

AROUND FOR AN AFTERNOON WITH FOSSETTS

FA-DA! Rosa Presto with Geraldine Cormiskey and Marion Fosssett



IT'S A KINDA MAGIC! Sarah Fosssett, Geraldine, Rosa Presto and Marina Demchuk

er's hands. But the scariest act was the Globe of Death - a motorbike stunt which also wowed the crowds at Top Gear in the RDS.

Argentinian stuntmen Ariel, Johnny and biker chick Dirsee looked as if they were about to become Hell's Angels for real as they performed somersaults inside the metal structure upside down, their helmets knocking sparks off the metal.

Giggling

"The Globe has claimed lives," ringmistress Marion Fosssett said to a hushed crowd.

After that it was time for a laugh. Moldovan contortionist Konstantin had everyone giggling as he ran amok in his Slinky - which looked like a giant, three-pronged worm. He had the kids in the audience screaming with laughter as he swooped down on them. But the

biggest kid in the circus was Otto the Clown, aka Otto Fosssett (21), who has been clowning around since he was nine years old.

Otto, who used to perform with ponies and camels, is among the last of the Fosssett family to have worked with animals, as the circus can no longer find big enough showgrounds to keep them in comfort.

Circus matriarch Mrs Fosssett says she misses the animals. "They were like my babies," the granny of 14 told the Sunday World. "My pet camel used to follow me everywhere just to give me a kiss. Animal rights people tar all circuses with the one brush but we were always good to our animals."

Still svelte and glamorous, Mrs Fosssett watched proudly last weekend as her youngest grandchild, three-year-old Bobbi Bell, opened the show with a song. The angelic tot was

joined by the rest of the Fosssett family including her big sister Megan (15) and her aunty Marion Fosssett - the glamorous Ringmistress.

Fossetts, which started in Mallow, Co Cork, has been touring Ireland non-stop for 120 years - making it the longest-running circus in the world. "We're older than the State," Marion points out.

Art

But unlike indoor theatre, the circus is not supported by massive grants. "The Abbey got €80 million last year but we got just €67k," says promoter Charles O'Brien. "We are a proper theatre - the only difference is we move our theatre twice a week. It's the ultimate art form."

● Fosssett's Circus runs until January 4 at the Royal Hospital, Kilmmainham. Tickets are €15 midweek and €17 weekends (€3 off with voucher).

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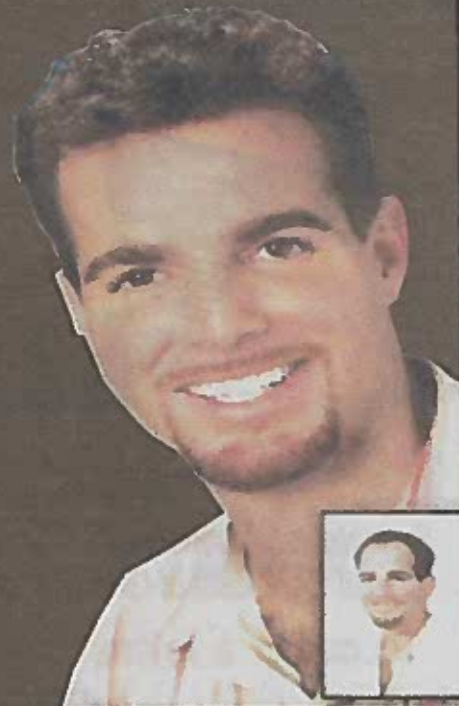


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