

Archaos Theatre has come to Edinburgh. You could forgive them for wishing they had stayed at home

Council men turn chicken

Festival diary

Pierrot
Pillot-Bidon
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WE arrive on Tuesday. It has not been an easy journey.

Two trucks break down in Crewe, someone goes to Paris for spare parts, the chef's pig, Aurora, is banned by Customs, and I cannot import performing chickens. But we smuggle in 2,000 litres of wine and seven cases of Ricard, so we are happy and ready to set up.

Sankey our electrician breaks six vertebrae falling ten metres from the roof of the tent whilst rigging the lights. She tells us in hospital that whatever happens, The History Of The World will go on. If there are no officials from the council, then perhaps it will.

The council wants to shut down our show, so they cause trouble all week. Just to please them, we must remove whole rows of seats; we must build crash barriers, just like at a football ground to make a safety fence. Then they decide to interfere with the show and tell us we must change our acts, which is absurd.

The council make it so difficult that on Friday we are forced to say to them — tell us exactly what you want then leave us alone. If we agree, we will do what you require and the show goes on. If we do not agree, we are on strike.

We will not talk with the council again. They are bureaucrats who imagine they are circus directors, so we tell them to go and buy a tent.

Stefan says it is time for action. Next day he rides his motor bike over the roof of my car whilst I am driving along Princess Street. It is lucky that three television crews and five newspaper photographers happen to see it — now we have proof that we are not dangerous. It is also lucky that Mark

Borkowski, our publicist does not call the police. He thinks if I go to jail it will be good for publicity. I think it would be bad for the show and very bad for me. There is no Ricard in prison.

Anyway the audiences think the show is fantastic, except for two strange people. One stood up in the middle of the show, shouted: "You are perverts," and left. Another has been telling a newspaper that we are sick, depraved, immoral, obscene, indecent and devil-worshippers. This is rubbish. Just because I have a little chicken blood on my shirt!

The rest of the audience is happy, we are happy but the council is not. We hear from Dave Reeves of Zap Productions who is producing the show and has worked all week to keep our tent open and the council's mouths shut, that the council think we may be corrupting young people!

I am tired of this. We have worked across Europe without any trouble. The French Government support us, they encourage us to perform, they give us grants and they understand that we are making a new kind of show which people want to see. Only in England is there censorship — censorship by men in a town hall who know nothing about circus or theatre.

Why should we fight the Battle of Waterloo on Leith Links every day just to do what we can do freely anywhere else? The council say we are mad. Maybe we are. But they are crazy.

Next year Archaos will come back and run the council: the council can perform a circus. Our pig Aurora will be lord mayor.

Zut alors! We have only four cases of Ricard left.

Postscript: Entente cordiale at last on Friday 18th. The council are happy. Maybe I will sent them a case of Ricard. Perhaps this is what they wanted all along.