



Trouper Alumni: Where are they now?

Eric Bates, Trouper 2004 - 2005

(I'm) from Waitsfield, Vermont, and have lived in Montreal for the last 7 years, but I'm mostly living out of a suitcase these days (10 months away from home!).

Since Smirkus I was accepted at McGill University, and after two years decided I missed the circus too much, so I auditioned and was accepted into the National Circus School in Montreal. After three years I graduated and made a new show, Sequence 8, with the Montreal based company, The 7 Fingers of the Hand. Since then I've been touring the world with this show for the last two years, going from Brazil to Monaco to France to Spain, in fact all over the world. On the side I've managed to fit in a few other adventures, including winning a Bronze Medal at the Cirque de Demain festival, and performing in some amazing places like Italy, Qatar and Israel.

There's a magic about Smirkus in that it was a place where it was ok to work hard, that training and improving and learning was fun. That's what always stuck with me, this hunger that we had at that age and a place that fostered and encouraged it, where anything could go in the ring if you worked hard enough at it. Even going back to visit now I see it, everyone training in whatever spare time they have between shows, juggling backstage any moment they can sneak in during the show, trying new tricks for the first time onstage over and over, so that at the end of the year the show is a completely new beast, it's unbelievable to see how much it can grow over a period of weeks, just due to the initiative and natural drive of the kids in it .



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