



And now, in the Center Ring



The Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus is billed as the Greatest Show on the Earth.

It has lions, tigers, elephants, some of the world's most beautiful women and almost 100 clowns. It seems like a cast of thousands.

According to Assistant Performance Director Jeff Loseff, 300 people are responsible for producing the show. Many of them change costumes as often as 10 times a show, making the cast seem larger than it is.

Backstage, people in various degrees of undress scurry about, preparing for the next act. Many speak in foreign languages, others have heavily-laced accents.

The area surrounding the stage entrance is harried. Elephants barely miss stepping on a midget assigned to keep the big beasts in line. A white tiger takes a swipe at a clown leaning a bit too close to the tiger's cage.

The Greatest Show on Earth is advertised as wonderful family entertainment. Part of its success is the feeling of family which each performer has with his or her peers.

Loseff says the circus is like a big family, not necessarily a happy family, but big nevertheless. The turnover rate is negligible.

Even so, one young woman was heard to say she'd do anything to audition for a chorus line part.

But in the center ring, the ringmaster calls for the ponies. The show always goes on.



Story and Photographs
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