HEART STRINGS
We are going to *Heart Strings* at Atlantic Theater Company.

**Where are we going?**

The show will be at the Linda Gross Theater. The address is 336 W 20th Street.

We might come by bus, subway, car, or by walking.

**Masks**

Masks are required in the theater. We will wear masks to protect each other.

**Bathrooms**

There are bathrooms on the bottom floor of the theater. We can take the stairs or the elevator to get there.
Ushers

When we get to the theater, we will be greeted by ushers and volunteers from Atlantic Theater Company. We will pick up our tickets from the box office.

Theater

We will go into the theater to find seats. There is no assigned seating, which means we can choose where we want to sit. We can enter the theater 30 minutes before the show begins to find our seats. A seating chart with more information is at the end of this story.

Stage

The show will happen on the stage. We can look at the stage but cannot walk on it or touch it. We can walk around the rest of the space if we need to.
Lights

When the show starts, the lights will dim which means it will get a little darker, but it will never be completely dark. There will be many different lights with different colors that change during the show. If we don’t like the lights, we can cover our eyes, look away, or take a break.

Sound

There will be some music and sound effects in the show. If the sounds are too loud, we can cover our ears, use headphones or take a break. Staff will have headphones we can use if we need them.

Quiet Space

If we need a break, we can go to the lobby to move around or sit down. It will be quiet in the lobby. There will be a live video of the show, so we don’t have to worry about missing out on the action.
Meet the Cast

Sienna Aczon
_Hoku_

Aaron Banes
_Josiah_

Un Joo Christopher
_Mahina_

Kristi Donna Ng
_Tutu_

Jeremy Rafal
_Grandpa_
About the Play...

Setting:
The play takes place in Koloa, Kauai in Hawaii.

History:
The play takes place in the 1930’s, which is before Hawaii became a state. During this time Hawaiian people were being forced to give up parts of their culture. In the play we see the Hawaiian kids who have to use English names and are not allowed to speak Hawaiian language at school as a way to get them to conform to a certain way of being - a way of being “just so.”

Props:
Throughout the play the characters use hei to tell stories. 
Hei are Hawaiian string figures like the game “cat’s cradle.”

Language:
The characters are Hawaiian and sometimes they say some Hawaiian words. Here are some you may hear:

Wahine – “wa- Hee-nay” = Woman

Kaula- “COW-la” = Rope or string

Hale- “HAH-lay” = house

Pa`i- “PUH-ee” = slap or strike

Pau- “Pow” = finished

Mahealani – “mah-hey-ah-LAH-nee” = full moon phase

Hanai- “hah-NYE” = custom of adoption or of caring for a person like family

Kahu- “KAH- hoo”= pastor of a church

Sometimes, the characters in the show will talk to the audience from the stage and ask us questions.
The Story:

On a little island in the middle of the Pacific, two girls face a big storm, a clash of cultures, and the knots of sibling rivalry.

Lights up!

10-year-old Hoku is waiting after school for her adopted sister Mahina and making Hawaiian string figures, hei.

Mahina got in trouble at school for not speaking in English and answering to her English name.

Hoku, Mahina, and their friend Josiah go to school together. At their school, they use American names and not their Hawaiian names.

Hoku and Mahina are hanai sisters. Hanai is a Hawaiian word meaning extended family. Hoku and Mahina have been hanai sisters living together since they were young.

Hoku tells the audience that she and Mahina used to get along but ever since she started school everything Mahina does annoys her.
In the Kitchen:

Mahina and Hoku arrive home to Tutu cooking in the kitchen. Tutu is the Hawaiian word for grandmother.

Mahina tells Tutu she is confused about why she must go by another name at school. Tutu explains that the school has strange rules about Hawaiian language and names but at home she can be exactly herself.

Talking with Grandpa:

Mahina and Hoku join Grandpa outside. Hoku tells Grandpa how she is tired of having to share with Mahina and how worrying about her at school is distracting her from making everything perfect. Grandpa explains that nothing in the world is perfect, even he must unite, fix and retie his fishing nets.

Grandpa does a string figure of a house with two string children running away in different directions. He says this figure represents people in a home forgetting what’s important. Grandpa tells Hoku and Mahina that a string connects them and sometimes we must patiently work out the knots in our strings.
Another Day at School:

Mahina got in trouble at school again for speaking Hawaiian words. The teacher told the children not to speak about *hanai*. Mahina’s string was taken away. Her string made her feel comfortable and calm.

After school with Hoku, Mahina plays with the string speaking in Hawaiian while Hoku keeps correcting her with English words.

Josiah asks Hoku to study with her. Hoku is frustrated because she can’t focus on work when she is always having to worry about Mahina.

**Later that night:**

Hoku, Mahina, Tutu, and Grandpa watch the night sky together on the porch. Mahina asks Hoku to do a string figure but Grandpa and Tutu yell “No!” Tutu explains that Hawaiians believe it is bad luck to do strings at night, and that the ancestors who taught them the strings also taught this rule.

Mahina says that Hoku and her are both the same, both *hanai*, but Hoku gets annoyed because she is Tutu and Grandpa’s real grandchild while Mahina is adopted. Tutu explains that *hanai* means “care for, nourish, feed” so they are all *hanai*, a big family to love each other.
In the Girls Bedroom:

A storm starts in the middle of the night. Mahina wakes up and is scared. She asks Hoku to be there for her forever. Hoku gets angry. She pulls out the string and starts to do the figure Grandpa showed, where the house falls apart. Mahina warns her not to do the strings at night. Hoku yells at Mahina.

The Next Morning:

The next day Hoku wakes up and doesn’t see Mahina. Josiah sees Hoku is upset and tries to cheer her up, but Hoku tells him to leave her alone. Josiah feels sad.

Hoku feels bad about everything. She waits after school for Mahina but Mahina never comes.

Back at home:

Mahina has a suitcase. Tutu explains that Mahina’s mom had a new baby, so Mahina is going back to her mom to help. Grandpa tells Hoku that Mahina asked to leave. Hoku tells Grandpa this is everything she wanted because now she won’t have to wait around, be annoyed by her questions, or share her food. But secretly Hoku is sad that Mahina is leaving.
Many mornings later:

Tutu notices Hoku hasn’t been the same since Mahina left. Grandpa asks Hoku to come help him fish.

Josiah comes to the beach and convinces Hoku that she misses her hanai sister because the two of them are tied by the strings of the heart.

Josiah reminds Hoku that the day she stopped crying in kindergarten was the day they adopted Mahina. On that day she told him she was so happy because now she’d never be alone again.

Josiah makes a string figure of lightning. He explains that this storm will pass, and after that things will be even better. Hoku does string figures for the stars and mosquitos, saying that someday Mahina will be back.

Hoku asks Josiah what his Hawaiian name is, and he says Kalā, which means the sun.

Back at home:

Hoku confesses that it’s her fault that Mahina left because she played with the strings at night and wished Mahina would go away.

Grandpa assures her that it’s ok to have angry thoughts and that she didn’t make bad things happen but she did hurt
Mahina’s feelings. He encourages her to think about the things she misses about Mahina. Hoku lists all the things she misses about Mahina and wishes she would come home.

**On a stormy night:**

Hoku learns that Mahina is out in a storm trying to come back to Hoku. Hoku runs out of the house to look for her, knowing Mahina would use her knowledge of the stars to find home. Josiah and Hoku run through the forest calling her name.

They find Mahina and go home.

Mahina tells the audience about how that night they had a big feast and from then on, she had one big family who worked all together to help each other.

Hoku joins Mahina and they tell the audience how they grew up happy together even when they didn’t get along. They were two hearts connected by one string.
After the show...

The actors will take a bow, and the audience will clap for them. If the clapping is too loud, we can cover our ears or go to the lobby of the theater.

We will exit through the lobby of the theater.

Thank you for joining us at Atlantic Theater Company!
# A seating guide to the Linda Gross Theater

## Linda Gross Theater Seating Chart

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**Stage Diagram**

- **Blue Area:** If you need to stand, move around or need a quick exit, this row is also wheelchair & companion accessible.
- **Red Area:** Close to the action (actors may go in the aisles).
- **Green Area:** Easy exits.
- **Yellow Area:** Away from direct lights & speakers.

**Note:** Seating is general seating and not assigned. The theater will open 30 minutes prior to the show time.