Introductory Notes

1. Introductory information

**Event name:** Air Play

**Event presenter:** Adelaide Festival of Arts with Acrobuffo

**Event date and time**:

The audio-described performance is on **Friday 17rd March 2023** at 7pm.

**Event location**:

The production takes place in the **Festival Theatre** at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

**Runtime**: 58 minutes (no interval)

The Audio Described performance of Air Play will be

**Event synopsis:** This physical-theatre show combines umbrellas, fabrics, balloons (and more) with a circular placement of multiple floor-fans, to float, fly and play around with ‘things in the air’.

Years of experimentation with simple materials, movement and technology have resulted in Circus performers Seth Bloom and Christina Gelsonein collaborating with kinetic sculptor Daniel Wurtzel to develop this gently comedic – and wordless – entertainment.

**Audio Describers:** Jo Ankor and Jules Fielke

1. Set description

The stage is dark with narrow spotlights that focus on the objects that fly. A white rubber mat, with a large red circle and a yellow one painted on in, lies close to the edge of the stage. Behind, a 3-metre diameter circle of 12 knee-high blue industrial-strength fans face in toward each other. Christina says that ‘The whole show flies so high, we travel with our own 15 metre black velvet “legs" that frame the stage’.

Each sequence is defined by a change in music, ranging from Eric Satie’s gentle ‘Gymnopédie’ to a brass band. Props are produced from a suitcase – a yellow one for Christina and red one for Seth – or a pocket.

Seth and Christina start with a single red feather blown to each other and progress through yellow and red balloons on strings to hand-size round balloons, waist-high balloons, taller-than-them balloons, up to two latex balloons so big that they can climb inside (except for their heads!). The waist-high balloon is “neutrally buoyant” to float slowly: Christina says ‘When in performance, I have no idea where it is going or who I will be playing with, it is entirely improvised. Sometimes when it hangs overhead of the audience, it rises gently. This is because the audience’s collective body heat is changing the air and causing the balloon to rise.’ You will have to wait and see what happens in Adelaide!

Pieces of red or yellow or translucent organza, referred to as ‘silks’, fly over the audience’s head and range in length from 6 metres to 8 metres, with the final white silk being 10 by 10 metres square.

Christina told us that not only is the very first fabric sculpture of the show a reproduction of Daniel Wurtzel’s famous “Pas de Deux”, a photographic series which is in museums all over the world, but that Daniel worked exclusively with Air Play to create all the fabric sculpture sections in the show, ‘so there are images in Air Play that can literally be seen nowhere else’.

The show finishes with a snow-dome effect: Christina explains that the “snow” is polystyrene packing peanuts – ‘we reuse them for dozens and dozens of shows!’

1. Characters and Costumes

**Seth Bloom** has short curly dark hair, that is frequently hidden under a red beret with a black band around the base. He has dark eyes and eyebrows, a straight nose and is clean shaven.

He wears a red overall that has lots of pockets like a mechanic’s with stud fasteners down the front. The legs are rolled up at the ankles to reveal white knee-high socks (we later find they have three red stripes at the top). Underneath the red overall he has a white t-shirt with red edging around the short sleeves. A narrow red belt is around his waist, and he has white sandshoes on his feet.

**Christina Gelsonein** has short hair, that is a shocking purple colour. It is shaved at the back and sides, and her upper hair is pulled into two cute little pigtails that stickup into the air like straight tufty horns! She has a mobile mouth and expressive eyes.

She wears a white t-shirt with a yellow band, edging the arms and a yellow onesie or overall. It has large pockets on either side across the chest and is zippered at the front. A long rope is wrapped around her waist several times and ends in large silver clips that link together creating a belt. The wide legged overalls finish at mid-calf. She has long white socks, featuring three yellow stripes at the knee and wears white adidas sneakers, with three dark parallel bars on the side.

1. Creatives

Written, Created and Performed by Seth Bloom and Christina Gelsonein

Air Sculptures by Daniel Wurtzel

Directed by West Hyler

1. Event details

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**Ticket information**: Adelaide Festival of Arts

**Runtime**: 58 minutes (no interval)

1. Access information

The production takes place in the **Festival Theatre** at the Adelaide Festival Centre. Access is through via the Riverbank Concourse.

The **Festival Theatre** is wheelchair accessible and guide dog friendly.

There are accessible toilets in the venue. Please ask at the main reception desk.

Getting to the event: Please contact the **Adelaide Festival Centre** on 131 246 for details on current Covid requirements and the best access route to the theatre complex.

Assistance: assistance is offered by venue staff