

Babes With Blades Theatre Company Presents

\$4.99

Blow Me Down...

yoho.

(a pirate play about mary read & anne bonny)

Written by SMJ - Directed by JD Caudill

BABES WITH BLADES THEATRE COMPANY

is a proud member of



BWBTC'S 2026 PROGRAMMING IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED

in part by

The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation

The Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

The City of Chicago Department of
Cultural Affairs & Special Events CityArts Grant

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GAYLORD & DOROTHY
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BABES WITH BLADES

THEATRE COMPANY

proudly presents

yo ho.

(a pirate play about mary read & anne bonny)

By SMJ

Director.....	JD Caudill
Fight Director.....	Carly Belle “CB” Cason
Scenic Designer.....	Amy C. Gilman
Lighting Designer	Laura J. Wiley*
Costume Designer	Jennifer Mohr*
Props Designer.....	Maddie Abelson
Sound Designer.....	Alex Kingsley
Make-up and Hair Designer.....	Syd Genco
Intimacy Director	Alyssa Vera Ramos
Stage Manager	Grace Elizabeth Mealey
Technical Director	Line Bower*
Production Manager.....	Rose Hamill
Asst Director.....	Kat Coyl
Asst Fight Choreographer	Meme Matteson
Asst Stage Manager	Talia Neidorf
Production Assistant	Payton Shearn*

** Denotes BWBTC Ensemble Member*

Special thanks to About Face Theater, Taylor Blum, Cat Davis, Jimmy Heisel, Michael Joseph, Kevin Rolfs, Yellow Rose Theatre.

This production uses realistic staged violence in the telling of the story.

There will be one ten minute intermission.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING
OF ANY KIND IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED**

CAST

Mary Read / Mark / M.....Sierra Bryn
Anne Bonny / Andy / Ana.....Rachel Sleek-Bañuelos
Calico Jack.....Stef Brundage
Vanessa / Ensemble.....Brittani Yawn
Chad / James / Ensemble.....William Delforge
Understudies.....Quintin Craig (Chad/James US),
.....Schnaude Dorizan (Vanessa US), Stephanie
.....Fongheiser (Anne Bonny US), Cris King
.....(Calico Jack US), Makenna Van Raalte
.....(Mary Read US)

WHO'S WHO



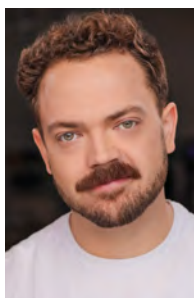
STEF BRUNDAGE (they/them, Calico Jack) could not be happier to be making their BWBTC debut, at long last. In Chicagoland theatre, Stef has worked with Raven, First Folio, Danztheatre, Red Tape, Chicago Dramatists, Pride Films & Plays, The Conspirators, Shakespeare All-Stars, and others. As an actor, Stef has also worked Off-Broadway and regionally across New York. As a playwright, their work has been performed in the UK and all over the United States. Stef holds a Masters Degree in Classical Theatre from the London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art. Gratitude to their best judy, JD. Love to Mike & Greta.



SIERRA BRYN (they/them, Mary Read) is a Chicago- based performer and real life gay-ass pirate. Typecasting! A company member of The Point Theatre Project (where you might have caught them exorcising their demons last year), their previous performance credits include work with the Athenaeum, Black Button Eyes, Yellow Rose Theatre, Neilshow Productions, MPAACT, Theatre Y, Against the Grain, and more! IG: @sierrabryn



QUINTIN CRAIG (he/they; Chad / James US) is thrilled to be making their BWBTC debut! Quintin is a graduate of the Theatre School at DePaul University with a BFA in Acting. Recent credits include Debate: *Baldwin vs. Buckley* (TimeLine Theatre), *Bubba and Krystyl are Unraveling the Fabric of Reality* (YippieFest), and *The Guy Who Didn't Like Musicals* (self-produced at the Athenaeum). They are proudly represented by BMG Talent. They would like to thank his family and friends from Chicago and everywhere in between <3.



WILLIAM DELFORGE (he/him, Chad / James) is delighted to make his BWBTC debut! Recent credits include: *Static-Head* (The Impostors), *Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus* and *How to Transcend A Happy Marriage* (Redtwist Theatre). His Chicago credits also include work with theatre l'acadie, Steep Theatre, and Rhinofest among others. Film: *Kim's Big Date*. William holds a BFA from The Theatre School at DePaul. Special thanks to Sophie and Frankie for all their love and support!



SCHNAUDE DORIZAN (she/her; Vanessa US) is a Chicago-based actor, improviser, and dancer. Originally from New York City, she moved to Chicago in 2015 to become a neuroscientist and fell in love with the performing arts scene here. She has trained and performed at Acting Studio Chicago, Theatre Momentum, the Cornservatory, and the Yellow Rose Theatre. She is incredibly excited to make her BWBTC debut in *yo ho*! Check her out on Instagram at @drschnaughtyd for wacky, nerdy, dance-filled adventures!



STEPHANIE FONGHEISER (she/her; Anne Bonny US) is thrilled to be working with BWBTC for the first time and to be a part of this world premiere. Chicago credits include: *The Pets* (u/s, Bramble Theatre), *Dear Jack, Dear Louise* (u/s, Metropolis Theatre), *Time is a Color and the Color is Blue* (Avalanche Theatre), *Mercy Killing* (Open Space Arts), *The Brightest Thing in the World* (u/s, About Face), *A Christmas Carol* (u/s, Drury Lane Theatre), *Little Women* (First Folio Theatre), and *Frankenstein* (Oil Lamp Theatre).

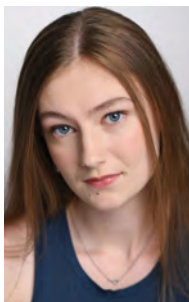
Stephanie is a company member at Avalanche Theatre and is represented by BMG Talent. To SMJ – everything I am as an actor is because of you.



CRIS KING (she/her, Calico Jack US) is making her BWBTC debut! Cris's previous acting credits include Dr. Westfeldt in *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* (Lazy Susan Theatre Co.), A Provocateur in *Ubu the King* (Meat Machine Theatre), and Skye in *White Elephant* (Yellow Rose Theatre). As an improviser she has been seen in *Permit Pending* (iO Theater), *Asshole's Advocate* (Annoyance Theater), and she is a company member of Improv Chattanooga. Cris also authored the short plays *Used Tires and Custom Body Work* and *Latitudes*. She can be found on TikTok and Instagram @criskingvo, where her videos have amassed over 40 million views. She'd like to thank her wife, Ramsay, for a boundless love and support that Cris does not deserve.



RACHEL SLEEK-BAÑUELOS (she/her, Anne Bonny) is thrilled to be making her BWBTC debut as the infamous Anne Bonny! A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) with a BFA in Dramatic Performance, Rachel's screen credits include NBC's *Law & Order: SVU*, *Buying Her*, *Find Me*, and numerous independent films and shorts. Her theatre background includes classical and contemporary work ranging from *Blood Wedding* and *Spring Awakening* to Shakespeare productions with Cincinnati Outdoor Shakespeare. She has curated a soft spot for bold characters, messy humans, and anything a little strange. In addition to acting, Rachel is an experienced dialect and voice teacher. Her inspiration is fueled by the love and support of her exceptional family and friends. She is honored to be joining the ranks of the wildly talented BWBTC team!



MAKENNA VAN RAALTE (they/she, Mary Read US) is so excited to be making their BWBTC debut! They are the proud Artistic Director of Essential Invisible Theatre Co., and a Nonsemble member at Nonsense Theatre Co. Recent credits include *Heavy* (Nonsense) and *The Blood Countess* (Idle Muse). Catch them this September in *Love, The Sinners* (Production Productions)! Keep up with Mak's work at @makennavanraalte or at mvanraalte.com. Proudly represented by ATB Talent.



BRITTANI YAWN (she/her, Vanessa) is a performer and writer based in Chicago. Originally from Cleveland, OH, Brittani is an alum of Miami University. Chicago credits include Promethean Theatre, The Second City, The Plagiarists, Artemisia Theater, Hell in a Handbag, The Annoyance, iO, among others. Brittani is represented by Grossman & Jack Talent.

PRODUCTION TEAM

MADDIE ABELSON (she/they, Props Design) is feeling so fortunate to be returning to the Chicago theatre scene with BWBTC. Regional work seen at Millbrook and Flat Rock Playhouse. UIC Theatre Alum.

LINE BOWER (they/them; Technical Director) is a Chicago-based technical director, carpenter, and scenic painter. They received their BA in Theatre Technology & Design with a minor in Stage Combat from Columbia College Chicago. They've been a regular carpenter at Northlight Theatre since 2022 and a BWBTC ensemble member since 2023. Favorite TD credits include: *Port of Entry* (Albany Park Theatre Project), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (BWBTC), *That Must Be the Entrance to Heaven* (Visión Latino), *Jane: Abortion and the Underground* (Idle Muse). You can catch them at carpentry overhire calls throughout the city, or carrying loose pieces of lumber on the CTA. Inquiries: linebowerTD@gmail.com

JD CAUDILL (they/them, Director) is a queer director, literary manager, and music director. Their recent direction includes *The SpongeBob Musical* (Kokandy Productions; Bowling Green State University), *Sofa King Queer* (Nothing Without A Company), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Haven Theatre), *I Promised Myself to Live Faster* (Hell in a Handbag), *After the Blast* (Broken Nose Theatre), and *Southern Comfort* (Pride Films and Plays). They've also directed for Bechdel Fests 4-6 + 8 (Broken Nose Theatre), *Book of Shadows* (Broken Nose Theatre), and other plays at The New Colony, Haven Theatre, The Runaways Lab

Theatre, New American Folk Theatre, Hobo Junction, 20% Theatre, Paragon Theatre, Otherworld Theatre, Arc Theatre, 16th Street Theatre, Stage Left, The Syndicates, and Red Theatre. They have been a proud ensemble member of Hell in a Handbag for ten years, and served as an ensemble member and literary manager of Broken Nose Theatre for seven years. They are driven to make theatre because of the unique sense of community it creates by bringing people together in person to experience imaginative stories of hope and catharsis. As a director, their mission is to create queer art for everyone; they want queer audiences to experience new stories of authentic representation while helping non-queer audiences cultivate empathy for the LGBTQIA+ community.

CARLY BELLE “CB” CASON (She/they/any, Fight Director) is a founder of Counterfeit Combat, Head Acting Coach with Model Act Studios, and is thrilled to be swashbuckling with this great group of pirates! With roots deep in the heart of Texas, they have over a decade of training and experience in combat for stage and screen. Other Chicago credits include: *Bloodbound* (Auriel Productions), *Fencers of Panache* (Fair in the Field), *And They Were Shipmates* (Counterfeit Combat), *Leap of Fate* (Nonsense Productions). They would like to thank her family, friends, and partner for always supporting her dreams and endeavors.

KATHERINE (KAT) COYL (they/them, Assistant Director) is a Chicago-based director, choreographer, and teaching artist whose work spans opera and dance and includes multiple world premieres. Recent credits include *Here be Sirens* (Stage Director) presented at the Edge Theater and EarTaxi Festival; *Hindsight* (Intimacy and Fight Director) with Chicago Fringe Opera; *Lenora* (Intimacy and Fight Director) and *The Nose* (Intimacy and Fight Director) with Chicago Opera Theater; *Breaking the Wave* (Assistant Director and Intimacy Coordinator) with Detroit Opera; *Memoirs of Jazz in the Alley* (Intimacy Director) with South Chicago Dance Theatre; *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turning* (Intimacy and Fight Director) with Chicago Opera Theater; and *Athena* with Urbanite Theatre. They also serve as Adjunct Faculty at DePaul University. A special thank you to Chuck Coyl and all of his many

contributions, both locally and nationally, to the Stage Combat Community.

SYD GENCO (she/her, Makeup and Hair Design) is thrilled to be collaborating with BWBTC for the first time, and with director JD Caudill again (and again and again!) She's makeup designed all over the city, including the last 13 seasons with Hell in a Handbag Productions (*Queen for a Day*, *The Golden Girls Lost Episodes*, and more!), and the last 4 seasons with Kokandy Productions (*Jekyll and Hyde*, *Into The Woods*, and more!) She's also designed for Metropolis (*Rock of Ages*), Highland Park Players (*Kinky Boots*), and too many more to list. She's also an actor, and you may have seen her grace the stage a few times around Chicago. Syd is a graduate of the CCPA at Roosevelt University with a BFA in Musical Theatre Performance, and is a certified Makeup Artist through Make Up First School Chicago. www.madcbs.com

AMY C. GILMAN (she/her, Scenic Design) is a Chicago-based set and exhibit designer. Amy has previously worked with BWBTC for their production of *The Mark*. Other set design credits include *Unknown Variable* (Momentary Theatre), *Come Again* (Stage Left), *Sweet Charity* (Blank Theatre), *Bookworms* (Kerfuffle), *Gather* (Filament), *Luna* (Filament), *Catch the Fish* (Poor Theatre). She has worked as an assistant scenic designer at Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakes, Steppenwolf, and Cincinnati Playhouse. Amy also designs museum exhibits. Her work can be seen at sites including Magic Discovery Center, Children's Museum of Richmond, Toledo Main Library, and Edventure Children's Museum. Her work can be seen on her website: gilmandesign.com

ROSE HAMILL (she/her, Production Manager) Rose Hamill (Production Manager) has been a stage and production manager in Chicago for over 10 years and has worked with many storefront companies including The Factory Theater, Redtwist Theater, and Firebrand Theatre among others. She was a member of Broken Nose Theatre for 6 years, and served as their Managing Director for 4 years: her production credits include *At*

The Table, Bechdel Fests 6-9, *Labyrinth*, and *After the Blast* among others. Rose is a long time BWBTC collaborator, and currently serves as President of BWBTC's Board of Directors. Rose holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Technical Theatre from Columbia College Chicago, with a minor in Arts Administration; as well as a Project Management Professional certification through the Project Management Institute and a Certificate of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management from Northwestern University. She is a full time Executive Assistant and the owner/operator of RBH Weddings LLC.

ALEX KINGSLEY (they/them, Sound Design) is a theatrical designer, writer, and grad student at University of Illinois Chicago. They received their BA in Theater with a minor in Film & Media Studies from Swarthmore College. Alex is a co-founder of new media company Strong Branch Productions, where they have done sound design work for both audio dramas and live theatrical productions such as *The Stench of Adventure*, *Strong Branching Out*, *Murder Babies*, *The Dreamless Patron*, and *Unplanned Obsolescence*. They have been a finalist for the Audioverse Award for their podcast sound design work. In Chicago, they have done design work for a wide variety of theater companies, including Nothing Without a Company, Tin Drum, Kerfuffle, Thomas St. Opera, and more. Alex is represented by Sara Megibow.

TALIA NEIDORF (they/them, Assistant Stage Manager) is super excited to be working with BWBTC for the first time. Performer credits include *Chicago Cop Macbeth*, *Duck Soup!*, *Tartuffe* (The Conspirators) and *Salome* (Lyric Opera of Chicago). Talia is also a frequent performer at the Newport Theater. They have a BA in Acting from Columbia College Chicago. In their free time, they are reading graphic novels, researching weird history and adoring their cat.

MEME MATTESON (she/they, Assistant Fight Choreographer) is a Chicago based actor, fight choreographer and theatre educator. They are originally from Fraser, Colorado, and have a degree in Musical Theatre from Columbia College Chicago. After being in the original

staged reading for *yo ho* last year, they are thrilled to be assisting CB with the fights for this show. Meme's most recent fight direction credits include *The Love of Three Oranges* at Whitney Young, and *Gladiator Fight Night: Arcade Anarchy* with Point Theatre Project.

GRACE ELIZABETH MEALEY (she/her, Stage Manager) is a professional stage manager based in Chicago. Previous credits include: *The Mark* (BWBTC), *Scaramouche* (City Lit Theater Company), *Girls & Boys*, *The House Without A Christmas Tree* (Griffin Theatre Company), *The Storm of the Century*, New Work Festival 2025, *Alone at Last!* (Laughing Stock Theatre), *Sentinels* (CPA Theatricals) and upcoming: *King Lear* (BWBTC). Grace Elizabeth graduated from Loyola University Chicago, where she received her B.A. in Theatre and Art History and a minor in Shakespeare Studies. Gratitude and humility always.

JENNIFER MOHR (she/her, Costume Design) is so excited to be designing for BWBTC again. Previously she was a part of the cast of *The Lady Demands Satisfaction*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and has designed costumes for several other BWBTC shows. Jennifer works as a teaching artist and has had the privilege of performing with various theatres in Chicago including Chicago Shakespeare, First Folio, Birch House Immersive, Artemisia, Idle Muse, and Midsommer Flight. She is a proud ensemble member at Idle Muse Theatre Company, as well as with Laughingstock Theatre, performing Commedia del'Arte around Chicago! Jennifer is also an enthusiastic artistic affiliate of BWBTC. So many thanks to her friends and family for their constant support.

ALYSSA VERA RAMOS (she/her, Intimacy Director) is a queer, Boricua, multi-hyphenate theatre artist dedicated to pleasure, practice, and being good to each other. As an Intimacy Director, credits include *Waitress*, *Come From Away*, and the staged reading of *Mija* (Paramount Theatre), *Never Better* (Theo Ubique), *Skyflint: Part One* (Director's Haven 7), and the webseries *Eat Cute* (The Ampliverse). She has also served on intimacy teams at The Gift, Metropolis, and Raven Theatre. Passionate about collaboration and new work, Alyssa co-developed and directed

the audience participation-infused *We Could Be* (About Face Theatre) and *Upstream* (Mixed Blood Theatre), and the forthcoming site-specific play, *The Dinosaur of Lake Michigan* (Kerfuffle: Theatre for the Very Young). Alyssa is a proud Curator of Swarm Artist Residency and a Steering Committee Member of the Latinx Theatre Commons. In the day-to-day, Alyssa can be found drumming and dancing at La Escuelita Bombera de Corazón, reading picture books to babies, and laughing very loudly. She is currently pursuing her MFA in Applied Theatre at Emerson College.

SMJ (they/them, Playwright) is a mixed-Latiné, non-binary, and NYC-based playwright, theatermaker, and educator originally from Mount Vernon, OH. They are proud to be the Executive Director of Andy's Summer Playhouse, a professional children's theater in Wilton, NH. They were a 2022-2023 Dramatists Guild Foundation Fellow. As a writer, their work has been seen in various forms with Ars Nova, Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, New York Stage and Film, Latinx Playwrights Circle, The Orchard Project, the New York Comedy Festival, Latiné Musical Theatre Lab, Columbus Children's Theatre, The Flea Theater, Carnegie Mellon University, New York University, University of Central Florida, Otterbein University, Wright State University, and Manhattanville University. They are a member of the Dramatists Guild and Ring of Keys. SMJ is proud to be represented by Abby Berger at Bohemia Group. www.smjwrites.com

PAYTON SHEARN (she/they, Production Assistant) is an arts administrator based in Chicago. She is so excited to be working with BWBTC once again! Payton is a graduate of Northwestern University, where she studied Theater Management and Gender & Sexuality Studies. She is also a proud BWBTC ensemble member. They love making theater for young audiences, theater that explores the intersection of art and activism, and theater that combines the two. As always, all the love and thanks to Line, #shearnsquad, and their chosen family.

LAURA J. WILEY (she/her; Lighting Designer) is a lighting and video designer working primarily with theater and dance. She is the resident projection and lighting designer for Idle Muse Theatre Company, with whom she has worked with since 2011. Wiley often incorporates live video into projection designs along with abstract images and textures, using technology as scenic piece, moving light and as an individual element. She holds a Bachelors in Science concentrating on theatrical lighting and projection design from Southern Oregon University and is also a proud Artistic Affiliate of BWBTC.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Babes With Blades Theatre Company produces theatre in venues located on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home. This region that we now commonly refer to as “The Chicagoland Area”, has long been a center for Indigenous people to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties. Today, one of the largest urban Native American communities in the United States resides in Chicago. Members of this community continue to contribute to the life of this city and to celebrate their heritage, practice traditions, and care for the land and waterways. If you are originally from outside of Chicago, you can discover who's traditional homelands you inhabited by going to Whose.Land.

WANT TO HELP BWBTC AT NO COST?
COMPLETE OUR AUDIENCE SURVEY:



**BWBTC IS ONE OF LESS THAN 15% OF
CHICAGO THEATRE COMPANIES**

dedicated to representing marginalized voices
through storytelling

(and the only one that uses stage combat as a consistent storytelling tool.)

COMING THIS FALL FROM BWBTC



BABES WITH BLADES

THEATRE COMPANY

ENSEMBLE

Kristen Alesia	Line Bower
Alison Dornheggen	Kim Fukawa
Carrie Hardin	Kelsey Kovacevich
Jillian Leff	Morgan Manasa
Jennifer L. Mickelson	Jennifer Mohr
Izis Mollinedo	Hazel Monson
Lauren Paige	Hayley Rice
Patty Roache	Thomas Russell
Megan Schemmel	Payton Shearn
Laura J. Wiley	Kathrynne Wolf
Maureen Yasko	Ashley Yates

BOARD

Lata Balagangadharan	Jess Chamblee Eisenberg
Rose Hamill	Kelsey Kovacevich
Catherine Mallers	James Piche
Hayley Rice	

Want to support BWBTC?

Consider joining the board!

Email business@babeswithblades.org



Babes With Blades Theatre Company uses stage combat to tell stories that elevate the voices of underrepresented communities and dismantle the patriarchy. Through performance, script development, training and outreach, our ensemble creates theatre that explores the wide range of the human experience, and cultivates broader perspectives in the arts community and in society as a whole.

BabesWithBlades.org

Babes With Blades Theatre Co. proudly works with:

