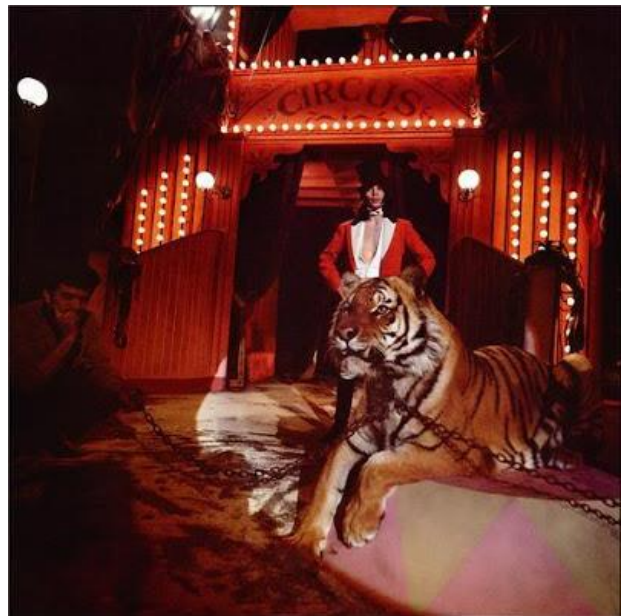
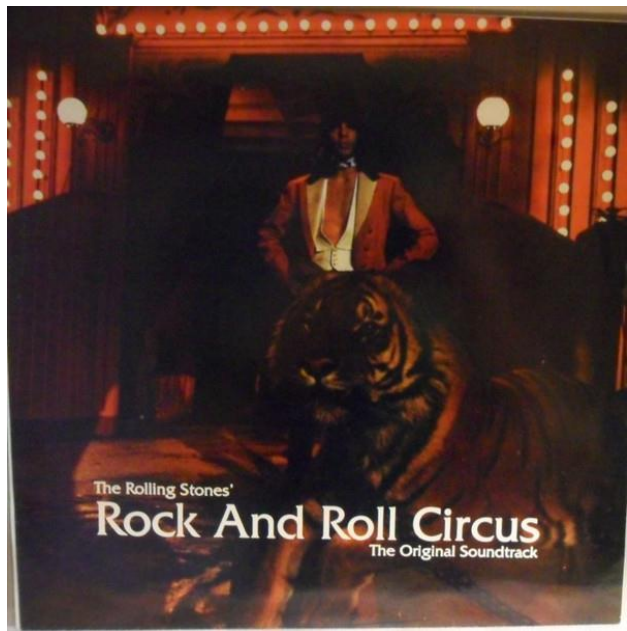


The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus IORR

The Wait

In 1989 Starlight Records, a US bootleg producer, released *The Rolling Stones' Rock And Roll Circus, The Original Soundtrack*, 21 years after it was recorded. The portrait photo on the front of the bootleg was taken by Ethan Russell. The songs were identical to those that would appear on the official release seven years later.



The Circus was contrived to promote and build on the success of *Beggars Banquet*. The Stones declined to release the film or the music on the original schedule because they were not happy with their performance. A popular explanation is the project was scrapped because the Who outperformed the Stones and Mick Jagger, in particular, did not want to be outdone by another band on his project.

The project was soon forgotten until 1992 when director Michael Lindsay-Hogg began to edit the film. He learned that some critical footage was missing and thought to be lost or destroyed so he put the project on hold. The missing footage was found in a bin in the Who's private film vault by director/producer team Michael Gochanour and Robin Klein in 1993. Or, according to another story, the misplaced film reels were found leaning against a hay bale in a barn in France. Perhaps that is where the Who's bin was and these are one and the same story. In any event, Gochanour and Klein completed the unfinished film in fall of 1996. The film premiered on 12 October 1996 at the Walter Reade Theater as part of the New York Film Festival. The live album was released October 14, 1996.

The Concept

"The Rolling Stones were going to put on a rock 'n' roll show like nothing anybody had seen before. Mick Jagger, as king of the scene, saw that something supercolossal would be needed

next if he was going to maintain his position as the alpha wolf of Brit rock. Something mindboggling to startle the over-amped sensibilities of his jaded flock. How about: an album that was also a book, a show, and a movie (and, of course, a worldwide TV special). A milestone, the musical equivalent of a moonwalk.” David Dalton, Mojo

The Stones were back. The newly released *Beggars Banquet* was destined to be a hit. At the time, Mick Jagger was looking for a way to promote the new record outside the conventional press and concert appearances. The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour TV film had originally aired on BBC1, in black-and-white, on Boxing Day, 26 December 1967 and Jagger liked the idea of emulating The Beatles and getting the Stones in front of an international audience with a film of their own.

No idea was too grandiose to consider. Exotic locales like the Taj Mahal, Morocco’s Mountains of the Moon, the Roman Coliseum, the Great Wall of China were talked about. David Dalton who wrote the text for the booklet included with the album suggested the Stones travel down the Mississippi River from Memphis to New Orleans on a paddle-wheeler stopping to play with the great old blues cats the Stones grew up on. That idea was rejected as too costly, impractical, and condescending.

The original idea was for a concert including Small Faces, Traffic, Cream and others. It is unclear how the idea of a circus emerged. One theory attributes the idea to the trio of Jagger, Pete Townsend (The Who) and Ronnie Lane (Small Faces). The Who and Small Faces had previously talked of taking a rock’n’roll circus across the US by train. Perhaps Jagger suggested a train was not necessary. According to Michael Lindsay-Hogg, director of the TV music show *Ready Steady Go!*, the idea of combining rock music and a circus setting came to him when he was trying to come up with ideas after being approached by Jagger to direct the film; he said he drew a circle on a piece of paper and free-associated. At the time the DVD was released, Jagger said, “I mean it’s always been said that it was my idea and I’ve read the reviews (laughs). So, why not? I think it was kind of my idea.” The idea seemed to coalesce around November 5, 1968, a scant month before the show.

However it happened, Lindsay-Hogg agreed to create a television concert with a circus theme. Jagger’s idea was to have their favorite bands join the Stones and the clowns, jugglers and animal acts of one of the small circus companies still touring British fair grounds. Jagger wanted Brigitte Bardot as the ringmaster. They would all perform in a big-top environment before an audience of invited guests.

Some say the Circus was being assembled in spite of manager Allen Klein. So, the Stones, with Jagger in particular, put up their own money to assure the success of the venture. News of the

JAGGER TV TALK ON HIS NEW FILM; 'CIRCUS' DATE

MICK JAGGER appears on television tomorrow (Saturday) talking about the Rolling Stones' film "One Plus One" — and excerpts from the movie will be screened at the same time. Jethro Tull has been added to the guest list for the Stones' own TV spectacular, first details of which were revealed last week — the special will be rehearsed on December 10, and filming takes place the following day (11) at the Intertel Studios before an audience of "several hundred."

The Stones' film "One Plus One" is the main contribution to BBC-2's "Release" magazine tomorrow. Extracts from the picture — premiered at the London Film Festival at the end of next week — will be shown, and Mick Jagger will discuss the venture with co-producer Ian Quarrier.

It was revealed this week that three ITV companies are already negotiating for the British screening rights of "The Rolling Stones' Rock 'n' Roll Circus" special. However, it will not now be ready for Christmas transmission — the Stones plan to show it to prospective buyers on January 1.

Executive producer of the TV show is 32-year-old Californian Sanford Lieberson, who acted in the same capacity for Mick Jagger's recently-completed film drama "Performance." The Stones themselves are financing the project, which stems from an idea of Mick's.

Donovan, Traffic, Pink, Pigmeat, Fury, Frank, Nancy new discs

NEW singles by Donovan, Traffic, Pink Floyd, Pigmeat Markham, Paul Jones, Billy Fury and Nancy Sinatra have been scheduled for release as well as a Christmas disc by Frank Sinatra. A bumper bundle of new albums includes discs by Tom Jones, Esther Ofarim, Richard Harris, Herb Alpert, Stevie Wonder and Sly and the Family Stone. The Manas and Papas have a new LP coming out next month — and so does Mama Cass as a soloist.

Donovan's new single, released next Friday (29), comprises two "A" sides "Atlantis" / "To Susan On The West Coast" (Pye). Out the same day are Paul Jones' "Aquarius" (Columbia), Pigmeat Markham's "Sock It To 'Em Judge" (Chess), Nancy Sinatra's "Good Time Girl" (Reprise), the Sandpipers' "Let Go!" (A & M) and Frank Sinatra's "Whatever Happened To Christmas" (Reprise).

Scaffold: U...

NEGOTIATIONS are nearing conclusion for the first-ever U.S. tour early in the year. The group will present its own full stage production of poetry and songs — for a period of no less than a "six-figure sum" — and colleges.

Among December 6 issues are...

Rock and Roll Circus first reached the outside world on November 13, 1968, when the Daily Mirror said, "The Stones are to produce their own TV spectacular for sale all over the world. They will star in an hour-long show, which will cost £20,000 to make.

Worldwide sales are likely to earn them £250,000."

On November 23 the

New Musical Express had this to say about the Circus, "It was revealed this week that three TV companies are already negotiating for the British screening rights. However, it will not now be ready for Christmas transmissions. The Stones plan to show it to prospective buyers on 1 January 1969. The Stones themselves are financing the project, which stems from an idea of Mick's." Bill Wyman said costs soon got out of hand and were estimated to be £31,686 by production company Courtel.

The Title

Once the Stones had decided to combine rock legends and circus acts the title was ordained. What else could it have been but *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus*, just like the 'bigtop' sign in the movie says. ABKCO stuck with that title 28 years later.

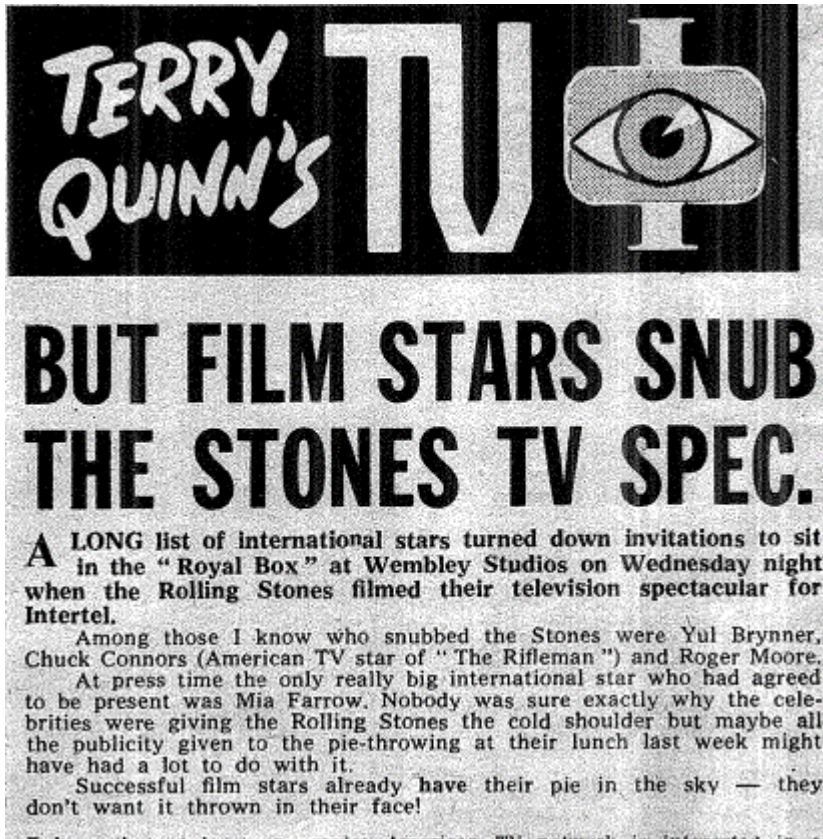
Who Was To Perform

Jagger praised director Lindsay-Hogg, "Michael is a very creative guy...we came up with this idea, and the whole idea, obviously, is to make it a mixture of different music acts and circus acts, taking it out of the normal and making it slightly surreal...mixing the two up. And, also, we wanted as many different kinds of music as possible. So that's why we thought about who would be the best kind of supporting acts."

Early lists of invitees included Traffic and Cream, but they broke up before the show was filmed.

Jagger wanted the Who, Marianne Faithful, Dr. John, Gram Parson's Flying Burrito Brothers and Steve Winwood's new group, after Traffic broke up. Keith wanted Johnny Cash. Cash declined,

the Isley Brothers, also on someone's wishlist, were not able to make it.



Peter Swales, nominally the Stones promotions man at the time of the Circus, said, "Allen Klein tried to sabotage the Circus by withholding money and completely failing to book Dr. John and the Burritos...Glyn Johns [recording engineer] played me an acetate of Jimmy Page's new band, still called The Yardbirds [soon to be Led Zeppelin] and pleaded with me to get them on the Circus.

Jagger said no...By now it was getting close to taping, but we had no acts except the Stones and the Who. So, Mick played his trump card and called up

his idol-John Lennon. Mick didn't really want to do it because he didn't want to be beholden to John, but he did it. Lennon said he would do the supergroup and brought in Eric Clapton, Mitch Mitchell [from the Jimi Hendrix Experience] would play drums, and Keith elbowed Bill Wyman aside and insisted on playing bass."

"One of my lasting memories from Rock and Roll Circus was Yoko crawling out of a black bag...and wailing on a song of hers, backed by John on guitar and a French classical violinist. It kind of summed up the shambles that it all was." Charlie Watts

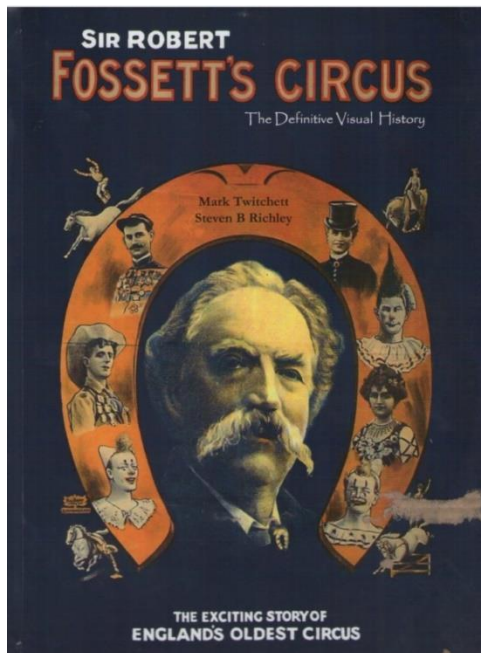
Lindsay-Hogg tells a similar story, "All the performers in the show had basically come out of a little address book in Mick Jagger's back pocket. He looks up L, he calls John, and then John says he'll do it." Lennon, Richards, Mitch Mitchell and Eric Clapton join forces to play as The Dirty Mac, a last-minute addition to the show. The Circus was the group's one and only performance. Lennon supposedly came up with the name as a play on Fleetwood Mac. Lennon later said,

"The first time I performed without The Beatles for years was the Rock And Roll Circus, and it was great to be on stage with Eric and Keith Richards and a different noise coming out behind me, even though I was still singing and playing the same style. I thought: Wow! It's fun with other people."

Dalton tells an alternative story about Klein's role and Lennon's involvement. In this version, Jagger was hesitant to call Lennon and Klein offered to make the call, having recently become Lennon's manager. Klein said, "I called Lennon's home number. His answering machine had a message to the tune of Three Blind Mice...Lennon has always wanted to be a Rolling Stone-just as Mick had always wanted to be a Beatle-so it wasn't that hard to persuade him to be in it."

The rock artists to perform on the album were Jethro Tull, The Who, Taj Mahal, Marianne Faithful, The Dirty Mac with Yoko Ono and Ivry Gitlis, and, of course, The Rolling Stones.

Sir Robert Fossett's Circus



Sir Robert Fossett's Circus has had quite a long run, beginning in 1888. Ireland's National Circus operated through the reigns of five British monarchs and survived two World Wars. It covered the length and breadth of England, Scotland and Wales. Few towns in the UK have not been visited by Fossett's Circus, which made a habit of playing in out-of-the-way places, overlooked by their larger rivals. Sir Robert Fossett's Circus remained true to its family roots and continued to provide its patrons with traditional circus fare, unchanging in an ever-changing world of entertainment. It was chosen by the Stones, in part due to its less polished acts which would be so familiar to the childhoods of so many viewers.

Working With Record Companies

It seems the first several Stones' album covers were chosen by Andrew Loog Oldham and the record companies. Even so, The Stones demonstrated their interest in album art from the outset by choosing a young David Bailey to photograph their early albums. When Bailey was unavailable, Gered Mankowitz was tapped to replace him. *Their Satanic Majesties Request* appears to have been the breakthrough album, in terms of the Stones', read that "Mick Jagger's," involvement in the cover design. From that point on it seems fair to say Jagger was intimately involved in the cover's design for each Stones' album.

Multiple artists have expressed the sentiment that Jagger and the Stones were looking for ideas for their album covers. They would not hire an artist and tell him what to do, they hired an artist for the ideas they could bring to the band. Some would come armed with multiple ideas to pitch, others, who had done it before, might pitch a single idea. There was often competition

Iris Keitel lived with Allen Klein and was the longtime girlfriend of the late Beatles and Rolling Stones manager Allen Klein. Keitel lived in Klein's E. 58th Street apartment for over 20 years, even though he was still married to his estranged wife.



and no one stayed around too long although some artists repeated several times, among them David Bailey, Gered Mankowitz, and the team of Peter Corriston and Hubert Kretzschmar. There were one hit wonders like Robert Frank, Guy Peelaert, and Hiro. The superstar Andy Warhol did two Stones covers. Working for the Stones was fertile ground for creativity, expression and, at times, controversy. Oh yeah, working for the Stones could also make a career for you.

Not all Rolling Stones albums were produced by the Stones, some were produced by record companies. Working with a record company is a different process than working with the Stones, who always leveraged the creative control they had. By the time Klein had gained control of the Stones catalogue through 1970 as well as ABKCO Records, art design and packaging was more a corporate responsibility than a creative opportunity. ABKCO assigned *The Rolling Stones Rock*

And Roll Circus job to Iris Keitel (Art and Package Design Director), Alisa Ritz (Associate Art and Package Design Director) and Cheri Martino (Art and Package Design Coordinator). The titles pretty well describe the hierarchy for this project. Alisa (Ritz) Coleman declined to comment on her role in creating the album art. The actual artwork is believed to have been done by Marvin Mattelson (Cover Illustration) and Cody Rasmussen (Package Design). Record companies are more oriented toward making a profit than a statement and they are inclined to tell their artists what they want rather than to ask them what they've got.

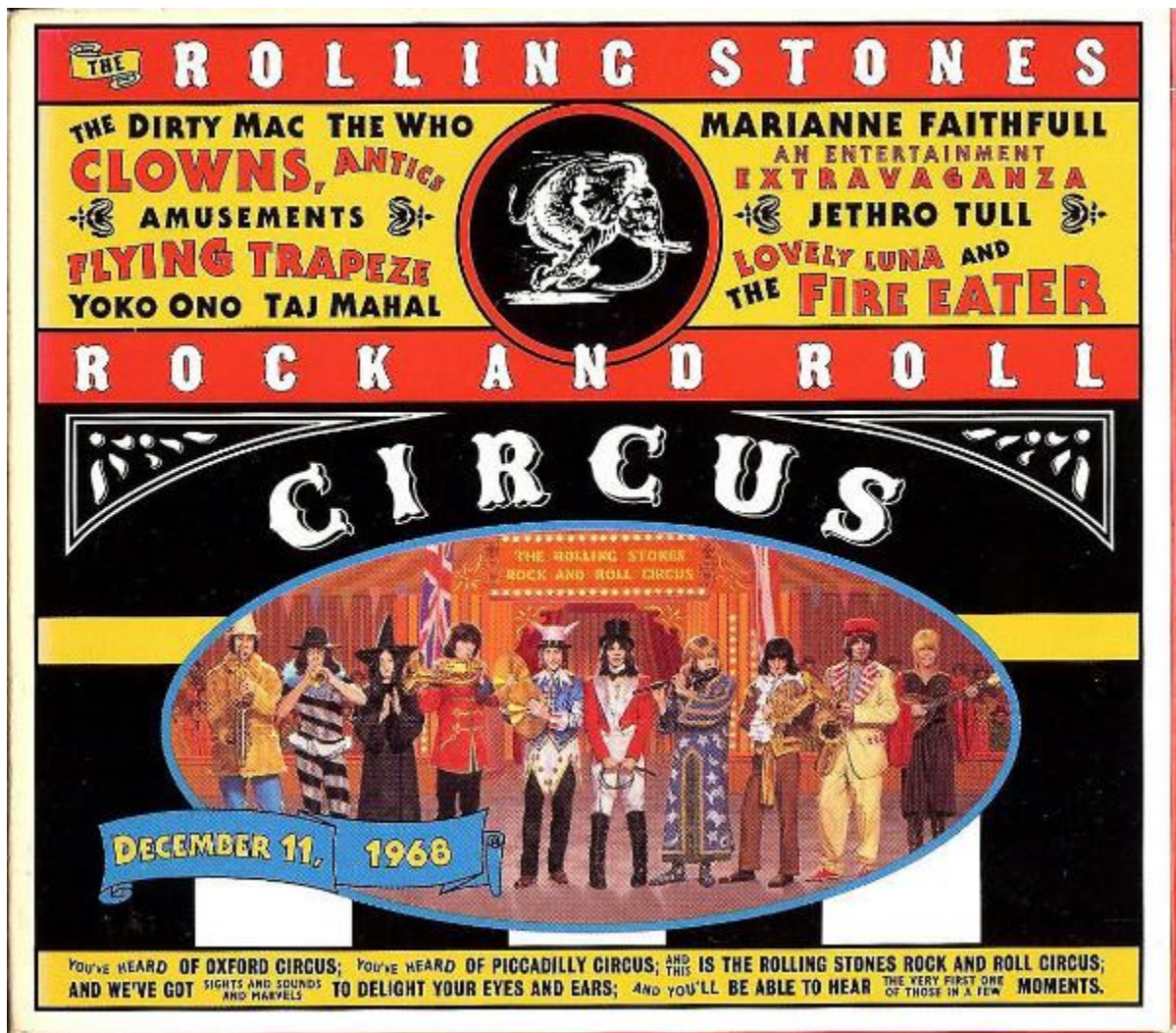
The Front Cover



Marvin Mattelson painted the colorfully dressed ensemble seen on the front of the album. The NME of 12/12/68 said, "The grand parade in the Circus ring was a photographer's paradise with Yoko dressed as a witch with tall black pointed hat and John as a tumbler." ...Mick was dressed as a ringmaster. The photographers were let in and crowded round like a cloud of locusts with Rolliflexes clicking. Ten minutes later Mick curtailed the photo call. The photo from which the painting was made was likely taken at that time. A similar arrangement can be seen between 1:10 and 1:45 of the video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuwlTzelcu8> following the parade of circus stars to begin the show. The people depicted in this painting from left to right are: Peter Dinklage (tenor saxophone), John Lennon (trombone), Yoko Ono (clapping), Keith Richards (French horn), Charlie Watts (Cymbals), Mick Jagger (Whip), Brian Jones (flute), Bill Wyman (French horn), Eric Clapton (alto

saxophone), and Marianne Faithful (mandolin). The band name and album titles are done up in lights, flanked by colorful triangle banner flags. Fans dressed in colorful ponchos and felt hats appear seated in the stands.

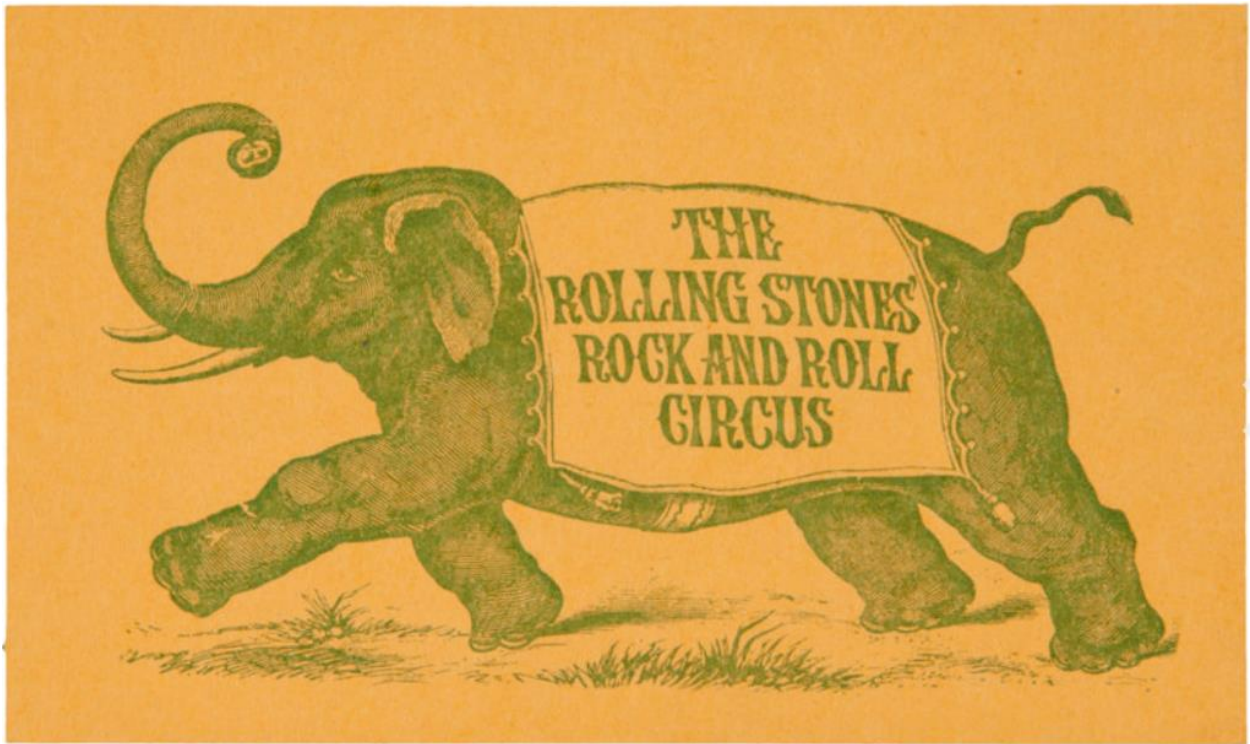
This painting was the centerpiece for the album cover. The scrolling blue banner announces the date the show began in the Intertel (V.T.R. Services) Studio, Wycombe Road, Wembley, Middlesex in Studio A. The nearest tube was Stonebridge Park on the Bakerloo Line. Half a circus tent was draped around one end of the studio, it forms the backdrop for the painting. A circus ring, sawdust, ropes, poles, and all the mysterious rigging of a circus were reproduced inside this gigantic space.

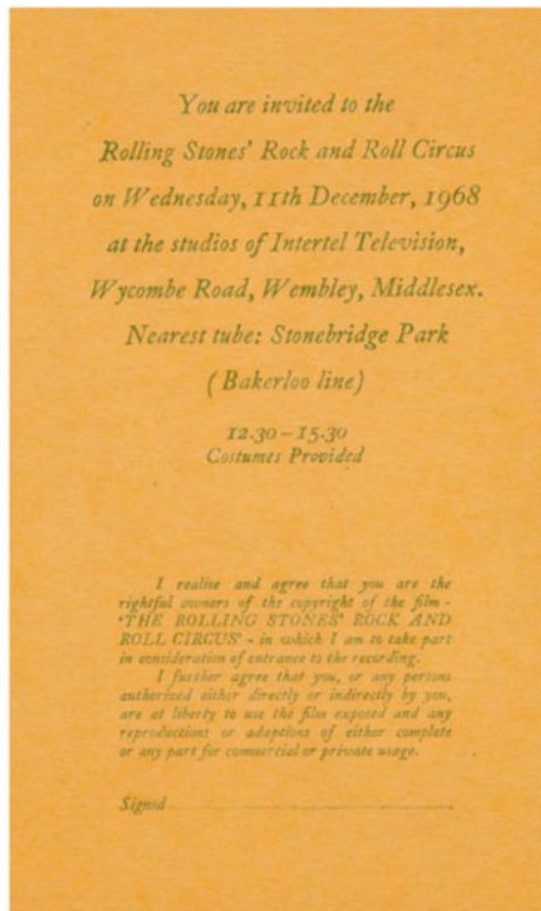


Mattelson, located in the New York metro area at the time he did the work, said he got a call from Alan Klein the owner of ABKCO. "He knew my illustration work. That was the only time I ever worked for him. It took about three months to do the painting including creating the reference photos...I was hired to paint the image of the cast members in a circus tent. That was the total extent of my involvement...They told me what they wanted and I did it."

The band name and album title appear at the rear of the studio on an archway lighted with the bare light bulbs of a side show, prominently displayed in Mattelson's painting. All the acts entered through the archway, seen in the rear of the painting.

The audience, seen in the painting's background, consisted of about 300 fans who won tickets distributed by The Rolling Stones Fan Club and by the *N.M.E.* The tickets, were printed on gold metallic cards with a 19th century wood-cut of a galloping elephant in green.





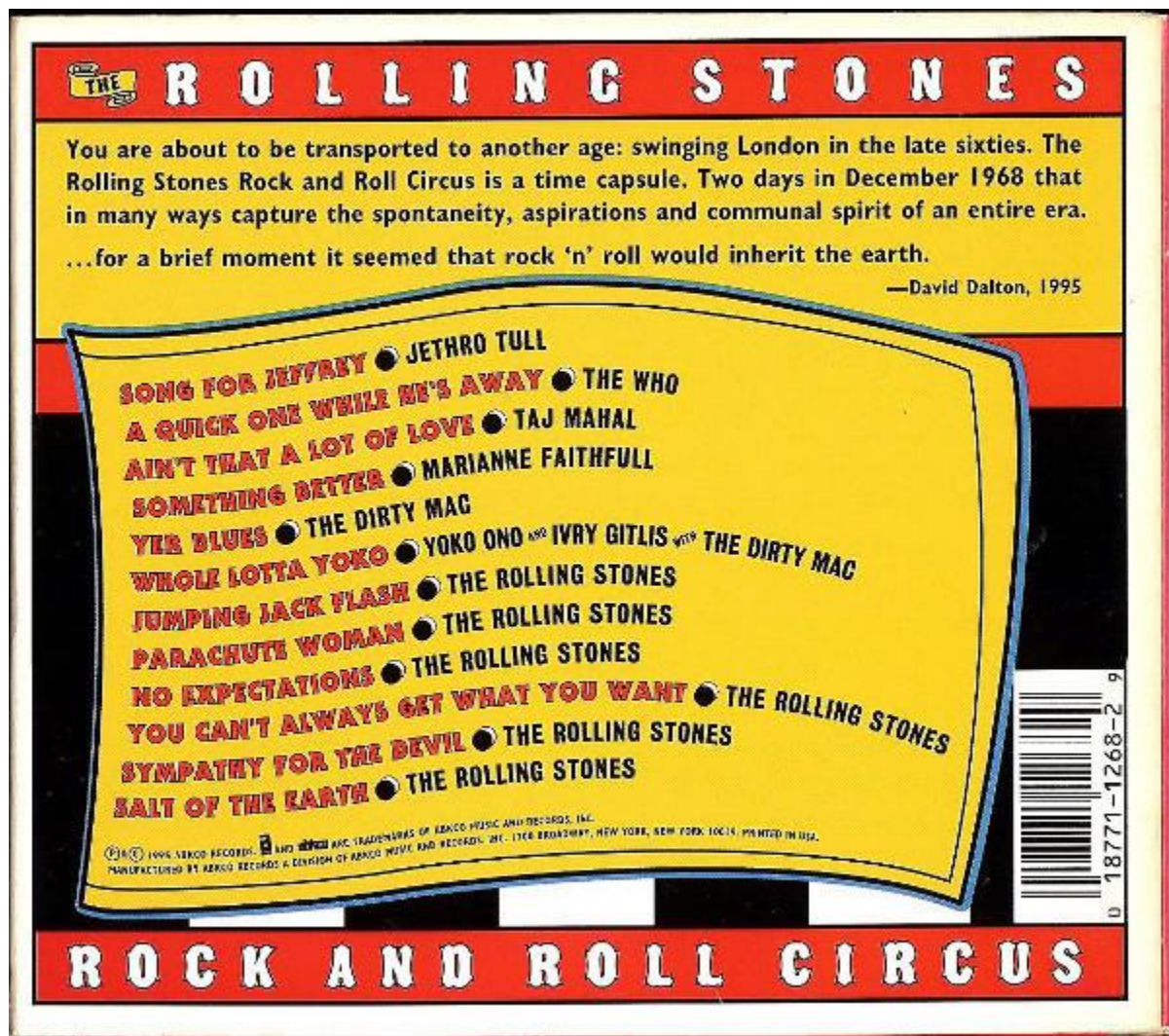
The flipside of the ticket includes an invitation to the event and a release form that was signed by all who attended, giving the Stones the right to use the film and their images commercially. As fans entered, they were given brightly colored (rented) ponchos and felt hats and they were allowed to sit wherever they liked in the stands arranged in a horseshoe around the ring.

Across the bottom of the front cover is a box of text in varied font styles that includes ringmaster Mick Jagger's introductory remarks. "You've heard of Oxford Circus; you've heard of Piccadilly Circus; and this is the Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus; and we've got sights and sounds and marvels to delight your eyes and ears; and you'll be able to hear the very first one of those in a few moments."

Across the top of the album cover is a banner with the band's name, followed by a poster with a sprinting elephant at its center and the names of selected musical acts in black font and selected circus acts in red font.



Clockwise from the top these acts are The Dirty Mac, The Who, Clowns, Flying Trapeze, Yoko Ono, Taj Mahal, Marianne Faithful, Jethro Tull, Lovely Luna and the Fire Eater. The lineup promises antics, amusement and an entertainment extravaganza.



The flipside of the album continues the color scheme. It repeats the band name and album title at the top and bottom of the cover. David Dalton, covered the event for *Rolling Stone*, and authored both the enclosed booklet and the words that appear on the rear of the album. The film has been described as a quaint time capsule of the last days of Swingin' London.

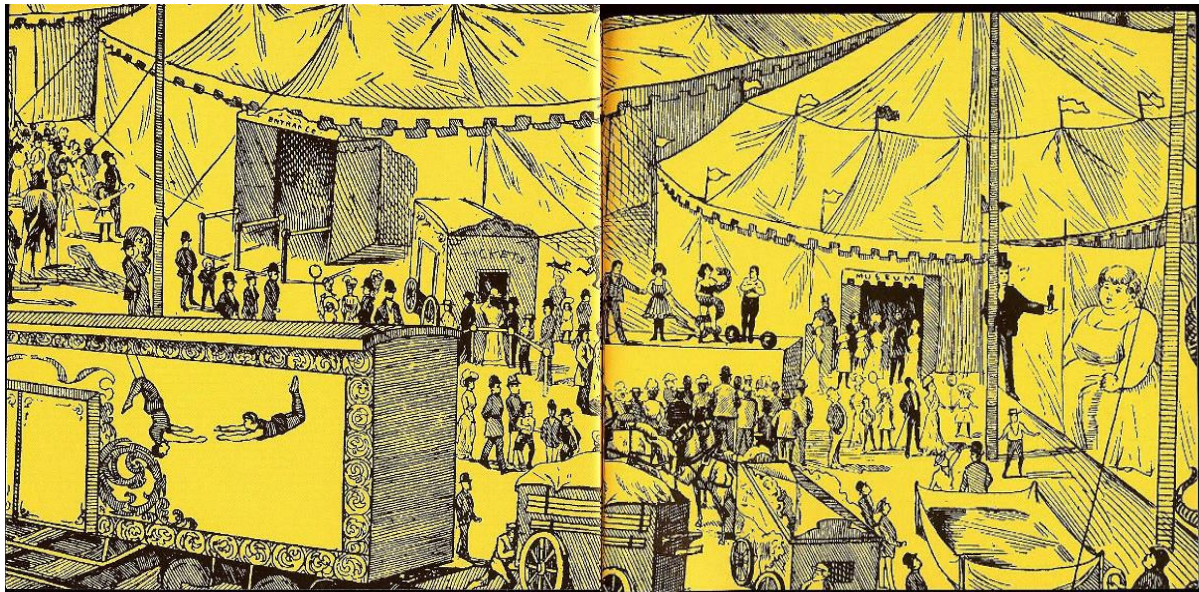
Dalton expanded on the last line of his liner notes in a 2003 interview with Robin Klein, editor of the circus film, when he said of those days in 1968, "It was just still at the point when everybody thought rock was going to inherit the earth. We all assumed Mick and Keith [Richards] were on the phone to Fidel [Castro] and Mao [Zedong], and you know, Mick was

going to become a member of Parliament. And say delusionary if you wish, but it really was sort of an inspiring time."

A banner announces the tracklisting with song titles in red and performing artists in black.

The Booklet

The cover to the enclosed booklet is identical to the album cover. Inside the front and back pages is a delightfully evocative illustration of an old-time circus grounds. Efforts to learn the source of this illustration were unsuccessful.



The first 19 pages of the booklet were written by David Dalton March 19, 1970. They are illustrated by nine photos from the Circus. Pages 20 and 21 present a centerfold of 26 photos

Keith is Richard in the first part of the booklet written in 1970 by David Dalton enclosed with the album and Richards in the second part and credits written by Dalton in 1995.

from the Circus. Page 22 begins a 14-page update by Dalton dated 1995. This narrative is illustrated with six photos from the circus. It is followed by a two-page listing of "The Players" then two pages of "The Songs," followed by a page of credits.



Cast and Crew

From top left clockwise the photo shows Alisa Ritz-Coleman, Iris Keitel, Marvin Mattelson, and Cody Rasmussen.



It Was A Thing

If any Stones album has a formulaic look it is any Stones album that has defaulted to some version of the tongue and lips logo. This album looks like ABKCO's default to a 'circus-look' album cover. One can almost hear Keitel saying, "Let's not overthink it people. Get me a circus-themed album cover and let's get this album out on the streets." It does less for me than virtually any other Stones cover. Then why do I kinda like it? It works. It says circus.

In the new millennium where CGI movies, virtual reality, and social media entertain billions on the planet it is not easy to imagine a time when a corny circus and some old rock bands was even a thing. But this was a thing. It was not some old rock bands, these were rock gods. Yoko made people sit and say, "WTF?" Brian Jones was making his last filmed appearance with a

band he formed that grew into a behemoth either unable or uninterested in dealing with behaviors that are now widely recognized as symptoms of a deadly serious disease.

Outside of London and the readers of music publications few people knew about the Circus at the time. But in the 1960's and in swingin' London it was a thing. By 1996 it was Swingin' London in a time capsule and now it is a largely forgotten moment in the long history of The Rolling Stones.

Sources

Bockris, Victor. (1993) Keith Richards The Biography. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Clayson, Alan. (2008) The Rolling Stones Beggars Banquet. Flame Tree Publishing, London.

Coleman, Alisa. (2020) Personal communication August 12, 2020 via Lisa Bryant.

Dalton, David. (2004) Ladies and Gentlemen Before Your Eyes the Greatest Show on Earth. MOJO the Music Magazine, October, 2004.

Davis, Stephen. (2001) Old Gods Almost Dead The 40-Year Odyssey Of The Rolling Stones. Broadway Book, New York.

Karnbach, James and Bernson, Carol. (1997) It's Only Rock And Roll, The Ultimate Guide To The Rolling Stones. Facts on File, Inc., New York.

Margotin, Philippe and Guedson, Jean-Michel. (2016) The Rolling Stones All the Songs The Story Behind Every Track. Blackdog and Leventhall Publishers.

Mattelson, Marvin. (2020) Personal communication August 4, 2020.

Norman, Philip. (2012) Mick Jagger. Harper Collins: New York.

Richards, Keith with Fox, James. (2010) Life. Little Brown and Company, New York.

Wyman, Bill with Coleman, Ray. (1991). Stone Alone the Story of a Rock 'n' Roll Band. Penguin, New York.

Wyman, Bill with Havers, Richard. (2002) Rolling With The Stones. DK Publishing, Inc., New York.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rolling_Stones_Rock_and_Roll_Circus

https://www.joylandbooks.com/books_new/sir-robert-fossetts-circus.htm

<https://www.sandowsafe.co.uk/2017/01/27/history-of-the-sir-robert-fossett-circus-family3116/>

<https://worldradiohistory.com/UK/New-Musical-Express/1968/NME-1968-12-14i.pdf>

<https://worldradiohistory.com/UK/New-Musical-Express/1968/NME-1968-11-23.pdf>

<https://iorr.org/iorr27/circus.htm>

<https://entertainment.ha.com/itm/music-memorabilia/tickets/rolling-stones-rock-and-roll-circus-invitation-card-1968-/a/7161-89673.s>

<http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/523970/Rolling-Stones-Rock-and-Roll-Circus-The/full-credits.html>

<https://ultimateclassicrock.com/rolling-stones-rock-and-roll-circus-concert/>

https://ultimateclassicrock.com/rolling-stones-rock-and-roll-circus-concert/?utm_source=tsmclip&utm_medium=referral

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/the-rolling-stones-masterful-rock-roll-circus-245642/>

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/la-et-ms-rolling-stones-circus-20190319-story.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rolling_Stones_Rock_and_Roll_Circus_\(album\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rolling_Stones_Rock_and_Roll_Circus_(album))

<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/10/12/movies/taking-a-trip-back-in-time-to-the-sleek-young-stones.html>

<https://www.loudersound.com/features/the-chaotic-story-of-the-rolling-stones-star-studded-rock-and-roll-circus>

<https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/the-rolling-stones-rock-and-roll-circus/>

<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/25/745287835/resurrected-stones-film-finds-pivot-point-in-rock-history>

<https://www.discogs.com/The-Rolling-Stones-The-Rolling-Stones-Rock-And-Roll-Circus/master/241253>