

YOUR DIGITAL PROGRAM / TEXT ONLY VERSION

# Air Play

Acrobuffos

**Wed 15 - Sun 19 Mar / Festival Theatre, Adelaide Festival Centre**

**Duration:** 1hr, no interval

**Warnings:** This performance contains theatrical haze. Latex balloons are used onstage and in the audience. Patrons with latex allergies should sit towards the back of the stalls or choose seats in the dress circle or grand circle. Recommended for ages 5+

**Note:** Lockout period applies

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## THIS DIGITAL PROGRAM INCLUDES

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# Credits

Writers and Creators **Seth Bloom** and **Christina Gelsone**

Performers **Seth Bloom** and **Christina Gelsone**

Kinetic Sculptor **Daniel Wurtzel**

Director **West Hylar**

Technical Director **Todd Alan Little**

Stage Manager **Flora Vassar**

Lighting Design **Jeanne Koenig**

Costumes **Ashley Dunn Gatterdam**

Sound Design **Seth Bloom** and **Christina Gelsone**

Additional Sound Design **Phil Ingle**

Props **Seth Bloom** and **Christina Gelsone**

Representation **Boat Rocker Entertainment** and **Aurora Nova**

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## Note from the Creators

**Christina Gelsone and Seth Bloom**

*Air Play* is a visual poem, using no words. Just as a poem may have no literal story, *Air Play* is open to interpretation. Around the world, audiences tell us that the wonder and discovery of *Air Play* are bold reminders of their own childhood, of growing up, of friendship, sibling rivalry, loss and memory.

Is *Air Play* theatre, comedy, sculpture or circus? Yes! Our show is rooted in our love of circus, clowns, aerialists, acrobats, and jugglers. Real people doing real things — defying gravity. If you tilt your head, you'll see the circus in *Air Play* — the fabrics become our aerialists, helium balloons become juggling props, and the powerful fans gracefully defeat the same gravity circus performers work so hard to overcome.

## About the Show

**By Christina Gelsone and Seth Bloom**

Our home of New York City has a long history of artists from different genres collaborating, most notably dancer Martha Graham and sculptor Isamu Noguchi. We continued the tradition, curious to see what combining our physical comedy with the air sculptures of Brooklyn-based kinetic artist Daniel Wurtzel would create. Over five years between 2010 to 2015 we worked together, developing new sculptures and object manipulations to make the genre-bending *Air Play*.

Whether you speak Mandarin or Dutch or Sign Language, we want to laugh with you. We've performed *Air Play* across the USA and around the globe: at an opera house surrounded by volcanoes in Chile, with giant bats hanging in trees outside Melbourne's State Theater, under a massive antique crystal chandelier in Portugal's Teatro Circo, and after grabbing a spicy egg pancake on the way to Shanghai's Grand Theatre. *Air Play* has now been seen at over 90 theaters worldwide.

## About the Company

Acrobuffos from New York City is the international touring physical theatre company of Christina Gelsone and Seth Bloom. Known for their stunning visual aesthetic and non-verbal comedy, the Acrobuffos have worked in 29 countries across a wide range of venues from city streets to circus tents to elite international theaters. Their unique shows have been called "inspired and finely crafted" by the Sydney Morning Herald, "rare gems" from Manchester Theater Awards, and "hardly your average clowns" from the New York Times.

Using an intense hands-on research and development process, Seth and Christina often take between two to five years to make a show. Responsible for most elements of their productions, they wear many hats, as playwrights, prop builders, costumers, set makers, sound designers, and ultimately as the performers. With shows touring for years and performed hundreds of times, the Acrobuffos are valued world-wide for their poetic use of everyday objects, original storytelling, warm-hearted themes, and guaranteed laughter without using language. Their accessible shows work across a broad spectrum of cultures, ages, neurodiversities, and economic classes.

The Acrobuffos have been seen at Mexico's famed Cervantino Festival, the Royal Festival Hall in London, the World Busker Festival in New Zealand, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the World Expo in South Korea, as well as competing at the prestigious Wuhan International Acrobatic Art Festival of China and headlining the 35th season of the Big Apple Circus. Christina is often the only female clown at these festivals.

In 2010, the Acrobuffos began working with kinetic sculptor Daniel Wurtzel of Brooklyn, continuing the New York City tradition of artists of unrelated mediums devising new work together. Their collaboration, *Air Play*, has been performed in over 90 theaters around the world and continues to tour.

## Biographies

### SETH BLOOM

#### Creator & Performer

Seth has performed in 30 countries and 49 US states; over half a million people have seen his shows live. Since 2006, he has created work with his wife and clown partner Christina Gelsone as the duo Acrobuffos, making seven unique shows, including *Waterbombs!* and *Air Play*.

Originally a professional juggler and clown, he quickly steered to social circus and inventive theater. Over seven years, he worked intermittently in Afghanistan with the Mobile Mini Circus for Children. In London, Seth earned his MFA in Lecoq theater technique, and co-founded Split Knuckle Theatre, a five-star physical theater company. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University, Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Clown College, the Dell'Arte School of Physical Theater, and London International School of Performing Arts (MFA).

### CHRISTINA GELSONE

#### Creator & Performer

Christina has performed in 40 countries as a wordless clown, stilt walker, mask performer, juggler, puppeteer, and acrobat. Since 2006, she has created work with her husband and clown partner Seth Bloom as the duo Acrobuffos, making seven unique shows, including *Waterbombs!* and *Air Play*.

Originally a professional ballet dancer, Christina studied Shakespeare at Princeton University and corporeal mime at the Dell'Arte School of Physical Theatre. She worked with Bond Street Theatre in post-conflict zones including Afghanistan, Kosovo, Albania, and Serbia, and taught acrobatics for girls at Mobile Mini Circus for Children in Afghanistan. Other professional adventures include starting a social circus in Egypt, creating curriculum-based comedy and teaching at universities. Over half a million people have seen her shows live.

## **DANIEL WURTZEL**

### **Kinetic Sculptor**

Daniel is a New York artist best known for his kinetic sculptures using air and lightweight materials that fly. He has shown his artworks at the Musée Rodin, the Grand Palais in Paris, the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, the Museum Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, the Phillips Collection, Phaeton Science Center, and Kunsthall 3.14. Daniel's artworks are on permanent exhibition at Swiss Science Center Technorama, Copernicus Science Center, the World Expo in Astana, and the Museo do Amanhã in Rio de Janeiro. His work is featured on Broadway in *Finding Neverland*, with *Cirque du Soleil* in *Amaluna*, and centre stage at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. Daniel has also worked with some of the world's most highly regarded theatre directors, including Julie Taymor, Diane Paulus, Robert Lepage, Zhang Yimou, and Michel Laprise.

## **WEST HYLER**

### **Director**

West is the co-Artistic Director of Drama-League nominated theater company Artistic Stamp. He was story writer and scene director for *Paramour*, *Cirque du Soleil's* first Broadway musical, and the Producing Artistic Director of the New York Musical Festival. He's worked on five Broadway shows and recent directing credits include *Shrek! The Musical* (National Opera House of Bulgaria), *Piff the Magic Dragon* (Las Vegas Flamingo) and *Big Apple Circus*.

## **JEANNE KOENIG**

### **Lighting Designer**

Jeanne has worked with light for over 30 years. As Lighting Supervisor for *The Lion King*, she has worked in 15 countries and scores of productions since 1997. Other associate works include Broadway productions of *In Transit*, *Side Show*, *Twyla Tharp's Movin' Out*, *Come Fly Away*, *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, *Leap of Faith*, *Ragtime*, *All Shook Up*, *Bells Are Ringing*, *Juan Darien*, *Hughie*, *Big Apple Circus* and *Ringling Bros*. As part of the core creative team of *Air Play*, her lighting has travelled the world. Jeanne continues to work with light to tell stories, practices and teaches mindfulness meditation and spends time in nature.

## **TODD ALAN LITTLE**

### **Technical Director**

Todd has production managed over 40 musicals (seven world premieres, four going to Broadway) for the Goodspeed Musicals in Connecticut. Todd assisted in the creation of critically-acclaimed Japanese Kabuki shows for Western audiences: *Kabuki Medea*, *Kabuki Othello* and *Kabuki MacBeth*. Todd has also performed on stage in various roles and helped manage a record-breaking, non-stop, around-the-world solo balloon flight. He has toured with *Air Play* since 2015.

## **FLORA VASSAR**

### **Stage Manager & Lighting Supervisor**

Flora has toured with *Air Play* since its 2015 premiere. Flora's stage management credits include: Pig Iron Theatre Company, Target Margin, the Philadelphia Artists' Collective, Swim Pony Performing Arts, Trey Lyford, Resonance Ensemble; ASM for Bristol Riverside Theatre, 1812 Productions, the PAC, Theatre Exile, the Berserker Residents. Props include: Theatre Exile, Lantern Theater Company, Orbiter 3, the PAC, Act II Playhouse, 1812. Flora has served on the board of directors for The Resource Exchange, Philadelphia's creative reuse centre, since 2014.