

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Photos by Lila Cole*

**Media Contact:**

Anne Marie Nest

 (718) 744-4332

 [annemarienest@gmail.com](mailto:annemarienest@gmail.com)

## ***Chalk: Breaking the Silence Around Pregnancy Loss and Infertility***

Dance-Theater Performance to Premiere at the Savoy Theater in Denver

"I felt SO alone after my first miscarriage. I didn't know anyone who had one. Turns out I knew a lot of people who had, but it's just not something people talk about."

-- Jessie Cole Santala

(Denver, CO) In an era in which matters of reproductive health can be highly political and polarizing, ***Chalk*** — a dance theater performance weaving stories of pregnancy loss and infertility premiering at **The Savoy Theater in Denver March 5-8, 2026** — focuses on commonality and shared humanity.

Created and performed by dancer/choreographer **Kristin Marrs** and theater artist **Anne Marie Nest**, *Chalk* lays bare the intensity, complexity and absurdity of the artists' struggles through miscarriages and extreme medical interventions, transforming private grief into collective understanding.

As part of the performance, a public call was made for audio recordings of people's experience with infertility. *Chalk's* producers were flooded with responses, with a common theme of feeling isolated in what is actually a very common experience. As interviewee Jessie Cole Santala said, "I felt SO alone after my first miscarriage. I didn't know anyone who had one. Turns out I knew a lot of people who had, but it's just not something people talk about."

Says co-creator Marrs, "While I knew the statistics for rates of miscarriage, it wasn't until I had my own repeated losses that I comprehended the depth of the devastation."

Psychologist Jessica Zucker, founder of the #IHadAMiscarriage movement and author of a book by the same name, articulates her research in the World Health Organization's report on Child Loss and Maternal Health:

*Losing a baby in pregnancy through miscarriage or stillbirth is still a taboo subject worldwide, linked to stigma and shame. Many women still do not receive appropriate and respectful care when their baby dies during pregnancy or childbirth.... Around the world, women have varied access to healthcare services, and hospitals and clinics in many countries are very often under-resourced and understaffed. As varied as the experience of losing a baby may be, around the world, stigma, shame and guilt emerge as common themes. Women are often not encouraged to talk about their experience and loss. They are made to believe they should stay silent. This can lead to isolation and disconnection, even from their partners and close family, and means that women end up trapped in their own personal grief. Such compounded pain is unacceptable.*

Co-creator Nest says that she and Marrs created the show to “provide others who know this particular grief some solace, support, and sense of belonging - and those who have not, a deeper understanding and compassion.”

“My hope is that *Chalk* will provide women and their partners with a space to tell their own stories,” says Marrs. “And that it will provide their communities with a willingness to hear them.”

### **Performance Dates & Times**

- Evenings: **March 5 (preview), 6, 7 @ 7:30 PM**
- Matinee: **Sunday, March 8 @ 2:00 PM**

**Location** The Savoy Denver, 2700 Arapahoe Street in Denver

**Accessibility:** Wheelchair accessible

### **Production Team**

Co-creators and performers: Kristin Marrs, Anne Marie Nest

Director: Mare Trevathan

Lighting Designer/Stage Manager: Peggy Mead-Finizio

Props Design: Mariana Tejada

Sound Designer: Ramin Roshandel

Producer: Sarah Phanos

Marketing Research Assistants: Avery Provorse and Tyler Phi

## Tickets

ChalkDenver.eventbrite.com

\$10 Preview

\$25 General Admission | \$10 students

Please contact Producer [sarahroseprod@gmail.com](mailto:sarahroseprod@gmail.com) if special arrangements are needed.

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## Bios:

Iowa native **Kristin Marrs** is a dancer, choreographer, and movement teacher. She is an Associate Professor of Instruction and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Iowa Department of Dance, where she teaches a wide variety of courses across the dance and somatic curriculum. She is also a certified Alexander Technique teacher, and has a private studio in Iowa City where she works with students of all ages and abilities in improving alignment, breathing, postural tone, and ease of movement. [www.kristinmarrs.com](http://www.kristinmarrs.com)

**Anne Marie Nest** met Kristin at the University of Iowa while she was professor of voice and speech in the Theater Department. Prior to her career in higher education, Anne Marie was a professional actor, working primarily in regional theaters and Shakespeare Festivals. Anne Marie now works as an executive coach and communications consultant for the Fortune 500 and AM Law 200. She is an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework, trained mediator through Columbia University, and certified CTI & ICF coach. [www.annemarienest.com](http://www.annemarienest.com)

**Mare Trevathan** (she/her) is an audiobook narrator, actor, director, teacher, traveler, aspiring gardener, animal enthusiast, coffee drinker and compulsive upcycler. In recent years, she performed in "Blind Date"-- pairing one audience member to one actor as they wandered the Denver Museum of Contemporary Art; worked with architects in Ahmedabad, India creating "dance about architecture"; directed with the disability-affirmative Phamaly Theatre Company; and facilitated "The Israeli-Palestinian Conversation"-- part immersive theater and part community dialogue. Mare teaches Voice Over at the Tony-winning Denver Center for the Performing Arts. [maretrevathan.com](http://maretrevathan.com)

**Peggy Mead-Finizio** is an active lighting designer, choreographer, arts educator, and arts administrator. She is a freelance Lighting Designer and is currently an Associate Professor of Theatre at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) in Saginaw, MI. She holds an MFA in Theatre Arts with a focus in Lighting Design and an MFA in Choreography from the University of Iowa. She designs lights for dance and theatre and enjoys the collaborative process of creating

something new. Her most recent lighting design has been for SVSU's mainstage production of *R.U.R.: An AI Musical Melodrama*.

**Mariana Tejeda** is a multidisciplinary artist from Mexico City working across theater, dance, opera, and visual arts. Holding MFAs in Stage Management, Creative Writing, and Dance Choreography from the University of Iowa, she explores identity, migration, belonging, and femininity through humor and intimate, interdisciplinary work. Her collaborations span Mexico, the U.S., and abroad. In 2021, she created *The Laphin MirRoooar*, a poetry exhibition uniting artists from diverse fields to reinterpret her poems. Her work has appeared in *Dance Gala* and gallery shows, and she has been honored by the University of Iowa as a Champion for Student Success and Dare to Discover scholar.

**Ramin Roshandel** is a composer and sitar player. His composition has been described by Josh Levine as "brutally Persian," and his performance on the setar has been considered "masterful" by Huntley Dent in Fanfare Magazine. His compositions have been performed by Anna Elder, Will Fried, Daniel Schreiner, The JACK Quartet, University of Iowa Center for New Music Ensemble, Ensemble Dal Niente, KamratŌn Ensemble, and LIGAMENT duo. Roshandel holds a PhD in Music Composition from the University of Iowa and is currently teaching composition and music theory at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. [ramin-roshandel.com](http://ramin-roshandel.com)

**Sarah Phanos** is a theater producer born and raised in New York City but currently based in Edinburgh, Scotland. She was a professional actor for over 20 years, a teacher and a festival scout. Sarah served on the US Board of the Edinburgh International Festival while also scouting work for the Festival's creative director. She is currently developing a National Armed Forces Community Arts Festival in collaboration with Napier University to honor and support veterans in Scotland. Sarah brings an international perspective to her producing work and is especially interested in bold artistic innovation, underrepresented voices and projects that foster emotional connection with audiences.

**Avery Provorse** is a Dance and Enterprise Leadership major at the University of Iowa. She has recent experience choreographing the Southeast Middle School show choir, along with teaching WERQ classes at her campus recreational center. She has run other media accounts, including her high school show choir, theater, and dance marathon pages, as well as developing an account for her community volleyball group. She also worked briefly with Stephanie Miracle behind the scenes of *Fakers Club*. Avery is so excited to be working with CHALK DANCE THEATER. Her favorite part of working on this project is the people she has met so far; all inspiring, creative, and collaborative women.

**Tyler Phi** is a second year student at the University of Iowa! He is a dance BFA candidate and exercise science major. Growing up he loved show choir and performing which led him to eventually start taking some dance classes in his later years of high school. After that Tyler decided to take his passion for dance to Iowa. Since he has been in Iowa City, Kristin has been

an amazing ballet and anatomy teacher! Besides ballet, Tyler loves to train in a multitude of forms like contemporary, house, and popping.