

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
STALLER
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

PRESENTS



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025

FEATURING

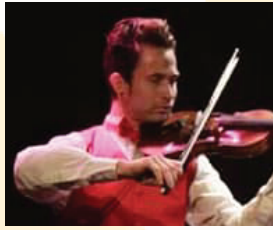
**JEFFERSON FREIRE, PHER GLEASON,
KEITH NELSON, ANDREW SCHARFF,
RYAN SHINJI MURRAY, ELLIE STEINGRAEBER**

ABOUT

The Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, founded by Keith Nelson and Stephanie Monseu in 1995, prides itself on being an integral part of America's outstanding folk traditions of circus, sideshow, and vaudeville. Bindlestiff's activities fall into three main areas: producing original shows, festivals, and public events; supporting emerging circus and variety artists with grants and high-production value showcases; and bringing accessible, high-quality circus arts education to youth and communities.

Over the decades, Bindlestiff has presented nearly 600 of the world's top artists in the circus and variety fields. Shows in their home regions of New York City and the Hudson Valley, as well as national tours in the United States, have engaged audiences in the hundreds of thousands, with performances in theaters, Spiegeltents, big tops, cruise ships, fairs and festivals, including 2017's Smithsonian Folklife Festival, celebrating the cultural heritage of the American circus on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

To learn more, visit bindlestiff.org/about-us/



Jefferson Freire grew up in São Paulo, Brazil, becoming an extraordinary juggler under the guidance of Anderson Pereira da Silva, a street performer who is considered one of the best jugglers in Brazil. Jefferson has performed internationally with Circo Tápias Voadores (BR), Circo Universo Casuo (BR), and Circus Bella (US). Jefferson continued his own artistic development at SP-Braapa Theater School, São Paulo Conservatory of Music, Fundação das Artes, and the SF Community Music Center, studying violin.



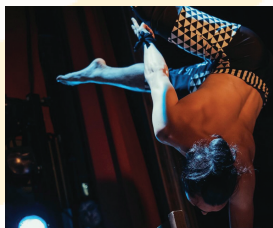
Pher Gleason is an award-winning juggler, circus arts educator, writer, and filmmaker based in New York City. As a juggler she has worked with Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, Circus Smirkus Camp, Cirque Us, Circus Amok, and Brooklyn's The Muse, specializing in balancing her technical knowledge with experimental style and decisive panache. She is the only openly transgender, world-record-holding juggler. In 2021, she directed the circus film *Dead + Alive*, featuring Richard Saudek and Dana Dailey.



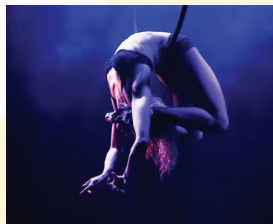
Keith Nelson learned to juggle and eat fire at Hampshire College in 1989. He moved to New York City and almost instantly devoted his life to the circus. Keith swallows swords, spins tops, juggles plates, balances glasses, and manipulates just about anything. He is the co-founder and executive director of Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, one of the longest running circus and variety arts companies in New York. Keith has been featured on *Late Night with David Letterman*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The Late Late Show with James Corden*, and in season one of *OZ*. He is a professor of circus arts.



Andrew Scharff is from Philadelphia, PA and has performed for circuses and festivals all over the United States, Europe, and Asia, and for cruise ships which are almost always in the water. Every year, as part of his Clown the World project, he takes a trip to a new country to share his one man clown show. He is very excited to be performing once again with The Bindlestiff Family Cirkus. @andrewsbigshow on IG and FB @clowntheworld on IG and FB



Ryan Shinji Murray (he/him) is a multi-disciplinary circus artist. He has performed around the world with Cirque Éloize's *iD* and as an original cast member of Cirque du Soleil's *Kurios* - touring with the show for seven years. Along with his partner, Juanita Cardenas, he received the MAP Fund Grant and developed a new work of dance, puppetry, and circus entitled *The Void*. Based in Brooklyn, he collaborates regularly with several different companies and stages including ABCirque, 3AM Theatre, Parallel Exit, Westchester Circus Arts, and the Metropolitan Opera. He also coaches circus arts at Circus Academy New York. @ryanshinji



Ellie Steingraeber (she/her) has folded into a pretzel on *The Tonight Show* and flown 70 feet in the air at Madison Square Garden. She has celebrated over 15 years as a circus and variety artist. She has traveled the globe performing unique acts in some of the world's strangest venues, ridden on top of elephants in small town circus shows across America, and brought joy to countless audiences through TV appearances, theatrical circus shows, and street performances.