BIOS:
CREATIVE TEAM

Chris Lashua, Creative Director / Founder
Company founder, Chris Lashua, hails from Boston, Massachusetts, where he spent most of his youth riding on a BMX bike. He was discovered by Cirque du Soleil and created/performed a BMX bike act that was entirely his own. He was then commissioned to build a “German Wheel” piece for the company, cementing his reputation as a visionary of circus gadgetry. His engineering chops and creative energy led him to ‘run away’ with his own circus company, Cirque Mechanics.

Chris believes that innovative mechanical apparatus and the relationship between performer and machine sets his company apart and is at the heart of what makes Cirque Mechanics unique. Chris has delivered on this unique relationship in Birdhouse Factory and Boom Town the company’s two theatrical productions and in Cirque Mechanics for the Orchestra, Chris explored the performer machine relationship with the Gantry Bike, a self-contained, pedal driven mechanical stage, worthy of the grand classical music featured in that show.

Once again, Chris continues to build on the might of the Gantry Bike, in Pedal Punk, by adding newly designed, inventive pedal driven devices that interact with the performers. In Pedal Punk, Chris masterfully merges his passion for cycling, circus and all things mechanical in an exceptionally playful and artful way.

Aloysia Gavre, Co-Director / Choreographer
An original co-director and choreographer of Birdhouse Factory, Boom Town and Cirque Mechanics for the Orchestra, also an early member of the San Francisco based Pickle Family Circus, Aloysia has been a movement, dance and circus enthusiast most of her life. She has studied with Pilobolus, The Tandy Beal Dance Company and Zacho Dance Theater and perfected her circus abilities with Master Lu-Yi of the San Francisco School of Circus Arts and L’Ecole Nationale du Cirque in Montreal. Aloysia was a featured act in Cirque du Soleil’s O in Las Vegas and Quidiem where she performed the aerial hoop act that earned the troupe a special prize at the Monte Carlo International Circus Festival in 2002. Aloysia ia also co-founder of Cirque School L.A., a place for “anybody with any body” to explore the circus arts www.cirqueschoolla.com
Sean Riley, Set Designer, Artistic Rigger
Sean Riley has a 20-year career combining suspension, kinetic movement, and design with performance. Through scenic design, rigging design, and mechanical design, often in concert with each other, he creates unique performance environments. Concentrating his design for performance on site-specific and non-traditional work Riley has created installations in collaboration with a wide spectrum of accomplished artists and collaborators. Being known for his bold and often surprising use of space and for large-scale movement, Riley’s installations commonly reflect his life long obsession with gravity and Newtonian physics. His works have been installed from backyards to Broadway, and continue to tour internationally. He is a founding member of Cirque Mechanics and his company Gravity Design, through which he has developed an arsenal of specialized tools, pushing the bounds of performance as well as industrial safety. Riley is also the host of the National Geographic Television series “World’s Toughest Fixes” www.visiblegravity.com, www.gravitydesign.org, www.cirquemechanics.com

Steven Ragatz, Writer/Artist
An original Birdhouse Factory, Boom Town and Orchestra Project cast member and collaborator, Steven Ragatz has been entertaining audiences with his juggling, physical comedy, stilt walking and general antics for the past three decades. As a ten-year veteran of Cirque du Soleil, Steven has toured throughout North, South and Central America as well as Asia and Europe performing multiple juggling acts as well as an eclectic array of characters. His television credits include The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The Rosie O'Donnell Show and The Today Show. And he has enjoyed seasonal appearances with the Indianapolis and Detroit Symphonies, juggling in front of live orchestras.

Michael Picton, Composer
Michael Picton first ran off with the circus in 2000, as keyboardist with the European tour of Cirque du Soleil’s Quidam. Since then, he has become one of the musical voices of the Greatest Show on Earth, composing songs and score for Bellobration and Funundrum, the 137th and 140th editions, respectively, of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus, and he has orchestrated the Dragone productions Le Rêve (Las Vegas) and The House of Dancing Water (Macao). As the Grand Prize winner of the 2004 Turner Classic Movies Young Film Composers Competition, Michael was chosen from a field of over 600 composers to compose the epic score to the 1926 Greta Garbo silent film, The Temptress. Other Film and TV work includes scores to the Marian Davies silent film The Red Mill, the independent feature Little Chenier, the Sci Fi Network series Flash Gordon, and the theme to the VH1 series I Want to Work for Diddy, for which he was awarded a 2009 BMI Film and TV Music Award. He has scored numerous commercials and his music has defined the sound of networks such as PBS, CNN, Comedy Central, Discovery Channel, Sprout TV, FX Network, Universal Network, and the Biography Channel. Michael studied composition at McGill University, Montreal and he is currently based in Brooklyn, New York.

Lisa Ragatz, Costume Designer
studied opera and ballet costuming at Indiana University, and has 30 years of experience in costume design and construction for opera, dance, ice skating, and circus arts. She has worked as a costumer for Cirque du Soleil at Treasure Island, Cirque du Soleil Special Events, Bietak Productions, Busch Gardens, Indiana University School of Music, Celebration Barn Theater, The Oddfellows Theater, Under the Umbrella, and for several Cirque Mechanics productions, including Birdhouse Factory (2004-2007), Mechanical Action (Philippines, 2007), the Gantry Project (2012), the Symphony Project (2014), and most recently, Pedal Punk (2014). Lisa lives in Bloomington, Indiana, with her husband Steven, son Andrew, and her cat, Mrs. Mears.
Anthony Powers, Lighting Designer
Anthony has designed productions throughout the US, Asia, South America and Europe. For the past few years he has designed the lighting for and production managed corporate and live events as well as national broadcast events and music festivals for a vast array of clients and talent. Anthony is also the undisputed karaoke king of Nome Alaska. He currently lives in sunny Oakland CA with his amazing, robot designing, rocket ship building wife and the cutest little dog you will probably ever see - The Lemmy. Anthony is as passionate about metal (especially old school thrash) as he is about lighting and you can often find him by simply following the loudest music in the building. He would like to give all praises to ODIN, the Allfather, King of the Nine Realms and Lord of the Aesir. His design work can be seen at anthonypowers.virb.com.

Bryan Rosenbaum – Assistant to the Composer
In 1996, vocalist, & multi instrumentalist Bryan Rosenbaum launched his music career in Los Angeles making a name for himself in the underground subculture of the Rave and club scene. In 2000 he accompanied Michael Franti and Spearhead on an adventure around the globe. Bryan has composed and or performed with artists such as Los Lobos, Ozomatli, Perry Ferrel, Ivan De Prume (White Zombie), and at Coachella, the Billboard Music Awards and more. Bryan has opened up for Primus, Tool, Stanley Clark, Jane’s Addiction, and Sublime. Bryan now resides in Las Vegas working with “Down By Day” an upcoming original electro punk band. His work has been used in commercials, theater, circus, and Broadway shows. Bryan is currently teaching music production and live performance on ABLETON LIVE.

Aida Lashua – Co-Producer/Collaborator
Aida has been Chris’ co-producer and creative partner in life and work for over 20 years. This partnership has led her to develop an appreciation for business and a passion for the circus arts. Aida manages the day-to-day operations of company and family with poise, she is a creative force and a stabilizing influence. Aida’s background in direct marketing allows her to use a targeted message approach in the development of the company’s website and social media presence. As a mother of three boys, Aida is an avid supporter of the educational component and community outreach programs offered by Cirque Mechanics. She has written the education outreach support materials and study guides, as well as developed the structure of the educational workshops. Aida feels most at home near the ocean. She hopes to one day become a published writer.

CAST/CREW

Jan Damm – Comedic Character, Rolla Bolla
Jan has spent countless hours on stage entertaining since a very young age. At 11, he started his professional career in his home state of Maine, juggling at children’s birthday parties. Also a long-time theater nerd, Jan was inspired to combine character and skill and set his sights on becoming a stage clown. To that end, he’s trained with masters of the craft such as Avner Eisenberg, John Gilkey, Fritz Grobe, Lu Yi and Jeff Raz. He studied acrobatics and taught flying trapeze in San Francisco, street performed in Europe and Canada, and led the Cirque show aboard Celebrity Cruise’s ‘Silhouette’. Other recent credits include Seattle’s Moisture Festival, Montreal Complement Cirque, and Chicago’s Midnight Circus. With Cirque Mechanics, Jan has previously appeared onstage in Italy and Hong Kong, as well as numerous events in the US. Jan is thrilled to join the exciting new production of Pedal Punk, and hopes to tour with the show far and wide! Jan lives in Chicago and enjoys the Sunday New York Times and good coffee.
**Wes Hatfield, Acrobat/Trampolinist/Cyr Wheel**

Wes has been a competitive trampolinist for over ten years. He got his start in Germany where he spent his early years in Gymnastics. At age 10 he joined T&T (Trampoline and Tumbling) when he and his family moved to Colorado. In the world of trampoline competition his resume includes several State and National Championship titles. At age nineteen he quit competition and became a circus performer, traveling around the world wowing audiences with his technical prowess and zany comedic antics. Wes was also a cast member in Cirque Mechanics’ Birdhouse Factory and Boom Town, performing trampoline and Chinese Poles. Wes now lives in Los Angeles, where he is a coach at Cirque School Los Angeles and has been expanding his discipline repertoire, developing a duo trapeze act and training in Cyr Wheel. Wes is a fan of avocados and coffee (not together though).

**Holland Lohse – Acrobat/Trampolinist/Unicyclist**

Holland is an artist dedicated to living his life on the edge as a self-described daredevil acro-spartan. His quest to become an acrobat evolved from a childhood spent hurtling down Colorado mountains on a unicycle or climbing up them with ice axes. He later became an accomplished competitive diver and National Age-Group Champion in trampoline gymnastics. His passion for the circus arts first began after watching a Cirque du Soleil video of Quidam in 5th grade gym class. Since then, it has become a driving force and dedication to challenge the laws of physics and exceed his physical limits every day. Pursuing his craft has taken him from Johannesburg to the Caribbean, from New York to Las Vegas and Los Angeles working for Royal Caribbean, Le Grande Cirque and Cirque Mechanics. Most importantly, wherever his work takes him, Holland lives his life the way he performs; stretching the boundaries of his mind and body, finding extraordinary ways to take his art to new creative levels and, in doing so, inspiring his audience to remember what it's like to live a life with limitless possibility.

**Blake Hicks – BMX Artist**

Blake started his craft riding BMX on streets and parking lots in St. Louis, Missouri. While all the other kids didn’t think riding BMX was as cool as traditional school sports, Blake believed that with practice and perseverance he could turn his passion into a career. At age 20 Blake moved to Portland, Oregon where he joined the “Wanderlust Circus” and learned how to transform his specialty talent into a circus act. In 2011 Blake designed "TRON Bike", a replica of his Pedal Punk bike, except it is covered in over 100 feet of Glow wire, to mirror the look of Disney's TRON. His initial TRON YouTube video went viral worldwide. Thanks to the TRON bike, Blake has performed on "Americas Got Talent" and with such celebrity DJ’s as Skrillex, Paul Oakenfold, Armin Van Burren, Tiesto and David Guetta. Recently Blake was a featured contestant on France’s #1 T.V. show, "The Best". When Blake isn't riding, he spends his time playing with his cats and chickens and designing unique costumes. A newcomer to "Cirque Mechanics" Blake is thrilled to work with BMX flatland legend "Chris Lashua". Blake loves meeting new people and taking photos. Please be sure to say hi and get a photo!

**Ben “Windu” Sayles - Acrobat Generalist**

Windu was born near a US Army garrison in Vicenza, Italy in 1984. Windu has not spent more than two years in the same place since elementary school. He graduated cum laude from California State University, Northridge in 2008. Windu has a diverse and extensive training background, which he only started pursuing as a hobby in his 20’s. He has studied many disciplines including the aerial arts, break dancing, contortion, ballet, yoga and gymnastics. His performance displays his unique multi disciplinary expertise. Windu began his performance career with the Los Angeles based Diavolo dance company. Windu has a love for circus and dance, and enjoys bringing them together. This is his first production with Cirque Mechanics and he’s enjoying the collaborative performance opportunities the company offers.
Lauren Stark – Aerialist
Lauren Stark, originally from Northern California began studying and performing classical ballet and contemporary jazz as a young girl. She also has training in musical theatre and modern dance. In 2003 Lauren began attending the International Boulder Jazz Dance Workshop at the University of Colorado at Boulder and became a member of the workshops resident professional dance company, Interweave Dance Theatre. In 2006 Lauren moved to San Francisco to continue her career as a dancer while training at Alonzo Kings Lines Ballet studio, and ODC Dance Theatre. Lauren moved to Los Angeles and discovered circus. She began training aerial and ground skills at Cirque School LA under the direction of Aloysia Gavre. Lauren recently graduated from CSLA's professional circus program and now is an aerial coach and kids program coordinator. Lauren is also a resident aerialist for SBE Entertainment and performs weekly at local events in Hollywood. This is Lauren’s 4th project with Cirque Mechanics and could not be more excited to be traveling and working with such a talented cast. She is living her dream and feels blessed every single day. They also provide Lauren with Maple Almond Butter on the road, she's here to stay!

Lindsey Covarrubias, Aerialist
Lindsey is a San Francisco Bay Area native who moved to Los Angeles to pursue her dreams of circus. After studying dance at UC San Diego, Lindsey began training in the aerial arts under the direction of Aloysia Gavre. A graduate of Cirque School Los Angeles’ professional program, Lindsey now works as a coach and performer in the Los Angeles area as well as travels to perform for both corporate and private events. She was recently featured as an aerialist in Rob Schnider's new reality show The Real Rob, as well as for a Warner Brothers special event. This is Lindsey's second production with Cirque Mechanics as she is also a performer with The Orchestra Project.

Nata Ibragimov - Hoola Hoop Artist
Originally from Baku, Azerbaijan, Nata currently resides in NYC. She was a national level rhythmic gymnast for 11 years. After retiring from the sport at the age of 16, she pursued her other passions, such as visual and performing arts. Circus was a perfect outlet for her creativity, it gave her freedom to experiment and improve her skills. Most importantly though, circus has given her the opportunity to meet some incredibly talented people, that inspire her art every day. Aside from being a performer, Nata is a professional illustrator. Her paintings have been included in private collections and displayed in galleries around the world. www.nataillustration.com

Katie Ketchum – Acrobat
Katie is a former competitive roller blader from Buffalo, NY. She competed in X-Games, Asian X-Games, and LG World Championships for 10 years. Ranked number one in the world in 2005 and 2006, Katie retired from competition to join Cirque du Soleil's Wintuk in NYC in 2006. It was there she found her love for circus and began learning various circus disciplines. Currently residing in Los Angeles, when she isn't hanging out at the beach, you will find her traveling the world performing her hand balancing canes act, hand to hand duo, rollerblading, or climbing around on Chinese poles. Katie is thrilled to join the Cirque Mechanics family and is looking forward to the good times ahead with the Pedal Punk cast!
Kevin Rogers – Artist/Technician
Kevin is from Pasadena California, his love for performing began at age 3. Since then he has worked as an actor, acrobat and stuntman. He graduated with a BA in theatre from Cal State Fullerton, which allowed him to learn and hone his skills on stage as well as backstage. He has been blessed to travel the US and the world doing what he loves most! He loves working with Cirque Mechanics and is proud to have been part of Birdhouse Factory as well as Boom Town and looks forward to the new adventure of Pedal Punk!

Janeen Johnson, General Stage Manager
Janeen's career in theater production was cultivated through eleven years of arts and civic engagement as a student of folk arts, dancer, arts administrator and company manager. She yields an impressive professional track, serving a multitude of projects illustrating a wide-range of artistic and theatrical expressions-to include seven years of experience as a freelance production field technician and stage manager throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Janeen has worked with the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, San Francisco Hip Hop Fest, San Francisco International Festival of the Arts, Black Choreographer’s Festival, Chitresh Das Dance Company, Fua Dia Congo Performing Arts Company. She is now a seasoned circus stage manager with Cirque Mechanics Birdhouse Factory and Boom Town.

Krissy Kenny – Lighting Director
Krissy is a lighting designer, moving light technician, and production electrician hailing from the Green Mountains of Vermont where she is a Journeyman in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) union Local 919 and spent a great deal of time working as head electrician for the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College. Currently she resides in San Francisco working as a union stagehand with IATSE Local 16 frequently filling in as Head Electrician at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and also serving as Vice Chair for the Young Workers Committee. She gained an extensive background in musical theater performance and dance for more than 10 years before becoming a technician in 2007, most notably being vocally trained by Bill Reed (founder of the musical theater program at Circle in the Square Theater School in New York City). When not in the theater, which is rare, Krissy can be found kayaking, hiking, scuba diving, fishing, figure skating, biking, or hanging out with her dog River.
ABOUT THE SHOW

From the inventive Cirque Mechanics comes Pedal Punk, a Steampunk inspired acrobatic whirlwind where cycling is the escape from technology obsessed society. In Pedal Punk we experience the excitement, artistry and thrill that occurs when a zany bike shop mechanic - interacts with cyclists and bikes and repairs more than broken pieces. He creates wondrous machines that come to live and inspires the cyclist in all of us to unite with our inner Pedal Punk.

Creative Director Chris Lashua spent most of his career on a BMX bike and inside a German Wheel. This new production showcases his innate passion and fascination for all things bicycles and cycling. The synergy between man and machine, the hallmark of Cirque - Mechanics, is magnificently exposed in Pedal Punk. It is that synergy that The New York Times called "exceptional, evocative, eye-catching and grossly entertaining…in a word, excellent.”

• The Gantry Bike, the centerpiece of the show, is a pedal driven, roving mechanical marvel, a giant playground on wheels, elegant and versatile.

• The Gantry Trampoline act, led by master trampolinist Wes Hatfield is a daring adrenaline rush.. The acrobats bounce, climb and play, all while the Gantry spins and moves.

• Male contortionist, Windu, seems to disassemble his body à la urban break-dancer.

• BMX rider, Blake Hicks, is a master of his machine. He displays flashy technical prowess as he pulls off big tricks and extreme stunts, testing his limits every time.

• Nata Ibragimov transforms playing with bike rims into a dynamic tango. She rolls and spins her hoops with rhythm and precision, across the stage and high up in the air.

• A Classic Penny Farthing turns into a strong aerial duo act, when the bike is lifted by Gantry power, high above the stage.

• Jan Damm, is a skillful comedic juggler and clown. His hysterically funny audience participation piece, a very clever stationary bike race, will create heroes in the crowd.

• Holland Lohse and Katie Ketchum perform a romantic unicycle dance that overwhelms the senses. Their balancing and pedaling tell a tale with dexterity, strength and passion.
SPECIAL THANKS

Aida and our three sons, Zion, Quinn and Iago, for their unconditional love and support, their encouragement and for adopting my love of machines and exploration. For their never ending act ideas, narrative and plot discussions. And for pedaling through life beside me. To dad and mom for making me believe anything IS possible.

Our cast and crew for their tireless efforts, incredible imagination and collaborative spirit. Gilles Ste-Croix for discovering my potential and encouraging me through the years, Neil Benson and his team at Opus3 Artists for delivering on the vision for our company and believing in our creative process. Armand Thomas (my consigliere) for his continuing support of me, my family and our projects. Bo Bogatin for keeping us honest and legal. Andy Espo for his friendship, clear head and objectivity. John Henry for his dedication and work ethic. Brian Schuette, and the boys at United Machine, for fabricating and creating and trusting me with their equipment. Our friends and family at Cirque du Soleil for continuing to set the bar higher.

It is my life’s thrill to get to “build a circus with my friends and call it work”. The time spent creating this show was an invigorating, challenging and at times a frightening journey. The days were long, but encouraging, uplifting and exhausting. But most of all, they were a blast. I hope you get half as much enjoyment watching as we had in creating, thanks for coming!