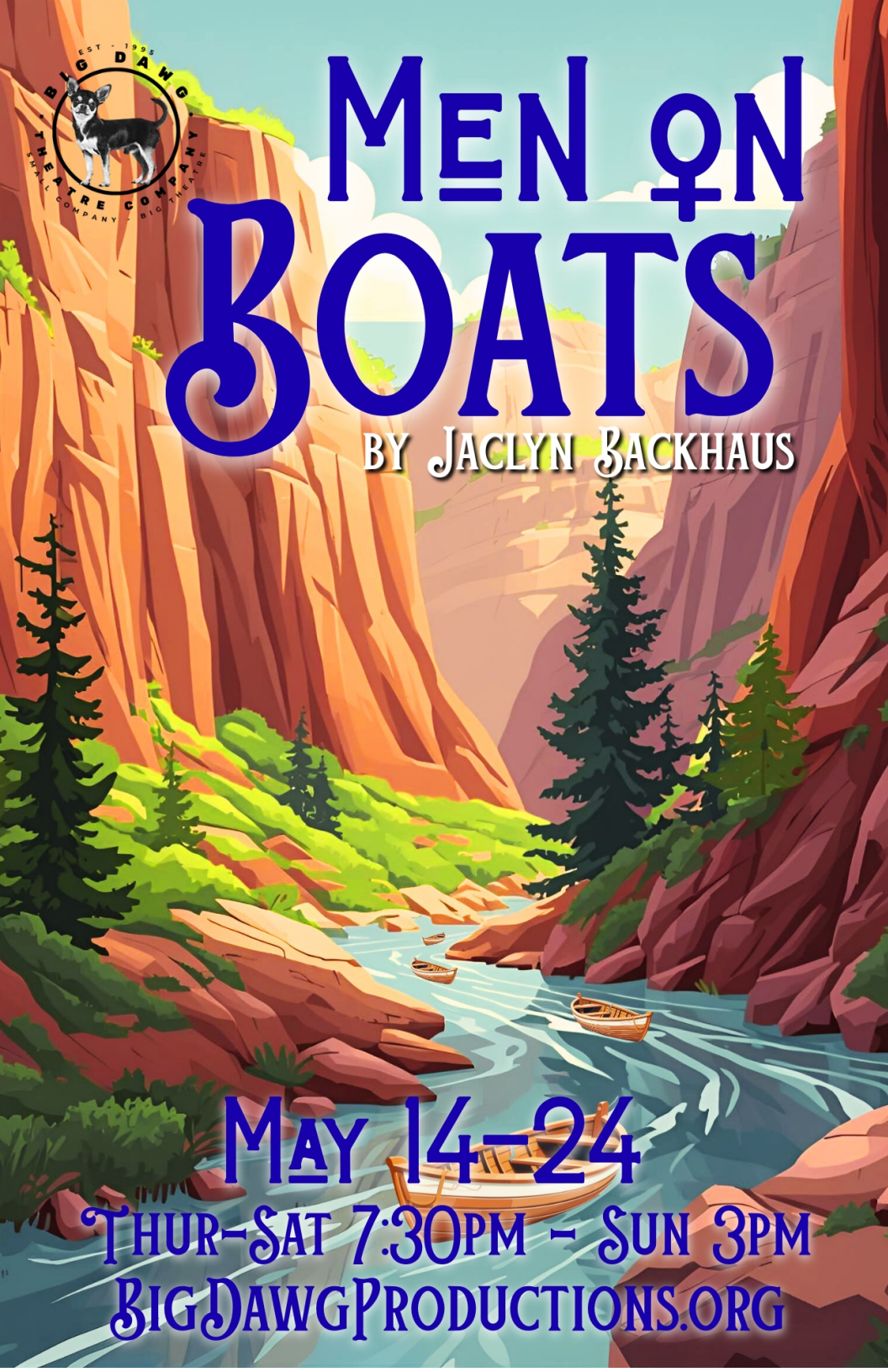




# MEN $\cup$ N BOATS

BY JACLYN BACKHAUS



MAY 14-24

THUR-SAT 7:30PM - SUN 3PM

[BIGDAWGPRODUCTIONS.ORG](http://BIGDAWGPRODUCTIONS.ORG)

# Men on Boats

by Jaclyn Backhaus

## Directed by Beth Swindell

Stage Manager.....Yahui Lia  
Sound Design and Original Music.....Justin Lacy  
Lighting Design.....Cole Marquis  
Costume Design.....Stephanie Scheu Aman and Dori Nason  
Board Operators.....Yahui Liao, Jennifer Cox

## Set

Design.....Terry Collins  
Construction.....Terry Collins, Tim Tyson

## Original Music

composed by Justin Lacy

Violin.....Christa Faison  
Chimes, cricket chirps, and bowed cymbals/crotales....Mitch Hebert  
All Other Instruments.....Justin Lacy

## Cast

Hannie Bowen.....John Wesley Powell  
Blake Carter.....John Colton Sumner  
Georgia Cole.....William Dunn  
Anna Gamel Huber.....Frank Goodman, Mr. Asa  
Courtney Harding.....Bradley  
Addison Hamlet.....Seneca Howland, Just Jim  
Erin Hunter.....Old Shady  
Chloe Mason.....Hawkins  
Nikki Sanders.....Hall  
Maria-Luisa Winslow.....O.G. Howland, Johns

## Setting

On boats in 1869. Traversing the Green and Colorado Rivers from Wyoming to a big canyon on the government's first Sanctioned Expedition. The play is based largely on John Wesley Powell's journals of his expedition, published as 'The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Canyons.'

## Cast

**Hannie Bowen (Major John Wesley Powell)** is a film and theater actress born and raised in Wilmington, NC. She was last seen on stage as “Jean Louise” in Opera House Theater Company’s production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Hannie and her two cast-mates were recently awarded as Best Acting Ensemble at the Berlin Film Festival for their performances in Liam Arnold’s atmospheric thriller *The Straw Lady*. She holds her MFA in Acting (SCAD, 2023). She’d like to thank her husband Carson for his enduring love and support.

**Blake Carter (Sumner)** is thrilled to be part of this stunning cast. Growing up as the child of a theatre directing Mom and a river guiding Dad, she could either be found reading in the booth or taking naps in the middle of a canoe. Blake dedicates every moment she spends on stage to her late mother Gail, a high school drama teacher and director, who inspired a generation of theatre lovers, performers, and technicians. Special thanks to her little family, Thomas and Owen, for being the best partners in this wild adventure of life. “Oars up, Oars out!”

**Georgia Cole (William Dunn)** is a whimsical Wilmington theatre kid who has traveled far and wide just to recently return once again to the stages of North Carolina’s best coastal town. Some of her favorite roles have included Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Dromio in *Comedy of Errors*, Titania in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and various roles in *Scotopia Annual New Works Festival*. She currently works as an Artistic Associate and Actor with MoB Theatre here in Wilmington. Georgia is so grateful for the community bond this play has provided thanks to the leadership of director Beth Swindell, for getting to perform with her childhood bestie Chloe Mason again, and for her consistently supportive family and friends."

**Anna Gamel Huber (Frank Goodman / Mr. Asa)** is thrilled to carry on the tradition of women playing men on stage, especially with this wildly talented group of women! A 20-year veteran of

Wilmington's theatre community, she is always game to dive into her next (sometimes crazy) characters. Her previous credits include: Dr. Westfeldt/Renfield in *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*, Lana Sherwood/various roles in *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, and Siobhan in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. Many thanks to Beth, cast and crew for celebrating the wonderful power that is womankind!

**Courtney Harding (Bradley)** is a little nervous, but also excited to be working with such a wonderful group of creative people! She is grateful to Beth and Big Dawg Theatre Company for giving her the opportunity to explore such a fun role in a fantastic topical story. She would also like to thank her fiancé Cody, for being so understanding of her crazy Theatre Kid schedule; and the cast and crew for such a memorable experience of bonding, shenanigans and laughter. Oars Up! Oars Out! May this connection live on, long after this show is behind them.

**Addison Hamlet (Seneca Howland / Just Jim)** is a graduate from UNCW with a BA in Performance Theatre and currently teaches Theatre and Choir at Williston Middle School. Her most recent projects include *The Willis Richardson Players' Purlie Victorious*, *Mouth of Babes: Scotopia*, and 2025 Wilmington Theatre Awards Best Play Winner, *HOME*. She would like to thank the entire cast and crew of *Men on Boats*, her family and friends, students and teachers, and the people of Wilmington for their passionate support of local artistry!

**Erin Hunter (Old Shady)** is thrilled to be returning to the river after playing *Dunn* the first time that Big Dawg mounted the show. She is thrilled to be working with Beth, Steve, and this incredible cast and crew. Thanks for letting me come play again! Thank you also to her incredibly supportive husband, Jarrett, who is her favorite adventure partner. And thank you to each one of you who come out and support live theatre!

**Chloe Mason (Hawkins)** is an artist, storyteller, and playwright. She earned her BA in Performance Theatre with a minor in Film

Studies from Appalachian State University in 2022. She serves as Company Manager for MoB Theatre and was part of the founding team for the Scotopia New Play Festival. At this past Scotopia, Chloe premiered her original show *Cornelia: Confessions from a Cage*, a darkly comic solo piece about her and her childhood guinea pig. Chloe's work lives in the space between humor and hurt, using art as a method to process life's challenges. She is grateful to be a part of *Men on Boats*, where she has had an opportunity to do just that with such a powerful group of women and people.

**Nikki Sanders (Hall)** was raised in Greenwood, SC and moved to Wilmington for graduate school in 2019. She returned to Wilmington in 2025 after completing her graduate program. This is her first role in over a decade. She is honored to be working under Big Dawg Theatre Company with such a talented and kind cast. Maria-Luisa Winslow (OG Howland & Johnson) is thrilled to be a part of *Men On Boats*. As a Puerto Rican, Maria-Luisa finds a deep connection with this play's themes of colonialism, entitlement, and survival. She is also honored to have the opportunity to play with such a talented and amazingly fierce group of women. In June, she will be seen in OHTC's production of *GYPSY*. Immense gratitude to Beth Swindell, Yahui Liao, Steve Vernon, and the crew and creatives of this gender-bending production. Much love to her husband, son, family, and friends for their never-ending support. And thank you for joining us in this adventure! ¡Pa'lante!

**Beth Swindell (Director)** is honored to be back on the water for this incredible production and thrilled to work with this amazing cast, crew, and creative team. She is a Wilmington native who has performed, directed, and choreographed in the local theater community for over 20 years. Some of her directorial credits include Big Dawg's, *Women Playing Hamlet* and first production of *Men on Boats*, as well as Thalian Association's *Sleuth*. As a performer, her favorite roles include "Patsy" in *Crazy for You*, "Judy" in *9 to 5 the Musical*, "Gypsy/Louise" in *Gypsy*, "Darlene" in *The Diviners*, and "Joanne" in *Rent*. She would like to thank Steve Vernon and Big Dawg for seeing the potential in her as a director.

She also sends a huge thanks to this genius creative team who made all of her dreams come true. And to her wonderful cast, she extends sincere gratitude for the hard work and humanity put into this process. Oars up! Oars Out!

**Justin Lacy (Sound Design)** is a composer and multi-instrumentalist specializing in theatrical scoring and immersive sound design. His work for *Men on Boats* draws on acoustic instrumentation, environmental sound, and rhythmic momentum to mirror the physical and psychological journey of the expedition. Combining folk instruments, found textures, and subtle electronic elements, the score moves fluidly between music and sound — paddles in water, shifting currents, nighttime stillness — creating a continuous sonic landscape that evolves alongside the performers onstage. With a background in both composition and visual storytelling, Lacy approaches theater as a living system, crafting scores that support timing, movement, and ensemble energy while maintaining a distinct musical voice.

**Yahui Liao (Stage Manager)** is thrilled to join this party boat with so many talented, kind women. Her special skills include pointing at maps like she understands them, carrying heavy things for no reason and calling cues at the wrong time. Many thanks to Steve, Beth for letting her on board, Ty for loving her as-is, and you for coming to witness this chaos.

***Special Thanks to Topher Davis & LucyBeth Nieves-Arriba, Opera Wilmington, Jason Aycock and Opera House Theater Company, Chandler Davis, The Thalian Association, TACT, Lula's A Pub, Ned & Arleen Rhodes, Cyndi & Ron McNeil, Robert Zaytoun, George Keller, Hugh MacRae III, Mary Boney Denison & John Clark, Charles Calhoun, Richard Trubia, Mary Baggett, Charlotte Davis, Peggy Baddour, Robb Mann, Justin Lacy***

## *A Word From Our Raffle Sponsor*



# OPERA WILMINGTON

This July, Opera Wilmington presents a pairing of two one-act operas: Giacomo Puccini's ***Suor Angelica*** and Pietro Mascagni's ***Cavalleria*** rusticana. Both represent opera's "verismo" (realistic) style, exploring deep emotions and conflicts.

The theme of justice runs through both works. The title of Mascagni's beloved opera translates as "rustic chivalry," and it portrays love, jealousy and revenge as the rough justice of a Sicilian village.

Puccini's opera is set in an Italian convent where a young nun, Angelica, has lived for seven years, banished by her aristocratic family. A visit from her aunt sets off a chain of events that ends in justice – redemption – for Angelica.

Our productions are fully staged and accompanied by the Opera Wilmington Orchestra under the direction of Daniel Brier.

A pre-performance talk takes place before both Friday evening performances in **Beckwith Recital Hall**, adjacent to the **Mainstage Theatre** where the operas are performed. Both facilities are located in UNCW's Cultural Arts Building, 5270 Randall Drive.

Information is at [operawilmington.org](http://operawilmington.org) or call 910 239-7087.

## **Big Dawg's Mission**

To produce entertaining, thought provoking, and socially responsible theatre, with an emphasis on involving youth and the community in the performing arts.

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AND

Our small, but dedicated group, of community advisors and volunteers who work in the community to support the company in fundraising, and outreach.

## **Get Involved**

If you are interested in becoming a board member or volunteering with Big Dawg Productions send a message to [BigDawgPro@gmail.com](mailto:BigDawgPro@gmail.com)

*A Big Thank You To Our Amazing Donors & Sponsors!  
Big Dawg Productions extends its sincere thanks to all those who donated to us in the last year. Every dollar supports local theatre, local actors and crews, and allows us to continue bringing unique and thought provoking (or at least funny) theatre to the stage and expand our community impact with new programs.*

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## **Grant Sponsors**

The Arts Council of Wilmington/NHC, The Landfall Foundation, The Wilson Center at Cape Fear Community College

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Dr. LucyBeth Nieves, Arriba & Topher Davis, R E Frerichs MD & Tony Harrelson, Cynthia McNeil, Ned & Arleen Rhodes

## **Producers**

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Maureen & Paul Baron, Mark Basquill, Beth Bell, David & Laura Kay Berry, Griffin & Rowan Davis, Charlotte Davis, Paula Davis, Dawg Lovers a group of dedicated followers, Mary Anne Deaton, Lorraine O. Hiester, Michael Lauricella & Andy McVey, L&L Rentals, Lee Lowrimore & Dorothy Rankin, Nancy Nail, Steve Rassin, Richard Trubia, Shirley Valentine, Katherine Vernon, Blanche Williamson, Charles & Michaele Wezwick, David Zuckerman

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**June 21**

***Father's Day Fundraiser - Hosted By City BBQ***

Celebrate Dad with great food for a great cause! Bring the family, enjoy some BBQ, meet some of the team behind the scenes and support Big Dawg — because nothing says Father's Day like smoked meat and the arts.

**July 9-19**

***The Shark is Broken***

by Ian Shaw and Joseph Nixon

The first summer blockbuster movie is being filmed, but no one working on the movie would know it. Dive deep into the tumultuous, murky waters of the making of a major motion picture with testy, feuding costars, unpredictable weather, and a shark prop whose constant breakdowns are looking like an omen for the future of the movie. In this comedy cowritten by Ian Shaw and Joseph Nixon, the short tempers of *Jaws* stars Robert Shaw (father of cowriter Ian), Richard Dreyfuss, and Roy Scheider take center stage as they bond, argue, drink, gamble, and pray for an end to the shoot, not knowing it will change their lives forever.

“THE SHARK IS BROKEN wittily excels not just as a clever time capsule, but as an examination of male bonding and competitiveness, ego, frailty, fame, and filmmaking.”

—The Daily Beast.

**August 13-23**

***The Explorers Club***

by Nell Benjamin

London, 1879. The prestigious Explorers Club is in crisis: their acting president wants to admit a woman, and their bartender is terrible. True, this female candidate is brilliant, beautiful, and has discovered a legendary Lost City, but the decision to let in a woman could shake the very foundation of the British Empire, and how do you make such a decision without a decent drink? Grab your safety goggles for some very mad science involving deadly cobras, irate Irishmen and the occasional airship.

“You don't have to be British to lose your composure and howl with laughter at THE EXPLORERS CLUB, a witty spoof of all those

bold Victorian adventurers who ravaged foreign lands and annihilated indigenous cultures in the name of science.”

—Variety.

**October 15-25**

***Chemical Imbalance: A Jekyll and Hyde Play***

by Lauren Wilson

A fastpaced, wickedly funny reimagining of Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic tale. In this contemporary adaptation, Dr. Henry Jekyll is a brilliant but socially awkward psychiatrist who experiments with a revolutionary drug designed to “cure” the darker impulses of his most troubled patient—himself. When the volatile and uninhibited Edward Hyde emerges, chaos erupts in a blur of mistaken identities, outrageous encounters, and razorsharp comedy. Blending gothic suspense with laughoutloud farce, *Chemical Imbalance* explores the duality within us all— proving that sometimes the scariest monster is the one we’ve tried hardest to suppress.

“An evening of exhilarating entertainment... An inventive, original comedy of horrors.”

– San Francisco Examiner

**December 10-20**

***Jacob Marley’s Christmas Carol***

By Tom Mula

“Marley was dead, to begin with...” —and what happens to Ebenezer Scrooge’s mean, sour, pruney old business partner after that? Chained and shackled, Marley is condemned to a hellish eternity. He’s even given his own private tormentor: a malicious little hellsprite who thoroughly enjoys his work. Desperate, Marley accepts his one chance to free himself: To escape his own chains, he must first redeem Scrooge. So begins a journey of laughter and terror, redemption and renewal, during which Scrooge’s heart, indeed, is opened; but not before Marley—in this irreverent, funny and deeply moving story— discovers his own.

“Delectably zany... inspired theatre... gives the audience cause to ache, and to laugh, and in the end, to exalt.”

– City Beat



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# MEN ON BOATS

BY *JACLYN BACKHAUS*



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# THE SHARK IS BROKEN

BY *IAN SHAW AND JOSEPH NIXON*



# The Explorers Club

By *Nell Benjamin*



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# Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol

By *Tom Mula*

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