

**THE CIRCUS 1870-1950. £120. Taschen Publishing. Available through [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)** "The Circus 1870-1950" is not so much a book as a tome. In fact it is so large and heavy it had to be delivered to me by Parcel Force. It measures 45 x 30 cms. and is 8 cms. deep and is so heavy you can barely lift it! It is simply the largest book on any subject I have ever seen, and once you have "found a home for this tome" you would be well-advised to leave it there! The Mail on Sunday described it as "big and thick enough to be a coffee table in its own right". It was published by the German firm Taschen (publishers in 2004 of the book "1000 Clowns More or Less") and its advertised retail price in England was £120 but there were 'deals' to be done, with the Mail on Sunday and the Times offering at discounted price of £108, and it can also be found on the website of Amazon at £64 or less. Luckily, Amazon's price also includes the mighty cost of postage...

With an ISBN number of 978-3-8228-5153-1, those who can afford its hefty price tag should be able to order it from any bookshop, and it is almost superfluous to say it is the most sumptuous book ever published on the subject of Circus. Sumptuous but somewhat vapid, one might well add. For it covers a strangely limited period of circus history and is basically restricted to American circus history, mostly that concerning the Barnum and Bailey and Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey shows, along with a number of other American circuses. Multilingual in English, German and French, I do not quite see the appeal for European readers for so expensive a book. Even if swiftly reduced in price it will still be an expensive buy for most people.

It is edited by Noel Daniel from Los Angeles, who, despite the name, is a woman. It has three major contributors, Fred Dahlinger Jnr., American circus historian, and author of several books on the American circus; Linda Granfield, whose 2001 book "Circus - An Album" is unknown to me (although as I have over 3,000 circus books, maybe I just forgot about it) and my old Parisian friend Dominique Jando, now ensconced in America, writer of several great works on Circus, and a former director of The Big Apple Circus and of the San Francisco School of Circus Arts, and a co-founder of the prestigious Festival Mondial du Cirque in Paris.

With 670 pages, and printed on fine art paper (not that dreary, muddy paper so often used these days which drag down the quality of most books) it is a breathtaking compendium of histor-

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