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FirstWorks and Cirque Mechanics 'Pedal Punk' their way into The Vets in just four weeks!

Broadway-style spectacle meets BMX in this electrifying steampunk circus

PROVIDENCE, RI – **FirstWorks**, a RI non-profit dedicated to connecting art with audiences, brings the steampunk spectacle of **Cirque Mechanics' "Pedal Punk"** to Rhode Island to launch their 2016/2017 **Artistic Icons Series**. **Cirque Mechanics' "Pedal Punk"** whirls into Providence on **Saturday, October 29 at 7:30 p.m.** at **FirstWorks at The VETS** (1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence). Tickets for the performance, presented by **FirstWorks** and The VETS, range from **\$18-\$75** and are available for purchase at first-works.org and **401-421-ARTS (2787)**.

Called "a spectacular ride for hipsters and pipsqueaks alike" by Time Out New York, this steampunk inspired circus features spectacular feats on wheels of all sizes in a heart-racing ode to the bicycle. Take a gander at The Gantry Bike, a 3,000 pound, pedal-powered scaffold set that is an eye-popping playground for this talented ensemble. In "Pedal Punk," acrobats and funambulists dangle and twirl while flying unicycles and floating trapeze artists perform breathtaking aerial magic.

Rhode Island's own **Recycle-a-Bike** will be on hand for **FirstWorks' JumpStart** series, a signature program that matches local artists and artisans with **FirstWorks'** Artistic Icons in theme and genre. Beginning at **6:30 p.m.** in The Vets upper lobby, "**Pedal Punk**" audience members can learn how the cogs and gears work on everyone's favorite simple machine.

This marks the second appearance at **FirstWorks** by the Las Vegas-based Cirque Mechanics, led by Artistic Director and Boston native, Chris Lashua, who was one of the best-known BMX freestylers in the world. Lashua traded his BMX for performing on the German Wheel in Cirque du Soleil, ultimately designing his own bicycle-inspired act with the famed troupe and solidifying his reputation as an innovator in the art of circus gadgetry. His inventive engineering and artistic vision led him to run away with his own circus, creating Cirque Mechanics.

"Cirque Mechanics has tapped into our fascination with steampunk culture and created a Broadway-style spectacle. Director Chris Lashua keeps topping himself with thrilling new ways for us to enjoy the circus! Prepare to be wowed when acrobats pedal an enormous machine of bars and wheels – the Gantry – onto the stage. It's the American circus reinvented in timber, steel and ingenuity," said **FirstWorks** Founder and Artistic Director Kathleen Pletcher.

In addition to their Artistic Icons Series performance at The VETS, **FirstWorks** will host a unique **Artist-Up-Close** event with Chris Lashua and members of Cirque Mechanics. The public is invited to a free **Bike to Beer** event, co-sponsored by the Rhode Island Bike Coalition at **The Malted Barley** (334 Westminster Street, Providence) on **Friday, October 28 from 5-8:00 p.m.** Grab a beer and a delicious

homemade pretzel while learning about Lashua's BMX past and how it influences his Cirque Mechanics present.

About Cirque Mechanics

Cirque Mechanics has established itself as a premiere American circus, with its unique approach to performance, inspiring storytelling and innovative mechanical staging. Cirque Mechanics, although inspired by modern circus, finds its roots in the mechanical and its heart in the stories of American ingenuity. The shows, rooted in realism, display a raw quality, rarely found in modern circus, that makes their message timeless and relevant. The stories are wrapped in circus acrobatics, mechanical wonders and a bit of clowning around.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, Rhode Island whose purpose is to build the cultural, educational and economic vitality of its community by engaging audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Since 2004, **FirstWorks** festivals, performances and programs have attracted more than 366,000 participants. The **FirstWorks Arts Learning Program** reaches over 4,000 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island with transformative arts-based learning experiences. **FirstWorks** is Founding Creative Partner for PVDfest, partnering with the City of Providence to produce an international arts celebration held each June in downtown Providence. The 2016 PVDfest drew over 75,000 to experience music, art and spectacle. Visit www.first-works.org to learn more.

Listings Information:

WHO: **FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series presents Cirque Mechanics "Pedal Punk"**

WHEN: **Saturday, October 29 at 7:30 p.m. (Recycle-a-Bike JumpStart begins at 6:30 p.m.)**

WHERE: **FirstWorks at The Vets** (1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence)

TICKETS: **\$18-\$75** (includes a \$3 restoration fee and the Recycle-a-Bike JumpStart)

PURCHASE: Tickets are available at www.first-works.org and at the Vets Box Office: **401-421-ARTS (2787)**, 220 Weybosset Street, Providence

SPECIAL OFFERS: Save 20% on a “Four Pack” of tickets for the entire family with code SPOKES4*. Special ticket packages for the full **FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series** (Cirque Mechanics “Pedal Punk”, Paul Taylor Dance Company and Rennie Harris Puremovement), start at \$72.75 and will be available through October 29. *Restrictions apply.

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