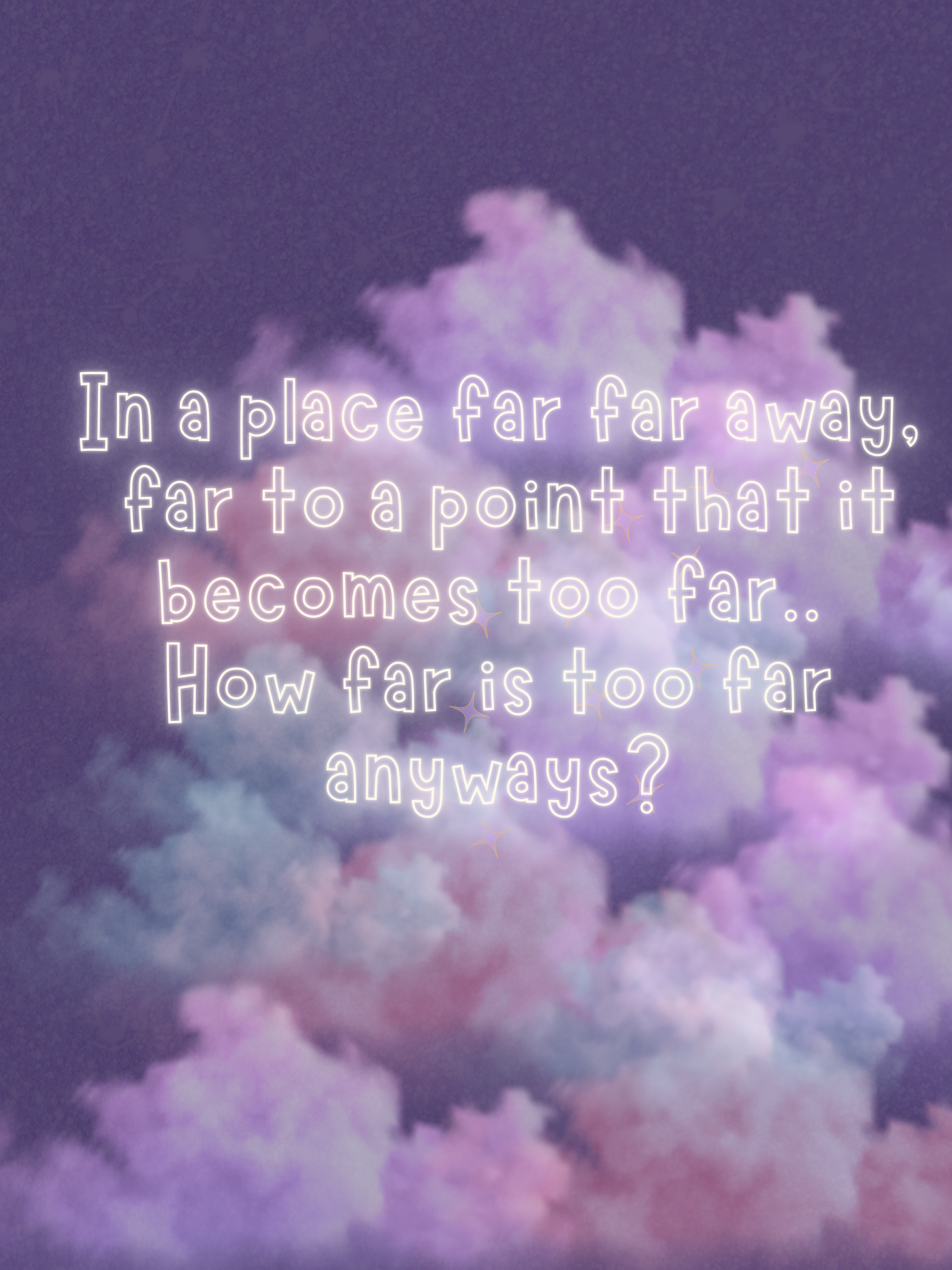




# UPWARD

The musical

RANEEM ALMOHANDES & MATTHEW NASSIDA



In a place far far away,  
far to a point that it  
becomes too far..  
How far is too far  
anyways?

# Overview

**GENRE** Fantasy Family Comedy

**SETTING** In the cloud realm and above, where the cloud creatures live.

**TIME** Lost in time

**RUNTIME** 90 Minutes

**CAST SIZE** 14 - 35

**LANGUAGE** Arabic / Saudi accent OR English

**THEMES** Generational expectations, forgiveness, sisterhood, self discovery, following dreams.

**FORM** Live or partially recorded with full orchestra

**TARGET AUDIENCE** Families

# Characters breakdown

## WITH VOCAL RANGES

- AMAL** F, 60s, (Alto C#3 -E5), A loving, warm grandmother.
- MOHEEB** M, 70s, (Baritone B2 - F4), The leader of the family, firm and strict.
- REEMA** F, Tweens, (Mezzo G3 - A5), quirky, curious, feels like an outsider.
- DEEMA** F, Tweens, (Mezzo G3 - A5), Reema's twin, dad's favorite daughter. Too good at what she does.
- FARAH** F, 30s, (Mezzo-Soprano A3 - F5), Reema and Deema's mother, kind, always feeling that there's something missing.
- WALEED** M, 40s, (Bari-Tenor G2 - E4), The girls' father. Dedicated in following what he has to follow, never questioning.
- ANCESTORS** Any Gender, (Any vocal types), Ageless, dead people who think that they know what's best for the living people. They live within frames.
- FAMILY** Ensemble. All Genders, All ages, (All vocal types), Always doing the same thing, over and over.



# Synopsis

Living with her family in a castle floating above the clouds, Reema is a quirky 10-year-old girl who stands out from her twin Deema, her parents Farah and Waleed and the rest of her family, including Moheeb, the elder and the leader of their family. Their monotonous routine consists of collecting and extracting "Glint," a colorful magical substance from the clouds to prevent the castle from falling to The Below. The more glint you collect, the higher your score on the family wall which has portraits of each person in the family. Including, at the very top, 3 large portraits of the ancestors of the family that speak and move and act as a council for which people can bring their troubles. If you fail at living up to the family's standards of collection however, you are banished and sent to the Below, a terrifying dark place far underneath the castle.

The glint has properties that Reema can't comprehend but she steals tiny pieces of it from her routine to try and understand why she feels so different. Overall, Reema is terrible at collection and after being bullied multiple times she finally begins to notice that the glint may be trying to communicate with her. She follows it and stumbles upon the room all of the glint is stored in holding up the castle and is finally able to connect to another trapped being in this world. After returning home she notices a small piece has followed her back, Tint, a dog-like cloud full of glint that wants to befriend her but is also starved for glint. At first Reema tries to keep Tint calm but after almost being caught with Tint multiple times finally allows him to eat so that he can calm down. It doesn't work as he continuously asks for more and she must work harder to try and keep him still and hidden.



# Synopsis

Suddenly and unexpectedly the castle falls so slightly from the sky and stops again, frightening the family as they are unsure why it happened. Moheeb goes to meet with the Ancestors to try and figure out what went wrong and is told that someone is stealing glint and that he must solve the problem as the castle cannot return to the below. Meanwhile Reema, still trying to hide Tint, stumbles upon Deema and in a sudden moment must confess to stealing the glint and hiding a new friend which is a cloud of glint itself. They fly into an angry dispute as neither twin can see the other's side. But their conversation is interrupted, as the castle falls stronger than ever and the family is called together for a meeting.

Upon convening, the family is told by Moheeb that someone is stealing glint and if it is not returned, they could fall out of the sky. This throws the family into a panic and everyone scrambles to find where the lost glint is located. Within the chaos Deema stumbles into Moheeb and for the good of the family reveals to him that Reema is the one stealing the glint. Moheeb sets off to find Reema but before he does Reema stumbles upon the ancestors room and in trying to catch Tint accidentally knocks an ancestor's portrait off the wall. Once it breaks, the painting reveals a vision of one of Moheeb's memories from before. She sees Amal, her grandmother singing to her mother as a child during wartime in the below. Reema is confused but barely has time to think when Moheeb discovers her and banishes her from the family. He begins to make another portrait and locks away the family's memories of Reema and all of her belongings so that no one can remember.

The family begins again in the Above but Deema feels something is wrong but isn't sure what. In the below Reema mourns but discovers Tint came with her. He leads her to a place where more of her family stay and she discovers Amal. Amal retells the story of why the family runs away and how Moheeb is their grandfather. Then Tint, in an act of sacrifice, gives Reema their glint so she can fly. She returns to the Above and reveals the truth to everyone, smashing the paintings to remind everyone and they slowly descend to the Below to become a whole family again. They all use the glint to create the pieces of their beautiful world they missed.

# Songs list

<b>ACT I</b>	
PROLOGUE	MOHEEB, FAMILY
EVERYDAY	ALL (BUT AMAL)
HAVING FUN	WALEED, DEEMA, REEMA, FAMILY
THE BELOW	THE BULLIES, REEMA
ARE WE THE SAME?	REEMA
A LITTLE BIT MORE	REEMA, DEEMA, WALEED, FARAH, MOHEEB, FAMILY
FORGETTING	ANCESTORS, MOHEEB
THE ARGUMENT	REEMA, DEEMA
MISSING PIECES	ALL (BUT AMAL)
SEEING	YOUNG FARAH, AMAL
EPILOGUE	ALL (BUT AMAL)
<b>ACT II</b>	
EVERYDAY REPRISE	DEEMA, WALEED, FARAH, MOHEEB, FAMILY
SO SMALL	REEMA., DEEMA
MISSING PIECES REPRISE	DEEMA, FARAH, REEMA
IS THIS REAL?	REEMA
WEATHER THE STORM	AMAL, FARAH, REEMA, FAMILY
REMEMBERING	REEMA, DEEMA, FAMILY
BREAKING THE MOLD	ALL



# Demo songs

## EVERYDAY

The song Everyday is the opening number of the show, it establishes tone of the world, the main characters, their unique perspectives and relationships to each other.

This video is performed by the students of Musical Theatre Writing program during the first table reading of Upwards May 2023.

## SEEING

Seeing is the theme song of the show, although the story takes place in fantastical world beyond the clouds, this song is heavily inspired by the magnificent sceneries from around Saudi Arabia. Amal, the grandmother is singing to Farah about their beautiful magical home before they ran away with the castle upwards.

This song is performed by professional actors: Sherz Aletaha & Priya Mahendra as part of the final showcase of the NYU's program at Joe's Pub Theatre, New York

To watch the songs click the link:

<https://tinyurl.com/8e5z3sef>

To follow along with the lyrics:

<https://tinyurl.com/4uzbxsxn>





# Moodboard

THE CASTLE EXTERIOR/ BEGINNING OF SHOW



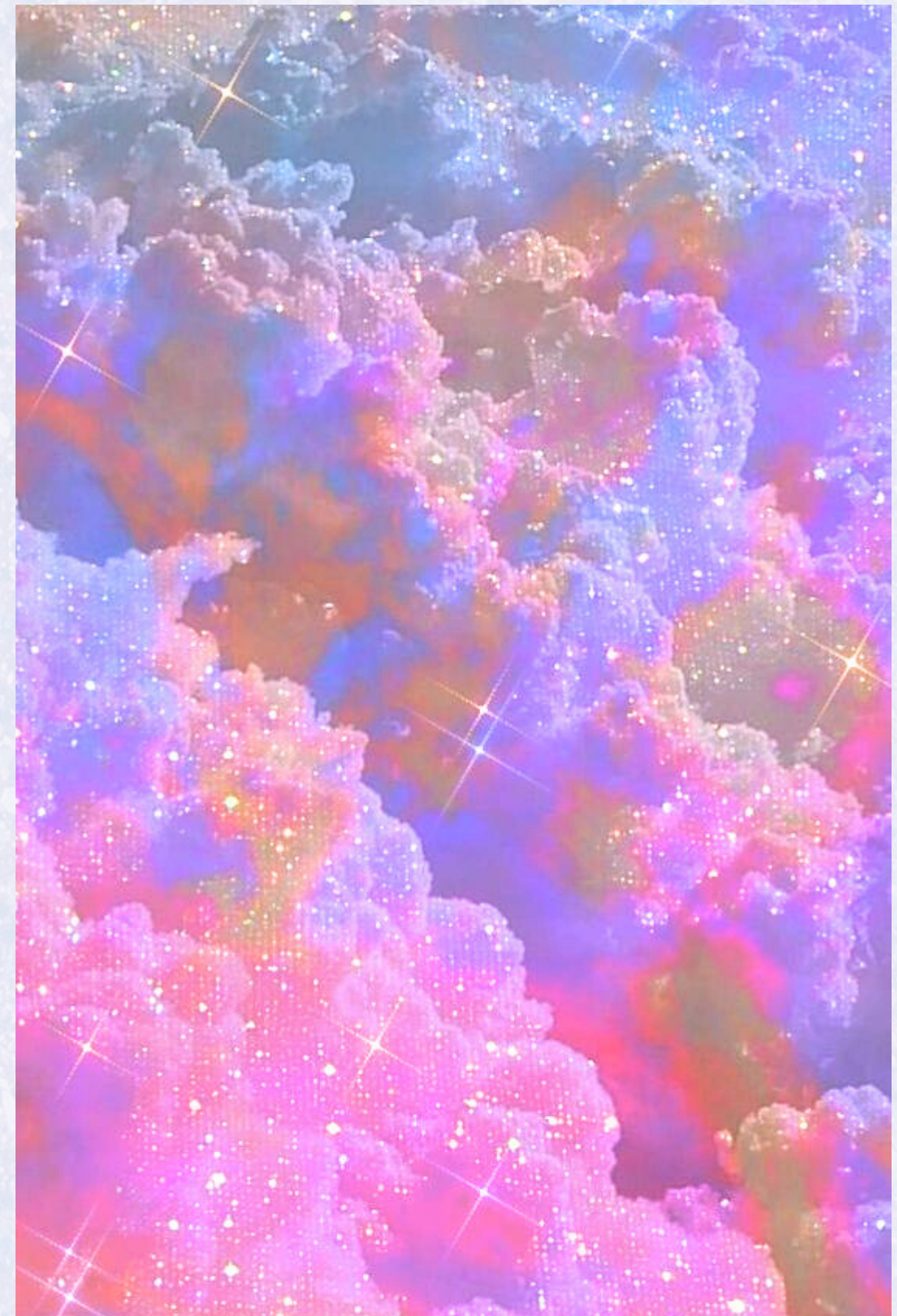
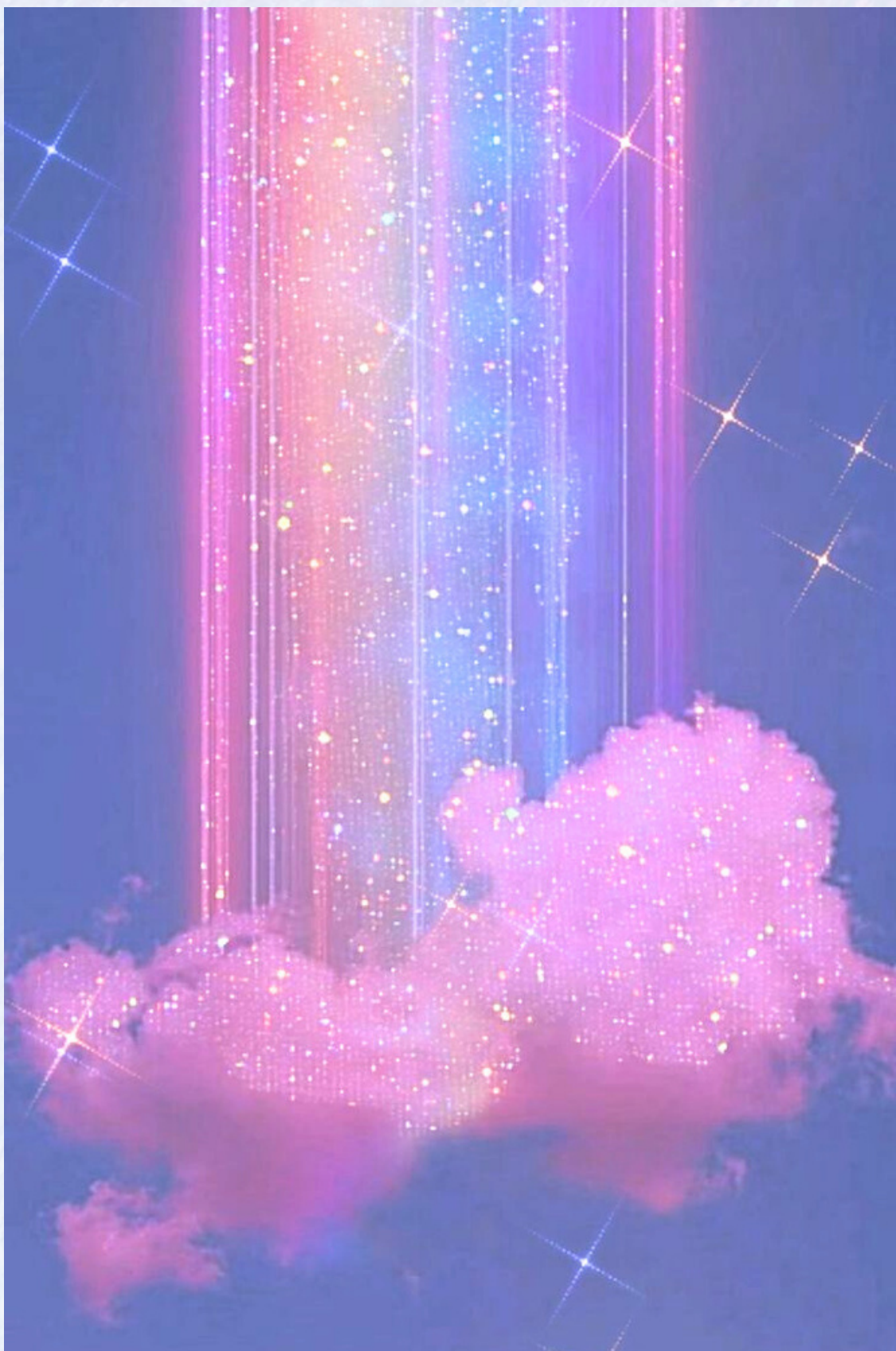
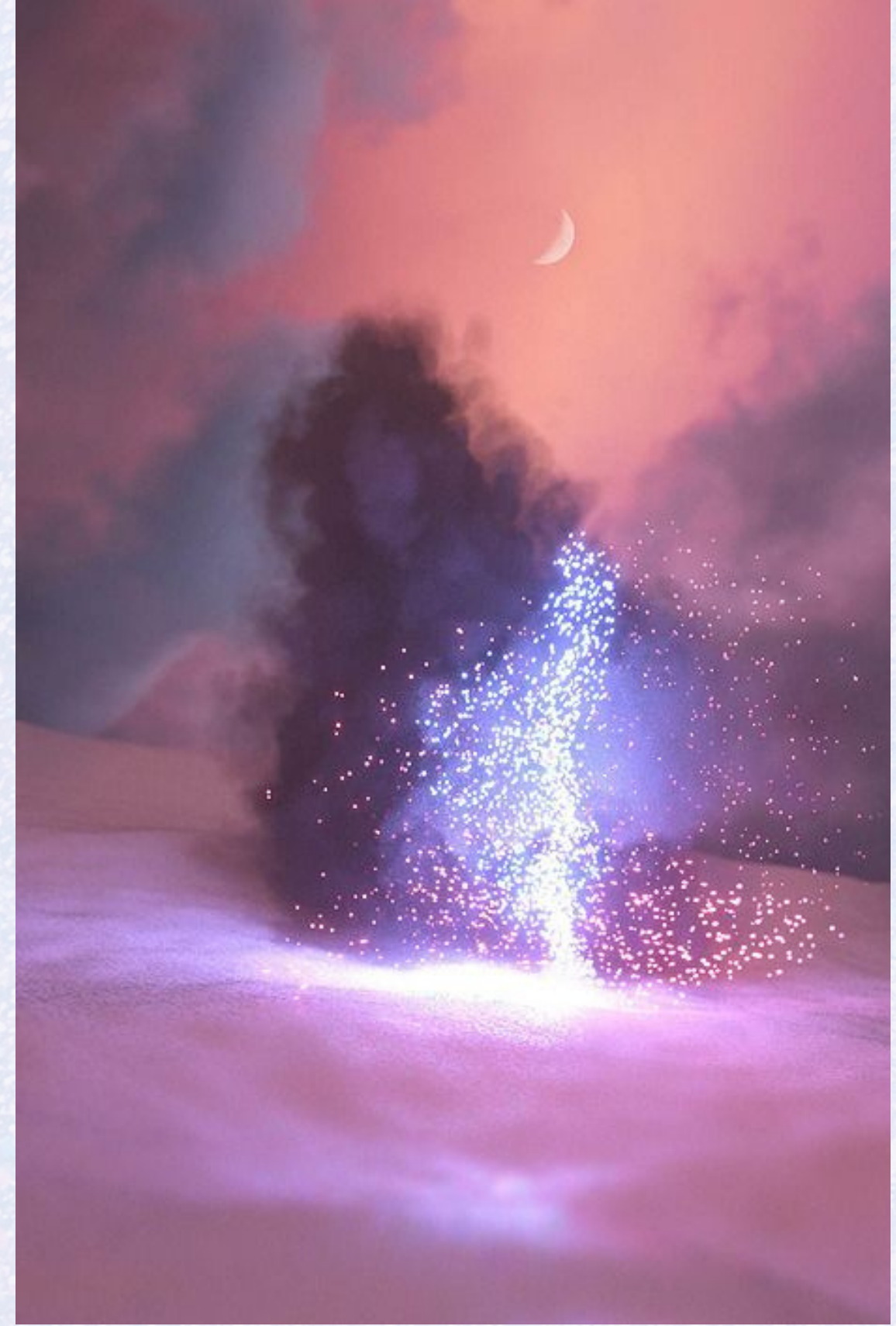
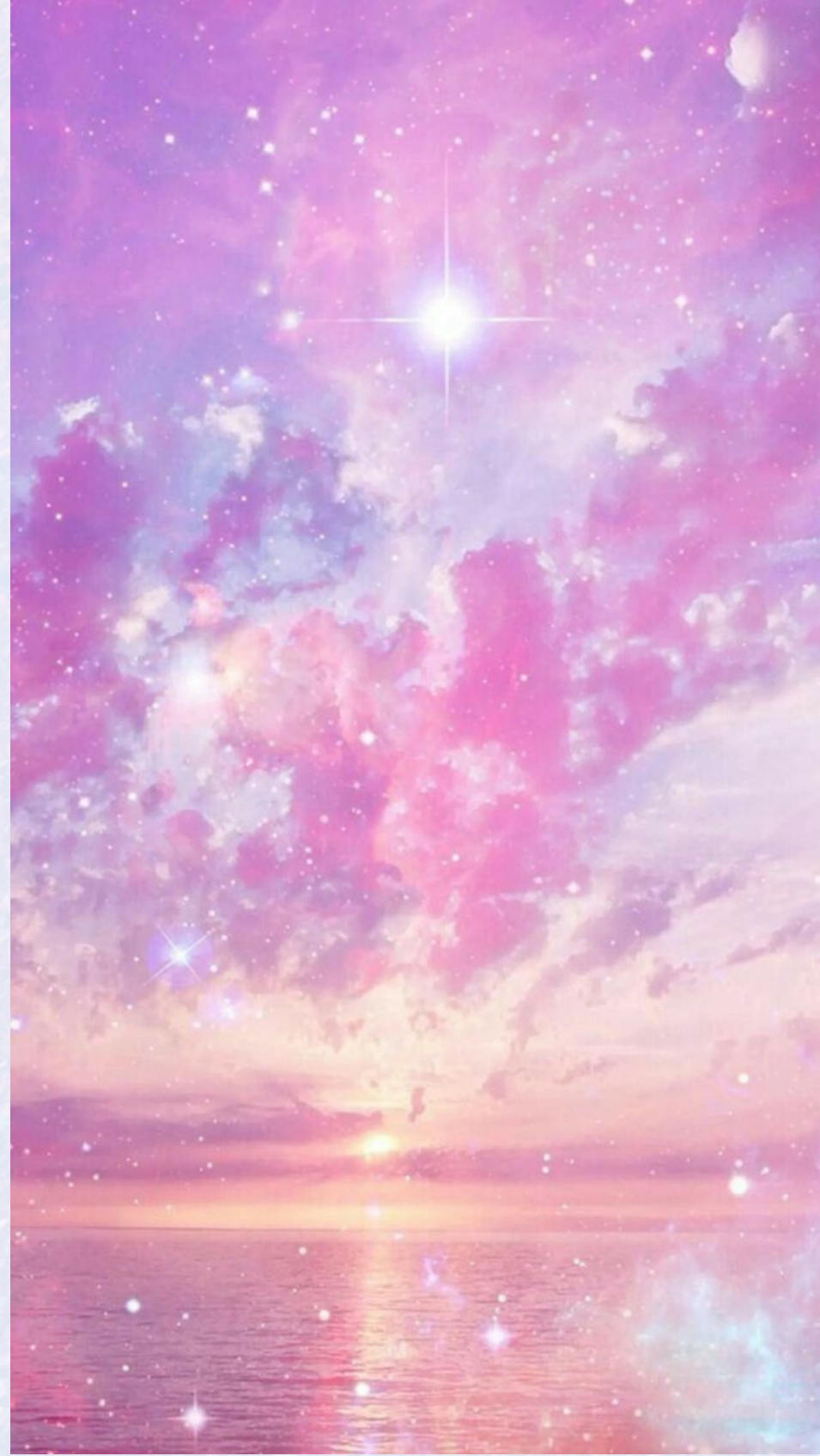
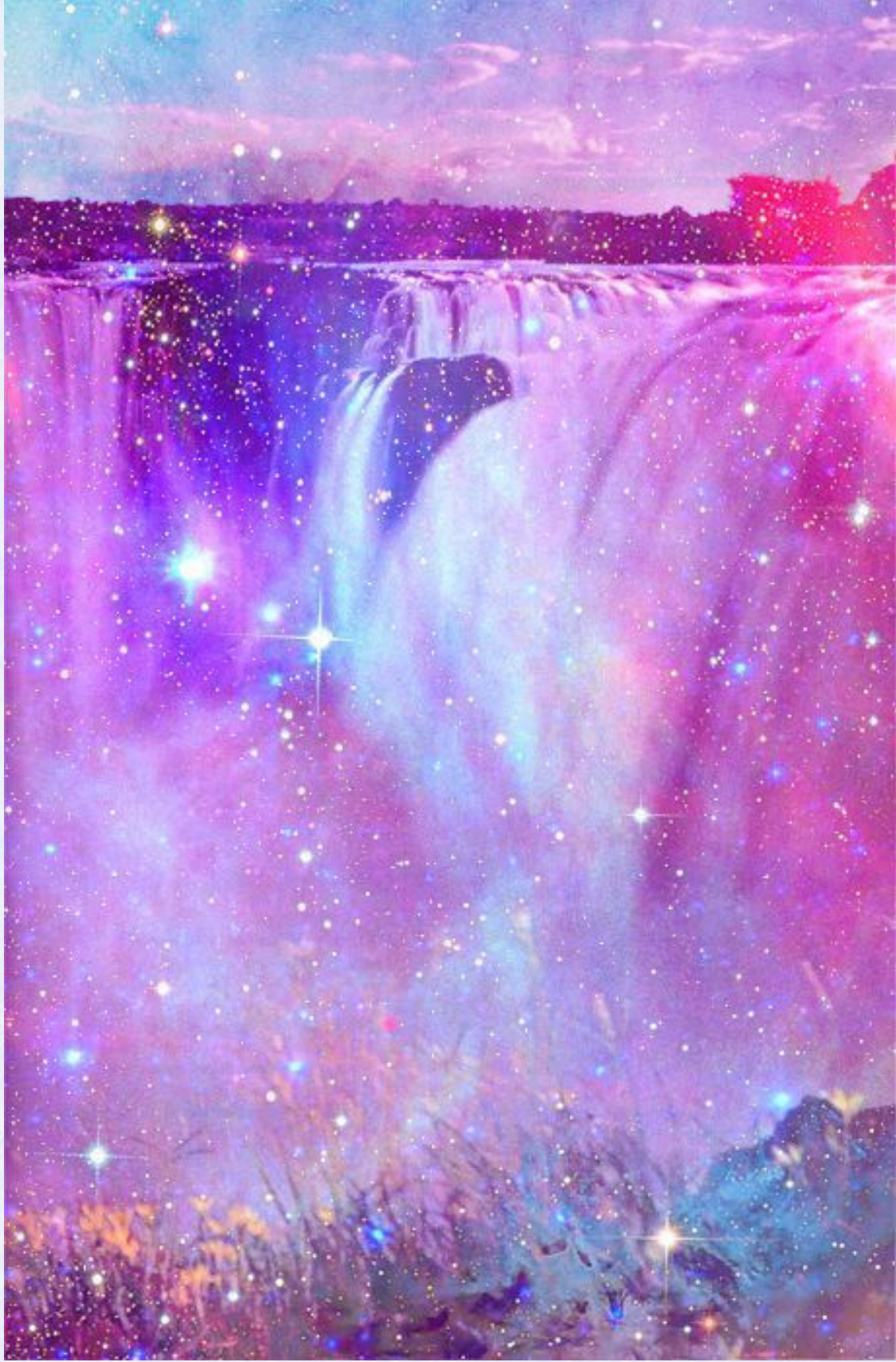
# Moodboard

## THE CASTLE INTERIOR



# Moodboard

## THE GLINT



# Moodboard

THE CASTLE EXTERIOR/ END OF SHOW



# Moodboard

## CLOUD CREATURES



# Creative Team

## MUSIC AND LYRICS



Matthew Nassida is a writer, composer, music director, and performer currently stationed in Brooklyn, NY. He received his BFA in musical theatre performance at Northern Kentucky University and his MFA from New York University for his graduate degree in Musical Theatre Writing. His works have been accepted into the Cincinnati Fringe Festival (Scouts: A New Musical), Irvington Theater Short Play Festival (The Story of a Daughter) and have been performed through Footlighters Inc. Theater on tour to small theaters in the Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana tri-state area (Precipice: What Took Us Over The Edge). He served on Footlighter Inc.'s play selection committee prior to the pandemic, received the ASCAP Fredrick Loewe award, and has music directed and directed several productions prior to moving to NY.



# Creative Team

BOOK AND LYRICS  
RANEEM ALMOHANDES



Raneem is a writer, director and producer. She recently got her MFA in Musical Theater Writing from New York University. During the program, she co-wrote, co-produced and co-directed the musical short "A Swing" with her sister Dana. A swing was funded by ithra, King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture. It was selected for the official competition at Saudi Film Festival and was chosen to be as part of Saudi's participation at Cannes film festival 2022. It was also officially selected for the Red Sea International Film Festival. A Swing Got an honorable mention for Best Female Arab Filmmaker award at Cairo International Short Film Festival. It was recently part of the selection by Saudi's Ministry Of Culture, Film commission to be screened in multiple cities in France, 2023 as part of Saudi Film Nights in France event, March 2023. It was also acquired by a global streaming service starting September 2023. Raneem took several courses in film production from Google/Youtube , University of Southern California , New York Film Academy and British Film Institute funded by Saudi's Ministry of Culture. She Co-wrote with her sister Dana their musical feature "Dandana " which was nominated for 2020's Saudi Film Festival for best feature screenplay and got shortlisted in the second round of Sundance's Screenwriters Lab. For several years, Raneem has been a YouTube Creator for Change (CFC) Ambassador in Saudi Arabia chosen by the Google / Youtube team. Her first short "human" was funded by Google as part of the CFC program. This film was the first short to be premiered in a Saudi cinema.

# Contacts



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