

Hay Days

By

Rob Rosiello

WHY I LIKE IT: *Drama Editor JANET EHRLICH COLSON writes...*

Rob Rosiello's Hay Days is a fabulous theatrical biopic of Harry Hay, a pioneer of gay rights as well as a controversial - and colorful character. More than just a monologue, Hay Days is a transformative one-man show with a wholeness to the experience that engages the audience on a multi-level journey of a man both driven and undone by his passions. Although Harry Hay is of a past generation, Rosiello's play is on the cutting edge of the kinds of stories we need in our theaters right now, stories that imbue the cultural conversation with intelligent and artful insights and provocatively steer us away from the tyranny of cancel culture. Hay Days is drama. It's history. It's poetry. It's quite unlike anything you've seen before because of the way Rosiello uses historical details as a springboard to takes risks with his subject matter, exposing the flaws in his protagonist, the self-doubts, and the vulnerabilities that threaten to make us all a little more human. This is a must read. Not a history buff? Don't let that scare you. The play stands on its own regardless of your relationship to the context (although you may find yourself taking a deep dive into a Google rabbit-hole after you've finished to learn more). I'll give you one line below and then it's up to you to keep reading.

HARRY

"Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his heart and speaks another."

(Moving beneath the noose, he grabs a chair and lines it up underneath.)

Five stars.

(Spacing is playwright's own. Please scroll down.)JEC

HAY DAYS

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CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Harry Hay: male, early forties; Gay rights pioneer whose struggle with language and identity for the gay community was also a personal struggle with identity and acceptance.

HAY DAYS

(In the shadows that make up our darkness.)

HARRY

I am here
But where is here?
Was that a hand?
Who is touching me?
I reach out—
Alarm?
Pleasure?
Was it them?
Or was it me?
The dark—
A face—
I know this face—
And the panic—
The terror—
She is struggling—
And screaming—
No sound comes from her—
But I can hear her—
The sound is deafening!
Dear God— what am I doing?
A flash of silver—
A blade in my hand—
What have I done?
She isn't alone—
On the bed—
Vacant eyes—
What have I done?
Theirs—
Hers—
Vacant eyes—
What have I done?
Running—
The dark—
WHAT HAVE I DONE?

(August 10, 1948.

Late night.

The living room of a modest yet comfortable suburban Los Angeles home.

The remnants of a party are evident.

A single piece of birthday cake sits atop the desk.

HARRY HAY stands, trembling, and holds a garden trowel.

He is wearing a suit with no tie but collar still buttoned.

He drops the trowel and becomes transfixed on a noose that is hanging directly center of the room.

It is crude and crafted from several neckties.

HARRY

"Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his heart and speaks another."

(Moving beneath the noose, he grabs a chair and lines it up underneath.)

HARRY

"Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his heart and speaks another."

(HARRY tests the chair for its sturdiness before standing on it.
Not quite the right height.)

HARRY

"Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his heart and speaks another."

(HARRY takes a book from the couch and places it on the chair.
He spots a child's rag doll on the floor, picks it up, considers it, then sets it on the couch.

He steps on the chair, stands on the book and can now reach the noose with more ease.

Harry sighs.

It is the rag doll again.

He gets off the chair and turns the doll around so it faces into the couch and not him.

HARRY mounts the chair again, places the noose around his neck.

He closes his eyes.

Pause.

He opens his eyes.

HARRY takes off the noose and steps off the chair.)

HARRY

August 10, 1948.

I threw a brick tonight.

Not a literal one, mind you.

But a brick, nonetheless.

(He picks up a piece of birthday cake.)

This cake— this was Anita's brick at me—

For unceremoniously abandoning her birthday dinner earlier this evening.

(He sets the cake down.)

It's a joke we share— the brick that is.

No...joke isn't the right term....

Purpose? Reason? Goal?

Yes! Goal.

To throw bricks whenever possible.

To cause a stir, to rally, to not merely accept or be accepted.

To step out of line and be the one to lead the charge.

The idea dates back to my early days in Los Angeles.

1933 to be exact.

Pre—Anita.

Pre—Communist Party.

Pre—.....

(He turns and gestures towards the noose.)

...this.

(There is a shift in lights.

Sounds of a crowd.

Angry and growing.)

HARRY

New to the scene and in love— in lust to be more precise.

His name is Will — Will Geer.

Together we go, marching in the face of the machine— the system.

It's a protest. One not replete with workers and day laborers— this one is made up of Mothers & Wives & Children—

The poor and the less fortunate

The minority.

Yes.

The minority.

Today, though— not so little...or so minor. Not so minor as we gather to protest the spilling of milk. No— quite literally! The deliberate dumping of perfectly good milk down the storm drains to drive up the prices.

People...but people are starving! In the streets...where the milk now runs

Not overseas in some far off land— right here in downtown Los Angeles.

As we surge in number, I notice that we are not alone.

Those around me turn their eyes to the heavens

Someone to protect them

Someone to save them
And on the rooftops—
Angels on high
But not for our protection— no!
Police.
And they are—
They are holding—
What?
Machine guns—
Pointed down—
At us!
The women and the children...
The fire of protest— Bedlam— right on the edge
I can feel the tension—
A smothering embrace—
Smack!
A loud thud behind me—
A woman goes down— a small girl burrowed into her bosom—
Smack!
The sickening crack of bone—
Another down!
Now the swell of the masses is beginning to toss about—
A tempest building with a maddening fury—
The police— the guardians— the heavenly hosts armed on high—
They aren't ready for a riot—
They are trying to *incite* one!
I am swept up on the moment and I look around
I look around and I see it— I see it and I pick one up
The building block of generations— nothing more common than a simple brick
Red and heavy— but today my weapon of choice— of defiance
I pick it up off a stack of newspapers
I pick it up and I throw it
I throw it and it hits— it never hits!
Probably because I never throw—
But I do— today I do— I throw it— and today it hits.
It hits! It actually does!
A police officer— right on the side of the head, knocking him off his horse and onto the ground.
I did it.
I did it?
I did it!
I had thrown the brick and hit the mark
Silence
Confusion
Stunned disbelief
For everyone
Including me

But just for a moment
And when the moment passes....
CHAOS!
I am being screamed at in three languages
I don't understand any of them
Even though I'm sure one of them is English, I think
Horses charging, children screaming
Mothers, wives, sisters
Pushing and shoving
Will?
He's lost—
I'm lost—
Faces everywhere
I'm not even sure—
My feet are carrying me
Or am I flying?
I barely touch the ground
“Get him outta here!”
“Where?”
“Go!”
They treat me—
They treat me like their hero—
Fresh from battle—
For a noble cause—
Their noble cause.
“Don't stop!”
“*Move!*”
In a doorway
Up a staircase
Through apartments
Past families
In and out
“Up this way!”
“No— now down here!”
“Quick before they catch him!”
Daylight
Darkness
Noises
Smells
I have no time to think
“Don't stop now!”
“*Move!*”
“Keep him moving!”
I did it—
I threw—
It landed—

Wheels in motion—
No time
On we go
Finally, we arrive.
Where?
Here.
Where is that?
Where am I?
In a cave of rugs they hide me—
Bundled away in the basement
Safe and secure— like Aladdin
Surrounded by magic carpets— a hidden treasure
Once I surface again, the streets are quiet.
Empty.
And Will Geer?
A comrade in arms—
Without question.
A comrade *in* the arms of his lover—
Too public a showing—
Beyond his level of comfort
Will Geer—
Figuratively and literally—
Gone.

(Lights return to the living room.
HARRY pauses.
He considers the noose again.)

Not a darling and thoughtful gift for Anita to awake tomorrow morning and find me swinging from the rafters.
Although, given how I carelessly excused myself from her birthday tonight, she might not mind so very much.
Perhaps.
Or not.
After 10 years of marriage, one would hope for a little better.
Than this, I mean.
And by this, I refer to me.
Hence the last minute change of heart.
Or reprieve.
I haven't decided yet.
One guarantee though—
A certain end to the walking in my sleep—
And the torture of these frightening dreams
These violent and graphic dreams—
About Anita and the children—
(Pause.

HARRY collects himself.)

Even on her birthday she still thinks of me.

(He again picks up the piece of cake and sniffs it.)

Unless she has laced it with something.

Judging from the finger marks and nibbles out of the corners, it looks like one of my two daughters left this treat behind.

And given the amount of icing left— I would guess it to be Katie.

Hannah would have scraped the cake clean without even a hint of the frosting to remain.

She's very direct that way.

(HARRY hums "Happy Birthday.")

Now, make a wish and blow out the candle.

If there was one.

I know what you probably wished for, my dear.

Don't worry, I won't say it aloud and jinx it for you.

One of us should have all our dreams come true.

(HARRY tastes the cake but cannot even find pleasure in this.)

HARRY

A note would be considerate, I suppose.

As considerate as one could be for such an act.

At such a time.

(HARRY goes through the desk.

He finds a pen but no paper.

Instead he finds a bundle of letters.)

HARRY

Letters from Anita.

Pre—marriage— 1938.

Post—Will Geer though— and my initial throwing bricks and running from the police.

Anita changed me— meeting her.

Set up at a dinner party— I was drawn to her— she was tall—

Not a modern beauty by any means— but she outshined any woman I had even met—

A sharp intelligence and the most alluring quality about her— the most seductive trait that for the first time made me take notice of a woman of all creatures—

It was her card.

Yes! She was a card carrying member of the Communist Party.

That alone was enough for me.

And we bonded.

Quite fast, actually.

She and I—

Protest marching, card carrying members—

The perfect couple.

I finally had given The Party cause for a considerable sigh of relief.

Consorting with the crowd that I did was not looked upon favorably.

Settling down and marrying was much more desirable.
For them.

For me, it was a matter of convenience and necessity.

Anita knew this.

She understood and accepted it— even commented, "I have been with other men who are...that way."

"That way."

(He takes a moment with the letters and smells them.
He opens one and reads.)

HARRY

"My Dear Harry— At first I didn't go to the door twenty times a day to look for mail but now I'm lucky if I get away with fifty. I didn't used to feel like spending every minute of the day and night with a pen in my hand trying to write you, but now I feel like starting again as soon as a letter has left this floor via the mail chute."

Not much of a poet, my Anita.

But never did anyone, man or woman, say such lovely things—

And dare I say mean every word of them.

Lovely.

Just lovely.

(HARRY replaces the letter and picks up their wedding photo from a table.)

HARRY

September 9, 1938 we were married.

A good Catholic boy and a proper Jewish girl—

An outdoor wedding...

(He admires the photo.)

I could be dramatic and scrawl, "Good—bye! For now..." across the glass of the photo frame. Problem being that neither Anita nor I wear the appropriate shade of red for such a dramatic gesture.

(Pause.)

She was everything I could wish for in a partner—

Still is.

Just the anatomy is wrong.

(HARRY sets the photo down.)

HARRY

What would dear Dr. Kinsey say about that?

(Pause.
He takes a book off the chair.)

Perhaps a page literally ripped from this scandalous Journal of Enlightenment would be more fitting—

Sexual Behavior in the Human Male.

By Dr. Alfred Kinsey.

This...manifesto, if you will, describing male sexuality and how it is naturally prone to “change” over time.

He even has taken the time to concoct a scale to measure one's level of homosexuality or heterosexuality.

So on a scale of zero to six— how do you rate?

Zero being exclusively heterosexual, and a six being exclusively homosexual— where do you rate?

In all I do, and in all I say, I always strive to be a perfect ten!

(He slams the book shut.
Pause.)

And here I sit, pondering the means by which to convey my final farewell to the world as I know it— and this has made its way into the world....

Ironic I find it necessary to stand on this in order to reach that!

(Pause.)

Standing on the precipice, unsure what to do tonight...

Tonight...

Oh the magic of tonight!

A surprise to me most of all.

The casual observer might deem it nothing more than a mundane beer blast...

But no!

This collective was far more electric than that!

A coming out if you will— a debutante's ball without the hoopla and forced formality of white gowns— although sorely missed by some, I'm sure!

Two dozen or so gentleman— collected together under the pretense of politics and the discussion of our glorious leader, the progressive candidate Henry Wallace.

The over—riding theme of the party, if you will—

All that was missing were some sparklers and patriotic bunting.

But this is unlike any other congregation of which I had partaken—

Until now—

And so long in the making I dare say it is worth the wait!

(He moves about the room as if at the party again.)

Smart men, handsome men—

Dare I even say a few beautiful men...
It was if I was on a first date—
Or to be more accurate—
Several dozen first dates, but all at once—
But not just any bundle of first dates—
The physical beauty is heightened by the intelligence and enthusiasm of this international
congregation—
One in particular catches my eye right off—
A stunning young Norse god—
Bronzed and pouty—
A perfect combination *and* weakness of mine....
My intentions must be quite apparent as a voice, familiar and friendly, advises me against it.
“I’d let that one sail into the sunset— he just recently caught a ‘touch’ of the gonorrhea. I’d look
for another harbor to drop anchor.”
Truly?
“Truly!”
Pity.
Catching a touch of the gonorrhea?
Isn’t that like announcing that one is a “little” pregnant?
Off to a good start indeed!
With an eye still on my tainted Norse God, it is then I hear—

(Speaking in an exaggerated French accent.)

"*Pardonnez—moi, Monsieur...* did you hear about this new report by a Dr. Kinsey?"
Conversation ebbs about us.
You are referring to *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, are you not?
Heads now turn.
“So you have heard...”
Rapt attention now.
Heard about it— I helped him write the damn thing!
Gales of laughter as I turn to face my innocent inquisitor.
Laughter, I realize—
Only from me.
My French Delight is blushing, unsure at the response of the room or me.
In certain circles I understand this is a necessary precaution, very cloak and dagger—
Akin to rapping on the door of a speakeasy and announcing, "Joe sent me!"
If we cannot lift this veil of secrecy in a room like this with company such as ours—
With whom and where can we?

(Slight pause.)

And yes— I know of the Kinsey Report.
"Do you believe the claim?"
I know of what he spoke— that accent now working like a drug on me—
37% of adult men claim to have engaged in some kind of experience with another male of the
species.
Let's say the number *is* true—

The most recent US census claims that there are about 146 million citizens living in the United States

Of that, 51%, roughly, are male— so around 74 million men.

And if Kinsey is right— and 37% is an accurate number...

This would mean that somewhere around 27 million men have engaged in some kind of 'intimate' encounter with another male of the species—
27 million.

The room as a collective has no idea what to do or say.

I think I can actually hear the beer in their hands slowly loosing its head.

We are only about two dozen, ourselves, gathered in a small apartment on St James Park just off the campus of USC...

But imagine larger numbers—

Around the country—

Around the world—

Thousands—

No, millions—

Together—

Congregating—

Organizing.....

There is a sudden explosion of conversation—

Small pockets all at once to each other yet at the same time— all directed at me.

"It's illegal— for us to congregate—"

"There is a public hatred—"

"They think we're perverts—"

Aren't we?

A pervert— by definition— is a person whose behavior deviates from what is acceptable.

Mainstream tends to slant this towards the sexual.

I like to dip turnips in honey before I can eat them—

By definition— out of the ordinary— not terribly acceptable by some— so therefore—
perverted.

Does this make me a monster?

At certain dinner parties and better restaurants— perhaps.

It sets me apart, if you will..

And there are many others out there like me— like us—

Unique— but not alone.

And if we can assemble them— imagine the voice—

Imagine the strength—

The power of assembly—

The power of the numbers—

It wouldn't be easy—

It can't be easy—

But nothing worth fighting for ever is....

Easy....

Unlike some of us in this room.

Again— laughter— to lighten the mood—

But not the tone—

And so we launch into it—
We have been around for years—
Decades—
Centuries—
Often hiding in plain sight.
As recent as the films being churned out by the Hollywood machine—
In literature throughout the years—
Lord Alfred Douglas— "I am the love that dare not speak its name."
Shakespeare's Sonnet #20 and the "Master Mistress" of my passion—
And of course— there is Homer— "Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides
one thing in his heart and speaks another."

(Pause.)

The work has begun.
Jotting down notes— trying to decide on a name—
"Queers for Wallace!"
"Queens for Wallace—"
"Fruits for Wallace!"
I caution and suggest one that isn't too blatant— too shocking.
This is how we arrive at "Bachelor's for Wallace."
What seems like minutes flew by over the course of hours.
It is now well past midnight
The party has dwindled—
Some bidding their good nights—
Others coupling off with knowing looks and silent farewells to those of us less fortunate.
Our host for the evening catches me, leans in and takes hold of my elbow with gentle ease, like a
matron about to confess a secret family recipe.
"Don't let your own chatter fool you, Harry. I'm afraid it was just the beer talking tonight. It'll
all look different to you in the light of day."
I want to say, where does he gets his nerve?
The unmitigated gaul!
But I am too late as someone else has caught his eye—
My Norse God—
Of all people!
And off they go.
Bon Voyage to you both!
I threw a brick...
Bachelor's for Wallace...
And so I begin the journey home.
Driving through the unusually quiet streets.
The heat of the day still holding thick in the air—
The notes from the evening are rolled up beside me on the front seat of our family car...

(He takes in the air yet finds no relief)

I will opt for a more celebratory route home tonight.
Echo Park.

I leave the car behind—
I also leave the door unlocked and keys in the visor above the driver's seat—
Clearly this is not my first time at the park.
One never knows when a hasty exit in advance of a police officer may be imminent or necessary.
But the thrill and joy of such a nocturnal visit pulls me in— as it has on so many other a night
like this.
The anticipation of finding someone in the shadows with whom to celebrate my victory—
No— coming here was not a bad idea at all—
Going home to that life—
Premature reactivation of my secular world—
That would not do at all—
Not on a night like this.
Tonight is meant for so much more—
And into the shadows I creep...
The ability and need to congregate and meet and unite—
One by one, two by two
Build the ark, Noah— and the creatures of the world shall come together in pairs!
The procreation may be a little more tricky than the original staging but oh! the joy in the
process!
Forms moving and coupling
The sounds that I soon hope to emit
I plunge deeper—
Into the darkness—
Of the night—
And beyond—
Was that a hand?
Who is touching me—
I reach out and make contact—
A soft cry—
Alarm?
Pleasure?
Was it them or me? I cannot tell—
The allure is rapidly fading into the night—
Running— through the darkness and into patches of dim light—
I feel faint—
Am I even moving?
I am at the car— out of breathe and fumbling with the door
Shaking so bad I can barely open it and climb inside
What is happening?
What is going on?
Keys into the ignition
I am driving again— perhaps not the best idea but I have to keep moving—
Fear driving me on—
But of whom?
Or what?
I resume the journey.

Home.

I enter our neighborhood at a slow pace— if a police officer sees me he should most certainly think me to be drunk.

The excitement of the evening— where has it gone?

The momentum—

The energy—

The possibility....

Apparently as strong as the dew that covers the lawns and sidewalks around me.

Dazzling now—

Defenseless against the bright light of day.

"I'm afraid it was just the beer talking tonight."

I pull into my driveway and am about to turn off the engine when I realize—

It isn't my driveway.

And I am not sitting in front of my house.

I back out and drive back down the street.

"It'll all look better in the light of day."

And it happens again.

I have passed by my own residence and am about to turn the corner at the end of the block.

Again I turn around and finally manage to creep home.

And there I sit for several long minutes—making certain above all else that this time I am sitting in my own drive at my own address.

I stare at the darkened dwelling, save one light left on in the living room,

Safe as to not hurt Harry.

"Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is that man who hides one thing in his heart and speaks another."

(Pause.)

The silhouette of a swing in the back yard is barely visible in the darkness.

An overturned tricycle abandoned in the front yard.

A beach bucket half full of garden dirt and sand sitting on the edge of the walk.

Remnants and pieces of a good life— a presumably happy one spilling out before me.

Flowers, trees, grass.

A house and home

A family within.

All mine.

All for me—

By me.

If I could only wish it all away—

But wait—

Where—

No longer in the car—

How did I....?

I am no longer outside

I am now *inside* the house—

My house

(The shadows from before return as HARRY speaks.)

I am moving— up the stairs—
I am here
But where is here?
Was that a hand?
Who is touching me?
I reach out—
A soft cry—
Alarm?
Pleasure?
Was it them?
Or was it me?
The dark—
A face—
I know this face—
And the panic—
The terror—
She is struggling—
And screaming—
No sound comes from her—
But I can hear her—
The sound is deafening!
Dear God— what am I doing?
A flash of silver—
A blade in my hand—
What have I done?
She isn't alone—
On the bed—
Vacant eyes—
What have I done?
Theirs—
Hers—
Vacant eyes—
What have I done?
Running—
The dark—
WHAT HAVE I DONE?

(Lights up.
Again HARRY is holding the garden trowel that he drops.)

If this is what I am capable of doing—
If this is what lingers just below my surface—
Safe as to not hurt Harry....
What about Anita?
And the girls?

A dream—
This time—
But what happens when it isn't a dream...
This has to be stopped.
This cannot happen.

(Long pause.)

This world of my own creation—
The sight of it
The weight of it
"Safe home" someone called as I left the party tonight.
No one warned me—
No one prepared me for that long drive home—
The perils before me—
The silence
The reality.

(Lights return to the living room.
HARRY rummages through the desk.
Finally finds a notebook.
He pauses and sits on the edge of the desk, pen and notebook in hand.)

Take a chance for once!
It was never this hard— to go out on the ledge—
To be the voice heard above the crowd—
And now....
It's all just too safe.
Safety net
Safety in numbers
"Safe home!"
This— all of this...safe and secure.
This living room for example—
I confessed to Anita some time back, in a moment of sheer desperation and weakness, about the nightmares— nightmares like the one tonight.
This said confession was spawned by Anita's discovery of me in my drawers wandering about the kitchen—
With no clear reason for being in there at 3 o'clock in the morning.
Nor any clear recollection on how I got there—
Hence the present arrangement of furniture...
Safe as to not hurt Harry.
Secure in case any midnight wanderings should find me down here— and hopefully not land me flat on my face
A banged knee perhaps in lieu of a broken nose or busted eye.
Or worse.

(HARRY stands.)

It has to stop some time.
I can't keep living in a gilded cage padded as to not stub a toe or warrant a bruise.

It has to stop!

(He begins to re—arrange the furniture then pauses.

Powerless over who I am.

Perhaps.

Powerless over what I can be.....

Certainly....

(Pause.)

I am not *this*—

(He indicates the noose.)

The answer is not that—

The answer is—

What?

(Pause.

HARRY mounts the chair and takes the noose in hand and holds on to it.)

I took Anita and the girls to the zoo around Father's Day this past June—

To see the caged animals.

Pure delight through a child's eyes.

Katie, of course, was fascinated by the giraffes.

Graceful and so very tall— a mountain on the move.

Hannah— her tastes are definitely more unusual.

Perverse, if you will.

A little girl, all smiles and pigtails—

Found a home and perfectly content watching the monkeys.

For the longest time she just stood watching them.

(HARRY demonstrates as he recounts the story.)

And as they swung from limb to limb I noticed a moment in time—

A literal moment — as they swung through the air— when they were neither clinging to a branch or grabbing on to a new one—

They simply had to let go—

With the faith, of course, that they would have something to grab.

And the amazing thing—

The beauty of the animal instinct—

As they hung in mid—air—

Arms spread—

Not holding on to a thing.

There was no fear—

No worry—

No hesitation—

For they had the faith that there would be something to grab on to once they let go.

There always was.

And they always did.

(Pause.)

Standing on the precipice, unsure what to do....
You throw a brick.
Yes!
Powerless over who I am.
Perhaps.
Powerless over what I can be.....
Certainly not.
Hello— my name is Harry and I am a Bachelor for Wallace!

(Fade to black.)

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:

“Before there was Harvey Milk...
Before there was Stonewall...
There was Harry Hay.”

In light of recent mind numbing legislation that has been passed by American States like Florida and Texas attacking transgender youth and the ability to teach LGBTQIA+ history in schools, I felt it was time to again revisit this legendary and often incendiary gay icon, Harry Hay. If legislatures and people are trying to silence the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community, and are trying to suppress or even erase the history of this community, as a member of this community I felt that something needed to be done. Just saying “Gay” and posting clever memes on social media wasn’t enough.

I chose to revisit this play that had been written a little over ten years ago with my writing partner at the time, James Heighington. It was right after the release of the film, Milk, that James approached me about writing a one-man show about a gay rights pioneer I had never heard of, Harry Hay. I immediately plunged into the research with James and found a complicated and fascinating portrait of a man, full of contradictions and yet someone who had the ability to constantly reinvent himself, never once losing sight of whom he was or why he, as a gay man, was special.

Our time creating this story about Harry did not whitewash him or his story, as we found all the flaws and tribulations were what made him such a compelling and fascinating figure. Harry Hay passed away in 2002 at the age of 90, and we quickly found there was a whole generation who had never heard of him until they heard our play. At the same time, and to our joy and surprise, a pleasant number of people who knew him came to hear the NYC reading of this play and the subsequent workshop in LA a few years later...this shows the lasting impact of a man who refused to step down or fade away...

And now we felt the time had come again to share a piece of the LGBTQIA+ story, in a time when some are trying to erase us and silence us, we need to speak of our history and those who paved the way for us to fight onward and upward...

AUTHOR BIO: Rob Rosiello is a graduate of Villanova's Master Program in Theatre, where he was a member of the Barrymore Award winning ensemble of *Angels in America*. Rob served as a teaching assistant in playwriting at Primary Stages' Off-Broadway Theater in NYC. Rob's playwriting credits include: *Honky Tonk Queen, A Song I Forgot to Sing, Cold Stun, The World's Oldest Living Drag Queen, Pandora,* and *Hay Days*. While living in NYC, he had the great fortune of producing the National Tour for the Winner of the first five seasons of *RuPaul's Drag Race* on behalf of Logo TV and Absolut Vodka. As a result, he was asked to pen a chapter in an academic text, *RuPaul's Drag Race and the Shifting Visibility of Drag Culture*. His chapter, *I Am The Drag Whisperer*, chronicles his time on the road on the front lines of a cultural phenomenon. The world premiere of his play, *Vernal Rites*, was finally staged January 2022 at Old Academy Players in Philadelphia, and his original 4-part radio thriller, *The Broken Hollow Banshee*, aired in the fall of 2021.