

BURNING
COAL
THEATRE
COMPANY

Bringing Them Home

Stories of the war dead resting in Oakwood
Cemetery

Adapted by Abbe Fralix and Jerome Davis from
the Book by Bruce Miller and Robin Simonton

Directed by Susan Gross

Oakwood Cemetery

September 27 & 28 at 6:30pm

September 29 at 2pm



Bringing Them Home

A Note from the Director:

As we reflect on the lives of the soldiers who have fallen, it's important to remember that often they had no choice whether to enlist, fight or give their lives in service to their country. My goal is for all of us to pause and reflect on how those battles in which they fought, affected not only their physical beings, but how it affected their mental health, as well as the mental health of those who loved them and waited for them to come home. I cannot imagine what it is like to be a soldier during times of war. Whether they chose to fight bravely or didn't have that choice, they gave their lives for a cause they may or may not have believed in, and for that I am grateful. The lives of these young soldiers were cut short far too soon and in the telling of these stories, we can imagine where life may have taken them if only they had been given that gift.

It's been my honor to bring these thought-provoking and beautiful stories crafted by Burning Coal's artistic director, Jerome Davis and development director, Abbe Fralix to life for you in collaboration with my gifted actors and stage manager Carry Vaughan-Sprouse.

As you watch, I hope you will feel the weight of their journeys, no matter your individual thoughts about war. We are all affected and will continue to be until we give peace a chance. Thank you for taking the time to attend this performance and for supporting theatre.

-Susan Gross, September 2024

Cast

The Civil War: Gettysburg

Written by Abbe Fralix

Jacob Berger.....Iowa
Thom Christensen.....Dr. Rufus Weaver
Faisal Imitaz.....Ark
Kate Milligan.....Grace

The Spanish-American War: Creating a Hero

Written by Abbe Fralix

Heather Butler.....Newsie 1
Luca Lemelle.....Newsie 2
Lemony Wood.....Worth Bagley

WWI: Just One More Day

Written by Jerome Davis

Jacob Berger.....John William Teachey
Thom Christensen.....Benjamin F. Dixon
Luca Lemelle.....Robert Marshall Teachey
Lemony Wood.....Beverly Munford Allen

WWII: The Ashe Avenue Boys

Written by Abbe Fralix

Jacob Berger.....Arthur Harris
Heather Butler.....Mary Crocker
Thom Christensen.....Philip Edelen
Faisal Imitaz.....Milkman
Laura Jenkins.....Mildred Edelen
Bobby Kaufman.....Mailman
Luca Lemelle.....Robert "Bobby" Crocker, Jr.
Katie Milligan.....Vertie Harris
Lemony Wood.....Neale Edelen

Vietnam: Daniel And Curtis

Written by Jerome Davis

Jacob Berger.....Curtis Franklin Baggett
Thom Christensen.....Actor
Bobby Kaufman.....Daniel Ellsberg

Production Team

Director.....Susan Gross
Technical Director.....Barry Jaked
Stage Manager.....Carrie Vaughan-Sprouse
Assistant Stage Manager.....Ethan Westmoreland
Scenic Painter.....Meredith Riggan
Assistant to the Director.....George Jack
Costumes Wrangler.....Abbe Fralix
Properties Wrangler.....Susanna Skaggs

CONTENT ADVISORY: Discussions of war, violence, and death

Views expressed are those of the playwrights and do not reflect views of the authors of *Bringing Them Home* or the families of the deceased. While grounded in fact, this work is historical fiction and any resemblance to real people is not intended.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



Jacob Berger (Iowa/Arthur/John William/Curtis)

Jacob is grateful to return to Burning Coal Theatre after acting in its previous productions, *Arcadia* (2023) and *My Ex-Boyfriends* (2024). In addition to Burning Coal, he has been fortunate enough to act in Southern Wake Players' *Sense and Sensibility* (2023) and Switchyard Theatre's *Fuddy Meers* (2022). Thank you for supporting local theatre and enjoy the show!



Heather Butler (Newsie 1/Mary Crocker)

Heather made her North Carolina debut with The National Women's Theatre Festival in *Dance Nation*. A Massachusetts transplant, Heather enjoys being on stage (Karen Weston in *August: Osage County*; Alice Beineke in *The Addams Family*), as well as spearheading productions (*26 Pebbles*; *The Vagina Monologues*). She is grateful for the opportunity to be working with Burning Coal, and wishes to acknowledge her father, James Nolan, and her grandfather, Emmett Nolan, for their service to our country.



Thom Christensen (Rufus Weaver/Ben Franklin/Actor)

Thom has walked past Oakwood Cemetery countless times walking his dog Roosevelt. This is his first time being inside the cemetery, and despite its history and the incredible persons who reside within its borders, he nevertheless hopes the current visit does not yet become a permanent stay.



Faisal Imtiaz (Ark/Milkman)

Faisal is making his US theater debut after a decade-long career in Pakistan's entertainment industry. With experience spanning stage, television, and film, Faisal has been part of multiple theater productions, including international collaborations that have showcased his diverse acting skills. He has acted in notable Pakistani TV shows and films, most prominently in *Gawah Rehna*, an upcoming feature film that is eagerly awaited for release. Faisal's talent has also been highlighted in numerous TV commercials for international brands. Now based in the United States, Faisal is excited to bring his passion for storytelling and his wealth of experience to the American stage.



Laura Jenkins (Mildred)

Laura is thrilled to be returning for another Oakwood play. It is an honor to bring life to these real people and their real life struggles. At Burning Coal, Laura has appeared in *Inherit the Wind*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and lots of other little productions. Some other favorite credits include *Quilters* at Deepdish, *Pirates of Penzance* at RLT, and *Sweet Delilah Swim Club* at TIP. Thank you all for coming and we hope you enjoy the show.



Robert Kaufman (Mailman/Daniel)

Shows in North Carolina are: at Theatre in The Park are *Harold and Maude*, *It Shoulda Been You*, *Devon Does Denmark* and *Henry V*. At Burning Coal Theatre; *1776*, *Evita*, *Galileo*, and *Awake and Sing*. Theatre Raleigh, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. At NCT, *Camelot* w/Debbie Boone, *South Pacific*, *JC Superstar*, *Music Man* w/Tom Wopat, *Phantom* (Kopit) w/Michael Minerak, *Peter Pan*, *Annie Get Your Gun* w/ Lauren Kennedy, *High School Musical*, and *Cinderella*. At The Justice Theatre; *All The Way*. Favorites are *Play It Again, Sam*, *Guys and Dolls*, *On the 20th Century*, *Man of LaMancha*, *Hello, Muddah, Hello Faddah*. Don't forget to laugh! I love my wife.



Luca Lemelle (Newsie 2/Robert Marshall Teachey/Bobby Crocker Jr.)

Luca is very excited to be a part of his first production with Burning Coal! With TAP: *Charlotte's Web*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Peter Pan*, *Seussical Jr*, *Into the Woods*, *BATB Jr*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Frozen Jr*. With DDMS: *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* Huge thanks to the amazing cast and crew of Oakwood and to my family. Thank you for being here and enjoy!



Katie Milligan (Grace/Vertie)

is excited to join Burning Coal Theatre Company for this production. Previous productions include: Jo in *Ex-Boyfriends* (Burning Coal Theatre Company), Dolley Madison in *ONA* (OdysseyStage), Margaret Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (Southern Wake Players), Brakenbury in *Richard III* (STS), Jackie in *DOT* (NRACT), and Mariane in *Tartuffe* (VST). Special thanks to her biggest supporter, Steven Milligan.



Lemony Wood (Worth Bagley/Beverly Munford Alien/Neale Edelen)

Lemony Wood is a stage and voice actor who recently graduated from Enloe High School and is currently taking at least one gap year. She's starred in all of Burning Coal's Teen Summer Theatre Conservatories for the last four years but this is her first experience acting in an adult production. Her favorite ever role she took on was Ms. Trunchbull in Burning Coal's production of *Matilda Jr* just this July. She is an aspiring writer-director and plans to shoot a short film next June, as well as finish editing her film she shot in the final few days of high school. She runs multiple youtube channels and has a world record speedrun in her favorite game of all time, "Viva Pinata: Trouble In Paradise".

Playwrights

Jerome Davis (Producer/Playwright)

For Burning Coal Theatre: *A Little Night Music*, *Arcadia*, *Evita*, *Ashe in Johannesburg*, *The Weir* (twice), *Rat in the Skull*, *Pentecost*, *Winding the Ball*, *Steward of Christendom*, *Night & Day*, *Company*, *Road to Mecca* (twice), *Juno & the Paycock*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Hamlet*, *Hysteria*, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, *1960*, *The Seafarer*, *Shape of the Table*, *Enron*, *Jude the Obscure Parts 1 & 2*, *Shining City*, *The Heretic*, *Iron Curtain Trilogy* (Raleigh and London), *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Spoonface Steinberg*, *Written on the Heart*, *Dark Vanilla Jungle* (London), *Iphigenia in Splott* (Raleigh and DC). Acting: *Love's Labours Lost*, *Mound Builders*, *St. Nicholas*, *Skylight* and *Talley's Folly* (Raleigh and London). Also, *Skylight* in Orlando and *King Lear* (Lear/Wilmington). Other: *See How They Run* (Southern Pines), *Twelfth Night* in Apex and *Turn of the Screw* for NC Opera. Jerry worked with or studied with Uta Hagen, Adrian Hall, Richard Jenkins, Hope Davis, Horton Foote, Denis O'Hare, Nikos Psacharapolous, Julie Bovasso, Ralph Waite, Oliver Platt, Ben Gazzarra and Ellen Burstyn at Trinity Rep (Providence), People's Light & Theatre (Philadelphia), NJ Shakespeare, SoHo Rep, Barrow Group, Columbia University, Phoenix Theatre (SUNY/Purchase). This is his 27th year running Burning Coal which he and his wife Simmie Kastner founded in 1995. He received the 2019 Raleigh Medal of Arts.

Abbe Fralix (Playwright)

Abbe Fralix is an actor, educator, and arts administrator based in Raleigh, North Carolina. She holds a BFA from William Peace University and an MFA from Mary Baldwin University in Staunton, Virginia. As an actor, Abbe has performed with NC State's University Theatre, Sweet Tea Shakespeare, Burning Coal Theatre and other Triangle area companies, as well as Steadfast Shakespeare and the Prague Shakespeare Company. As an educator, Abbe has served as an adjunct faculty member at William Peace University, Mary Baldwin University, and Wake Technical Community College, as well as an education artist for The American Shakespeare Center and a freelance dramaturg. Abbe currently works as the Development Director at Burning Coal Theatre.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CREW

Susan Gross (Director)

For Burning Coal Theatre: KidsWrite (*Disaster at Lakeview*; *Regrets of Man*). Susan made her Off-Broadway debut in the New York premiere of Christopher Durang's *The Vietnamization of New Jersey* and performed on stage at Theatre Row, The Brick, Dixon Place, and Teatro LATEA. In Boston, Susan performed with Lyric Stage, New Repertory Theatre, Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre, Greater Boston Stage Company, and Zeitgeist Stage. Susan made her Burning Coal debut last summer with her solo show *Ruby* which received its premiere in New York with Tongue In Cheek Theater. *Ruby* was nominated for best performance, direction and production of a solo show at Planet Connections Theatre Festivity. Her other plays have been performed at The Secret Theatre in Queens, NY and the Off-Broadway venue, Theatre Row. She is currently at work on her new play, *Just Kids*. Susan can be seen opposite Zoe Kazan in *In Your Eyes* and opposite Jude Law in Steven Soderbergh's *Side Effects*. She is a proud member of Actors' Equity, Dramatists Guild and SAG-AFTRA.

Carry Vaughan-Sprouse (Production Stage Manager)

Carry Vaughan-Sprouse has been with Burning Coal Theatre since 2013 as their lead House Manager/Front of House Coordinator. She has also stage managed, assistant stage managed and assistant directed numerous productions in her time at Burning Coal. Her favorites are *The Heretic* (2013), *Iron Curtain Trilogy* - Raleigh and London Tours (2014), *Romeo and Juliet* (2015), *Dark Vanilla Jungle* - London Tour (2016), *The Normal Heart* (2018), *A Hundred Words for Snow* (2020), *I and You* (2021), *A Great Big Woolly Mammoth Thawing from the Ice* (2022), and *Radio* (2024). This is her very first time working on an Oakwood production!

Ethan Westmoreland (Assistant Stage Manager)

Ethan is thrilled to be returning to Burning Coal his work on *Ex-Boyfriends* earlier this year. He hopes to continue helping bring forth exciting original works from local artists.

Barry Jaked (Technical Director)

Barry started working with Burning Coal in 2012 as the Technical Director for *Jude the Obscure* and continued in this roll through 2017 when he took a position as the Technical Director for Aberdeen Community Theatre in Aberdeen, SD. In November of 2019 he returned to the Raleigh area and Burning Coal as the Master Electrician. Once the pause for Covid was over he resumed his roll as the Master Electrician. In August 2023, he was hired by Burning Coal as the Resident Technical Director and Master Electrician.

Meredith Riggan (Painter)

Meredith is a North Carolina based artist and is excited to be returning to Burning Coal Theatre Company for the Second Stage Series productions. Meredith has been with Burning Coal theatre for 8 seasons. After receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Scenic Art from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Meredith has worked as the Scenic Charge Artist at several theatres around North Carolina including William Peace University, Half Pint Theatre, Sweet Tea Shakespeare, Triad Stage, City Arts-Greensboro Children's Theatre, The Winston Salem Theatre Alliance, ECU Loessin Playhouse, along with several freelance jobs such as painting for The International Festival and painting custom pet portraits.

ColeTrain (Shop Dog "Paint Assistant")

ColeTrain is excited to be a part of another production at Burning Coal Theatre. He has been "assisting" his Scenic Artist Mom in several theatres since he was 7 weeks old (he will be 13 this year). He has no formal training in scenic art, but he is great at supervising projects, looking cute, and tries to leave a paw print on every set. ColeTrain is a 10/10 good boy.

Susanna Skaggs (Properties Wrangler)

Susanna Skaggs is an actor and recent alumna of UNC Chapel Hill. Her professional theatre career began at Burning Coal Theatre in their 2016 production of Edgar Wright's *Written on the Heart*. Since then, she has worked in film, television, and theatre. Her most recent film credit was playing Lina in the Netflix Original Rom-Com *Love and Gelato*. When she's not acting or working at Burning Coal, she loves to knit sweaters, watch as many movies as she can, and cuddle with her tuxedo cat, Pepper.

George Jack (Assistant to the Director)

For Burning Coal, George has performed in *Written on the Heart* (US premiere), *Brigadoon*, *Hysteria*, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Hamlet*, *Einstein's Dreams*, *1776* (Franklin), *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *The Man Who Tried to Save the World*, *Travesties* (Lenin, at the Spoleto Festival), *Tartuffe*, many original historic plays in Oakwood Cemetery, other historical plays (Halloween and Christmas performances at the Mordecai House, Raleigh City Museum, City Cemetery, Raleigh's First Baptist Churches, and the Page-Walker House in Cary), performances with KidsWrite and Burning Coal's Playwriting Lab, and many staged readings. Other local credits include plays with Raleigh Ensemble Players (Caiaphas in *Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, Claude Monet in *Defying Gravity*), *Honest Pint*, Theatre in the Park, Stillwater Theatre. Second Avenue South, Delta Boys, the African-American Cultural Complex (John Quincy Adams in *The Amistad Saga*), and Playground Theatre Cooperative in Carrboro. He has been a part of Burning Coal for twenty-plus years.

Season 28: Mainstage

Join us at the Murphey School for our 2024-2025 season as we delve into the words of great modern wordsmiths and unpack what it means to be human.



Copenhagen

by Michael Frayn
October 10-27, 2024

The Rainmaker

by N. Richard Nash
December 5-22, 2024

Paint Me This House Of Love

by Chelsea Woolley
January 30-February 16, 2025

Being Chaka

by Tara Amber, Chuk Obasi,
and Nalini Sharma March
13-30, 2025

Merrily We Roll Along

by Stephen Sondheim
and George Furth
April 10-27, 2025

Season Subscriptions Available at

<https://burningcoal.org/now-playing/season-28/>

Next up at Burning Coal

BURNING COAL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS



WRITTEN BY MICHAEL FRAYN DIRECTED BY JEROME DAVIS

COPENHAGEN

OCTOBER 10TH-27TH, 2024 | THURS. FRI. AND SAT. AT 7:30PM | SUN. AT 2:00PM

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Haughey/ Gregory

Pop-up Production

BY COLIN MURPHEY
DIRECTED BY FLORA BARE

OCT 14-23RD
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@ 7:30PM



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Burning Coal is supported by the United Arts Wake County as well as the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.



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