

A new musical
by
Jenny Tsai & Keith Nesbitt

THANK YOU

The story of Mr Lee's Fabulous Circus has been developed by Jenny and Keith in collaboration with Lucas Lloyd. We'd also like to thank Tara, the artistic director at Riverside Theatre Works, for her encouragement and guidance and for taking the time to read our early drafts.

Keith would like to personally thank Karen for the words she contributed. In fact it was only three words and they were not very important ones, but every little bit helps and her ongoing support has been invaluable. (Actually they were three very good words.) Thanks.

Jenny would like to personally thank her husband, Yen-Chen, for his tremendous support.

Jenny and Keith would also like to thank Marietta Phinney, the founding director and Melissa Williams, the executive director of Riverside Theatre Works for their help in making Mr Lee come to life. Indeed we'd like to offer our sincere thanks to everyone who made it possible to bring the world premiere of Mr Lee's Fabulous Circus to its very first stage.

Even with a Fortune Teller in the cast, the future of the show is somewhat uncertain. However, with the hard work and determination of the creative team, the cast, theatre supporters, and all our friends and family we hope soon to bring a full version of the musical to a stage near you.

A new musical



Mr Lee's Fabulous Circus

by

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*Riverside Theatre Works, Hyde Park, MA.
17th February, 2007*

Tonight's performance of Mr Lee's Fabulous Circus is the first workshop of the show and presents in concert style all the songs from the musical. The story is set in an old time circus and revolves around the trapeze artist, Marcel. Although Marcel comes from a long line of Trapeze stars, he has an odd fear of gravity. We follow his story as he tries to overcome his fear of falling from happiness into sadness.

CHARACTERS		CAST
MR LEE	The ringmaster and circus owner.	Andrew Rhodes
TIGER LEE	Mr Lee's daughter, the fearless aerial performer.	Liane Grasso
MARCEL	Trapeze artist with the Tumbling Flyers of Brazil.	Laurent Martin
CRISTINA	Marcel's sister, acclaimed for the triple somersault.	Melissa Williams
SAMSON	The Strongman and friend of Mr Lee.	Michael O'Brien
CANNON-MAN	The human cannon-man and Samson's good friend.	Michael O'Brien
GRIM	The evil knife thrower.	Evan Siegel
LEO	The lion tamer and Grim's deceitful partner in crime.	Laurent Martin
FORTUNE TELLER	The mysterious foreteller of destiny.	Melissa Williams
HAPPY CLOWN	Always the optimist.	Laurent Martin
SAD CLOWN	A little bit the pessimist.	Evan Siegel
TALL CLOWN	Tall in stature but a little small in spirit.	Larry Leggett
SMALL CLOWN	Small in stature, but big in heart.	Michael O'Brien
LION 1	One old lion.	Larry Leggett
LION 2	Another old lion.	Evan Siegel
YOUNG LION	A youthful lion.	Michael O'Brien
FAT LADY	As she appears. Or is she?	Melissa Williams
GHOST OF MRS LEE	Tiger's mother and recently departed wife of Mr Lee.	Melissa Williams

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ACT 1 - CIRCUS ON PARADE

Set in the 1950's the story begins as the clowns greet the audience.

Life is like a Circus	Clowns
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All the circus stars parade as the circus performance begins in spectacular style.

Mr Lee's Fabulous Circus	All
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We briefly meet Tiger's friends from the flying trapeze, Marcel and Cristina. They wish Tiger good luck. *Mr Lee introduces his daughter's first act.*

The fearless Tiger Lee walks the tight rope and sings.

I'm a Tiger	Tiger Lee
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Tiger is escorted from the wire by the knife thrower, Grim. The Fortune Teller appears and warns Mr Lee of a premonition. She has seen a "shadow falling". Mr Lee calls for Marcel to watch over Tiger's next act. She must perform the dangerous dance on the "Rope of Death". There is some intense rivalry between Marcel and Grim.

I want to win her hand	Grim, Marcel, Tiger Lee
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Tiger's performance ends without incident. Grim dances with Tiger and leaves Marcel to ponder his feelings. It seems that Grim will win Tiger's hand.

Afraid of the Flight	Marcel
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Grim and Leo discuss their plans for an accident on the Trapeze. They are plotting to take over the circus. This is behind Grim's attempt to win Tiger's hand. *Mr Lee introduces Leo the lion tamer and his three rather tame lions.*

Crackers and Soup	Leo, Lions
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Mr Lee introduces the Tumbling Flyers of Brazil. They are the family trapeze artists, Marcel and his happy-go-lucky sister, Cristina. Cristina will perform the triple somersault. The crowd urges her on and the safety net is removed. This is a normal part of the show but tonight the Fortune Teller's premonition will prove ominous.

Sometimes Angels Fall	Cristina
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Triple Somersault	All
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Cristina falls. She lands fairly lightly but is unconscious. Mr Lee goes for help. Marcel and Tiger rush to her aid. Cristina lies still on stage.

Sometimes Angels Fall (reprise)	Marcel, Tiger
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- END ACT I -

ACT II - SCHEMES AND FORTUNES

The action takes place about the circus tents and trailers. After the bright colors of the performance we get to see the more mundane side of circus life. Mr Lee and his friends, Marcel, Tiger, Samson and the Cannon-man are in Mr Lee's trailer playing cards.

There is some tension between Marcel and Tiger.

We learn that Cristina has only broken her leg in the fall from the trapeze and will recover. However, it seems accidents and troubles are plaguing the circus. It is only a few years since Mr Lee's wife died while training for the same act her daughter (Tiger) now performs. Marcel is convinced that Cristina's fall is no accident.

Without Cristina's triple somersault, the crowds may be hard to attract. We also learn that the Circus safe has been robbed. It seems that troubled times are ahead for the circus. Mr Lee tries to rally his friends.

Another Day	Mr Lee, Tiger, Marcel, Samson, Cannon-man
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The mood swings and our friends dance a bit have some fun at Samson's expense. Samson relates the "sad" story of his own ill-fated love.

Married a Country Singer	Samson, Marcel, Mr Lee, Tiger, Cannon-man
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Grim goes to see the Fortune Teller to check on the progress of his plots and plans. The Fortune Teller reads the Tarot cards for Grim. However, he likes to interpret them in his own way.

Grim Fortune	Grim, Fortune-Teller
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Tiger Lee comes to see the Fortune Teller. She meets with Grim, who both frightens and attracts her. Tiger agrees to be in Grim's knife-throwing act. Grim leaves and Tiger and the Fortune Teller are left alone. Tiger seeks some guidance for her troubled heart. The Fortune Teller reveals that she will find the name of her true love in her dreams.

Gypsy Eyes	Tiger, Fortune-Teller
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Tiger meets up with Marcel. Marcel is deep in thought. He is thinking of trying the triple somersault but he fears gravity. He is in love with Tiger but seems unable to express his feelings. He is even a little scared of happiness or at least the fear of falling into sadness. Tiger explains that, "Happiness has no safety net". Marcel and Tiger dance.

Happiness is Simple	Marcel, Tiger
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The dance ends with some misunderstanding between Tiger and Marcel. Marcel is of course jealous of Grim. Tiger is confused about her feelings for both Grim and Marcel. She prays to her departed mother for guidance. The ghost of Mrs Lee answers but it is unclear if Tiger can hear her.

Guide Me	Tiger, Ghost of Mrs Lee
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- END ACT II -

ACT III - THE FINAL PERFORMANCE

Another circus performance. At this moment the future of the circus and the love triangle (Tiger, Marcel and Grim) hangs in the balance. The clowns perform, mocking at love.

Love is for the Clowns	Clowns
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Mr Lee introduces the strongman. The stage is busy with jugglers, fire-breathers, acrobats, etc.

In the Balance	Samson, All
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Grim is about to perform his Knife throwing act. Tiger is tied to the target. Grim grows anxious for Tiger to make a commitment. He grows impatient to rule. *Mr Lee introduces the Knife throwing act.*

Make my Day, Make my Night	Tiger, Grim
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Tiger recognizes that her heart lies with Marcel. Grim is enraged and sends Leo to cut the safety net on the trapeze. He forces Tiger to watch as Marcel performs the triple somersault. Leo stands near Mr Lee with a knife, to ensure that Tiger does not reveal the danger of the cut net. Tiger assures Marcel that he will find flying is like "happiness". His friends watch anxiously. Samson wishes him good luck.

Another Day (reprise)	Mr Lee
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Life's Trapeze	Marcel
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Marcel overcomes his fears and attempts the triple somersault. He has learned to believe in flight. Unfortunately he fails. However as he falls the strongman is there to hold the net. Samson was warned by Marcel who understood Tiger's message that "Happiness has no safety net". Mr Lee has had enough and stops the show to call in the undercover clowns. He has suspected all along.

Justice is Here	Tall Clown, Grim, All
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Grim and Leo are arrested and led away. Cristina returns and reveals that she will fly again.

Sometimes Angels Fly	Cristina
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Marcel has overcome his fears and proposes to Tiger. Tiger is surprised and hesitant.

Afraid of the Flight (reprise)	Marcel
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Eventually Tiger agrees to marry Marcel. More surprises as Mr Lee asks Marcel and Tiger to take over running the circus. Mr Lee plans to retire with the Fortune Teller to a quiet place by the sea.

Circus is Leaving Town	Mr Lee, Fortune Teller
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Marcel and Tiger agree to run the circus. Everyone is in a fine mood as they depart the stage to leave the Fat lady alone in the spotlight.

Mr Lee's Fabulous Circus (reprise)	Tiger, Marcel, All
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The Show is Over	Fat Lady
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- THE END -

COMPOSER & PIANIST



Jenny Tsai

Jenny Tsai is a pianist, accompanist, teacher, improviser, composer and music arranger. She received her bachelor degree in Piano Performance from Soochow University in Taiwan. She received her Master's Degree in *Music and Music Education* from Teacher's College, Columbia University in 2004. Jenny is the music director, music arranger and the pianist of the musical "As The Flowers Grow". She also music directed "Annie", "the Wizard of Oz", "the Music Man", "Guys and Dolls" and "Impressario" at Riverside Theatre Works from 2004-2006. Her master programs focus on piano performance and pedagogy, as well as on improvisation and arrangement. She was the piano instructor of music and music education department at Columbia from 2002-2004. She was also the teaching assistant of "jazz improvisation" and "improvisation and composition" classes. She currently teaches piano lessons and musical theater class at Riverside Theatre Works.

LYRICIST & STORY CREATOR



Keith Nesbitt

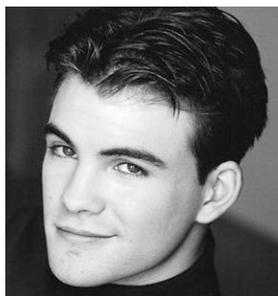
Keith's background is actually in computer science and mathematics and during his day job he focuses on applied research. He likes to build tools for helping people to find patterns in information. He studies how the mind works and how people create and use ideas. Keith is from Australia and obtained his PhD in Computer Science from the University of Sydney. Despite his more scientific side, he also has an artistic side and has been writing songs and painting pictures since 1975. He has written lyrics for over 1001 songs and also exhibits his paintings. He has collaborated with many musicians, and his current band, called "Strange Things", released their first album called *Landscape* last year. and are about to release their second album called, *Tilt-A-Whirl*. This is Keith's first, but he hopes, not last, journey into the world of ideas called "musicals".

CAST



Liane Grasso

Liane is a voice instructor at Riverside Theatre Works, where she is also the music director for the performance groups Mixed Emotions and Next Generation. She is equally comfortable performing in both opera and musical theater. She began her musical theater career when she appeared as Joanna in the award-winning production of *Sweeney Todd* at the New Repertory Theatre. Other musical theater credits include *Kiss Me, Kate* (North Shore Music Theater), *Follies* (Overture Productions), and *A Little Night Music* (Lyric Stage Company of Boston). Liane has also worked with many local classical groups, including Opera Boston, Opera New Hampshire, New England Light Opera, and Longwood Opera. Favorite opera and operetta credits Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance*, *Giannetta* in *Goldoliers*, The Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, Olympia in *Tales of Hoffman*, and Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, among many others.



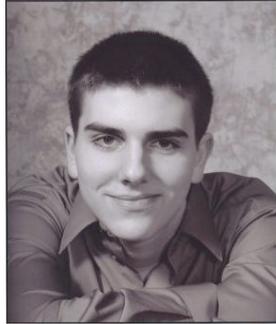
Larry Leggett

Despite his specialized training at The Boston Conservatory as a concert composer (and much to the chagrin of his former professors), Larry has always enjoyed theatre, particularly musicals, and has always loved performing for, and with, children. Larry has been musical directing children's theatre across the country for the last seven years, in addition to performing tiny bits of theatre off-and-on with a handful of local companies, including Makeshift Theatre Co.



Laurent Martin

California native Laurent Martin relocated to Boston in 2005 to pursue a master's degree at the New England Conservatory of Music with teacher Carole Haber. Recognized as an expressive singer and comic actor, Laurent started performing in musical theatre productions in the 6th grade and performing in opera after enrolling at the University of California Santa Cruz. Boston audiences have heard Laurent here at Riverside Theatre Works in last year's production of Mozart's *Impresario* and at NEC's Jordan Hall in *The Saga of Jenny*, a review of music by Kurt Weill. Laurent has performed the roles of Nero in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Bill in *Kiss me Kate*, Rinnucio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Lippo in *Street Scene*, El Remendado in *Carmen*, and Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*. He also works as an opera stage director in the San Francisco Bay area.



Michael O'Brien

Michael has been performing since age 10. He is a member of Riverside's traveling performance company Mixed Emotions, and is cast in Riverside's upcoming production of *Children of Eden*. Favorite past roles include *Anything Goes* (Billy), *Seussical* (Wickersham Bro.), *Chicago* (Ensemble), *Cheaper By The Dozen* (Joe Scales), and countless others. In addition to performing Michael is often seen manning the control booth as a lighting and sound designer at Riverside Theatre Works.



Andrew Rhodes

Andrew has an Associate's Degree in Performance from the K. D. Actors Conservatory in Dallas, Texas and a B.A. in Theatre from The University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas. He has won national recognition for his costume designs and has had his designs displayed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Andrew has also been an improv and creative dramatics instructor for children and an active performer and fight director at Foothills Children's Theatre in Worcester for three years, playing villains too numerous to mention. This summer, Andrew directed *GUYS AND DOLLS JR.* for the Summer Broadway Boot Camp at Riverside Theatre Works. Andrew lives in Cambridge and is the Artistic Director of Makeshift Theatre Company.



Evan Siegel

Evan's professional credits include *The Buddy Holly Story* (Clearlake MC/4th Cricket) and *Grease* (Vince Fontaine/Teen Angel) at Seacoast Repertory Theatre, as well as *Fiddler on the Roof* (Perchik) and *My Fair Lady* at the Albany Park Playhouse. Other favorites include *Carousel* (Billy), *South Pacific* (Cable), *Guys and Dolls* (Sky), and *Three Sisters* (Vershinin). He recently completed a 20-country World Tour with the Harvard Din & Tonics (a vocal jazz group), and will play alto and soprano saxophones in the Hasty Pudding Theatricals upcoming productions in Cambridge, NYC, and Bermuda. He will graduate from Harvard in the spring (if all goes according to plan...) with a degree in Linguistics.



Melissa Williams (*Mrs. Barry*)

Melissa is the Executive Director of Riverside Theatre Works and has been working at Riverside Theatre Works since 1996. She teaches private voice and directs *The Broadway Kids*, all while overseeing the daily business of Riverside Theatre Works. Melissa holds a Masters Degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from the *University of Colorado* and studied at the *Boston Opera Institute* with Sharon Daniels and Phyllis Curtin. Melissa is the founding director of an early childhood music program called *Tiny Tot Tunes*, and she also lectures and leads workshops for educators in the benefits of early childhood music in the development of young children.