



Mill Mountain Theatre &
Historical Society of Western Virginia
Present



THE BOTETOURT PROJECT

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN VIRGINIA

The exhibition in which this performance was based, **Botetourt County: 250+1 Years of Delights - Botetourt's History through the Decorative Arts**, was curated by Ashley Webb, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions with the Historical Society of Western Virginia, in partnership with the Bank of Botetourt. The exhibit was on view from April 24, 2021-November 2, 2021.

For more information on the Historical Society, how to become a member, or visit the museum's online collections, visit www.roanokehistory.org.

CAST

Julia Hancock & Ensemble	Lilah Beamer
Mary Johnston & Ensemble.....	Grace Cordle
Merriwether Lewis, George Hayth, Ensemble.....	Willa Cruikshank
Narrator, Edward Burgh, Ensemble.....	Kaitlin Jackson
William Clark, William Gibbons, Ensemble.....	James Moledor
Cinnie Moomaw, Benjamin Burgh, Ensemble.....	Lily Stanley
Mary Johnston & Ensemble.....	Bella Turner
Mary Johnston & Ensemble.....	Riley Whisnant

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer.....	Ginger Poole
Director.....	Tiffany Waters
Museum Curator.....	Ashley Webb
Director of Education.....	Victoria Buck
Creative Director of Public Relations.....	Ian Ridgway

UPCOMING EVENTS AT MMT

Music of the Crooners Oct. 29 - 30
A Christmas Story Dec. 1 -23

Fall Extension Class Registration
FREE Monster Mash Masterclass & Halloween Bash
FREE Costume Design Masterclass
FREE Playwriting Masterclass

SPONSORS AND GRANTORS



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I've never cared for the word, 'director'. Although I've called myself one and have accepted the title from others, it's never felt like the most accurate description of how I view my role. Rather than being a 'director', I prefer to consider myself a facilitator--a facilitator of creative expression, of a safe environment, and of bold choices. I didn't direct this show so much as guide it, refine it, and care for it. Like a gardener tends to their patch, enabling their natural growth, so I guided this performance and, I hope, inspired my cast's creativity along the way.

The theatrical process known as devising means to create an original performance in which every artist has an equal voice. As such, it necessitates a certain level of risk. Unlike a traditional rehearsal process, there are no scripts, no directors implementing a vision--there are only collaborators with many different ideas. So, how do we begin? Devising demands that, to begin, we take a leap of faith allowing ourselves to accept the fear of the unknown, take big risks, and make bold choices.

Imagine a container: a piece of tupperware, a mason jar, a jug. We began by filling our container with ingredients we needed or wanted in our performance. In first were the stories of The Corps of Discovery, the life and work of Mary Johnston, Cinnie Moomaw, William Gibbons, daily life and travel, and the Botetourt Dragoons showcased in the museum's celebratory exhibit, Botetourt County: 250+1 Years of Delight. Through guided instruction from myself and studying historical research provided by Ashley Webb, museum curator, the cast theatricalized a series of historical events depicting life in 19th century Botetourt County to commemorate it's 251st anniversary.

As a joint project shared between the History Museum of Western Virginia and Mill Mountain Theatre, collaboration has been and continues to be, the core tenet of our ensemble's process. Every collaborator has left their own distinctive footprint in the performance, and their ability to share their ideas and build off each other is extraordinary. They exhibit wild imagination and their freedom of creative expression is inspiring. Their intensity, specificity, and passion are evident in their striking performance.

Creating this performance has pushed our cast to critically examine their own place in history--the history we're making today by performing this piece or writing this director's note. What if these events will survive in 25, 50, or 100 years? What footprint will we leave behind on this world and what effect will it have on the future? How many random meetings and choices had to fall perfectly in line to lead to our very existence today? History is all around us, in our past and in our future.

With this unconventional performance created by Mill Mountain Theatre Conservatory students, they will shatter the fourth wall, moving audiences through the museum's exhibits and casting them as explorers, wedding guests, suffragettes, and soldiers. Told through a series of vignettes with expressive movement, music, and improvised audience participation, The Botetourt Project is a unique, interactive experience.

Finally, I have several very important individuals to thank, without whom this project wouldn't have been possible. Thank you to Victoria Buck for your never ending faith and support in artistic pursuits; Ashley Webb for your constant kindness and collaboration; Ian Ridgway for many laborious hours on our production marketing materials; my amazing cast and parents for many hours of hard work and many car rides; and my partner, Tyler, for your unwavering patience, inspiration, and love.

--Tiffany Waters, "Director"

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Ed Holt for his story circle interview for *The Botetourt Project*.

MMT Education Staff Victoria Buck and Leonela Hernandez

MMT Creative Director of Public Relations Ian Ridgway

MMT Technical Director Matt Shields

Historical Society of Western Virginia

Historical Society of Fincastle

The Roanoke Times

Fincastle Herald

Virginia Commission for the Arts

This project was supported by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which receives support from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

MMT CONSERVATORY SCHOLARSHIPS

Mill Mountain Theatre is honored to offer two scholarships for students in the Conservatory programs providing life skills and training in theatre disciplines. Both are supported by donations from friends who share beliefs about growing our future talent.

- The **John T. “Jack” Avis Scholarship** was established by MMT’s Board of Directors to recognize the service of a director and president who served MMT from 2004 to 2017. The award goes to a student of any age who demonstrates leadership.
– **Isaac Bouldin, 2021 Recipient** –
- The **John Sailer Scholarship Fund** is in memory of a scenic and lighting designer whose creativity impacted productions at many theatres, including MMT, for decades. The award was created by his family to enable students interested in technical aspects of theatrical productions to attend MMT classes.
– **Eliza Rose Gregory, 2021 Recipient** –

For information about donations to MMT’s scholarship funds, please contact John Levin at 540-342-5761 or development@millmountain.org

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