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Dramatic Publishing

Laurie Brooks'

ALL of US

A powerful new play that reveals
the inner lives of LGBT teenagers and asks
"ALL of US" to stand up for their rights.



Bring It!

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Perfect for any organization that cares about
fighting discrimination.

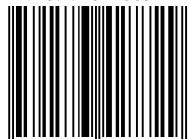
ALL of US

Drama. By Laurie Brooks. Cast: 5m., 5w., 1 either gender. *May be expanded.* How do we combat the current epidemic of prejudice and bullying of gay high-school students? One way is to use the power of storytelling to humanize the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender teens. Designed to be performed by and for high-school students, *ALL of US* raises awareness of the discrimination, hatred and violence LGBT students face in their schools and communities. From cities, small towns, suburbs and rural areas, an ensemble of gay teens reveal their stories and the heartbreaking consequences of being marked as different. Nick, from a southern religious family, is sent to straight camp to turn him into an “ex-gay.” Jess, a tomboy looking for love, finds it in an unexpected ally. Justin, from a wealthy family in New York, discovers another America and begins a grassroots fight for gay rights. Shea ends up on the streets; Chris, a transgender female to male, searches in vain for someone like her; and Frank, the lovable gay boy, falls through the cracks. These stories navigate the treacherous world of being gay in high school—growing up and coming out—coping with love, hate, violence and hope—as they reveal the inner lives of LGBT teenagers and ask “ALL of US” to stand up for their rights. Simple to produce, with minimal technical requirements, this powerful play is perfect for any school or organization that cares about fighting discrimination. *Bare stage with seating. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: AF2.*

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ALL OF US

By
LAURIE BROOKS



Dramatic Publishing

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For Beck

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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All of Us was commissioned by Dramatic Publishing and premiered July 25, 2011, at the Kansas City Fringe Festival produced by the Coterie Theatre's School for Theatre Exploration. Jeff Church, Producing Artistic Director; Joette Pelster, Executive Director; Meghann Henry, Education Director.

The Ensemble
(In Alphabetical Order)

Madison Cydney Carl
Kid Evan Michael Haas
Shea Sarah Jordan
Marshall Charlie Meredith
Allie. Kendall Ryan
Jess. Meredith Shea
Chris Rachel Shelby
Nick. Alex Stompoly
Justin Bradley Turner
Tyler Ian Vonfange
Frank. Kyle Wallen

Artistic and Production Company

Directors. Jeff Church, Meghann Henry
Movement Sequences Laurie Brooks, Meghann Henry
Step Choreographers Rufus Burns, Laurie Brooks
Light Designer/Operator Jayson Chandley
Composer/Sound Designer/Operator Eric Wallen
Stage Manager Jessie Greenfield
Technical Director (Met) Warren Deckert
Technical Director (Coterie) Scott Hobart

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ALL OF US

CHARACTERS

- KID . . . hidden in a hoodie, either gender, must be able to
perform spoken word/rap
- MARSHALL clean-cut, soft-spoken, in the closet,
from Colorado Springs, Colo.
- ALLIE loyal, vulnerable, from Portland, Ore.
- JESS. tomboy, from Portland, Ore.
- MADISON. funky clothes, wild hair, from suburbs of
Columbus, Ohio
- FRANK feminine, vulnerable, from suburbs of
Columbus, Ohio
- TYLER . . . muscled-up, from a farm near Davenport, Iowa
- NICK. . . . religious, slight Southern accent, from Alabama
- JUSTIN preppy, super smart and knows it,
from New York City
- CHRIS. transgender, female to male, physically still a
girl but looks like a guy
- SHEA lesbian femme girl, left Bellingham, Wash.,
for Seattle

ABOUT THE PLAY

This play is largely presentational with a great deal of direct address. It is best played as close to the audience as possible so that there is little space between the audience and the players to better facilitate the ending. The play is meant to be performed on a bare stage except for six cubes on the periphery of the space that can be moved to serve various uses, including as drumming devices to add distinctive rhythms in the introduction of each fragment. The acting company functions both as an ensemble and individual characters in the stories. Kid wears a hoodie that hides his face and does not take part in the ensemble action. Initially, Kid views the Ensemble with disdain but slowly, as he listens to their stories, he begins to care. The entire cast remains on stage for the duration of the performance. The play moves freely in and out of real time and past tense. Sections of Ensemble dialogue are intended to be divided so that the audience hears both single and multiple Ensemble voices (see playwright's notes at end of script).

Ensemble Members taking on smaller, drop-in roles may be backlit. This denotes characters from the past and avoids confusion with each actor's primary character.

During rehearsals the cast builds a series of tableaux that represent concepts in the play. Instructions for tableau building are included at the back of the text. A series of energetic but simple movement sequences are also built in the tradition of stomp dancing, a style that uses hand/body clapping and foot stomping to express emotion. Also included is a template of the division of Ensemble dialogue to serve as a guideline.

ALL OF US

IN THE DARK: *We hear the sound of the ENSEMBLE snapping their fingers. KID sits alone, apart from the others.*

AS LIGHTS RISE: *ENSEMBLE begin clapping a rhythm. The clapping escalates until an ENSEMBLE MEMBER shouts, “Bring it! 2-3-4-” ENSEMBLE jumps in place, then breaks out into the space, banging a rhythm on cubes, body slapping, clapping and stomping in a kind of furious dance. Vocal sounds add to the energy, such as “Oo,” and “ah,” and other energetic, positive expressions, until an ENSEMBLE MEMBER shouts, “Bring it —2-3-4-5-6-7-8,” as ENSEMBLE takes positions around the space.*

ENSEMBLE *(to the audience).*

I am queer
I am gay
lesbian
bisexual
transgender
questioning
I don't know what I am.
I am out of the closet.

In your face
Everywhere you look.
Here is my neutral self.
The real me is hiding...somewhere.
I'm afraid someone will find out.
Then everyone will hate me.
Identity politics suck.
I will not be defined by my sexuality.
I am comfortable with who I am.
I am so much more than gay.
I am a mystery.
With me, what you see is what you get.
I look like my Uncle Harold.

(ENSEMBLE laughs. As they speak the following lines, the ENSEMBLE moves, one by one, to form a tableau of friendship.)

ENSEMBLE.

Don't call me homosexual.
I prefer the word queer because
it's just one syllable.
I am who I am so just shut up about it!
I am sad
angry
proud
lonely
If you cut me, I bleed.
If you call me names, it hurts.
I am a person.
I am a whole lot like you.
These stories are true.

They might even be familiar.
Maybe they happened to your
brother,
sister,
cousin,
friend
or maybe you.
They are a part of all of us,
All of us.

(Tableau complete.)

JESS *(indicating KID)*. Not all of us.

TYLER. Hey, Kid.

KID. What do you want?

JESS. You wanna join us?

KID. Leave me alone.

JESS. Sor-ry. It's just kinda weird that you're up here.

MARSHALL. Yeah. It's like you're with us, but you're not with us, if you catch my drift.

(Note: KID's rants throughout the play are meant to be delivered in spoken-word style without music. He addresses these rants to the audience and/or ENSEMBLE in a kind of street performance.)

KID. Out on the streets, alone in the
dark/ sleeping in the park, holdin'
on to my heart/ Found a half a can
a Coke and a few lousy smokes/ then
lost myself inside a cheap bag a
dope/ Will I ever win?/ A falsified

grin pasted hard on my face?/ I
doubt it and I'll shout it/ Hell, I
can do without it/ I don't need
you, I don't trust you/ I dare you
to care/ Look around, I'll be gone/
Don't even try to find me/ I'll
flee, I guarantee/ You disagree?/ I
see you/ I see you staring at
me/ Leave me alone, take your little
bitty pity/ in this city nobody
cares anyway/ I found that out the
hard way, baby/ So keep your
precious sob stories all to
yourself/ Write it in a book and
stash it high on the shelf/ I don't
wanna hear it, it's nothin' but
bullshit/ take your tight-knit pals
and split. Go far.

(ENSEMBLE is impressed with KID's performance skills.)

ALLIE. Wow. That was awesome.

JUSTIN. Sorry you've had a rough time, man.

KID. Like you care.

JUSTIN. I said I was sorry.

KID. Talk's cheap.

TYLER. Just leave him alone.

(KID turns his back on the ENSEMBLE.)

NICK. First Fragments!

ENSEMBLE (*overlapping voices*).

Here we go!

Freshman year.

Does my hair look all right?

(ENSEMBLE explodes into the space and forms tableau of family photo. The ENSEMBLE gives the audience a huge, fake smile and we hear the click of a camera.)

FRANK. Growing up. Coming out.

ENSEMBLE. ...or not.

(As each ENSEMBLE MEMBER speaks, he/she moves out of the tableau into the space.)

ENSEMBLE.

To be or not to be?

That's the question.

I want to come out.

I want to stop hiding.

pretending,

lying.

But how can I tell my parents?

My friends?

My brother?

My girlfriend?

Maybe they'll be angry.

Maybe they'll understand.

Maybe they already know.

I'm afraid of the hatred,

the abuse,

the stares,

the taunts,
Afraid no one will love me,
Afraid to be alone.

NICK. I was fourteen when I figured out I was gay. My first crush hit me like a bolt of lightning. And I thought, oh, crap, this is not going to go over well with my parents.

JESS. I was sweet sixteen and in love with Allie. My mother said it was disgusting. Then she started screaming and crying.

MARSHALL. I probably knew at age ten or eleven. But I couldn't admit it to myself. I'm still not out.

NICK. What are you waiting for?

MARSHALL. I'm not ready yet, okay?

CHRIS. Honey, I've known since I was eight, nine years old.

FRANK. I got you beat. I was three or four and I already knew that I was attracted to men.

SHEA. What? You didn't know at three or four. You can't even remember back that far.

FRANK. How do you know what I can remember? Are you me?

JUSTIN. Developmentally, you weren't capable of knowing something that sophisticated at three years old.

FRANK. I was advanced for my age.

(ENSEMBLE laughs. MARSHALL takes the stage.)

MARSHALL. I'm the quarterback on the football team and I star in the school musicals. I sing, I dance, I act, I get sacked. I do it all.

ALLIE. That's Marshall from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Popular? You could say that.

MARSHALL. Girls call me, IM me, even sext me. Cool, beautiful, popular girls. They just don't interest me. As friends, sure, but other than that, not so much. But I'm the quarterback. That comes with expectations. I thought if I could make myself feel something for those girls, it'd make my life easier. So I'm dating Amy.

(AMY appears, backlit.)

AMY. Hey, hot stuff.

MARSHALL. We have fun. But she keeps dropping these hints that she wants our relationship to be more...physical.

(ENSEMBLE groans. AMY slides her arms around MARSHALL and kisses him. He does not enjoy it.)

AMY. What's wrong? I thought you liked me.

MARSHALL. I do. I do.

AMY. Then how come you don't act like it?

MARSHALL. I morph Amy into Justin Bieber...with his old hairdo. *(He kisses her. Kiss ends, he looks at her, sees she is not Justin Bieber. To audience:)* Nope. Nothing.

(AMY drapes herself on MARSHALL.)

AMY. I love you, Marshall.

(MARSHALL pushes AMY away. AMY fades.)

MARSHALL. I love you, too.

(ENSEMBLE reacts with disbelief.)

MARSHALL. It's not a lie, okay? I love her like a friend.

And besides, what else can I say?

FRANK. Amy, I'm gay.

(ENSEMBLE laughs.)

ALLIE. So Marshall turned to the one person he thought would understand. His mom.

(MARSHALL'S MOM appears, backlit. ENSEMBLE snickers.)

MARSHALL. Don't laugh. A boy's best friend is his mother, right? *(To MOM.)* Uh, Mom, got a minute?

MARSHALL'S MOM. For you, always.

MARSHALL. I'm kind of freakin' out here.

MARSHALL'S MOM. What's the problem, honey? Come tell me all about it.

MARSHALL. Well, I've been worried, you know? It's probably stupid...but... *(Pause. Deep breath.)* Do you think I'm gay?

(MOM gives audience a look, hesitates.)

MARSHALL. Wait. Don't answer. See, I've been kissing Amy, but I don't feel anything. The guys keep asking what me and Amy are doing, you know, and well, we're not doing anything.

MARSHALL'S MOM. Ooohhh. That's good, honey. You've got plenty of time for all that after you're married.

MARSHALL. You don't think I might be gay? *(To audience.)* Here's where I'm hoping she'll help me out. I change her into Bette Midler.

(MARSHALL'S MOM becomes Bette Midler.)

MARSHALL'S MOM *(imitating Bette Midler)*. Of course you're gay, darling! Fantastic! We'll have so much fun on cruises!

MARSHALL. But what she really says is...

MARSHALL'S MOM. Gay? Certainly not. Don't worry, sweetie. You're my red-blooded All-American boy.

(ENSEMBLE boos softly. MARSHALL'S MOM, clueless, fades.)

MARSHALL. I went deeper inside the closet.

(JUSTIN takes the stage.)

JUSTIN. My mom knew I was gay from the beginning. She didn't have to be a rocket scientist to figure it out.

FRANK. That's Justin from New York City, the Big Apple. Hello, sweet cakes!

JUSTIN. I grew up playing with my sister's Barbies, dressing and undressing them, styling their hair. Hell, I wanted to BE Barbie. And, eat your hearts out, boys, I went to an all-male private high school. It was a smorgasbord. I had gay friends and straight friends and girl-

friends. No one was threatened by my sexuality. One thing I knew for sure. I'd never leave New York where being gay was no big deal.

TYLER. Well, congratulations on your perfect life. (*He joins JUSTIN.*)

CHRIS. That's Tyler from rural Iowa. And when I say rural I mean the middle of nowhere.

TYLER (*to JUSTIN*). Far as I knew, New York was some place you read about in books. And I was too busy to read what with farm chores and all. I did my best to be like my dad wanted me to be, decent grades at school, church every Sunday and a big helping of respect for my parents' way of life. When I was sixteen, I drove the truck over to Iowa City and bought me some magazines. I won't go into the particulars. Let's just say they weren't pictures of girls. Then one night my little brother walked in my room without knocking and well... My dad was waiting for me the next morning. He took his belt to me until he got tired of it, then hauled out the barbecue and burned the magazines in the front yard.

(SHEA takes focus.)

SHEA. By the time I turned fifteen, I was angry at the whole world. Everybody around me was a target.

MADISON. That's Shea from Bellingham, Washington. She didn't give a rat's ass about anybody.

SHEA. I got in some kind of fight every week. After a bunch of girls beat the shit out of me, I took to hiding out. I liked it so much I started skipping school with my

friend, K.C. She'd call school for me and I'd call for her.

(K.C. comes forward, backlit. During the following phone call, K.C. and ENSEMBLE MEMBERS try hard not to laugh, to varying degrees of success.)

K.C. Hello, this is Shea's mother. I'm sorry, Shea won't be in school today. She's come down with another cold. Bye. *(She fades.)*

SHEA. We'd hang out in the woods just the two of us. We got caught, of course. The "rents" locked me in my room. "You're not our daughter," they said. "We don't even know you." I jumped out my second-story bedroom window and ran to K.C.'s house. We headed for Seattle and freedom.

(CHRIS jumps up on a cube.)

CHRIS. I know what you're thinking, is that a dude or a girl? Why should you be different from anybody else? I'm Chris, the token trans, female to male. *(He takes a bow.)* Go ahead, take a good look. I'm used to it. Imagine for a minute that you wake up one morning and you're trapped in the body of the most beautiful person in the world. Brilliant, right? Now imagine that you wake up the next morning and you're trapped in the wrong body and it's not that beautiful. So what, you say? I'll tell you what. Imagine you're a guy and you start growing breasts. Think about that nightmare. And you can't wake up from it.