

CIRQUE ELOIZE RAIN

Performed by a Canadian Troupe of acrobatic artists

January 24 & 25, 7:30 PM Chrysler Hall

Presented by the Virginia Arts Festival

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

Cirque Eloize Rain takes the circus out of the big arenas and puts it in the theatre. It's untraditional circus in its departure from the usual format but has hints of the greatest show on earth,

The company is made up primarily of acrobats who perform virtuoso gymnastic feats in solo and duet acts but are also part of the overall ensemble. Although there is little real dance, the evening has the feeling of a dance concert since most of the performance is done to music, both live and recorded.

These performers are outlaws. They don't violate social rules and regulations but they do defy the laws of nature such as gravity or balance and human strength. They put their bodies through amazing actions that make one feel they are free of joints, bones and muscles that limit what normal mortals can do.

In a program note the director Daniele Finzi Pasca describes his show by saying "it is full of hope, joy, and a sweet longing, and that it is made of the stuff of my grandmother's stories. I dedicate it to all those who love to have the rain pouring down on them."

Well, I'm not sure I felt all that about the evening. Admittedly it has many moments of exceptional beauty and impressive athletic agility. I wish the presentation were more compact. As done each act seems to go on too long. The traditional three ring circus never stops and usually keeps one's eyes and ears constantly involved, offering more than can be absorbed at times. I wish that were true in Cirque Eloize Rain. It stops and starts spasmodically instead of being a river of images that flows without interruption. There is spoken dialogue that is often hard to hear. Lighting designer Martin Labrecque has chosen to present everything on a cloudy rainy day and quite often the people on stage are hard to see distinctly.

Since its inception, this award winning Canadian troupe has performed for more than three million spectators in more than 200 cities and 20 countries. Its appeal is unique. The performers literally put their lives at risk to entertain us. Quite often they succeed.

Cirque Eloize is a prelude to the 11th annual Virginia Arts Festival which begins on April 17 and continues through June 3. For a complete festival schedule call (757) 282-2822.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.