

RockPower

HARDER THAN THE REST

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Send in the Metal Clowns...

ARCHAOS are back in the ring with Metal Clown, another anarchic performance that turns circus on its head and chainsaws its legs off. LIZ FLAVELL survived the show...

Archaos are back in Britain with Metal Clown, a brand new show which yet again throws the rules of circus into the air – and one or two chainsaws as well. But chainsaws have lost the cutting edge as far as Archaos director Pierrot Pillet Bidon is concerned, even if audiences could probably watch performers juggle them from now until eternity.

Archaos was the rebel-with-a-cause baby born of Pierrot five years ago. Ever since, it has had audiences mesmerised by motorbike acrobatics, offbeat high-wire antics, freaks, burnt-out cars, loud, loud music and its sheer energy, working everyday images of city life, machinery and people into a

circus performance.

The vision behind Archaos has taken one more step towards art *not* for art's sake with Metal Clown using its strong sense of allegory to portray a corrupt and increasingly technological society exploiting the beauty of the world. The usual ramshackle array of broken cars, diesel lorries, bikes, fire, smoke, overpowering rock music courtesy of Brixton's Thunderdogs join the mindlessly gibbering, self-destructive and hilarious metal clowns, but to counter their image Pierrot has brought in a 40-strong Afro-Brazilian martial arts, dance and musical troupe.

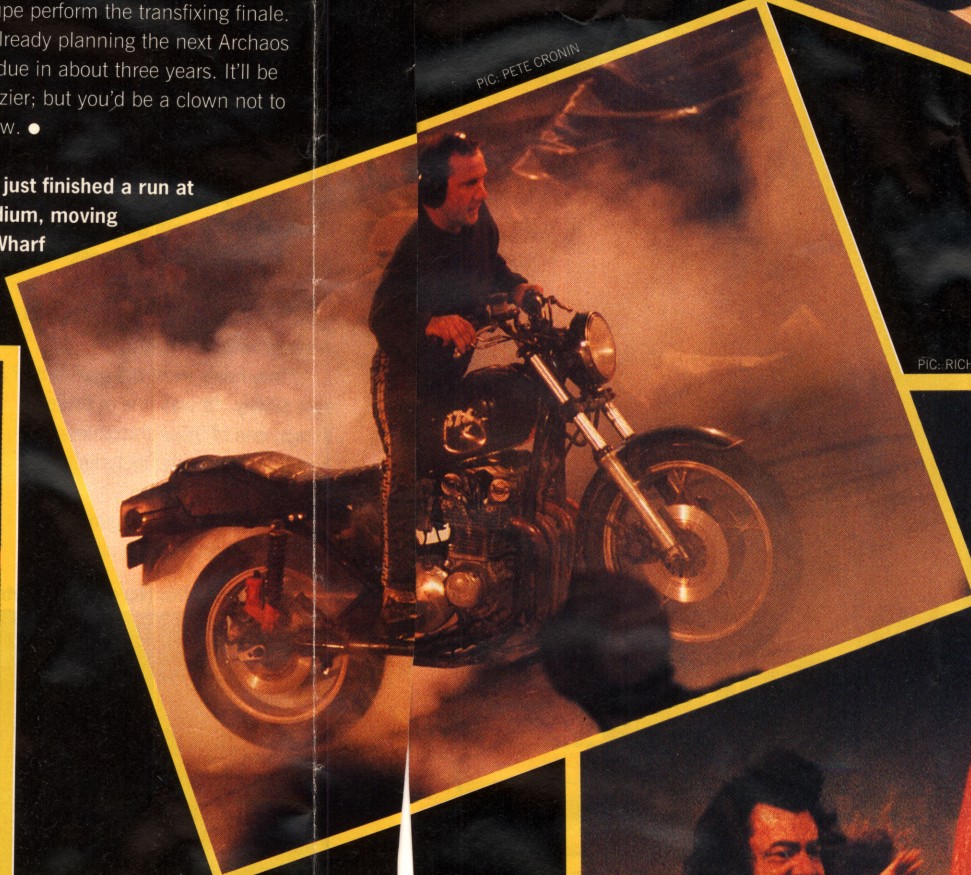
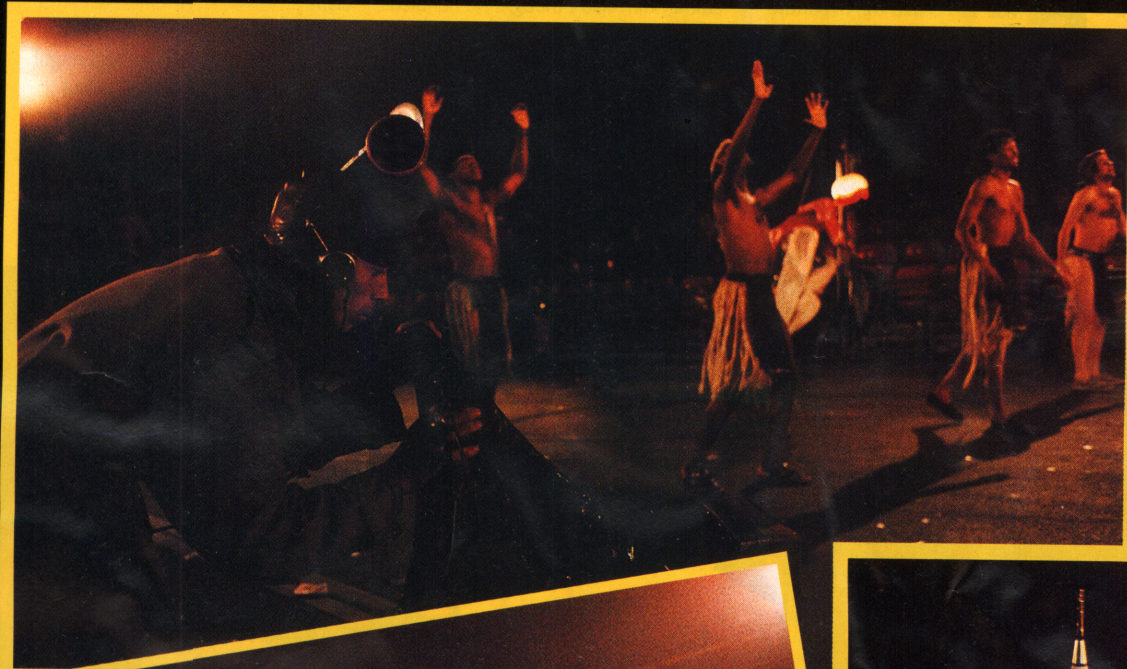
Another metaphorical visual wonderland is created, in which the rise of a dictator is envisioned in the sinister meanderings of a guy in a pink mac, on stilts, with a gas mask. Violence manifests itself in infanticide, abduction and cruelty as the Thunderdogs play louder; the belligerent metal clown drinks petrol from a doll's head to throw flames from his mouth; and cars career across the stage taking captives as they go. Death is represented by two aerialists who spin and weave on a mast high over the audience, encapsulating the danger of Archaos as they perform without a net.

The downfall of the dictator is finally visualised as the stilt walker is toppled from his lofty heights, and his balls are sliced off and juggled by another of the performers. The grace of the indigenous Brazilian people is once again allowed to flourish as the dance troupe perform the transfixing finale.

Pierrot is already planning the next Archaos performance, due in about three years. It'll be bigger and crazier; but you'd be a clown not to catch them now. •

Archaos have just finished a run at Wembley Stadium, moving to Battersea Wharf 3-22 December

PIC: RICHARD BELLIA



PIC: PETE CROWIN

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