



# THE TEMPERAMENTALS

BY JON MARANS



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

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Originally produced in New York City  
by Daryl Roth and Stacy Shane.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON MUSIC**

An optional CD containing instrumental recordings of "God Save Us Nelly Queens" and the Act Two "Turnip" music performed on the recorder is available through the Play Service for \$20.00 plus shipping and handling. There is no additional fee for the use of this music in performance.

*This play is dedicated to the original  
Mattachine visionaries*

*and to*

*Daryl Roth  
Jonathan Silverstein  
Kevin McAnarney  
and  
Stacy Shane*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

While this isn't a musical, certain musical elements greatly help the storytelling. Therefore, it's vital for MAN #1 to play the ukulele. Fortunately, it's a fairly easy instrument to learn and only eight chords are used throughout the entire play.

It would also be terrific for MAN #2 to play the clarinet. However, that instrument is difficult to learn. If MAN #2 isn't already proficient at the clarinet, it might make more sense for him to mime playing it to pre-recorded music. (The clarinet sheet music is included in the back of this script.) The other possibility is for MAN #2 to learn the recorder and perhaps play some of the pieces live — particularly “Nelly Queens.” And then have the rest of the music pre-recorded and mime playing them. (Obviously the recorder gives a less elegant sound than the clarinet.)

On a much more personal note, writing about these five brave men was not only a labor of love, but an eye-opening exploration of a world that was relatively unknown to me. For those who find these men and this subject matter equally absorbing, I urge you to read Stuart Timmons' book *The Trouble with Harry Hay* (Alyson Publications).

THE TEMPERAMENTALS was produced by Daryl Roth, Stacy Shane and Martian Entertainment at New World Stages in New York City, performances beginning on February 18th, 2010. The associate producer was Alexander Fraser. The general manager was Adam Hess; the company manager was Kyle Provost. It was directed by Jonathan Silverstein; set and costume designs were by Clint Ramos; lighting design by Josh Bradford; sound design by Daniel Kluger; graphic design by Adrian Sie; casting by Stephanie Klapper. The production stage manager was Tom Taylor; assistant stage manager was Julie DeRossi. The media co-ordinator was Thomas Dooley. The press rep was Kevin P. McAnarney. The cast was as follows:

HARRY HAY ..... Thomas Jay Ryan  
 RUDI GERNREICH ..... Michael Urie  
 CHUCK ROWLAND & others ..... Arnie Burton  
 BOB HULL & others ..... Matthew Schneck  
 DALE JENNINGS & others ..... Sam Breslin Wright

THE TEMPERAMENTALS was originally produced in New York City by Stacy Shane and premiered at the Barrow Group Studio Theater in New York on April 30th, 2009. It moved to the TBG Theater in New York City on June 10th, 2009, produced by Daryl Roth and Stacy Shane. It was directed by Jonathan Silverstein; set and costume designs were by Clint Ramos; lighting design by Josh Bradford; sound design by Daniel Kluger. Porter Pickard was the company manager; Adrian Sie was the graphic designer. The production stage manager was Samone B. Weissman and the assistant stage manager was Paloma Pilar. Kevin P. McAnarney was the press rep. The cast was as follows:

HARRY HAY ..... Thomas Jay Ryan  
 RUDI GERNREICH ..... Michael Urie  
 CHUCK ROWLAND & others ..... Tom Beckett  
 BOB HULL & others ..... Matthew Schneck  
 DALE JENNINGS & others ..... Sam Breslin Wright

## CHARACTERS

HARRY HAY  
RUDI GERNREICH (who also plays WOMAN #4)

**Man #1:**

CHUCK ROWLAND  
VINCENTE  
WOMAN #2 and others  
*plays ukulele*

**Man #2:**

BOB HULL  
GEORGE SHIBLEY  
WOMAN #1 and others  
*plays clarinet (or recorder)*

**Man #3:**

DALE JENNINGS  
NIGEL BUTLER  
WOMAN #3 and others

## SETTING

THE TEMPERAMENTALS takes place in the early 1950s in various locations throughout Los Angeles.

As the play is in many different locales, the set should not be realistic. Instead, each locale only need supply us with atmosphere. Most of the settings are secluded, out-of-the-way places. Where secrecy can not only grow but thrive — in a heady, intoxicating way. Where a secret language hangs in the air — much more vibrant and alive than the English language that all of these characters speak.

Anyone who looks at something special, in a very original way, makes you see it that way forever.

—George Cukor

# THE TEMPERAMENTALS

## ACT ONE

*Late at night. The Chuckwagon Diner.*

*1950. It appears we're in a small hole-in-the-wall restaurant in the Wild West.*

*Actually, we're in an L.A. restaurant.*

*Two men in suits sit across from each other at a table: Rudi and Harry. Rudi is 29, pale, interestingly handsome, wildly charming. Harry is 39, pushy, gruff, blustery, and imperious. Rudi speaks with just a trace of a Viennese accent.*

*Perhaps in the shadows, a menacing man also in a suit watches on. Imminent danger must always hang over Rudi and Harry whether or not the danger is actually present.*

*Harry stares out for a couple of seconds. The silence rings out and then:*

HARRY. It really IS like a cameo.

RUDI. (*Amused.*) ... Well ... hmmm ... what can I say.

HARRY. Like the face of an ancient Greek woman. (*Off Rudi's annoyed glare.*) OR man ... Majestic. Regal. Unreachable.

RUDI. Now, truly, what can I say?

HARRY. You don't know what cameo means — do you? Don't sweat it.

RUDI. (*Amused.*) I would hardly be sweating. I'd simply ask you. (*Harry slowly puts his foot on top of Rudi's. Rudi startles.*) Ah! Your



foot, Harry.

HARRY. What?

RUDI. Is on top of mine.

HARRY. And therefore protecting you.

RUDI. Almost crushing me.

HARRY. Should I stop?

RUDI. Don't be ridiculous. I said "almost." (*Beat.*)

HARRY. (*Testing him.*) So what DOES the word "cameo" mean?

RUDI. It's a kind of engraving on a stone. And as you chip away to carve the face, you find another color exists. The underlying color of the stone.

HARRY. (*Stunned, but trying to hide it.*) Correct.

RUDI. You didn't remotely know that.

HARRY. Correct again. How did you figure that out?

RUDI. Your foot relaxed. (*Harry's amused.*)

HARRY. So most stones have a second color?

RUDI. Of course. But which is the true color? The inner or the outer?

HARRY. The inner, of course.

RUDI. Yes. Perhaps. Although who says a stone can only have one true color? Why not two?

HARRY. I keep forgetting.

RUDI. What?

HARRY. That you were born in Vienna. (*Rudi looks puzzled.*) Raised on art, culture.

RUDI. (*Amused.*) Just because I'm from ... I promise you, Vienna has its share of stupid people. A famous saying: "After all the Jews had fled or been killed — and then after the war when all the Nazis went into hiding — nothing was left in Vienna except for — the unexceptional."

HARRY. And look at that. You put yourself into one of the exceptional categories.

RUDI. The quotation did that for me.

HARRY. However it failed to mention —

RUDI. Yes?

HARRY. The Temperamentals. Also persecuted. Equally exceptional.

RUDI. Although they would hardly be part of the saying.

HARRY. Not yet. But someday they'll — (*A glass breaks offstage or a man clears his throat. Harry and Rudi are instantly on alert — as if a gun just went off. Harry cautiously looks over to see what happened.*)

*Rudi doesn't turn. Then Harry stares at Rudi — communicating in the silence that everything is fine. Their conversation picks up where it left off.*) Someday the Temperamentals will not only be *making* the quotes, but be *in* them.

RUDI. (*Amused.*) It seems highly unlikely that civilized conversations would include people who are —

HARRY. (*Firmly.*) I guarantee it will happen. I guarantee it. Because of me. (*There is something about Harry's strength that Rudi finds strangely appealing.*)

RUDI. (*Tickled.*) Because of you?

HARRY. (*Getting louder as he speaks.*) I was born on Easter Sunday. The *Titanic* went down the following Thursday. And why? Two *Titanics* can't exist in the world at one time! When one shows up, the other *has* to go down!

RUDI. Harry.

HARRY. Yes, Rudi.

RUDI. Please, modulate your voice.

HARRY. At the Chuckwagon Diner?! ... I wasn't saying anything inappropriate.

RUDI. No, but when you get excited you talk ... loudly. And spit. (*Harry is stunned that Rudi said that.*)

HARRY. I'll try to be more aware of those things.

RUDI. A cameo is also a word in *my* business. The motion picture business.

HARRY. *Your* business? (*Harry chuckles.*)

RUDI. You're amused?

HARRY. Well ... aren't you an *assistant* costume designer or something like that?

RUDI. Now *that's* amusing. I must tell that joke to all of my assistant designers ... (*Throwing it away.*) And Lana Turner.

HARRY. ... You've designed for — ? (*Rudi nods nonchalantly.*) ... Sorry. I just assumed — I mean all the other young artsy types that I've ... known —

RUDI. (*Amused.*) All the *other* young — ? ... So what is a cameo — in *my* business? If you're unsure, please don't be afraid to ask —

HARRY. It's a small, but pivotal role played by a somewhat well-known actor — or actress. Usually just one scene.

RUDI. (*Trying to be matter-of-fact.*) Yes.

HARRY. Now you're the one who's stunned!

RUDI. Correct.

HARRY. I used to be an actor before I began — (*With a mystery to it.*) teaching. (*Harry stares at Rudi. Wondering. Then from under the table, Harry lifts up an old battered briefcase, takes out a few sheets of paper, hands it to Rudi.*)

RUDI. Why are you —

HARRY. Read it.

RUDI. But what exactly —

HARRY. (*Firmly, although quite anxious underneath.*) I said “Read it!” (*As Rudi begins to look it over, Harry speaks.*) Last week — after we met, I thought — sure we disagreed about the war, but at least we were both *in* the argument. Although I still say, you can’t go into a country uninvited —

RUDI. Helping them is the *right* thing to do.

HARRY. (*Loving the fight.*) Can’t help every country in trouble, dammit.

RUDI. (*Personal.*) Or people. And certainly didn’t. As my entire family could attest to.

HARRY. THAT was obviously horrible —

RUDI. And today’s situation in Asia is equally volatile —

HARRY. We can’t get involved in someone else’s war —

RUDI. For the bigger picture, we must! And will. Because whatever the president says when it comes to national security, the country accepts.

HARRY. They do not.

RUDI. You’re being naïve.

HARRY. (*Pissed off.*) You’re being Viennese. (*They stare at each other for a moment. It’s a standoff.*) Nothing like a good argument to get the blood going.

RUDI. (*Turned on.*) Mine is certainly racing. (*As Rudi continues looking at the document, he is so stunned by what he reads that he puts his hand on Harry’s arm. Which makes Harry uneasy. Even more so if a man in the shadows steps out, glaring at this inappropriate behavior.*)

HARRY. Rudi, your hand.

RUDI. After what I’ve seen in Vienna, I don’t care. From what you have written, I think neither do you. (*Harry takes Rudi’s hand and removes it from his arm.*)

HARRY. People have been arrested for less than that.

RUDI. I intend to continue doing it. You need to get used to it. Do not disappoint me next time. (*Rudi continues reading.*)

HARRY. (*Pleased by Rudi’s pluck.*) Your face.

RUDI. Yes?

HARRY. (*Smitten.*) It really *is* like a cameo.

RUDI. This document —

HARRY. Yes?

RUDI. — is the most dangerous thing I have ever seen ... Count me in. (*Blackout. As the men remove their clothing, lights slowly up on an attic-like room where it's difficult to stand, especially on the sides. Harry sits, barefoot. While an oddly subservient Rudi — shirtless — is in the middle of putting on Harry's socks. As he does, Harry looks at a sketchbook.*) Excuse me, but that is private.

HARRY. And putting my socks on isn't? (*Rudi continues putting socks on.*) What IS this design?

RUDI. A houndstooth check.

HARRY. (*Looking at design.*) They're so damn large.

RUDI. When I create, I believe in making bold statements.

HARRY. *That* — I approve of.

RUDI. However, the actual pattern is simple and elegant. So it's a bold statement — but on a classic pattern.

HARRY. (*Looking at sketchbook, a dress pattern.*) A bold statement on a classic pattern.

RUDI. That I believe everyone can wear.

HARRY. (*Correcting him.*) Every *woman* can wear.

RUDI. Why not men as well? All of them swapping and sharing the clothes I design. (*Harry, slightly amused, laughs. Rudi glares.*)

Did I laugh at your manifesto?

HARRY. ... No.

RUDI. I also try to give myself dilemmas — to challenge myself. Can I make a dress out of a simple geometric shape? (*Rudi pulls a long black gown out of a bag. Holds it up.*) It looks like an ordinary gown. Although incredibly stylish. I particularly like the way the satin and the matte silk compliment each other while both being black. But I digress. It looks like an ordinary gown. But — (*Rudi lays the gown down on the ground. The actual shape is a huge circle.*)

The dress is actually one incredibly large —

HARRY. (*Stunned.*) — Circle. Damn.

RUDI. (*Pulling out a small cape from the bag that matches the gown.*) Even the cape —

HARRY. — Is a circle.

RUDI. Next, I will design a gown from a square. (*Rudi holds out the cape to Harry.*) Put it on. You'll also see how comfortable it feels.

# THE TEMPERAMENTALS

by Jon Marans

5M (doubling)

“Temperamental” was code for “homosexual” in the early 1950s, part of a created language of secret words that gay men used to communicate. *THE TEMPERAMENTALS* tells the story of two men — the communist Harry Hay and the Viennese refugee and designer Rudi Gernreich — as they fall in love while building the first gay rights organization in the pre-Stonewall United States.

*“Intellectual, emotional and sexual.”*

—**The New York Times**

*“Combines savvy context and ascending flights of bittersweet fabulousness.”*

—**New York Newsday**

*“Fascinating, entertaining and emotionally affecting.”*

—**Associated Press**

*“With style and a sense of humor, THE TEMPERAMENTALS mixes politics with campy comedy and unexpected bursts of emotional candor.”*

—**Time Out New York**

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