



# BRAWLER

By Walt McGough

Directed by M. Bevin O'Gara

March 1 - 18

 *Boston* **PLAYWRIGHTS'** *Theatre*

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# A WELCOME FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the third production in our Season of New Plays—*Brawler* by BPT alumnus Walt McGough. We have produced Walt’s work before—perhaps you remember *The Farm* some years ago, a play about the world of espionage and a “spook” in crisis. Walt’s plays have been produced to resounding success here in Boston at Central Square Theatre and New Repertory Theatre, among others, and most notably in Chicago and currently in San Francisco where his play *Non-Player Character* just finished its run at the San Francisco Playhouse. Welcome back to the East Coast, Walt!

We’re privileged to be working again with the gifted M. Bevin O’Gara, director of our productions of Melinda Lopez’s *Gary* and Leslie Harrell Dillen’s *Two Wives in India*. Bevin is the new Artistic Director of the Kitchen Theatre, our collaborating presenter, in Ithaca, New York, and we hope this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship between our two companies. We have similar visions, and we are putting our best feet forward in this “World Premiere” of *Brawler*.

We can call *Brawler* a “rolling” World Premiere in that it will play here in Boston three weekends and then move to Ithaca for more rehearsals (and Walt’s revisions) where it will open again in an even newer incarnation. This is our gift to the playwright and to this important play. Please let us know what you think of it, and please tell your friends. It’s my firm belief that this play will have a long and happy life, and you will be able to say you were here when it was born. Every time you attend a new play, you make history.

Next on the boards will be our first foray into opera with our production of *The Rosenbergs, An Opera*, directed by Dmitry Troyanovsky with musical direction by Cristi Catt. The production, too, is a collaboration—this time with Brandeis University—and we look forward to having you with us. Boston University’s Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies and the Jewish Cultural Endowment, the Center for Humanities at BU, and the BU Arts Initiative have come together with the Brandeis Arts Council and Theatre Department to collaborate on this award-winning opera. Adapted from the Rosenbergs’ letters while in jail, librettist Rhea Leman and composer Joachim Holbek have fashioned a melodic, moving, and

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fascinating character study of these two mysterious, real-life figures from our American past. The opera will play only two weekends (April 12-22) here at BU (and then one more weekend at Brandeis), so don't forget to pen us into your calendars.

But in the meantime, please enjoy *Brawler*. Thanks for making history with us!

All my best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Snodgrass". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "All my best,".

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Boston Playwrights' Theatre  
presents

# **BRAWLER**

by Walt McGough

directed by M. Bevin O'Gara\*\*\*

A world premiere, produced in  
collaboration with Kitchen Theatre Company

Scenic Design	Cristina Todesco**
Lighting Design	Evey Connerty-Marin
Sound Design	Andrew Duncan Will
Costume Design	Penney Pinette
Movement and Fight Choreographer	Misha Shields***
Stage Manager	Katherine Humbert*
Assistant Stage Manager	Beirut Balutis
Assistant Director	Alexis Scheer
Carpentry Assistant	Jacob Mellon
Light and Sound Board Operator	Katherine Humbert*
Master Electrician	Keithlyn Parkman
Electricians	Gabriel Goldman, Kevin Sheehan, Zachary Straeffer
Costume Master	Alexis Scheer
Properties Artisan	Alexis Scheer
House Managers	Anna Oehlberg, Paisley Piasecki, Kira Rockwell
Front of House Staff	Beirut Balutis, Anmol Dhaliwal, Madison Frilot, Marzie Ghasempour, Matt Manarchy, Laura Neill, Kira Rockwell

## **CAST**

Moose	Greg Maraio*
Jerry	Marc Pierre*
Odie	Anthony Goes*
Trisha	Gigi Watson
Game Commentator	Ed Hoopman*

\*Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

\*\*Member, United Scenic Artists Local USA 829

\*\*\*Member, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

*Brawler* runs 90 minutes with no intermission.

*The video and/or audio recording of this performance  
by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.*

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## A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Ancient Greece is not the obvious starting point for a play about ice hockey, but that's where *Brawler* began, because sometimes playwriting is weird. I read Sophocles' *Ajax* in graduate school at BU, in a translation by Bryan Dorries which was specifically geared towards soldiers returning from the Middle East. Dorries' reasons for such a translation were clear: Sophocles, though most remembered as a dramatist, was a general as well, and because military service was compulsory in Grecian society, his plays were originally performed to audiences full of soldiers. With that in mind, it's clear that *Ajax* is not a story about gods and destiny, but about a soldier struggling to survive after a war is over, and feeling abandoned by his commanders once he is no longer useful.

While that interesting bit of trivia rattled around in my brain, I also read something else: a *New York Times* article about Derek Boogaard, the Minnesota Wild and New York Rangers player who, in 2011, died of an accidental overdose of painkillers, and became one of a number of hockey "enforcers" to suffer similar fates in a short timeframe. Here was another story about a warrior cast aside, which caught my interest. Boogaard's story collided with *Ajax*'s in my brain, and just like that, a play was born.

As a native Pittsburgher, and a lifelong fan of all its storied franchises (yes, even the Pirates), I've spent recent years wrestling with what it means to love something that often sacrifices the bodies and minds of its practitioners, many of whom sign on well before the age where they're thinking clearly about their decision. Hockey is a beautiful sport, full of graceful maneuvering and unfathomable coordination, but it's also a game with violence lurking under the surface at all times. A hockey enforcer's job is to sacrifice his body for the good of the team, and absorb the eruptions of that violence when they happen. As such, enforcers' post-hockey lives generally see them dealing with the toll such a job description can exact, be it physical or mental. The enforcer role has officially been phased out in recent years, but doing so hasn't eliminated the violence so much as spread it around, and put all players more equally at risk of injury. Is that better? I'm not sure, but it's at least a bit more egalitarian in its brutality.

In writing this play, I wanted to have a conversation about the ways that the things we love can hurt us, and how the entertainment we consume can hurt others. How much we choose to acknowledge or ignore it is up to us all on an individual basis, but we can no longer pretend to be unaware. There aren't enough thanks available to Bevin, Kate, the cast, and everyone involved with bringing this story to life. I hope you enjoy.

—Walt McGough

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## CAST & CREW

**BEIRUT BALUTIS (Assistant Stage Manager)** is an Appalachian playwright currently earning an MFA in Playwriting at Boston University. His work has been developed or produced at the Cape May Playwright Symposium, Mt. Gretna Theatre Festival, the Hershey Area Playhouse, and the Boston Theater Marathon. Beirut earned an MFA in Stage and Screen at Lesley University.

**EVERY CONNERTY-MARIN (Lighting Design)** is delighted to be back at BPT for another show. Previous works here include *Faithless* (ALD, BU), *The Honey Trap* (LD, BU) and *Lost Tempo* (LD) earlier this season. They are a recent graduate of Boston University with a degree in lighting design and a concentration in production. They are particularly excited to be on this co-production with Kitchen Theatre and the remounting of the show in Ithaca. When not here, they split their time between freelancing around the Boston area and hanging out with their cat. They would like to thank said cat, as well as friends and family for their unwavering support.

**ANTHONY GOES\* (Odie)** is making his BPT debut. He was last seen locally in *Simon Says* at the BCA and in the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Regional houses include Pasadena Playhouse, New Victory Theatre, Lynn Redgrave Theatre, Crossroads Theatre, Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, and Connecticut Rep to name a few. Anthony holds an MFA in Acting from the University of Connecticut and currently is an adjunct professor at the Community College of Rhode Island.

**ED HOOPMAN\* (Game Commentator)** can be seen currently in *Old Money* (Commonwealth Shakespeare at Babson College). Recent Boston performances include King Arthur in *Camelot* at Lyric Stage and Ted in *Ideation* at New Rep. Other regional credits: *Finish Line* (Boston Theater Co./Boch Center); *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Taming of the Shrew* (Comm Shakes); *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *City of Angels*, *Dear Elizabeth*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Groucho Marx in Animal Crackers* (Lyric Stage); *Mister Roberts*, *Indulgences* (New Rep); *Dog Paddle* (Bridge Rep); *A Civil War Christmas* (Huntington Theatre Company); *Assassins*, *After Ashley*, *A Clockwork Orange* (Company One); and *Shear Madness* (Charles Playhouse). NYC: *Interior: Panic* (NY Fringe Festival) and *World's Fastest Hamlet*, both with Hedgepig Ensemble Theatre; *Jester's Dead* (The Outfit); *Foreign Wars* (Random Access Theater). TV: *See Kate Run* (ABC), *Aftershock* (History Channel). Mr. Hoopman is also an accomplished voiceover actor whose work can be heard both locally and nationally.

[www.edhoopman.com](http://www.edhoopman.com)

**KATHERINE HUMBERT\* (Stage Manager)** is delighted to be working on another production with Boston Playwrights' Theatre where she has stage managed *Elemeno Pea*, *Every Piece of Me*, *The Atheist*, and *Memorial*. She has spent several years with Central Square Theater where she has assistant stage managed The Nora Theatre Company's *Operation Epsilon* and *Arcadia*, and the

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Underground Railway Theater's productions of *SILA*, *A Disappearing Number*, and *Mr. g*. She has also had the pleasure of working on The Nora/URT's *The Other Place* and *Arabian Nights*. A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, she returned to the Boston area several years ago to explore the theatre scene and has been enjoying every moment. Most recently, Katherine assistant stage managed SpeakEasy's production of *Men on Boats*. Other recent stage management credits include *Into the Woods* (Weston Drama Workshop), *Translations* (Bad Habit Productions), and *Company* (Moonbox Productions).

**WALT McGOUGH (Playwright)** is a Boston-based playwright (by way of Pittsburgh and Chicago). In Boston, he has held fellowships with both the Huntington and New Repertory Theatre Companies, and was a finalist for the 2016 Dramatists Guild Lanford Wilson Award. His plays include *Pattern of Life*, which was named Best New Play by the Independent Reviewers of New England, and *The Farm*, *Priscilla Dreams the Answer*, and *Paper City Phoenix*, all of which received Best New Play IRNE nominations. Other plays include *Chalk*, *Dante Dies!! (And Then Things Get Weird)*, *The Haberdasher!*, and *Non-Player Character*. He has worked around the country with companies such as The Lark, the Huntington, New Rep, the Kennedy Center, NNPN, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Fresh Ink, Sideshow, Orfeo Group, Nu Sass Productions, Chicago Dramatists, and Argos. In 2015, his play *Advice for Astronauts* was selected as the winner of the Milken Playwriting Prize. He has served on the staff at SpeakEasy Stage Company in Boston and Chicago Dramatists, and is a founding ensemble member of Chicago's Sideshow Theatre Company. He holds a BA from the University of Virginia, and an MFA in playwrighting from Boston University. More information at [www.waltmcgough.com](http://www.waltmcgough.com)

**GREG MARAIO\* (Moose)** returns to BPT after playing Skip in last season's *Faithless*. Greg is a Boston native who has been working as an actor and a director for the past 10 years. He was a member of the ensemble of the 2016 workshop production of *Finish Line* and returned for its world premiere at Boston's Shubert Theater in March 2017. Recent acting credits include Jordan in the New England premiere of *Significant Other* (IRNE Nomination) as Jonathon/Miranda in *Casa Valentina* (Elliot Norton and IRNE nominations) and as Victor/Clint in John Kuntz's *Necessary Monsters* (SpeakEasy Stage). Other recent acting credits include *Colossal* (Company One); *Translations* (Bad Habit Productions); and *The Misadventures of Spy Matthias* (Theatre on Fire). He has also worked with many local companies including The Huntington, New Rep, Zeitgeist Stage, and Central Square Theater, where he will be performing the role of La Marquise de Merteuil in their June production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Greg received a BFA from Lesley University where he studied acting with Anne Pluto. Sincere thanks to Bevin, Walt, and Kate.

**M. BEVIN O'GARA\*\*\* (Director)** is thrilled to be back at BPT having previously directed *Gary* (Elliot Norton nomination for Best Production) and *Two Wives in India*. O'Gara currently serves as Producing Artistic Director at the Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca, NY. As a director, Bevin's credits include *The Who & The What* by Ayad Ahktar, *Milk Like Sugar* by Kirsten Greenidge (Elliot Norton

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Award nomination for Best Production) and *Becoming Cuba* by Melinda Lopez at the Huntington Theatre Company; *The Bridges of Madison County*, *appropriate*, *A Future Perfect*, *Tribes* (Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards for Best Production), and *Clybourne Park* with SpeakEasy Stage Company; *Brahman/i*, *Chronicles of Kalki*, *You for Me for You*, *Love Person*, and *The Pain and the Itch* with Company One Theatre; *Phedre* with Actors' Shakespeare Project; *Fast Company* with the Lyric Stage Company, *Marjorie Prime* with the Nora Theatre Company, *How Soft the Lining* and *Translations* with Bad Habit Productions, *2.5 Minute Ride* with New Repertory Theatre, and *Melancholy Play* with Holland Productions. She holds a BFA from Boston University.

**MARC PIERRE\* (Jerry)** is absolutely thrilled to make his BPT debut. Most recent credits include *Airness* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *When January Feels Like Summer* (Central Square Theatre); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Lyric Stage Company); *Milk Like Sugar* (Huntington Theatre Company); *The Flick* (Gloucester Stage); *Romeo and Juliet* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company). Marc received his BFA at Emerson College. He is a recipient of the Isabel Sanford Scholarship and Emerson College's Acting Area Award.

**PENNEY PINETTE (Costume Designer)** is a Boston-based designer focusing in dance and theatre. She has designed *Ideation*, *The Gift Horse*, *Golda's Balcony*, and *A Number* at New Rep. In addition she teaches costume production at Boston University where she recently received her MFA. Some of her work has been with Boston Conservatory Dance Department from 2013-2017, local puppeteer Bonnie Duncan of They Gotta Be Secret Agents, and the local dance community including Prometheus Dance, Contrapose Dance, and Fort Point Theater Productions.

**ALEXIS SCHEER (Assistant Director/Props Artisan/Costume Master)** is currently pursuing a MFA in Playwriting at Boston University. She also moonlights as an actor and Producing Artistic Director of Off the Grid Theatre Company. [www.alexisscheer.com](http://www.alexisscheer.com) // twitter: [@alexisscheer](https://twitter.com/alexisscheer) // insta: [@scheer\\_madness](https://www.instagram.com/scheer_madness)

**MISHA SHIELDS\*\*\* (Movement and Fight Choreographer)** is a dance and aerial circus choreographer in the Boston and New York areas. Off-Broadway credits include *Baghdaddy* (Chita Rivera Award Nominee/St. Luke's Theater), *Wonderland* (Atlantic Theater), and *The Orion Experience* (XL Nightclub). Other credit highlights include *I Was Most Alive With You*, *Milk Like Sugar*, *A Doll's House*, *Ripcord* (Huntington); *Emma!* (Stageworks Media workshop); *Zombies on Broadway!* (RKO Theatricals workshop); *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Merrily We Roll Along* (APAC); *Company* (St. Bart's Players); *The Bridges of Madison County* (SpeakEasy); *We're Gonna Die*, *Hype Man*, *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.*, *Really* (Company One); *Rocky Horror* (Yale); *Cabaret*, and *Sunday in the Park With George* (Boston Conservatory). Upcoming in 2018, *Loch Ness* (Adirondack Theatre Festival). Love to Ben and Shea. [www.mishashields.com](http://www.mishashields.com)



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**CRISTINA TODESCO\*\* (Scenic Design)** returns to Boston Playwrights' Theatre where she previously designed *The Sussman Variations* and *Legally Dead*. Theater companies include Actors' Shakespeare Project, Company One, ART Institute, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, the Culture Project, Gloucester Stage, Huntington Theatre, Boston Playwrights', Merrimack Repertory Theater, New Repertory Theater, Olney Theater Center, Orfeo Group, Poets' Theater, SpeakEasy Stage Company, Harbor Stage, Summer Play Festival, Trinity Rep, Wheelock Family Theater, Williamstown Theater Festival among many more. She has designed for the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall in Boston and at Tanglewood. For Outstanding Design, she is the recipient of four Elliot Norton Awards and an IRNE Award. She earned a BFA in painting from Boston University's School of Visual Arts, and an MFA in scenic design from BU's College of Fine Arts School of Theatre, where she currently teaches.

**GIGI WATSON (Trisha)** is gratefully making her debut with Boston Playwrights' Theatre! Other Boston credits include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (SpeakEasy Stage); *Hamlet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth* (Brown Box Theatre Project); *Finish Line* (Boston Theater Company); *Billy Elliot* (Wheelock Family Theatre); *The T Party* (Company One); *The Gypsy Machine* (Theatre on Fire); *Rent*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Fiddlehead Theatre Company); *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Greater Boston Stage Company); *Coriolanus* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); and *Café Variations* (ArtsEmerson/SITI Company). Gigi also works with commercial and corporate clients as a video and voiceover artist. Additionally, she coaches acting and singing with My College Audition, teaches yoga, and serves as fairy dogmother to many members of the four-legged community in the Boston area. Gigi holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from Emerson College.

**ANDREW DUNCAN WILL (Sound Designer)** Recent local sound design credits include productions with Hasty Pudding, A.R.T. Institute, Lyric Stage, Bad Habit Productions, Flotsam Productions, Gloucester Stage, Stoneham Theatre, Puppet Showplace Theater, New Rep, Fresh Ink, Boston Public Works, Commonwealth Shakespeare, and Company One. Andrew received an MFA in Sound Design from Boston University.

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## SPECIAL THANKS

Daniel Berger-Jones, Daniel Blada, Paul Daigneault, Brandon Green, Charles Haughland, Nile Hawver, Lila Rose Kaplan, Angie Jepsen, Lenelle Moïse, Lisa Timmel

\*Actors' Equity Association (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 49,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States.

\*\*United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, is a labor union and professional association of Designers, Artists and Craftspeople, many who are world famous, organized to protect craft standards, working conditions and wages for the entertainment and decorative arts industries.

\*\*\*Stage Directors and Choreographers Society's mission is to foster a national community of professional stage Directors and Choreographers by protecting the rights, health and livelihoods of all our Members. To facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and opportunities, while educating the current and future generations about the role of Directors and Choreographers and providing effective administration, negotiations and contractual support.



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he met his match with  
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then Ahab's wife arrived.*

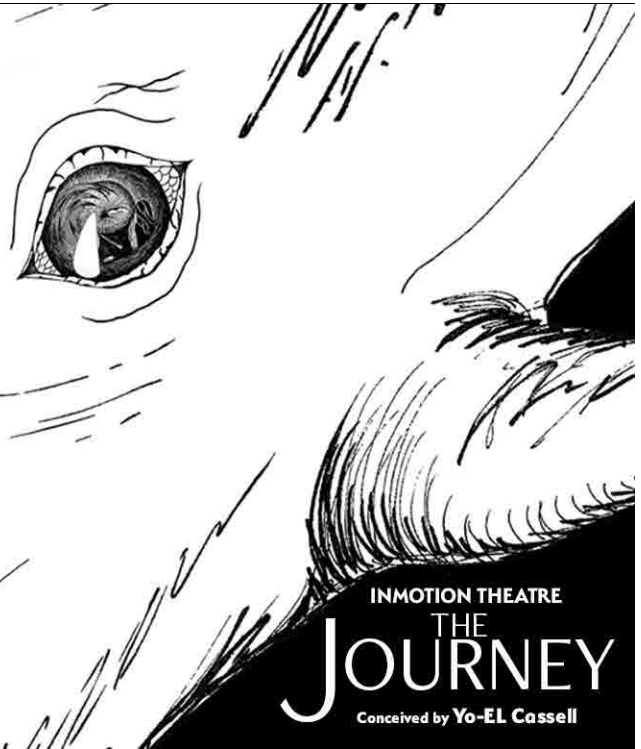
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Founded in 1981 at Boston University by Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, Boston Playwrights' Theatre is an award-winning professional theatre dedicated to new works. At the core of our programs is the Playwriting MFA offered in the celebrated English Department in the College of Arts & Sciences and in collaboration with the award-winning School of Theatre in the College of Fine Arts. Alumni of our program have been produced in regional and New York houses as well as in London's West End; our own productions of alumni work have garnered regional and Boston awards, including numerous Best New Script Awards from the Elliot Norton committee and the Independent Reviewers of New England.

From class workshops to our Season of New Plays, BPT employs the best of New England's professional actors, directors, and designers to bring each playwright's vision to its first audiences.

Each spring we produce New Noises: Massachusetts Young Playwrights' Project. Area high schools work with professional playwrights, directors, and actors to see student works on stage for the first time.

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When we are not producing plays, we continue our mission to support new works by renting theatre space to other New England theatre companies at below-market rates. Our Black Box Fellowships provide support for the development and production of new plays.

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