

# Lone Star Circus Debuts in Dallas

by Guy M. Achille

photos by Paul Armstrong

**L**one Star Circus, the brainchild of Fanny Kerwich, a French, fifth-generation circus performer, made its official debut on the last week of December at the Rosewood Center for Family Arts in Dallas, Texas. Lone Star Circus was born after the successful run two years ago at Dallas' Scottish Rite Cathedral of *Extravaganza – Le Cirque*, a stage circus show with a brilliant international cast of performers.

Naturally, the idea then came to continue producing such shows, albeit independently. Lone Star Circus is the performing arm of Lone Star Circus Arts Center, a non-profit organization that also includes a circus school, Fanny's first activity in Dallas: she taught circus arts to children at Dallas International School, and had her own circus studio, The Expressionists. Both activities continue now under the Lone Star Circus Arts Center umbrella.

*Celebration – Le Cirque*, Lone Star Circus' first production, included some acts and elements from the original show, and production numbers in which a group of students from the school was invited to perform. The show was directed by Fanny, who also participated with her hula-hoop act—which she put together in Moscow several years ago under the celebrated act director, Valentin Gneushev.

The leading characters were Dick Monday and Tiffany Riley, as two clowns (Slappy and Monday, of course) who discover a book of fairytales in a giant snow globe, from which comes a world of fairies, pixies, and amazing performers. Simple enough, and perfect for the Holiday season! Monday and Riley are well known in Dallas, where they run Slappy's Playhouse ("magic, mayhem and monkey business"), a clown and puppet theater for children; their presence thus brought a sense of home comfort to the show, not to mention a thread, and a good dose of laughter—which is, after all, what clowns are supposed to do. And it must be pointed out that these ones also succeed.

The other acts were Angelo Rodriguez, a dramatic

Peruvian strap act on tissu with a Cirque du Soleil pedigree; the award-winning Russian juggler Vladimir Tsarkov ("The Red Harlequin," the first of Gneushev's many legendary acts); the Mongolian contortionist Serchmaa Byamba; the remarkable acrobatic adagio of Passion-2-Balance (Nelson Pivaral and Goulia Rozyeva); Jeff Lee, a Dallas-based magician; and the Osorio Troupe on the teeterboard (headed by triple somersaulter Rolando Encarnación, of the Flying Bells, Flying Condors, and Flying Preciados, his current troupe).

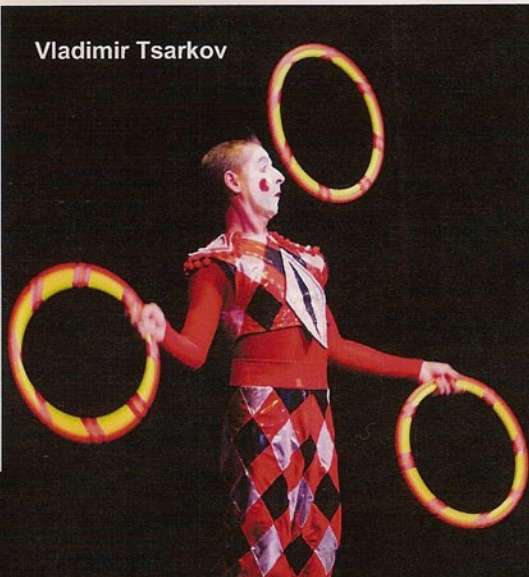
But two of the most memorable moments were perhaps the opening and final tableaux. In the opening, five tissu acts appeared magically together above the spectators in the theater itself, there to introduce Rodriguez. The final tableau mixed the professional performers and 20 students of Lone Star Circus Arts Center, celebrating together "A Wonderful World" to Louis Armstrong's beautiful song.

The show owed much of its magic to the lighting of Melissa Gashion and the simple, yet charming and efficient set of Walter Lemons. But also much to the presence of the students who brought their youth and enthusiasm to the entire production,

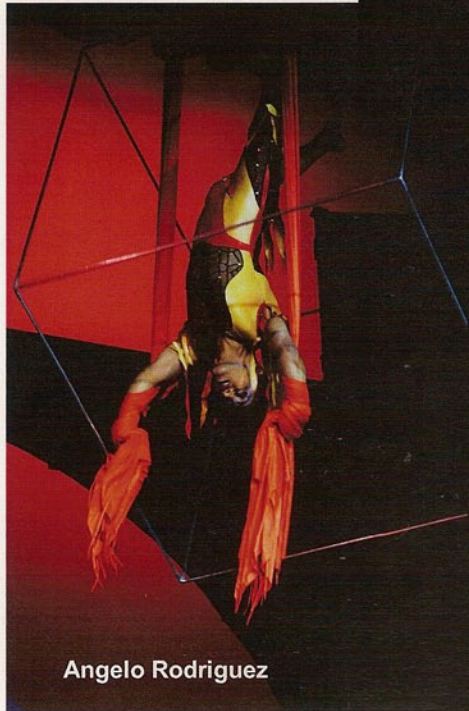
especially a delightful "pixie," Julia Pasquinelli, whose joy at performing was infectious.

Lone Star Circus' first installment was an unmitigated success, and it is scheduled to return next December for an extended run at the Rosewood Center for the Family Arts. It could well become a Dallas Holiday tradition, and even the beginning of something bigger. At least it is certainly something for which we can all wish. ●

Vladimir Tsarkov



Angelo Rodriguez



Fanny Kerwich

