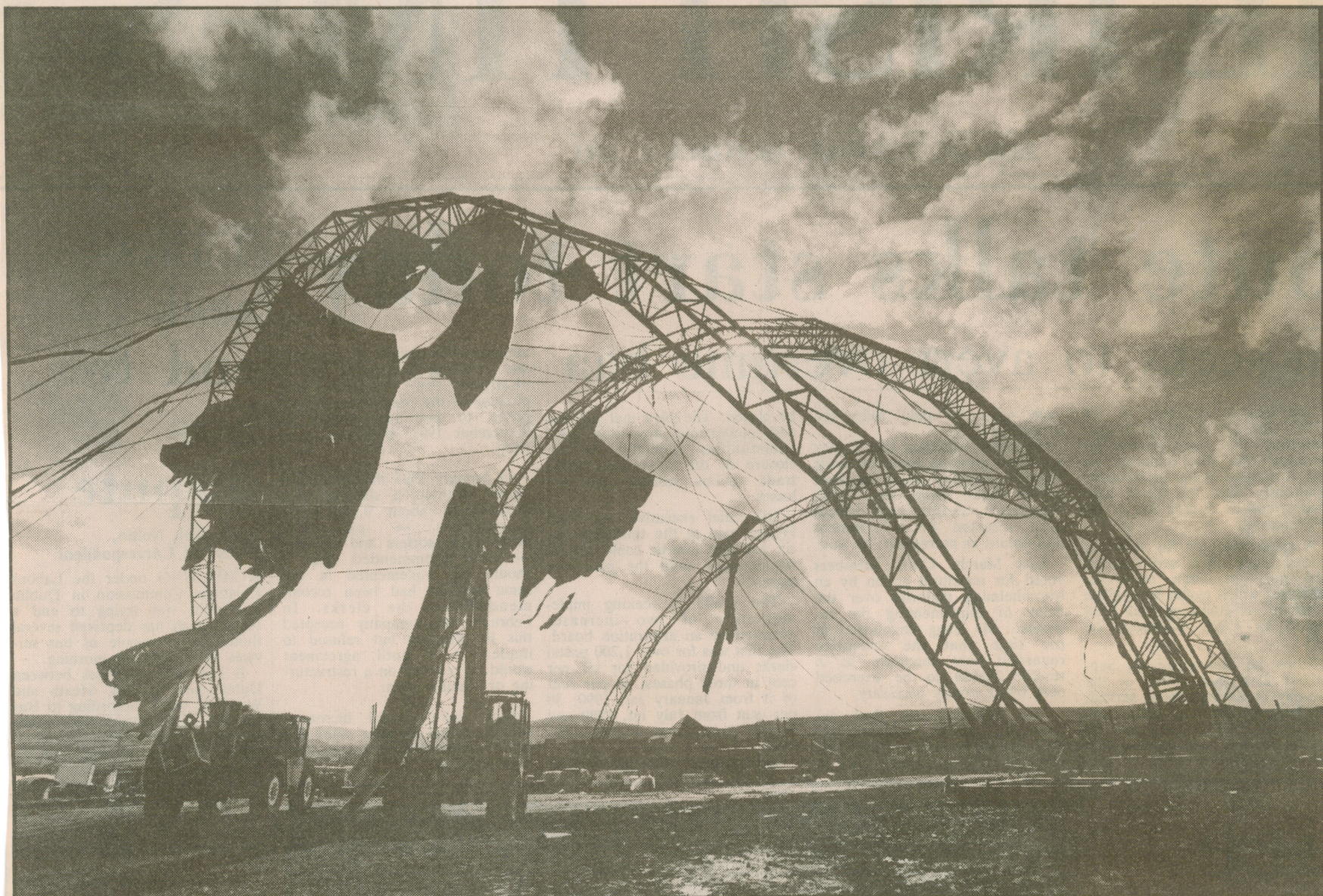


Archaos (5)
DURRANT'S TEL: 071-588-3671
 103 WHITECROSS STREET, LONDON EC1Y 8QT
 THE IRISH TIMES
 11-15 D'Olier Street, Dublin, Eire
 CIRC. 70,335 MORNING ISSUE
 DATE - 8 OCT 1991

WS

THE IRISH TIMES, Tuesday, October 8, 1991



Big Top with no top . . . the remains of the storm-damaged tent of the Archaos Theatre Company in Tallaght yesterday. — (Photograph: Matt Kavanagh)

Ill wind in Tallaght upstages festival

By Paddy Woodworth

GOOD performances by the President, Mrs Robinson, and the veteran actress Maureen Potter, were both upstaged at the official opening of the Irish Life Dublin Theatre Festival yesterday. The culprit, acting against his will, was the festival director, Tony O Dalaigh, who had a dramatic late announcement to make. At least two performances (tonight's and tomorrow's) of the most highly-publicised show in his programme have had to be cancelled.

An ill wind in Tallaght on Sunday afternoon had torn to shreds the special tent for "Metal Clown" the spectacular show to be staged by the French circus company Archaos, to an audience of 2,300 per night. The show is the financial — and

arguably the artistic — lynchpin of this most ambitious Dublin Theatre Festival, which will premiere 12 Irish plays and present 19 visiting companies over the next two weeks.

Mr O Dalaigh said that alternative tents — and alternative venues — were being sought, and he hoped that everyone who had bought tickets could be accommodated at additional shows later in the festival. However, speaking later to *The Irish Times*, he said that the problems involved in replacing the tent, which had been custom-made for the Archaos show, were considerable. The whole series of Archaos shows was now "definitely in the air," he said.

"At present, there is no one here in authority from Archaos for us to deal with.

We are awaiting the arrival of their agent, Mr Adrian Evans, of Circus International from Seville this evening. We have a lot of questions to ask.

"For many months now, the festival has put about 60 per cent of its technical resources into this single show. Now Archaos have failed to provide us with a space to perform in. Our understanding is that a tent for an event like this should normally be able to withstand winds of 160 mph. The winds on Sunday were only 50 mph. We will be looking into every clause of our contract, and of our insurance arrangements. We'll just have to take it in stages from here on in."

Earlier, Maureen Potter had welcomed guests to the opening, claiming that she had performed in early Dublin Theatre

Festivals "with Molly Malone on one side and Brian Boru on the other". She then graciously offered "to step aside, as so many people seem to be doing these days", for the President.

Mrs Robinson departed almost entirely from her supplied script to tell us that she finds it "an enormous joy that it's now part of my job to go to the theatre, and that I'm guaranteed an excellent seat." She praised the programme warmly and in detail. Irish theatre, she continued, had "never had an easy or smooth relationship with its audience. Its job is not to flatter but to tell the truth."

Less seriously, she concluded by quoting Fanny Burnett on First Nights: "One goes to the theatre to meet one's friends, and show that one is alive."