



***Men On Boats***

By Jaclyn Backhaus

Directed by Mary Beth Easley

David Thayer Theatre | UI Theatre Building

Please be advised that this play contains strong language, gunshots, and theatrical weapons.

1869 - Four boats chart a course down the Colorado River toward the Grand Canyon. Led by John Wesley Powell, the eclectic and confident explorers face treacherous conditions, raging rapids, and ever-depleting rations. Jaclyn Backhaus's comedy *Men on Boats* explores masculinity, bravery, and legacy in this atypical history play—all while in boats!

**Tickets:**

Tickets are available through the [Hancher Box Office website](#) or by calling 319-335-1160.

**Performances:**

Friday, November 3 at 8:00 P.M.

Saturday, November 4 at 8:00 P.M.

Sunday, November 5 at 2:00 P.M.

Wednesday, November 8 at 8:00 P.M.

Thursday, November 9 at 8:00 P.M.

Friday, November 10 at 8:00 P.M.

Saturday, November 11 at 8:00 P.M.

# Meet the Cast

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**John Wesley Powell | SARAH  
GAZDOWICZ**

Sarah is so excited to be a part of what is a dream show for her! Sarah graduated from UIowa in May with an MFA in directing: recent directing work at the University includes *Pierogi Play*, *The Bacchae*, and *small hours* (Iowa Director's Festival). Recent acting work includes Amber in *You're Still Here* (NPF) and Malvolia in *Twelfth Night* (Riverside Theatre). Thank you to Mary Beth and love to Bob and Topsy!



**William Dunn | KAT GUERRERO**

Kathleen M. Guerrero is a second-year MFA Acting Candidate from Crystal City, Texas. She is a recent graduate of The University of Texas at Austin's Theatre and Dance Department. Her recent credits include *Braided Sorrow* directed by Natalie Villamonte Zito, *The Bacchae* directed by Sarah Gazdowicz, *England's Splendid Daughters* by Ann Kreitman, *This Is Life* by Frances Garnett and Kathleen Guerrero, *La Ruta* by Issac Gomez, *Three to Five Days* by Olivia Clement, and much more. She would like to thank her friends,

family, and faculty for helping her get to where she is now. Gracias por todo!

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**O.G. Howland | PIPER EAGLE\***

Piper Eagle is a fourth-year undergraduate student studying Criminology and Ethics & Public Policy. She has done theatre throughout elementary, middle, and high school, however, *Men on Boats* will be her first performance at the university. She is excited to take part in performing arts at Iowa and play a man on a boat.



**Seneca Howland | MADELINE  
"MADDIE" RODRIGUEZ\***

Madeline Rodriguez (she/her/hers) is a sophomore majoring in Theater and Ethics & Public Policy. Originally from Georgetown, Texas, her work and training include Zach Scott Theater (Austin), Zilker Theater (Austin), Georgetown Palace Theater (Georgetown), and various commercial and independent film projects. Her past productions at the university include *Mother:Knife* and *Braided Sorrow*. She is thrilled to be working on such a unique show with a cast and creative

term of talented and incredible women. Oars up, oars out, and..... we truly begin!

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**John Colton Sumner | ASHA KELLER\***

Asha Keller is very excited in her last year to be in her fifth show overall and second Mainstage at the University of Iowa. She was previously in *BLKS* and most recently in *Lil G: A Gatsby Remix* as part of the New Play Festival. Asha would like to thank her family and friends for their support, and she's so excited to challenge herself in this play!



**Andrew Hall | AVA BURMAHL\***

Ava Burmahl is a first-year undergraduate student at the University of Iowa, and this is her first production as a college student. Some of her favorite previous roles include Shakespeare in *Something Rotten!*, Natalie in *All Shook Up*, and Heather Chandler in *Heathers*. When not participating in theatre, Ava enjoys practicing visual arts and making music. She thanks the cast of *Men on Boats* for being so welcoming and fun to work with, and she hopes you enjoy the show!

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**Old Shady | HOLLAND LARNED\***

Holland is a third-year theatre major at the university. This is her fourth time on UIowa's stages after *The Bacchae*, *Childish Hearts*, and *Fathers and Sons*. She would like to thank her cat Snowball for all his support— he would absolutely love to share tin fish with Old Shady.



**William Robert Hawkins | EMMA SCHROEDER\***

Emma Schroeder is ready to transform into William Hawkins and traverse the raging rivers of the Big Canyon. Although she is nervous about her boating skills and the pains of rowing, she is confident that she'll survive with the help of her fellow boatmates and the wonderful crew aboard this play.

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**Frank Goodman | ABBY PAUL\***

Abby Paul is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in Cinema and Theatre Arts. Abby is thrilled to be in her first mainstage show and be able to assist in costume design at the same time! She is very thankful for everyone who has helped bring this show together, and Jenny Kelchen for her mentorship.



**George Young Bradley | ALICE CONROY\***

This is Alice Conroy's 5th production at the University of Iowa, and she is so excited to be playing Bradley. For this production, Alice tested out her method acting skills and spent the entire semester on a boat pretending to be a man. In her own words, "The waters were rough but life sure got easier as a man". Alice would like to thank her parents because if she hadn't grown up on the song "Row Row Row Your Boat" this show would not be possible. Enjoy the show!

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# Meet the Creative Team

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**Director | MARY BETH EASLEY**

Mary Beth Easley is head of directing in the Department of Theatre Arts. From 2006–2018, she was Artistic Director of the CUNY-Brooklyn College Department of Theater. Focusing on new play development, intercultural theatre expression, and outreach to under-represented urban and rural communities, Ms. Easley has been directing plays, coaching, and teaching acting for many years. She has directed Off-Broadway and in regional theatres throughout the United States. In NYC, her work has been

featured at The Bushwick Starr, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Circle Rep, The Women’s Project, The New Federal Theater, and LaMama ETC, among others.



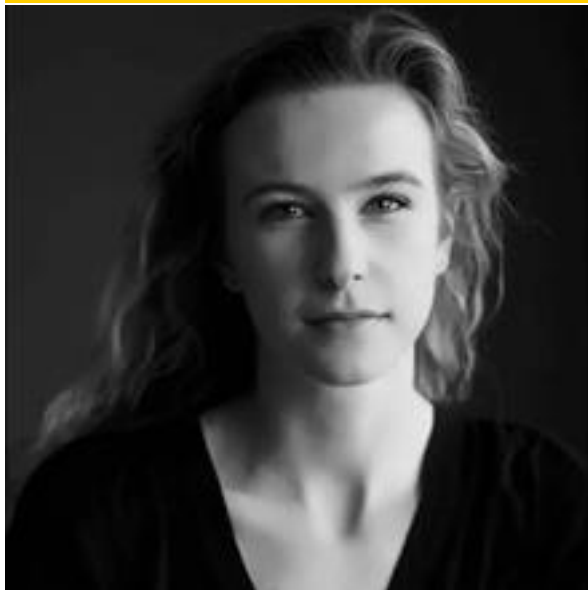
**Movement Director | JOHANNA KASIMOW**

Johanna Kasimow is an Assistant Professor of Directing in the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Iowa. Her recent creative research focuses on the interplay of clown and affect in performance in a new play titled *The Grüb*, which probes the sensations of hiding, trans-generational inheritance, and the rhythms of survival in an underground pit. Johanna has worked with artists and theatre companies across the US, including: Pig Iron Theatre Company,

The Eva Steinmetz Project, Antigravity Performance Project, Tiny Circus, Theatre Horizon, and New Paradise Laboratories. Recently, Johanna directed *City In Heat*, a site-specific live cinema performance piece, as part of the Open Air Media Festival at Public Space One in Iowa City. Her teaching and research has focused on clown and mask; civic and social practice art; community-based theatre; theatre of the climate crisis; and contemporary performance. Johanna received an MFA in Devised Performance from the University of the Arts/Pig Iron School in Philadelphia.

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**Dramaturg | MARGARET SMITH**

BA(hons) English Literature & Theatre Studies from The University of Sheffield  
MA Theatre Criticism & Dramaturgy from Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, University of London. Margaret (She/Her) is a first-year MFA candidate in Dramaturgy. Her most recent credits include *Fahrenheit 451* (CDT, Complicité), *A Bright Room Called Day* (Collaborazione), *Scenes from an Execution* (Dear Hunter Theatre), and the premiere of *W.E.T.* (CSSD). She hopes you enjoy the show.



**Stage Manager | MEENAKSHI CHINMAI**

Meenakshi is a second-year MFA stage manager. She has been involved in several production in India from a very young age. Her love for theatre started from acting in several children's plays, but things took a turn and her passion for stage management started when she met her mentor Dr. Terry John Converse, Emeritus professor Washington State University. She is very happy and proud to be a part of the UIowa stage management cohort. She is very grateful

to her mother Charu and mentor Terry Converse for being such a strong influence in her life and supporting her in pursuing a career in theatre.

She is grateful to be a part of such an amazing play with a full strong and independent female cast for her first mainstage production at UIowa. She extends her heartfelt gratitude to her professors, friends, ASM, and the whole team behind *Men on Boats*. **Enjoy the Show!**

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**Scenic Designer | CHLOE COBB**

Chloe is a second-year Theatre Arts MFA student with a focus in scenic design. Hailing from the Grand Canyon state, they are so excited to bring a slice of the Grand Canyon to the midwest. Previous projects at Iowa include scenic design for *Ugly Lies the Bone* as part of the mainstage season, and *Fathers and Sons* for New Play Festival. In the spring, Chloe will be designing the set for *Into the Woods*.



**Costume Designer | JENNY NUTTING KELCHEN**

Jenny Nutting Kelchen is a costume designer and visual artist, as well as Resident Costume Designer, Costume Studio Director, and Lecturer for the Cornell College Department of Theatre and Dance. Jenny received her B.A. in Studio Art from UNI and her M.F.A. in Theatre Design from the University of Iowa. Jenny has designed costumes for Cornell College, Riverside Theatre, Old Creamery Theatre Company, UNI, Grinnell College, Coe College, Iowa

Summer Rep, Working Group Theatre, Theatre Cedar Rapids, and La MaMa Etc. *Men on Boats* is Jenny's fifth production with Mary Beth and is a full circle moment as this is Jenny's 100th mainstage production design, with her first being at the University of Iowa some 20 years ago. Cheers to this amazing team and cast!

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**Sound Designer | MARK BRUCKNER**

Mark Bruckner (Sound Designer, Songwriter, Vocal Coach) is a New York Innovative Theater, Audelco Award-winning composer, and Henry Hewes American Theatre Wing design nominee. Recent work: Original Music and Sound Design for *Ugly Lies the Bone* (directed by Mary Beth Easley, Spr 2023 Mabie Theatre); Music Direction, Conductor, and Arranger for *Something Rotten* (directed by Jonathan Hadley, Spr 2023 Mabie Theatre); Original music and music director for *The Bacchae* (directed

by Sarah Gazdowicz, Thayer Theatre, Fall 2022); Original music and sound design for *The Marriage of Alice B. Toklas by Gertrude Stein* by Edward Einhorn (Jermyn Street Theatre, West End London, UK, March 2022); Original music and ambisonic sound design for *Body Concert* by Kevin Augustine of Lone Wolf Tribe which just received the Grand Prize for Best production at the 17th International Lalka Też Człowiek festival in Warsaw, Poland. Visit [www.markbruckner.ne](http://www.markbruckner.ne)



**Lighting Designer | JEFFREY OAKLEY**

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**Assistant Movement Director | BRADY VAN PATTEN**

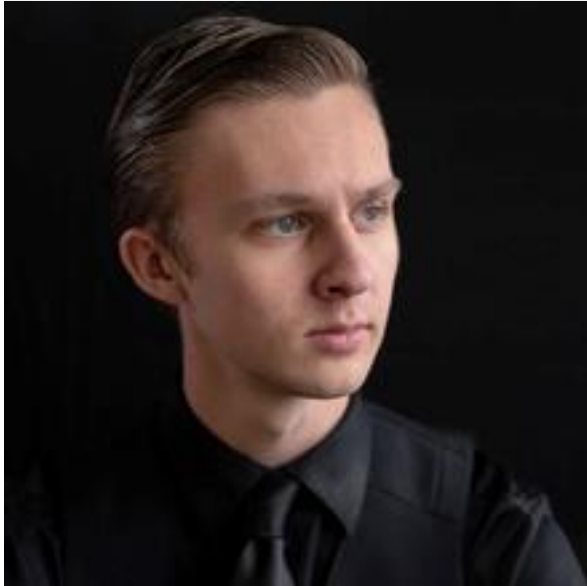
Brady Van Patten is a queer Chicago based physical theatre performer and creator, presently a Master of Fine Arts graduate student at the University of Iowa with a choreographic emphasis. Existing at the intersection of theatre and dance, Van Patten as a creator seeks to continuously celebrate queer stories in ways that exist and challenge heteronormative political and social constraints by celebrating queer spirit. Van Patten's recent performances

include *One Giant Leap*, an evening length clown show through collaboration with the University of Iowa's Department of Theatre Arts and *Another Stage of Staging Ourselves*, a collaborative project that explores the complexities of queer, male friendships presented at The Witching Hour Festival by the Englert Theatre.

In Chicago, Van Patten has guest performed his original work with The Neo-Futurist Theater Company in The Infinite Wrench Pride Show. He has created and performed original works for spaces including the Harvest Chicago Contemporary Dance Festival at the Ruth Page Center of Performing Arts, Heels Overhead festival at The iO Theater, and THAWALLS at Links Hall and Navy Pier. Collaboraction Theatre Company in the PeaceBook Project under the director of Kacie Smith and Ben Wardell, Kelly Anderson Dance Theater, Carson Reiners, Jennifer Kayle at The Harvest Chicago Contemporary Dance Festival, Comedy Dance Chicago, and invited workshop guest for Lucky Plush Productions.

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**Assistant Stage Manager | JACKSON J. KOPESKY**

Jackson J. Kopesky is an alumnus of the University of Iowa. His thanks go to Cosette, whose faith in him never wavered.



**Assistant Costume Designer | ABBY PAUL\***

Abby Paul is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in Cinema and Theatre Arts. Abby is thrilled to be in her first mainstage show and be able to assist in costume design at the same time! She is very thankful for everyone who has helped bring this show together, and Jenny Kelchen for her mentorship.

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Deck Crew Captain	Niyati Deshpande*
Wardrobe Crew Captain	Alice Webster*
Light Board Operator	Trinity Christofferson*
QLab Operator/SBO	Molly Costello*
	Riley Atwood*
Deck Crew	Joseph Lepire*
	Kolton Stremmer*
	John Stinson*
	Jason Vernon*
Wardrobe Crew	Jennifer Hogan*
	Hannah Shade*

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