



## ‘Twas the Night Before: Cirque du Soleil’s First Christmas Show Makes Its Salt Lake City Debut

### Description

**SALT LAKE CITY, UT** Under the guidance of Lead Artistic Director **Melissa Colello**, with General Stage Manager **Nick Garcia** and Stage Manager **Charly Ortega** shaping the show’s precision and flow, Cirque du Soleil’s *‘Twas the Night Before* arrives at the Eccles Theater shimmering with holiday warmth. Yet what makes this production memorable is not its glitter or nostalgia—it’s the way this creative team reimagines a familiar Christmas poem as an embodied story about wonder. Loosely inspired by Clement Clarke Moore’s *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, the show feels both whimsical and deeply human, grounding its spectacle in a narrative of rediscovery surrounded by stunning acrobatics and dancing.

The story follows Isabella, a teenager numbed by routine and disenchanted by the season, who tumbles into a dream-world where Christmas is not a commodity but a practice of imagination. This framing gives Cirque du Soleil license to do what it does best: create a kinetic universe where bodies, objects, and sound move in conversation with one another. The plot is light—really a frame more than a script—but this is part of Cirque du Soleil’s lineage. The emotional arc is stitched not through dialogue but through physicality: a leap, a spin, a moment suspended in air.

The design team creates a world that is both whimsical and fully inhabited—a winter dreamscape sculpted from light, color, and imagination.

Aerial performers executing a daring stunt together against a backdrop of sparkling blue decorations **Ben Huey & Carmen Ribas Segura**. Photos courtesy of Cirque du Soleil.

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### Where the Circus Comes From—and What it Refuses to Forget

To understand what Cirque du Soleil [French for circus of the sun] accomplishes in *‘Twas the Night*, it helps to understand the long history behind circus performance itself. The modern circus took shape in 18th-century England with equestrian showman Philip Astley, whose circular arena allowed

audiences to witness feats that flirted with gravity. Throughout the 19th century, circuses became nomadic towns of spectacle—acrobats, clowns, daredevils—whose artistry was inseparable from danger.

Cirque du Soleil transformed that lineage when it emerged in 1984: no animals, no three-ring chaos, no sideshow exploitation. Instead, the company centered the artistry of the human body, weaving dance, storytelling, and acrobatics into cohesive theatrical worlds. *’Twas the Night Before* stands firmly within that tradition. Each act extends a legacy of embodied storytelling: juggling that turns into choreography and aerial silks that drift like illuminated snowfall.

A performer showcasing acrobatic skills by balancing on a bicycle, set against a shimmering backdrop.  
**’Twas the Night Before**. Photos courtesy of Cirque du Soleil.

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## Where Wonder Meets Risk

Circus has always lived at the edge of risk, and Cirque du Soleil’s own history bears this out. The losses of Sarah Guyard-Guillot in *KÅ* (2013) and Yann Arnaud in *Volta* (2018) remind us that even mastery cannot defy gravity forever. Part of what moves us in these performances is the vulnerable human body at their center—the recognition that wonder and danger coexist.

## Safety and the Demands of Touring

I kept circling back to a simple, unsettling question: why are basic safety precautions still not standard for aerial acts? Tumbling mats were laid out for the men performing ground acrobatics and flips, cushioning even the possibility of a misstep—yet the aerial performers, suspended twenty or thirty feet in the air, had no such protection. The contrast was hard to ignore.

On a touring show, where artists must adjust to a new stage, new rigging angles, and shifting environmental variables each week, accidents don’t happen because performers lack skill; they happen because even mastery has limits in unfamiliar spaces. A basic mat won’t eliminate the inherent risks of circus work, but it would soften the consequences of a missed grip or unpredictable landing—and, just as importantly, it would allow performers to commit fully to their stunts without trepidation. When artists feel secure, they perform with greater freedom, confidence, and expressive range. In that sense, safety is not merely protective; it is generative. These artists put their bodies on the line to create wonder. Providing minimal, reasonable precautions is not only an ethical responsibility—it actively supports the excellence the company is known for.

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## A World Built from Light, Color, and Winter Dream-Logic

The cohesion of *’Twas the Night* is not accidental—it’s the work of a deeply synchronized creative team. **Lead Artistic Director Melissa Colello** balances narrative softness with Cirque du Soleil’s signature precision, while **General Stage Manager Nick Garcia** and **Stage Manager Charly Ortega** marshal the show’s complex transitions with timing that feels almost musical. The visual storytelling is rooted in **Greg Groeszinger’s lighting**, which sculpts the stage into glowing

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winter dioramas, and **Marianne Thériault's wardrobe**, whose peppermint-bright color palette reinforces the production's dream logic. **Head of Sound Alex Gilbert** shapes the show's heartbeat, weaving pop, electronic, and orchestral textures, while **Head of Automation Allyson Fobean** ensures that every lift, drop, and aerial reveal unfolds with Cirque du Soleil's characteristic precision. With **Makeup Artist Patrizia Apolli** and **Property Master Luc De Schutter** adding finishing touches, the design team creates a world that is both whimsical and fully inhabited.

The reimagined holiday soundtrack elevates the production, weaving familiar melodies through electronic, pop, and orchestral textures. Sometimes the music swells with cinematic warmth; at others, it pulses with a beat that makes the acrobatics feel electric.

A performer from Cirque du Soleil hangs upside down in a clear aerial frame, adorned in colorful, sp  
**Martina Trombetta**. Photos courtesy of Cirque du Soleil.

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## Rediscovering Wonder in a Season That Often Forgets It

Many holiday productions rely on nostalgia; fewer ask what that nostalgia is for. Cirque du Soleil's *â??Twas the Night* poses a more interesting question: What does it mean to believe in magic when the world teaches us to outgrow it?

Through Isabella's journey, the show reframes Christmas not as consumption but as imagination, not as tradition but as possibility. Children respond immediately to this world, but adults feel it too—the tug toward something tender and alive. There's something profoundly moving about watching performers fling themselves into the air as if the world might catch them.

**Perhaps that is Cirque du Soleil's greatest offering is the reminder that astonishment is not childish but deeply human.**

A performance from Cirque du Soleil's 'Twas the Night Before,' featuring acrobats in festive costume  
**Â?lodie Sanna & William Borges with Hoop Diving Ensemble**

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## Cirque's Gift to the Season

*â??Twas the Night Before* is not Cirque du Soleil's most ambitious show, nor does it pretend to be. Instead, it is a joyful, generous, and gorgeously crafted celebration of the season—one that understands spectacle as a kind of gift. It balances whimsy with technical mastery, heart with theatrical precision, and childhood wonder with the weight of a long, risk-laden circus lineage.

If you're looking for a holiday production that dazzles without condescending, that invites both children and adults into a shared moment of imagination, *â??Twas the Night Before* is exactly the show to see.

Cirque du Soleil may be new to Christmas, but they understand wonder better than almost anyone.

A performer dressed in a white costume spins on the ground, surrounded by other dancers in colorful  
Dancers. Photos courtesy of Cirque du Soleil.

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## ABOUT THE SHOW

*’Twas the Night Before* is Cirque du Soleil’s first Christmas show, inspired by the beloved 1823 poem *’A Visit from St. Nicholas* by Clement Clarke Moore.

Lines from the classic poem serve as touchstones in Cirque du Soleil’s contemporary story about a jaded young girl who rediscovers the magic of Christmas. The production features:

- A cast of **26 world-class artists**
- High-flying, gravity-defying acrobatics
- Original characters and dazzling costumes
- A reimagined holiday soundtrack infused with Cirque du Soleil’s signature style

More information: [www.cirquedusoleil.com/twas-the-night-before](http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/twas-the-night-before)

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## TICKET INFORMATION

**Tickets:** As is typical for the Eccles, ticket prices run **\$70–\$180, before fees.**

**Venue:** Eccles Theater, 131 S. Main Street, Salt Lake City.

**Box Office:** 801-355-ARTS (2787) or [Broadway-at-the-Eccles.com](http://Broadway-at-the-Eccles.com).

For **group orders of 10+ seats**, contact **Chris Schneider** at 317-632-5183 or email for assistance.

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE Student Rush tickets will be available for all performances Dec 4-14 at Eccles Theater for \$44 (taxes and fees included). Tickets are available in-person only, 90 minutes before curtain with a valid student I.D., 2 tickets per student while supplies last. Quantities limited.

## [broadwayattheeccles](#) [#ecclestheater](#)

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## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

**Eccles Theater** • 131 Main Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

**Thursday, Dec. 4** • 7 p.m.

**Friday, Dec. 5** • 7:30 p.m.

**Saturday, Dec. 6** • 1 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, Dec. 7** • 12 p.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 9 7 p.m.  
Wednesday, Dec. 10 7 p.m.  
Thursday, Dec. 11 7 p.m.  
Friday, Dec. 12 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 13 1 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 14 12 p.m., 3 p.m.

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## Cast

### Principal Roles

- **Å?lodie Sanna**     *Isabella / Acrobatic Bike*
- **William Borges**     *Father / Aerial Lamp*

### Featured Performers

- **Chris Aguirre Aceituno**     *Jolly / Juggler*
- **Victoria Baudry-McPherson**     *Acrobatic Hotel Cart*
- **Martina Trombetta**     *Acrobatic Hotel Cart*

### Aerial & Specialty Acts

- **Aryn Shelander**     *Hair Suspension*
- **Ben Huey**     *Duo Straps*
- **Carmen Ribas Segura**     *Duo Straps*
- **Holler Zavatta**     *Roller Skates*
- **Shih-Rong Huang**     *Roller Skates*

### Diabolo Artists

- **Yi-Fang Chen**     *Diabolo*
- **Yu-Hui Teng**     *Diabolo*
- **Shih-Wei Huang**     *Diabolo*

### Acro Table / Hoop Diving Ensemble

- **Aaron Blomme**
- **Esteban Masco**
- **David Tanner**
- **Lucas Costa De Souza**
- **Mohamed Conte**
- **Ch  ngzh  ng X  <sup>1</sup>**
- **Shane William Minerich**

## Dancers

- Victoria Cone
- Kiara Fina
- Kai Ogawa
- Chaz Walter
- Jerould Jorge

# ABOUT CIRQUE DU SOLEIL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group is a world leader in live artistic entertainment. For four decades, the company has pushed the boundaries of imagination through its unique blend of live shows, immersive experiences, multimedia, and music.

Since its founding in 1984, Cirque du Soleil has inspired more than **400 million people across 86 countries on six continents**. The Canadian-based company employs nearly **4,000 people**, including **1,200 artists from more than 80 nationalities**.

More information: [cirquedusoleil.com](https://www.cirquedusoleil.com)

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# ABOUT THE JOHN GORE ORGANIZATION

The John Gore Organization is a leading global presenter, distributor, and marketer of Broadway theater. Led by 25-time Tony Award winner John Gore, its family of companies includes Broadway Across America, Broadway.com, The Broadway Channel, BroadwayBox.com, Group Sales Box Office, and Broadway Brands.

Presenting Broadway productions in over 45 cities across North America as well as on Broadway, Off-Broadway, the West End, Japan, and China, the organization has won Tony Awards in every producing category and numerous Drama League, Drama Desk, and Olivier Awards.

The company remains committed to expanding theater access and education, helping introduce Broadway to future generations of audiences and industry professionals.

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