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“Men on Boats is off-the-canyon-walls funny”—Chicago Tribune

“A thrilling, gender-flipped slice of Manifest Destiny”—Time Out New York

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER ANNOUNCES CASTING FOR MEN ON BOATS, JACLYN BACKHAUS’S SUBVERSIVE RETELLING OF 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN EXPLORERS

A.C.T.’s Strand Theater
October 17–December 16, 2018

SAN FRANCISCO (August 30, 2018)—American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon announced today casting for Men on Boats—Jaclyn Backhaus’s hilarious, historical, and moving adventure—playing at A.C.T.’s Strand Theater (1127 Market St., San Francisco) October 17–December 16, 2018. Spinning historical, theatrical, and gender conventions on their heads, this subversive tale of ten men, four boats, and two rivers contains none of the above. Pack your gear for this 21st-century theatrical spin on 19th-century American explorer and one-armed Civil War veteran John Wesley Powell, who assembles a brawny and eclectic band of men—soldiers, trappers, and adventurers—to explore Wyoming’s waterways. Inspired by Powell’s actual travel log from 1869, Jaclyn Backhaus’s nimble and ingenious script is provocative, laugh-out-loud theater, performed by a cast of women who infuse America’s historic myths of male conquest with a sly blast of subtext. With the speed and force of white-water rapids, Backhaus conjures her epic story—in which simple materials are transformed into perilous canyons and death-defying cliffs—out of movement and sheer imagination, shaping an innovative and innately theatrical play that became an off-Broadway sensation. Press nights for Men on Boats will be held on Thursday, November 1 and Friday, November 2, 2018. Single tickets (ranging from $15–$110) are available at the A.C.T. Box Office at 415.749.2228 or online at www.act-sf.org. Ticket prices are subject to change without notice.

“I am passionate about plays that push the theatrical form,” says MacKinnon. “First produced by the New York downtown theater company Clubbed Thumb—which gave me my start as a director—Men on Boats is such a
A troupe of ten amazing Bay Area–based, female-identifying performers bring to life John Wesley Powell’s 1869 expedition to discover the Grand Canyon. It is a harrowing and outrageously fun adventure!”

Under the direction of Tamilla Woodard (co-founder of PopUP Theatrics; Artistic Director of The Five Boroughs/One City Initiative at Working Theater), Men on Boats features a cast of ten local San Francisco Bay Area actors. They are (in alphabetical order): Arwen Anderson (King Lear at California Shakespeare Theater; Hamlet at Marin Shakespeare Company), Rosie Hallett (Red Speedo at Center REPertory Company; Thomas and Sally at Marin Theatre Company), Lisa Hori-Garcia (The Gangster of Love at Magic Theatre; Snow Queen at Marin Theatre Company), Libby King (RooseElvis at The TEAM; Uncle Vanya at East 13th Street Theatre), Amy Lizardo (The Unfortunates at A.C.T.; Quijote Nuevo at California Shakespeare Theater), Sarita Ocón (Twelfth Night at California Shakespeare Theater; Ghost Light at Berkeley Repertory Theatre), Annemaria Rajala (A Little Night Music at A.C.T.; Our Enemies at Golden Thread Productions), Katherine Romans (A.C.T. M.F.A student; The Importance of Being Earnest at Livermore Shakespeare Festival), Liz Sklar (A.C.T. M.F.A. graduate; Seagull at Marin Theatre Company), and Lauren Spencer (King Charles III at A.C.T.; Anne Boleyn at Marin Theatre Company).

The creative team for Men on Boats includes Nina Ball (Scenic Designer), Christine Crook (Costume Designer), Robert Hand (Lighting Designer), and Kate Marvin (Sound Designer).

In connection with Men on Boats, A.C.T. will offer numerous InterACT events—many of which are presented free of charge—that will give patrons opportunities to get closer to the action while having an entire night out at the theater. Visit act-sf.org/interact to learn more about subscribing to these events throughout the season:

- **Bike to the Theater Night:**
  **Wednesday, October 17, 6:30 p.m.**
  Providing a greener alternative to theater transportation, A.C.T. and the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition offer free valet bike parking, as well as a special discount on tickets, for these select performances.

- **Prologue:**
  **Tuesday, October 30, 5:30 p.m.**
  Before the curtain goes up, get a sneak peek at the artistic process at this fascinating preshow discussion with the director and artistic staff.

- **Audience Exchanges:**
  **Tuesday, November 6, 7 p.m. | Sunday, November 25, 2 p.m. | Wednesday, November 28, 2 p.m.**
  After the show, stick around for a lively Q&A session with the actors and artists who create the work onstage.

- **OUT with A.C.T.**:
  **Wednesday, November 7, following the 7:30 p.m. performance**
  The best LGBT night in town! Mingle with the cast and enjoy free drinks and treats at this popular after-party.

- **Theater on the Couch:**
  **Friday, November 9, following the 7:30 p.m. performance**
  This exciting postshow discussion series addresses audience questions and explores the minds, motives, and behavior of the characters.
- **Wente Vineyards Wine Series:**
  *Tuesday, November 20, 6:30 p.m.*
  Before the show, raise a glass at this wine-tasting event featuring the Bay Area’s hottest local winery.

- **PlayTime:**
  *Saturday, December 8, 12:45 p.m.*
  Before this matinee performance, get hands-on with the artists who make it happen at this interactive theater workshop.

A.C.T.’s production of *Men on Boats* is made possible by associate producers Linda K. Brewer; Dr. Allan P. Gold and Mr. Alan C. Ferrara; and Robina Riccitiello.

A.C.T. would like to acknowledge its 2018–19 season presenters Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson; Priscilla and Keith Geeslin; James C. Hormel and Michael P. Nguyen; Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston, The Shenson Foundation; Toni Rembe and Arthur Rock; Robina Riccitiello; Jeff and Laurie Ubben; and Kay Yun and Andre Neumann-Loreck.

A.C.T. would also like to acknowledge its 2018–19 company sponsors Ray and Dagmar Dolby Family Fund; Frannie Fleishacker; Kevin and Celeste Ford; Mr. and Mrs. Gordon P. Getty; Jeri Lynn and Jeffrey W. Johnson; Burt and Deedee McMurtry; Patti and Rusty Rueff; Mary and Steven Swig; Jack and Susy Wadsworth; and Barry Williams and Lalita Tademy.

Additional support provided by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; PG&E; The Shubert Foundation; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; San Francisco Grants for the Arts; and Wells Fargo.

FACT SHEET FOR MEN ON BOATS

WHAT:
Spinning historical, theatrical, and gender conventions on their heads, this subversive tale of ten men, four boats, and two rivers contains none of the above. Pack your gear for this 21st-century telling of 19th-century American explorer and one-armed Civil War veteran John Wesley Powell, who assembles a brawny band of soldiers, trappers, and adventurers to explore Wyoming’s waterways. Inspired by Powell’s actual travel log from 1869, Jaclyn Backhaus’s nimble and ingenious script is provocative, laugh-out-loud theater, performed by a cast of women who infuse America’s historic myths of male conquest with a sly blast of subtext. With the speed and force of Powell’s white-water rapids, Backhaus conjures her epic story—in which simple materials are transformed into perilous canyons and death-defying cliffs—out of sheer imagination, shaping an innovative and innately theatrical play that became an off-Broadway sensation.

WHO:
by Jaclyn Backhaus
Directed by Tamilla Woodard

CAST:

CREATIVE TEAM:
Nina Ball (Scenic Designer), Christine Crook (Costume Designer), Robert Hand (Lighting Designer), and Kate Marvin (Sound Designer)

WHERE:
A.C.T.’s Strand Theater (1127 Market St., San Francisco)

WHEN:
October 17–December 16, 2018
Press Nights: Thursday, November 1 and Friday, November 2, 2018

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:
Tuesdays–Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.
Sundays at 2 p.m.

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Wine Series: Tuesday, November 20, 6:30 p.m.
Playtime: Saturday, December 8, 12:45 p.m.

TICKETS:
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INFO:
415-749-2228 | act-sf.org/boats

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