

GROUND FLOOR THEATRE PRESENTS:

ALWAYS A BOY

A WORLD PREMIERE PLAY



BY JO IVESTER AND JEREMY IVESTER

DIRECTED BY LISA SCHEPS

Ground Floor Theatre Presents

Always A Boy

By

Jo Ivester & Jeremy Ivester

Directed by LISA SCHEPS

<i>Assistant Director</i>	JOAN JOHNSON
<i>Intimacy Director</i>	ANDY GRAPKO
<i>Scenic Design</i>	CB FELLER
<i>Lighting Design</i>	JACQUELINE SINDELAR
<i>Costume Design</i>	JANA ZEK
<i>Sound & Video Design</i> ..	DILLON HARGER, DILLON JAMES, TITO ROVNER
<i>Stage Dressing & Properties Design</i>	LIZ TYSON
<i>Production Stage Manager</i>	MAXINE DILLON
<i>Stage Manager</i>	KELSEY MORINGY
<i>Technical Director</i>	DEMETRI BELINI
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<i>EDI Consultant</i>	NICOLE BELL
<i>Fundraising</i>	JEREMY CANALES

CAST

Joshua.....	JEREMY IVESTER
Young Joshua	KADEN ONO
College Joshua	LAURA LEO KELLY
Rachel	MOLLY FONSECA
Richard.....	NATHAN JERKINS
Becca.....	CHELSEA CORWIN
Seth	MAX GREEN
Tucker	TRACE TURNER

Playwrights' Note

It's been a tough decade for transgender people in Texas, with relentless attacks that seek to weaponize a fear of the unknown for political gain. The bathroom bills, the sports bans, and worst of all, the denial of potentially life-saving medical care for trans minors, care that is accepted by all respected members of the medical community as a proven means to reduce the anxiety, depression, and suicide ideation that can accompany gender dysphoria. The environment has become so toxic for transgender people here in Texas that some families have fled their homes lest they become the target of investigations by the government.

We have chosen as writers to use the power of theatre to share our family's journey, albeit a fictionalized version of it. By doing so, we hope to raise awareness about what it means to be Trans. We believe that with that growing awareness, Trans individuals will find greater acceptance. Good theatre is a powerful tool. When the audience cares about the characters they see on stage, they end up caring a little bit more about what is going on in the world around them. This is our way — as Mom says in the play — of helping to change the world.

The process of writing this play together has brought us closer as a family. As we explored the mother/son relationship presented in the script, we had to explore our own relationship and the family dynamics surrounding the extraordinary adventure of finding one's true gender identity. The entire experience has been a true joy, both the adventure itself and the writing about it. What more can a parent want than to see their child happy and flourishing!

-Jo Ivester & Jeremy Ivester



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

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Megan Thornton, Director of New Works

WHO'S WHO



JEREMY IVESTER — **Playwright/Joshua** (*he/him*) is the trans, gay man whose true-life story inspired the play *Always a Boy*, as well as the award-winning, best-selling memoir, “Never a Girl, Always a Boy”, upon which the play is based. Jeremy is a full time Uncle and a part time LGBT advocate speaking at schools, conferences, and sensitivity training to help educate and raise awareness for the community



KAYDEN ONO – **Young Joshua** (*he/they*) is honored to be a part of *Always A Boy*. He recently competed with his middle school theater team in AISD’s middle school all district competition for a one act play and earned 3rd place in the district as Mary Anthony in the *The Trial of Susan B. Anthony*. Kaden has been active in theater and dramatic plays for the past six years with Austin Educational Theatre, where he was a part of many of their productions and national competitions such as in the roles of Robertson Ay in *Mary Poppins*, Bill Sikes in *Oliver*, Genie in *Aladdin*, One of the three little pigs in *Shrek*, and a Salt shaker in *Beauty And The Beast* which was his very first musical theater debut at the age 7 years old. When not rehearsing for a production, Kaden enjoys creating visual art and playing rhythm based music games .



LAURA LEO KELLY—**College Joshua** (*they/them*) is a trans non-binary performer based wherever the good theatre is. After originating the role of Aiden in the world premiere of *Jack & Aiden*, they are elated to be back on the Ground Floor Theatre stage. Favorite regional credits include: Andrej in *Once* (CCAET Theatricals), Sonny in *Grease* (Musical Theatre West), and Andrew Hall in *Men on Boats* (Thingamajig Theatre). Laura Leo is proud to have performed in over 10 countries as Anybodys in the International Tour of *West Side Story* under the direction of Lonny Price. In 2022, they won an OC Theatre Guild Award for their performance in *Striking 12!* at Chance Theater. AMDA LA Alum! Protect Trans Youth. @laukell_



MOLLY FONSECA – **Rachel** (*she/her*) is a multidisciplinary theatre artist based in Austin, TX. She has been seen on stage in productions by Street Corner Arts, Hyde Park Theatre, Shrewd Productions, Capital T Theatre, and Penfold. As a solo performer, her original one-person plays *Actor of the Year*, *Lady Without a Baby*, and *MS* have been presented at FronteraFest. In 2023, she received a commission from ScriptWorks to co-create *A Woman Managing Her Anxiety* for FronteraFest, which was selected as Best of Fest. She currently teaches acting as a part of the adjunct faculty for the Drama Department at Austin Community College. Recent directing credits include *The Odd Couple* and *Plaza Suite* at Georgetown Palace Theatre. *Always a Boy* is Molly’s first production with Ground Floor Theatre.



NATHAN JERKINS—**Richard** (*he/him*) is proud to perform in his first production with Ground Floor Theatre! Nathan is a co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of Penfold Theatre Company. Acting credits include *Art, Box, Vincent, Much Ado About Nothing, Now Then Again, Romeo & Juliet, A Minister’s Wife, Servant to Two Masters, Going With Jenny, Three Days of Rain, A Miracle on 34th Street Classic Radiocast*, etc. (Penfold); *The Duchess of Malji, Tate’s Lear, Rose Rage, Taming of the Shrew* (Hidden Room Theatre); *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* (ZACH Theatre); and other productions with Austin Shakespeare, Doctuh Mistuh Productions, The Scottish Rite Children’s Theatre, City Theatre, and others. Nathan has received over a dozen acting awards and nominations. He is also an award-winning director and has written plays produced at Penfold, Scriptworks’ FronteraFest and internationally.



CHELSEA CORWIN—**Becca** (*she/her*) is so excited to appear in the world premiere of *Always a Boy!* This production has been so fun and inspiring to be a part of. Credits also include *14/48* and *Proof*. Thank you immensely to my family and friends for your constant support and love

WHO'S WHO (CON'T)



MAX GREEN—Seth (*he/him*) feels incredibly fortunate to be making his Ground Floor Theatre debut with such a unique and beautiful play. He is a Bard College graduate and you may have seen him in productions such as *Lobby Hero* (Jeff), *Matilda: The Musical* (Mr. Wormwood), *The Baker's Wife* (The Teacher), *Twelfth Night* (Sir Andrew), & *The Foreigner* (Charlie). Max would like to thank his friends and family for ceaselessly supporting him throughout his artistic journey. Lastly, being a little brother playing a big one on stage, Max would like to dedicate this production to all siblings everywhere. May the laughing, teasing, wrestling, lessons, and love never stop between them.



TRACE TURNER—Tucker (*he/they*) is a multi-disciplinary queer story crafter originally from Austin, TX. Trace previously worked at GFT as the director of *Jack & Aiden* and is overjoyed to be back again. Trace works primarily as a director but can be seen around town as an actor, writer, and intimacy director. Previous performance credits include: [*oracle.ai*], *I Knew Him Well* (Frontera Short Fringe Festival), *Snout/Wall in A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Austin Shakespeare), Anthony in *The Verge* (The Larks STL), as well as 'Colin' in the short film *Black Magic* directed by Cristin Stephens. www.traceturner.com

JO IVESTER—Playwright (*she/her*) is a social justice advocate, speaker, and writer. She is the author of two award-winning memoirs, *The Outskirts of Hope* and *Never a Girl, Always a Boy*, the second of which inspired the play *Always a Boy*, co-written with her son Jeremy. She serves on the emeritus board of Equality Texas and is Chairman of the Board for Ground Floor Theatre. She is the president and co-founder of both Georgetown PRIDE and PFLAG Georgetown. Married to Jon Ivester for 43 years, Jo has four kids and five grandkids. Captivated by the theater when cast in a college production at seven years old, Jo later met her husband when they were acting with The Shakespeare Ensemble at MIT. She is thrilled to now see her middle son explore the theater world as well, first as a co-writer of *Always a Boy* and then as an actor portraying Joshua, a character inspired by his own personal story.

LISA SCHEPS—Director, Founder & Co-Artistic Director Ground Floor Theatre (*she/her*) 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 *Jenna & the Whale*. 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. #ATXtheatre

JOAN JOHNSON—Assistant Director (*she/her*) is proud to work with Ground Floor Theatre on this wonderful production. Joan is a Director, Dramaturg, and Performer. Some of her past works include *My Barking Dog*, (director) *The Creature*, (deviser/performer), and *Melancholy Play*. (director) See her upcoming work with Broke Thespian Theater this summer with as the director of *Sagittarius Ponderosa* by MJ Kaufman. She'd like to thank her wonderful partner and loving family and friends

ANDY GRAPKO—Intimacy Director (*she/her*) is the Resident Intimacy Director for the Department of Theatre and Dance at UT Austin. Trained with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, her recent intimacy credits include *Jack and Aiden* (Ground Floor), *Ride the Cyclone* (UT, Austin), *Le Bohème* (Butler Opera Center), *Pipeline* (Alchemy Theatre), *Sanctuary City* (Ground Floor Theatre), *The Pearl Fishers* (Austin Opera), *Big Love* (Texas State), *Grease* (Summer Stock Austin), *Fabulous Monsters* (Public Theatre of San Antonio), *More Blackberries Please* (Cohen New Works Festival), *...but you could've held my hand*, (UT, Austin), and films *Growing Pains*, *Do Not Disturb*, and *Clock*. www.andygrapko.com

WHO'S WHO (CON'T)

CB FELLER—Scenic Design (*they/them*) is thrilled to be part of another Ground Floor Theatre production. Recent credits at GFT include: scenic art for *Jenna & the Whale* and *Sanctuary City*. You might have also seen their work in *Miss Lulu Bett*. When not painting they don the acting and director hats. In *Art of Martyrdom* they received a B. Iden Payne nomination for best supporting actor as well as *Dragonfly Princess* at the VORTEX. They just finished directing *Sir Knightsalot* at Scottish Rite. 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.

JACQUELINE SINDELAR—Lighting Design (*she/her*) 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 *Art, The Laramie Project, Jenna & the Whale, 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.

JANA ZEK—Costume Design (*she/her*) has over 10 years of experience designing and wardrobe supervising for stage and screen in Austin and New York. She has designed multiple productions for Generic Ensemble Co. including *Carmen, 893 Ya-ku-za, and Collection*. Feature and short film credits include *Nana's Secret Recipe, No Loss // No Gain, Men in Blue, and Waiting for Deading*. She is excited to be working with Ground Floor Theatre for the first time.

DILLON HARGER (*he/him*), **DILLON JAMES** (*he/him*), **TITO ROVNER** (*he/him*)—**Sound Design**
The three members of the sound team graduated from UT Austin with a Bachelor's of Science in Arts & Entertainment Technologies. They have been in close collaboration for the past three years, and they seek to create a new standard of compositional creativity. Providing a plethora of knowledge and skills any theme of sound and music can be dutifully realized by the three. Recent works by the sound team as a group or individually include: *Decapitations* by Megan Tabaque, University Fashion Group's 2023 Capstone Collection, as well as numerous choreographic and theatrical works with the Department of Theatre and Dance at UT Austin.

LIZ TYSON—Prop and Set Dressing Design (*she/her*) is a freelance designer working in film and theater in Austin, TX. She previously worked with Ground Floor Theatre on *Jack & Aiden* and is delighted to be back for *Always A Boy!* Other recent credits include: Production Design for the short films *Lure* and *Pizza My Heart*, and Prop Design for Filigree Theatre's *Antigone* and *Photograph 51*.

MAXINE DILLON—Production Stage Manager (*she/her*) is a theatermaker with a love of new work and the discovery of new voices. She graduated from Yale University, where she spent more time going to rehearsals than doing her readings. In her time in Austin, Maxine has had the joy of working with Penfold Theatre, Different Stages, and Ground Floor Theatre, both as a stage manager (most recently, in rehearsals for *Jack & Aiden*) as well as a playwright and proud member of GFT Writes.

KELSEY MORINGY—Stage Manager (*she/her*) is a born & raised unicorn of Austin, TX. She studied Performance & Production at Texas State University with an emphasis in Stage Management & Directing. Previous shows Kelsey has stage managed include Ground Floor Theatre and Deaf Austin Theatre's collaborations of *The Last Five Years* and *Next To Normal*, Ground Floor Theatre's *Jack & Aiden, Fun Home, rain falls special on me, Single Black Female, White Rabbit Red Rabbit, Dex & Abby, TRANSom, There & Back, Sanctuary City, and Anna in The Tropics*, Deaf Austin Theatre's *The Laramie Project, St. Edward's University's The Wolves* and Penfold Theatre's *Ghost Quartet* and *Amadeus*. She also operated supertitles for Deaf Austin Theatre and ZACH Theatre's collaboration of *Cinderella*. Kelsey's directing credits include *Road To Nirvana, Jenna & The Whale* and her original work *Cabaret Wonderland*. Kelsey would like to thank our AMAZING cast & crew for their passion and dedication on this show.

WHO'S WHO (CON'T)

DEMETRI BELINI — **Technical Director** (*he/him*) is a scenic designer and technical director from Houston, TX. He moved to Austin in 2021 to pursue his career in theatrical design. Previous projects include *Heartbreak House* (Different Stages) & *The Sound Inside* (Jarrott Productions). Next he'll be partnering with TexARTS, designing the set and props for *Native Gardens*. Demetri hopes to continue serving the arts community in Austin and beyond, advocating for transparency and equity for all artists.

NICOLE BELL — **EDI Consultant** (*she/her*) is co-owner of Full Humanity Consulting and is a strategic learning and development professional that has over 19 years of creating training programs that focus on leadership and equity while creating inclusive, authentic, and liberating learning connections. She is a certified mediator, success coach, and a graduate of both Leadership Women-Leadership Pipeline (2016) and the Essential Class of Leadership Austin (2018). Nicole is a Courageous Conversations about Race Affiliate Practitioner. In March 2023, she was awarded as the People's Choice Equity Champion of Change recipient from DivInc. Nicole focuses on supporting women and families of color. In her spare time, she's a very loud volleyball/cheer mom, enjoys comedy shows, movies, tik toks, and eating ice cream with her daughters, Avery, 25, and Zoie, 13

MOTLEY CREW MEDIA — **Press Representative** 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

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May 16–June 1, 2024

Clyde's by Lynn Nottage

Directed by Lacey Cannon Gonzales & Carl Gonzales

August 15–31, 2024

Passover by Antoinette Nwandu

Directed by Simone Alexander

December 5 –21, 2024

TBA Musical

For more info

groundfloortheatre.org/2024season

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.

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