



"Honour, The Musical"

New Bern is a city with a rich historic, racial and cultural heritage. It is also a city rich in artistic talent with two large theater companies and an active musical performance scene. We are drawing on all of these to present parallel stories of one of North Carolina's most famous conflicts, the Stanly-Spaight duel, along with a related story of an early 19th century African American experience.

Honour, The Musical is an original musical play with scripts and lyrics by historian and professional writer Bill Hand and music composed by musician/historian and well-known local performer Simon Spalding. It, first, tells the story of the 1802 duel between Richard Dobbs Spaight and John Stanly and, second, that of one of Spaight's slaves, Sarah Rice, who was the mother of a child through John Stanly and who, one day, would gain her freedom and become an important part of New Bern history. The play also examines the anomaly of "Barber John" Stanly, a former slave who became the largest slave owner in the county.

The concept of honor is a primary theme of the show, which sees the duel through the eyes of Richard Dobbs Spaight, signer of the U.S. Constitution and former governor and congressman who must deal with political defeat — and, in his eyes defamation — by the young upstart John Stanly. Pulled into the trauma of this growing tragedy is Sarah Rice, who struggles to convince her masters of the honor that her own freedom would bring.

Honour mixes traditional and original music as it whisks audiences from the signing of the Constitution to the congressional race that Stanly would win, and the incident that in 1802 would lead the rivals to try to kill one another on a "field of honor." The play presents an important part of North Carolina history from a politically contentious day that parallels our own.

Honour takes pride in the promise of being a polished, professional production that emphasizes North Carolina traditions, personalities and histories, employing the rich talent that exists in Craven County and its surroundings for every step of the production from its writing to its stage crews, musicians, and actors.

The production is backed by a collaboration of community partners — Executive Producer New Bern Historical Society, Title Sponsor CarolinaEast Health System, Media Title Sponsor The New Bern Sun Journal, and Venue Sponsor Craven Community College. Thus it is a unique community production that represents New Bern's strong commitment to cherishing and sharing our heritage.