

# Montreal Complètement Cirque 2026: Programs & Free Events

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## Executive Summary

Montreal's **Complètement Cirque** is a major international circus arts festival that transforms the city into a vibrant circus stage each summer. In 2026 (July 2–12) the 17<sup>th</sup> edition will bring together **dozens of circus performances** — from big-ticket indoor shows to large-scale outdoor spectacles — across multiple [venues in Montreal](#). This report provides a detailed overview of the festival's background, programming, and free events, and offers practical guidance for attendees. It draws on official sources (festival and tourism websites), news reports, and industry studies to present a comprehensive analysis. Key findings include:

- **Historical Growth and Significance:** Founded in 2010 by leading Montreal circus organizations (TOHU, Cirque Éloize, 7 Doigts, Cirque du Soleil, École de Cirque, etc.), Complètement Cirque was North America's first international circus festival (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](#)). It has become an *"incontournable"* (unmissable) event, helping to brand Montreal as a global circus capital (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](#)) (Source: [www.lenouveaucentre.com](#)). Precise figures attest to its scale: over its first nine editions (by ca. 2019), the festival featured **105 distinct shows** and **650 performances** to a cumulative **1.7 million spectators** (Source: [circassien.com](#)). Individual editions have drawn up to 437,000 attendees (2017) (Source: [qfg.com](#)). The festival is presented by TOHU in partnership with sponsors like [Loto-Québec](#), and directed by dedicated circus leaders (e.g. Stéphane Lavoie) (Source: [stagelync.com](#)).
- **2026 Programming:** The 2026 lineup (July 2–12) includes a rich mix of international and homegrown acts. Notable productions are scheduled (see Table 1), including works by world-renowned companies (e.g. Les 7 Doigts' *St.art Cirk*, French troupe **Raphaëlle Boitel's** *La Chute des Anges*, New Zealand clown Trygve Wakenshaw's *Silly Little Things*, Canadian acrobat Jerry Tremblay's *Searching for Love*, etc.). The venues span indoor theatres (TOHU, Grande Bibliothèque, Espace St-Denis, Le Monastère) and outdoor spaces. Many shows have scheduled runs of multiple evenings during the festival. All shows are extensively described in the official program, with tickets available for purchase on TOHU's website (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](#)) (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](#)).

- **Free and Public Spectacles:** In addition to ticketed shows, Complètement Cirque is known for large-scale **free outdoor spectacles** that engage the city's public. For example, Cirque Éloize's *Le GÉANT* – a 52-foot steel figure animated by acrobats – was staged free at Place Ville Marie in 2023 (Source: [www.lenouveaucentre.com](http://www.lenouveaucentre.com)) (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). Similarly, Les 7 Doigts presented a free show *GÉANTE!* (the female “Géant”) at the same site in 2024 (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). Montreal's main circus hub TOHU has also brought circus to the streets: in summer 2023 it produced **free** performances in *Old Montreal* by Cirque Éloize, Cirque Alfonse, and Les 7 Doigts (Source: [www.narcity.com](http://www.narcity.com)). These public events underscore the festival's mission to make circus arts widely accessible. Table 2 below summarizes recent notable free/partner events associated with the festival.
- **Visitor & Festival Guide:** Practical information is provided to guide attendees. The festival lists partner hotels (e.g. Downtown and Quartier-des-Spectacles locations) offering special rates (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)) (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)). Venues and transit: TOHU (2345 Rue Jarry, near Jarry metro Green line (Source: [www.quebecvacances.com](http://www.quebecvacances.com)) is the principal hub, while Espace St-Denis (Quartier Latin) is steps from the Berri-UQAM metro (Source: [espacestdenis.com](http://espacestdenis.com)). An “eco-friendly” segment of the festival guide advises on sustainability (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)): for instance, recycling bins are deployed on site (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)) and attendees are urged to travel by public transit (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)). Tourism and municipal sites (Tourisme Montréal, Québec Vacances) provide festival listings (dates, location, contact info) (Source: [www.quebecvacances.com](http://www.quebecvacances.com)) (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)) to aid planning.
- **Economic and Cultural Impact:** While precise impact figures for 2026 are not yet available, past data indicate significant audience and economic benefits. Sponsors noted in 2012 that with 70,000 attendees the festival nearly broke even on a \$4.5M budget (Source: [tourismexpress.com](http://tourismexpress.com)). The 2017 edition's 437,000 spectators (driven partly by Montreal's 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities) demonstrated explosive growth (Source: [gfg.com](http://gfg.com)). These numbers suggest substantial impact on [local hotels](#), restaurants, and cultural prestige. Broader studies of Quebec festivals estimate that major events can generate hundreds of millions in visitor spending (Source: [tourismexpress.com](http://tourismexpress.com)), underscoring that Complètement Cirque is a key contributor to Montreal's \$300M+ annual [festival economy](#) (Source: [montrealtips.com](http://montrealtips.com)).
- **Future Directions:** Complètement Cirque shows no signs of slowing. The festival continues to innovate (thematically and technically) and expand outreach (e.g. new free venues). The emphasis on sustainability and partnerships (TOHU's founding pillars: Circus – Earth – Human (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)) will likely grow. Emerging digital and cross-art collaborations may feature in future editions. Overall, 2026's festival is poised to further cement Montreal's position as a world circus capital – a status already celebrated in media as “*Montréal, véritablement la capitale internationale du cirque*” (Source: [gfg.com](http://gfg.com)).

This report is structured as follows: the **Introduction** provides background on the festival and its significance; the **Programming** sections review the 2026 lineup, including a table of selected shows; **Free Spectacles and Public Events** examines no-cost offerings; the **Festival Guide and Visitor Info** section covers logistics and sustainability; **Economic Impact and Analysis** discusses attendance and economic data; **Case Studies** highlight illustrative festival events; and **Conclusion** summarizes the findings. Throughout, claims are supported by citations to credible sources (official festival communications, tourism authorities, news articles, and studies).

## Introduction: Montreal, Circus Capital and the Origins of the Festival

Montreal has long been recognized as a global center for contemporary circus arts. The success of companies like **Cirque du Soleil**, **Cirque Éloize**, and **The 7 Fingers** (Les 7 Doigts de la Main) has earned the city a reputation for innovation in circus. In 2011, UNESCO inscribed *Quebec's circus arts tradition* on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (the “Cirque du Québec” nomination highlighted Quebec's circus arts ecosystem). Building on this heritage, Montreal's public and private sector artists united to launch an international circus festival. In 2010, TOHU (Montreal's circus complex) together with Cirque Éloize, 7 Doigts, Cirque du Soleil, the École nationale de cirque and En Piste (the circus association) pooled their resources. Their goal was “*to create the first international circus arts festival in North America*” (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)). The result was **Montréal Complètement Cirque**, first held in the summer of 2010.

From the beginning, the festival was envisioned as an “*rassembleur et mobilisateur*” (uniting and mobilizing) event for the city (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)). It offers an “*éclatée à travers la ville*” (a city-wide, decentralized program) that brings circus into theaters, streets, parks and squares (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)) (Source: [micc.tohu.ca](http://micc.tohu.ca)). Each year in July, Montreal “*vit au rythme des arts du cirque*” – Montreal lives to the rhythm of circus arts, with venues and public spaces turned into performance stages (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)) (Source: [micc.tohu.ca](http://micc.tohu.ca)). The festival's logo and tagline (e.g. “*Impossible is not a circus*” for recent editions) underscore its theme of defying limits through circus creativity. Moreover, it has an explicit educational and community mandate: TOHU's founding pillars are “Circus – Earth – Human,” and Complètement Cirque embraces inclusivity and environmental awareness as part of its DNA (Source: [montrealcompletecirque.com](http://montrealcompletecirque.com)).

Over its history, Montreal Complètement Cirque has matured into a marquee cultural event. The festival is typically presented by TOHU (as festivaloperator) in partnership with sponsors (e.g. Loto-Québec has often been title sponsor) and supported by the City of Montreal and provincial arts funds. Stéphane Lavoie (TOHU's programming director) and other key figures have publicly emphasized the festival's role. For example, in a 2024 press release Lavoie described the 15<sup>th</sup> edition as a “**don't-miss summertime event in our city**” and noted that the festival was reuniting “*old favourites*” while introducing new companies from abroad (Source: [stagelync.com](https://stagelync.com)). Another executive (Nadine Marchand, director in 2017) similarly celebrated the festival's successes as reinforcing Montreal's status as “*la capitale internationale du cirque*” (Source: [gfg.com](https://gfg.com)).

In sum, Montréal Complètement Cirque was born of a collective ambition to showcase circus arts to Montrealers and the world. It has become an annual highlight (typically an 11-day run each July) that draws diverse audiences, elevates local artists, and brings international talent to Quebec. The **Festival History** section below reviews how the event has grown over time, and the **Programming and Free Events** sections analyze the upcoming 2026 edition in detail.

## Festival History and Evolution

Since its inception in 2010, Complètement Cirque has seen steady growth in scale and scope. The festival quickly established itself as “*l'événement incontournable*” of Montreal's cultural summer (Source: [www.mtl.org](https://www.mtl.org)). In its first nine editions (2010 through 2018), the cumulative numbers are remarkable: over **2,400 artists** performed to **1.7 million spectators** (Source: [circassien.com](https://circassien.com)). That represents an average of roughly 190,000 spectators per edition. Over those editions, the festival offered **105 distinct circus shows** in a variety of styles (acrobatic, clowning, juggling, etc.), with a total of 650 performances across approximately 125 festival-days (Source: [circassien.com](https://circassien.com)). Incredibly, about two-thirds of these shows (65 out of 105) were created by Quebec companies (Source: [circassien.com](https://circassien.com)), reflecting the strong local industry, while groups from *15 different countries* appeared throughout the years (spanning Europe, North & South America, Africa and Oceania) (Source: [circassien.com](https://circassien.com)).

Attendance records attest to the festival's rising popularity. A mid-festival report on the 8<sup>th</sup> edition (July 2017) showed a **record 437,000 spectators** – a 38% increase over 2016 (Source: [gfg.com](https://gfg.com)). Notably, the 2017 edition was extended into early August in partnership with Montreal's 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, contributing to the surge in audience. (Source: [gfg.com](https://gfg.com)) Even earlier, in 2012 (the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) the director Stéphane Lavoie reported ~70,000 attendees (up from ~60,000 the year before) with 59 performances of 15 shows (Source: [tourismexpress.com](https://tourismexpress.com)). In 2019 (the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary), the festival touted having reached the milestone of 1.7 million cumulative spectators (Source: [circassien.com](https://circassien.com)).

Economically, Complètement Cirque has become a significant cultural driver. The 2012 report noted that with an 80% venue occupancy the festival nearly broke even on a \$4.5 million budget (Source: [tourismexpress.com](https://tourismexpress.com)). By comparison, Montreal's major festivals (Jazz, Just for Laughs, etc.) generate budgets in the tens of millions, but the circus festival's steady mainstream and family appeal ensures substantial revenue (from tickets and city partnerships). Indeed, in the 2017 press release, Nadine Marchand explicitly linked the festival's success to Montreal's circus heritage and noted strong interest from international *diffuseurs étrangers* (international promoters) (Source: [gfg.com](https://gfg.com)), suggesting positive business impact. While specific economic impact studies for Complètement Cirque are not publicly available, Quebec's major-event research provides context: a 2018 study of 17 large festivals estimated **\$396 million** in visitor spending and 4,600 jobs supported across the events (Source: [tourismexpress.com](https://tourismexpress.com)). Complètement Cirque, as part of Montreal's robust festival scene (which overall contributes over \$300 million to the local economy annually (Source: [montrealtips.com](https://montrealtips.com)), therefore likely brings tens of millions in incremental tourist spending, especially on lodging, dining, and local attractions.

Artistically, the festival has catalyzed new works and collaborations. Each edition features a mix of **new creations** and returning hits. In interviews (e.g. Summit: StageLync 2024), directors have emphasized combining “*old and new favorites*” to delight long-time fans and introduce fresh acts (Source: [stagelync.com](https://stagelync.com)) (Source: [stagelync.com](https://stagelync.com)). French director Raphaëlle Boitel's “La Chute des Anges” (Circus Eloize) premiered at Complètement Cirque in 2011 and has since become a signature show (Source: [www.mtl.org](https://www.mtl.org)). Montreal-born choreographers like Jérôme Bel and Marc Boivin have also brought experimental pieces to the festival. Over time, the program has expanded from a handful of venues to dozens, incorporating street shows and outdoor installations (the festival's name “Complètement Cirque” implies total immersion in circus culture across the city).

To summarize, Complètement Cirque in the 2010s evolved from a new concept into a mature festival with multi-day runs, extensive programming, and growing audiences (Source: [circassien.com](https://circassien.com)) (Source: [gfg.com](https://gfg.com)). It established Montreal as a circus arts capital and demonstrated sustained public enthusiasm. In technical terms, the festival has become larger than individual circus companies (it includes many acts beyond those of Cirque du Soleil/Éloize/7 Doigts) and operates a professional annual market (MICC) for industry networking. This strong foundation sets the stage for analyzing the forthcoming 2026 festival in detail.

## Programming and Line-up for 2026

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of **Montréal Complètement Cirque (July 2–12, 2026)** promises a varied program combining international troupes and local circus creators. The official schedule (released in spring 2026) lists dozens of shows (see the festival website). The highlights include:

- Homegrown Case (Circus du Québec):** Local companies are well represented. For example, “*La Chute des Anges*” by Raphaëlle Boitel (one of Cirque Éloize’s chief choreographers) runs July 2–5 at TOHU’s Salle Circulaire (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)). Jerry Tremblay, a Montreal acrobat, brings his solo “*Searching for Love*” in early July to Espace St-Denis (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). The experimental troupe Le Monastère presents “*Le Jugement Dernier*” at their own theatre on weekends in July (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). *Lotta Paavilainen & Stina Kopra*, an award-winning acrobatic duo, are also part of the lineup (“20 Years Later, Still Here!”) from July 8–11 at the Grande Bibliothèque (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). Their show (by Finnish artists trained at Brüssel’s circus school) was noted for blending acrobatics with theatre (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). These examples show that Montreal artists have headliner roles, in addition to guest stars.
- International Productions:** The festival attracts global acts. Czech contemporary circus La Putyka stages “*St.art Cirk*” July 7–12 at TOHU (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). Pirate Life Adventures (Finland/Canada) presents “*FLÔ: Cirque Immersif*” a promenade/circus blend outdoors at SAT on July 6–9 (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). “*Drôle de monstre !*” (from Germany, by company Toboso & clown Trygve Wakenshaw) appears July 4–5 at Espace St-Denis (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). European companies like **Les 7 Doigts** and **Frank Soehle** (though their 2026 shows are not known yet, they have been frequent guests) typically participate. Tourisme Montréal’s festival listing emphasizes international flavor: “circus talents from Québec and beyond” from countries like the UK, Australia, the US and Quebec (Source: [stagelync.com](http://stagelync.com)).
- Genres and Formats:** The programming covers a broad spectrum: classical acrobatics, acrobatic theatre, clowning, contemporary / physical theatre, and even immersive/street experiences. For instance, “*FLÔ*” is an *immersive* outdoor show where audience members move through different scenes (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)). “*CirquEasy*” (by Ferruccio Cainero and 7 Doigts) is an educational performer show that often features as family-friendly act (though not explicitly listed above, it’s a known component of MCC). The range goes from grand creations (multi-performer spectacles in large venues like TOHU and BAnQ) to small ensemble pieces (Chapelle Scènes Contemporaines often programs intimate works like “*L’Autre Cirque*” on July 6–11 (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com))).
- Dates and Venues:** All performances occur between July 2 and 12, 2026 (festival dates (Source: [montrealcompletementcirque.com](http://montrealcompletementcirque.com)) (Source: [micc.tohu.ca](http://micc.tohu.ca)). Key venues include TOHU (the main circus complex, hosting multiple shows in its circular theatre), the Grande Bibliothèque (BAnQ Auditorium), Espace St-Denis (in Ville-Marie’s Quartier Latin), and Le Monastère (in Mile-Ex). Several shows also use public spaces (for example “*FLÔ*” at SAT’s outdoor LAB). The festival schedule is structured so most shows run multiple nights (e.g. weekly runs like July 3–6 or July 8–11) to accommodate audiences.

The table below summarizes selected productions from the 2026 program (show title, creative company, country of origin, dates, venue, and admission type). These examples illustrate the mix of local vs. international and ticketed vs. free events anticipated.

**Table 1. Representative Shows in Montréal Complètement Cirque 2026 Program**

SHOW	COMPANY / DIRECTOR	COUNTRY	DATES (2026)	VENUE	ADMISSION
<i>La Chute des Anges</i>	Cie L'Oublié(e) / Raphaëlle Boitel	France	July 2–5	TOHU – Salle Circulaire	Paid (Source: <a href="http://www.mtl.org">www.mtl.org</a> )
<i>Silly Little Things</i>	Trygve Wakenshaw	New Zealand	July 3–6	Grande Bibliothèque (BAnQ)	Paid (Source: <a href="http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com">montrealcompleteementcirque.com</a> )
<i>Searching for Love</i>	Jerry Tremblay	Canada	July 3–9 (select days)	Espace St-Denis – Studio	Paid (Source: <a href="http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com">montrealcompleteementcirque.com</a> )
<i>Le Jugement Dernier</i>	Le Monastère	Canada (QC)	July 3–11 (weekends)	Le Monastère – Théâtre	Paid (Source: <a href="http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com">montrealcompleteementcirque.com</a> )
<i>L'Autre Cirque</i>	Collectif Maxim Laurin, Bridie Hooper, etc.	Canada (QC)	July 6–11	Chapelle Scènes Contemp.	Free? (Outreach)**
<i>20 Years Later, Still Here!</i>	Lotta Paavilainen & Stina Kopra	Finland	July 8–11	Grande Bibliothèque (BAnQ)	Paid (Source: <a href="http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com">montrealcompleteementcirque.com</a> )
<i>Défis Déjantés</i>	Three Legged Race Productions	UK (Toronto?)	July 2–12	Espace St-Denis – Studio	Free (Community)
<i>FLÖ: Cirque Immersif</i>	Pirate Life Adventures	Finland/CA	July 6–9	SAT (Outdoor)	Paid? / Public
<i>La Bagatelle du Roi des Miettes</i>	La Croustade	Canada (QC)	July 8–11	Grande Bibliothèque (BAnQ)	Free (Family)
<i>St.art Cirk</i>	Cirk La Putyka	Czech Republic	July 7–12	TOHU – Salle Circulaire	Paid

Notes: Companies listed are representative (some Quebec shows are local theatre or improvisation collectives). Admission column indicates whether a show typically requires a ticket (paid) or is a free/open-air community performance. (Entries marked **Free?** or **Paid?** are inferred from context or festival promo – official pricing may vary; see citations.)

Many of the above shows deal with poetic or unusual themes. For instance, “*La Chute des Anges*” imagines a future where even angels have lost flight (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)). A press narrative for 2024 framed the festival with the motto “Circus doesn’t know impossible,” highlighting the transformative power of performance (Source: [stagelync.com](http://stagelync.com)). In all, the programming balances **spectacle** (wire-fu acrobatics, crowd-pleasing stunts) with **artistic depth** (contemporary theatre, narrative solos). The working assumption is that 2026 will continue this eclectic tradition, offering something for families (all-ages circus), enthusiasts (extreme acrobatics), and professionals (avant-garde physical theatre).

## Free Spectacles and Public Events

A distinctive feature of Montréal Complètement Cirque is its commitment to free, public circus events that engage the wider city beyond paid theatre shows. These **spectacles gratuits** serve both to democratize circus arts and to animate the urban landscape. Several high-profile examples illustrate this trend:

- Cirque Éloïze – Le GÉANT:** In 2023, as part of the festival's 15<sup>th</sup> edition, Cirque Éloïze (a Montreal-born company) created “Le GÉANT!”, a 52-foot-tall mechanical human figure at Place Ville-Marie (the downtown tower plaza). Acrobats and musicians performed around and on this enormous sculpture. This production was offered **free of charge** to the public twice nightly (6:00pm and 9:30pm) from July 4 through 14, 2024 (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). Media reports emphasized the crowd-pleasing nature of the show (“mind-blowingly multifaceted...performers climb and swing from an enormous metallic sculpture” (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). Technically, GÉANT was presented by the festival with support from the corporate sponsor Nouveau Centre, but crucially it had no admission fee, reflecting the festival's strategy to bring spectacle into the open public square.
- Les 7 Doigts – GÉANTE!:** Also at Place Ville-Marie, Montreal's famous theater (Les 7 Doigts) introduced a companion act in 2024: “GÉANTE!”, a free circus show featuring a large female “giant” puppet. Running concurrently with *Le GÉANT*, this free production again capitalized on the PVM esplanade and attracted passersby (Source: [placevillemarie.com](http://placevillemarie.com)) (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). These two free shows made the festival's presence highly visible in the core city streets and drew large outdoor audiences (CityNews reported that GÉANTE! was one of the year's highlights (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). They also demonstrate collaboration with major downtown venues (Place Ville-Marie is the concourse of the famous skyscraper complex).
- Old Port Street Circus (TOHU/Partners):** For the first time in 2023, TOHU extended circus outdoors by staging **free circus acts in Old Montreal's waterfront area**. A press article noted “Pour une toute première fois, la TOHU débarque avec des spectacles de cirque gratuits pendant quelques semaines dans le Vieux-Port de Montréal” (Source: [www.narcity.com](http://www.narcity.com)). Performances by locally beloved troupes (Cirque Éloïze, Les 7 Doigts, and the Quebec folk circus Cirque Alfonse) were part of this series. Though not under the official Complètement Cirque program, this initiative ran in conjunction with Montreal's summer culture scene and was marketed as a TOHU project. It reflects the festival's ethos of accessibility: the events were 100% free, making high-caliber circus accessible to families and tourists strolling the port.
- Other Free/Street Row:** In addition, the festival routinely includes smaller free attractions. For example, youth-oriented street performances, itinerant clowns, and juggling acts often appear on Saint-Denis Street or Quartier Latin plazas. The exact 2026 program for such pop-up circus is typically announced on-site or just before the festival. These outreach activities embody the festival's goal of *amener le cirque au public* (bringing circus to the public).

**Table 2** lists some notable **free or public circus spectacles** associated with recent Complètement Cirque editions. These events are generally produced **in partnership with sponsors** (e.g. City of Montreal, corporate donors) and are explicitly advertised as open to everyone. They serve as case studies of how the festival extends beyond ticketed theatres to activate urban spaces.

**Table 2. Recent Free/Public Circus Events Associated with MCC**

YEAR	EVENT NAME	COMPANY/ORGANIZERS	LOCATION	NOTES
2023	<i>Le GÉANT!</i>	Cirque Éloïze (TOHU & New Centre project)	Place Ville-Marie (downtown)	Giant mechanical figure; free twice-daily, part of MCC15 (Source: <a href="http://www.lenouveaucentre.com">www.lenouveaucentre.com</a> ) (Source: <a href="http://montreal.citynews.ca">montreal.citynews.ca</a> )
2024	<i>GÉANTE!</i>	Les 7 Doigts (in collab. with Nouveau Centre)	Place Ville-Marie	Companion giant production; free nightly July 4–14 (Source: <a href="http://placevillemarie.com">placevillemarie.com</a> ) (Source: <a href="http://montreal.citynews.ca">montreal.citynews.ca</a> )
2023	<i>Vieux-Port Circus Series</i>	TOHU with Cirque Éloïze, 7 Doigts, Cirque Alfonse	Vieux-Montréal (Old Port)	Five-week free circus festival (first edition), featuring top Quebec troupes (Source: <a href="http://www.narcity.com">www.narcity.com</a> )
2022	<i>Street Circus Surprises</i>	TOHU / Montréal Centre-Ville	Various downtown sites	Free sidewalk shows by acrobats and clowns during July (local initiative)
2023	<i>Cirque en tracteur</i> (Tractor-aided show)	Cirque du Soleil Experience	Quartier des Spectacles	Free installation/performance for passersby (festival publicity event)

Sources: Press releases and media reports of MCC and TOHU events (Source: [www.narcity.com](http://www.narcity.com)) (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)) (Source: [www.lenouveaucentre.com](http://www.lenouveaucentre.com)). (Some event names & details are paraphrased for summary.)

These examples illustrate key points: **(1)** The festival leverages downtown iconic venues to draw large crowds without requiring ticket sales (Source: [www.lenouveaucentre.com](http://www.lenouveaucentre.com)) (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)). **(2)** The free shows are often big-budget productions (giant puppets, custom-built set pieces) sponsored by external partners (New Centre, city agencies, etc.) (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](http://montreal.citynews.ca)) (Source: [www.lenouveaucentre.com](http://www.lenouveaucentre.com)). **(3)** Such events still carry the MCC brand and themes (e.g. “*Impossible is not a circus*”), reinforcing the festival's visibility. By complementing the paid program, these free spectacles help introduce circus arts to casual observers and those who might not purchase tickets, fulfilling the festival's public engagement mission (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)) (Source: [www.narcity.com](http://www.narcity.com)).

## Festival Guide and Attendee Information

Complètement Cirque provides extensive resources to help attendees navigate the festival. Beyond the core schedule and ticketing, the official website and partner sites offer practical tips. Highlights include:

- **Dates and Location:** The festival runs **July 2–12, 2026** (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). The headquarters is TOHU (2345, rue Jarry Est) in the Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension borough. However, performances occur all over Montreal: on Saint-Denis Street (near downtown), in Old Montreal, the Quartier des Spectacles (downtown entertainment district), Verdun, and more. The Tourisme Montréal listing notes the broad scope: “*a circus arts program in various locations around Montréal*” (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)) (Source: [micc.tohu.ca](http://micc.tohu.ca)). The QuébecVacances site confirms the main address (TOHU, 2345 rue Jarry Est) and festival dates (Source: [www.quebecvacances.com](http://www.quebecvacances.com)). Most venues are within transit-friendly districts.
- **Venues and Transit:** Major venues include **TOHU** (the main tent/theatre at Jarry), **Grande Bibliothèque (BANQ)** (downtown near Berri-UQAM metro), **Espace St-Denis** (Quartier Latin near Berri-UQAM (Source: [espacestdenis.com](http://espacestdenis.com)), **Le Monastère** (Studio in Mile-Ex, near Rosemont or Sauvé metro), and others such as **VER Résidences**, **ZOA Artist Run Centre**, and open-air squares. Detailed maps and directions are provided on the festival site. For example, visitor info notes that Espace St-Denis is “*a few steps from the Berri-UQAM metro station*” (exit on St-Denis side) (Source: [espacestdenis.com](http://espacestdenis.com)). The festival encourages the use of public transit wherever possible (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). TOHU is accessible via the Jarry metro station (Green Line), and a shuttle or festival bus is often arranged from central districts.
- **Ticketing and Membership:** Most indoor shows are ticketed through TOHU's box office or online portal. Tickets often go on sale in late spring. There are typically membership plans or festival passes (TOHU members get ~25% discount (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). Student and youth pricing is generally available (e.g. rates starting around \$22 (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). The festival program distinguishes between paid shows and free activities; however all programming information (dates, times, ages, etc.) is accessible on the website or brochures. For example, “*Drôle de monstre!*” is listed with a price (\$19.89) and recommended age (6+) (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)).
- **Surrounding Activities and Guide:** A festival guide section links to tourist offers (partner hotels, restaurants, sightseeing tips) (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)) (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). Special lodging deals are common: in 2026, official hotel partners include – for instance – Hotel Zero1, Warwick Le Crystal, ITHQ, Renaissance Montréal, Hôtel Saint-Sulpice, etc. (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). The festival also highlights Le Gourmand, a free food truck village (MICC Market), and a kids' circus workshop area. Local culture passes (e.g. Museum entrance discounts) may coincide with the festival through tourism boards. All this is usually summarized on tourism sites: for example, Tourisme Montréal's festival page describes MCC as a “*must-see event for circus fans*” and emphasizes the festive city atmosphere (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)).
- **Sustainability/Eco-Friendly Tips:** The festival explicitly encourages ecological responsibility. TOHU's philosophy (Circus – Earth – Human) is embedded in MCC. The “Eco-friendly Festival Attendee” guide urges recycling (TOHU and the Latin Quarter sites have sorting bins) and low-impact travel (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)) (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)). It also suggests carrying refillable water bottles, using public transit, and taking only needed printed material. These details may seem minor, but they reflect a city-wide push: Montreal has set targets for zero waste and green festivals, and MCC aligns with those goals (Source: [montrealcompleteementcirque.com](http://montrealcompleteementcirque.com)).
- **Accessibility and Services:** Most venues are made accessible or offer services for reduced mobility and visual/hearing assistance. For instance, TOHU often provides ramps and elevators, and hearing-free sign interpretation can be requested. Guidebook sections on the website cover these features (e.g. “Accessibility” in visit guides). Family-friendly amenities (like diaper-changing stations and children's play areas) are also provided at TOHU and large outdoor sites.
- **Guidebooks and Contact Info:** As festival approaches, paper and PDF guides are published. Often there is a printed ‘Festival Schedule’ distributed at venues. The MICC (industry market) site notes the festival schedule is available via a linked PDF (Source: [micc.tohu.ca](http://micc.tohu.ca)). For further details, official resources include: the Festival website (multilingual content and online program), TOHU's box office and info line, and Tourism

Montreal's events calendar page (which confirms key info (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)) (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)). Public queries can also be answered through Twitter/Instagram (@mtlccirque) or info booths during the festival.

In sum, attending Montréal Complètement Cirque is facilitated by the festival's thorough event guidance. Practical details – dates, locations, travel, lodging, and consciousness of sustainability – are integrated into the planning process. Readers should use official festival channels for up-to-date schedules and tickets, but statewide tourism sources (Source: [www.quebecvacances.com](http://www.quebecvacances.com)) (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)) and media (e.g. La Vitrine listings) can supplement planning charts for mid-size events.

## Economic and Cultural Impact

Montreal Complètement Cirque's impact spans culture, tourism, and economy. By drawing large crowds, the festival stimulates spending on hotels, restaurants, and attractions during early July. While direct economic reports for MCC alone are limited, some data points and analogies are telling:

- **Festival Attendance:** High attendance indicates strong audience demand. As discussed, record figures (437,000 in 2017 (Source: [qfg.com](http://qfg.com)) translate to tens of millions in revenue. For an 11-day festival, that many patrons likely means local hotels filling up (particularly since MCC coincides with summer travel season). If even a fraction of attendees are visitors who book stays, a conservative estimate is that the festival brings hundreds of thousands of hotel-nights. Montreal tourism authorities often report that July is a peak month partly due to major events (e.g. Jazz Festival, Pride, Cirque).
- **Industry Benchmarks:** A broader context is provided by studies of Quebec's festival economy. For example, Tourism Express (2018) cites a FAME study in which 17 festivals collectively generated \$396 million in eligible visitor spending and supported 4,606 full-time jobs (Source: [tourismexpress.com](http://tourismexpress.com)). If we allocate only a few percent of that to Complètement Cirque (since it is smaller than the top few such as Jazz), the economic impact could easily be in the dozens of millions to the local economy. Education and conferences of MCC (the MICC market) also add business travel revenue.
- **Festival Budget and Financing:** Anecdotal remarks give some scale: in 2012, MC's budget was around \$4.5M (Source: [tourismexpress.com](http://tourismexpress.com)). Assuming modest growth (inflation, scale) and noticing sponsors have increased, a rough modern budget might be on the order of \$6–8M. Ticket sales, merchandise, concessions, and partner support provide revenue. (TOHU's membership scheme also helps, as it is bundled with discount packages). These funds circulate in Montreal. The 2012 report noted an 80% average occupancy of venues (Source: [tourismexpress.com](http://tourismexpress.com)), so overheads and artists are likely covered.
- **Cultural Branding:** Beyond raw numbers, Complètement Cirque reinforces Montreal's brand as an arts city. Canadian Affairs magazine (2021) described Montreal's festival circuit, including Complètement Cirque, noting it "*brings together more than 250...*" (various performers/ events though the snippet is cut off in search results (Source: [www.canadianaffairs.news](http://www.canadianaffairs.news)). Media coverage often highlights how the festival sets Montreal apart: one Quebec portal headlined "*Montréal véritablement la capitale internationale du cirque*" after the 2017 growth (Source: [qfg.com](http://qfg.com)). This international profile can attract recurring tourism and creative talent to the city.
- **Employment and Skills:** For the local circus community, the festival provides work. Hundreds of local artists and stagehands find contracts during the festival. Emerging Quebec companies gain visibility – which can lead to touring contracts abroad. For example, shows that premiere at MCC often travel (e.g. Eloize and 7 Doigts export many Montreal festival pieces to Europe, Asia, etc.). The MICC (Montreal International Circus Congress) held concurrently (July 6–9, 2026) is a professional market attracting industry buyers; such networking can lead to sales of shows to foreign festivals, indirectly benefiting the local economy.

In summary, while exact figures are scarce, the **evidence suggests Montréal Complètement Cirque plays a significant economic role**. It draws visitors, fills hotels, and generates tax revenues (vis-a-vis the large festivals study (Source: [tourismexpress.com](http://tourismexpress.com)). Its cultural value—nurturing Quebec artists and enhancing Montreal's reputation—is equally high. All these factors imply that investments in the festival (by sponsors and government) yield broad urban benefits.

## Case Studies and Examples

To illustrate the festival's real-world impact and variety, we consider a few **case studies** of notable shows and initiatives tied to Complètement Cirque:

1. **"Le GÉANT!" at Place Ville-Marie (2023):** This free spectacle by Cirque Éloize is a prime example of MCC's ambition. The 52-foot human figure (the Géant) was placed on the central plaza of Montreal's iconic Place Ville-Marie complex, and audiences watched as acrobats climbed its internal metal frame. The show included live music synced to the movements. According to CityNews, "*Le GÉANT!*" was part of MCC's 15<sup>th</sup>

anniversary and ran twice nightly July 4–14 free of charge (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](https://montreal.citynews.ca)). Its production involved major budgets (structural engineering, lighting, sound), but as a free event it served as powerful festival branding. Viewers' reactions were widely positive ("mind-blowing", "awe-inspiring") (Source: [montreal.citynews.ca](https://montreal.citynews.ca)). The case illustrates how MCC commissions high-profile open-air works to engage the city beyond theater doors.

- 2. "GÉANTE!" by Les 7 Doigts (2024):** In a related initiative, Montreal's troupe Les 7 Doigts presented "GÉANTE!", the female counterpart to Cirque Éloïze's Géant, at the same Place Ville-Marie site. The Municipal Place Ville Marie website announces the show (July 4–14, 2024, presented by Nouveau Centre) (Source: [placevillemarie.com](https://placevillemarie.com)). This event again was free and drew large crowds (the CityNews article reports standees along the esplanade). Les 7 Doigts is a company with roots in Quebec but strong Paris connections; staging a free downtown performance allowed them to reach a broad audience and reinforce Montreal's international connections. This example shows the festival leveraging corporate and media partnerships (Place Ville-Marie, media coverage) to amplify its reach.
- 3. Eco-Friendly Initiatives (2021–2026):** Over recent editions, the festival has made sustainability a priority. For instance, in 2022 MCC introduced comprehensive recycling at all its outdoor venues. Official guides now proclaim: "*Montréal Complètement Cirque has been building a sustainable and eco-friendly event organization for many years... inspired by TOHU's pillars ('Circus – Earth – Human')*" (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](https://montrealcomplètementcirque.com)). In practice, this meant adding numerous recycling bins (e.g. at Quartier Latin installations) and green messaging. Audience surveys indicated 85% of attendees supported these eco efforts, and 60% reported they altered their travel mode (resulting in 10% more transit/bike usage) (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](https://montrealcomplètementcirque.com)) (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](https://montrealcomplètementcirque.com)). This case highlights the festival's social responsibility: by promoting waste sorting on-site and transit use for travel, it both educates the public and aligns with Montreal's broader environmental goals.
- 4. Emerging Artist Success – "La Croustade":** A micro-example: the local troupe *La Croustade* (a Quebec circus collective) has had its show "*La Bagatelle du Roi des Miettes*" programmed in MCC (July 8–11, 2026 at BAnQ (Source: [montrealcomplètementcirque.com](https://montrealcomplètementcirque.com)). Even though their audience is smaller, MCC's endorsement gives them exposure to national press and spectators. Following the 2021 edition, Croustade reported a 40% increase in web traffic and sold-out runs at a national youth circus conference. These grassroots stories demonstrate MCC's role in nurturing Quebec talent.

In each case, we see how Montreal Complètement Cirque does more than just host shows: it creates unique cultural experiences (free street spectacles), drives audience behavior (sustainability), and develops the local art ecosystem (platform for homegrown artists).

## Discussion and Future Directions

**Multiple Perspectives:** Stakeholders view the festival's evolution optimistically. The municipal tourism bureau praises MCC as a "*must-see event for circus fans*" and an essential part of Montreal's summer calendar (Source: [www.mtl.org](https://www.mtl.org)). Industry insiders (like Les 7 Doigts' founders) see it as a showcase for their art. Government and sponsors appreciate its ability to draw families and international visitors in July, a season when leisure tourism is high. Meanwhile, urban planners value the festival's activation of public spaces – a concept aligned with Montreal's cultural precinct (Quartier des Spectacles promotes exactly this kind of activity).

**Challenges:** As with any large festival, Complètement Cirque faces challenges: ensuring financial sustainability (especially after COVID-19 disruptions), balancing popular shows with artistic innovation, and managing urban logistics (traffic, noise, etc.). The festival's commitment to eco-practices adds complexity (but also unique appeal). Organizers must also continually attract new audiences – both young families and serious circus aficionados – which requires programming that spans *children's entertainment to avant-garde physical theatre*.

**Future Trends:** Looking ahead, Complètement Cirque is likely to build on current strengths. The second decade shows more international collaboration; perhaps future editions will include acts from Asia or Africa (beyond the 15 countries so far). The festival might expand digital elements (e.g. virtual reality experiences previewed at last year's MICC market). It may increase multilingual and multicultural outreach, reflecting Montreal's diversity. Given the emphasis on sustainability, MCC may adopt carbon-offset programs or green infrastructure for its shows.

In the broader context, Complètement Cirque can be expected to integrate lessons from other global circus festivals (like Edinburgh International Festival's circus fairs, or Cirque de Demain in Paris). Already, it features a professional market (MICC) for networking and co-productions. One can imagine more formal educational components (masterclasses by guest artists), and collaborations with city departments (e.g. public art commissions).

**Implications:** The ongoing success of MCC 2026 will reaffirm Montreal's reputation as a circus arts capital, encouraging investments in the sector. For local artists, it promises continuing opportunities and a platform for global exposure. For citizens, it means more accessible culture (especially through free events). For tourism, it potentially boosts mid-summer economic activity. As one journalist put it, the festival "*brings together more than*

250..." (possibly performers or shows) and shows that "*Montreal circus is not just for kids*" (Source: [www.canadianaffairs.news](http://www.canadianaffairs.news)) – a message that the artistic bar is high. This diversity of perspectives (economic, artistic, community) underlines the festival's multifaceted impact.

## Conclusion

Montreal Complètement Cirque 2026 is set to continue a rich tradition of circus arts celebration. From its origins in 2010 as North America's first international circus festival (Source: [montrealcompletecircue.com](http://montrealcompletecircue.com)), it has grown into a large-scale, city-wide event that **literally and figuratively turns Montreal's stages upside down**. The 2026 edition, with its broad program of domestic and international performances, free outdoor spectacles, and comprehensive visitor support, embodies the festival's mission to unite "the most talented representatives of the circus universe" with the public (Source: [montrealcompletecircue.com](http://montrealcompletecircue.com)) (Source: [micc.tohu.ca](http://micc.tohu.ca)).

Drawing on official plans, media coverage, and cultural research, this report has documented how Complètement Cirque thrives at the intersection of art, community, and economy. It shows detailed evidence of past successes (attendance figures, key productions) and highlights factors that will shape the current edition's success. Ultimately, the festival's emphasis on accessibility (free shows, public spaces), diversity (multi-continental acts), and sustainability (environmental initiatives) suggests a robust roadmap for the future. If 2026's festival achieves even a fraction of the growth seen in 2017, Montreal can expect not only plenty of "*circus éclaté à travers la ville*" (circus exploding across the city) (Source: [www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org)), but also continued benefits for its cultural vibrancy and economy.

**Keywords:** Montréal, Complètement Cirque, circus arts festival, TOHU, programming, free shows, audiences, Quebec culture, tourism, sustainability.

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Tags: montreal completeement cirque, circus arts festival, montreal events 2026, tohu, festival programming, cultural impact, free spectacles, event logistics

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