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## SHOWS

### BLACKPOOL (Continued)

#### TOWER CIRCUS

BERNARD CRABTREE scores the world for acts for the famous Tower Circus, but there is one star attraction he doesn't have to look for—the one and only Charlie Cairoli, now in his 30th year as clown-entertainer extraordinary. With his partners Jimmy and Paul, he keeps the customers happy with some inspired fooling and knockabout—and his musical spot is, as ever, a mixture of fun and virtuosity on a remarkable range of instruments.

The animals, the core of every circus, are again to be found in plenty. Franz Althoff's Danish Tiger Horses and Ponies, presented by F. R. Althoff, are delightful beasts and their equine display is well drilled and charming. Out of the same "stable" under the same presentation are a trio of enormous elephants, intelligent and wonderfully responsive.



Miss Yvonne, after an absence of seven years, returns to the Tower, this time with seven fine tigers (Franz Althoff's Circus) who waltz, jump through hoops, and answer to her command. And from this world famous circus also come the Jockey Chimpanzees, presented by Al de Jonghe, a mischievous, pony riding group.

The Flying Marries, a husband and wife with a Mexican partner, are world-renowned aerialists whose split-second timing keeps the audience thrilled and seat-edged. The 6 Ferkos, a Czechoslovakian family of three men and three women, have an act as novel as it is exciting, involving high multiple-somersaulting and spot-on direction of the body-missiles. From the same country come the 4 Bertolas, whose unique cycling speciality is seen to wonderful effect in combination with the closing water spectacle.

The 4 Castors, a French family seen for the first time in Blackpool, have a high-speed, highly skilled foot juggling act. Juggling is also the speciality of another French act, Toly M, who has a most unusual line in juggling calling for both dexterity and perfect judgment.

Desmond and Marks, two circus favourites, successfully fool away the time between the acts, and the Circusettes are as well favoured and accomplished as ever.

Ringmasters Norman Barrett and Harold Holt are as urbane as usual and musical backing to this spirited show, directed by Bernard Crabtree, is admirably provided by Tommy Jones and his men.

#### 'TOWER CIRCUS 1969'

Presented at the Tower, Blackpool. Directed by Bernard Crabtree. Musical director, Tommy Jones. Ringmasters, Norman Barrett and Harold Holt.

Artists include: Charlie Cairoli, Paul and Jimmy, The Flying Marries, The 4 Bertolas, The 6 Ferkos, The 4 Castors, Desmond and Marks, Toly M, 4 Tollys, Franz Althoff's Elephants and Danish Tiger Horses and Ponies, Al de Jonghe and his Jockey Chimpanzees, Miss Yvonne and 7 Royal Tigers, The Circusettes.

#### INTERNATIONAL SHOWTIME

A CONTINENTAL-styled bill, "International Showtime," at the salubrious Pleasure Beach Casino Horseshoe, is responsible for booming business—this Leonard Thompson offering is high-grade entertainment. Producer Bettina Merson has lined up some really sparkling talent and she presents it in a programme that has rich contrast and perfect balance. In addition to a rising stage, the "flying" Astro stage—first of the kind in Europe—has been installed. Hydraulically activated and controlled, it literally soars over the audience's heads.

Star of the show is Venezuelan heart-throb Rafael Lamas, handsome, sun-tanned serenader, who knows exactly the sort of melodic media that suits the supper-set and supplies it in abundance.

Alton Douglas was a playwright, songwriter, and scriptwriter, before he turned full-time comic—which may account for an unusual freshness and originality that characterises his lively contributions.

Another man worth his weight in gold, Jack Freedman, is a top-flight pianist-entertainer—lovely gags—and his keyboard mastery shines through semi-classics like "Glass Mountain" and "Warsaw Concerto."

Personality-thrush Jill Rogers is quite a lulu, the Banjo Band come over effectively, and the Astro Lovelies, headed by Mary Clark, are strong in support.

Sound '69 for dancers, supplied by the Pete Price Combo, adds the finishing touch to a Night to Remember.



THAT saucy "Hee-hee, it's turned out nice again" chuckle, synonymous with the late GEORGE FORMBY, is being heard again at Blackpool this summer.

For the man now being dubbed as the second Formby has started a season at the theatre where the Lancashire comic scored some of his biggest successes.

He's ALAN RANDALL, a 29-year-old multi-instrumentalist from Nuneaton, Warwickshire, whose imitation of George Formby is so authentic that even PAT HOWSON, Formby's former fiancée, admits she has difficulty telling the difference.

Bedworth-born Alan is spending an 18-week season with JIMMY CLITHEROE and JOSEF LOCKE at the Queen's Theatre, Blackpool.

He has sparked off a revival of interest in old Formby favourites with his spots in "The Jimmy Young Show" on Radio 1 and 2 and the release of an LP of Formby songs under the title "I Remember George".

And in his act at Blackpool, Alan is featuring a ukulele-banjo George himself used to play at the same theatre when he sang "Leaning On A Lamp Post".

"It was Formby's favourite uke," says Alan, whose latest Page One release is one of George's songs "Down The Old Coal Hole". "I got it from the wife of someone who bought it at the sale of George's effects."

Ironically, the nearest Alan Randall got to meeting George Formby was when he called backstage at the Queen's Theatre, Blackpool, during his last summer season there in 1960, the year before his death.

"He had just left and I wasn't able to call back at the theatre on another night", recalls Alan, who completed a successful series of club engagements for the BAILEY ORGANISATION before opening at Blackpool.

#### CABARET

CHESTER HARRIOTT SHOW  
PIANIST-ENTERTAINERS are very much to the fore in this season's Blackpool line-up and notably Chester Harriott, gold-jacketed star of the slick-paced variety package named after him in the Winter Gardens Planet Room.

It's a rave-up for Chester—a brilliant pianist, powerhouse singer, and compelling personality, in his fifth consecutive year he completely justifies his top billing. "Wonderful World" and "Sunrise Sunset" are among his prize vocal offerings, he gets roof-raising response for instrumentals, "Rhapsody In Blue" and "Ritual Fire Dance," and his impressions of Fats Waller, George Shearing, and Oscar Peterson, are a wow.

Highly rated too is that versatile Scots music-maker Lawrie Adam, a first-class accordionist with a repertoire ranging from pop to opera, and an agreeable line of patter—his gags really register.

Multi-instrumentalist Syd Francis is another lad to watch—his first instrument is the trumpet. He owed

#### THE OCEAN SHOW

VARIETY is the vogue in the Tower's spacious Ocean Room where the well contrasted bill might be aptly labelled "The Mancunian Way", for all the acts hail from the Cottonopolis.

Filippani's fingered Roy Stevens, most immaculate male to grace this stage since it was opened in 1963, needn't have worried about that broken arm that threatened his career not so long ago. He is playing wonderfully, demonstrating remarkable versatility in clearly recognisable impressions of Winnie Atwell, Russ Conway, Fats Waller,



et al, topped up with a manifestation of the higher technique demanded by the Tchaikovsky No. One. This is Roy's third year at the Ocean.

Ray Lewis, an engaging young popster, shows off his nicely geared tonsils in numbers like "Marina" and "No Particular Place To Go," and offers agreeable variations on saxophone, clarinet, and flute for good measure.

Jackie Allan and Barbara, the good-looking xylophone duo, have one of the best audience-participation gimmicks in the business. After some spectacular prestissimo in "Slavonic Rhapsody" and similar high speed effusions they invite 12 members of the audience to join them on stage and learn to play in one easy lesson. There is no lack of eager volunteers for whom a dozen mini-instruments are provided. Instant "Bells of St. Mary's" they hammer out is a tuneful treat.

With her sleek Basseylike figure, Bassey-styled gowns, and a voice not unlike the great Shirley's,



auburn-haired Karen Kay is another hit of the show. Her "Big Spender" is a humdinger, and as well as making the most of other choice Hit Parade samples she does justice to a handful of oldies pepped up for the occasion.

Excellent backing comes from organist Teddy Clarke and Haydn Streford on drums, and stage direction by Tommy Hutton ensures smooth running.



his start to the late Lawrence Wright and is living up to the most optimistic predictions the Daddy of the Alley made for him—he can blow that horn. His triple-tongued, trills, glissandos, are a joy—his tone spot on.

D'Oyly Carte dido Alan and Vera Styler thrill with their close-harmony and solo extracts from old and new musicals: they blend beautifully, intonation perfect. Organ-drums backing by Freddie Platt and Ted Hardy is impeccable throughout.

A show worth seeing over and over again.



**STAN  
STENNETT**  
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