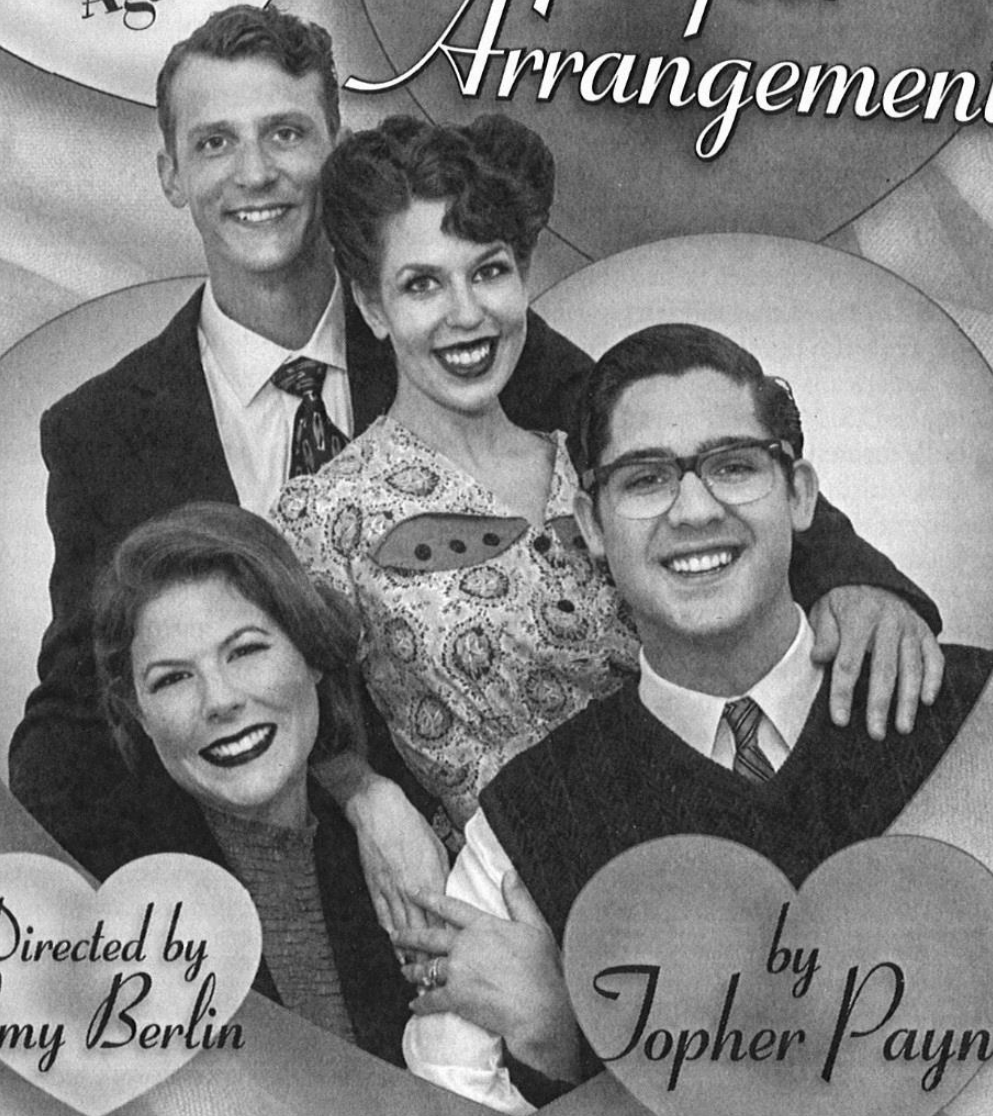


RICHMOND TRIANGLE PLAYERS PRESENTS

*Making  
America Gay  
Again*

# *Perfect Arrangement*



*Directed by  
Amy Berlin*

*by  
Topher Payne*

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## A Comedy Based on Serious Political History

By Jake Newsome

IN THE 1950S, SENATOR JOSEPH MCCARTHY destroyed the careers and lives of innumerable people accused of being Communist sympathizers in what has come to be known as the Red Scare. What is less known, however, is that leading politicians and lawmakers also actively hunted out federal employees suspected of being gay during what historian David Johnson has called the Lavender Scare.

As early as 1947, Senator Kenneth Wherry warned his colleagues of the alleged threats that gay men and lesbians posed. During a Senate debate in 1950, he asked, "Can you think of a person who could be more dangerous to the United States of America than a pervert?" Many officials claimed that foreign powers could more easily use the secret sexual orientation of gay Americans to blackmail them into sabotaging the U.S. Moreover, gays and lesbians reputedly formed cliques, and thus could form a "state within a state" and undermine the authority of the government. In the 1950s, many officials no longer saw homosexuality as merely a religious or moral question; it was a matter of national security.

Wherry spearheaded the witch-hunt against gays, but he was not alone. McCarthy saw the campaigns against Communists and gays as linked since both were based on fears of an "enemy within." FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover collected files on "subversives," which included "sex-deviates." In 1953, President Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which charged federal agencies to fire employees who were deemed "security risks." The definition of risk was left purposefully broad, and EO-10450 effectively banned homosexuals from working for the government or any of its contractors. By 1960, over 5,000 gay men and lesbians had been fired.

This purge had an effect that the government did not anticipate. These workers, who considered themselves patriotic citizens dedicating their efforts to their country, suddenly found that their entire lives had been reduced to the label "homosexual." Their forced outing, humiliation, and arbitrary termination motivated these individuals to think of themselves as a distinct group of citizens whose constitutional rights had been violated. Homosexuality became a political cause, and

the Lavender Scare galvanized gay men and lesbians into action.

The Mattachine Society, the first gay rights organization in the U.S., was founded in 1950 in Los Angeles, an area that relied on U.S. Defense contracts. Activism also emerged on the east coast. Dr. Frank Kameny, an astronomer for the US Army Map Service, was fired in 1958 for being gay. He filed lawsuits, formed a D.C. chapter of the Mattachine Society, and organized a picket line in front of the White House in 1965. This was all years before the Stonewall Riots in New York, which are usually taught as the beginning of America's gay rights movement.

The story presented in *Perfect Arrangement* is not simply a chapter of "gay history." During the Lavender Scare and the subsequent decades of activism, gay Americans not only fought for specific rights, but also broadened the definition of full citizenship to include all Americans, regardless of sexual orientation. Therefore, this is fundamentally an American story. It is a moral lesson about responsible citizenship, the importance of tolerance, and the acceptance of diversity. This history has much to teach all Americans about the fragile nature of human rights and civil liberties in modern democratic life.

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**Dr. Jake Newsome** is a scholar of American and German LGBTQ history. His research focuses on human rights and the postwar treatment of the Nazis' gay and lesbian victims. He earned his Ph.D. in history from the State University of New York at Buffalo and now works at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

### For further reading:

- The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* by David K. Johnson (University of Chicago Press, 2004).  
*Hoover's War on Gays: Exposing the FBI's "Sex Deviates" Program* by Douglas Charles (University Press of Kansas, 2015).  
"Homo-Hunting' in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and the Homophobic Side of McCarthyism" by Randolph Baxter in *Nebraska History*, Volume 84 (2003), pages 119-132.  
*The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* by Margot Canaday (Princeton University Press, 2009).  
*Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* by Alan Berube (2nd Edition, University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

**RICHMOND TRIANGLE PLAYERS**

**Philip Crosby**, Executive Director

**Lucian Restivo**, Associate Producing Director; **Keith Fitzgerald**, Associate Artistic Director; presents

*Perfect Arrangement*

By **Topher Payne**

Sponsored by **Barcode**

Set Design by  
**David Allan Ballas**

Costume Design by  
**Lynn West**

Lighting Design by  
**Andrew Bonniwell**

Associate Set Designer  
**Michael Maddix**

Hair and Make-Up Designer  
**Joel Furtick**

Technical Director  
**Roland Brown**

Technical Advisor  
**Alan Williamson**

Production Stage Manager  
**Ming-Shiuan Pu**

Properties and Sound Design  
**Lucian Restivo**

Directed by  
**Amy Berlin**

**The Cast**

*(in order of appearance)*

|                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bob Martindale .....     | Stevie Rice           |
| Millie Martindale .....  | Louise Ricks          |
| Norma Baxter .....       | Tara Callahan Carroll |
| Jim Baxter .....         | Luke Newsome          |
| Theodore Sunderson ..... | Jeff Clevenger        |
| Kitty Sunderson .....    | Jacqueline O'Connor   |
| Barbara Grant .....      | Jennifer Frank        |

*The play takes place in the living room of the Martindales' Georgetown duplex,  
Washington DC, Spring 1950.*

**Act One:**

*Scene One:* An evening in April, 1950.

*Scene Two:* An afternoon,  
three weeks later.

*Scene Three:* The following afternoon

*There will be  
one 15-minute  
intermission.*

**Act Two:**

*Scene One:* A few hours later.

*Scene Two:* The following morning.

*Scene Three:* An afternoon,  
three days later

*Scene Four:* The following afternoon

**Perfect Arrangement** is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

Richmond Triangle Players' production of **Perfect Arrangement** is a proud participant in **arttober**

Please remember to turn all cell phones, beepers, candy wrappers and small children to a silent mode.

No texting during the performance, please.

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For more information, please visit: [www.samuel french.com/whitepaper](http://www.samuel french.com/whitepaper)

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