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They Call Me Q!

July 19, 2013 by Ryan Taylor [Leave a Comment](#)

They Call Me Q! ranks among the very best of a large and varied crowd of autobiographical solo shows I've seen over eight years of Capital Fringing.

The keys to Q's superiority in a crowded genre? Specificity and perspective. Gifted with a natural talent for accents and mimicry, Qurrat Ann Kadwani has seemingly absorbed the multitudes of cultures and personalities she has been surrounded with in her homes both original and current. Kadwani warmly invites the audience to share the stories of her youth and family distilled through her keen insight and delivered with magnetic charm. I strongly encourage you to accept her kind invitation.



[Click for tickets to They Call Me Q](#)

Kadwani's story is a sometimes-paen-sometimes-lament on the immigrant experience. Born to Muslim parents in India, Kadwani's family moved to the Bronx when she was a child. Kadwani's monologue is an autobiography in the fullest sense, opening with her birth and seeming to stretch right up to her closing invitation for the audience to join her outside for post-show chit-chat.



They Call Me Q

at Qurrat Ann Kadwani

60 minutes

at Gearbox

1021 7th Street NW 3rd Floor

Washington, DC, 20001

[Details and tickets](#)

Over the course of an hour we will hear stories of bullies confronted, pilgrimages performed, otherness challenged and many a mispronunciation of "Qurrat". Thematically much of it concerns the internal conflict of young immigrant unsure of just how much she can melt into the pot without losing a unique identity or alienating the family she loves. This reviewer felt the strange patriotism borne of hearing a unique perspective on the privileges and challenges the American experience offers to those who choose it willingly and with clear eyes.

The structure of the show is of the generic “trials-and-tribulations-of-a-struggling-young-artist” autobiography but Kadwani’s level of technique and the uniqueness of cultural perspective elevate the material. Wringing every drop of stagecraft out of the *spartan* Gearbox space, Kadwani seamlessly moves between characters with costume changes as smooth and simple as twist of a scarf. It’s never less than effective and a sign that she trusts her audience to keep up with the transitions in perspective with needless or ostentatious trickery.

Kadwani’s mouth-watering descriptions of her mother’s traditional Indian cooking will have you craving a proper biryani. The night ends not in so much a climax as an epilogue. Appropriate given that Kadwani’s story continues on into a future excitingly unseen.

Kadwani’s time among us is sadly, vanishingly brief. The final two of her three-performance run are both the weekend of July 20th. Do yourself a favor and catch Q while you can.

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About Ryan Taylor

Ryan Taylor is Artistic Director of The Washington Rogues. He’s been Fringing since the festival began and has the battle scars and increased tolerance to extreme heat to submit as evidence. Along with four Fringe shows for the Rogues, Ryan has produced and directed for companies including Arena Stage, Rorschach, The Source Festival, Solas Nua, and most recently the DC Queer Theater Festival. Along with previous assignments for DCTS, Ryan has also done some feature writin’ and reviewin’ for the Washington City Paper, and once portrayed the embodiment of Reverend Run’s Twitter account in a Washington Post web-series.

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