

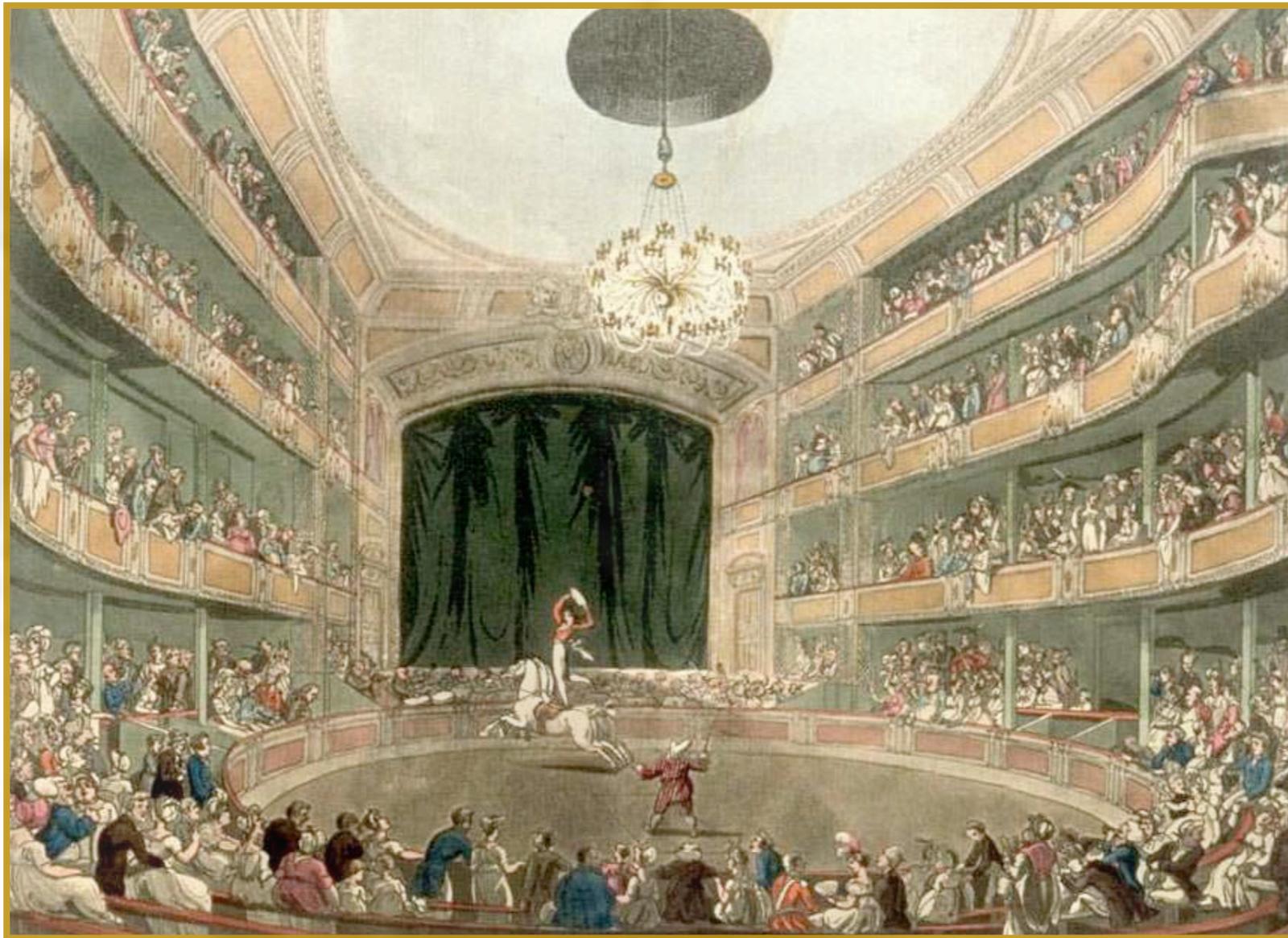


SPLATS

Splats History of the Circus



Splats Entertainment 2011



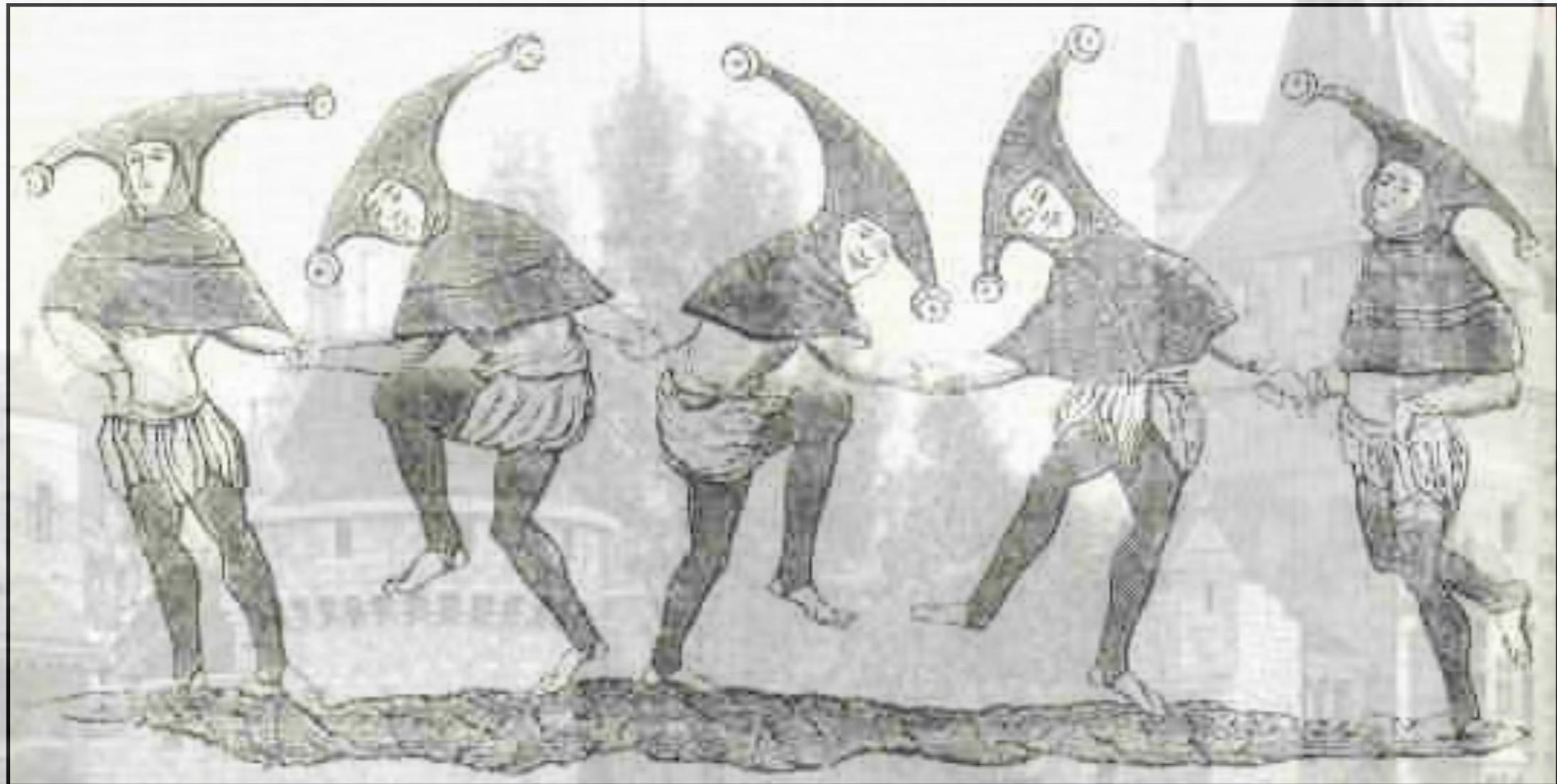
The circus as we know it was started in London in 1798 by a showman called Phillip Astley. He wanted to find the best way to display his tricks whilst riding on a horse. He decided that a circle was good as the horses could run around it and the most amount of people could see it.



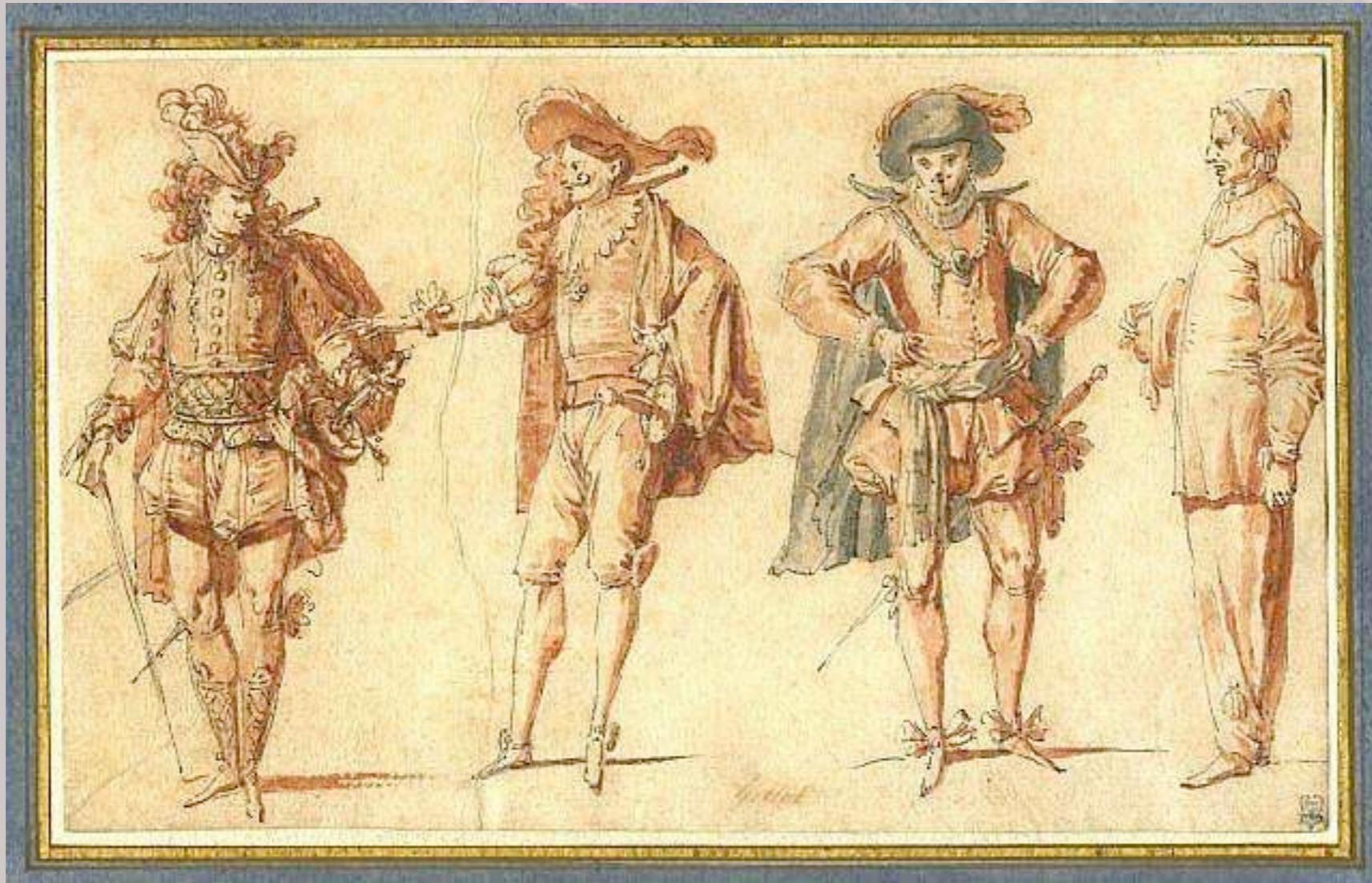
He decided to call it the circus after the Roman circular entertainments where they had chariot races and battles like the Colosseum in Rome. This was called the circus. His circus became very popular and they started introducing jugglers and acrobats in between the horse acts to give them time to get the next show ready.



Before this there have always been groups of travelling entertainers going from town to town performing acrobatics, clowning shows and juggling skills. You find these performers in pictures on Ancient Greek vases, Roman Statues, Ancient Chinese texts, in hieroglyphic in the tombs of the Pharaohs and medieval paintings.



They were called Jester in the middle ages and would travel between rich knights castles performing their shows. The very rich kings and knights had their own Jester.



The Italians made it into an art form with Commedia dell'arte in the Tudor times. Commedia was an improvisational art form that began in northern Italy and spread to other parts of Europe in the 16th century. Traveling entertainers would set up outdoor stages and perform juggling, acrobatics and small plays based on stock scenarios and characters.



Commedia is where one of the most famous clown characters Pierrot comes from. Pierrot is the French version of Pedrolino, who was a character in commedia dell'arte.



Picasso's famous Cubist painting "The Three Musicians" featured two commedia dell'arte characters, Harlequin and Pierrot, along with a monk.



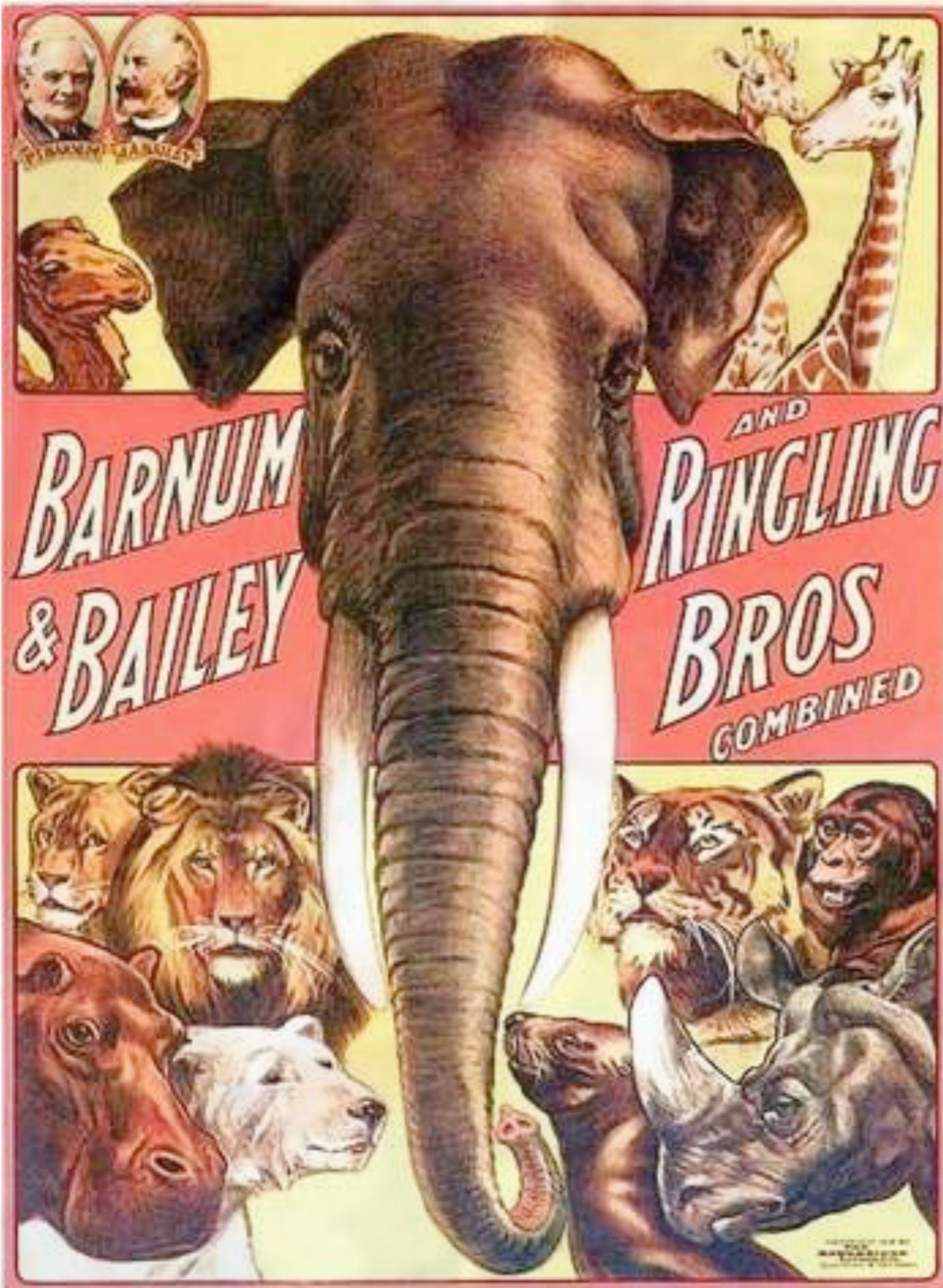
Commedia also is where Punch and Judy comes from.



And today's Pantomimes also have their roots in
Commedia dell'arte



This is Grimaldi. He is the first white faced clown that we see today. There is a clown church dedicated to him.



In Victorian times the circus became huge and none bigger than the American circus of Barnham. He ended up with a three ring circus. With wild animals and flying trapeze acts.



In modern times people don't like to see wild animals in shows as they are worried that the animals are unhappy. Some circuses still have domesticated animals like dogs, horses and budgies.

Modern circus is all about human skill and courage.

There are still massive shows touring the world like the Canadian company Cirque du Soleil.