

**CARSON AND BARNES 1986 CIRCUS BAND DIRECTED BY
CHARLES STEVENSON
Reported by C. H. Bennett Jr.**

The cruise controls's set at 62 mph- a bit over the allowed but it's 2:30 A.M. and there's nothing but bugs on the road ahead. It's a 6 hour drive from my home to Nebraska City Nebraska and today is circus day. If I want to arrive for the set-up I've got to hurry.

The radio forecasts a high of 98 degrees with high humidity and I question why I'm leaving the friendly confines of central air! However I've only missed Carson-Barnes one season since 1969 and I feel they'll by-pass Kansas this year, so I feel the long drive is worth it.

After two lengthy detours I arrive a few minutes off the advertised time in Nebraska City. Still no arrows or even paper up. A few blocks further however and I see my first window card- now I'm excited!

The show is setting up on a very rough lot on the edge of town. Walking across the area where the midway will take shape is Charlie Stevenson. Charlie says the show is strong, the band is strong, and business is good- a good year to be on the road.

Finally after what seems like several "days" (it is REALLY hot and humid!) out comes the Ringmaster who blows the whistle, and the show starts. The performers and band do a remarkable job despite the in-tents (pun fully intended) heat. The spec and dressage horses are cut, but probably due to the lot and not the weather.

Charlie's band is 8 pieces, and strong. Make no mistake about it the crew on the bandstand at Nebraska City is one hell of a band- the best, in my opinion, Carson and Barnes has ever had. Instrumentation includes 3 trumpets-all are young and can really play. Some passages are taken up an octave (reminding me of Bobby Danks and Charlie Bertini, two great young circus trumpets). Bob Gardiner is back on drums and also included is tuba, trombone, and 2 baritones.

A baritone to a circus band is like a sax (ugh) to a dance band. You just can't have a circus band without one (Bill Prun, are you listening?). Charlie and Arvel Alread do a great job on the horns. Alread is very strong and does a great job on the solo in Jungle Queen, and on the beautiful counter-melody in Gallito.

The "Book" as usual for a Stevenson led band is a "traditionalists" delight. Tune after tune of oldies but goodies. The clown stops use 4 great numbers- Trombone Blues, Walking Frog, Trombonium, and a new one for me, Trombonology. Bonist Smith does a great job cutting the smears, he belongs in a class with great ones I've heard like Jim Cunningham, Dave Kennedy and Chuck Howard, and I'm sure Duble and Bader would approve also.

Elephants use Garland Entry, Quality Plus, On the Square, Entry of the Gladiators and one called, I believe, Weidmeyer's. The band usually plays a few pre-show numbers. On the day, Gentry's Triumphal and Broadway One-Step were used. The show ran one hour and forty-two minutes without a spec.

CARSON AND BARNES 1986 CIRCUS BAND, CONT.:

Band personnel: Bandmaster and Baritone horn: Charles Stevenson, Trumpets-
Bruce Knowlin, Paul Cippon, Jose Calderon; Baritone: Arvel Alread; Drums:
Bob Gardiner; Tuba: Curtis Ninny; Trombone: Mark Smith.

Musical program presented at Nebraska City, June 28, 1986:

1. Overture: The Greatest Show On Earth
2. Pat White/cats: Bravura
Jungle Queen
Salute to the Sultan
Caravan
War March of the Tartars
Big Cage Galop
3. Aerial acts: Kiefer's Special
When White Lilacs Bloom Again
4. slack wire/acro Pan American
Burma Patrol
Algeria
5. Ballet/webs: El Relicario
Memories (The Way We were)
El Relicario
6. Liberty horses: Robbins Bros. Triumphal
Ohio Special
Robbins Bros. Triumphal
7. Clowns: Trombonoligy
Trombone Blues
8. Riding act: Cowboy Capers
Himalaya
Wyoming Days
Sunshine Galop
9. Balance/acro Daybreak
Symphony
10. Single Bulls: Saint Mihiel
Brazil
Saint Mihiel
11. Cradle acts: Tenderly
Born Free
12. testerborads: That's Entertainment
Fine and Dandy
Stop It!
Broadway One-Step
13. Clowns: Trombonium
Walking Frog
14. Jugglers: Copa Cabana
15. 3 rings of bulls: Weidmeyer's
Garland Entry
Quality Plus
On the Square (trio only)
Entry of the Gladiators
16. high wire acts: Ascent chords
Zingarella
Gallito
Curro Cuchares
17. Flying acts: Zacatecas
Tesoro Mia
Alpine Sunset
Go Galop
18. Finales: No Business Like Show Business

Spec music, when presented used: Entry of the Gladiators, Billboard, Barnum-
Bailey's Favorite. Dressage horses used Espana Cani.