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Barred circus does show behind bars

By Nigel Reynolds, Arts Correspondent

ARCHAOS, the violent French circus troupe barred from juggling chainsaws and banned altogether in several towns, has given a private show for the toughest criminals in Glasgow's Barlinnie prison, it was disclosed yesterday.

The controversial performers, who usually include nudity, and smashing vehicles and household objects, gave a "toned down" 40-minute performance in the yard at Barlinnie's Special Unit last Tuesday.

Prison authorities were so delighted that Archaos, one of the hottest and most controversial acts at the official Edinburgh Festival this year, has been invited to return on September 3.

The performers, who are heavily subsidised by the French Government and constantly on tour in Europe as a symbol of modern French cul-

ture, will give a fuller show in front of the entire population of Barlinnie, Scotland's largest prison.

Mr Dan Gunn, governor of the special unit, denied yesterday that Archaos had been inappropriate. He said: "I think it was a fairly restrained performance. We try to make sure that nothing untoward happens."

Mr Mark Borkowski, a spokesman for Archaos, said all nudity and scenes of violence had been written out for the show. It had consisted mainly of acrobats and jugglers, including female clown Natalie juggling dead fish, demonstrations of basic circus skills and music.

Archaos yesterday refused to perform at a charity ball at Hoptoun House, Edinburgh, after they were told they could not do their full act for fear of damaging the building.