

# Circus goes over the Big Top

By ANDREW YOUNG

PARENTS have been dragging their children out of Archaos, the French revolutionary circus appearing on Leith Links as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

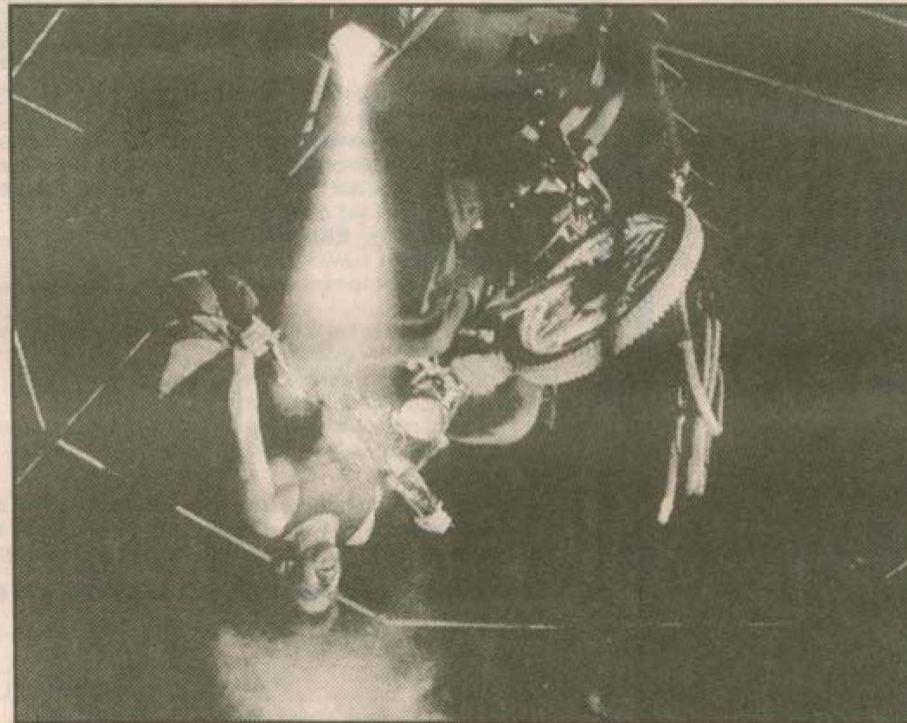
Having been under the belief that they had gone to see a conventional circus, they have been appalled at scenes of nudity, homosexuality, chain saw and iron bar fights, and enforced audience participation in the worst possible taste.

Those who have demanded their money back have been given it (£8 and £6 adults, £4 children).

However, an unrepentant Mark Borkowski, London agent and spokesman for Archaos, which is appearing with support from the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, said yesterday: "Now that word has got round about what kind of show this is, it is unlikely that there would be any more refunds.

"French values of what is decent are far more liberal than ours and people coming to see the show must be aware of this by now."

He admitted there had been a complaint on Saturday night when a woman attending with her husband and two children interrupted the show.



Archaos motor cyclist turns circus world upside down.

Mr Borkowski said: "She objected to two guys kissing, saying it was depraved. And she said that as we were giving concessionary rates for children we should make it blatantly clear that it was not suitable for kids."

The family was gently hustled out, their money returned.

Billed as The Last Show on Earth, Archaos describes itself as one of Europe's new circuses. It

does not have horses, opting for the more sensational ingredients of chainsaws, iron bars, hammers, motor cycles and a Mercedes, openly boasting that its members indulge in mad, wild and dangerous stunts.

Even before Friday opening night, a girl trapeze artist was injured in a 30ft fall.

The council has warned Archaos that its licence will be

revoked unless some aspects of the show are toned down and yesterday Mr Borkowski conceded that juggling with active chain saws had been removed from the bill.

He said that part of the nudity had been accidental. A woman was being foot-juggled when her top fell off. She has now decided to do the rest of the shows topless.

Other high or low lights of Archaos: an opening classical tableau with scantily-clad alleged virgins, homo-eroticism and macho poses. A Mad Max macho steps off his machine, grabs a pretty girl in the audience by the hair, kisses her on the mouth. In the background two male stage hands kiss.

□ *THE Edinburgh Festival and Fringe — the biggest cultural beanfeast in the world — opened yesterday and for the next three weeks the Herald will be covering the shows, the personalities, the news and the controversies. Today William Russell tries a diet of zabaglione and mash at the Film Festival, John Fowler takes a stroll along a mile of theatre, David Belcher prepares to laugh American style, and our critics review the new shows. On pages 6 & 7.*