

(Offstage)

(V): Land acknowledgement:

LEGacy Circus would like to take a moment to recognize and reflect that as white settlers, we benefit from multiple systems built upon and continuing to create harm. The circus industry, including here in Kijipuktuk, is not exempt from this. We will continue to question and reflect, and to collaborate with and centre the voices of Indigenous people in each territory we work in.

I'm Vanessa Furlong. Together with Erin Ball, we are LEGacy Circus. April Hubbard is joining us onstage as well, on your right, as our narrator. We all use she/her pronouns and we're all white and queer. We are also all connected to Disability. Erin is a double below knee amputee who also identifies as Mad (from the Mad Pride movement). Vanessa identifies as a Mad artist. April is a wheelchair user and also Mad. Amy MacDonald is our stagehand, Steph Kincade is our tech, Joi is taking photos and Bon Evans will be around the space videoing the show. Everyone involved identifies with Disability.

Welcome to LEGacy Interrupted. This show is approximately 45 minutes long with no breaks however, we encourage you to take care of yourselves. Please move around, make noise, and take breaks as needed.

(E): We would like to thank our ASL interpreter, Rhonda Kassamani, a middle eastern woman wearing all black, located to your left.

We would also like to thank Amy Amantea, our access consultant for Blind and low vision folks.

Content warnings: There will be Disability content, removal of prosthetic legs, talk of mental health and mention of the pandemic.

Vanessa and I have been apart for almost two years. What we are sharing today is an excerpt from what we have created in the past, as well as creations from the pandemic and something we have created this week while I have been in this province which represents what we will bring to the future. This is a work-in-progress. It is an exploration in accessibility, and we want to know what works for you and what does not. Please join us after the show for a brief question and answer session.

(V): We would like to say a huge thank you to our sponsors: the Halifax Fringe Festival, Paul Vienneau, Rosie Porter, Kays Torbiak, Darrel MacDonald, Tinker's Tinctures and those who wish to remain anonymous. And a huge thank you to our whole crew and Kate Mitchell for our costumes.

The props on stage, in case you missed the touch tour, include:  
An aerial rig that is like a large swing set about two stories high, is center stage.

(E): Upstage is an old silver hospital wheelchair. It has a bar across the back and no backrest. A guitar case is downstage on your right side. On your left are two prosthetic feet with black fake leather flat shoes and red sticks for ankles. Upstage and center are two canes that are meant for handstands, they have small wooden blocks on top and a box at the base connecting them.

Vanessa and I wear black tight-fitting costumes. Vanessa's is a two piece and mine is one. We both wear black pants. There is beadwork and fringe on the costumes. Both of us wear our mid-length hair down.

(Vanessa, Erin and April enter the stage)

### **(Circus Sessions Piece)**

April: Vanessa dances on stilts.

Erin watches in the background.

Erin enters and the two gaze at each other.

They begin to circle, slow, careful .

Vanessa invites Erin to play. Erin joins, folds forward, forearms to the ground.

Vanessa lowers herself onto balancing blocks, together, they move. legs lift open split, they are upside down. Together they move, open split, legs circle, helicopter. They arch their back and move their legs behind them. Their feet reach back to meet the top of their head. A circle.

They unravel back to the ground and face each other.

Song lyrics:

*"Stones on weathered shores*

*You were the one*

*I will always be there*

*You wrap your loving arms*

*Around my doubt*

*I am tired of that*

*This won't get broken*

*Home on our front porch*

*All broken down*

*I will always be there*

*Rest your weary head*

*Dismiss your doubt*

*I will always be there*

*This won't get broken"*

April: Legs wide. Bum scoot. Erin inches forward, Vanessa inches forward. Erin inches forward, Vanessa inches forward. Forward, forward. Contact.

Vanessa reaches Erin's foot. Curious nudge.

Erin reaches Vanessa's foot. Curious nudge.

Other foot. Nudge

Other foot. Nudge

Vanessa lifts her pant leg to reveal a human foot attached to a peg as long as an arm.

Erin lifts her pant leg to reveal a prosthetic lower leg.

Vanessa lifts her other pant leg. Foot and peg match the other.

Erin lifts her pants on her other leg. Prosthetic limb matches the other.

Erin tucks knees to chest.

Vanessa gently cradles Erin's metal feet and places them onto her belly.

Erin lies back, and lifts Vanessa powerfully with her prosthetic legs. Flying.

Vanessa gives her entire weight into Erin's hands. Trust. Strength. Potential.

They move to a new position. Vanessa lies face down, reaches up and back, arched cobra shape. Erin handstands and gives Vanessa her metal ankles. Where one ends, another begins.

They unravel, kneel, face-to-face.

Vanessa invites Erin to sit and begins to be silly, clowning. She motions for a microphone which she holds to various parts of their legs and attachments.

(Amy brings microphone)

(hear the rip of the tape and Velcro)

Vanessa removes a stilt.

(hear the rip of Velcro)

Erin removes a leg.

(hear the chaos of sounds of removing limbs)

Pieces go flying.

Erin pulls her legs into her chest and begins moving her lower legs by bending and straightening her knees.

Vanessa? Are you making turkey puppets out of Erin flapping her lower legs - that do very much resemble floppy marshmallows - her words - ???

Vanessa: "that is precisely what I am doing

(music plays)

April: Vanessa grabs an aerosol can. Sprays armpits, hands, feet and crotch. Sprays Erin's hands. Attempts to spray Erin's feet. Oops.

Vanessa mounts the trapeze. Without lower legs, Erin reaches and grabs Vanessa's ankles. Hangs upside down on Vanessa's feet.

Erin under bar, Vanessa lightly stands on the back of her head. Shorter body parallel to ground. Power pose.

Erin sits on bar. Vanessa rolls backwards and stands on Erin's shoulders. Long legs wrapped in ropes.

Extend, contract, heads together, push out, arch.

Both on the bar.

Back to back. Arch out. Height difference. Erin on knees, Vanessa on feet. Heart shape. They sit and stare at each other. Vanessa descends, walks legs to ground. She spins trapeze, inverts, hooks feet on bar. Erin kneels on Vanessa's feet. They both split their legs. Gaze at each other. Upside down in Vanessa's lap, Erin drops to Vanessa's feet below the bar, suspended by armpits. They both descend.

**(INTERRUPTION)**

(Lights out)

(Silks are brought down, rosin moved, canes taken off)

(Vanessa ties trapeze off)

(Vanessa gathers Erin's legs and brings backstage)

Radio broadcast: There are no confirmed cases of the COVID-19 in the Maritimes. About a dozen people have been tested for it, and we are already seeing some signs of the effects CTVs Paul Hollingsworth with how public health officials are dealing with this likely problem.

Testing for Coronavirus in Nova Scotia as of last week, we've tested seven, and all negative, a couple more tested this week in New Brunswick, four have been tested, also all negative. As for nationally we're adjusting our kind of border measures in our at our screening and into the healthcare system across the country, Dr. Robert Strang says, health officials are bracing for the worst, as Coronavirus continues to spread the question in Canada has to be, then how do we manage it as best we can, as he plans for the future Strang also looks to the past, implementing alternative care sites, like the province used during the H1N1 outbreak is an option the province is considering but people that we were concerned at the H1N1. The last place. He wanted them was emergency rooms and hospitals because they were waiting the people that most vulnerable are there beside them Strang also says current provincial strategies include planning for the possibility of hospitalizing people if Coronavirus spreads to Nova Scotia.

**(Erin's silks act)**

AD: Two strands of strong, white, aerial fabric hang from above. Erin is suspended slightly above the ground, inside the fabric, like a cocoon.

Erin: A time of isolation.

AD: Erin slowly exits the cocoon.

Erin: A time of reflection.

AD: Erin climbs slowly.

Erin: Adaptation

AD: Higher in the air. Slowly arching and climbing.

Erin: Digital connections and relationships

AD: Flowing, angular shapes.

Erin: What is care?

AD: Smooth. Contracted then expanded.

Erin: How can we re-imagine community?

AD: High in the air.

Erin: What is truly important?

AD: upside down, wrapped in fabric

Erin: Access

AD: slow methodical spin

Erin: Justice

AD: hangs by hands

Erin: Listening

AD: she slowly slides down

Erin: Action

AD: at the bottom of the fabric she sits on the ground and holds the fabric

Erin: Connection

AD: lights out. Erin crawls backstage.

(Lights out when Erin is on silks on floor, lights go down stage right side, light to center stage)

(Amy ties off silks)

**(Vanessa putting on stilts)**

I am going to put on my stilts now. My stilts are held on my feet by failing velcro and duct tape, they are twenty years old, I should not be putting them on my legs. I sometimes call them my danger sticks.

The pandemic was a break up between me and circus  
I needed to rest and to grieve.

I had to learn to not be mad at my body. It was changing. Getting weaker with rest, less flexible, changing shape. I learned instead to fall in love with its ability to adapt, the

beautiful way it rested and softened, but then could come back to strength when I needed it.

I had to learn to not be mad at everyone else thriving in the arts digitally. I wasn't being left behind. I was listening and learning. The arts are NOT a competition.

It took two years to learn to cope better.

I carry my stilts in this soft-shelled guitar case when I travel. The last time I used it the case was December 2019 and the last time I performed with Erin. There is an airport sticker still on it that shows the destination: Mexico.

I got over my bitterness about trying digital art when I saw the potential for more access. This summer I was in a digital residency with Summerworks Toronto alongside Erin. I experimented with using this guitar case as a physical replacement for Erin during what would be our duo trapeze act.

(Guitar case is clipped to bar)

### **(Vanessa's Trap Piece)**

(pre-recorded)

A trapeze bar hangs between two ropes from the ceiling and dangles above the ground. It is lower to the ground than the duo trapeze act because it's easier for me to get on with my stilts. The guitar case that will never be Erin is attached to one rope by a steel clip known as a carabiner.

I Crawl

I Touch the guitar case. Missing Erin. Hesitant about how this will look and feel.

Spin bar

Hold bar

Pull up to stand on ground with stilts

Small jump to place Hips on bar

Folded over bar to dangle. Spinning. Pull case in for a hug. Wishing it was really Erin....

Sit on bar

Unclip case

Wear case like a backpack

Stand on bar

Suspended by arms wrapped in ropes

High in the air

Seated on bar

Guitar case between legs

Case mimics Erin's drop from our duo trapeze act. Drops to floor. Lifeless.

Wide long legs lower to ground

I look to case. It's not Erin. It could never replace her. I exit, wearing case as backpack, crawling.

(Amy moves feet to trap)

### **(Erin's foot trap piece)**

(Pre-recorded - sad tone)

Here I sit alone on the floor, wearing my black and silver metal and carbon fiber prosthetic feet – a second pair of prosthetic feet rest at my side. I call them my fancy feet because they have black fake leather shoes and red sticks for ankles. I used to wear them out dancing.

Vanessa and I usually do the Charlie Chaplin potato dance with them.

I can hold the shoes in my hands and make them dance. I make them take steps, as if my hands were the feet. Right leg kick, left leg kick, both legs, and circle around. Right leg kick, left leg kick, both legs, and circle around.

Vanessa usually takes off her stilts and encourages me to take off my prosthetic legs. I guess I can take them off. And the inside sock-like liners too. I feel a sense of freedom and relief when they come off.

This can of grip spray is used to maximize the grip of skin to the bar. She usually makes a joke about spraying my feet –(beat) but since I don't have any, I will just spray my hands.

And now we would get on the trapeze. I can't even reach it without her. Even though it's the lower bar, it's still out of reach. I can hang the feet from the bar to reach. White shoes on black metal and carbon fiber prostheses. The curve of the fake ankles rests on the trapeze bar perfectly. Upside down detached feet dangle from the bar. Can these prosthetic feet mimic Vanessa in our duo act?

My prosthetic legs have thigh braces because my lower legs are so short. The braces are upside down, the closest part of the legs to the ground. They create a window frame effect. My face almost fits inside.

I grab hold of the prosthetic ankles – they are hard on my hands – as I start to spin, I feel the intensity of the movement – my hair gently flowing as I turn.

I can't believe this is working. Airborne, making shapes with my prosthetic feet that hang from the bar.

These fake feet dangling from the trapeze bar are not like hers. They are hard and they don't move with me, but I will do what I can without her. I miss human contact. I miss Vanessa.

I pull myself to a seated position on the bar. I'm pleasantly surprised that my spinning and movements didn't knock these fake feet right off.

I usually reach for her foot here. I'll try lifting a heavy prosthetic foot up to where hers would be. Precarious.

She usually hangs by her feet below me here. I kneel on my faux feet.

This is where we would stare at each other but all I have to stare at in this moment are these lifeless feet that just don't replace Vanessa.

(Lights out)

**(INTERRUPTION)**

(Enter Yves song begins)

(Erin comes down from the trapeze, sits in the wheelchair and brings it centre stage, gathers her legs)

Amy brings in stilt attachments and hangs up trapeze. Clears everything else from the stage (mat, rosin, tape etc). Takes feet from Erin

Center and silk light up

Erin gets into stilts in center, vanessa walks into silk light stage right

April: The old metal hospital wheelchair is now centre stage. It's cold frame a reminder of isolation. Erin sits in it and uses an Allen key tool to unscrew her prosthetic feet from the rest of her prosthetic legs. She replaces those feet with long thin poles that are similar to stilts and are more than an arm's length long.

Vanessa enters on stilts.

(When Erin's stilts are on and she's standing it will be full stage wash)

Erin stands tall, the same height, on the prosthetic poles. Face-to-face, they gaze at each other and begin to circle each other, the way they began.

**(Pre-recorded Future)**

As of just five days ago, we were reunited and immediately dropped into "what now?" How are we different? What emotions will we feel? We both cried....but at different times and for different reasons.

Too much to catch up on. So much to work on. We only have five days. With new creative access ideas, new apparatuses, new ways of working and new acts.....just five days together to review everything we experienced from before...everything we experienced apart, and having no way of knowing what comes next

(Music plays)

April:

Still wearing stilts, Erin invites Vanessa down to the wheelchair. Erin sits on an armrest and Vanessa sits on the bar across the back.

They lean into each other and begin creating flowing movements and shapes with their long legs.

On either side of the chair, in contorted positions, stilted legs meet. Joined.

Beside the chair, Vanessa flip overs, landing in a bridge-like position.

Erin flips backwards over the chair, using the chair as support.

Strong balance positions.

Huuuuuge splits

Both sit on armrests of chair, back-to-back, like a long leg spider moving to catch prey, they use their legs to spin the chair.

Erin places hands on armrests and Vanessa supports Erin's long metal leg as Erin lifts into a handstand high above the chair. Unreal. Vanessa moves away.

Vanessa does a handstand with hands on the ground and stilts on the back of the chair.

Magic. She flips over.

The two leave the stage together sitting on the chair, long legs pushing on the ground and hands guiding the wheels.