

A ‘BABY’ FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BABY was written in 1983. In the intervening years, the universe has utterly changed. There isn't a single subject that this show touches on -- gender, sexuality, fertility, language, diversity, same-sex marriages (including parenting), child-bearing age, medical processes, and even politics – that hasn't changed. The world has changed, and because the show is set in the present, we, the authors, knew that BABY had to change with it.

A small New York production gave us a chance to do just that. Focusing on diversity, we cast, for the young college students, a Lizzie who is legally blind and a Danny (the musician) who is functionally deaf --and wrote those disabilities into the show, (Feel free to replace those obstacles with any other you might find in casting.) We made Arlene almost ten years older, since child-bearing fertility has changed. (Also although it is never mentioned, feel free to make Alan and Arlene a mixed-race couple of any ethnicity.)

The biggest change is making one of the couples a same-sex marriage. This was a change that couldn't be accomplished by altering a few pronouns. The entire process of fertilization, from acquiring sperm to insemination, is different, We did extensive research and also benefited from conversations with a number of same-sex couples who were willing to share their deeply personal experiences with us.

We authors had one worry. We thought if we changed the plots of the three stories, it would require rewriting the score – and the score to BABY for many people has become iconic. But we were surprised to find how little had to change. The score defines the emotional turning points in each of the stories, and those emotional pivots are universal, whatever the specifics of the plots.

We did however update the sound of the show. We are a long way from 1983 and since BABY takes place in the present, we reconfigured Jonathan Tunick’s brilliant original orchestrations for a guitar-based orchestra of six.

BABY is not a period show. It is in fact one in the most immediately “present” musical ever written. And it lives in the specifics your cast will bring to the show. We invite you to bring your own creativity to the producing of this new modern BABY.

Richard Maltby

Sybille Pearson

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