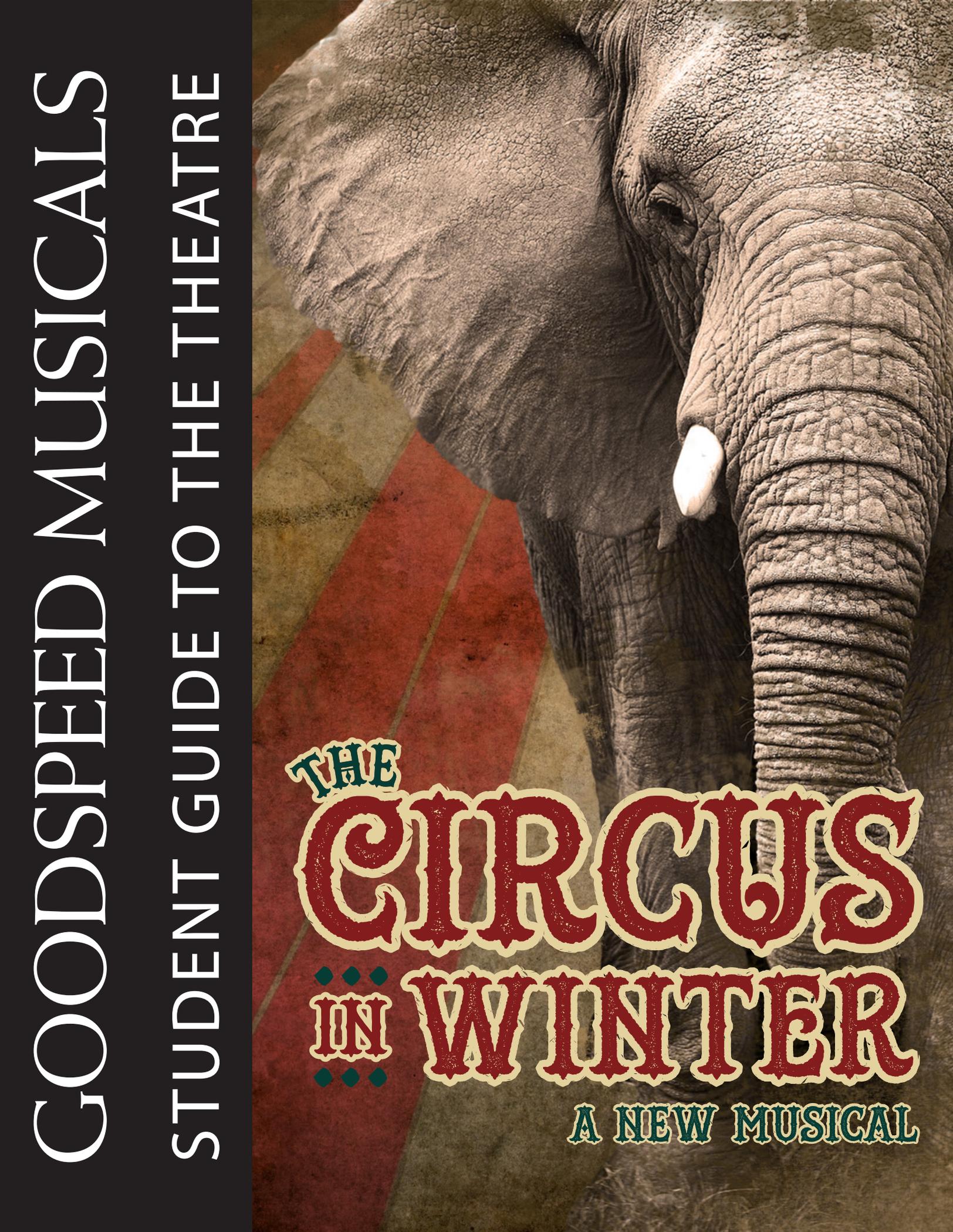


GOODSPEED MUSICALS

STUDENT GUIDE TO THE THEATRE



THE
CIRCUS
IN WINTER
A NEW MUSICAL

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THE CIRCUS IN WINTER
The Norma Terris Theatre
Oct 23 - Nov 16, 2014

Music and Lyrics by
BEN CLARK

Book by
HUNTER FOSTER
&
BETH TURCOTTE

Inspired by the novel by
CATHY DAY

Lighting Design by
DONALD HOLDER

Costume Design by
MARINA DRAGHICI

Scenic Design by
JASON SHERWOOD

Choreographed by
SPENCER LIFF

Directed by
JOE CALARCO

Produced for
Goodspeed Musicals by
MICHAEL P. PRICE

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The Max Showalter Center for
Education in Musical Theatre

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CHARACTER SUMMARY



Shannon Antalan as Pearly, Aaron Ramey as Wallace, Dee Roscioli as Jennie, Charles Gray as Jo-Jo, and James Penca as Ollie. ©EMMA

JAMES PORTER: The father of Wallace Porter. He has little tolerance for his son's fanciful nature and spends his days gambling.

WALLACE PORTER: The son of James Porter who helps his father run the family stables. He has been fascinated with the circus from a young age, particularly the elephants. After the death of his beloved wife, Irene, Wallace sells the stables and opens *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*.

JENNIE DIXIANNA: An exotic fortune teller and spinning aerialist for the circus. She joined the circus as a teenager to escape an abusive home and eventually falls in love with Wallace Porter.

CLYDE HOLLENBACH: The previous owner of *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*.

IRENE PORTER: Wallace Porter's wife who tragically passes away during childbirth.

PEARLY: A young black woman and former slave. Her real name is Dinah Cornelia Washington and she works as a servant in a railway camp before joining the circus. She is forced to leave her home after she falls in love with a white man and becomes pregnant with his child.

GUS: Pearly's father.

GORDON: A young Union soldier who falls in love with Pearly. He tells her about his time working for *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie* in his home state of Indiana.

DODD: A young Union soldier who takes advantage of the black women he oversees.

ELEPHANT JACK: The trainer for the circus' elephant, Ceasar, and the jealous former lover of Jennie Dixianna.

GORDON, JR.: Pearly and Gordon's son.

OLLIE: A young man who has grown up as a clown in the circus and longs to make his living as an artist. He has also fallen under Jennie Dixianna's spell.

MR. AND MRS. COLONEL: An elderly couple that moves to Lima, Indiana and hires Ollie to paint murals in their home.

ELIZABETH: Gordon's wife.

ETHEL HOBZIZNI, JO-JO, & TONY COLORADO: Circus performers and personnel.

SHOW SYNOPSIS

The show opens on a dark stage. Suddenly, lights come up on a multitude of circus performers. James Porter, the father of Wallace Porter, walks through the crowd to a small door followed by his son. Young Wallace is instructed to wait outside while his father plays cards with members of the circus troupe. While waiting, Young Wallace catches his first glimpse of Caesar the elephant and develops a fascination with the majestic pachyderm. James storms out of the card game while Wallace is admiring Caesar and forcibly drags his son away from the circus.

Soon after their visit to the circus grounds, James falls ill and dies leaving Wallace with a huge amount of debt. Eventually, Wallace is able to pay off his father's creditors and turns their once-shabby family stables into a thriving enterprise. Despite his success, Wallace has never forgotten his love for the circus and quickly sells his profitable stable business to buy a small, run down circus.

On a business trip for his newly acquired enterprise, *The Great Porter Circus and Menagerie*, Wallace meets a young woman named Irene. The pair fall in love on their first date at the circus, get married, and go back to Lima, Indiana. After Wallace learns that Irene is pregnant with their first child, he becomes obsessed with material things and begins spending more time designing their new mansion than supporting his wife. While he is busily overseeing the construction of his palatial home, Wallace hires a manager, Mr. Colonel, to help him with the day to day operations of the circus. Mr. Colonel finds Wallace a new act for his circus, an aerialist and psychic named Jennie Dixieanna. Wallace is intrigued by Jennie's clairvoyant abilities and she demonstrates her talent for him. While looking into the future, Jennie sees that Irene has gone into premature labor and she tells Wallace to return home as soon as he can. Wallace rushes home to find Irene has died while giving birth to their son.

While Wallace grieves for his wife, Pearly is coping with the loss of her mother and the changes occurring in her world due to the Civil War. While working in a railway camp with her father, Gus, Pearly meets a young, white Union soldier named Gordon. Despite the dangers of having a mixed race relationship, they fall in love and begin meeting in secret. Gus discovers the clandestine meetings and confronts Pearly. Caught, she confesses that she has fallen in love with Gordon and is pregnant with his child. Gus is horrified by his daughter's confession and demands that Pearly leave the camp immediately. Despite his daughter's pleas for forgiveness, Gus insists that he must report her relationship with Gordon to the proper authorities; however, he gives her time to escape by telling the camp supervisors that, upon learning about the relationship, he killed his daughter and threw her body in the river. Frightened and alone, Pearly flees the railway camp and travels the country, moving from place to place. One day she sees a train with "The Great Porter

Circus and Menagerie" written on the side and recalls Gordon telling her how he used to work for a circus with the same name. Pearly and her young son, Gordon, Jr., immediately stow away on the train. Ollie, a reluctant performer with the circus, who eventually offers them a part in his act, discovers the pair.

Most of the performers welcome Pearly and Gordon into their community, however, Elephant Jack is the exception. He feels that Pearly and Gordon don't belong with the circus. Elephant Jack becomes furious when Pearly shows an aptitude for animal training and he dislikes when Porter allows her to work with his elephant, Caesar. Porter, who has been in mourning for his wife, begins an affair with Jennie that further enrages her former lover, Elephant Jack. At the beginning of Jennie and Wallace's relationship, it is revealed that Irene Porter delivered a healthy baby boy before her death and Wallace asked Jennie to take the baby to a place where he would be content. The situation is further complicated when it is revealed that Ollie is Porter's son and that Jennie has had a physical relationship with both men.

Ollie is in love with Jennie and he begs her to leave the circus with him at the end of the season. Instead of returning his feelings as he hoped, she reveals his parentage. Ollie is shocked and angry to learn that Wallace Porter is his father and quits the circus. In an emotional and alcohol induced haze he stumbles to Caesar's pen and releases the elephant. Freed from his cage, Caesar goes on a rampage through town, injuring several circus workers and killing Elephant Jack before Porter shoots him. A torrential downpour begins after Caesar is killed and it causes the town to flood. The circus loses all of its animals and eight of its employees to the flood. Jennie Dixieanna is not among the dead but has vanished without a trace.

MEET THE WRITERS



Ben Clark

BEN CLARK (*Music & Lyrics*) is a singer, songwriter, composer, and an Indiana native. Ben has been writing music since age 14 and *The Circus in Winter* marks his full-length musical debut. For this piece he has received overwhelming response from both educational and professional worlds including the Kennedy Center Award for Outstanding Musical Composition. In 2012, he received a fellowship at the O'Neill Center and was an invited artist at the Johnny Mercer Writer's Colony at Goodspeed Musicals. Ben works in New York as a recording artist with his band, Ben Clark and the Long Shadows. He is releasing a full-length solo album in 2014 called *Time and the Miles Apart*. He is a graduate of Ball State University and currently lives in Brooklyn.



Hunter Foster

HUNTER FOSTER (*Book*) wrote the books for the Off-Broadway musicals *Summer of '42*, *Bonnie and Clyde: a Folktale*, and *The Hollow*. Additionally, Hunter has starred on Broadway: Leo Bloom in *The Producers*, Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Tony® nomination), Bobby Strong in *Urinetown* (Outer Critic nomination), *Les Misérables*, *Grease*, *Footloose* and Alan Menken's *King David*. Off-Broadway: *Ordinary Days* at Roundabout Underground, Lincoln Center Theater's *Happiness* (Drama Desk nomination), *Frankenstein* (Victor Frankenstein), *Dust, Modern Orthodox, Urinetown* (Lortel nomination). Regional: *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Signature Theatre – Helen Hayes nomination), *The Government Inspector* (Guthrie), *Mister Roberts* (Kennedy Center), *Party Come Here* (Williamstown), and *Children of Eden* (Papermill). He is a graduate of the University of Michigan Musical Theatre Program.



Beth Turcotte

BETH TURCOTTE (*Book*) has been an inspirational theatre artist and educator devoted to the development of new work and emerging talent for the past 30 years. She has earned accolades in both professional and educational arenas for her visionary projects and passion for arts education. Beth is the recipient of the 2012 Creative Endeavor Award for her dedication to arts education and the creative process. In her community work, she created the Cornerstone Center for the Arts, an inner-city arts institution discovering young unheard voices and exposing over 15,000 children to theatre, dance and music. She is a Professor of Theatre and Dance Performance at Ball State University and received her MFA from Southern Methodist University.

THE CIRCUS IN WINTER ROUTE BOOK CONTINUED



The cast at the first read-through at Goodspeed. ©Diane Sobolewski

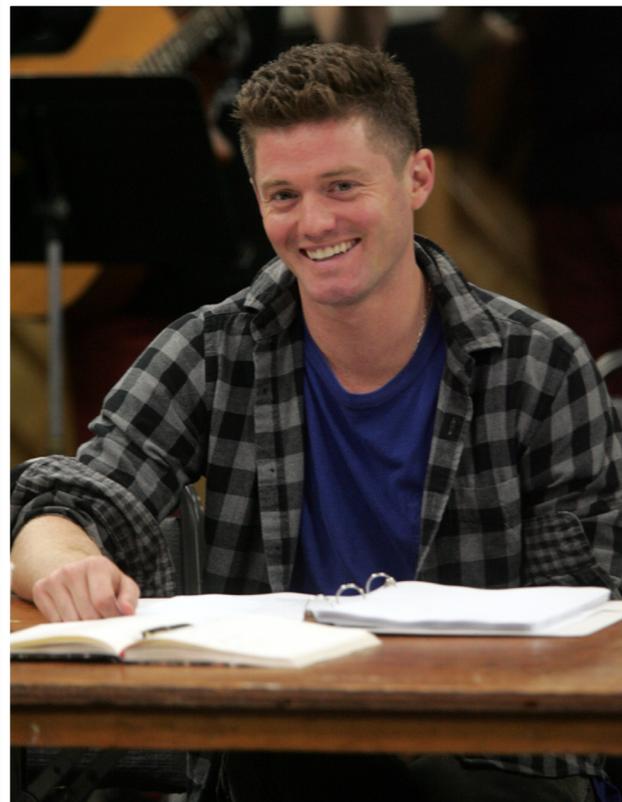
Theater. Then, *The Circus in Winter* traveled to Peru, Indiana and was performed at the Ole Olsen Memorial Theater, the International Circus Hall of Fame, and finally, at the Muncie Civic Theatre.

The Circus in Winter became a fully-realized production in 2011 and was performed at Ball State as part of the University Theatre's 2011-2012 season. The musical was then selected to be performed at the KC-ACFTF's Region III Festival at the University of Illinois in 2012. During the KC-ACFTF performances, *The Circus in Winter* was identified as one of the top five shows in the nation and won seven awards at the KC-ACFTF national awards ceremony in April 2012.

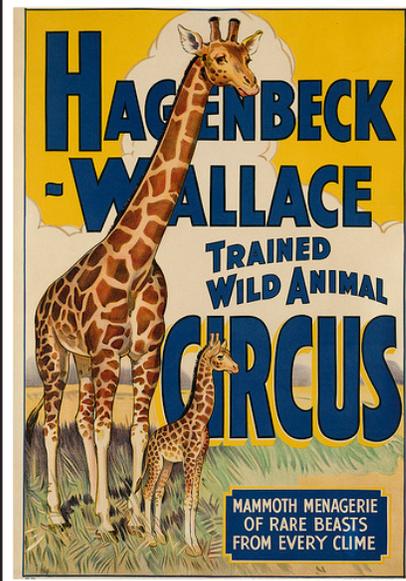
Subsequent to the astonishing success of *The Circus in Winter* at KC-ACFTF, the National Alliance for Music Theatre (NAMT) chose the musical as one of the finalists in their yearly new work

competition. Hundreds of scripts are considered annually for NAMT's Festival of New Musicals, however, only eight are selected to give condensed performances in what has become a leading industry event and a major stepping stone towards a full Broadway production. *The Circus in Winter* was given the honor of both opening and closing the event and was the first new work to do so in the history of NAMT.

Goodspeed Musicals' production of *The Circus in Winter* at the Norma Terris Theatre in Chester, Connecticut will be the first full-length performance of the musical since 2012 and the first performance using a revised libretto written by Hunter Foster and Beth Turcotte.



Choreographer Spencer Liff at the first read-through. ©Diane Sobolewski



This eventually led to a parade filled with gilt covered wagons, calliopes, floats, and performers that would march down the main street of each town the circus visited. The parade became a staple of the late 19th century circus by giving crowds a taste of the performances that awaited them under the big top. This tradition continued until the advancement of the automobile made it impossible for performers and animals to move freely through town streets.

THE HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS

At the height of its popularity there were dozens of traveling circuses making the trip around the country, one of which was the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* that served as the inspiration for *The Circus in Winter*. The *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* was originally two separate entities; *The Carl Hagenbeck Circus*, which was founded by noted animal trainer Carl Hagenbeck, and *The Great Wallace Show*, founded by Benjamin

other when Wallace claimed full control of the circus in 1890 and changed the name to the *B.E. Wallace Circus*. The *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* came into being in 1907 when Benjamin Wallace purchased *The Carl Hagenbeck Circus* and merged it with his own company. Carl Hagenbeck protested at the use of his name in the title since he no longer had any connection to the circus and tried to sue Wallace but lost the battle in court.

The *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* wintered in Wallace's hometown of Peru, Indiana and went through the flood of 1913 losing 8 elephants, 21 lions and tigers, and 8 horses when the Wabash River overflowed its banks. That same year, Wallace sold his share of the circus. The flood was not the only tragedy to strike the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*; in 1918, a train engineer fell asleep and ran his locomotive into the rear of the Hagenbeck-Wallace train near Hammond, Indiana. At least 86 people died in the train wreck and 127 more were injured. Demonstrating the meaning of the words, "the show must go on," several competing circuses loaned Hagenbeck-Wallace their equipment and performers so that only two performances were canceled due to the tragedy.

Shortly after the train accident, Hagenbeck-Wallace was bought by the American Circus Company, which boasted shows like the *Sells-Floto Circus* and *John Robinson Shows* on its roster. John Nicholas Ringling bought the American Circus Company and all subsidiary companies in the late 1920s for over \$1 million. The circus split from the Ringling enterprise in 1935 and began operating independently as *The Hagenbeck-Wallace and Forepaugh-Sells Bros. Circus* until it ceased operations in 1938. The compound in Peru, Indiana that was formerly the winter home of the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus* now functions as the Circus Hall of Fame.

Wallace. Hagenbeck pioneered the use of reward-based animal training as opposed to fear-based training that was utilized by most trainers in the 19th century, and eventually his methods were adopted by zoos and circuses across the world.

Benjamin Wallace was a livery and stable owner in Peru, Indiana who bought a circus with his business partner James Anderson in 1884. Like most circus partnerships, this one ended with one partner buying out the



Hagenbeck-Wallace clowns



CLICK HERE
to learn more about
circus history

LINK: <http://www.circusinamerica.org>



Photo by Frederick W. Glasier

Circuses tried withholding portions of the roustabouts' pay to be given to them in one lump sum at the end of the season to encourage men to stay on, however, some unscrupulous circus organizations began practicing "red lighting" to avoid giving payment. "Red lighting" was the practice of throwing a laborer from a moving train. If the man survived the fall, all he would see were the disappearing red lights of the train in the distance. There was also a distinct mistrust felt by people in the circus towards the outside world, the nomadic shows would become societies unto themselves and anything "not circus" was viewed with

deep suspicion.

CIRCUS CULTURE

Like most societies, the circus had its own hierarchy and could be broken into several categories: management, employees, and performers. Management was at the top of the chain of command and consisted of owners, publicity managers, general managers, and labor managers. Employees and performers were usually considered to be of equal status but had their own rankings within their groups.

Employees of the circus would include ticket sellers, candy butchers, and front door men at the top of the caste system, since they usually worked their way up to management positions, followed by other workers, and roustabouts at the bottom of the system.

Performers were divided according to their specialty with equestrians and aerialists being awarded the most prestigious positions followed by animal trainers, acrobats, clowns, and sideshow freaks.

Circus personnel would have their place in the circus hierarchy and this could be identified by their sleeping assignments and place in the cook tent line. Featured performers and key personnel would be assigned a stateroom or a section of a railcar (depending on available space) while roustabouts could be assigned two to a bunk, if they received a bunk at all.



Photo by Frederick W. Glasier

INTERESTING FACTS



Clyde Beatty



- P.T. Barnum was born in Bethel Connecticut.
- For 50 years, Bridgeport Connecticut was the winter home of *Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth*. The Ringling Brothers moved the headquarters of the show to Sarasota, Florida in 1927. The Barnum Museum is located in Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Hunter Foster is one of the authors of the revised book for *The Circus in Winter* and his sister, Tony winner Sutton Foster, starred in the 2012 presentation of *The Circus in Winter* at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals.
- Cathy Day has two novels that have been published, *Comeback Season: How I Learned to Play the Game of Love* and *The Circus in Winter*. She is in the process of writing her third novel which will also begin with a C.
- Joe Skelton, the father of famous performer Red Skelton, worked as a clown in the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*.
- Famed animal trainer, Clyde Beatty, toured with the *Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus*.
- The trunk of an elephant is so sensitive that it can pick up a pin.
- There are two main species of elephants: the African elephant and the Indian elephant.
- Most circus elephants are Indian elephants.
- An elephant's hair is so coarse that trainers sometimes use a blowtorch to trim it.
- Since the Animal Welfare Act came into law in 1966, every major circus that uses animal performers has been cited for violating the minimal standards of care.

CIRCUS BACKGROUND & HISTORY

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THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Seeing a musical at The Norma Terris Theatre is a unique and exciting experience. All the members of the production, both cast and crew, work hard to give you a great show. As an audience member, you also have an important job. You must help the performers give their best performance possible. You can do this by practicing these rules of theater etiquette:

- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when the performance is over. Applause is how you say “thank you” to the performer. The actors will bow as you applaud. That is how they say “Thank you for coming.”
- Do stand and applaud if you thought the show was outstanding.
- Don’t forget to turn off your cell phone. A ringing or buzzing phone can be very distracting. It can also be embarrassing for you if it is your phone that is disrupting the show!
- Don’t text during the performance.
- Make sure to visit the restroom before the production begins.
- Don’t speak or whisper during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency should whispering occur.
- Remember that the overture (introductory music) in musical theatre is part of the performance, so remain silent when the show begins.
- Don’t take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and it can result in an accident.
- Don’t put your feet up on the seats or kick the seat in front of you.
- Do sit ONLY when your seat is in the folded down position.
- Do remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, calmly walk toward the nearest exit.



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