

Catapult festival 2007

It's the nation's only circus and physical theatre festival and it's on this September in Bathurst

by KYLIE SHEAD

It will be nothing but hoola-hoops, juggling and tumbling in Bathurst from 12 –16 September this year when the second Catapult Festival of circus and physical theatre comes to town.

Around 300 mostly young people from circus, dance and performing arts groups around the country are expected to attend the festival, which will include workshops, forums and a large array of performances as well as a parade.



Alicia Battestini and Ali Weaver are The Flying Beehives. Circus Monoxide will premiere their new show, Crash and Burn, under The Big Top at the Catapult Festival in Bathurst on 15 September.

The only event of its kind in Australia, the Catapult Festival is set to become a biennial feature on the national arts calendar following the success of the first festival, also held in Bathurst, in 2005.

A focus for Catapult organisers is on providing young performers with opportunities to interact with practising adult professionals during the four days of the Festival — giving them the chance to perform alongside professional artists as well as participating in forums and workshops. Workshops and forums will include subjects like practical theatre making, career paths and themes such as 'using narrative in performance'.

The festival has attracted many professionals who are willing to share their skills and embrace the Catapult ethos: artists like Simon O'Brien, Kate Champion, Adam Kronenberg will all be at the festival.

A highlight of this year's festival will be the return of Circus Monoxide to Bathurst. With the support of the Australian Government's Festival Australia program, the successful Wollongong-based troupe will premiere their new show in their Big Top as well as running

workshops. Circus Monoxide grew out of a final year project of CSU Theatre/Media students in Bathurst so it's appropriate that during Catapult the troupe will also be mentoring CSU student interns.

The Australian Circus and Physical Theatre Association (ACAPTA) has instigated a National Youth Circus Day on 13 September which will be celebrated at Catapult. The organisers are working with youth groups and ACAPTA to gain national media coverage and plan celebrations for the day.

"The thrust of the day is to promote the benefits to youth of participating in a Circus program," says ACAPTA in its May 2007 newsletter, "benefits that extend far beyond the obvious personal and social growth parameters most often reported on.... The day will also be an opportunity to present the role played by Youth Circus companies in the community and the role played by ACAPTA in supporting those companies across Australia. It will also give the young people participating the opportunity to feel connected to their peers throughout the country."

A festival parade on the morning of Saturday 15 September will include three local marching bands, coordinated by the Mitchell Conservatorium of Music. Large scale puppets will be constructed by local university and school student in the lead-up to the parade, under the guidance of acclaimed puppet maker, Adam Kronenberg. All festival participants will be invited to be involved in the parade.

Over two hundred young people have already registered to take part in Catapult 2007, including troupes from Albury, Bathurst, Bateman's Bay, Bega, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Blue Mountains, Canberra, Conodbolin, Cowra, Forbest, Gosford, Gunnedah and Kellyville. Interest has also been received from artists in Melbourne, and as far away as Canada.

The full program is being finalised as we go to press. Check the Catapult website for more information. ■

CONTACT Stephen Champion, Coordinator, Catapult Festival Tel 02 6333 6166 Website www.catapultfestival.com.au

August

4 – 5 August

👁 *Bathex 2007* Stamp, Coin, Lapidary & Collectables Exhibition: stoneware, colonial artefacts, militaria, coins, gramophones, rocks & minerals, postcards, stamps, old cameras and more. **BATHURST** Tel 02 6332 3762

4 August – 20 October

👁 *David McBride: If Not Now, When?* A survey show of works by David McBride, an artist who lives on a rural property near Mendooran. Western Plains Cultural Centre DUBBO Tel 02 6801 4444 www.wpcddubbo.org.au

7 August

🎵 Muso's Night at the Pastoral Hotel Musicians – join in the crowd or have a go yourself, and help support emerging and established musicians from across the region **DUBBO** Tel 02 6882 4219

7 – 8 August

🎭 The Dancers Company, presented by the Australian Ballet: three magnificent works from the Romantic Period. **GRIFFITH** Regional Theatre Tel 02 6962 8100