



PROGRAM

TURN PHONE HORIZONTAL FOR BEST
VIEW

July 19-21st, 2024
Aloft Circus Arts



THIS SHOW IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF OUR
FRIEND,

ALISA GAYLON.

“WE ARE ALL JUST WALKING EACH OTHER
HOME.”

-RAM DASS

THE STORY OF WAY HOME



In the twilight of her last day, an elderly woman revisits the home that made her.
Looking through the windows of memory,
she remembers a swing when her feet couldn't yet reach the ground,
she remembers falling in love...

She wonders about the lives of all those who lived there
long after she had left.

Did the walls contain their joy? Their sorrow?
What stories could the walls tell if only they could talk?
What does it mean to finally...come home?

We invite you through the doors of our story
as it weaves itself backward and forward in time,
through the eyes of one woman's memory
and the shadows of the others
she imagined might have also once called this place home.



CREATION TEAM



Kristi Alyssa: Director, Producer, Writer, Lighting and Sound Designer

Chloe Zabicki: Assistant Director

Luke Greeff: Dance Choreographer

Martha Bayne: Stage Manager

Laila Ruangpan: Backstage Manager

Raven See: Poet

Aloft Circus Arts: Coproducer



CAST

Chloe Zabicki: The Woman

Eleana Suazo: The Girl

Luke Greeff: “Just One Light”

Benjy Radinsky: Father

Camille Swift: “Porchlight Heart”

Courtney Sendzimer: Mother

Daisy Coleman: “I Can’t Live Here Anymore”

Kristi Alyssa: Mother

Laila Ruangpan: “Porchlight Heart”

Lyla Taraska: Kid

Nick Grischow: Husband

Noa Kim-Cohen: Sibling

Raven See: Narrator

Taylor Fost: Daughter

Valeria Rosero: “Away From Here”



CREW

Raven See: Lighting Operator

Greta Humphrey: Sound Operator

James Taff: Set Design and Builder

Kristi Alyssa: Prop Design

Jeremey Lynch: Videography

Luis Cardenas: Videography

Nancy Behall: Photography

Michelle Reid: Photography

Mo Helton, Kelsey Blood,

Laura Shihadah and Lulu Walkowicz: Ushers and Volunteers

Heather Couch-Denton: Legal Advisor



Letter and Thank You from the Director Kristi Alyssa:

This show is a collection and collaboration of many.

Thank you to everyone who supported us and believed in us. To everyone who donated to help make this show happen, purchased a ticket, shared a post, told a friend, taught me skills that I used to create this show (shout out to Alex Avery for teaching me how to be a lighting designer!), graciously listened to me ramble about my ideas, hopes and fears, generously leant their advice and expertise or their own hands and time...it means the world to me.

To my cast - I cannot put into words how meaningful it is to work with you all. This cast is from all walks of my personal career. From my professional colleagues that I deeply admire and look up to, from students in my youth ensemble program that is very dear to my heart, to my long-time recreational lyra students and two recent graduates of the pro program that I direct - it is an honor to share the stage with you all and to have worked with you. Thank you for giving your talent and heart to my first professional production and giving me the space and grace to learn with you all.

To my mom for being my biggest cheerleader and to my dad for building our set with love. To my friends and family who came from near and afar to be here - thank you.

To everyone who helped me to grow into the circus artist, teacher and director that I am today. To ISU's Gamma Phi Circus who forever altered my life path, to NECCA and to Aloft who formed me and to all of the coaches who believed in me.

There is no one who has been as great of an influence on my career as my coach and mentor,
Shayna Swanson, director of Aloft Circus Arts.

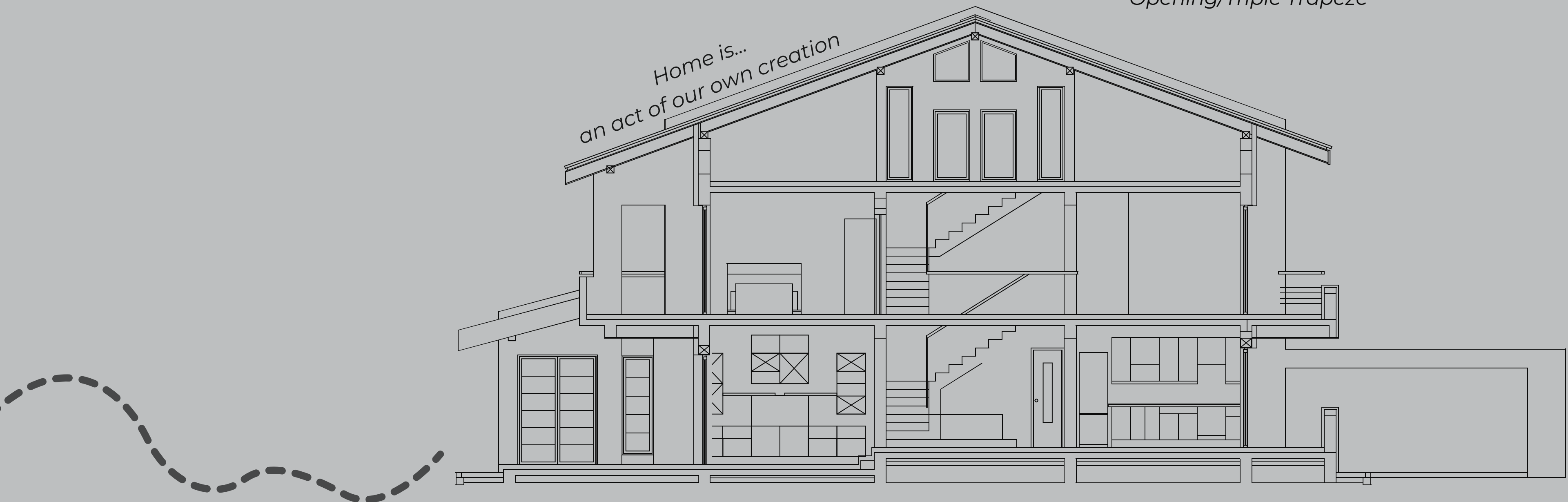
Shayna - you believed in me from day one when I walked through the doors of Aloft as a starry eyed circus student, as my lyra coach you pushed me to work hard and to aim high, believed in me to be a leader at Aloft and you have inspired me, guided me and cheered me on now as a fledgling circus director. I look up to you so much. It is because of you, that myself and many others call Aloft...**home.**

-Kristi Alyssa, Director

SHOW MAP

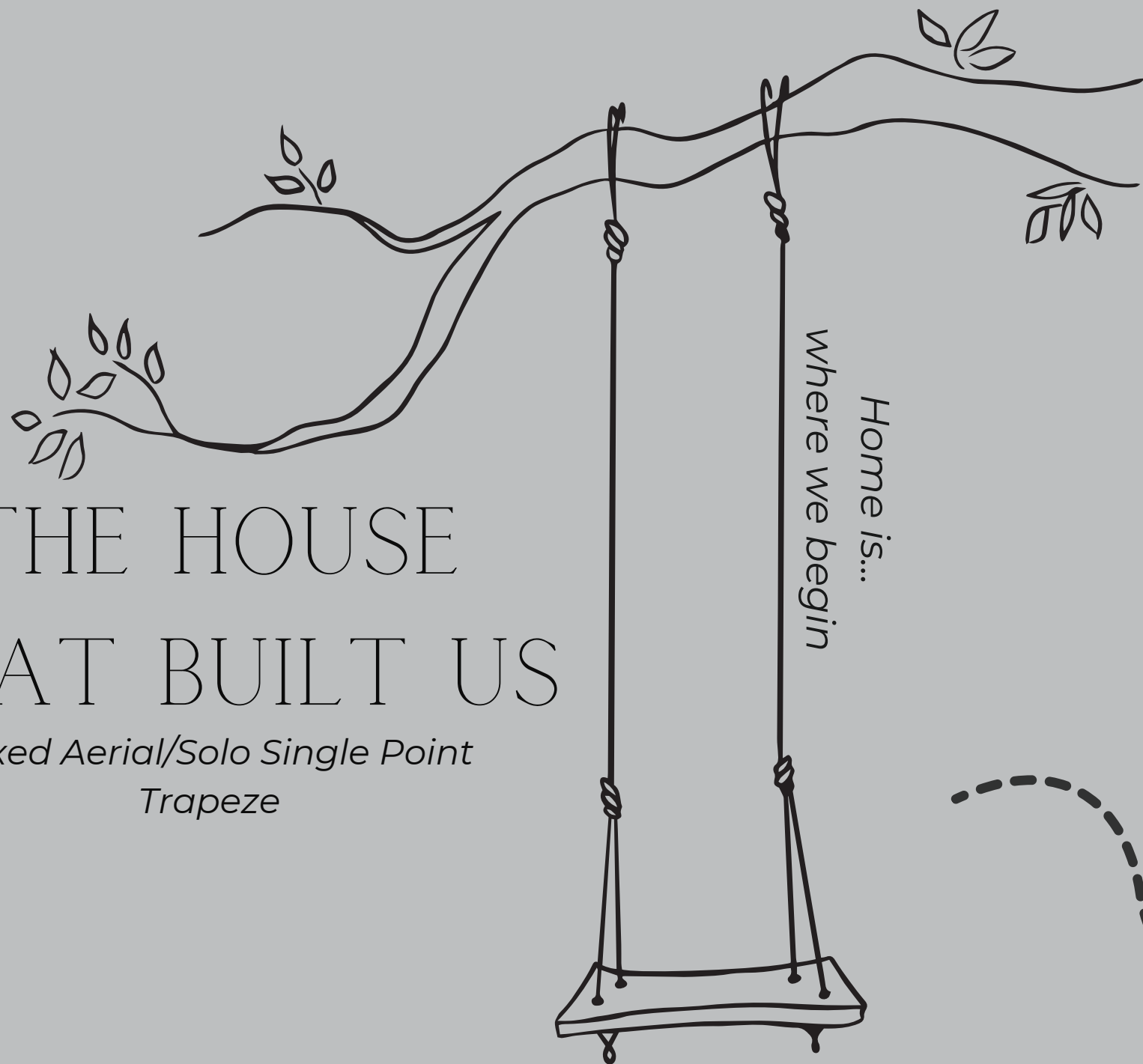
TO BUILD A HOME

Opening/Triple Trapeze

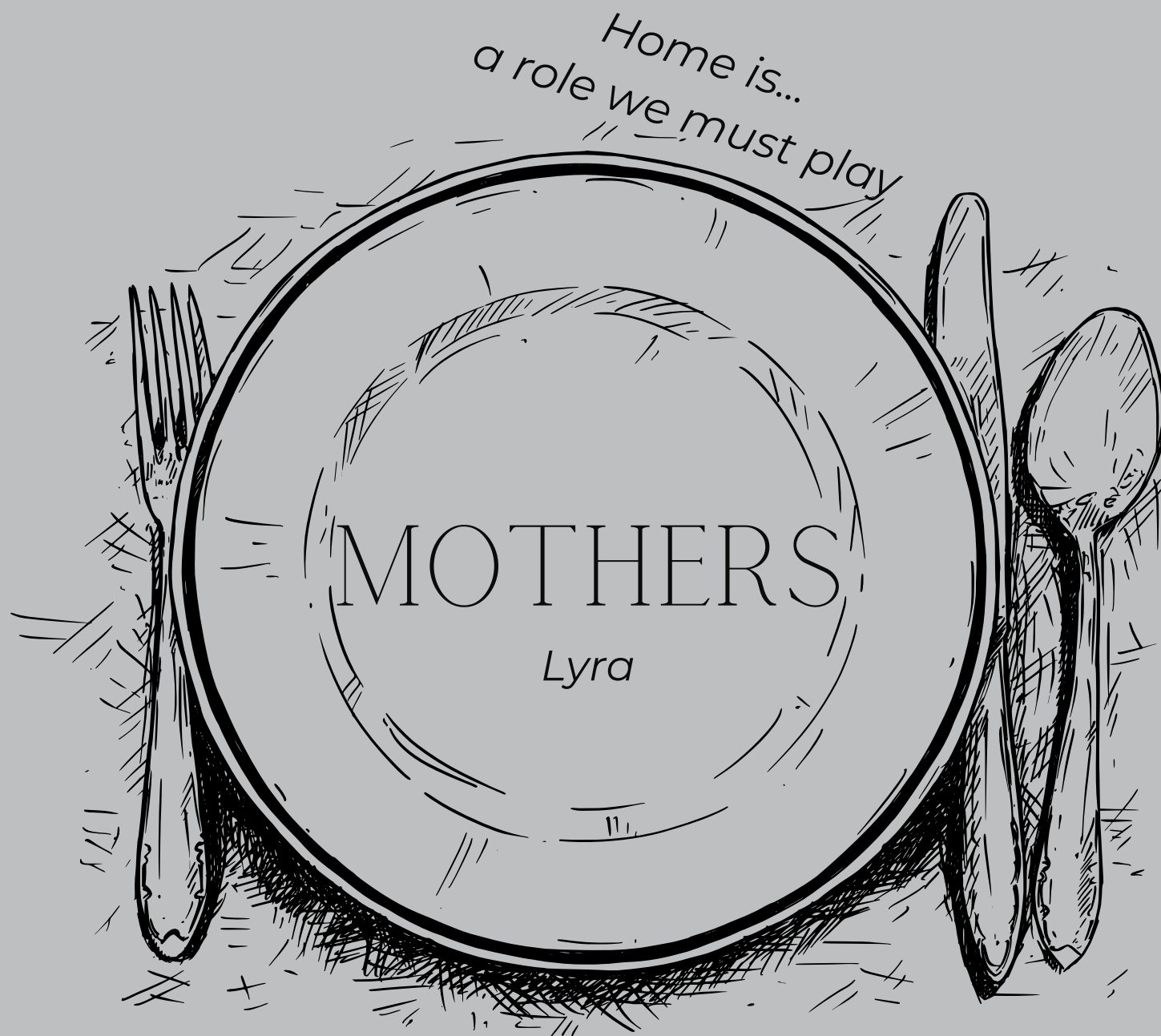
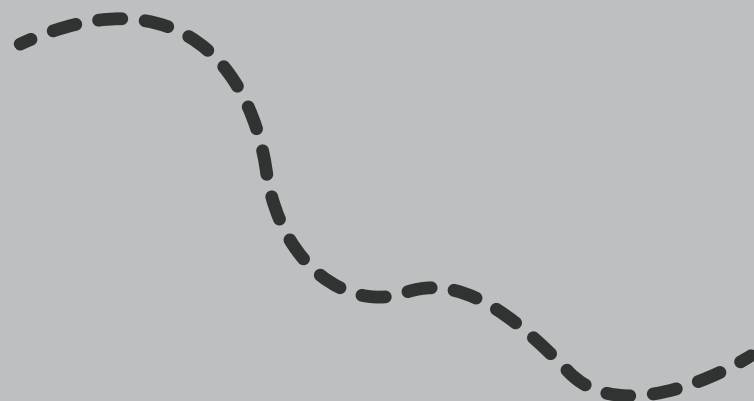


THE HOUSE THAT BUILT US

*Mixed Aerial/Solo Single Point
Trapeze*



Home is...
where we begin



Home is...
a role we must play

MOTHERS

Lyra

Home is...
the story of us

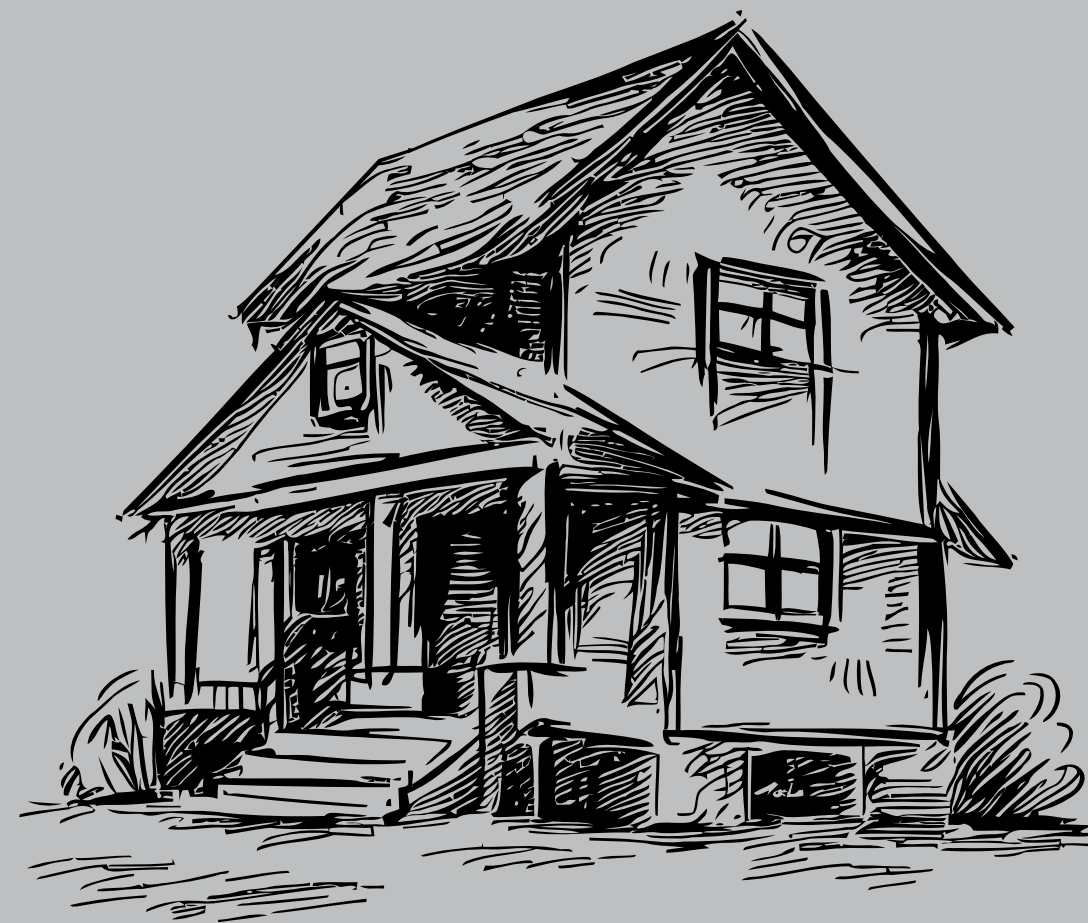


OVER THE THRESHOLD

Duo Straps



MOVING INTERLUDE



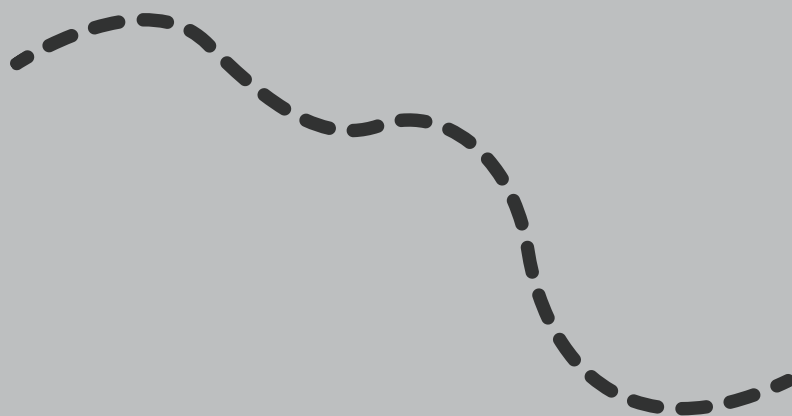
Home is...
beginnings and endings



Home is...
a place I couldn't belong

JUST ONE LIGHT

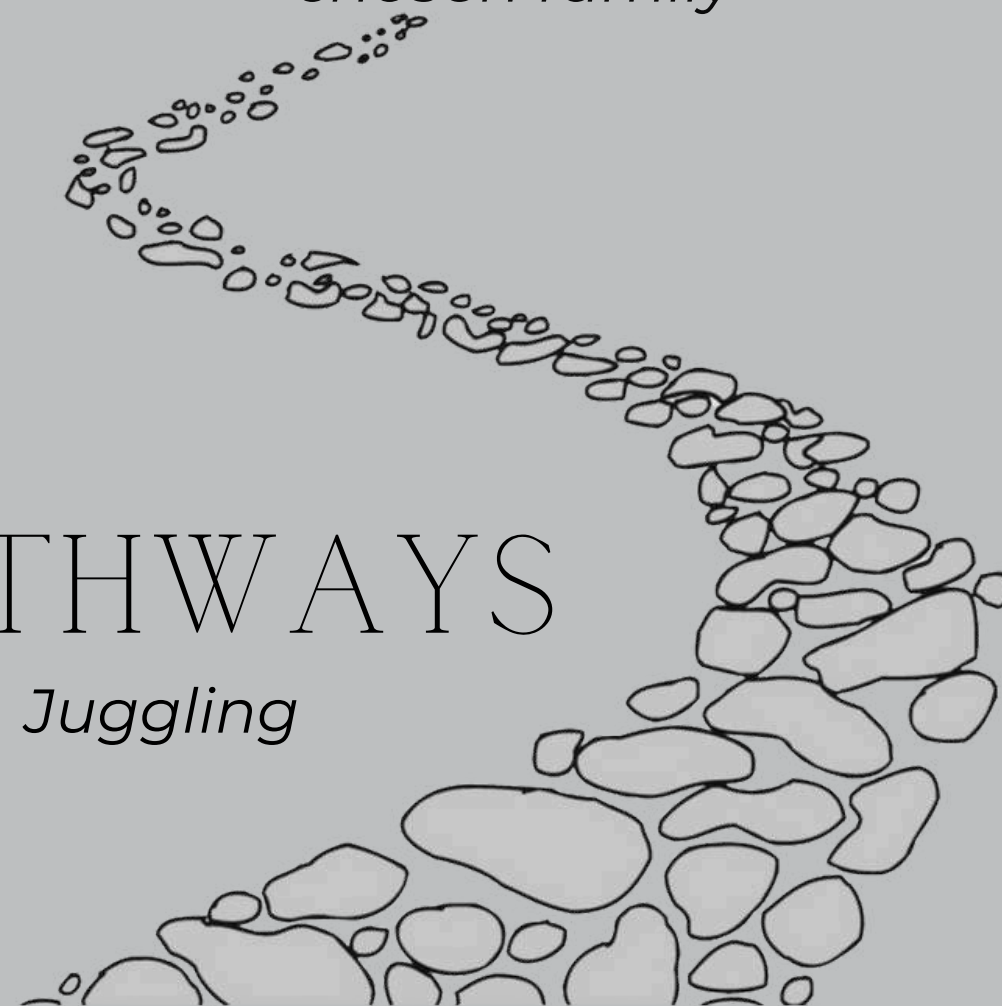
Solo Dance



Home is...
chosen family

PATHWAYS

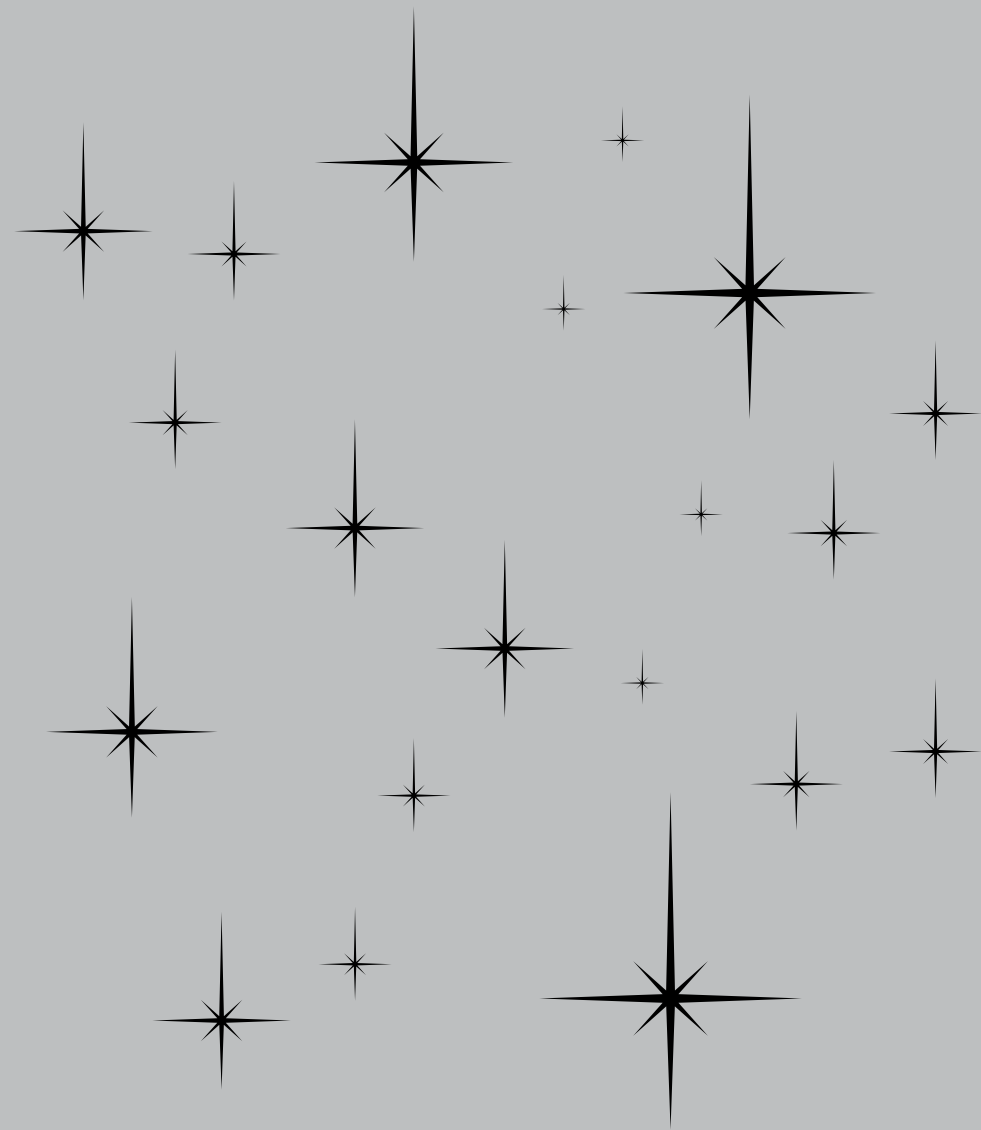
Juggling



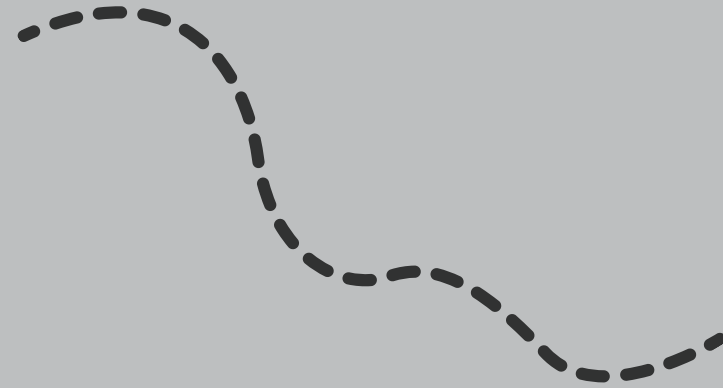
INTERMISSION
(15 MINS)

BACKWARD AND FORWARD IN TIME

Group Dance

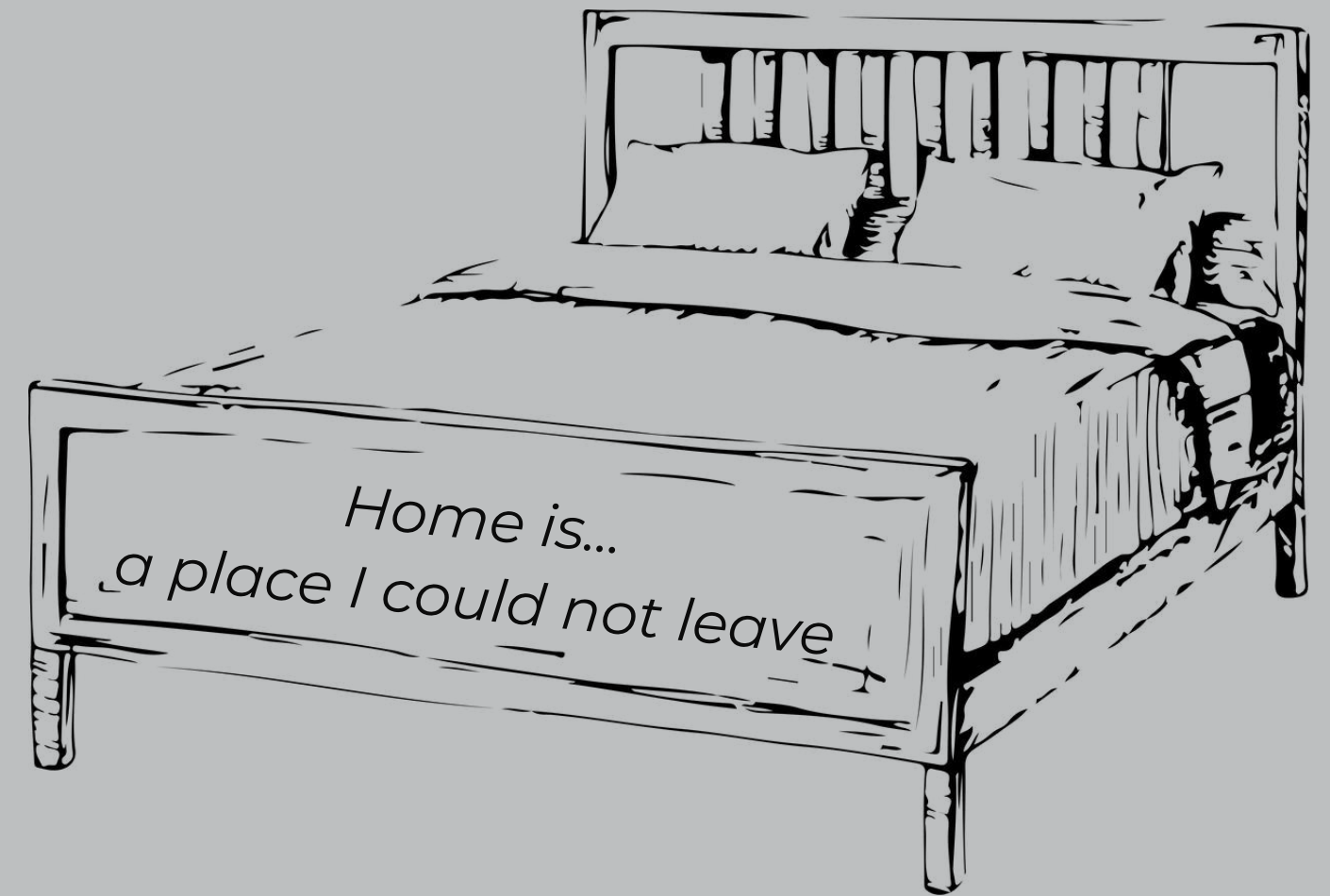


*Home is...
collectively dreaming into being*



I CAN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

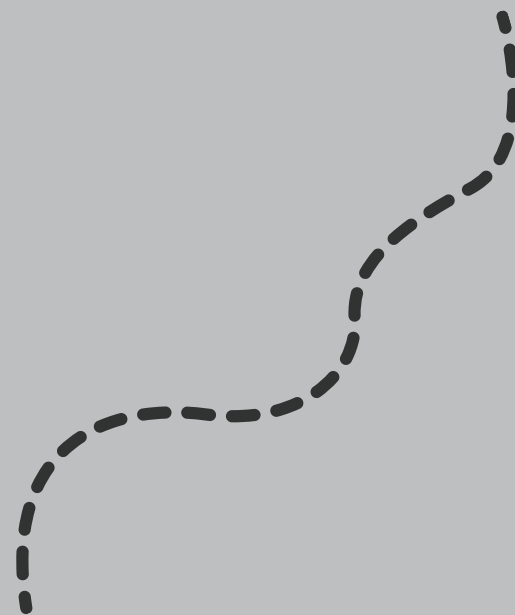
Solo Silks



*Home is...
a place I could not leave*

AWAY FROM HERE

Solo Cloudswing



DINNER WITH NO ONE

Bungee





PORCHLIGHT HEART

Sling

*Home is....
a person.*



TO COME HOME

Solo Single Point Trapeze/
Finale



*Home is...
where we return.*

ALL POETRY IN
“WAY HOME” IS
ORIGINAL WORK
WRITTEN AND
PERFORMED BY
RAVEN SEE

KRISTI ALYSSA



Kristi Alyssa (she/her), has been a circus artist for 16 years. She ran away with the circus and never looked back by joining the Gamma Phi Circus at Illinois State University. She later went on to graduate from NECCA (2012) and Aloft Circus Arts (2015) professional training programs. She specializes in lyra and is a highly in-demand instructor and choreographer in the Chicagoland area. She is the Director of the Youth Program, Director of the Professional Training Programs an instructor, performer, lighting designer and photographer at Aloft Circus Arts. She also performs and teaches trapeze, lollipop (plyra), silks, spanish web, flexibility, juggling, pole, handbalancing, diabolo and more. She directed "Somewhere Out There" (May 2023), and "All in Good Time" (May 2024) and is thrilled to be directing her first professional show under her own company Reminiscent Circus - "Way Home". She is honored to have the cast of "Way Home" be made up of talented artists from many facets of her career - her fellow professionals, her adult students, two recent graduates of the Aloft Professional Training Program and student members of her Aloft Youth Ensemble.

CHLOE ZABICKI



Chloe Zabicki is an aerialist who specializes in trapeze, lyra, and silks. Her exploration of space and movement is joyful. Chloe began her artistic career by studying ballet and ballroom dancing as a child, and throughout high school and college. She was a member of Smith College's synchronized swim team where she performed and choreographed routines. Chloe began training circus in Chicago with a focus on static trapeze, single point trapeze, and pogo jumping. She has worked with a variety of coaches who have helped her to develop her technique and aesthetic.

LUKE GREEFF



Lucas Greeff (ze/he/they) is a dancer, choreographer, and circus artist whose work focuses on expanding the scope of queer & neurodivergent performance, engaging inherent energies, and challenging physical extremity through movement experiment. Luke's past choreographic works include (Z)im, Missile Kid, Bo(ix)y(e) Division, Carnal Inferno, Spectrum, and the Trapping Butterflies Project (artists against domestic violence). Former dancer for St. Petersburg Ballet Company and Joel Hall Dancers; Luke's ongoing artistic affiliations include Yes Ma'am Circus, Reminiscent Circus, Lucid Banter Project, Synapse Arts, Kenwood School of Ballet, Aloft Circus Arts, and Thwack Dance. Recipient of the 2023 Twisted Windows LGBTQIA+ Artist Award presented by the Chicago Circus & Performing Arts Festival, Luke is the co-founder and co-director of Such Creatures and leads movement practices tailored for queer and neurodivergent movers.

LAILA RUANGPAN



Laila Ruangpan (b. Bangkok, Thailand) is an American based multi-disciplinary artist.

Laila's journey in aerial arts began in 2015, she now dedicates herself to silks and sling. She currently coaches fabric at Aloft Circus Arts, and Frankfort Circus Center. Her style highlights dramatic expression melded with athleticism. She loves to explore eccentric movement punctuated by stillness and her unique style and choreographic flair manifests in confident live performances.

With a strong passion for learning, sharing her knowledge, and fitness, Laila also practices Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, is a barre instructor at Barre3, and a piano teacher at her own piano studio. Additionally, she is a keyboard player for a metal rock band, 7th Symphonic.

Laila can also be spotted on stage performing with The Galaxie Chicago, and in various random creative performance endeavors.

RAVEN SEE



Raven is an artist who has always followed their impulse to create. Beginning as a poet and expanding into the world of circus arts in 2016, Raven has brought their unique mix of language and creative movement to international audiences in Cyprus, Spain, and Austria.

Primarily a contortionist, Raven's work embodies queer experience as they explore the limits of possibility. In their hands, circus is a somatic experience and contortion is a language that allows for new levels of expression. Whether on the ground or in the air, they move in a way that is both fluid and unearthly to create something that can only be described as poetry in motion.

MARTHA BAYNE



Martha Bayne is a writer, editor, organizer, and amateur aerialist based in Chicago. The editor of three acclaimed anthologies of writing about Chicago and the Midwest, she is currently the senior acquisitions editor for regional trade books at the University of Illinois Press, and her reported work and essays have been published widely in local and national outlets. A member of Theater Oobleck's artistic ensemble, she has created work for solo and group performance, and was a recipient of a 2017 National Endowment for the Arts grant for the immersive haunted house project A Memory Palace of Fear. She has helped produce many original works of theater in Chicago and New York City, most recently the revival of Mickie Maher's The Hunchback Variations and the cantastoria cycle Baudelaire in a Box. A member of the Aloft community since 2013, she currently studies lyra with Kristi Alyssa and is excited to be part of the creative team for Way Home.

BENJY RADINSKY



Having worn many a hat in many a place, Benjy is an aerialist, juggler, and general circus thing hailing from Chicago, IL. After a dizzying dive into the circus world in his late teens, Benjy became a founding instructor and performer with Defy Gravity Pole Fitness and Aerial Arts Studio in Champaign, IL. He traipsed across the country to continue his training in Seattle, WA and New York City before landing back in Chicago. A technically trained circus artist, he is most interested in creating fantasy narratives and making outlandish, queer art; which is to say he spends a lot of time crawling around like a nightmare lizard or frolicking in the air hoping he sprouts wings. Just kidding, he'd prefer a tail. Benjy specializes in aerial silks, aerial sling, and juggling, with proficiency in pole dance, duo trapeze, and aerial hoop. As well as performing, Benjy has a BA in Global Studies from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and has spent the last few years bartending and serving. When he's not in the air you can usually find him with his head in a book, meandering through a dark corner of his imagination, or exploring a new part of whatever city he happens to be in at the time.

CAMILLE SWIFT



Camille Swift (Femme Fénix) is a Chicago-based circus artist, specializing in static trapeze, dance trapeze, and aerial sling, with extensive training in traditional arts (ballet, piano, oil painting) and a few less conventional ones (breakdancing, Japanese swordsmanship). Her passion is creating acts that are highly skilled yet imaginative, expressive and visually striking. She speaks fluent French and has traveled to Paris and Montreal to train and develop her acts. Camille is also a visual artist, focusing in figurative oil painting, book arts, and collage. She has performed in AirOtic Soirée with Les Farfadais, CREACTION by Cirque du Soleil at Club Med Opio-en-Provence as well as performed multiple times at the Seattle Moisture Festival and various shows and cabarets across the Midwest. When not performing or creating, she works as a professional aerial coach, training her students in dynamic movement, efficient technique, building strength, flexibility and aerial awareness.

COURTNEY SENDZIMER

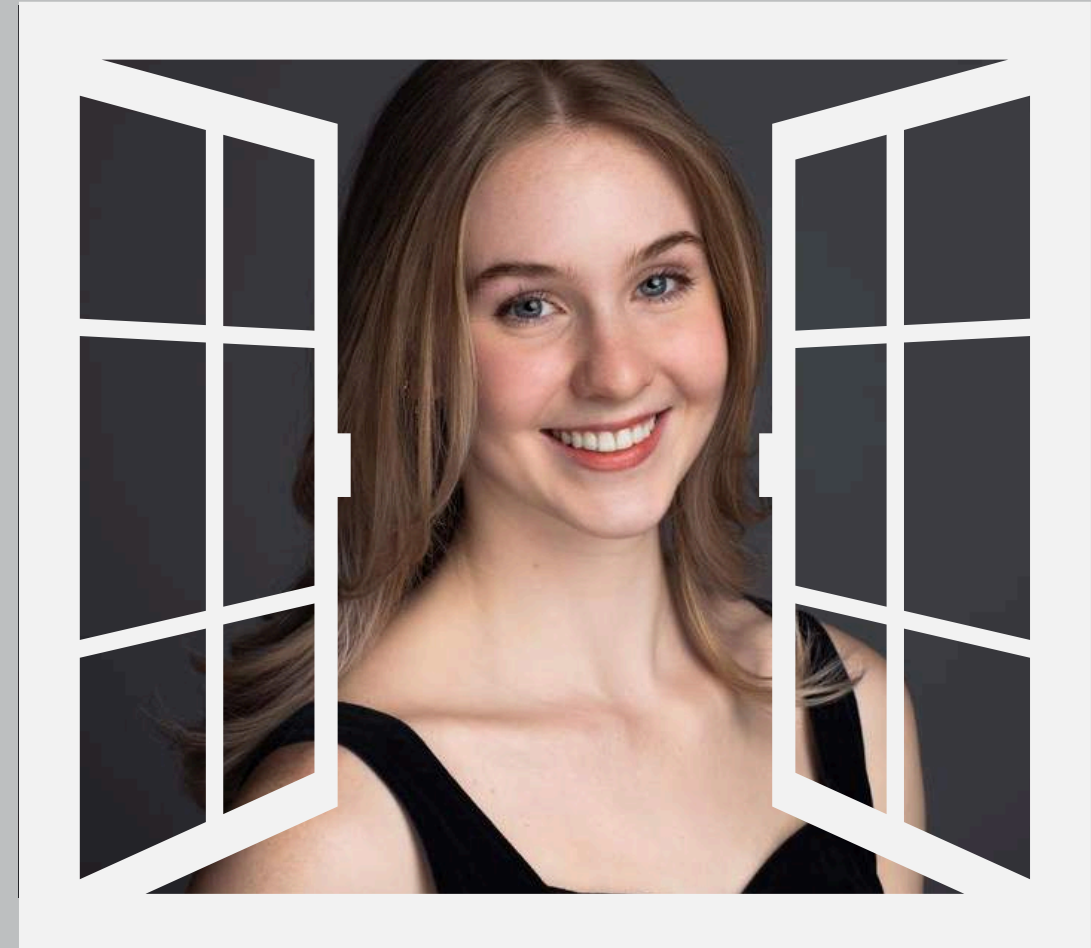


Courtney began her circus career 6-years ago (at the age of 40) with a silks class at Aloft Circus Arts. She would watch the Lyra class practicing across the room and thought that class looks like something I'd like. She began taking Lyra the next session and immediately knew she found her apparatus. Over the years she's taken silks, rope and sling but lyra remains her passion. She specializes in dynamic tricks and likes to translate fabric tricks to the lyra.

Courtney trains under Kristi Alyssa and has performed in a number of amateur shows. Way Home is her first professional performance.

In her non-circus life she has a passion for fitness and is certified to teach group exercise classes such as Spinning, Insanity, Turbokick and more. She also trained as an amateur boxer and has a mean left hook. She works full time as the Director of Partner Integrations for a multifamily housing software company.

DAISY COLEMAN



Daisy Coleman is honored to be a teacher at Aloft Circus Arts and is completing her final year as a co-youth leader in the Aloft Youth Ensemble. While she specializes in silks, she also trains in trampoline and teeterboard (CCDC); handstands (Aloft); straps (MSA); and dance (Visceral). She has completed summer training intensives: San Diego Circus Center's Master Youth Intensive, NECCA's Performance Boot Camp, and Aloft Circus Arts's Jolt program. Daisy is very excited to be a principal cast member of Way Home.

ELEANA SUAZO



Eleana just graduated high school and has been part of the Aloft Youth Ensemble for 3 years. She was a student leader in the ensemble and mainly does trapeze and lyra. Outside of circus she plans to major in Biology and she loves to read.

LYLA TARASKA



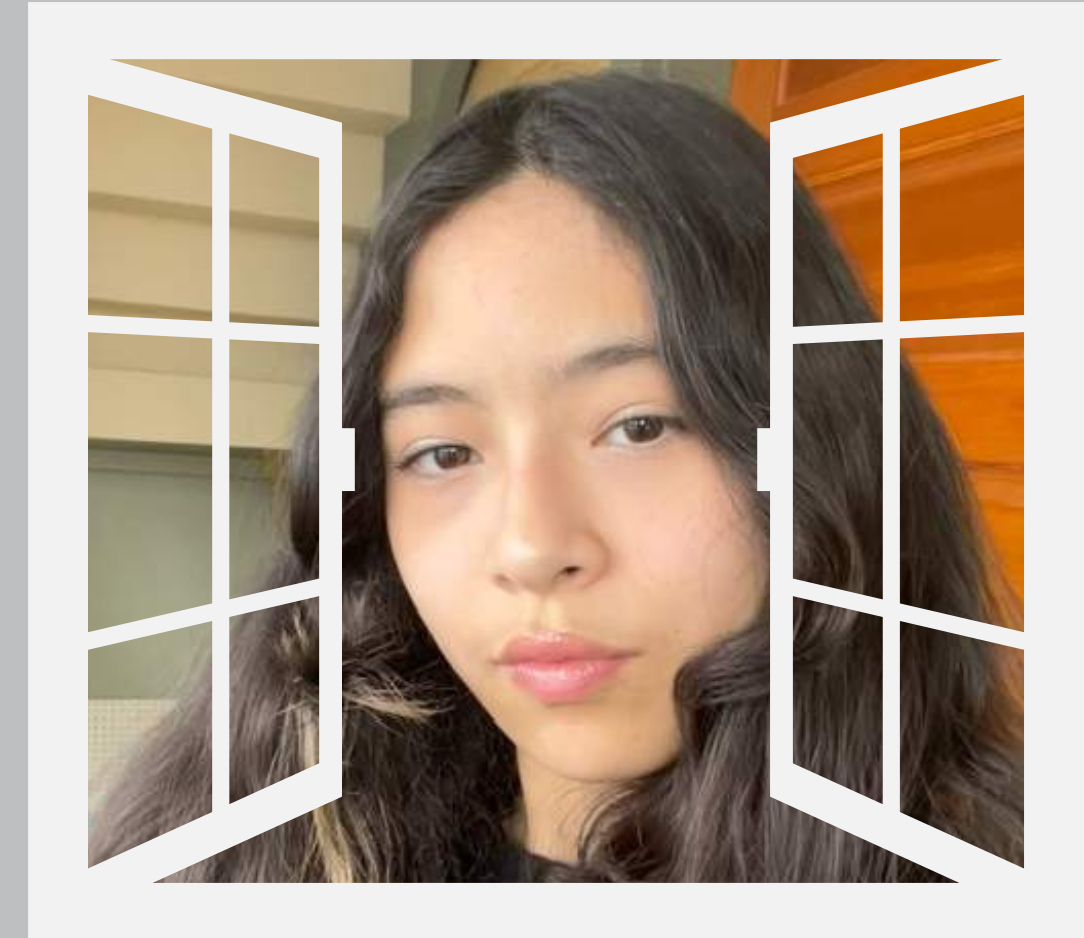
Lyla Taraska is seventeen years old and has been a member of the Aloft Youth Ensemble for the past three years. After discovering classes at Aloft Circus Arts, she quickly developed a passion for circus and aerial arts. Lyla continues to develop her technique with a focus on lyra, single point trapeze, and spanish web.

NICK GRISCHOW



Nick Grischow (he/him) is a Chicago-based circus and theatre artist. While specializing in static trapeze and hat juggling, that doesn't stop him from picking up any apparatus he can lay his hands on! By taking skills from different disciplines, he creates stories reflecting human nature without relying solely on spoken word. Nick is a graduate of Actors Gymnasium's professional circus training program with a clown concentration. He has received his BFA in theatre performance from UW-Whitewater, and is a certified personal trainer through NASM. He has also received training in various martial arts and dance. Nick works events as a performer through Actors Gymnasium Entertainment and NewMoon Chicago.

NOA KIM-COHEN



Noa is a seventh-grader who has been doing circus for three years and is a member of the Aloft Youth Ensemble. She specializes in lyra and trapeze. She is excited to be part of Aloft Circus Arts' performances.

TAYLOR FOST



Taylor Fost (she/they) is 18 years old; She has been a circus artist for 11 years, with a specialty in lyra and aerial arts. She has been able to learn in all areas of the circus arts such as tumbling, object manipulation, hand balancing, and more throughout her circus career.

Taylor has a large background in traditional arts (musical theater, dance, visual art, piano, voice) which she focused on at Interlochen Center for the Arts, as well as years of learning the martial art Tae Kwon Do at Connelly's Academy. She loves to use her experiences within the performing arts to explore the characters she creates on stage, and in the air, today.

Taylor joined the Aloft Circus Arts community in the fall of 2022 and recently joined the Aloft Youth Ensemble this past fall. She can't wait to continue her circus career after her high school graduation this upcoming spring, as well as the continuing creation of Way Home.

VALERIA ROSERO



Valeria Rosero (she/her) is an Ecuadorian-born, Chicago-based circus, dance, and theatre artist who is proud to call Aloft one of her artistic homes. She began her circus journey in 2020 at the Actors Gymnasium, and joined their Professional Circus Training Program the year after, where she created her silks piece "Bound." Valeria then joined the Aloft Professional Training Program Year One, which culminated with the show Terra in 2023, and where she showcased her first cloud swing act "Broken Bridge." Valeria uses performing arts as language for storytelling that is universal and inclusive; where spoken language isn't a barrier, but a tool to be used as desired. She graduated from Northwestern University as a Theatre major with a BA in Communication, and holds a Certificate in Spanish Diction and Vocalization, Radio Script Writing, and Voiceover from the Tecnológico Espíritu Santo in Guayaquil, Ecuador. When she's not on stage, Valeria loves painting, drawing, and learning about interior design. She also works events as a performer through New Moon and Actors Gym Entertainment. Valeria is proudly represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent Agency.

DOUGIE



Dougie just mysteriously appeared and demanded to be in the show. We were afraid to say no.

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VIDEOS!

