

Celebrating 25 years of Zip Zap's social circus magic



By Leigh Andrews

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Zip! Zap! Circus! The non-profit Zip Zap Circus is currently celebrating its 25th year with a series of special monthly shows to showcase their talented students. Here's what you can expect.

On a sweltering Saturday at the end of April, 500 or so guests sat in the big white dome of the Zip Zap Circus in Cape Town's CBD, just behind the Artscape block. Entering the blessed shade of the main tent we had to hold on to our figurative hats as children ran past doing flick flacks – a selection of those we'd see on the main stage later, as well as excited attendees caught up in the circus theme.

Taking our seats in the main hall, there were shouts and cheers and hissed shushes as anticipation built for the spectacle we'd come to see, with the audience largely comprising loved ones of current students of the Zip Zap Circus.

Cofounder Brent van Rensburg talked us through the school's history, having started with just 15 students and now incorporating over 1,400 in different programmes including advanced classes, with all the teachers and trainers former Zip Zap students themselves.

While this marked the first of their quarter-century celebratory shows, with a diverse group of students from all the programmes taking part, it was also the first ever show for some who confessed the 'magic tummy butterflies' before braving up with a smile and deep breath.



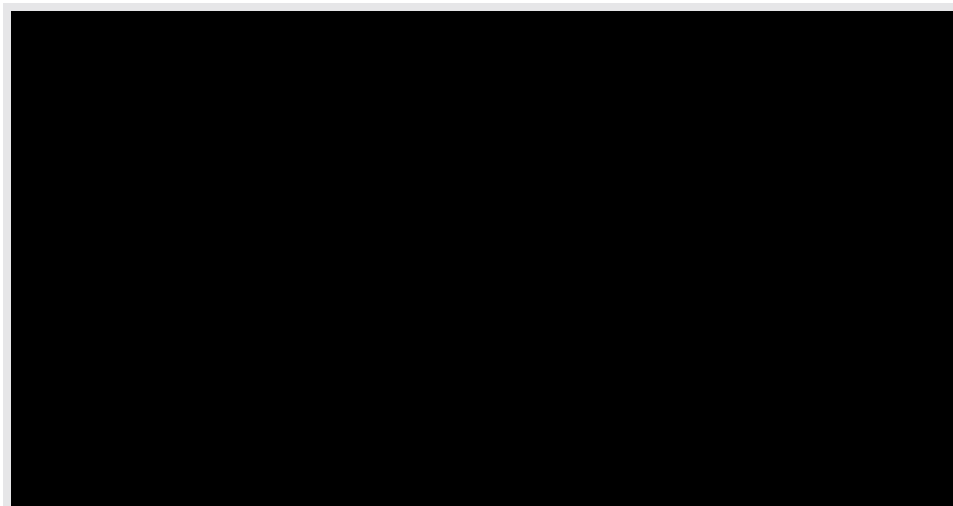
Jacobus Claasen. All images © – Anne Barbotteau from Zip Zap Circus.

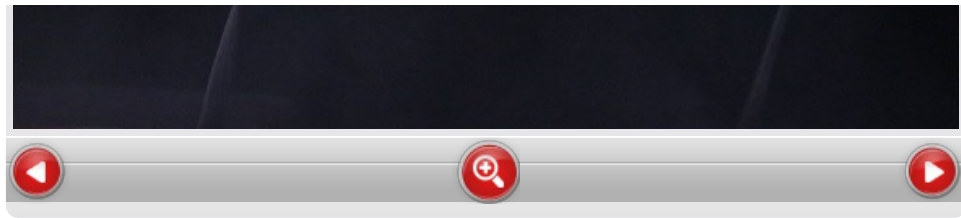


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Little wonder, Van Rensburg explained, that it's really become a family and way of life built on 'circus magic', with attendees from all walks of life enticed by that special sense of wonder an animal-free circus evokes. Before the littlies started shifting in their seats the action began, and while it was hot for us sitting in a tent, it was even hotter for those fledgling trapeze artists, jugglers and physical comedians.





We were soon clapping along, gasping at some of the acrobatic feats we witnessed. Trapeze artists were suspended from bright ribbons and swiftly unravelled their way to the ground; ensembles spun across the stage in hoops, wearing top hats and face-paint while dressed in stripes and suspenders. We were transfixed by explosions of colour and light, with a mix of music from the comedic French Vaudeville-style to hum-along-and-air-flute pennywhistles and scatty Skrillex beats perfectly setting the scene for each act.

These kids have rhythm, hand-eye coordination and a purpose they're passionate about. Makes me wish I'd known about Zip Zap Circus in my youth. Incorporating trapeze, comedy, acrobatics, juggling and dance, '25 Years: An acrobatic walk down memory lane' is a true visual delight. There are five more shows scheduled for this year on 20 May, 3 June, 1 July, 5 August and 9 September.

Book your tickets on [Quicket](#) at R110 per person, free for children under four – exceptionally reasonable as entry to shows is what keeps the school afloat. Even more so when you realise the requisite intermission circus snacks, purchased with tokens, amount to just R15 for a hot dog slathered in sauce, with plastic wine glasses filled to the brim with 'red' or 'white' (bonus: they have empty stems) for the same price!

You can also follow Zip Zap Circus on social media for updates: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#).

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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