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FESTIVAL CIRCUS PERFORMER HURT AFTER FALLING 30FT FROM TRAPEZE

Picture: DUNCAN DINGSDALE



Sarah Sankey helps to put up the Big Top before her accident.

A "dangerous and sensational" show is in hospital in Edinburgh after falling from a trapeze.

Londoner Sarah Sankey, 23, is believed to have suffered spinal injuries in the accident.

She plunged about 30 ft to the ground as the French alternative circus Archaos was preparing for the start of its run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

A spokesman for Lothian Health Board said yesterday the performer was in a "stable and comfortable" condition in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary after being admitted the previous night.

The circus, which has featured chainsaws and motorbikes, has a reputation for danger.

Circus spokesman Mr Mark Borkowski said that last year it had 13 casualties.

Ms Sankey joined the circus during that trip to London last year. "She started off as an electrician doing the lights and progressed through," said Mr Borkowski.

She had become one of the thirty-strong troupe of performers in the circus, which is backed by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Mr Borkowski said she had been at the top of their tent in Leith Links rigging the trapeze when the accident happened.

Mr Borkowski said no tackle or safety nets were used in Archaos performances and added: "The show will have to go on."

One of the routines in the Archaos repertoire, juggling with live chainsaws, will not be featuring in the performances in Edinburgh.

The Festival Fringe programme describes Archaos as "one of Europe's 'new circuses.'"

"This French circus troupe with their mad, wild, dangerous stunts and acrobatics has propelled circus to the twenty-first century."

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