

# Character and Story Guide



This guide will prepare you for the show *Circus Abyssinia: TULU*.  
It will help you understand the characters, the story and what to expect at the theater.

The show you will see at The New Victory Theater is called *Circus Abyssinia: Tulu*. The show is a little over an hour long.



Photo: Andreas Simopoulos



Circus Abyssinia is a group of performers. All of them are artists and acrobats from Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a country in Africa.



There are 12 performers in the show who perform circus tricks like juggling, tumbling, and dancing. The performers take turns doing different acts. Sometimes there is one performer in an act, sometimes a pair, and sometimes a group.



Photo: Craig Sugden

You can tell that a new act is starting because the performers, lights, and music change. Throughout the show you will hear different Ethiopian pop and funk songs. The stage is mostly blank and open, but sometimes the performer brings on small equipment for certain tricks.



The show doesn't have a specific story. Instead, the show has a theme. The main theme of the show is the Olympics. The performers wear costumes like athletes in the Olympics, carry flags, and even carry a torch.



Photos: Craig Sugden



The show celebrates Ethiopian culture and amazing athletes like Deratu Tulu. She was an Ethiopian long distance runner in the Olympics. The show Tulu is named after her! The female performers in the show represent Tulu's athletic spirit and determination





The show begins with a solo contortion act. She comes onstage and stretches her body in different ways. When a circus performer is very flexible and stretches their body like this, they are called



Then, she is joined by a group of performers who look like they are on a sports team. They dance, stand on each other's shoulders, swing each other and do flips!



The next act is a pair of contortionists who do stretches and partner acrobatics while wearing animal print costumes.

Photos: Craig Sugden



A small platform in the shape of a circle is brought onstage and two skaters do spins and tricks on roller skates, including a trick where they stay connected by a small rope.



A very strong performer comes onstage and uses his strength to balance upside down on small poles.

Photos: Craig Sugden





A group of performers appear on roller skates doing dances and tricks with hoops! The hoops form to represent the Olympic rings.



Then, the performers use hoops to do tricks. They stack the hoops, run, jump and flip through the hoops.

Photos: Andreas Simopoulos

Then, the performers bring out a torch of fire and a ring. They light the ring and it becomes a ring of fire. Then, two jugglers come out with sticks of fire and begin to juggle the fire. They do tricks on their own and pass the fire between them.



Photos: Craig Sugden



It may be new or scary to see fire onstage. The performers and staff at the theater follow rules to make sure they are keeping the performers, audience, and space safe while there is fire onstage. There is someone who stands in the back to make sure the fire is always safe.



After the fire act, performers come onstage with different flags, including the Ethiopian flag. They dance and do tricks with the flags. This may seem similar to flags in an Olympic flag ceremony.



Photo: Andreas Simopoulos



A performer appears hanging from the ceiling from ropes and grabs the flag. They use the ropes to stretch their body, twist and turn, and go upside down. When a performer does tricks in the air like this it is called aerial.



Photos: Craig Sugden

The final act is a full group act and the performers change into traditional costumes with patterns. A group of acrobats do flips off of a Russian swing. Two performers have sticks in their hands and make beats and rhythms. They cheer and speak to one another and the audience in an Ethiopian language called Amharic. Then, the whole company comes out and all of the performers dance, cheer, and celebrate!



Photos: Craig Sugden





This show is full of fun, talents and tricks! You will see performers who have amazing skills, flexibility, and strength. The performers spend a lot of time practicing and you should not try any of the tricks that you see in the show.



Photos: Craig Sugden



Thank you for coming. We hope to see you back at the New Victory Theater soon!