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Number 2

January 11, 1982



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Success and Sorrow at The Big Apple

by SAM HOLMES

The Big Apple Circus achieved its greatest success and suffered its most upsetting loss during the opening week of its Dec. 4-Jan. 3 run in New York City.

The success consisted of a series of breakthroughs. Now, for the first time the circus has a convenient, high-prestige location at Lincoln Center, right beside the Metropolitan Opera House - a far cry from the 8th Avenue parking lot where it last appeared in Manhattan. For the first time there's a full-scale advertising campaign, with posters in the subways and ads in the daily papers. There's a new one-ring, 1,550 seat tent - bright blue plastic with orange and yellow trim - heated by forced air. And by bringing together top acts such as the Flying Gaonas, Danish equestrienne Katja Schumann, wire walker Philippe Petit, juggler Michael Moschen and the strong show it presented earlier this year, the circus has created its most exciting performance.

A high point of opening week was Dec. 8, when the Mayor of New York, Edward I. Koch, served as honorary ringmaster at a \$75-a-ticket benefit for the New York School of Circus Arts, which sponsors the Big Apple. The mood of elation was destroyed about 33 hours later, however, when at 5 a.m. fire in the horse tent killed the dancing stallion Dabo and burned the clown pony Kelso so badly that he had to be put away. Fire department officials termed the blaze "suspicious."

Dabo, on loan from the Swiss Circus Knie, had been ridden by Katja Schumann, who was unable to bring her own horse, Sky Warrior, to this country because of quarantine restrictions.

The New York Times saluted the gallantry of the show, which performed less than six hours after the fire. In the circus backyard there were tears, but Paul Binder, a founder of the show, told New York television audiences, "Our job is to lift the spirit."

The circus immediately sought a replacement for Dabo, and was able to borrow a black mare from Johnny Herriott, who had just closed with the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus. Katja was back in the show on Herriott's horse by Sunday, Dec. 13th.

Besides the new stars that have been added to the show, many of the acts which were held over from last summer have introduced new routines and twists.

Ringmaster Carlo Pellegrini brings on the whole cast in an opening Charivari, which is followed by Alexandre Pavlata's cloud swing. He starts with hip circles which are made to seem even faster by the use of a strobe light and in addition to the act he hangs by one hand while in the other he holds the ropes to a trapeze on which eight-year-old Vlastichek Bertini does a one-foot toe hang.

Clowns Michael Christensen and Paul Binder are next with their juggling routine (clubs a chicken, hats a shoe). They appear repeatedly throughout the show and have several new routines, including one in which they



The Big Apple Circus Ring

play badminton across the Gaona's net as it is being set up.

Power Acrobatics by the Back Street Flyers is the fourth presentation, and they're stronger than ever. Then come: Spanish web by the lovely Tisha Tinsman, the Amazing Zakahr (Michael Christensen) and his dangerous trained mole Githa, Carol Buckley and her baby elephant Tarra, and high wire by Philippe Petit, who once walked a wire stretched between the towers of the World Trade Center.

Petit uses an off-beat kind of showmanship that put me off at first. Performing 30 feet above the ring, with no net, he is accompanied by a ringside grand piano and trumpet playing music that includes Bach and Chopin, well played but not circusy enough for me. But as he juggles, does a

(Continued on Page 23)

The Peru Circus

by F. W. GRESHAM

On Sunday, Nov. 29th, the Peru (Ind) Amateur Circus played a date here in Fort Wayne (Ind) in the Memorial Coliseum. Although small, they did fill the arena floor in a three ring format. This is the same arena that is used by the Hubert Castle Circus and often by the Big One.

The following review is from the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel of Nov. 30th.

Peru is the "greatest city in the world for young people," in the opinion of First Baptist Church pastor Jim Hardin and two Memorial Coliseum audiences Sunday saw one of the big reasons why.

The Peru Amateur Circus was in town, making their two professional appearing benefit performances for Three Rivers Neighborhood Clinic a very special occasion for Fort Wayne's big and little kids - those at the circus and those also who will benefit through medical services boosted by dollar sup-

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port of some \$20,000, thanks to the 300-member, all-volunteer circus.

But "this is also a special occasion for the circus," explained Hardin, gazing skyward at the 30 and 40 foot riggings. "This is a big arena," larger than the young performers are normally accustomed to playing, said Hardin, who, besides serving pulpit-side in Peru also serves ringside at the circus performances throughout the year.

The genial ringmaster and his family (a daughter is a trampolinist) moved to Peru six years ago and someone asked him, "What are you going to do in the circus?" I said, "I can talk." I quickly became assistant ringmaster for four years, ringmaster the past two. I really get a charge out of it; it's the greatest thing in the world."

One major reason for Peru's greatness, Hardin believes, is the Amateur Circus. "You put 200 kids in the circus show, they don't get into trouble."

How could they? The Miami County performers, who range in age from six through college, "practice daily, or at least three to

(Continued on Page 21)

New Show Bows

Charles Germaine's Royal London Circus made its debut in Salt Lake City on Dec. 18-19, playing to five full houses. The show included stage dressing of English flags and even a British ringmaster.

Seven animal acts were presented, including D. R. Miller's elephants, llamas, ponies and bears, as well as a Doberman dog act from Las Vegas.

A multiple contract had been signed prior to the show date by Germaine and the sponsoring organization. Then following the engagement the sponsored signed Germaine to produce their circus for an additional five year period.

Some of the highlights of the program included the Flying Valencias, The Los Gachos, The Super Lokos, Tibi Young's Crystal Ball, The Ferkes with a double perch act, Herbie Weber's slide-for-life and a six piece band.

Good weather was attributed to the huge turnout of enthusiastic crowds, who obviously were pleased with the performance.

Germaine plans to keep the title, but would not discuss future bookings or plans for a show route. Germaine did say that in addition to his circus activities, his country western productions featuring such artists as Bill Anderson and Tom T. Hall are heavily booked into the 1982 season.

Germaine said he is presently negotiating with two separate groups who can provide a complete circus, including the tent and seats for his 1982 season. The circus will be European style, using one ring and moving on all new equipment.

Germaine further stated that as in the past when he had the Miller-Johnson Circus, he does not wish to own anything other than a brief case and a plane ticket. "If a plane is not available," he said, "then I'll use my car."

Germaine said that he was extremely pleased with the quality of the performers and their excellent cooperation with his organization. The D. R. Miller animals were well presented by Bobby Gibbs and his staff.

Germaine and his wife are presently enjoying a vacation in Costa Rica.

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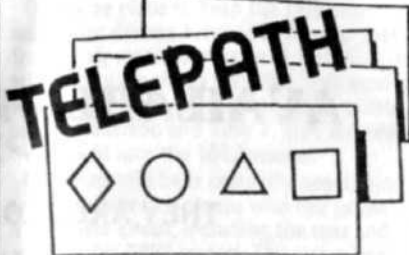
Beatty-Cole

by 'Circus Joe' Valenciano

Here are a few notes on the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus as seen just a few days before they closed in 1981.

The Valencianos caught the Beatty-Cole Circus on Nov. 25th just outside of Ft. Myers, Fla. The show was set up by a shopping center. The big top was still in good condition, as was the overall look of equipment. The top was blue and white striped canvas with a matching side show. The midway consisted of an elephant ride, pony sweep, side show, office semi and a concession semi.

We enjoyed the show, after not having seen it since 1979. The performance was well balanced with animals, acrobats, aerial acts and tumblers. Being acrobats, we especially enjoyed the unusual trampoline casting act and the three ring teeterboard display.



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Among the long-time friends we talked with were: Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Storey, Fred Logan, Tony and Julio Estrada, Elba and Argentina.

The program ran two hours with an opening spec. During intermission they brought in two big bulls for elephant rides, in ring one.

In the show we also enjoyed seeing acts composed of troupes.

In the show were: Dave Hoover, cats; Las Verdus Troupe, rolling globes; Oscarian Bros Troupe, trampoline/casting; Johnny Welde's bears (5); John Herriott Family, horses; The Great Vashek and Kathy, inclined wire and aerial motorcycle; The Argentinas and Estradas, perch pole acts; The Munoz Sisters, aerial display; Estrada, Ayala, and Martinez Troupe presented teeterboard acts in a good acrobatic 3 ring display; The Flying Alvarez Family and the Fred Logan Family with the Beatty elephant herd, plus others.

Clown Alley had about five or six clowns and after a long time I saw the fire house skit, and there were some walk-arounds in the show.

(Continued on Page 17)

John Strong Show

John Strong's Southern Unit Christmas Show opened on Dec. 9th in Anaheim, Ca., and closed Dec. 22nd, in Fort Worth, Tex.

Featured in the show were: The Widgets (Wainwrights), a new clever comedy acrobatic act in fuzzy animal suits; Pat and Gwen Davison, doing their entire roly boly act, after touring in '81 with Circus Vargas; Lenny Mazel, a versatile and talented juggler; Eric and Angela Wilnow and their beautiful collies; The Wainwrights, class trampoline act; Roulette (Marsha Montbanc) in a fantastic single trapeze number on a roll out stage rigging; Rolick Montbanc, announcer and amazing magic with rings and swords; Super Show Clowns, Ralph Greco "Ralphie" and Chris Roberts "Huckleberry Clown" were on the show through San Antonio. (Dec. 20th they ran out of gas, were asleep, parked on the Interstate road-

side and an auto with three drunks totaled Ralph's van. Ralph and Chris luckily escaped with cuts and bruises).

Neil Armstrong played the show along with Bob Gardner, on drums. Lenny Mazel played Santa Claus.

Visitors at the show included Jim, T. J. and Tim Howell, Mell Hall, and Ron and Pam Perry.

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BEATTY-COLE (Continued)

I liked the big office semi which I hadn't seen before. All white with big colorful lettering. The rest of the trucks were red with blue cabs. In the top were 5 seat wagons, usually when we saw the show I would see 9 of them.

A few days after seeing this nice big show I was saddened to hear the news that the circus will no longer travel under canvas, but would move indoors.

Farewell to many years of "Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. 3 Ring Circus - World's Largest Under the Big Top" as the slogan read on both posters and trucks.

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PEOPLE

TRUDY and BILL STRONG worked several Christmas dates with their Dalmatian dogs and are now scheduled to open with the EDDIE ZACCHINI show at Tampa.

RON and PAM PERRY will tour with Circus Vargas this season, where their double or tandem slack wire act will be featured.

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Party Time

On Sunday, Nov. 8th, the personnel of three traveling variety shows, which feature magic, were able to join together for a dinner at an Ashland, Ky., steak house, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Ron Bacon.

The Hal and Christ "Wondercade" show had the day off, so after the folks from that show caught Bacon's "Holiday Magic Fantasy" at a matinee only in Grayson, Ky., they all joined with the group from Bill Garden's "Holiday Hippodrome," which did a matinee only at Ashland, Ky, for a sumptuous feast and reunion.

Joining hosts Ron and Willeen Bacon from their show were: Phil, Linda and Lauren Chandler, Dave Miller, Billy Martin, Don Phillips and family and Robin and Migelito Merez.

The guests from "Holiday Hippodrome" included David and Linda Penny, Grumpy Kimes, Phil and Chris Oler, Clara, Joe, Georg and Monica Bertini, Danny and Randy Carey, Floyd 'Brad' Bradbury and Barbie Sheri.

Those attending from 'Wondercade' were Ward Hall, Roy and Susan Huston, Pete Terhurne, John 'Red' Trover, Cindy Martin and Norma Cristiani.

Current Notes

Some tough new animal control laws have reportedly gone into effect in both Florida and California, effective as of Jan. 1, 1982. At the moment Circus Report is trying to find out just what the laws are and what they will involve. As soon as some information is made available to us we will print it so that readers can keep abreast on what is happening in these two states.



The above picture is of the "American Eagle Mechanical Military Band Wagon" float seen in the annual Rose Parade from Pasadena, Calif., on Jan. 1, 1982. The huge float was entered by the Casablanca Fan Co., with elephants provided by Circus Vargas. The float was designed by The Design Collaborative and was built by Floatmasters,

TV Show

The Entertainment Channel, Cable TV is planning to begin a pay-cable service early in 1982, and has announced plans to offer subscribers 130 episodes of "The Animal Express."

In the magazine-style series on the world of animals, Joan Embery will take viewers to the San Diego Zoo, the San Diego Wild Animal Park and her own ranch, as well as other out-of-the-way locations.

PERU CIRCUS (Continued)

four times a week, a couple hours per practice. Beginners in April are performing in July," says Hardin. Some now in college have been with the circus since age 6.

The only salaried person in the organization is head trainer Bill Anderson, very much on the scene at the show, applauding performances and shouting encouragement as the youthful performers confidently hung from their heels 30 feet above the floor, or, in the exciting concluding act, soar through the air from 40 foot riggings, the young women and men ably demonstrating their proficiency on the flying trapeze, "the most dangerous" of all acts, according to the ringmaster. The perch pole, in which young women balance at the top of a 35 foot high, metal pole held by a man, is another of the "most dangerous", says Hardin.

The nearly two and a half hour show is also "the safest circus in the world", Hardin says. Volunteer riggers, many of whom have children in the show, are close by to break any falls (there were only a couple Sunday

night) and there is always a mat or net under to catch the very few who do tumble.

The combined audiences of 7,000 plus can also thank the Circus City Band, directed by Peru High School Music Department Head Tom Gustin, for their contribution to the great show.

The program included the following acts: High Casting, Pants Chase, Bike, Balloon Chase, Shoot Thru, Clowns, Side by Side, Trampoline, Loop Walk, Clowns, Skating, Web, Intermission.

Low Casting, Clowns, Four Lane, Clowns, Teeterboard, Single Trap, Clowns, Perch Pole, Flying act.

PEOPLE

BOB EMERICO worked as Santa Claus at a special Christmas party in San Francisco just before Christmas Day.

DONNA and **BILL BANNISTER**, aerialists, will be with Circus Vargas again this season.

BIG APPLE CIRCUS (Continued)

blindfold somersault, catches a soccer ball with one foot and bounces the ball on his forehead as he walks the wire, the music becomes secondary to his nerve and skill.

After the intermission the second half opens with Jim Tinsman hand balancing on blocks, five high, on a small platform 15 ft. above the ring. Until the fire, the Katja Schumann Spanish riding act with Dabo followed. Dabo not only danced but picked his way neatly through a series of sword blades and jumped rope while leaping hurdles around the edge of the ring. (I understand the act has been slightly changed with Herriott's horse).



Carol Buckley and Tarra

Next is Michael Moschen, a wonderfully graceful comic juggler who does some of his best work with a single ball, and who finishes with impressive fire clubs in a darkened tent. Then come the Bertinis exciting unicycles and teeterboard, and finally the great Flying Gaonas, with Tito doing the triple. It is really thrilling to be able to sit so close to their act.

Rik Albani leads the six-piece band in a mixture of old and new music which almost

always seems right. Producers Judith Friedlaender and Ivor David Balding have given the show a lighting system of over 50 fixed and three follow spots, bright costumes, an efficient sound system and blue padded seats.

Special credit should be given to Alexandre Pavlata who not only performs but also supervised the setting up of the 110 ft x 140 ft tent, a difficult problem, because the Lincoln Center site is all terazzo, marble and concrete, with almost no place to drive stakes. He solved it by putting key stakes in tree pits, and by using enormous cement blocks (4x4 feet, weighing several tons) to anchor tent ropes and guy wires. A stalwart in the setting up was production manager Robert Libbon, who suffered a bad fall a few days after the show opened, however, and had to be hospitalized.

The leaders and staff of the Big Apple have gone through six years of very hard work and many disheartening disappointments to reach this point. I think one thing that has kept them together and kept them going is their strong belief in the value of the one-ring circus. They're demonstrating that value to a lot of people with the current show.

Do You Remember?

by TED AKEMAN

Norris Bros. Circus 1938 - The show was owned and managed by Bud E. Anderson, who had bought the show from Charles La Monte, after he had sold his Seal Bros. Circus to Ira Watts Parker.

Laura Anderson ran the office and 'Doc' Ramsey was the agent. Luke Anderson had the concessions, Shorty Lynn was the lot supt., and 'Doc' L. B. Ford was the side show manager, while 'Montana' Earl Brombolt was the show's equestrian director.

Featured in the big show was an outstanding animal act consisting of 'Eva' the elephant and 'Topsy' the zebra; The Westlakes and the LaVelda Duo were big show performers as was Borghild Ford and Frances Anderson.

Pete Hanagan was featured in the concert as a 'Singing Cowboy.' Fred Brad was the legal adjuster.

The show folded on July 5th at Eavs, Co.

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People

PHIL TEMPLE, magician, appeared in the main showroom "Palace of Mystery" at the Magic Castle in Hollywood, Calif., Dec. 21st to Jan. 3rd, presenting 30 minutes of magic and illusions.

JOHN H. McCONNELL was recently appointed to the position of Vice President of Administration with the Royal Hanneford Circus.

DENNIE PINSON is joining Circus Vargas this month where he will work with the elephant under the direction of **REX WILLIAMS**.

JOANNE PINSON is busy making wardrobe and jewelry for a number of show acts. At the same time **PEE WEE** has been working for the Gainesville (Texas) Construction Co.

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MICHAEL McCARTHY, clown, will be touring with Circus Vargas for the 1982 season, and will be doing advance work for the show.

KARIN and **HAPPY DAVIS** are the parents of a baby boy - Harrison Stewart Davis - who was born on Nov. 22, 1981 and weighed in at 6 lbs. 10½ oz. and measured 20 in. long.

He joins RBBB Red Unit

Peru, Ind. - The Peru Circus has launched another local boy into the big-time big top - Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Brian Miser is the second member of his family from the northern Indiana town of circus families to sign with Ringling. The 18 year old former star of the local Peru Circus has signed a contract as a flyer in a new trapeze act.

His brother, Craig, has been with the show two years, last season as a catcher with one of the two Flying Farfans acts.

Brian performed in several acts with the Peru Circus, including a trampoline comic routine, juggling and flying. He started with the circus as a clown.

He was a mid-term graduate of North Miami High School. Last February he visited Circus World in Florida, owned by Mattel Co., which has controlling interest in the Ringling-Barnum Circus.

Brian and Joe Lester, of Peru, were invited to try out at Circus World while they were there.

"Brian made great progress in flying and probably had the best teacher possible, Faye Alexander," said Brian's father, Harold Miser. "He's recognized around the world as a top instructor. He performed with a lot of circuses and also did all the difficult tricks in the movie 'Trapeze' with Tony Curtis."

The new flying act with Ringling's Red Unit features the Vasquez Family, a man and his wife. They have flown with other professional circuses and were asked to form an act. They needed a flyer and a catcher.

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"Vasquez went to Circus World to look for people for his act," said Harold Miser. "He offered the job to Brian. Brian took a couple of weeks to decide if he was ready. Faye encouraged him, and I'm sure that had a lot to do with his decision."

Brian will go to Sarasota to start practicing with the new act. The act will then join the rest of the Red Unit at Venice, Fla., to prepare for the new season.

"It's great," Harold Miser says of his son's new career. "But it would never have happened if it hadn't been for our circus. It's known everywhere. Even down at Circus World, Brian and Joe were always introduced as being from Peru, the circus capital of the world."

Reunion

by B. EVERETT ESLINGER

Thirty-four of the circus fans who used to make and participate in the Old Milwaukee Days Circus Parade sponsored by the Schlitz Brewing Company and put on by the Circus World Museum, of Baraboo, during the 1960's and 1970's got together at John and Helen Marietta's in Pittsburgh, Kansas, for a reunion to talk over this never-to-be-forgotten event.

Meetings were held in the Marietta's railroad club car to review the past episodes. Tours were conducted to see the fine collection of railroad cars and railroad collectibles.

Also to look at their circus vehicles, calliopes, band organs and a variety of rare antiques. In the meantime one of these musical instruments could be heard playing a tune that brought back wonderful memories to those in attendance.

Circus fans and friends from nine different states came to participate in this and to enjoy good food and beverages

Circus Logan

by BILL WALTERS

Circus Logan appeared in a number of towns in Central Arkansas during the month of December.

I was able to see a performance in Little Rock, sponsored by the Falcon Jet Corp., for its Christmas Show. Johnny Frazier and Dan "Whip" Viefield, from Hugo, Okla., came into Little Rock to see the show.

Logan, the Magic Ringmaster and Charley Roark featured a very entertaining show, which was very well staged. Charley Roark's ventriloquist act and his Punch & Judy were very well received, as was the remainder of the line up.

Featured in the show were: Logan, the Magic Ringmaster; Bill and Mary Robertson in a clown gag; Charlie Roark, ventriloquist; Magic with audience participation; Clown gag; Punch and Judy Show (Roark); The Guillotine; Clown gag; Color Book Pitch; Magic; Smart Pooch Show, The Mattieshans and a Patriotic Finale.