

## Access Guide for Butch/Femme



Image description: The graphic is promoting the play BUTCH/FEMME by Emily Paterson being presented at Theatre Passe Muraille. The central image is a gold wedding ring with a diamond.

Theatre Passe Muraille's crimson red branding lines are on each side of the image, the TPM and The Green Couch's logo are on the bottom left of the image.

There is text on the top left of the graphic that reads:

"Butch/Femme

by Emily Paterson | A Theatre Passe Muraille Presentation of The Green Couch Theatre Company Production "

The Text on the top right of the graphic reads: "One night. Two pasts. A reckoning long overdue." Graphic design by Emily Jung.

## Theatre Passe Muraille's Relaxed Environment

**Butch/Femme** will be performed at Theatre Passe Muraille as a Relaxed Environment. A Relaxed Environment is designed to create a more welcoming atmosphere for all audience members, including those who could specifically benefit from a more informal approach, and a 're laxing' of formal theatre conventions.

### A Relaxed Environment includes:

#### At the theatre:

- A very low-level house light in the audience
- The ability for anyone to come and go from the space, get up and move, as needed
- Ability to leave your phone on silent or vibrate
- A more open approach to audience movement or sound
- May also include a quiet space to sit
- May also include a Peer Support Facilitator on select days who is a person who can (not available for BUTCH/FEMME)

#### This Access Guide, includes:

- An introduction to the play and some of the key elements
- Specific environmental, content and trigger warnings

Thank you to TPM's Access Sponsor



**TD READY  
COMMITMENT**

## What's Included in this Access Guide?

This Access Guide aims to inform and support anyone in their understanding of the play. In particular, the guide may assist those who have different needs for communication including, but not exclusively, neurodiverse and autistic people, individuals who communicate using multiple languages, as well as others who may be challenged by some theatrical constructs.

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## Need More Information?

If you require more information please reach out to Theatre Passe Muraille's General Manager Jenn Sartor at [jenns@passemuraille.on.ca](mailto:jenns@passemuraille.on.ca).

## How to Experience Butch/Femme

**Butch/Femme** runs from September 20th-September 27th, 2025 and performance dates and times can be found on our [ticketing page](#). The entire run will be sensory sensitive. Butch/Femme will be performed in one act and will last 65 minutes, an hour and five minutes. The theatre space will be open to audiences 30 minutes before the set start time and the Front-of-House manager will announce when the theatre is open from the lobby.

**Audio Described (Traditional, Closed)** - The performances of Butch/Femme on Sunday, September 21st at 2pm and Friday, September 26th at 7:30 pm will contain closed audio description by Janis Mayers of Superior Description Services.

**Relaxed Space** - If you leave the theatre at any time there is a Relaxed Space in the lobby you can visit. Our Relaxed Space is a quiet environment/location equipped with comfortable seating, blankets, and sensory objects for any patrons who need a break from the performance or would like to experience it in a more low-intensity environment. If you ask an usher they will show you to this area.

**Mask Mandatory Performances** - There will be a Mask Mandatory Performance of Butch/Femme on Wednesday, September 24th at 7:30 pm. For this performance, all patrons will be asked to wear a respirator mask (KF95/KN95/N95 or better). If you do not have one with you, we will provide a KN95 mask at the doors.

## Performance Advisories & Common Questions

**Are there any performance advisories?**

**Content Warnings:** Homophobia, alcohol use, discussion of hate crime and violence, discussion of a sexual relationship (more suggestive than graphic), use of homophobic language.

**Environmental Warnings:** There are two short moments where the theatre lights will go out and the theatre will be very dark at the beginning and end of the performance.

**Age limit suggestion:** 12+

## What access components are available during the performance run?

**Audio Described Performances:** The performances of Butch/Femme on Sunday, September 21st at 2pm and Friday, September 26th at 7:30 pm will contain closed audio description by Janis Mayers of Superior Description Services to better include Blind and Low Vision audience members.

**Sensory Sensitive Run :** All performances of Butch/Femme will be sensory sensitive. A sensory sensitive (SS) performance includes everything for a Relaxed Environment, in addition PLUS the sound, lighting, projections and other elements of the performance have been altered or designed so Butch/ Femme better includes audiences who are sensitive to sensory stimulation. For example, if there are flashing lights they might be slowed down or the contrast might be changed so that it is not as intense.

**Mask Mandatory Performances:** There will be a Mask Mandatory Performance of Butch/Femme on Wednesday September 24th at 7:30 pm. For this performance, all patrons will be asked to wear a respirator mask (KFN95/KN95/N95 or better). If you do not have one with you, we will provide one at the theatre. TPM has 4 rooftop HVAC units with filters and will have a Coway Airmega 400 Smart Air Purifier running in the space. The

Coway Airmega 400 is a true HEPA air purifier, it covers 1 '560 sq ft in 30minutes.

## Plot Details

The following section of text contains Plot Details that could be considered spoilers! Please continue to the section titled Set Details if you do not want to know what happens (the end of the plot section is highlighted)!

Words that are underlined can be found in the Background Information section if you would like a definition or would like to learn more.

Alice “Al”: 22 years old, butch lesbian from rural Ontario. Has spent life living as an outcast, deeply sensitive, loving, and has a tendency to run when things become too difficult.

Jenny: 21 years old, femme lesbian from rural Ontario. She is resilient, loyal, and lonely. She finds solace in conforming to her family’s expectations but ruminates on the past often.

**Before the Performance begins** there will be an in-person Land Acknowledgement by the playwright Emily Paterson.

### Opening

Set in 1957 rural Ontario, Butch/Femme follows two former lovers, Jenny, a femme lesbian and Alice (“Al”), a butch lesbian. One night, Jenny is doing dishes in her apartment above the local grocer, when Al, who left their small hometown and Jenny a year before for Toronto, arrives on Jenny’s doorstep. Alice has bruises and cuts on her face. The two are cold at first, catching up on the weather while hurling snide comments at one another. Al explains that she had called and Jenny didn’t pick up, so Al showed up at her doorstep instead. Al is straightforward and tells Jenny she misses her, while Jenny takes more time to warm back up to Al. The pair also reminisce on how they first met. Jenny had run across the Donnelly’s field to introduce herself to Al. She explains that she’d never met someone like Al before and that after all this time she still doesn’t regret talking to her. Jenny’s guard remains up while Al explains why

she left. For Al, getting a job was hard because she was discriminated against for being a more masculine presenting lesbian. Al felt like an outcast and thought Jenny's life would be easier if they moved to a larger city.

### **Leaving the small town, moving to Toronto**

In between jobs, Al starts to feel increasingly uncomfortable in their small town. She unexpectedly leaves Jenny, who wakes up to Al's things being packed up for a move to Toronto. While in Toronto, Al makes friends with other lesbians: Nickie, Maggie, Andy, and June. Jenny is often insinuating that Al had a more intimate relationship with June than Al is letting on. Al goes on to explain that what prompted her to come back was a violent encounter. On Saturday night, Al and her friends were leaving a bar. Alice describes how a group of teenage boys beat up Nickie and Andy while Maggie ran to get the manager of the bar. When June joins the fight, Al remembers a knife and a broken beer bottle, she remembers blood and the sound of shoes running away. Al explains that after this encounter, she saw a woman who looked a lot like Jenny, so she called and then came by her apartment. While Jenny cleans Al's cut, Al then explains that while she didn't love June (especially in the way she loved Jenny) June loved her. Al doesn't know what happened to June, she had just left her there that night.

### **Jo and Lacey**

Jo and Lacey are the only other lesbians and butchfemme couple in the small town that Jenny and Al lived in. Lacey, the femme was very upset to find out Jenny was engaged to Fred and had slapped her, while Jo poured a glass of whiskey. Jenny lets Fred believe that Jo is a man as a safety precaution. Although Jo and Lacey knew that Al was leaving for Toronto, and had helped her move, Al never reached out again after leaving and still hasn't spoken to either one since. Al decides that she will reach out to them again at the end of the story to apologize and spend time with them.

### **Jenny's engagement**

During Jenny and Al's conversation, Jenny reveals that she met a man named Fred - and that they're engaged. Jenny says that he has a stable job but hesitates to say she loves him. Jenny explains that the reason she got with Fred was that she was embarrassed, because she fought to legitimize her relationship with Al even though her

parents refused to speak with her for three years, once Al left she did what she believed to be the safest option. Al continues to ask questions about the details of their relationship and Jenny grows uncomfortable. Once Al asks once more for details on their sex life, Jenny explains that he's rougher and less caring than Al was. Jenny also explains that she doesn't care for the sex either and she'd rather be with Al again. Jenny decides after talking to Al that she'll give Fred a call and cancel their engagement.

## END OF PLAY

### Background Information

The following words are listed in the Plot Details section with an underline. The following list provides definitions and links if you want to learn more.

**butch lesbian:** A lesbian whose appearance, behaviour, or identity is regarded as masculine. ("Butch, N. & Adj. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary"). For more information click [here](#).

**femme lesbian:** A lesbian who embraces identity markers that are associated with traditional expressions of femininity, as clothing, hairstyle, interests, or behaviors. ("Definition of Femme | [Dictionary.com](#)"). For more information click [here](#).

### Set Details



#### The Main Floor of the Main space theatre:

- Living room type set with a yellow chair and couch with a side table and a lamp and a coffee table in front, a white fridge and kitchen counter with sink, there is a rug on the ground (not shown in this photo)

For details on lighting & sound levels for Butch/Femme read the Performance Advisories & Common Questions.



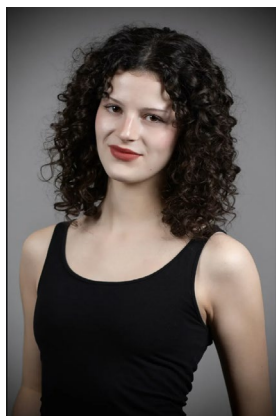
## Seating Conditions

**Butch/Femme** will be performed with traditional theatre seating with the audience seated together on one side of the playing space. Physically accessible and size inclusive seating is available.

If you have specific seating requests not outlined in this document (and would like this arranged in advance) we invite you to communicate this to our Front House Staff using [info@passemuraille.on.ca](mailto:info@passemuraille.on.ca) or by calling 416-504-7529.

## Characters

The following descriptions include information about the Characters.



**Jenny:** 21 years old, femme lesbian from rural Ontario. Was once popular, but chose to abandon her previous life to live as her true self with her former girlfriend, Alice. She is resilient, loyal, and lonely. She finds solace in conforming to expectations of her but ruminates on the past often.

Jenny is played by Annabelle Gillis. Annabelle has fair skin and curly dark brown hair to her shoulders. In the photo below she is wearing a simple black tank top, and the background is a light grey. She has a soft smile with a natural red lip.



**Alice "Al":** 22 years old, butch lesbian from rural Ontario. Has spent life living as an outcast, deeply sensitive, loving, and has a tendency to run when things become too difficult. She is insecure in herself, but not her feelings. She is seeking forgiveness from those who she has hurt and has a deep desire to change.

Al is played by Tessa Kramer. Tessa is a woman with soft, curly auburn hair and blue eyes who looks directly at the camera with a gentle smile. In the image below she's dressed in a light green blouse with a collar, set against a neutral beige background.

## **The End of the Performance**

At the end of the performance, you are welcome to come and go from the space while you are at the theatre if you would like to visit the lobby, washroom, or Relaxed Space.

## **Venue Guide**

Click [HERE](#) for more details, including maps, parking information, FAQs, and the Theatre Passe Muraille Visual story!