

ACTOR NOEL GAULIN

## THE CALL OF THE WILD: ILLUSTRATED EDITION

From the novel by Jack London

September 28th – October 11<sup>th</sup> 2015-  
Austin Playhouse @ ACC Highland  
Mall

Monday – Wednesday, Sept. 28, 29  
& 30 - Oct. 5, 6, & 7 @ 10 AM

Saturday and Sunday Oct 3, 4, 10 &  
11 @ 2pm

To reserve tickets please visit  
[austincc.edu/drama](http://austincc.edu/drama)

# Welcome to the Klondike!

Welcome to Adventure!

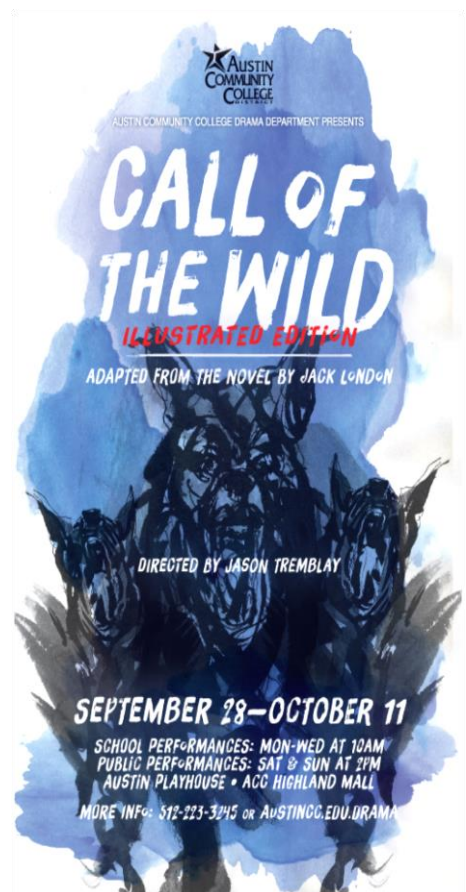
The ACC Department of Drama welcomes you to the Austin Playhouse for our production of *The Call of the Wild: Illustrated Edition*.

This multi-media adventure mixes classic story telling with projected illustrations to tell the story of Buck, the magnificent cross-bred offspring of a St. Bernard and Scottish Collie. Kidnapped from his lavish life on a California estate and sent to work as a sled dog during the great Klondike Gold Rush, Buck fights to survive and becomes the most famous dog in the whole history of the northland.

The public face of ACC's Drama Department is in its performances which have charmed Austin citizens for the past three decades.

Performances have included an ambitious selection of musicals, traditional plays, avant-garde theater, and original works.

Behind the scenes, the department offers a full selection of classes in acting, voice, movement, make-up, costuming, production management, and technical theatre.





## About the Author

Jack London was born John Griffith Chaney on January 12, 1876, in San Francisco, California.

After working in the Klondike, London returned home and began publishing stories. His novels, including *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang* and *Martin Eden*, placed London among the most popular American authors of his time.

## Early Years

Jack, as he came to call himself as a boy, was the son of Flora Wellman, an unwed mother, and William Chaney, an attorney, journalist and pioneering leader in the new field of American astrology.

His father was never part of his life, and his mother ended up marrying John London, a Civil War veteran, who moved his new family around the Bay Area before settling in Oakland.

Jack London grew up working-class. He carved out his own hardscrabble life as a teen. He rode trains, pirated oysters, shoveled coal, worked on a sealing ship on the Pacific and found employment in a cannery.

In his free time he hunkered down at libraries, soaking up novels and travel books.

## The Young Writer

His life as a writer essentially began in 1893. That year he had weathered a harrowing sealing voyage, one in which a typhoon had nearly taken out London and his crew. The 17-year-old adventurer had made it home and regaled his mother with his tales of what had happened to him. When she saw an announcement in one of the local papers for a writing contest, she pushed her son to write down and submit his story.

Armed with just an eighth-grade education, London captured the \$25 first prize, beating out college students from Berkeley and Stanford.

For London, the contest was an eye-opening experience, and he decided to dedicate his life to writing short stories. But he had trouble finding willing publishers. After trying to make a go of it on the East Coast, he returned to California and briefly enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley, before heading north to Canada to seek at least a small fortune in the gold rush happening in the Yukon.

By the age of 22, his experience in the Yukon had convinced him he had stories he could tell. In addition, his own poverty and that of the struggling men and women he encountered pushed him to embrace socialism, which he stayed committed to all his life.

In 1899 he began publishing stories in the *Overland Monthly*. The experience of writing and getting published greatly disciplined London as a writer. From that time forward, London made it a practice to write at least a thousand words a day

## Commercial Success

London found fame and some fortune at the age of 27 with his novel *The Call of the Wild* (1903), which told the story of a dog that finds its place in the world as a sled dog in the Yukon.

The success did little to soften London's hard-driving lifestyle. A prolific writer, he published more than 50 books over the last 16 years of his life.



He charged forth in other ways, too. He covered the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 for Hearst papers, introduced American readers to Hawaii and the sport of surfing, and frequently lectured about the problems associated with capitalism.

## Final Years

For much of the last decade of his life, London faced a number of health issues. This included kidney disease, which ended up taking his life. He died at his California ranch on November 22, 1916.

# Gold! RUSH!!!

The Klondike Gold Rush was a migration by an estimated 100,000 prospectors to the Klondike region of the Yukon in Canada between 1896 and 1899. Gold was discovered there by local miners on August 16, 1896 and, when news reached Seattle and San Francisco the following year, it triggered a stampede of would-be prospectors.



Some became wealthy, but the majority went in vain. The Klondike Gold Rush ended in 1899 after gold was discovered in Nome, Alaska prompting an exodus from the Klondike. It has been immortalized by photographs, books and films.

To reach the gold fields most took the route through the ports of Dyea and Skagway in Southeast Alaska. Here, the Klondikers could follow either the Chilkoot or the White Pass trails to the Yukon River and sail down to the Klondike. Each of them was required to bring a year's supply of food by the Canadian authorities in order to prevent starvation. In all, their equipment weighed close to a ton, which for most had to be carried in stages by themselves. Together with mountainous terrain and cold climate this meant that those who persisted did not arrive until summer 1898.

Once there, they found few opportunities and many left disappointed.

Mining was challenging as the ore was distributed in an uneven manner and digging was made slow by permafrost. As a result, some miners chose to buy and sell claims, building up huge investments and letting others do the work. To accommodate the prospectors, boom towns sprang up along the routes and at their end Dawson City was founded at the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon River. From a population of 500 in 1896, the hastily-constructed town came to house around 30,000 people by summer 1898. Built of wood, isolated and unsanitary, Dawson suffered from fires, high prices and epidemics. Despite this, the wealthiest prospectors spent extravagantly gambling and drinking in the saloons.

The Native Hän people, on the other hand, suffered from the rush. Many of them died after being moved into a reserve to make way for the stampede.

From 1898, the newspapers that had encouraged so many to travel to the Klondike lost interest in it.

When news arrived in the summer of 1899 that gold had been discovered in Nome in west Alaska, many prospectors left the Klondike for the new goldfields, marking the end of the rush.

The boom towns declined and the population of Dawson City fell away. Mining activity of the gold rush lasted until 1903 when production peaked after heavier equipment was brought in.

Since then the Klondike has been mined on and off and today the legacy draws tourists to the region and contributes to its prosperity.





'There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life, and beyond which life cannot rise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes when one is most alive, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive.

This ecstasy, this forgetfulness of living, comes to the artist, caught up and out of himself in a sheet of flame; it comes to the soldier, war-mad in a stricken field and refusing quarter; and it came to Buck, leading the pack, sounding the old wolf-cry, straining after the food that was alive and that fled swiftly before him through the moonlight."

## Cast and Crew

Jason Tremblay

Noel Gaulin

Michael Rae

Eliot Haynes

Chris Owen

Dallas Tate

Graham Weber

Taylor Harrison

Jorge Sermini

Teresa Morrow

Lindsay Scarbrough

Karina Figueroa

Joelle Cruz

Writer/Director

Performer

Original Illustrations

Sound Design

Media Design

Production Manager

Original Music

Costume Design

Video Archive

House Manager

Production Assistant

Production Assistant

Production Assistant

### QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- (1) How does *The Call of the Wild* present the human-dog relationship?
- (2) What is the "law of club and fang"? What does it represent? How is Buck introduced to it?
- (3) To what extent does London anthropomorphize Buck—that is, present him like a human being? To what extent is he emphatically an animal?
- (4) What is the "call of the wild"? How does it affect Buck's behavior?
- (5) What role does survival play in the story? How is it different for dogs and humans?

### 7 Reasons Theatre Makes Our Life Better

First, theatre does no harm. Theatre is one of those human activities that doesn't really hurt anyone or anything. While we're engaged in making or attending theatre, we are not engaged in war, persecution, or crime.

Second, theatre is a sophisticated expression of a basic human need -- one might call it an instinct -- to mimic, to project stories onto ourselves and others, and to create meaning through narrative and metaphor. Theatre matters, because we can't help it. It's part of what makes us human.

Third, theatre brings people together. For a performance to happen, anywhere from a hundred to a thousand or more people need to gather in one place for a couple of hours, and share together in witnessing and contemplating an event that may be beautiful, funny, moving, or thought-provoking.

Fourth, theatre models for us a kind of public discourse that lies at the heart of democratic life, and builds our skills for listening to different sides of a conversation or argument, and empathizing with the struggles of our fellow human beings whatever their views may be

Fifth, both the making of theatre and attending of theatre contribute to education and literacy. Watching the characters talk back and forth in the theatre is tricky; it requires sharp attention, quick mental shifts, and nimble language skills.

Sixth, theatre as an industry contributes to our economy and plays a special role in the revitalization of neglected neighborhoods.

Finally, the seventh way that theatre matters -- is that it influences the way we think and feel about our own lives and encourages us to take a hard look at ourselves, our values, and our behavior.

*From Howard Shalwitz – Artistic Director, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Co.*

