



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1-26-2005
Contact for publicity: Patrizia DiLucchio (831) 915-7467
email: publicity@circuschimera.com

An International Wonderland Takes Shape: Circus Chimera Prepares Alice For Her Center-Ring Debut

Finally, they're here. The Russians, the Kenyans, the daredevil from Peru, the Chinese acrobats in their shining silks. They've traveled from four continents around the world to Brownsville, Texas' historic seaport and the biggest city in the Rio Grande Valley.

Who are they? The international cast of performers behind Circus Chimera, a little circus with big dreams. They've come to rehearse their new show, *Alice In Wonderland*, which opens February 2 in Brownsville.

Though Brownsville is famously warm even in January, at 9am when rehearsals begin it's still chilly under the empty 60-foot-high Big Top. Between acts, the Black Angels – the Kenyan acrobat troupe – shiver and bundle up in layers of sweaters. "It's never cold in Mombassa," explains Abdalla Mwahazi, a lean boy with an easy smile whose nickname is "Professor."

One of the Africans' many performing specialties is The Human Tower, a breath-taking, gravity-defying stunt. "The Professor" is the top man of the Tower — twenty feet above the ground. How does he make climb? "It's all in the shoulders," he explains during a break. "I have to be very careful to climb up my team mates' bodies without upsetting their balance. It helps that we've been performing together since we were ten years old."

Next up for rehearsal is Ekaterina Bazarova, Circus Chimera's Alice. She smiles and blows kisses from the side of the stage as she stretches her lithesome body through a series of jaw-dropping warm-up exercises. (Can you blow kisses while balancing on one hand? How about while stretching your legs backwards till they touch your chin?)

Katya, as she's called, still doesn't know much English. "Language – not so important," she says with a radiant smile, cooling off with her water bottle. "These are my family. I love them."

Then Katya, a graduate of the world-famous Moscow Circus Arts Academy, gives Mwahazi posture pointers while both are standing on their heads. It's a classic "Only At the Circus" moment!

One by one, the performers take turns practicing in front of artistic director Guennadi Tregoub's critical eye. "I've been with Circus Chimera for three years now," says Guennadi. "And I've never been more excited about a show!" *Alice In Wonderland's* opening number is his particular favorite, a synchronized combination of shadow play, aerial contortion and tumbling as the beloved characters appear to materialize from the pages of a book.