

Ground Floor Theatre in collaboration with Broadway United presents:

# JENNA & THE WHALE

BY VANESSA GARCIA  
AND JAKE CLINE



DIRECTED BY LISA SCHEPS



THE SHUBERT  
FOUNDATION INC.

GROUND  
FLOOR  
THEATRE

Design by Shannon Grounds

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Presents

# Jenna & the Whale

By

VANESSA GARCIA & JAKE CLINE

Directed by LISA SCHEPS

<i>Assistant Director</i> .....	KELSEY MORINGY
<i>Scenic Design</i> .....	ALLISON KEMMERER
<i>Puppet Design</i> .....	CONNOR HOPKINS
<i>Lighting Design</i> .....	JACQUELINE SINDELAR
<i>Costume Design</i> .....	PAM FLETCHER FRIDAY
<i>Sound &amp; Video Design</i> .....	LOWELL BARTHOLOMEE
<i>Stage Dressing &amp; Properties Design</i> .....	CB FELLER
<i>Music Consultant &amp; Composition</i> .....	MAURINE MCLEAN
<i>Production Stage Manager</i> .....	ASTRID RANGEL
<i>Stage Manager</i> .....	KELSEY MORINGY
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i> .....	HARRIET BUTLER
<i>Technical Director</i> .....	NATHANIEL WILLIAMS
<i>Graphic Design</i> .....	SHANNON GROUNDS
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## CAST

Jenna.....	KELSEY MAZAK
Jonah.....	MATTHEW VO
Coco.....	KEATON PATTERSON
Deputy Tyler.....	BROOKE ASHLEY EDEN
Lynn .....	JENNIFER JENNINGS
Rita.....	TONIE KNIGHT

### WARNING:

*Jenna & the Whale* deals with the subject of suicide.  
This production employs some flashing strobe effects.

## Playwrights' Note

We've all had those moments in the dark center of night, or sometimes right in the bright light of day, where it feels like total Victory at Sea. Moments where it feels we've been swallowed by a beast. But life, somehow, persists. At the end of every night, no matter how long it is, there is a morning; at the end of every scorching summer (at least for now) there is the respite of autumn. Even for those of us who have suffered great loss, there is the net of community that strings us together, whether made of family or friendship, and helps us move through; find a way toward hope. There is always hope.

One of the great things about co-writing is that we are not one voice, but two. We are not one world, but many – we are all the people who have touched us, moved us, stirred us, shown us light, and embraced us right when we needed it most. We are also lucky enough to have this wonderful cast, crew, director, and producers to begin the voyage of Jenna & the Whale – we could not imagine another beginning for them both (Jenna and her whale), for us, and for the town of Dunes Beach. We hope it casts its embrace toward you.

With Love, Vanessa & Jake



**Ground Floor Theatre** fosters an environment for creative thinkers and artists to produce works focusing on underrepresented communities, lifting voices that need to be heard to people who need to hear them.

*We believe in theatre for everyone!*

For more information please visit [groundfloortheatre.org](http://groundfloortheatre.org)

**BROADWAY UNITED**

**Broadway United** was formed by the award-winning team of Jim Kierstead and William Fernandez. With more than 8 Tony Awards, a Pulitzer, an Olivier, an Emmy and other laurels, and over 20 years of producing experience between them in theatre, film, and television, Broadway United is committed to developing and promoting the work of artists from equitable racial and ethnic backgrounds. They have not only worked in London's West End and New York's Great White Way, but have produced in Miami, and Atlanta (happily traveling to such great cities as Austin to help create works such as *Jenna & the Whale*).

Broadway United recently released their first indie feature, *Borrowed*, which is now streaming nationally on Amazon Prime. They will soon see their second full-length feature release, *Summoning The Spirit*, begin streaming in August on Amazon Prime. Broadway United recently added Latine actor/producer/entertainment marketing professional Roger Gonzalez to their team. Broadway United has relationships with Latine, LGBTQ+, Spanish-speaking theatre and film companies across the country and have nurtured strong ties to Latine communities in Miami and New York City in an effort to expand their creative endeavors.

For more information please visit [broadway-united.com](http://broadway-united.com)

# CAST



**KELSEY MAZAK—She/Her** (*Jenna*) is stoked to be working with Ground Floor Theatre for the first time! Kelsey is a graduate of SMU's BFA Acting program and has worked with numerous local theatre companies such as ZACH (*Dracula*), Streetcorner Arts (*The Gulf*, *Butcher Of Baraboo*, *The Spin*), Hyde Park Theatre (*Antipodes*), Jarrott Productions (*Significant Other*, *Pet Dick*), Different Stages (*Heartbreak House*, *Yankee Tavern*, *Book Club Play*), and Trinity Street (*Our Town*, *Into The Woods*). She is so grateful for the ability to do what she loves on a regular basis. Love to all of her "lifers" who have stood by her this past year.



**MATTHEW VO—They/Them** (*Jonah*) Originally from Dallas, Matthew moved to Central Texas for school where they received a BFA in Acting from Texas State University. They've performed on many stages in Dallas some of which include The Moody Performance Hall, The Dallas Theater Center and Shakespeare Dallas' Samuell-Grand Amphitheater. At Texas State, they've performed in numerous shows, two of their favorites being a part of the original cast of *Zu's Earth* (Shakey B) and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* (The Moon), where they wrote and performed all original music for the show.



**KEATON PATTERSON-She/Her** (*Coco*) is thrilled to be working with Ground Floor Theatre to tell such a meaningful and magical story. In truth, she has not performed in quite some time, since before Covid-19...one could say it's been a while! She is a graduate of Southwestern University with degrees in Business and Theatre Arts. Some of her previous credits include: Melody in *Bad Jews*, Cat in the musical *HONK!*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Holly in *Anton In Show Business*, & Gwendolyn in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She would like to thank her family for the endless encouragement and the entire community of passionate individuals at Ground Floor Theatre whose effort and passion made this a magnificent experience.



**BROOKE ASHLEY EDEN—They/Them** (Deputy Tyler) is a queer interdisciplinary artist working & living in Central Texas. Favorite theatre performance credits: Georgia in *The Vineyard*, Mrs. Fleming in *Heathers*, and Hetchman's Wife in *The Hatmaker's Wife*. Outside of theatre, Brooke works as a professional musician, barista, & wannabe standup comedian. [BrookeAshleyEden.com](http://BrookeAshleyEden.com)



**JENNIFER JENNINGS -She/Her** (*Lynn*) Most recently seen as Susan in *The Pact* (Jarrott Productions), Jen is thrilled to be working with Ground Floor Theatre for the first time! Favorite shows include *Alabaster* (Shrewd Productions), *Wild Horses* (VORTEX; 2018 B. Iden Payne Outstanding Actress in a Drama; Robert Faires' Top 10 (+1) Theatre Riches of 2017; 2018 Austin Critics Table Outstanding Performance by an Individual), *Storm Still* (VORTEX), *Terminus* (VORTEX), *Sing Muse* (VORTEX), *Lear* (VORTEX), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Penfold Theatre and Present Company), *Agent Andromeda* (Sky Candy), and *The History of King Lear* (The Hidden Room)



**TONIE KNIGHT-She/Her/Ella** (*Rita*) is delighted to be back at Ground Floor Theatre. She was last seen here as Ofelia in *Anna in the Tropics*, for which she won a B. Iden Payne Award for Outstanding Featured Performer. Most recently, she performed in ZACH Theatre's production of *Noises Off!* as Dotty/Mrs. Clackett. Other credits include *Luchadora!* (Nana Lupita) with Mary Moody Northen Theatre; *Water by the Spoonful* (Haikumom/Odessa); and *Great Expectations* (Mrs. Joe); both with Different Stages. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Performance Studies from UT Austin.

# PRODUCTION TEAM

**JAKE CLINE-He/Him** (*Playwright*) is a Florida-born playwright, literary critic and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. He has written for *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, CNN, *Outside* magazine and other national outlets. A member of PEN America and the National Book Critics Circle, Cline in 2020 was a finalist for the NBCC's Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing. He was a member of the 2019-2021 class of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs' Playwright Development Program, which presented a public reading of his play "The Mountains." By day, Cline works as publications director at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. He lives in Miami with his wife, Yvette, and rescue beagle, Doug. [jakecline.net](http://jakecline.net)

**VANESSA GARCIA-She/Her** (*Playwright*) is a Cuban-American playwright, screenwriter, novelist, and journalist/essayist who has written for *Sesame Street*, where she's been nominated for an Emmy (*Monster Meditation*), and won two Telly Awards (*Tamir On the Street*). She's also worked on *Caillou*; *Behind the Beats* (a French animated show about the interconnected history of music), and other shows. She's the author of the novel, *White Light*, which won an International Latino Book Award and was one of NPR's best books of 2015. Her award-winning Picture Book for children, *What the Bread Says*, launched in 2022. Theatrically, she's the author of *The Amparo Experience*, an immersive hit that *People en Español* called "Miami's Hottest Ticket." Other plays include: *Sweet Goats & Blueberry Señoritas*, which she co-wrote with Obama's Inaugural poet, Richard Blanco, and *#Graced* about a woman searching for what it means to be American right now, which premiered at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. Her journalism, essays and thought pieces have appeared in *The LA Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *National Review*, *ESPN*, *The Hill*, *Catapult*, *The Boston Globe*, and numerous other publications. She holds a PhD from the University of California Irvine in Creative Nonfiction. [www.vanessagarcia.org](http://www.vanessagarcia.org) Insta: @vanessagarciawriter

**LISA SCHEPS-She/Her** (*Director, Founder & Co-Artistic Director Ground Floor Theatre*) Lisa is thrilled to be working on this world premiere with this incredible team. At Ground Floor Theatre (GFT), she has directed *Parade*, *Gibberish Mostly*, *Fun Home* (B. Iden Payne award for direction), *Next to Normal* (B. Iden Payne award for direction), *TRANSom*, *Unexpected Joy*, *The Last Five Years*, and many others. Lisa has a fifty year history in theatre and has the unique distinction of playing the camel's rear end on Broadway. After 20 successful years in New York, she moved to Chicago and opened a wildly successful company producing business theatre (ask her, she'll tell you what that is). She moved to Austin in 2003 and jumped head first into the Austin theatre scene opening her first theatre, play! Theatre Group in a former Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall on the East Side. In 2014 she founded GFT. Besides running the theatre Lisa hosts local radio show *Off Stage* and *On The Air* on KOOP community radio. She dedicates this production to her pet whale, Foxtrot. #ATXtheatre

**KELSEY MORINGY-She/Her** (*Assistant Director/Stage Manager*) is a born & raised unicorn of Austin, TX. She studied Performance & Production at Texas State University with an emphasis in Stage Management & Directing. Kelsey's previous directing credits include *Road To Nirvana* and her original work *Cabaret Wonderland*. Previous GFT shows Kelsey has stage managed include *The Last Five Years*, *Next To Normal*, *Fun Home*, *Single Black Female*, *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, *Dex & Abby*, *TRANSom*, *There & Back*, and *Anna in The Tropics*. Other local Austin shows she has worked on include Deaf Austin Theatre and ZACH theatre's collaboration for *Cinderella* and Penfold Theatre's *Ghost Quartet*. Kelsey would like to thank Astrid, the creative team, and our AMAZING cast for their passion and dedication on this show. Special thanks and love to Lisa Scheps for always believing in Kelsey and gifting her with so many wonderful opportunities to grow!

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION TEAM (CONT.)

**ALLISON KEMMERER-She/Her** (*Scenic Designer*) Allie is thrilled to be making her scenic design debut for Ground Floor Theatre. She has been working various freelance carpentry jobs at GFT since 2022, for shows such as *Unexpected Joy* and *Dot* and *Amadeus* (Penfold) as well as a set design credit for Stage Austin's *Pageant*. She is currently pursuing a degree in Film with an interest in set design. She has loved her time working for GFT and can't wait for everybody to see all the hard work and heart they've poured into this show! She always wants to give a special shout out to her friends and family whom have always supported her.

**CONNOR HOPKINS-He/Him** (*Puppet Design*) is the Artistic Director of Trouble Puppet Theater Co., which produces original works based on history and literature. He is, according to necessity, a puppetmaker, director, production designer, technical director, and performer. Trouble Puppet has been recognized for outstanding work in artistic and technical capacities, including Critics' Table and B. Iden Payne award for Original Script/New Play of the Year, Outstanding Production, Outstanding Direction, Outstanding Costumes, Outstanding Media Design, and Outstanding Puppetry. Trouble Puppet's work is inspired not only by artistic passion but by social, political, and human convictions: that there can be no end to the struggle for knowledge and compassion, and against injustice and intolerance.

**JACQUELINE SINDELAR-She/Her** (*Lighting Design*) graduated from Loyola University New Orleans with a BFA in Film and Visual Arts. Since then, she has been working in film, professional theater and live event production for over a decade. Jacqueline has had the honor of designing for *Box*, *Julieta Tiene La Culpa*, *Sanctuary City*, *Anna in the Tropics* and *Tick, Tick... Boom!* at Ground Floor Theatre over the last year. She has also worked as Lead Theatrical Electrician for Color Factory Houston; Lighting Designer for New Manifest Theatre Company and The Back Pack; Lighting Supervisor for Fusebox Festival; and Master Electrician for kidsActing Studio, Austin Shakespeare, and Zilker Theater Productions.

**PAM FLETCHER FRIDAY-She/Her** (*Costume Design*) is happy to be working again with Ground Floor Theatre. This has been her 4th show to costume in Austin this summer. (Some people will do anything to stay out of the heat!) Hoping you are as moved by this group of talented folks as I have been.

**LOWELL BARTHOLOMEE-He/Him** (*Sound and Video Design*) is an actor, playwright, sound and video designer, and director in Austin. His most recent work has been seen/heard in *The Lifespan of a Fact* and *The Sound Inside* (Jarrott Productions), *Family Traditions* (ScriptWorks), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Vincent* (Penfold). He provided sound design for Ground Floor's *There and Back* in 2018. He has received the B. Iden Payne Award and the Austin Critics Table Award for his work. He's an artistic company member of Rude Mechs and Hyde Park Theater and a playwright member of ScriptWorks.

**CB FELLER-They/Them** (*Stage Dressing & Prop Design*) CB Feller is thrilled to be returning as props master for this production. You might have seen their previous scenic art in *Sanctuary City* or *Anna and the Tropics* which won a B. Iden Payne for set design. Recent credits include: *Art of Martyrdom* and *Dragonfly Princess*. When not doing theatre, CB is a graphic artist working on their web comic about online dating among various other subjects and trying not to trip when they walk.

**MAURINE McLEAN-She/Her** (*Music Consultant & Composition*) treasures the role music has played in her time on this Earth. She has performed in melodramas, musicals and with the local Gilbert and Sullivan company. Numerous Austin bands have included her on bass and vocals, including No Mercy, No Strings Attached, and the Ruth and Gail Ensemble. She is best known as a bass player and composer for The Therapy Sisters, for over 40 years of performances from coast to coast and even overseas. She hopes you remember Moby Dick's favorite meal: Fish and ships!



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION TEAM (CONT.)

**ASTRID RANGEL-She/Her** (*Production Stage Manager*) is a Texas State University alumni where she graduated with a Production & Performance degree with an emphasis on Stage Management and Directing. Her previous shows include *rain falls special on me*, *Anna in the Tropics* (GFT), *A Christsmas Carol* (Penfold), *Girl of Glass* (Theatre Synesthesia), *Lighting Girl* (Frontera Fest), and *How I Learned to Drive* (Texas State University). Astrid would like to thank her boyfriend Kyle for always supporting her theater journeys, her family for coming to see this amazing show and Ground Floor Theatre for giving me the opportunity to grow as a person and stage manager. I hope you all had a whale of a time!

**HARRIET BUTLER-She/Her** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be making her Ground Floor Theatre debut with the amazing company of *Jenna & the Whale!* Harriet's recent stage management credits include *Matilda* and *Beauty and the Beast* (Stageworks Theatre, SM), *The Cat in the Hat* (ZACH, Takeover SM), and *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* (ZACH, SM Intern). She recently graduated from Texas State University with a BFA in Theatre, with an emphasis in Technical Production and a concentration in Stage Management. Recent collegiate credits include *Into the Woods* (PSM), *Gloria* (ASM), and *Father Comes Home From the Wars pts.1 and 2* (Takeover SM). Enjoy the show!

**NATHANIEL WILLIAMS-He/They** (*Technical Director*) has worked with Ground Floor Theatre, Hyde Park Theatre, The Stage Austin, Cold Frame Collective, and Conspirare in various technical roles since moving to Austin in 2021. Nathaniel was Assistant Technical Director at Kalamazoo Civic Theatre during the 2019-2020 season. Nathaniel has a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Rice University. Recent credits include *The Real Inspector Hound* (Stage Austin), *Romeo and Juliet* (Cold Frame Collective), and *Sanctuary City* (Ground Floor Theatre). He would like to thank his family for their support, and Mackenzie for being a wonderful partner.

**ANDY GRAPKO-She/Her** (*Intimacy Director*) is the Resident Intimacy Director for the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin. Her intimacy work includes training with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, Theatrical Intimacy Education, and Intimacy for Stage and Screen. Her recent intimacy credits include *Sanctuary City*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Big Love*, *Grease*, *Address the Body!*, *Fabulous Monsters*, *Anna in the Tropics*, ...*but you could've held my hand*, *Venus in Fur*, *Pippin*, and films *Clock*, *Do Not Disturb*, and *RAPS*. [www.andygrapko.com](http://www.andygrapko.com)

**MOTLEY CREW MEDIA** Founded in 2006 by Amy S. Layton, Motley Crew Media is a full-service boutique marketing and public relations firm with a focused expertise in arts and entertainment. Made up of senior-level experienced PR and marketing specialists, the "Crew" helps clients bring their brand to life in the field through passion and commitment, alongside a keen ability to transform concept and vision into precisely executed reality. Sampling of clients include: aGLIFF, Austin Playhouse, Austin Shakespeare, Broadway Across America, Ground Floor Theatre, Hobby Center, Holland Taylor, Impact Arts, Jaston Williams, LTWA, LTZA, Penfold Theatre Company, Tapestry, Texas Performing Arts, The Lost Gonzo Band, and ZACH Theatre among many others. [info@motleycrewmedia.com](mailto:info@motleycrewmedia.com)

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M E D I A



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WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP  
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*JENNA & THE WHALE?*

We need your help to fund this show. If you'd like to support this production, click the QR code or Venmo (@GroundFloor) or Pay Pal (lisa@groundfloortheatre.org). Any amount helps.



We would like to acknowledge that we are on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America.

We would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

We would also like to acknowledge that East Austin has also been historically home to segregated and under resourced Mexican and Black communities.

As guests, we pay respect to these peoples, past, present, and future, here in their homeland.

**SPECIAL THANKS:**

Sharon Ploeger, Motorblade, The Stage Austin, Esther's Tex Mex, Pat & Linda Cannon, Erica Moreno/Neat Freak Studio, Folly Parton Designs, Spectral Flux, Twin Creek Studios, Black Collar Party, DJ Rella/Arielle Levin, The Therapy Sisters, Daydreamer, Nathan Jerkins & Penfold Theatre, Lacey Cannon Gonzales & Carl Gonzales, Cassidy Spruiell, Bianca Torres, Laura Celest Cannon, Felix Coronado, David and Rose Segura, Brianna Garcia, Cassidy Parker Knight, Denver Miner, Tonie Knight, Jay Williams, Elizabeth Newman (Filigree Theatre, Simone Alexander, Scottish Rite Theatre, Kids Acting, Patrick Anthony, Southwestern University, Georgia McLeland, Mary Moody Northen Theatre, To all those that have helped develop Jenna & the Whale through readings, including Miami New Drama, The Sol Project, Adriana Gavia, Conor Bagley, Victoria Collado, Broadway on Demand, and Broadway United.