



METAL CLOWNS

OK, so it's three years and three shows since Archaos' high-wire punks first enthralled British audiences and outraged council safety officers, and you probably think that the whole *Mad Max* cartoon apocalypse routine must be looking a bit too crusty for its own good these days. You figure that if you've seen one motorbike ballet, you've seen them all. If you do, you're in good company. Archaos' prime mover Pierrot Bidon admits that he doesn't get quite the same buzz from a chainsaw any more. As a result, he's completely revamped Archaos' act for their new show "Metal Clown". "The chainsaws have gone. The 'Compilation' show last year was the end of all that. We could have kept it going and earned a fortune. But Archaos have always been about change." Hence, although it's as spectacularly chaotic as usual, the new show (the biggest unsupported touring show currently operating in the world) adds up to an angry allegorical drama about the rape of the Third World, about the conflict between technology and nature. It pits South American street culture, a 40-strong martial arts dance troupe and "unashamed physical innocence" (ie gratuitous nudity) against an evil dictator on stilts and a whole parade of customised heavy machinery, with the highlight provided by a huge truck which supports a 40ft mobile trapeze rig. Inspired by Roman arenas, Brazilian carnival, American monster trucks and even joyriders, Bidon says the show represents a neat reworking of Archaos' origins. "We started as a circus with the odd theatrical element. With 'Metal Clown', we have become like a theatre company with the odd idea from the circus thrown in." So do all the changes mean that council safety officers can sleep easy? "Things have changed there too. The show is still about danger, but councils have finally realised that we know what we're doing, that we're not just a bunch of madmen." *Jim McClellan*

Archaos' Metal Clown will play at Wembley Stadium Car Park (081 900 1234) Oct 29-Nov 24