The Fitzgerald Brothers’ Circus: Considering Circus Entertainments in Late Colonial New Zealand

From the 1850s through to the 1870s the discovery of gold around the Pacific Rim at various sites in California, New Zealand, and the eastern colonies of Australia, gave rise to an itinerant performance culture which induced an assortment of troupes to travel in the wake of the moving labour force of miners and camp followers. Historical accounts of the circus in colonial Australia have shown that out of the itinerant circus troupes that provided entertainment to gold rush settlements, the genre developed to become, arguably, the most popular form of entertainment throughout the colonies of Australasia during the latter years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth-centuries. To date, a broad historical retrieval of the circus in New Zealand has yet to be undertaken. Consideration of the cultural recreations of colonial New Zealand society has tended to relegate circus to a subset of entertainments termed gold rush culture, a grouping which includes opera, vaudeville, theatre and circus shows. However, my study of the vibrant, internationalist, and prolific entertainments presented in New Zealand by the Fitzgerald Brothers’ Circus in the years 1887-1904, from which this essay is derived, challenges the historic relegation of circus to the frontier settlements or to the periphery of colonial society. The FitzGeralds were part of a group of elite entertainment organizations that employed advanced marketing and management strategies to entrepreneur major tours of the colony in this period. This essay aims, in some measure, to reclaim the position circus entertainment acquired in the cultural fabric of late colonial life, and in the cultural imaginary of the public of New Zealand during this era.

The FitzGerald Brothers’ Circus gathered itself together in the late 1880s out of the collected experience and operational knowledge of several earlier circuses. Of the three brothers, Dan (1859-1906) and Tom (1865-1906) were the active proprietors of the circus, while John (1862-1922), a New South Wales barrister and State Labor parliamentarian, provided the company with a familial base in Sydney from where he managed finances and legalities for the organization. It was during the early 1890s, when the eastern colonies of continental Australia were experiencing severe depression and widespread labour unrest, that the company emerged as the largest colonial circus in Australasia. By 1902 the organization had grown so vast materially that it split into two companies which systematically divided up their established touring routes. A FitzGerald company began touring the colonial outposts of Asia in 1904, showing for two years through the Dutch East Indies, Singapore and the Straits Territories, India, and Shanghai. In early 1906, Dan and Tom both passed away within three months of each other and despite the efforts of Tom’s wife, Millie, who kept a vestige of the company running for several years through the smaller towns of Australia, the company had ceased to operate by late 1908.

Between the years 1894-1904, the FitzGerald Brothers’ Circus played eight tours through New Zealand, remaining here for up to seven months at a time as they worked the major centres and small towns between Auckland and the Bluff. The terrain and the popular taste of the colony had been tested by Dan and Tom FitzGerald on an early visit in 1887 when The Herbert and Fitzgerald London Circus crossed to New Zealand from Hobart and spent ten months playing through the colony twice. Analysis of the FitzGerals’ nineteen years of touring reveals that by comparison, Tasmania and Western Australia, colonies also at
considerable distance from the dense population centres of continental Australia’s east coast, received seven and four visits from the circus respectively between the years 1886-1905. During the 1890s, the principally equestrian company consisted of a substantial stud, the largest travelling menagerie of exotic and indigenous species at that time in Australasia, and a performance troupe gathered from the colonies and the entertainment centres of the Northern hemisphere. When they played the major centres of New Zealand their performance marquee accommodated over 3,000 people and contemporary newspapers reported that the tent was customarily full. Even a cursory consideration of the FitzGerals’ performance history indicates that the company enjoyed strong popularity here and that the colony was a sound financial proposition for the circus. The frequency with which they returned to New Zealand and the length of their tours also confirms that New Zealand was an essential part of the touring territory routinely accepted by entertainment companies of this era.

The range of advertising channels available to a nineteenth century circus included printed materials which were circulated around a town by the advance agents of the circus, daily advertisements placed by the circus management in the amusement columns of the local newspapers, and editorial columns in community newspapers. Taken overall, evidence gathered from the colonial press delivers a range of voices commenting upon the circus. Display advertising is where the voice of the circus management can be heard, foregrounding the acts and elements of program change they believed would hold the strongest popular draw. Amusement columns were also the locus of response and apology from the management to complaints voiced by the public at the performance site. Reviews convey the voice of the journalistic observer, detailing the turns he enjoyed and cribbing or discarding the rest, and in occasional essays encompassing interviews we hear the reported voices of agents, proprietors, and occasionally, performers. The advent of performer publicity photos in the late 1890s provides a window onto the manner of the performers’ presentation of themselves, while sketch illustrations depict the newspaper artist’s reception of moments in the live action of performance. The multi-vocality of these sources, when considered altogether, renders a prismatic, if fragmentary reflection of the personalities, marketing strategies, and cultural productions of the circus. Aside from its regular presence in the press, the nineteenth-century circus also produced an array of advertising materials such as advance couriers and heralds, posters, daybills and programs. Of the printed matter produced for thousands of performances across nineteen years, very few pieces of FitzGerald ephemera have survived. The largest cache is held at the Turnbull Library and a few of those artefacts provide a catalyst to the following discussion.

“Unfolding the Wonders of Christendom”

A circus herald dated December 1 places the FitzGerald Brothers’ Circus and Menagerie of Wild Performing Animals in Wellington for a seven night season in 1894. Issued by the Sydney printers Troedel and Cooper, the front page has been overprinted with the season details, indicating it was a generic item produced in bulk prior to the trans-Tasman journey and distributed throughout the seven month tour. The circus herald was an organ of advance publicity, designed to excite potential audience by highlighting the sensational, the extraordinary, or the admirable qualities of the show and its proprietors. Customarily, a herald conveyed those select aspects of the performance assessed by the management as holding the strongest popular appeal. For the performance historian this type of document offers an insight into how the circus management read the taste of their audience, this is where we perceive what the management wanted their public to see. In the case of the 1894 herald, the FitzGerals were targeting their show to a middle class public. They drew
attention to their exotic animal holdings, they advertised the wealth and respectability of their enterprise, and proposed that circus amusements were an improving influence on the minds and outlook of society’s youth. Defence of the circus on the grounds that it provided inspiration to live a healthy life appears amidst the copious text of the document.

In these days when we have so many large cities where are employed so many young men in offices, counting-houses, and other places of business, often their physical development is almost entirely neglected...the consequence is, that before they reach the age when they should be the strongest and healthiest, they frequently begin to show signs of weakness and decay; this should not be so, and in our opinion there is no place where they can observe the advantage of physical development better than in the Circus. Here they can see young athletes, whom nature has not endowed with a better frame and constitution than themselves, but who, by proper practice, have so improved and perfected their physical organization as to be able to perform almost incredible feats, and exhibit a strength that would otherwise appear impossible. The only objection anyone can have to the circus is the immoral influences which have been frequently attached to it. Now, if those influences can be abrogated, why should the Circus be any more immoral than the Theatre, Opera, or Concert? We think it is time for the masses to unbias their minds, and judge without prejudice. The day of Puritanism is over.

In keeping with the discrete marketing purpose of circus heralds, this one delivers a lot more information than a circus poster and was intended for a public who would study the document, then perhaps retain it as a piece of memorabilia after the live event. On the front page images of the menagerie inhabitants are crammed between slogans encouraging the reader to visit the ‘zoological garden on wheels’ where ‘the wonders of Christendom’ from remote regions of the earth could be viewed ‘by the youth of the Empire of the southern seas’. The flip side carries drawings of the circus’s equestrian acts amongst substantial text blocks, but on balance, the herald preferences the exotic captives of the menagerie over the human and equine performers of the circus. The principal argument of the document promotes the Circus as a forum for natural history education and, therefore, the public good.

Newspaper advertising from throughout the tour also indicates the circus management calculated that promoting their show as rational recreation was the ideal strategy to adopt for a New Zealand audience. An article from the Otago Witness is typical of the cogent argument employed by the company and supported by the local press.

The FitzGerald Brothers claim there is no more interesting study than that of natural history, and the bringing before the student the great numbers of wild beasts, reptiles, birds, &c. which the show exhibits grants an opportunity of gaining more practical knowledge in that line than can be obtained in a year’s study at college. Here the peculiarities of the different animals may be observed, and when once the student has become familiar with them, from practical observation, the lesson is indelibly written in his mind.vii

Earlier in the century the American entrepreneur P.T. Barnum had shrewdly explored the interactivity of natural history and popular entertainments, finding that the combination of recent scientific knowledge and popular shows had a strong appeal to the middle classes of the United States.viii The FitzGeralds’ alliance with the science of natural history and its attendant discourse of man’s evolutionary descent followed in the wake of Barnum’s strategies and was strengthened moreover, when the FitzGerals took delivery of their first
orang-utan early in 1894.\textsuperscript{ix} Touted in press advertisements as ‘our nearest relative’, it was on the shoulders of the young ape that the mantle of the crucial link in the Darwinian descent of man was repeatedly hung and throughout the seven month tour of 1894-5 the orang-utan was the company’s principal advertising pitch.\textsuperscript{v} A curious juxtaposition appeared in the \textit{Auckland Star} of October 9 1894, where the marketing of the orang-utan was accompanied by a poem.

With a view to rise in the social scale,
He shaved his bristles and docked his tail;
He grew moustachios and he took his tub,
And he paid his guineas to a toilet club.
But it would not do,
His scheme fell through.
He bought white ties and he bought dress suits,
He crammed his feet into bright tight boots,
And to start in life on a bran new plan,
He christened himself Darwinian Man.

This poem, and the circus’s exhortation to come and see ‘the only orang-utang ever alive in Australasia’, appeared alongside an advertisement for the visiting American lecturer and noted female emancipist, Mrs Annie Besant, who was presenting her oration concerning ‘The Evolution of Man’ to the public of Auckland. Such were the anxieties of the time, and the FitzGeralds were alert to exploiting them.

Journalistic observations indicate that the FitzGeralds’ menagerie did indeed provide an educational forum for children and their parents. The circus introduced some of the planet’s most impressive animals to the residents of New Zealand, and they transported with them living specimens of some of the Australian continent’s unique and rarely seen creatures.\textsuperscript{xii} Two rare sets of visual images record the visit of the FitzGeralds to Dunedin in February 1895; in both cases the menagerie animals rather than the circus performers were the subject choice. The sketchbook of William Mathew Hodgkins, from Dunedin, 1895, is devoted to a variety of animals of the menagerie and their keepers. Overall, there is a tentative quality to the drawings; they may represent Hodgkins’ first encounter with and first attempt at drawing these animals.\textsuperscript{xii} The most detailed piece is a watercolour of the orang-utan, pasted into the notebook with the designation ‘FitzGeralds’ Circus Feb ’95’ noted in the top corner. An addendum appears in the bottom corner, ‘Mr FitzGerald tells me she died at Riverton soon afterwards.’

A series of glass plate photographs taken by the Burton Brothers and held in the collection of the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, record the tigers in their travelling cages, the young orang-utan sitting in the lap of a menagerie assistant, and the caged lions with their “tamer”.\textsuperscript{xiii} These remnant images collectively signify that the visit of the menagerie was an important event worth recording; they also attest to the novelty of such a collection of animals in New Zealand at this time. New Zealand’s first public zoo opened in Wellington in 1907, and while small menageries regularly visited the colony, the opportunity of witnessing a collection of exotics such as those exhibited by the FitzGeralds was rare.\textsuperscript{xiv} Time spent in the menagerie tent may have been, for some spectators, a passive experience which filled the wait before show time, but these traces reveal that for others, the animals provided an interest which was beyond mere uninformed curiosity.
FitzGerald Bros Great Circus and Menagerie of Performing Wild Animals, New Zealand Tour 1894-5

The circus arrived in Auckland on October 9, 1894. In what must have been an impressive show of labour and organization, the animals, personnel, and paraphernalia were unloaded at the dock and the performance site at the Harbour Board Reclamation in Quay Street was rigged for opening night. The New Zealand Observer and Free Lance published an artist’s sketch of he events at the wharf; the paper also recorded a few statistics regarding the company and its impedimenta. The main tent was 285ft in diameter with a seating capacity of 3,000; in addition, a large menagerie tent, dressing tents, tents for the accommodation of the men, and three horse tents each 72ft long, also occupied the site; the total circus pitch covered nearly two acres; the stud numbered 120 head; the total number of artists was 40; and twenty vehicles were required to convey the paraphernalia. The arrival of the circus coincided with a period of utter paucity of spare cash in the city, regardless of which Auckland’s various newspapers recorded attendance as phenomenal with the 3,000 seat tent pushed to standing room. The acts presented on this tour encompassed turns usual to the nineteenth-century circus. Clowning entr’actes, acrobatics, gymnastics, contortion, and an exhibition of lion taming were peppered through the show, but the bulk of the program involved horses in one manner or another. Throughout its history the FitzGeralds’ Circus specialised in equestrianism in a variety of forms and notwithstanding the foregrounding of the menagerie in the advertising literature, equine acts constituted seventy per cent of the FitzGeralds’ program in 1894-5. The popular reception of the Auckland season was reported in newspapers throughout New Zealand and this positive media coverage sanctioned the circus as a desirable recreational site.

Over the ensuing seven months the FitzGerals played through New Zealand twice, making use of the various methods of transportation available. From Auckland they travelled south by train and played through the Waikato settlements, then returned to Auckland from where they took two steamers from Manakau Harbour to New Plymouth. After playing through the districts of Taranaki and Wanganui they showed across the island to Napier, then headed south through the Manawatu district, travelling along the train line from Palmerston North, through the towns of the Wairarapa to Wellington. Their progress between the two major cities of the North Island took the best part of two months. From Wellington the company crossed Cook Strait to Picton and when they appeared at the nearby town of Blenheim the leader of the circus band, a German cornet virtuoso named Von der Mehden, became the focus of community interaction with the circus. Von der Mehden’s recent composition ‘Bucephaleon’ was apparently a current favourite with several local bands who paid homage to the composer with a public performance of the quick step prior to one of the performances. From Marlborough the circus travelled by steamer to the northerly towns of the West Coast, played their way south to Hokitika, then hauled the animal wagons, paraphernalia, and company across Haast Pass to Christchurch where they opened a ten day season on January 19, 1895. From Christchurch the circus played its way south to Dunedin, opening on February 15, and after playing to the southerly extent of the South Island, the company turned around and played its way north, reaching Auckland in April.

The logistics, advance organization, and care required to move the entire circus community by rail, coastal steamer, and road wagons during the seven month tour must have been considerable. While the close proximity of towns in New Zealand would seem in some ways to be attractive to a touring concern, the terrain of the country must have offered challenges, especially when one considers that performers and animals were often travelling by horse drawn wagons and needed to be in peak condition at all times for performance and
exhibition. Towards the end of April the personnel of the circus went into winter camp on a property near Papatoetoe where they spelled the stud and the menagerie animals. During this hiatus, the proprietors, Dan and Tom FitzGerald, travelled through the United States, Britain, and Europe seeking out a new company of novelty performers from the ‘principal theatres, music halls, and circuses of the old world’. xxix

The recorded response to the FitzGeralds in New Zealand was as effusive and popular as it had been for several years in the other colonies of Australasia. Quite apart from the attraction of the performances, the shared bonds of colonial regionality stimulated the New Zealand public’s affection for the company. The Auckland press praised the FitzGeralds for not being American, calculating it was the proprietors’ colonial sensibilities which caused them to deliver all that they promised and more, rather than following, as the writer perceived it, the American system of promising much and delivering much less. xxi The company’s promotional materials from this period certainly support the proposition that during the 1890s New Zealanders regarded themselves as part of a much bigger colonial region and that within the idiom of trans-Tasman culture, New Zealand and Australia were not regarded as ‘significantly different places’. xxiii When reading through the various press reports published in New Zealand during these years, or the densely written herald which has survived from the 1894-5 tour, apparent anomalies stand out in the language. The thing that seems at first surprising is that the FitzGeralds did not particularize their advertising copy for a New Zealand audience. Slogans such as ‘A card to the public of Australia…worked with Australian money, brains and energy…the money taken is circulated in Australia’, alongside claims that elements of the show were the ‘only’ or ‘the best’ in Australia/Australasia, appear at odds with the separate national identities we are now accustomed to respecting from either country. These seeming incongruities only make sense within the context of the shared colonial sensibilities that linked the people of New Zealand and the other British settler colonies in the region at this time in their history. Perceptions of the impropriety of the FitzGeralds’ advertising language in New Zealand fade away when we accept that national identity had not been strongly imagined by the community or constructed by political agendas within New Zealand up to this time.

“All the latest London novelties…at less than London prices”: the New London Company 1895-6 xxiv

The FitzGeralds’ increase in size and popularity during the early years of the 1890s had been supported with marketing rhetoric that was stridently nationalistic. Reflecting a broad cultural shift in continental Australia which saw expressions of emergent national identity in the literary and visual art productions of the 1880s-90s, the FitzGeralds’ advertising literature included catchphrases such as ‘Australia for Australians…come and see what Australians can do now…we claim to give a performance by Australian-born artists, who are equal to any known athletes in the world.’ The isolationist and protectionist ideology adopted by the company in the years 1890-3 eschewed Old World circus acts as being passé, if not positively redundant in the bright new world of fin de siècle colonial entertainment. However, a surprising repositioning of the company occurred in 1895. When Dan and Tom returned from their tour of the entertainment centres of the Northern hemisphere they presented a downsized company of international artists titled the FitzGerald Brothers’ New London Company. The four artists gathered for the new company were a young Rumanian-born aerial gymnast Adelina Antonio, recently of the London Aquarium; an extreme high-diver named Charles Peart; a duo of contortionists engaged from the Nouveau Cirque in Paris named Les Freres Éclairs; and an American performer, E.L. Probasco and his ‘educated’ horse Mahomet.
who had recently been working at London’s music halls. No longer parochial and vernacular in their performances, nor isolationist or protectionist in their promotion, the FitzGeralds now presented their enterprise as an international concern with links to the entertainment centres of London, Paris and New York. With the presentation of the New London Company the FitzGeralds brought international performers from the British metropolis to the dominions on the periphery of the British Empire. The context of this assemblage of imported performers was subtly different to that of a touring company emanating from Britain or the United States. Tours by companies from the Northern hemisphere brought to the colonies their choice of culturally civilising productions, by contrast, the New London Company was selected by native-born colonials confident they knew how to read and provide for the tastes of their countrymen.xxv After a quick six week tour of Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, the company crossed to Auckland in November 1895 where they joined with the standing company.

Amongst the FitzGerald ephemera held by the Turnbull Library is a program from January, 1896 issued for the New London Company’s season in Christchurch.xxvi The typographic layout of the program reflects the recent changes to the company. The front page lists and describes the acts of the artists recently engaged from overseas, while the double page spread inside details the running order of the evening show. The foregrounding of the imported ‘stars’, highlighted on the front cover as the principal draw, is a nuance suggestive of the company’s recently adopted hierarchy.

The tour of 1895-6 lasted four months and followed a more rationalized route than the previous summer. The circus adhered closely to the rail lines and, where possible, transported audience in from outlying areas. In Auckland, daily advertisements signalled that the circus would not be visiting the towns of the Waikato district as it had in the previous year. Instead, the management had arranged with the Railways for special trains and fares to run from the Waikato on designated days. Rail excursions had been arranged for those living to the north of the city along the Helensville line, while arrangements were also advised regarding the Northern Steamship Company which had agreed to run special fare excursions from the Thames and the Coromandel areas on separate days. Some of these excursion fares were provided with extended expiry dates, thus facilitating the opportunity for spending a few extra days as cultural tourists in Auckland. When the circus played the New Plymouth area trains were laid on from Waitara and when in Christchurch, altered timetable arrangements were advertised for trains servicing the districts of Amberley, Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Oxford which lay beyond the city centre.

The public transport arrangements brokered by the management on this tour indicate that the FitzGeralds had influence with the relevant strata of colonial administration and, moreover, that the company’s productions were publicly sanctioned by those echelons of power. A system of transporting audience from country areas in to major urban centres was also in place during the company’s recent quick tour of the four major cities of eastern Australia. It is arguable that the politically endorsed management strategies employed by the company for this tour, and in ensuing years, confirm that the cultural position occupied by the circus was by this time respectably middle class. This was not a performance troupe on the cultural periphery; the organization was sited much closer to the cultural centre of Australasian colonial society.

While we cannot retrieve the kind of data that would allow us to ascertain the precise social composition of the circus’s audience, their appeal to the broad middle class is supported by other information contained in the program from Christchurch. Fifty separate advertisements
cram the peripheral columns of the four page program and the types of services and goods represented tell us something about the circus’ audience. The businesses appearing in the program placed their advertisements, presumably, because they knew the public they were targeting would be present in the audience at the FitzGerald’s shows. Multiple ad blocks for hotels vie for the business of families, tourists, commercial travellers, theatrical companies and others. The presence of advertisements for grain and chaff merchants, livery stables, saddlers and equerries probably reflect, to a certain extent, the commercial dealings of the circus while in Christchurch. As a predominantly equestrian concern with a sizable stud to feed and service, the businesses with whom the circus traded would have been offered advertising space in the program for gratis or as contra for services. But aside from the page space occupied by commercial services for hospitality or equine management, twenty four other advertisements market goods and services to a public with disposable cash. Services for dentistry, photography, auctioneering and monumental masonry appear alongside advertisements for jewellers, watch dealers, silversmiths, clothiers, drapers and furniture dealers. Two staffing agencies are also represented in the circus program, one for male and female servants, the other an agent for harvest hands, grooms, gardeners, shepherds and female servants.

Recorded responses to the New London Company indicate that it engendered a sense of connectedness between the circus’s public and the British Isles from where a large percentage of the Australasian colonial population had been transplanted. Under the heading of “A Sensational Show”, a journalist for the Southland Times reported “they have given the inhabitants of this colony an idea of the wonderful performances that are continually being presented to the habitués of the leading places of amusement in London, Paris and other cities of the old world.”

The FitzGerald’s engaged acts from Britain, Europe and the United States on a regular basis throughout the ensuing ten years, integrating the imported performers into the FitzGerald Circus community for the length of their contracts. Amongst the novelties and elite athletes gathered by the brothers were a group of performing animals purchased from Carl Hagenbeck in Germany, performers from the Variety stages of the Northern hemisphere, strongmen, and the first troupe of Sumo wrestlers to leave Japan. The Turnbull Library holds programs and other ephemera from many of the FitzGerald’s subsequent tours of New Zealand, but the stories of those performances, and the nuanced reflections of society which can be read in those performances, belong to a larger study.
NOTES


ii In particular the circus of Hayes and Benhamo, later Benhamo’s English Circus, 1878-1884, thereafter Dan Fitzgerald with the Herbert Family, 1884-1888.

iii The Wirth Brothers’ Circus was the other principal circus in Australasia until 1893 when the company departed the country and did not return until 1900.

iv Descriptions of the typical circus *herald* and *courier* from the nineteenth-century are provided in Pfening, Jnr, F.D., “Circus couriers of the late 1800s”, *Bandwagon*, Vol 3, No 1 (Jan-Feb), 1959 pp3-4. “A herald is usually one sheet of paper printed on both sides, approximately 10 inches wide and 29 ½ inches long. In contrast, a courier is usually considerably smaller in size, perhaps 10 x 13 inches in size, and eight to twenty four pages in length.”

A *daybill* was a single sheet issued for the program played on a specific day. The Turnbull Library holds one *daybill* for the FitzGerals issued for a performance in Adelaide in 1901. Eph-B-CABOT-Circus Fitzgerald-01

v Quoted from the circus *herald* from Wellington, 1894, at Eph-E-CIRCUS-1894-01

vi See previous note

vii Otago Witness, February 14, 1895 p37. This text was reprinted verbatim from the company’s *herald* for the tour.


ix The FitzGerals appear to have taken delivery of the orang-utan by April, 1894. Hobart Mercury, April 18, 1894

x Charles Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* was first published in 1859.

xi *Auckland Star*, October 9, 1894. The company was advertising lions and lionesses, Bengal tigers, puma, panther, cheetah, Burman tigers, bear, orang-utan, monkeys, jackals, wolves, dingoes, and Tasmanian devils.

xii Hodgkins, William Mathew (1833-1898) [Sketchbook] Dunedin [18]95 E-391. Animals of the FitzGerals’ Menagerie represented in the sketchbook include a tiger cub, baboon, bear, orang-utan and lion. There are also several sketches of menagerie assistants.


It is probable that the tamer pictured with the lions is Jack Graham, an American wrestler who first came to Australia with Cooper and Bailey’s Circus in 1877 and was working as lion tamer with the FitzGerals throughout 1894-5.

xiv In 1906 the English menagerie firm of Bostock and Wombwell visited New Zealand and bequeathed one of their lions to the city of Wellington. For a time the lion was kept at the Botanical Gardens and was subsequently moved to Newtown Park, part of which was developed into New Zealand’s first zoo. See Bostock, Edward Henry. (1972) *Menageries, Circuses, and Theatres*. New York:B.Blom (reprint of 1927 edn)


xvi New Zealand Observer and Free Lance, October 6 and 20, 1894


xviii The modern circus genre is dated from 1768. From the late eighteenth-century through the early decades of the nineteenth-century, equestrian acts constituted the principal part of circus programs in England, Europe, and North America. From the combination of horse, human skill, and circular ring, a variety of styles developed including *voltige*, a combination of acrobatics and good riding where the rider leaps on and off a moving horse; *bareback* or *jockey* acts, where the rider spends more time on the back of the horse performing feats of balance rather than acrobatics; *liberty horses*, which might solve arithmetic problems for their trainer, or might perform complicated movement formations in perfectly matched groups; and *haut école*, or *high school*, an aristocratic form of equitation which persists today in places such as Spanish Riding Schools and dressage competitions.

xix *The Marlborough Express*, December 11 and 12, 1894

xx In Christchurch the public transport timetables were altered to allow for the late closing of the circus. The changes took in the needs of people living in Lyttleton for whom the 10.30 pm train was held back until the end of the show, and the city’s tram network made provision for ‘late trams everywhere, New Brighton included’. *The Press*, January 19 and 22, 1895

xxi Advertising slogan for the FitzGerald Brothers’ New London Company published in the *Brisbane Courier*, November 5, 1895.
Of the theatrical entrepreneurs working in Australia at this time – Brough, Boucicoult, Williamson, Musgrove, Barry, Dampier, and Rickards – only the FitzGerald Brothers could lay claim to being native born. Brough, Musgrove, Dampier and Rickards were English, Boucicoult and Williamson were American, and Dan Barry was from Dublin.

Eph-B-CIRCUS 1896-01