One Night Only

John Wesley Harding

He got shafted in Bradford for his out of date routines up there

And the trouble he ran into Brighton was more than his share

He's been running for thirty years, he would have settled down

But each town he appears in puts a red nose on the clown

You can buy the old showbills and frame them, they're nearly antiques

You can trip up on his big clown shoes as you're starting to speak

He squirts the flower, hurts your hand, it'll always catch you

And his tears are etched so deep that they might just be tattooed

The one man circus is coming to town

Put the banners up, take your trousers down

Paint on a smile, wipe off the frown

Heaven knows he won't hurt us

The loose, the lovely and the lonely

One night only

He said 'I played Chaplin for Hitler in March 44

Been a black and white minstrel before that whole thing was outlawed

And I've dragged it on every pier in every seaside town

But there aren't any dances today, the pavilions have all been pulled down

I came over straight after the war and they hijacked my name

I waited for so many years but my wife never came

I've been learning these lines every day since 1945

And I'll recite them everyday I wished I was alive'

The one man circus is coming to town

Get the dogs out, tear the posters down

Paint go home on the walls til he is elsewhere bound

Don't you know he could hurt us

The loose, the lovely and the lonely

One night only

He's tripping over backwards, taking off his clothes

And no-one helps him, everyone knows

We laugh at the misfortune of others

Everytime the glass empties, the lions they all get set free

On a town full of unsuspecting tourists who scream when they're happy

And the scarecrow's on probation just for making faces in a mirror

The past put a hand on his shoulder and drowned him in tears

Now he ushers and watched the movies where children don't age

And the dancing horse stole all the keys and took charge of the stage

And the freaks are on the razzmatazz, they're all fuelled on coke and gin

And the cast-out's on the street and we've already let him in

The one man circus

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