



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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***Near West Theatre Announces Everybody’s Talking About Jamie  
A Joyful, Powerful Musical About Courage, Identity, and Finding Your Spotlight***

CLEVELAND – March 17, 2026 – Near West Theatre is proud to present “Everybody’s Talking About Jamie,” a vibrant, heartfelt musical inspired by a true story about courage, identity, and the power of embracing who you are. “Everybody’s Talking About Jamie” runs three weekends from April 17 through May 3. Performances will take place at Near West Theatre’s ADA-compliant venue, located at 6702 Detroit Avenue in the heart of the Gordon Square Arts District. Tickets are \$20, with additional Pay What You Choose options available. Visit [nearwesttheatre.org](http://nearwesttheatre.org) or call the Box Office at 216-961-6391, weekdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Based on the true story of a 16-year-old British schoolboy, the musical follows Jamie, a teenager raised by a hardworking single mother who dreams of becoming a drag queen. As Jamie navigates bullying, prejudice, and the everyday chaos of high school, he begins to discover the courage it takes to live authentically and step confidently into the spotlight.

The show’s contemporary score helps bring Jamie’s journey to life in bold and unexpected ways. Musical director Olivia Tassone highlights how the music strengthens the emotional connection between audience and character.

“While a pop/rock score is nothing new to musical theatre, this one blends styles and textures in a way that feels fresh and certainly like nothing I have ever heard,” said Tassone. “The music uses symbolism that resonates deeply with not only the character, but the audience as well, helping to build a strong connection between viewer and character.”

Beyond its music and spectacle, the story resonates far beyond the stage.

“This show is full of relatable content, not only for the LGBTQIA+ community, but for anyone who has ever felt different, non-conforming, or even rejected,” Tassone added. “Jamie’s story is not specific to drag culture or even the queer community — it’s a story about going against the grain and finding your power in a world that tells everyone to conform.”

Director David Turner emphasized that the production process has been rooted in care, conversation, and connection.

“We’re engaging directly with the community to deepen our understanding of drag culture and the lived experiences behind it,” Turner said. “Within the cast, we’re sharing personal stories, building trust, and creating space for honest conversations as we navigate some of the show’s more sensitive themes. That connection helps the actors ground their performances in empathy and truth.”

The production arrives at a time when stories of authenticity and belonging feel especially meaningful.

“‘Everybody’s Talking About Jamie’ feels especially important right now, as our queer community continues to face prejudice and misunderstanding,” said Trinidad Snider, artistic director of Near West Theatre. “What I love about Jamie’s story is that, despite the judgment and attacks he encounters, he remains joyful and deeply grounded in who he is and who he hopes to become. That kind of courage and authenticity is something worth celebrating.”

Ultimately, the creative team hopes audiences leave the theatre feeling inspired to embrace their own individuality.

“As drag icon RuPaul says, ‘We’re all born naked, the rest is drag,’” Turner said. “I hope audiences leave feeling inspired to embrace their most authentic selves. Life is too short, and the world can be too heavy, not to celebrate who you are and what brings you joy. And if the people around you don’t recognize your brilliance, find or create your chosen family who does. It’s time to step out of the darkness and into your own spotlight.”

“Everybody’s Talking About Jamie” will feature direction by David Turner, with Choreography by Kristy Cruz and Kirk Lydell, and Music Direction from Olivia Tassone. The production team also features Lighting Design by Anzel Richkowsi, Scenic Design by Laura Carlson, Costume Design by Vanessa Cook and Props Design by Maurita Riddle. Sound Design by James Romeo with Technical Direction by Perren Hedderson. Sound Tech by Christina Easter and Assistant Technical Direction will be offered by Emily Hehnen. Near West’s Production Manager is

Michael Stein. "Everybody's Talking About Jamie" will be Stage Managed by Whitney Miller with Assistant Stage Management offered by Carmen Chen, and Production Assistance by Christina Ciofani.

The talented cast includes (in alphabetical order): Rafael Alarcon, Priya Banks, Katie Blume, Maggie Chapman, Douglas Crawford, Unity Culver, Brian Currie, Rachel Drotar, Amanda Droste, Joel Fenstermaker, Blessing Gee, Katie Goodin, Jailyn Sherell Harris, Madelyn Hayes, Allan Hughes, Maddie Jones, Ava Komich, Zach Littlejohn, Kathryn O'Sullivan, Daniel Pelissier, Kai Pennington, Chris Sgarlata, Tasha Simpson, Colin Snider, Viktor Edward Swan, Mikey Szabo, JT Tan, Tyler Thompson, Katie Unger, Christopher Walker, Sydney Nicole Warren, and Kellen Williams.

For additional information including box office information, please visit [nearwesttheatre.org](http://nearwesttheatre.org). The theatre was constructed as part of the Gordon Square Arts District capital campaign and features climate-control and is fully accessible by wheelchair. "Everybody's Talking About Jamie" is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

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### ***About Near West Theatre***

Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through accessible, affordable, and transformational theatre arts experiences. Since 1978, Near West Theatre has been shaping, changing, and saving the lives of children, teens, and adults. The community theater hosts a variety of free community events and free after-school programs to underline its commitment to accessibility for all people. The organization serves people of all ages, but a focus on youth goes back to its founding and continues to this day. [www.nearwesttheatre.org](http://www.nearwesttheatre.org). @nearwesttheatre. NWT is grateful to receive financial support from the Ohio Arts Council and Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. For more information, visit [nearwesttheatre.org](http://nearwesttheatre.org) or follow the theatre on Facebook ([facebook.com/nearwesttheatre](https://facebook.com/nearwesttheatre)) and Instagram (@nearwesttheatre).

### **[TOMBSTONE INFO]**

#### **"Everybody's Talking About Jamie"**

*" So go and find your dance, go and find your voice."*

*Spring Teen and Adult Mainstage Production  
Runtime: 2 hours and 40 minutes, 15-minute intermission*

Book and Lyrics by Tom McRae  
Music by Dan Gillespie Sells  
From an idea by Jonathan Butterell

“Everybody’s Talking About Jamie” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.  
[www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

Performance Dates

Fri. April 17 - 7:30 PM

Sat. April 18 - 7:30 PM

Fri. April 24 - 7:30 PM

Sat. April 25 - 7:30 PM

Sun. April 26 - 2:00 PM

Fri. May 1 - 7:30 PM

Sat. May 2 - 7:30 PM

Sun. May 3 - 2:00 PM

Suggested Performance Listing

**Near West Theatre**, 6702 Detroit Ave., Cleveland’s Gordon Square Arts District. Box Office: 216-961-6391 or [nearwesttheatre.org](http://nearwesttheatre.org). “Everybody’s Talking About Jamie” runs April **17, 18, 24, 25 & May 1, 2 at 7:30 p.m; April 26 & May 3 at 2:00 p.m.** General Admission: Tickets \$20 with Pay What You Choose options available. “Everybody’s Talking About Jamie” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com).