

A show unlike any we have we have ever done for a time unlike any we have ever been in

THE BALANCING ACT



Walking the Pandemic Tightrope



Oct 10
7PM CST
2020

SHOW IS ONLINE AND TICKETS ARE FREE BUT YOU MUST REGISTER AT
[HTTPS://CIRCUSHARMONY.ORG/THEBALANCINGACT/](https://circusharmony.org/thebalancingact/)



The Balancing Act is dedicated to three cousins:
BJ Scarfone, Lynne Manilla, and
Sandi Manilla,
of blessed memory,
for helping us keep our balance!





WELCOME!



Circus is about humans overcoming challenges. Our entire world is challenged right now. As a nonprofit social circus school, we feel like we are walking a tightrope. Under normal circumstances, we know how to walk a tightrope, however the length keeps getting extended.

When you are learning to walk a tightrope, if you start to lose your balance, you don't stay in one place and fight to get it back. The best thing to do to regain your balance is to take your next step forward.

One of our students, Will Hickey, said, "It's important to look for balance. It doesn't necessarily seek you out if you don't look for it." From their living rooms, bedrooms, backyards, and local parks, Circus Harmony students and alumni have created new acts and tell the stories of how they are keeping their balance in this unbalanced time.

Will observed, "This show feels like it's taking our separated lives and individual experiences and attaching them. There's a reason people make quilts and not just regular blankets." Come wrap yourself in this show, like the circus itself, the show is daring and funny, exciting and entertaining, heart-stopping and heart-warming. I think you will be inspired by these young people's strength, grace, and resilience.

Jessica Hentoff





PRE-SHOW



A view into how some of Circus Harmony's alumni, students, parents and coaches are keeping their balance.

Music: "Auggie's Juggling Song" Jeffrey Richard Carter

CECILIA BOYERS

Coach and alum.

Student.
Words from his mother, Tara Scherer.

PAUL SCHERER

SIDNEY IKING BATEMAN

Alum, professional circus performer and WWE NXT wrestler.

Alum and professional circus performer.

CLAIRE WALLEDA

AMON SMITH

Student.
Words from his mother, Ariah Smith.

Alum and professional circus performer.

KEATON HENTOFF-KILLIAN

MELVIN DIGGS

Alum and professional circus performer.





THE BALANCING ACT



CHAOS TAKES A SEAT

Performers: Dennis, Eliot, Ethan, Lyla, Philip, Sabrina, Sarah, Will
Choreographer: Becky Brown
Music: "Time" Jeffrey Richard Carter

Performer, Choreographer and Monologue: Lacy Gragg

Music: "Little Waltz" Jeffrey Richard Carter

SMILING

COUCH JUGGLING

Performer, Choreographer and Monologue: Dennis Bailey

Music: "Le Jongleur" Jeffrey Richard Carter

Performer and Monologue: Nate Dee

Music: Kellin Quinn

FLIPPING IT

SYMPHONY HOOPS

Performer: Greta Stiegler

Music: Excerpt from "Symphony in C Major, Yoshi's Island/1st Movement, World 1"
Greta Stiegler



Performer and Choreographer: Maddie Wenger

Poem by: Maddie Wenger

Music: “Amour Étrange” François Simon

HAIKU HOOPS

PANDEMIC JUGGLING

Performers and Monologues: Eliot, Sean

Choreographers: Eliot Bailey, Sean Petric, Jessica Hentoff

Music: “Temptation Rag” Thomas Henry Lodge; Performed by Adam Hoskins

Performers: Dennis, Eliot, Ethan, Lyla, Philip, Sabrina, Sarah, Will

Choreographer: Kyran Walton

Music: “Hand to Hand” Noah Lovins

EQUIPOISE

DON'T CATCH IT

Performers: Dennis, Eliot, Ethan, Philip

Choreographers: Eliot, Dennis and Philip Bailey; Ethan Ryan; Oliver Layher

Music: “Keep Away” Jeffrey Richard Carter

Performer and Monologue: Will

Choreographers: Elliana Grace and Becky Brown

Music: “Amour Étrange” François Simon

NEW NORMAL



BAILEY FAMILY ONE WHEEL WONDERS

Performers: The Bailey Family; Lou, Leah, Eliot, Dennis, Philip

Choreographers: The Bailey Family, Jessica Hentoff

Monologue: Leah Bailey

Music: "Auggie's Juggling Song" Jeffrey Richard Carter

Performers: Lacy Gragg with sister, Eleanor, and Sean Petric with nephew, Archer.

JUGGLING BABIES

PERSPECTIVE

Performer and Monologue: Isabella Majzun

Performer and Monologue: Ethan Ryan

Music: "It's Possible" Jeffrey Richard Carter

BALANCE

SIBLING RIVALRY

Performers and Choreographers: Anna and Oliver Layher

Monologue: Anna Layher

Music: "Some Siblings" Jeffrey Richard Carter

Performers and Monologues: Lyla, Sarah

Choreographer: Dashdende "Rosa" Yagaantsetseg

Music: "Prowling" Khangal Bulgan

REFLECTION

CONTROL

Performer and Monologue: Kyran Walton



Performers and Monologues: Jahlah
Baum, Sabrina Skaggs
Choreographer: Elliana Grace
Music: “Solo Duet” Adam Hoskins

MIDNIGHT ROSE DUO

BAILEY BROTHERS

Performers: Eliot, Dennis and Philip Bailey
Choreographers: The Bailey Family and
Jessica
Music: “Tenno’s Tale” Jeffrey Richard Carter

Performers: Dennis, Eliot, Ethan, Lyla,
Philip, Sabrina, Sarah, Sean, Will
Choreographer: Sereno Aguilar Izzo
Music: “Malabristas em Jogo” Jeffrey Richard
Carter

ZOOM JUGGLING

STAY POSITIVE

Performer and Monologue: Finn
McNamee

Performer: Finn McNamee
Music: “Time” Jeffrey Richard Carter

FINN-ALE





YOUTH CIRCUS PERFORMERS



Jahlah Baum, 17



Dennis Bailey, 13



Eliot Bailey, 16



Philip Bailey, 10

Lacy Gragg, 16





William Hickey, 16



Sarah Kuhlman, 16



Lyla Lawless, 9



Anna Layher, 15



Finn McNamee, 15



Sean Petric, 18





Ethan Ryan, 16

Sabrina Skaggs, 17



Paul Scherer, 12



Amon Smith, 11



Greta Stiegler, 20



Maddie Wenger, 13





PARENTS



PERFORMERS

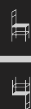


Lou and Leah Bailey

Leah and Lou are parents of Flying Children, Eliot, Dennis, and Philip. They participate weekly in Juggling and Unicycle Clubs and have taken this shutdown to hone their skills and create a family unicycle act. When she's not watching (or participating in) the circus, Leah is a homeschooler, GIS Analyst, and runner. Lou is a Safety Manager and his favorite non-circus pastime is disc golf. In addition to the incredible opportunities that Circus Harmony has provided their family, the Baileys are most grateful for the friendships and family that they've found here.

TESTIMONIALS

Leah Bailey
Ariah Smith
Tara Scherer





ALUMNI PERFORMERS



Sidney Iking Bateman

Sidney Iking Bateman started his circus journey with Circus Harmony at the age of 11. After he finished high school in 2010, he was accepted into the prestigious École Nationale de Cirque and graduated in 2014. He

immediately landed a job with the internationally renowned circus company, Les 7 Doigts de la Main, where he toured the world as part of the original cast of the incredible show, *Cuisine et Confessions*. Sidney Iking then moved on to Cirque du Soleil's show *Luzia* and was part of their American and international tour. In December 2019, he decided to trade the circus ring for the wrestling ring and is now an up and coming wrestler with WWE NXT! Sidney Iking attributes his drive for success to his two children, Madi and Zack, aged four and eleven.

Follow him on Instagram! [@sidneyiking](https://www.instagram.com/sidneyiking)



Cecilia Boyers

Coach



Cecilia Boyers is an aerial silks coach and performer at Circus Harmony. Starting at age 12, she spent six years flipping and flying as a student at Circus Harmony. At 18, she left for four years of college at the University of Chicago where she coached silks and performed in many productions with the student-led circus group, Le Vorriss and Vox. She has been back at Circus Harmony as a coach and performer for the last year and a half, and it is one of the happiest, most fulfilling aspects of her life. Her favorite part about being a coach is watching a student's face light up when they achieve a trick for the first time--there is nothing like it!



Nate Dee

Nathan has been involved with Circus Harmony over the past several years as a student, teacher, and St. Louis Arch. Some highlights of his career have been performing with the St. Louis Arches in Circus Flora and participating in the 2018 Revolution for Harmony Circus Tour in Puerto Rico. Nathan is currently attending Lindenwood University as part of the Physical Education Teaching Certification program (K-12). Follow him on Instagram! [@nathan_dee](#)



Melvin Diggs

Melvin Diggs is a young man who takes great pride in putting everything he has into the betterment of himself and anyone that crosses his path. Luckily, joining the circus ended up being the best place to share that desire. To Melvin, the whole concept of circus is to grow as an Artist, Human, Performer, and Partner to those he may come in contact with through work and more importantly, life.

[Watch.](#)

Follow him on Instagram! [@m3l_314](#)

Keaton Hentoff-Killian

Sitting high upon a tree branch when he was just past the age of 8, Keaton found himself with a dilemma. He told all of his friends that were congregating at the base of the tree, on the safety of the park floor that he would do a flip. The obvious choice would be to climb down a branch to a level that didn't strike immediate gut lurching fear but foolish as he was, he jumped. Many people ask why Keaton loves the circus. He isn't able to ever articulate it clearly but the desire to risk your own skin just for the enjoyment of others is definitely part of it. He's been working in Australia with C!RCA for the last 4 years and has had the luck and honor to tour around the world performing to thousands of people. For everything that goes great in his life he had his mother Jessica Hentoff and Circus Harmony to thank.

Follow him on instagram! [@keatonhk](#)





Oliver Layher

Guest Coach/Choreographer

Oliver is a former Circus Harmony student and St. Louis arch who has been in the circus for 10 years. He has performed many different shows around the United States, France, and Puerto Rico as a member of the Arches. He is currently studying at L'École Nationale de Cirque in Montreal where he is studying hand to hand as a porter.

Follow him on Instagram! [@oliver_layher](https://www.instagram.com/oliver_layher)

Isabella Majzun

Isabella Majzun fell in love with performing when she was five years old. She started out at Circus Harmony, and performed with the St. Louis Arches for four years.

She then went on to perform with Circus Smirkus for three summers. Over the years, she has performed in Israel, Canada, and across the United States. She is now furthering her circus training as a juggler at L'École Nationale de Cirque in Montreal.





Claire Wallenda

Claire Wallenda began her circus career as a seven-year-old student at Circus Harmony. At thirteen-years-old she joined the St. Louis Arches. As an Arch, Claire developed a passion for performing in the circus. From 2005-2013 she performed with the Arches on Circus Flora, throughout the United States, and in Israel as a member of the Galilee Arches. Her artistry is not limited to the ground. She has performed on horseback with the Ianna Spirit Riders, on the lyra with her partner Elliana Grace, flying through the air by nothing but her ankles on the swinging trapeze, and walking a slender strand above the heads of countless audiences with the Flying Wallendas.

Kyran Walton

Guest Coach/Choreographer

Kyran was raised in St. Louis Missouri and has been a very energetic child since he could walk. He played a few sports before the age 8 but none of them were engaging enough for him. Circus Harmony performed at his school around the time that he was 8 and he immediately begged his mom to sign him up for classes.

Since then Kyran has been in the circus for 11 years now along with dancing for 6 of those years. Around age 11, Kyran was made a member of the circus Harmony's advanced troupe : the St. Louis Arches. During the next 7 years, Kyran became fairly advanced in Contortion, Hand-balancing, juggling, Acrobatics, Trapeze, Unicycle, wire, Banquine, hand to hand. Over these 11 years Kyran performed in over 1000 shows from St. Louis to Monte Carlo, Israel, Puerto Rico, New Orleans Jazz fest, Washington D.C, New York and many more. Ever since he was 13 years old, Kyran dreamt of going to Ecole Nationale De Cirque in Montreal. When he was 18, he auditioned, and luckily got in. Kyran is currently in his second year specializing in Hand to Hand which combines all his favorite disciplines (Hand-balancing, Acrobatics, Contortion). Kyran is very happy to have made it this far thanks to support from his family and his circus family. Outside of Circus, Kyran enjoys Filming, Photography, sleeping, and questioning the unquestioned.

Follow him on Instagram! [@kyran_lee](https://www.instagram.com/kyran_lee)





VIDEO PRODUCTION



Patti Chambers Video Editor Board - Vice Chair

Patti Chambers is a local producer/director who loves Circus Harmony and the social circus movement. She is the vice chair of the Circus Harmony board; a circus student; our unofficial circus photographer and a circus parent. She continues to marvel at the miracles she witnesses at Circus Harmony - both inside the ring and in the lives of our circus family.



Laura Lippert Video Editor Artistic Content Coordinator Coach



A St. Louis native, Laura is in demand with her innovative style and the rare mixture of tradition and modernity around the globe. She loves giving her art, finding a different and distinctive color each time. Known for acts with her hair and her aerial chair, Laura found a second home in Switzerland over the past three years with Broadway Variété among other European cities. Having trained and performed around the world, she has now been back in St. Louis for the past year and a half. She is pleased and grateful to be a part of Circus Harmony. In addition to all that, it seems that she is now a video editor!

See and learn more [here](#).

Follow her on Instagram! [@laura.lippert_hairy.lady](#)





MUSIC AND AUDIO



Jeffrey Carter Composer

Jeffrey Richard Carter returns to Circus Harmony this year as music director. At Webster University, Jeff is Professor & Chair of the Department of Music, and he leads the only undergraduate program in the country in musical direction for musical theatre. He is the recipient of 'best supporting actor' and 'best musical director' awards for local theatre work. Jeff's a composer, voice teacher, singer, collaborator, and music director with international credits. He adores this circus organization, and is truly elated that he can finally join the circus.



Adam Hoskins Musician Composer Audio Mastering Engineer

Adam is a St. Louis native, local and world-renowned musician specializing in guitar with a Bachelors in Music with an emphasis on music technology from Webster University. He has 20 years experience playing the guitar and 10+ years doing it professionally, in addition to working as an audio engineer. See and learn more [here](#).



Kellin Quinn Hentoff-Killian

Composer

My name is Kellin and I'm not sure whether this should be in first person or not. I was born and raised here at Circus Harmony. I then moved to Montreal to join my friends at circus. It turns out they had all graduated already. So I made some new friends and did some shows on the street. I went to Chicago to join the Midnight Circus crew, then went off to Europe to do something there.

See and learn more [here](#).
[Watch.](#)



Noah Lovins

Composer

Noah Lovins is currently studying Music Direction for Musical Theatre at Webster University in St. Louis, MO. During his time at Webster, he has composed music for Circus Harmony, theatrical productions with Webster Conservatory, theatrical productions with PING! A Performing Arts Collective, as well as various student films. He had also played piano for Circus Harmony, as well as playing rehearsals for various theatre companies in St. Louis. He's excited to compose and play for Circus Harmony this year and for many years to come!





TEACHERS AND STAFF



Jessica Hentoff Artistic/Executive Director Coach

Jessica Hentoff is the Artistic/Executive Director and Founder of the social circus school Circus Harmony. She has been teaching and performing circus arts for 47 years. Jessica is a founding member of both the Big Apple Circus in NYC and Circus Flora in St. Louis. Jessica has been using circus arts to motivate social change since she started the St. Louis Arches youth circus troupe in 1989. In 2009, she received the double honor of being named St. Louis Arts Innovator of the Year by the Arts & Education Council and receiving the Grand Center Visionary Award for Outstanding Arts Educator. She serves on the advisory board of the World Circus Federation and on Circus Fans of America's Youth Circus Committee. Jessica is the only social circus person to ever serve as a judge at the International Circus Festival of Monte Carlo. In 2014, she received the first-ever Excellence in Education Award from the American Youth Circus Organization/American Circus Educators. In 2020, she helped found the Global Alliance of Circus Schools. At Circus Harmony, Jessica uses her remarkable vision and knowledge of circus arts to build character and community and help children “defy gravity, soar with confidence and leap over social barriers.”

See and learn more [here](#).

Follow her on Instagram! [@jessicahentoff](#)



Michelle Fassler

General Manager



Michelle Fassler serves as General Manager for Circus Harmony. Michelle has worked in the education and nonprofit community in Saint Louis as a Director of Career Services, Program Manager and ADA Coordinator for the last fifteen years. She has a BA in Communications from Westminster College and a MA in School Counseling from Lindenwood University. Michelle is very active in the community as a member of the Community Investment Committee at United Way of Greater St. Louis and as an advisory member to the National Disability Institute where she worked on poverty reduction campaigns. As the General Manager at Circus Harmony, Michelle handles all daily operations, including office management, human resources, and finances.

Dashdendeв 'Rosa' Yagaantsetseg

Master Teacher

Contortion, hand balancing. Rosa Yagaantsetseg is both an Honored Artist and Honored Citizen of Mongolia. While she has done and taught every circus act you can think of (including partner acrobatics on the back of a camel), her specialties are contortion and hand balancing. Rosa is world famous as a performer and choreographer of acts that are a creation of beauty, strength, creativity, and control of the human body. She is Circus Harmony's most beloved coach. Her acts have won accolades from around the world, including silver medals at the Monte Carlo International Circus Festival, the Paris Young Actors Festival, the Italian International Circus Festival, the Hungarian World Circus Arts Festival, and more.



Elliana Grace

Lead Coach



Elliana Grace has been in the circus since before she could even walk. Her first entry into a circus ring was on the back of an elephant at the age of 2 weeks! Raised in St. Louis, MO as a member of Circus Harmony's élite youth troupe - the Arches - with additional education at the École de Cirque de Québec; she has performed and taught in Montreal, Israel, Dubai, and all across America. She has extensive experience in such disciplines as lyra: (solo and duo), static trapeze, tumbling, hula hoops, bareback horse riding, upside-down loop walking, and more. In 2013, she toured as Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's youngest-ever female human cannonball. She is thrilled to be coaching the unique students of Circus Harmony and has loved watching them grow into such talented individuals.

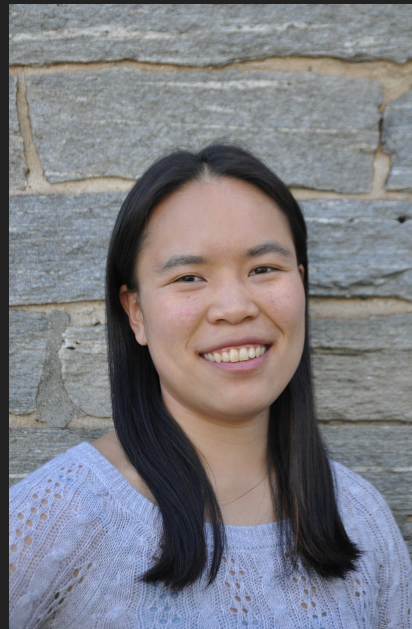
See and learn more [here](#).

Follow her on Instagram! [@_elliana_grace](#)

Becky Brown

Admin Assistant
Coach

Becky started out flipping and swinging as a competitive gymnast, and transitioned into aerial dance after she decided the relentless pounding of sticking landings no longer agreed with her body. Since discovering the aerial world, she has performed on (almost) everything that can be hung from the ceiling - dance trapeze, aerial silks, aerial hoop, stilts, Spanish web, corde lisse, and invented steel apparatus - and has training in partner acrobatics, swinging trapeze, bungee dancing, hand balancing, and contortion. Performance and collaboration credits include Aloft Circus Arts, MSA & Circus Arts, Frequent Flyers Productions Aerial Dance, Flyaway Productions, Rabble Dance Collective, Elevé Youth Circus Collective, and Orphan Circus. Becky also holds a BS in biology and a BA in Russian language and cultural studies, and is fluent in French.





Sereno Aguilar Izzo

Guest Coach

Sereno is a Juggler. He was born in New York City and grew up in Guanajuato, Mexico. Sereno graduated from École Nationale de Cirque in 2018, has been on stage since 2003, and has performed in over 10 countries around the world.

Frankie Watson

Coach

Dance Teacher

Frankie Watson was born in St. Louis Missouri. She has been dancing since age 2. With dance as her major, she attended Carr Lane Visual and Performing Arts Middle School and Central Visual and Performing Arts High School. After graduating in 2003, Frankie went on to further her education, receiving a BA in dance from Lindenwood University. In 2008 Frankie moved to Los Angeles, California where she signed with Clear Talent Group and had the opportunity to work with Beyoncé, Britney Spears, Kelly Rowland, Willow Smith, Cee Lo Green, Lil Momma, Nick Jr's TV show "Fresh Beat Band, and more. In 2015 Frankie performed with the Black Rep in the musical "Tell Me Something Good." Currently Frankie is back in St. Louis choreographing for studios, competition teams, The Dollhouse Studios, and Circus Harmony. Frankie has worked with Circus Harmony since 2012 and says, "it is a joy to teach and watch these talented young students grow."





DESIGNERS



POSTER DESIGN

Beau Shoulders, New Scar Design

[@newscardesign](https://www.instagram.com/newscardesign)

CHAIR LOGOS AND PROGRAM

Laura Lippert

ADDITIONAL FOOTAGE PROVIDED BY

Les 7 Doigts de la Main/7 Fingers





SPECIAL THANKS



Teresa McNamee, LICSW Social Worker

Teresa has professional social work experience in a variety of settings, providing social work and related services to children, youth, and their families for nearly 20 years. She graduated from Washington University School in St. Louis School of Social Work and has maintained her clinical license for the last 11 years. Teresa currently serves as the Executive Director of a nonprofit organization serving victims of domestic, family, and teen dating violence. She lives in Minnesota with her husband and two small children, enjoys canoeing, and loves working with her circus family!

Dear readers,

The story is longer than I will tell here, but Teresa first came to Circus Harmony as a board member. She was a licensed social worker, and she stepped down from the board then became a volunteer social worker for our flying children. They called her Mother T. It even said so on her Circus Harmony jacket. She instituted company meetings where they could talk freely. She helped them create our code of conduct. Teresa left and has been living and working around the country in various places for various nonprofits and helping innumerable people. At the beginning of the pandemic, she called me out of the blue to check in. We were just starting to work on *The Balancing Act*. I asked if she'd be willing to be part of the project because I knew that in a show about mental health we should have a professional working with us. She said "yes."

So, for much of the summer, our current flying children got to have Mother T meetings. The monologues that you hear in the video came from these meetings and them being able to talk about their feelings, both what was bad and what was good about the pandemic.

Teresa has two young children and is the executive director of a nonprofit in another state that deals with victims of domestic violence. Trust me when I say she was extremely busy over the summer. We ended those meetings and we went on to filming the show.

And, after going over those video credits and redoing them countless times and the same with the program... I have to say that I forgot someone. It was Teresa McNamee. I've apologized, but I wanted all of you to know how important she's been to Circus Harmony and was to this project. Thank you, Mother T.

Sincerely,

Jessica Flentoff





THANK YOU!



If you are interested in taking classes or booking shows either via zoom or outside, socially-distanced, please contact us at circusday@circusharmony.org

