



BOSTON
CENTER
FOR THE
ARTS

MEN ON BOATS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: August 7, 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jim Torres - 617.529.1670

PRESS DATE: *Sunday, Sept. 10 – 3PM or by request. Sign up [here](#).*

AUTHOR VISIT: *Jaclyn Backhaus will give a talkback following the Wed. 9/27 performance.*

(BOSTON) – From September 8 to October 7, 2017, SpeakEasy Stage Company will proudly present the Boston-area premiere of **MEN ON BOATS**, a comic adventure tale about an actual 1869 expedition to chart the Colorado River, brought thrillingly to life by a diverse non-male cast.

The play is the work of Brooklyn resident Jaclyn Backhaus, who stipulates that, while the characters in the play were historically cisgender white males, the cast should be made up entirely of people who are not. “I am talking about racially diverse actors who are female-identifying, trans-identifying, genderfluid, and/or non-gender-conforming,” notes the playwright in the script.

The result is a hilarious historical pageant that offers both a provocative and contemporary lens through which to view our shared past.

Somerville resident Dawn M. Simmons will direct SpeakEasy’s Boston Premiere production of **MEN ON BOATS**. In addition to her many directing credits, Ms. Simmons is co-Artistic Director of New Exhibition Room, Artistic Lead with The Front Porch Theatre Collective, a member of the StageSource Board, and Director of Performing Arts for Boston Center for the Arts.

To go on this journey with her, Ms. Simmons has assembled a talented crew of Boston-based actors: Lyndsay Allyn Cox, Ally Dawson, Veronika Duerr, Bridgette Hayes, Alice Kabia, Mal Malme, Cody Sloan, Robin Javonne Smith, Hayley Spivey, and Ellie van Amerongen.

The all-female design team is Jenna McFarland (scenic); Rachel Padula-Shufelt (costumes); Daisy Long (lighting); and Elizabeth Cahill (sound).

Samantha Layco is the Production Stage Manager. Simmons will be assisted by Sloth Levine.

MEN ON BOATS will run for five weeks, from September 8 through October 7, in the Roberts Studio Theatre in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont Street in Boston’s South End.

Ticket prices start at \$25, with discounts for students, seniors, and persons aged 25 and under.

For tickets or more information, the public is invited to call the box office at **617.933.8600** or visit **www.SpeakEasyStage.com**.

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Show History

MEN ON BOATS was originally produced by the Off Off Broadway company Clubbed Thumb at the Wild Project Theater in June 2015 as part of the theater's annual Summerworks festival. The show was then remounted in July 2016 at Playwrights Horizons for a one-month limited engagement.

Artist Information

JACLYN BACKHAUS (Playwright) is a playwright and a creative director for Fresh Ground Pepper. Her play **MEN ON BOATS** was a NYT Critics' Pick (Clubbed Thumb's Summerworks, Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons) and was nominated for the John Gassner Playwriting Award by the Outer Critics Circle. Her other works include **YOU ON THE MOORS NOW** (Theater Reconstruction Ensemble, The Hypocrites in Chicago) and the upcoming musical **FOLK WANDERING** (Pipeline, Spring 2018). She was the 2016 Tow Foundation Playwright-in-Residence at Clubbed Thumb. Her work has been developed and showcased with the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival, Playwrights Horizons, NYTW, MTC, EST, Ars Nova, The Public, The Civilians R&D Group, SPACE on Ryder Farm, and Live Source. BFA: NYU. She hails from Phoenix, Arizona.

DAWN M. SIMMONS (Director) is so excited to be making her SpeakEasy Stage Debut. Dawn is a playwright, director, and arts administrator living in Somerville, MA. She is Co-artistic Director of New Exhibition Room, Artistic Lead with The Front Porch Theatre Collective, a member of the StageSource Board, and Director of Performing Arts for the Boston Center for the Arts. Her directing and writing credits include work with Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Bad Habit Productions, Anthem Theatre, Boston Public Works, Lyric Stage Company, New Exhibition Room, Suffolk University, Fresh Ink Theatre, Dorchester Fringe Festival, GAN-e-meed Theatre Project, The Theatre Offensive, Our Place Theatre Project, Mill 6, Actors Refuge Repertory Theatre, Fort Point Theatre Channel, Boston Theatre Works, and As Yet To Be Theatre.

Actor Information

LYNDSAY ALLYN COX (O.G. Howland/Tsauwiat) is pleased to make her SpeakEasy debut. Recent Boston acting credits include *Barbecue*; *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Lyric Stage); *Zombie Double Feature*, *It Happened...We Can't Say When* (New Exhibition Room); *Dearly Departed*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Intimate Apparel*, *All in the Timing* (The Footlight Club); *The Overwhelming* (Company One); *The Heidi Chronicles* (Longwood Players); and *ClimACTS* (The Theater Offensive). Directing credits include work with The Theater Offensive, Fresh Ink, and Another Country Productions. Lyndsay is also the Public Relations and Media Director for Fresh Ink Theatre Company. She studied acting at Appalachian State University and the University of Florida, and holds a BA in Theatre Performance.

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Actor Information (cont.)

ALLY DAWSON (Hawkins) returns to SpeakEasy, having played Emma last season in *Grand Concourse*. Previous credits include: *I Am Lear* (Actors' Shakespeare Project); *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* and *The Chronicles of Kalki* (Company One); *That Time the House Burned Down* (Fresh Ink Theatre); *Luna Gale* (Stoneham Theatre); and *Baltimore* (New Repertory Theatre & Boston University). Ally holds a BFA in Acting from Boston University. Thank you to SpeakEasy and the cast for being a wonderful group to collaborate with always. allydawson.com

VERONIKA DUERR* (William Dunn) is thrilled to be making her SpeakEasy debut. She is a proud member of Actors' Equity and the founder of The Weird Sisters Theatre Project in Atlanta, GA (www.theweirdsisters.org). Since graduating from the Savannah College of Art and Design with a BFA in Theatre, Veronika has lived and worked in NYC, LA, Atlanta, and now Boston. Her New England credits include work at Merrimack Repertory Theatre in Lowell; and next spring, she can be seen onstage at New Repertory Theatre. Thank you for supporting live theatre!

BRIDGETTE HAYES (John Colton Sumner) is delighted to make her SpeakEasy debut. In addition to acting, she works as a designer, dramaturg, and teaching artist, and is an Artistic Associate at Bridge Repertory Theater. She has performed Off-Broadway in *The Contrast*. Other recent credits include *Dog Paddle*, *Julius Caesar* (Bridge Rep); *An Octoroon* (Company One/Arts Emerson); *How Soft the Lining* (Bad Habit Productions); *The Love of the Nightingale* (Hub Theatre Company); and *Radium Girls* (Flat Earth Theatre). Bridgette studied at LAMDA and received her BFA in Acting from Boston University. She is pursuing a Masters in Dramatic Arts at Harvard.

ALICE KABIA (Hall) is a senior at Boston University majoring in Theatre Arts. They are thrilled to be making their SpeakEasy debut, and would like to thank the Boston University School of Theatre faculty and the *Men on Boats* creative team for this incredible opportunity. Other credits include *Baltimore*, *Prometheus Bound*, and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Boston University). Alice would also like to thank their friends and family for their continued love and support throughout this process.

MAL MALME (Old Shady) is thrilled to be making their SpeakEasy debut. Mal has also appeared with Company One, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, The Theater Offensive, and Fresh Ink. Mal is co-founder of Queer Soup Theater, which is currently touring *The Pineapple Project*, a play for kids about gender diversity, created and performed by Mal and Becca A. Lewis. Mal is honored to serve on the Board of StageSource.

CODY SLOAN (Frank Goodman/Mr. Asa) is excited to make his SpeakEasy debut. Recent credits include: *Amadeus* (Moonbox Productions); *Gay Shorts* (Open Theatre Project); *Daughter of Venus* (Artists' Theater of Boston); *The Extraordinary Fall of the Four-Legged Woman* (NY Fringe Festival); *This is Our Youth*, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, and *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Boston University). He is proud to have studied at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting and the American Conservatory Theater. Tons of love to Charley and Caroline. To Joan, I love you and couldn't do any of this without you. www.codydsloan.com

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Actor Information (cont.)

ROBIN JAVONNE SMITH (John Wesley Powell) is delighted to make her SpeakEasy debut. She is a company member of Beau Jest Moving Theatre and Ryan Landry's Gold Dust Orphans. Robin has also worked with Theatre on Fire, Actors' Shakespeare Project, Fort Point Theatre Channel, and Bad Habit Productions. Robin is a graduate of Bowdoin College and studied at the British American Drama Academy in London.

HAYLEY SPIVEY (Bradley) is honored to make her SpeakEasy debut with *Men on Boats*. She is a graduate of Boston University with a BFA in Theatre Arts. Her studies focused on acting, playwriting, and dramaturgy. Her most recent performance was in *Don't Give Up the Ship* (Fresh Ink Theatre). Her acting credits at Boston University include *After the Fall*, *For Colored Girls...*, and *Big Love*. When she's not acting, Hayley is an avid playwright and screenwriter. She can't wait for the future projects to come.

ELLIE VAN AMERONGEN (Seneca Howland, The Bishop) is excited to make her SpeakEasy debut in *Men on Boats*! She is a senior Musical Theater major at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee with an emphasis in songwriting. Previous regional roles include Father Toulon in *Red Noses* and Green Lady in *The Skriker* (The Boston Conservatory). She would like to thank her family, friends, and teachers for their constant support. Find her on SoundCloud @ellievanam!

For tickets or more information on **MEN ON BOATS**, the public can call the BostonTheatreScene Box Office at 617.933.8600 or visit www.SpeakEasyStage.com.

Press inquiries should be directed to **Marketing & Communications Director Jim Torres**:
Office: 617.482.3279 Cell: 617.529.1670 Email: JimTorres@SpeakEasyStage.com

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MEN ON BOATS by Jaclyn Backhaus

Presented by: SpeakEasy Stage Company, the Calderwood Pavilion Resident Theatre Company at the Boston Center for the Arts; Paul Daigneault, Producing Artistic Director

MEN ON BOATS is a rollicking adventure tale brought thrillingly to life by a gender-bending cast of diverse performers who tell the tale of an actual 1869 expedition to chart the Colorado River. Comedic but never camp, pointed but never political, this rousing historical saga offers a provocative new lens through which to view our shared past.

Cast: Ally Dawson, Veronika Duerr, Bridgette Hayes, Lyndsay Allyn Cox, Alice Kabia, Mal Malme, Cody Sloan, Robin JaVonne Smith, Hayley Spivey, Ellie van Amerongen

Director: Dawn M. Simmons

Design Team: Scenic: Jenna McFarland Lord
Costumes: Rachel Padula-Shufelt
Lighting: Daisy Long
Sound: Elizabeth Cahill

Production Stage Manager: Samantha Layco

Performing at: The Roberts Studio Theatre
in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts,
527 Tremont Street in Boston's South End

Performance Schedule: September 8 – October 7, 2016
Wed. & Thurs. at 7:30PM; Fri. at 8PM; Sat. at 4 & 8PM;
Sun. at 3PM. Additional performance Thursday, Oct. 5 at 2PM.

Estimated Run Time: 100 minutes without intermission

Ticket Prices: Tickets start at \$25. Seniors: \$5 off at all times except gallery seats. Age 25 and under: \$25 at all times.

Student Rush: \$15 with valid college ID, in person at the box-office only, two hours before curtain, subject to availability. Limit – one rush ticket per valid ID.

Box Office: 617.933.8600; www.SpeakEasyStage.com

Press Contact Only: Jim Torres – 617.529.1670 (cell – not for publication)

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