

Moscow Cats Theatre

Russian clown Yuri Kuklachev lets his cats be the stars of the show.

By Clea Simon

An orange tabby pushes a cart across the theater stage, apparently oblivious to the two other cats and single dog riding inside the golden wagon or the cheers of the audience. Another pliant longhair allows herself to be dressed in a Russian folk costume, with a full skirt and wide sleeves that would drive most pets bonkers. Against a colorful background, the mostly white tabby then balances on a large ball, unfazed by more applause. A human clown enters, his patchwork costume a discordant match for the bright colors of the fanciful stage props behind him. Just when things seem to settle down, he looks up and — gasp — a gray tiger-striped daredevil leaps from a platform more than 10 feet away onto the clown's shoulder. The show is on!

Through a series of silly sketches and outright clowning around, the cats keep surprising the audience, often upstaging their human costars.

Cats are natural athletes and gifted clowns, but professional actors? For the cats working with Russian clown Yuri Kuklachev, such hijinks are more than fun — they're the main attraction in an international sensation: the Moscow Cats Theatre.

****For the full article, pick up the March 2007 issue of CAT FANCY.****

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