

Special Feature

– PORTRAIT CITT/ICTS 2005 Award recipient

Each Stageworks issue for the next 6 months will feature a portrait of this year's CITT/ICTS Annual Awards Recipient. This month, we portray **Jaque Paquin**, recipient of The Ron Epp Memorial Award for Professional Achievement.

"I feel as though I have succeeded in my mission when the audience doesn't realize there are up to nine tons of equipment rigged to the big top's cupola. For that, I need to ensure that all the technical and acrobatic equipment is an integral part of the show's aesthetics."

Jaque Paquin
Rigging Designer

Jaque began his career in the artistic world as a lighting technician. He was 14 years old. The next year, he opened a discotheque. Then, he worked in turn as a set technician in a show venue, a set painter for film, a grip for television, and a carpenter, team leader and project manager for a workshop that manufactured sets for theatre and variety shows. He studied art history, focusing on film, and electronics. **"I've held almost all the same jobs as the people who construct and use my equipment. So I make the effort to facilitate the technicians' and artists' work,"** he says. Jaque now has the double responsibility of designing acrobatic equipment for all of Cirque's shows, and coming up with rigging setups for all the set equipment (sound, lighting, sets and acrobatic equipment).

Jaque has been working with Cirque du Soleil since 1990, during which time he has created the aerial environments for *Saltimbanco*, *Dralion*, *Varekai*, *O*, *Zumanity* and *KÀ*. He also contributed to the adaptation of the touring show *Nouvelle Expérience* when it was presented at the Mirage in Las Vegas. From 1991 to 1996, he was Technical Director for the North American, European and Japanese tours of the show *Saltimbanco*. In 1995 and 1996, he directed all site setups for the Montreal International Jazz Festival and the FrancoFolies de Montréal.

No training program exists for a job like Jaque Paquin's. **"To learn this profession, you need to practice it,"** he smiles.

We also credit Jaque, with his strong imagination and skills both artistic and technical, with the invention of the fantastical boat in the show *O*. This acrobatic apparatus combines three techniques never before brought together in the circus arts: the parallel bars, Korean cradle and flying trapeze. As a project manager for acrobatic equipment research and development at Cirque du Soleil, he is constantly on the lookout for ways to give new looks to the various circus arts techniques.

If the public doesn't realize that there are tons of equipment suspended from the big top structure or theatre beams, Jaque feels that he's accomplished his mission. Rigging installation for the show *KÀ* turned out to be more complex and demanding than for any other show Jaque has worked on. To meet the show's requirements, he created equipment adapted to the acrobats' needs, but above all to suit the set design and the show's themes. His installations needed to harmonize with *KÀ*'s aesthetic appearance as

well as with the rest of the sound and lighting equipment. Jaque admits, **"I had never collaborated on a show whose risk factors were so high. And safety is our ultimate priority. Always. The show's set design created an extremely dangerous environment. There is a constant fall risk for the artists, and at certain points in the show, that fall could be one of up to 30 metres!"**

For Jaque, it's important to never compromise on safety. If an artistic concept can't be brought to life while

respecting safety standards to the letter, it's dropped without further ado.

Once safety questions are resolved, Jaque Paquin can finally turn to the creative aspects of his job: **"For *KÀ*, I wanted to produce the impression of a void, and disorient the public. The goal was not to create a feeling of danger, but to suggest openness, and give the impression that everything is hanging in the air."**

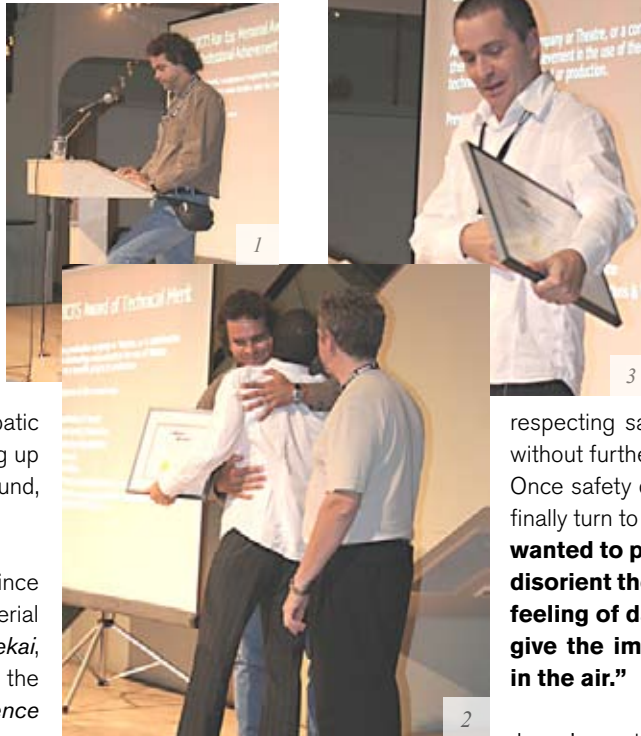
Jaque's contribution to the show industry, and more specifically to the field of acrobatic rigging, has been immense, and the challenges he takes on are a worthy of his talent. He is of great value for an organization such as Cirque du Soleil, which constantly seeks to surpass the limits and reinvent the world of imagination.

Jaque Paquin was born in 1960 in Drummondville, Quebec.

1 - Robert Lemoine presenting the award

2 - Jaque and Robert, with CITT/ICTS President Graham Frampton

3 - Jaque Paquin accepting the award



Announcing Ron Epp Scholarship Award

The International Alliance of Theatre Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 461, in association with Theatre Ontario is proud to establish a scholarship award in memory of Ronald A. Epp who passed away on January 10 2005 at the age of 42. This award will honour Ron's professionalism and his commitment to education.

The award will allow theatre professional to attend a recognized school

or professional workshop for the purpose of upgrading their skills in stage rigging, scenery automation and safety in the arts. This award is funded through memorial donation, private and corporate donations, and fundraising by Local 461 and the Niagara Frontier Darts League. The award will have its inaugural presentation on 2006, be presented again in 2007 and 2008, with continued presentations to be determined by the funds available at the time. More information about the award, and how to make contributions will be posted on the Theatre Ontario website

www.theatreontario.org