1 (+ de 65 ans, abonnés des structures partenaires), 8 € tarif réduit 2 (étudiants, - 26 ans.) 3 spectacles : 45 € (réduit 30 €). 8 spectacles : 80 €.
- **Lieux de représentations** : les spectacles ont lieu sur la place de la République sous chapiteaux mais aussi à l'Arsenal, aux Trinitaires, à l'Opéra-Théâtre et à l'espace BMK-Théâtre du Saulcy.

## Delta Sky Magazine (U.S. Sep 2019)

### CITYLICIOUS

## SEPTEMBER 2019

A taste of what's happening around the world this month.

#### MEXICO CITY

Cinephiles from around the globe will gather at **Shorts Mexico** to catch a glimpse of featurettes from emerging Latin American and global filmmakers. Various locations. September 4-11. [shortsmexico.com](http://shortsmexico.com)

#### ASHEVILLE

Bite into Appalachia at **Chow Chow: An Asheville Culinary Event**, a food festival that transforms local ingredients into regional treats. Various locations. September 12-15. [chowchowasheville.com](http://chowchowasheville.com)

#### ATLANTA

Panic! at the Disco and Lizzo are just two of the artists lending their voices to **Music Midtown**'s lineup of seasoned performers and rising stars. Piedmont Park. September 14-15. [musicmidtown.com](http://musicmidtown.com)

#### LOS ANGELES

**Sisters in Law** follows the friendship between Supreme Court justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor that religion, culture and even politics couldn't break. The Wallis. September 18-October 13. [thewallis.org](http://thewallis.org)

#### MINNEAPOLIS

Acrobatics, juggling and other feats are set to the rhythms of East Africa at **Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams**. Children's Theatre Company. September 17-October 20. [childrenstheatre.org](http://childrenstheatre.org)

#### MARSEILLE

Six international teams race on the French city's North Bay for a chance at a \$1 million prize at **Marseille SailGP**. Rade Nord. September 20-22. [sailgp.com](http://sailgp.com)

#### TORONTO

The first **Toronto Biennial of Art** is a free 72-day event that includes exhibitions, performances and discussions. Various locations. September 21-December 1. [torontobiennial.org](http://torontobiennial.org)

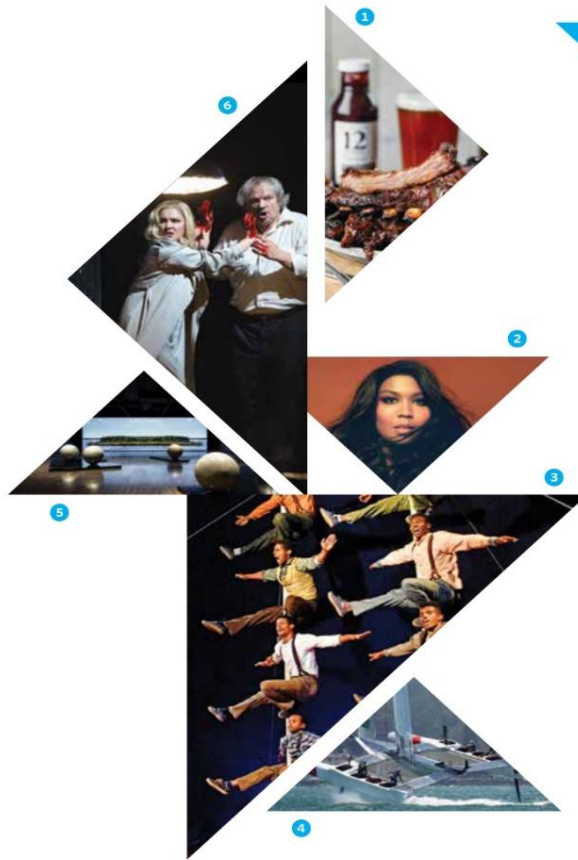
#### NEW YORK CITY

It's double, double toil and trouble with an updated production of Giuseppe Verdi's **Macbeth**—starring Plácido Domingo—that swaps out the Middle Ages for the post-World War II era. The Metropolitan Opera. September 25-October 12. [metopera.org](http://metopera.org)

#### PLEASANTVILLE, OHIO

The **Luke Bryan Farm Tour** stars the country megastar plus Cole Swindell, DJ Rock and more for a concert honoring farmers across the U.S. Miller Family Farms. September 28. [lukebryan.com/farm-tour](http://lukebryan.com/farm-tour)

SEE PAGE 61 FOR PHOTO CREDITS.



"EVERYONE LOOKS TO AN ARTIST FOR SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST THE MUSIC, AND THAT MESSAGE OF BEING COMFORTABLE IN MY OWN SKIN IS NO. 1 FOR ME."

— LIZZO, SINGER

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## Bichu's Interview with Gazzetta di Modena (Italy, 2019)

<https://gazzettadimodena.gelocal.it/tempo-libero/2019/12/27/news/tutto-comincio-da-alcune-arance-e-dalla-scoperta-del-cirque-du-soleil-1.38257934>

## Bibi and Bichu's Biography

The story of Bibi and Bichu, whose lives *Ethiopian Dreams* is surreally based on, began some twenty years ago on the streets of Jimma, with two young brothers flipping and tumbling and wowing the crowds. The brothers dreamed of joining the circus, but no circuses ever rolled into town, only rumours and televised glimpses from lands overseas. At 10 years old, inspired by these glimpses, Bibi and Bichu were sowing seeds into their socks and carving their own juggling clubs from blocks of wood. Self-taught and determined, they honed their skills on the city streets where they performed for the sheer love of performing.



They came to England in 1998 to perform at Brighton Fringe and stunned audiences and artists alike with their juggling skills. After making their home in the UK, Bibi and Bichu trained at the National Centre for Circus Arts, where they met Sean Gandini, director of Gandini Juggling, who cast them in the Millennium Dome celebrations, *Big* (2000), and later, in *Smashed* (2012 and 2016) and *Mozart's Glow* (2017). Sean has been a friend and mentor to them ever since.

Bibi and Bichu have performed in thousands of shows that span the spectrum of the circus arts: from CBeebies' 'Justin's House' in London's O2 Arena to the Olivier Award-winning ENO production of *Akhmaten* (2016). From 2002-2016, they were also resident jugglers at Giffords Circus, touring the south of England with shows that told and retold stories through the medium of circus.

Interspersing live gigs with numerous TV appearances, they've juggled on the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, on 'The Paul O'Grady Show', 'Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway', 'Blue Peter' and Sky One's 'What's Up TV'. In 2017, they were even cast in Disney's most recent live-action movie, Tim Burton's *Dumbo* (released March 2019), where they feature heavily in the circus scenes.

In 2010, they returned to Ethiopia as young men and found many would-be circus artists just like them, clamouring for audience and opportunity. So they started funding a circus school in the capital city called Circus Wingate. Though explosive with talent, with extraordinarily high standards (artists train there under Ethiopian gymnastics coach Solomon Tadese), the school was so sorely lacking in funds it was about to close. With Bibi and Bichu's help it's now a thriving and steadily growing charitable institution, with 150 students on roll and counting. The brothers soon started extending their help to other circus schools in the district, including Bitu Brothers Circus and Sheger Circus.

Given how they started, and how much they owe to the help and the kindness of fellow artists, it's very important to Bibi and Bichu to provide the same kind of support to other circus 'dreamers'. The brothers soon found that their dream of joining the circus had turned into something else – the desire to create something more, and to change the ways of circus in Ethiopia. In 2017 Bibi and Bichu teamed up with the extraordinary artists at these circus schools to create *Circus Abyssinia*, a show which stages the creation of the world's first Ethiopian circus and weaves the dreams of its cast and creators.

Since debuting to a standing ovation in London at Kingston's Rose Theatre in 2017, the show has enjoyed two sell-out seasons at Edinburgh Fringe, performed highly successful runs in Singapore, at the Underbelly Festival in London, and at the 2018 Adelaide Fringe, where it won the 'Pick of the Fringe' Award in its opening week. The cast was even invited to perform on the 2017 Royal Variety Performance, where Circus Abyssinia shared a stage with Cirque du Soleil. Bibi says seeing this was a 'moment of genuine emotion, of absolute pride. We were pinching ourselves'.

In 2019 Circus Abyssinia completed its first world tour, including Australia, the UK, the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan, the Sziget Festival in Budapest, a theatre and festival tour of Europe, a performance residency at NYU in Abu Dhabi and a 5 week run at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis.

Circus Abyssinia is currently planning the tour of their brand-new second show, *Tulu*. It is show that celebrates the true tale of an icon: featuring dazzling feats of speed and flight, and rocking with the exuberant joy of its cast, *Tulu* depicts the journey of Ethiopian legend Derartu Tulu, the first African woman to win Olympic gold.

## The Circus Abyssinia Troupe

The Circus Abyssinia Troupe hails from Addis Ababa and trained at Circus Wingate, one of Ethiopia's few successful and expertly regulated circus schools.



The troupe all trained under former Ethiopian gymnast coach, Solomon Tadesse. Most of its members joined as children and have retained an attitude of childlike joy and wonder towards their craft which makes watching every performance feel like it's both their first and last time on stage.

What makes the troupe truly extraordinary is their brilliant magnetic rapport, both with each other in the ring, and with the audience. This is nowhere more apparent than when the whole team performs a hand-vaulting act comprising precarious balances and near-collision, executed with an abandon that belies the level of trust and skill which makes such uninhibited acrobatic display possible.

The troupe's burgeoning circus careers have changed their lives and the lives of their families for the better in very real, significant ways. The troupe's circus success has meant they have been able to support their families back home, paying for their schooling, buying them houses to live in, and helping them become self-sufficient – some artists' families have been able to establish farms, and are growing crops to support themselves.

### **WORKSHOPS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

In the meantime, the Abyssinia troupe enjoys participating in community outreach activities while on tour. The whole cast engages with local youth and circus communities through class visits and communal meals, and frequently hold

workshops for all abilities on site or at local circus schools, using the common language of circus and dance as a medium for a special kind of cultural exchange.

In classes ranging from 30 minutes to 120 minutes, the cast of Circus Abyssinia share their skills of contortion, juggling, dance and acrobatics with amateurs and professionals alike. The age range for these classes is generally 7 years and up.

CA 'technique workshop' at NYU Abu Dhabi, Sep 2019:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iz0pWTCWcg8>



CA workshop at Cirkidz, Feb 2019 (Circus School in Adelaide, South Australia).





# Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams

## Synopsis

Surrealist and joy-driven, accompanied by a soundscape that draws on Ethiopia's rich musical past and present, Circus Abyssinia is a tale of the circus, told through stunning ensemble feats of acrobatics, contortion and juggling, all performed to the irresistible rhythms of Ethiopian music and song. Inspired by the story of Bibi and Bichu, the show follows the journey of two little Ethiopian brothers, whose one wish - to run away with the circus - is granted by the Man in the Moon.

Transported by their lunar benefactor, the boys navigate – and participate in! – the daredevil wonders of circus. They are far from alone; the ring, like the spotlight of a moon, reveals glimpses of other stories and dreams: acrobatic narratives that unfold without words, and intertwine with their own.

These narrative threads entwine, even threaten to ensnare, but ultimately lead towards an extraordinary possibility: an out-and-out Ethiopian circus and a phenomenal new Ethiopian tradition.





## **Touring Schedule**

### **Past Dates**

IYAF at The Rose Theatre, Kingston: 9 Jul 2017

Postcards Festival at Jacksons Lane, London: 28 Jul, 2017

Camden Fringe at The Cockpit, London: 1 - 2 Aug 2017

Edinburgh Fringe in Underbelly's Circus Hub: 5 - 26 Aug 2017

The Greenbelt Festival: 28 Aug 2017

The Royal Variety Performance, London: 24 Nov 2017

Singapore's 'Christmas Wonderland Festival': 1 - 26 December 2017

Adelaide Fringe, Australia: 16 Feb - 18 Mar 2018

The Underbelly Festival, London: 6 Apr - 20 May 2018

Aberystwyth Art Centre, Wales: 28 - 29 Jul 2018

Edinburgh Fringe (Underbelly's Circus Hub): 4 - 25 Aug 2018

New York (at the New Victory Theatre): 30 Nov - 30 Dec 2018

Adelaide Fringe, Australia: 17 Feb - 19 Mar 2019

Theatre and Festival Tour of France: 5 - 19 May 2019

Brighton Fringe, UK: 22 May - 2 Jun 2019

Theatre and Festival Tour of the UK: 4 Jun - 15 Jul 2019

Pontio Theatre, Wales: 17 - 23 Jul 2019

Fuji Rock Festival, Tokyo: 24 - 28 Jul 2019

Sziget Festival, Hungary: 7 - 14 Aug 2019

NYU, Abu Dhabi: 2 - 8 Sep 2019

The Children's Theater Company, Minneapolis: 17 Sep - 20 Oct 2019

Le Vendéspace, La Roche-sur-Yon, France: 14 Dec 2019

Teatro Storchi, Modena, Italy: 31 Dec 2019

## Director's Note

All of us in Circus Abyssinia grew up dreaming of joining the circus, but for all its rich and vibrant traditions, Ethiopia has no circus tradition, and very few acrobats ever make a living by their skills. Circus Abyssinia is the first Ethiopian circus created by and for Ethiopian artists, and my hope is that our show will help create a space in the world for many more to come.

I think part of the power of the show is the way it highlights the importance of dreams in a world too often marked by cynicism and doubt. The show is about the boyhood dreams of my brother and I, but it's also about every artist back in Ethiopia and everywhere – those who know that to perform is to be happy, and that nothing can compare with sharing the beats and excitement of acrobatic daring and dance with an audience.

And that's what it's really all about. Our show explores Ethiopia's colourful artistic heritage, and the traditions that set us apart, but at its heart is a celebration of the dreams and joys common to all cultures and continents, and that bring us together.

**- Bichu Shimellis**

## Online Media

### **Video links**

Trailer: [Circus Abyssinia: Ethiopian Dreams](#)

Vox Pops: [London 2018](#), [New York 2018](#)

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/circusabyssinia>

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/bibiandbichu>

YouTube: [Circus Abyssinia](#)

### **Circus Abyssinia's social media handles**

Twitter: [@CircusAbyssinia](#)

Facebook: [@Ethiopiandreams](#)

Instagram: [Circus Abyssinia](#)

### **Bibi and Bichu's social media handles**

Facebook: [@bibibandbichu](#)

Twitter: [@bibibandbichu](#)

Instagram: [Bibi & Bichu](#)

### **Websites**

[www.bibandbichu.com](http://www.bibandbichu.com)

[www.circusabyssinia.com](http://www.circusabyssinia.com)