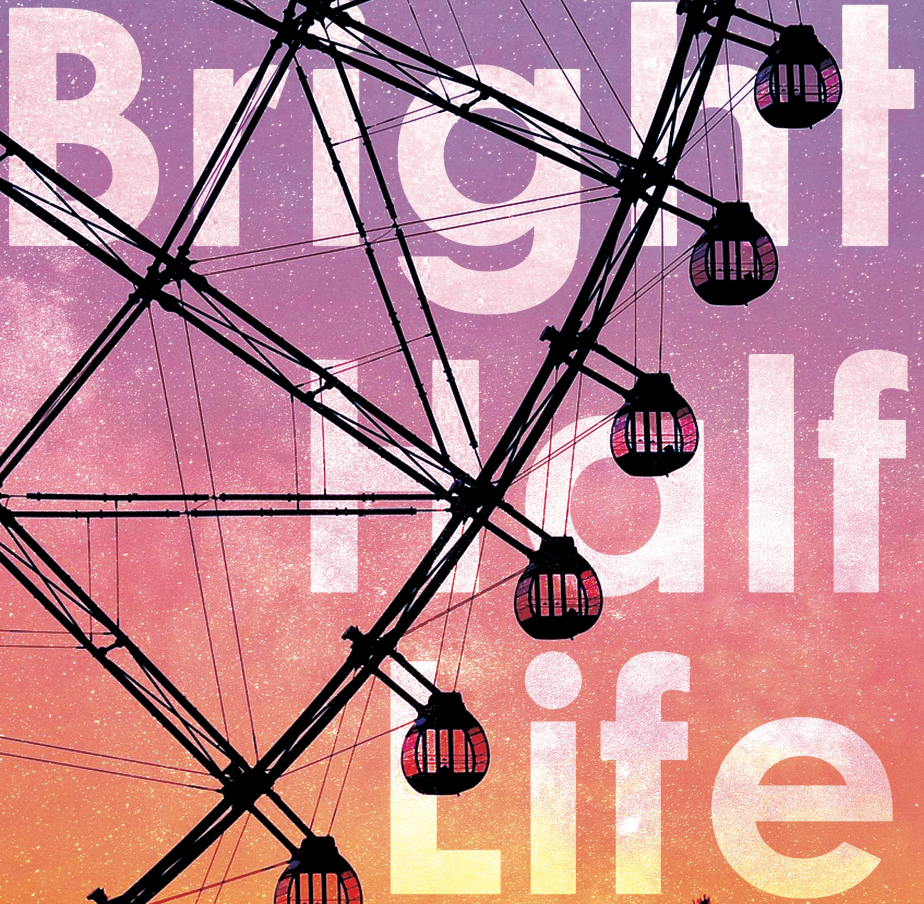




THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**  
PROGRAM IN THEATRE AND DANCE



# Bright Half Life

**by Tanya Barfield**

directed by **Zeina Salame**

October 4th - 7th at 7:30PM • October 8th at 2:00PM | **Royall Tyler Theatre**

**We appreciate your patronage, and we hope you enjoy the performance.**

- The use of cameras and recording devices of any kind is strictly prohibited.
- Smoking is not allowed within 25' of the building and no food or drink is allowed in the theatre.
- Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices.
- Please do not walk on the stage.

## **Indigenous Land Acknowledgement**

*The campus of the University of Vermont sits within a place of gathering and exchange, shaped by water and stewarded by ongoing generations of Indigenous peoples, in particular the Western Abenaki.*

*UVM respects the Indigenous knowledge interwoven in this place and commits to uplifting the Indigenous peoples and cultures present on this land and within our community.*

Read UVM's official Land Acknowledgement [Here](#).

The University of Vermont  
School of the Arts  
Program in Theatre & Dance  
Presents

# *Bright Half Life*

By Tanya Barfield

Director	~	Zeina Salame
Assistant Director	~	Marty Gnidula
Assistant Director	~	Maggie Rahilly
Scenic Designer	~	Sara Nelson
Assistant Scenic Designer	~	Jacob Winn
Costume Designer	~	Mac Weaver
Lighting Designer	~	John Paul Devlin
Dramaturg	~	Greta Powers
Sound Designer	~	Abra Clawson
Production Stage Manager	~	Natalee Garen
Assistant Stage Manager	~	Trevor Gould
Assistant Stage Manager	~	Elizabeth Oliver

## CAST

(In order of appearance)

<i>Vicky</i> .....	Caira Adams
<i>Erica</i> .....	Adeline Cota

## TIME

1985 - 2031

*Bright Half Life* is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service,  
440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016



For a complete list of content warnings scan the QR code above.

## Director's Notes -

*Bright Half Life* shares the love story of Vicky and Erica. Their time together unfolds to us through interruptions and spliced moments, though jump cuts, through come back arounds, and through beginnings. In an interview with WAM Theatre, Tanya Barfield described this play as, "a mixed up love story about the highs and lows of a long term relationship." Indeed, it is quite purposefully mixed up. Often asked about the piece's nonlinear timeline, Barfield told Profile Theatre that "the structure of the play resembles one's life," adding that "we live our lives chronologically but the way we think about our lives is beyond chronology." I agree with her. I don't remember this day chronologically, let alone my life's worth of days. Rather, I remember life viscerally and in fragments. I remember in flashes and in blurs. I am grateful to this writer for a piece that feels quite a lot like many of us feel when we look back, then forward, then back again.

In the prefatory notes of the script, Barfield offers some very clear directions to the makers of this play, "There is little to no set. No props. No pantomime, No projection." She challenges us to take everything away but these women and their relationship. She invites us to aesthetically lift what really matters – them. Directing this play in an educational setting then becomes an epic undertaking in imagination. The students must vividly imagine everything that is not there – every sofa cushion, computer key, dial tone, and gust of wind - they first must find in themselves, and then remember into being for us. They must also imagine a whole half-life which they (at twenty-something years old) have yet to live. Vicky and Erica meet in their early twenties and spend the next twenty-three years as a couple, then another twenty or so years in each other's orbit. Over forty years ... imagine that.

This play also met me in what is perhaps my half-life, and I'm still sorting out what that means. I am, however, especially grateful for a particular lesson Barfield offers us through this piece: our lives are made up of the most exquisite messes. Nothing must be perfect in order to be beautiful. Endings needn't be happy ones for them to be full-up with love. *Bright Half Life* reminds us that sometimes a great love story is made up of the most forgettable magic and the most spectacularly ordinary moments. So, we are sharing some here with all of you.

Thank you for joining us at the theatre.

~Zeina Salame

October 2023

p.s. This is for the one who was major, not minor.

## Notes from the Assistant Directors –

Looking into the void, what do we see looking back at us? In moments of terror and uncertainty, we are forced to take account of our lives. All of the moments, when we feel near death and doom (or on a *precipice*, if you will), making sense of ourselves becomes almost too much to bear. Where are we? What have we done? What can we be proud of? What shouldn't we?

Immediately we understand that the tangible is meaningless. The physical body disappears and becomes trivial. The pressure then lies on what we cannot touch physically; the strings that tether us to sanity. We build our lives with logic, reason, dollars, phone calls, dinners, and diapers. But eventually the void strips all of the physical away. How do we go on?

There must then be something else. Something that makes it make sense. Devotion is terrifying. It requires relinquishing the prep for demise. Natural instinct tells us to maintain our independence, but one thing leads to another and we find connections that become our sanctuary. Moments of joy, pain, laughter, yearning, benevolence, and, at times, love, become our meaning. Memory isn't where these moments live; they are with us in a more lasting, all-encompassing way. They are the feelings and impressions that cannot be stripped away from us. Even if the details, facts, and truths are fuzzy, the meaning of our lives becomes crystal clear to us, even if we cannot understand it. This is highlighted again and again in Tanya Barfield's "Bright Half Life" as we bridge the space between the earthly and the celestial. That these things in life that awe-inspire us, these liminal spaces between the stars and the parking lot pavement are located inside the transience of our own capacity for human connection and the deepness of these connections. The stars, moon, sun, and clouds are contained in the bodies of our two characters. It is up to us to point the constellation out, to hit the "going up" button on the elevator, to skydive, to tumble, to hold on to a kite that in one hand is being held by a tight fist and on the other end is swimming with the birds. Barfield reminds us that the act of willfully jumping out of an airplane is about as absurd as falling for the person who makes us do so - frightening, exciting, and all the better by doing it hands-held.

And what joy is it to hold someone's hand as you jump.

**Marty Gnidula & Maggie Rahilly**

## Notes from the Dramaturg -

How do we hold onto each other? Is it through the predictable clasp of hands, a shared glance of recognition, a blurted out “I love you” into the great expanse we call a relationship? There’s no point in quantifying our connections – the amount of hugs shared, the compliments of praise, the acts of loyalty. Yet we do, anyway. In futile attempts we try to make certain of the ones we cling to, the ones we reach for across the bed in the middle of the night, searching. As if our certainty will ensure it never ends. As if our half-lives are worth more than the time it takes to decay, that the brightness isn’t dimming gradually, each day, until it’s merely a morsel of light. We hold onto each other through shared memories, which are semi-true, at best. These are the memories that come – after it ends – while sitting in traffic, buying groceries, over coffee with a friend. The scenes in our minds are disjointed – crushing, joyous, boring. Yet we watch them anyway, able to carefully analyze the subject of the memories themselves. The one whose expression we misconstrue, then hit rewind, replay, and ask, *What were you thinking?* Here is where we land in *Bright Half Life*. Tanya Barfield crafts a nonlinear love story that builds, crashes, and rises. I understand the urge, as you view the play, to “figure it all out.” To perfectly understand the timeline, the arc of the relationship, the years gone by. But, I’d advise you to let go. Instead, experience the emotion of what it feels like to remember without reason. When we’re in our own minds, there’s no need for explanation – and Barfield doesn’t give us one. Instead, she devastates us with the truth of memory – that its existence ensures us what we experienced was real. Indeed, a bright half life, but a burning one, at that.

### Greta Powers

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The University of Vermont School of the Arts  
go to [uvm.edu/cas/soa](http://uvm.edu/cas/soa)

For more information about  
the Program in Theatre & Dance  
go to [uvm.edu/cas/theatreanddance](http://uvm.edu/cas/theatreanddance)  
or email [Theatre@uvm.edu](mailto:Theatre@uvm.edu)

# *Bright Half Life ~ The Company*

## PRODUCTION

<i>Stage Manager</i>	~	Natalee Garen
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	~	Trevor Gould
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	~	Liz Oliver
<i>Assistant Scenic Designer</i>	~	Jacob Winn

## SCENERY & PROPS

*Scenery Construction*.....Trevor Gould, Erica Kaiser, Violet Lacroix, Alexis Lindsay, Frances Murray-Gurney, Sam Powers, Zach Puritz, Sammi Rizzo, Abi Scholl, Lauren Schwartz

## COSTUME

*Wardrobe*

*Crew*.....Carley Hall

*Wardrobe Construction*.....Audrey Buzza, Ava Cambra, Atlas Cooper, Bella Cordero, Franny Ruth Daleo-Clark, Wiley Delisa, Wren Dumais, Maggie Frazer-Olson, Alexandra Gardner, Kyra Gillespie, Acadia Jonson, Lexington Kennedy, Dana McGraw, Emma Maclaren, Carolina Mourinho, Kieran E. Roberts, Hailey Rosenfeld, Emily Vela, Tovahn Vitols

## LIGHTING & SOUND

*Electricians*.....Caira Adams, Egypt Buford, Audrey Buzza, Lainie Clark, Nina De Silva, Juliana Gagne, Trevor Gould, Carley Hall, Ethan Humphry, Jackie Lemieux, Selena Meyer, Ellise Nealy, Alexis Santo, Nate Seibold, Blue Steves, Icho Weigold

*Light Board Operator*.....Wren Dumais

*Sound Board Operator*.....Evan Dodge

## FRONT OF HOUSE

*Box Office/ Marketing Staff*.....Will MacDonald, Juliana Gagne, Erica Kaiser, Lydia Gayle St. Marie, Regan O'Brien

*House Managers*.....Téa Van Linde, Juliana Gagne

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Bert Crosby

Tami Salame



## Who's who in the cast of *Bright Half Life*

### **Caira Adams** (*Vicki*)

Caira (she/her) is a Senior transfer student, Majoring in Theater, and Minor in Film/TV. This is her first mainstage production at UVM and she could not be more excited to share this story with the audience! Caira has learned so much from this experience and could not be more proud of her personal progress since coming to UVM. Caira would like to thank the creative team of AD's, dramaturges and SM's who helped support her during this process. Along with that, she would like to thank her fellow player Addy, and her director Zeina for being an absolute joy to work with!! Above all, Caira wants to thank her mom for supporting her dreams to pursue acting as a career after college. (Fun fact, this is Caira's first college production that is not a musical!)

### **Adeline Cota** (*Erica*)

Adeline Cota is a senior student in the College of Arts and Sciences with a major in theatre and a minor in studio art. At UVM, she has been seen recently as Clytemnestra in *After Agamemnon*, one of the Zicos in *Enter Your Sleep*, and as Scherrer in *Walking*. She is excited for everyone to see this beautiful play and is extremely grateful for this opportunity. Enjoy the show!

## Who's who on the creative team of *Bright Half Life*

### **Abra Clawson** (*Sound Designer*)

Abra is always happy to be back designing at UVM! Previous design credits include UVM: *Bat Boy The Musical*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Blue Window*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Tartuffe*, *Hand to God* (Asst. Design); St. Michael's College: *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Silent Sky*; and the Baltimore Center Stage *Young Playwright's Festival*. Podcast credits include the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis' *A Glorious Snowy Day* and the Vermont Folklife Center's *VT Untapped*. Abra apprenticed with Baltimore Center Stage (2019) and the Santa Fe Opera (2021) where she received the Katherine M Mayer award for Outstanding Apprentice. She presented her UVM Honors Thesis "Sounds from a Dream Place" on the Current Practices and Research in Sound panel at USITT 2019. Abra is currently the Event Manager at Burlington City Arts, where she produces events and festivals year-round. BA: University of Vermont '19 in Anthropology and Religion. See more at [abraclawson.com](http://abraclawson.com).



### **John Paul Devlin** (*Lighting Designer*)

John Paul Devlin is designing for UVM for the first time. He has been working in the area since 2001 at Saint Michael's College where he is a Professor of Fine Arts, Theatre. John classes himself as “the ABC technician” at Saint Michael's—“All But Costumes.” He has recently started directing for the department in addition to his design and technical work. He has been the Production Manager and Resident Designer for the Saint Michael's Playhouse since 2002. He holds an MFA in Design and an MA in American History from Syracuse University. A veteran theatre artist approaching 450 productions, John's design work has also been seen at Lost Nation Theater, Northern Stage, Vermont Stage, Moonbox Productions (Boston), Black Hills Playhouse (South Dakota), Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and First Stage Milwaukee. Thanks to Carol and Kat: without their continuing support, he would not be able to sustain a career as a theatre artist. <https://jdevlin1.wixsite.com/website>

### **Natalee Garen** (*Production Stage Manager*)

Natalee Garen is a senior theatre major, stage manager, and a theatre artist from Colchester, Vermont. She has worn many hats in RTT, including assistant director of *Bat Boy: The Musical*, wardrobe technician for *Blue Window*, audio technician for *It's a Wonderful Life*, and more. She is thrilled to share in this work with you, and incredibly grateful to the kind, compassionate team who made it possible.

### **Marty Gnidula** (*Assistant Director*)

Marty is a senior here at UVM. This is his first-time assistant directing, and he couldn't have asked for a better company of collaborators and friends. He has appeared at the Royall Tyler in *Walking*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and other projects. He wants to send a special thanks to Zeina, the whole SM and creative team, and everyone who has helped support him during his time at UVM.

### **Trevor Gould** (*Assistant Stage Manager*)

Trevor is very excited to be able to help with the production of *Bright Half-Life*. Trevor studies theatre and biology at the University of Vermont. He most recently worked as an intern at St. Michaels Playhouse where he worked in the box office, scene shop, and with lighting. When Trevor isn't in the theater he is a swim coach at the Edge in South Burlington and the UVM Club Swim Team. Trevor is a Junior at UVM and lighting is his favorite part of theatre!

### **Sara Nelson** (*Scenic Designer*)

Sara Nelson is the resident scenic designer, production manager, and full-time lecturer for the Program in Theatre and Dance here at UVM. In addition to those roles, much of her work is focused on mentoring students through the design and production process. Sara is a member of USITT and has also presented work on collaboration and the creative process for the Association of Theatre in Higher Education. Selected Design: *Popcorn Falls*, *Desperate Measures* (Saint Michael's Playhouse), *Batboy*, *Walking*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Blue Window*, *Enemy of The People*, *Shakespeare In Love*, *The Normal Heart*, *The Wolves* (University of Vermont); *Big Love*, *Cabaret*, *Eurydice* (Northern Vermont University); *Spring Fling: First Love* (F\*It Club); *This Time* (Workshop presented by Rising Circle Theater Collective); *Spring Fling: My Best/Worst Date Ever* (NYIT Nom) (F\*It Club); *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *The Laramie Project* (Adelphi University); *HMS Pinafore*, *Grease* (Arizona Broadway Theatre). MFA University of Montana.

### **Elizabeth Oliver** (*Assistant Stage Manager*)

Elizabeth (Liz) Oliver, is thrilled to be back in the Royal Tyler Theatre for her fourth main stage production! Liz is a senior Health and Society major with a minor in Theatre. Previously, she has been seen in *She Kills Monsters* (Evil Gabi) and *Straight White Men* (Stagehand—not a straight white man), both directed by the lovely Zeina Salame. She is overjoyed to be working with Zeina on yet another meaningful piece, this time behind the scenes. Liz has the utmost appreciation for the opportunity to work on this lovely show and hopes you enjoy!

### **Greta Powers** (*Dramaturg*)

Greta (she/her) is a junior English major from Shelburne, VT! She is so pleased to be returning to her role as resident nerd (or rather, dramaturg) after working as the dramaturg for UVM's production of *Straight White Men* last winter. Also at UVM, Greta acted in the 2021 and 2022 First Time Showcase productions (*Constellations* and *Enter Your Sleep*, respectively), as well as stage managed the one act *Medusa* in 2022. She thanks the entire team of *Bright Half Life* for their support and dedication, and hopes you enjoy the show!

### **Maggie Rahilly** (*Assistant Director*)

Maggie Rahilly is a junior English major and Theatre minor at the University of Vermont and is overjoyed to be making her assistant directorial debut with this piece. Maggie's theater background is primarily in performance and has taken on roles such as Eponine (*Les Misérables*), Crutchie (*Nedsies*), and Ophelia (*Hamlet*). Maggie would like to thank Robert Klump for his continued mentorship, guidance, and love for theater which he has passed on to her; she would also like to thank that cast, crew, and creative team for all their support, friendship, and artistry. This one's for you, Bob.

### **Zeina Salame** (*Director*)

Zeina Salame (PhD, MS, MA) is an artist/scholar and Assistant Professor who joined UVM in 2021 as an Andrew Harris Fellow. She is a director, a performer, and a dramaturg. For UVM Theatre she has directed *Straight White Men* and *She Kills Monsters*. Vermont locals may also recognize Zeina from collaborations with Middlebury Acting Company and Historically Close Friends. Recent collaborations nationally include: Eugene O'Neill Theater Center National Playwrights Conference and National Music Theater Conference, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Artists Repertory Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Golden Thread Productions, Commonwealth Theatre Center, the Guthrie Theater's Level Nine (New Arab American Theater Works), and the National Institute for Directing and Ensemble Creation (Pangea World Theater & Art2Action). Zeina's writing on theatre is published in *Études*, *Al Jadid*, *Arab Stages*, and *Howlround*. Her monograph building from her 2020 dissertation "Carried in One Woman: Reflections on Arab American Female Solo Performance" is forthcoming. Zeina is also a co-founder of Florida based theatre company, The 5 & Dime.

### **Mac Weaver** (*Sound Designer*)

Mac Weaver (he/him) is a freelance artist and stagehand from Boston, MA. He graduated from the University of Vermont in Spring of 2023, with a major in Film and Television Studies and a minor in Studio Art. He is excited to be returning to Vermont and the Royall Tyler Theatre as a designer!



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PROGRAM IN THEATRE AND DANCE

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***Touchstone***

Creating and performing in the Fleming Museum's Marble court, UVM dance students and dance Lecturer Julie Peoples-Clark, will explore feelings of isolation, the sensation of touch and human connection. Creative research will explore kinesthetic responses as we leave isolation and welcome touch and connection back into our lives post pandemic.

October 27 @ 7:00PM & October 28 @ 2:00PM

In the Fleming Museum's Marble Court

***Imogen Says Nothing***

*Imogen Says Nothing* is a revisionist comedy in verse and prose featuring

Imogen, a character who only appears in the First Folio of William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, speaks no lines, and is probably a typo. Wildly theatrical and subversively funny, *Imogen Says Nothing* is the tale of an unforgettable woman who will not give up letting her voice be heard and her story told.

November 8 - 12 in the Royall Tyler Theatre

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