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Hellzapoppin Circus Sideshow challenges audiences to “Face Your Fears” one more time

The rock ‘n roll circus embarks on the final leg of their nearly two-year tour, taking their death-defying freakshow to twenty more U.S. cities.

OLD TOWN (6 September 2022): On Tuesday night in New Orleans, the **Hellzapoppin Circus Sideshow** launches the final leg of their nearly two-year “**Face Your Fears**” tour. The show created in response to the fear gripping the globe will be completely revamped after the twenty-city US tour concludes on September 30 in Baton Rouge. When the colorful cast of sideshow freaks and oddities, fearless daredevils, and uniquely talented superhumans resumes touring next February, it will be with an entirely new production thus they’re eager to go out with a bang this month.

“Hellzapoppin is the perfect concoction of entertainment. It is as though traditional circus and sideshow, slapstick, vaudeville and southern Baptist inspirations got together with rock and roll, giving birth to a glorious two-headed baby that performs death-defying acts!” said **Willow Lauren**, an impish seductress and one of the few women in the world who swallow swords and regurgitate razor blades.

Lauren is a featured artist during the September trek that will visit eight states, playing in a different city each night much like the heavy metal, hardcore and alternative rockers who created the headbanging music that serves as the soundtrack to the rock and roll circus created by **Bryce “The Govna” Graves**. Producing and directing Hellzapoppin, Graves sees his company’s mission as keeping sideshow alive and redefining circus, entertaining crowds the world over by showcasing extraordinary performers who defiantly smash the limiting boundaries of what people think is humanly possible.

“Sideshow is literally a dying art form. There are not many of us left in the world today and there is not a sideshow in the world that travels like we do nor is there a sideshow with the caliber of performers that make up Hellzapoppin,” said Graves proudly about his lineup boasting talent that has appeared on “**Ellen**” and **AMC’s Freakshow**, and in the pages of **Guinness World Records**.

Serving as Hellzapoppin’s ring leader, Graves has a unique vantage point to observe crowd responses to “Face Your Fears.”

“I absolutely love watching the audience reactions from the side of the stage. The shock and awe. Hands covering eyes with fingers open. Screaming and yelling with both joy and laughter as they cheer the performers on. You can’t take your eyes off of it; not even for a second. You want to look away, but you can’t. Once in a while, we might see someone faint, and the funny thing is it’s usually the big tough burley biker guys. We call this a falling ovation,” laughed Graves.

Graves curates Hellzapoppin Circus Sideshow from a pool of about fifty performers, rotating a cast of five or six artists per tour in order to keep the show fresh and different. The smallest performer is perhaps the biggest star: **Short E. Dangerously**, a three-foot-three half-man stuntman without legs who appears twice in “**Ripley’s Believe It Or Not!**,” including his own permanent wax statues.

“The best way that I can describe our show is a two and a half-hour shotgun blast to the face! We feature the most dangerous and extreme stunts in the sideshow world. My signature act is walking on broken shards of glass with my bare hands while it is on fire. It is a demonstration of pain tolerance and mental and physical toughness,” said Dangerously who admits to defying death on stage yet not always escaping injury despite training and studying for over a year before ever attempting to perform his show-stopping stunt for audiences.

The other two performers illuminating the last “Face Your Fears” run are slightly more “conventional” circus artists. **Lucian Fuller** is a high-energy juggler, imaginative unicyclist and family-friendly comedian while **Roilan Hernandez de Paz** is a third-generation hand balancer from Cuba who has performed with **Cirque du Soleil**. There are clear and present elements of fear and danger in their performances, maintaining the theme of the production.

Hellzapoppin Circus Sideshow performances are total sensory experiences at maximum volume. The performers work without harnesses or safety nets, and “anything can happen,” which is how Graves defines Hellzapoppin, a title that came from a popular 1930s Broadway musical that later spawned a movie of the same name.

Dangerously says that any fear and anxiety that he experiences prior to showtime disappears as soon as the lights dim. And then performing becomes a full-throttle adrenaline rush.

“The energy we get from the audience always gives us the energy to get it done. You do this because you love it, and you can't imagine doing anything else in the world. Only a few people can do what we do which is what makes us so unique,” said Dangerously.

Lauren’s view on fear has a much calmer, somewhat spiritual perspective.

“I don't know that anything scares me personally per say. It's all about perspective and your relationship with fear. What you focus on expands, so I try to focus on the things I can control. Pray more and worry less. If I ever feel anxiety or scared about anything, I don't give in to it. Instead, I quickly dissect what I am feeling and why I am feeling that emotion. Once I give language to that emotion, I have the data and I can move forward with a clear head,” said Lauren.

Taking a modern approach to circus and freakshow, Hellzapoppin’s first-ever gig came opening for **Marilyn Manson** in 2009. They’ve since toured with about a dozen rock bands and appeared at prominent music festivals, playing over three thousand shows in sixteen countries to a soundtrack comprised of **Motorhead**, **Motley Crue**, **Nine Inch Nails**, **Avatar**, **In This Moment**, **Texas Hippie Coalition**, **Highly Suspect**, **Saliva**, **Apocalyptica**, **Skillet** and others.

While some may think that Hellzapoppin Circus Sideshow is extreme, Graves says his circus is for all people and people of all ages.

“You don’t stop going to the circus when you get old; you get old when you stop going to the circus.”

The itinerary for Hellzapoppin Circus Sideshow’s “Face Your Fears” tour is (dates may be added):

September 6	New Orleans, LA	The Howlin’ Wolf
September 8	Springfield, MO	The Outland
September 9	Bloomington, IL	Castle Theatre
September 10	Iowa City, IA	Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon
September 11	Lincoln NE	The Bourbon
September 13	Sioux City, IA	The Marquee
September 14	Sioux Falls, SD	Bigs Bar
September 15	Kearney, NE	Other Side
September 16	Denver, CO	Meow Wolf Denver/Convergence Station
September 17	Greeley, CO	Moxi Theater
September 19	Lubbock, TX	Jake’s Sports Café
September 20	Wichita Falls, TX	Stick’s Place Bar
September 21	Fort Worth, TX	The Rail Club Live
September 22	San Antonio, TX	The Rock Box
September 24	Tyler, TX	Country River Club Tyler
September 25	Houston, TX	Rise Rooftop
September 26	Corpus Christi, TX	House of Rock
September 27	Dallas, TX	Amplified Live
September 28	Austin, TX	Come and Take It Live
September 30	Baton Rouge, LA	Chelsea’s Live

For more information, please visit <https://hellzapoppin.com>.

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