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Lift Every Voice

(Online Theatre Edition)

By

G. RILEY MILLS and PRINCE ROC

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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Lift Every Voice (Online Theatre Edition) was first presented by Collaboraction Theatre Company as a virtual production on Aug. 28, 2020.

CAST:

RICKY TANG.....Gavin D. Pak
TOM BANKSJack Lancaster
ESTRELLA “STAR” RUIZ..... Alexa Maria Huerta
JAMES WILSON Robert Hunter Bry
GRACE GARRETT..... Cayla Leigh Jones
AMY LANGFORD..... Meredith Rupp

PRODUCTION:

Director RORY JOBST
Casting CATHERINE MILLER
Production Manager..... CAITLIN BODY
Sound Design SARAH ESPINOZA
Video Effects.....LIVUI PASARE
Editor..... ALEX GROESCH
Producing Director..... SARAH SWIFT
Executive Producer ANTHONY MOSELEY
Executive ProducerDR. MARCUS ROBINSON

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CHARACTERS

RICKY TANG: 17.

TOM BANKS: 17.

ESTRELLA “STAR” RUIZ: 17.

JAMES WILSON: 17.

GRACE GARRETT: 17.

AMY LANGFORD: 17.

SETTING: The action of the play takes place on a virtual call during a student council meeting at an elite public high school in Chicago.

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(Over the opening credits, “The Star-Spangled Banner” is heard. After a few bars, it starts to become distorted and strange, eventually morphing into an instrumental version of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” After a few bars, it fades out.

Opening credits end.

Lights rise on a virtual meeting. It is the end of the school day. TOM BANKS pops up on screen, looking around, confused.)

TOM. Hello? Anyone? What time does this thing start anyway?

(RICKY TANG appears on screen.)

RICKY. Bro.

TOM. Dude.

RICKY. I’ve been waiting to talk to you about this all day. You see it?

TOM. Oh, I saw it.

RICKY. Crazy.

TOM. I know, man. I’ve never seen people so upset.

RICKY. What did Amy say?

TOM. Haven’t talked to her.

RICKY. Really?

TOM. Not yet.

RICKY. She didn’t message you after it all went down?

TOM. Bro, she might get expelled.

RICKY. Come on, man. Who we talking about here? Amy Langford isn't getting expelled. Not over a Snapchat.

TOM. Who sent it to you?

RICKY. Like five different people. One who doesn't even go to our school.

TOM. When I first saw it, I thought, "No way Amy would put something like that out on social media."

RICKY. And yet she did.

TOM. Think Grace has seen it?

RICKY. I hope not for Amy's sake. Otherwise white girl gonna get her butt kicked.

TOM (*after a pause*). Was it really that bad though?

RICKY. Amy's message? Dude.

TOM. She was just expressing an opinion.

RICKY. You can't post something like that, bro. That thing went viral in the span of an hour.

TOM. In calculus today, we didn't even talk about calculus. We spent the whole class trying to figure out what Amy was trying to say.

RICKY. I'm pretty sure I know exactly what she was trying to say.

TOM. Hashtag: All lives matter.

(*ESTRELLA RUIZ appears on screen.*)

TOM (*cont'd*). Hey, Star.

ESTRELLA. Did you guys see it?

TOM. Amy's handiwork?

RICKY. I think everybody's seen it by now.

ESTRELLA. Why would she post something like that?

TOM. Amy didn't post it. She put it on her private story and Chloe took a screenshot.

ESTRELLA. Wait, so Chloe posted it?

TOM. Blasted it out to half the student body.

RICKY. Classic Chloe.

ESTRELLA. Has Grace seen it?

RICKY. I'm pretty sure we would've heard if Grace had seen it.

TOM. You think they'll show up for this meeting?

ESTRELLA. Who?

TOM. Amy and Grace.

RICKY. Class president and vice president, they better.

TOM. This might be the first student council meeting I don't sleep through.

ESTRELLA. I heard there was a death threat against her.

TOM. Who?

ESTRELLA. Amy. Apparently someone Zoom-bombed A-PUSH today saying some stupid crazy stuff.

TOM. Geez.

RICKY. It wasn't a death threat. It was just someone with their camera off saying Amy was going to "get what's coming to her."

TOM. Brooks probably regrets playing that song now, all the drama it caused. Kind of weird forcing us to listen to a song over Zoom.

ESTRELLA. I'd never heard it before, had you?

RICKY. It's called "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

TOM. Hey! Look at Mr. Ricky-pedia here.

RICKY. It was a poem first and then somebody put it to music around 1900. Over time, it became known as the "Negro" national anthem.

TOM. Check this kid out. He's like a little asthmatic Einstein.

I'm so proud of you.

RICKY (*smiling*). Shut up.

TOM. I bet you graduate, what do they call it ... su-mana kuma-tada?

RICKY. Summa cum laude?

TOM. Yeah. That.

RICKY. You are so dumb. How did you even get into this school?

TOM. I don't know. Ask your mom.

RICKY. So immature. I've got to pee.

(He exits, turning his camera off.)

ESTRELLA. Where is everyone?

TOM. Late.

ESTRELLA. As usual.

TOM. So, Star. You got a date for prom yet?

ESTRELLA. You actually think there's going to be a prom?

TOM. Could happen. Anyway, I was thinking of asking you.

ESTRELLA. You already asked me. Twice.

TOM. Third time's the charm.

ESTRELLA. Or three strikes you're out.

TOM. If you want me to do a big promposal type thing I can probably hook that up. My uncle works for WGN. Radio.

ESTRELLA. You're funny. But definitely not.

TOM. I'll take that as a solid maybe.

(RICKY appears again.)

RICKY. What did I miss?

ESTRELLA. Tom was just—

TOM (*interrupting*). Nothing. You didn't miss anything.

(Another box pops up, camera off.)

ESTRELLA. Someone's joined.

TOM. Who is it?

(The camera turns on revealing JAMES WILSON. They all breathe a sigh of relief.)

JAMES. What up, nerds?

(They all stare at him waiting for a reaction.)

JAMES (*cont'd*). What?

ESTRELLA. You didn't see it?

JAMES. See what?

RICKY. Amy's Snapchat.

JAMES. I skipped today, had to go get a new phone. What happened?

ESTRELLA. Check the chat.

(She sends him a message. JAMES reads it.)

JAMES. Oh, wow. Amy wrote that?

TOM. Yup.

JAMES. Why would she write that?

RICKY. She was mad that Brooks played the Black national anthem before classes today.

JAMES. What's the Black national anthem?

TOM. Something Brooks probably found on the internet. You know him.