

# LAUGHS, THRILLS ON TAP FOR CIRCUS-GOERS

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Spending a lifetime in the circus has taught Alex Petrov a thing or two.

Such as: It's really, really hard to drink a bottle of water while you're standing upside down.

Petrov is part of a topsy turvy, upside-down act that will be part of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, which opens at 7 tomorrow in the Toledo Sports Arena.

He and his wife, Victoria Zsilak, walk around - and juggle and dance - on an upside-down set suspended more than 30 feet above the ground as part of their five-minute act.

How the couple stays upside down is a big secret; the experience of being inverted isn't.

"At the beginning, when you start to do it, it's too much blood [rushing] to your head," Petrov said. "Everything is different because you need to learn to think upside down. You're fighting gravity."

The shows performed in Toledo will be part of the circus' Gold Edition. They will feature co-host Jon Weiss, known to many for his appearance on the reality show *Amazing Race 4*.

One hour before each show, ticket holders will be allowed to meet with animals and performers.

Other highlights once the show begins include:

- The Flying Neves troupe, hailing from Brazil, which performs aerial maneuvers on the flying trapeze.
- A high-wire act by Los Scolas that includes riding bicycles across a 3/4-inch wire.
- Contortionists known as the Sankar Duo who can twist their bodies into unbelievable shapes.

And, of course, the clowns and elephants you were expecting.

The stop in Toledo will be one of 51 in North America that the Gold Edition will make this year, but that's nothing unusual for circus veterans like Petrov.

"This is normal life," he said. "When we stop for a little bit, it seems not normal."

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus performs tomorrow through Monday in the Toledo Sports Arena, 1 Main St. Show times are 7 p.m. tomorrow; 11 a.m., 3 and 7 p.m. Saturday; noon and 4 p.m. Sunday, and 7 p.m. Monday. Tickets, \$13 to \$30, are available from the box office, Ticketmaster, 419-474-1333, or [www.Ringling.com](http://www.Ringling.com). Tickets for tomorrow's performance are \$11, excluding VIP floor seats. Information: 419-698-4545.

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