

Press Release | Waterside

for immediate release

Key Dates: show run: Weds 3 June to Sat 6 June 2026

Press night: Weds 3 June 7.30pm

Press Pack [LINK](#)

Waterside Arts presents its first in-house production, 'Clothes Swap', a new play exploring refuge, resistance and radical self-expression set in a queer youth club

Waterside Arts in Trafford, Greater Manchester, is producing its first show in a move to spotlight and champion original homegrown narratives that define the region. This new vision supports new writing, expanding the theatrical canon of what stories appear on stages across the UK.

'**Clothes Swap**' is written by Liam Mansfield and is set in a queer youth club. It was inspired by a real clothes swap at an LGBTQ+ young persons' charity in Trafford, where emerging playwright Mansfield volunteered. 'Clothes Swap' is directed by **Nathaniel J Hall** (*First Time, It's a Sin* C4) and produced by Waterside Arts. It was originally developed by Green Carnation Theatre.



'Clothes Swap' with Ash **David Carpenter**, Chris **Nicole Keri**, Tatum **Abel Hanson**, Den **Naomi Ricci**.

Image credit: Lee Baxter

'**Clothes Swap**' follows a group of queer young people navigating identity, belonging and the beautiful chaos of becoming themselves. Set in October 2025 under the shadow of growing anti-trans and anti-queer rhetoric, alongside the burden of austerity, the story captures and spotlights the joy of young people and the connections they make in a queer youth club.

At its heart is their fiercely protective but emotionally drained youth leader, alongside an outsider whose suspicion threatens the fragile safety of the group. When the future of the

youth group looks to be in jeopardy, they come together to try to navigate a path to resolution and find new members.

The story and themes give a voice to the lives of queer young people. Written with honesty, humour, and deep compassion, the play explores what it means to be seen, supported and held by community. 'Clothes Swap' celebrates the vital importance of spaces where queer young people can exist without explanation, while confronting the tensions that arise when those spaces are misunderstood or challenged.

Liam Mansfield's first play, it highlights the fun and struggles of being a queer teenager, exploring the nuances of gender and how society responds and reacts.

Liam Mansfield, playwright, said: "I wanted to capture the joy of a clothes swap, where young people can try out new styles and explore identities in a way that might not be possible at home. The play shares these experiences of young queer people - highlighting the chaos, fun, and struggles of being a teenager. Just like in life, the characters are a little messy at times, nobody is perfect, and they're all trying to find out how and where they fit in."

Helping to shape the story so it felt authentic and local, Mansfield worked with young people in Trafford and Knowsley. They had a significant impact on the development of the story, with workshops in collaboration with Rainbow Reflections and the Proud Trust. Working closely with the original creative team, they helped refine the story, language, and nuances, ensuring it authentically brings the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people to life.

The cast has three youth club members, teenagers Tatum, Ash and Den played by **Abel Hanson**, **David Carpenter** and **Naomi Ricci**. The Youth club founder is played by **Nicole Keri**, with **Lindsay Eavis** playing Val, the retired 'outsider'.



'Clothes Swap', Waterside Arts. Image credit Lee Baxter. Left to right: Tatum (Abel Hanson), Chris (Nicole Keri), Ash (David Carpenter), Den (Naomi Ricci), Val (Lindsay Eavis)

Liam Mansfield, playwright, said: "The play became a way to explore gender in a world that was appearing more and more binary and divided. By exploring this through a naturalistic setting, I hope that audiences can both enjoy themselves and learn a little something about the real people behind the debates. I also wanted the characters to feel real, not caricatures from the news, so that the story can leave a lasting impression on audiences."

Waterside's vision is that the stories told through the plays it presents are relevant, rooted in place and resonate with audiences. Stepping up as a producing venue and bringing the work of exciting new writers to the stage, Waterside is taking an important and ambitious next step, with plans to tour the shows nationally. With artists and new voices currently navigating an especially challenging creative landscape, it will champion a wide range of emerging talent through its commissioning scheme.

Darren Adams, Creative Producer and Waterside Venue Manager, said: "It's an incredibly bold and exciting moment for us to be putting on Clothes Swap. We have a phenomenal creative team in place and a story shaped with care, love and community at its heart. Producing work in-house allows us to champion stories that matter, and Clothes Swap is a perfect example of why this step feels so important. At a time when debates around safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people are becoming increasingly divisive, 'Clothes Swap' offers something different. It doesn't lean into culture wars or conflict; instead, it unfolds gently, sensitively and movingly, giving space for empathy and understanding. "

Speaking about the director Nathaniel J Hall, **Darren Adams said:** "This is our second collaboration with Nathaniel J Hall. In 2018, Waterside Arts commissioned a play written and performed by Hall called '**First Time**'. It was a huge success that played a big part in inspiring our shift toward producing our own work. Nathaniel brings a huge amount of heart, insight and creativity to Clothes Swap."

Nathaniel J Hall, Director, said: "I cut my teeth directing youth theatre shows, and Liam's play mirrors my experiences watching young people's joy as they discover their weird and wonderful tribe - the script is full of so much delicious energy and creative possibilities, I jumped at the chance to direct it! Clothing is the main metaphor and message; queer people often code-switch using clothes, toning down for safety or glamming up to express gender euphoria and joy - I'm definitely hoping to see plenty of fabulous queer fashion on display! The play is full of humour and heart too, sensitively exploring the impact of rising queer-phobia on LGBTQ+ lives, so it's educating and destigmatising important issues as well as entertaining people. I hope queer audiences feel seen and feel joy, and I hope others gain empathy and insight."

Clothes Swap is at Waterside from Wed 3 Jun to Sat 6 Jun. To find out more and book, visit watersidearts.org/clotheswap

Editor's Notes:

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Press Pack [Google Drive Link](#) | [Link to this release online](#)

Listings information:

Clothes Swap by Liam Mansfield

Venue: Waterside, 1 Waterside Plaza, Sale, Trafford, M33 7ZF

Dates: Wed 3 Jun to Fri 5 Jun 19:30, Sat 6 Jun 14:30 & 19:30

Prices: £18 / £16 / £10 Under 18 / 20% discount for Waterside Members

Age 12+

Post-show discussion: Thu 04 Jun

BSL performance date Thu 04 Jun

watersidearts.org/clotheswap

Marketing copy:

Waterside presents its first in-house production, a powerful new play by emerging writer Liam Mansfield, inspired by his work as an LGBTQ+ youth worker. Set in a youth club, the play explores

identity, community and the messy, joyful process of self-discovery. Clothes Swap features a group of queer young people, their exhausted but fiercely protective youth leader, and an outsider who sees the group as a threat; this is a story of compassion, warmth and honesty. A celebration of queer community and the spaces that make belonging possible.

Short Credit: Clothes Swap is written by Liam Mansfield and directed by Nathaniel J Hall. Clothes Swap is the first in-house production by Waterside Arts and was originally developed by Green Carnation Theatre.

Cast

Chris **Nicole Keri**
Ash **David Carpenter**
Val **Lindsay Eavis**
Tatum **Abel Hanson**
Den **Naomi Ricci**

Creatives

Writer: **Liam Mansfield**
Director: **Nathaniel J Hall**
Creative Producer: **Darren Adams**
Associate Producers: **Jemma Baines & Sam Danson**
Creative Consultant: **Maz Hedgehog**
Production Design: **Darren Adams**

ABOUT WATERSIDE

Waterside is an award-winning cultural destination in the heart of Sale, Trafford. A vibrant home for performance, creativity and community, welcoming over 100,000 visitors annually. Renowned for high-quality, engaging and accessible work, Waterside's artistic policy, 'Everything We Do Is Connected' fuels a programme that blends popular works with bold creative risk, champions young people's talent and voices and places care, listening and growth at the centre of every artistic experience. Each year, Waterside curates a festivals programme; Pride in Trafford, Refract and Prism, drawing around 20,000 people annually and strengthening the local creative ecology and economy.

The venue, its galleries and Sup Bar & Coffee House are open six days a week, offering a lively, welcoming space for audiences, artists and communities to connect. Waterside is owned and operated by Trafford Council and supported through grant funding from Arts Council England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the UK Government.

watersidearts.org