Everybody’s Talking about Jamie

An Experience L.A. Event

Thurs., February 17, 2022
The Ahmanson Theatre, Los Angeles

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Everybody’s Talking about Jamie is a new, award-winning musical inspired by a true story.
- It was composed by Dan Gillespie Sells, the lead singer-songwriter of the UK rock band The Feeling, with book and lyrics by Tom MacRae.

“Not everybody wants to be a teenage drag queen... But, people do want to be respected for who they are. I think it’s just the idea that if you apply yourself in a positive way, you can be whoever you want to be.”—Jamie Campbell to the BBC
EVERYBODY’S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE

Everybody’s Talking about Jamie is a hit musical inspired by the true story of Jamie Campbell, a gay British teenager whose school forbade him from wearing a dress to prom. The show premiered at the Crucible Theatre on London’s West End in 2017. The production won three WhatsOnStage Awards and was nominated for five Olivier Awards.

The composer, Dan Gillespie Sells, is best known as the lead singer-songwriter of the rock group The Feeling. He’s cited Freddie Mercury and Neil Young as influences.

Tom MacRae, who wrote the book and lyrics, is an English TV writer, playwright, screenwriter, and lyricist. He’s the creator of the British sitcom Threesome (2011–12).

THE REAL JAMIE

Jamie Campbell’s true story was told in the BBC Three documentary Drag Queen at 16.

“[B]ullying did grind me down, but drag did the opposite. It provided me with confidence and helped shield some of my vulnerability,” Jamie later told the BBC.

A FEW OTHER MUSICALS WITH LGBTQ+ PROTAGONISTS

- Avenue Q (2003)
- Falsettos (1992)
- Fun Home (2013)
- Hedwig and the Angry Inch (1998)
- La Cage aux Folles (1983)
- The Prom (2016)
- Rent (1996)

WEST END THEATRE

London’s West End is considered, alongside Broadway, as the site of the top mainstream, commercial English-language theatre. There are currently 38 theatres in the West End district, the oldest of which dates back to 1663.

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

The nonprofit Center Theatre Group is one of the largest theatre companies in the United States, offering year-round programming at the Mark Taper Forum, the Ahmanson Theatre, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre. The company has been producing theatre for more than 50 years, and regularly programs award-winning revivals as well as world premieres.

THE AHMANSON THEATRE

The Ahmanson Theatre opened in 1967. The building is named for Caroline Leonetti Ahmanson, a philanthropist and the wife of Howard F. Ahmanson, Sr., who founded the insurance and savings and loan company H. F. Ahmanson and Co. The venue underwent a major renovation in 1994.

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to be bullied than straight cis youth in U.S. high schools, according to the CDC. The 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance report found that 43 percent of U.S. transgender youth had been bullied on school property, compared to 18 percent of cisgender youth; 29 percent of gay or lesbian youth and 31 percent of bisexual youth reported having been bullied on school property, compared to 17 percent of straight youth.
FOR FURTHER REFLECTION
- Jamie Campbell has said, “Drag is an extension of your personality but it’s also not the ‘regular’ you. So, it was a way of getting those things out that I wouldn’t do as my ‘normal’ self.”
- Do you relate to drag in this way? Or are there other ways that you are able to express things that your “regular” self might not?
- What do you think motivates the people who tried to silence, bully, or shame Jamie?
- What motivates the people who supported Jamie?
- How do you think this story would be different if it happened 20 years ago? Or 20 years from now?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:
- Other productions and programs presented by Center Theatre Group | centertheatregroup.org
- The documentary Jamie: Drag Queen at 16 Available on Prime Video
- The Hollywood Pantages Theatre | broadwayinhollywood.com
- Celebration Theatre | celebrationtheatre.org
- OUTFEST | outfest.org
- Volunteer opportunities and resources with the Los Angeles LGBT Center | laigbtcenter.org
- Programs and resources with REACH LA | reachla.info
- Upcoming Visions and Voices events:
  - 3/3: Archival Intimacies: Queering South/east Asian Diasporas
  - 4/1: Belonging as Survival: Creativity, Activism, and Community
  - 4/21 AND 22: Ku’er Worlds: Queering Chinese American Identities in Art and Film

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES
ANDREW JUSTICE of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

ARTICLES
- Hyewon Kim, “‘Everybody’s Talking about Jamie’ by Tom MacRae,” Theatre Journal 73, no. 3 (2021): 429–32.

AUDIO