

# FAMILY FUN

## One treat after another

Luciano Anastasini



Circus founder creates Texas show with global flair

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**Y**ou can take the girl out of the circus, but you can't take the circus out of the girl. And why would you want to?

Fanny Kerwich, an eighth-generation circus performer, was driven to create a circus here after leaving her life on the road to marry Mark Doyle of Dallas in 2002. Now 43, she has 150 students in her Lone Star Circus, where she trains kids and adults in recreational and professional circus techniques. And she's bringing international circus stars to perform in her fifth homegrown circus, *Cirque Banquisté!*, alongside some of her talented students.

The show continues through Jan. 1 at the Rosewood Center for Family Arts. As her children, Gitana, 5, and Garrett, 4, mingle happily with the kids of fellow circus performers, Kerwich is exuberant about bringing her dream home.

"It had to be done. Texas had to have a circus," she says. "Happy is a small word for it. I'm proud. Proud of me and of the passion of my husband and so many others that made it happen. ... It's extraordinary to see that communication throughout the circus world about what's happening here in Dallas. We only have six shows, and all these circus superstars will be out signing programs and taking pictures with the kids. They may not be onstage for more than five minutes, but those five minutes can be so powerful, they can stay in the memory of a child for a lifetime."

Here's a look at some of those performers:

### LUCIANO ANASTASINI'S POUND PUPPIES

Luciano Anastasini of Italy, a Ringling Bros. and Big Apple Circus veteran and one of the stars of PBS' *Circus* documentary, rescues dogs for his remarkable act. It's only fair, he says. Dogs rescued him.

Growing up as an eighth-generation circus performer, Anastasini, now 55 and a married father of two juggling boys, always loved dogs and saved them when he could, teaching them tricks such as jumping through hoops. Then one day, the longtime acrobat fell 50 feet during a performance. Severely injured, he was lucky to be alive but worried as to how he would

Big Apple Circus

continue his life in the circus.

"The dogs needed me to take them for walks and take care of them to keep them alive, and taking care of them helped me forget all the pain in my body. ... My uncle told me to build holes in the sand as therapy for my hand. One of my dogs helped me dig, and that made me laugh."

Just as Anastasini had to focus on what he could do rather than what he couldn't do after his injury, he looks for dogs that have been abandoned because they jump on tables or won't stop running. He then turns each dog's flaws into strengths.

The dog who loves to run, runs around the ring and jumps hurdles. The dog that jumps up on tables now jumps high to do a barrel act.

"You can get everyone to do something if you see what it is they like to do. If they like to do it, they'll do it really good."

He currently has 14 dogs, with four or five of them set to perform in this show. One thing about his act, though — don't expect him to make his kids, which is what he calls his dogs, do the act the same way twice.

"I don't want to get my dogs bored. This way it stays a game to them."

## REJEAN ST. JULES

Canadian-born Rejean St. Jules has played around the world, from the Lido in Paris and Monte Carlo to the Apollo in Dusseldorf, Germany, to Las Vegas, where he lives and has been a showstopper for three decades. But this will mark his Dallas debut.

St. Jules, 52, has been juggling since he was 12. His parents had tried to talk him into a hand-balancing act, but after one season of working with a juggler who wore a tuxedo, he knew what he was meant to do. He is known to dazzle with his elaborate, lightning-fast handling of

clubs and rings choreographed with a high-tech display of music and lights.

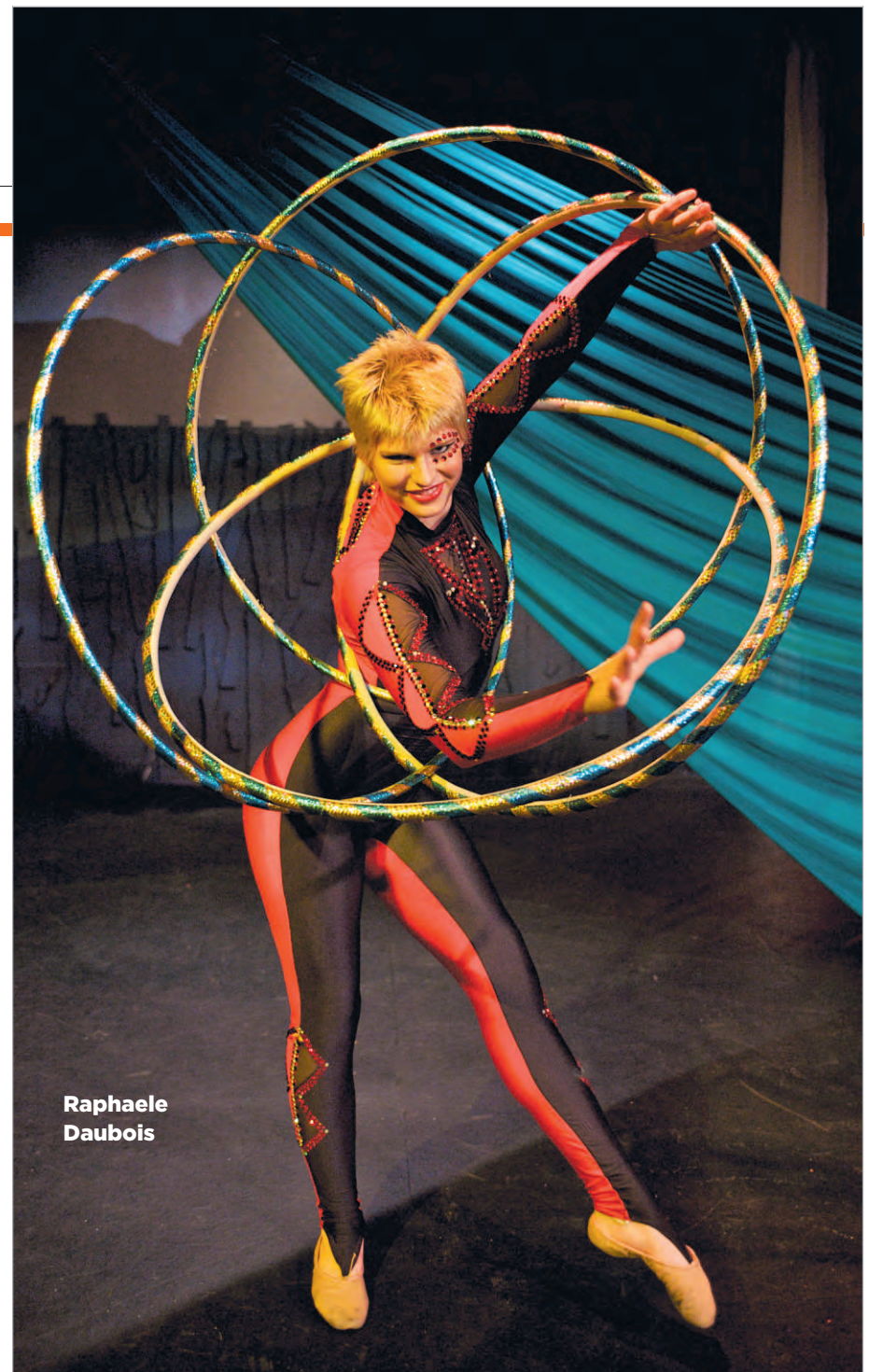
Most of all, he looks forward to bringing his whole family, including his wife and son and parents, to meet with Kerwich's mother, whom they remember from when she was Miss Arizona. He's also looking forward to seeing Anastasini, with whom he worked 30 years ago.

"When you see performers you haven't seen in 20 or 40 years, when you get together, it's like you were there yesterday. That's what's great about it. That's our way of life."



Rejean  
St. Jules

Jean Nedell



Raphaelle  
Daubois

Andy Mogg

## RAPHAELE DAUBOIS

Raphaelle Daubois, 20, of Dallas is one of Lone Star Circus' homegrown talents. She started taking classes with Kerwich at 11, drifted away when her friends did, but then returned with renewed commitment.

"My heart came back to it because Fanny is so passionate about it. She transfers her passion to me."

Kerwich showed Daubois how much she believed in her by entrusting Daubois with her signature Hula-Hoop routine.

Daubois has performed it at *Cirque Banquisté!* before, but this time it will be in the coveted star spot in the middle of the second act. It will also be brand new; Daubois has revised Kerwich's number with a new costume, music and delivery to make it her own. It's an act that she hopes to take on the road to launch her professional career.

"I'm very proud because all the time and effort and bruises and bleeding fingers finally matter and, oh, just thinking about it gives me butterflies in the stomach. It's like being home. I never want to leave the stage."

■ Continues Dec. 30 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 at 2 and 5:30 p.m. at the Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St., Dallas. \$20-\$45. 214-740-0051. [www.lonestarcircus.org](http://www.lonestarcircus.org).