

I was fortunate to have been with His Highness Prince Rainier III, for the creation of the International Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo, this event to the glory of the Traditional Circus.

Prince Rainier III has always had a passion for Circus and particularly for animals.

In 1974, for the 25th anniversary of his reign, he wanted to honor the Circus, by creating an event worthy of his hopes.

The beginnings were difficult because no professional believed in it.

Only the family of Joseph BOUGLIONE, by renting his tent and taking care of the management, replied favorably.

Thus, Emilien BOUGLIONE participated with his cavalry, as well as the family of Ferdinando TOGNI, great dynasty of The Italian Circus, assisted by his two sons, Enis and Bruno TOGNI, who presented their magnificent cavalry.

The popular success was very important, the circus tent fully booked at each meeting and S.A.S. Prince Rainier III wished to be fully involved, as President of the Organizing Committee and also, as President of the Jury.

Since that date, I have had the honor of being his Artistic Advisor until his death, and I am until now, the artistic advisor of S.A.S. Princess Stephanie of Monaco.

Thus, I can testify to the presence of Russian artists, from the birth of the Festival until the 43rd Circus Festival, which will take place next January.

In addition, I organize the 3 days press conference of the Festival, this is the opportunity for me to present and interact with all the artists and, of course, with the Directors of the State Circus of Russia.

For some years, I regularly invite the Directors of the 3 big circus companies of the Russian Federation : the "ROSGOSCIRK", the two brothers Edgar and Askold ZAPASHNY, Directors of the big State Circus of Moscow, as well as Maxim NIKOULIN and his precious collaborator Alexander OGURTSOV, to attend to my press conferences in front of journalists from all over the world, often in front of more than 100 people.

It was at the 3rd Festival, in 1976, with "The Chemchours Group", that the long list of Russian Artists engaged at the Cirque de Monte-Carlo Festival, began.

Indeed, this is during their involvement in “The Russian Cirque Tour in France”, and particularly in Paris, that "The Chemchours" and their management accepted the invitation to come to Monaco. Their talent was rewarded by a Silver Clown.

The first official delegation of the State Circus of Russia came at the 5th Festival, in 1978, with the BELJAKOWS Troup, with their bears who brought the material on the track ... The success was prodigious and they received the Golden Clown, from the hands of Prince Rainier.

The 6th Festival, in 1979, saw the participation of the 7 pole-vaulters led by Leonid KOSTIUK, under the authority of the General Director, Anatoli KOLEVATOV. In the Jury, we noted the presence of the great russian tamer, Irina BOUGRINOVA. I will always keep in mind the exploit of the carrier Leonid KOSTIUK, climbing a sloping part, supporting on his forehead the perch at the top of which was an outfielder. This very dangerous act took place without tether, with the agreement of Mr Anatoli KOLEVATOV. What a suspense, because the outfielder risked his life to be rewarded by a Golden Clown. I can still, as I'm speaking, see this unimaginable feat in my mind!

The 8th Festival, in 1981, saw the triumph of one of the greatest clowns in the world, Oleg POPOV, who made a real recital and won the Golden Clown, which also rewarded his brilliant career. In the same Festival, Piotr LIUBITCHENKO and Ludmila GOLOVKO, got a Silver Clown, for their "Washington trapeze".

The 9th Festival, in 1983, saw the triumph of juggler Sergei IGNATOV, who received a Silver Clown.

Let's get to the 10th Festival, in 1984, to see the superb DJIGUITS, directed by Tamerlan NOUGZAROV, rewarded by a Golden Clown for their great exploits. Natalia VASILIEVA and Yuri ALEKSANDROV, graceful aerial gymnasts, received a Silver Clown. The General Director was Mr Vladislav KARIJSKIY and the prestigious clown, Yuri NIKULIN, was a member of the Jury.

For the 11th Festival, in 1985, Vladimir DOVEIKO's Troup received a Golden Clown for their amazing rocking jumps on stilts. The russian clown KOUKLATCHEV with his cats received a Silver Clown. We noted in the Jury, the presence of Mr Léonid KOSTUIK.

In 1988, Russia was rewarded with 2 Silver Clowns at the 13th Festival, with flying trapeze artists, the STANKEEV, and Alexander TSUKANOV on his unicycles, a true artist who knew perfectly how to highlight his amazing balances on a single unicycle. The eminent Professor DIMITRIEV was part of the Jury.

The 14th Festival, in 1989, allowed us to applaud the hand-to-hand balancing of KOTSUBA, father and son duet, act which received a Silver Clown.

The 15th Festival, in 1990, will also remain engraved in my memory with the discovery of the tamer Nikolay PAVLENKO, who will become my faithful friend.

Imagined by Valentin GNEOUCHEV, his shape of maestro dressed, with a stick of bandmaster to train his wildcats, was one of the great events of the Festival. He received a Golden Clown and shared the success of this Festival with the Mexicans, "The Flying Vasquez", who toured for the first time in Europe with the quadruple somersault-flying trapeze. The group AKISHIN, with his jumps in the rope in third height, obtained a Silver Clown. Mr Léonid KOSTIUK was once again part of the Jury.

From 1990 to 1995, Mrs. Ludmila YAIROVA was the General Director of the State Circus of Russia, "SOYUZGOSCIRK".

The 17th Festival, in 1993, reserved us some nice surprises with the PEREZVONI, aerial barrists, who were beautifully staged by Valentin GNEOUSHEV like a carillon, and obtained a Silver Clown, like the RUBZOV Acrobats, on an elastic springboard.

The 18th Festival, in 1994, was largely dominated by russian artists, with a Golden Clown for the BORZOVI who invented the exercises at the russian bar, at the top of the tent. The DOVEIKO, on the russian swing and the GOURIANOV, rocking jumpers received a Silver Clown.

The 19th Festival, in 1995, rewarded one of the finest flying act in the world, designed by the great and talented russian director, Pietr MAISTRENKO, with his act "The storks". Another russian act obtained a Silver Clown, the SOUDARTCHIKOV, elegant transformists magicians.

Unfortunately, this Festival was saddened by Nikolay ZEMSKOV sudden death, who died of a heart attack in the night in his hotel. We will never forget this magnificent artist, elegant and courageous, who directed two numbers of russian bar and perch, directed by Valentin GNEOUSHEV. The memory of this tragedy remains engraved in my heart. No doubt, the emotion and the nervous tension carried away this great artist.

The 20th anniversary of the Festival, in 1996, allowed us to discover my friend Oleg IZOSSIMOV, balancing on a music sung by the great tenor, Luciano PAVAROTTI. This artist always works on a great way, I applauded him in October, at the famous Tiger Palace Cabaret of Frankfurt, on "Main in Germany". The VOROBIEV, with their fantastic act of double russian swing jumpers, received, like Oleg IZOSSIMOV, a Silver Clown. It is Mrs. Tatiana ASSOVSAYA who directed the "SOYUZGOSCIRK".

The 22nd Festival, in 1998, allowed us to applaud the VOLJANSKY tightrope walkers, with their ascension on a 45° wire. They received a Silver Clown. At the 24th Festival in 2000, the TCHERNIEVSKI rocking jumpers were rewarded with a Golden Clown.

It is still a brilliant Troup at the russian rocker, The PUZANOVI, which was awarded with a Golden Clown at the 27th Festival, in 2003.

During the 28th Festival, in 2004, the KOVGEA Troup, still rocking jumpers received a Silver Clown.

During the 29th Festival, in 2005, Prince Rainier III created a new reward : the Bronze Clown, and rewarded Mr. DALMATIN, for his training of dogs and ponies, the ROKASHKOV, for their elegant fixed bar act and KHAILAFOVS for their perch act.

During the 30th Festival, in 2006, H.S.H. Princess Stephanie wanted to honor all the great artists, without awarding any rewards. Thus, we review, with great pleasure, my great friend, Oleg POPOV, Golden Clown at the 8th Festival, as well as the great troupe of rocking jumpers, the PUZANOVI, Golden Clown at the 27th Festival.

At the 31st Festival, in 2007, the DOSOV Troup, rocking jumpers and the DOMCHYN Troup, at the double russian swing, received a Silver Clown. The BROBOVI aerial duo, on smooth rope, as well as Ruslan and Ilona SADOEV, jugglers

and acrobats on horseback, received a Bronze Clown.

At the 32nd Festival, in 2008, the AKIMOVs received a Bronze Clown for their superb on air straps act.

At the 33rd Festival, in 2009, the TSISOV Troup received a Silver Clown for its very original tightrope act.

At the 35th Festival, in 2011, the Jury chaired by HSH Princess Stephanie, in which Mrs Valentina SAVINA, Director of the Circus School of Moscow, was sitting, awarded 2 Bronze Clowns to Roman KAPERSKY, contortionist, and the KHUBAEV Troup, great ground acrobats.

For the 36th Festival, in 2012, russian artists were particularly distinguished. They received two Silver Clowns, with the very original lions training of Vladislav GONCHAROV, who danced tap-dancing, surrounded by his lions, as well as the VOROBIEV, reckless acrobats at the double russian swing.

The ISRAFILOV duet received a Bronze Clown for its airstrip act.

We noted, in the Jury, the presence of Mr. Alexandre OGURTSOV, Director of NIKOULIN Circus.

At the 37th Festival, in 2013, the MARKIN Trio, an audacious acrobat act on the Rola-bola, was awarded with a Bronze Clown.

At the 38th Festival, in 2014, Russia was honored by being awarded the only two Golden Clowns of the Jury, awarded to the SOKOLOV Troup, with a vibrant tribute to Mozart, superbly directed by the great director, Alexander GRIMAILO and the aerial duet "Desire of Flight", in their air straps reckless act.

The Jury rewarded DOBROVITSKIY Troup, Aerial flyers, with a Silver Clown, the superb Anastasia MAKEEVA, with aerial tissues loops and the intrepid Lisa KACHATRYAN, tightrope walker, with 2 Bronze Clowns.

Mr. Boris FEDOTOV, Artistic Director of the NIKOULIN Circus, was part of the Jury.

In the 39th Festival, in 2015, we could note the presence in the Jury of the late Mr Alexander VOLKOV, President of the Republic of Udmurtia.

The elegant equestrienne, Anastasia FEDOTOVA STYLAN, received a Golden Clown and Russia was also rewarded with 3 Silver Clowns, with the SHATIROV Troup, on russian bar, the PRONIN Troup, on double swing and the YAKOV-EKK Troup, DJIGUISTS and also, by 3 Bronze Clowns, the KOLYKHALOV Troup, on fixed bar, the BLACK and WITHE Duet, aerial acrobats on tissues and the MELESHIN BROTHERS, on rola-bola.

Never before, a nation won 7 Clowns at the same Festival, demonstrating the talent and vitality of Russian artists.

Unique exploit in the history of the Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo.

According to the wishes of Princess Stephanie, the Festival's 40th anniversary, in 2016, was a huge success, although without reward.

Russia was very well represented by the SOKOLOV Troup, DESIRE OF FLIGHT Duet, Anastasia MAKEEVA and Nicolay PAVLENKO.

We are now at the last Festivals and especially the 41st Festival, in 2017.

Russian artists were once again honored with the rocking jumpers Troup, directed by Sergei TRUSHIN, who received a Golden Clown with avant-garde staging direction by Director Askold ZAPASHNY.

Edgard and Askold ZAPASHNY brothers got a Silver Clown with their very original training of tigers and lions.

The Superb Girls Troup SKOKOV, presented by the ROSGOSCIRK Director, Dmitry

IVONAV, won a Bronze Clown, with their Russian double bar act.

The remarkable contortionist, Alexander BATUEV, directed by Alexander GRIMAILO, also obtained a Bronze Clown.

The 42nd Festival, which took place in January 2018, saw the triumph of Clown Sergei PORSVERNIN and his family, his son and his grandson, taps kings. They received a Silver Clown.

The VIVALOV Troup, with its daring jumps from the aerial board, received a Bronze Clown. Dmitry IVANOV, the new Director of The ROSGOSCIRK, was honored by Princess Stephanie, as a member of the Jury.

For the 43rd edition of the Festival, which will take place in January 2019, the participation of the Big Company, led by Gia ERADZE, true circus star, will be a big event.

We can only admire the talents of this tamer, choreographer and costume designer who will present his best acts, with all new costumes, specially made for the 43rd Festival, recalling that Gia ERADZE is produced by The ROSGOSCIRK.

The other event will be the new aerial act of Alexander GRIMAILO, with the ALEV Troup and their exercises at the russian air bar, and the spectacular transformation into flying trapeze.

Conclusion

My conference clearly shows that russian circus performers have been spotlighted since the Festival's inception.

No nation had so many participants and russian artists were at the peak of their art.

The talent of the artists has also benefited from the imagination of the track directors.

Number of Clowns won at 42 Festivals:

- Gold Clown: 14

- Silver Clown: 30

- Bronze Clown: 18

Totally : 62

Thus, russian artists won 62 Clowns.

This number imposes admiration and I can say that, without the participation of russian artists, the Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo, would never have achieved its worldwide reputation.

**Recap of awards from russian artists
International Circus Festival of Monte-Carlo**

	GOLD CLOWN	SILVER CLOWN	BRONZE CLOWN	TOTAL CLOWNS
Festival n° 03		1		1
Festival n° 05	1			1
Festival n° 06	1			1
Festival n° 08	1	1		2
Festival n° 09		1		1
Festival n° 10	1	1		2
Festival n° 11	1	1		2
Festival n° 13		2		2
Festival n° 14		2		2
Festival n° 15	1	1		2
Festival n° 17		2		2
Festival n° 18	1	2		3
Festival n° 19	1	1		2
Festival n° 20		2		2
Festival n° 22		1		1
Festival n° 24	1			1
Festival n° 27	1	1		2
Festival n° 28		1		1
Festival n° 29			3	3
Festival n° 31		2	2	4
Festival n° 32			1	1
Festival n° 33		1		1
Festival n° 35			2	2
Festival n° 36		1	1	2
Festival n° 37			1	1
Festival n° 38	2	1	2	5
Festival n° 39	1	3	3	7
Festival n° 41	1	1	2	4
Festival n° 42		1	1	2
TOTALY	14	30	18	62

**THE PARTICIPATION OF RUSSIAN ARTISTS
AT THE INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS FESTIVAL
OF MONTE-CARLO**

**Lecture by ~~FRANÇOIS~~ FREKE,
Artistic Advisor of the International Circus
Festival of Monte-Carlo**

Saint-Petersburg, November 2018
