

# Edinburgh Telegraph

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## Fringe chainsaw act ruled out

ONE OF the most bizarre and violent theatre groups at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival has been ordered to drop an act in which actors juggle with working chainsaws because it is too dangerous.

Archaios, The Chainsaw Circus, a 50-strong French troupe, has also been told by Edinburgh district council to drop part of its act in the festival that starts today in which clowns attempt to hypnotise chickens.

Described by critics as a cross between Hell's Angels and Billy Smart's, Archaios claims to be a traditional circus in which motorbikes and trucks replace horses and where chainsaws are used in stunts.

By Nigel Reynolds  
Arts Correspondent

The level of violence is so great that dozens of its members have been injured all over Europe in the past few years.

The troupe's English lighting manager, Miss Sarah Sankey, is in an Edinburgh hospital after fracturing six vertebrae in her spine and breaking an arm when she fell 20ft from a high-wire on Wednesday night.

M Pierot Bidon, the troupe's director, said yesterday that 30 cast members had been injured during a month-long run in London two years ago.

Seven actors had broken arms or fingers on a tour to Copenhagen earlier this year while another had lost all his teeth after being hit with a sledgehammer.

Edinburgh council officials agreed to grant a performance licence to the troupe this week only on condition that several acts were axed.

M Bidon said yesterday: "I can understand they are worried about safety, but we are not a danger to the audience."

"Sometimes we have accidents ourselves, but all my actors are very keen on the show and I often have to stop them from getting too excited."