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With many new acts, Circus Gatti has something for everyone

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For Circus Gatti ringmaster Justin Loomis the circus is home.

"I've done this all my life pretty much," Loomis told the Reporter-Telegram. "My father was in the circus business, and as a child, I found it intriguing. And I fell in love with the circus."

This year's show, Shazoom, is a return to the origins of circus that combine the traditional circus-acrobatics performances and the art of clowning. The show highlights the physical demands of extraordinary human performances presented in three rings of activity.



The circus has performances Wednesday through Saturday at Ector County Coliseum and March 7 and 8 at Chaparral Center. Each performance lasts two hours.

"They can expect to see everything they'd want to see in the circus," Loomis said of Circus Gatti's show. "We have a lot of new acts this year. We have included a motorcycle that rides up a high wire, and there's a girl on the trapeze that hangs underneath the motorcycle. It is a little dangerous, and it is unique, and we haven't had an act like that for several years. It definitely will be an addition to the show this year that people will not have seen if they came last year."

In addition to an elephant act, Loomis said, "We have what we refer to as a big and little act. It involves one of our elephants named Patti and a little pony named Andy. They work together simultaneously performing the same type of tricks. It's really interesting to see the big elephant and the little pony doing the same things side by side."

The clown Leo Acton is new to the Circus Gatti family, Loomis said. "Before he came to us, he had spent 10 years with Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus. He has a miniature car — a very, very tiny car. It's amazing how he fits in there. When he comes out, the audience is really surprised. He does a lot of audience participation. He interacts really well with the kids and gets kids out of the audience to act in the show."

Returning this year "by popular demand" is the EJ Duo from Las Vegas, Loomis said. "They do a magical transformation act with instant costume changes."

Circus Gatti gears its show to appeal to all ages, Loomis said. "We have senior couples come to see the show. We have single

parents with children. We have grandpa, grandma bring the kids. We show to all kinds of people so we try to have something for everyone.

Loomis hasn't always been a ringmaster. He's been a clown, had a dog act, a pig act, a magic act and a plate-spinning act.

"But the ringmaster was always my favorite thing," said Loomis, who has been ringmaster since 1996 and a ringmaster with Circus Gatti for four years. "For me, it was kind of a natural thing. Everybody always told me I had a really good voice, and I should try announcing the show, so I did. And that's what I've done ever since."

All the details:

What: Circus Gatti

Where: Ector County Coliseum. Odessa.

Covered Horse Arena

4201 Andrews Highway, Odessa

When: Wednesday-Friday: 4:15 and 7:30 p.m., Saturday: noon, 4:15 and 7:30 p.m.

Where: Chaparral Center

Midland College campus

When: March 7: 2 and 6 p.m., March 8, 4:15 and 7 p.m.

Tickets: Adults (18 and over) \$22, students and seniors \$16 and ages 2-12 \$10. Seats are not reserved. VIP tickets are available at \$30 and are based on availability and location. For more information go to www.circusgatti.net. Doors open an hour before each performance.

Information: In 1963, Major Matthew J. Gatti, retired, founded the American Continental Circus and the Canadian International Circus. Later these two shows became Circus Gatti.

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