



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

## Episode Descriptions

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### Episode 1: Sympathy for the Devil

Sep 28, 2023

#### Short Description

What is it about the dark that illuminates us? Inspired by Alegría, screenwriter/director John August chats character evolution, story-worlds, and challenges our understanding of darkness.

#### Long Description

Screenwriter and director John August (*Charlie & The Chocolate Factory*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*) is known for creating wildly imaginative storylines where darkness and light get turned upside-down. He joins Michel Laprise for a chat about character evolution, story-worlds, and stories that challenge our understanding of darkness. Together they discuss **ALEGRIA**, a Cirque du Soleil show exploring themes of light vs. darkness, the thirst for change, and 'sympathy for the devil.'

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### Episode 2: The Magic of the Every-day

Sep 28, 2023

#### Short Description

Mysteries abound in our world if only we have eyes to see them. Inspired by LUZIA, author and journalist Luis Alberto Urrea peers through the lens of magical realism, ghosts, and miracles.

#### Long Description

Open your eyes to magic, and you will find it all around you. A conversation featuring award-winning Mexican-American author and journalist **Luis Alberto Urrea** (*The Hummingbird's Daughter, The Devil's Highway*) in conversation with Michel Laprise about the inspiration to be found in adopting the lens of magical realism, ghosts, and miracles. Together they explore the things we might find in the world if we only had the eyes to see. With a statement from *Daniele Finzi Pasca* (Writer/Director) on 'Luzia ideology.' Music from **LUZIA**, a Cirque du Soleil show with themes of light, rain, and Mexico.

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## Episode: Creative Rites

### Short Description

Inspired by *KÁ*, anthropologist Wade Davis joins us to explore the deeply cultural phenomenon at the heart of the hero's journey: the Rite of Passage.

### Long Description

The rite of passage is at the heart of the hero's journey. Understanding it is crucial to understanding humanity, and essential to many forms of creative storytelling. Award-winning anthropologist **Wade Davis** is a rare combination of scientist, scholar, poet, world-traveler, and passionate defender of all of life's diversity. He joins Michel for a deep conversation about the creative and cultural significance of the Rite of Passage, across cultures and throughout history, and delves into the significance of today's modern "rites.". Together, they discuss *KÁ*, a Cirque du Soleil show with its themes of rites of passage, and self-discovery.

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## Episode 4: Full Immersion, with Director Félix Lajeunesse

Oct 26, 2023

### Short Description

Inspired by the surreal world of "O", director Felix Lajeunesse sits in for a fascinating conversation about presence, immersion, and creativity within Virtual Reality Cinema.

### Long Description

In a world that feels like it's evolving faster than we can comprehend, what does it mean to be "present" and "immersed"? Felix Lajeunesse's journey into the world of immersive storytelling began when he and collaborator Paul Raphael founded Felix & Paul Studios, a Montreal-based creative studio. The duo embarked on a mission to harness technology to create emotionally resonant narratives that would transport audiences into new dimensions of storytelling. Listen in as Felix joins Michel Laprise

for a fascinating conversation about the evolution of Virtual Reality Cinema, the elegance and surrealism of the Cirque du Soleil show “O”, and Felix's philosophy on presence, immersion, and creativity.

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### **Episode 5: Circle of Empathy, with Microsoft Futurist Jaron Lanier**

Nov 9, 2023

#### **Short Description**

Futurist, musician, and VR pioneer, Jaron Lanier, illuminates our perceptions of reality, connection with nature, and the future of technology in a conversation inspired by ECHO.

#### **Long Description**

How do we continue fueling creativity while holding ourselves accountable for how the future unfolds? In this episode, Michel Laprise interviews Microsoft’s ‘Prime Unifying Scientist’, futurist, musician, and VR pioneer, Jaron Lanier. Inspired by the music and core concepts of ECHO, the two discuss our changing perception of reality, why we must not lose touch with nature, and the future of technology. Listen in as the two delve into the future, the power of invention, and the importance of empathy.

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### **Episode 6: Reaching Back in Time, with Archeologist Salima Ikram**

Nov 23, 2023

#### **Short Description**

Prof. of Egyptology, Salima Ikram, sheds light on how ancient stories can influence modern creativity in a conversation inspired by the original must-see show, *Mystère*.

#### **Long Description**

If you want true creative inspiration, look to the past. So says the highly distinguished Professor of Egyptology at The American University in Cairo, Salima Ikram. Ikram has worked as an archaeologist in Turkey, Sudan, Greece, and the United States, and now she joins Michel Laprise for a deep conversation inspired by the history and mythology of the original must-see Cirque du Soleil show, *Mystère*. Listen in as the two examine how ancient stories can inspire modern-day creativity.

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## **Episode 7: Migration Fusion, with UC Davis Educator Dianne Ullman**

Dec 7, 2023

### **Short Description**

Discover the magic of merging art and science with entomologist Diane Ullman in a fascinating discussion inspired by JOYA's themes of migration, learning, and maturity.

### **Long Description**

What happens when you combine scientific and artistic modes of inquiry? According to Diane Ullman, this is how creative genius is born. As co-founder of the Art/Science Fusion program at UC Davis, Ullman interweaves art into her science curriculum to stimulate her students' interest and creative problem-solving. Join the award-winning professor and entomologist as she sits down with Michel Laprise for a discussion inspired by the music and concepts of JOYA, a Cirque du Soleil show with themes of migration, learning, and coming of age.

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## **Episode 8: Get Kurios, with NASA Astrophysicist Dr. John Mather**

Dec 21, 2023

### **Short Description**

Nobel-laureate Astrophysicist and Sr. Project Scientist for the James Webb deep space telescope sits in for a conversation inspired by KURIOS: Cabinet of Curiosities.

### **Long Description**

What happens when you have a lifelong mindset of curiosity? Nobel-laureate astrophysicist Dr. John Mather is the big scientific brain behind the James Webb deep space telescope, a massive leap forward in humanity's quest to understand the universe and its origins. Dr. Mather sits down with Cirque du Soleil creative guide, Michel Laprise, to discuss how a never-ending quest for knowledge has led to wildly creative collaborations that redefine our understanding of time, space, and what it means to be human. Listen in as these two luminaries explore concepts inspired by the music and themes of KURIOS: Cabinet of Curiosities.

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## **Episode 9: Drawn to Life, with Disney and Pixar Animation Studios Creative Director Roger Gould**

Jan 4, 2024

### **Short Description**

Inspired by *Drawn to Life*, Disney-Pixar's Creative Director, Roger Gould, examines the profound impact of moving images in portraying the human experience.

### **Long Description**

Sometimes, following a simple line on a page can lead to incredible creative breakthroughs. Michel sits down with Disney and Pixar creative director Roger Gould to talk about the power of the moving image to capture essential aspects of the human experience. Gould is known for his work on Disney Animation's *Hercules* (1997), and Disney Theme Parks projects including *Cars Land* (2012), *Frozen Ever After* (2016) and *The Enchanted Tale of Beauty and the Beast* (2020). He was a key animation consultant on *DRAWN TO LIFE*, Cirque du Soleil's compelling homage to Walt Disney Animation Studios' stories and the art of animation.

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## **Episode 10: Laughter in the Darkness, with Comedian Josh Johnson**

Jan 18, 2024

### **Short Description**

At the intersection of pain and creativity is laughter. Learn how comedian Josh Johnson transforms struggle into art in a conversation inspired by KOOZA.

### **Long Description**

Sometimes, the source of creativity can be a place that hurts. And one of the places where pain and creativity intersect most potently is in the art of stand-up comedy. In this episode, Michel is joined by Josh Johnson, stand-up comedian, Emmy-nominated writer (*The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*), performer, and NAACP award-winner from Louisiana, for a conversation about how to turn pain into creative output. Featuring music and ideas from KOOZA, a classic Cirque du Soleil show featuring a trio of in-your-face, boundary-pushing clowns.

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## **Episode 11 : Bugs of your Dreams, with Entomologist Dr. Sammy**

Feb 1, 2024

### **Short Description**

Explore the beauty and diversity of insects with world-renowned entomologist, Dr. Samuel Ramsey (aka Dr. Sammy), in a conversation inspired by OVO.

### **Long Description**

There is no more diverse group of organisms on this entire planet than insects, and perhaps no one draws more creative inspiration from this group than world-renowned entomologist, Dr. Samuel Ramsey (aka Dr. Sammy). Listen in as “Your Friendly Neighborhood Entomologist” sits down with host Michel Laprise to share his extensive research on insects and how each of these remarkable creatures has its own value. Join us for a buggy conversation inspired by OVO, and discover how creative inspiration can be found in the captivating life cycles of insects.

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## **Episode 12 : Adapting The Beatles, with Music Producer Giles Martin**

Feb 15, 2024

### **Short Description**

Inspired by The Beatles LOVE, legendary music producer Giles Martin shares how reinterpreting iconic Beatles songs can re-frame the music for a whole new audience.

### **Long Description**

Often, creativity comes in the form of adaptation. Reinterpreting a classic can re-frame stories and songs in creative ways for a whole new audience. Meet award-winning music producer and Beatles audio expert Giles Martin – son of legendary music producer George Martin. Giles talks about working closely with his father to adapt the revered Beatles canon and optimizing the sound for Cirque du Soleil’s Beatles-inspired show, *LOVE*, featuring the music of The Beatles through time.