

The biggest show is spellbinding

Ann Arns of 760 Sheffield, Birmingham, is an 8th grader at Covington Junior High School.

By ANN ARNSUL

Deaf Ross sewing an American flag while riding on an elephant, Ben Franklin reduced to the size of a clown, and Paul Revere shouting, "The Circus Is Coming!" The Circus Is Coming! could only happen at the Bicentennial Edition of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

This spectacular circus had its opening night Tuesday at Detroit's Olympia Stadium, with 23 acts, some 120 animals, and more than 500 performers.

Star of the show is the fearless animal trainer, Gunther Gebel-Williams, who makes elephants dance, tigers play leap frog and horses stand on their hind legs, merely by the sound of his voice.

Gebel-Williams made a spectacular entrance by riding with a tiger on the back of an elephant.

He commands the largest group of performing tigers in the world and has won the "Oscar" of the circus world three times. His most amazing feat was to use an elephant to propel himself off a teeterboard onto the back of another elephant.

But as great as Gebel-Williams is, he

does not put his head into the mouth of a lion. That is the death-defying specialty of Wolfgang Holzmair, another great animal trainer.

MANY OF the circus performers are from foreign countries. The youngest performer in the circus, Barry Lapp, is from Great Britain. He is 11 years old and is a daredevil bicyclist who performs on trick bikes and unicycles of all sizes including the smallest bike in the world which is less than three inches high. Barry's bikes are made by his father who assists him in the act.

The most exciting tumbling act was performed by the Sofia Troupe, a group

named after the capital of Bulgaria. These acrobats are catapulted from a giant swing into the air where they somersault over and over and land feet first on the shoulders of other performers.

It is impossible to name all of the great acts, but special mention should be made of the trapeze artists, The Flying Wiltons and The Flying Farfars, the serial artists, Astor Cortes (who twirled rings on his arms while standing on his head on a trapeze) and one of my favorite acts, the Rudi Lens Chimps.

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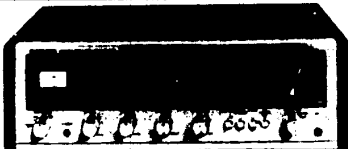
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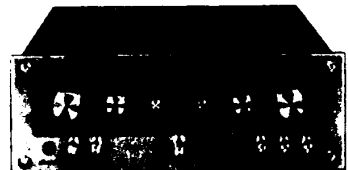


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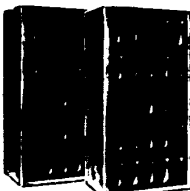
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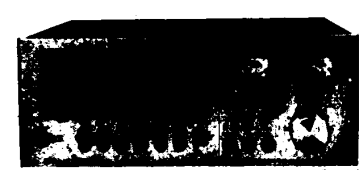


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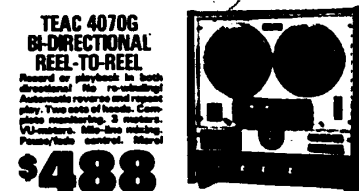
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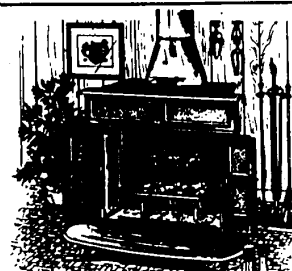
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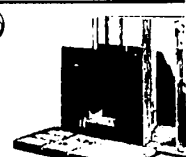
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