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## The Show – Origins & Artists

In 1992, Teatro ZinZanni's creative director Norm Langill walked into a weather-beaten spiegel tent on a quiet Barcelona street, and fell in love. Inside that tent, anything was possible. Inside that tent, *everything* was possible: Feats of terrible strength! Manic antics! Beauty beyond belief! Art as dinner; dinner as art!

Langill found the *Palais Nostalgique* tent in Belgium and convinced the Klessens family to bring it to Seattle. Inspired by the great cabarets of Europe, Norm and his creative team built Teatro ZinZanni, a bold dinner show steeped in absurdity and spiked with a fresh sense of American comedy. From around the world, Teatro ZinZanni brought in celebrated artists schooled in cirque, clowning, cabaret, aerial and balance artistry, magic and illusions. From renowned celebrated Seattle restaurants, the team brought in top chefs to create a five-course meal extraordinaire.

The first production of Teatro ZinZanni opened in Seattle in 1998. Originally scheduled to run for six weeks the show received rave reviews and was held over for fourteen sold-out months. In 2000, Teatro ZinZanni moved the *Palais Nostalgique* to San Francisco, where it continues to captivate audiences and break new artistic territory. Soon, Teatro ZinZanni was on the hunt, looking for a second tent. Teatro ZinZanni found the *Moulin Rouge*, a slightly older but no less elegant tent, again from the Klessens family. Inside this palace of mirrors and red velvet opened a second Teatro ZinZanni company in Seattle in 2002.

A night at Teatro ZinZanni is like no other. Think Fellini. Think Toulouse-Lautrec. Think remote-control dolls, stripper dwarves, human towers, contortionists heels over heads high above you, a Gray's Anatomy of muscles on display, twelve feet away. Think opera and spectacle, chiffon and chain mail, flying men and floating women. "I tell people it's the most fun you can have with your clothes on," says Maria Muldaur, a divine diva in ZinZanni's ever-rotating cast.

Everyone is in on the act, including the guests. A stern White Clown swoops up an audience member wearing a feather boa for a golden-oldies dance. A ribald Red Clown grabs an elder gent in tails: "Snow on the roof, fire in the furnace!" A drag queen with a cluster-bomb bosom drags a man center stage to dress him up like Little Bo Peep.

In this alternative universe, there are edges, embraces and always entertainment beyond compare. Teatro ZinZanni is one of the only places in the world where more than a dozen international performers of this caliber are featured nightly. The show has joined the ranks of famed European clubs such as the Wintergarten, The Apollo and the Tigerpalast as a world-class showcase for the increasingly rare arts of the cirque.

It's the nightclub of your dreams.