

# Here's Your Chance to Run Away to the Circus

## It's Waterside Fun Under the 'Big Top'

By Christy Goodman

The circus is coming to Red Hook's waterfront. The seventh annual CIRCUSundays in June is back at Red Hook's Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge, located at their new location by the Columbia Street Marine Terminal in Gowanus Bay (699 Columbia Street).

As audiences enjoy the cool summer breezes off the water, they can "come aboard an historic, national treasure and see a variety of acts that dazzle and delight the child of all ages that resides in each of us," said Showboat Captain David Sharps.

The newly refurbished and preserved historic 1914 Lehigh Valley Railroad Barge #79 will host acts ranging from comedy to stilt dancing to trapeze artists.

"What is nice, first of all, is that a lot of the acts are Brooklynites," said mistress of ceremonies Karen Gersch. "They have come from many places around the world and are living in Brooklyn now."

Every Sunday in June there will be a 1 p.m. show and a 4:30 p.m. show that pull an average audience of 100 people on the enchanting showboat.

On June 8, the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge will feature the Baltic Street Band.

"They are homegrown Brooklyn musicians," said Gersch. "They play everything from ragtime to blues on a lot of unusual instruments."

Kim Winslow, from the Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit and a specialist in Bubble Wizardry, and Chris McDaniel, an

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incredible Wild West artist, complete with trick roping and bull whip skills, will be performing.

"Michael Moschen is our most famous performer and juggler that day," said Gersch. "We are debuting an aerial act, Lumia, on single trapeze."

Also performing will be Ira the Human Slinky, who was trained in the Moscow Circus.

"They are all unusual acts," said Gersch. "That is what I look for."

World-traveled comedian who hails from Brooklyn, Hilary Chaplain is featured on June 15, along with Drew the Fool, who "does a beautiful rolling globe act," said Gersch.

Flamboyant Stilt Dancer Carmen Banana will dance her way through the esplanade like a Caribbean Fairytale as Oodles of Poodles, Russian performing dogs, show how well they have trained their humans.

Natasha will also do her dance with something similar to a Chinese yo-yo, based on two



sticks with a rubber fan toy attached to a string that she flings high into the air.

Master of juggling and buffoonery, Will Shaw will head up the June 22 show. Captain Sharps will display his talents at vase manipulation and his stylish, world-traveled club passing duet with Karen McCarty.

"Karen sings soprano and he accompanies her on four different types of carpenter's saws," said Gersch.

The final shows on June 29 headlines with Dikki Ellis, who does a slackrope routine. The slackrope is basically a tight rope, but it is flat and loose. Plus, Ellis adds juggling and magic to his performance.

The aerial artistry of Lumia will be back and Rob Schwimmer, a modern-day Spike Jones will play his eccentric music on his homemade instruments.

Mr. Carlo, who boasts he is part barker, part juggler and part hooper, will take the stage. The Peppercoms will be on hand, as well.

"It is the only show of its kind on the east coast—a circus presented on a show-

boat," said Gersch. "It is a return to old fashioned family shows."

Children always get a front row seat to the interactive performances.

Adorning the walls of the showboat are photographs from CIRCUSundays past by local photographer William King.

"He is painstaking about the process and captures beautiful moments in the performers that are filled with the dynamics and grace of the shows," said Gersch, artistic director. "It really gives you a feel of the shows and performances. It is a little bit of history on board."

First shown at Red Hook's Independence Bank Gallery, King's photographs were originally funded through a Brooklyn Arts Council grant.

They catch Torkova the magician mid-trick and freeze frame Shaw at the peak of his jokery.

"I try to capture the essence of each performer, the magic that was coming from them," said King. "In the case of Torkova you catch what he is doing he is so good."

Sharps lauded Gersch as the Mistress of Ceremonies and stated, "The performers are so unique and original. Everything is very spontaneous and interactive with the audience."

He added, "It is a very entertaining atmosphere."

The Columbia Street Marine Terminal site, close to the historic Grain Terminal Site, is hosted by John Quadrozzi, Jr., who invited the circus to the area this year.

The Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge will also be hosting their annual music events in July.

A ConEd sponsored shuttle bus will also be picking people up for the circus shows.

Tours of the barge are available year-round by appointment. All shows are rain or shine. Advance ringside reservations are \$10. Tickets are available at the door for \$5.

For shuttle information or more information on the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge, call (718) 624-4719 or go online to waterfrontmuseum.org.



LEFT: Each CIRCUSunday at the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge features a magician, like Arjay Lewis

RIGHT: Brooklyn's own Baltic Street Band have fun with music

BELOW: Dikki and his slackrope and comedy routine are always a favorite at CIRCUSundays in Red Hook

