

# Basic Circus Arts Instruction Manual

## Preface

This circus arts manual is the result of a series of professional development modules organised by The European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC) through the « European Network for Pedagogical Exchanges » (EPE) project.

This EPE Network was comprised of six professional development modules, each specifically dedicated to the technical aspects of the circus disciplines contained in this manual, as well as a seventh « transversal » module related to « Safety and Rigging ». This project was a European first!

These seven modules were held between November 2005 and April 2007, and each module attracted an average number of 22 teachers coming from all the major professional circus schools from Europe and around the world (Canada, Australia, Colombia...)

What you are holding in your hand is the fruit of all the exchanges between all of these teachers, collated and edited by the Pedagogical Coordinator, Jeff Hewitt Davis. We propose that this collection be considered as basic reference material for circus arts teachers, and future circus arts teachers, and as complementary to their on-going practical education.

The implementation of this network and the production of this manual were made possible thanks to the support of the European Community (Leonardo da Vinci – Education and Culture).



Éducation et culture

## Leonardo da Vinci



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## Partners of the project



## Other participants to the project



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## Steps for the production of the manual

This manual is the result of the work done within the framework of the "European Network for Pedagogical Exchanges" (EPE network), a project initiated by the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC)

The objectives of this network were:

- to promote and share the teaching methods of each school;
- to validate and spread the most effective methods used;
- to raise the level of expertise of all the teachers from the schools of the Federation;
- to stimulate the mobility of students and teachers;
- to promote inter-cultural exchanges;
- to create a durable network of teachers.

### 1) Organisation of vocational training module

Initially, the EPE network has allowed a maximum of teachers to meet in order to share their practical and theoretical knowledge, via seven modules of training and exchanges. These modules have been hosted by seven schools of the network: Die Etage (Berlin) the École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque (Brussels), the École Nationale des Arts du Cirque de Rosny-sous-Bois (Paris) the Escuela de Circo Carampa (Madrid), the Scuola di Formazione Arti Circensi Flic (Torino), the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (Châlons-en-Champagne) and The Circus Space (London).

Each module took place during a period of six days, and alternated lectures and demonstrations by teachers, debates and discussions, practical workshops and open exchanges. The pedagogical coordinator, Jeff Davis, was responsible for the organisation of these working weeks. He was also in charge of collecting the information needed to produce pedagogical tools.

A first evaluation was led by the pedagogical coordinator and the pedagogical director of the hosting school at the end of every module.

More than 150 teachers and 120 students from all the major professional circus schools of Europe and around the world took part to these encounters, held between November 2005 and April 2007.

### 2) The production of pedagogical tools

Afterwards, Jeff Davis summarised the results of these exchanges of knowledge in the form of the present handbook, composed of independent chapters.

The aim was to put into writing the sum of oral knowledge available in our network, in order to preserve a record of the teachers' skills and to build a tool that could be used as a basis reference for each chosen technique.

This work has been enriched by pedagogical films, edited in parallel on the on the basis of the pictures filmed during each module.

### **3) Evaluation of the pedagogical tools**

Every chapter of the handbook was examined by a representative sample of FEDEC teachers on the basis of an evaluation grid defined by the entire partnership. These teachers may, or may not have, taken part in the modules concerned. Thanks to these evaluations, Jeff Davis has been able to make the necessary corrections and to make the handbook more relevant.

In May 2007, the final draft of the corrected handbook has been examined one last time and approved by all the partners of the project.

### **4) Definition of a methodology for transmitting the knowledge**

In parallel with the production of the tools, the EPE network has continued to give thought to the collection and the transmission of circus skills and to the definition of an optimal model for organising a module for pedagogical exchanges.

### **5) Diffusion of the results to the final users (circus arts teachers and future teachers)**

The Instruction Manual and the pedagogical films that accompany it will be distributed throughout the whole circus network (professionals and amateurs), via FEDEC members and the website.