

Rodleigh Stevens - Resumé

I am a fifth-generation South African circus performer. I have dedicated my life to the pursuit of excellence in circus arts. I am passionate about creating new circus acts and training the next generation of elite circus professionals in both traditional style and contemporary style circus.

My training:

I began flying trapeze training at the age of 10. I was fortunate enough to continue my circus and acrobatic training throughout my teenage years as part of my secondary school's sports program. I trained at a gymnastics club during my four years of college studies. I received informal flying trapeze training from mentors like Lee Stath (first catcher to catch a 3 1/2 back salto performed by Tony Steele with his act The Flying Marilees), Miguel Vasquez (first flier to catch the amazing quadruple) while I toured with RBBBC in 1987-88. I had formal trampoline training from Viatcheslav Skokine who was one of an elite group of Russian research students who helped create the modern technique of twisting as taught on trampoline today. I have studied and trained under world renown coach Victor Fomine, who is still the most successful swinging trapeze, cloud swing and straps coach in the world. I graduated from Ecole National de Cirque in Montreal in the Professional Training Course which I took in order to be exposed to more hours of training with Victor Fomine.

My performing: (Scroll below to CV list from 1977)

I have performed professionally for over 20 years as a flying trapeze flier and catcher, casting cradle flier and catcher, trampolinist, hand balancer, hand-to-hand performer, duo trapeze base, solo and duo bungee performer. I called my flying trapeze act "The Flying Rodleighs" and we were voted best aerial act for many years in Europe by the European Circus Fans Association. We were invited on two occasions to participate in the International Circus Festival of Monte Carlo, but we were unable to attend either time due to injuries requiring surgery.

My flying trapeze act won "Best Aerial Act" award at the Golden Circus Festival in Rome in 1992

My performing career highlights:

- invitations to take part in the Monte Carlo International Circus Festival in 1991 and again in 1997 with my flying trapeze act Flying Rodleighs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fP1azrU7ehU>
- my flying trapeze act won "Best Aerial Act" award at the Golden Circus Festival in Rome in 1992 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdtrf9gBT0o>
- performing duo swinging cradle with rock star Pink on her record-breaking 2009 Australian tour *Funhouse* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BK_P9P5C0N8&list=RDBK_P9P5C0N8&start_radio=1
- performing on 20m high flying rig for the opening of a shopping centre in South Africa with my team of young performers whom I trained at the Zip Zap Circus school -

My coaching: (Scroll below to CV list from 1999)

I can teach ages 5 years to 80 years of age. From basic beginner levels to professional high skill levels. I can teach all circus disciplines from beginner level to intermediate levels. My speciality disciplines which I can teach to high skill levels relate to aerial acrobatics, acts requiring aerial awareness, partner and group acts including hand to hand type acts. I can teach both bases and fliers for all these disciplines. I coach using the Decision Training method incorporated with modern bio-mechanical technique.

I can **teach** the following disciplines to an advanced level:

- flying trapeze (in combination with Russian swing and cradle casting and Russian cradle casting)
- Russian bar
- Russian swing
- Korean/Russian casting
- casting cradle
- swinging trapeze
- cloudswing
- duo swinging trapeze
- duo trapeze
- straps (solo and duo)
- trampoline and mini tramp
- tumbling (ground acrobatics)
- power track
- pyramids, acro-balancing, adagio
- hand to hand
- teeterboard and Korean teeterboard
- bungee (solo and duo)
- hand balancing/chair balancing

I can **coach** the following disciplines to intermediate level:

- Chinese pole
- antipoden duo
- rola bola
- contortion (soloists or group)
- tight wire (not high wire)
- slack wire/rope
- web
- silks
- hammock/teardrop silks
- aerial ring
- corde lisse
- aerial cube
- solo trapeze, dance trapeze and triple trapeze

I can **coach** the following disciplines at a beginner level:

- juggling - balls, rings, clubs and cigar boxes

- cube and levi-wand manipulation
- group bicycle and unicycling

Rodleigh Stevens - Curriculum Vitae

1977-79: At the age of 19, I began serious flying trapeze and catching training at the YMCA flying trapeze facility in Cape Town. When I was 20, I joined a South African flying trapeze team called 'The Star Lords,' as a catcher. I toured Paris (Cirque D'Hivre), England (Gerry Cottle Circus), Norway (Cirkus Berny) and Sicily (Circo Embell Riva) with 'The Star Lords' during that one-year contract, also performing in their big trampoline act.

1980-83: I returned to South Africa to further my education and to continue my training in hand balancing, adagio, trampolining and flying trapeze. During this time, I performed my hand balancing and adagio acts extensively in nightclubs, for corporate events, at agricultural shows and in theatres. I joined a gymnastics club for further training in gymnastics disciplines.

1984: I created my own flying trapeze team, 'The Flying Rodleighs,' and was contracted with Circus Nock in Switzerland to perform two acts: a combination trampoline/high bar act as well as my flying trapeze act. We also performed with Circo Embell in Sardinia during the winter season that year.

1985: 'The Flying Rodleighs' were contracted to the Austrian National Circus Jacobi Althoff in Austria. Once again returning to Circo Embell Riva in Italy and then spent the Christmas season performing at the Ahoy Halle in Rotterdam.

1986: 'The Flying Rodleighs' moved to the USA and were contracted with Circus Vargas, who toured the United States and Canada.

1987-88: I joined a South African flying act called 'The Soaring Stars' as the lead flier in one of their two acts. They were contracted to Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus Red Unit's 117th edition touring the United States. This act included Russian catcher above the swinging catcher and a cradle catcher above the fly bar, and a Russian swing under the platform.

1988: Returned to Europe with modernised flying trapeze act, still under the name of 'The Flying Rodleighs'. Performed with the Gerry Cottle/Austen Circus in London for their winter season.

1989: 'The Flying Rodleighs' were contracted to perform their flying trapeze act and a combination of trampoline/casting act with two catchers for the Royal London Circus in Taiwan. 'The Flying Rodleighs' also performed for Kerstcircus Ahoy in Rotterdam for the Christmas season of this year.

1990: 'The Flying Rodleighs' were contracted to Circus Barum in Germany. The team was invited, but unable to attend the 16th International Monte Carlo Circus Festival in 1991

due to personnel changes and injury. I also performed with my team at the Christmas gala in Rouen, France and performed in the winter season for the Golden Circus in Madrid.

1991: 'The Flying Rodleighs' were again contracted to Circus Barum in Germany for the summer season, where we continued to improve our skills. We then played Circo Lidia Togni in Sardinia for the winter season, and created a casting cradle act in addition to our flying trapeze act.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqCpV8wSRVE>

1992: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their contract with Circus Barum in Germany, also performing at The Golden Circus Festival with Liana Orfei in Rome, winning the "Best Aerial Act" award.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdtrf9gBT0o>

1993: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their contract with Circus Barum in Germany. The winter season was spent performing with Circus Sarrasani in Dresden.

1994: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their contract with Circus Barum in Germany. We also performed for Kerst Circus in Zwolle, Holland and Brussels this year.

1995: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their contract with Circus Barum in Germany. We also worked at Kerstcircus Ahoy in Rotterdam for the third time and were filmed for a documentary TV show with a local celebrity.

1996: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their contract with Circus Barum in Germany. The team's second invitation to participate in the 21st International Monte Carlo Circus Festival, however we were unable to attend due to an injury requiring surgery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fP1azrU7ehU>

1997: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their contract with Circus Barum in Germany. We then performed the winter season with Circus Flic Flac in Frankfurt.

1998: 'The Flying Rodleighs' continued their final contract with Circus Barum in Germany. Due to injuries, this was my flying troupe's final professional season.

1999-2001: I took the position of head coach of Zip Zap Circus School in Cape Town, South Africa. Here I created a new flying trapeze team, 'The Zip Zap Flyers' as well as new acts and full touring shows for the school. This troupe's highlight performance was the opening of a new shopping complex in Pretoria in which our flying trapeze troupe (including myself) worked at a height of 17m (10m to the bottom of the net). I also trained the flying trapeze team that was contracted with Universoul Circus in USA. I taught ground acrobatics at a local gymnastic club to level 10. I trained a comedy aerial trio called Silijo who participated at the International Circus Festival of Monte Carlo in 2002 winning the Press award.

2001: I moved to Australia and started my own circus school called Trix Circus, on the Gold Coast. As well as teaching, I also manufactured and sold circus equipment under the Trix

Circus name. The company continues to run to the present-day manufacturing circus equipment to the ever-growing number of circus schools throughout Australia and internationally.

2001-2002: I became a regular guest trainer for the Flying Fruit Fly Circus School (Albury, NSW), Southern Edge Arts (Albany, WA), Skadada Dance Company (Perth).

2003-2009: I worked for Aerial Angels Productions (Gold Coast) as Head Rigger and Corporate Performance Manager. This included the managing long-term contracts at the local casinos and managing many corporate events in India and other parts of Asia, including the opening ceremony for the Asian Women's Games in Malaysia in 2007.

2003: In conjunction with Skadada Dance Theatre, I created performances for the 4th International Arts Festival in Shanghai. Skadada and I represented Australia at this festival, performing a solo bungee act and a duo aerial act.

2006: I created a new flying trapeze act called 'The Trix Circus Flyers,' in which I performed as a catcher. This troupe performed in Australia then went to Sweden (with another catcher) to join Robert Bronett's Cirkus Scott/Levade.

2007: Produce circus theatre show with my students called "Uplifted" and perform at the Gold Coast Arts Centre

2008: I created a new flying trapeze act called 'The Flying Aces' who performed on Pop Circus in Japan until 2010. I managed the team from Australia, training and supplying new team members as necessary. I produce a theatre circus show with my circus school students called "Uplifted", which performed at the Gold Coast Arts Centre.

2009: I performed with singer Pink during her record-breaking *Funhouse* tour of Australia. I was her catcher on the swinging cradle while she sang the blockbuster-hit *Sober*. This year marks my first visit to world renown swinging trapeze coach Victor Fomine in Montreal to improve my understanding of cloudswing and swinging trapeze techniques and training progressions.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BK_P9P5C0N8&list=RDBK_P9P5C0N8&start_radio=1

2010-2013: I co-created a performing group for the local corporate/professional market in Australia. During this time, I worked on a number of large-scale creative projects with local dance schools and high schools to introduce circus into their performing arts curriculum. I also worked as Head Rigger for Le Grande Cirque on their Australian tours. This included their sold-out season of *Adrenaline* at the Sydney Opera House.

2014-2016: I was contracted to Stardust Circus in Australia to perform double trapeze, catch on the flying trapeze and work as technical director as well as head coach for this family-run circus.

2015, 2016: In both years I spent a month in Montreal receiving intensive training from Victor Fomine to learn his training techniques for swinging trapeze and cloudswing.

2017: I was contracted by Sailor Circus as Head Trainer to create and present a 50-minute performance piece, at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC with 30+ school performers. I was filmed as part of a documentary about teaching circus skills, which was shown on the Smithsonian Television Channel. In August of this year I enrolled at Ecole National de Cirque for the Professional Trainer's Course, recommended by Victor Fomine, in order to be exposed to more hours studying training of his students, doing swinging trapeze, cloudswing and straps.

2018: I continued the coach's course at ENC, being trained by Victor Fomine in Swinging trapeze, Cloud Swing and Straps. I completed the course with excellent grades and graduated in June. In July, I commenced work for Cirque du Soleil training a new high bar/catcher team of aerialists to perform in the re-mounted version of their iconic show *Alegria*.

2019: From January through April, I continued to train the high bar act until the show's premiere in April. I also helped train the swinging trapeze acts, and their longists, for *Alegria*. In July, I was sent to China by Cirque du Soleil to train the duo straps act taking part in the new residential show called 'X-Land of Fantasy'. In September I was acrobatic coach for the first change over cruise ship team for the MSC cruise ship *Bellisima*, for Cirque du Soleil at Sea. I continue to do replacement coaching at Ecole National de Cirque in Montreal in many different disciplines.

Qualifications :

ENC Professional Circus Trainer Course (2018)
Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment (2002)
Australian Advanced Rigger and Dogger License (2001)
Elevated Work Platform License [+11m] (2001)
Higher diploma in Clinical Technology [Pulmonology] (1983)

Languages:

English
Afrikaans
German
Dutch (intermediate level)
Italian (intermediate level)
French (intermediate level)

Notable Past Student's Achievements:

Monte Carlo Circus Festival:

- 'The Owl and the Pussycat' (duo trapeze) – Bronze medal winners - Paul Tracogna and Adrienne Jack-Sands 2019
- 'Duo Milany' (casting cradle) – Press Award - Kristen White and Plamen Milany 2008

- 'Silijo' (comedy double trapeze) - winner of SACEM prize - Simon Chanarin, Lionel Chanarin and Jose Batiste 2002

Cirque du Soleil :

- Jo Mion (flying trapeze) – *ZAIA*
- Anthony Delaney (flying trapeze) – *ZAIA*
- Lena Grezegolec (acrobat) – *KA*
- Danica Hilton (teeterboard and power tumbling) – *ZAIA*
- Chantell Nell (aerialist) – *Corteo*
- Michelle Eve Wuthrich (cast/acrobat) – *Toruk*
- Bianca Ruysenaers (cast/acrobat) – *Toruk*
- Team (High bar/catcher aerial act) – *Alegria* 2019
- Nicole Faubert and Guillaume Paquin (Duo Mobile) – *Saudi Arabia* Cirque du Soleil special event
- Maxime Piche-Luneau and Caroline Huang (Duo Straps) – *X - The Land of Fantasy*
- Show team of 16 acrobats performing two shows “*Syma and Varélia*” - MSC cruise ship *Bellissima* for Cirque du Soleil at Sea 2019

Cavalria:

- Jason Fergusson (Russian bar and hand to hand)
- Bianca Ruysenaers (Hand to hand duo and group bungee)