

BABES WITH BLADES THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

FIGHTING WORDS FESTIVAL

JUNE 17TH-18TH & 24TH-25TH, 2023

THE GATEKEEPERS

BY JILLIAN LEFF



SIN AGUA

BY DESI MORENO - PENSON



RICH B*TCH

BY RACHEL LYNETT



FREE TO THE PUBLIC

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FOR TICKETS & INFO VISIT: WWW.BABESWITHBLADES.ORG



EVENTS PROGRAMMING IS PARTIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE THE ARTS WORKS FUND AWARDS FOR ILLINOIS EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND INCLUDED IN THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST, THE CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS & SPECIAL EVENTS CITY ARTS GRANT, THE SHILOH AND DEWEY FOUNDATION, THE ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL AGENCY EMERGENCY RESCUE PLAN GRANT AND REGIONAL OPERATING GRANT, THE SMALL BUSINESS ALLIANCE SHUTTERED VENUE OPERATIONS (SVO) GRANT PROGRAM, AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS BACK TO BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM AND ALLES FOR COMMUNITY BUSINESS

BABES WITH BLADES THEATRE COMPANY

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BWBTC'S 2023 PROGRAMMING IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED IN PART BY

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THEATRE COMPANY



The performances in this festival use realistic staged violence in
the telling of the stories.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING OF ANY KIND IS
STRICTLY PROHIBITED

RICH B*TCH

By Rachel Lynett

Directed by Lo Williams
Fight Choreography by Madison Hill*

CAST

Dani Brittani Yawn (she/her)
Emma Amber Washington (she/her)
Maddie Kim Fukawa* (she/her)
Izzy [Debbie Baños](#) (she/her)
Vivien [Elisabeth Del Toro](#) (she/her)
Intimacy Consultant Jennifer L. Mickelson (she/her)

Content Warning: Please be advised that this script portrays drug use and heavy alcohol use, as well as discussions of suicide, sexual abuse, and unintended pregnancy.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

[Rachel Lynett](#) (she/they) is a queer Afro-Latine playwright, producer, and teaching artist. Their plays have been featured at San Diego Rep, Magic Theatre, Mirrorbox Theatre, Laboratory Theatre of Florida, Barrington Stage Company, Theatre Lab, Theatre Prometheus, Florida Studio Theatre, Laughing Pig Theatre Company, Capital Repertory Theatre, Teatro Espejo, the Kennedy Center Page to Stage festival, Theatresquared, Equity Library Theatre-Chicago, Talk Back Theatre, American Stage Theatre Company, Indiana University at Bloomington, Edgewood College, and Orlando Shakespeare Theatre. Their plays *Last Night* and *HE DID IT* made the 2020 Kilroy's List. Rachel Lynett is also the 2021 recipient of the Yale Drama Prize for their play, *Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson)*. Lynett was the 2021 recipient of the National Latinx Playwriting award and the runner-up for the 2022 Miranda Family Voices Latinx Playwriting Competition for their play, *Black Mexican*. Their play, *White People by the Lake* was also a 2022 Blue Ink Award finalist. They have previously taught at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Alfred University. Lynett was recently a staff writer for *The Winchesters* and is working on an upcoming feature.

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ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Lo Williams (she/her) is an actor, director, producer, and poet currently based in Chicago, Illinois. She values work presenting intersectional experiences with respect and humanity that caters to a variety of audiences in age, race, social class, and identity. As a passionate advocate and administrator, Lo strives to create and provide opportunities for new and underrepresented works to be explored on stage. When centering work around the community, she believes that making theatre in hopes that the “non-theatre person” will attend and be impacted is a reliable way to allow that intention to remain pure.

Lo has been involved in the development of world premieres of new Black theatrical productions in the capacities of producer, director, playwright, and actor, and she is a proud alumna of the inaugural class of the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts at Howard University, having earned a BFA in Theatre Arts. Lo is also an alumna of the National Theatre Institute and the Lin Manuel Miranda Family Fellowship. Recent credits: *Rent* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Assistant Director), *The Thing that Comes to the Basement* (Ghostlight Theatre Ensemble, Director). Website: lowilliams.live. Instagram: [@its the lauraxx](https://www.instagram.com/its_the_lauraxx)

ABOUT THE FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Madison Hill* (they/them) – is excited to make their debut as a Fight Choreographer in this festival! Madison has multiple certifications with the Society of American Fight Directors, and regularly attends workshops and classes with the SAFD. Their first production with BWBTC was *Richard III* as Ratcliffe/York, and they are now a proud Artistic Affiliate with the company. Madison is thankful for their partner, chosen family, and all the ensemble members with BWBTC.



SIN AGUA

By Desi Moreno-Penson

Directed by Amy Gerwert Valdez
Fight Choreography by Thomas Russell

CAST

Amanita[Aileen Moreno](#) (she/her)
Malyalena Daisy Valdez Serrano (she/her)
Tufa[Xela Rosas](#) (she/they)
Cas[Emma Fulmer](#) (she/her)
Carranza[Luz Espinoza](#) (she/her)

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ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

[Desi Moreno-Penson](#) (she/her) is a playwright, actor, dramaturg, and independent theater producer based in NYC. She has an MFA in Dramaturgy and Theater Criticism from Brooklyn College. Her plays have been developed/produced at Ensemble Studio Theater (EST), INTAR, MultiStages, Perishable Theater (Providence, RI), SPF-Summer Play Festival, terraNOVA Collective, Downtown Urban Theater Festival (DUTF) @the Cherry Lane, Urban Theater Company (Chicago), Teatro Coribantes (San Juan, PR), among others. She is the Instructor for [Classics In Color](#), an online new play development course sponsored by Dramatic Question Theater (DQT) for BIPOC playwrights interested in creating modern adaptations of classical works. Her short play, *Dead Wives Dance the Mambo* was featured as part of The Chain One-Act Festival at the Chain Theater, directed by KM Jones. Her new play, *El Bacalao: The Catfish Man*, a Latinx retelling of Euripedes' *The Bacchae*, was selected for the 2021 Fall Intensive Writers Group with Workshop Theater. Her play, *Beige* received a staged reading as part of the playwrights/directors unit (PDU) at The Actors Studio. In addition, *Beige* is the winner of the 2016 National Latinx Playwriting Award sponsored by the Arizona Theater Company; and is a finalist for both the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival (San Francisco, CA). She has twice won the MultiStages New Works Contest sponsored by MultiStages Theater Company for her plays, *Ominous Men* and *Comida de Puta (F%&king Lousy Food)*; she has twice been a semifinalist for the Princess Grace Award, and her work has received Honorable Mention on [The Kilroys List](#). Her plays are published by Broadway Play Publishing; her short play, *Reconcile, Bitch* is included in the short plays anthology "Best Ten-Minute Plays of 2020," published by Applause Theater and Cinema Books; a ten-minute play, *Spirit Sex: A Paranormal Romance*, was selected for the short plays anthology, "Best Ten-Minute Plays of 2010;" and a scene from her play, *Comida de Puta (F%&king Lousy Food)* is included in an anthology featuring plays written by Latinx playwrights, "Scenes for Latinx Actors: Voices of the New American Theater," both published by Smith and Kraus.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Amy Gerwert Valdez (He/She/They) is very excited to be working with BWBTC. Their recent works have been with the children's theatre program at Carol Stream Park District. Amy is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago where they received a BFA in Theatre Directing. In their free time they spend time with their girlfriend Reann and cat, Stormy. IG [@starryeyedamy](https://www.instagram.com/starryeyedamy)

ABOUT THE FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Thomas Russell (he/they) is a Chicago-based fight choreographer and actor. Recent credits include the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire, *The Wonder* (Eclectic Full Contact Theatre, Rancy U/S), and *The Legacy of Sherwood Forest* (Littlebrain Theatre, Guillermo/Guy). He's choreographed violence for local colleges and high schools, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Midsommer Flight, and TimeLine Theatre Company. They're incredibly grateful to be working with BWBTC, and they're so happy to have the endless support of his family, friends, and loved ones. Enjoy the show!

THE GATEKEEPERS

By Jillian Leff*

Directed by Morgan Manasa*

Fight Choreography by Pol Cooney

CAST

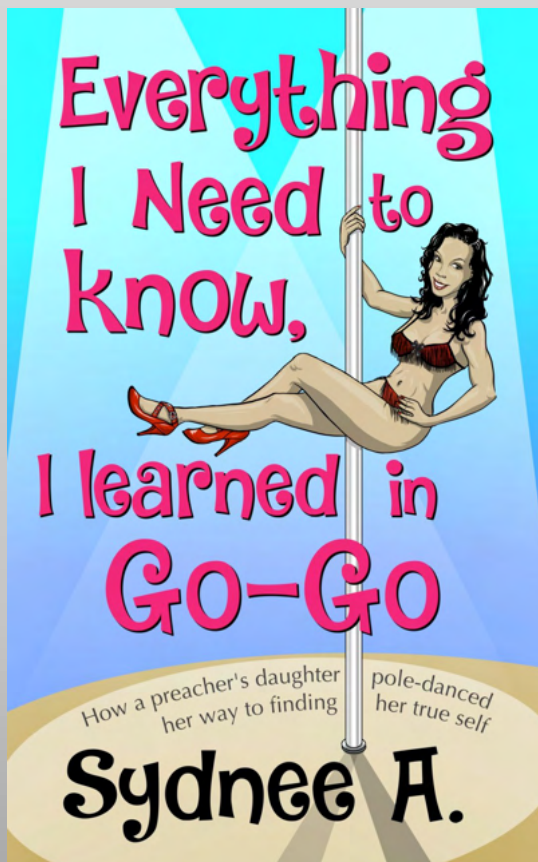
Sloane	Kristen Alesia* (she/they)
S	Kathrynne Wolf * (she/her)
Ava	Brandi Jiminez Lee (she/her)
Dez	Todd Douglas (he/him)
Dez (older).....	Linsey Falls (he/him)
William	Ross Compton (he/him)
Nameless 1.....	Christopher Sylvie (he/they)
Nameless 2.....	Grant Brown (he/him)
Nameless 3.....	Lauren Paige * (she/her)
Stage Directions	Maureen Yasko* (she/her)

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

[Jillian Leff](#)* (she/her) is a Chicago based playwright and actor. In the city, her plays have been produced by The New Coordinates (*Small World* - co-written with Joe Lino - 2020 Jeff Award Nominee for New Work), The Cuckoo's Theater Project (*Missed Opportunities*), and The Right Brain Project (*(Non)Fiction*), while her short plays have been produced by Broken Nose Theatre, Random Acts Chicago, and Ghostlight Ensemble, among others. She has a BFA in Acting from Ball State University and is an Ensemble Member with Babes With Blades Theatre Company.

<https://newplayexchange.org/users/21210/jillian-leff>

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ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Morgan Manasa* (she/her/hers), a graduate of the Chicago College of Performing Arts and Theatre Conservatory at Roosevelt University, has been a theatremaker in Chicago for the past 20 years. Morgan is an ensemble member of Babes With Blades Theatre Company where she's been seen in their production of *Henry V* (Fluellen) and *Witch Slap!* (Goody Blunt). Morgan has directed a handful of one-acts and 10-minute play festivals but made her mainstage directorial debut with Arthur M. Jolly's *The Lady Demands Satisfaction* (Jeff Recommended) with BWBTC. Most recently she directed *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Jeff Recommended) with Idle Muse Theatre Ensemble where she also directed *In The Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)*. Thank you for supporting live theatre! www.morganmanasa.com

ABOUT THE FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Pol Cooney (they/them) is a Violence Designer, Actor, and Teaching Artist in the Chicago area. They are an Advanced Actor Combatant with the Fight Directors of Canada and are currently working towards their Fight Instructor Certification. Their most recent acting credits include *Twelfth Night* (Midsommer Flight, Orsino), *Romeo and Juliet* (Accidental Shakespeare, Tybalt), *Hell Followed with Her* (Wildclaw Theatre, Toadvine), and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (First Folio, Moth/Demetrius U/S).

Their most recent Violence Design credits include various high schools in the Chicagoland area, *HOA* (Factory Theatre), *Krugozor* (Theatre Evolve), *Midsummer Nights Dream* (Oakton Community College), *Outlaws* (Avalanche Theatre), *The Mark and Nina the Hellhound* (BWBTC), *Wendigo* (Three Brothers Theatre), and *Henry V* (First Folio Theatre). Pol is thrilled to be back with BWBTC for their third Fighting Words Festival. Enjoy the show!

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Babes With Blades Theatre Company produces theatre in venues located on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home. This region that we now commonly refer to as “The Chicagoland Area”, has long been a center for Indigenous people to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties. Today, one of the largest urban Native American communities in the United States resides in Chicago. Members of this community continue to contribute to the life of this city and to celebrate their heritage, practice traditions, and care for the land and waterways. If you are originally from outside of Chicago, you can discover who's traditional homelands you inhabited by going to Whose.Land.

BWBTC IS ONE OF LESS THAN 15% OF CHICAGO THEATRE COMPANIES

dedicated to representing marginalized voices through storytelling
*(and the only one that uses stage combat as a
consistent storytelling tool.)*

BABES WITH BLADES

THEATRE COMPANY

ENSEMBLE

Kristen Alesia	Line Bower
Jazmín Corona	Alison Dornheggen
Carrie Hardin	LaKecia Harris
Madison Hill	Kelsey Kovacevich
Jillian Leff	Morgan Manasa
Jennifer L. Mickelson	Izis Mollinedo
Hazel Monson	Jennifer Mohr
Lauren Paige	Megan Schemmel
Hayley Rice	Kathrynne Wolf
Maureen Yasko	Ashley Yates

BOARD

Lata Balagangadharan	Melanie Bolen
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Catherine Mallers	James Piche
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Want to support what we do?

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OUR MISSION

Babes With Blades Theatre Company uses stage combat to tell stories that elevate the voices of underrepresented communities and dismantle the patriarchy. Through performance, script development, training and outreach, our ensemble creates theatre that explores the wide range of the human experience, and cultivates broader perspectives in the arts community and in society as a whole.