

## **PARTNER BIOS**

### **Cornell "Tuffy" Nicholas      Ringmaster & Producer**

One could say Tuffy literally grew up in the circus. Tuffy's introduction to circus life began at birth as his father was a world renowned ringmaster with the Ringling Brothers for 27 years and his mother, also with the Ringling Brothers, was a bear trainer.

As he progressed through the decades in various roles, he now has had over 30 years experience in promoting and producing live entertainment productions including circuses, concerts, festivals and sporting events.

Since 2000, as President & CEO of Global Entertainment Productions, Tuffy has been sought after to be producer and show manager of various show entities. Tuffy has been the producer and show manager of the Moscow State Circus and the Moscow International Circus, which played in venues across the country with over 5000 shows to date.

In addition to the Moscow State Circus and the Moscow International Circus, Tuffy organized and produced Cirque Hawaii, a multi-million-dollar state-of-the-art, permanent theatrical spectacular that showcased the award-winning talent of over 34 performers and nine renowned acts from around the world that entertained Hawaiian audiences from 2005-2008.

### **Doug Harris      CEO & Managing Partner**

With the opening of his company, Harris Agency in 2004, Doug culminates over 25 years experience in international marketing, communications and agency management.

His career was established in New Zealand's top agencies, before moving to Europe for a three-year stint on the client side. Relocation to Honolulu, Hawaii in 1992, he founded Smartcomm, before merging with McNeil Wilson Communications/Laird Christianson Harris in 1999. He remained a principal partner at McNeil, the largest communications consultants in the state of Hawaii, for five years before spinning off to start Harris Agency.

He is considered to be one of Hawaii's top consultants on brand start-ups and business turn-arounds.

Industry and community involvement includes America Diabetes Assn., American Heart Assn., Promotion Marketing Assn., SCORE, Hawaii Food Industry Assn., NZDA and numerous other educational and sporting activities.

He has managed a successful rock band and founded New Zealand's oldest surfing magazine.

### **Jerry Pupillo      Partner & Executive Producer**

Jerry formed Rubicon Consultants & Marketing in 2008 after serving for over 10 years as President/General Manager of Hawaii's number one family attraction, Hawaiian Waters Adventure Park. Most recently Jerry partnered with Tuffy as Executive Producer of the highly successful Moscow International Circus's 2008 Pacific Tour. His extensive contacts and experience in the Hawaii visitor industry is a result of nearly two decades of working with or for travel & tour operators from JTB & Hilton Hawaiian Village to Kualoa Ranch & activity Club with a heavy emphasis on sales/marketing/distribution with Japanese & Mainland USA tour wholesalers. Jerry also has worked for the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in Okinawa, and the World Trade Organization's Market News Service in Geneva, Switzerland.

## **PERFORMER BIOS**

### **Alena Chernova, Kazakhstan**

Alena is from Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, where she started ballet school at the age of four. She then joined a Kazakhstan Circus at age eight. She has traveled throughout Europe, Asia and North America. She has performed and competed in several championships.

### **Olessya Kurgayeva, Kazakhstan**

From Rudny, Kazakhstan, was trained at Youth Circus School in Kazakhstan. She started performing at the age of twelve. She has toured extensively throughout Russia, Japan, China, and now in North America.

### **Ciacla Ion, Moldova**

From Chisinau, Moldova, Ion began training in gymnastics at six years of age. After training on the teeterboard from the age of twelve he toured through Europe. Ion moved to the United States where he has trained on the bungee and has toured extensively performing with various shows.

### **Stephan Terni, Moldova**

From Chisinau, Moldova, Stefan originally trained as a gymnast before joining a circus school. Since graduation he has toured both Europe and North America as a performer with major productions.

### **Petru Vasilachi, Moldova**

Originally from Chisinau, Moldova, Petru began training in gymnastics at age seven and continued training for eleven years. He graduated from an acrobatics school where he received a diploma in gymnastics. Petru has toured throughout Europe and North America.

### **Alexandre Arestov, Russia**

Originally from Moscow, Russia is a multi-talented performer. He is a graduate of the world famous Moscow Circus School with a degree in Theatrical Arts. Alexandre started his own Acrobatic troupe in the Moscow State Circus. He has traveled all over Europe, South America, and Asia.

### **Elena Arestov, Russia**

From Moscow, Russia. She began practicing circus arts at the age of 8. She continued through collage where she graduated from the world famous Moscow Circus School. Elena specialized in Acrobatics and performed with a troupe. She performed with the Moscow State Circus in Russia and all over Europe.

### **Ivan Arestov, Russia**

Ivan is a 2nd generation circus performer. Ivan made his debut at the age of 3. Ivan performed Hand to Hand with his Father Alexandre. Ivan is now mastering his balance on the Ultimate Wheels. Better known as the unicycle without a seat.

### **Simon Arestov, Russia**

Simon is a 2nd generation circus performer born in Moscow, Russia. Simon made his first professional performance in The Moscow State Circus with his parents troupe. Simon later began performing Hand to Hand with his father and later moved on to his specialty the Rolla Bolla. Simon has performed the Rolla Bolla since the age of 13.

### **Lyric Wallenda, Germany**

Lyric is a 7th generation of the world famous Wallenda family. She is the great grand daughter of the late Karl Wallenda. Lyric began her professional career at the age of Five. She has mastered many types of

Aerials acts along with the family tradition the High wire. Lyric performs the Aerial Perch with her mother Rietta Wallenda. She participated with her family in The Monte Carlo Circus Festival 2004. The Wallendas took the Silver Clown for the USA.

#### **Rietta Wallenda, Germany**

Rietta a 6th Generation Wallenda, began performing on the high wire with her grandfather Karl and the Great Wallendas at age 13. Rietta has had a multifaceted career, adding to her talents on the wire by performing daring feats on the Sway Pole. She doubled for Cathy Rigby in the chair position at the top of the pyramid in The Great Wallendas. She was the top 7th person in the pyramid in the Monte Carlo Circus Festival 2004 the Wallendas took the Silver Clown.

#### **John Winn, Germany**

For seven generations that began in West Germany, John's family has been in the thrill show business. John grew up touring and performing with his family throughout the world. Today John and his wife Tina create routines together on the motorcycle incline wire act and on the high poles with very unique and new extreme aerial thrill performances which today make up the Galaxy of Thrills. When it comes to their performances, John is a perfectionist in every way. He insists on building and setting up all their equipment and rigging himself.

#### **Sabrina Ponciano, Hawaii**

Sabrina Ponciano has a BFA degree in Dance from the University of Hawaii. She also studied ballet, jazz and modern for the past 21 years from Punahou Dance School, Ballet Hawaii, Hawaii State Ballet and 24-7 Danceforce. She has studied with Marcelo Pacleb, John Landovsky and Shamil Yagudin of the Bolshoi Ballet. She has performed in various local productions as well as the Pro-Bowl half-time shows and the Norwegian Cruise Lines productions on the "Pride of America" ship. She has been on 2 collegiate dance teams—HPU and UH and she held the title of Miss Garden Isle 2007. She also won the talent award at the 2007 Miss Hawaii Scholarship Pageant.

#### **Tom Green, Canada**

The Man, The Myth, The Legend in his own mind. The man who likes to be called "Borsh" is one of the best circus comedians, and will have you rolling with laughter and shaking your head at his understated talent. His extreme comedy style is unique and will have you laughing off your seats.

#### **Gisela Bautista, Brazil**

Gisela was born and raised in the circus as a fifth generation performer. When she was three years old she would watch her older sister perform her contortion act and she would try to mimic her poses. Her father noticed and began teaching Gisela contortions, and by age six she had her own contortion act, but she kept on practicing to improve. When she was nine years old she started performing the contortion act that she is now famous for and still performs today. She has performed all over the United States, Canada, Mexico, Dominican Republic and the Bahamas. Her enthusiasm and love of performing shows in her work.

#### **Oleg & Valentina Ryzhkov, Russia**

Oleg and Valentina were the heart and soul of the famous Moscow International Circus production., Long time audience pleasers as world class aerialists, the Ryzhkovs were hand picked from Russia to bring authenticity & creativity to operate the old school secrets of what it means to be a Moscow Circus. They have traveled the world bringing all elements and facets of the circus production into fabulous events for audiences of all ages.

#### **Veronica Paige, Alaska**

Since moving to Alaska seven years ago, Veronica has played the lead girl in "Bat Boy-The Musical" at Cyrano's playhouse, Mary Magdalene in "Jesus Christ Superstar" at The Performing Arts Center, Sally Bowles in "Cabaret", Sheila in "Hair" at Out North, and performed as the lead female in "The Whale Fat Follies" at The Fly By Night club hosted by Mr. White Keys. She was also hired as the featured band for

The Special Olympics both 2008 and 2009, The Mayors Diversity Ball, The Postmasters convention, and Conocophillips events. Her band plays regularly at Blues Central, Humpy's Alehouse, The Peanut Farm, & Bernie's Bungalow and was a featured band for the local annual Blues Festival called "Blues on the Green" opening for Johnny Winter, Ike Turner, John Belushi to name a few.

**Olexandr Kartukov, Russia**

Olex is a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation performer who started his professional clowning career in 1988 for the Moscow State Circus in Russia. He is nationally recognized for his diverse talent in physical comedy. His disciplines include but are not limited to: juggling, acrobatics, cigar boxes, musical eccentric-al, hand balancing, and his own invention—the “bouncing ballerina”. Olex is extremely versatile and his characters include: an American Face Clown, a mime, a European style clown, and many more. Olex has performed for fairs, circuses, night clubs, casinos, NBA half-time shows, stage shows, and for many live television events.