

Inside Out (Original Off Broadway Cast Recording)

Inside Out, originally entitled *Roleplay*, was green-lighted for its world premiere at the Group Repertory Theatre in North Hollywood. A day before the first preview, GRT Artistic Director Lonny Chapman came up to us in hushed tones and said, “I really like this show, but we may not be able to open. We can’t afford to pay the band for the previews.” Our band consisted of a piano player and percussionist. Somehow they found the money and the show opened and was scheduled to run for six weeks. It was surprisingly successful and ended up running five months (which was unheard of at this rep company).

From then on, other local productions popped up and we contacted every theater with a New York zip code to see if there might be interest in an Off Off Off Broadway anything. We were amazed at how uninterested all the east coast theaters were in our little gem. Then a curious thing happened.

Roleplay had just been produced again in Los Angeles (as a second stage/subscriber bonus) at The Colony Theatre and did very well again. Artistic Director Barbara Beckley just happened to travel to New York after our run and just happened to run into Zeke Zaccaro. Zeke was involved with an Off Broadway theatre company in Chelsea and they had just lost the rights to a small cast, all-girl musical and were trying to figure out what to drop into its place. Barbara said, “Oh, we just did an all-girl musical, *Roleplay*, and our audiences loved it.” That was all it took: a recommendation from an artistic director.

Roleplay opened in New York at The Village Theatre Company. It received — what we thought to be — a tepid review in the *New York Times*, but New Yorkers assured us it was a rave. And that next day — just like in the movies — there was a line around the block to get tickets. The play was extended and extended and eventually came to the attention of Marc Routh and Richard Frankel who optioned it for an Off Broadway production. During the (again, unheard of) five-month run, we were requested to create a new opening number. Similar to the pre-Broadway opening of *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, it was felt that our opening number was not setting up the play properly. So, we wrote a new opening and sent it to New York. The women learned it,

it was staged and in it went ... and ... didn’t do the magic we’d hoped for. Two weeks later, we got a request for a different, new opening number. We wrote. We sent. They staged. It still didn’t work. Eventually, we wound up writing five opening numbers — none of which worked.

With each incarnation, we tinkered with the script and score, putting new numbers in, re-arranging, re-working. Prior to the Off Broadway production, Routh and Frankel had secured an out-of-town try-out at a regional theater in Sarasota: The Florida Studio Theatre. We tweaked the script more — prior to and during that production. It was at this juncture we learned there was a problem with our title. Routh and Frankel were having a hard time getting legitimate producers interested in a musical that was likened to a risqué category at the back of *New Yorker* magazine, where people advertised (and presumably purchased) “*Roleplay*.” So, the search was on for a new title. We submitted more than 200 titles and — all were rejected. As we worked on a new opening, we found our new title, *Inside Out*, also the title of the opening song. The Florida production was a hit.

Several months later, we were flown back to New York for auditions for the Cherry Lane Theatre Off Broadway production. What a field day we had. Here was a show with six great roles for women and it was going to play *in* town. So, everyone wanted to audition. Casting Director Alan Filderman lined up a staggering array of incredibly gifted actresses, each one sang two full songs. We felt we ought to pay a cover charge, because the talent was remarkable. We were fortunate to assemble the cast that was chosen and that now lives on in this recording: Ann Crumb, Harriett D. Foy, Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, Jan Maxwell, Cass Morgan, and Julie Prosser.

Prior to our opening night, Marc Routh took us aside and explained how the opening and reviewing process would go. He said that reviewers would see the show during previews and hold them until opening night. All the reviews would come out the day after opening. This was shocking to us, but we sailed along with the tide. He further explained that after the opening performance there would be a lovely party and during the course of that celebration, someone would head out to pick up a copy of

the *New York Times*. Marc said he would go outside and read the review. If there were any good quotes, he would return to the party and read them aloud. If the review was bad, he wouldn’t read any of it and the party would pretty much end. If the review was good, he would come in and read the entire review.

To say that opening night was exciting would be a huge understatement. Everyone was there, even Al Hirschfeld. After the performance, we walked to a beautiful two-story restaurant and partied. Even though there was a ton of food and an open bar, our stomachs were in knots. This restaurant had two sets of double glass doors. At one point in the party we could see Marc go outside and get the paper from an assistant who had gone to fetch it. Through the glass doors, we could see him study the paper. It was hard to get a sense of what he was thinking because of the double glass and because of his great poker face. He came into the restaurant, walked right up to us and whispered, “I’m going to read the *entire* review.”

Marc read the review, one sentence at a time as 300 people cheered after each pause. It was surreal.

Several months after the show closed, we gathered in Manhattan to make this recording. The women were all busy, there was a window of only 36 hours when they could all be together. It was great to re-connect with these extraordinary actresses and to be able to capture their exceptional performances here in this time capsule.

We have often referred to *Inside Out* as our “little show that could.” It just keeps popping up and charming audiences all over again. And what seems to be its pattern is that each production engenders another production. People see this play and they love it and want to do it. Audiences genuinely identify with it and, hopefully, it’s still got a lot more lives.

— Doug Haverty & Adryan Russ