

FYI: Vol. IV, No. 1

Write a Jingle, Win a Prize

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey is partnering with Indaba Music to find a “youthful, modern and memorable anthem for use in promoting The Greatest Show on Earth.” Submissions should invoke the ambiance of the circus, convey the idea that Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey is coming to town and inspire audiences to go to the show. Contestants may begin submitting their jingles now through March 9, 2015. Prizes include \$5,000 in cash, travel, tickets and accommodations for 4 to Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey presents *Circus XTreme* at the Giant Center, Hershey, PA. and inclusion of the winning jingle in Ringling Bros. promotions, 4 tickets to Hersey Park and Pr statues on Indaba Music. For contest rules and guidelines go to <http://Indabamusic.com/ringling>

Emmett Kelly Lives On (But Not as You Might Expect)

A new play based on the relationship between Emmett Kelly and his son is currently in the development stage co-written by Jonathan Cerullo and Stephen Woodburn. Cerullo had been the choreographer of the Big Apple Circus several seasons ago. He became involved in the project when he met Stasia Kelly, Emmett’s daughter by his second wife Evie, who happened to mention that she was trying to write a play about her father. Since then a revised version of the script, based on the reaction it got in Sarasota at a reading at the Ringling museum this past July is being prepared. That first public reading came about, when Dwight Currie, the museum’s director of programming became interested in the project. The co-authors hope to have another reading, this time in New York City, sometime this spring. Although the play’s story is told through a variety of circus acts, it does not focus on Kelly’s professional life, but rather on the ironically tragic relationship he had with his first born son, Emmett Kelly, Jr.

Cirque du Soleil Seeking Financial Restructuring

The Canadian cirque juggernaut has hired an investment bank, Goldman Sachs, to help in its previously announced attempt to find a strategic partner. Translation: a financial investor. In December Guy Laliberte, the company’s founder told the *Wall Street Journal* that he was looking to sell a minority share, between 20 and 30%, aiming for a deal that would bring the company’s value to somewhere between \$1.5bn to \$2.5bn. Its revenue dropped to \$850m in 2013 from \$1bn in 2012.

Circus World Finally Seeing Black

Circus World Museum is expecting to close its books on the 2014 season in the black, through a combination of increased revenue and decreased expenditures. The Baraboo, WI attraction took in \$1.62 million in operating revue this past year, which although below its hoped for target, did exceed the \$1.48 million take it realized in 2013. Key to the increase was enhanced fund raising, rather than admissions. As a result the museum will end the year with about \$1.7million on hand against anticipated expenses of \$1.65million, down from \$1.7m the previous year.

Professional Circus Schools Popping Up All Over the Country

The Circus Conservatory of America, the country's first circus college (with the emphasis on "college") says it is about a year ahead of schedule in getting ready to open in Portland, Maine. Those involved hope to make Portland a "booming circus arts market in the same way that New York City is a magnet in the theatre world." What they are hoping to do is fill the void that has previously existed in the United States at the highest level of professional circus training, and thus making this country finally competitive in the international market. Now young artists will no longer have to go to Montreal, Belgium or France to learn the craft and artistry of circus, or so the thinking goes. The training facility is currently slated to open to the public early this year, while other facilities are being constructed to accommodate the larger conservatory. "So we are ahead of schedule," Conservatory President Peter Nielsen, told the local press, "due to the overwhelming reception we've had locally from people who want to support us and make it happen, [as well as] the confidence we've received from the international circus community." Once the conservatory is fully operational it will provide high-level professional training in a college atmosphere.

Meanwhile in Evanston, Illinois, The Actor's Gymnasium, created in 1995, is ready to embark on the next step in its development by launching a professional circus training program of its own, set to open in September of this year under the direction of master teacher Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi. Applications for all interested students are now being accepted at www.actorgymnasium.org. Deadline for early application is February 17. The program is designed to prepare students for professional circus performance or for audition into a multi-year program, which suggests that although its program is designed for dedicated artists looking to take their circus training and theatrical skills to the next level, there will still be one level beyond what this program is able to deliver. However, to provide a foundation for the professional training Actor's Gymnasium is partnering with the award-winning professional theatre companies Lookingglass Theatre and Lucky Plush Productions, who will provide instruction in dance and physical theatre.

More praise for *From Barnum & Bailey to Feld, the Creative Evolution of the Greatest Show on Earth*, ...the new book by Ernest Albrecht, editor/publisher of Spectacle.

"An extraordinary book. An incredible work of scholarship, reportage and writing.

I thoroughly enjoyed it."

Paul Binder, founder Big Apple Circus

