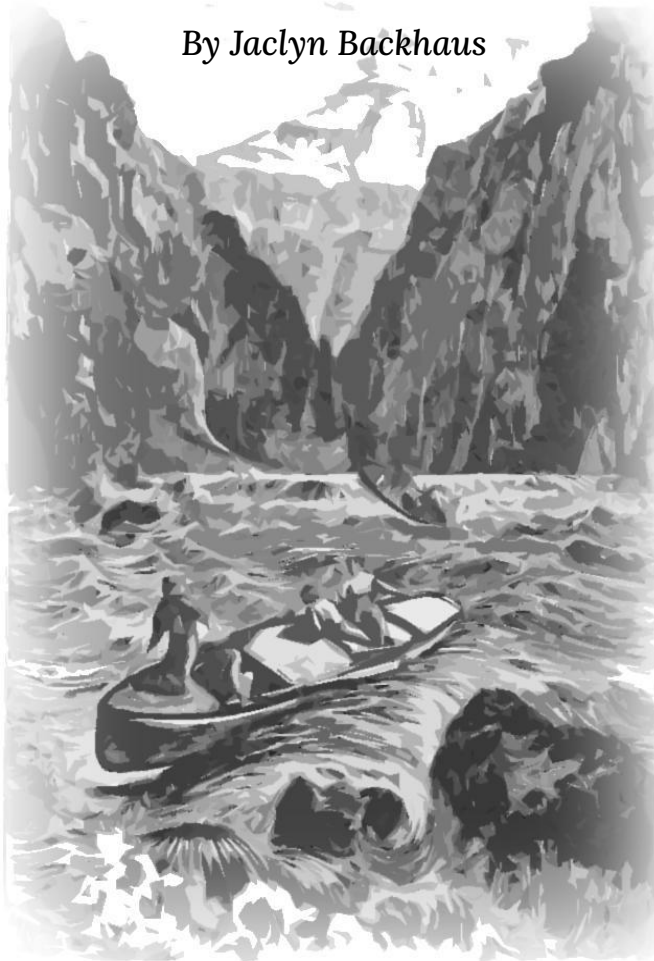


Gather Repertory Theatre Presents

Men On Boats

By Jaclyn Backhaus



North Valley Friends Church
May 19th-20th, 26th-27th @ 7:30pm
May 21st & 28th @ 4:00pm

Men on Boats

Written by Jaclyn Backhaus

Directed by Sarah Aldrich

Actors

John Wesley Powell ...	Ciel Pope
William Dunn ...	Megan Haynes
John Colton Sumner ...	Cara Copeland
Old Shady ...	Rommie Christiansen
Bradley ...	Charlotte Zenzano
O.G. Howland / Johnson ...	Olivia Cuddeford
Seneca Howland / "Just Jim" ...	Cora Beeman*
Frank Goodman ...	Skylar Bastedo
Andrew Hall ...	Marcus Praneetpolgrang
William Hawkins ...	Delia Xzamora Negrete

Designers

Director ...	Sarah Aldrich
Creative Consultant ...	Reid Arthur*
Stage Manager ...	Emma Schmitt
Assist. Stage Manager ...	Shanon Keehn
Sound Designer ...	Michael Buss
Assist. Sound Designer ...	Rowan Lowery
Scenic Designer ...	Hunter Price
Assist. Scenic Designer ...	Chloe Blair
Props Designer ...	Dandy Johnstone
Dramaturg ...	Brendan Comiskey*
Light Designer ...	Nathan Thrasher
Costumes / Hair & Makeup ...	Marlyss Fry
Production Manager ...	JeanneAnn Comiskey*

*Gather Repertory Theatre Company Member

Our production is made possible by our wonderful and generous supporters:

Ronni Lacroute,
Yamhill County Cultural Coalition,
First Federal,
the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation,
and the Chehalem Cultural Center.

We'd love to offer our special thanks to:

North Valley Friends Church,
George Fox University Theatre Department,
Bryan Boyd,
Emma Boyd,
Kacy Hughson,
Erin Hall
Cheri & Dale

And to members of our Board:

Sean Andries
Polly Peterson

And many others who have helped further theatre in our community.

We at Gather Repertory Theatre acknowledge that we live and work on the unceded ancestral lands of the Tualatin Kalapuya people. We recognize with gratitude the land itself and those who have been its stewards throughout the generations. This statement is merely a verbal act of reverence for indigenous communities but it does not replace the further work of honoring the legacy of the land and its people.

Director's Note

So you bought tickets for Men on Boats. What are you about to see?

Let's start with what you won't see. You won't see any boats. You won't see any white, cisgender men. And you won't see a faithful, historical reenactment of the first government sanctioned expedition to the Grand Canyon. Sorry for the false advertising. Now this is a play based on all of those things.

In 1869, John Wesley Powell, a one-armed, fiery, eternally optimistic Civil War vet led a ragtag crew of adventurers on a three month expedition sanctioned by President Grant to chart the Colorado and Green Rivers to the "Big Canyon." What we know now of that expedition is due mostly to Powell's extensive if not highly dubious journal entries detailing a grand story of heroics, dangers, and courage.

Now most historians agree that there is probably a heaping portion of exaggeration mixed in with the historical record. It is, after all, Powell's journal—Powell's perspective. And as we will learn over the next few hours, the person holding the pen is usually the person who decides what the story is about. As Mr. Asa says, "This is your story, for now."

So tonight, what we attempt to do, and what I believe Jaclyn Backhaus set out to do when interpreting this story, is to pass the pen along; to the voices of those who have historically been written about rather than getting to do the writing. We pass the pen to the women, the indigenous folx, the gender-diverse, and the people of color. It is high time they have a place in the adventure stories of our folklore, and high time we begin asking ourselves who has been telling the story.

I cannot speak highly enough of the actors you are about to see tonight and the work they have created. They are hilarious, passionate, gracious, fun, dedicated, and the best crew I could have had around me on this expedition. Thank you to Ciel for taking up the helm, to Megan for bringing the fire, to Rommie for helping us feel the breeze, to Cora and Olivia for bringing the trouble, to Delia and Marcus for bringing the PARTY, to Charlotte for the eternal enthusiasm, to Skylar for the exuberance, and to Cara for always being ready to lighten the mood.

And to those behind the scenes but truly on the front lines, Emma, Shannon, Reid, Brendan, Michael, Nathan, Dandy, Rowan, Hunter, Marlyss, Chloe; we would truly be wordless, soundless, naked and in a dark, empty room without you. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

- Sarah Aldrich

Dramaturg's Note

"We are now ready to start on our way down the Great Unknown... Our boats, tied to a common stake, chafe each other as they are tossed by the fretful river... What falls there are, we know not; what rocks beset the channel, we know not; what walls rise over the river, we know not... With some eagerness and some anxiety and some misgiving we enter the canyon below and are carried away by the swift water through walls which rise from its very edge."

- J.W. Powell

There's no doubt John Wesley Powell had a particular flare for storytelling. Most of what Jaclyn Backhaus presents in *Men on Boats* is directly pulled from Powell's own accounts of his adventures—whether true or exaggerated has been a topic of debate even among his own crew. Even still, the men that embarked into the "Great Unknown" were certainly tough-as-nails, fearless and good-hearted. They sought out to create a legacy, to make history, and to survive.

John Wesley Powell's expedition of 1869 was the first *truly* government-sanctioned exploratory journey down the Green, Virgin and Colorado rivers, concluding just through what was once creatively named the "Big Canyon" (Powell later popularized *Grand Canyon* as the apt moniker). Though other settlers, adventurers and, of course, indigenous peoples all traveled sections of these rivers, none had done so with the intentions of mapping the region in its entirety for future traders, travelers, and colonizers.

Expeditions all over the American territory during the Westward Expansion were justified as scientific in nature—collecting geological samples, recording flora and fauna, and mapping the mostly uncharted land—though they also informed the growing government of the amount of valuable resources on the land, how arable it was, how many native tribes were inhabiting the lands, etc. The government was more eager to fund adventurers if the land they traveled could likely be commercialized. Powell's expedition got a lot of support behind it from the Chicago Academy of Sciences, the Illinois State Natural History Society, and the Illinois Industrial University. The US congress even authorized US army rations to be given to the men for the expedition. The 1869 Expedition didn't yield as many scientific results and findings as Powell wanted, though he went on to be the first to complete a scientific survey of the Grand Canyon region in his future expeditions. Today, John Wesley Powell is something like a folk hero in Arizona and Colorado—he is a sort of grandfather figure to those who set their own paddles into the Colorado, an emulation of Powell's own adventure.

In May of 1869, Powell, together with his crew of nine set out in four boats: *Emma Dean*, *Kitty Clyde's Sister*, *No-Name*, and *Maid of the Canyon* specifically crafted for this expedition. Over the next three months, they mapped large areas of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and Wyoming. The crew passed through and interacted with the indigenous lands of the Ute, Havasupai, Pueblo, Navajo, Hualapai, Southern Paiute, and Hopi tribes.

It didn't matter to Powell and his troupe that they were giving names (often after themselves) to mountains and cliffs and bluffs that had already been inhabited for centuries by existing native communities. *Men on Boats* exposes the viewer to the idea of history being written by the "victor," and how those we consider to be heroes are often shown in the most flattering of lights, their misdeeds often hidden from the mainstream. There is adventure and fun and laughs to be had, but on a deeper level we are being shown a reversal of a common story—white men leading the "other" into the unknown. Here, on this stage, we see a collection of people who traditionally, who usually do not get to play a role such as this.

Jaelyn leaves us with these questions: Are Powell and his men victims of their country's ideology or willing participants in it? And, like Powell, are we conscious of our legacies as we create them?

As a company, we recognize our complicity in unjust systems. We are committed to evolving our understanding of equity, inclusion, and antiracism, as well as respecting and uplifting people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly BIPOC artists. We recognize that being a person of color in this community is particularly strenuous and dangerous. We also recognize this statement's parallels present for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, particularly in the danger and strenuous nature of being LGBTQIA+ in this community. It is integral to our mission to uplift, celebrate, and give platform to a wide array of voices.

ACTORS

Ciel Pope (*she/ her*) is a theater artist with a passion for performance and movement. After graduating from Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Ciel moved back to the West Coast to earn her BA in theater from Willamette University. Very much a language and Shakespeare lover, some of her favorite recent roles include Malvolia in *Twelfth Night* (Willamette University) and Rosalind in *As You Like It* (Saltfire Theatre).

Playing Bradley in *Men on Boats* was Ciel's first role after high school, and she is delighted to be returning to the rapids full-circle for her first show after college.

Megan Haynes (*she/her*) is thrilled to be making her Newberg stage debut in this production. Originally from West Virginia, Megan arrived in Portland nearly seven years ago to attend The Actors Conservatory in Portland, after receiving a BA in Theatre from Miami University of Ohio. She has appeared in numerous productions in the Portland metro area, most recently as Chiron/Quintus - *Titus Andronicus* (Speculative Drama). Other past roles include: Ophelia - *Hamlet*, Benvolio - *Romeo and Juliet* (Salt & Sage Productions), Le Beau/Audrey - *As You Like It* (Oregon Adventure Theatre). She would like to thank William Shakespeare for all the work he has provided her to this point, as she puts him back on the shelf for a little while.

Cara Copeland (*she/her*) is in her second production with Gather Repertory (previously Myrtle Webb in *Our Town*) and is grateful for this opportunity! She and her family have called Newberg home for 24 years. By day she works for a nonprofit trying to make the world a better place to raise children. She has been telling stories through theater since she was a teenager and loves helping people find joy in living. Most days you can find her walking her dog around town with friends or tasting delicious drinks with her partner, Andy.

Marcus Praneetpolgrang (*they/he*) is currently a student at Portland State University studying graphic design. They used to do a lot of theater in high school but hasn't since, so he's excited to get back into it. Outside of theater, Marcus likes to rock climb at the Tigard Circuit Gym and hang out with the sheep on the farm!

Rommie Lynn (*she/her*) is a long-time Newbergian, works full-time at a local humanitarian aid organization, and is an occasional outdoor educator. She is excited and deeply grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the work that Gather Repertory is doing in Newberg. Rommie holds a BA in Theatre from George Fox University. Her favorite local acting credits include *Macbeth* (Banquo), *Uncle Vanya* (Sonja), *Julius Caesar* (Marc Antony), and *Eurydice* (Eurydice). If she isn't slinking around the stage, Rommie can be found making nostalgic playlists like it's a competitive sport, maintaining her status as Honey Pie Pizza's Number One Customer, and frequenting the local trivia night with her team, Rubber Chicken Nugget Red Light Green Light.

Charlotte Zenzano (*she/her*) has a background in classical ballet and is now pursuing more performing arts. After choreographing for and dancing in the short film "Midnight Rhythms" in 2021, she fell in love with being on set and being around other creatives. Since then, she has been taking classes and has acted in a couple short films. She is excited to perform in her very first play! Charlotte is currently an AP Specialist for a restaurant group and enjoys drawing and ballroom dancing in her spare time.

Olivia Cuddeford (*she/her*) is an actor in the greater Portland area who graduated with a degree in Theatre from George Fox University in 2019. She has always been interested in storytelling and loves

the communal nature of theatre as an art form. When she is not on stage you can find her running around outside with her perfect doggo, Orville.

Skylar Bastedo (*he/him*) is excited to join the cast of *Men on Boats* as Frank Goodman! He recently moved to the Beaverton area and has been loving it so far. Skylar is a freelance writer and environmental portraiture photographer, and has led many-a-panel educating others about LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent communities and their histories. Before coming to PDX, Skylar was part of the talented Ensemble in Harlequin Productions' *Love and Information*, and spent a season with Olympia Family Theatre as Jake in *The Delicious Revenge of Princess Rubyslippers*. He'd like to thank his parents and friends for encouraging him, and his black cat, Nori, for the snuggles.

Delia Xzamora Negrete (*they/them*) has been working with and for the Newberg community since the fall of 2020, supporting students in the Newberg School District before moving on to support lifelong learners through the Chehalem Cultural Center. They graduated from Bushnell University in 2017 with a degree in Music Industry and a focus in audio engineering, and worked in Nashville, TN in live sound, studio sound, and business marketing. They marked their return to theatre after 6 years by playing George Gibbs in Gather Repertory's first production, *Our Town*. Delia would like to thank Gather Repertory for that production, their partner, Cora (whom they met through *Our Town*), and Wayside Friends Church for their support, love, and friendship. They are proud to continue working in and for this community they've grown to be part of.

Cora Beeman* (*she/they*) is a founding company member with Gather Repertory and is stoked to be working on their second production with the company. Cora graduated from George Fox in 2019 and has gone to and fro between Washington and Oregon since - seeming to always end up back in the Berg. She has now settled down here in Newberg (as permanently as she'll admit) with her two cats, Oliver and O'Malley, and her partner, Delia. They would like to thank JeanneAnn, Brendan, and Reid for their constant work towards relevant storytelling - it's an honor to run this company with you all.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Sarah Aldrich (*she/her*) is a Director, Actor, and Playwright in Portland, Oregon. She graduated from George Fox with a degree in Theater (Theater Majors Never Say Die!) and since then has been working professionally as an actor with companies like Portland Actors Ensemble, Experience Theater Project, Pentacle, and most recently Broadway Rose as Lucy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. As a director her most recent credit was an original adaptation of *Macbeth* with all original music composed by her creative partner Nathaniel Rodrigues. The album was released on Spotify earlier this year ("Macbeth: What Man May Dare"). Sarah is thrilled and honored to be directing *Men on Boats* for Gather Repertory and can't wait for others to fall in love with it like she has.

Emma Schmitt (*she/her*) Is stage managing her second show for Gather Repertory this season. Emma has a particular passion for arts administration and community engagement. She is a huge believer in the Arts and their ability to enact substantial and lasting change in our community. "As a 'visual' artist, it has been a thrill to work alongside theatre artists and performers, I am constantly impressed by the radical inclusion, integrity, and ingenuity of theatre artists. I am honored to support our artist's talents and work alongside Gather Repertory again." Emma currently works as a Studio & Gallery Director at Artist Block Wine's tasting room in Dundee, OR. She would like to extend special thanks to her partner, Hannah for her constant support and encouragement of her career in the arts.

Shanon Keehn (*she/they*) is a familiar face around Newberg, having received her BA in Theatre from George Fox University. This is her first time working with Gather Repertory, but Assistant Stage Manager has always been her favorite position so she's not nervous. Along with taking on the role of understudy, Shanon certainly has found the best of both worlds! Her credits include stage managing for Lakewood Theatre's *The Ghost of David Belasco*, and GFU's first virtual production, *Silent Sky*, as well as assistant stage managing for Renegade Opera's production of *Tito*. When she's not working, Shanon enjoys singing on her church's worship team and on her occasional day off will road trip to fun places around the PNW. She is incredibly excited about this opportunity to hone her skills and wants to thank her friends for all of their support.

Nathan Thrasher (*he/him*) is a freshman in college studying lighting design and architecture. He went to Newberg highschool where he a ran sound for their musicals, after highschool he began working in theaters around the Portland metro area doing everything from lights to sound. When he is not backstage you can find him outdoors snowboarding or hiking.

Marlyss Fry (*she/her*) is a lifelong Oregon resident with a love for all things creative. She has always had a particular fondness for theatre, whether it be acting, assisting backstage, costume construction or hair and makeup design. This is the first production she has worked on since graduating from George Fox University in 2018. She is grateful for the no-reservations-given encouragement from her husband to accept this project, and to her 11-month old for letting her step into other facets of being. When not working on this production or caring for her kiddo, Marlyss can be found managing the Club at Durant Vineyards in Dayton, OR.

JeanneAnn Comiskey (*she/her*) is the Artistic Director of Gather Repertory. She has her BA in theatre from George Fox University where she has since also taught and directed. Her Portland area theatre credits include working with Third Rail Repertory, Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble, Profile Theatre, and Penguin Productions. By day she is the Community Engagement Coordinator at The Chehalem Cultural Center in Newberg. She is proud to be Lebanese and an LGBTQ2SIA+ ally.

Reid Arthur (*he/him*) has been a member of the Newberg community since 2016 and graduated with his bachelor's degree in theatre with a concentration in acting/directing at George Fox University. A performer at heart, he's appeared in shows at George Fox, Portland, and Florida, where he performed in shows and parades at Walt Disney World. In 2019 he came out publicly as gay during GFU's annual lip sync competition—the resulting visibility allowed him to meet, connect and grow with the queer community in Newberg and has given him the privilege of working with organizations like Table 14 and Pflag that strive to serve the LGBTQIA+ community.

Hunter Price (*he/him*) is a Theatre Maker, visual artist, and rock climber from Sandpoint Idaho. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Idaho in 2016. Hunter recently moved to Portland Oregon after spending 4 years in Chicago creating plays with The Neighborhood Theatre. Hunter serves his community as an actor, designer, director and playwright. Like theatrical duct-tape, slap him anywhere, he's just happy to help. In the great pause of 2020/23 hunter has been dreaming of finding his way back into a room to make plays and is honored to be a collaborator with Gather Rep for his first show back. When not daydreaming, you can find Hunter hunched over his desk making collages or climbing at Movement Gyms Portland where he also works the front desk!

Chloe Blair (*she/her*) has lived in Newberg since moving from Kentucky in 2014. A Newberg high school alum, she helped in their theater productions as a tech, as well as having a few small acting roles. She's so happy that Gather has allowed her to participate in this production, as well as their last one so that she can gain more experience and just have some fun. She is a current student at PCC and hopes to transfer to a school to study set design for film.

Michael Buss (*he/him*) Human by name, punk by design, and chaser of the novelty of life. He's been on a journey to learn the art of video design and production since before the advent of social media. He taught himself the ins and outs of audio design in the mid 2015s while working on a youtube channel but quickly found the design and editing process far more intoxicating than the content he was working on. He is overjoyed to return to a Gather Repertory production after getting the opportunity to work with them as an actor last season. When not working in theatre, Michael works as a network technician for Oregon Child Development Coalition, adventuring with his partner Sarah, and juggling running several D&D campaigns.

Rowan Lowery (*he/him*) is an 18 year old senior at newberg highschool who spends his time playing viola and working In The theater. Rowan has lived in newberg for his entire life and currently works in the restaurant at the Allison here in town. He plans to attend Pacific University next year to further his music education and eventually study sound engineering.

Brendan Comiskey (*he/him*) is a writer, a playwright, and a poet. He graduated from George Fox University in English and Communication (19') and went on to complete a Master of Arts in Teaching (20'). He is the Executive Director and resident Dramaturg of Gather Repertory, and currently works at the Chehalem Cultural Center. With design credits on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Oliver!* and *Our Town*, he is forever grateful to be telling stories and building relationships with the wonderful people involved in this production.

Dandelion Johnstone (*they/them*) has been involved in theater since freshman year of highschool, and has designed props for Newberg High School, namely *Spongebob* and *Little Women the musical*. They love to source and build little nick-nacks, and to create cartoonish pieces for actors to interact with on stage. Dandy will attend SOU this fall, majoring in theatre.



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by William Shakespeare
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28-29 at 7pm

Almost, Maine
by John Cusani
August 18-19, 25-26
September 1-2 at 7pm

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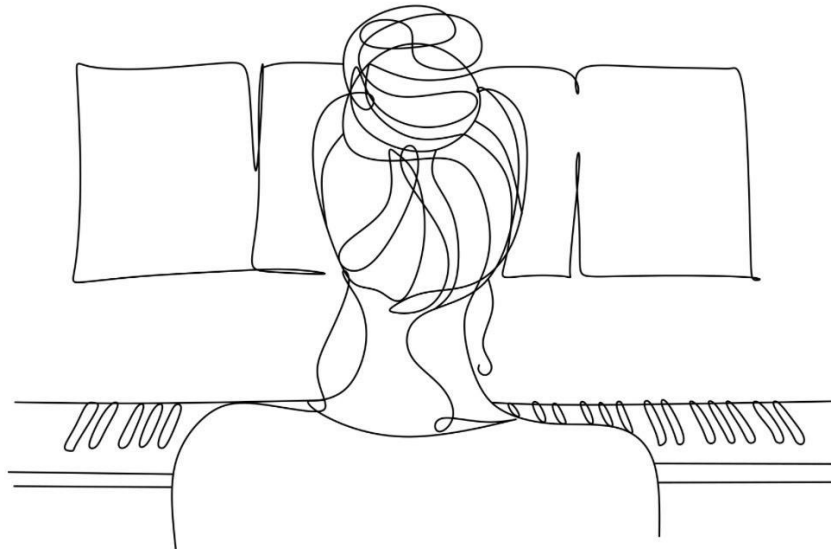
By Sarah Treem

Auditions June 12th 6-10pm

Chehalem Cultural Center Black Box or via video

Callbacks June 14th 6-10pm

Chehalem Cultural Center Black Box



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Gather Repertory aims *to bring the community together through sharing purposeful stories that foster equity, develop curiosity, and celebrate life.*

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Playwrights Horizons, Inc. and Clubbed Thumb produced
MEN ON BOATS in New York City, 2016

Initially developed and produced by Clubbed Thumb in 2015