

Speakeasy: A New Musical

Logline:

A Romeo & Juliet reimagining set in a 1920s queer speakeasy — where joy is rebellion, and love sings louder than law.

Project Details:

- Book, Lyrics, & Music by Waymon Hudson
- Cast: 8-10 principal roles with flexible ensemble (doubling possible)
- Running Time: Approx. 2 hours + intermission
- Orchestration: 6-10 piece jazz ensemble
- Tone: *Hadestown* and *Ragtime* meets *Cabaret* — with smoke, sweat, and sequins

Core Themes:

- Found Family and Chosen Truth
- Joy as Resistance
- Queer Liberation and Political Urgency
- Breaking Generational Cycles
- Love in Defiance of Law and Legacy

Development Status:

- Full libretto and lyrics complete
- Pitch deck, sample lyrics, and visual packet available
- Seeking: composer, agents, production partners
- Demo recordings currently in development. Sample lyrics and full libretto available.

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SPEAKEASY
A NEW MUSICAL

By
Waymon Hudson
Book, Lyrics, & Music

Submission Packet
Final Draft – June 2025

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Why Now

Speakeasy reclaims one of the most iconic love stories in the canon — and gives it back to the people who've too often been left out of it. This isn't just a reimagining. It's a rebellion.

Set in a world where joy is an act of resistance, Speakeasy is both a love letter to musical theatre and a lifeline to every queer kid who grew up searching for themselves onstage — and a battle cry for those still waiting to be seen.

In a time when drag is being outlawed, books are being banned, queer and Black histories are being erased, police violence rages, religious-fueled oppression festers, and visibility itself has become dangerous, this show insists:

We were always here. Singing. Loving. Surviving.

One of our characters quotes Zora Neale Hurston:

“If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.”

That line is more than a moment.

It's the spine of this show.

Speakeasy isn't only about forbidden love — it's about chosen family, intergenerational resistance, and the power of storytelling to defy silence.

It's about twirling through the ashes in sequins and sweat, mascara smudged, fists raised, and voices screaming in protest.

This is a story that mourns the past, roars in the present, and refuses to be quieted again.

It belongs onstage — **now**, when it's needed most.

Creator's Statement

When I began writing Speakeasy, I wasn't just trying to set an old love story to jazz. I was writing a revolution and revelation.

Set in a 1920s speakeasy but rooted in today's fight for visibility, Speakeasy is my attempt to reclaim joy as a political act — especially for queer people, for people of color, for anyone who's ever been told to shrink themselves. I wanted to explore how love — “forbidden love,” queer love, found-family love, revolutionary love — can be just as defiant and dangerous as protest.

As a queer writer, I grew up with stories about people like me that too often ended in shame, silence, or disappearance — or worse, erasure. This show doesn't shy away from tragedy — but it insists on beauty, on laughter, on tenderness, on spectacle. Speakeasy doesn't just mourn what's been lost. It fights for what's still possible.

Musically, I'm drawn to the tension between polish and chaos. That's why the score swings between explosive jazz numbers, aching string-laced ballads, and intimate, whispered confessions. It's a show full of contradictions: sacred and sinful, silken and sharp, roaring and still. That's where I believe truth lives.

I wrote Speakeasy for the kid who snuck into a drag bar and saw someone like them sing for the first time. For the elder who survived when others didn't. For anyone who's ever had to build a sanctuary from nothing because the world left them outside.

This isn't just a story of love in hiding.

It's a story of choosing joy — and choosing each other — out loud.

And that choice is everything.

—

Waymon Hudson

Book, Music & Lyrics — SPEAKEASY

Core Themes

Queer Love & Visibility

Speakeasy places queer love at its center — not as subtext, but as sacred. In a world that punishes tenderness, characters like Merc and Miss Addie embody what it means to live, and die, for the right to be seen.

Joy as Resistance

The Velvet Boot isn't just a club — it's a sanctuary, a community, a family. Here, music, drag, dance, and laughter become radical acts. The show insists that survival isn't enough. Joy is rebellion and it must be loud.

Toxic Masculinity & Emotional Repression

Through Rome and Marco's fractured bond, the musical interrogates inherited masculinity — how “soft boys” are hardened by expectation, and how to rebel against it.

Religious Trauma & Queer Liberation

Jules's journey from repression to self-possession mirrors the battle many queer people face with faith, family, and silence. Her defiance is not a rejection of belief — but a reclamation of truth.

Chosen Family & Intergenerational Survival

Miss Addie, Merc, and even Ty O'Hara represent a generation of queer and closeted adults who sacrificed so the next might live freer. Their care — and regret — reverberates across the stage.

Systemic Oppression & Collective Rebellion

The lovers are caught not just in a feud, but in the machinery of white supremacy, religious zeal, and patriarchal violence. The tragedy is not personal — it is systemic. And the revolution is collective.

The Power of Storytelling

At its heart, Speakeasy is about reclaiming the narrative — about turning marginal lives into center-stage ballads. The act of telling this story becomes its own form of resistance.

Core Themes

Each of the four central characters carries a piece of the writer's own queer journey:

- **Jules** is the question that wouldn't stay quiet, a heart still reaching through the prayers meant to silence it.
- **Rome** is the soft boy made to feel wrong, learning that tenderness is not a flaw, but a strength.
- **Merc** is the laughter that hides the ache, craving a love he fears he'll never deserve.
- **Miss Addie** is the caretaker who stayed too long, trading her love so others might find theirs yet still stays quietly defiant and finds her voice.

Their lives echo like jazz — dissonant, defiant, unfinished.

SPEAKEASY is built from their chords:

love and loss,
survival and song.

Together, they create a symphony of resistance —
A song about the price of joy,
the inheritance of pain,
and the sacred act of choosing each other anyway.

Together, they demand joy.

They resist erasure.

They live — loudly, lovingly — in the face of every force telling them not to.

These main characters reflect parts of all of us — softness, silence, sacrifice, survival. Together, they form a chorus of defiance and hope that speaks to the outcast that lives in each of us.

Project Overview

A jazz-drenched Romeo & Juliet reimagining set in a 1920s Chicago Queer speakeasy where two lovers challenge the violence of family, law, and legacy — and where a found family dares to live loudly in a world that demands silence.

SPEAKEASY is a radical, jazz-fueled reimagining of Romeo & Juliet — set not in Verona, but a 1920s Chicago speakeasy where queer, Black, brown, and poor communities dared to live loudly in the shadows of Prohibition, religious oppression, and state violence. This original musical fuses a jazz-age soundscape with modern political urgency to tell a story of forbidden love, chosen family, defiant joy, and resistance.

At the heart of the story are Jules (Juliet) — the daughter of a strict police sergeant father and temperance activist mother — and Rome (Romeo), the soft poetic son of a bootlegging crime boss. Their romance ignites in The Velvet Boot, a queer sanctuary of resistance and celebration, where those silenced by society find their voice.

It is shaped by the fierce loyalty of Merc, Rome's queer best friend whose love goes unspoken but not unseen, and by the quiet strength of Miss Addie, Jules's lifelong protector and a Black queer woman who knows what it means to survive by staying in the shadows. Their sacrifices deepen the stakes — and expand the love story beyond a couple to a community.

As the love story unfolds, they challenge social divides, familial expectations, and the violent backlash of a world that refuses to let them live freely. As the world outside grows more violent, the story crescendos into a raid, a wedding, a vigil, and a reckoning.

With a fresh musical score, grounded storytelling, and a cast rich in diversity, SPEAKEASY is a timely and timeless love story built for the modern stage.

It's about what happens when marginalized people fight to live loudly in a world built to silence them. It speaks urgently to the moment we live in — where book bans, anti-queer legislation, and racial violence echo the silencing tactics of a century ago.

At its core, this show asks: What if love could be a revolution? It insists that joy is political, found family is sacred, and visibility is survival.

This show doesn't just retell a love story. It reclaims it.

At a Glance

Title: Speakeasy

Genre: Musical Drama

Setting: 1920s Chicago – The Velvet Boot speakeasy and streets divided by Prohibition, prejudice, and power.

Cast Size: 9-10 principal + ensemble

Running Time: Approximately 2 hours 15 minutes, with one intermission

Orchestration: 10-piece jazz band (piano, upright bass, drums, reeds, brass, optional light strings) or can be expanded to full orchestral strength

Tone & Style

Boldly theatrical yet emotionally intimate, *Speakeasy* blends high-stakes tragedy with joy, satire, and jazz-fueled magic realism. While grounded in 1920s jazz, the score incorporates gospel, swing, folk, and contemporary musical theatre stylings — allowing emotion to drive genre. It evokes the musical DNA of *Hadestown*, *Ragtime*, *Rent*, and *Spring Awakening* — with the sweat of *Cabaret* and the fury of a protest song, like *Caroline, or Change* or *The Color Purple*.

Production Notes

Speakeasy is intentionally designed to scale from intimate chamber productions to full Broadway-style spectacle, with built-in flexibility in casting, staging, and orchestration.

Staging & Casting

- **Flexible cast doubling:** Optional ensemble expansion or doubling
- **Minimalist or immersive options:** *Speakeasy* scenes can be staged with simple risers and lighting or full set builds
- **Choreographic range:** Can be intimate, shadow-based blocking or fully choreographed 1920s jazz/swing/dancehall fusion

Orchestration

- **Base orchestration:** 6–10 musicians, ideal for upright bass, piano, clarinet/sax, trumpet, drums/percussion, and optional violin/guitar. Can also shrink to piano/percussion for workshop formats or grow to a full orchestra for large stage productions.
- **Vocally rich:** Opportunities for a cappella, tight harmonies, jazz trio interludes, and torch solos

Design World

- **Queer nightlife aesthetic:** Smoke, spotlight silhouettes, deco mirrors, velvet curtains

Full Synopsis

Act I

In 1920s Chicago, beneath the noise of prohibition and purity, The Velvet Boot thrums with forbidden life. A coded knock opens its hidden doors as the company bursts into the explosive opening number, “**Come to the Speakeasy,**” welcoming us into a secret world that dares to exist — a kaleidoscope of joy, rebellion, and sanctuary for queer people, immigrants, artists, and outcasts that history has tried to silence and who rise in defiance of law and shame.

Outside, Juliet “Jules” Delaney walks the morning streets with her devout temperance mother and police officer father. But something stirs when she lingers near a disguised door. In “**Something’s Brewing,**” Jules questions the quiet life mapped out for her — and begins to long for something more than the narrow future she’s been promised.

That night, she returns — and slips inside The Velvet Boot. In the lush, pulsing number “**Inside,**” Jules finds herself enchanted by queer joy, found family, and the radical act of belonging without shame. There, she meets Romeo “Rome” Moretti, poetic son of bootlegging kingpin Marco Moretti. Their chemistry flares in “**Stolen Glances,**” but it’s on the rooftop — far above the noise — where they let their masks fall. In “**Girl in the Margins,**” Rome names Jules as something rare: not silent, not saved, but radiant in the spaces no one else sees.

Watching in the background is Merc, Rome’s queer best friend — sharp-witted, tender-hearted, and quietly in love with him. And at home, Miss Addie, Jules’s quietly rebellious lifelong housekeeper — a closeted queer woman who long ago gave up her chance at love in a world that refused to let her be herself — offers her steady protection and encouragement to break free.

Yet danger brews. Rome’s father, Marco, demands loyalty in “**Family Business,**” where Merc pleads for a different kind of strength. Meanwhile, Jules’s parents plot a crackdown on vice in “**Dens of Sin,**” believing Jules to be untouched by the city’s sins.

The lovers declare their defiance in “**Two Different Worlds,**” vowing to choose each other despite the walls around them. But time runs out. As the club patrons dance with wild abandon, a raid is launched. In a fractured “**Family Business (Reprise),**” rebellion meets righteousness. Police storm the club. Sirens blare. Glass breaks. Merc shields Rome. Jules is pulled away. The world shatters as the curtain falls.

Act II

Morning. Smoke. Rubble. In “**Cracked Bottles, Broken Hearts**,” the patrons of The Velvet Boot emerge — queer, Black, brown, immigrant, working-class — not as victims, but survivors mourning the place that gave them voice. The speakeasy may be broken, but their defiant spirits burn brighter than ever.

Rome is arrested. Jules is imprisoned by her parents. In split scenes, both confront the legacies they’re meant to inherit — and reject them. It is Merc who steps in — organizing, protecting, helping Rome break free. And it is Miss Addie who takes a risk, turning against the family she’s served, to help Jules escape. Their quiet heroism becomes the lifeline.

In the tender, urgent “**One More Hour**,” the lovers prepare to flee. Merc and Addie share their regrets and quiet hopes in “**The Watchers**” — revealing lives lived in simmering silence so the next generation might live in full voice.

Jules claims that voice in “**I Choose This**” — an anthem of autonomy in a world that never let her be herself. In a quiet ceremony beneath the ruins of the club, she and Rome marry in “**The Vow**,” vowing truth even in the ashes.

But freedom comes at a price. Merc, running one last bootlegging errand to buy them time, is killed by police — specifically by Officer Ty O’Hara, a closeted man who Merc thought he may have a future with. In “**Last Call**,” Rome weeps and rages, beginning to understand what true rebellion looks like as his poet soul clashes with his need for revenge for Merc’s death.

The community gathers to mourn Merc. Through spoken tributes and a reprise of “**The Watchers**,” Merc is honored not just as a witness, but as a light and the beating heart of this found family. Patrons honor him. Jules lays his bloodied scarf on a stool. Miss Addie declares, “He didn’t just watch,” she says. “He lived.”

But peace is short-lived. Marco arrives with a gun. Rome is shot shielding Jules. Police enter. Jules is hit in the crossfire. In their final breaths, they sing “**Somewhere in the Smoke**” — not a requiem, but a dream of the world they never got to live in.

But this story doesn’t end with their deaths.

Finale

The speakeasy survivors return — drag queens, bartenders, queer lovers, jazz musicians, Black and brown working-class patrons — those history tried to erase. Miss Addie lights the final candle — a ghostlight — and delivers the truth:

*“They didn’t just die for who they loved.
They died because they dared to love out loud.”*

A hush falls. Then, in **“Two Different Worlds (Reprise),”** the ensemble sings an unresolved harmony — whispered but powerful. The final chord doesn’t resolve. It breathes. It aches. And in that ache... is a promise as Miss Addie stands as the final watcher but now ready to take action, vowing:

*“So here I am, the one who stays...
To tell their story. True. Always.”*



Song List

Act I

Come to the Speakeasy – Ensemble

Opening number; immersive, jazz-fueled invitation to a hidden world.

Something’s Brewing – Jules

Solo; Jules’ ‘I Want’ song; quiet yearning and awakening.

Inside – Jules, Merc, & Ensemble

Ensemble; joy and transformation as Jules finds community.

Stolen Glances – Rome & Jules

Duet; first sparks of forbidden love.

Family Business – Marco, Merc, & Bootleggers

Tense ensemble; legacy, masculinity, and loyalty.

Girl in the Margins – Rome

Solo; soft and hesitant as poetic Rome opens up.

Dens of Sin – Miriam, Sgt. Delaney, & Ensemble

Satirical number; religious fervor and repression.

Two Different Worlds – Rome & Jules

Romantic duet; hope against odds and familial walls.

Stolen Glances (Reprise) – Miss Addie

Solo, intimate glimpse into Addie’s past

Family Business (Reprise) – Marco, Miriam, Sgt. Delaney, & Ensemble

Righteousness meets rebellion as both sides prepare for the raid.

Two Different Worlds (Reprise 1) – Rome & Jules

Brief restatement of their love interrupted by the raid.

Act II

Cracked Bottles, Broken Hearts – Ensemble

Post-raid anthem, mourning and queer resilience.

One More Hour – Rome, Jules, Merc, Miss Addie

Quartet; reflection and sacrifice before the escape.

The Watchers – Merc & Miss Addie

Duet; generational trauma, queer love, and chosen family.

I Choose This – Jules

Empowering solo, agency and self-determination.

I Carried the Sound – Miss Addie

Gospel-tinged solo of survival and finding one's voice after a life of silence

The Vow – Rome & Jules

Intimate duet; secret wedding and chosen commitment.

Inside (Reprise II) – Ensemble

Echoes Jules' journey now shared by her chosen family.

All that I Am – Merc

Silky smooth lament of never being the one chosen

Last Call – Rome

Solo; rage, grief, and a vow to remember Merc.

Come to the Speakeasy (Reprise) – Jules & Ensemble

Haunted callback; joy corrupted by tragedy.

Somewhere in the Smoke – Rome & Jules

Final duet; love, death, and legacy.

Two Different Worlds (Reprise II) – Ensemble

Final a cappella hymn; memory, resistance, and unresolved hope.

The Watchers (Reprise) – Miss Addie

Final show beat, soft but defiant

Lyric Spotlight: Voice of the Show

These hand-selected lyrics offer a glimpse into the emotional, political, and poetic core of Speakeasy. Each moment captures a key voice or theme, from liberation to loss, from rage to resilience.

"Come to the Speakeasy" – Ensemble

Come to the speakeasy —
No names, no rules, no fear, no shame.
Where saints and sinners toast the same.
Come find the music, drown out the blame,
Just knock three times... forget your name.

**Iconic and mysterious, this lyric sets the tone of the show—
a world outside law, shame, and silence.**

"Something's Brewing" – Jules

If life is sin,
then call me cursed.
I want a sip...
I want the thirst.
Something brewing, so much to learn
But I won't boil... For this I'll burn.

A defiant 'I Want' song for a modern heroine on the edge of discovery.

"Family Business" – Marco

Soft boys bruise where knives won't miss —
And dreams don't buy a life like this.
Love? It don't pour profits, boy.
Poems? Sweet words? This life destroys.

A brutal, patriarchal worldview delivered with rhythmic bite.

Lyric Spotlight: Voice of the Show

"Cracked Bottles, Broken Hearts" – Priest Piano Player Solo

I watched from pews, I mouthed their prayer,
But found no God or mercy there.
It took this place — all flash and sound —
To show me where the holy's found.

**Spiritual reclamation through joy and defiance.
A thesis line for the show's subversive queer soul.**

"I Choose This" – Jules

I choose this — the fire, the risk,
The story told in hands and lips.
I choose the heat, the sound, the skin —
The world that burns to let me in.
I choose the truth that shakes the pew...
Finally, I get to choose what's true.

This is the show's soul cry — a declaration of joy, body, and belonging.

"The Watchers" – Merc & Miss Addie

We loved in silence, loved in shame,
And watched it die without a name.
So let them run, let them rise,
Let love outshine this world of lies.
We'll bear the weight, we'll play our part,
We watched, we stayed... to guide their heart.

**A poetic portrait of queer elders holding space for the next generation.
Haunting and hopeful.**

Lyric Spotlight: Voice of the Show

"Last Call" – Rome

SO LAST CALL! For the ones who tried!
LAST CALL! For the dream denied!
Raise one for the dreamers life betrayed,
For bootlegged love and hearts mislaid.
This night is cursed. This war is mine.
They killed you, Merc... my rage will shine.

**Grief-fueled fury that becomes revolutionary.
A tragic, galvanizing showstopper.**

"Inside (Reprise II)" – Ensemble

Inside... we raise the names we lost.
Inside... we pay what joy has cost.
Inside... we bend but we don't break —
Inside... we rise right through the ache.

A spiritual anthem of chosen family and survival.

"Two Different Worlds (Reprise II)" – Miss Addie & Ensemble

Two different worlds, one sacred sound,
Where love's the only law they found.
They'll call it wrong; they'll call it lost,
But joy like this is worth the cost.

Final thesis of the show. Love defiant, radiant, and paid in full.

Character Breakdown

Jules “Jules” Delaney: 19, raised in a rigid religious household. Brave, questioning, and awakening to her own voice.

Rome “Rome” Moretti: 20–21, poetic bootlegger’s son who dreams beyond crime and violence.

Merc (Mercutio DeLuca): Mid–20s, Rome’s queer best friend, dashing, street-smart, deeply loyal and quietly in love. Sharp, protective, with a tragic heart.

Miss Addie (Addie): 50s, Jules’ housekeeper. A Black queer woman with deep wisdom and secret revolutionary spirit.

Marco Moretti: 40s–50s, Rome’s father and a ruthless bootlegging kingpin, hardened by violence and empire-building.

Miriam Delaney: 40s–50s, Jules’s mother. A devout, cold, and fervent temperance activist who values propriety over connection.

Sgt. Thomas Delaney: 40s–50s, Jules’s father. A rigid, authoritative police officer who sees the world in black and white, unable to separate love from law.

Officer Ty O’Hara: 20s, a young, closeted cop who aids Merc and Rome, then is the catalyst for tragedy. Minor role with major impact.

Priest: 20s–30s, secretly plays piano at the Velvet Boot, performs Rome and Jules’s wedding in secret. Soft-spoken and supportive.

Ensemble: Multi-role performers portraying flappers, dancers, bootleggers, bar patrons, protestors, and police. The ensemble represents the many communities silenced during the Prohibition era: queer, BIPOC, poor, and working class.

Key Character Arcs

***Note on Character Names:** Throughout the libretto, shifts between names like “Romeo” and “Rome” or “Juliet” and “Jules” are intentional — narrative cues that reveal how a character is being seen. “Romeo” and “Juliet” appear when others project roles, ideals, or control onto them. “Rome” and “Jules” reflect selfhood, intimacy, and chosen identity.*

These naming shifts mirror the arc of the story itself: from performance to truth, from what is expected... to what is real.

JULES (JULIET): From sheltered obedience to fearless rebellion, Jules transforms from a girl who’s been told what to believe into a woman who chooses for herself. Her arc traces a rising sense of agency, as she challenges her family, unlearns inherited dogma, and claims her identity. Jules becomes not just a lover, but a strategist, taking action to escape a legacy of repression. She dies not defeated, but fully self-defined — an emblem of courage and change.

ROME (ROMEO): A reluctant bootlegger with a poet’s heart, Rome begins quietly resisting the violence and legacy of his father’s empire. His arc is one of awakening: from passive dreamer to active defier of systems. Love doesn’t rescue him — it activates him. Rome’s transformation is crystallized in his final vow, where sacrifice becomes an act of authorship. He dies not as his father’s son, but as the man he chose to be.

MERC: The show’s emotional backbone, Merc is a queer protector whose strength masks a tender, unspoken truth — he’s in love with his best friend Rome. Witty and wise, he mentors the lovers, helps them escape, and gives his life so they can have the chance he never did. Merc’s death is not just tragic; it is sacred. His legacy reverberates through the finale, a reminder that unseen love still reshapes the world.

MISS ADDIE: A Black, queer housekeeper who’s spent her life surviving in silence, Miss Addie begins as a caretaker—but becomes the conscience of the show. She protects Jules like a daughter while navigating a world where her truth has always been dangerous. In the end, Addie claims her voice. She becomes the torchbearer of memory, lighting the final candle in the show’s closing vigil and anchoring the story in legacy, resistance, and hard-earned grace. She is the keeper of memory and defiance — and the show’s final narrator of truth.

Key Character Arcs

Miriam & Sgt. Delaney: Once the moral gatekeepers of their world, Miriam and Sgt. Delaney cling to righteousness until it costs them their daughter. Their arc is not one of redemption, but of realization. When Jules dies, they are left with only silence — facing the truth that their ideology destroyed what they loved most. They represent the systems Jules and Rome fought to escape: rigid, repressive, and unable to change in time.

Marco Moretti: A patriarch forged in violence, Marco clings to control under the guise of protection. He sees vulnerability — especially love — as weakness and trains his son to survive, not dream. But as Rome chooses freedom over loyalty, Marco unravels. His arc ends not with dominance, but desperation. In a final confrontation, he kills the very future he thought he was safeguarding. Marco is the cautionary shadow of the show: what happens when power matters more than people.

Officer Ty O'Hara

A closeted young officer torn between duty and desire, Ty embodies the crack in a system built on silence. His bond with Merc is laced with history, longing, and everything left unsaid. As pressure mounts, he becomes a man split in two — protecting a law that condemns who he is, and a love he can't name. In a confrontation during Merc's bootlegging run, he makes the fatal mistake of pulling the trigger. The tragedy: he becomes the killer of the one man who saw him clearly. Ty's arc is the cost of silence—a warning and a wound.

The Velvet Boot (The Speakeasy)

More than a setting, the Velvet Boot is a living force — part sanctuary, part battleground. It begins as an escape: velvet curtains, shadowed corners, whispered truths. But as the story unfolds, it becomes a crucible for transformation — where love blooms, secrets unravel, and the oppressed reclaim their voice. The Velvet Boot reflects those who fill it: fluid, fierce, and always in danger. Even when raided and wrecked, it resurrects in song. By the finale, it's both tomb and temple — a reminder that queer spaces, even in ruin, echo in power and impact forever.

Staging the World of *Speakeasy*

The world of *Speakeasy* is both dreamscape and grit — a place where past and present blur. Staging should reflect the show’s central tension: joy within danger, softness inside steel.

Visual Palette:

- Art Deco shadows and golden light
- Smoke curling through spotlight beams
- Silhouettes, brass, and velvet
- Brick and bourbon, sequins and stained glass

Staging Language:

- The Velvet Boot is a living character — intimate, breathing, changeable
- Ensemble functions as a Greek chorus, memory, and community — always watching
- Ghostlight imagery threads throughout — candles, spotlights, mirrors
- Movement should echo jazz: syncopated, improvisational, sensual, defiant
- Lighting must shape mood more than setting: color tells story as much as props

Inspirational Reference Points:

- *Hadestown* – mythic, elemental staging in a contained world
- *Natasha, Pierre...* – immersive world where audience and cast blur
- *Spring Awakening* – minimalism with emotional maximalism
- *Cabaret* – performative intimacy & threat just beneath glamor

Designers Should Consider:

- Found-object aesthetic: crates, broken mirrors, risers made of barrels
- Rehearsal room flexibility: chairs and shadows can become the city
- Costumes that layer 1920s reality with a queer, modern flourish
- Use of live band onstage or partially visible for immersion

About the Creator

Waymon Hudson (Book, Lyrics, and Music)

Waymon Hudson is a multidisciplinary artist, lyricist, and activist whose work centers queer identity, resistance, and radical belonging. With a background in performance and a career leading high-impact communications campaigns, he brings a unique blend of storytelling, political urgency, and emotional depth to the stage.

A longtime advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and narrative equity, Waymon's work reclaims space for voices too often erased. *Speakeasy* is his full-length musical debut — a culmination of his passions for protest, poetry, and Broadway. His writing pulses with rhythm, rebellion, and reverence, honoring both classic musical tradition and bold, contemporary truth.

