

THE DEVILS BETWEEN US

WRITTEN BY
SHARIFA YASMIN

DIRECTED BY
ALI-REZA MIRSAJADI



**THE
ROOM**



BACKSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **COMMUNITY SERVICE** at
AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

BACKSTAGE CALLBOARD

THE DEVILS BETWEEN US

by Sharifa Yasmin

Directed by Ali-Reza Mirsajadi

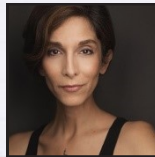
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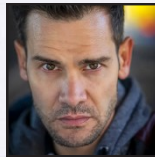
Manny Buckley*



Lisa Fairchild



Pooya Mohseni



Matthew Tyler

In a small town in the boonies of South Carolina, a closeted young man named George is trying to figure out how to keep his late father's business running, only to be faced with a ghost from his youth. A young Muslim, who he knew as his boyhood lover Latif, has returned as Latifa to take care of her estranged father's funeral. Forced to confront devils both have been avoiding, they find that their only way out of the past, is through each other.

**Ensemble member of American Blues Theater*

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CONTENT ADVISORY

The Devils Between Us contains sexual content, transphobic & homophobic language, and mentions of violence against members of the LGBTQ+ community. This show is not meant to re-harm, but to be a release. With that said, its content has the capacity to trigger, and it's strongly advised to not attend if any of the above themes might cause harm for you.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



SHARIFA YASMIN she/her (playwright) is a trans Egyptian-American director, actor, playwright and intimacy coordinator. She has completed directing fellowships with The Drama League, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Manhattan Theatre Club, Geva Theatre, and was a Eugene O'Neill national directing fellow. Yasmin's playwriting focuses on the intersection of Queer and Arab identities. Her plays have been produced with the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Uprising Theatre, Amphibian Stage, Trans Theatre Fest, Women's Theatre Festival, taught at DePaul, Susquehanna, and Kansas Universities, and published in *The Methuen Drama Book of Trans Plays*. Yasmin was honored as the inaugural recipient of the SCDF Barbara Whitman Award in 2021 for her work in directing. She currently serves as a member of The Drama League's Directors Council, and is completing her MFA in Directing with Brown/Trinity Rep. www.sharifayasmin.com



ALI-REZA MIRSAJADI they/he (director) is a theatre artist, scholar, and activist, whose work centers on SWANA theatre, black, queer, and gender expensive performance, and pedagogy. Recent directing credits include Ezzat Goushegir's *My Name is Inanna* (Red Tape Theatre), Naghmeh Samini's *Home* (DePaul), and Rohina Malik's *The Hijabis* (Broken Nose Theatre). Their scholarship has been published in *Theatre Journal*, *TDR*, *Theatre Topics*, *HowlRound*, *The Methuen Drama Book of Trans Plays*, and more, and they are co-editing and translating a forthcoming anthology on post-revolutionary Iranian plays with Dr. Nahid Ahmadian, as well as writing a monograph, *Performing the Polyseme: Theatre and Ambiguity in Contemporary Iran*. Reza is an artistic associate of the Medina Theatre Collective, and they hold a Ph.D. in Theatre and Performance Studies from Tufts University and a B.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of Pennsylvania.



MANNY BUCKLEY he/him (Hunter) is a proud Ensemble member of American Blues Theater. He is a Chicago-based director, actor, playwright and teaching artist. Blues credits include *Fences*, *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!*, *Six Corners*, *Looking Over the President's Shoulder* (Jeff Award Nomination-Best Solo Performance), and *Dutchman/TRANSit* (Black Theatre Alliance Award Nomination). Manny toured nationally as "Satchel Paige" in the original production of *The Satchel Paige Story*, and appeared in *The Father* (Helen Hayes Award Nomination) at Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. He originated the role of "Carson" in *Hit the Wall*, which sold out extensions in Steppenwolf's Garage Rep. Select Chicago credits include *The Brothers Size, 1984*, and *Of Mice and Men* (Steppenwolf); *Dorian* (House Theater); and *Love's Labor's Lost* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre). Mr. Buckley is the recipient of a Black Theatre Alliance, and Black Excellence Award. He most recently directed *Kingdom*, an audio drama, with Broken Nose Theatre.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



LISA FAIRCHILD she/her (Barb) is a well-known actor in the Texas/Oklahoma area. Since graduating from Otterbein University with a BFA in Theatre Performance and completing an acting apprenticeship at Actors Theatre of Louisville, she has worked in theatre, film and television. Most recently, she appeared in Amphibian Stage's SparkFest reading of *Take My Milk For Gall* by Leela Velautham and her previous SparkFest appearance was in Sharifa Yasmin's *Close to Home*. Recent theatrical performances include Edna in *Handle with Care* at Stage West, Sofia in *Dance Nation* at RecRoom Arts and award-winning roles as Siobhan in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nite-Time* at OKC City Rep and Hazel in *The Children* at Stage West. She is currently in final workshopping in preparation for a full production in the fall at Circle Theatre of *I'm Proud of You* by Tim Madigan.



POOYA MOHSENI she/her (Latifa) is a multi-award-winning Iranian American actor, writer, filmmaker and transgender activist. She recently appeared in the world premiere of *The Sex Party* (Menier Chocolate Factory) in London. Her other stage performances include her Obie win in the Pulitzer and Obie-winning play *English* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Hamlet* (Play On Shakespeare Festival), *One Woman* (United Solo), *She, He, Me* (National Queer Theater), *Our Town* (Pride Plays), *Galatea* (The WP Project), *The Good Muslim* (EST), *White Snake* (Baltimore Center Stage), and the Audible production of *Chonburi Hotel & The Butterfly Club* (Williamstown Theater Festival). Her film and television credits include *Law & Order: SVU*, *Big Dogs*, *Falling Water*, *Madam Secretary*, *Terrifier* and *See You Then*, streaming on all digital platforms. She's part of the advisory council for The Ackerman Institute's Gender & Family Project. She's represented by Headline Talent Agency and TGTalent.



MATTHEW TYLER he/him (George) is an actor, director, photographer and writer. He is a California native and graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts (BFA Acting) and has appeared in more than 40 productions around the country. Most recently he could be seen in *Slap & Tickle* with Boundless Theater Company, a site-specific, immersive experience at The Eagle NYC. Past favorite roles include, Sidney in *Deathtrap* (Millbrook Playhouse), Oberon in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company) and Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* (San Francisco Shakespeare Festival). He has directed a number of productions including Theatre 68 NYC's production of *Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls*. Love and appreciation always to my amazing husband Jeremy (and Bella and Buster). IG: @calimatty and @matthewwilliamsonphotography. <https://www.matthewtyleractor.com>

ABOUT ISLAMIC BURIAL RITUALS

In *The Devils Between Us*, Latifa has returned to her hometown to take care of her estranged father's funeral, which includes some of the common Islamic burial rituals described below.

Funerals and funeral prayers in Islam follow fairly specific rites, though they are subject to regional interpretation and variation in custom. In all cases, however, sharia (Islamic religious law) calls for burial of the body as soon as possible, preceded by a simple ritual involving bathing and shrouding the body, followed by Salat al-jinazah (funeral prayer). In Islam, mourning for the deceased is observed for three days by the relatives.

Cremation of the body is strictly forbidden in Islam.

COMMON ISLAMIC BURIAL RITUALS

Burial rituals should normally take place as soon as possible and include:

- Collective bathing of the dead body, except in extraordinary circumstances, as in the battle of Uhud
- Enshrouding the dead body in a white cotton or linen cloth.
- Funeral prayer (صلاة الجنازة)
- Burial of the dead body in a grave.
- Positioning the deceased so that the head is faced towards Mecca (Makkah Al-Mukarramah).

According to a Hadith, "Recite Surah Yaseen over a dying person".

BATHING THE BODY

The corpse is washed (ghusl, bathed), with the purpose to physically cleanse the deceased. The exact manner, method, style and accessories used for bathing the corpse may vary by locale and temporal position, except that it is to be done with heated water. Bathing the dead body is an essential ritual of the Sunnah of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, and therefore a part of the Islamic sharia. This should occur as soon as possible after death, preferably within hours.

Orthodox practice is to wash the body an odd number of times (at least once) with a cloth covering its awrah (parts

of the body that should be hidden according to sharia).

The "washers" are commonly adult members of the immediate family, who are of the same gender as the deceased. In cases of violent deaths or accidents, where the deceased has suffered trauma or mutilation, morgue facilities mend the body and wrap it in a shroud to minimize fluid leakage prior to surrendering it to mourners for washing.

SHROUDING

The corpse is typically wrapped in a simple plain cloth (the kafan). This is done to respect the dignity and privacy of the deceased with the family sometimes present. The specifics of this ritual, including the material, style, and color of the cloth, may vary between regions. However, the shroud should be simple and modest. It is for this reason that Muslims have generally preferred to use white cotton cloth to serve as the shroud. Men may use only three pieces of cloth and women five pieces of cloth.

The body may be kept in this state for several hours, allowing well-wishers to pass on their respects and condolences.



Equipment for washing and preparing bodies at Afaq khoja Mosque, Kashgar. 2010. [Source](#).

ABOUT ISLAMIC BURIAL RITUALS

FUNERAL PRAYER

After the announcement of death of the deceased person, the Muslims of the community gather to offer their collective prayers for the forgiveness of the dead. This prayer has been generally termed as the Salat al-Janazah (funeral prayer).

BURIAL

Following washing, shrouding and prayer, the body is then taken for burial (al-Dafin). The exact manner, customs and style of the grave, the burial and so forth may vary by regional custom.

The grave should be perpendicular to the direction of the Qibla (i.e. Mecca) so that the body, placed in the grave without a coffin, lying on its right side, faces the Qibla. Grave markers should be raised, not more than about 30 centimeters (12 inches) above the ground, so that the grave will neither be walked nor sat on. Grave markers are simple, because outwardly lavish displays are discouraged in Islam. Graves are frequently marked only with a simple wreath, if at all. However, it is becoming more common for family members to erect grave monuments.

Three fist-sized spheres of hand-packed soil prepared beforehand by the gravediggers are used to prop up the corpse, one under the head, one under the chin and one under the shoulder. The lowering of the corpse and positioning of the soil-balls is done by the next of kin. In the case of a deceased husband, a male brother or brother-in-law usually performs this task. In the case of a deceased wife, the husband undertakes this if physically able to. If the husband is elderly, then the eldest son (or son-in-law) is responsible for lowering, alignment and propping the deceased.

Orthodoxy expects those present to symbolically pour three handfuls of soil into the grave while reciting a Quranic verse meaning, "We created you from it, and return you into it, and from it we will raise you a second time". More prayers are then said, asking for forgiveness

of the deceased, and reminding the dead of their profession of faith.

The corpse is then fully buried by the gravediggers, who may stamp or pat down the earth to shape. Commonly, the eldest male will supervise. After the burial, those gathered pay their last respects to the dead by collectively praying for the forgiveness of the dead. This collective prayer is the last formal one for the dead. In some cultures such as those in Southeast Asia, relatives scatter flowers and pour rosewater upon the grave before leaving.

MOURNING

According to Sunni Islam, loved ones and relatives are to observe a three-day mourning period. Islamic mourning is observed by increased devotion, receiving visitors and condolences, and avoiding decorative clothing and jewelry in accordance with the Qur'an.

Widows observe an extended mourning period (iddah, "period of waiting"), four months and 10 days long. During that time, the widow is not to remarry or to interact with non-mahram (a man she can marry). This rule is partly to confirm that the woman is not pregnant with the deceased's child prior to remarrying. However, in case of emergencies such as visiting a doctor because of a health emergency, the widow can interact with non-mahram.

Grief at the death of a loved one and weeping for the dead is normal and acceptable. Sunni Islam expects expressions of grief to remain dignified, prohibiting loud wailing or mourning in a loud voice, shrieking, beating the chest and cheeks, tearing hair or clothes, breaking objects, scratching faces or speaking phrases that challenge the power of God (e.g. "If God exists and is just, he would not allow such injustice"). Grieving is allowed as part of the funerary rites to allow one to come to terms with the loss of a loved one as long as it respects Allah.

BEING MUSLIM & LGBTQ+ IN AMERICA

The Devils Between Us centers on Latifa, a trans Muslim woman. The below article by Daniel Burke was originally published on CNN.com on May 28, 2019. It has been edited here for length. You can read the full article [here](#).

In the United States, you could count the number of mosques like Masjid al-Rabia on two hands. It's a small community built on "five pillars of inclusivity," including pledges to be "women-centered," anti-racist LGBTQ-affirming and welcoming to a variety of Islamic traditions.

Mahdia Lynn, a transgender woman, helped found the mosque in Chicago in 2016. For several years, Lynn attended a mosque in a small conservative Muslim community in Oklahoma, where people believed she was a straight, cisgender woman. "There was always the risk of being outed," said Lynn, a Shiite Muslim. "But at the time, I just wanted to focus on my faith."

There are a few mosques like Masjid al-Rabia around the world, notably in Berlin and Toronto. But the number of LGBTQ-affirming mosques and Islamic centers in the United States remains small.

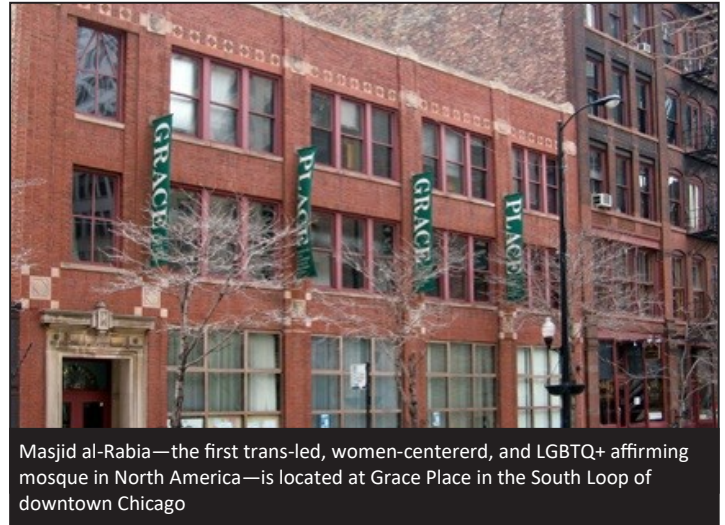
Muslims for Progressive Values has eight "inclusive communities" in the United States, from Atlanta to San Francisco. Berkeley's Qal-bu Maryam Women's Mosque, which calls itself "America's first all-inclusive mosque," opened in 2017. Other like-minded mosques have struggled to find consistent congregants in recent years and closed down.

Imam Daiyee Abdullah, 65, is one of the few openly gay Muslim clerics. For four years, he labored to build a mosque for LGBT Muslims in Washington, DC. Frustrated, tired and running out of money, Abdullah gave up and moved to the mountains of Colorado, where the nearest inclusive mosque is an eight-hour drive away.

Liberal Muslims say there are hints of change. The percentage of American Muslims who said society should accept homosexuality has doubled in the last decade, to 52%, and is even higher among Millennials.

Still, for many LGBT Muslims, coming out of the closet to their families and religious communities can be a fraught decision.

Ani Zonneveld says she receives calls regularly from young gay and lesbian Muslims who have been threatened by their family or are afraid to reveal their sexual identity. "I tell them that, unless you have a fantastic relationship



Masjid al-Rabia—the first trans-led, women-centered, and LGBTQ+ affirming mosque in North America—is located at Grace Place in the South Loop of downtown Chicago

with your parents, keep it in the closet until you finish high school and can leave the house," said Zonneveld, who heads Muslims for Progressive Values.

Religious spaces can be just as alienating, Zonneveld said. "What we have seen is that LGBT Muslims are not comfortable going to a mosque, and if they do, they definitely keep closeted."

They may even be reluctant to tell anonymous pollsters. According to a recent survey of more than 800 American Muslims, 0% identified as gay or lesbian.

'Islam is too important to leave anyone behind'

Muslims in the United States are among the most diverse religious communities in the world. While 82% are American citizens, nearly a third have been in the country for less than two decades. A plurality (41%) are white, but no racial or ethnic group makes up a majority of Muslim American adults.

That diversity also applies to attitudes towards gay, lesbian and transgender people. According to a recent survey by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 31% of Muslim-Americans said they hold a favorable opinion of LGBT people, 23% said "unfavorable" and 45% said they had "no opinion."

Among the Catholics, Jews and Protestants polled, only white evangelicals held less favorable views of LGBT people, the survey found.

BEING MUSLIM & LGBTQ+ IN AMERICA

Some Muslims have, like Lynn, hidden aspects of their identity for fear of being alienated or even endangered. But she said bigotry is no worse among American Muslims than in society at large.

“To act as if discrimination is unique to American Muslims is to buy into the Islamophobic narrative pushed by the right wing in this country, which is ironic, because it’s the right wing that is systematically erasing transgender people’s rights.”

Lynn transitioned as a teenager, and converted to Islam later on, during a particularly painful period. Islam’s spiritual regimens and rules for living offered a scaffolding on which to rebuild her life, the 31-year-old said. “Islam saved my life, so I made the decision to give my life over to Islam.” She founded Masjid al-Rabia with two other Muslims in 2016.

While pushing for greater inclusivity in American mosques, she said it also provides a hospitable space where Muslims can practice their faith openly, regardless of race, gender, sect or sexual identity.

“We believe that everyone has a right to come to Islam as they are. Islam is too important to leave anyone behind.”

Support in society, but not in mosques

Muslims disagree on how to interpret the Pew survey that showed an increasing acceptance of homosexuality. Some said it signals growing support for LGBT political rights, but not in religious spaces like mosques and Islamic centers.

LGBT activists have broadly supported Muslim-Americans, rallying to their side in recent years to protest Trump administration policies. Prominent Muslim activists have argued that they need all the political allies they can muster.

“I will fight for anyone who fights for our community,” activist Linda Sarsour said during a contentious panel discussion at an Islamic convention last year. “And everybody is created by Allah and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. That is how we Muslims have to show up in these United States of America.”

But Yasir Qadhi, an influential scholar and dean of academic affairs at the new Islamic Seminary of America in Dallas, said pro-LGBT-rights political activists are confusing

young Muslims. “You are sending a mixed message,” he said at the Islamic conference. “Because at the end of the day, we do not believe that it is morally healthy to engage in intercourse outside of the bonds of marriage.”

Contentious questions

In a recent interview, Qadhi said that he is grateful for LGBT Americans’ political support. While he hasn’t changed his theological views, he said he has softened his rhetoric. LGBTQ Muslims should be welcomed at mosques, he said, but should not push for changes in Islamic theology or practice on mosque grounds.

The Fiqh Council of North America, a body of scholars who issue legal opinions based on Islamic texts, will take up transgenderism this year, said Qadhi, a council-member. Sexual reassignment surgery is permitted in Shiite Islam, but not among Sunnis, who comprise the majority American Muslims.

In most mosques, the genders are separated, and there have been conflicts about where Muslims in the process of gender transition should sit, Qadhi said. “Gender identity issues will be the big questions for the next several years.”

But external and internal tensions can make it hard for Muslim-Americans to directly address contentious questions, said Dalia Mogahed, director of research for the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.

“This is a huge source of division in the community right now,” she said. “There are a lot of different opinions and, frankly, there is a lack of space to discuss it.”

“When you have a community that is so under the microscope and being subjected to litmus tests for civility and tolerance, people become afraid and self-censoring”

Mogahed herself came under attack several years ago after a Gallup survey showed that no British Muslims – as in, 0% – said homosexuality was morally acceptable. Right wing provocateurs such as Milo Yiannopoulos seized on the survey to portray Muslims as a threat to gays and lesbians.

But Muslims in the United States and Britain have not mounted political or social campaigns against the LGBT community, Mogahed said. “To conflate a religious belief with one community being a threat to another is unfair.”

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Devils Between Us is set in a small town in South Carolina. Below is from a 2019 report from the UCLA School of Law Williams Institute about discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in South Carolina. It has been edited here for length. You can read the full report [here](#).

Over 4.5% of American adults identify as LGBT. Approximately 137,000 LGBT adults live in South Carolina. South Carolina does not have a statewide law that expressly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, leaving LGBT people vulnerable to harassment and discrimination in the state.

This report summarizes evidence of discrimination against LGBT people in South Carolina, explains the current protections from sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in the state, and estimates the administrative impact of adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the state's existing non-discrimination laws.

LGBT people in South Carolina report experiencing discrimination and harassment in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other settings.

- An estimated 137,000 LGBT adults live in South Carolina. There are approximately 99,000 LGBT people aged 16 and older in South Carolina's workforce.
- Survey data indicate that LGBT people experience discrimination in South Carolina. For example, the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that 37% of transgender respondents from South Carolina who held or applied for a job in the prior year reported that they had been fired, denied a promotion, or not hired because of their gender identity or expression. In addition, 26% of transgender survey respondents from South Carolina reported experiencing some form of housing discrimination, such as being evicted or denied housing, in the prior year because of their gender identity or expression. And, 36% of respondents who visited a place of public accommodation where employees knew or thought they were transgender reported experiencing some form of mistreatment, including denial of equal treatment or service, verbal harassment, or physical assault in the prior year.
- In addition, aggregated data from two large public opinion polls conducted between 2011 and 2013 indicated that 81% of South Carolina residents thought

that LGBT people experienced discrimination in the state. Another public opinion poll conducted in 2016 found that 52% of South Carolina residents thought that gay and lesbian people experienced a lot of discrimination in the U.S. and 58% of South Carolina residents thought that transgender people experienced a lot of discrimination in the U.S.

- National survey data on discrimination against LGBT people are consistent with data from South Carolina. For example, a national survey of LGBT people conducted by Pew Research Center in 2013 found that 21% of respondents said that they had been treated unfairly by an employer in hiring, pay, or promotions and 23% had received poor service at a restaurant, hotel, or other place of business because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in South Carolina have also been documented in testimony before the state legislature and city councils, through administrative complaints, lawsuits, and in the media.

Research indicates that LGBT people in South Carolina experience economic instability.

- Data collected through the Gallup Daily Tracking Poll indicate that LGBT people in South Carolina experience poor socioeconomic outcomes:
 - ◇ 28% of LGBT adults in South Carolina reported having a household income below \$24,000 compared to 23% of non-LGBT adults.
 - ◇ 23% of LGBT adults in South Carolina reported that they do not have health insurance compared to 13% of non-LGBT adults.
 - ◇ 36% of LGBT adults in South Carolina reported not having enough money for food compared to 18% of non-LGBT adults.
 - ◇ 11% of LGBT adults in South Carolina reported being unemployed compared to 5% of non-LGBT adults.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

- Research has linked socioeconomic disparities for LGBT people to geographic region, lack of legal protections from discrimination, and a poor social climate.

Local governments, private employers, and public universities in South Carolina have made efforts to protect LGBT people from discrimination and harassment, but coverage is incomplete.

- Eight localities in South Carolina have adopted local ordinances that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in areas such as private and public sector employment, housing, and public accommodations. These localities are: Richland County, Charleston, Columbia, Folly Beach, Latta, Mt. Pleasant, Myrtle Beach, and North Charleston.
- These local ordinances protect approximately 1% of South Carolina's workforce from employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Local ordinances also protect approximately 8% of adults from discrimination in housing and 12% of adults from discrimination in public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Many of South Carolina's largest corporate employers, including BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, Wells Fargo, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare, and SCANA Corporation, have policies prohibiting discrimination

based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, several large public universities in South Carolina, including the University of South Carolina, Clemson, The Citadel, and Winthrop University, have adopted policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity in employment and/or education.

- Despite these policies, many LGBT South Carolina residents are not protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity absent a statewide non-discrimination law that includes these characteristics.

Public opinion in South Carolina supports the passage of non-discrimination protections for LGBT people.

- In response to a 2018 poll, 58% of those polled in South Carolina said they favor laws protecting LGBT people from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.
- In response to a national poll conducted in 2011, 73% of those polled in South Carolina said that Congress should pass a federal law to prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



Daufuski Island, South Carolina

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



CENTER ON HALSTED

Center on Halsted is the Midwest's most comprehensive community center dedicated to advancing community and securing the health and well-being of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people of Chicagoland. More than 1,000 community members visit the Center every day, located in the heart of Chicago's Lakeview Neighborhood.

In addition to offering programs and services on-site, Center on Halsted serves as a gateway to the broad array of community resources available in Chicagoland and beyond. Their [Trans* Resources](#) page includes over a dozen organizations that provide services and support to trans individuals in Chicagoland.



GLAAD

Founded in 1985, GLAAD is a non-profit organization focused on LGBTQ advocacy and cultural change. GLAAD works to ensure fair, accurate, and inclusive representation and creates national and local programs that advance LGBTQ acceptance. Serving as a storyteller, media force, resource, and advocate, GLAAD tackles tough issues and provokes dialogue so that authentic LGBTQ stories are seen, heard, and actualized. GLAAD strives to protect all that has been accomplished and helps create a world where everyone can live the life they love.

GLAAD's [Transgender Resources](#) page includes dozens of national resources for transgender people, including crisis resources, advocacy resources, and legal services.



NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY

The National Center for Transgender Equality advocates to change policies and society to increase understanding and acceptance of transgender people. In the nation's capital and throughout the country, NCTE works to replace disrespect, discrimination, and violence with empathy, opportunity, and justice.

ABOUT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

MISSION

American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.

VALUES

American Blues Theater *acts* on its values –

- Accountability
- Courage
- Teamwork
- Service

ABOUT US

American Blues Theater, founded in 1985 and winner of American Theatre Wing’s prestigious National Theatre Company Award, is a non-profit arts organization that produces high-quality productions with a focus on stories that are relevant, timeless, and inclusive to the American spirit.

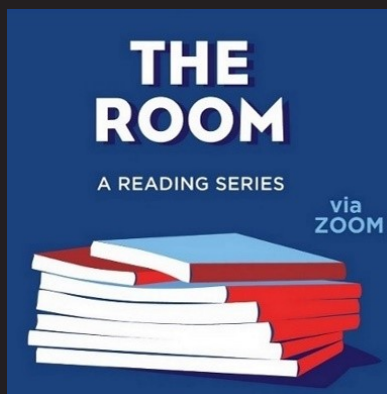
American Blues Theater is **committed to developing new work as more than half of the productions are world and Chicago premieres**. Play development programs include the nationally-recognized Blue Ink Award, commissions, readings, and the 15th annual *Ripped Festival* of short plays.

American Blues Theater **believes in teamwork both on and off-stage**. A leader in community engagement for decades, the theater matches each play’s themes with other non-profits’ missions to raise awareness.

In addition to producing plays, American Blues Theater **offers a range of free services**, including continuing education programs, writing instruction and matinees for Chicago Public Schools, dramaturgical materials, and post-show discussions to widen access in the community.

American Blues Theater and its artists have earned 226 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations, 44 Black Theater Alliance Awards, and numerous industry accolades, including nomination and awards for the Pulitzer Prize, Academy Awards, Tony Awards, Golden Globes Awards, Emmy Awards, and more.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER



Visit AmericanBluesTheater.com to learn more.



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
4809 N RAVENSWOOD, SUITE 221
CHICAGO, IL 60640
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American Blues Theater sits on the original homelands of the Council of Three Fires (Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa). Read full land acknowledgment at americanbluestheater.com/location.