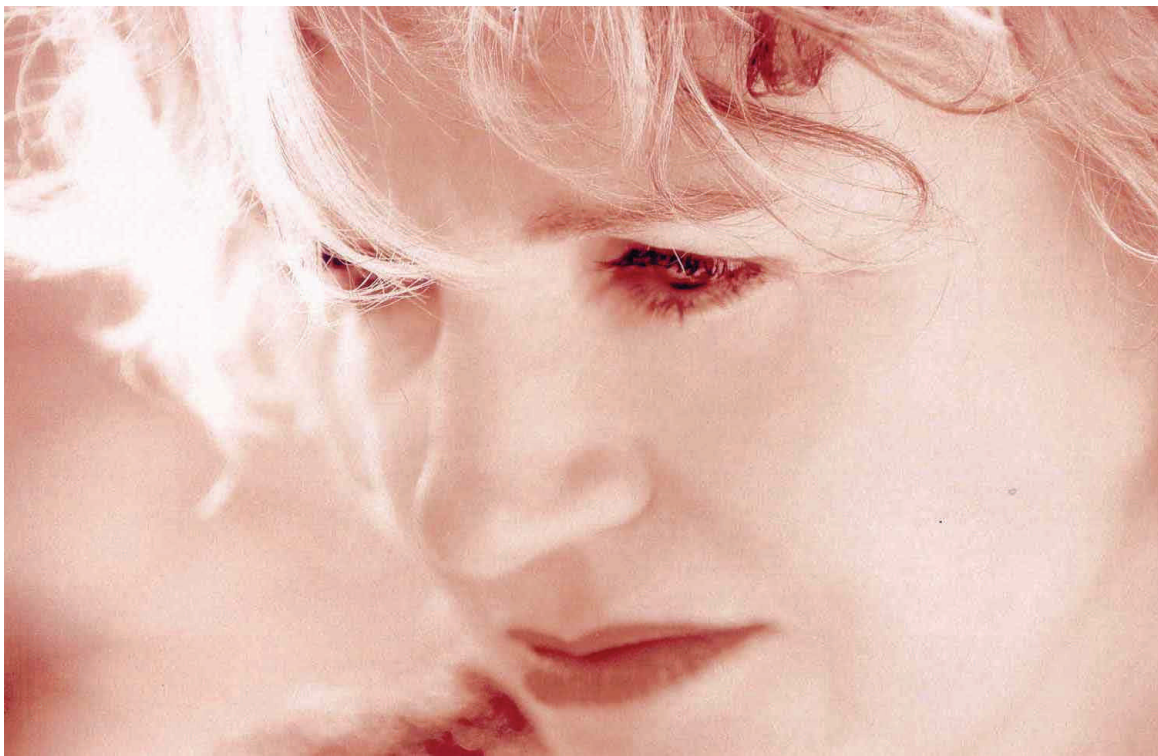


VOA Productions
presents

Francesca Gagnon
THE VOICE OF ALEGRIA[™]



sings the music of *Cirque du Soleil*[®]
a symphony program

Francesca Gagnon

THE VOICE OF ALEGRIA™

THE PRODUCTION

Alegria: a state of mood, a state of mind, Spanish for 'joy'.....

Produced by VOA Productions (2Luck Concepts, Aureka Productions, GAMI/Simonds) and a co-commission with the University of Florida Performing Arts (Gainesville, FL), *Francesca Gagnon - the Voice of Alegria* is a comprehensive work for symphony orchestra that draws from several *Cirque du Soleil* productions including *Alegria*, *Cortéo*, *Kà*, *Quidam*, *Saltimbanco* and *Delirium* that evoke the essence and most memorable moments of *Cirque du Soleil*.

Millions around the world have seen their shows, millions more have purchased their audio CDs. By turns lyrical and playful, the music of *Cirque du Soleil* is imbued with the many colors of the world. A new world with a universal language, where we celebrate our differences be that of culture, color or creed, a world in which we remember how to dream and dare to do so.

The creative team for *The Voice of Alegria* includes *Cirque du Soleil* alumni Francesca Gagnon (the incomparable voice and presence of the original production of *Alegria*), musical director Benoit Groulx (producer for the recording *Cortéo*), and lighting director Michael Riotto (lighting designer for *Le bar au bu du Monde*), along with three time Grammy winner Jorge Calandrelli, Frédéric Chiasson and Anthony Rozankovic contributing additional arrangements. Added to the mix is stage direction by Marion J. Caffey, of *3 Mo' Tenors* and *3 Mo' Divas* fame.



photo: Jeff Knee, capturimage.com

With shades of Piaf, Brel, Ferland and Vigneault, Francesca's unique voice gives the production an international reach with songs sung in multiple languages (French, English, Italian, Spanish). *Francesca Gagnon - the Voice of Alegria* is a complete musical and visual experience for the senses. It is colorful, has texture, shape, form and intensity.

"It takes the symphony orchestra out of the traditional classic western European repertoire and creates a new sound, a new look. It's a way of getting new audiences to understand that the symphony orchestra, the orchestral sound, doesn't have to be trapped in the romantic period or in the 17th century, but truly is a 21st century art form."

Michael Blachly, Director, UFPA

World Premiere
October 22, 2010
Curtis M. Phillips Center
University of Florida, Gainesville
Raymond Chobaz, conductor

from the audience.....

"If other symphonies want to have a pops concert they should jump at it. It's remarkable."

"I still have chills...after seeing it I still have chills, it's just incredible."

"I wasn't sure how the music was going to work on its own, but it stands on its own, and then some...it just takes your breath away."

*If CIRQUE DU SOLEIL is indeed the eighth wonder of the world,
GAGNON is the otherworldly herald who made everyone notice.*

Francesca Gagnon

THE VOICE OF ALEGRIA™

The Artists

FRANCESCA GAGNON

As a child, growing up in Québec, Canada Francesca Gagnon already had musical inclinations, beginning her studies of piano and jazz-ballet at the age of 10. A few years later, while singing Brel, Piaf and Vigneault songs on stage, she realized she had a passion for performing.

In 1980, she moved to Montréal, enrolling in music and classical singing courses at the University of Québec, and later, studied dancing and vocal techniques in New York City. To develop body strength, agility and control, precious assets for her future performances, she studied Hatha Yoga and African dance classes. Francesca began appearing on television and as a soloist in theatres and festivals and recorded her first album for EMI that was subsequently nominated for "Most Promising Female Vocalist of the Year" at the 1986 Juno Awards. One of these songs would climb the charts to No. 1 and sell over 250,000 singles.

In the fall of 1989, following the release of her second album, Francesca headed for Paris. Her unique voice gained her recognition in cafés, cabarets, theatres... The simple pleasure of singing live, of letting her bohemian soul express itself by performing anything from rhythm & blues to Piaf or Kurt Weil, earned her the title, a modern realist singer. "I love when songs have depth, meaning, and intensity, when they approach the tragic!" she claims. During her tours of Morocco, Central Africa and Cameroon, she absorbed the culture, immersing herself in the warm African rhythms and renewed her passion for the discovery of new cultures and new music.

1994 was a pivotal year in the career of Francesca: she became "the Voice of *Alegria*" for the *Cirque du Soleil* production of the same name. Charming and seducing audiences and critics all over the world with her mesmerizing voice and her incredible talent as a performer, the *Alegria* album remained on the Billboard charts in the U.S. for 56 weeks and climbed to number 1 soundtrack on the Top World Music chart. To date, more than two million copies of *Alegria* have been sold worldwide.

She won the hearts of American audiences, performing on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno and for president Bill Clinton and other celebrities. She later performed in Mexico at the Awards Ceremony and at Royal Albert Hall for Prince Charles.

In 1995, Francesca sang *Alegria's* title track at the Montreal Jazz Festival for 200,000 people and repeated her performance at the 2004 festival. This second performance, featured on the *Cirque du Soleil* DVD, *Midnight Sun*, directed by Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon, celebrates both the Jazz Festival's 25th Anniversary and the *Cirque du Soleil* 20th Anniversary. Meanwhile, Francesca found time to record her solo disc *Au-delà des couleurs* for BMG France, singing in French, Italian, and Spanish. The recording was nominated at the ADISQ Gala in the "World Music" category.

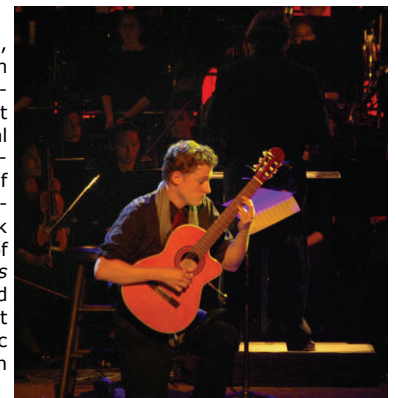
Returning from tours on three continents with *Cirque du Soleil*, absorbing the varied cultures and languages, Francesca worked at creating and recording *Hybride*. Inspired by each language's unique musical tone, Francesca invents her own language. "I love using my voice as an instrument", she says. That is why she sings instinctively, bringing emotions, feelings and colors to the melodic canvas. She becomes a musical painter, leaving to her audience to interpret her music in a way that connects with their own imagination, their own soul.

In 2008 Francesca met the Chilean ensemble Inti-Illimani in Montréal. Magic ensued and it was evident they shared a mutual admiration for each other's work and a passion and love of music from any and all quarters of the world. Since that meeting they have toured Chile and North America together and in August 2010 Warner Latin released their CD *Meridiano*.

DAVID VESLOCKI

guitar

New York City guitarist David Veslocki has been heard on ABC, BBC, Animal Planet, Universal Music Killer Tracks, HBO. He has xperformed in some of the greatest halls in the world; Avery Fisher Hall, Kilbourne Hall, The Eastman Theatre, The 92nd Street Y, the Bushnell, South Korea's Woodbridge Music Hall. Davbid is an endorsee of Parker Guitars, D'adario strings, and Blackbird Guitars. David tours regularly to the UK, Europe, South Korea, and throughout the United States, and has shared the stage with Derek Trucks, The Average White Band, Clark Terry, and several Disney Artists. David's original composition and production *A Better Life*, co-written with Courtney Drumme, appeared on a benefit album for Connecticut Children alongside star Jamie Fox. David has studied with some of the finest guitarists in the world including Nicholas Goluses and Benjamin Verdery as well as countless legendary guitarists in masterclass including David Leisner, Sharon Isbin, and Elliot Fisk. David is the winner of the Elliot Fisk Award, three Downbeat Magazine Awards, and the Hartford Jazz Society Award. David has gathered a good deal of world premiers, including Pete Wier's *10,000 Cranes*, Ricardo Muldoon's *Guitango*, and Shingo Fujii's *Concerto De Los Angeles*. His symphonic appearances have included the Rochester Philharmonic, the Orchestra of the Americas, and the Hartford Symphony. David attended Yale University's School of Music (full scholarship), and is the only guitarist to have graduated with both a degree in Classical and Jazz performance from the prestigious Eastman School of Music (also on full scholarship). David teaches guitar and recording at Concordia Conservatory, and the 92nd Street Y in New York, and is the co founder of Guitar Ambassadors LLC.



Francesca Gagnon

THE VOICE OF ALEGRIA™

The Creative Team

BENOIT GROULX

musical director / arranger

Benoit Groulx, composer, arranger and orchestrator, has worked as an orchestrator on numerous films as well as an arranger of popular and jazz projects. The 1995 winner of a Félix for Arranger of the Year given by ADISQ (Canada), his original music includes movie scores (Steel Toes, Montreal Stories), orchestrations for composers Nick Glennie-Smith (Secretariat, Sounds of Thunder) Hans Zimmer (The Little Polar Bear), chamber and orchestral work, jazz and world music. For Cirque du Soleil, Benoit was the producer for the recording of the production Cortéo, hailed as an oeuvre of rare depth and beauty.

"It was one of my wishes one day to arrange the music of Cirque du Soleil for orchestra. On the circus show, the songs use sequencers and samplers and synthesizers, so we had to convert those ideas to instrumental ideas."



MICHAEL RIOTTO

lighting director

Lighting Director Michael Riotto has been a theatrical lighting designer, director and production manager since 1990 and has worked with Cirque du Soleil, Les 7 doigts de la Main, Cirque Eloize, and Les gens d'R. Currently he is the Principal of Michael Riotto Design, LLC (MRD), an architectural and theatrical design firm based in New York. MRD is committed to finding alternative and sustainable methods of illumination and is actively involved in the design of new fixtures, including LED sources, for both theatrical and architectural applications.

"Our show is a mix of color and richness in flavor and scenery through lighting."



MARION J CAFFEY

stage director

Raised in Gainesville, FL, Marion now resides in New Jersey having recently become the Executive Producer of the iconic show, Apollo Amateur Night, produced at the world Famous Apollo Theater in New York City. Marion began his career as a song and dance man in New York in 1981, ultimately performing on Broadway, Off-Broadway and around the world. In 1997, he made a career choice to dedicate his time and talent to conception, directing, producing and writing, eventually creating and directing Street Corner Symphony (Broadway), Cookin' at the Cookery (Off-Broadway), Three Mo' Tenors and 3 Mo' Divas (PBS & HDNet) and was the original stage director for the Canadian stage hit Bowfire!. On November 13, 2006, he became a part of American history working as Creative Producer/Director of the Ceremonial Groundbreaking for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC. When complete, this memorial will honor the only non-president on the Mall in Washington DC. One King among presidents. Marion thanks his family Stephanie, Mari, Dawn, Phyllis and Chris.

"When that music swells over the top of you, even if you are in rehearsal, you get goose bumps, and that's what I'm feeling today."



JORGE CALANDRELLI

arranger

Jorge Calandrelli is Executive Director for the Concord Music Group and an independent composer, arranger and producer. Jorge won his third Grammy in 2006 with "For Once in my Life" performed by Tony Bennett and Stevie Wonder on the legendary chart breaking album *Tony Bennett-Duets: An American Classic* for which he was Music Director, Arranger and Conductor. The album features Tony Bennett in duets with Barbra Streisand, Paul Mc Cartney, Sting, Bono, George Michael, Elton John, James Taylor, K.D. Lang, Billy Joel, Diana Krall, Michael Bubl  and more. His work with Yo-Yo Ma won him a Grammy in 1999 and again in 2004 (Best Classical Crossover Album). He has worked with Elvis Costello, Bette Midler, Andrea Bocelli and The Boston Pops. In the Latin field Jorge is recognized as one of today's top Composer, Arranger, Producers. During the three years of his songwriter/producer agreement with Estefan Enterprises he composed, produced and/or arranged for several artists including: Gloria Estefan, Jon Secada, Marc Anthony, Shakira, Ricky Martin and Madonna.

As composer and orchestrator, Jorge Calandrelli has been involved in various television and motion pictures in the United States and Latin America. Among the most outstanding are: *Crouching Tiger/Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee); *The Color Purple* (Steven Spielberg); *The Billionaire Boys Club* (Marvin Chomsky); *Tron* (Steven Lisberger) and *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrik). Most recently Jorge Calandrelli provided orchestral arrangements for Sting's current tour.



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FRÉDÉRIC CHIASSON

arranger

Born in Lamèque, New Brunswick, Frédéric Chiasson studied saxophone at conservatories in France before returning to Canada to study composition. He received his masters degree in composition from the Université de Montréal with Denis Gougeon. Currently Frédéric is completing his composition doctorate at the Université de Montréal with Isabelle Panneton and Caroline Traube. He has been a member of the board of directors of Codes d'accès, an organization for young composers and performers of new music, and president of the Cercle des compositeurs de l'Université de Montréal (CéCo). Frédéric has received numerous grants and prizes, among them the Fonds Québécois de la Recherche en Sciences et Culture (FQRSC) doctorate scholarship, and the Canadian Universities Musical Society (CUMS) Composition Prize. He frequently gives lectures at conferences on his research of instrumental and orchestral timbre related to Charles Koechlin's *Traité de l'orchestration*. Frédéric Chiasson distinguishes himself with his search for an adequate alchemy between contemporary and more ancient composition techniques, producing a renewed musical expression. The resulting works leave an impression of strength, originality and naturalness.



ANTHONY ROZANKOVIC

arranger

Anthony Rozankovic graduated from the Québec Music Conservatory in 1990, completing his curriculum in composition, orchestra direction, fugue, counterpoint, harmony and trombone with masters Gilles Tremblay, Gaston Arel, Clermont Pépin, Jacques Faubert, Joseph Zuskin and Raffi Armenian. Though his work as a composer has since been vast and varied, Anthony Rozankovic has also developed an impressive career as orchestra and music director, conducting over a hundred performances of orchestral pieces, including operas, classical and contemporary symphonies, several of which were new creations. In his stunning creative drive, Anthony Rozankovic has composed more than 40 orchestral pieces. Among his commissioned works was the collective production of the Millennium Symphony performed before an audience of 40,000 at Montréal's St-Joseph Oratory in June 2000. In 1995, he received the ADISQ Félix Award as arranger of the year. Since 1996, Anthony Rozankovic has also been nominated twice at the Gémeaux Awards for his sound track compositions. Another ADISQ nomination (Album of the Year-Original Sound track) went to Anthony Rozankovic for his album *D'où cé qu'on vient (Where do we go)*, a compilation of his works for stage, cinema and TV. In addition to his current engagements as a composer of film music, concert pieces and arrangements, Anthony Rozankovic remains an active keyboard performer, exploring a great diversity of musical venues: jazz, pop and world music.



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PROGRAM

	title	arranger	Cirque du Soleil production
1.	overture / Journey of a Man	Benoit Groulx	film
2.	Volo Volando	Benoit Groulx	Cortéo
3. 4.	Querer/ Bridges of Sorrow	Frédéric Chiasson	Alegria / Delirium
5.	Let me fall	Anthony Rozankovic	Quidam
6. 7.	Il sogno di Volare / Marelle	Benoit Groulx	Saltimbanco / Quidam
8.	Alegria	Jorge Calandrelli	Alegria
9.	Vai Vedrai	Benoit Groulx	Alegria
10.	Pageant	Benoit Groulx	Kà



photo: Jeff Knee, capturimage.com

Francesca Gagnon

THE VOICE OF ALEGRIA™

One of the many elements that sets CIRQUE DU SOLEIL apart ... is its MUSIC.
Orange County Register, CA

Francesca Gagnon has a very particular voice, powerful, raucous, bewitching .
La Presse, Montreal, QC

At the forefront of this production [Alegria] is the sumptuous voice of Francesca Gagnon; who lends an ethereal air to the show with her unique singing.
The Press Democrat, San Francisco

Gagnon's voice is mesmerizing.
Daily Bruin, Los Angeles

The World Premiere Performance of Francesca Gagnon – The Voice of Alegria was everything that we could have hoped for; and, all that we had anticipated in the planning and development of the work. Ms. Gagnon has a strong creative team working with her that gave the evening a stunningly dramatic lighting design and a dynamic musical score with a rich aural orchestral bed to support her rich and incomparable voice.

Michael Blachly
Univ. of Florida Performing Arts, Gainesville



photos: Jeff Knee, capturimage.com

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