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An exploratory analysis and creative interpretation of female
performers in the traditional travelling circus

Emily Davina Carr

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters by Research (Music)

September 2019

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Abstract

This thesis explores the history of the modern circus, with a particular focus on discussing hidden female performers from traditional travelling circuses. Through conducting interviews and archival research, the information on the lives of the female performers in the circus separates into three areas: performance, gender, and lifestyle. These three areas create topics for the creative interpretation section of this project, forming a five-track EP, *Our Circus*, of original songs. By using the art form of music to celebrate the art of the female circus performer, a voice is given to those whose stories have not been heard as loudly as their opposite sex in modern circus history. This practice-based research allows information to reach both the academy and public domain, showing that creative research enhances social science research whilst projecting the stories of incredible women in the arts through music, creating a connection and awareness beyond academic fields and to the wider public.

“The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not.” *The Night Circus*, (Morgenstern, 2011, p. 3).

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Chapter 1: The Circus

Background

In 2018 the United Kingdom celebrated 250 years of modern circus, with organisations such as Circus250 (2018) at the hub. Through an array of events, new collections and impressive exhibits for people to attend all over the country, Circus250 reminded the nation of the wonderful world of circus, offering information on the lesser known figures of the modern circus. The celebrations for 250 years of circus commenced at the end of 2017 with the release of the award-winning film, *The Greatest Showman* (Gracey, 2017), immersing audiences into the world of circus, focusing on the story of P.T Barnum and his greatest show on earth. The film reignited people's love for circus world-wide. The UK in particular spent a year absorbed in the exciting Circus250 celebrations, embracing stories and information from the past and present. It was the rediscovery and retelling of modern circus history during Circus250 that captured imaginations by highlighting different aspects of circus history that were obscured. Part of the early stages of this research project began to reveal a well-hidden woman at the centre of the ring – hidden, yet in plain view – almost removed from the ease and access of the history of the modern circus. Patty Astley (see Toulmin, 2019;2018), wife of the man known as the father of the modern circus, Philip Astley, inspired the shape of this project and formed an interesting stimulus for a creative research project about women in the circus.

Hidden women's stories will be discussed further in this thesis, as well as the research methodology, but in order to demonstrate academic rigor from the earliest opportunity, it is important to acknowledge the way in which this will be presented. Because of a strong, personal response to the subject and the people involved, this thesis is written in the tone of my creative voice rather than with traditional academic discourse. To maintain a level of writing throughout this project which remains clear, informative, speculative, and yet scholarly, is difficult. This conflict with writing in an academic voice when reflecting on creative practice is not uncommon (see Le Ha, 2009, p.135; Lucas, 2015, p.186). Carless and Douglas (2011) acknowledge benefits in using music to present research, but difficulties can lie in explaining creative reflection through formal writing in an academic style. I must stress that my creative voice as a musician and song writer is heavily responsible in the reflection of the writing style throughout this project's presentation.

Questions of Hidden Women and Art World's Uniting

In the early stages of research, into what I thought would be my topic of 'history of the circus', I noticed that the majority of people mentioned in history overviews were men – Barnum and Bailey, George Sanger, Bertram Mills, Philip Astley and so on. Hidden women emerged during further research, and I started to uncover some remarkable female performers. Gender information seemed sparse from the outset. Could this be described, in its literal sense, as the 'hidden genders' Bennett,

Hennekam, Macarthur, Hope, Goh (2019;2018) discuss in their paper in relation to female composers? Further research via newsletters and websites proffered information solely on females of the circus (see Circus Now, n.d.; Circus250, 2018; Toulmin, 2018). Female performers were – and quite timely in relation to my undertaking of research – specifically showcased as an individual topic as part of the 2018 celebrations of Circus250, with people such as Professor Vanessa Toulmin, curator of the National Fairground and Circus Archives at The University of Sheffield, creating exhibitions on a variety of subjects within the circus, some including a pure focus on women of the circus.

Music and Research

How could I, as a songwriter, convert the information from research to inspire a piece of creative work? Could two distinct creative art forms combine, inspire and enhance another? How could the combination of music and circus use its strength by uniting to create a discussion, or more, an awareness of a topic? Prior to my research, a study by Carless and Douglas (2011) explored ‘how songs contribute to the communication of social science research’. They examined the use of writing and performing songs as a way of presenting research and how it begins to narrow the separation between the academy and the community. This is especially in line with my research, as whilst it draws elements from the academic field of history of the circus, it is looking at people, and this format of presenting research will allow a wider spectrum of audience to have access to a piece of research material, than if presented in purely a thesis form. Using story, people, and place as a basis for creative stimuli has been explored in the academic field with Toby Martin’s *Songs from Northam Avenue* (2017) for example, where lyrical and musical content was created by ‘listening to stories from people in those places and the ways in which these stories were constructed and told’ (Martin, 2017, p. 23). This way of gathering inspiration and creating the concept for a piece of musical work is how I intend to go about the writing of my songs for this project – using real-life stories. Various other methods of song writing techniques have been explored by scholars and musicians, another being the observational song writing approach (see McCormick, 2010), famously used by Arctic Monkey’s Alex Turner through his vivid descriptions of real-life moments that he has witnessed and converted into musical work; things I observed when visiting circuses throughout my research have encouraged song ideas. I have drawn some ideas from the song writing techniques and methods discussed above and the project’s musical section focuses on the celebration of the stories of female circus performers. This research furthers the idea presented by Carless and Douglas (2011) in the exploration of songs contributing to the communication of social science research, and I am in no means stating that my research is presenting a new way of creating musical inspiration.

The Project

The project is made up of two pieces of work that accompany one another. The first part of my project is presented as this thesis, compiled of short essays which focus on an exploratory analysis of female circus performers, through both a literature review and case studies which were collected through primary research via interview and archival research, and a creative exploration into the process of the composed music for this research. It concludes with why creative practice-based research is important for circus history, the arts and the social sciences. The second part of the project which accompanies this thesis, is a five-track EP of original compositions titled, *Our Circus*, recorded and placed on a USB stick for reference purposes.

Part of my project consists of drawing from interviews with female performers of the traditional travelling circus as primary source material for both critical discussions in the dissertation and creative inspiration for the practice-research element of my work. A semi-structured interview approach has been adopted to collate qualitative research to highlight the voices of individual participants. This method of accumulating data via the primary research method of interviewing participants proved its fair amount of challenges, as it was not a method of data gathering that I was used to. The skills and knowledge I had at the point of conducting the interviews were at a beginner's level, therefore, on reflection of a year's study, I feel an alternative interview structure, such as a narrative approach, may have been more practical for gaining the information that was particularly needed for this project. Other factors included, considering the availability of female performers whilst touring seasons commenced, which led to a lack of available interview participants. With this in mind, my research took me to primary sourcing archival items from the National Fairground and Circus Archives at The University of Sheffield. Letters, photos and archive notes provided several case studies on female performers in the traditional travelling circus and led to creative inspiration for the practice-research element of my work.

Chapter 2: The Story

History or Her Story?

The modern-day circus is said to have begun 250 years ago, with a man. He would be known in our day as the ‘father of modern circus’ (TPAP, 2019) composing a space that would eventually showcase unbelievable talents. With a background as an equestrian, Philip Astley began with putting on displays of trick-riding in his own, small, circular arena. He realised that the centrifugal force created by a horse moving within a circular space/ring allowed for stunts to be performed whilst riding. After some time, Astley eventually developed the performance space of the small arena into an amphitheatre, where, within a 42-foot ring, a diverse range of entertainment could be viewed, including, the original trick-riding with animals, and now, also, displays of acrobats and comedy (Circus250, 2018). With an array of entertainment enclosed within a circular structure (NFCA, 2019), this would play a major part of what we now know today as the circus. Grand and impressive with its unpredictability of perilous acts, awe-stricken audiences from all social standings and classes (Simon, 2014, p.31) would find themselves from the safety of their seats, gazing upon acts that left them with both feelings of fear and desire at the same time (Bouissac, 2012, p.199). However, this entertainment in-the-round was by no means a new endeavour, with such forms of leisure dating back to Roman and even Grecian eras. Although differing in explicitness of activity, from roman gladiators to circus acrobats, the common thread between entertainment of this sort has been its welcome from families throughout history as a way to spend a day out together and be entertained, and eventually, the modern circus would adopt the form of travelling entertainment, arriving and performing to different audiences and copious amounts of families.

In the early days of the modern circus, performances would take place in buildings made specifically for the acts which were ‘known as hippodromes, circuses and amphitheatres’ (NFCA, 2019). Entertainment of this sort could be argued as originating from the roman coliseum, or even the Olympics, but the true marvel of what Philip Astley created is evident through the longevity of 250 years of an art-form and entertainment, a ‘world within the world’ (Simon, 2014, p.20). Around the same time, American circus began to develop following two men, Barnum and Bailey. Beginning as The American Museum that showcased unique beings, ranging from wild animals that the average American had never seen in real life before, to humans with fascinating talents, the museum would develop into something similar to what Philip Astley had put together - shows bursting with lavish performances of great and diverse talents. Using the thriving railroads throughout America, Barnum and Bailey realised that touring the circus allowed audiences all over the country to witness a performance from the closeness of their own town or city. The train systems allowed for the show to reach different places, spreading the word about the magic of the circus. When the circus came to town there would often be a large parade (Davis, 2002, p.2) where crowds would line the streets, welcoming

their new guests. For the portability and having a reliable performance space, American circuses used a large tent to host the show, rather than using buildings. Eventually, these tents would hold several rings inside, where audiences could watch several different feats of dangerous and thrilling entertainment. Having the ability to perform to a wider range of audiences and easing the access of attending circus shows by bringing the circus to the people, circus thrived from the mid-19th century and into early 20th century, even attracting the attention of Queen Victoria as a mode of entertainment. The travelling circus was adopted by British circus and soon touring circuses would arrive in towns and cities all across the UK in a beautiful crimson and white circular tent with high sweeping tops to host acts from a great height.

If there is one thing to be taken from all of this sieving through vast number of books, essays, websites, archive materials and interview recordings on circus history, it is that, the history of the modern circus is not just *his* story: it is *her* story too.

Hidden Stories

Popular history depicts the early development of the modern travelling circus as being a male-dominated world with founders – or fathers – of the modern circus such as, Philip Astley, Barnum and Bailey, The Ringling Bros, and George Sanger, taking the spotlight for the creation and development of the circus and its early triumphs. Obscured by the prominent discussion of the men of the circus, is that there were many, just as clever, strong-headed, and innovative women taking a substantial role in the creation, running and success of circuses. Writing for the online paper, *The Stage*, about Circus250 and women in the circus, author Tom Wicker (2018) agrees saying, ‘the contribution of many female performers has been written out of history.’ Looking at the history of the modern circus that I found in my early stages of research, and outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the information is male-heavy and completely overlooks the mother of the modern circus, Patty Astley. So, where are all the stories about females of the traditional travelling circus?

The research I embarked upon started to raise some ‘hidden stories’ of women from circus history who were ‘overlooked in favour of their male counterparts’ (Wicker, 2018). The research revealed an array of amazing women who played a part in creating the success of the circus. Due to the celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the modern circus rich stories on some of the understated heroes of the modern circus surfaced. Online websites led to finding information on some famous female performers of traditional travelling circus. Through Circus250, the ‘coordinating body for the promotion and dissemination of all the fabulous events throughout the UK and Ireland’ (Circus250, 2019), I found various leads that uncovered lesser known stories about female performers of traditional travelling circuses. I came across Professor Vanessa Toulmin, curator of The University of Sheffield’s, National Fairground and Circus Archives (NFCA), and an avid enthusiast and researcher of all things circus and fairground. Having written various essays on the subjects of both the circus and fairground history, her

paper on Patty Astley titled, '*My wife to conclude performs the rest*' - *Patty Astley the first lady of circus* (2019;2018), delves into the life of Patty Astley whose life and input in the circus is lesser known than her husband's famous history. The lack of her name used throughout early circus history, and simply being named as 'the wife of Philip Astley', or even under the shared title of her husband as 'Mr and Mrs Astley', is uncomfortable to comprehend. Toulmin's paper on Patty Astley's contribution and role in the early circus played a large role in driving this project. Using the NFCA website, I was able to explore the history and lives of several female performers with incredible stories. Women such as: Lulu Adams, known as one of the first female clowns, who I will discuss more on later; May Wirth, a talented performer of bareback horse-riding whilst performing acrobatic tricks, and Koringa, the crocodile enchantress who performed tricks with reptiles, to name a few. Other websites (see Circus Talk, n.d.; Circus Now, n.d.) helped me uncover stories about female performers of the past and present. I realised the history of the modern circus was not just about the success of men and its 'fathers of the modern circus', as I began to uncover more information on female performers using these websites, archives, exhibitions (see Toulmin, 2018), and essays written on the subject. It was bursting with stories of the most incredible, talented and inspirational females, all with lives that needed celebrating and stories that needed to be voiced loud and clear.

Gender and The Arts

Research on gender and the arts, in particular the female and performance, has been examined over the recent decades with focuses on equality, body image, social traditions/stereotypes etc. This plethora of research study may be growing due to shifts in attitudes throughout society towards gendered norms (The Atlantic, n.d.). Body image and the representation of gender, along with how traditional circus culture plays a role in the presentation of female performers, has been explored attentively; areas such as female nudity and the body (see Davis cited in Tait & Lavers, 2016, p.173; Tait, 2005) and social codes and traditions (see Sizorn cited in Tait & Lavers, 2016, p.500). There are areas of research focus that concentrate solely on the celebration of women in the circus, an example being Arantza Barrutia-Wood's archival piece, *Lulu Adams - female clown and circus performer* (Barrutia-Wood, 2016), which reviews the life of Lulu Adams. Other examples include *Circus! Show of Shows*, the exhibition ran by Professor Vanessa Toulmin and the University of Sheffield's National Fairground and Circus Archives during 2018. Founder of Circus250, Dea Birkett, mentions this importance of 'discovering and uncovering stories of women of the past' on Radio 4's, Women's Hour, in a segment on Women and the Circus (Cope, 2018). She also mentions uncovering these stories on hidden women from history helps towards bettering the future for females in circuses today. It is now more important than ever to engage in this celebration of art by voicing the achievements and lives of female circus performers.

The place of women in wider society is constantly changing and developing, as more scholars of the arts investigate and present research in the different areas on the female performer. Circus250, Circus Now, Circus Talk, and scholars like Professor Vanessa Toulmin, are widening the discussion on women in the circus in sharing stories. Telling the story of people living their lives regardless of gender, race, age, and size etc., is key to connecting human race; a collection of humans voices are a force to be reckoned with when heard. This is my small voice, adding to both previous and ongoing research into female performers.

Defining Circus

In relation to what is meant by ‘circus’ in essay, I will quickly address which form of circus is the focus of my research. It is important to recognise that there are many forms of circus that have developed during its lifespan. In the present day, there are two main styles of modern circus that have developed: traditional and contemporary. Traditional circus follows a lot of the original set of codes and conventions that have been a part of the traditional style for hundreds of years. It provides an illustration of what was, something which Sylvestre Barré-Meinzer names the ‘circus of nostalgia’ (Sizorn, 2016, p.499). Circuses that pride themselves as following the traditional style would therefore be perpetuated and presented as authentic. This type of circus is mainly performed in a circus tent and often via a traveling and touring circus company; traditional circus tends to be family-based (Beadle & Könyöt, 2016, p.70), and is often passed onto the next generation. In comparison, the circus style known as contemporary, follows a more modern-day approach to circus performance, and a removal from some of the more traditional codes and conventions (Sizorn, 2019, p.501). The acts that are part of contemporary circus remain drawn from traditional circus skills passed down from generations, however, they have removed gender codes and stereotyping and the way of presenting circus skills and practice, reinventing a new way of showcasing circus talent. Performances are often stage-based in theatres or studios, and, although contemporary circus companies may too tour their shows, instead of performing in the traditional tent, they tend to be in venues that house entertainment. There are some circuses today that combine these two styles, bringing a contemporary and modern approach to traditional circus performance, an example being Big Kid Circus with their addition of laser-lighting, modern music, and a female ringmaster.

With the general term of circus covering a range of styles, there is little room in this thesis to explore the vast amount of stories and the hidden history of female performers lives from both traditional *and* contemporary circus, therefore, I have chosen to narrow my research field to just focusing on female performers of traditional travelling circuses. MIT Libraries (n.d.) state that, ‘the research process is more relevant if you care about your topic.’ My grandmother grew up living within the travelling circuses and fairgrounds around Barnsley in the early 1900s. Family ties and personal interest towards travelling life and entertainment helped in choosing between traditional and

contemporary circus to research. Furthermore, by beginning with the origins of the modern-day circus and looking into traditional travelling circus first, there is the potential for future research to follow chronologically and continue the same practice-based research of women of the contemporary circus, which can be seen as an emerging field for research (Leroux, 2014).

Chapter 3: The Research

Gathering Real-life Stories

Storytelling is something that has connected people throughout time. The creation of a narrative allows for a discourse between people, their emotions and thoughts. A story guides the listener, reader or consumer into another viewpoint, or world, and this can provide momentarily escapism – much like what an audience can experience at the circus. Creating stories mimicking real-life people and scenarios is seen throughout fictional writing, as described by Gottschall (2013, p.66) who states the ‘evolutionary function of fiction is – at least in part – to simulate the big dilemmas of life’ and then goes on to explain how consumers of fiction benefit, explaining that ‘people who consume a lot of fiction should be more capable social operators than people who don’t’. This project focuses on creating music to present the stories of real-life female performers. Studies suggest that the consumers of this research’s creative product may become more understanding of the information (Carless and Douglas, 2011) on these female performers and their lives in the circus, as it is presented to the audience in a format similar to how written fiction is presented to its reader in the form of story. As explained above, consumers of stories are more likely to be understanding, therefore, my research should contribute to the encouragement of celebrating circus history’s hidden women with the academy and the public.

In its most basic sense, most fictional stories have a beginning, middle and end, just as with this project which begun with a set of research questions and ideas based around finding out information on the lesser known women of circus history, and eventually leading to an end point of celebrating these women via pieces of music that are inspired by the women’s lives, their talents and their stories. A story does not just begin and then end straight away, it has substance and a centre that makes the story mean something and allows a consumer time to connect with the narrative. What is clear, is that it is important to consider that the research, or middle section, of this project is what is going to be vital at joining the beginning to the end; essentially, the middle section of this project boils down to finding a way of converting information on female performers of the circus into a creative piece of musical work. Speaking with real-life female performers felt like the best way of hearing their own story, and in its literal sense, their own voice. Taking a qualitative approach to research by conducting semi-structured interviews, this would form part of my research of gathering stories and information about being a female performer of the travelling circus.

Practice-Based Research

The idea of practice-based research, which is what my project follows, is using practice to present research producing ‘something insightful, useful or indeed groundbreaking.’ (Candy & Edmond, 2018, p.64). The *practice* part involves ‘conceiving ideas and realising them in some form as [...] musical compositions’ (2018, p.64), whilst the *research* part ‘establish facts [...] new

understandings’ and it must also be ‘original and contextualised’ (2018, p.64). My practice is the composition of music about the lesser known women of modern circus history that I have researched. The project, that has been created to present this obscured knowledge, is insightful, discussing hidden women and celebrating them, which is useful to the current female circus performers, shedding a spotlight on them, their history and their art.

Practice-based research ‘provides a means of exploration that extends that work in a personal sense as well as contributing to the wide picture’ (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, p.63). Through ‘uncovering stories of women of the past’ (Cope, 2018), this allows a better understanding of history, providing knowledge for both the present and future female circus performers. As practice-based research lends its focus to this exploration, the telling of personal stories to present new knowledge in the field of traditional circus history and its female performers seems best suited to a practice-based form of research than to another means of academic research.

Qualitative Research Experience

With a background in music composition, my knowledge of conducting qualitative research was fairly minimal. Knowing I intended to conduct interviews to gain the bulk of my circus research and creative inspiration for the musical aspect of this project, at the beginning of my Masters I attended a few classes that focused on qualitative research, addressing areas such as interviewing, ethics, analysing data etc., and although these lectures were helpful, conducting my own interviews would mean putting what I had learnt into practice. In contributing to the research community, my project’s aim was not about finding out new information, it was about attempting to understand people and combining the two disciplines of circus and music from one world – the art world – to create a voice and present to all, and this is why I felt that using qualitative research to form my work would be the most effective.

Interview Methodology

Using Glaser & Strauss’ (1967) grounded theory, I followed Strauss’ take on the qualitative method, by using the method of verification. This method led me to the decision to gather my information through semi-structured interviews, one-to-one with the performers. By using semi-structured interviews, this placed me in a position of understanding that, whilst I had certain themes and ideas that I wanted to address – performance, gender and lifestyle – I allowed for the participant to subtly guide the interview in a direction they wanted. Although this creates almost a conversation-styled interview, I was aware that my themes would still be the underlying centre point and focus. Going back to Strauss’ method of verification, the study was being built from the ‘ground up’, allowing for the chosen themes to act as a guide, but I was conscious that these were changeable based on individual

interviews. This method of study could be criticised as difficult relating to subjectivity (Locke, 2001, as cited in Grey, 2018, p.694), however, as the research is used as a creative prompt for a music project, this seemed the most effective way of gathering honest, personal and valid data, as it is data gathered from the mouths of the performers themselves.

By researching people and their lives, the form of gathering information via interview is a popular choice as ‘social scientists rely largely on verbal accounts to learn about social life’ (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016;2015). In creating music about women in the circus, ideally I wanted to write about the things that they experience, both performing and travelling with the circus, and by using a semi-structured, or semi-standardised, form of interview method, this enables me as the researcher to ‘seek to approach the world from the subjects perspective’ (Lune & Berg, 2017, p.70). The benefits of using a semi-structured interview approach allows for a flexibility in the movement around topics that the participant brings up through their answers, giving the interviewers the ‘freedom to digress’ (2017, p.69). This is especially the case with this very study, as some of my interviews were with male performers, to which one of them went on a tangent about his mother and other female performers of his family (see Ar, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019), and this proved to be very useful information that I would have otherwise maybe not have learnt.

Before I created a set of semi-structured questions to ask the participants, I had to decide what subareas I wanted to address within this project when looking into female performers of the traditional travelling circus. Initially, I began with creating a mind map styled document, placing the word circus in the centre, to find themes that made up, what I believed, the circus to be. This can be seen as the original beginnings of my ground up approach, as I was yet to be ‘steeped in the literature that [...] creative efforts become impeded or constrained’ (Corbin 1998, as cited in Grey, 2018, p.694). From this, I found that I could place different ideas under generalised titles, and these became known as, Performance, Gender, Lifestyle and General. I then placed these titles onto different pieces of paper and began to write questions relating to each category. All of these questions were present with me at the interviews. When it came to talking to the participants, I picked different questions from each of the categories, allowing for the participants to direct the conversation via their answers. After conducting the interviews, I decided to remove General as a subarea as it was too vast, and I was happy that all of the information collected fell into these three areas of Performance, Gender and Lifestyle (*see Figure 1 & 2*).

Originally, the intention was to allow the interviews to take up to a maximum of an hour if needed, but due to interviews taking place ringside and the performers taking time out of their practice schedule, the interviews lasted around 3 minutes each. The time allocated to talk to the performers was much shorter than I expected and being new into the research field, my skills at conducting short interviews, whilst extracting as much relevant information as possible, was a challenge. I wrote a set of questions based around the four themes and these questions were only a rough guide that I would use to prompt me. In total, only five recorded interviews were conducted, three being male performers and

two being female. Due to the busy schedules of the performers, few women were able to speak with me, and the circus company's PR team kept bringing me male performers to interview. This may have been down to my lack of communication with the PR team, as they thought I just wanted to interview performers in general. Again, my interviewing etiquette and skills at gathering research from participants was lacking, and to be polite, this is how I came to interview the male performers. When interviewing the male performers, I decided to guide the interview towards discussing the female performers of the circus that they knew, and this often turned out to be their female family members. The interviews were not wasted, and some interesting themes and ideas arose, complimenting other research that I had found through the archives.

Research Ethics

All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and in person, as part of an open press call for that specific circuses new show. Participants were told that I was a student of the University of Huddersfield and that I wanted to ask them a few questions about their circus act and circus life for research purposes. I told them that I was a songwriter and was doing a project on female performers in the traditional travelling circus. I did not know who I was interviewing prior to meeting the participants, but in communication with sponsors and participants I ensured they understood 'the purpose of the research and [solicitation] of their cooperation' (Grey, 2018, p.85). I verbally sought permission from each interviewee to record their interviews via a mobile voice recorder, later placed on a secure pass-coded hard-drive and transcribed. Ideally, I should have also sought written consent from the participants and completed ethics forms for the participants to sign and retain. In the absence of these, I have chosen to redact specific personal details from the interviews transcribed in this project and used initials to distinguish between the different interviewees. I have kept their gender and circus act, but redacted names and the circus from which they are a part of. In future research, I will ensure that any participants to that research have full access to written ethics forms and information on what data I am collecting, along with contact details for myself and the university should they wish to withdraw from the research process.

Data Analysing

Analysing collected data would consist of; transcribing the audio of the interviews, creating a code to begin analysing, a thorough analysis of the themes drawn from the codes, followed by a discussion of the findings. My method of analysing my data via a coding and indexing system was taken from Braun & Clarke (2013), where I chose to create a variation on their basic principles. My method of analysing the data began with an inductive approach. I found one-word themes and wrote them in the left-side margin briefly outlining what my participants were discussing, completely based of the

data and not using any of my own knowledge on the subject to associate the findings to – this would come later when discussing the participants’ answers. Then in the right-hand margin I would then expand on these initial ideas to create a larger picture of these themes to prepare for the discussion process of the analysis (see appendix 1f-1j).

	Performance	Gender	Lifestyle
Act	X	X	
Talent/Skill	X		
Safety	X		X
Audience	X		
Roles	X	X	X
Show’s Narrative	X	X	
Travelling			X
Culture	X	X	X
Family		X	X
Generational		X	X
Childhood			X
Growing Up			X
The Future	X	X	X
Image	X	X	
Body	X	X	
Traditions and Codes	X	X	X
Who Performs What?	X	X	

Figure 1. Example of the data display table I created

I organized these themes using a data display technique where I placed the three main themes discussed of performance, gender, and lifestyle, into their own columns, followed by the sub-themes that developed from these. As shown above, *Figure 1*, a table was formed, where an ‘X’ would be placed if the sub-theme was part of a larger theme. This method of data organization and comparison worked well to create a structure that would link themes and help towards creating a linear flow to my writing later on. The discussion part of the analysis to follow from the above table can incorporate a deductive approach as I connect external knowledge from relevant literature and sources to interpret the themes provided by the participants’ answers in the interviews. To then understand specific qualities and meanings of the themes, extracts from the interviews will be used. The aim is to find some correlation to the literature in the fields of gender, performance and women performers of the circus, yet allow for the discussion section of the analysis to go in any direction deemed necessary.

Reflection on Method of Research

The interviews conducted for this research took place a little under the half-way mark of my Masters. My skills in qualitative research have developed and I can see that my interviews could have been conducted differently in order to gather more information directly relevant to my project. For example, instead of using a semi-structured interview and grounded-theoretical method of research, I

would now opt for a narrative research approach, where participants would present a timeline of their life, giving stories of time-marked events (see Goodson & Gill, 2011, p.17-33). This may be a better way to focus this qualitative research and could achieve richer data filled with content relating to their lives in the circus. Other avenues for discussion may have opened using this approach as the participant would lead the interview by talking about their lives. Nevertheless, from the interviews conducted, some interesting themes reoccurred which prompted additional research methodologies, beyond semi-structured interview, as detailed below.

Archival Research

A further investigation to gain personal insight in how female performers felt being part of the travelling circus led me to the National Fairground and Circus Archives (NFCA). Only securing the 5 short interviews, with three male performers and two female performers, archival primary resources felt like the natural path for my research to venture down. Reoccurring themes found through the data analysis of the interviews I conducted provided markers to look out for in further research, and the themes and points that were brought up started appearing in archival research and other literary sources. The NFCA allowed me to access family collections which included material such as photographs, letters, diaries and newspaper clippings of interviews etc. These collections shed light on some of the hidden women’s lives via the archival items before me, prompting creative inspiration almost immediately.

	Performance	Gender	Lifestyle
Lulu Adams	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
Koringa	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	
Patty Astley	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	
Miss La La	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	
Olympia	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
May Wirth	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
Renee Marshall (Scott)	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>

Figure 2. Table of female performers organised into themes

Combining the research collected from the archives with the conducted interviews and literary secondary research, stories of female performers of the traditional travelling circus emerged and unfolded, providing not only information to form a new version of history, but information that could be creatively interpreted and shaped into music. I collected information on several female performers during my archival and literary researches and broke down the information I found on them using a table, *Figure 2*, where they were compared alongside the main topics stated earlier: performance, gender and lifestyle. The use of this secondary table, along with the initial data display table, *Figure 1*, worked well as organisational tools to help process and structure the discussion of the findings.

Chapter 4: The Findings

Performance

Reviewing the transcriptions of the five interviews I conducted, it is clear to see that by using a semi-structured interview style, and my lack of experience, there was little continuity between questions asked to all participants. I noted I asked the male performers about how they felt about performing directly, *Figures 3 & 4*, however, when it came to asking the female performers, I focused more on how they felt about being a woman in the circus and asked little on the performance side.

E: So, do you find live performance thrilling?

M: Yeah, I love it and I want to be like this life...circus life is not for always, [unsure what is said], but after, you cannot do nothing, so maybe we try to make a circus school or sell the circus.

Figure 3. M, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019 (see appendix 1a)

E: Yeah, wow! How do you find life travelling/performing?

B: For me, I don't know the other life, you know? When I stop in some city to stay for a while, after two weeks we already wanna leave because it's boring. It's always the same for us, we are used to the [unsure what is said], met new people, new city, performing and the travelling *laughs*, busy life.

Figure 4. B, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019 (see appendix 1b)

The female participants interviewed drew on their performance without being prompted, as with interview four (*appendix 1d*), when asked if the circus was where she would want to be, the female dancer said that she would always want to be on stage. With a background in dancing, starting from the young age of five, she learnt various styles and performed on cruise ships. She then got an invitation from a German circus to join them and dance in their shows, and then eventually ended up performing with her current circus, and when asked if she enjoyed it, she replied, 'I love it. Life is mine...Circus is my life.' (Am, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019). The female performer's love for dancing and performing in the circus radiated from her, through her passion when describing her past performing on cruise ships, and the many styles of dance that she had studied growing up. The sheer love for performing was clearly expressed, *Figure 5*.

A: I don't know. It's just, I love it. I love what I do and for me circus is not a job, it's like part of my life. And if you do you your job as a pleasure, you enjoy it, so it's not a job.

Figure 5. Am, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019 (see appendix 1d)

The opinion on performing in the circus being a job that is pleasurable, and even sometimes not feeling like a job at all, is something that I found quite common in my archival research. When

interviewed in 1948 for *The Evening Bulletin, Philadelphia*, (Figure 6), Lulu Adams, a circus clown, stated that, ‘it’s the best job in the world.’



Figure 6. Newspaper article from 1948 Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archive (see appendix 1k)

Similar to the female performer of interview four, from her childhood and onwards Lulu Adams life was all about performance, as Barrutia-Wood (2016, p.108) states, ‘her life was one of continually practising and performing music, dancing, singing and acrobatics.’ Louise Craston, aka Lulu Adams, was born and raised within a family that had a history ‘in the circus, performance and variety business’ (NFCA, 2019a), so, naturally, her chosen career path seemed fitting. Her father, Joe Craston, performed as a clown and attracted the attention of Lord George Sanger at the mere age of nine (NFCA, 2019a), his daughter would follow in his footsteps. With a variety of skills in music, acting, dancing, Lulu performed a musical act with her brother Joe, and sister Vicky, playing the bagpipes and wearing Scottish kilts, which went under the name of ‘The Three Crastons’ (Barrutia-Wood, 2016, p.110). After performing with her siblings for several years, she became part of a new performance, one with her husband, Albert Adams. Meeting whilst travelling her previous act, the couple met, married and created the act, ‘Albertino and Lulu’, which was a clowning duo (Barrutia-Wood, 2016, p.110). Marrying a fellow performer only magnified Lulu’s love for performing and encouraged a life and career of enjoying entertaining the masses, as she once stated, ‘I love children, and I can’t think of a better way to enjoy myself than by giving them a good time’, (see appendix 1k).

Another female performer born into a family of performers, and learning circus skills from a young age, is May Wirth. Born in Queensland in 1894, May Wirth was only a young child, like most generational circus children, when her father, a performer and gymnast, taught her simple skills of tumbling and contortion (Ramsland, 1997, p.48). Her family broke down early on, and at the age of seven her mother gave May up for adoption to Marie Martin, sister to the brothers of Australia’s finest blossoming circus, Wirth Brothers Circus (Leon, 2010). Marie was an equestrian and spent several years training May, developing a trick-riding performance which saw her circus career soar at the impressive age of fifteen, and caught the eye of the Ringling Bros. Circus and Barnum & Bailey in America,

eventually leading to touring and starring in several shows for them (Ramsland, 1997, p.49). May did not have the easiest upbringing, especially during her adoption and adjustment into a new family, with issues of poor care and neglect – something which adopted circus children often experienced (1997, p.49). Despite this, May's act not only awed audiences back in the early 20th century, but is still seen today as an incredible act. Impressive, and almost unbelievable, video archive footage dating back to 1924 of May performing tricks whilst on moving horses has been recovered (Mark St Leon, 2010), capturing on film the sheer feat of skill and risk in performing in the circus.

The female equestrian performance can be dated back to the creation of the modern circus and to Patty Astley, who with her husband, opened a riding school in 1768 (Toulmin, 2019;2018, p.1) and created a form of entertainment that would be the birth of modern circus. Husband, Philip Astley, given the name of 'father of the modern circus' and highly praised for his equestrian skills is celebrated throughout circus history, yet his wife, Patty Astley, played a role in the creation of the modern circus and took part in a high-risked equestrian performance which included her holding a hive of live bees whilst trick-riding. The performance of women in any spectacle conflicted with social norms of the 18th century, alongside the traditional codes and thoughts of the female anatomy at that time, the female body was not seen as being strong or athletic and certainly not performing on galloping horses. The extent of the risk in Patty's performance is not only subtly overlooked by history, but staggeringly, by her husband, when, in addressing the conclusion of a show in 1768, he merely states, "my wife, to conclude, performs the rest," which was in relation to her perilous performance of 'standing on her head and riding two horses' (Toulmin, 2019;2018, p.4).

These feats of women's strength and jaw-dropping performances do not only relate to trick-riding; Koringa, known as the female fakir, proves just that. Born, Renée Bernard, from France, Koringa performed stunts that were highly dangerous, such as, 'dancing barefoot on a ladder of razor-sharp sword blades' (Discovery Museum, 2018), whilst presenting a stage presence that 'conjured up visions of the exotic and the unknown' (Potts, 2018). Her unique mystical image and 'hypnotic control over animals and reptiles' (Henderson, 2019) captured the attention of Cyril Mills, son of successful circus owner Bertram Mills, who saw her performing in France and made her the lead act of the Bertram Mills Circus in 1938 (Discovery Museum, 2018). Koringa's most memorable act consists of enchanting crocodiles into a trance and placing herself within their jaws (Katz, 2018).

M: That moment I feel like that the most important thing in the circus or in our act, is to make people scared, and in the same moment to make people happy and enjoy the show. So, always

Figure 7. M, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019 (see appendix 1a)

For most of the women discussed so far, performing in the circus entailed displaying a talent that came with a large risk of danger. The danger in their performances added to the audience's anticipation and excitement, blurring the lines between risk and safety. A high-wire performer from interview one agreed, *Figure 7*. Also mentioned in the interviews conducted was the bravery of a

younger sister of one of the Globe of Death performers, who from the age of ten to fifteen, stood in the centre of the globe and, as she performed tricks, three of her brothers rode motorbikes around her. The Globe of Death performer commented that all the women in his family played a part in the circus, however, only his young sister came inside the globe, surrounded by her older siblings. Ultimately, this performer didn't let her gender stop her from doing the same thing as her brothers, it was a back injury, cutting her time in the globe short due to 'problems in the back' (B, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019).

Gender

The study of the representation of the female in the circus, especially their body and image, is a topic that Davis discusses in, *Respectable Female Nudity* (2002). Covering mainly circus history from the late 19th and early 20th century, she explores the female body, portrayed image, and nudity; this also includes issues of using race and weight to exploit and market women and the societal place of women and class status, for example; the lack of female circus owners because of the law and inequality of the genders rights, and gender expectations, traditions, and roles of the woman. The areas that Davis discusses clearly draw a relation to the societal norms and traditions of the late 19th century to early 20th century, to the ways in which the female performer's place in the circus was constructed and represented – to put this simply, the circus had extracted its set of codes and roles from society at that time.

The circus was a place where the societal norms of how a female could look, act and earn a living were greatly challenged, and in many ways, the circuses representation of the various type of female – from the large to the small, to different races, the young to the old – began to celebrate women to wide audiences. This did not always mean that women were represented respectably by the shows' creators as Davis (2002, p.83) states,

'[...] showmen were keenly aware of circus women's transgressive potential. As a result, they repositioned these strong, athletic, traveling women into traditional gender categories: as models of domestic womanliness, and as objects of titillation. In their elaborate advertising campaigns, proprietors used gender, race, class, and representations of empire to create an irresistible sexual striptease under the guise of "clean" family entertainment.'

Despite the use of women's bodies and even their race being exaggerated as a marketing tool for circus, there were many female circus performers who acknowledged this and used it to their advantage to become successful and amazing female circus performers. Beginning with the body of the female performer within the circus, this has been a marketing point used by circuses to promote acts, drawing from the unusual nature of a woman having great physical strength, and they were given the title of strongwomen. Olga Albertina Brown, known as, Miss La La, would interweave her strength into her performances, hanging from a great height using her jaws to grip onto a rope and suspending her body (Toulmin, 2018). Miss La La possessed strength throughout the whole of her body and was noted for her small size and great strength. The idea that a woman could be physically strong was a selling point for the early circuses because it wasn't the stereotypical ideal of what the female should look like

or be able to do. In the late 19th century the woman was not seen as a physically strong in comparison to her husband. Miss La La achieved her success regardless of being mixed-race. Other females of mixed ethnicities, particularly African, were presented in the early days of the circus as an exhibition rather than to perform. Black women, and men too, would be shown as part of sideshows just because of the colour of their skin, and in other cases, often placed as part of acts with animals (Toulmin, 2018, p.14). This again is a reflection of the social stigma towards non-whites during the late 19th century and early 20th century. For Miss La La to create success from using her strength as her performance during this time was a great feat, and it makes me regard her as a wonderful and inspiring woman.

During this time, many showmen exploited the female body for its shape and anatomy with the intention to mock high art, these were known as ‘statue girls’ (Davis, 2002, p.84). Women would be nude, spray painted, and exhibited outside circuses in all their glory. The remarkable thing about this is how circuses could showcase women in this way despite being part of a society and time where women dressed in modest, long skirts and would not show much of their body in public. Although a more blatant way of looking at female nudity in the circus, it does show in an explicit way how the female body has been used for generating a marketed image.

This marketable image of the female performer is made apparent through the costumes worn – short, tight, sparkly outfits that show off the female body whilst the performers do their act. The use of minimal fabrics for outfits reduce the likelihood of material to negatively impact the safety of the performance, whilst also maintaining a feminine looking body. Costumes tend to show a lot of the female performer’s body, usually more than the males, and tend to be something that helps performers get into the mindset of performing in the ring and becoming the act. In interview 4 with a dancer in the circus (*appendix 1d*), she mentioned that she felt fantastic once she put her costume on and when asked about how she felt being a woman in the circus, she directly addressed the image of the female performer with positivity saying, ‘they are always beautiful and nice, and nice costumes and then nice make-up, so we feel fab’ (Am, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019). The use of costume to enhance a woman’s body is something that clown, Lulu Adams, brought in her own refreshing way with her act. Lulu managed to create an image that included the stereotypical femininity of the spangled outfits, decorated with a wig and white face grease associated with traditional clown performances, ‘taking advice from her father in avoiding the grotesque in her make-up’ (NFCA, 2019a). Her innovative blurring of the lines between conforming to a feminine stereotype and staying true to the traditions of the act itself is admirable, and her image remains unique.

The representation of the female performers place within a show’s narrative has been one that differs and remains changeable in today’s circuses. Whilst attending the circus where I conducted the interviews (*appendix 1a-e*) for this study, promotional shots were being taken by the local media of individual acts. I noted that during one particular act, where three brothers ride motorbikes at speed in the Globe of Death, the female dancers were used, almost as accessories, *Figure 8*. This seemed to show

how the narrative of this particular act focused on the bravery of the men whilst the women added to the narrative of the males' performance, by demurely holding onto them, *Figure 9*.



Figure 8. Promotional shots of performers being taken by media (see appendix 1l)

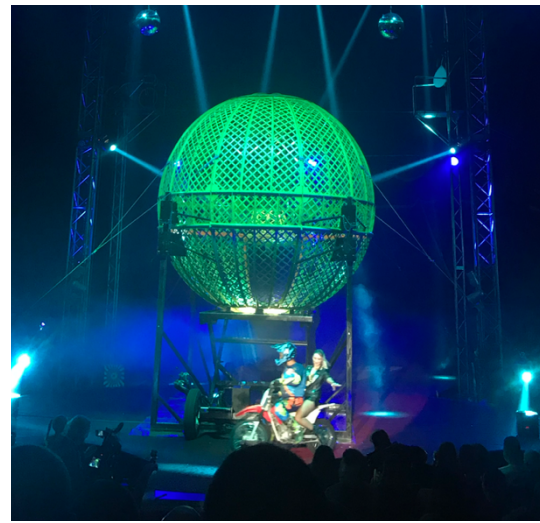


Figure 9. Globe of Death performance (see appendix 1m)

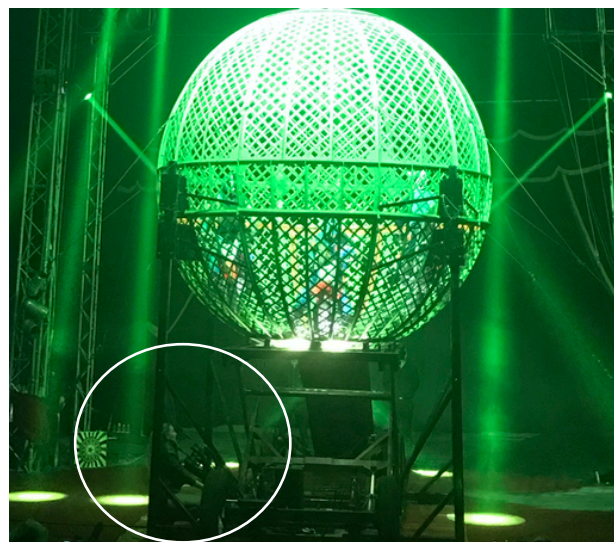


Figure 10. Female performer checking the equipment during the Globe of Death performance (see appendix 1n)

Watching the performance itself, the introduction of the three brothers began with the first man on a motorbike parading round the ring with a minimally dressed female on the back, holding onto him and waving. What was not highlighted so vividly, was the role of the female performer during the performance of stunts within the globe of death. The women helped maintain the safety of the apparatus, checking that the globe remained secure, and then opened part way during the middle of the act to create a gap that the riders had to avoid. Her role was key to controlling the safety of the male performers and yet this aspect of her performance was hidden, *Figure 10*.

Aerialist performances employ stereotypical gendered roles. In duo acts where aerialists perform, most of the time the story follows a male and female act in love—the narrative of the strong male and beautiful and light female, coming together to form art. Attending a show, I watched an aerialist performance that was structured in this way, conforming to traditional stereotypes where a male and female perform delicately in love with one and other. I watched another performance at a different circus where a lone female aerialist performed harsh and creepy movements dressed as DC comic's, Harley Quinn. She performed solo and awed audiences with her fierce elegance at a great height, *Figure 11*, and although a very different style of performance to the partnered act performed at the previous circus, there was something so empowering about a woman using her own strength and skills and steal the show without the need of a created storyline of a male using his strength to support hers on the aerialist ring.

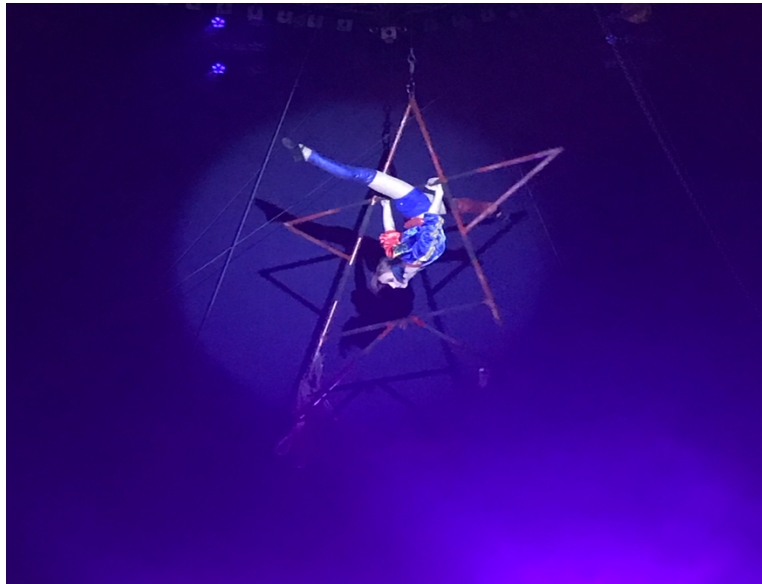


Figure 11. Female aerialist performer as Harley Quinn (see appendix 1o)

The narrative of the same act can differ greatly when representing female roles in the circus. Traditionally performed by a male, the rise in female ringmasters, or ringmistresses, has increased over time. At the circus that showed the solo female aerialist perform as Harley Quinn, the show itself was led by female ringmistress, Olympia, *Figure 12*. In an unrecorded discussion during the interval, she mentioned to me that she came from seven generations of circus and that being a female ringmaster felt incredibly empowering and fun. Olympia's style as a ringmistress was similar to that of the stereotypical ringmaster; she made sure that the audience was engaged by playing a charismatic relationship with the clown; led the singing of the introduction of the show and the outro; ensured each new act was introduced, and that the ring was ready for the performers. Olympia's narrative rarely focused on the fact she was female, and more on her role as the 'master of the ring', yet, in other cases, it is as if society has not shifted its gendered expectations and associations, as I found, when googling 'female ringmaster' to find out further information on more females of this role and the results that came up

were an array of ‘sexy ringmistress costumes’. On the other hand, when googling male ringmaster, nothing sexualised came up at all.



Figure 12. Olympia, ring mistress, at a circus performance (see appendix 1p)

I asked a female performer from interview 3 (*appendix 1c*) how she felt about certain roles being for men and others for women in the circus, and she replied, ‘women can do pretty much anything, same as men’ (E1, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019). Stereotypes and gendering of certain roles in the circus is being challenged more in today’s circuses, however, in another unrecorded discussion, this time with a front of house staff member at the circus where I conducted my interviews, Greg, a former circus performer himself, mentioned that he did not understand why some roles are just typically for males and females within the circus, but that at the end of the day, circus directors are looking for high-quality and unique talent, regardless of gender.

Lifestyle

The role of the female performer in the circus often does not end inside the ring. The maintenance of the circus itself is a team effort with all performers, and in the case of most traditional travelling circuses ‘the essential unit of the production process [...] is the family’ (Beadle & Könyöt, 2016, p.70). During my research I found several women who were also mothers whilst being performers. First and foremost, the first lady of the modern circus, Patty Astley, was a mother. Whilst helping with the invention of the modern circus and with its running, she performed stunts on horses with live beehives in her hands, and also raised her son, training him as an equestrian. Managing her role as a performer, an innovator and a mother/trainer, this woman represented lives of many female performers in the circus who are mothers.

Renee Marshall (Scott), was born in 1916 into a family of circus performers (NFCA, 2019b). During her teenage years she performed up to five different acts as part of her families circus, including, ‘the vaultage, the perch, the trapeze, the swinging ladder or the breakaway ladder and the double act’ (NFCA, 2019b), and helped with running and travelling the circus. Her brother, George, mentioned she took on the role of make-up, and looked after the children of the circus, making sure they were fed and looked after, all whilst being a ‘tremendous artiste’ (NFCA, 2019c). The many roles that Renee took on during the first few decades of her life provide a glimpse of the reality of what female performers do when being part of the travelling circus. For Renee, these roles did not end after she got married. Marrying into a fairground family, her husband, Walter Marshall, managed the family business, Marshalls Modern Amusements Ltd. (NFCA, 2019c), which Renee helped run whilst Walter was serving in WWII. Letters from Walter to Renee, held by the National Fairground and Circus Archives at The University of Sheffield, highlight how Renee was left with their new-born daughter, Sandra, and the family business. Walter returned from the war and they had a second child together, John. After the death of Walter, 24 years later, the family business continued, ran by Renee and the children (NFCA, 2019c). Just as with Patty Astley, Renee demonstrates how the female performer can adopt many different roles outside the ring.

The role of being a female performer and mother is something I noted when interviewing participants for this study. When I arrived at the circus to conduct my short interviews, I went to a press call for the general media as this was the only opportunity I had to interview the performers before touring season begun. All the performers were drifting in and out of the tent and entering the ring to perform short sequences of their performances. I noticed a lady in a gold costume walked in with a young child in a pram. Front of house staff member, G, informed me that the lady performed an acrobat act in the show and that she was a mother who brought her child along with her on tour. I watched the performer head into the ring to be photographed whilst she performed an impressive skipping act and, after this ended, she immediately went ringside and back to her child in the pram where she began giving the child some food. Seeing this side to the running of the circus, whilst being in the ring itself, was inspirational to witness. After this, I began conducting my interviews and when I interviewed a dancer (*appendix 1d*), she mentioned she was also a mother. She described circus life as being wonderful, but she missed her daughter, only seeing her during the summer holidays (Am, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019). The travelling life of being part of the circus brings lots of opportunities to grow as individuals, meet new people and to perform to fresh audiences every day, however, just like the dancer that I interviewed who missed her daughter, for female performers who are not from generational circus families and have become part of a travelling circus, being away from their family can prove just as hard. As the female performer of interview 3 discussed, *Figure 13*.

E: How do you feel about being on the road, like the travelling part of the circus, away from home.

T: Quite sad without family, but in general good.

E: Do you feel like you're part of a family here?

T: Yes.

Figure 13. El, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019 (see appendix 1c)

Chapter 5: The Music

The Stages of a Process

In an unrecorded conversation with the front of house staff member, G, who had discussed his opinion on gender and performance mentioned in the previous chapter, he also provided an interesting insight into how the performers practice their acts. When I asked if all the performers are truly performing their acts – with no safety wires, or illusions – G replied with a smile and said what the audience sees at a circus performance is the result of hours and hours of practice: everything is real. Using the example of the high-wire act, G began by saying that practice for this performance started on a wire that is barely off the ground. The performers practice on this low wire and must be able to complete their act 20/20 times, meaning that if the performer achieved the execution of their act 19/20 times they would have to start their attempt again, and only until completed 20/20 times at a few inches off the ground could they then take it up onto the high-wire. It struck me how much work goes into what the audience sees at a circus and made me think of my own process of song writing. The stages of practicing a circus act repeatedly, until perfected safely, mimics the stages of writing a song. Beginning with perhaps a chord progression, followed by a melody line, creating lyrics to intertwine the music and decorating with an accompaniment of other backing instrumentation to fill the gaps; it is a process where several attempts are made to create the final piece of music. Hearing that the circus performer achieves what they do through consistent practice highlighted that all artistic creations take practice, time, and are a process.

When executing the creative practice part of this project, I knew that there would be various stages involved in order to compose the final pieces. These stages will be discussed throughout this chapter by taking each track individually and breaking down the music, revealing the context behind the lyrical and musical ideas, exploring how individual tracks compliment the rest of the EP, and their relation to the research.

Track One – Lean In

One of the common things I found from the research conducted is how much enjoyment circus performers get out of bringing a smile to crowds and aweing audiences with their acts. From Lulu Adams and her love of making children feel excited about being at the circus (*appendix 1k*), to interviews one, four and five (*appendix 1a, 1d and 1e*) mentioning the importance of their engagement with audiences and ensuring that they have a good time, all of these performers feel a real joy from connecting with crowds and this plays a large role in their own happiness of being part of the circus. In summary, the circus and its performers invite audiences to lean in, and I, too, as a musician, invite listeners to lean in. My aim for the opening track of the EP was to recreate the space of being inside a

circus tent and watching an aerialist perform at a great height. The song needed to sound ethereal and spacious, whilst also warm, inviting, and enticing to represent being inside the circus tent and around a ring. Using collected memories from performances of aerialists during research, the whole ambience of the track was imagined; the song, *Lean In* (appendix 2a), seemed to create almost as effortlessly as the aerialists' act itself. In order for audiences to 'lean in' and watch a performance with great astonishment the act has to be dream-like and alluring – the aerialist creates this. The female aerialist performs a controlled act with extreme elegance where small movements evolve into magnificent performance. This delicate performance is underlined by strong, sharp and well-rehearsed body movements and the step-based staccato piano that opens and continues throughout this track replicates the beauty of small details. Accompanied by reverb, this electric piano paints the base of the instrumental section, just as the circus tent acts as a stage, creating room for the lyrics to decorate and dance, describing the aerialist's body and how it performs. The phrasing style for the lyrics took inspiration from artist, Lana Del Rey, and her style of song writing – minimal but eloquent. With lyrical lines following onto the next line to create a seamless flow, I wanted to paint the image of the fluid performance and using just a few simple words to describe her body's movements, corresponding with the act. Recounting the movements of the female aerialist's body using a simple wording format in the form of, in most cases, two to four words per line, *Figure 14*, the lyrics copy the performance, showing less is more. In addition, there is the simple use of alliteration and assonance with the words, 'circle sequins' and 'diamond dotted' which sound dainty, yet strong, much like the performer.

Dm Lean in	Am Flick wrist	
There's a	G	
Am Slight sway	Seduction	
		Dm
	With the light	
Dm Slight sway	Am Circle sequins	
Hypnotise	G	
Am Arched back	Drifting	
Eyes narrow		Dm
	to the side	
Dm to the right	Am Diamond dotted eyelids	
Long neck	G	
Straight lines	gaze up at the sky	

Figure 14. Lyrics and chords from the opening section of track one, Lean In (see appendix 1a)

Singing in the old bars
Swinging with the old stars
Living for the fame
Kissing in the blue dark
Playing pool and wild darts
Video games

Figure 15. Video Games lyrics by Lana Del Rey

In Lana Del Rey's song, *Video Games* (2012, track 4), she uses close to four or five words per line, *Figure 15*, where she simply describes being in a bar with old time stars and hanging out with them

playing different games. By using several present participles at the start of each phrase, she summarises in one word what she is doing, and then ends each lyrical line with where and who she is with. This basic and sparse lyric choice is enough to tell the listener everything that they need to know in a tidy package, and this is what I wanted to create with *Lean In*. Lana sings the lyrics with an effortless, breathy vocal over a simple step-based piano, as with *Lean In*, and the song sounds soothing and soft. Lana's lyrics tend to create small vignettes of a scene, which can be seen from the *Video Games* lyrics, and this idea of creating a window into a moment is what I wanted the whole of this EP to capture, especially with the first track, *Lean In*. To recreate sitting inside a circus tent that is bursting with talent radiating from just the female aerialist performer, using short glimpses of imagery to describe this provides a mini story in which audiences can fill the gaps with their own imagination.

The structure of the song follows the beginning of the act where the ring is still and there is a lone aerialist in the air starting her beautiful performance, and as the musical textures develop throughout the song they represent the progression of the aerialist's performance, leading to an instrumental outro to let the performance do the speaking. Watching aerialists perform, they often take a moment to get into a position, where they release and then perform the manoeuvre and I feel like the music mimics this style of movement. The ending of the track builds up and shows that no words are needed, the performer simply performs and presents all that needs to be said. The goal for this song was to celebrate the female aerialists that I saw perform, whilst also setting the tone and opening for the EP. Being the first track written, it naturally felt like an opener for the EP, almost like The 1975 and their ethereal instrumental first tracks to their albums (see The 1975, 2013, track 1; 2016 Track 1). Having an airy, ethereal opening track sets the tone and mood for the whole EP, also acting as if it were the opening of a show. This first track on my EP sets the scene of the circus tent encasing the audience, urging them to 'lean in'.

Track Two – Legs & Daisies

Moving onto track two, the focus of the song is on Lulu Adams, which stemmed from a photograph of her and a friend sat amongst the grass and daisies, taken from the Lulu Adams Collection at The University of Sheffield's National Fairground and Circus Archive (NFCA), *Figure 16*. Track two, named *Legs & Daisies*, is set outside of the circus tent and draws away from the setting of track one's *Lean In*, and concentrating more on the topic of circus life; this subtle change of scenery is not only a change of setting, it progresses the EP by exploring the circus lifestyle. The picture of Lulu Adams and her friend was one of the first items I viewed at the NFCA, and immediately I was drawn to it for its simplicity and also the three words written on the back, *Figure 17*.



Figure 16. 'Legs and Daisies!' photograph from the Lulu Adams Collection. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archive (see appendix 1q)

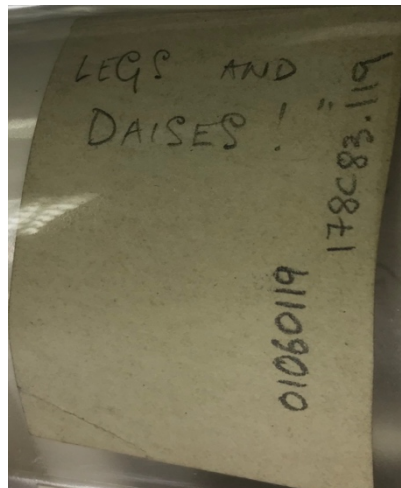


Figure 17. Back of photograph from the Lulu Adams Collection. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archives (see appendix 1r)

As effortless as *Lean In* felt to create, the words 'Legs and Daisies!' resonated with me, and I immediately came up with a short lyrical phrase and melody to accompany. Following the addition of a few chords played on acoustic guitar, the track became a 5 second hook with just the phrase, 'I got my legs in daisies' sung over, yet, it just did not feel right and was too upbeat, too shiny and happy. I took a few weeks away from this song and when I came back to look at the photo of Lulu with fresh eyes, I saw a woman pausing to be with nature on an ordinary overcast day, sat with her friend, out of costume and away from the ring, just as Lulu – and so the lyrics began to form and the track began to take shape.

The final bridge of the song (*appendix 2b*) reflects that moment of sitting in the grass and the daisies, and Lulu looking forward to performing with the thought that she can come back and take a time out by sitting with her legs in the daisies. Ending with a big chorus where the line ‘I wish I had my legs in the daisies’ is repeated several times, this symbolises the importance of having a space to sit with your thoughts and pause in a busy, entertainment-filled world; being part of the art world as a musician and songwriter, I realise this value of taking a break. What Lulu Adam’s reminds me in the photograph ‘Legs and Daisies!’ is that performers are human beings with lives beyond the circus ring and sometimes it is needed for them to sit, take a moment away, and have their legs in the daisies.

Track Three – Steady Takings

Continuing the theme of the circus world both inside and outside of the tent, life for performers often involved doing lots of other roles to contribute to the successful running of the circus. At the National Fairground and Circus Archives (NFCA) where I collected information on Lulu Adams for the previous track, I also came across the Marshall and Scott Family Collection. The collection focuses on Renee Scott, born into the Scott family of circus performers, where she too would perform various acts including the trapeze and the vaultage, until the age of 22 when she married Walter Marshall (NFCA, 2019b). Walter was born into a Yorkshire fairground family, the Marshalls (NFCA, 2019c), sharing a similar background in touring entertainment as Renee. When the second world war broke out, Walter served in the RAF where he worked his way up to a sergeant (NFCA, 2019c), and Renee was left with the family business to run as a single parent to a young baby, Sandra. Letters were exchanged over the duration of WWII and some of these were collected as part of the Marshall and Scott Family Collection at the NFCA. The letters to Renee from Walter during the war were the only letters that remained, the letters that Renee sent to Walter were not in the collection. Reading the letters that Walter had sent, I began to imagine: what would have Renee replied?



945554, Sgt Marshall.
134. M. U.
R. A. F.
Peshawar Army Forces
Sunday Oct. 18 1942.

can get plenty here. They are the one thing there is no shortage of. I suppose they are plentiful in England now so that will make a difference to the boxes.

How's our darling daughter keeping these days? I bet you have a job to keep her of the box now. Take good care of her my darling and water she does not go on by herself. I wonder if she would know her Daddy now. Does she still pull Clippy about?

If you still have a photo left of you both, please send them. If not go to where they were taken, and get one of each, postcard size.

Hope the wireless is going alright and that the eliminates is alright and keeps the accumulates charged. We have no wireless here on the mess, but

My Beloved Renee,
How tricks at home my sweetheart? Sincerely hope that everyone is in the best of health. Also that business is alright.

Charlie had an Airgraph from his Miss yesterday and she mentions that she received a letter from you. Almost all the bits that came with me, received his Airgraph yesterday. But I was unlucky none for me. Hope some better luck next time. Mrs Jones mentioned that you have sent a parcel, it will be a good while before I receive it. When you do send a parcel my darling, do not bother to send any Cigs. We

3

hope to get one soon.

I have met a good a few of the boys, who were at Peshawar with me. You will remember the very quiet mechanic called Taylor. The one that helps me with the Riley so much. Well I met him on the second day off the boat. But have not seen him since.

Very little space left now my sweetheart. Keep smiling and give my kind regards to everyone. I wrote Mam & Dad on Saturday. Hope to hear from you soon, and let me have all the news.

Cheris my darling. Looking forward to the day we shall be together again.

For Daint.
XXXXX

All my Love
Your Loves Loving & Faithful
Hubband. Walter
XXXXX XXXX X X

Figure 23. Letter dated Sunday Oct 18, 1942 from Walter Marshall to wife Renee Marshall. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archives (see appendix 1u)

The writing of letters between a wife and husband separated by war, bursts with a romantic flare – it felt natural that this song was going to be a love song. With track two, *Legs & Daisies*, the focus narrowed on a particular moment in the life of circus performer Lulu Adams, and how taking a moment to pause is needed in busy performer’s life, and with this track, I was going to have the centre point of the song to take the form of a reply to one of Walter Marshall’s letters, *Figure 23*. I tried to imagine how Renee must have felt when left to run the family business, raise her new baby on her own, and send packages with clothes and photos to her husband, all whilst missing him greatly and hoping for his safe return. From reading several letters written by Walter, it was apparent that his love for Renee was great and that she too loved him dearly. What I found interesting about this whole scenario was that even through a war, two people remained deeply in love, and mirroring this continued love was the running of the family business of circus fairground amusements that carried on during the harsh war – love and entertainment prevail.

In the beginning of track three, *Steady Takings*, the lyrics are almost a repetition of Walter’s opening of his letter, *Figure 23*. The lyrics develop to discuss their baby and a brief description of how she reminds Renee of Walter, *Figure 24*. Barely touching the surface of what Renee must have felt during this time, I imagined everything around her would have made her think of Walter, especially the child that they bore together, hence the choice of lyric describing their daughter’s eyes to be the same as the father’s – sometimes the little details mean a lot. Out of the opening verse, the main hook appears, *Figure 25*, where the current state of the business is discussed and how it has been a helpful distraction whilst Walter has been away. The phrase ‘steady takings’ stuck out to me when I wrote this section and was given the song’s title as it summarises the heartfelt simplicity of discussing the mundane in a letter, and the slow and steady taking of each day for Renee and Walter without each other.

G **C**
How’s things my sweetheart?
G **C**
I’ve been thinking of you every moment
G **C**
Our baby girl is doing just fine
G **C**
She’s an armful of joy with her father’s eyes

Figure 24. Lyrics and chords from verse one of track three, Steady Takings (see appendix 2c)

G **C**
And the business is stable with steady takings
G
It’s been keeping me busy
C **D** **Em D** **C**
Distracting me from my heart that’s aching
Em D **C** **G C**
With you being so far away

Figure 25. Lyrics and chords from hook of track three, Steady Takings (see appendix 2c)

For the instrumentation, I chose to have a string section play a legato melody to underline the electric piano, the idea being that the strings would carry the weight of the vocals, electric piano and decorating guitar. The drums for this song come in after the first time the hook is presented, unlike track two, *Legs & Daisies*, where the drum opens the song before anything is sung. By holding the drums back and just having the vocal and electric piano accompany each other for the start of the song, the focus on the opening lyrics of Renee’s reply to Walter can be easily heard; the percussion of this song

is also played at a slower tempo than in *Legs & Daisies* to take a slow and steady approach to present this side of circus life. The previous song suited a more upbeat supporting drum section as the focus was on being in the outdoors and in nature as part of the travelling life, whereas with *Steady Takings* it reminds listeners that the circus is an entertainment and business that will still run even during a war. Running a business, a home, and a long-distance relationship is what Renee accomplished, which is especially impressive at a time when male figures would both own and tend to the general business of circus and fairground logistics.

Moving onto the second half of the track, the lyrics are a reply to Walter's queries regarding missing packages, *Figure 26*. In Renee's position I imagined she would have many things to do on a daily basis as life as a mother and business owner. With the addition of sending of letters and parcels, this must have all been a lot on her mind. Writing down the things she sent to Walter in the letter, I felt, would have added a minute relief of things off her long list, and merely sharing it with Walter would feel a less lonely moment.

G	C
I sent your parcels last Tuesday	
G	
But apparently there's delays?	
C	
I'm sorry you've had to wait	
G	C
I've sent four letters with photos in the meantime	
G	C
And they're somewhere on their way	

Figure 26. Lyrics and chords from verse two of track three, Steady Takings (see appendix 2c)

Continuing from the second verse and into the hook once again, the song then builds up with an instrumental section that is full of strings performing harmonic lines, a beautiful picked guitar part, a euphoric layering of backing vocals, and syncopated drums with cymbals added. No more words are sung, nor needed to be said, as this concoction of sound brings the track to the end, and Walter and Renee's connection deepens with distance – a letter can only say so much.

Track Four – Pet Crocodile

Koringa, the enchantress of crocodiles, who placed her head between their jaws, and also walked on broken glass with bare feet, was a remarkable and memorable female performer. Pushing the boundaries of safety, she performed such dangerous acts, mesmerising audiences with her abilities. Out of all the performances, stunts and appearances recorded, there is one that remains my favourite – one, where the simple activity of visiting a tearoom could provoke an idea for a song.

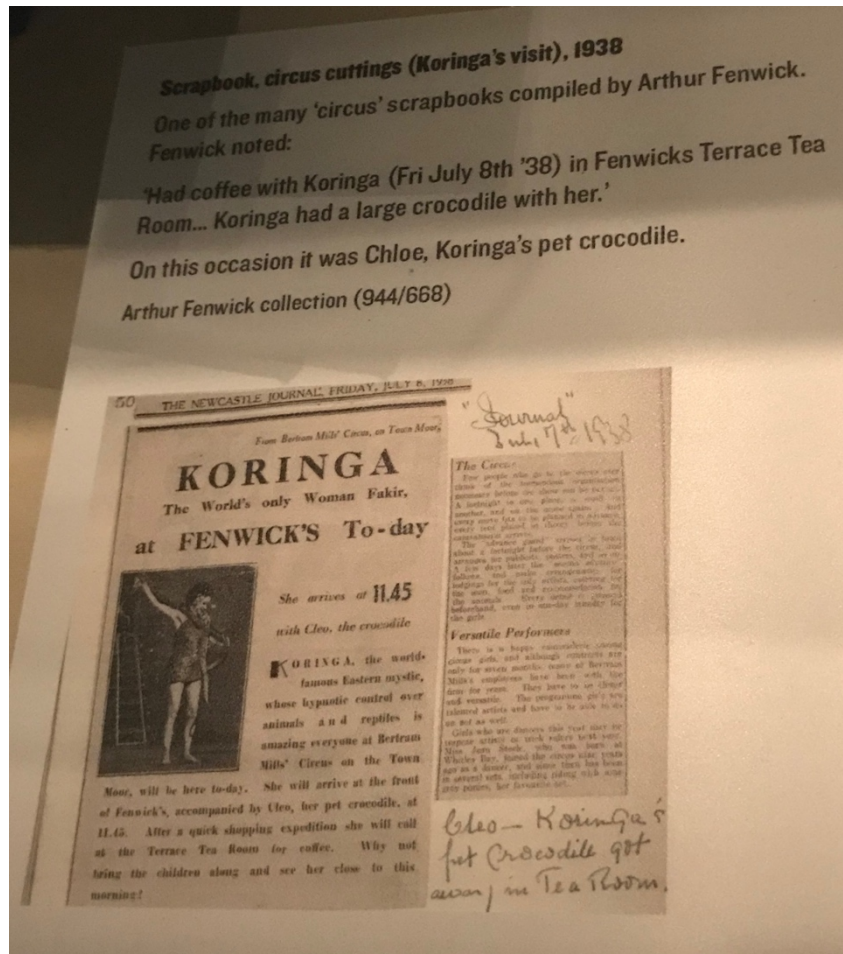


Figure 27. Plaque detailing Arthur Fenwick's scrapbook clippings on Koringa's visit to tearoom from the Circus! Show of Shows exhibition in Newcastle. Reproduced with Permission of Tyne and Wear Archives (see appendix 1v)

When visiting the Circus! Show of Shows exhibition at its Newcastle location during my research, which celebrated 250 years of modern circus in the UK as part of Circus250, I came across a scrapbook page from circus enthusiast and store director of Fenwick's department store, Arthur Fenwick. It had some information at the side of it on a plaque, *Figure 27*, which described when Arthur invited Koringa to coffee in Fenwick's Terrace Tea Room. When Koringa arrived for coffee with Arthur, she had a large pet crocodile with her. This short scene played over in my head – a female performer and her pet crocodile, sat across a table with a successful male director of a major department store drinking tea and coffee—who had more power and who was in control? The woman with a pet crocodile.

The opening instrumental of track four, *Pet Crocodile*, is played on two synths with differing melodies and a bass sitting underneath. There are no vocals for 8 bars until the words 'drink up' are sung, and the first verse and electronic drumbeat begins. The first verse dives straight into the consumption of tea, coffee and cakes in a tearoom whilst Koringa explains the beauty of her crocodile and, finding this rather amusing, she presses Arthur asking, 'What's up? Have you never had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you ate?' *Figure 28*.

Bb
drink up

F5maj7 G57
have you ever had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you
ate?

Bb
eat up

F5maj7 G57
and sat at the table, underneath, right by the side of
your feet

F5maj7
lies a beautiful

Bb **F5maj7**
dark green beast with the sharpest yellow teeth

G57 **F5maj7**
wrapping its tail and tucking into some meat

Bb
but what's up?

F5maj7 G57
have you never had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you
ate?

F5maj7
maybe not

Figure 28. Lyrics and chords from verse one of track four, *Pet Crocodile* (see appendix 2d)

Bb **F5maj7 G57** **F5maj7**
well I have the best damn beasts in town

Bb **F5maj7 G57**
F5maj7
they're creatures with the biggest hearts around

Figure 29. Lyrics and chords from the bridge of track four, *Pet Crocodile* (see appendix 2d)

The playfulness of Koringa is something that I wanted to get across with this track. The complete control of her art, inside and outside of the ring, is something that shoppers and visitors of Fenwick's in Newcastle that day in 1938 would have been in awe by, and I certainly think that Arthur Fenwick himself would have been impressed, too. With the bridge section of the track, *Pet Crocodile*, I wanted to present a woman who loved her act and showed a lot of respect for her pet animals who worked hard with her to create the performance, *Figure 29*. My aim for the choruses was to embrace the female performer by having the word 'woman' sung with a punch and eventually lead into the line of 'a woman with a pet crocodile'. In the previous three tracks that I have written for this EP, they too have all been about strong, inspiring, female performers, however, with this song's setting presenting a scenario where Koringa is suggesting, in a playful manor, that Arthur is the strange one for never having ate with a pet crocodile sat beside him, I could present the successful and powerful female performer in a light that is humorous and easily absorbed as a listener. The synth, bass and beat-driven dance track also provides an easy-listening sound to support a song topic of importance and celebrates the cleverness, bravery and talent of the female performer.

F5maj7 a woman with a pet crocodile,	Bb	Bb I walk on broken glass and put my reptiles in a trance	F5maj7
F5maj7 that's sat across from you, having afternoon tea and scones	F5maj7 G57	G57 and even put my head between their gaping jaws	
F5maj7 in the store that you own	Bb	F5maj7 Bb crazy huh?	
yes,		F5maj7 G57 have you never had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you ate?	
F5maj7 a brave woman		F5maj7 maybe not	
G57 that's strong and fierce and fine			
F5maj7 and fun to dine with			

Figure 30. Lyrics and chords from verse two of track four, *Pet Crocodile* (see appendix 2d)

Heading into the second chorus, *Figure 30*, I wrote lyrics that show Koringa fearlessly addressing her pride in being a female performer in the circus, and even describing aspects of her act, such as walking on broken glass and putting reptiles in a trance. As the song draws to a close, 'have you ever had a woman with a pet crocodile' is the last phrase sung, drawing attention to her impressive act, once again, in its most literal sense; what 'a woman with a pet crocodile' also represents is the female performer and their abilities – 'a woman with strength and power.' Koringa and her pet crocodile symbolise a courage and confidence that is reflected in each of the female performers discussed throughout this research project, all having their own version of a *Pet Crocodile*.

Track Five – *Here to Entertain/Our Circus*

C#m B A B C#m B A B	Just a young girl tumbling through a childhood
C#m B A	Making her way with a place on the bill
B C#m	At five years of age
B A	Where most would spend their days playing, not dreaming up visions
C#m	Where a father would hold her
B A B C#m	And a mother wouldn't be left to give up her own
B A B	And at just seven years old, separated and a life on the road
C#m B A B	With unfamiliar faces, new skills, new places
C#m B A	To train as an equestrian and a world-class acrobatic

Figure 31. Lyrics and chords from verse one and two of track five, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus* (see appendix 2e)

Track five, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus*, is a song of two halves. The first half of the song opens with an insight into circus performer, May Wirth, with a lyrical overview of her childhood and later life as a highly successful equestrian. I wanted to provide a short chronological story of May

growing up and becoming a part of the circus and this is presented in the structure of half of a typical pop song. Following a verse one, verse two, bridge, and hook pattern, this completes the first half of *Here to Entertain/Our Circus*. Verse one and two of *Here to Entertain* have different lyrics sung over the same chord progression, *Figure 31*, with verse one describing May’s early years of being trained by her father and already earning her keep at the age of five. Verse two briefly touches on her act that she would become famous for, whilst also mentioning how she became an orphan, as her mother was no longer able to provide May with a good life due to her own struggles in her relationship with May’s father. Becoming an orphan to one of Australia’s top circuses was not as good as it seemed, and May did not have the best upbringing, but alongside this, she managed to train hard and achieve a high quality of talent as an acrobatic and equestrian through a dedication of practice – circus performance provided her with a space to escape.

C#m	B	
And she would take the world by storm		
F#m	B	
And join the greatest show		
C#m	B	F#m
All of this goes deeper, deeper than one could ever know		

Figure 32. Lyrics and chords from the bridge of track five, Here to Entertain/Our Circus (see appendix 2e)

C#m	B	F#m	
See, you and me we are the same			
B	C#m	B	F#m B
We were born to shine and entertain			
C#m	B	F#m	
people like me and you belong up on a stage			
B	C#m	B	
where we can push aside the past			
F#m		B	
and throw ourselves in the performance			
C#m	B		
you’ve lived some long hard days			
F#m	B	C#m	B F#m
but in the circus ring you shine			

Figure 33. Lyrics and chords from the hook of track five, Here to Entertain/Our Circus (see appendix 2e)

In the bridge section of *Here to Entertain* (*Figure 32*) the lyrics mention how she joins ‘the greatest show’ which relates to her time with Barnum and Bailey’s circus. May Wirth moved away from Australia and began to make a great name for herself across the world whilst in her teenage years, and her story, which is only briefly covered in *Here to Entertain*, highlights a young girl finding an escape through her art. The ending hook of *Here to Entertain* (*Figure 33*) plants the seeds for the second half of the track, *Our Circus*, establishing the idea of escaping through art and moving towards the climax of the EP. In the hook section, I wrote lyrics to link the circus and music worlds together through the similarities of May Wirth and myself and this is presented in the line, ‘we were born to shine and entertain’; ultimately, May was born to perform and overcome the challenges of her past, with performance allowing her to thrive in a world that did not want to let her. May and I, although over a century apart, have our own versions of *Our Circus*, albeit performance or music to connect us. In this

song I state this, ‘you and me we are the same.’ When writing this section of the song I felt an epiphany, as if the whole project, with its varied questions and exploratory ideas, came together in one summation – and this is how, not only *Our Circus* the track came to light, but how I decided it was a fitting name for the completed EP.

C#m
when we entertain
F#m
we can escape
Ab7
through our circus x2

Figure 34. Lyrics and chords from end section of track five, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus* (see appendix 2e)

(Vocal rounds)
Feel the energy (when we entertain)
Escape (we can escape) from reality
(through our circus) even if it’s temporary x2

(and when the head’s in a daze
the heart’s in the right place
'cos where are we most alive?
our circus) + Feel the energy (when we entertain) x2

Figure 35. Vocal rounds from end section of track five, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus* (see appendix 2e)

In *Our Circus* I used a lyric technique that I had never written with before and I challenged myself to write a set of vocal rounds. I created a wall of words that slotted into each other, creating new sentences in the process. The lyrics shown in *Figure 34* accompany overlaid lyrics to combine with those shown in *Figure 35*, including the addition of a final stanza, which are then sung to complete a vocal round of three different vocals at one time. The use of vocal rounds adds a sense of order to an array of ideas, which I find summarises the very process of creating a research project as a whole. This technique of presenting lyrics is one often used to make clever use of lots of lyrics at one time, one example being Arizona band, The Maine, with their song *Another Night On Mars* (2015, track 10), where a vocal round of two sets of lyrics are sung at the same time, *Figure 36*. The main lines shown in section A briefly outline the importance of friendship, allowing the vocal lines of section B to go a little deeper, which I simulate with my lyrics which end, ‘Where are we most alive? Our circus.’

	B
A	
What's another night on Mars?	(This one goes out to my closest friends
With friends like ours	The ones who make me feel less alien
Anywhere is home...	I do not think I would be here if not for them
	See all the nights in shitty bars
	Throwing up in taxi cars
	Or on our backs under the stars
	As we sang, as we sing)

Figure 36. *Another Night on Mars* lyrics by The Maine

The instrumentation accompanying the vocal rounds for the final section of track five is made up of a cello, a viola, a bassoon, an English horn, and an organ, all supported by a drum with a hi-hat pattern to sit underneath the three vocal rounds when they are sung at one time. Orchestral instruments have been a prominent theme throughout this EP with mostly strings and horns used as a backing element to sung vocals, and I feel the use of instruments associated with classical music used alongside the contemporary electronic synths and reverberated voices, pays homage to the traditional by merging together in a modern way to form a story – the circus and the music combining forces. In addition, most of the women written about for the tracks on this EP are sadly no longer around in this life, yet, through music, their stories are heard, so again, I feel that the use of instruments they would be familiar with throughout this EP have provided a touch of nostalgia, and a nod to those who will be remembered.

Track five, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus*, brings the overall EP back to the ring where we are first brought to in track one, *Lean In*, where the female aerialist performs from a great height. Having addressed some of the realities of being part of the traditional travelling circus – Lulu and her moment of peace, Renee’s duties of running a business and being a mother, the dangers of performance with Koringa – the EP comes to a full circle bringing all of the attention back to performance, and how freeing it can be to perform your art. The EP reflects that regardless of the ‘steady takings’, or the ‘legs in daisies’ moments, we were all born to entertain. We all have our own version of Circus.

Chapter 6: The Conclusion

The Truth

Most of the female performers, either interviewed or researched, mentioned that circus is the life for them, as the female dancer from interview four (*appendix 1d*) confirmed, ‘I love what I do and for me circus is not a job, it’s like part of my life’ (Am, personal interview, Feb 7, 2019). As a musician, I feel the same way about my art too – writing a song does not feel like a job, it is part of my life. The circus provides a way of escape. For an audience, they are enclosed and tucked away under a canvas tent, as the everyday continues on the outside. The spectator’s senses are heightened from the environment, and if pleasure is found from this, it is often described as escapism (see Fenemore, 2003, p.109). For the performers, it is their moment to shine, to present their talents, and to play their part in ‘the greatest show on Earth’. To the many performers and creators that fill our world with their wonderful art, whether through dance, acting, writing stories, composing music, all of it is our own version of ‘circus’ because *Our Circus* can be whatever we want it to be. Researching incredible female performers over the past year has been inspirational. It has allowed me to celebrate some of the hidden women of the traditional travelling circus world and create new music by taking inspiration from stories, images, and the lives of a few in particular. The truth is, there are more female circus performers who I have not discussed, discovered or explored through my research efforts. This project is only a start. It is also a contribution, because the people of the arts must work together and look after the space that is made by creators.

The Answer

A key question I had at the beginning of this research was, how can the two art worlds of circus and music combine to create a discussion, or more, an awareness of a topic? What is incredible about the answer to this is that it was obvious: keep making art. When I first set out on the researching stage of this project, I realised that finding female performers of the traditional travelling circus from popular circus history was a challenge. Popular history focused on successful men in the modern circus, leaving the women hidden. What I drew from my research was that there are many magnificent female circus performers out there hidden from mainstream popular circus history, but there are also some great academics and groups providing ways for these hidden women to be celebrated. Through the telling of stories about women in the circus, some academics, enthusiasts, websites and groups have shared lots of information about female circus performers of the past and present. With particular thanks to people such as, Professor Vanessa Toulmin, curator of The University of Sheffield’s, National Fairground and Circus Archives who has spent time writing journals on some of the circuses’ hidden women, for example the essay on Patty Astley (Toulmin, 2019;2018), and creating films and exhibitions celebrating

women in circus. I have realised that this growth in the celebration of the lesser-known female circus performers is down to the discussion and spreading of stories – this is how society connects, learns and develops (Cope, 2018).

Relating to my question of ‘How could I, as a songwriter, convert the information from research to inspire a piece of creative work?’ I decided to celebrate the stories of the women in circus as revealed by the research. The music composed formed its shape by drawing aspects from the different stories investigated (Martin, 2017), leading to three areas: Performance, Gender and Lifestyle. At the start of this project, these themes were set as areas to group the data into, and it is those areas that carry through the music and are presented. With Track 1, *Lean In*, and Track 5, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus*, the content of both songs heavily focuses on the act itself, drawing attention to performances from an aerialist and an equestrian, and celebrating their art. Within all of the songs there is a focus on highlighting female performers, but specifically focusing on Gender, Track 4, *Pet Crocodile*, expands female empowerment in a comical way, showing off the female performer’s strength both inside and outside of the ring. Ending with the topic of Lifestyle, Track 2, *Legs & Daisies*, and Track 3, *Steady Takings*, pay particular attention to the realities of circus life, showing the female performers to be just like the audience, and just like you and me, human beings. The creation of these tracks worked in synergy with the research, enhancing both the research project and the quality of the creative composition.

Many aspects helped towards converting the stories and lives of female performers of the traditional travelling circus researched, into song, and some of these included: having tactile artefacts from the archives to provoke real emotions that acted as inspiration for creating music and provoking story; the stories hidden within these artefacts and from the performers themselves via interviews, this information guided the music into the areas of Performance, Gender and Lifestyle, grounding the lyrical keys for each track concept, and allowing for a structured and organised approach to the song writing process.

The Arts as Research and Awareness

Using the arts is a strong tool for promoting equality and awareness (Consilium, 2013, p.3). If the arts combine, as with the case of this project with circus and music, wider audiences can be reached, and the arts will grow stronger and become more important at discussing the important topics. Take for example, The 1975 and their upcoming album *Notes on a Conditional Form* (2020) where they highlight drawing the focus of their music to the issue of climate change and how we can all make little efforts to make a big change – we live in an age where the power of the arts can change society’s efforts towards even looking after our climate! Drawing back to the initial study by Carless and Douglas (2011) that this research was based on, where music was performed and presented in order to inform both the academy *and* the public with research findings, this project intends to achieve the same with research-

based background that helped produce a piece of musical creation that both explored and celebrated the female circus performer. Whilst it can be argued that practice-based qualitative research has ‘yet to gain acceptance in mainstream academic research,’ (Candy & Edmonds, 2018), I believe this way of presenting research is very promising in raising awareness towards the hidden and lesser known sub-cultures. I believe the arts in particular have a great role in all of this and working together to share hidden stories of incredible lives, results in giving various areas of society a louder voice.

Appendix 1: Interviews, Archival Materials and Photographs

Interviews

1a: Interview one with male, M, high wire and wheel of death performer, on February 7, 2019.

Interview one: M [REDACTED] (High Wire and Wheel of Death)

Emily: What is your name?

M [REDACTED] My name is M [REDACTED] from the [REDACTED] Troupe.

E: And what do you do in the performance?

M: We do the wheel and the wire.

E: How long have you been in the circus?

M: In the circus I have been more than ten years. We travel from all the world, every year we make different circus, different country, different places, so, long time in the circus.

E: How do you find life on the road, touring life?

M: Life in the circus starts from a dream, like when you are small boy, and when you go to see a circus show, you say, 'oh, it would be nice to be working in the circus and feeling that life and travelling all of the world, and making danger acts, and make people happy'.

E: And how do you feel when you put on your costume, that moment before you come out?

M: That moment I feel like that the most important thing in the circus or in our act, is to make people scared, and in the same moment to make people happy and enjoy the show. So, always when I am ready to work, I feel happy and I feel like I have to be ready also and 100% in what I am doing.

E: Yeah, because you're playing with risk and safety.

M: Yes, the high wire is a 7 metre high and with no safety. The only safety we have is practice, and you have to know what you're doing. It's the same with the wheel, the wheel of death, if you make just something that is not 100%, you will be... *laughs*.

E: So, do you find live performance thrilling?

M: Yeah, I love it and I want to be like this life...circus life is not for always, [unsure what is said], but after, you cannot do nothing, so maybe we try to make a circus school or sell the circus.

E: Are you from a generation of circus performers?

M: No, my mom and and my father they do have nothing to do with the circus. I was just like a normal boy, so one time I go to see the circus and I like it, and I jumped to the circus.

E: That's ace. Well, I can't wait to see you perform. Thank you for chatting.

M: Thank you.

1b: Interview two with male, B, globe of death performer, on February 7, 2019.

Interview two: B (Part of performing the Globe of Death)

Emily: So, I'm Emily. I'm a student at University doing a degree in music about circus, so, I was just going to ask you a few questions. What's your name?

B: B

E: And what do you do in the show?

B: I'm doing the Globe of Death.

E: The Globe of Death! And what do you feel when you put this outfit on and you're just about to get ready?

B: Yeah, it is one adrenaline that we start to feel when we start to prepare for coming to the ring. Like, when we switch on the bikes we already start to feel some adrenaline, some excitement and when we come inside the globe, it is the maximum concentration and just a focus on what we're doing, don't make mistakes.

E: And how long have you been part of the circus?

B: I am the third generation of circus family. My grandfather started with the Globe of Death fifty years ago in Brazil. We are one of the first families in Brazil that had started to do this act. By my circus family, we are twelve guys that have done the Globe and thirteen years ago was my first time outside of Brazil doing here in Europe. And since then I have never left *laughs* Europe, I start to work everywhere in Europe and also in Asia, South Africa. We travel round the world bring the adrenaline for the people.

E: Do you have any sisters that perform in the circus?

B: Sorry?

E: Do you have any women in your family who are in the circus?

B: Yeah, all the woman's of my family also do something in the ring, but in the Globe, only my small sister.

E: Oh! Okay.

B: She started to do when she was ten years old and she was doing for five years, now she don't do one anymore. She got problems in the back and then she stopped.

E: Yeah, wow! How do you find life travelling/performing?

B: For me, I don't know the other life, you know? When I stop in some city to stay for a while, after two weeks we already wanna leave because it's boring. It's always the same for us, we are used to the [unsure what is said], met new people, new city, performing and the travelling *laughs*, busy life.

E: Yeah, do you feel like you're part of a family?

B: Yeah, like every season, everywhere, every new country is a new family, is new friends, is people that we work for an entire year with, sharing the life together. We make a lot of BBQs, meetings, we work together and it's one family. Then, sometimes we stay a couple years without seeing each other and *smiles* soon again we work together somewhere else.

E: That's lovely! Thank you very much for speaking to me it was nice to meet you.

B: Thank you. Nice to meet you.

1c: Interview three with female, El, skipping and fast track performer, on February 7, 2019.

Interview three: El (Skipping and Fast Track)

E: So my name is Emily and I'm from the University of Huddersfield. What's your name?

El through a translator: Her name is El.

E: Lovely, and what is your act?

T: She's doing Skipping as you saw now and Fast Track as well.

E: Fabulous, so how long have you been part of the circus?

T: Seven years.

E: Are you from generation of circus?

T: No, she is from the sport background.

E: Ah, nice. How do you find being a women in the touring circus?

T: *El laughs* Quite good.

E: Do you come across any challenges being a woman?

T: Yes, especially in sport, acrobatics.

E: Yeah, that can be a challenge. What do you feel when you put on your costume before you're about to go out and do the show?

T: Happiness.

E: And how do you feel about being part of the circus itself?

T: She doesn't know really what to say, but she feels really good.

E: How do you feel about being on the road, like the travelling part of the circus, away from home.

T: Quite sad without family, but in general good.

E: Do you feel like you're part of a family here?

T: Yes.

E: Yeah! Last question, do you feel like there are a set of codes that the women will do certain performances compared to the men?

T: No, she doesn't think so because she believes that woman can do pretty much everything, same as men.

E: Yeah. Thank you so much for speaking to me.

T: You're welcome.

1d: Interview four with female, Am, dance performer, on February 7, 2019.

Interview four: Am (Dancer)

Emily: Hi! Nice to meet you I'm Emily.

Am: Emily. Am I'm Am

E: Yes, nice to meet you.

A: Nice to meet you too.

E: You look fabulous!

A: Thank you so much.

E: How do you feel when you first step into this outfit?

A: I feel fantastic.

E: Are you part of a generation circus/travellers?

A: No, I was dancing since I was five and I finished dancing school and also I studied dancing jazz and modern and folk dance. Actually I'm Ukrainian, yes, so all my life I was dancing.

E: And what got you into circus?

A: Before I was working on the cruise ships and I had an invitation from my dance company to join the circus. So I started in German circus. I worked for five years and a half in German circus, after that, Denmark [unsure what is said], yeah, so now I'm here. *smiles*

E: Yeah! Do you enjoy it?

A: I love it. Life is mine...Circus is my life.

E: Yes, and how do you feel as a women in the circus?

A: They are always beautiful and nice, and nice costumes and then nice make-up, so we feel, fab.

E: Do you feel like there are different acts depending on if you're a woman or a man in the circus?

A: I don't know. I think we can...I don't know? *laughs*

E: Like are there more...would you say...would you ever get any male dancers?

A: Yes, we do, we do. We do some hip-hop dance. And also like showgirls, and something sexy nice from Chicago, like Broadway shows.

E: Yeah, and do you feel like this is where you wanna be?

A: Yes, always. I want to be on stage.

cont..

E: Yes. And just it makes you happy?

A: Makes me feel perfect.

E: Are there any sayings that you all go by? Or like words of wisdom?

A: Sorry?

E: Do you have, like, any sayings that you all say to each other to keep you happy?

A: I don't know. It's just, I love it. I love what I do and for me circus is not a job, it's like part of my life. And if you do your job as a pleasure, you enjoy it, so it's not a job.

E: Yes, and do you have a family in the circus?

A: Not in the circus, my family lives back home, yes.

E: Do you get many mothers? Do you get many mums in the circus, like parents?

A: No, my relatives they are not, they're not working in the circus.

E: Do any of your family or is it just you?

A: Yes, it's just me.

E: Oh wow, do they ever come see you?

A: Yes, my daughter came to see me and she stayed for summer holidays for one month.

E: Aw, do you miss her?

A: Of course.

E: How old is she?

A: She's fourteen.

E: Aw, does she want to do circus?

A: No, she is doing different kind of art. She's drawing.

E: Nice! Amazing, well I can't wait to come see your show and thank you for letting me speak to you.

A: Thank you as well for coming and we are waiting to see you enjoy the show.

E: Yes, can't wait, thank you so much.

A: Thank you.

1e: Interview five with male, Ar, juggling performer, on February 7, 2019.

Interview five: Ar [REDACTED] (Juggling act with his brother)

E: Hi, so I'm Emily, nice to meet you!

Ar: Nice to meet you, my name is Ar [REDACTED].

E: Nice to meet you, and what is your performance?

Ar: Excuse me, I'm a little bit speak English, can you speak slowly? *laughs*

E: Oh sorry! What do you do in the performance?

Ar: Ah! Me and my brothers we have a jugglers act, but it's a little bit special because we do a Chinese style with Diablo. It looks like a big yo-yo and with juggling can do some acrobatic tricks together.

E: Very nice! So have you been in the circus all your life?

Ar: Yeah yeah yeah. We working in the circus more than ten years, at this moment, yeah. Our grandmother, our mother were too circus performer.

E: Nice, and what did they do in the performance?

Ar: Our grandmother, she was a, how to say, trapeze, flying trapeze. Our mother she was a, roller with birds, you know? It was amazing, fantastic acts, I remember this time.

E: Do you have any other female performers in your family? Any women who are in the circus?

Ar: At this... Now?

E: Yeah.

Ar: Now, no. Only me and my brother. *laughs*

E: Wow, my goodness. How do you find travelling life, like the circus life?

Ar: Yes I really like it because every time I see some new countries, new cities, new meetings, you know, new peoples, and it's great for us *laughs* we like it.

E: What inspires you?

Ar: Ah, what?

E: What, like, makes you want to do this? Like be part of the circus. Is it for the audiences?

Ar: Uh huh.

E: Do you like seeing the audiences face and reaction?

Ar: Where's... or here?

cont...

E: Here.

Ar: Here, yeah. I like your audience of your country because they are with emotion, you know? When we've been in other countries sometimes they are very closed you know? You do full act, you do everything for them, but they are very closed, they do only like this *claps with no emotion on face*. But here, then your peoples is very emotions, yeah, sometimes they do like this *stomps feet and grins whilst clapping* or screaming something and applauses. It's good, it's great for us, it's the best for what we want here, you know? And what we wanna see.

E: Yes. So do you have a family? Like, do you have a partner or a wife?

Ar: Yes yes, I have a wife but she doesn't work in the circus. She's a tourist guide, yes, but sometimes I bring she with me and we travelling together. Sometimes she invite me to her job and I see other countries like Turkey or Thailand.

E: Very nice! And what's your favourite memory?

Ar: My favourite mem...Of course, London. *laughs* Yes, because all my life I dreaming about two countries, Japan and UK, you know, Great Britain is my dream from when I was a younger, yes.

E: Wow, well, thank you very much and it looked amazing!

Ar: Thank you for inviting us for this chance, we hope we will do some good performing for your people. *smiles*

E: I'm sure you will! Like, it looks amazing! So thank you very much!

Ar: Okay, thank you and sorry for my English. *laughs*

E: No! Thank you!

1f: Hand-coded version of interview one with male, M, high wire and wheel of death performer.

- lyrical ideas

Transcription of interviews with [redacted] Performers

Interview one: M [redacted] (High Wire and Wheel of Death)

Emily: What is your name?

M [redacted]: My name is M [redacted], from the [redacted] Troupe.

E: And what do you do in the performance?

Performance M: We do the wheel and the wire. the act

E: How long have you been in the circus?

Duration Travelling M: In the circus I have been more than ten years. We travel from all the world, every year we make different circus, different country, different places, so, long time in the circus. time in circus
the world /
places.

E: How do you find life on the road, touring life?

Dream Childhood Feeling Lifestyle Audience M: **Life in the circus starts from a dream**, like when you are ^{small} a child boy, and when you go to see a circus show, you say, 'oh, it would be nice to be working in the circus and feeling that life and travelling all of the world, and **making danger acts, and make people happy**.' Circus started
with a dream
visited circus
as young boy
travelling like
Wanted to work
in circus
make audience
happy

E: And how do you feel when you put on your costume, that moment before you come out?

Performance Audience Feeling Safety Job M: That moment I feel like that the most important thing in the circus or in our act, is to **make people scared, and in the same moment to make people happy** and enjoy the show. So, always when I am ready to work, I feel happy and I feel like I have to be ready also and 100% in what I am doing. The act
make audience
scared / happy
need to be 100%
to ensure safety
ready to work
job.

E: Yeah, because you're playing with risk and safety.

Safety Performance M: Yes, the high wire is a 7 metre high and with no safety. **The only safety we have is practice**, and you have to know what you're doing. It's the same with the wheel, the wheel of death, if you make just something that is not 100%, you will be... *laughs*. Safety through
practice.
the acts.

E: So, do you find live performance thrilling?

Feeling Lifestyle Future M: Yeah, I love it and I want to be like this life... **circus life is not for always**, (unsure what is said), but after, you cannot do nothing, so maybe we try to make a circus school or sell the circus. Circus life
not for always!
future of circus /
his career.

E: Are you from a generation of circus performers?

Generation Family Childhood feeling! M: No, my mom and and my father they do have nothing to do with the circus. **I was just like a normal boy**, so one time **I go to see the circus and I like it, and I jumped** to the circus. not from
generation
speaks of he was 'normal'
boy - (young)
joined circus from
one time seeing it.

E: That's ace. Well, I can't wait to see you perform. Thank you for chatting. parents.

M: Thank you.

1g: Hand-coded version of interview two with male, B, globe of death performer.

Transcription of Interviews with [REDACTED] Performers

Interview two: B [REDACTED] (Part of Team [REDACTED] performing the Globe of Death)

Emily: So, I'm Emily, I'm a student at University doing a degree in music about circus, so, I was just going to ask you a few questions. What's your name?

B: B [REDACTED]

E: And what do you do in the show?

Performance B: I'm doing the Globe of Death. *the act.*

E: The Globe of Death! And what do you feel when you put this outfit on and you're just about to get ready?

Feelings B: Yeah, it is one adrenaline that we start to feel when we start to prepare for coming to the ring. Like, when we switch on the bikes we already start to feel some adrenaline, some excitement and when we come inside the globe, it is the maximum concentration and just a focus on what we're doing, don't make mistakes. *feeling of adrenaline entering ring the bikes*

Safety E: And how long have you been part of the circus?

B: I am the third generation of circus family. My grandfather started with the Globe of Death fifty years ago in Brazil. We are one of the first families in Brazil that had started to do this act. By my circus family, we are twelve guys that have done the Globe and thirteen years ago was my first time outside of Brazil doing here in Europe. And since then I have never left "laughs" Europe, I start to work everywhere in Europe and also in Asia, South Africa. We travel round the world bring the adrenaline for the people. *Safety through focus maximum concentration third generation grandfather 1st family in Brazil to create act 13 years 1st time in circus away from Brazil. Bringing adrenaline for audiences*

E: Do you have any sisters that perform in the circus?

B: Sorry?

E: Do you have any women in your family who are in the circus?

Family GENDER B: Yeah, all the woman's of my family also do something in the ring, but in the Globe, only my small sister. *all women in my family do something in the ring. globe of death, all males except youngest sister.*

Gender Family E: Oh! Okay.

B: She started to do when she was ten years old and she was doing for five years, now she don't do one anymore. She got problems in the back and then she stopped. *Sister did globe from 10-15 years old. started when had prob ems in the back.*

Lifestyle Travelling Lifestyle E: Yeah, wow! How do you find life travelling/performing?

B: For me, I don't know the other life, you know? When I stop in some city to stay for a while, after two weeks we already wanna leave because it's boring. It's always the same for us, we are used to the [unsure what is said], met new people, new city, performing and the travelling "laughs", busy life. *doesn't know 'other' life travelling to different places - stop them being bored. - busy life.*

Lifestyle Family Future E: Yeah, do you feel like you're part of a family?

B: Yeah, like every season, everywhere, every new country is a new family, is new friends, is people that we work for an entire year with, sharing the life together. We make a lot of BBQs, meetings, we work together and it's one family. Then, sometimes we stay a couple years without seeing each other and "smiles" soon again we work together somewhere else. *new countries, new people - that's the lifestyle 'sharing life together'*

E: That's lovely! Thank you very much for speaking to me it was nice to meet you.

B: Thank you. Nice to meet you. *if don't see others for couple years, 'soon again' will work together somewhere else'*

1h: Hand-coded version of interview three with female, EI, skipping and fast track performer.

Transcription of Interviews with [REDACTED] Performers

Interview three: EI [REDACTED] (Skipping and Fast Track)

Emily: So my name is Emily and I'm from the University of Huddersfield. What's your name?

EI [REDACTED] through a translator: Her name is EI [REDACTED]

E: Lovely, and what is your act?

Performance T: She's doing Skipping as you saw now and Fast Track as well.

E: Fabulous, so how long have you been part of the circus?

Duration T: Seven years.

E: Are you from generation of circus?

Generation T: No, she is from the sport background.

E: Ah, nice. How do you find being a women in the touring circus?

Gender Feelings T: *EI [REDACTED] laughs* Quite good.

E: Do you come across any challenges being a woman?

Gender Performance T: Yes, especially in sport, acrobatics.

E: Yeah, that can be a challenge. What do you feel when you put on your costume before you're about to go out and do the show?

Image Feelings T: Happiness.

E: And how do you feel about being part of the circus itself?

Feelings T: She doesn't know really what to say, but she feels really good.

E: How do you feel about being on the road, like the travelling part of the circus, away from home.

Travelling Lifestyle Feelings Family T: Quite sad without family, but in general good.

E: Do you feel like you're part of a family here?

Family T: Yes.

E: Yeah! Last question, do you feel like there are a set of codes that the women will do certain performances compared to the men?

Feelings Gender T: No, she doesn't think so because she believes that woman can do pretty much everything, same as men.

E: Yeah. Thank you so much for speaking to me.

T: You're welcome.

Handwritten notes:

- the act.
- Part of the circus for seven years not from generation of circus from a sport background.
- Feels good about being woman in touring circus.
- in sport, being a woman can be challenging - especially acrobatics.
- When putting on costume before a show she feels happiness.
- she feels 'really good' being part of circus.
- travelling life is quite sad without family but in general good
- Feels like part of family here @ circus. life is circus.
- She doesn't think that men / women do certain performances based on gender. she believes women can do pretty much everything, 'Same as men'.

1i: Hand-coded version of interview four with female, Am, dance performer.

Transcription of interviews with [redacted] Performers

Interview four: Am [redacted] (Dancer)

Emily: Hi! Nice to meet you I'm Emily.

Am [redacted] Emily. Am [redacted] I'm Am [redacted]

E: Yes, nice to meet you.

A: Nice to meet you too.

E: You look fabulous!

A: Thank you so much.

E: How do you feel when you first step into this outfit?

A: I feel fantastic.

E: Are you part of a generation circus/travellers?

A: No, I was dancing since I was five and I finished dancing school and also I studied dancing jazz and modern and folk dance. Actually I'm Ukrainian, yes, so all my life I was dancing.

E: And what got you into circus?

A: Before I was working on the cruise ships and I had an invitation from my dance company to join the circus. So I started in German circus. I worked for five years and a half in German circus, after that, Denmark [unsure what is said], yeah, so now I'm here. *smiles*

E: Yeah! Do you enjoy it?

A: I love it. Life is mine... Circus is my life.

E: Yes, and how do you feel as a women in the circus?

A: They are always beautiful and nice, and nice costumes and then nice make-up, so we feel, fab.

E: Do you feel like there are different acts depending on if you're a woman or a man in the circus?

A: I don't know. I think we can...I don't know? *laughs*

E: Like are there more...would you say...would you ever get any male dancers?

A: Yes, we do, we do. We do some hip-hop dance. And also like showgirls, and something sexy nice from Chicago, like Broadway shows.

E: Yeah, and do you feel like this is where you wanna be?

A: Yes, always. I want to be on stage.

Handwritten notes on the left margin:

- Image
- Image Feelings
- Generation Childhood
- Performance Duration
- Feelings Future
- Gender image Feelings
- Gender Performance
- Feelings Performance

Handwritten notes on the right margin:

- I commented on appearance - positively
- She feels fantastic in outfit / costume
- Not part of generation
- dancing background since childhood (age 5)
- performed elsewhere
- Circus is her life "life is mine" it is here
- she noticed how beautiful, nice & costumes & makeup → make the women feel fab!
- male dance hip-hop? unsure if understood but discuss 'Sexy nice' dance she does - elements of Chicago / Broadway shows
- She wants to be on stage / ring → link!

cont...

E: Yes. And just it makes you happy?

A: **Makes me feel perfect.**

performing on a stage makes her feel perfect.

E: Are there any sayings that you all go by? Or like words of wisdom?

A: Sorry?

E: Do you have, like, any sayings that you all say to each other to keep you happy?

lifestyle

A: I don't know. It's just, I love it. **I love what I do** and for me **circus is not a job**, it's like **part of my life**. And if you do your job as a pleasure, you enjoy it, so it's not a job.

the lifestyle reality of a job - doesn't feel like a job as it's a 'pleasure'.

E: Yes, and do you have a family in the circus?

Family

A: Not in the circus, my family lives back home, yes.

she has no family in UK.

E: Do you get many mothers? Do you get many mums in the circus, like parents?

Family

A: No, my relatives they are not, they're not working in the circus.

E: Do any of your family or is it just you?

Family

A: Yes, it's just me.

just her working in circus.

E: Oh wow, do they ever come see you?

Family

A: Yes, my daughter came to see me and she stayed for summer holidays for one month.

she has a daughter - came to see her perform - stayed during summer holidays for 1 month.

E: Aw, do you miss her?

Feelings

A: Of course.

she misses her.

E: How old is she?

Family

A: She's fourteen.

her daughter is 14.

E: Aw, does she want to do circus?

Family Future

A: No, she is doing **different kind of art**. She's drawing.

her daughter does a 'different kind of art' - drawing. doesn't want to do circus.

E: Nice! Amazing, well I can't wait to come see your show and thank you for letting me speak to you.

Audience

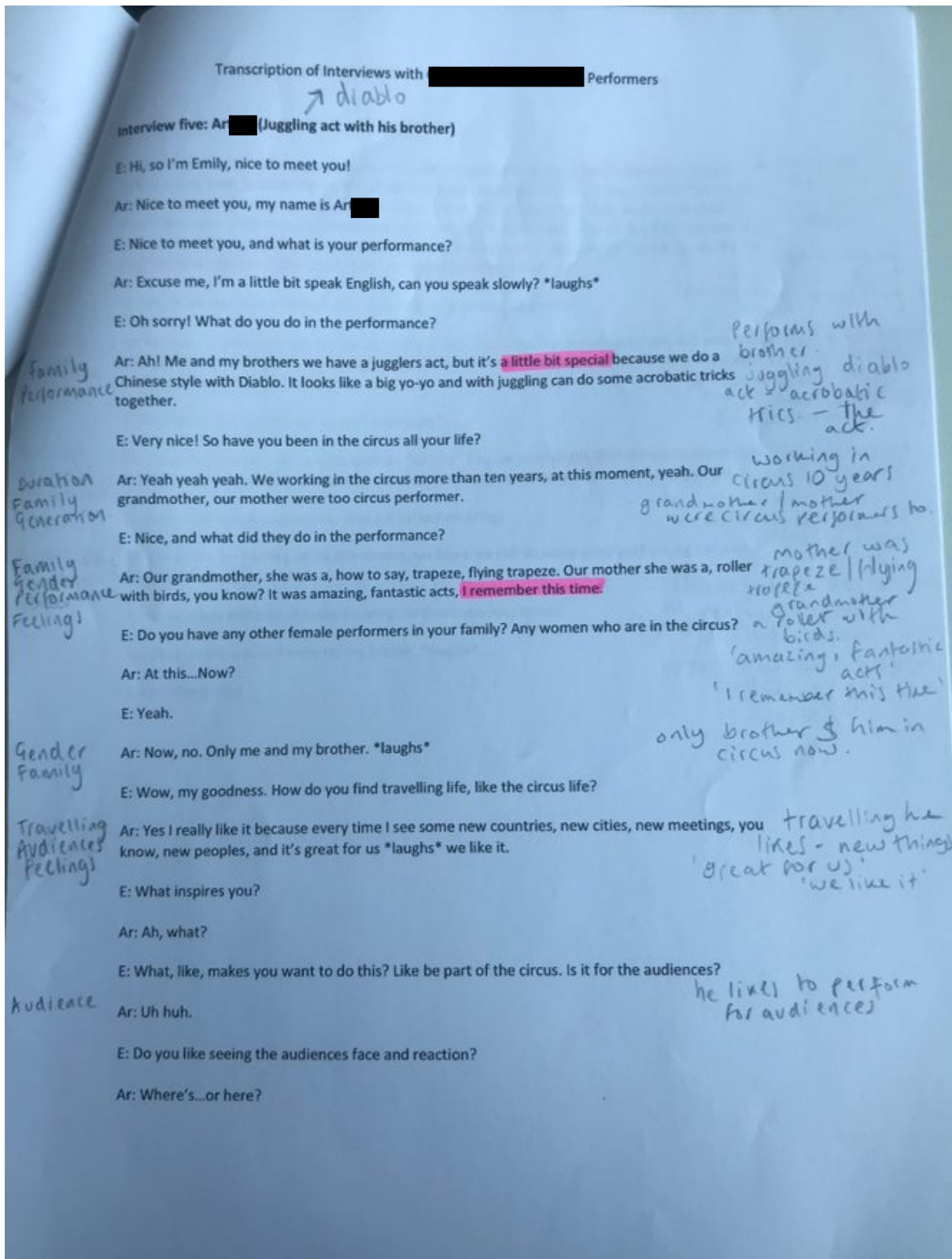
A: Thank you as well for coming and we are **waiting to see you enjoy the show**.

she's waiting to see audience enjoy the show

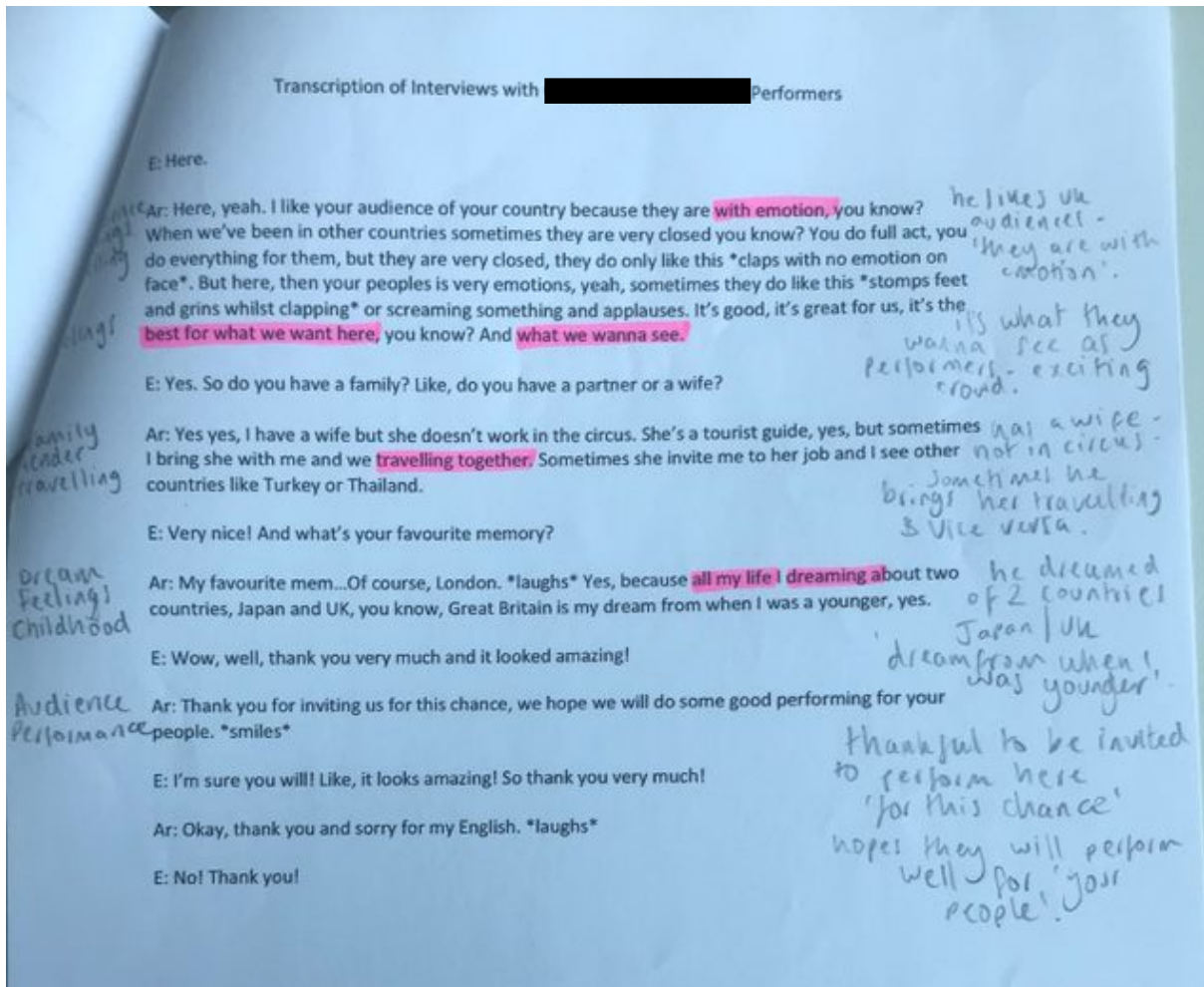
E: Yes, can't wait, thank you so much.

A: Thank you.

1j: Hand-coded version of interview five with male, Ar, juggling performer.



cont...



Archive Materials/Photographs

1k: Tuesday May 25th, 1948, Philadelphia – The Evening Bulletin, 'Woman Clown – It's the Best Job in the World' Says Show-World Rarity, from the Lulu Adams Collection at the NFCA. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archive.

1l: Photograph taken by me during visit to the circus. In this picture promotional shots are being taken by media.

1m: Photograph taken by me of the Globe of Death performance during a circus performance.

1n: Photograph taken by me of female performer checking the equipment during the Globe of Death performance at the circus.

1o: Photograph taken by me whilst attending Big Kid Circus of female aerialist performer as Harley Quinn.

1p: Photograph taken by me of Olympia, ring mistress, during the show at Big Kid Circus.

1q: Photograph of Lulu Adams and friend sat in the grass and daisies. 'Legs and Daisies!' from the Lulu Adams Collection at the NFCA. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archive.

1r: The reverse side of the photograph of Lulu Adams and friend sat in the grass and daisies. 'Legs and Daisies!' from the Lulu Adams Collection at the NFCA. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archive.

1s: Newspaper clipping titled, '*First Lady of Clown World Has Others Laughing Altho Her Heart Is Breaking*', dated July 1948, from the Lulu Adams Collection at the NFCA. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archives.

1t: Newspaper clipping titled, '*Husband's Sudden Death Fails to Stop Woman Clown*', from the Lulu Adams Collection at the NFCA. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archives

1u: Letter dated Sunday Oct 18, 1942 from Walter Marshall to wife Renee Marshall from the Marshall and Scott Family Collection at the NFCA. Reproduced with Permission of The University of Sheffield, National Fairground and Circus Archives.

1v: Plaque from the Circus! Show of Shows exhibition in Newcastle of '*Scrapbook, circus cuttings (Koringa's visit), 1938*' taken from the Arthur Fenwick Collection. Reproduced with Permission of Tyne and Wear Archives.

Appendix 2: Lyrics and Chords

2a: Lyrics and chords for track 1, *Lean In*, an original song from the EP, *Our Circus*.

Dm Lean in	Dm Lean back
There's a	There's a
Am Slight sway	Am Soft sway
Dm Slight sway	Dm Soft sway
Hypnotise	Just in time
Am Arched back	Am Slender limbs
Eyes narrow	Draping
Dm to the right	Dm From a height
Long neck	Neck tall
Straight lines	Long lines
Am Flick wrist	Am Flick hair
G Seduction	G Surrender
With the light Dm	to the night Dm
Am Circle sequins	Am Circle sequins
G Drifting	G Drifting
Dm to the side	Dm to the side
Am Diamond dotted eyelids	Am Diamond dotted eyelids
G gaze up at the sky	G gaze up at the sky

2b: Lyrics and chords for track 2, *Legs & Daisies*, an original song from the EP, *Our Circus*.

<p>F G F G It's an uninterrupted quarter to three</p> <p>F G F G and the sky is in one of those changeable moods</p> <p>F G F G The branches are barely hanging from most of the trees</p> <p>F G F They just wanna hold on to something</p> <p>G F G like the feel of the daisies under my knees</p> <p>F G my knees</p> <p>F G my knees</p> <p>F G my knees</p> <p>F Am G let's make jewellery out of nature</p> <p>F Cmaj7 Dm C F and sit out in the dainty breeze before the show begins</p> <p>Am G and when it all begins</p> <p>F Am G I'll be thinking back to when</p> <p>F G I had my legs in the daisies</p> <p>F G my legs in the daisies</p> <p>F G F G It's an overcast Monday, coming to ten to five</p> <p>F G time comes to a standstill here</p> <p>F G when you lie in the grass, daisies at your side</p> <p>F G F G the summer is fading and making room for the fall</p> <p>F G soon the crowds will be waiting</p> <p>F G it's nearly time to perform</p>	<p>F G but I love</p> <p>F G I love</p> <p>F G I love</p> <p>F G I love my legs in the daisies</p> <p>F Am G we made jewellery out of nature</p> <p>F Cmaj7 Dm C F and sat out in the dainty breeze before the show began</p> <p>Am G and when it all begins</p> <p>F Am G I'll be thinking back to when</p> <p>F G Am G I had my legs in the daisies</p> <p>F G Am and when the dainty breeze, it kissed my skin</p> <p>G F G Am G in the late afternoon, a cloudy sky cloaked my body</p> <p>F G Am all the branches that clung for hope on every tree</p> <p>G F I wish I had</p> <p>G Am my legs in the daisies</p> <p>G F I wish I had</p> <p>G Am my legs in the daisies</p> <p>G F I wish I had</p> <p>G wish I had</p> <p>Am wish I had</p> <p>G F G Am my legs in the daisies</p> <p>G F my legs in the daisies x4</p>
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2c: Lyrics and chords for track 3, *Steady Takings*, an original song from the EP, *Our Circus*.

G **C**
How's things my sweetheart?

G **C**
I've been thinking of you every moment

G **C**
Our baby girl is doing just fine

G **C**
She's an armful of joy with her father's eyes

G **C**
And the business is stable with steady takings

G
It's been keeping me busy

C **D** **Em D** **C**
Distracting me from my heart that's aching

Em D C G C
With you being so far away

G C
Em D C
G C

G **C**
I sent your parcels last Tuesday

G
But apparently there's delays?

C
I'm sorry you've had to wait

G **C**
I've sent four letters with photos in the meantime

G **C**
And they're somewhere on their way

G **C**
And the business is stable with steady takings

G
It's been keeping me busy

C **D** **Em D** **C**
Distracting me from my heart that's aching

Em D C G C
With you being so far away

G C
Em D C
G C

2d: Lyrics and chords for track 4, *Pet Crocodile*, an original song from the EP, *Our Circus*.

Bb
drink up

F5maj7 G57
have you ever had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you ate?

Bb
eat up

F5maj7 G57
and sat at the table, underneath, right by the side of your feet

F5maj7
lies a beautiful

Bb **F5maj7**
dark green beast with the sharpest yellow teeth

G57 **F5maj7**
wrapping its tail and tucking into some meat

Bb
but what's up?

F5maj7 G57
have you never had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you ate?

F5maj7
maybe not

Bb **F5maj7 G57** **F5maj7**
well I have the best damn beasts in town

Bb **F5maj7 G57**
F5maj7
they're creatures with the biggest hearts around

Bb
have you ever

have you ever

F5maj7
have you ever had

G57 **F5maj7**
a woman

Bb
have you ever

have you ever

F5maj7
have you ever had

G57
a woman

F5maj7 **Bb**
a woman with a pet crocodile,

F5maj7 G57
that's sat across from you, having afternoon tea and scones

F5maj7 Bb
in the store that you own

yes,

F5maj7
a brave woman

G57
that's strong and fierce and fine

F5maj7
and fun to dine with

Bb **F5maj7**
I walk on broken glass and put my reptiles in a trance

G57
and even put my head between their gaping jaws

F5maj7 Bb
crazy huh?

F5maj7 G57
have you never had a pet crocodile just sit whilst you ate?

F5maj7
maybe not

Bb **F5maj7 G57** **F5maj7**
well I have the best damn beasts in town

Bb **F5maj7 G57**
F5maj7
they're creatures with the biggest hearts around

Bb
have you ever

have you ever

F5maj7
have you ever had

G57 **F5maj7**
a woman

Bb
have you ever

have you ever

F5maj7
have you ever had

G57
a woman

F5maj7 Bb
a woman with a pet crocodile

2e: Lyrics and chords for track 5, *Here to Entertain/Our Circus*, an original song from the EP, *Our Circus*.

C#m B A B C#m B A B
 Just a young girl tumbling through a childhood
C#m B A
 Making her way with a place on the bill
B C#m
 At five years of age
B A
 Where most would spend their days playing, not dreaming up visions

C#m
 Where a father would hold her
B A B C#m
 And a mother wouldn't be left to give up her own
B A B
 And at just seven years old, separated and a life on the road
C#m B A B
 With unfamiliar faces, new skills, new places
C#m B A
 To train as an equestrian and a world-class acrobatic

C#m B
 And she would take the world by storm
F#m B
 And join the greatest show
C#m B F#m
 All of this goes deeper, deeper than one could ever know

C#m B F#m
 See, you and me we are the same
B C#m B F#m B
 We were born to shine and entertain
C#m B F#m
 people like me and you belong up on a stage
B C#m B
 where we can push aside the past
F#m B
 and throw ourselves in the performance
C#m B
 you've lived some long hard days
F#m B C#m B F#m
 but in the circus ring you shine

C#m B F#m
 you shine
C#m F#m
 shine
C#m
 and entertain
C#m F#m Ab7
C#m
 when we entertain
F#m
 we can escape
Ab7
 through our circus x2
C#m F#m Ab7 – all of last section
 (Vocal rounds)
 Feel the energy (when we entertain)
 Escape (we can escape) from reality
 (through our circus) even if it's temporary x2
 'cos where are we most alive?
 our circus
 (and when the head's in a daze
 the heart's in the right place
 'cos where are we most alive?
 our circus) + Feel the energy (when we entertain) x2
 Feel the energy (when we entertain)
 Escape (we can escape) from reality
 (through our circus) even if it's temporary
 We can escape through our circus

2f: Original lyric/hook idea for Legs & Daisies that remained unused in the final song.

I got my legs in daisies

I got everything that I need

I got the world around me

Surrounded by family

And when I think for a minute

About this life that I chose

Then I'm winning

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