

# MURDER BALLAD

*Conceived by Jonathan Larson Award winner Julia Jordan*  
*Book and lyrics by Julia Jordan | Music and Lyrics by Juliana Nash*

**AUGUST 11-27, 2023**

** ABET**

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*Est. 2018*



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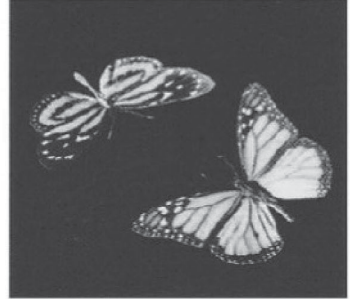
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AND JOHN & BEVERLY JOHNSON  
*present*

# MURDER BALLAD

**A NEW MUSICAL**

*Conceived by Jonathan Larson Award winner Julia Jordan*  
*Book and Lyrics by Julia Jordan | Music and Lyrics by Juliana Nash*

**AUGUST 11-27, 2023**



ABET is sponsored in part by the City of Jacksonville and the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville through the Cultural Service Grant Program.

**ABETTHEATRE.COM | 904.249.7177**

# THE CAST

Chris Berry ..... as Tom  
Erin Barnes ..... as Narrator  
Julia Blasi ..... as Sara  
Chris Robertson ..... as Michael

# THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Directed by ..... Kacy Hope  
Assistant Director ..... Daniel Starling  
Musical Director ..... Erin Barnes  
Stage Manager ..... Susan Roche  
Lighting Designer ..... Ben Sparenberg  
Sound Design ..... Andrew Phoenix  
Piano ..... Erin Barnes  
Guitar ..... Andrew Phoenix  
Bass ..... Mamie Lue Catalina  
Costumes ..... Kacy Hope & Cast  
Production Manager ..... Lee Hamby  
Set Concept ..... Kacy Hope & Daniel Starling  
Set Dressing ..... Lee Hamby  
Lighting Board Operator ..... Kaleigh Ervin  
Sound Board Operator ..... Susan Roche  
Set Construction ..... Tom Barr, Brian Johnson, George Kruer, Ben Sparenberg  
Set Painting ..... CK Painting  
Props ..... Lee Hamby & Kacy Hope  
Stagehand ..... Gillian Rodriguez

# THE STORY BEHIND A MURDER BALLAD

Murder ballads are considered to be the original vehicle for true crime story-telling. Dating back to the 17th century, the genre first gained popularity across Europe then immigrated with Irish and Scottish settlers to the Appalachian region of the United States and spread from there. Murder ballads aren't simply stories of made up crimes, like the Dixie Chicks tune, Goodbye Earl; they are real-life crimes retold through music, like Delia's Gone by Johnny Cash. Similar to the current trend of true-crime TV and podcasts, murder ballads sensationalized stories about people being murdered for various transgressions, typically crimes against the patriarchy or church.

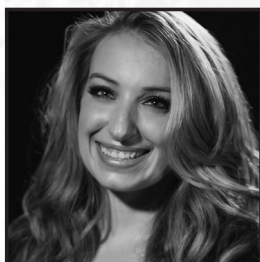
Now enter *Murder Ballad the musical*, written by Julia Jordan and Juliana Nash. Listen as our cast tells a tale "where good does not prevail." A tale of love lost and gained, jealousy, denial, betrayal, and death; fitting the traditional murder ballad style. We also witness our characters deal with post-partum depression, stalking, toxic masculinity, and abuse. *Murder Ballad* is incredibly relevant, touching on these issues many of us face. And, like any good story of mischief and murder, will likely leave you thinking, "I should've seen that coming!!"

– Kacy Hope

# ABOUT THE CAST



**Chris Berry** (Tom) is elated to be joining his fellow castmates in sharing this delightfully horrendous story. A biomedical engineer by trade, Chris has performed professionally in Greenville, SC during his studies at Clemson University (glad you're in Jax, Trevor Lawrence). Previous Jacksonville credits include *The Wild Party*, *Violet*, *Toxic Avenger*, and *Bonnie & Clyde*. Much love to his friends and family for the never-ending love and support, especially Joanna and the future Baby Berry. Mom and I are incredibly excited to meet you.



**Julia Blasi** (Sara) is so happy to be back on stage with ABET. Julia is a lifelong theatre lover, singer, and actress. You may have recently seen Julia as a Player in Theatre Jacksonville's production of *Pippin*. She also recently played Alice Murphy in ABET's production of *Bright Star*. Some of her favorite roles include Hope Cladwell in *Urinetown*, Maureen in *Rent*, Sandy in *Grease*, Mayella Ewell in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Queen Aggravain in *Once Upon a Mattress*. In other exciting news, Julia will be getting married next spring. She would like to thank her friends, family, and fiancé for all of their support.



**Chris Robertson** (Michael) is honored to be part of his first production with ABET. You might have seen him last summer as Charlie Price in *Players by the Sea's* production of *Kinky Boots*. His favorite past productions include *Sweeney Todd* (2010), *Parade*, *Next to Normal* and *Reefer Madness!* As always, he would like to thank his friends and family for their continued love and support. Instagram - [Christ.toph93](#)



**Erin Balazs Barnes** (Narrator/Music Director) is loving being back at ABET, playing with the band AND stepping out to sing this time around! Erin keeps very busy in Jacksonville theatre, having worked as actor, singer, music director, and pianist for dozens of productions over the years. She is a Summa cum Laude graduate of the Jacksonville University School of Music. Favorite onstage roles include Vera in *Smoke in the Mountain* (Alhambra), Francesca in *The Bridges of Madison County* (PBTS), Aunt Spiker in *James and the Giant Peach* (ABET), and Tracey in *Sweat* (The 5 & Dime). Favorite credits as music director include *Snoopy*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Always*, *Patsy Cline*, and *Man of La Mancha* at ABET, *Something Rotten* and *Mamma Mia* at Theatre Jacksonville, and *Falsettos*, *Company*, and *A New Brain* at The 5 & Dime. Many gracious thanks to Kacy for this rather unexpected opportunity, and to husband Matt and the kiddos, whose constant support and love are always the bedrock of this busy, beautiful existence.

# ABOUT THE CREW



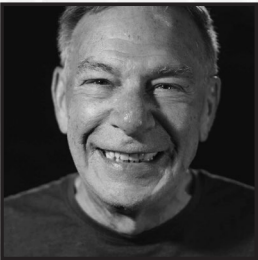
**Kacy Hope** (Director) is excited to direct *Murder Ballad* at ABET! You may recall seeing her onstage in TJ's productions of *Mamma Mia* (Donna) and *Peter Pan* (Wendy), or in *The 5 & Dime* production of *Falsettos* (Dr. Charlotte). However, she has a long history of directing, beginning in 2004 with *Honk!* at Barn Lot Theatre in Kentucky. Since then, Kacy has directed more than a dozen main stage plays including *Hairspray*, *Back to the 80's*, *School House Rock* (KY), and *Chicago* (Stowe, Vermont), and most recently, *Clue!* At Theatre Jacksonville. Kacy also directed ABET's production of *Bonnie & Clyde* in 2022. She extends a heartfelt thank you to her cast and crew for their patience and willingness to play and Lee Hamby for his faith and trust. Much love to fellow director and best husband ever, Will Davis, for his unending support and constant encouragement.



**Daniel Starling** (Assistant Director) is so grateful to return to ABET and help bring this story to life. He has been humbled by the opportunity to work with a such a truly phenomenal cast, and assist Kacy as she effortlessly guided this production. Daniel is a relative newcomer to Theatre, with his first role in ABET's *Bonnie & Clyde* in early 2022, also under Kacy's direction and he hasn't stopped since. His recent credits include *Seymour Krelborn* in *Little Shop of Horrors* at OPCT, *VP Panche* in 25th Annual at Saltwater Players, and Co-director of *Bright Star* at ABET.



**Susan Roche** (Stage Manager) is happy to be working with some of her favorite people at her favorite theatres! Susan has been volunteering at ABET for the last 15 years as an actor, singer, musician, photographer, videographer, board member, tech and stage manager. Favorite roles as an actor include *Joanne* (*Company*, OPCT), *Sister Mary Lazarus* (*Sister Act*, TJ), *Marge* (*Bridges of Madison County*, PBTS), *Officer Randy* (*Superior Donuts*, PBTS), *Robert Anne* (*Nunsense*, ABET), and *Hannah* (*Spitfire Grill*, *Limelight*). Bravo to the cast and production team of *Murder Ballad*! Now, let's "sing the murder ballad's warning...."



**Ben Sparenberg** (Lighting Designer) is excited to be working with ABET again on *Murder Ballad*. Working with this production team and talented cast has been a wonderful experience. Ben relocated to Jacksonville in December 2018 from Charlotte, NC where he had a long career as an architectural lighting designer. His love of theater brought him to Theater Charlotte where he worked on and designed a number of productions. Since moving to JAX that same love of theater brought him to ABET and PBTS.



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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A very special thank you to Players By the Sea  
for hosting our entire 2022-23 Season.





## ABOUT US

### OUR MISSION

is to bring the excitement of live theatre to diverse audiences. An emphasis is placed on new and original plays, neglected classics, and on developing new talent.

ABET is a not-for-profit theatre registered with the state of Florida, the City of Jacksonville through the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, The Tom Nehl Fund of the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, and other private foundations and individual donations.

### STAFF

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ABET Founder: **Carson Merry Baillie**

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